

## CHAPTER LXXXV

### They Depart From Serenia

At sunrise, we stood upon the beach.

Babbanja thus:--"My voyage is ended. Not because what we sought is found; but that I now possess all which may be had of what I sought in Mardi. Here, tarry to grow wiser still:--then I am Alma's and the world's. Taji! for Yillah thou wilt hunt in vain; she is a phantom that but mocks thee; and while for her thou madly huntest, the sin thou didst cries out, and its avengers still will follow. But here they may not come: nor those, who, tempting, track thy path. Wise counsel take. Within our hearts is all we seek: though in that search many need a prompter. Him I have found in blessed Alma. Then rove no more. Gain now, in flush of youth, that last wise thought, too often purchased, by a life of woe. Be wise: be wise.

"Media! thy station calls thee home. Yet from this isle, thou earnest that, wherewith to bless thy own. These flowers, that round us spring, may be transplanted: and Odo made to bloom with amaranths and myrtles, like this Serenia. Before thy people act the things, thou here hast heard. Let no man weep, that thou may'st laugh; no man toil too hard, that thou may'st idle be. Abdicate thy throne: but still retain the scepter. None need a king; but many need a ruler.

"Mohi! Yoomy! do we part? then bury in forgetfulness much that hitherto I've spoken. But let not one syllable of this old man's words be lost.

"Mohi! Age leads thee by the hand. Live out thy life; and die, calm-browed.

"But Yoomy! many days are thine. And in one life's span, great circles may be traversed, eternal good be done. Take all Mardi for thy home. Nations are but names; and continents but shifting sands.

"Once more: Taji! be sure thy Yillah never will be found; or found, will not avail thee. Yet search, if so thou wilt; more isles, thou say'st, are still unvisited; and when all is seen, return, and find thy Yillah here.

"Companions all! adieu."

And from the beach, he wended through the woods.

Our shallops now refitted, we silently embarked; and as we sailed away, the old man blessed us.

For a time, each prow's rippings were distinctly heard: ripple after ripple.

With silent, steadfast eyes, Media still preserved his noble mien;  
Mohi his reverend repose; Yoomy his musing mood.

But as a summer hurricane leaves all nature still, and smiling to the  
eye; yet, in deep woods, there lie concealed some anguished roots torn  
up:--so, with these.

Much they longed, to point our prows for Odo's isle; saying our search  
was over.

But I was fixed as fate.

On we sailed, as when we first embarked; the air was bracing as  
before. More isles we visited:--thrice encountered the avengers: but  
unharm'd; thrice Hautia's heralds but turned not aside;--saw many  
checkered scenes--wandered through groves, and open fields--traversed  
many vales--climbed hill-tops whence broad views were gained--tarried  
in towns--broke into solitudes--sought far, sought near:--Still Yillah  
there was none.

Then again they all would fain dissuade me.

"Closed is the deep blue eye," said Yoomy.

"Fate's last leaves are turning, let me home and die," said Mohi.

"So nigh the circuit's done," said Media, "our morrow's sun must rise o'er Odo; Taji! renounce the hunt."

"I am the hunter, that never rests! the hunter without a home! She I seek, still flies before; and I will follow, though she lead me beyond the reef; through sunless seas; and into night and death. Her, will I seek, through all the isles and stars; and find her, whate'er betide!"

Again they yielded; and again we glided on;--our storm-worn prows, now pointed here, now there;--beckoned, repulsed;--their half-rent sails, still courting every breeze.

But that same night, once more, they wrestled with me. Now, at last, the hopeless search must be renounced: Yillah there was none: back must I hie to blue Serenia.

Then sweet Yillah called me from the sea;--still must I on! but gazing whence that music seemed to come, I thought I saw the green corse drifting by: and striking 'gainst our prow, as if to hinder. Then, then! my heart grew hard, like flint; and black, like night; and sounded hollow to the hand I clenched. Hyenas filled me with their laughs; death-damps chilled my brow; I prayed not, but blasphemed.