

## CHAPTER LVIII

### Mardi By Night And Yillah By Day

During the night following our arrival, many dreams were no doubt dreamt in Odo. But my thoughts were wakeful. And while all others slept, obeying a restless impulse, I stole without into the magical starlight. There are those who in a strange land ever love to view it by night.

It has been said, that the opening in the groves where was situated Media's city, was elevated above the surrounding plains. Hence was commanded a broad reach of prospect.

Far and wide was deep low-sobbing repose of man and nature. The groves were motionless; and in the meadows, like goblins, the shadows advanced and retreated. Full before me, lay the Mardian fleet of isles, profoundly at anchor within their coral harbor. Near by was one belted round by a frothy luminous reef, wherein it lay, like Saturn in its ring.

From all their summits, went up a milk-white smoke, as from Indian wigwams in the hazy harvest-moon. And floating away, these vapors blended with the faint mist, as of a cataract, hovering over the circumvallating reef. Far beyond all, and far into the infinite night, surged the jet-black ocean.

But how tranquil the wide lagoon, which mirrored the burning spots in heaven! Deep down into its innermost heart penetrated the slanting rays of Hesperus like a shaft of light, sunk far into mysterious Golcondas, where myriad gnomes seemed toiling. Soon a light breeze rippled the water, and the shaft was seen no more. But the moon's bright wake was still revealed: a silver track, tipping every wave-crest in its course, till each seemed a pearly, scroll-prowed nautilus, buoyant with some elfin crew.

From earth to heaven! High above me was Night's shadowy bower, traversed, vine-like, by the Milky Way, and heavy with golden clusterings. Oh stars! oh eyes, that see me, wheresoe'er I roam: serene, intent, inscrutable for aye, tell me Sybils, what I am.-- Wondrous worlds on worlds! Lo, round and round me, shining, awful spells: all glorious, vivid constellations, God's diadem ye are! To you, ye stars, man owes his subtlest raptures, thoughts unspeakable, yet full of faith.

But how your mild effulgence stings the boding heart. Am I a murderer, stars?

Hours pass. The starry trance is departed. Long waited for, the dawn now comes.

First, breaking along the waking face; peeping from out the languid

lids; then shining forth in longer glances; till, like the sun, up  
comes the soul, and sheds its rays abroad.

When thus my Yillah did daily dawn, how she lit up my world; tinging  
more rosily the roseate clouds, that in her summer cheek played to  
and fro, like clouds in Italian air.