

CHAPTER CI

The Iris

That evening, in the groves, came to me three gliding forms:--Hautia's heralds: the Iris mixed with nettles. Said Yoomy, "A cruel message!"

With the right hand, the second syren presented glossy, green wax-myrtle berries, those that burn like tapers; the third, a lily of the valley, crushed in its own broad leaf.

This done, they earnestly eyed Yoomy; who, after much pondering, said--"I speak for Hautia; who by these berries says, I will enlighten you."

"Oh, give me then that light! say, where is Yillah?" and I rushed upon the heralds.

But eluding me, they looked reproachfully at Yoomy; and seemed offended.

"Then, I am wrong," said Yoomy. "It is thus:--Taji, you have been enlightened, but the lily you seek is crushed."

Then fell my heart, and the phantoms nodded; flinging upon me bilberries, like rose pearls, which bruised against my skin,

left stains.

Waving oleanders, they retreated.

"Harm! treachery! beware!" cried Yoomy.

Then they glided through the wood: one showering dead leaves along the path I trod, the others gayly waving bunches of spring-crocuses, yellow, white, and purple; and thus they vanished.

Said Yoomy, "Sad your path, but merry Hautia's."

"Then merry may she be, whoe'er she is; and though woe be mine, I turn not from that to Hautia; nor ever will I woo her, though she woo me till I die;--though Yillah never bless my eyes."