

Oh! the wizard's rod, more than fabled god,
 O'er human hearts has power,
 And pains, and tears, through troubled years,
 Are all the victim's dower,
 But not in fear, or pain, or tear,
 Dear woman's empire lies,
 But in the wand, of her snow-white hand,
 Which fairy power defies!

They say the skies, with their starry eyes,
 Look far into future days,
 And if their light we drink by night,
 We catch prophetic rays;
 But let me drink, at the fountain's brink,
 The light of some loved one's eye,
 And her smile shall teem, with prophetic beam,
 Of bright futurity!
 —*Dublin University Magazine.*

THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.*

CHAPTER IV.

"To Zoar," said to himself the ardent youth, "I go without tarrying, and surely some of the righteous in that city will return with me to Sodom, so that, peradventure, ten persons may be found therein such as my God loveth, so that the city and my Tizrah be saved.

South-west of the five cities—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zebaim, and Zoar—was the little city of Zoar. It stood upon a very gentle eminence, just jutting up from the plain, and immediately in the shadow of that great wilderness of mountains which extends to the Red Sea. It was peopled by a race, who, sprung originally from the hills, had retained much of the pastoral simplicity and virtue of their ancestors. They worshipped, although with rude rites, the true God. Practising polygamy, they yet avoided and detested the abominable practices of Sodom, and the gross intemperance of Gomorrah. The tie connecting them with the four cities was slender; civil war was more than once on the point of breaking out, and Zoar more than once was in danger of destruction at the hands of its sister towns. But its inhabitants, though few, were strong and courageous, while their brethren lay involved in sin, and their envy was as lazy as it was voluminous, resembling a half-stupefied snake, opening heavy eyes of rage at its enemy, and lolling out a forked tongue, harmless as painted lightning. Zoar, besides, was linked in league with Salem and with Abraham, and protected by the awe of their names.

As Irad hastens along, he is aware of a sudden light on the left hand, immediately above the cities of the plain. He deems at first that it is the glory of the Lord returned, and he pauses to behold it. But he soon perceives a far different spectacle. That is a huge mass of light, or fire, in the shape of a serpent, with a head from whose jagged jaws protrudes a tongue of livid blue, and on whose brow shine, as it were, two angry stars, looking downwards upon the earth. It seemed waiting to spring at and devour some object beneath it, and its tail and its tongue quivered as with eager rage. But while Irad gazes, it is diminished like an evening cloud, and becomes a

round mass, forming the likeness of a great city, on which tongues of fire are dropping down, and through whose streets men are running with frantic gestures; and Irad knows the city to be Sodom. But scarce can he draw his suspended breath till again the figure changes, and the serpent reappears now not looking to earth, but lifting up in triumph its eyes and horrid crest to heaven. Another look, and all is darkness.

Resolute, although appalled, Irad hastens on, for love and fear are wings too swift to be stayed. And now he sees the lights of Zoar shining in front. But he becomes also aware of a shadow, like that of a man gliding along before him. He tries to overtake him, but in vain; and when he approaches the gate of Zoar, the figure turns round, and he perceives an angel, armed with a fiery sword, and with eyes full of a sterner fire. Awful entreaty sits on his lips, and on his brow a gentle but decisive frown. Irad stops, for the angel has placed himself right across the path, and he dares not proceed. "Return, Irad," says the angel, "the gates of Zoar are shut till to-morrow, and to thee shall never be opened. *It is too late.*" And as he spoke, he waved the flaming brand over Irad's head, and the youth shrunk back, for even desperate resolve proved unavailing against the terror of an angel's brow, and sword, and eye. "Back to Sodom," said the voice, "and there await thy time." And, in deep grief, and staggering through disappointment as through drunkenness, he retreads his steps toward the fated cities.

He finds the gates of Sodom open, and enters in. At first, he is astonished at the unwonted silence of the streets, which seem deserted by their inhabitants. But, as he passes on, and nears the centre of the city, he hears loud shouts, and sees a glare of torches, and, led by the light, he reaches a street, into which the whole inhabitants of the town seem collected, so great and dense was the throng. Mingling with the crowd, he soon ascertains the cause of the tumult. The house before which they are convened is that of Lot. Two strangers had entered at eventide, and the multitude are demanding them, that they may gratify their passions on their persons. And Irad saw under the light of the torches the faces of the human fiends of Sodom collected into one detestable mass. It was a hellish sight: Children were there, far gone in vice, and familiar with every abominable practice. Women were there, fomenting the fury of their mates. Old grey-headed sinners stood foremost at the door, beating it with clubs, and crying out for the giving up of the strangers. Torches flickered, swords and hatchets flashed, oaths and imprecations, too tremendous to be recorded, mingled with the shouts; and, as the crowd swayed back and forward, like a wave, around the door of Lot, children and women were trampled under feet, and the cries of their unregarded death completed the harmony of hell, which went up through the darkness. And most fearful of all to Irad, from a window of the street, and commanding a view of the whole, appeared the white grinning tusk and serpent eye of Caphortim, like an evil spirit of the scene.

At last the door opens, and Lot appears, entreating parley. He offers them his two daughters, but the offer is spurned; and they are about to