

CHAPTER LXV

Sailing On

Morning dawned upon the same mild, blue Lagoon as erst; and all the lands that we had passed, since leaving Piko's shore of spears, were faded from the sight.

Part and parcel of the Mardian isles, they formed a cluster by themselves; like the Pleiades, that shine in Taurus, and are eclipsed by the red splendor of his fiery eye, and the thick clusterings of the constellations round.

And as in Orion, to some old king-astronomer,--say, King of Rigel, or Betelguese,--this Earth's four quarters show but four points afar; so, seem they to terrestrial eyes, that broadly sweep the spheres.

And, as the sun, by influence divine, wheels through the Ecliptic; threading Cancer, Leo, Pisces, and Aquarius; so, by some mystic impulse am I moved, to this fleet progress, through the groups in white-reefed Mardi's zone.

Oh, reader, list! I've chartless voyaged. With compass and the lead, we had not found these Mardian Isles. Those who boldly launch, cast off all cables; and turning from the common breeze, that's fair for all, with their own breath, fill their own sails. Hug the shore,

naught new is seen; and "Land ho!" at last was sung, when a new world was sought.

That voyager steered his bark through seas, untracked before; ploughed his own path mid jeers; though with a heart that oft was heavy with the thought, that he might only be too bold, and grope where land was none.

So I.

And though essaying but a sportive sail, I was driven from my course, by a blast resistless; and ill-provided, young, and bowed to the brunt of things before my prime, still fly before the gale;--hard have I striven to keep stout heart.

And if it harder be, than e'er before, to find new climes, when now our seas have oft been circled by ten thousand prows,--much more the glory!

But this new world here sought, is stranger far than his, who stretched his vans from Palos. It is the world of mind; wherein the wanderer may gaze round, with more of wonder than Balboa's band roving through the golden Aztec glades.

But fiery yearnings their own phantom-future make, and deem it present. So, if after all these fearful, fainting trances, the verdict

be, the golden haven was not gained;--yet, in bold quest thereof,
better to sink in boundless deeps, than float on vulgar shoals; and
give me, ye gods, an utter wreck, if wreck I do.