

him," became the counter-cry; and one (the same one who seized Irad by the hair of the head, and dragged him to the pit of fire) stepping lightly forward, hamstringing the prophet with his sword, and, after striking him again to death, waved it wildly above his head, and cried, "I have choked the liar in his own blood." Acclamations succeeded his words; the multitude pass on their way, and the sounds of business and incipient revelry are renewed.

Some of the bystanders, at the instance of Tizrah, now lift the body of Ham, and begin to carry it toward his house. Irad had signed to his beloved to leave the city with him, but her keen eye had noticed that a company of Sodomites, upon the tidings of Lot's departure, silently seized upon the northern gate, as if to prevent all access in that direction. Reluctantly he is compelled to follow the body of his chief foe through the streets. Sodom gathers around the dead as he passes, and slowly does he pace the road he had traversed so quickly two hours before. Confusion, riot, and every evil work in the city, find a sudden centre in the corpse of Caphtorim. Not a tear is shed, for, though feared and obeyed, he was not beloved, but frantic dances, wild laughter, curses loud and deep, looks of defiance cast up to the heavens, obscene jests, and other unutterable enormities, surround the funeral, and form a fitting tribute to the departed—the flowers of his children cast upon the corpse of their terrific father! At length they reach the square of the city, and the Unknown who had killed the prophet cries, that the body should lie in that place till it was high noon, and that then the rites of sepulture, only paid to kings, should be discharged to it. And there on the altar reared to Baal, surrounded by thousands, with his face black and swollen, the frown and grin of death extant upon his features, his long white beard floating on his breast, like foam on a midnight river, reclines the Giant of the Curse till the hour of noon should arrive.

Ham had not been the actual King of Sodom; but the influence he exerted over the people, his lavish use of money, the mystery which hung around him, and the strange rumours which floated as to his name, his past history, his wealth, and the crimes committed in his dwelling, made him the real sovereign of the cities, whose monarchs, besides, were feeble and luxurious persons, sunk in sensuality, and who had long been unable or unwilling to apply an effectual curb to the excesses of their subjects. He, therefore, as the dead king, now lay on the altar in the public square, receiving the homage of the loyalty of that doomed people, who begin, as they kneel, or move restlessly, or dance, or wail in wild music around his corpse, to feel obscurely that, in losing him, they have lost the last bulwark between them and destruction.

But this feeling is speedily exchanged for another—a fiercer and a final! On the northern side of the square, a sudden bustle is heard. Cries next arise, as of one who is coming on reluctantly, and of those who are compelling him to come; and when the crowd disperses, behold a company dragging forward an old man, whom Irad perceives to be Melchisedec.

"Here is our great foe," they exclaim; "we found him at the gates, asking for one whom he

called his son, and who was lost; and we, telling him that we would bring him to where his son was, seized on him and came hither; and now shall he not perish?"

"Yea," cried the unknown murderer of the prophet, "and his son with him"—pointing to Irad as he spoke; "for there is the man. He, too, like Melchisedec, fears Jehovah, and we must burn them both to the shade of Caphtorim, and in the room of Lot and his daughters."

Hideous was the howl, like that of ravaging wolves, which now broke from the multitude, as they bound the youth beside the aged man—Tizrah in vain seeking and praying for their lives, or at least that she might die along with them. Immediately beside the altar on which Ham was blackening in death another altar is erected, and on it are stretched the twain, who, sublimed far beyond fear, are looking recognition, peace, and love, into each other's eyes. The Unknown, holding in one hand the weeping Tizrah, whom he eyes with seeming regard, tells meanwhile the bystanders to prepare quickly the materials of the burning. "Behold," he adds, "the burnt offering Baal has sent us to the memory of Caphtorim, his true worshipper! Nay," he shouts again, "behold I show you, ye men of Sodom, a strange thing; Caphtorim is Ham the father of us all, and I am the real Caphtorim, who was said to be dead in Africa, and am the father of this fair maiden. It was I who met thee, Irad, on the streets of the city, when thou first wanderest in it a stranger. It was I who made thine enemy know who thou wert, after I had followed thy steps, and had seen thee, myself unseen, meeting him at the western gate of the city. I hate thee, because I hated thy father, and because thou darest to love her! And this Melchisedec," continued Caphtorim to the throng, "is Shem, the eldest son of Noah, the enemy of Ham; and I swear by that bright sun above me—even by the great Baal himself—that he and Irad shall die ere it be the hour of noon. As he spoke, he raised his right hand toward the sun, when, as if in mockery of the action, the appearance of a man's hand, black as sackcloth of hair, passes over the orb, and quenches him in darkness.

Shrieks of horror burst from the crowd. The hands and knees of the men who are preparing the materials for the martyrdom quake, and even Caphtorim's firm grasp of his daughter is loosened for a moment, and the maiden bounds forward, and throws herself on the funeral pyre beside her beloved. But her father's courage comes rushing back instantly to his heart, and he cries aloud, "'Tis but an eclipse. It will soon pass away, and the sun break forth again." And scarce has he uttered the words, till pass away it does, and the sun does re-appear. But such a sun. Beamless, troubled, and torn, he seems dissolving over their heads into showers of blood and flame; and as they gaze upwards—now rather fascinated and bewildered than in active terror—there is first felt an intolerable heat, which glazes and glazes over their upturned countenances, and then there drops again the curtain of the darkness; and then again it opens, and there appear large flakes and tongues of yellow fire, descending as if from the sun, and sinking upon the crowd; and when they draw near, and begin to