

it swept almost to her dimpled feet, and clung to her beautiful form as though jealously striving to conceal the loveliness it succeeded in enhancing. She looked at him with eyes blue and deep as limpid wells, and Stanley stood enraptured—entranced. She smiled, and a flame leaped up within him, for which he sought not to find a name.

"Come, love, come," she murmured, and sprang to the sun-lit shore. She clung to his hand and led him, a willing captive, over the sands and up the cool, green slopes of her island domain. Winding, flower-bordered pathways led through the bewildering mazes of tropical verdure; bright-plumaged birds sang and swayed on the waving palms; rills of cool, clear water tinkled across the path at every turn, while a subtle fragrance permeated the atmosphere, and sweet æolian music swelled and throbbed with every passing breeze, thrilling the senses and lulling the tired spirit to repose. Hundreds of hammocks swung temptingly amid the cool shadows of the trees, and Stanley observed that many of them were tenanted by graceful, sun-tinted nymphs, as lovely as the being at his side. Trees, laden with strange, delicious fruits, hung low, and cushioned boats rocked invitingly on miniature lakes.

"Well, how do you like it all? How are you impressions? Of what are you thinking?" finally demanded his fair companion, as she paused near the arched entrance to a glittering cavern in the hillside.

"Thinking?" cried he, as his glowing eyes sought hers. "Oh, I can not think; I am lost in wonder, intoxicated with beauty, and tingling in every vein with a delicious sense of obligation to the lovely one who has transported me from a realm of toil and strife and weariness, to this fair haven of rest, this heaven on earth."

The lovely face grew radiant at his words; she drew closer, and murmuring "Love knows no obligation," twined her soft arms about him, and drew him, resistless, into the cool shadows of her cavern palace.

* * * * *

Was it weeks, months, or years, that elapsed while the recreant knight of the quill lay dreaming the hours away, in the enchanted island of rest? He could not tell; he kept no note of time; he only knew that the days drifted by like a string of shining pearls, and when, at last, there came a pearl that somehow seemed less perfect than its predecessors, he scarcely realized it, but wondered, in a dreamy way, what it was that jarred upon his senses, and pricked uncomfortably somewhere in his inner consciousness. What was it that made him turn from his downy couch, from the clinging arms of his sweet captor, and ask for a book?

"A book!" she echoed, opening her dreamy eyes in sudden alarm. "A book! Dost think we have books in the land of *dolce far niente*? Books are evil things, and not in accord with the spirit that rules here. They arouse the intellect, stir the brain to action, and stimulate poor, foolish humanity into doing many absurd and useless things. In all my fair dominion there is no book, nor anything else that is, in the slightest degree, an emblem of toil or disquietude."

"But," he said, hesitatingly, "I wonder what you do to pass the time away?"

"You wonder what we do?" she echoed again. "Why, love, have you forgotten that this is the land of 'sweet idleness'? We do nothing; we do not pass the time away; we let it pass itself."

"Oh, pardon me; I had forgotten," he said slowly, and very quietly.

But, somehow, he failed to see the arms held caressingly toward him. He left her and wandered away alone, and