Exiles of El Akim

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Exiles of El Akim

I

Beyond these distant dunes lies El Akim
Where once a city stood that ruled the land
For miles about; yet if one looked, 'twould seem
A tale, a wall half buried in the sand,
Where once ten wells flowed forth and gardens grew.
The caravans that passed paid tribute there
And every son of Islam's desert knew
The wealth of El Akim, and sent his share.

In decades past the Turks o'er swept the wall,
Whose crest has not been buried yet. They slew
The men, they stopped the city's wells, and all
They left behind was waste. A bleeding few
Survivors fled from El Akim that night;
Their tribe is poor, that once o'erflowed with might.

II

Long years have passed since El Akim did 'change
Her shining mantle for a shroud of sand.
Yet now behold the darkened dunes! A strange
And mournful sight doth greet the land!
Two men approach the vast entombed site,
One youth, whose glist'ning eyes see naught but peace;
The other, old, with eyes bereft of light
That see a throbbing world whose pulse did cease . . .

The old man's voice defies the deadly calm.
—My son, says he, the wand'ring I have known
At last shall end. This sacred spot, the balm
To all my worldly cares, will be my home.
Go forth, ye sole survivor of our race;
Go find your joy in yet another place.