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CHAPTER II.

HOW THE WORLD BECAME PEOPLED.



AFTER Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden they began to cultivate the soil, which, though choked with briars and weeds, by hard labor was still made to produce abundantly for their uses. God soon after gave to them two sons, the elder of whom was called Cain and the younger Abel. As these grew up the former became a tiller of the soil and the latter looked after the flocks, so that they became great helps to their parents.

Though punished sorely by God, Adam did not lose the love and reverence which he first had for his gracious Father, and after leaving Eden he worshipped God and offered up becoming sacrifices that won His favor. Cain and Abel were also taught to be devotional, and they too made sacrifices of the fruits of their labor. On one occasion, while working in the field together and alone, Abel made a sacrifice of a lamb, and Cain offered one of the grain and grasses of the field. Each would have been acceptable to God had they been made in the same loving spirit; but Cain made his offering with a rebellious and sinful heart, or sacrilegious spirit, while Abel rendered up grateful thanks for the mercies he had received. Thus was God pleased with Abel's offering and offended with Cain, whereat Cain became so incensed with his brother that he killed him.

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After committing this foul murder Cain was sorely troubled in his heart and would gladly have hidden himself from the All-seeing eye, but God called to him and asked where was his brother. Cain's response showed plainly how troubled and yet rebellious was his spirit, for in a pettish mood he answered, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But God had been a witness to the murder and would avenge it by placing a curse upon the criminal. God did not kill Cain, but sent him out a vagabond and outcast upon the world, with a brand upon him that would serve to show to all who should thereafter meet him that he was his brother's murderer.

Cain now became conscious of the great sin that he had committed, and realized how bitter was the punishment which God had pronounced against him, so he cried out, partly in remorse, but chiefly as an appeal for mercy,