

CHAPTER LV

Wherein Babbalanja Comments Upon The Speech Of Alanno

As we lingered in the precincts of the temple after all others had departed, sundry comments were made upon what we had seen; and having remarked the hostility of the lunatic orator toward Dominora, Babbalanja thus addressed Media:--

"My lord, I am constrained to believe, that all Vivenza can not be of the same mind with the grandiloquent chief from Hio-Hio. Nevertheless, I imagine, that between Dominora and this land, there exists at bottom a feeling akin to animosity, which is not yet wholly extinguished; though but the smoldering embers of a once raging fire. My lord, you may call it poetry if you will, but there are nations in Mardi, that to others stand in the relation of sons to sires. Thus with Dominora and Vivenza. And though, its majority attained, Vivenza is now its own master, yet should it not fail in a reverential respect for its parent. In man or nation, old age is honorable; and a boy, however tall, should never take his sire by the beard. And though Dominora did indeed ill merit Vivenza's esteem, yet by abstaining from criminations, Vivenza should ever merit its own. And if in time to come, which Oro forbid, Vivenza must needs go to battle with King Bello, let Vivenza first cross the old veteran's spear with all possible courtesy. On the other hand, my lord, King Bello should never forget, that whatever be glorious in Vivenza, redounds to himself. And

as some gallant old lord proudly measures the brawn and stature of his son; and joys to view in his noble young lineaments the likeness of his own; bethinking him, that when at last laid in his tomb, he will yet survive in the long, strong life of his child, the worthy inheritor of his valor and renown; even so, should King Bello regard the generous promise of this young Vivenza of his own lusty begetting. My lord, behold these two states! Of all nations in the Archipelago, they alone are one in blood. Dominora is the last and greatest Anak of Old Times; Vivenza, the foremost and goodliest stripling of the Present. One is full of the past; the other brims with the future. Ah! did this sire's old heart but beat to free thoughts, and back his bold son, all Mardi would go down before them. And high Oro may have ordained for them a career, little divined by the mass. Methinks, that as Vivenza will never cause old Bello to weep for his son; so, Vivenza will not, this many a long year, be called to weep over the grave of its sire. And though King Bello may yet lay aside his old-fashioned cocked hat of a crown, and comply with the plain costume of the times; yet will his, frame remain sturdy as of yore, and equally grace any habiliments he may don. And those who say, Dominora is old and worn out, may very possibly err. For if, as a nation, Dominora be old--her present generation is full as young as the youths in any land under the sun. Then, Ho! worthy twain! Each worthy the other, join hands on the instant, and weld them together. Lo! the past is a prophet. Be the future, its prophecy fulfilled."