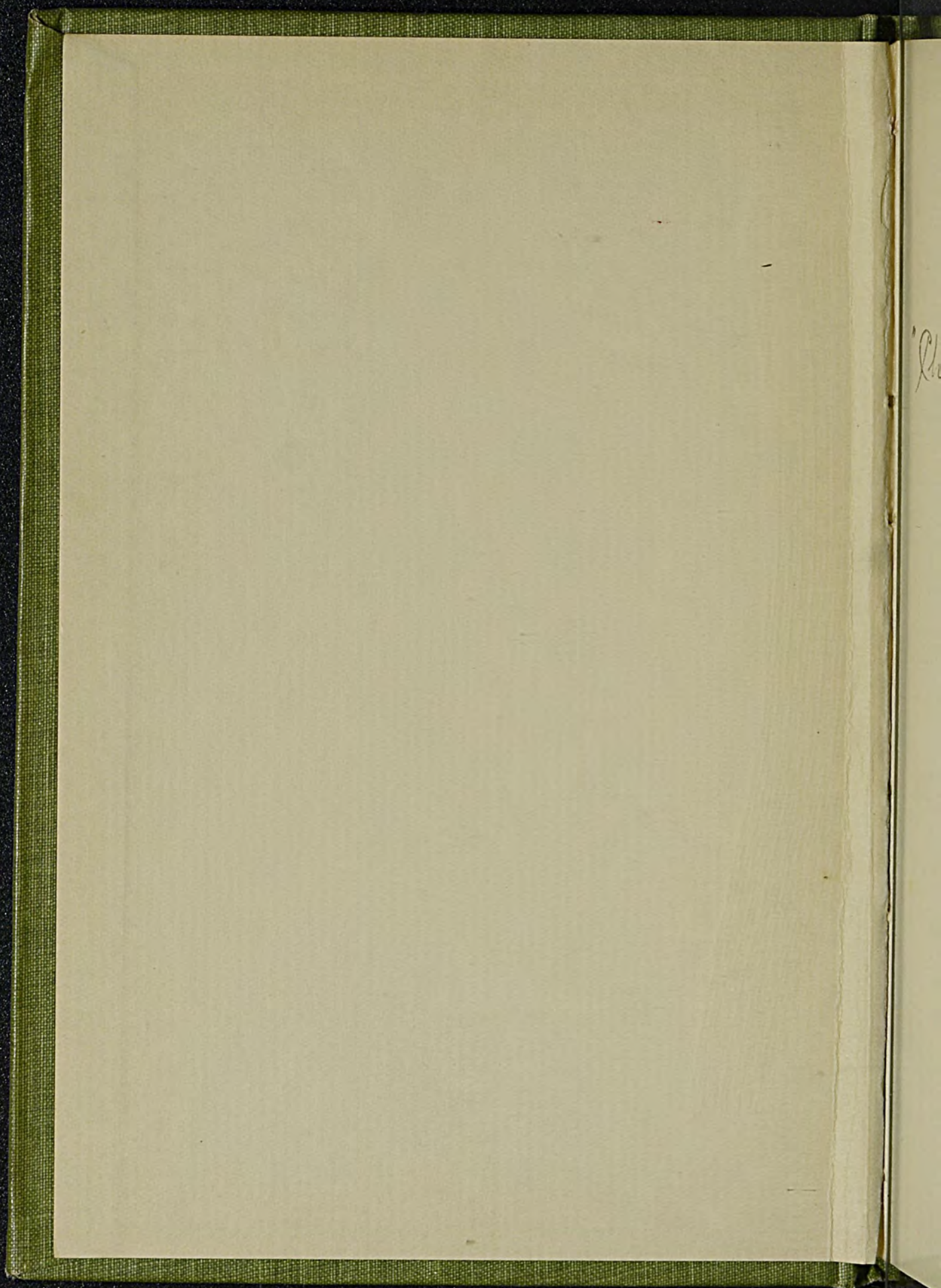




THE FALL OF UTOPIA



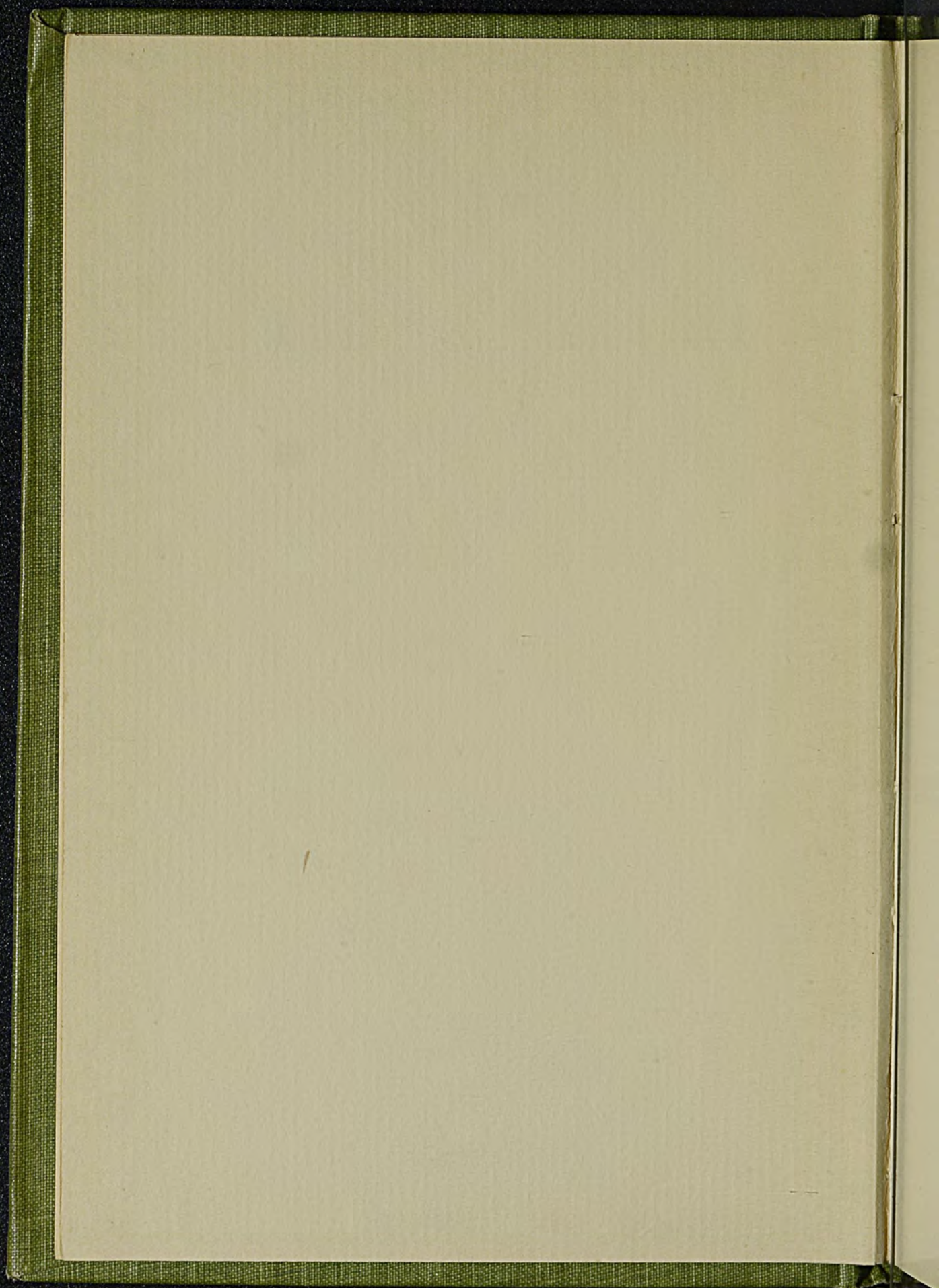
CHARLES J. BAYNE



To: Calvin W. Sawyer, Esq.
"avec reconnaissance et bons
souhaits"

From: T. Oscar Bonaparte,

"Christmas 1906" - Boston.



THE
FALL OF UTOPIA.

BY
CHARLES J. BAYNE.

AUTHOR OF

"A Truant from the Rhone." "Drones and Dreamers."
"Ruth and Her Relations." "The Water Spirit's
Bride." "The Things we Might Have Said."
"Trovato." "Perdita, and Other
Poems." "Gioia," Etc.



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“ Kingdoms and empires in my little day
I have outlived, and yet I am not old.”

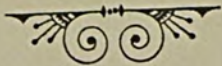
—BYRON.

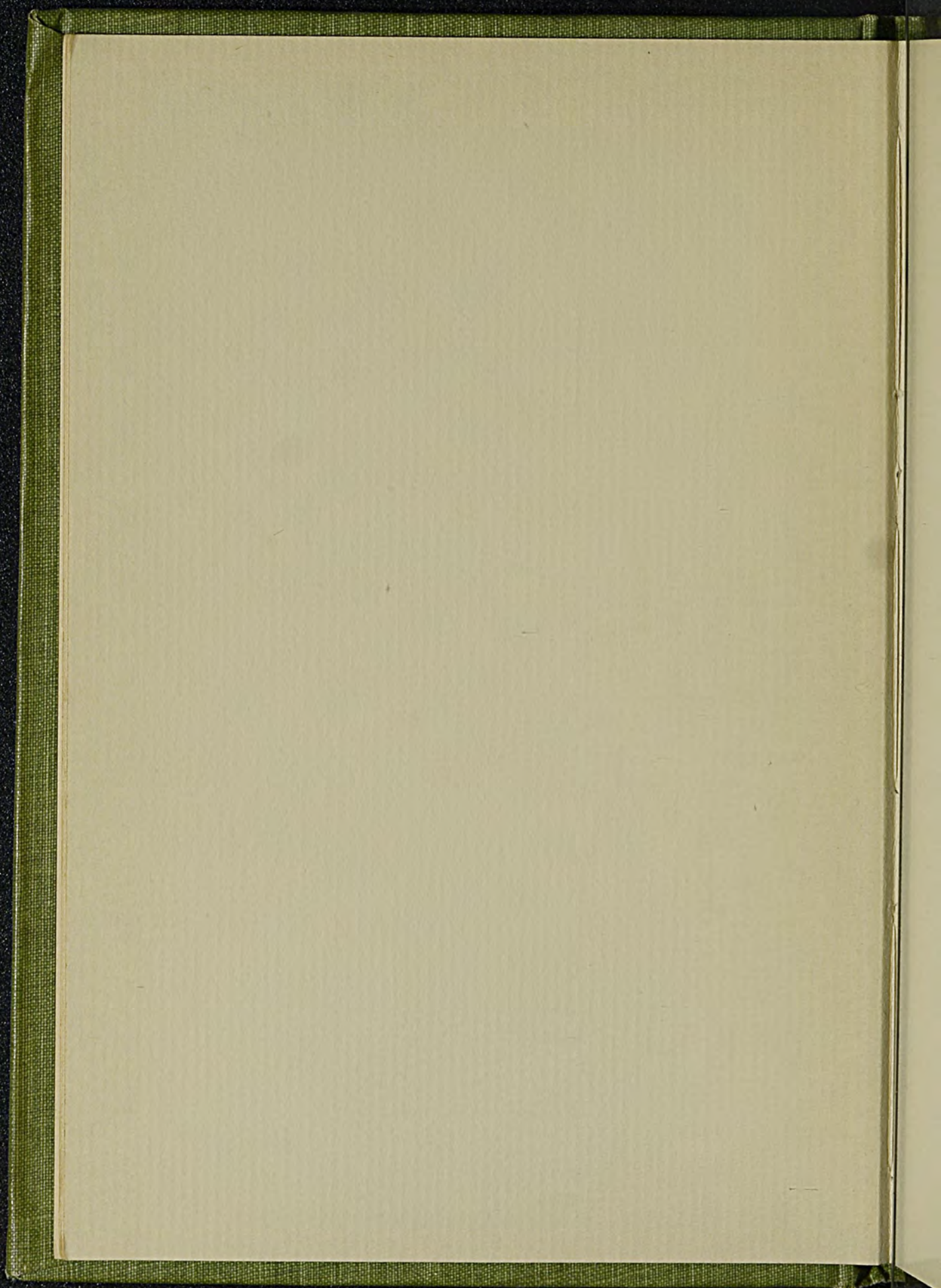


“ Là, il vizio, la dissolutezza, l'ingiustizia, la rapina, la frode, sono onorate, ricompensate dal potere supremo Là, il traditore della patria diviene il più potente cittadino dello Stato. Là, colui non è oppressore, è oppresso.”—GAETANO FILANGIERI, *Scienza della Legislazione*.



“ L'opulence d'une cité de commerce s'est changée en une pauvreté hideuse . . . et les reptiles immondes habitent le sanctuaire des dieux Ainsi donc périssent les ouvrages des hommes; ainsi s'évanouissent les empires et les nations.”
—VOLNEY, *Les Ruines*.





THE FALL OF UTOPIA.



CHAPTER I.



I AM a Moor. My birth, which occurred by an interesting succession of events deemed worthy to be recorded, in the neighborhood of Granada, was of humble parents. That is, they were poor and inconspicuous; and yet, if service to the great may be accounted ennobling, my lineage is not to be despised.

When Amina, the mother of Mahomet, had become unable to nurse her divine offspring, and for months had vainly sought among the sordid Bedouins for a foster mother for her lowly-born child, Harlema, the wife of a good Saadite shepherd who lived in the pleasant mountains near Tayef,

took the infant prophet from the unwholesome airs of Mecca and carried him to her own delightful home, where, until the third year of his age, he was reared with all a mother's tender care. Harlema had one son, Amroud, the boyhood companion of the Apostle of Allah, a youth of most excellent qualities; and to him my worthy father was able to trace an uninterrupted lineage.

In the early decades of the Hegira, while the Ismailis sect was alluring so many of the Faithful by its mystic promises, and, by its gradual domination over the mind and judgment, bringing so many to the tacit renunciation of Allah and his Prophet, Abdul Hassan, then in the enquiring and adventurous stage of youth, presented himself one day to the daï and expressed his desire to become a neophyte. Truth to say, there was in his mind more of curiosity than of devotion, but Abdul Hassan could dissemble well.

Being taken under instruction, he pretended to repose implicit confidence in all the daï said, by which the safety of admitting an applicant into the secrets of the sect is judged, and often would he break out

in the most fervent praises of the imam.

Satisfied with his evident sincerity, the daï proceeded to admit him successively, with all the accustomed oaths and securities, into each of the nine degrees, and he was finally confirmed a convert of Ismailis.

Soon, however, Abdul Hassan wearied of his new religion. Surfeited curiosity became disgust. Deluded and imposed upon by such hollow mockery, he determined to reveal the mysteries he had sworn to keep. A simple renunciation was not sufficient for his resentful mind. He would expose the deception, in spite of ban or menace, and give Ismailis a fatal sting.

The consequences were such as might naturally be expected. Never before had such treachery and sacrilege been known. The Prophet and the Silent One would be no longer venerable, and proselytes' gold would cease to flow into their common coffers. Actuated, therefore, by various incentives, the infuriated schismatics pursued Abdul Hassan with restless zeal.

There could be no safety but in flight, and soon the Exposer of the Mysteries had

left the tamarinds and acacias of Araby the Blest far behind him forever.

I will not dwell upon his sorrow at leaving the land of his nativity, nor the frequent earnest longings of the pilgrim's heart for its receding plains. These he had, let none deny, but what tongue can translate the idioms of the heart?

It was during the Feast of Roses, when the focusing grace and beauty of all the entrancing year wove a chaplet of joy with which to crown the smiling Summer, that the hard-pressed but unbroken fugitive arrived in the delightful Valley of Cashmere.

His anxious and distrustful heart was at first but little moved by the unequalled beauty of this luxuriant land. Misgivings were in his mind, whose power the conscious righteousness of his betrayal could not quiet. Soon, however, were calmed the exile's longing and the fugitive's fears. A wonderful peace possessed his soul.

One evening, attracted by the entrancing music that came softly stealing through the perfumed groves where bright fountains flashed in the mellow moon-light, he ventured

forth to witness the scene of merriment which was evidently in progress. True his soul was at peace, yet his flight from home and country, and the various misfortunes attendant thereupon had left a melancholy softness in his breast. Warm-hearted and susceptible in his nature, the feelings awakened by the magnificent scene before him amounted to an infatuation.

Lutes and tabors in the slender, jewelled hands of dancing damsels who lightly trod their own exquisite measures seemed to lend unwonted liveliness to the sparkling, leaping waters. The richest gems flashed from shapely throats and costly girdles; anklets and bracelets of finest gold encircled limbs of the most perfect mould, while all the oils and spices of the East seemed concentrated in this perfumed dream.

Abdul Hassan looked on amazed. All thought of his late disasters fled. Touched by the captivating beauty of the airy dancers, with whom the Houris themselves could not compare, and by the seductive melody which stole through the moonlit bower of roses that nodded in the fragrant air, his bosom

swelled frequently and deeply. A vague, unconscious spirit of love for the fair Cashmerians took possession of his heart.

Among the dancers was one, a damsel of uncommon beauty, who, above all others, engaged his eager gaze. No step was so light, no song so sweet, as hers. The golden ornament on her white brow was set with rarest gems that gleamed in the moonlight like the stars in Orion's Belt. Transported, infatuated, beyond degree by the lovely creature, his eyes at last could scarcely turn from her smiling lips and glowing cheeks, her ravishing form and supple step.

As moment after moment he gazed he felt that his heart was melting away — yes, that a frantic love for her possessed his soul, until, when the soft, amethystine streaks of approaching day sent the revellers to their bowery homes, he followed, with impatient heart, the lovely damsel to the place of her abode.



CHAPTER II.



MONG the few remaining Magi, whose priesthood, once dominating the very throne itself, was now swiftly passing away, there lived one, in the Valley of Cashmere, who possessed a daughter of surpassing beauty. So fair was she that none could gaze unmoved upon her heavenly form. There was light in her eye and grace and beauty in her step, and throughout all the country she was accounted the fairest.

The worthy King of Iran was a man whose discernment and esteem of excellent mental qualities had not been warped by bigotry or creeds, and at his court the learned Magian was frequently seen. Indeed, so great was the royal estimation of the Gheber priest that the King rarely ventured any momentous action without first consulting his erudite friend.

The Magian's charming daughter thus

became a familiar sight at court, where the full deference due, both to the daughter of so wise a man, and to the possessor of such unequalled charms, was willingly paid on every hand.

Among the votaries of this favored damsel none were more ardent in their tributes than the handsome foster son of the King, Prince Selim Azhurni. He was a youth of manly stature, dark, piercing eyes, and resolute, impressive features. Aside from his perfect figure and noble carriage, the Prince was noted for uncommon genius in poetry and music, a wonderful familiarity with the sciences, including some of the dark cabalas of Egypt, and an affability and pleasantness seldom found in one of his rank and age.

Yet was the passion of Prince Azhurni but smally rewarded by the smiles of the Magian's daughter. Graceful and attractive he was, to be sure, yet who can account for the caprices of a female heart? Neither had the glitter and magnificence of a kingly court been able to touch her unimpressible breast, so the captivated Prince sighed in vain.

Abdul Hassan, having found the abode

of the object of his passion, had not nursed the flame in profitless inaction. In the simple quarters which, by the laws of his office, the Magian was forced to occupy, the manly figure of the fugitive ere long became no unfamiliar sight. The diligence of love had been rewarded, and, by the dexterous insinuations which love alone can dictate, he had managed to introduce himself by night into the presence of the maiden. Being received with no unwillingness, he continued his nocturnal visits, in the absence of the Magian, until the maiden's toleration finally ripened into love quite as ardent as his own. At night while the bulbul sang to the sleeping rose, their fingers would alternately touch the love-tuned lute, and their soft-mingling voices, melting their passionate hearts into sweet accord, would rise through the myrtles until the coming of the Magian.

Meantime the obstinate little Cashmerian became more and more intolerant of the attentions of the Prince, and if she was not wanting in the demonstrations of her displeasure, neither was the unfortunate lover capable of dissembling the anguish which her

uncompromising coldness engendered, and this melancholy moping became the subject of conjecture throughout the realm.

"Why, O gentle daughter of the Magian!" said the Prince one day, as the damsel passed through a hall of the palace, "why! O fairest of women, wilt thou not smile upon me? Is thy heart, indeed, of stone? See! we shall have dominion and wealth, and the earth will not be able to contain my love for thee. Upon thy chiselled arm—" Here the Prince drew forth a bracelet of finest gold, glittering brightly with diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls, set with such combination of their colors as to produce a most remarkable effect, and half clasped it around her tapering arm.

Taking it quickly from her wrist, she seemed at first about to throw it into the fountain playing in the hall, but turned and respectfully gave it to the Prince again, saying, with mingled scorn and deference:

"Though thou wert *Cashna himself, and heir to a kingdom mightier than that of

*An Indian god of perfect beauty, especially idolized by the women.

†Kai Khusru, he whom I love would not be forsaken, O Prince, for thee !”

When the news of her petted son's ineffectual efforts to win the heart of the Magian's daughter finally reached the ears of the Queen, she, desiring to behold what supernatural graces characterized the man who had been preferred to a prince of the blood, immediately commanded that Abdul Hassan be brought before her.

Scarcely had the graceful young Arab crossed the threshold and paused before the Queen, when her eyes alighted upon an amethyst signet on his hand.

Trembling and agitated at the sight, the royal mother could scarcely maintain possession of her senses. Her cheeks grew pale and her whole frame gave evidence of a most disconcerted mind. The well trained Ethiopians about her knew not what to do. Finally she recovered sufficiently to say :

“ At last he comes of whom the sorcerer foretold ! It is he ! ”

Then, after a pause which somewhat calmed her deep emotion, she continued :

†Persian form of Cyrus.

“Son of the Faithful, thou hast come to a distant land to hear strange tidings of thy self. For thy coming I have watched like Iran for her *Great King. Leave me now; but, when the evening moon climbs over the mountains, see that thou returnest, and thy mind, which, I perceive, stirs with wonder, shall not go unsatisfied.”

Conjecturing and bewildered, Abdul Hassan retired; but at the appointed hour he returned to hear what the Queen might have to say.

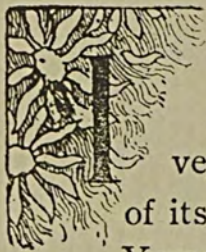
*Cyrus, according to the Persian poets, having grown old disappeared one day from the banks of a pleasant stream. His return, with increased magnificence, was religiously expected.



CHAPTER III.



THE QUEEN'S STORY.



N that region of Araby the Blest, loved and sought by all for the luxuriousness of its vegetation and the deliciousness of its climate, lies the kingdom of Yeman. The sparkling waters musically trickle down the hillsides of green, and the refreshing winds from the southern sea are unceasing. Even the renowned Hamaden could have been no more delightful, and the damsels of the kingdom were of the fairest.

"It was there I was born and reared during the happy reign of one of its wisest kings. My father had grown rich in the trade of frankincense, and doubly blest with his kind indulgences and the enjoyment of such a land, I grew up as happy and as free as the antelopes that drank from the crystal fountains of this favored spot.

"Until my seventeenth year no inci-

dent occurred which I deem worthy to relate. My devotions were punctually performed, and the fast of the month of Ramadan I observed like a true daughter of the Faithful. These, with my domestic duties and some simple diversions, occupied the tearless hours of my time.

“One day, however, at about the age I have mentioned, as I walked forth from my father’s tent — for it was the torrid month of Reby, and we were tenting without the city — I met a youth of surpassing grace and most pleasing countenance — a stranger in the kingdom of Yeman. He was the possessor of a mighty caravan, consisting of half a thousand camels and a hundred of those sure-footed steeds of Neged, which traveled from place to place, but most frequently were engaged in transporting precious stones and other costly merchandise of Africa, across the deserts to Katif, that wonderful city built of salt, in the province of Bahrein.

“Until then my inexperienced heart had remained unmoved, but no sooner did I behold his noble form and enrapturing smile than all the fountains of my heart broke

loose in a transport of the tenderest love. He, too, seemed affected; and, to my infinite joy, approached and spoke to me. Fairer he seemed than the great *Abdallah, on the night of whose nuptials two hundred jealous maidens expired in despair. The modulations of his voice were in keeping with his looks — tender and gentle. Soon this affable son of the ancient tribe of the Ayhurites became the continual companion of my happy days. Ah! to gaze into his eyes was like a draught from Al †Cauther. The streams danced more brightly, the flowers bloomed more sweetly and the winds blew more softly, than ever before; and all touched the sweet harmony of love.

“Thus the golden days went by. But finally a cloud came to over-spread our fair horizon. All the evil Dives seemed to have conspired against the celebration of our nuptials. The appointment of a day for their final consummation was sure to be attended by some deep calamity, various obstacles would invariably arise to prevent the celebration.

*Father of Mahomet.

†A stream of the Mahometan Paradise.

"Upon one occasion there was to be a feast and day of rejoicing in the kingdom of Yeman, for a poet of decided talents who would henceforth immortalize the tribe, had made his appearance there. It was agreed that the concluding festivities should be followed, while rejoicing damsels, with their tymbals and tabors, yet remained, by the celebration of our long-deferred nuptials.

"Scarcely had we begun, however, to prepare for this final feature as the banquet drew to a close, when, as if seized by some awful spell, the multitude was suddenly attacked with madness. They ran frenziedly away, and became incurable maniacs.

"Alarmed beyond expression by this extraordinary occurrence and crowning disappointment, it was determined that I should seek a certain wise Egyptian, deeply skilled in sorcery, astrology and the occult arts, with whom I chanced to be acquainted, and beg an elucidation of these remarkable demonstrations, or learn, at least, whether our hopes were destined to be fulfilled.

"A cave, secluded among the neighboring hills, to which, as a child, I had often

wandered, led down into labyrinthine excavations from which no human being could escape, if unfamiliar with its windings, and it was here the dark Egyptian spent his days. From the profound depths of his weird retreat a circular shaft communicated with the surface above, and from within its ebony walls the sage astrologer could perceive the wheeling stars at the height of noon.

"I shall not pause to describe his lonely cell, where mystic scrolls, smoked crucibles, and all the instruments of the alchemist's art lay around in wild confusion. When acquainted with my mission, he turned and called a raven, perching nearby with his head beneath his wing, and having around his neck of night a row of bells, alternately gold and silver. Whispering a few mysterious words into the bird's ear, he held him up that he might fly to the upper world. Then the Egyptian began preparing a tiny caldron, filling it with a number of peculiar liquids, and building beneath it a naphtha fire.

"The raven returned, bearing in his beak three petals, resembling those of the tulip, and these the Egyptian placed in the

boiling liquid. For several minutes he stirred the mixture with three arrows without heads or feathers, used in divination, repeating wild incantations. and then he drew forth the dripping petals.

"Certain characters, unintelligible except to himself, appeared upon their surface, and these he studied attentively for a few moments. He then retreated to the foot of the shaft, and, after observing the constellations for a short while, returned, and slowly answered :

"Not thee, but thine."

"This I readily understood to mean the hopelessness of our ill-starred love which could only be partially mollified by the vaguely promised union of our posterity. Ah ! it pierced like a yataghan to my loving heart, and I hastened to relate to my dear companion the words of the dark oracle.

"Allah acbar !" exclaimed he, and turned away. In a few days he returned, bringing with him two signets, of which the one had been so skillfully cut from the other that when united they were as a solid stone, so perfect was the union. Upon my hand

he placed the one cut in relief, charging me to bestow it upon the daughter with whom Allah should bless me, as foreshadowed by the dark Egyptian. The companion, from which it had been cut, he retained, intending, he said, to place it upon the hand of him whom heaven should send as a son.

“Immediately he left me and departed from the kingdom of Yeman. Thenceforward I neither saw nor heard of him more ; though many of the *taikhs of Arabia mention a youth, one of two brothers, bearing his name who participated in founding the recent City of †Victory upon the banks of the Nile.

“Soon the pangs of retrospection drove me from my once delightful home, and the happy days of my love, a blooming ‡Tayef in the desert of my life, became the source of grief too deep to permit delay among the blasted, desecrated scenes. Accordingly my father took me, and journeying for several months we finally arrived here in the kingdom of Iran.

“Among the many suitors who flocked

*Chroniclers.

†Cairo.

‡A region so peculiarly fertile that it was fabled to have been washed from Syria during the deluge.

around me, after the first transports of my grief had subsided, was the Magian, whom thou knowest. Unstricken then with years, of exquisite tastes and remarkable cultivation, he was at that time a man of great attractiveness, and I finally yielded to his importunities, and unsanctified relations sprang up between us.

“The offspring of this unbonded union was Zarinah — she whom thou lovest ! Yet so secret had been my indiscretions that when my present lord, the King, one day beheld me walking forth near his palace, struck with my grace and beauty, he delayed not to raise me to his throne, where in unrestricted favor, I have ever since remained.

“Hesitating in my unwillingness to see wedded the charming but dishonored offspring of error to the son of him I had so tenderly loved, should he come, as the oracle foretold, I have withheld from her the signet. Here it is. See ! There can be no mistake, for never was a more perfect fit.”

In a short time the astounded Abdul Hassan departed with the signets, and at night stole to his trysting bower with Zarinah.

The blemish of her birth had by no means altered his passion ; but his tranquil happiness was soon to be destroyed. The jealous Magian, discovering the passion of his idolized daughter, whom he had hoped to hold as the comfort of his declining years, determined to rid himself of Abdul Hassan ; so the loving couple, growing apprehensive, stealthily fled one night, and tarried not until safe upon the shores of Barbary.

The distressed old man, who had formerly divided his time between the two places, now abandoned the Valley of Cashmere and took up his abode in the royal palace.

On the African shore the fugitive pair resided in peace and happiness until their tardy death. The discovery of a vast treasure of gold and jewels by one of their descendants, among the ruins of a palace of Tripoli, which the eccentric Cahina, Queen of the Berbers, had caused to be destroyed that it might not fall into the hands of the conquering Abdallah, had rendered the line of Abdul Hassan immensely wealthy. This wealth they enjoyed in delicious inactivity until, joining arms with the invincible Tarik in

his victorious sweep to the Region of the Evening,* those whose bodies were not stretched between Gibraltar and the Bay, finally settled, with the Faithful from Irak, in the city and vicinity of imperial Grenada.

*Arabic HANDALUSIA, formerly applied to whole peninsula of Spain.



CHAPTER IV.



LOVE shall chant requiems over the grave-stone of eternity. From the beginning it has been ; to the end it shall be. The towers of its citadel gleam afar like the sacred Dome of the *Rock. Beautifier of sterility, ennobling principle of life, exhaustless as the fountains of †Osset ! Swelling like the tides of ‡Harpi Mu, it inundates creation. The loaded treasury of Suleyman the Wise could contain no gem so rich as the petrified throb of a loving heart.

How sacred to me have become the Vega's flowery sweeps, where the Xenil and the Darro thread a wilderness of sweets, and gently whisper to the fig-tree and the vine as they nod in the cooling breezes of the Sierra Nevada ! Its departed days have become pilgrim-shrines to my vagrant memory. Its borders are my ultimate bounds.

*Mosque of Omar, Jerusalem.
†Spirit of the Nile.

‡Miraculously replenished yearly.

But perhaps you remember that Boabdil fell; let me pause to explain. One day, when as yet the thankful *TE DEUM* of victorious Ferdinand had scarcely died away, and the rocky Alpuxarras still harbored scores of fugitive Moors, resentful and depredatious for the loss of their kingdom, the intrepid Isabella rode forth with only a few female attendants, and was rapidly but unwittingly making toward the rendezvous of one of the fiercest of these bands. My father's mother, seeing the imminent danger to which the Queen exposed herself, and more sensible to the appeals of sex than to the spirit of retaliation, hastened to apprise her of her peril. The grateful Isabella was profuse in her demonstrations of gratitude, and pressed my grandmother to remain, with her family and intimate friends, in the pleasant valley of her childhood. It is here I was born — here loved and sorrowed.

Among the number of this favored residue, there was a damsel of ravishing beauty who bore the name of Saffana, the Pearl. For her I had conceived, even in my earliest years, the most ardent and unbounded love.

Beautiful as day, a paragon of grace and loveliness, she had long held my heart a willing captive. Nor did she regard me with indifference. Along the silvery windings of the Darro, or up the green, refreshing knolls, we would often slowly wander, overflowingly transported by the sweet infatuation of mutual love; or else, seated beneath some nodding bower whose boughs sang dreamy songs of perfect peace, would read to each other from the poets of Arabia.

But this delicious dream suddenly had a lamentable end. One day as we sat together upon the verdant banks of the Xenil, to which our unconscious steps had wandered, a silken scarf, upon which she embroidered our intertwined names in the design of myrtle leaves, suddenly fell from her hands into the waters below. The current at this point being extremely swift, in an instant had carried it far down the stream, and I hastened after it with all speed. With great difficulty I finally secured it and returned in time to see a bold Spanish cavalier, mounted upon a fleet and gaily caparisoned courser, seize my worshipped Saffana in his arms and dart away be-

yond the Sierras ! My anguish was indescribable. Having no means of pursuit at hand, I was unable to follow the abductor, and was compelled to submit passively to my loss.

The years stole by, but my sorrow and devotion remained undiminished. I became a prey to the most morbid melancholy. Life was a sunless day, a starless night. But an incident finally occurred which altered my sad routine.

Among the many architectural wonders in the city and vicinity of Granada, in the construction of which art and science seemed exhausted, there was none of such grandeur as that of the Palace of the Zodiac. So stupendous was its plan, so perfect its execution, and so bewildering its general magnificence that there were those who claimed it to have been constructed, like Alhambra, by the aid of powerful genii. Twelve stately chambers, each having in its burnished ceiling one of the signs of the zodiac, set in stones of inestimable value, radiated from a hall, the crowning glory of the palace, which was known as the "Hall of Celestial Dreams."

The Islam interdiction of portraiture,

which required rash painters to furnish souls for their images when they should reach the other world, had but rendered the permissible decorations the more magnificent; and fretwork, tapestry, mosaic and arabesque seemed to breathe a perpetual harmony. Aside from the constellations which glittered from the ceilings of the chambers, the polished walls of variegated marble, worked into contrasts most agreeable to the eye, and tessellated floors whose tiny squares combined to represent sparkling streams flowing through luxuriant gardens, so dazzled the eye and bewildered the mind that no one has ever yet been able to describe them. The doors were of flaming brass, so hung that, when opened, their massive hinges began the most exquisite melodies, resounding throughout the entire palace.

But the "Hall of Celestial Dreams" was more wonderful still. No human tongue could describe its ingenious arrangement. This hall had been constructed by a holy santon, who, in a life-long retirement had conceived and perfected its wonderful design. Its walls were of aromatic woods, so carved

as to form a thousand and seven texts from the Koran and the Sonna, which could be read from as many different points, yet always the same. Its ceiling represented the entire firmament, moved by clock-work so as to perform the regular revolutions of the heavenly bodies as they were understood in the time of the santon.

Through imperceptible crevices in the marble floor, whose mosaics were set so as to present a different landscape from whatever angle viewed, exuded the most delicate and enduring perfumes. Sumptuous divans of gold, crimson, and purple brocade, wrought into vines or groves, with all their natural colors of fruit, leaf and flower, were arranged about the hall; and whoever slept thereon might see in his dreams whatever he most desired.

It was to this Hall of Celestial Dreams that I finally repaired, when my overwrought brain could endure no more, in hope of seeing the beloved object of my sorrow.

Faithful to its renown, the wonderful hall presented, in a dream, the darling object to my view. I perceived her, in a state of

the most evident despair, seated upon a rocky ledge on a distant island. So great was my transport at beholding the long-lost Saffana that I spared not a moment from gazing upon her heavenly face and to locate the surroundings — an error which I soon deprecated deeply, as I woke still ignorant of the place of her detention ; a second admission to the Hall not being allowed.

However, I had already experienced sorrow, and determined that, without pausing to indulge unavailing regrets, I would set out immediately to search all the islands of the sea for my abducted treasure.

The vessel in which I sailed, after being out for nearly two months, one day encountered a terrific storm, and was dashed to pieces by the fury of the waters. A small boat, into which, with a few companions, I had thrown myself when compelled to abandon the wreck, floated at the mercy of wind and wave for three days, then a monster sword-fish pierced and sank it, and I alone, of all my companions, reached a desolate island close at hand.

Its form, somewhat in the shape of a

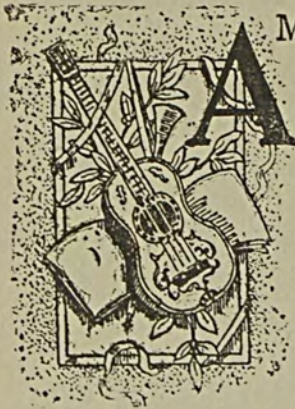
crescent, reminded me of the seat of that perfect government, Utopia, of which I had so often heard. For more than a day I wandered about among the ruins of what had evidently been substantial cities, and marvelled much at the shattered walls and deserted streets. On the evening of the second day I was astonished to perceive two figures — a gray haired man and a damsel of astonishing beauty — sitting together on the desolate sea shore. Astonishment was soon transformed into uncontrollable delight, however, when, on approaching, I discovered the maiden to be none other than my long-lost Saffana! I will not attempt to describe that thrilling scene of mutual surprise. Tongue and pen fall powerless. Nature would convulse in vain.

When the first ecstasies of meeting had passed away, I turned to her aged companion, and, learning that my conjectures were correct, gave eager ear, as in retrospect, he related the sad stories connected with the Fall of Utopia.

CHAPTER V.



THE UTOPIAN'S STORY.



AMONG the multitudinous principles, which, operating together, brought about the lamentable destruction of Utopia, and, upon the site of one of the most wonderful governments ever devised by wisdom and executed by discretion, planted the standard of desolation, it is impossible to select any definite agency to which one can point with accuracy as the predominant cause of this mighty falling away.

Numerous and various as have been these causes, the conclusion to which we are driven, in the absence of any specific principles to which the destruction is attributable, is, that, the fullness of time having arrived, the continual operations of combined circumstances,

finally wrought their fatal consummation.

From the Almighty's "Let there be!" human hearts have ever been the same. The passions have waged with equal warmth and similar inclination in every land and time. Imitation, the most natural and instinctive trait known to man, lapses quite as naturally into rivalry and contention. Envy and avarice insinuate themselves, and the principles of spontaneous destruction are thus unconsciously introduced into the best of economies.

The human mind, never refusing to entertain strong appeals to the passions, permits itself to engender a love of the marvelous, which, working upon the delighted imagination, gradually alienates the sober and dispassionate elements necessary to proper preservation, and allows idleness and dissolutions to creep into its strongholds. Superstition, following, exerts its undermining influence, and from the whole, spring unnumbered evils. The mind, too, as though intuitively recognizing its celestial origin, seems ever yearning for its lost estate, and is, by nature, inconstant and restless and

anxious for repeated changes. As a consequence, the monotonous similarity of dress, custom and habitation, such as the Utopian policy provided, excluding, moreover, the incentives of ambition and pride, no less than envy and vainglory, could not but receive a final overthrow.

Since no two men may perceive precisely alike, a difference of opinion must exist among all mankind. This, becoming known, as it naturally will, in the course of intercommunication, creates various discussions, every man holding tenaciously to his own tenets; wrangling and contention, inflamed with an inherent passion, bring about malice, envy, hatred and a disintegration of those institutions which concord and unanimity alone can preserve. Religion, science and philosophy continually hold open the ample fields of disputation, which but widen at each advance.

This spirit of selfishness, withdrawing the individual from the commonality, brought on, in this instance, the desire of individual wealth and personal emolument. Strife, avarice, cunning and deception came each to play its part. Bickerings and feuds mar-

shalled in the spirit of retaliation, and all the agencies of intestine discord were soon at work.

The continuation of a government characterized by a community of property, a contempt for wealth and ornament, and a wearying simplicity of dress and abode, was hence, in itself, impracticable ; but, the element which most nearly approached to a pre-eminence in working the fall of Utopia, was the introduction of foreigners and their manners.

Association readily breeds assimilation, and the various customs of other nations soon exerted influences that in addition to those just mentioned, wrought the final overthrow.

However, anxious stranger, without troubling you longer with my own analytical opinions, I will proceed to relate a few of the more prominent incidents in the history of this unfortunate island, and leave you to draw your own conclusions from these stories of love and hope and beauty ; of pride and envy and avarice.

I must speak of deeds that were done before my day, handed down, as they have

been, by indubitable traditions, with no inducement to misrepresentation, so I will go back to what seems to be the beginning, and I doubt not but what you will be able to trace from these stories the spark that ultimately brought about this lamentable ruin.

It was not far from this spot that the rays of the setting sun, falling upon a verdant grotto which opened upon the gentle windings of the river Anidar, softly touched a haggard brow upon which the beads of death were slowly gathering. At the kiss of the tender sunlight the dying man opened his glassy eyes, and, not entirely vanquished by the throes of this final hour, a mighty soul shone through. A profound, tenacious, and unyielding intellect must have lain behind; and the protracted lucubrations had not failed to leave their marks.

About him, in careless confusion, lay many yellow scrolls and mysterious instruments, so disposed as to leave no doubt of zealous usage.

"Daughter!" The sunken eyes beamed with an almost natural light as he heard himself utter the cherished name.

The hand of his daughter, Starlight, tightened its loving grasp upon his bony fingers, and the old man turned his kindling eyes upon the beautiful girl. Raising his feeble hand, he would have smoothed the soft, brown ringlets of her hair, as they fell in unconfined loveliness about her noble forehead, but it fell listless at his side. A sigh of despair half escaped his lips.

“Daughter! the stars have denied me the mysteries I sought, and, with their alluring secrets, have drawn this unrecompensed soul to the great Beyond. But no beam from the rolling spheres could ever rival my own Starlight, so long the solace of my enfeebled years: and now alas! I must lose thee, too. But I would die, as I have lived, patiently and resignedly. Under our perfect government thy temporal wants shall be well supplied, and may the great Mithras ever lovingly guard thy soul! Kiss me, Starlight! — and farewell!”

The weeping girl tenderly pressed his clammy lips, and the old man breathed no more.

CHAPTER VI.



As the years rolled by the natural grace of Starlight matured in astonishing beauty. The sorrows of her early life set a melancholy softness in her deep, dark eyes, and a touching sadness in the curve of her ripened lips. Her nature, too, partook of this winning gentleness, and the tenderness of her heart was known to be equalled only by the penetration of her mind.

In the same family as that to which, as was the custom of the Utopians, she had been confided on the death of her father, there was a girl of about her own age. So similar were they, not only in disposition, but in outward form, and so enamored were they of each other, that they were known throughout the island as the Sisters. Their beauty and winning traits made them universally renowned and loved.

Since the death of the studious recluse,

Starlight and Phrystia had been inseparable. Side by side, when, on harvest day, the Utopians went forth to gather their sun-ripened grain, the devoted friends pursued their appointed tasks. At evening, and during the leisure hours of noon, they retired alone to the cool, refreshing garden of their home, where they would join their voices to the sound of some musical instrument, or read aloud by turns from a favorite author. Thus many years went by. Finally, however, an incident occurred which altered the peaceful tenor of their lives.

It was a custom among the Utopians to send out one of their inhabitants occasionally, to collect debts due the government by neighboring nations for the overplus of corn, wool, etc., sold them during such years as the wisdom and industry of Utopia had produced more than was requisite for their own consumption. Since, in the island itself, a community of property obtained, there could be no need of money, except in the rare case of war; consequently such as were sent to collect these dues were permitted to remain some time in the foreign country and live in

the most sumptuous and expensive manner, at the cost of the State.

Othiastes, son of a noble Archphilarch of Amaurot, had recently returned from such a mission. Scarcely had he reached his native city, from which he had been absent many years, when the fame of the surpassing gentleness and beauty of Starlight and Phrystia reached his ears. His naturally amorous temperament had not been cooled by his sojourn at the foreign court, and he hastened to pay his respects to the charming and devoted Sisters.

The reports of their graceful and engaging manners were substantiated. Indeed, notwithstanding the elevated pitch to which rumor had raised his anticipations, he was compelled to confess great astonishment on beholding the real objects of such unlimited praise, beautiful beyond his highest conceptions. It is unnecessary to relate that such wit and beauty as he here found combined made an easy prey of his susceptible heart. They became the exclusive objects of his dreams and meditations, and not a moment of their agreeable companionship was sacri-

ficed but upon occasions of the most imperative necessity. If the names of the Sisters had before been united whenever uttered, there was now added another equally inseparable.

But the difficulty of making a preference between the two soon confronted him, for polygamy was not allowed in Utopia. So unselfishly devoted were these remarkable Sisters that each even sought to further the interests of the other in the eyes of the undecided lover, to whose many captivating traits they, nevertheless, were by no means insensible. This generous care for the welfare of each other rendered both but more amiable in the sight of Othiastes. Thus for months he stood distracted and irresolute between the two.

Finally, however, a change in the generous love of Phrystia decided the vacillating lover. The spirit of unselfish affection for her foster sister gradually declined before her more ardent passion for Othiastes, and she, at length, began exercising all the artifices she could conceive to prejudice his heart in her own favor—for there are no

surprises in love. With this change her whole conduct and disposition altered. She avoided the uncomplaining Starlight, and seemed to regard her with that suspicion she knew she had justly roused against herself. The silent consciousness of an ungenerous action rendered her petulant, morose and passionate.

Othiastes was not slow to perceive this unkind abandonment of the gentle Starlight, and his preference for the astronomer's daughter immediately prevailed. Henceforth she alone engaged his meditations and attentions. Phrystia grew daily more odious in his sight, until, intensified by his increasing love for Starlight, his indifference towards her amounted to abhorrence.



CHAPTER VII.



THIASTES, once settled in his choice, pursued his suit with unfailing zeal. Starlight, ripening daily into more perfect beauty, became his second self, and scarcely any hour found them separate. Side by side in all their labors, they spent their leisure, whether playing the engrossing game of the Virtues and the Vices, or wandering through the neighboring groves and gardens, always in a congenial companionship.

Starlight retained her unselfish regard for the false Phrystia, and seemed unconscious of her treachery. Yet she could not but confess a partial tenderness for her assiduous lover. However, an incident soon occurred which, appealing to her sympathetic heart, diverted the tendency of her passion.

There lived, in a certain quarter of Amaurot, a youth of many estimable qualities of mind. His manly character, lively

intelligence and generous nature had rendered him universally beloved. One night he dreamed that, as he walked alone in the temple, a massive candelabrum, branched into the shape of a sheaf of corn, and used exclusively during the first month of harvest, suddenly fell upon him as he passed beneath it, and struck him on the head with tremendous force. He fell, bleeding, to the floor and seemed experiencing all the pangs of dissolution when he awoke. This dream he took to be a forerunner of his death when the approaching harvest should arrive, and immediately abandoned himself to the deepest melancholy.

Nothing could distract his thoughts from the attended calamity, and without sleep or sustenance, day or night, he brooded over his unfortunate situation. Music and gaiety had lost their charms. Reading and disputation, in which, especially, he once delighted, could not bring him to himself again.

The tender heart of Starlight had been touched by the story of this unfortunate youth, and she determined to beguile him, if possible, from his fatal reflections. She often

visited him, and exerted all her charms for his recovery, but, while he could not remain altogether insensible to such unprecedented grace, he could not be weaned from his deeply seated sorrow.

Starlight did not despair, but continued her gentle smiles and kindly ministrations. Nor could her sympathetic heart restrain its feeling within the bounds of a friendly and charitable regard.

The troubled youth unconsciously acquired a stronger sway over the anxious girl. Biased in favor of what her heart conceived to be a duty, she soon abandoned her incipient passion for Othiastes, and, quickened by the foretaste, turned toward the declining Dreamer with the most ardent devotion.

Had it not been for the unmistakable evidence of an inward decline — hollowing cheeks and enfeebling steps — it might have easily been supposed, as, well pleased with the ingenuous Starlight, the languisher would smilingly converse with the devoted girl, that at last a saviour had been found to divert his thoughts from their dolorous channel.

Meantime Othiastes burned with jealousy and revenge. The fiercest hatred is often but a kind of love. It is passion, all. And the disappointed lover, with a malignity commensurate with his devotion, in that wild inexplicable spirit of destruction and desperation which frequently seizes upon human hearts, resolved on a fearful vengeance upon the unsuspecting Starlight.

According to the ancient laws of our island, for any two or more inhabitants to be found guilty of discussing matters pertaining to the government was considered a crime for which death alone could atone, and this punishment was often most summarily executed. When the infamous Othiastes beheld this remarkable couple so often in each other's company, it was to this vigorous and inviolable law that his desperate heart reverted. Here, under the semblance of anxiety for his country's welfare, he might deal his fatal thrust and gratify his implacable vengeance, unquestioned, unsuspected of his motives.

Revenge never shrinks from its instruments; and passion warms the blood that would else run cold. At this critical period,

Othiastes thought of the treacherous Phrystia. "What heart, once sinning, sins but once?" said he. "The hell in human breasts yearns for expiring Virtue, and clamors loudly for its corse; and envy, joined with depravity, defies both heaven and earth."

Seeking out the unfaithful Sister, Othiastes renewed his attentions; and she, too obtuse to perceive the motive concealed beneath his specious love, abandoned herself to the most unrestrained infatuation over her imagined triumph.

At the proper moment, the vindictive, designing lover engaged the willing Phrystia into his unconscionable scheme, and soon the island of Utopia grew noisy with whispers of astonishment, exchanged on every hand, that Starlight and her remarkable lover had formulated designs against the government.

With trembling expectancy they awaited her appearance before the Senate.



CHAPTER VIII.

UTOPIA, throughout its length and breadth, had, for some time, re-echoed the startling story, and now the investigation was at hand.

Starlight, trembling with excitement, stood before the assembled Senate, confronted by her accusers, and surrounded by a curious multitude. The desperate illness of the Dreamer, who shared with her the charge of guilt, had prevented his appearance, and so she stood alone.

Othiastes, displaying the boldness of an unfeeling heart, began his accusations with a half triumphant air and unhesitating voice. His well conceived story, couched in words of studied smoothness, seemed to carry conviction as it fell. During his pauses, all eyes were turned upon the unfortunate girl. Many gave vent to expressions of indignation and heaped maledictions upon the trembling Starlight, who had dared to concert designs against the public good. Others gazed with

compassion and incredulity into her innocent, downcast eyes.

The shameless Phrystia followed, substantiating the charges of Othiastes, and recounting various occasions on which she herself had overheard treasonable words fall from the lips of the lovers.

The Prince then turned to Starlight and bade her speak, if there was anything she wished to say in her defence. She raised her head, and, calming her emotion, with a half defiant glance in her naturally tender eyes, thus began :

“ Prince and most noble Senators ! if love be criminal, I have sinned ; if sympathy be transgressive, I have erred ; and if tenderness for the unfortunate be accounted treason to the State, most deeply have I offended, and most willingly will I suffer ; but, if a regard for the tender ties of humanity and a response to the gentle dictates of a woman’s heart may continue to be considered as in the spirit of our government, most jealously have I kept the law. Unaccustomed to the machinations of the wicked and designing, and a stranger, by reason of my sex, to the art of

disputation, there is but little hope that my simple contradiction of the charges urged against me will be able to prevail against the artifice and chicanery of an accomplished deceiver. Let me not hope to be so fortunate. But, having ingenuously related the true reason of this persecution, no judgement can deprive me of my serenity of conscience, nor the buoyancy of spirit which follows the innocent to the grave.

“You must know, most sapient counselor! that a jealous heart is the bed-stone of this calumnious fabric. The love of Othiastes’ frozen heart has melted into revenge. Once he loved me, but I did not retain a similar love for him ; and from the depths of his despair all this turpitude has evolved. From the cinders of hope burst the flames of desperation ; while the throne of beneficence becomes the footstool of depravity. I loved — still love — another ; and this love his abandoned heart would make the instrument of my destruction.

“She who ratifies his accusations, once the sister of my heart, and but dearer for the relationship which no common blood allied,

has been weaned from her sisterly devotion by the stronger appeals of her passion for Othiastes. Her I will spare all denunciation or reproach, well knowing that the agonies of retribution will be sufficient when her dissimulating lover, his end accomplished, has ungratefully abandoned her.

"I can do no more than repeat my protestation of innocence. They who love must suffer. There is a fable, which a cunning Greek relates, that 'from a mystic egg, laid by primeval Night, sprang forth sweet Eros with his golden wings, the pervading principle of Love.' But, rather, for me, has immortal Eros hatched from some mystic egg deep chaos and eternal night!"

Starlight ceased. Overcome with emotion she sank almost at the feet of her accusers.

In spite of the Constitution of Utopia, which declared that all deliberations of state should continue three days before the final judgement, the Prince and Council were about to render their decisions when, in the midst of the uproarious multitude, a man mounted upon the shoulders of his fellows

and shouted to the Council, above the din, to be allowed, by special exception, to speak in behalf of the accused, seeing her own inability to defend herself, and her accusers being two to one.

The Prince, answering for the Council, granted the permission.

This generous stranger — stranger at least to Starlight — was one of the public disputants of Utopia, who, by a provision of its government, on having displayed sufficient talent and inclination, are exempt from the daily duties of common citizens, and are allowed to devote their time to study and debate.

No other incentive than the sympathetic concern which Starlight's deplorable situation had awakened actuated him to undertake her rescue, but, plunging into the heat of argument, and inspired by the righteousness of his cause, he attacked the fallacious charges with a vigor, dexterity, and penetration which proved him a most accomplished disputant. One by one the allegations of the accusers were forced to fall before his tremendous sweeps ; but, in spite of his mighty

effort, he was unable to prove, by living evidence, the falsity of the accusations. With a mighty appeal to the dictates of innate justice and humanity, the speaker concluded and disappeared.

The tumult among the divided multitude ran high. Confusion reigned supreme. All efforts to restore quiet were, for some time, in vain. Comparative silence, however, was finally secured.

The Senators assembled closely about the Prince, and, in undertones, began their deliberations. The Council was much divided; many arguing the youth, even the beauty, as well as the evident innocence of the maiden; some remembered the estimable qualities of her studious father; some were touched by her tender attachment to the Dreamer. Others noted only the lack of conclusive contradiction of the charges made against her and descanted upon their duty to fulfil the letter of the law.

A decision was finally reached. The Prince arose, holding in his hand the decisive judgment. Not a sound was heard. The anxious crowd leaned forward breathlessly to

catch the word. Every eye was fixed in intensest expectation.

Just then Starlight, returning to consciousness, opened her eyes and feebly stirred. The lips of the Prince parted, and she caught the words :

“In the name of Mithras and of Justice, death !”

Starlight sank upon the floor.



CHAPTER IX.



Last day before harvest was nearly spent. The haggard youth who, for months, had been wasting away with his afflicting apprehension, now knew that the end was near and that his vision was about to be fulfilled. Indeed, the glassy stare of approaching death was already in his eyes.

Turning to the anxious watchers at the bedside, he made an effort as though to speak. Presently his thin lips parted :

"Before I die," said he, "I desire, my faithful friends, to make known to you the story of my life, which has remained undisclosed until now, and I pray Heaven for strength to sustain me while relating it.

"That I am not a Utopian by birth is no secret. I was born in the vicinity of one of the most noted of European capitals, and was the elder of two sons. My father, a

man of no small fortune, lavished all that heart could wish upon my brother and myself, and being a man of some discretion, he assembled at his spacious chateau, the most learned and distinguished tutors, sparing no cost in embellishing the minds of his idolized children. Our every whim and fancy, from very infancy, had been indulged, and, but for the ineradicable perversity of our hearts, even after his lamented death, we might have continued happy.

“My brother, though otherwise a man of infinite good sense, generous, handsome and engaging, was yet possessed of the most amorous of all hearts. This weakness, whether from inability or a want of inclination, he rarely failed to gratify, and was consequently led into a multitude of embarrassing errors and indiscretions. His passions pursued their caprices with a blind disregard for whatever consequences might be entailed.

“As for myself, an insatiable avarice was my predominant passion, and in its gratification I was no less impetuous than my uxorious brother. My father, during our

childhood, in order to counteract the inclination towards prodigality, had caused us to be instructed, though in the midst of luxury, to recognize the wisdom of providence and economy. In my brother, the effect was the desired medium, but in myself, confirming a natural inclination, it soon produced a sordid, niggardly avarice, which set all ties and feelings at defiance.

“Immediately upon the death of our father, my brother and myself apportioned our inheritance. The chateau itself, in addition to a considerable sum fell to the share of my brother; while to me fell the rich estates surrounding it, with a proportionate amount of ready money.

“My brother, desiring to travel, soon set off, after heartily granting me permission to occupy the paternal residence as my own until his return.

“In the warm, luxuriant countries along the Mediterranean his susceptible heart expanded with delight, and seemed to feel that it had found the perfect paradise of love. Each day found him sighing at the feet of some new beauty, and the suspecting stars

nightly blushed at his continual vows. Lavish and improvident, he was frequently without funds and much inconvenienced to re-establish himself.

“Finally, with his unrestrained excesses he fell ill. In a neighboring cloister there lived a pious nun, alike remarkable for her beauty and for the causes which led her to take the veil. In youth she had loved above her station, and, in order to deliver the object of her affection from the threatened resentment of an intolerant uncle, she had proved the genuineness of her devotion by secretly withdrawing from the world. An uncommon care and tenderness characterized her ministrations, and her goodness and beauty made her known far and near.

“When my brother fell ill, she hastened to visit him, and each succeeding day found her religiously at his side.

“One day she noticed a signet upon his hand, and its remarkable motto excited her surprise. During the feudal ages a popular amusement at the various courts of Gaul was a kind of verbal tournament between different troubadours or minstrels, on questions

of love, over which the noble ladies usually presided and arbitrated. A curious code, anonymously compiled, and of great antiquity, was used on these occasions, a copy of which, in the palace of King Arthur, was suspended by a chain of gold from a falcon's perch. From this peculiar work my brother had taken the following appropriate line: *L'Amour ne peut rien refuser à l'amour*. It was with this sentiment in his heart and these words on his signet that he had set out to conquer the world.

Perceiving these remarkable words, the human nature in the breast of the lovely recluse prevailed, and she desired my brother, now much improved, to give an account of his eccentricity.

"This request but afforded an opportunity to express the ungovernable love, improper, he confessed, but not impure, which he had long since conceived for her. Surfeited with idle and unprofitable passions, he had really come to love this tender, self-sacrificing unfortunate with a depth and sincerity which lent persuasive force to his appeals.

“At first the gentle nun was overwhelmed with chagrin and astonishment at this disregard for the sanctity of her office, and scorned his audacious advances ; but, having once been touched by words of familiar softness, the half-forgotten chords again vibrated in her heart, and, in the intoxication of awakened love, in the transports of feeling, augmented by a favor which she was forced to confess she entertained for her charge, she finally renounced her vows of celibacy and seclusion, and awaited with impatience my brother’s recovery, which would witness the consummation of their nuptials.

“With all the anxiety of a loving heart, she noted each phase of his convalescence, and rejoiced at the approach of the welcome day of union.

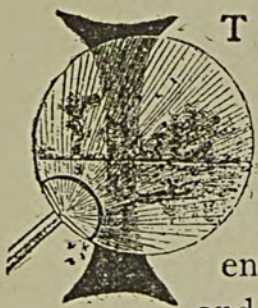
“But the happiness of both was to be unfulfilled. She herself fell sick on the eve of the approaching alliance. Day by day she declined. Love and tenderness were unavailing and at last she died.

“Overcome with his insupportable sorrow, my distracted — brother — retur — ”

The dying man could say no more. A convulsion seized his emaciated frame, and the agonies of death seemed upon him.



CHAPTER X.



T was a doubtful struggle. Life and death contending for the mastery! Now one, now the other seemed about to prevail. At last the patient's fixed eyes opened again, and his spirit veered toward the world of the living. Slowly he recognized his surroundings and finally was sufficiently recovered to resume his story :

“As for me, no power could eradicate the inveterate avarice of my nature. While my generous parent lived, the friends and companions who laughed with me were as numerous as his unstinted liberality and good fellowship could procure, and these boyhood friends were as sincere and unselfish as heart could wish. Nor did I lack that tender love which no sex can ever receive from its kind.

“A gentle, loving creature had given me the pure affections of her childish heart. In return, I adored her. But alas for my unconquerable weakness !

"The covetous heart is a sorcerer leagued with hell, before whose almighty touch love and trust melt away as the snow summers off from the mountains! Idolatrous iconoclast! Arch-destroyer of human hopes! The thief of souls! The off-spring of envy; the parent of jealousy; the enemy of peace and mercy! Cursed spirit of despair! One by one, my envious and despicable heart destroyed its tranquil pleasures.

"On the return of my sorrowful brother from the scene of his overwhelming misfortune, far from receiving him with brotherly cordialty and the tenderness which his remorseful and melancholy state of mind demanded, I not only refused him admission to the home of his childhood, but maintained absolute possession of the property which he had unsuspectingly entrusted to me.

"Perceiving the effect of his unrestrained confidence, and the utter futility of any attempt to recover his chateau, even if inclined, he sadly left me in quiet possession of our ancestral estate. Nor have I ever seen him since.

"One would think that the compunction

of conscience for having committed such an outrage would have cured this distemper of the soul; but avarice would deplume the angels, and coin the golden throne of God! The nearest and dearest of my friends were gradually estranged. The humble peasants whom I once esteemed for their intrinsic virtues, I now despised for their lowliness. My heartless treatment of indigent dependents and fallen friends would make a revolting story.

“ She whom I had once tenderly loved fell a victim to my impartial passion. For months together she would be forced to mourn my neglect, when a blind absorption in business affairs led my thoughts away; again she would find herself the object of intolerant jealousy. Thus my inconstant heart vacillated until one day, as we stood upon a beetling cliff overlooking a scene of surpassing grandeur, she turned to a youth who accompanied us, and addressing him, smiled with what I chose to think too much warmth. Being more ill-humored than usual, I was so provoked at her boldness that I dealt her a heavy blow, and she fell lifeless

and mangled upon the jagged rocks below.

"I was for some time insensible of the magnitude of my crime; but, gradually recovering from my intoxicated and resentful state of mind, I came to a realizing sense of my ferocious conduct, and gradually grew less interested in my lands and coffers. Once beginning to soften, my heart recalled with infinite remorse, the happy days of my innocent childhood, spent in the sweet companionship of the gentle being I had murdered!"

The Dreamer could scarcely continue for emotion. He seemed to experience all the agonies of which he told. His voice, too, was growing perceptibly weaker, and his story seemed about to remain unconcluded. After some time, however, he again rallied, and continued.

"It is needless to attempt a description of my feelings at this critical time. Every reminder of my sordid passion became insupportably odious, and I determined to abandon the scenes of error forever.

"It was about this time that I learned from an aged sailor, of a country beyond the

seas which he called "Hutopia," where all property was owned in common, and money was a thing unknown. There would consequently be no strife, or covetousness, and such, it seemed to me would be a suitable asylum for my self-detested soul.


"I accordingly agreed with the mariner that if he would but land me safely on that peaceful, favored island, he should have possession of all my rich estates. In a short while we began our journey, and in due time arrived at Amaurot, where I have ever since remained."

He ceased. Exhausted as he was with his lengthy narrative, it was evident that his end would soon come. His breath came at less regular intervals, and with greater difficulty. He lingered until the rising sun peeped over the eastern hills, and as the harvest day came beautifully on, the watchers around his bedside whispered :

"The dream has been fulfilled !"



CHAPTER XI.

HE day of Starlight's execution had arrived. Excited groups of citizens, who had not yet forgotten the recent scenes in the Senate, were assembled at various places throughout the city of Amaurot, and the unrestrained fury of partisan hatred among those who approved or condemned the fatal sentence gave a menacing appearance which had never been known before. All efforts towards pacification were ineffectual, and so universal was the feeling, either for or against the condemned conspirator, that only a few desired to make the attempt. Long before dawn the streets had begun to surge with the restless, clamorous, mad throng and, deserting their flocks and fields in the general frenzy, the people of the neighboring country came into the excited city.

The warmth of dispute often led to blows, and, friend joining friend, riotous numbers were frequently embroiled. Much,

indeed, was to be feared from the increasing contentions, and Amaurot trembled for its fate.

The immediate vicinity of Starlight's place of confinement was naturally the point of centralization, and here all Utopia seemed assembled. Here was the scene of the most portentous violence.

At last Starlight appeared, surrounded by officers and ghostly counsellors, and the solemn train began wending its way toward the place of execution.

Popular frenzy became wilder still, and the hideous riot and din, spreading wider and wider, growing louder and louder, became a chaotic convulsion, a seething anarchy.

Starlight's partisans seemed the predominant faction, and when she appeared the contest for her release became indescribably frantic. The sympathetic heart of the Utopian populace was touched; their blood was all aflame. Civil strife, before unknown, was more awful for its novelty; its consequent disasters had not yet been learned.

The tumultuous crowd had been kept at bay, but, passing into a narrower street, a

funeral train was suddenly encountered, slowly marching along to the sound of solemn music. Death beheld death and shuddered. The multitude grew calmer for a moment, and someone whispered :

“The Dreamer !”

Starlight's expectant ears caught the words and she fell senseless to the earth.

Without pausing to ascertain the cause, the infuriated crowd renewed its struggles with greater desperation than ever. Thinking the object of their contention dead, the partisans of Starlight turned revengefully upon the homes of their foes, and, laying waste with astonishing rapidity, touched fire to the rifled buildings, and put the axe to the groves and gardens of the citizens who had so recently become their implacable enemies.

The work of devastation was already progressing with a celerity which promised an early destruction of the city, and even a desolation of the island, when the prostrate girl opened her eyes. Consciousness returned and, glancing about her, she saw the awful evidence of the vengeance which, she learned, was being executed in her behalf.

Through the tumult she implored them, as best she could, to forbear. For a moment she seemed to forget her own anguish of heart in her anxiety for the city. Her supplications were for a long time disregarded, but they finally prevailed, and the maddened crowd which mocked at opposition was moved by persuasion.

Seeming to feel duty grow upon her, she begged her riotous partisans to cease their quarrels altogether, and, the weaker faction which opposed being only too glad to permit them, they gradually became more subdued.

Discretion, too, directed that it would be advisable to forego the execution of Starlight until some more advantageous time, and so, not without some half-smothered curses from the infuriated crowds, the pale and trembling maiden was returned to her gloomy confinement.

What agony of heart she must have felt! He whom she loved — so dearly, deeply loved — had expired in her absence! Who had been there to kiss the death-dew from his brow, and cool his burning pulse? His

last words, what were they? Was there a message? When had he died? These must have been the shadows of her thought-realities!

Most prominent in the angry rabble which struggled to deliver Starlight from her fate was noticed a youth whose refined, intelligent face formed a striking contrast with the coarse and hardened features of his fellows. When fury was at its height none was so furious as he, and the boldness of his attacks, the pertinacity with which they were pursued, was noticeable even in that indiscriminate war.

Who was he? everyone asked. "The Disputant!" When the frenzy of conflict had subsided he suddenly disappeared. "What had become of him?"

It was an ominous absence, for his sullen soul had withdrawn only to meditate upon dark designs. In the silence of retirement was being evolved destructive agencies, and soon, sweeping down upon Utopia from an unsuspected quarter, desolation was to light upon the devoted land.

Men fear the uncomprehended, but the

dimly known is doubly feared. What his dark designs *might* be was easy to imagine, but what they *were* was unimaginable.

• Starlight had taken possession of his soul, whether from love or its kindred, sympathy, and he had determined that retribution should be visited upon those who sinned, and upon the land which they inherited.



CHAPTER XII.



THE feast of Trapmenes was at hand, and the last day of the departing year was filled with revelry and mirth. The streets of Am-aurot, so lately thronged with rioters and red with human blood, had become the scene of joy and festivity. Peace dwelt in the ruined structures of the half-consumed city, whose blackened walls and upturned foundations lined the widely wasted streets.

It is on this occasion that the pious Utopian children make annual confession to their parents, or whomsoever else may have their guardianship, and, with the frankness which characterizes the race, avow all their faults and weaknesses.

Althea, the daughter of the Prince of the island made herself no exception, and a confession made on this new year's morning threw all Utopia into excitement.

Among the associates of her earlier days, while as yet her father was but an unpretentious Philarch, was a stranger whose manly bearing, generous nature, and agreeable manners soon won her tender heart. The mutual passion which arose continued its unruffled flow until, beneath the fervent skies of later years, its blended currents gaily danced in ecstasies of delight.

But Althea was forced to mourn parental disapproval of her choice, and he who had once tolerated, even encouraged, the enigmatical stranger, now, somewhat pompous by preferment, forbade a continuation of attentions to his daughter.

Enigmatical, I say, and such the stranger was. Not a native of Utopia, yet no one knew his nationality. A vessel silently anchored one night in the crescent harbor, and he, the solitary passenger, came ashore. The vessel left as silently as it had come, and here, apparently without any definite designs, the stranger had ever since remained ; and, with never a word as to his former life had entered heartily into the customs and the cares of his adopted land.

During a recent war of the Utopians with one of the neighboring nations, the stranger, furiously fighting in the foremost ranks, had been taken by the enemy. Months had passed away, and still Althea vainly languished for his coming, like the earth for the tardy Spring, and it was during these months of Erastus' absence that the trial and condemnation of Starlight, with all the lamentable consequences, had occurred.

The execrable Phrystia, enjoying marked distinction at the hands of the Prince since her false solicitation for the welfare of the government, was often in the company of Althea. Once, when the maiden was heard to murmur against the unfeelingness of her father, the Prince, for having refused to permit her alliance with the object of her love ere he had taken what seemed to be his last farewell, Phrystia ventured to confide to her that the charges against Starlight were but revengeful fabrications.

The soul of Althea recoiled from the odious woman who had so heartlessly profaned the sanctity of friendship and the noble principles of truth, in the gratification of her

selfish ends, and, fired with indignation, she threatened to expose her treachery to the Prince. But the unprincipled Phrystia easily silenced her menacing tongue.

Althea's absent lover bore a striking resemblance — a resemblance which was something wonderful — to the unfortunate Dreamer, with whom Starlight had been convicted of holding treasonable council; and, with her ingenuity to conceive, and depravity to execute, it would be no difficult matter to shift the charge upon Erastus — and the Senate, before her eloquence, seemed to be of easy faith. All this Althea knew too well, and love prevailed over conscience and resentment.

Soon afterward, a trusted messenger hurried breathlessly in to announce that a lame man, much like Erastus, was seen coming, travel-stained and weary, in the way which led from the hostile quarter of the island. Althea was in wild excitement. Her loving heart could scarcely contain itself, in its longing to have him near again; but her mind still entertained misgivings as to his safety, for she hardly dared to trust

such an embodiment of faithlessness as Phrystia had become.

Her anxiety was unnecessary, however, for so long as unexposed, the sinful Sister was content to hold her peace.

But the noble nature of Erastus — it was he who had returned — scorned the compromise of honor by a silence which he deemed as guilty as the deed, and, confident in his own ability and the power of right over wrong, he persuaded Althea to reveal the imposture to her father. The recent bloodshed and conflagration had been, he said, a fearful visitation of retributive justice upon a land which the Angel of Equity had fled, and an immediate restoration of the innocent Starlight to life and freedom would be but a small reparation of the grievous errors.

This was the condition of affairs when the feast of Trapmenes came to close the past and open the succeeding year. Althea exposed the cowardly treachery to her father, and the horrified Prince, not yet too blind or unfeeling to perceive what an irreparable crime would have been committed in the execution of Starlight, immediately convoked

the Senate and issued the proclamation of her release.

When the news of Starlight's established innocence was noised about the island, popular fury again seemed about to rise — indeed, did rise, and amounted to violence on several occasions, though not so unrestrained as on the day of her intended execution.

The spirit of passion and irritability seemed to have permeated all Utopia. Contentions and disputes became more frequent and more ungoverned. The seeds of dissolution and destruction were rapidly sprouting in the heart of the model government. The generous, yet resentful Disputant was among the sowers.



CHAPTER XIII.



SINCE the day of the unsuccessful effort to lead Starlight to execution, the streets, the markets, and the mess-halls had all become the scenes of continued wrangling. The Disputant, who had defended the innocent maiden before the Senate, had made a solemn oath that since the deafness of the government to all appeals of reason had produced so many conflicts, the spirit of rivalry and discord, easily introduced through the permissible medium of discussion, when once aroused would quickly involve, by a kindred and ever increasing disaffection, all the customs and institutions of the island in which rivalry could be exercised. Every department of art, science and commerce would become subjects of dissension.

The revengeful dream of the Disputant

achieved a woeful realization. Such a revolution, you may well suppose, required behind it a mind well skilled and powerful. The young revolutionist's discourses were models of eloquence, penetration and persuasion, and not Amaurot alone, but all Utopia, was beneath his sway. In the attempts to emulate his elegant discussions, disputation became contagious. No intellect was so low but what, catching the spirit of the times, it would occasionally attempt a flight.

The commonplaces of life were abstrusely speculated upon. Is food really necessary, or is the feeling called hunger produced by some disorganization of the system? How do the clouds retain their rain? Why is there such difference in the density of different objects? In what ratio is the strength of man to that of an ant? Such were the questions in the discussion of which, neglecting their fields and orchards, the Utopians spent days together.

"I deny that I am!" exclaimed one, in the heat of argument, and, in his extremity, slew himself to substantiate his assertion.

A carpenter sat in his doorway, one even-

ing, and, contemplating the number of buildings then being erected to replace those burned during the recent disturbances, fell to soliloquizing :

“By whom were all these building raised? Sure, by myself and my fellows. Were it not for us, there would be no roof to protect these parasites from the wind and rain, and no shield, but the trees, from the blazing sun of noon-day. And yet we are no better favored than other men. My brother carpenters shall join me, and we will make these useless fellows to appreciate and esteem us more. They will come to us and supplicate us, and we will refuse. To bring us to relent, all men shall flatter and honor us. We shall become distinguished throughout the island. Only under condition that we are to enjoy exceptional privileges and immunities will we at last consent to return to our labors.”

He succeeded in interesting his fellow carpenters by his fallacious arguments. Other artisans caught the infection, and discord and strife resulted. Following upon the desire for honor and preferment quickly came

the attempt to secure, as individual property, a more material wealth. The community of goods and conjunction of labor had, virtually, already fallen. Gold soon came to have a greater value, in their sight, than the baser metals, for they began to cast their eye towards other nations where moneys were current.

Deeper questions of science were occasionally, and, at last, frequently, discussed: Is happiness the true end of life? What is the nature of true happiness? What is the distinction between love and friendship? What is the source of the passions?

Religious principles soon became a matter of discussion, and, fired with fanaticism, the wrangling casuists carried the fever of debate and rivalry to its highest pitch. The generous, tolerant spirit which had so long characterized this people was rapidly passing away.

Envy, disregarding all ties of blood and bond, clasped hands with Vengeance in the war of desolation. Crime rapidly became common, and the effects, if not the essential elements, of the universal malady entering the

very Senate itself, the offenders went unpunished.

From the sophistries of argument it was but a step to intrigue and chicanery, and the innocent were often the victims. A rivalry of words led to a rivalry in display, which naturally engendered a taste for gaudy dress and ornament. The simple costume of their ancestors, as old as their history, could no longer satisfy the people. Extravagance was a natural consequence.

Individual right became fully recognized, and gold and silver were circulated as money. Moderate fortunes were often expended in the beautifying of a court or garden, that it might outshine that of a neighbor. Jewels and precious metals were used extensively in decorations, and Utopia—the simple Utopia—assumed an air of dazzling luxuriance.

The consequences of this revocation of ancient customs and institutions require no speculation. There must now be a change of government.

Monarchy is the first and most natural conception of government. To this the Utopians turned their minds, and soon their

efforts. Ambition had kept pace with dissolution, and in the imminence of the approaching overthrow, there was no lack of aspirants to the throne. All eyes, however, naturally centered upon the eloquent Disputant, who had been the parent of the revolution, as most capable and worthy to reign.

The wicked are never at loss for instruments. A ready hand was found. The Prince was assassinated, and all the officers of state were slain on the same night while in their beds, and on the morrow the lamentations of their relatives and few remaining friends were drowned by the acclamations of the people in elevating the Disputant to the throne.

Revenge, he reigned.

All Utopia applying itself to the labor, a sumptuous palace, embellished with a profusion of gold, silver, precious stones and fragrant woods, arose in the heart of the revolutionized city. Its massive proportions towered high in air, a monument to departed simplicity and peace. Other requisite public buildings were successively erected on a proportionate scale and with a beauty of architec-

ture whose introduction among such a people can only be accounted for by assuming the association of foreign elements, the glittering domes and dizzy turrets of the capital city could soon be seen for leagues around. Dignitaries, retainers, and all subordinate officers were, in turn, appointed, and Utopia's ancient government was sealed.



CHAPTER XIV.

EVEN the vicious condemn vice ; and gratified ambition despises the mediums of its emolument ; so recognizing that the sojourn of Othiastes among a foreign nation, whose injustice and corruption had contaminated the principles of his youth, was the primitive cause of the treachery which led to the recent strife and dissensions, and culminated in the establishment of monarchy, the newly confirmed government, with no feelings of gratitude or indulgence toward the means of its institution, issued, among the earliest of its enactments, a decree prohibiting the entry of foreign vessels into its ports.

For several months this policy had been rigidly enforced, and all foreigners were rigorously excluded. One morning, however, the Chief Guard of the Port was notified that a vessel, carrying but four passengers and a scanty crew, had arrived outside the harbor of Amaurot and an audience with the King

had been implored. Being refused permission to land, they pleaded the unusual circumstances which had led them to seek a refuge in the island, and begged with such earnestness only to be heard, that the harbor officers had come to consult their superior, who hastened to inquire into the extraordinary affair. He found the passengers to consist of an Arab, a Spaniard, a Syrian Jew and a Moorish maiden, the latter of astonishing beauty.

The Chief Guard listened attentively to their entreaties, and finally, (whether more persuaded by the eloquence of their appeals, or the brightness of the young girl's eye) he consented to present them to the King, and allow them to relate their stories.

The King placed implicit confidence in the judgment of his chief port officer, and received the strangers graciously. Looking closely into their countenances, as they stood before him in the gorgeous throne room, he noticed that, without an exception, they had a haggard, careworn look. The beauty of the maiden, heightened by the piteousness of her visage, claimed several moments of his attention ; but finally he bade

them relate their extraordinary stories, which, they had claimed, would obtain an exception in their favor of the interdiction of strangers, and secure them a haven of rest.

Much to the regret of the King, who secretly desired that the maiden should first begin, the Syrian Jew stepped forward, and, to the accompaniment of a small cithern of exquisite tone which he held in his hand, began to chant—in a peculiarly mournful measure of the Utopians, which in some manner he had learned—the misfortunate story of his life.

So pleased was the King with this, that at the end of the first strain he expressed his desire that all should retire to his private garden, and there, in a scene of indescribable luxuriance and deliciousness, musical with birds and flowing fountains, the singer began again.



THE SYRIAN'S LAMENT.

Where the rose, intertwining with the thornless lotus,
grows,
And the dews which the gentle winds of Paradise
diffuse,

Sparkling bright, glad the dwellers in that Garden of
Delight;
Where, in streams gently flowing, a reflected city
gleams
Which outvies all the glories of great Solomon the
Wise,
She, the pure, who a mortal, was too spotless to endure,
Too divine, too seraphic to assort with hearts like
mine,
Is restored, a pardoned exile, to the kingdom of her
Lord!
As the rills, freshly flowing from a thousand cooling
hills;
As the wine, dropping sweetly from the blushing
autumn vine;
As the grove to the Bedouins that o'er the desert rove;
So to me, though unworthy even a smile from such as
she,
Was the voice which so often made my happy heart
rejoice,
And the glow which upon my heart her love-lit eyes
would throw.
But alas! well the patriarchs declared our joys as
grass,
Summer reigns — parching summer! and throughout
the arid plains
Does not swell a single fountain for the famishing
gazelle!
Worm and blight have eradicated in the grower's
sight
Every vine which his tender care had loved to prune
and twine.
And the palms, now abandoned for the simoom's
sandy storms,
Only rise tantalizingly to cheat the fancying eyes.

Sorrow stole the *Mezuzah from the door-post of my
soul,
And alas ! now unexorcised the demons freely pass.

Far away, near the palace of the rising King of Day,
In a vale ever tuneful with the dove and nightingale,
Green and fair, with the yellow olive nodding every-
where,
And the date, over-ripened, scarce the harvesting can
wait,
Where the cheek of the lily grows a shade more palely
meek,
And the flocks feed unharmed beyond the range of
wolf or fox,
There while yet life was youthful, and these eyelids
were unwet,
†Decrito ! thy emollient lore I first began to know.
She who claimed first my demon rage, (whatever else
misnamed !)
O'er me came like the incense from a sacrificial flame.
She was fair : queenly Esther with her charms could
not compare.
In her smile there was rapture, and her laughter
could beguile
From their sphere heavenly spirits, if they only paused
to hear.
She was fair ; I was tender ; all is comprehended
there !
Hand in hand, with an innocence untutored and
unbanned,

We would stray where the sunlight with the waters
loved to play,

*A parchment, inscribed with verses from the Pentateuch, enclosed in a small cylinder, and attached, as a kind of sacred talisman, to the post of the door.

†The Syrian Venus,

And, reclined on the mossy banks, the fragrant gar-
lands twined ;
While above mating turtles cooed their overflowing
love,
And the drone of the bees: the cicala's dreamy tone,
As they rose o'er the fields, lulled the spirit to repose.
Heaven smiled as it smileth only on a careless child.

Then, in turn, youth stole on, but our passions did not
burn
Less intense, less exclusive than in childish innocence.
We perhaps tied more carefully the sandal's leathern
straps
And would bring tidier pitchers in the evening to the
spring.
Should the air in the wimples of her broidered *tsaif
dare
To intrude and, becoming, for the moment over-rude,
With its breath even reveal her snowy linen
†cæthoneth
Which no more was the only, but sufficient, robe she
wore,
To her cheek would come the blushes which, if but
empowered to speak,
Would have chid the bold zephyr for the mischief
that it did.
Gentle eyes, now caught stealing, turned away in soft
surprise,
And withal, graver feelings our spirits seemed to fall ;
But, at heart, well we recognized behind the modest
start
And the care years engendered that our habits be
more fair,
All the sweet, trusting confidence with which we used
to meet.

*"A light summer dress of handsome appearance"—Smith, Dic-
tionary of Antiquities, etc.

†"Inner garment"—Ibid.

O the days of our youth, when the melancholy haze
 Of concern for the future and the lessons yet to learn,
 Softly shades the intensity of glitter which pervades
 Early dreams till with moderated gentleness it beams !
 Then the heart, with the tenderness that soberer
 thoughts impart,
 Learns to glow with a feeling which no laughing love
 can know.

Now at last, when the season of our youthfulness had
 passed,
 Came the song whose sweet prelude had enchanted us
 so long ;
 And the sun which, in rising, we had thus far gazed
 upon,
 And admired, as with brilliancy the east he flushed
 and fired,
 Slowly rose in its majesty until, in calm repose,
 With the dreams which, like Jacob's, see a heaven
 through their beams,
 Slept the soul in sweet langor, neath that ardent sun's
 control.
 O how sweet is affection where both love and judg-
 ment meet !
 And, as time can alone establish this harmonious
 chime
 How divine is the passion when maturer hearts
 entwine !
 When at last chilly ‡Kislev has, with every wintry
 blast,
 Past away, and again we feel the ¶Iyar zephyrs play,
 We behold with delight the tender vernal buds unfold,
 Till the green of the mountains and the vales that
 intervene
 Has replaced with luxuriance the unvegetating waste :

 ‡December.

¶May.

But, before we can garner in the autumn's perfect
store,
We must wait till the summer, more ensouled and
sedate,
Shall transmute, with its balmy breath, the flower into
fruit.
So we dwelled in the valley with our peaceful breasts
unswelled
By one dark apprehension of the treacheries that
mark
Those who dwell in the splendor of the populated
swell.
And the years of our life, with no tutelage of tears,
Sped along in simplicity of love, and as the song
Murmurs back when the wavelets break on pebbles in
their track,
They expired with such melodies as Israel's harpers
wired.
Well we knew that our bosoms burned with love sin-
cere and true,
So pursued our devotions with no moody interlude.
Even as when, lighting thirsty, at the fountain in the
glen,
As 'tis said, the drinking *Yonah does not pause to
lift her head,
So we drank at the fount of mutual love whose frag-
rant bank
And cool draught lapped the spirit in such bliss till, as
it quaffed,
Unconcerned for all else, it to the present, only,
turned.
True the sea waits all waters, but the brook flows on
as free ;

*" Ils [turtle-doves, Heb. Yonah] maugent et boivent de meme sans relever la tete qu'apres avoir avale toute l'eau qui leur est necessaire."—Buffon, Hist. Nat.

And the streams of affection with, at most, but
 vaguest gleams
 Of their end, passed away, regardless whither they
 might tend.
 Closer ties than had bound us when, beneath our
 youthful skies,
 With no thought of the future, we rejoiced, were still
 unsought.
 O dead years of that youth ! how I bathe thee now
 with tears !
 From the height of the Tabor of my days enraptured
 sight
 Looks below on the †Jezreel of the past, whose
 flowers blow
 On its plain in profusion midst the fields of waving
 grain,
 And my heart, overcome with all the memories that
 start,
 Bursts in tears worse than wormwood that to those
 delightful years
 Should succeed ‡Edom's desert — even blasted of the
 weed !

But away with such brooding thoughts ! — ah ! that
 the mystic clay
 From the field of ¶Aceldema made retrospection yield
 To decay when the spirit of affection flits away ! —
 Well, at last — let me hasten, for the tears are falling
 fast ! —
 I perceived that the spirit of my loved one inly
 grieved.

†The fertility of this plain, at the foot of Mt. Tabor, is proverbial ;
 see Milman's *Jews*, B. v.

‡"Edom, with slight exceptions, is blasted with cheerless desolation
 and hopeless sterility." Olin's *Travels in the East*.

¶"To the earth of this cemetery [Aceldema, or Potter's Field] has
 been ascribed a peculiar, if not miraculous, efficacy in hastening the
 decomposition of dead bodies."—*Ibid*.

Day by day I discovered — with what anguish who
can say ! —
More and more, that the canker ate in silence at the
core,
And distressed unendurably, when finally I pressed
Her to trust in my love, still burning as it ever must,
And reveal the cause of sorrows she no longer could
conceal,
She, with eyes brimming over, said between her sobs
and sighs
That in spite of my faithful love, which only served to
smite
Her own soul for its thanklessness, inconstant to its
pole,
Just as grows less and less the Jordan's volume as it
*flows,
Her esteem had at last become a more contracted
stream.
Still she felt that her heart could for no other ever
melt ;
That sincere I had proven, and that all which could
endear
Still was mine, but that passion, once determined to
decline,
Laughed to scorn all sophistical endeavors to suborn
Its caprice into constancy, and rather would increase
In distaste for the graces it so fondly once embraced.
Ah ! how deep was my agony ! the spirit could not
weep ;
Or if wept, all the fountains of its Marah tear-drops
swept
Back again o'er their source, until congealed to silent
pain.

*“ Neither [of the mountains] affords any important tributaries to the Jordan, which probably enters the Dead Sea with a smaller volume of water than it receives from the Sea of Tiberias.”—Ibid.

Like the fleece by the †Warrior spread, where once the
 dewes of peace
 Seemed alone to have fallen, now while all the world
 had grown,
 To my eye, fresh and sparkling, there alone 'twas
 parched and dry!
 Once revealed, the diagnostic, which should be no
 more concealed,
 Daily grew more confirmed, and, as despair is wont
 to do,
 Every glance, less elated than it might have been,
 perchance,
 Now recalled, was attributed to passion that had
 palled.
 Ah! to find that the ‡Okser is but air beneath the
 rind!
 Colder still grew her passion! But the ¶antelope
 mounts the hill
 With a spring lighter yet than down the Valley of the
 ||King,
 And there flows in the heart the strongest tides when
 we oppose.
 So, intense in its terror, each reanimated sense
 Wildly pled restoration of the golden hours fled.
 As serene as the current which, with motion scarcely
 seen,
 Softly flows through Genneseret, is affection in
 repose;
 But it grows, when the streamlets from the Hermon
 of our woes,

†Gideon : vide Judges VI, 37-40.

‡The Sodom apples of Josephus (Wars, B IV, Chap. VIII, Sec. IV) are identified by Dr. Robinson (Researches) with a fruit called the Okser, "which resembles an orange, and grows in clusters, is filled with air, and explodes when pressed."

¶"Leur jambes de devant sont moins longues que celles de derriere, ce qui leur donne plus de facilite pour courir en montant qu'en descendant. — Buffon, Hist. Nat.

||Unidentified in modern topography,

With the chill of inconstancy, its banks begin to fill,
 To the wild, rushing torrent, unencumbered and
 unisled,
 Which descends through the §Arabah of life, until it
 ends,
 Murkily, at the last, in the Dead Sea, Apathy.
 And, so strong it had grown, that its endeavors to
 prolong
 The regard which was waning, met awhile with rich
 reward.
 Once again, like the verdure when it feels the Latter
 Rain,
 Hope revived at the smile of which it long had been
 deprived,
 And discerned in her glances something of the light
 that burned
 In her deep, lustrous eyes, before, in shame, they
 learned to weep.

But ah! woe: soon the melodies of hope which
 charmed me so,
 With a fire of expression such as, when the mighty
 †choir
 On Moriah, consecratingly according tongue and
 wire,
 Woke the loud ‡“Jehovah reigneth!” from the valley
 to the cloud,
 Died away in my heart until the cold, imperious sway
 Of the wild desolation of those ¶regions unbeguiled,
 As they say, by a sound but of the shrieking birds of
 prey,

§The Jordan Valley.

†Solomon employed “4000 as singers and musicians” at the dedica-
 tion of the temple. — Milman.

‡The XCVII Psalm, beginning “The Lord reigneth!” was
 chanted at the dedication of the Temple.

¶The silence and solitude of Lebanon is said to be broken only by
 the howl of wild beasts and the scream of the eagle.

Had assumed its dominion on a throne of peace
entombed.

I again saw that passion had begun to slowly wane,
And as though to refuse me even pity for my woe,
Did not now seem to sorrow that it soon must disavow
Any part in the feeling which no longer swelled each
heart.

If before I had suffered what was now the grief I
bore!

In dismay I beheld her growing colder day by day,
Knowing not what expedient to use upon my lot.

If, as sleeps the fearless ||goat upon the mountain's
craggy steeps

Hearts could grow all insensible to their surrounding
woe,

Blest indeed were the luckless one estrangement
dooms to bleed!

She, 'tis true, had not yet become so hardened as to
view

My distress with indifference, and the look of tender-
ness

Often told that her pity had not grown entirely cold;
So at last with much sympathy into her firmness cast,
Threw aside all the tacit ties with which we were
allied:

"It must be! time has written the unchangeable
decree.

We no more can resuscitate the simple love of yore,
And, the heart growing colder, it is time that we
should part.

Once, 'tis true, when affection was as yet unlearned
and new,

I admired, loved, adored thee, only as a heart inspired

|| "Elle aime à s'écarter dans les solitudes, et grimper sur les lieux
escarpe, à se placer et même à dormir sur la pointe des roches et sur
le bord des précipices." — Buffon, Hist. Nat.

With the fire of first passion can adore, love and
admire.
It was sweet to my girlish heart to have thee softly
greet
When I came, and, at parting, breathe a blessing on
my name,
Or to stroll with thee by me as the heaven's starry
roll
First began to illuminate the widely arching span,
But, in truth, 'twas a passion with no thought beyond
my youth.
As the §roe, when the waking winds of Spring begin
to blow
And throughout all the forest tender buds begin to
sprout,
Turns to browse here and there upon the tender, lus-
cious boughs,
Till at last, inebriated by the succulent repast,
He has strayed from the fastness of his native tangled
shade,
And is caught in unconsciousness; so, with no further
thought
Than to feed on the pleasures that environed me, nor
heed
Where my feet chanced to wander, I was led from
sweet to sweet,
Till at last, when awakened from the stupor of the
past,
In surprise, I discovered that already closest ties,
Unavowed, it is true, and yet for that no less allowed,
Our hearts twined with an earnestness which neither
had designed.

§“ Au printemps, ils vont dans les taillis plus clairs, et broutent les boutons et les feuilles naissantes de tous les arbres. Cette nourriture chaude fermente dans leur estomacs et les enivre de manière qu'il est très-aise alors de les surprendre : ils ne savent où ils vont, ils sortent même assez souvent hors du bois, et quelquefois ils approchent du bétail et des endroits habités.”—Histoire Naturelle.

Well, while still I esteemed thee, and believed none
else could fill
Half so well my ideal, yet my spirit would rebel
At the thought of a bondage undesired and unsought,
For, though hatched to captivity, the §Kore feels
attached
To the skies and the meadows, and soon pines away
and dies.
Love declined, and more gallingly the ties began to
bind,
Till, constrained by my anguish, I resolved to be
unchained.
Still our years of affection, and regret to cause thee
tears
Made me halt in my purpose, and, despite its bold
revolt,
My heart grieved that no better end could ever be
achieved.
Then, when, pressed by thy eagerness, my purpose I
confessed,
You implored with such piteousness to be again
restored
To my heart as in other days, my nature's tenderer
part
For the while dominating, I consented to beguile
Into peace my misgivings; but alas! they will not
cease!
Love, constrained, turns to loathing, and, while yet
'tis unprofaned,
It is best that the tie, no longer dear, be dispossessed.
So farewell! — the "forever" makes my bosom some-
what swell,

§The little partridges [Heb. Kore.] says the French naturalist, "qui sont enclos dans les faisanderies, et qui n'ont jamais connu la liberté, languissent dans cette prison, qu'on cherche à leur rendre agreable de toutes manieres, et meurent bientot d'ennui."

But, assured that thus only peace can ever be secured,
 I must dwell in the past no more, and so a long fare-
 well !
 Thou art blest with such graces as will charm the
 coldest breast ;
 Heart and mind bright and noble and harmoniously
 combined,
 Thou shalt claim lordly favors, mighty men exalt thy
 name,
 And shalt find in thy wanderings one whose soul is
 more designed
 In its tone to assimilate completely with thine own.
 As the crow at the north assumes a plumage white as
 †snow,
 And we see all the changes of the sky in Galilee,
 So, awhile, and thou, too, shalt with the smiling learn
 to smile.
 Let who will, controvert it, yet this truth is truthful
 still :
 Woman's scorn, like the tamarisk, drops manna from
 its *thorn.
 Search it out, and, delivered from the envy and the
 doubt,
 There shall dwell gazelle-eyed Peace with thee — and
 now my last farewell !”
 She was gone ! How I sickened when I found myself
 alone !
 Midnight's shroud wrapt creation, and my spirit
 sighed aloud :

“ Ah ! shall I, like the bird of †Paradise, forever fly !

†The crow, which is found, says the same excellent authority, from the polar circle to the Cape of Good Hope, and is subject, more or less to the influences of climate, *est quelquefois blanc en Norwege et en Islande.*

*The manna has been ascertained, by Burckhardt and others, to be a natural production, which “distils from the thorns of the tamarisk in the month of June.”

†An ancient fable regarding this bird.

Sorely pressed with its anguish, shall affection find no
rest,
Lest it bring, like the †swallow, when it folds its fatal
wing,
Withering blight to the verdant bough whereon it
dares to light,
Till, at last, love, unsheltered is abandoned to the
blast !
Why should hearts ever waken since so surely love
imparts
Such distress, darkly lurking in each treacherous
caress !
I must bear in a breast so lately freed from every care,
Ills whose source neither ¶mandrakes nor the
||Zockum can divorce.
Gracious Guide of my fathers ! Thou whose mercies
didst abide
With the seed of thy patriarchs, from Egypt's bondage
freed !
Thou whose wing didst protect them when in Babel
none could §sing,
And whose hand led them back again to Canaan's
smiling land !
Lead, O lead me, I pray thee ! for my broken heart-
strings bleed,
And unblest is the yearning of this soul to be at rest !
As the note of the soaring lark is often heard to float
From the sky when the singer has long melted from
the **eye,

†“ On a remarque les branches qu'elles adoptent pour y passer ainsi la nuit meurent et se dessichent.”—Buffon, Hist. Nat.

¶“ Supposed among Eastern women to act as a love philtre.”—Milman's Jews, B II.

||Another thorny tree, called the Zockum, bears a fruit from which the natives extract an oil reputed to possess valuable medicinal properties. The pilgrims seek for it with great avidity.”—Olin, Travels in the East, C V I.

§Psalm CXXXVII.

**“ She [l'alouette] is of the small number of birds which sing on the wing ; the higher she flies, the more she strains her voice, and often it is forced to such a point that, though floating high in air, and lost to view, she may still be distinctly heard,”—Histoire Naturelle.

So the songs of my happier days, which memory pro-
 longs,
 Sweet and clear, echo still in my infatuated ear,
 But despair for the future strikes its sad discordant air,
 And destroys all the melody of recollected joys,
 Till, at last like the warning voice through Salem's
 streets that passed,
 "Woe! and woe!" becomes the burden of the inhar-
 monious flow.
 It is well, when responsively the breast has ceased to
 swell,
 To commend new asylums for the spirit we offend,
 But alas! like the †Ezrach or the flags of the morass,
 True love dies when transplanted from its native soil
 and skies.
 Thus for days, with that anguish which no human
 power allays,
 I bemoaned the sad fortune of a feeling heart
 dethroned,
 Till, constrained to abandon scenes where nothing
 now remained
 But the ghost which in mockery recalled the sub-
 stance lost,
 I withdrew from sweet Syria in some doubtful hope
 to woo
 Into rest the disquiet of my wild, chaotic breast.
 As the main bore me onward, watching Acca's flowery
 plain
 And the steep brow of Carmel slowly sank into the
 deep,
 Thus the long silent heart awoke its melancholy

§"All the four years that intervened before the war, he [Jesus, son of Aramus] never spoke, excepting the same words, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" He never cursed any one who struck him, nor thanked any one who gave him food. His only answer was the same melancholy presage. At length during the siege he suddenly cried out, "Woe, woe to myself!" and was struck dead by a stone."—Milman's *Jews* B XIII.

†"Most of the Jewish doctors understand by the term Ezrach, a tree which grows in its own soil," [Smith] The bay tree of Ps. XXXVII, 33.

SONG.

Where sweet oleanders caressingly meet
 Their pink imaged selves on the †Naman's cool
 brink,
 And drink the clear drops till their dewy heads
 sink,
 Replete, on their stalks, like the top-heavy wheat ;

Where wide o'er the meadows through which
 ¶Kishon's tide
 Descends to the Great Sea, the ||Rimmon grove
 bends
 And blends fruit and flower in such beauty as
 lends
 New pride to the murmuring waves as they glide ;

There still, with a heart's uncontrollable thrill,
 I see the fair land love has made me to flee ;
 And free, fading Syria ! my griefs flow for thee,
 Until all the fountains of tears they unfil !

Ah ! there, where, as yet unacquainted with care,
 I first felt the passion which jealously nurst,
 So curst me with hopes which at last were
 reversed
 I dare not remain and can never repair !

Then swell, mighty waters ! My country, farewell !
 Though wild are the waves, yet the heart thus
 exiled
 Deems mild all their rage to affection reviled !
 Impel ! — where, I care not, but lingering is hell !

†The river Belus, which flows into the Mediterranean at Port Acca.
 ¶The historic river at the foot of Mt. Carmel. ||Pomegranate.

Swift the keel of my vessel, with a welcome rush and
reel,
Split each wave with an energy invincible and brave.
Mountain high rolled the billows, and, now swelling
to the sky,
Now again all but buried, on we sped across the main.
Wild delight! how my restless soul exulted at the
sight!
Blow and blow, O thou tempest! hurl thy mightiest
powers below!
Howl and howl in thy fury! let the ocean demons
growl!
For each blast bears me onward from my home and
from the past.

Time forbids grief to linger to enlarge its pyramids;
In this tale of existence woe enough must needs pre-
vail,
So I haste o'er the wanderings wherein peace I vainly
chased.
In the far gelid land beneath the seaman's guiding
star,
Where the snow never melteth and the winds of win-
ter blow,
There, in vain, sought I respite from an unforgetting
pain;
For the snow could not smother all the smouldering
fires of woe,
Nor the chill breath of winter freeze the inward tear-
founts still.
Then, where mild blew the zephyrs till the hills and
valleys smiled
With their dowers of the vintage and the sun-enam-
oured flowers;
Where extremes never entered, and the crystal moun-
tain streams
Glassed the dies of the fairest of creation's liquid skies,

And the fields, soft and fertile, were untortured for
their yields —
There again, alleviation sorrow courted — but in vain!
Smiling skies could not animate my pensive, tearful
eyes,
Temperate gales temper anguish, nor the perfume
which exhales
From sweet vales breathe its influence o'er the heart's
distracted wails.
Still oppressed with remembrance and the wildness of
unrest,
Next I fled to the circle wherein torridly is shed
From the low-drooping pinions of the sun a drowsy
glow
Which enwraps every sense till into stupor all relapse;
There beside lazy rivers which in dreamy silence
glide
Through the brake and the forest, brightly plumaged
birds awake
Thrilling hymns to the morning from the intertwining
limbs;
But even there solace mocked me, for the tropic's fiery
glare,
Or the deep forest's music, could not lull my cares to
sleep.
Every land, every cilme, by every gale or zephyr
fanned,
Every main, in my anguish, thus I compassed — but
in vain!
In the throng of the gayest now I mingled, but the
song
Quickly grew more repulsive than the brooding
thoughts I flew,
And the pain relegated me to solitude again, —
I could smile, but my heart remained in anguish all
the while,

Like the §trees which on Olivet the wondering traveler
sees,
Flower and fruit still might flourish, but decay was at
the root —
Then, returned to the quiet for whose rest so much I
yearned,
Thought pursued till again I fled the haunted solitude.

Well, at length fruitless wanderings having well-nigh
spent my strength,
And, o'ercome with the yearning for my long forsaken
home,
I returned with the restlessness of soul which in me
burned,
To the land where my budding heart had learned to
first expand.

As I neared the fertile valley which affection had
endeared,
How my heart, spite of sorrows which I knew it must
impart
Thus to meet my deplored one, in anticipation beat!
Every face with a contour of a more than common
grace,
Every form which into beauty quicker pulses seemed
to warm,
Passing by, made me start, and look with anxious,
searching eye.
When, at last, from the summit of its guardian hills,
I cast
Far below my enraptured eye, and, in the golden glow
Of the soft, evening glory-tints reflected from aloft.

§“ The trunks of a number of them (Olives) have decayed to the extent of several feet above the root with which the branches are connected only by some thin, dry splinters, coated on the outer surface with the bark. Higher up the trunks became solid, and the branches appear healthful and vigorous.”—Travels in the East, Vol. II, Chap. IV.

Saw the sweet verdant valley sleeping calmly at my
feet,
How my breast, whose homesickness had, indulged,
been lulled to rest,
Heaved and swelled with solicitude as o'er the scene
it dwelled !
Hopeless still was that bosom for I knew her change-
less will,
Yet a faint, indescribable sensation mocked constraint,
And would steal o'er the soul, whatever passions it
might feel,
And inspire timid visions less of hope than of desire.
Each retreat, long deserted by expatriated feet,
Where so oft I had wandered lay below me in the
soft,
Mellow light of the dying day, and since, ere yet the
night
Should descend, I again would through the mazy
bowers wend,
Might I chance to encounter the familiar smile and
glance
Which, of old, I, there stealing, was accustomed to
behold ?

Thus I gazed with a pensive eye ; but soon I stood
amazed
As, aroused from the dreamland where my sleepy
spirit drowsed,
I perceived that the scene was by no human form
relieved !
No one tilled in the corn-fields, none their evening
pitchers filled !
And the stones of the grinders sent not up their usual
tones.
But surprise scarce had given me a moment for sur-
mise

When afar, slowly winding up the mountains that
debar
This retreat from the sloping plains extended at their
feet.
I descried hosts of mourners, with their sackcloth
round them tied,
And before, spread with cypress boughs, a solemn
bier they bore !
With the thrill of foreboding and suspense, adown
the hill
Swift I sped, and unhalting in the valley, onward fled
Over knoll, ravine, torrent, with a wild presaging soul,
In the hope to o'ertake them ere the plains' receding
slope
So far aid their slow journey that, with fears still
unallayed,
I at last must abandon my pursuit ; so on I passed
Till the tall mountain barrier opposed its rocky wall.
Night came on, and, there wandering in the darkness
all alone
I in vain sought the defiles which conducted to the
plain ;
So, when dawn lit the passes, all the train, alas ! was
gone !
Undismayed, still I followed, and when evening's
deepening shade
Softly fell o'er the turrets and the graceful domes that
swell
From the breast of Jerusalem, all crimsoned from the
west,
With delight I beheld upon old Scopus' towering
§height
Those I sought, gathered lovingly about the bier they
brought.

§ Situated north of Jerusalem, and by many thought to command the
finest view of the city.

But forgive if I hasten o'er my tale ; I could not live
Through the pain of relating all my agonies again.
All too true was my presage, and while whispering
 night winds blew
From the far distant sea, and softly twinkled every star
In the wide arch of heaven, they related how she died.
Time indeed brought repentance of the destiny
 decreed,
Till she felt all the coldness of her frozen nature melt,
And perceived, spite of justice, that each human
 heart bereaved,
Must regret, — that to slumber is not wholly to forget.
Every scene love had sanctified when, peaceful and
 serene,
There we strayed, woke remembrance, till the deep
 remorse that preyed
In her breast, stole the tulips from her cheeks and
 mocked her rest.

Well, she died ; and when winding up the distant
 mountain side,
They conveyed to the Holy Hills her bier, I just had
 strayed
To the height of those western peaks, from whence I
 caught the sight
And pursued to the sacred walls the funeral multitude.
O the hell which within my tortured breast I felt to
 swell !
Heart and brain whirled convulsively in simoom-blasts
 of pain.
Only those who have gazed upon the stilly, pale
 repose
Of the breast where affection once was whispered into
 rest,

And have mused o'er the forehead, once all blushingly
suffused
At the breath of a loved one, bearing now the kiss of
Death —
Those alone know affliction as alas! it may be known,
And can feel desolation in its fulness o'er them steal.
How intense is the loneliness of heart! each ravished
sense
Must deplore that the object of its love can be no more.
And by chance if the force of years some sullen solace
grants
Till up start stately fabrics in the newly hoping heart,
Still they grow, like Tiberias, from the crumbled tombs
*below!

It was night: down the mountain side, with many a
mournful light
O'er the plain wildly gleaming, slowly came the solemn
train.
Salem slept; even the zephyrs, which among the trees
had crept,
Died away, and no sound escaped the funeral array.
On they passed by the Grotto of the †Prophet, till, at
last,
Between Gihon, towering darkly, and the sacred hill
of †Zion,
They awoke mournful dirges, and, with measured
voice and stroke,

*“ The city having been built over an ancient cemetery, Herod was obliged to use force and bribes to induce the people to settle there.” — Hist. Jews, B XII.

†The Grotto of Jeremiah, north of the city, Damascus gate.

‡Situated respectively on the west and south side of the city.

Wound along Hinnom's ¶valley till the melancholy
 song
 Swept the Vale of ||Jehoshaphat, and Kidron caught
 the wail.
 Up the steep stones of Olivet, whose summit seemed
 to keep
 Solemn guard o'er the sepulchers beneath its watch
 and ward,
 Through the gloom, they bore the body to the cold,
 confining tomb.

* * * * *

As I woke into consciousness the streaks of morning
 broke
 Far away over Moab, and the Holy City lay
 In the gray mists of morning at my feet: advancing
 day
 Bathed the east in a flood of golden glory, which
 increased
 Till the sky burned with beauty, and §Sakhara's
 dome, near by,
 Flashed the light back to heaven even more intensely
 bright.
 They had gone; all was silent, and I pondered there
 alone.
 In a tomb near the **Prophet's, to await the final
 doom,
 They had laid her I cherished! Once I softly knelt
 and prayed,
 Then arose, and, descending, left her spirit to repose.

¶The Valley of Hinnon (or more properly, the Sons of Hinnon beginning near Mt. Gihon, extends southward in a direction parallel to the western wall, turns sharply to the east and sweeping along the back of Zion on the south, joins the Valley of Jehoshaphat nearly at right angles.

||The Valley of Jehoshaphat, through which flows the Brook Kidron, separates the city from Olivet on the east.

§The Mosque of Omar, on the site of Solomon's temple.

**Zechariah.

Dumb and sealed all the voices of my heart, its founts
congealed.
Soon I fled from the region of the worshipped — and
the dead !
Now, oppressed with the silent throes which agonize
my breast,
I but seek some short respite from my sorrow till,
grown weak
With distress, I at last, shall meet the Angel's cold
caress,
And resume Love's communion in the Land beyond
the tomb.

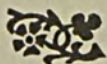


Tears were running like rivulets from the Syrian's eyes, and when his story was at length concluded, laying aside his cithern he looked up to the royal Disputant and enquired, if, "after such extraordinary misfortune in his native land, he might have permission to remain in the peaceful boundaries of Utopia ? "

The King had been much affected by the recital, and the occasional sighs and tears with which it was interspersed, together with the general melancholy air of the afflicted lover, prevailed over the heart whose generous nature had not altered since, when yet the unpretentious Disputant, he was

prompted to resent the injustice done the innocent Starlight. He readily consented that, together with his companions, the Syrian should henceforth consider Amaurot his home.

The King, however, desired that his companions should relate their stories, but evening coming on, and there being no moon, after arranging to return to the palace garden at the same hour the succeeding day, the delighted strangers at last retired, much gratified at having finally found a refuge from the world by which they had been so misused.



CHAPTER XV.



PROMPTLY at the appointed hour on the following day, when all were disposed in a convenient circle amid the garden bowers, the aged Arab arose and placed himself by the sovereign.

The long, gray beard, bowed form and wrinkled brow proved him to be undoubtedly a man of sorrows and years. His flowing *haique was torn and soiled, and the rude lance which, through life-long habit, he never laid aside, would have been of small avail for attack or defence. In his face, the distressful look which characterized all his companions, assumed, more than with any, the phase of despair.

After a moment's pause, as though to collect his wandering thoughts, he lifted his eyes toward the heavens and with clasped hands hanging before him, thus began :

*Outer Garment.

“Zoraya ! my Light of Dawn ! thou who sitest beside the cool waters of *Al Jennah, drinkest of the sweet streams of wine and honey that flow over their musk beds through bordering saffron boughs ; and hearest the sweet tones of †Israfel mingling with the ineffable melody of the §Taba’s fruit-laden limbs when rustled by the perfumed airs from Allah’s throne ! sustain, O sustain me as I relate my tale of woe !” Then addressing the sovereign he continued :

“Love of country, O King ! is inherent, I know, but even the stranger will concede that ||Hejaz is a goodly land. There among the Highlands whose grassy peaks look down on the sea below, I was born and reared. My father, the Sheik of an extensive tribe inhabiting this region, was a man whose courage and hospitality could not be equalled ; and the unmixed blood of ‡Kailhan flowed in the veins of all his noble steeds.

“Here with only such incidents as mark the career of tribes of my nation, I passed

*Paradise.

†Having the sweetest voice of all the angels.

§The Mohammed Tree of Life.

||The western third of the peninsular, bordering on the Red Sea.

‡One of Solomon’s horses, from which best Arabian breeds are reputed to have descended.

my careless youth. Activity and freedom of life lent their aid to develop mind and body into complete and harmonious maturity. This form, O King ! now bending beneath the weight of woe and years, became tall and lissome as the palm ; and such instruction as could be afforded in a wandering mountain tribe was given my restless mind.

"At an early age I displayed great ability in the cultivation of poetry ; and the partiality of friends even declared my early productions to be superior to those of §Hatem, †Amru, or the beautiful ‡Sedjah. This talent so much prized by an Arab, was assiduously fostered, and soon my name was known throughout all Hejaz.

"Now, in the holy city of Mecca there had also arisen a poet who, in spite of several distasteful characteristics, had acquired some celebrity. Impatient of rivalry, and envious of my growing reputation, he finally ex-

§"The character of Hatem is the perfect model of Arabian virtue ; he was brave and liberal, an eloquent poet, and a successful robber." "Gibbon, Decline and Fall," chap. L.

†The distinguished warrior for the faith whose "poetic genius [in youth] was exercised against Mahomet."—Ibid.

‡The infatuated poetess whose affiliation with the false prophet Moseilina has rendered her famous.

pressed his desire that we meet in friendly contest and determine whose was the superior gift. The great poetical contests of the annual fairs of Ocadh had long since been abolished, but this did not prevent a generous contention among private individuals.

"Judges from among the friends of each having been selected, and the place of meeting appointed, the contest began. My rival sang the wondrous achievements of the invincible *Khaled, while I chose the loves of †Balkis and Suleyman the Wise as my theme. The contest was long and spirited and the interest intense. It was not until nightfall that the rendering of the poems was concluded, and when, on the morrow, the discision was pronounced, I was declared the victor.

"At the news of his defeat, my unsuccessful rival, irascible by nature, flew into a terrible passion, and when, in the evening, we chanced to meet again, his eyes flashed like those of the §Avenging Angel.

*The famous, "Sword of God," perhaps the most notable of Moham-
medan warriors.

†Queen of Sheba.

§Described by Mahomet as inhabiting the fifth heaven. His eyes
flashed fire and he held in his hand a flaming lance, while his visage was
"the most hideous and terrific" of those of all the angels.

*"Kotaib," he exclaimed, how darest thou confront me after thy treachery?"

"'Ah!' I replied calmly, as I gazed into his burning eyes, 'has †Al Moktar come among us?'"

"My apparent carelessness provoked him the more, and he flew into an uncontrollable rage.

"'Yes, it is well to regard it lightly, but thou knowest that thou hast won by bribery.'

Somewhat stung by his groundless accusation, I retorted :

"'Thou liest!' and drew my lance.

"'No, §Al Monthawi,' he replied, becoming somewhat calmer, 'lay aside thy weapon. Knowest thou not that this is the sacred month of †Ramadan—even the peaceful night of †Al Kader? Dare not violate, in thine haste, the holy law of the Prophet. Put up thine arms and depart in peace; but know, O §§Abu Jahl! that a vengeance more relentless and insatiable than the ††Thar it-

*Dog. †The Avenger. §The Destroyer. †A month of abstinence, pilgrimage and prayer, during which all hostilities cease.

†The Divine Decree; "a night in which, according to the Koran, angels" descend to earth and Gabriel brings down the decrees of God. During that night there is peace on earth, and a holy quiet reigns over all nature until the rising of the morn."—Irving, Mahomet and his Successors. §§Father of Folly. ††Blood revenge, regarded by the Arabs as an unavoidable, sacred duty.

self shall follow thee, though thou shouldst fly beyond the rocky walls of †Kaf into the awful land of ¶Yâjûj and Mâjûj. Sooner shall ¶Thabeck and Rushvan desert their charges than thy tortured soul find peace!’

“With this he turned away, his features relaxing into a scornful smile, and left me alone beneath the stars.

“I was a man of courage, O King! but, brought to a sense of my perilous situation by his ominous words, a sudden terror siezed me and I trembled at my fate. This it was which justified my terror :

“When Gian ben Gian, King of the Genii, and founder of the Pyramids, was, at the end of two thousand years, overthrown, with all his rebellious subjects, by Azrael, the mighty warrior of Paradise, ere he himself rebelled, the talismanic buckler of the Genius King, after many transitions, fell into the hands of Suleyman the Wise ; while his girdle, next in potency to the buckler itself, was inherited by another.

“For many years the possessor of this

†The Caucasus.

¶Gog and Magog.

||The respective guardians of the gates of Hell and Paradise.

precious treasure was unknown, but a certain man of the now lost tribe of Thamud was at length discovered to hold the Genii in command ; and, the buckler of Suleyman the Wise being safe, it was known that he held in his possession the missing girdle or Gian ben Gian. In the general extinction of the iniquitous primitive tribes, every soul of the tribe of Thamud passed away, except this single scion. By foreign marriage, however, his mingled blood was transmitted, in an unbroken line of posterity, until its present termination in the poet of Mecca. He, indeed, could claim but little of the blood ; but, as the sole surviving heir of his mighty father, unto him, (against whose potent domination of the Dives and Peris even the Two §Suras could not prevail), descended the girdle of the vanquished Genius. At his command all the Genii forsook their abodes and hastened to do his bidding, good or evil.

“Hence it was that his threatened vengeance made my awakened soul to tremble,

§A transcription of the two final chapters of the Koran is used as a talisman, among the Mohammedans.

and the darkness of my apprehension soon was fully justified.

“O Angel of Mercy! that his cursed resentment should have made my dearest love, my Light of Dawn, the instrument of his vengeance, and, sweeping like the awful §Khamseen over my blooming heart, left it bleak and desolate! As the heart loves, so is its grief.

“On the Highlands of Hejaz, farther to the south than the pasturage of my father’s tribe, there lived, — the light of her adopted tribe, the glory of the race! — the fairest of the daughters of Adam. The tender beauty of her smiling face, the grace and energy of her rounded form, were well supported by a strength of mind, a frankness of manners, and a generousness of heart which could not but prevail over the most unfeeling nature; and, with equal ease she sat upon the untamed steeds of the desert, or, around the evening camp-fires, related stories of her former home beside the Nile.

“The sorrowing and afflicted were her especial care, and a single word from her

§June simoom.

comforting lips more soothingly fell than all the Balsams of the South. So discreet was she, that among the tribe she was known as Onun Lhoem, Mother of Wisdom, — the best deserved of her titles ; — and her praise was upon the commending tongue of all who could word her name. Her teeth seemed formed of the pearls of Iran's gulf, and her luminous smile, contrasting with the darkness of her soft, waving hair, well confirmed her true name of Zoraya, Light of Dawn. Ah ! gentle, trusting soul ! my light of dawn she was indeed, and — confusion upon his face ! — the recreant slave who deprived me of her latest smile, shall forever be justly stigmatized as Abu Leilah, Father of Night !

“We had met and loved. For my part, the passion she evoked was but the adoration of her modesty and beauty which so many had bestowed on her before. She, for some less obvious cause, had returned my fond attachment, and, listening to the fervor of my love, as poured forth in a thousand verses, or, struck by the comely, supple form with which nature endowed my youth, at

length responded to my passion with an ardor equal to my own.

"The years of our affection had, thus far, been an untroubled dream, but, soon after the malediction of my unsuccessful rival, occurred the sad calamity whose horrors haunt my endless days—not to the grave, but through the death of life.

"One night, sleeping alone in my darkened tent, I seemed to see the pallid face of Zoraya in the throes of death. Her pale lips moved, and seemed to frame my name, but uttered not a word. Her open arms were extended toward me, and seemed beckoning me to come, and then they fell listlessly by her side. I awoke, trembling and terrified. The beads of perspiration stood upon my forehead, and the restlessness of anxiety would not permit me to return to sleep. I could not banish the awful vision from my eyes, and, after many vain endeavors, finally determined to set out toward her abode without delay.

"The night was not far advanced, and the brilliant moon was just mounting in the east, when, alone, I stole from my tent and began my journey.

“The ages to which anxiety extended the time I had been journeying, were, in reality, but a few short hours, and, as I entered a wooded valley between two verdant hills, the moon had just arrived at its midnight zenith. It was the Peris’ day-break.

“I thought, as I gazed through the solemn wood where the boughs intertwined overhead and the silver moonlight slept in flecks upon the carpeted ground beneath, that I had never before beheld so entrancing a scene. In silent admiration, despite my anxiety, I stood and gazed upon the beautiful valley. For awhile, not a sound broke the midnight stillness, and a peaceful calm possessed the silent night. But, at last, from the gloomy end of the valley, which extended into the distance, there came the faintest whisperings of exquisite music, swelling in modulated tenderness upon the gentle, perfumed breezes which immediately began to blow, and, falling delicately upon the senses, lapped my spirit into an ecstasy of delight. Such heavenly melody! I listened infatuated. Advancing slowly in the direction whence it came, I was even more de-

lighted by the increasing strains, and, unheeding where I strayed, hurried on and on and on, until, in a region never trod by man, I came upon the gossamer Peris in the midst of a joyful festival.

“‘Thou hast done thy task well,’ one whispered to another as, speeding by me, she joined the throng ; and the first smilingly pointed her airy finger towards me as she spoke.

“‘Aside from this all seemed unconscious of my presence, and gaily continued the dance and chorus. Hour after hour they prolonged their ravishing music, and that, too, like the nightingale, without once repeating a strain. Such symphony, such variety, I had never heard before, and soon the very remembrance of my recent solicitude was lost in the trance of joy. I stood unconscious of the flight of time.

“‘Suddenly, above the gentle chorus of the dancing Peris, broke from a distant minaret the familiar cry :

§“ ‘*La illaha il Allah : Mohamed Resoul Allah !*’

§There is no god but God : Mahomet is the prophet of God.

"The Muezzin was calling to morning prayers! In an instant the Peris vanished; and the valley became silent and still. I started and looked about me. The moonlight had faded, and the gray shades of dawn were around me. It seemed a different place. Nothing was familiar. The difference of light had transformed every object. I could no longer tell whence I had entered the valley, for several smaller depressions radiated between the hills which stood on every hand. Realizing my situation, a sudden terror seized me, and, in wild desperation, I hastened from the place.

"After long wanderings in unfamiliar paths, I at last succeeded in finding my way, and, filled with remorse for having been decoyed, hurried onward to accomplish my journey. But a vague misgiving possessed me.

"In her home beyond the Red Sea, Zoraya was once a priestess of Iris, and when leaving her native land, had brought with her the sacred ibis of the temple where she ministered. Great fondness had sprung up between the two, and the bird was ever at her

side. So, when I looked up and beheld this devoted pet swiftly flying towards its long-forsaken home, my alarm knew no bounds. It was an awful omen. She was dead.

"In an agony of doubt and fear I hastened on, and at mid-day nervously drew aside the curtain of her tent. There she lay, pale and feeble with approaching death! Just as I entered, the lids of her eyes turned expectantly towards the tent door, then slowly closed. She sighed, and her thin lips moved. Bending over her I caught the broken words:

"'Ya Allah! he does not come! Forsaken! — at last forsaken! Earth, farewell!'

"I would have taken her in my arms and kissed an assurance of my presence, but she struggled; — she was dead! She whom I had loved so tenderly had died believing me unfaithful! She whom I had cherished for so many delicious years had expired without a parting kiss! No assurance of the love which mocked the tomb! She had set, like the sun beyond §Algarbe!

"In a frenzy of grief I hastened from the tent ere those who watched beside her

§The west.

had recovered from their surprise. Away from those mournful precincts I hurried ; — away from the face of man. I had resolved to pray to die.

“ Onward I went, over mountain and desert, vainly hoping to dispel my thoughts, or as vainly sighing for the oblivion of the tomb. Ah ! how sweet is death ! How strange that those who may one day feel its power should regard it as the worst of foes ! The grave is the asylum of peace !

“ I will not trace the tedious details of my wanderings ; but, at length abandoning my native land forever, I began a restless roving. Over oceans and foreign lands I pursued my weary way. A year rolled by ; another and another ! Ten slow years passed ; — twice ten and ten more. Could I never die ? The most threatening dangers passed me by and I remained unharmed. When destruction seemed inevitable, the portentous agents, passing me, turned and smiled in mockery. The spell of the Thamudite poet was at work !

“ In the midst, O King ! of the third of the resplendent heavens, where glittering gems dazzle the eye on every hand and the

streaming light from Allah's distant throne bathes the walls with living glory, sits, with a hundred thousand battalions keeping eternal guard, the mightiest of the §gem-created, great Azrael, the Angel of Death. A thousand times the allotted life of man would scarcely be sufficient for traversing his measureless brow ; while his height, even as he sits, is beyond the power of conception. Before him is spread a book, which extends over half his dominion, and on its pages he is continually writing and erasing the names of those whose birth or death is at hand. Whoever approaches this awful seat of destiny must first evade the innumerable angels who, with unsleeping vigilance, stand in the glittering stars which depend by golden chains from the silver vault of the first of the heavens, and hurl their burning meteor brands at those who dare to scale the celestial battlements ; must compass the height of the heaven of steel and elude the multitude of spirits of light who have their habitation there ; and finally prevail over the

§The Angels were created of bright gems ; the Genii of fire ; and Man of clay.

guardian host of Azrael himself. The pages of that book can never be turned backward, and the destinies they decree are irrevocable. Hence the jealous care with which the leaves are guarded.

But all this could not withstand the spell of Gian ben Gian's potent girdle, and the cunning audacity of his surviving minions. Hence comes my eternal sorrow.

When the alluring midnight revelry of the Genii in the valley had ceased, the mischievous elves, delighted with their success, fled hastily to their secluded home and awaited the succeeding night. Then again all issued forth to receive the commands of their revenging master. His orders were to scale the walls of Paradise and change the record of my destiny ! I was to live forever !!

"With the Dives and Peris, to will is to do, and to conceive is to execute. Two of the boldest of the tribe, endowed with voices of supernal sweetness, were chosen from the number, and in a moment more, they were winging their flight toward the far-off walls of Paradise.

"High above the earth's receding hills

and mountains airily floated the Peris on the limitless bosom of space. They seemed like the faint palpitations of a sleeping Universe. Their filmy wings scarce waked a zephyr from its still repose. Beyond, the acuteness of vision possessed by Genii alone revealed the misty walls of their objective Paradise, and, unswerving in their flight only as their imponderable bodies swayed time to their pilgrim song, they sailed with incredible swiftness and indescribable ease. Soon the green earth had faded from their vision, and other worlds swept by. Nearer and nearer the high battlements approached ; the Two §Rivers flowed beneath their feet.

“When arrived within range of the guardian spirit’s vision, each took the golden lyre suspended at her side, folded her wings of light, and, as she floated toward the seat of bliss, began warbling with her sister such euphonious strains as even Paradise had never heard before ! As the rapturous melodies stole over the sacred walls, the spirits stood out upon the pendant stars, and, laying aside their arms, stooped low to catch the

§The Nile and Euphrates, fabled to flow beneath the throne of Allah.

faintest tone. Nearer and nearer the Peris came. The Silver Heaven stood entranced. With a sweeter sweep of their golden strings and a wilder beauty in their symphonious song, they spread their elfin pinions for a swifter flight and lit beyond the towering walls ! Paradise was gained.

“ Scarcely pausing, however, to catch a breath of the garden’s delightful fragrance, or to repose their weary bodies after their extended flight, again they spread their airy wings, and, resuming their melodious song, mounted upward ; entered the second of the heavens ; and, before the sentinel angels had yet recovered from their surprise, stood in the third circle, within sight of the awful seat of Azrael.

“ No sooner had they entered those trebly sacred precincts than the mighty legions around the angel of death and destiny began brandishing their fiery swords ; but, as they caught the sound of the approaching music, all dropped their arms and stood motionless beneath the spell. No sound but that of the lyres and voices of the Peris broke the listening stillness. No one moved.

From above and below the angels of Paradise stole near to catch the strange, sweet tones, and soon all were lost in a half-unconsciousness. The opportunity had arrived.

“With an imperceptible motion the Peris at length began to separate, and to tend still nearer toward the seat of Azrael. Soon they hovered on either side, and simultaneously the notes of one grew fainter and fainter, those of the other, clearer and sweeter. Involuntarily the attentive eyes of the heavenly audience turned upon the latter, and finally the strains of the former died entirely away. The first hung her lyre, yet quivering, by her side, and softly glanced around. No one perceived her ; all were listening entranced. Stooping slowly and cautiously over the book of destiny, she ran her eye swiftly down its open pages until it reached my name. In a moment she blotted out those above and below my own, and, with a lightning touch, turned the leaf ! Her mission was accomplished !

“Ya Allah ! what a moment it was for my life-weary, tortured soul ! Never to die ! Never to die ! Never to sit with my lost

Zoraya beside the cool rivers which refreshingly flow through the shady groves of Al Jennah! The fires of Jehennam are to be much preferred! Their cursed commission done, the Genii returned to earth, amid the praises and benedictions of their satisfied master. *He had been revenged!*

“And so, O my benefactor! I have wandered through the kingdoms of earth, but sorrow haunts me still. I have wept beside all tides and lamented on every mountain, and yet my heart is full. The same dread consciousness of interminable life and anguish marks every month and day and hour. For awhile, age seemed stealing on, as these locks, this form, betray; and hope of death revived in my weary, sickened heart: but at last, though the years went by, they left no trace of age behind. For me there can be no death — no rest. Hence, O King of this peculiar island! I have sought, less from hope than despair, a sojourn in your secluded land, to spend, in commiserable woe, a portion of those days which, unless the infinite mercy of Allah especially reverse the book of decrees, can find no end until, at the final

trumpet of Israfel, heaven and earth shall
melt away."





CHAPTER XVI.

THE King of Utopia had listened with great attention to the story of the unfortunate Arab, and had been affected even more by his woeful condemnation to an endless life than by the grief and desolation of the Syrian lover. All the attendants sighed deeply and sympathetically as he concluded. Indeed, so deeply was the King moved, to learn that such sorrow existed in the outside world, that he determined, not only to increase his favors towards the afflicted refugees, but to throw open Utopia to all the world, that the sorrowing might find repose.

Pressing affairs of state would not permit the continuance of the narrations for a few succeeding days, but at the end of that time, with an avidity much increased by delay, all assembled again to listen to the story of the Spaniard's cause of exile. That

of the beautiful maiden — how she blushes there beside you! — was blended with his own, and this would consequently be the last of the sadly pleasant entertainments. The thought brought regret to all, but inwardly they had devised means for a prolongation of the agreeable hours. When all were seated and the cavalier had placed himself in the centre of the assemblage and facing the King, he began

“The noblest of Castilian blood flowed in my father’s veins, and the name of Don José de Vega was once a synonym of worth. Descended from one of the bravest of the Knights of St. Iago, whose daring achievements on the field of Navaretta, in defence of the Bastard King, Don Henry of Castile, against his tyrannical brother, evoked the highest praises and made a banner of his §pennons — with this extraction, and himself brave, courteous and liberal, there was not a cavalier in Spain more honored and beloved.

“His father before him had been a man

§Hence made a Knight Banneret, subservient only to the baron. For both above, vide Froissart, *Les Chroniques*.

of most virtuous and exemplary character who sooner would have forgotten his darling joys than his Aves, and who was possessed of the tenderest of paternal hearts. To speak truth, Our Lady and his promising children shared among them his exclusive meditation and concern, and had the force of example been of proper avail, the latter must have been paragons of their kind. Not only was he scrupulously discreet in his conduct, but took every precaution that no contaminating influences should be brought to bear upon his children. Their domestic surroundings were all that could be desired, and every vice, despoiled of its delusive glitter, was presented in its true, vicious light.

“But despite his solicitude and precautions, both his sons, when arrived at their majority and freed from paternal restraint, gradually fell into a life of most excessive dissolution. In a few brief months all the instruction of years seemed to have been forgotten, and, by reaction, to have plunged them into more unrestricted vices than if they had never been restrained.

“Thus several years stole by, but at

last the elder of the two fell a victim to his indiscretions ; and, his parents having died, my father found himself alone and friendless in the world. In spite of his evils, he was a man of judgment and feeling, and, brought to a sense of his desperate situation, he determined to return.

“This determination he immediately put into execution, and, once truly repentant, his piety and devotion soon became commensurate with his former depravity. How a heart which, like his, had received the advantages of all moral and Christian example and instruction could ever grow so unnatural as to forsake its righteous principles now became a perplexing question. Looking around him, he began to consider his former associates in wickedness, and to enumerate those among them who had sprung from pious parentage, when, to his astonishment and shame, he discovered that these far outnumbered those who were evil, so to speak, by inheritance. Indeed, so decided was this predominance, to him it seemed that, by reason of the aversion which familiarity with vice produced, prevailing even

over the force of example, the surest guaranty of a righteous progeny was unrighteous ancestry!

The multitude of disloyal children who had forsaken the godly counsel of their parents confronted him on every hand, and, by a reciprocal course of ratiocination, his half-developed idea was becoming rapidly confirmed. Endued with the natural and universal opinion of mankind as to example, this, indeed, appeared to be a paradox, and he turned his entire attention to the study of sociology — particularly this phase.

This idiosyncrasy might have been a weakness produced by his protracted extravagances in youth — a slightly unbalanced state of mind; at all events, he continued to investigate the subject assiduously. At last he expressed his firm conviction in this contrary system of imparting the spirit of uprightness.

“Meantime he had loved, won and wedded. This difficult and perplexing question—momentous, however decided—had for awhile restrained him from the consummation of his happiness, but when did love ever con-

tinue to reason long ? The fairest beauty of Castile became his bride. The sole issue of that union was myself.

“ My father, among other of his qualifications, was a man of set determination ; and, convinced of the integrity of his idea, he did not hesitate to put it into practice. He relied implicitly on his logical deductions, and having once arrived at a conclusion, all apparently valid contradictions were merely clever sophistries. He remained unmoved.

“ So soon as I had arrived at an age of discernment he reverted to his former extravagances of life, for he loved me with a tenderness which was all but idolatry, and his willingness for self-sacrifice extended to the soul ! Among his friends some remained faithful, but the greater part, believing him mad, deserted him. He did not swerve. Would to God he had !

“ All went serenely during the earlier years of our youth. In spite of example, I retained my integrity. But at last came the consequences which might naturally have been expected. I became as depraved as my father — even worse. Alas, for his visionary

system ! It has darkened my miserable life. One after another, in rapid succession, I embraced all the vices in the category of sin. I became an abandoned man.

“ My father, perceiving the failure of a system by which, for my salvation, he had sacrificed his own soul, and seeing me, ungrateful wretch, violating all the laws of God and man, began to decline, and so continued until he sank, broken-hearted, into the grave.

“ But hearts never grow too depraved to love, though love itself be brought to depravity. In a pleasant part of Andalusia, not far from Grenada, there lived a beautiful Moorish damsel whose bright black eyes and graceful form, of which you yourself may judge, had captured my willing heart. The mother of Saffana — this was the maiden's name — had been permitted by good Queen Isabella to remain in her native land, after the expulsion of her race, as a recompense for some kind service, and there she continued to remain. The feeble appeals of a difference in faith had but little effect on my irreligious heart, and a total disregard of

these proprieties became one of my greatest transgressions.

"The wicked are the favorites of fortune, and I experienced but little difficulty in gaining an interview with the object of my passion; but here my good fortune ceased. Pleasantly but firmly she replied to my entreaties that, though she should become as recreant as myself in ignoring the distinctions of creeds, she was already another's and could give me no encouragement. Menace and supplication were alike unavailing, and, after several months of persistent effort, I was forced to abandon my suit.

"But to see the object of my baffled love become another's, without raising a revenging hand, was more than my vitiated nature could now endure. The happy nuptials were approaching. Posted in the mountains, I awaited my opportunity.

"The inexperienced girl, not wishing to disturb the peace of her lover, had not been discreet enough to impart to him the secret of my unsuccessful suit, and he, therefore, apprehended no danger. Together they would frequently wander upon the Vega in

the cooler hours of the afternoon and evening ; and the sight of their loving happiness made my resentful bosom burn.

“At last, one afternoon, shortly before their intended union, they strolled across the Vega, along the Xenil, and very near to my lurking-place. Saffana sat down on the river bank. I saw her lover, shortly afterwards, leave her for a moment and, following the stream for quite a distance, plunge in for something. My opportunity had arrived. In an instant I had swept down from the mountain on my fleet-footed steed, taken her in my arms and hastened back to the fastness of the Sierras.

“Making my way by a circuitous route to the port of Malaga, I set sail with her for the island of Majorca, where for several months we remained. Grief for her affianced, however, brought on an illness which continued during our sojourn there. Touched by her sorrow, and, moreover, now partially revenged, my heart began to soften, and soon my only care was to restore her to health and happiness.

“But an additional blow came. Re-

ports, from a source which seemed indubitable, declared that her despairing lover had died by his own hand immediately after his loss. At this, the afflicted girl was overwhelmed with grief. My own tender nature revived, and I began to experience the most agonizing remorse.

In search of diversion among new scenes, we soon sailed to the island of Sicily, where we remained until, encountering our fellow-sorrowers, who sit before you, and anxious, like themselves, for an asylum of peace, we determined to accompany them to the blessed island of Utopia."



CHAPTER XVII.



THE last narrative was now concluded. Slowly and regretfully the company dispersed. The King of Utopia had listened no less attentively than on the previous occasions, and was now determined, not only to permit the oppressed and afflicted of every land to make the island their home, but, impressed by the insight he had gained of the world through these narratives, he resolved to throw open his ports to the general commerce of all nations.

His fugitive friends were given lucrative and agreeable positions under the government, and ere long had all but forgotten their distresses in the busy routine of duty.

Once resolved upon establishing commercial relations with the world, the King of Utopia spared no pains to render his ports inviting. Indeed, his pains were scarcely necessary, for the fame of the island's won-

derful peace and prosperity had spread over the face of the globe, and the interdiction of foreign vessels had long been deplored.

No sooner had his royal purpose become known than the shipping of the world began to throng the harbors. The silks of Kathay and the furs of the poles, the fruits of the tropics and the manufactures of Europe poured into Utopia in exchange for its minerals—gold, silver, tin, salt, and precious stones—and its abundant agricultural productions—principally wheat and barley. The inexperience of the Utopians in matters of commerce, and their comparative ignorance of monetary values left them an easy prey to the chicanery of unscrupulous speculators, and the natives often suffered severely.

By this indiscriminate communication and immigration many of the worst elements of society were introduced, and soon all the vices of the East stalked abroad in the capital of Utopia. Their detrimental influences were naturally augmented by their novelty, for vice is so charming in its newness. So long as, in the mystery of human hearts,

mankind, in whatever state, may be allured by the unacquired, so long shall wickedness—the unknown state—tempt the purest heart from its long-familiar condition of innocence and truth. They seized it with destructive avidity, and it was not long before the last struggles of Utopia's glorious principles were at hand.

Efforts for individual gain rapidly grew more violent and exclusive in their nature. In the relations of brother to brother, brotherly relations were forgotten. It was a struggle in which self was for self alone. Human kindness waned before the greed of the novitiates of gold. Avarice was supreme. The selfishness of the man destroyed the power of the citizen, and all the benefits to be derived from harmony of action were sacrificed by the disaffection of the constituents.

Murder stood upon the high places, and the throne itself was impotent to avenge it. New instruments of destruction had supplanted the rude weapons of the fathers. Pillage and incendiarism came in with their share of destruction. The most unoffending became apprehensive.

Pride, too, entered there. The characteristic rivalry of the fallen nation evinced itself more than ever before in the emulation of dress and ornament, and many a lady hung a fortune from her ears. The wealth, the luxuriance of civilization and the East, as I said, poured in, nor did it remain unutilized. I hold it an eternal law that extravagance in person necessitates poverty in mind, and the law made no exception here.

Many abandoned Utopia. Some, seeking greater gain, wished to venture in foreign countries : others, humiliated and chagrined by their country's fallen state, quitted her desecrated shores forever ; while others still, trembling for their lives in a land where the wild infatuations of pride, avarice, and ambition, joining hands with the children of fanaticism and ingratitude, so transported every husbandman and artizan as to endanger the most innocent. Steadily the stream of emigration poured from the falling island, and counter-balancing this with so great an influx as assembled in its cities, Utopia had planted the anarchical seeds of nations long

inured to vice, in the bosom of a people unfamiliar with their dire effects.

Chaos reigned.



CHAPTER XVIII.



AMONG the causes of the fall of Utopia, one, more immediately attributable to the four afflicted strangers, soon began to make itself felt throughout the island. Their advent had procured the admission of the world to its ports, and hence had been the indirect medium of introducing the anarchy and distraction which was now doing its awful work, but the growing, menacing taste for narratives, and the consequent love for works of imagination, was a more direct, if not a more powerful, factor.

The ease and elegance with which each one of these strangers had recounted his life and sorrows, — however poorly I may have been able to repeat them — produced a profound impression on the minds of all whom royal favor had permitted to attend, and soon after their arrival, these four became the most distinguished of Utopia citi-

zens. Again and again they were called upon to repeat the sad history of their lives, until there was not a child unfamiliar with the details.

True, there had previously been occasional suggestions of something like connected narratives, but dwelling exclusively among themselves, and by the taciturnity of Erasmus, unable to profit by the experience of the only man who had visited Utopia from the cultivated portion of the outside world in years, there had never been, with the possible exception of the dying Dreamer's confessions, so coherent a story as those, related in the island; and even that exception, by reason of the subsequent revolutions and disasters could not produce its full effect on the more delicate sensibilities of mind and imagination. Hence this amusement was something new, and again the taste for novelty displayed its wonted inclination.

Verbal communication of the strangers' narratives became too slow. They were printed in book form and, with redoubled capacity, continued their circulation, becoming the classics of Utopia.

The King himself gave the movement his encouragement, and, being so pleased with the entertainment afforded him during their appeal for admission, he begged of them to recall whatever other tales, either true or fictitious, with which they might be acquainted, and to relate them to him during his leisure hours. The grateful fugitives were willing enough to evince their appreciation of his benefactions. It would at once entertain their kind sovereign and distract their brooding thoughts from their own misfortunes. Nor could anything have been more to their taste and qualifications. The proverbial predilection of an Arab for this pastime was indeed exemplified, but in the Syrian, the cavalier, and even the Moorish damsel, the poet, in his new branch, found worthy competitors.

In a short time the royal garden became fairly peopled, in spirit, by such of the personages of Arabia and of Spain as had done aught interesting to the King. His favorites were invited to attend, and every story, transmitted by this medium to the less fortunate of the inhabitants, was known in a

short time throughout Utopia. Beneath the smile of imperial favor the taste grew more confirmed, and soon the commencement of a new history or tradition was anticipated as an event of national rejoicing.

When interesting facts were at length exhausted, and beauty of language could no longer supply the want of intrinsic variety, the gifted four began to ply the imagination. No effort was made to deceive the King as to the fictions, and so ingeniously, harmoniously and delightfully they were woven, so charmingly related and so happily concluded that ere long he confessed his decided preference for fiction over fact.

How god-like are the children of the brain! Omnipresent and eternal, they laugh at leagues and ages! They scorn the might of Strength! They mock at exorcism! They penetrate; pervade! They encircle; they enwrap! Who can forget when they have spoken to remembrance? Who can recall what they have made the heart forget? Puissant children of the brain!

Aping their sovereign's entertainers, every Utopian was soon a romancer;— the

lipping learned to sing. There could be no higher excellence; and the wildest imagination was the highest order of intelligence. The laborer abandoned his languishing fields and the tools of the artizan went to rust. An influx to the cities began. With none to sow, there was nothing to reap. Want and privation, unheeded, threatened the kingdom. Idleness became legitimate — honorable.

Each of the constantly repeated conceptions contributed to the infatuation. An impost of narratives was laid on all who came, and a liberal response was the surest pass-port to favor and renown. Unpractical, visionary wretches, with inflated ideas and delusive fancies, now constituted the inhabitants of Utopia. The end was approaching.

Such fertile, inflamed imaginations were without a possible parallel. A youth, who had acquired remarkable dexterity in reading music at sight, was said to have fallen senseless in his ecstasy at beholding the notes of a beautiful composition. Common sense had passed away.



CHAPTER XIX.

NOW let me go back a little. After the assassination of the Prince, Althea's father, the faithful Erastus was about to consummate his happiness. Notwithstanding his unyielding persecutions, Althea had loved her father with great tenderness, and for several months subsequent to his death, so deeply and continually did she mourn for him, that her own life was frequently doubtful. The color faded from her cheek, her voice assumed a deathly tone. Tearless in her lethargy and un murmuring in her grief, she seemed to have lost all interest in human affairs.

But the deepest agony will abate, and her voice soon began to resume something of its wonted cheerfulness ; the roses and the light returned to her cheeks and eye. Erastus hailed them with delight ; a keener love than ever prevailed in his constant heart.

No time was lost ; preparations for their union at once began. Both had been among the recent converts to Christianity, and the

celebration of their wedding was to be in accordance with the holy rites of this religion. The small but exquisite chapel which had been piously erected by missionaries, on the site of an overthrown Utopian temple, was gaily decorated for this unique occasion.

Early on the morning of the day set apart for their union, friends began to gather. Good wishes were abundant and anticipations high. As the hour drew nigh, the happy couple proceeded to the little chapel, and closely watched by the many who accompanied them, paused before the altar, where a few brief words by the priest made them man and wife. When they had received the holy benediction they turned and moved slowly out, followed by their smiling friends who crowded around them, as happy as the newly married couple themselves.

But there was an incident. It was not bold or disturbing ; indeed, it was scarcely perceived by any ; and yet it was one which meant much to those who saw and comprehended. In the midst of the gay and happy concourse, the only ripple upon its serenity, stood the perjurer, Phrystia ! Resentment

burned in every feature, and her wicked eyes beamed with a fierce fire of hate. Close to her, but displaying little emotion, stood the subservient Othiastes. As the bride and groom passed out into the open air, the angered, conscienceless woman uttered a terrible imprecation on the noble Erastus, who had formally defeated her jealous resentment and humbled her pride, and upon the innocent girl at his side who, by merely associating with him, had incurred her resentment. She entertained dark designs as to the immediate sequence of this happy event, and those who read her countenance, trembled.



CHAPTER XX.



AMONG the effects which the great predisponents of corruption had produced, was the whisperings of treason and a new revolution. Many, not too far inebriated, began to awake from their lethargy and attend to the muttering of the approaching storm. Apprehension became darker, and numbers of the more conservative citizens, mindful of the former disasters, experienced genuine alarm.

Phrystia smiled. The design which her cursedly ingenious brain had conceived was succeeding marvelously well. So soon as she dared, supported by Othiastes, she appeared before the throne and, with a fiendish touch of satisfaction and revenge in her look and tone, charged the unsuspecting Erastus with high treason. Othiastes she called to witness, and he gave a ready confirmation.

Had the King been himself, a feeling recollection of her former crime and impeachment would have caused him not only to discredit but resent her false charge. But just at this period the Spanish cavalier was relating to his Majesty the interesting story of Don Roderick, whose unholy passion for the lovely Florinda led the resentful father, Count Julian, to deliver Spain into the hands of the Moors. The details of the narrative were much drawn out and perhaps highly colored, rendering it no less lengthy than entertaining. In his infatuation, the sovereign of Utopia, not wishing to be disturbed, had temporarily turned over to his grand vizier, in whom he reposed great confidence, all the affairs of state. It was then that Phrystia appeared with her charge.

Now, the grand vizier, immediately after the enactment prohibiting the immigration of strangers, provoked, perhaps, by the man's persistent silence, had wished to strain the law and expel Erastus, as a stranger, from the island, although his coming had been anterior to the prohibitory edict. This the King opposed, and, as is often the case,

instead of hazarding his favor with the great, the real opponent of his designs, he chose to derive some satisfaction from hating the man whom he had tried in vain to injure, and when Phrystia, with Othiastes, appeared, he hailed his opportunity, and, with but little ceremony or show of justice, condemned Erastus, the happy bride-groom, to execution.

There was little delay in the matter. In a short time, while the King was yet engrossed in the story of Florinda and her wrongs, and her father's terrible retaliation, Erastus was led to his fate.

In an open square of the capital a scaffold had been erected, and the headsman stood ready with his axe. The young man's heartless accusers and their equally heartless abettors could not be so unfeeling, however, as to demand his death without permitting him a few farewell remarks. He was told to speak, if he desired.

When battling, in other times, for the cause of Utopia, his nerves had never trembled at the fiercest foe; rather, with the zeal of the penitent who would expiate former faults, the surfeited and reclaimed libertine

seemed to revel in the conflict ; but concern for that other self, whom he had recently taken, could not be so ignored, and for a moment he seemed to shudder at his approaching doom. Finally summoning all his courage and self-possession, he began to disclose the well-kept mystery of his life.

Slowly and deliberately he proceeded to relate how, the son of affluent parents, he once possessed all that heart could desire ; but, led off into dissolution, he had quitted the parental home, on the death of his father, and after weary wanderings among scenes of ephemeral delights, returned, only to be repulsed from his own chateau, by the ingratitude of his only brother. He told of his subsequent wanderings and his arrival in Utopia ; of his tender love for Althea ; his sorrow at the enforced separation ; and finally his supreme joy in the recent blissful union.

Up to this, he had said nothing of the former treachery of his accusers. A wonderful change had come over the faces before him. In the height of their love for the exciting, the people were deeply moved by the eloquence and enthusiasm with which his

striking story was related. All seemed entranced in their stillness. The headsman had dropped his axe, and the guards no longer guarded. He paused. No one moved. Deep thought seemed to hold them all spell-bound. For a moment he gazed upon them, and then walked boldly away undisturbed.

No future effort was made to execute the judgment. He remained among them unmolested. Although attended by no demonstrations, popular feeling was revived against the two false witnesses, and a few days brought retribution upon their heads.



CHAPTER XXI.



THE discovery that Erastus was a brother of the unfortunate Dreamer had become the all-absorbing topic in Amaurot. In this general wonder no one had participated more than the surviving brother himself. Surprise soon gave place to a fiercer feeling, however, when he realized that it was for his own relation that the injured Starlight's love had burned. Forgetting all the early ingratitude of the dead, he only remembered that the first of Phrystia's many wrongs had been to one whom his brother had loved, and by whom he was loved in return. He could tolerate no more, and resolved upon her punishment.

After the enrapturing story of Florinda was concluded, the King had resumed the regular routine of his official duties, and learning of the recent proceedings against Erastus, and, with great indignation because of the of the chief vizier's sanction of the crimes of

the hated Phrystia, this worthy was dismissed in disgrace, and the prosecution of a charge against the two schemers for false accusation suited well with his temper.

With more justice, his disposition of the case was as summary as that before the vizier, and scarcely had the news of their condemnation gone abroad when the heartless pair, the authors of half Utopia's misfortunes, were led to execution upon the same scaffold which had been erected for their accusers.

Starlight's tender heart, in spite of the wrongful suffering she had endured, sank within her at the thought of their coming fate. Noble, generous woman ! what unselfish feelings ever moved her gentle soul ! She could not remain passive, and, before the hour of execution had arrived she arose and with trembling voice, began to plead for the life of her enemies. It was a touching appeal, but the King remained firm in his judgment.

Stolid and emotionless as through life, the treacherous pair stood in the presence of approaching death, before the reviling multitude. There was not the twitch of a muscle. To the proffered privilege of a few farewell

remarks their sole reply was silence. The nearest approach to feeling which either face betrayed was the look of loathing and contempt which Othiastes cast upon his corrupt companion, but this scarcely would have been perceived, perhaps, had it not been unmistakably confirmed.

Phrystia's head was upon the block. The executioner slowly raised his glittering axe in air. The surrounding thousands held their breath. For a moment there was a pause ; then, with a sudden grasp, Othiastes snatched the blade from the officer's hands, and before his intention could be realized or its execution prevented, the graceless wretch had himself severed the head of his wicked associate from her body. He made no attempt to resist his fate, and in a moment more his own bloody head rolled beside her's in the dust.

Fallen Utopia was avenged !



CHAPTER XXII.

A FEW years of comparative tranquillity had passed away, and by the side of the royal Disputant sat Starlight as Queen of Utopia. Kindness upon the one hand and gratitude upon the other had gradually merged into love, and finally the generous sovereign, fully reclaimed from his recent weaknesses, received, as the reward of his protection, the hand of the innocent he had protected.

Whatever passions may have been beneath the surface, peace seemed to possess the breasts of the Utopians.

But in Utopia there was one unquiet heart. In an upper room, facing one of the loveliest streets of Amaurot, furnished and adorned with all the beauty and magnificence which love could prompt and wealth bestow, lay Althea, slowly dying ! Although her spirits seemed to have again revived, she had never truly recovered from the shock occasioned by her father's death. The color had

for awhile returned to her cheeks, but, deeper down, disease had ever been at work.

After a few years, she again began to decline, and now Death gazed from her beautiful eyes. Erastus, overcome with grief, sat alone at her bedside, with his bowed head resting in his hand. He had watched long and anxiously beside her, and though the body was very tired, the spirit refused it rest. At intervals he would rouse from the stupor into which nature, in spite of him, was about to lapse, and, bending over her, would take her thin hand nervously in his own and gaze appealingly into her unexpressive eyes. There was no return to his beseeching look. Day by day he sat there. Her recovery was hopeless, and he preferred to have no intrusion upon his sorrow; he would sit there alone. Morning would come with its sunlight and freshness, and breathe in at the large open window. The song of the birds, as they awoke in the tall trees that shaded the street below, would come floating in — a mockery, yet a sweet mockery, of the silence in the chamber of approaching death, — still, scarcely stirring, Erastus sat

and watched. The sun would mount to noon-day, and, panting with the increasing heat, the little birds would cease singing and fly away to some cooler retreat ; still the grieving husband kept his seat. The quiet, sleepy afternoon would steal slowly on ; the gold and crimson of sunset could be seen from the western window, and the night would again come down. Amidst it all Erastus remained pensive and motionless. An awful agony was at his heart.

One evening, as he watched the sleeping patient, a sudden tremor came over her frame. He started and looked wildly into her face, then turned away. Althea was no more !



CHAPTER XXIII.

NOT long after the death of Althea, Erastus, whose overwhelming grief and melancholy state was perceptible to his many friends, received a summons to appear before the royal Sovereign ; who, in recognition of his sterling qualities and in sympathy for his great loss, bestowed upon him the chief office of the Court ; that of vizier to the King.

Erastus bowed in humble gratitude, but scarcely had the rumor of his appointment been spread abroad, when threatening demonstrations were noticeable on every hand. Salpurnus, the deposed vizier, had been secretly at work among his followers, and the dark resentment of his heart was about to be gratified. Throughout the island, and especially in the neighborhood of the capital, many had quietly attached themselves to the enterprise of revolution, and, — poor, blind sons of passion ! — had pledged their lives and services in the cause of his retaliation.

Salpurnus did not regard his preparations as fully developed, but, angered at the elevation of his enemy, and fearing the measures which the newly appointed vizier might prevail upon the King to put into execution against himself, he began to precipitate the attack.

One midnight, while discoursing with his worshipped Starlight, there was a demand for admittance at the outer gate. Being refused, it was forced, the guard cut down, and in another moment half a thousand men, wild with passion, were battering at the massive portal of the palace.

Erastus, awakened by the rabble outside, at once discerned the true cause. Without ceremony he hastened to the royal chamber, and prevailed upon the Sovereign and his consort to fly. A moment more and it would have been too late, for, as the three disappeared down a secret stairway which led to the garden, the angry mob gained entry, and swarming like bees through the palace halls, cried for the dastardly Disputant.

Foiled in their murderous designs, the inebriated revolutionists began to apply the

torch, and soon all the costly hangings and magnificent tapestries were a mass of flames. Wider and wider spread the roaring blaze, until, with astonishing rapidity, they enveloped the entire structure. The lurid glare lit up the sleeping island for miles around, and threw such of the inhabitants who had not been made acquainted with the deposed vizier's plan, into the wildest excitement.

In their terrified state they fell an easy prey to the surging revolutionists, who rapidly increased in numbers, and, after occupying the strongholds of the city, began sweeping across the island. Halting only long enough to organize their augmented forces and to form further plans of action, they marched irresistably onward, occupying village after village in rapid succession, forcing the husbandmen to surrender and join their ranks.

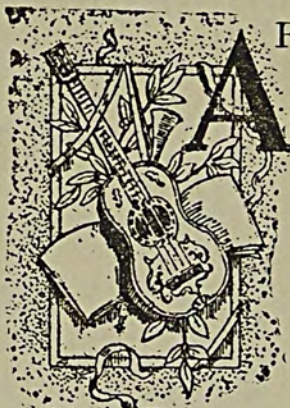
This latter, however, was not accomplished without many sharp and spirited conflicts, and the fierceness of the brief attacks was shown by the destruction left behind. It was not the plan of Salpurnus to secure his own elevation to the throne. The downfall of his enemies was the acme of his fiendish

motive, and he cared but little whether the land, over which he had no desire to rule, was devastated or not. The brand and the axe were never spared, and in their wake was naught but desolation. In four short days every village was occupied by the rebellious troops, and the fields on every side were laid waste and barren.

A diligent search had failed to discover the King and his companions, consequently their fate was unknown to their enemies. What the ultimate intentions of Salpurnus were concerning them and the future government of the island, can never be ascertained, for just at this time occurred the event which swept Utopia from the earth.



CHAPTER XXIV.



AFTER the former insurrection, which brought about the fall of the more simple Utopian government and placed a King upon the throne, there had existed great rivalry in architecture amounting to extravagance. Under the torch of the revengeful Salpurnus, these magnificent structures and the limited forests were destroyed, which left the whole island exposed to the full sweep of the elements, and with nothing to break their fury the winds could rage over the treeless tracts with terrific effect.

For several weeks preceding, and during the revolution, the heavens, at intervals, had worn a menacing aspect, signifying a terrible visitation of the elemental powers, but just as the culmination seemed about to arrive, the angry clouds would each time pass away

and the sky reassume its serenity. For several days, however, the atmosphere became more oppressive and the heavens gradually assumed a threatening appearance. There was a peculiar tinge in the coloring of the clouds never witnessed before and those of the Utopians who were not thoroughly distracted by the horrors of civil strife and destruction, looked with awe upon the gathering shades, feeling that they were forebodings of disaster.

Finally an unbroken sheet of hurrying clouds hid the face of heaven, but not a breath of air was astir. Far out on the horizon the sharp lightnings began to play, although at too great a distance for their report to be heard. Silent, ominous and still! Hostilities had ceased and every heart had grown sick with terror. So deep was the gloom that night seemed scarcely darker than the day. The lightnings grew more vivid, and the dull, distant roar of thunder now broke upon the earth. The black funeral shroud of heaven sank lower towards the threatened earth, as though, at the moment of its destruction, to envelop it for

eternity. Every inhabitant had forsaken his home, and in groups about the city all could be seen engaged in prayer. Wilder and wilder still grew the scene. The distant mutterings of thunder waxed into a booming fury, and the incessant lightnings, piercing, crackling, burning, played at hide seek over such domes and towers as had escaped the torch of the revolutionists.

Suddenly there came a thunderous burst of tremendous force which seemed to loosen the foundations of the universe. Utopia trembled. Beneath the flood and fury of rain and wind, the structures, burning from the lightning's flame, came crashing to the earth. The air was filled with flying timbers, and the maddened sea was fast battling its way inward several miles.

Hour after hour this awful wrath continued. Not a building remained. The morning came and brought but little abatement, and then another night closed in with a sky still dark and wild.

It was not until the following sunrise that the hurricane died away, and the winds had become gentle whispers, singing over the

wreck of their wrath, though the waves of the sea were still fretful. The clouds gradually cleared away, and the noon-day sun looked down upon an awful picture of desolation.

To that good angel, Starlight, I owe my own salvation, as does your gentle Saffana. Starlight alone, during all the excitement, maintained her calmness and presence of mind. When, at the approaching climax, all had been given up in despair, "Hasten," she said, "to my father's cave. There you will be safe." Thither I fled, leading Saffana by the hand. But Starlight turned in another direction and soon was lost from sight. The Disputant called wildly after her, but she made no reply. He hurried after her, and was himself soon lost from our sight.

I could not pause then to look after them, so with a silent "Farewell forever!" we hastened on to the astronomer's abandoned cave.

In a short while came the crash, and all who were unprotected must have perished at that instant. When the hurricane finally abated, bidding Saffana remain, I ventured from the cave. What a scene of death

and destruction met my eyes! Scarcely a column of the former structures could be seen, and dead bodies lay scattered far and wide. I cannot endure to describe it now.

Stumbling over the ruins, I finally came to a low stone sepulchre which stood entire. It was the tomb of the Dreamer. Imagine my surprise as, at its base, I saw two living creatures, and upon investigating, discovered them to be none other than Starlight and the Disputant! Neither had received the slightest hurt.

Arriving at this desecrated spot, Starlight had fallen upon her knees, and, with no intention of disloyalty to the living, uttered a prayer — her last, she thought — beside the tomb of the departed. It was here that the anxious Disputant came upon her, and fell down beside her just as the hurricane burst in its fury.

High enough to protect, but too low to be razed, the tomb — strange paradox! — had saved both their lives.

The fate of the three remaining strangers, of whom you have heard, remains a mystery. That of the unfortunate Arab,

doomed to perpetual life, was of especial interest, but no one ever knew his end. In the midst of the elemental fury, when destruction was at its height, transported with hope at the prospect of what seemed certain death, and possibly the end of time, so supernatural was the wildness of the tempest, he was heard, at intervals above the roar, thankfully exclaiming :

“ The spell of the girdle has at last been broken. Allah acbah ! Allah acbah ! ”

But his voice finally died away, and no token of him could ever be found.

The sorrowing Syrian and the luckless cavalier, after experiencing such misfortunes as marked their pitiable career, let us hope, were taken to the God of the afflicted and found peace in the silence of their unknown graves.

When restored to our senses the first thought was how to escape from this desolate spot ? Kind nature, as though repentant of its anger, was not long in affording this relief to Starlight and to the Disputant, for a small vessel, having, by some mysterious means, been spared destruction, was sighted

not far from the island. The sea still ran high, but preferring the risk of its wrath to the probabilities of starvation, a search was made for means to reach the ship.

A small row-boat was found, and though somewhat damaged, it was fitted up hastily and we all embarked. The struggle with the angry waves was terrific, and just as we neared the vessel, one billow mightier than the rest, swept Saffana and myself into the sea. It would have been certain death for Starlight and the Disputant to have attempted our rescue, and they labored on to the ship, no doubt believing us to have perished.

But the waves were kind in their unkindness and cast us back, much exhausted, upon the shore. Having nothing with which to signal across the wild sea, we were forced to look wistfully on, as, the next morning, the vessel, somewhat repaired, sailed away.

And so, among these scattered ruins, with only the scantiest sustenance, but with brave and trusting hearts, we have ever since remained. *Such was the Fall of Utopia!*

* * * * *

The aged man had at length concluded

his story. How my heart would thrill at the mention of the name of my worshipped Saffana ! how sicken when he spoke of her dangers and escapes ! And, when he had concluded, I uttered a fervent prayer to Allah for her preservation.

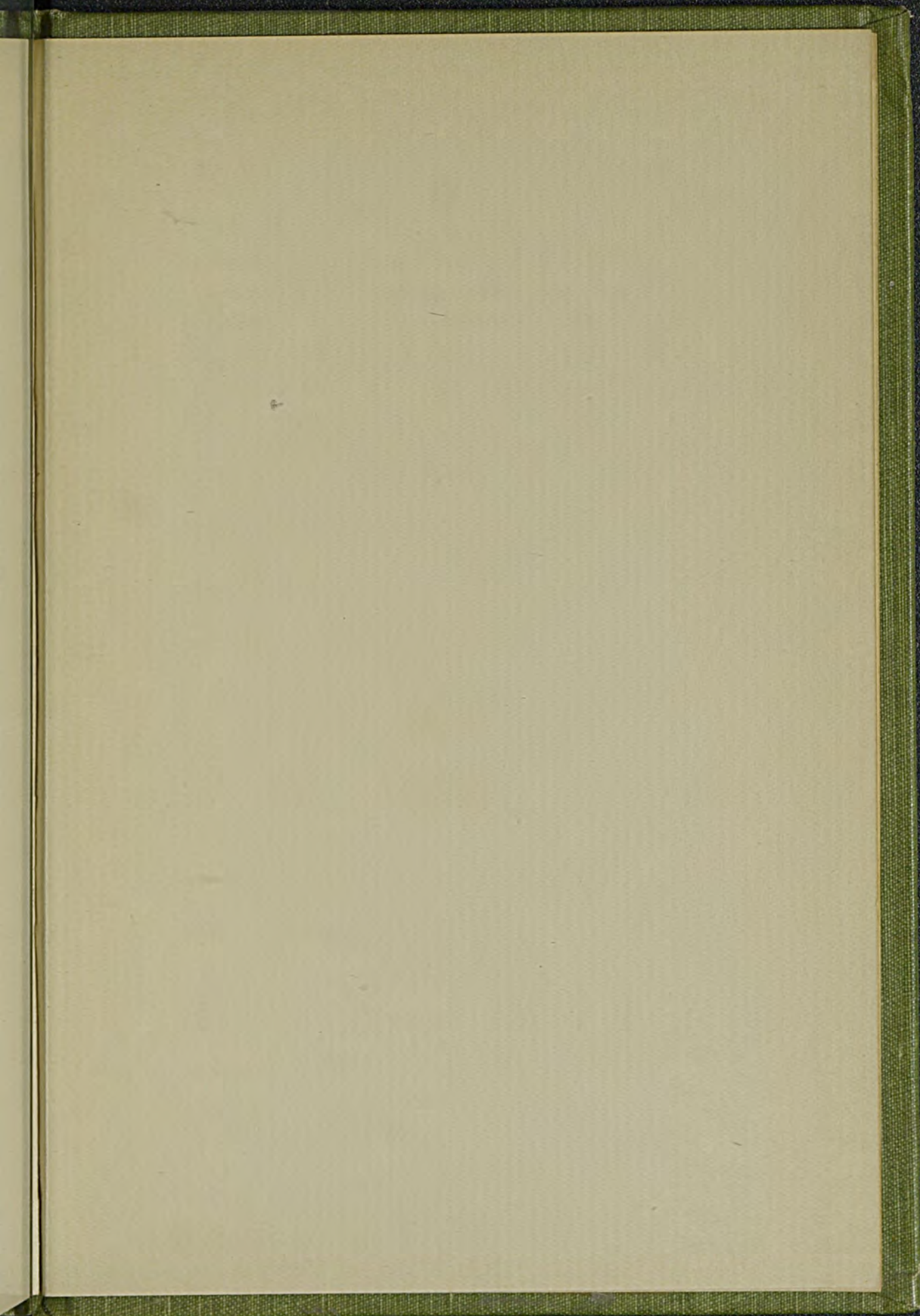
I had now spent several days on the island. It was a melancholy spot. The scenes that, from a peaceful simplicity, had risen to a state of richness and magnificence which astonished the world, were now laid waste in ruin and desolation. The wild winds howled through the crushed, desolated structures, and the screech of the sea birds, above the devastated gardens, seemed a mockery. How awful is the silence of ruined splendor ! And it was there.

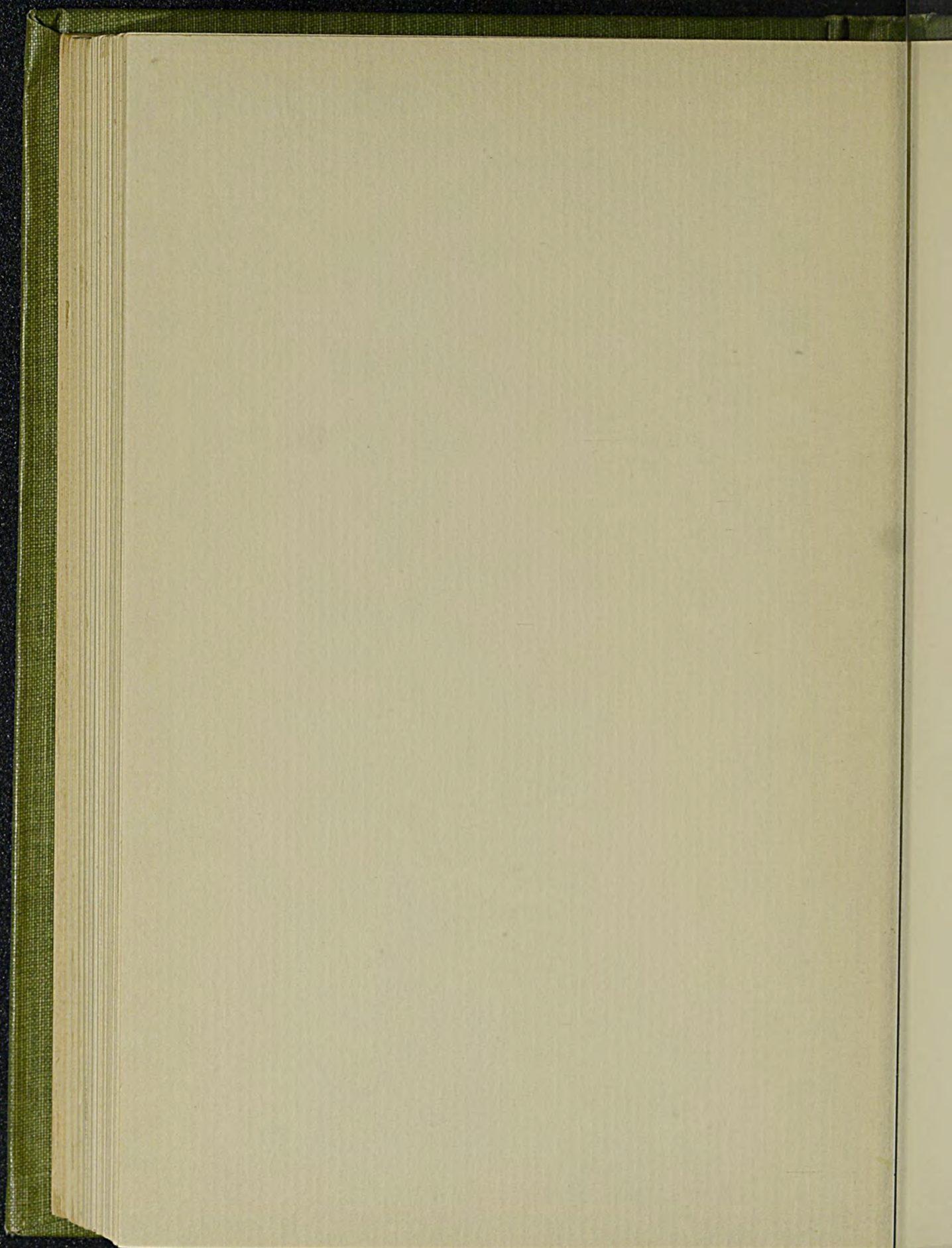
The human ghouls were not tardy in their coming, and to them we owe our deliverance. The destruction of Utopia soon became known, and, attracted by the immense spoil which they knew must be buried beneath the ruins, the white-winged ships were soon coming from every horizon.

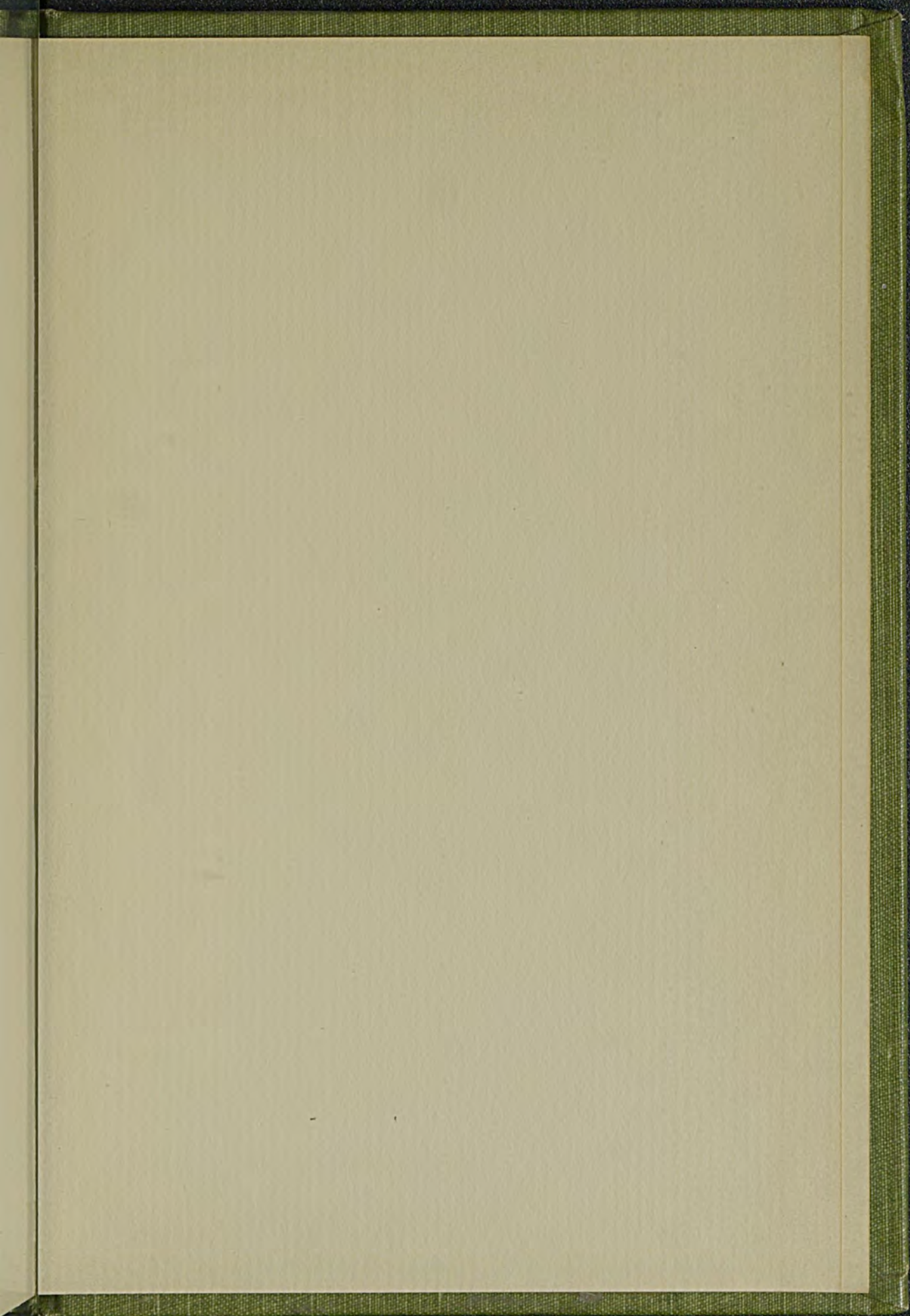
In one of these vessels, returning to the port of Malaga, Saffana, the aged Utopian

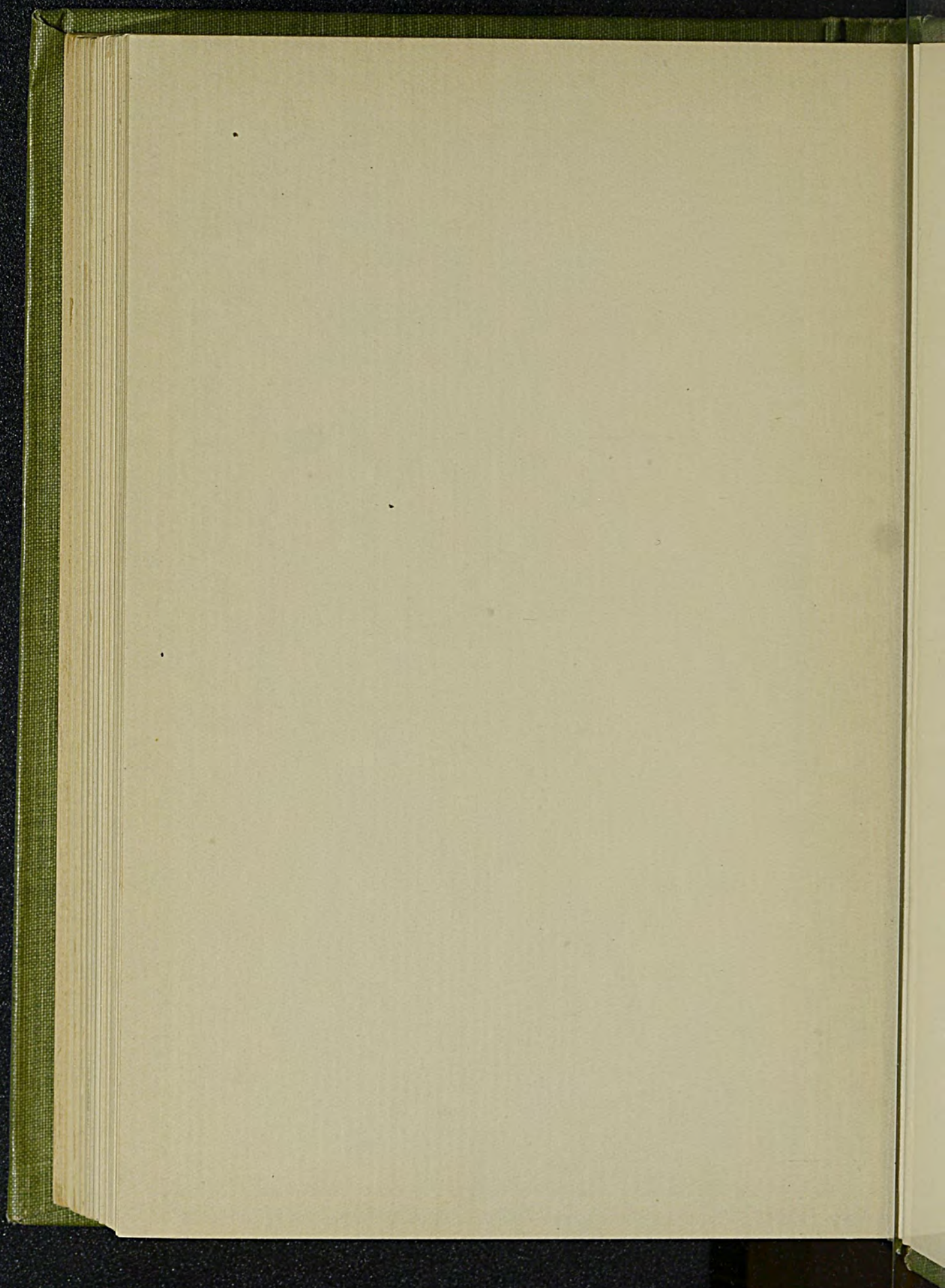
and myself embarked, and in due time, arrived, sound and well. Hastening across the snowy Sierras, we soon found ourselves in my peaceful home beside the Darro, where, happy and contented, we have ever since remained, in humble gratitude to Allah, the God of protection, and to the Hall of Celestial Dreams.











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