

a siege. Besides, it would require but a short time to bring succors sufficient to overwhelm the rebels and their allies and utterly annihilate them if they dared to await the issue. But the chief evil likely to result from this defeat would be the encouragement the nomadic desert tribes would gain from their unexpected victory over the supreme ruler of the country. They had for centuries been encroaching upon the original owners of the soil. Now they would be encouraged to renewed effort.

But another consideration of more immediate importance was presented. The supply of water in the city was small, and it was absolutely necessary to so dispose the army as to protect the communication with the great reservoir. To secure this the larger part of the army was ordered to move at once to a position covering the reservoir, the right resting upon the mountain causeway and keeping communications open with the city. Selif, thoroughly acquainted with the ground, was detailed to guide the Queen's officer whose duty it was to establish the lines. As the two, in advance of their escort, approached the reservoir they saw indistinctly a man under the shadow of the wall, and heard the blows of an iron instrument smiting the blocks of granite. Pausing a moment to learn what this might mean, even as they looked the great wall bowed outward and rent asunder, and with a leap and a roar the great volume of water rushed from its confinement and plunged down the mountain side. Tall trees snapped and went down before it like water reeds before a spring freshet. Vast boulders that had resisted the tempests of ages were swept before it like pebbles. Striking the level of the valley, the vast wave tore up the soil like a giant plowshare, and turned, with a roar like thunder, down the valley. The tents of Ishmael lay in its path. Ere their inmates had time to shriek and call on their gods, it picked them up and whirled them away gasping and helpless—their white tents like bubbles on the top of the tremendous wave. Towering above the walls of the Garden of Irem the vast flood crushed the puny majesty of man like a shell, and the next moment temple and palace, columned peristyle and gaudy kiosque were swept away, and all the vain host that lay down victors from a fight for a throne were but as motes whelmed beneath the tremendous fury of the mighty deluge.

When the morning broke, the wondering men of Hesea saw but a yawning abyss where their store-house of water had been, their gardens and fields were but bare rock and piles of debris, the wonderful and glorious garden, with the labors of centuries and the wealth of many kings, was utterly swept away. Here lay a marble column, yonder a granite pedestal, and further still a porphyry entablature, but the tall trees, the rich stuffs, the perfumed woods, the white Arab tents, and the fierce warriors all were swept away, till they were borne, mangled and torn, by many a mile of desert defile and dark ravine into the solemn depths of the Sea of Edom.

Then came one to Shedad and told how Al Ammin, watching by the great reservoir before the rebellion, had noticed how the cyclopean wall, disturbed by an earthquake, bent outward and threatened to fall under the vast weight of water that pressed upon it, and how the rebellion had kept him from reporting the fact. Further, he said, that when the battle closed, Al Ammin seeing the rebel and the Ishmaelite encamped in the valley, had taken an iron bar and pried at the great stones till the wall, ready to fall of its own weight, had given way, bearing death