

only to promote thy welfare! But come; Modac himself awaits thee in the Garden of Irem."

Al Ammin passed into his house for a moment to get another garment, for the night was already growing chilly, and when he returned he declared himself ready to go. The pair accordingly walked along the broad walk of the reservoir till they reached the hill side, and then took a path winding among great boulders till they reached the valley. Thence a walk of half a mile brought them to the Garden. Passing through the valley, neither seemed inclined to pursue the conversation. Al Ammin raised his eyes to the sky and wondered if he would ever again see the bright constellations that now began to blaze and burn above him. He looked upon the heavy foliage of the date trees and the pendent graceful frondage of the towering palms, and wondered if he would ever again repose during the sultry hours in their grateful shade. He glanced back at the silent city, whence here and there a ray of light streamed out upon the early night, and wondered if ever again he would walk its once familiar streets—streets to which he had been a stranger since the night when King Shedad found him sleeping at his post. He looked back at the dark mountain and wondered if ever again he would wander upon the massive wall or watch the waters rise and fall in the reservoir, or open the great gates to let the water flow down to irrigate the valley through which he was now passing. As for Malec, he never took his eyes from Al Ammin—eyes that seemed to glow in the darkness like those of a wild beast sporting with its prey.

At length the pair turned from the road they were pursuing, and in front of them rose a wall some twenty feet in height. Square towers stood at intervals along this wall, and sentinels could be seen going to and fro with measured tread between the towers. They paused at a great portal, whose supporting pillars were granite monoliths, over-arched by a carved pediment, also a single stone. On the architrave was engraved a representation of the all-seeing eye, surrounded by animbus, and on either side interlaced triangles. Al Ammin, who had never been so near to the Garden before, gazed with eager interest at these figures, dimly discernible in the thickening gloom; but Malec, to whom they were familiar, looked only for the officers in command at the gate, to whom he whispered a word and was at once allowed to pass, followed by Al Ammin. They found themselves in an arcaded archway, where a second officer presented himself, and to him likewise Malec whispered a word and again the twain passed on. At the further end of the archway they came upon massive folding doors completely plated with bronze. Upon this Malec gave several heavy measured raps and, in answer to the signal, a wicket was opened at which a man's face appeared. A whispered conversation lasting a minute or two took place between Malec and this man, at the close of which the doors swung open and Al Ammin for the first time in his life found himself in the Garden of Irem.

The Garden of Irem was the wonder of Southern Arabia. Tradition regarded the spot on which it stood as the place of sepulture of the Prophet Hud. Upon the Patriarch's tomb had first been built a shrine, which, as pilgrims flocked thither, gradually grew into a temple. The devotion of the people of Heseec decorated the grounds with towering palms, stately sycamores and other beautiful trees and shrubs, and the piety of the devotees adorned the shrine with jewels and sculptures.