

exquisite gardens, parks, and shrubberies, and of the mansions they surrounded. In the land from which I come, when I drive by any country-seat such as these, it is probable I know who lives there. Upon inquiry, I can easily learn whether he made his money by gold or by sheep, and even some scandal about his father having emigrated at the government expense with a ring round one of his ankles. But the proprietors of the splendid places I was now looking at—Jones of the Stock Exchange, Brown the contractor, Robinson who finds the rag-and-bone line mysteriously remunerative—these men of two thousand a year and upwards were nobodies. Society, of which they would be shining lights in Melbourne, is here unaware of their existence. As we emerged from this region into the campaign, a mighty glimmer of light flashed upon us through the trees. The top of the eastern hill seemed clothed in fire as for another sunrise. It dazzled me for a moment, and was gone; we were travelling on an elm-set English highway only, amidst a chequer-work of beam and shade. Then the trees ceased, leaving a great interval, and through it I beheld a magnificent palace of light, with towers and pinnacles tipped with flame. It was like no building wrought by the hand of man, and I looked for it to fade like a vision before my unsatisfied eyes.

'It is the Palace that was made by enchantment out of a single diamond,' exclaimed X, 'by the good genius Fock-sanendasar. It is open to mortals six days in the week; but on the seventh only to Shatholdas the unfortunate—to whose griefs its garden, planted by Prince Packstumeddin, is sacred.'

In another moment we had entered the crystal portal, and I found myself in the distant tropics, among lustrous birds and giant vegetation. The atmosphere would have been oppressive but for Siens who scattered coolness through the place from a mighty fountain, in which grew the rice plant and the sugar-cane, and one with tall green stems and fibrous leaves, upon which the eye gladly rested, as a relief to the surrounding splendours.

'It is the papyrus,' observed X, 'which supplied note-paper to Rameses the Great, from whose temple came yonder statues.'

I turned, and through an avenue of palms and sphinxes, perceived two figures seated, so colossal that I had entered between them without perceiving either.

'These were hewn out of the solid Nubian rock,' continued X, 'more than fifteen hundred years before the Christian era.'

'It is appalling to contemplate the off-spring of a period such as that,' said I; 'it is like standing face to face with eternity.'

'And yet that opposite cedar—look! you—was centuries old before Rameses was in the arms of his dusky mother, and once stood proudly up four hundred feet in air in the Sierra Nevada, in California. These things perplex you, Morumbidgee, because you attempt to reason about them. Give yourself up into my hands. I possess the enchanted carpet which Prince Moussain bought at Bishnagar for the Princess Nourounihar; and it shall carry us whithersoever you please. In an instant of time you shall be in the halls of Sennacherib, guarded by the winged Assyrian bulls; or in that red palace above Granada where the Moor held regal state in defiance of Christendom.'

The Court of Lions in the Alhambra rose before me while he spoke, a mass of gold and colour, with the stucco roof of the Hall of the Abencerrages beyond. The solitary splendour of the place—its gilded halls and inlaid ceilings; its silent fountain, its dim divans, inviting dreamy ease—enchained my tongue. It seemed as though I could have lived here with the memories of the Cid, a lifetime. But X said: 'Behold!' and drew aside a curtain.

I know not what I saw, but if that scene had been peopled by Peris, I know I should not have wondered. A vision of whiteness, of things too bright and beautiful to be real set in a realm of crystal; a mingling of statues and foliage; a murmur of music and voices.

'Be calm, O son of the under-world! Lo, here is ancient Greece!'

Before us stood the temple of Jupiter at Nemea, and through the colonnade entrance I caught a glimpse, I thought, of the Athenian Parthenon. Within were all the statues that have marred the world since it was born—the Farnese Juno and the Laocoon;