

CHAPTER III

FATHER ANDREW

None were abroad in the streets of Dunwich on that bitter winter night when these three trudged wearily down Middlegate Street through the driving snow to the door of the grey Preceptory of the Knights Templar. In a window above the porch a light burned dimly, the only one to be seen in any of the houses round about, for by now all men were abed.

"'Tis Father Arnold's room," said Eve. "He sits there at his books. I'll knock and call him, but do you two go lay hold of the ring of the church door," and she nodded toward a grey pile that stood near by. "Then none can touch you, and how know we who may be in this house?"

"I'll go no step further," answered Hugh sullenly. "All this Temple ground is sanctuary, or at least we will risk it." And, seizing the knocker, he hammered at the door.

The light in the window vanished, and presently they heard a sound of creaking bolts. Then the door opened, revealing a tall man, white-bearded, ancient, and clad in a frayed, furred robe worn over a priest's cassock, who held a lantern in his hand.

"Who knocks?" he asked. "Does some soul pass that you disturb me after curfew?"

"Ay, Father Andrew," answered Hugh, "souls have passed, and souls are near to passing. Let us in, and we will tell you all."

Without waiting for an answer he entered with the others, pushed to the massive door and bolted it again.

"What's this? A woman?" said the old priest. "Eve of Clavering, by the Saints!"

"Yes," she answered calmly, though her teeth chattered; "Eve of Clavering, Eve the Red, this time with the blood of men, soaked with the waters of the Blythe, frozen with the snows of Dunwich Heath, where she has lain hid for hours with a furze bush for shelter. Eve who seeks shriving, a dry rag for her back, a morsel for her lips, and fire to warm her, which in the Name of Christ and of charity she prays you will not refuse to her."

So she spoke, and laughed recklessly.

Almost before she had finished her wild words the old man, who looked what he was, a knight arrayed in priestly robes, had run to a door at the end of the hall and was calling through it, "Mother Agnes! Mother Agnes!"

"Be not so hasty, Sir Andrew," answered a shrill voice. "A posset must

have time to boil. It is meet now that you wear a tonsure that you who are no longer a centurion should forget these 'Come, and he cometh,' ways. When the water's hot----"

The rest of that speech was lost, for Father Arnold, muttering some word belonging to his "centurion" days, dived into the kitchen, to reappear presently dragging a little withered old woman after him who was dressed in a robe of conventual make.

"Peace, Mother Agnes, peace!" he said. "Take this lady, dry her, array her in your best gown, give her food, warm her, and bring her back to me. Short? What care I if the robe be short? Obey, or it will not be come, and he cometh, but go and she goeth, and then who will shelter one who talks so much?"

He thrust the pair of them through the kitchen door and, returning, led Hugh and Grey Dick up a broad oak stair to what had been the guest-hall of the Preceptory on its first floor.

It was a very great chamber where, before their Order was dispersed, all the Knights Templar had been wont to dine with those who visited them at times of festival. Tattered banners still hung among the cobwebs of the ancient roof, the shields of past masters with stately blazonings were carved in stone upon the walls. But of all this departed splendour but little could be seen, since the place was lit only by a single lamp of whale's oil and a fire that burned upon the wide stone hearth, a great

fire, since Father Arnold, who had spent many years of his life in the East, loved warmth.

"Now, Hugh de Cressi," he said, "what have you done?"

"Slain my cousin, John of Clavering, Father, and perhaps another man."

"In fair fight, very fair fight," croaked Grey Dick.

"Who doubts it? Can a de Cressi be a murderer?" asked the priest. "And you, Richard the Archer, what have you done?"

"Shot a good horse and three bad men dead with arrows--at least they should be dead--and another through the hand, standing one against twenty."

"A gallant--I mean--an evil deed," broke in the old warrior priest, "though once it happened to me in a place called Damascus--but you both are wet, also. Come into my chamber; I can furnish you with garments of a sort. And, Richard, set that black bow of yours near the fire, but not too fire. As you should know well, a damp string is ill to draw with. Nay, fear not to leave it; this is sanctuary, and to make sure I will lock the doors."

Half an hour was gone by, and a very strange company had gathered round the big fire in the guest-chamber of the Temple, eating with appetite of such food as its scanty larder could provide for them. First there was Red Eve in a woollen garment, the Sunday wear of Mother Agnes for twenty years past and more, which reached but little below her knees, and was shaped like a sack. On her feet were no shoes, and for sole adornment her curling black hair fell about her shoulders, for so she had arranged it because the gown would not meet across her bosom. Yet, odd as it might be, in this costume Eve looked wonderfully beautiful, perhaps because it was so scant and the leathern strap about her waist caused it to cling close to her shapely form.

By her stood Hugh, wearing a splendid suit of chain armour. It had been Sir Andrew Arnold's in his warlike years, and now he lent it to his godson Hugh because, as he said, he had nothing else. Also, it may have crossed the minds of both of them that such mail as this which the Saracens had forged, if somewhat out of fashion, could still turn swordcuts.

Then there was Grey Dick, whose garments seemed to consist of a sack with holes in it tied round him with a rope, his quiver of arrows slung over it for ornament. He sat by the fire on a stool, oiling his black bow with a rind of the fat bacon that he had been eating.

All the tale had been told, and Father Arnold looked very grave indeed.

"I have known strange and dreadful stories in my time," he said, "but never, I think, one stranger or more dreadful. What would you do now, godson?"

"Take sanctuary for myself and Grey Dick because of the slaying of John Clavering and others, and afterward be married by you to Eve."

"Be married to the sister with the brother's blood upon your hands without absolution from the Church or pardon from the King; and you but a merchant's younger son and she to-night one of the greatest heiresses in East Anglia! Why, how may that be?"

"I blame him not," broke in Eve. "John, whom I never loved, strove to smoke us out like rats because he was in the pay of the Norman, my Lord of Acour. John struck Hugh in the face with his hand and slandered him with his tongue. John was given his life once, and afterwards slain in fair fight. Oh, I say, I blame him not, nor shall John's blood rise between him and me!"

"Yet the world will blame him, and you, too, Eve; yes, even those who love you both. A while must go by, say a year. At least I'll not marry you at once, and cannot, if I would, with both your fathers living and unadvised, and the sheriff waiting at the gate. Tell me now, do any know that you have entered here?"

"Nay," said Dick, looking up from his bow. "The hunt came after us, but

I hid these two in a bush and led it away past Hinton to the Ipswich road, keeping but just ahead in the snow and talking in three voices. Then I gave them the slip and returned. They'll not guess that we have come to Dunwich for a while."

"And when they do even the boldest will not enter this holy sanctuary while the Church has terrors for men's souls. Yet, here you must not stay for long, lest in this way or in that your lives pay the price of it, or a bloody feud break out between the Claverings of Blythburgh and the de Cressis of Dunwich. Daughter Eve, get you to bed with old Agnes. You are so weary that you will not mind her snores. To-morrow ere the dawn I'll talk with you, and, meanwhile, I have words for Hugh. Nay, have no fear, the windows are all barred, and Archer Dick shall watch the door."

Eve went, unwillingly enough, although she could scarcely walk, flashing a good-night to her lover with her fine eyes. Presently Grey Dick also went to sleep, like a dog with one eye open, in the little ante-chamber, near to the great door.

"Now, Hugh," said Father Arnold, when they were left alone, "your case is desperate, for if you stay here certainly these Claverings will have your blood. Yet, if you can be got away safely, there is still a shaft that you may shoot more deadly than any that ever left Grey Dick's quiver. But yesterday I told you for your comfort--when we spoke of his wooing of Red Eve--that this Norman, for such he is, although his mother

was English and he was English born, is a traitor to King Edward, whom he pretends to serve."

"Ay, and I said as much to him this afternoon when he prated to me of his knightly honour, and, though I had no time to take note of faces, I thought he liked it little who answered hotly that I was a liar."

"I am sorry, Hugh; it may put him on his guard, or perhaps he'll pay no heed. At least the words are said, and there's an end. Now hearken. I told neither you nor any one all the blackness of his treachery. Have you guessed what this Acour is here to do?"

"Spy out the King's power in these parts, I suppose."

"More than that"--and he dropped his voice to a whisper--"spy out a safe landing-place for fifty thousand Normans upon our Suffolk coast. They are to sail hither this coming summer and set the crown of England upon their Duke John, who will hold it as vassal to his sire, Philip of France."

"God's name! Is that true?"

"Ay, though in such a devil's business that Name is best left out. Look you, lad, I had warning from overseas, where, although I am now nothing but a poor old priest of a broken Order, I still have friends in high places. Therefore I watched and found that messengers were passing

between Acour and France. One of these messengers, a priest, came a week ago to Dunwich, and spent the night in a tavern waiting for his ship to sail in the morning. The good wife who keeps that tavern--ask not her name--would go far to serve me. That night this priest slept sound, and while he slept a letter was cut from the lining of his cassock, and another without writing sewn there in place of it, so that he'll never know the difference till he reaches John of Normandy, and then not where he lost it. Stay, you shall see," and he went to the wall and from some secret place behind the hangings produced a writing, which he handed to Hugh, who looked at it, then gave it back to him, saying:

"Read it to me, Father, English I can spell out, but this French puzzles my eyes."

So he read, Hugh listening eagerly to every word:

My Lord Duke:

This by a faithful hand that you know to tell you all goes well with your Grace's business, and with that of your royal father. While pretending to hunt or hawk I have found three places along this seaboard at any one of which the army can land next summer with little resistance to fear, for though the land is rich in cattle and corn, the people are few.

These places of which I have made survey have deep water up to the

beach. I will tell you of them more particularly when I return.

Meanwhile I linger here for sundry reasons, which you know, hoping to draw those of whom you speak to me to your cause, which, God aiding me, I shall do, since he of England has wronged one of them and slighted the others, so that they are bitter against him, and ready to listen to the promises which I make in your name.

As an excuse for my long stay that has caused doubts in some quarters, I speak of my Suffolk lands which need my care. Also I court the daughter of my host here, the Knight of Clavering, a stubborn Englishman who cannot be won, but a man of great power and repute. This courtship, which began in jest, has ended in earnest, since the girl is very haughty and beautiful, and as she will not be played with I propose, with your good leave, to make her my wife. Her father accepts my suit, and when he and the brother are out of the way, as doubtless may happen after your army comes, she will have great possessions.

I thank your Grace for the promise of the wide English lands of which I spoke to you, and the title that goes with them. These I will do my best to earn, nor will I ask for them till I kneel before you when you are crowned King of England at Westminster, as I doubt not God will bring about before this year is out. I have made a map of the road by which your army should march on London after landing, and of the towns to be sacked upon the way thither. This, however, I keep, since although not one in ten thousand of these English swine can read French, or any other tongue, should it chance to be lost, all can understand a map. Not that

there is any fear of loss, for who will meddle with a priest who carries credentials signed by his Holiness himself.

I do homage to your Grace. This written with my hand from Blythburgh, in Suffolk, on the twentieth day of February, 1346.

Edmund of Noyon.

Father Arnold ceased reading, and Hugh gasped out:

"What a fool is this knave-Count!"

"Most men are, my son, in this way or in that, and the few wise profit by their folly. Thus this letter, which he thought so safe, will save England to Edward and his race, you from many dangers, your betrothed from a marriage which she hates--that is, if you can get safe away with it from Dunwich."

"Where to, Father?"

"To King Edward in London, with another that I will write for you ere the dawn."

"But is it safe, Father, to trust so precious a thing to me, who have bitter enemies awaiting me, and may as like as not be crow's meat by to-morrow?"

Father Arnold looked at him with his soft and dreamy eyes, then said:

"I think the crow's not hatched that will pick your bones, Hugh, though at the last there be crows, or worms, for all of us."

"Why not, Father? Doubtless, this morning young John of Clavering thought as much, and now he is in the stake-nets, or food for fishes."

"Would you like to hear, Hugh, and will you keep it to yourself, even from Eve?"

"Ay, that I would and will."

"He'll think me mad!" muttered the old priest to himself, then went on aloud as one who takes a sudden resolution. "Well, I'll tell you, leaving you to make what you will of a story that till now has been heard by no living man."

"Far in the East is the great country that we call Cathay, though in truth it has many other names, and I alone of all who breathe in England have visited that land."

"How did you get there?" asked Hugh, amazed, for though he knew dimly that Father Arnold had travelled much in his youth, he never dreamed that he had reached the mystic territories of Cathay, or indeed that

such a place really was except in fable.

"It would take from now till morning to tell, son, nor even then would you understand the road. It is enough to say that I went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where our blessed Saviour died. That was the beginning. Thence I travelled with Arabs to the Red Sea, where wild men made a slave of me, and we were blown across the Indian Ocean to a beautiful island named Ceylon, in which all the folk are black.

"From this place I escaped in a vessel called a junk, that brought me to the town of Singapore. Thence at last, following my star, I came to Cathay after two years of journeyings. There I dwelt in honour for three more years, moving from place to place, since never before had its inhabitants seen a Western man, and they made much of me, always sending me forward to new cities. So at length I reached the greatest of them all, which is called Kambaluc, or Peking, and there was the guest of its Emperor, Timur.

"All the story of my life and adventures yonder I have written down, and any who will may read it after I am dead. But of these I have no time to speak, nor have they anything to do with you. Whilst I dwelt in Kambaluc as the guest of the Emperor Timur, I made study of the religion of this mighty people, who, I was told, worshipped gods in the shape of men. I visited a shrine called the Temple of Heaven, hoping that there I should see such a god who was named Tien, but found in it nothing but splendid emptiness.

"Then I asked if there was no god that I could see with my eyes, whereon the Emperor laughed at me and said there was such a god, but he counselled me not to visit him. I prayed him to suffer me to do so, since I, who worshipped the only true God, feared no other. Whereon, growing angry, he commanded some of his servants to 'take this fool to the house of Murgh and let him see whether his God could protect him against Murgh.' Having said this he bade me farewell, adding that though every man must meet Murgh once, few met him twice, and therefore he did not think that he should see me again.

"Now, in my heart I grew afraid, but none would tell me more of this Murgh or what was likely to happen to me at his hands. Still, I would not show any fear, and, strong in the faith of Christ, I determined to look upon this idol, for such I expected him to be.

"That night the servants of Timur bore me out of the city in a litter, and by the starlight I saw that we travelled toward a hill through great graveyards, where people were burying their dead. At the foot of the hill they set me down upon a road, and told me to walk up it, and that at dawn I should see the House of Murgh, whereof the gates were always open, and could enter there if I wished. I asked if they would wait for my return, whereon they answered, smiling, that if I so desired they would do so till evening, but that it seemed scarcely needful, since they did not suppose that I should return.

"Do yonder pilgrims to the House of Murgh return?' asked their captain, pointing towards those graveyards which we had passed.

"I made no answer, but walked forward up a broad and easy road, unchallenged of any, till I came to what, even in that dim light, I could see was a great and frowning gateway, whereof the doors appeared to be open. Now, at first I thought I would pass this gateway at once and see what lay beyond. But from this I was held back by some great fear, for which I could find no cause, unless it were bred of what the Emperor and his servants had said to me. So I remembered their words--namely, that I should tarry till dawn to enter the house.

"There, then, I tarried, seated on the ground before the gateway, and feeling as though, yet alive, I had descended among the dead. Indeed, the silence was that of the dead. No voice spoke, no hound barked, no leaf stirred. Only far above me I heard a continual soughing, as though winged souls passed to and fro. Never in my life had I felt so much alone, never so much afraid.

"At length the dawn broke, and oh, glad was I to see its light, for fear lest I should die in darkness! Now I saw that I was on a hilltop where grew great groves of cedar trees, and that set amid them was a black-tiled temple, surrounded by a wall built of black brick.

"It was not a great place, although the gateway, which was surmounted by two black dragons of stone or iron, was very great, so great that a tall

ship could have sailed through it and left its arch untouched.

"I kneeled down and prayed to the blessed Saints and the guardian angels to protect me. Then I arose, crossed myself to scare off all evil things by that holy sign, and set forward toward the mighty gateway. Oh, never, never till that hour had I understood how lowly a thing is man! On that broad road, travelling toward the awful, dragon-guarded arch, beyond which lay I knew not what, it seemed to me that I was the only man left in the world, I, whose hour had come to enter the portals of destruction.

"I passed into the cold shadow of the gateway, unchallenged by any watchman, and found myself in a courtyard surrounded by a wall also built of black brick, which had doors in it that seemed to be of dark stone or iron. Whither these doors led I do not know, since the wall cut off the sight of any buildings that may have lain beyond. In the centre of this courtyard was a pool of still, black water, and at the head of the pool a chair of black marble."

Sir Andrew paused, and Hugh said:

"A plain place for a temple, Father, without adornments or images. But perhaps this was the outer court, and the temple stood within."

"Ay, son, the plainest temple that ever I saw, who have seen many in all lands, though what was beyond it I do not know. And yet--terrible,

terrible, terrible!--I tell you that those black walls and that black water were more fearsome to look on than any churchyard vault grim with bones, or a torture-pit where victims quiver out their souls midst shrieks and groanings. And yet I could see nothing of which to be afraid, and hear nothing save that soughing of invisible wings whereof I have spoken. An empty chair, a pool of water, some walls and doors, and, above, the quiet sky. What was there to fear in such things as these? Still, so greatly did I fear that I sank to my knees and began to pray once more, this time to the blessed Saviour himself, since I was sure that none else could help me.

"When I looked up again the chair was no longer empty. Hugh, a man sat in it, of whom I thought at first only one thing--that he must be very strong, though not bigger than other men. Strength seemed to flow from him. I should not have wondered if he had placed his hands upon the massive sides of that stone chair and torn it asunder."

"What was he like, Father? Samson or Goliath?"

"I never saw either, son, so cannot say. But what was he like? Oh, I cannot say that either, although still I see him in my heart. My mortal lips will not tell the likeness of that man, perhaps because he seemed to be like all men, and yet different from all. He had an iron brow, beneath which shone deep, cold eyes. He was clean-shaven, or perchance his face grew no hair. His lips were thick and still and his features did not change like those of other men. He looked as though he could not

change; as though he had been thus for infinite ages, and yet remained neither young nor old. As for his dress, he wore a cloak of flaming red, such a cloak as your Eve loves to wear, and white sandals on his feet. There was no covering on his shaven head, which gleamed like a skull. His breast was naked, but across it hung one row of black jewels. From the sheen of them I think they must have been pearls, which are sometimes found of that colour in the East. He had no weapon nor staff, and his hands hung down on either side of the chair.

"For a long while I watched him, but if he saw me he took no note. As I watched I perceived that birds were coming to and leaving him in countless numbers, and thought that it must be their wings which made the constant soughing sound that filled all the still and dreadful air."

"What kind of birds were they, Father?"

"I am not sure, but I think doves; at least, their flight was straight and swift like to that of doves. Yet of this I am not sure either, since I saw each of them for but a second. As they reached the man they appeared out of nothingness. They were of two colours, snow-white and coal-black. The white appeared upon his right side, the black upon his left side. Each bird in those never-ceasing streams hovered for an instant by his head, the white over his right shoulder, the black over his left shoulder, as though they whispered a message to his ear, and having whispered were gone upon their errand."

"What was that errand, Father?"

"How can I know, as no one ever told me? Yet I will hazard a guess that it had to do with the mystery of life and death. Souls that were born into the world, and souls departing from the world, perchance, making report to one of God's ministers clothed in flesh. But who can say? At least I watched those magic fowls till my eyes grew dizzy, and a sort of slumber began to creep into my brain.

"How long I stayed thus I do not remember, for I had lost all sense of time. In the end, however, I was awakened by a cold, soft voice, the sound of which seemed to flow through my veins like ice, that addressed me in our own rough English tongue, spoken as you and I learned it at our nurses' knees.

"To what god were you praying just now, Andrew Arnold?"

"Oh, sir,' I answered, 'how do you, who dwell in Cathay, where I am a stranger, know my language and my name?"

"He lifted his cold eyes and looked at me, and I felt them pierce into the depths of my soul. 'In the same way that I know your heart,' he said. 'But do not ask questions. Answer them, that I may learn whether you are a true man or a liar.'

"I was praying to Christ,' I faltered, 'the Saviour of us all.'

"A great God, Andrew Arnold, and a pure, though His followers are few in the world as yet. But do you think that He can save you from Me, as you were asking Him to do?"

"He can save my soul," I replied, plucking up courage, who would not deny the Lord even in a devil's den.

"Ah! your soul. Well, I have nothing to do with souls, except to count them as they pass through my dominion, and you are quite right to pray to one of the lords of that into which you go. Now, man, what is your business with me, and why do you visit one of whom you are so much afraid?"

"O Murgh!" I began, then ceased, for I knew not what to answer.

"So they have told you my name? Now I will tell you one of its meanings. It is "Gate of the Gods." Why did you dare to visit Gate of the Gods? You fear to answer. Listen! You came forth to see some painted idol, or some bedizened priest muttering rites he does not understand to that which is not; and lo! you have found that which is behind all idols and all priests. You sought an incensed and a golden shrine and you have found only the black and iron portals which every man must pass but which few desire to enter until they are called. Well, you are young and strong, come try a fall with Murgh, and when he has thrown you, rise and choose which of those ways you will," and he swept his hand toward the

doors around him. 'Then forget this world and enter into that which you have chosen.'

"Now, because I could not help myself, I rose from my knees and advanced, or was drawn toward that dreadful man. As I came he, too, rose from his chair, stretching out his arms as a wrestler does, and I knew that within the circle of those arms lay my death. Still I, who in my youth was held brave, went on and rushed, striving to clasp him. Next moment, before ever I touched him--oh, well was it for me that I touched him not!--some strength seized me and whirled me round and round as a dead leaf is whirled by the wind, and tossed me up and cast me down and left me prone and nerveless.

"'Rise,' said the cold voice above me, 'for you are unhurt.'

"So I rose, and felt even then that I who thought that every bone in my body must be broken, was stronger than I had ever been before. It was as though the lamp which had burnt low was filled suddenly with a new and purer oil.

"'Man,' said mine adversary, and I thought that in his cold eyes there was something like a smile, 'did you think to touch Murgh and live? Did you think to wrestle with him as in a book of one of your prophets a certain Jacob wrestled with an angel, and conquered--until it was his turn to pass the Gate of the Gods?'

"Now I stared at this dweller in Cathay, who spoke my tongue and knew the tale of Jacob in the ancient Book, then answered:

"Sir Murgh, or Sir Gate, or whatever your name may be, I thought to do nothing. You drew me to you, you challenged me and, since by the rule of my Order I may refuse no challenge from one who is not a Christian, I came on to do my best. But before ever I laid hand on you I was cast down by a wind. That is all the story, save that it has pleased you to let me live, who evidently could have slain me, for which I thank you.'

"You are wrong, Sir Andrew,' he answered, 'I did not draw you to me. Men come to Murgh at their appointed hour; Murgh does not come to them. You sought him before your hour, and therefore he refused you. Yet you will meet him again, as all flesh must when its hour comes, and because you are bold and have not cringed before my strength, for your comfort I will show you when and how. Stand by me, but lay no hand on me or my robe, and look into my glass while for a moment, for your sake, I stay the stream of time and show you what lies beneath its foam that blinds the eyes of men.'

"He waved his arms and the black doves and the white doves ceased to appear and disappear, and the eternal soughings of their wings was silent. He pointed to the water at his feet and I saw, not a picture, but a scene so real that I could have sworn it was alive about me. Yes, those who took part in it stood in front of me as though the pool were solid ground that their feet pressed. You were one of them, son, you

were one of them," and the old knight paused, supporting himself against the mantel-shelf as though that recollection overcame him.

"What did you see?" whispered Hugh.

"By God's holy name, I saw the Blythburgh Marshes deep in snow that was red, blood-red with the light of sunrise. Oh! I could not be mistook, and there ran the wintry river, there the church tower soared, there were the frowning, tree-clad banks. There was the rough moorland over which the east wind piped, for the dead bracken bent before it, and not twenty paces from me leaped a hare, disturbed suddenly from its form by a hungry fox, whose red head peeped through the reeds. Yes, yes, I saw the brute's white teeth gleam as it licked its disappointed lips, and I felt glad that its prey had beaten it! When you look upon that scene, Hugh, as one day you shall, remember the hare and the head of the hungry fox, and by these judge my truth."

"A fox and a hare!" broke in Hugh. "I'd show you such to-morrow; was there no more?"

"Ay, much. For instance, a hollow in the Marsh, an open grave, and an axe; yes, an axe that had delved it where the bog was soft beneath the snow. Grey Dick held the axe in one hand and his black bow in the other, while Red Eve, your Eve, stood at its edge and stared into it like one in a dream. Then at the head of the grave an old, old man clad in mail beneath his priestly robes, and that man myself, Hugh, grown very

ancient, but still myself, and no other.

"And at the foot of the grave you, Hugh de Cressi, you and no other, wayworn and fierce, but also clad in mail, and wearing a knight's crest upon your shield. You with drawn sword in hand, and facing you, also with drawn sword, rage and despair on his dark face, a stately, foreign-looking man, whom mine eyes have never seen, but whom I should know again midst a million, a man who, I think, was doomed to fill the grave.

"Lastly, standing on a little mound near to the bank of the swirling river, where jagged sheets of ice ground against each other like the teeth of the wicked in hell, strangely capped and clad in black, his arms crossed upon his breast and a light smile in his cold eyes, he who was called Murgh in Cathay, he who named himself Gateway of the Gods!

"For a moment I saw, then all was gone, and I found myself--I know not why--walking toward the mighty arch whereon sat the iron dragons. In its shadow I turned and looked back. There at the head of the pool the man was seated in his chair, and to right and to left of him came the black doves and the white doves in countless multitudes, all the thousands of them that had been stayed in their flight pouring down upon him at once--or so I thought. They wheeled about his head, they hid his face from me, and I--I departed into the shadow of the arch, and I saw him and them no more."