

# JOSHUA.

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## CHAPTER I.

"Go down, grandfather. I will keep watch."

But the old man to whom the words were spoken shook his shaven head.

"But up here you will get no rest."

"And the stars?—or even below; rest, in such times as these! Throw my cloak over me—rest in such a fearful night!"

"You are so cold; and your hand and the instrument shake."

"Then steady my arm."

The lad willingly obeyed the request; but after a short space he exclaimed: "It is all in vain. Star after star is swallowed up in black clouds. Ah, and the bitter cry of the city comes up. Nay, it comes from our own house. I am sick at heart, grandfather; only feel how hot my head is. Come down, perchance they need help."

"They are in the hands of the gods, and my place is here. But there, there! Eternal gods! Look to the north across the lake! No, more to the westward. They come from the city of the dead!"

"Oh, grandfather, father, there!" cried the youth, a priestly neophyte, who was lending his aid to an elder whose grandson he was, the chief astrologer of Amon-Ra.

They were standing on the watchtower of the temple of the god at Tanis, the capital of the Pharaohs, in the north of the land of Goshen. As he spoke he drew away his shoulder on which the old man was leaning. "There, there! Is the sea swallowing up the land? Have the clouds fallen on the earth to surge to and fro? Oh, grandfather, may the immortals have mercy! the nether world