

**THE TENTS OF SHEM;
A NOVEL, IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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The tents of Shem; a novel, in three volumes, Vol. II by Grant Allen

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GRANT ALLEN

**THE TENTS OF SHEM;
A NOVEL, IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

THE TENTS OF SHEM

A Novel

BY

GRANT ALLEN

AUTHOR OF

'BABYLON,' 'THE DEVIL'S DIE,' 'THIS MORTAL COIL,' ETC.



IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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THE TENTS OF SHEM.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STRANDS CONVERGE.

ON the platform outside the village, where the Beni-Merzoug held their weekly market, Vernon Blake stood sketching the buzzing group of white-robed natives who clustered beneath the shade of a great oak opposite, deep in eager conclave, as it appeared, on some important question of tribal business. A finer subject he had seldom found. Every gesture and attitude of the men was indeed eloquent ; and the pose of the Amine, in particular, as he listened to and weighed each conflicting argument, presented to the eye a perfect model of natural and unstudied

deliberative dignity. Le Marchant, stretched carelessly at the painter's feet, had brought out with him the copy of the *Dépêches Algériennes* which the Père Baba had yesterday lent them. He was reading it aloud, translating as he went, with but a languid interest in the diplomatic rumours and Court news which its telegrams detailed with their usual tedious conciseness, when, turning a page to the advertisement columns, his eye was attracted suddenly by the appearance, in large Roman type, of that unknown name which had imprinted itself so deeply on their minds of late, the English name of Meriem's father! '*On demande des renseignements,*' the advertisement ran, '*sur le nommé CLARENCE KNYVETT, Anglais.*'

Le Marchant could hardly believe his eyes.

'Look here, Blake,' he exclaimed, with a little cry of surprise; 'just see what on earth this means, will you?'

Blake took the paper from his hand, and stared at it hard.

‘What does it mean?’ he said, with a *whew*. ‘I can’t quite make it out. Two of them at once, too! It’s really very singular.’

Le Marchant snatched back the little sheet from his friend in fresh astonishment.

‘Two of them?’ he cried. ‘Why, so there are, actually. And both want to know the very same things—about Meriem’s father.’

‘Translate them,’ Blake said.

And Le Marchant translated:

‘Information wanted about one Clarence Knyvett, an Englishman, who is believed to have enlisted in the Third Chasseurs under the assumed name of Joseph Leboutillier, and to have hidden for some time as a deserter among the Kabyles of the Djurjura. If he or his representatives will address themselves to Iris Knyvett, 15, North Grove, Kensington, London, or to T. K. Whitmarsh, Esq., Old Square, Lincoln’s Inn, equally in London, they may hear of something to their advantage.’