

CHAPTER XLV

Reminiscences

In rescuing the gentle Yillah from the hands of the Islanders, a design seemed accomplished. But what was now to be done? Here, in our adventurous Chamois, was a damsel more lovely than the flushes of morning; and for companions, whom had she but me and my comrades? Besides, her bosom still throbbed with alarms, her fancies all roving through mazes.

How subdue these dangerous imaginings? How gently dispel them?

But one way there was: to lead her thoughts toward me, as her friend and preserver; and a better and wiser than Aleema the priest. Yet could not this be effected but by still maintaining my assumption of a divine origin in the blessed isle of Oroolia; and thus fostering in her heart the mysterious interest, with which from the first she had regarded me. But if punctilious reserve on the part of her deliverer should teach her to regard him as some frigid stranger from the Arctic Zone, what sympathy could she have for him? and hence, what peace of mind, having no one else to cling to?

Now re-entering the tent, she again inquired where tarried Aleema.

"Think not of him, sweet Yillah," I cried. "Look on me. Am I not

white like yourself? Behold, though since quitting Oroolia the sun has dyed my cheek, am I not even as you? Am I brown like the dusky Aleema? They snatched you away from your isle in the sea, too early for you to remember me there. But you have not been forgotten by me, sweetest Yillah. Ha! ha! shook we not the palm-trees together, and chased we not the rolling nuts down the glen? Did we not dive into the grotto on the sea-shore, and come up together in the cool cavern in the hill? In my home in Oroolia, dear Yillah, I have a lock of your hair, ere yet it was golden: a little dark tress like a ring. How your cheeks were then changing from olive to white. And when shall I forget the hour, that I came upon you sleeping among the flowers, with roses and lilies for cheeks. Still forgetful? Know you not my voice? Those little spirits in your eyes have seen me before. They mimic me now as they sport in their lakes. All the past a dim blank? Think of the time when we ran up and down in our arbor, where the green vines grew over the great ribs of the stranded whale. Oh Yillah, little Yillah, has it all come to this? am I forever forgotten? Yet over the wide watery world have I sought thee: from isle to isle, from sea to sea. And now we part not. Aleema is gone. My prow shall keep kissing the waves, till it kisses the beach at Oroolia. Yillah, look up."

Sunk the ghost of Aleema: Sweet Yillah was mine!