

were led by an appointed singer, to the sound of a tabor and flute. to the south of the temple of amon stood the king's palace, and near it, in more or less extensive gardens, rose the houses of the magnates of the kingdom, among which, one was distinguished by its splendor and extent. paaker, the king's pioneer, had caused it to be erected after the death of his father, in the place of the more homely dwelling of his ancestors, when he hoped to bring home his cousin, and install her as its mistress. a few yards further to the east was another stately though older and less splendid house, which mena, the king's charioteer, had inherited from his father, and which was inhabited by his wife nefert and her mother isatuti, while he himself, in the distant syrian land, shared the tent of the king, as being his body guard. before the door of each house stood servants bearing torches, and awaiting the long deferred return home of their masters. the gate, which gave admission to paaker's plot of ground through the wall which surrounded it, was disproportionately, almost ostentatiously, high and decorated with various paintings. on the right hand and on the left, two cedar trunks were erected as masts to carry standards; he had had them felled for the purpose on lebanon, and forwarded by ship to pelusium on the north east coast of egypt. thence they were conveyed by the Nile to thebes. on passing through the gate one entered a wide, paved court yard, at the sides of which walks extended, closed in at the back, and with roofs supported on slender painted wooden columns. here stood the pioneers of the embrasure, and he had only to lean a little to one side to get a view of the plaza. he did so. he could not see them; but he saw that the attention of the crowd was directed towards that angle of the square adjacent to the calabozo. the horrid ceremony would soon be over. perhaps they would then be carried within sight. he would wait for the moment, it would be his last ha what is that oh god: it is he heard the weep of the keen cuarto as it cut the air. he thought, or fancied, he heard a low moan. the silence of the crowd enabled him to distinguish the slightest sounds. god of mercy, is there no mercy god of vengeance, hear me ha vengeance what am i dreaming of, suicidal fool what my hands free can i not break the door the lock i can but die upon their weapons and maybe he had flung the noose from his neck, and was about to turn away from the window, when a heavy object struck him on the forehead, almost stunning him with the blow at first he thought it was a stone from the hand of some ruffian without; but the object, in falling upon the banquetta, gave out a dull metallic clink. he looked down, and in the dim light could make out that the thing which had struck him was of an oblong shape. he bent hastily forward, and clutched it. it was a parcel, wrapped in a piece of silken scarf and tied securely. the string was soon unfastened, and the contents of the parcel held up to the light. these were a rouleau of gold onzas, a long bladed knife, and a folded sheet of paper the last occupied his attention first. the sun was down, and the light declining, but in front of the window there was still enough to enable him to read he opened the paper and read: your time is fixed for to morrow. shall indeed be mine thy eldest sons. then he walked to and fro and thought over the events of the day. at last he stood still, with his arms crossed, and looked defiantly at the holy images; like a traveller who drives away a false guide, and thinks to find the road by himself. his eye fell on the arrows over his bed; he smiled, and striking his broad breast with his fist, he exclaimed, i i i his hound, who thought his master meant to call him, rushed up to him. he pushed him off and said if you meet a hyaena in the desert, you fall upon it without waiting till it is touched by my lance and if the gods, my masters, delay, i myself will defend my right; but thou, he continued turning to the image of his father, thou wilt support me. this soliloquy was interrupted by the slaves who brought in his meal. paaker glanced at the various dishes which the cook had prepared for him, and asked: how often shall i command that not a variety, but only one large dish shall be dressed for me and the wine thou art used never to touch it answered the old negro. but to day i wish for some, said the pioneer. bring one of the old jars of red wine of kakem. the slaves looked at each other in astonishment; the wine was brought, and paaker emptied beaker after beaker. when the servants had left him, the boldest among them said: usually the master eats like a lion, and drinks like a midge, but to day hold your tongue