

## CHAPTER LXVIII

### King Media Dreams

That afternoon was melting down to eve; all but Media broad awake; yet all motionless, as the slumberer upon the purple mat. Sailing on, with open eyes, we slept the wakeful sleep of those, who to the body only give repose, while the spirit still toils on, threading her mountain passes.

King Media's slumbers were like the helmed sentry's in the saddle. From them, he started like an antlered deer, bursting from out a copse. Some said he never slept; that deep within himself he but intensified the hour; or, leaving his crowned brow in marble quiet, unseen, departed to far-off councils of the gods. Howbeit, his lids never closed; in the noonday sun, those crystal eyes, like diamonds, sparkled with a fixed light.

As motionless we thus reclined, Media turned and muttered:--"Brother gods, and demi-gods, it is not well. These mortals should have less or more. Among my subjects is a man, whose genius scorns the common theories of things; but whose still mortal mind can not fathom the ocean at his feet. His soul's a hollow, wherein he raves."

"List, list," whispered Yoomy--"our lord is dreaming; and what a royal dream."

"A very royal and imperial dream," said Babbalanja--"he is arraigning me before high heaven;--ay, ay; in dreams, at least, he deems himself a demi-god."

"Hist," said Mohi--"he speaks again."

"Gods and demi-gods! With one gesture all abysses we may disclose; and before this Mardi's eyes, evoke the shrouded time to come. Were this well? Like lost children groping in the woods, they falter through their tangled paths; and at a thousand angles, baffled, start upon each other. And even when they make an onward move, 'tis but an endless vestibule, that leads to naught. In my own isle of Odo--Odo! Odo! How rules my viceroy there?--Down, down, ye madding mobs! Ho, spearmen, charge! By the firmament, but my halberdiers fly!"

"His dream has changed," said Babbalanja. "He is in Odo, whither his anxieties impel him."

"Hist, hist," said Yoomy.

"I leap upon the soil! Render thy account, Almanni! Where's my throne? Mohi, am I not a king? Do not thy chronicles record me? Yoomy, am I not the soul of some one glorious song? Babbalanja, speak.--Mohi! Yoomy!"

"What is it, my lord? thou dost but dream."

Staring wildly; then calmly gazing round, Media smiled. "Ha! how we royalties ramble in our dreams! I've told no secrets?"

"While he seemed to sleep, my lord spoke much," said Mohi.

"I knew it not, old man; nor would now; but that ye tell me."

"We dream not ourselves," said Babbalanja, "but the thing within us."

"Ay?--good-morrow Azzageddi!--But come; no more dreams: Vee-Vee! wine."

And straight through that livelong night, immortal Media plied the can.