

## CHAPTER LI

### The Dream Begins To Fade

Stripped of the strange associations, with which a mind like Yillah's must have invested every incident of her life, the story of her abode in Ardair seemed not incredible.

But so etherealized had she become from the wild conceits she nourished, that she verily believed herself a being of the lands of dreams. Her fabulous past was her present.

Yet as our intimacy grew closer and closer, these fancies seemed to be losing their hold. And often she questioned me concerning my own reminiscences of her shadowy isle. And cautiously I sought to produce the impression, that whatever I had said of that clime, had been revealed to me in dreams; but that in these dreams, her own lineaments had smiled upon me; and hence the impulse which had sent me roving after the substance of this spiritual image.

And true it was to say so; and right it was to swear it, upon her white arms crossed. For oh, Yillah; were you not the earthly semblance of that sweet vision, that haunted my earliest thoughts?

At first she had wildly believed, that the nameless affinities between us, were owing to our having in times gone by dwelt together

in the same ethereal region. But thoughts like these were fast dying out. Yet not without many strange scrutinies. More intently than ever she gazed into my eyes; rested her ear against my heart, and listened to its beatings. And love, which in the eye of its object ever seeks to invest itself with some rare superiority, love, sometimes induced me to prop my failing divinity; though it was I myself who had undermined it.

But if it was with many regrets, that in the sight of Yillah, I perceived myself thus dwarfing down to a mortal; it was with quite contrary emotions, that I contemplated the extinguishment in her heart of the notion of her own spirituality. For as such thoughts were chased away, she clung the more closely to me, as unto one without whom she would be desolate indeed.

And now, at intervals, she was sad, and often gazed long and fixedly into the sea. Nor would she say why it was, that she did so; until at length she yielded; and replied, that whatever false things Aleema might have instilled into her mind; of this much she was certain: that the whirlpool on the coast of Tedaidee prefigured her fate; that in the waters she saw lustrous eyes, and beckoning phantoms, and strange shapes smoothing her a couch among the mosses.

Her dreams seemed mine. Many visions I had of the green corse of the priest, outstretching its arms in the water, to receive pale Yillah, as she sunk in the sea.

But these forebodings departed, no happiness in the universe like ours. We lived and we loved; life and love were united; in gladness glided our days.