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The Hills of Kandahar

By ROBERT E. HOWARD

The night primeval breaks in scarlet mist;
 The shadows gray, and pales each silent star;
 The eastern sky that rose-lipped dawn has kissed
 Glows crimson o'er the hills of Kandahar.
 A trumpet song re-echoes from afar;
 Across the crags the golden glory grows
 To drive the shades, renewing ancient war;
 Now bursts full bloom the gorgeous morning rose.

These are the hills that many a sultan trod;
 Their rocks have known full many a victor's stride;
 These peaks could tell their tale of human pride—
 See where they rear, each like a somber god.
 Aye, they have gazed since first the primal dawn
 Fired with a wild, vague flame a bestial soul
 Who rose and stood and saw his fellow spawn
 With him, somehow, part of Creation's whole,
 And made himself immortal with a goal
 To be attained—this untaught simian faun.

Aye, but these peaks have known the human tread:
 The ebb and flow of dim humanity,
 The restless, surging, never-ceasing tide,
 The swarming tribes that came unceasingly;
 The lust of kings, the bloody war-dawn's red,
 The races that arose and ruled—and died.
 They will be brooding when mankind is gone;
 The teeming tribes that scaled their barricades—
 Dim hordes that waxed at dusk and waned at dawn—
 Are but as snow that on their shoulders fades.