

CHAPTER LXXIX

Babbalanja At The Full Of The Moon

"Ho, mortals! Go we to a funeral, that our paddles seem thus muffled? Up heart, Taji! or does that witch Hautia haunt thee? Be a demi-god once more, and laugh. Her flowers are not barbs; and the avengers' arrows are too blunt to slay. Babbalanja! Mohi! Yoomy! up heart! up heart!--By Oro! I will debark the whole company on the next land we meet. No tears for me. Ha, ha! let us laugh. Ho, Vee-Vee! awake; quick, boy,--some wine! and let us make glad, beneath the glad moon. Look! it is stealing forth from its clouds. Perdition to Hautia! Long lives, and merry ones to ourselves! Taji, my charming fellow, here's to you:--May your heart be a stone! Ha, ha!--will nobody join me? My laugh is lonely as his who laughed in his tomb. Come, laugh; will no one quaff wine, I say? See! the round moon is abroad."

"Say you so, my lord? then for one, I am with you;" cried Babbalanja. "Fill me a brimmer. Ah! but this wine leaps through me like a panther. Ay, let us laugh: let us roar: let us yell! What, if I was sad but just now? Life is an April day, that both laughs and weeps in a breath. But whoso is wise, laughs when he can. Men fly from a groan; but run to a laugh. Vee-Vee! your gourd. My lord, let me help you. Ah, how it sparkles! Cups, cups, Vee-Vee, more cups! Here, Taji, take that: Mohi, take that: Yoomy, take that. And now let us drown away grief. Ha! ha! the house of mourning, is deserted, though of old good

cheer kept the funeral guests; and so keep I mine; here I sit
by my dead, and replenish your wine cups. Old Mohi, your cup: Yoomy,
yours: ha! ha! let us laugh, let us scream! Weeds are put off at a
fair; no heart bursts but in secret; it is good to laugh, though the
laugh be hollow; and wise to make merry, now and for aye. Laugh, and
make friends: weep, and they go. Women sob, and are rid of their
grief: men laugh, and retain it. There is laughter in heaven, and
laughter in hell. And a deep thought whose language is laughter.
Though wisdom be wedded to woe, though the way thereto is by tears,
yet all ends in a shout. But wisdom wears no weeds; woe is more merry
than mirth; 'tis a shallow grief that is sad. Ha! ha! how demoniacs
shout; how all skeletons grin; we all die with a rattle. Laugh! laugh!
Are the cherubim grave? Humor, thy laugh is divine; whence, mirth-
making idiots have been revered; and therefore may I. Ho! let us be
gay, if it be only for an hour, and Death hand us the goblet. Vee-Vee!
bring on your gourds! Let us pledge each other in bumpers!--let us
laugh, laugh, laugh it out to the last. All sages have laughed,--let
us; Bardianna laughed, let us; Demorkriti laughed,--let us: Amoree
laughed,--let us; Rabeelee roared,--let us; the hyenas grin, the
jackals yell,--let us.--But you don't laugh, my lord? laugh away!"

"No, thank you, Azzageddi, not after that infernal fashion; better
weep."

"He makes me crawl all over, as if I were an ant-hill," said Mohi.

"He's mad, mad, mad!" cried Yoomy.

"Ay, mad, mad, mad!--mad as the mad fiend that rides me!--But come, sweet minstrel, wilt list to a song?--We madmen are all poets, you know:--Ha! ha!--

Stars laugh in the sky:

Oh fogle-fi I

The waves dimple below:

Oh fogle-fo!

"The wind strikes her dulcimers; the groves give a shout; the hurricane is only an hysterical laugh; and the lightning that blasts, blasts only in play. We must laugh or we die; to laugh is to live. Not to laugh is to have the tetanus. Will you weep? then laugh while you weep. For mirth and sorrow are kin; are published by identical nerves. Go, Yoomy: go study anatomy: there is much to be learned from the dead, more than you may learn from the living and I am dead though I live; and as soon dissect myself as another; I curiously look into my secrets: and grope under my ribs. I have found that the heart is not whole, but divided; that it seeks a soft cushion whereon to repose; that it vitalizes the blood; which else were weaker than water: I have found that we can not live without hearts; though the heartless live longest. Yet hug your hearts, ye handful that have them; 'tis a blessed inheritance! Thus, thus, my lord, I run on; from one pole to the other; from this thing to that. But so the great world goes round,

and in one Somerset, shows the sun twenty-five thousand miles of a landscape!"

At that instant, down went the fiery full-moon, and the Dog-Star; and far down into Media, a Tivoli of wine.