

CHAPTER LXXV

They Visit The Palmy King Abrazza

Night and morn departed; and in the afternoon, we drew nigh to an island, overcast with shadows; a shower was falling; and pining, plaintive notes forth issued from the groves: half-suppressed, and sobbing whisperings of leaves. The shore sloped to the water; thither our prows were pointed.

"Sheer off! no landing here," cried Media, "let us gain the sunny side; and like the care-free bachelor Abrazza, who here is king, turn our back on the isle's shadowy side, and revel in its morning-meads."

"And lord Abrazza:--who is he?" asked Yoomy.

"The one hundred and twentieth in lineal descent from Phipora," said Mohi; "and connected on the maternal side to the lord seigniors of Klivonia. His uttermost uncle was nephew to the niece of Queen Zmiglandi; who flourished so long since, she wedded at the first Transit of Venus. His pedigree is endless."

"But who is lord Abrazza?"

"Has he not said?" answered Babbalanja. "Why so dull?--Uttermost nephew to him, who was nephew to the niece of the peerless Queen

Zmiglandi; and the one hundred and twentieth in descent from the illustrious Phipora."

"Will none tell, who Abrazza is?"

"Can not a man then, be described by running off the catalogue of his ancestors?" said Babbalanja. "Or must we e'en descend to himself. Then, listen, dull Yoomy! and know that lord Abrazza is six feet two: plump thighs; blue eyes; and brown hair; likes his bread-fruit baked, not roasted; sometimes carries filberts in his crown: and has a way of winking when he speaks. His teeth are good."

"Are you publishing some decamped burglar," said Media, "that you speak thus of my royal friend, the lord Abrazza? Go on, sir! and say he reigns sole king of Bonovona!"

"My lord, I had not ended. Abrazza, Yoomy, is a fine and florid king: high-fed, and affluent of heart; of speech, mellifluent. And for a royalty extremely amiable. He is a sceptered gentleman, who does much good. Kind king! in person he gives orders for relieving those, who daily dive for pearls, to grace his royal robe; and gasping hard, with blood-shot eyes, come up from shark-infested depths, and fainting, lay their treasure at his feet. Sweet lord Abrazza! how he pities those, who in his furthest woodlands day-long toil to do his bidding. Yet king-philosopher, he never weeps; but pities with a placid smile; and that but seldom."

"There seems much iron in your blood," said Media. "But say your say."

"Say I not truth, my lord? Abrazza, I admire. Save his royal pity all else is jocund round him. He loves to live for life's own sake. He vows he'll have no cares; and often says, in pleasant reveries,-- 'Sure, my lord Abrazza, if any one should be care-free, 'tis thou; who strike down none, but pity all the fallen!' Yet none he lifteth up."

At length we gained the sunny side, and shoreward tended. Vee-Vee's horn was sonorous; and issuing from his golden groves, my lord Abrazza, like a host that greets you on the threshold, met us, as we keeled the beach.

"Welcome! fellow demi-god, and king! Media, my pleasant guest!"

His servitors salamed; his chieftains bowed; his yeoman-guard, in meadow-green, presented palm-stalks,--royal tokens; and hand in hand, the nodding, jovial, regal friends, went up a lane of salutations; dragging behind, a train of envyings.

Much we marked Abrazza's jeweled crown; that shot no honest blaze of ruddy rubies; nor looked stern-white like Media's pearls; but cast a green and yellow glare; rays from emeralds, crossing rays from many a topaz. In those beams, so sinister, all present looked cadaverous: Abrazza's cheek alone beamed bright, but hectic.

Upon its fragrant mats a spacious hall received the kings; and
gathering courtiers blandly bowed; and gushing with soft flatteries,
breathed idol-incense round them.

The hall was terraced thrice; its elevated end was curtained; and
thence, at every chime of words, there burst a girl, gay scarfed, with
naked bosom, and poured forth wild and hollow laughter, as she raced
down all the terraces, and passed their merry kingships.

Wide round the hall, in avenues, waved almond-woods; their whiteness
frosted into bloom. But every vine-clad trunk was hollow-hearted;
hollow sounds came from the grottos: hollow broke the billows on the
shore: and hollow pauses filled the air, following the hollow
laughter.

Guards, with spears, paced the groves, and in the inner shadows, oft
were seen to lift their weapons, and backward press some ugly phantom,
saying, "Subjects! haunt him not; Abrazza would be merry; Abrazza
feasts his guests."

So, banished from our sight seemed all things uncongenial; and
pleasant times were ours, in these dominions. Not a face passed by,
but smiled; mocking-birds perched on the boughs; and singing, made us
vow the woods were warbling forth thanksgiving, with a thousand
throats! The stalwart yeomen grinned beneath their trenchers, heaped

with citrons pomegranates, grapes; the pages tittered, pouring out the wine; and all the lords loud laughed, smote their gilded spears, and swore the isle was glad.

Such the isle, in which we tarried; but in our rambles, found no Yillah.