

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PARADISE REGAINED

"The loves that meet in Paradise shall cast out fear,
And Paradise hath room for you and me and all."
—Christina Rossetti.

At last—the springtime came!

The potent energy of the sun opened all the myriad veins of the great trees, wakened the hibernating creatures of the dens and burrows from their protracted sleep, caused the seeds to swell and burst in the bosom of earth, and sent the blood coursing through David's veins, quickening all his intellectual and spiritual powers.

And then, the end of his exile was near! In a few weeks he would have vindicated the purity of his purpose to attain the divine life, and have proved himself worthy to claim the hand of Pepecta!

All the winter long he had plied his axe. Once more, now that the snow had vanished, he set fire to the debris which he had strewn around him, and saw with an indescribable feeling of triumph and delight the open soil made ready for his plow. He yoked a team of patient oxen to it and set the sharp point deep into the black soil. Never had the earth smelled so sweet as now when the broad share threw it back in a continuously advancing wave. Never had that yeoman's joy of