

Therefore no message 'tis. The man is mad."
 Thereat the Leader laughed for scorn. "Hold,
 snake;
 If God be just, there SHALL be reckoning days.
 We rather would He were a partial God,
 And, being strong, He sided with the strong.
 Turn now thy reason to the other side,
 And speak for that; for as to justice, snake,
 We would have none of it."

And Satan fawned:

"My lord is pleased to mock at my poor wit;
 Yet in my pious fashion I must talk:
 For say that God was wroth with man, and came
 And slew him, that should make an empty world,
 But not a better nation."

This replied,

"Truth, dragon, yet He is not bound to mean
 A better nation; maybe, He designs,
 If none will turn again, a punishment
 Upon an evil one."

And Satan cried,

"Alas! my heart being full of love for men,
 I cannot choose but think of God as like
 To me; and yet my piety concludes,
 Since He will have your fear, that love alone
 Sufficeth not, and I admire, and say,
 'Give me, O friends, your love, and give to God
 Your fear.'" But they cried out in wrath and rage
 "We are not strong that any we will fear,
 Nor specially a foe that means us ill."

BOOK VII.

AND while he spoke there was a noise without;
 The curtains of the door were flung aside,

And some with heavy feet bare in, and set
 A litter on the floor.

The Master lay

Upon it, but his eyes were dimmed and set;
 And Japhet, in despairing weariness,
 Leaned it beside. He marked the mighty ones,
 Silent for pride of heart, and in his place
 The jewelled dragon; and the dragon laughed,
 And subtly peered at him, till Japhet shook
 With rage and fear. The snaky wonder cried,
 Hissing, "Thou brown-haired youth, come up to me,
 I fain would have thee for my shrine afar,
 To serve among an host as beautiful
 As thou: draw near." It hissed, and Japhet felt
 Horrible drawings, and cried out in fear,
 "Father! O help, the serpent draweth me!"
 And struggled and grew faint, as in the toils
 A netted bird. But still his father lay
 Unconscious, and the mighty did not speak,
 But half in fear and half in wonderment
 Beheld. And yet again the dragon laughed,
 And leered at him and hissed; and Japhet strove
 Vainly to take away his spell-set eyes,
 And moved to go to him, till piercingly
 Crying out, "God! forbid it, God in heaven!"
 The dragon lowered his head, and shut his eyes
 As feigning sleep; and, suddenly released,
 He fell back staggering; and at noise of it,
 And clash of Japhet's weapons on the floor,
 And Japhet's voice crying out, "I loathe thee, snake!
 I hate thee! O, I hate thee!" came again
 The senses of the shipwright; and he, moved,
 And looking, as one 'mazed, distressfully
 Upon the mighty, said, "One called on God:
 Where is my God? If God have need of me,
 Let him come down and touch my lips with strength
 Or dying I shall die."

It came to pass,
 While he was speaking, that the curtains swayed :
 A rushing wind did move throughout the place,
 And all the pillars shook, and on the head
 Of Noah the hair was lifted, and there played
 A somewhat as it were a light, upon
 His breast ; then fell a darkness, and men heard
 A whisper as of one that spake. With that,
 The daunted mighty ones kept silent watch
 Until the wind had ceased and darkness fled.
 When it grew light, there curled a cloud of smoke
 From many censers where the dragon lay.
 It hid him. He had called his ministrants,
 And bid them veil him thus, that none might look ;
 Also the folk who came with Noah had fled.

But Noah was seen, for he stood up erect,
 And leaned on Japhet's hand. Then, after pause,
 The Leader said, " My brethren, it were well
 (For naught we fear) to let this sorcerer speak."
 And they did reach toward the man their staves,
 And cry with loud accord, " Hail, sorcerer, hail !"

And he made answer, " Hail ! I am a man
 That is a shipwright. I was born afar
 To Lamech, him that reigns a king, to wit,
 Over the land of Jalal. Majesties,
 I bring a message, — lay you it to heart ;
 For there is wrath in heaven : my God is wroth.
 ' Prepare your houses, or I come,' saith He,
 ' A Judge.' Now, therefore, say not in your hearts,
 ' What have we done?' Your dogs may answer that,
 To make whom fiercer for the chase ye feed
 With captives whom ye slew not in the war,
 But saved alive, and living throw to them
 Daily. Your wives may answer that, whose babes
 Their firstborn ye do take and offer up

To this abhorred snake, while yet the milk
 Is in their innocent mouths, — your maiden babes
 Tender. Your slaves may answer that, — the gangs
 Whose eyes ye did put out to make them work
 By night unwitting (yea, by multitudes
 They work upon the wheel in chains). Your friends
 May answer that, — (their bleached bones cry out), —
 For ye did wickedly, to eat their lands,
 Turn on their valleys, in a time of peace,
 The rivers, and they, choking in the night,
 Died unavenged. But rather (for I leave
 To tell of more, the time would be so long
 To do it, and your time, O mighty ones,
 Is short), — but rather say, ' We sinners know
 Why the Judge standeth at the door,' and turn
 While yet there may be respite, and repent.

" ' Or else,' saith He that formed you, ' I swear,
 By all the silence of the time to come,
 By the solemnities of death, — yea, more,
 By Mine own power and love which ye have
 scorned, —

That I will come. I will command the clouds,
 And raining they shall rain ; yea, I will stir
 With all my storms the ocean for your sake,
 And break for you the boundary of the deep.

" ' Then shall the mighty mourn.

" ' Should I forbear
 That have been patient? I will not forbear!
 For yet,' saith He, ' the weak cry out ; for yet
 The little ones do languish ; and the slave
 Lifts up to Me his chain. I, therefore, I
 Will hear them. I by death will scatter you :
 Yea, and by death will draw them to My breast,
 And gather them to peace.

“ ‘ But yet,’ saith He,
 ‘ Repent, and turn you. Wherefore will ye die?’
 “ Turn then, O turn, while yet the enemy
 Untamed of man fatefully moans afar;
 For if ye will not turn, the doom is near.
 Then shall the crested wave make sport, and beat
 You mighty at your doors. Will ye be wroth?
 Will ye forbid it? Monsters of the deep
 Shall suckle in your palaces their young,
 And swim atween your hangings, all of them
 Costly with broidered work, and rare with gold
 And white and scarlet (there did ye oppress, —
 There did ye make you vile;) but ye shall lie
 Meekly, and storm and wind shall rage above,
 And urge the weltering wave.

“ ‘ Yet,’ saith thy God,
 ‘ Son, ay, to each of you He saith, ‘ O son,
 Made in My image, beautiful and strong,
 Why wilt thou die? Thy Father loves thee well.
 Repent and turn thee from thine evil ways,
 O son! and no more dare the wrath of love.
 Live for thy Father’s sake that formèd thee.
 Why wilt thou die?’ Here will I make an end.”
 Now ever on his daïs the dragon lay,
 Feigning to sleep; and all the mighty ones
 Were wroth, and chided, some against the woe,
 And some at whom the sorcerer they had named, —
 Some at their fellows, for the younger sort —
 As men the less acquaint with deeds of blood,
 And given to learning and the arts of peace
 (Their fathers having crushed rebellion out
 Before their time) — lent favorable ears.
 They said, “ A man, or false or fanatic,
 May claim good audience if he fill our ears
 With what is strange: and we would hear again.”

The Leader said, “ An audience hath been given.
 The man hath spoken, and his words are naught;
 A feeble threatener, with a foolish threat,
 And it is not our manner that we sit
 Beyond the noonday;” then they grandly rose,
 A stalwart crowd, and with their Leader moved
 To the tones of harping, and the beat of shawms,
 And the noise of pipes, away. But some were left
 About the Master; and the feigning snake
 Couched on his daïs.

Then one to Japhet said, —
 One called “ the Cedar Tree,” — “ Dost thou, too,
 think
 To reign upon our lands when we lie drowned?”
 And Japhet said, “ I think not, nor desire,
 Nor in my heart consent, but that ye swear
 Allegiance to the God, and live.” He cried,
 To one surnamed “ the Pine,” — “ Brother, behooves
 That deep we cut our names in yonder crag,
 Else when this youth returns, his sons may ask
 Our names, and he may answer, ‘ Matters not,
 For my part I forget them.’ ”

Japhet said,
 “ They might do worse than that, they might deny
 That such as you have ever been.” With that
 They answered, “ No, thou dost not think it, no!”
 And Japhet, being chafed, replied in heat,
 “ And wherefore? if ye say of what is sworn,
 ‘ He will not do it,’ shall it be more hard
 For future men, if any talk on it,
 To say, ‘ He did not do it?’ ” They replied,
 With laughter, “ Lo you! he is stout with us.
 And yet he cowered before the poor old snake.
 Sirrah, when you are saved, we pray you now
 To bear our might in mind, — do, sirrah, do;

And likewise tell your sons, "The Cedar Tree"
Was a good giant, for he struck me not,
Though he was young and full of sport, and though
I taunted him."

With that they also passed.
But there remained who with the shipwright spoke,
"How wilt thou certify to us thy truth?"
And he related to them all his ways
From the beginning: of the Voice that called;
Moreover, how the ship of doom was built.

And one made answer, "Shall the mighty God
Talk with a man of wooden beams and bars?
Nō, thou mad preacher, no. If He, Eterne,
Be ordering of His far infinitudes,
And darkness cloud a world, it is but chance,
As if the shadow of His hand had fallen
On one that He forgot, and troubled it."

Then said the Master, "Yet, — who told thee so?"
And from his dais the feigning serpent hissed:
"Preacher, the light within, it was that shined,
And told him so. The pious will have dread
Him to declare such as ye rashly told.
The course of God is one. It likes not us
To think of Him as being acquaint with changes
It were beneath Him. Nay, the finished earth
Is left to her great masters. They must rule;
They do; and I have set myself between, —
A visible thing for worship, sith His face
(For He is hard) He showeth not to men.
Yea, I have set myself 'twixt God and man,
To be interpreter, and teach mankind
A pious lesson by my piety.
He loveth not, nor hateth, nor desires, —
It were beneath Him."

And the Master said,
"Thou liest. Thou wouldst lie away the world,
If He whom thou hast dared to speak against
Would suffer it." "I may not chide with thee,"
It answered, "now; but if there come such time
As thou hast prophesied, as I now reign
In all men's sight, shall my dominion then
Reach to be mighty in their souls. Thou too
Shalt feel it, prophet." And he lowered his head.

Then quoth the Leader of the young men: "Sir,
We scorn you not; speak further; yet our thought
First answer. Not but by a miracle
Can this thing be. The fashion of the world
We heretofore have never known to change;
And will God change it now?"

He then replied:
"What is thy thought? THERE IS NO MIRACLE?
There is a great one, which thou hast not read,
And never shalt escape. Thyself, O man,
Thou art the miracle. Lo, if thou sayest,
'I am one, and fashioned like the gracious world,
Red clay is all my make, myself, my whole,
And not my habitation,' then thy sleep
Shall give thee wings to play among the rays
O' the morning. If thy thought be, 'I am one, —
A spirit among spirits, — and the world
A dream my spirit dreameth of, my dream
Being all,' the dominating mountains strong
Shall not for that forbear to take thy breath,
And rage with all their winds, and beat thee back,
And beat thee down when thou wouldst set thy feet
Upon their awful crests. Ay, thou thyself,
Being in the world and of the world, thyself,
Hast breathed in breath from Him that made the
world.

Thou dost inherit, as thy Maker's son,
That which He is, and that which He hath made :
Thou art thy Father's copy of Himself, —
THOU art thy FATHER'S MIRACLE.

“ Behold

He buildeth up the stars in companies ;
He made for them a law. To man He said,
‘ Freely I give thee freedom.’ What remains ?
O, it remains, if thou, the image of God,
Wilt reason well, that thou shalt know His ways :
But first thou must be loyal, — love, O man,
Thy Father, — hearken when He pleads with thee,
For there is something left of Him e'en now, —
A witness for thy Father in thy soul,
Albeit thy better state thou hast foregone.

“ Now, then, be still, and think not in thy soul,
‘ The rivers in their course forever run,
And turn not from it. He is like to them
Who made them.’ Think the rather, ‘ With my
foot

I have turned the rivers from their ancient way
To water grasses that were fading. What !
Is God my Father as the river wave,
That yet descendeth, — like the lesser thing
He made, and not like me, a living son,
That changed the watercourse to suit his will ?”

“ Man is the miracle in nature. God
Is the ONE MIRACLE to man. Behold,
‘ There is a God,’ thou sayest. Thou sayest well :
In that thou sayest all. To Be is more
Of wonderful than, being, to have wrought,
Or reigned, or rested.

“ Hold then there, content ;
Learn that to love is the one way to know

Or God or man : it is not love received
That maketh man to know the inner life
Of them that love him ; his own love bestowed
Shall do it. Love thy Father, and no more
His doings shall be strange. Thou shalt not fret
At any counsel, then, that He will send, —
No, nor rebel, albeit He have with thee
Great reservations. Know, to Be is more
Than to have acted ; yea, or, after rest
And patience, to have risen and been wroth,
Broken the sequence of an ordered earth,
And troubled nations.”

Then the dragon sighed
“ Poor fanatic,” quoth he, “ thou speakest well.
Would I were like thee, for thy faith is strong,
Albeit thy senses wander. Yea, good sooth,
My masters, let us not despise, but learn
Fresh loyalty from this poor loyal soul.
Let us go forth — (myself will also go
To head you) — and do sacrifice ; for that,
We know, is pleasing to the mighty God :
But as for building many arks of wood,
O majesties ! when He shall counsel you
HIMSELF, then build. What say you, shall it be
An hundred oxen, — fat, well liking, white ?
An hundred ? why, a thousand were not much
To such as you.” Then Noah lift up his arms
To heaven, and cried, “ Thou aged shape of sin,
The Lord rebuke thee.”

BOOK VIII.

THEN one ran, crying, while Niloiya wrought,
“ The Master cometh !” and she went within
To adorn herself for meeting him. And Shem
Went forth and talked with Japhet in the field,

And said, "Is it well, my brother?" He replied, "Well! and, I pray you, is it well at home?" But Shem made answer, "Can a house be well, If he that should command it bides afar? Yet well is thee, because a fair free maid Is found to wed thee; and they bring her in This day at sundown. Therefore is much haste To cover thick with costly webs the floor, And pluck and cover thick the same with leaves Of all sweet herbs, — I warrant, ye shall hear No footfall where she treadeth; and the seats Are ready, spread with robes; the tables set With golden baskets, red pomegranates shred To fill them; and the rubied censers smoke, Heaped up with ambergris and cinnamon, And frankincense and cedar."

Japhet said,

"I will betroth her to me straight;" and went (Yet labored he with sore disquietude) To gather grapes, and reap and bind the sheaf For his betrothal. And his brother spake, "Where is our father? doth he preach to-day?" And Japhet answered, "Yea. He said to me, 'Go forward; I will follow when the folk By yonder mountain-hold I shall have warned.'"

And Shem replied, "How thinkest thou?—thine ears Have heard him oft." He answered, "I do think These be the last days of this old fair world."

Then he did tell him of the giant folk: How they, than he, were taller by the head; How one must stride that will ascend the steps That lead to their wide halls; and how they drave,

With manful shouts, the mammoth to the north; And how the talking dragon lied and fawned, They seated proudly on their ivory thrones, And scorned him: and of their peaked hoods, And garments wrought upon, each with the tale Of him that wore it, — all his manful deeds (Yea, and about their skirts were effigies Of kings that they had slain; and some, whose swords Many had pierced, wore vestures all of red, To signify much blood): and of their pride He told, but of the vision in the tent He told him not.

And when they reached the house, Niloiya met them, and to Japhet cried, "All hail, right fortunate! Lo, I have found A maid. And now thou hast done well to reap The late ripe corn." So he went in with her, And she did talk with him right motherly: "It hath been full told me how ye loathed To wed thy father's slave; yea, she herself, Did she not all declare to me?"

He said,

"Yet is thy damsel fair, and wise of heart." "Yea," quoth his mother; "she made clear to me How ye did weep, my son, and ye did vow, 'I will not take her!' Now, it was not I That wrought to have it so." And he replied, "I know it." Quoth the mother, "It is well; For that same cause is laughter in my heart." "But she is sweet of language," Japhet said. "Ay," quoth Niloiya, "and thy wife no less Whom thou shalt wed anon, — forsooth, anon, — It is a lucky hour. Thou wilt?" He said, "I will." And Japhet laid the slender sheaf

From off his shoulder, and he said, "Behold,
My father!" Then Niloiya turned herself,
And lo! the shipwright stood. "All hail!" quoth
she.

And bowed herself, and kissed him on the mouth;
But while she spake with him, sorely he sighed;
And she did hang about his neck the robe
Of feasting, and she poured upon his hands
Clear water, and anointed him, and set
Before him bread.

And Japhet said to him,
"My father, my beloved, wilt thou yet
Be sad because of scorning? Eat, this day;
For as an angel in their eyes thou art
Who stand before thee." But he answered, "Peace!
Thy words are wide."

And when Niloiya heard,
She said, "Is this a time for mirth of heart
And wine? Behold, I thought to wed my son,
Even this Japhet; but is this a time,
When sad is he to whom is my desire,
And lying under sorrow as from God?"

He answered, "Yea, it is a time of times;
Bring in the maid. Niloiya said, "The maid
That first I spoke on, shall not Japhet wed;
It likes not her, nor yet it likes not me.
But I have found another; yea, good sooth,
The damsel will not tarry, she will come
With all her slaves by sundown."

And she said,
"Comfort thy heart, and eat: moreover, know
How that thy great work even to-day is done.
Sir, thy great ship is finished, and the folk
(For I, according to thy will, have paid

All that was left us to them for their wage)
Have brought, as to a storehouse, flour of wheat,
Honey and oil, — much victual; yea, and fruits,
Curtains and household gear. And, sir, they say
It is thy will to take it for thy hold,
Our fastness and abode." He answered, "Yea,
Else wherefore was it built?" She said, "Good sir,
I pray you make us not the whole earth's scorn.
And now, to-morrow in thy father's house
Is a great feast, and weddings are toward;
Let be the ship, till after, for thy words
Have ever been, 'If God shall send a flood,
There will I dwell;' I pray you therefore wait
At least till He doth send it."

And he turned,
And answered nothing. Now the sun was low
While yet she spake; and Japhet came to them
In goodly raiment, and upon his arm
The garment of betrothal. And with that
A noise, and then brake in a woman-slave
And Amarant. This, with folding of her hands,
Did say full meekly, "If I do offend,
Yet have not I been willing to offend;
For now this woman will not be denied
Herself to tell her errand.

And they sat.
Then spoke the woman, "If I do offend,
Pray you forgive the bond-slave, for her tongue
Is for her mistress. 'Lo,' my mistress saith,
'Put off thy bravery, bridegroom; fold away,
Mother, thy webs of pride, thy costly robes
Woven of many colors. We have heard
Thy master. Lo, to-day right evil things
He prophesied to us that were his friends;
Therefore, my answer: — God do so to me;
Yea, God do so to me, more also, more

Than he did threaten, if my damsel's foot
Ever draw nigh thy door.'"

And when she heard,
Niloiya sat amazed, in grief of soul.
But Japhet came unto the slave, where low
She bowed herself for fear. He said, "Depart;
Say to thy mistress, 'It is well.'" With that
She turned herself, and she made haste to flee,
Lest any, for those evil words she brought,
Would smite her. But the bondmaid of the house
Lift up her hand and said, "If I offend,
It was not of my heart: thy damsel knew
Naught of this matter." And he held to her
His hand and touched her, and said, "Amarant!"
And when she looked upon him, she did take
And spread before her face her radiant locks,
Trembling. And Japhet said, "Lift up thy face,
O fairest of the daughters, thy fair face;
For, lo! the bridegroom standeth with the robe
Of thy betrothal!"—and he took her locks
In his two hands to part them from her brow,
And laid them on her shoulders; and he said,
"Sweet are the blushes of thy face," and put
The robe upon her, having said, "Behold,
I have repented me; and oft by night,
In the waste wilderness, while all things slept,
I thought upon thy words, for they were sweet.
"For this I make thee free. And now thyself
Art loveliest in mine eyes; I look, and lo!
Thou art of beauty more than any thought
I had concerning thee. Let, then, this robe,
Wrought on with imagery of fruitful bough,
And graceful leaf, and birds with tender eyes,
Cover the ripples of thy tawny hair."
So, when she held her peace, he brought her nigh
To hear the speech of wedlock; ay, he took

The golden cup of wine to drink with her,
And laid the sheaf upon her arms. He said,
"Like as my fathers in the older days
Led home the daughters whom they chose, do I;
Like as they said, 'Mine honor have I set
Upon thy head!' do I. Eat of my bread,
Rule in my house, be mistress of my slaves,
And mother of my children."

And he brought
The damsel to his father, saying, "Behold
My wife! I have betrothed her to myself;
I pray you, kiss her." And the Master did:
He said, "Be mother of a multitude,
And let them to their father even so
Be found as he is found to me."

With that
She answered, "Let this woman, sir, find grace
And favor in your sight."

And Japhet said,
"Sweet mother, I have wed the maid ye chose
And brought me first. I leave her in thy hand;
Have care on her, till I shall come again
And ask her of thee." So they went apart,
He and his father, to the marriage feast.

BOOK IX.

THE prayer of Noah. The man went forth by night
And listened; and the earth was dark and still,
And he was driven of his great distress
Into the forest; but the birds of night
Sang sweetly; and he fell upon his face,
And cried, "God, God! Thy billows and Thy waves
Have swallowed up my soul."

“Where is my God?
 For I have somewhat yet to plead with Thee;
 For I have walked the strands of Thy great deep,
 Heard the dull thunder of its rage afar,
 And its dread moaning. O, the field is sweet, —
 Spare it. The delicate woods make white their trees
 With blossom, — spare them. Life is sweet; behold
 There is much cattle, and the wild and tame,
 Father, do feed in quiet, — spare them.

“God!

Where is my God? The long wave doth not rear
 Her ghostly crest to lick the forest up,
 And like a chief in battle fall, — not yet.
 The lightnings pour not down, from ragged holes
 In heaven, the torment of their forkèd tongues,
 And, like fell serpents, dart and sting, — not yet.
 The winds awake not, with their awful wings
 To winnow, even as chaff, from out their track,
 All that withstandeth, and bring down the pride
 Of all things strong and all things high, —

“Not yet.

O, let it not be yet. Where is my God?
 How am I saved, if I and mine be saved
 Alone? I am not saved, for I have loved
 My country and my kin. Must I, Thy thrall,
 Over their lands be lord when they are gone?
 I would not: spare them, Mighty. Spare Thyself,
 For Thou dost love them greatly, — and if not . . .”

Another praying unremote, a Voice
 Calm as the solitude between wide stars.

“Where is my God, who loveth this lost world, —
 Lost from its place and name, but won for thee?
 Where is my multitude, my multitude,
 That I shall gather?” And white smoke went up

From incense that was burning, but there gleamed
 No light of fire, save dimly to reveal
 The whiteness rising, as the prayer of him
 That mourned. “My God, appear for me, appear;
 Give me my multitude, for it is mine.
 The bitterness of death I have not feared,
 To-morrow shall Thy courts, O God, be full.
 Then shall the captive from his bonds go free,
 Then shall the thrall find rest, that knew not rest
 From labor and from blows. The sorrowful —
 That said of joy, ‘What is it?’ and of songs,
 ‘We have not heard them’ — shall be glad and sing;
 Then shall the little ones that knew not Thee,
 And such as heard not of Thee, see Thy face,
 And, seeing, dwell content.”

The prayer of Noah.

He cried out in the darkness, “Hear, O God,
 Hear HIM: hear this one; through the gates of death,
 If life be all past praying for, O give
 To thy great multitude a way to peace;
 Give them to HIM.

“But yet,” said he, “O yet,
 If there be respite for the terrible,
 The proud, yea, such as scorn Thee, — and if not,
 Let not mine eyes behold their fall.”

He cried,
 “Forgive. I have not done Thy work, Great Judge,
 With a perfect heart; I have but half believed,
 While in accustomed language I have warned;
 And now there is no more to do, no place
 For my repentance, yea, no hour remains
 For doing of that work again. O lost,
 Lost world!” And while he prayed, the daylight
 dawned.

And Noah went up into the ship, and sat
 Before the Lord. And all was still; and now
 In that great quietness the sun came up,
 And there were marks across it, as it were
 The shadow of a Hand upon the sun, —
 Three fingers dark and dread, and afterward
 There rose a white thick mist, that peacefully
 Folded the fair earth in her funeral shroud, —
 The earth that gave no token, save that now
 There fell a little trembling under foot.

And Noah went down, and took and hid his face
 Behind his mantle, saying, "I have made
 Great preparation, and it may be yet,
 Beside my house, whom I did charge to come
 This day to meet me, there may enter in
 Many that yesternight thought scorn of all
 My bidding." And because the fog was thick,
 He said, "Forbid it, Heaven, if such there be,
 That they should miss the way." And even then
 There was a noise of weeping and lament;
 The words of them that were affrighted, yea,
 And cried for grief of heart. There came to him
 The mother and her children, and they cried,
 "Speak, father, what is this? What hast thou done?"
 And when he lifted up his face, he saw
 Japhet, his well-belovèd, where he stood
 Apart; and Amarant leaned upon his breast,
 And hid her face, for she was sore afraid;
 And lo! the robes of her betrothal gleamed
 White in the deadly gloom.

And at his feet
 The wives of his two other sons did kneel,
 And wring their hands.

One cried, "O, speak to us;
 We are affrighted; we have dreamed a dream,

Each to herself. For me, I saw in mine
 The grave old angels, like to shepherds, walk,
 Much cattle following them. Thy daughter looked,
 And they did enter here."

The other lay
 And moaned. "Alas! O father, for my dream
 Was evil: lo, I heard when it was dark,
 I heard two wicked ones contend for me.
 One said, 'And wherefore should this woman live,
 When only for her children, and for her,
 Is woe and degradation?' Then he laughed,
 The other crying, 'Let alone, O Prince;
 Hinder her not to live and bear much seed,
 Because I hate her.'"

But he said, "Rise up,
 Daughters of Noah, for I have learned no words
 To comfort you." Then spake her lord to her,
 "Peace! or I swear that for thy dream myself
 Will hate thee also."

And Niloiya said,
 "My sons, if one of you will hear my words,
 Go now, look out, and tell me of the day,
 How fares it?"

And the fateful darkness grew,
 But Shem went up to do his mother's will;
 And all was one as though the frighted earth
 Quivered and fell a-trembling; then they hid
 Their faces every one, till he returned,
 And spake not. "Nay," they cried, "what hast
 thou seen?
 O, is it come to this?" He answered them,
 "The door is shut."