

is yawning ! The great serpent Apep is come forth from the city of the dead ! It comes rolling past the temple. I see it, I hear it ! The great Hebrew's threat is being fulfilled ! Our race will be cut off from the earth. The serpent ! Its head is set toward the southeast. It will surely swallow up the young sun when it rises in the morning ! ”

The old man's eyes followed the direction of the youth's finger, and he, too, could discern that a vast, black mass, whose outline was lost in the darkness, came rolling through the gloom, and he, too, heard with a shudder the creature's low roar.

Both stood with eye and ear alert, staring into the night, but the star-gazer's eye was fixed not upward, but down, across the city to the distant sea and level plain. Overhead all was silent, and yet not all at rest, for the wind swept the dark clouds into shapeless masses in one place, while in another it rent the gray shroud, and scattered them far and wide.

The moon was not visible to mortal ken, but the clouds played hide and seek with the bright southern stars, now covering them, and now giving their rays free passage. And as in the firmament, so on earth there was a constant change from pallid light to blackest darkness. Now the glitter of the heavenly bodies flashed brightly down on the sea and estuary, on the polished granite sides of the obelisks in the temple precincts and the gilt copper roof of the king's airy palace ; and again, lake and river, the sails in the harbor, the sanctuaries and streets of the city, and the palm-strewn plain surrounding it were all lost in gloom.

Objects which the eye tried to rest on vanished in an instant, and it was the same with the sounds that met the ear. For a while the silence would be as deep as though all life, far and near, were hushed or dead, and then a piercing shriek of woe rent the stillness of the night. And then, broken by longer or shorter pauses, that roar was heard which the youthful priest had taken for the voice of the serpent of the nether world ; and to that the grandfather and grandson listened with growing excitement.

The dusky shape, whose ceaseless movements could be clearly made out whenever the stars shot their beams between the striving clouds, had its beginning out by the city