

CHAPTER LXXXIX

They Enter The Bower Of Hautia

Conducted to the arbor, from which the queen had emerged, we came to a sweet-brier bower within; and reclined upon odorous mats.

Then, in citron cups, sherbet of tamarinds was offered to Media, Mohi, Yoomy; to me, a nautilus shell, brimmed with a light-like fluid, that welled, and welled like a fount.

"Quaff, Taji, quaff! every drop drowns a thought!"

Like a blood-freshet, it ran through my veins.

A philter?--How Hautia burned before me! Glorious queen! with all the radiance, lighting up the equatorial night.

"Thou art most magical, oh queen! about thee a thousand constellations cluster."

"They blaze to burn," whispered Mohi.

"I see ten million Hautias!--all space reflects her, as a mirror."

Then, in reels, the damsels once more mazed, the blossoms shaking from

their brows; till Hautia, glided near; arms lustrous as rainbows:
chanting some wild invocation.

My soul ebbd out; Yillah there was none! but as I turned round open-
armed, Hautia vanished.

"She is deeper than the sea," said Media.

"Her bow is bent," said Yoomy.

"I could tell wonders of Hautia and her damsels," said Mohi.

"What wonders?"

"Listen; and in his own words will I recount the adventure of the
youth Ozonna. It will show thee, Taji, that the maidens of Hautia are
all Yillahs, held captive, unknown to themselves; and that Hautia,
their enchantress, is the most treacherous of queens.

"'Camel-like, laden with woe,' said Ozonna, 'after many wild roving
in quest of a maiden long lost--beautiful Ady! and after being
repelled in Maramma; and in vain hailed to land at Serenia,
represented as naught but another Maramma;--with vague promises of
discovering Ady, three sirens, who long had pursued, at last inveigled
me to Flozella; where Hautia made me her thrall. But ere long, in Rea,
one of her maidens, I thought I discovered my Ady transformed. My arms

opened wide to embrace; but the damsel knew not Ozonna. And even, when after hard wooing, I won her again, she seemed not lost Ady, but Rea. Yet all the while, from deep in her strange, black orbs, Ady's blue eyes seemed pensively looking:--blue eye within black: sad, silent soul within merry. Long I strove, by fixed ardent gazing, to break the spell, and restore in Rea my lost one's Past. But in vain. It was only Rea, not Ady, who at stolen intervals looked on me now. One morning Hautia started as she greeted me; her quick eye rested on my bosom; and glancing there, affrighted, I beheld a distinct, fresh mark, the impress of Rea's necklace drop. Fleeing, I revealed what had passed to the maiden, who broke from my side; as I, from Hautia's. The queen summoned her damsels, but for many hours the call was unheeded; and when at last they came, upon each bosom lay a necklace-drop like Rea's. On the morrow, lo! my arbor was strown over with bruised Linden-leaves, exuding a vernal juice. Full of forbodings, again I sought Rea: who, casting down her eyes, beheld her feet stained green. Again she fled; and again Hautia summoned her damsels: malicious triumph in her eye; but dismay succeeded: each maid had spotted feet. That night Rea was torn from my side by three masks; who, stifling her cries, rapidly bore her away; and as I pursued, disappeared in a cave. Next morning, Hautia was surrounded by her nymphs, but Rea was absent. Then, gliding near, she snatched from my hair, a jet-black tress, loose-hanging. 'Ozonna is the murderer! See! Rea's torn hair entangled with his!' Aghast, I swore that I knew not her fate. 'Then let the witch Larfee be called!' The maidens darted from the bower; and soon after, there rolled into it a green cocoa-nut, followed by the witch,

and all the damsels, flinging anemones upon it. Bowling this way and that, the nut at last rolled to my feet.--'It is he!' cried all.--Then they bound me with osiers; and at midnight, unseen and irresistible hands placed me in a shallop; which sped far out into the lagoon, where they tossed me to the waves; but so violent the shock, the osiers burst; and as the shallop fled one way, swimming another, ere long I gained land.

"Thus in Flozella, I found but the phantom of Ady, and slew the last hope of Ady the true."

This recital sank deep into my soul. In some wild way, Hautia had made a captive of Yillah; in some one of her black-eyed maids, the blue-eyed One was transformed. From side to side, in frenzy, I turned; but in all those cold, mystical eyes, saw not the warm ray that I sought.

"Hast taken root within this treacherous soil?" cried Media. "Away! thy Yillah is behind thee, not before. Deep she dwells in blue Serenia's groves; which thou would'st not search. Hautia mocks thee; away! The reef is rounded; but a strait flows between this isle and Odo, and thither its ruler must return. Every hour I tarry here, some wretched serf is dying there, for whom, from blest Serenia, I carry life and joy. Away!"

"Art still bent on finding evil for thy good?" cried Mohi.--"How can Yillah harbor here?--Beware!--Let not Hautia so enthrall thee."

"Come away, come away," cried Yoomy. "Far hence is Yillah! and he who tarries among these flowers, must needs burn juniper."

"Look on me, Media, Mohi, Yoomy. Here I stand, my own monument, till Hautia breaks the spell."

In grief they left me.

Vee-Vee's conch I heard no more.