

Irak, to drown him in the waters of the Jordan. But the little one had won her heart, and, instead of obeying Ham's cruel command, she exposed him by night at the door of Melchisedec, who received him, and brought him up as a son. Nor was it till she was dying, years after, that she told Ham what she had done, and once, before Irak visited Sodom, while journeying northward, he saw, and knew, and hated the noble boy. Ham had brought much gold with him from Africa, and, having assumed his grandson's name, took up his abode in Sodom, and animated by hatred at God on account of his curse, he stirred up the minds of the people against Jehovah, and inflamed all their evil passions, till the name of Sodom became a horror and a stench in many lands. He had heard of the purpose determined against the city, but partly disbelieved it and partly employed himself in desperate magical researches, and efforts to counteract it. When he beheld, however, the faces at the door of Lot, and when his efforts to arouse the people to tear down the house failed, his ironsinews were loosened, and he felt compelled reluctantly to flee—to cast himself on the mercy of Melchisedec, who was his brother Shem, and to take Tirzah and Irak as a twofold peace-offering along with him. Upon returning, however, to his own house, he retired to his secret chamber, and tried an augury which he had learned from an old magician, a descendant of Cain, who had been drowned in the flood. Slaying with his own hand one of his slaves, he poured out his blood into a vessel of cabalistic formation, and, having darkened the chamber all to one lamp, which was human fat, and pronounced certain magical words, he leaned down over it, and saw in miniature the transactions of the next day mirrored on the gore. *What* he saw need not now be named, save that he knew the horror of the day that was at hand, and judged that if he fled ere the dawning he might escape. When this was done, he despatched three of his slaves in search of Irak, and had now commissioned Tirzah to tell him the strange tale, and to prepare him for the events of the morrow.

CHAPTER VI.

EAGERLY did the youth look and listen, as Tirzah told him this wondrous story. But while he had only eyes and ears for *her*, she frequently looked to the window, which was toward the east, and whence she feared the dawn would break too soon. And her soft, bright eye seemed to Irak as beautiful as the eye of the Morning Star, looking at the sun, ere he has risen upon the nations, and trembling on its high watch-tower at its solitary vision. But as he gazed, and when her tale was ended, the old man rushed into the room, and cried in haste, "Arise, let us be going; it is little more than an hour till the sun appear over the mountains of Moab, and it has been told me, that if I leave not Sodom before the cock crows, I must perish in the city. Help me, Irak in this great strait, and I will give thee Tirzah the beautiful to be thy wife."

At the words of the old man both started to their feet, and followed him into the open air. He told them that his slaves were on before with part of his treasures, and that they must hasten

after. It was yet the dusk before the dawning, but the stars enabled them to find their way. All was silent in the streets. Not a light shone at the windows. Hell was asleep. Speaking not a word, but with rapid step and anxious look cast ever and anon to the east, Ham led the way. The northern gate of the city is in sight; it has been left unguarded; a few steps more, and they shall have passed through in safety. He relaxes for a moment his pace, and, turning to Irak, his face assumes its old expression of malignant triumph—a look which said to the youth a thousand terrible things, when hark! from a perch at their very side, loud and shrill, the cock crows; and while Ham pauses in fear, on the right hand, like the leap of a giant, an hour before his time, "the sun rose upon Sodom" and on him, and, with one grin of powerless defiance at his hated beams, Ham reels, totters, and falls to the ground.

"He is dead," cried Tirzah, with a shriek; but as she bends over him, she finds that he still breathes. To Tirzah he turns for a moment a glance of love; but when Irak, too, leans over, and tries to help him, the whole fury and hatred of his nature concentrated in a frown hideous to behold, and muttering, "A few moments more, and thou hadst been mine for ever," he expires.

Irak would now have urged Tirzah to continue her flight, but grief for a season palsied her limbs, and surprise glued his steps too to the spot. And while they both tarried, Sodom awoke around them; its streets began to throng with multitudes, preparing for the business or pleasures of the day. Never did a richer light bathe its towers and idoltemples. Men, meeting each other, said, "How bright the sky! how beautiful upon the mountains the sun's feet of fire! Surely he has risen earlier to shine on our festival to-day, when Lot and his daughters are to be burned in the flames."

And soon even the suburban street, where the two lovers continued to watch the dead, was filled with people, for the tidings spread that Caphtorim, as he fled, had died—tidings which shaded without eclipsing the wild and general joy of that mad morning, the maddest in the whole history of the infatuated city.

Another hour passes, and still the sun is bright; and many are laughing at the sign of the Serpent, at which they had trembled overnight, and beginning even to forget the scorching and blinding look of the faces at the door of Lot, and are calling Caphtorim, what he called *them*, a coward, in seeking to flee. But now two other rumours fly over the cities: first, their wise men cannot deny nor explain the fact, that the morning has dawned *an hour before the usual time*, and that there is something strange and fearful in its splendour; and next, the house of Lot is found empty, and one man, on his way from a distant journey, had, at the western gate of the city, met him, his wife, and his daughters, parting with two strangers, who were clad in white apparel, and whose eyes were so bright as to affright him, and travelling on in great haste. Nay, as the question arises "Who is he that has seen them?" the man himself answers it by running frenzied through the streets, crying out, "Depart ye! depart ye! I have seen—I have seen the angel of the Lord! Yet two hours, and Sodom and Gomorrah shall be destroyed!" "Stop