

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE AMULET.

IT was high noon in the desert encampment. The shadows of the palms, which had boldly displayed themselves in the early cool of the morning, had gradually retreated before the triumphant progress of the sun, till now they lay a shrunken heap about the slender stems of the trees, which in their turn scarcely dared murmur to their children of the coming hours, when the burning tyrant overhead should again be brought low and the shadows reign triumphant. Through the shimmering air came the insistent voice of dropping water, telling over and over again of great depths of refreshing hid away in the secret places of the rock, safe from the thirsty ball of fire above, safe from the hungry sands which crept uneasily to and fro about the rocky margin of the fountain.

The camels crouched in the meagre shade, their