

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### They Embark From Diranda

Arrived at the Sign of the Skulls, we found the illustrious lord seigniors at rest from their flight, and once more, quaffing their claret, all thoughts of the specter departed. Instead of rattling their own ivory iii the heads on their shoulders, they were rattling their dice in the skulls in their hands. And still "Heads," was the cry, and "Heads," was the throw.

That evening they made known to my lord Media that an interval of two days must elapse ere the games were renewed, in order to reward the victors, bury their dead, and provide for the execution of an Islander, who under the pro-vocation of a blow, had killed a stranger.

As this suspension of the festivities had been wholly unforeseen, our hosts were induced to withdraw the embargo laid upon our canoes. Nevertheless, they pressed us to remain; saying, that what was to come would far exceed in interest, what had already taken place. The games in prospect being of a naval description, embracing certain hand-to-hand contests in the water between shoals of web-footed warriors.

However, we decided to embark on the morrow.

It was in the cool of the early morning, at that hour when a man's

face can be known, that we set sail from Diranda; and in the ghostly twilight, our thoughts reverted to the phantom that so suddenly had cleared the plain. With interest we hearkened to the recitals of Mohi; who discoursing of the sad end of many brave chieftains in Mardi, made allusion to the youthful Adondo, one of the most famous of the chiefs of the chronicles. In a canoe-fight, after performing prodigies of valor; he was wounded in the head, and sunk to the bottom of the lagoon.

"There is a noble monody upon the death of Adondo," said Yoomy. "Shall I sing it, my lord? It is very beautiful; nor could I ever repeat it without a tear."

"We will dispense with your tears, minstrel," said Media, "but sing it, if you will."

And Yoomy sang:--

Departed the pride and the glory of Mardi:  
The vaunt of her isles sleeps deep in the sea,  
That rolls o'er his corpse with a hush.  
His warriors bend over their spears,  
His sisters gaze upward and mourn.  
Weep, weep, for Adondo, is dead!  
The sun has gone down in a shower;  
Buried in clouds in the face of the moon;  
Tears stand in the eyes of the starry skies,

And stand in the eyes of the flowers;  
And streams of tears are the trickling brooks,  
    Coursing adown the mountains.--  
Departed the pride, and the glory of Mardi:  
The vaunt of her isles sleeps deep in the sea.  
Fast falls the small rain on its bosom that sobs.--  
    Not showers of rain, but the tears of Oro.

"A dismal time it must have been," yawned Media, "not a dry brook then in Mardi, not a lake that was not moist. Lachrymose rivulets, and inconsolable lagoons! Call you this poetry, minstrel?"

"Mohi has something like a tear in his eye," said Yoomy.

"False!" cried Mohi, brushing it aside.

"Who composed that monody?" said Babbalanja. "I have often heard it before."

"None know, Babbalanja but the poet must be still singing to himself; his songs bursting through the turf in the flowers over his grave."

"But gentle Yoomy, Adondo is a legendary hero, indefinitely dating back. May not his monody, then, be a spontaneous melody, that has been with us since Mardi began? What bard composed the soft verses that our

palm boughs sing at even? Nay, Yoomy, that monody was not written by man."

"Ah! Would that I had been the poet, Babbalanja; for then had I been famous indeed; those lines are chanted through all the isles, by prince and peasant. Yes, Adondo's monody will pervade the ages, like the low under-tone you hear, when many singers do sing."

"My lord, my lord," cried Babbalanja, "but this were to be truly immortal;--to be perpetuated in our works, and not in our names. Let me, oh Oro! be anonymously known!"