

the edge of the desert a mile or two away, Robin arose early, while the stars were still visible in the sky and the advancing glow of the sunrise had not yet reached the Milky Way. For some minutes he stood at the open door of the courtyard, looking out upon the desert, and down to the distant fields beside the Nile, and across to the far-away hills behind the town of Luxor. In the palms near by the sparrows chirped and fluttered as they awoke from their sleep, greeting the new day with their busy chatter, and from the scattered native habitations there came the crowing of the cocks and the lowing of the cattle. Overhead a long, trailing flight of storks passed across the sky, moving southwards on their journey from Europe, their black and white wings and pink legs illumined by the first light of the coming day.

Presently the stars faded, and the delicate hues of the dawn were shed over all things. It was as though the eastern hills were made of translucent amethyst, the fields of beryl, the nearer desert of alabaster, and the great cliffs behind him of amber and carnelian. The air was still, and here and there the smoke of an early fire went upwards from the whitewashed hut of some sleepy peasant like a thin blue line, unswayed by any movement of the atmosphere. Then, from the minaret of a mosque, down in a village amongst the fields, there came the gentle sound of the call to prayer.

With a sigh of supreme content Robin turned and went back across the shadowed courtyard, and so passed into the walled garden. Here the scent of the roses filled the air; and in the branches of a tamarisk a blue rock-thrush was singing his morning song, while on the dome of the chapel a turtle-dove cooed softly to his mate. The reflected light of the sunrise was now touching the top of the cliffs which towered above the white walls of the