







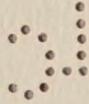
WHITE PIGEONS HERALDED THE APPROACH OF VENUS
(p. 164)

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

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CHAPTER I.

Nearer and nearer toward strange and unexplored regions, higher and higher sailed the Wonderful Elephant, borne along by the great silken balloon. Harold and Ione, the Prince and the little Princess slept peacefully.

It was midnight by the hands of the clock, but the boundless aerial space through which they sped was lighted by myriads upon myriads of twinkling stars. On and still on through diamond-specked space the Elephant floated safely. Above, below, to right, to left, and round about in all directions, flashing, glittering globes of light were to be seen and of such dazzling hues and colors as had never been dreamed of by earth-bound mortals. The planet Neptune was wrapped

in a bluish-green vapor; Uranus seemed a blinding white; Saturn emitted a yellow light; Jupiter shone like a glorious, crimson jewel; Mars blazed forth fiery red beams, while Mercury seemed bathed in a metallic green color.

Our young travelers had watched these silent orbs until from sheer exhaustion they had fallen asleep. Suddenly, with a quick jerk, the balloon came to a dead halt.

“Mercy, what can be the matter!” said Ione, springing up. “Do you suppose that the balloon can’t carry us any higher?”

“I am sure I don’t know,” answered Harold, only half awake, “still it can’t be that, for the old man said he had visited Mars and several other planets. Something must be out of order, however. Wait until I look in his book of directions and find what ought to be done.”

While Harold consulted the book, they all waited in great suspense, for what would become of them all should the balloon fail to carry them on? Their anxiety was soon set

at rest, however, for this is what Harold found in the book:

“The atmosphere extends some forty miles above the earth, then an imaginary line is reached beyond which the forces of the earth cease to act; while the Sun, by its great power of attraction, draws everything toward it with irresistible force. If you wish to cross this line and pass upward, use extra pressure and inflate the balloon to its utmost capacity. It will then carry you across and you will find that you are attracted toward the Sun, as before you were attracted toward the earth. Steer for any planet which you wish to visit and you can safely land upon it.”

When Harold stopped reading there was dead silence for a few minutes, then he said, “Prince, will you kindly press that electric button at your right? We can then watch the balloon inflate and carry us over the line.”

Slowly but surely, with much creaking and crackling of the silken cover, the balloon

became fully inflated, while the little Princess with strained, frightened eyes watched through one of the peep-holes, in mortal terror lest at each creak it might burst and they be hurled to the earth.

No such thing happened, but instead, the balloon gave a sudden bound and commenced rising at an alarming rate of speed; in fact, so fast were they approaching the Moon that they feared they would dash against one of its mountain tops. Harold found on consulting their time-indicator that they were traveling at a rate of speed equal to that of a ray of light, which is one hundred and sixty thousand miles per second. And it takes light moving at that rate of speed eight minutes and seven seconds to reach the earth.

“Look, every one look!” cried Ione. “What is that glistening, sparkling light that seems to ripple and flow like a stream of water?”

“It is the Milky Way,” said Harold. “From the earth it looks like millions upon

billions of stars sweeping a pathway through the heavens, but now that we are nearer, it seems like one continuous stream of silver fire."

"Isn't it perfectly beautiful?" exclaimed the girls in chorus.

Looming up before them was what appeared to be a large red island that floated in the heavens as a pond lily floats upon the surface of water. It seemed to get its color, not from anything red upon the island itself, but from red rays of light that fell directly upon it from the planet Mars.

Far in the distance floated other cloud-islands, each bathed in a color corresponding to the hue of the planet from which the rays came. They afterward found that these islands accompanied the different planets in their orbits much as our Moon does the earth. From the earth they have the appearance of stars, not islands.

Look in what direction one would, countless flashing rainbow islands could be seen whirling and twirling in fantastic manner

like giant spinning wheels, forming geometric figures of every conceivable design as they sped on their way, while through them all, in imposing, majestic lines swept the planets.

“What do you say to our first visiting the island of Mercury, that being the one nearest the sun, and then taking the others in order?” said Harold.

They all agreed to this plan.

“Now, I am going to state a few astronomical facts, dull as you may find them, for they are things you all should know, and I think the girls have little conception of the millions of miles distant these planets are, or of their size and the time it takes for light from them to reach us.

“Now, just out of curiosity I am going to ask you how large you think these planets are which you look at every night, and how far away they seem. I advise you to begin your guessing about Venus, as it is best seen from here.”

“Well, let me see,” said Ione; “Venus

looks to be about the size of a cheese, but, of course, I know that in reality it is almost as large as the earth."

"Now, princess, what do you say?"

"It looks to me to be about the size of a barrel-head and that it is twice as large as the earth."

"You are both wrong, and to show you how much you are in error, here are a few figures. Mercury is thirty-six million miles distant from the sun and it takes eighty-eight days to make one revolution in its orbit round the sun, consequently its year is only eighty-eight days, instead of three hundred, sixty-five and one quarter days as ours is. Wouldn't you like to live where the years were that long? Then you could have four Christmas Days where now you have but one," said Harold.

"Mercury," he continued, "has the shortest year of all of the planets and Neptune the longest, its year being sixty thousand, one hundred and twenty-six days in length. Just think, if you lived upon Neptune you

would have a Christmas once in about nineteen years reckoned by our time. The length of year varies with the other planets—but enough of statistics. I know they are uninteresting to girls. How would it please you to hurry on to Mercury's Satellite Island to see what it looks like and if it is inhabited?"

"I am sure it is inhabited," said the Prince, who was looking through the telescope, "for I can see tall figures moving along its shore."

Faster and faster sailed the balloon, dragging the Elephant after it until they were within a minute's distance from the island. Bathed in beautiful clear, greenish-white atmosphere, hundreds of people were standing on the beach of the island, which is swept by mighty currents of air even as our sea shores are swept by the tides, and were watching the approach of the queer-shaped, clumsy object from an unknown world. A little jolt and the Elephant's feet touched the shore.

CHAPTER II.

At first our young people kept still and peered through the peep-holes to get a good view of the strangers, but for some moments few were to be seen, as most of their number had darted away with lightning-like speed when the Elephant landed. To attempt to describe the swiftness with which these people moved and the ease with which they darted here, there and everywhere would be difficult. No wonder that they were quick, lively and elusive for they had strange little wings on their caps and sandals, such as you have seen on statues of the winged Mercury. Tall and handsome with beautiful foreheads and quick flashing eyes, they fluttered and flew about like so many birds.

Those who had disappeared soon returned and approached the Elephant, for they seemed fearless people after all, and then our young travelers slipped into their new white robes, which, by the way, I forgot to tell you about. They had found them enclosed in little jeweled acorns, which they thought were only watch-charms, but accidentally having touched a hidden spring in one, it opened and out fell a robe. They were fine as cobweb, soft as silk, changeable as the colors of a soap bubble and had the wonderful properties of making one invisible, giving one any outward appearance one might wish to assume, and at the same time enabling one to understand any language spoken within hearing. After donning these magic garments they found they were dressed like the little Mercurians, even to the wings on their heads and feet. They also found that they could understand all that was said by these sprightly people, for their language consisted entirely of short words and abbreviations. You must remember that

these people are always in a hurry so have no time for long words or expressions. When asked what their chief occupations were, one of the inhabitants answered that they consisted almost entirely in conveying messages between the earth and the planets. "We also watch over the people on earth upon whom the rays of Mercury fell at the moment of their birth. They possess the nature and characteristics that the influence of this planet is said to impart and so are our especial proteges."

"What are some of these characteristics?" said Harold.

"When not afflicted; that is, when no ray from an evil planet crosses the Mercurian ray, Mercury gives one a quick, sprightly manner, fluent speech, quick wit, bright intellect, and fondness for change and travel. These characteristics are greatly modified when cross-rays intervene from evil planets, and then one is unreliable, a busybody, has a sharp unkind word or a sneer for every one."

“Oh, my! I hope no bad ray crossed my Mercurian ray at birth,” said Ione.

“You need not fear,” answered one of the island people; “you were born under a ray from Venus.”

“Goodness! How do you know that?” asked Ione.

“By your face. We planet people can tell the moment we see a person what planet or planets influenced at birth.”

“Can you really?” asked Ione.

The Islander continued, “One of you give me the year, month, day, and hour in which you were born and I will tell you your nature, disposition, abilities, and whether you are destined to be healthy or unhealthy too, and whether you will be what is termed lucky or unlucky.”

Harold gave him his birth data and in return was told that he was ambitious, venturesome, loving, kind, thoughtful, quick-witted, far-seeing, healthy, extremely lucky, and very fond of travel.

That Harold was all of this his compan-

ions well knew, but how a perfect stranger could tell by learning his date of birth and barely looking at him was more than they could at once understand. The stranger finally told them that he did so by the science called astrology, which all star-people believe in, but which comparatively few people on earth seriously study today. It was held in great respect by the ancients, and even less than a hundred years ago, during Napoleon's life, many believed in the science and what it foretold for the future. Napoleon and Henry of Navarre both believed in what they called their lucky star and would consult an astrologer before undertaking any important venture to see whether or not they would be successful.

The self-appointed guide and informer of our young friends, having learned something of their history, became deeply interested in the party and asked if they would not like to visit the interior of the island to see just how its inhabitants lived. They gladly signified their pleasure to do so,

and what was their joy to find that they could fly over the ground with their artificial wings quite as easily as the native Mercurians.

As they sped along, many things were explained to them concerning the various solar systems and especially the one we call ours. This they learned consists of the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Mars, Venus, Earth, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, with accompanying satellites, besides innumerable fixed and moving stars; and ours is only one of many solar systems.

One of the things the guide pointed out filled the party with awe and wonder. Reflected on the clear blue vault above them was a continuous moving panorama of everything that was taking place upon the earth beneath them. Time and space seemed to be done away with. Did they wish to see what was transpiring in any country, all they had to do was to wish, and as if by magic the picture was above them. Simply by looking up they could see all they desired

reflected there; the country, its people, just what they were all doing; the whole living scene. As it happened a war was being waged in Asia. They could see the approach of the armies, could watch the progress of the battle, could almost count the number slain; and, still greater miracle, with the wish to know the cause of any war or of any event of past history, instantly came the knowledge—all was made clear. The picture of the present could be made to fade at their will and that of the past to take its place on the vault above them or to float by on flying clouds panorama-like.

When their surprise and amazement had partially subsided the Prince said, "Well, this is the most glorious way of learning history that I ever heard of. If our schools on earth could make moving pictures of the leading events in history pass before the children's eyes, they would be able to remember much better than by sitting and committing to memory a lot of dry facts and dates." And all agreed with him.

“Just for fun, let us wish to see what country we are over now,” said Ione, and immediately they saw North America, the particular spot being Chicago. They all gazed with interest upon the City by the Lake with its high buildings, and hurrying, scurrying people. The cloud above floated slowly along displaying different parts of the city and its surrounding parks and suburbs.

“Now, let us see Siam and find out what my brother is doing,” said the Prince, and immediately Chicago with its hustle and bustle faded from view and in its place stood the beautiful white palace of Siam. Presently was revealed to them the Prince sitting in state in all his robes of splendor enjoying his power to the utmost, for unlike our Prince he was fond of pomp and splendor.

“Let us see a picture showing what became of the Prince and Princess,” said Harold.

The next view presented the Elephant ris-



THEY FOUND THEM ENCLOSED IN LITTLE JEWELLED
ACORNS

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ing from the earth, drawn heavenward by a huge balloon.

“Well, this beats any detective agency I ever heard of,” said Harold. “You lose a thing or it disappears and all you have to do to find it is to wish to know where it is and there a picture of the object and place appears before you.”

“Are you now ready to go on and see something of our island?” said the guide presently, who had been patiently waiting for them to recover from their amazement at all they saw.

“Certainly, and we beg your pardon for keeping you waiting so long, but you can have no idea how fascinating we have found all these strange things.”

“What is that bright yellow light we see surrounded by those smaller different colored lights and luminous belt?” asked the Princess.

“That is the planet Saturn with its five satellites and luminous belt, and do you see floating under it, a little to the left, a dim,

yellow light that looks like a reflection from that same planet?" said the guide.

"Yes," they answered.

"That is another island like the one we are on now, only it is under the rays of Saturn, as we are under the rays of Mercury. It is also called the Island of Knowledge, because the people of Saturn's land are very intellectual. Now that you are up here you should visit all of our islands in turn and see for yourself what they and their people are like. First allow me to make a suggestion," continued the guide. "Leave your heavy Elephant on our island, as you will have no use for the balloon until you wish to return to Earth. At present avail yourself of our means of locomotion."

"A splendid suggestion!" they all exclaimed, "But how can we with our heavy bodies of flesh expect to fly around as you people do?"

"Come with me and I will show you."

The guide secured a pair of scales and each one in turn having been weighed, they

found that no one exceeded five pounds in weight.

“Your scales must be wrong,” exclaimed Harold.

“Oh, no, it is only because your bodies become lighter in this atmosphere, though they look the same as ever. Your magic robes will bear you up while your wings are carrying you from place to place.

“You will have to take our Flying Machines to reach many places at great distances from here, or else a boat on the Milky Way. I would advise you, after visiting all of our planet islands, to take what is called ‘The Circle Trip.’ That is a trip in a beautiful boat up the Milky Way, which encircles the heavens like a belt. You are borne along on its silvery waters in little shell-like boats to whatever place you wish to visit along its shores, for you must know that both sides of the stream are lined with cities, towns, villages, meadows, hills, and mountains, where people live as Earth people do beside their seas and rivers.”

“How perfectly entrancing it would be to visit all of the cities and islands you have up here among the stars!” said Ione. “And just think of it! we on Earth when looking at the little twinkling stars above us imagine them to be only bright, silvery balls of light, and now we find them inhabited. Will wonders ever cease?”

“Not while you are up here,” said the guide. “They will go on increasing until you will feel as if your very brain would crack in trying to grasp them all. Now, if you don’t mind,” said he, presently, “we will rise a hundred feet or so above the surface here, then you can look down and view our home from above as we fly over it on our way to other islands.”

As they floated along they noticed large quick-silver mines and also those from which emeralds and other green stones were taken, besides large quarries of red marble. The trees they passed were all short and had but few leaves upon them, but there were quantities of hazelnut bushes loaded with

nuts. All animals seemed to be fleet-footed, quick in motion, and sly like the weasel, fox and ape. The birds were not beautiful in plumage but the exceptional sweetness of their song rivaled that of our nightingale or thrush.

“Excuse me, but did you hear that peculiar whistle?” asked the guide. “That is a signal for me to go to Venus with a message. Would you like to accompany me or would you prefer to wait here? I will not say rest, for no one is ever tired in this atmosphere and it is only Earth people who understand the meaning of the word tired.”

“Oh, let us go by all means,” exclaimed Harold. “That is, if it would not inconvenience you, for you would show us the way and we could be learning how to fly with our new wings and robes.”

“Oh, mercy,” exclaimed the little Princess, “I will be afraid to follow you from this island out into space. Think of it! Should my robe fail to hold me up I would fall headlong as Lucifer did.”

“Don’t be afraid, my dear Princess. We will stand on either side of you until you gain confidence in yourself, besides you must remember that you could not fall with this magic robe about you and your wings will move themselves. Of course, you could go by simply wishing yourself there, but then you would see nothing by the way, while, by going in this way and more slowly, you can enjoy all the marvelous sights about you.”

CHAPTER III.

In the near distance they saw Venus, a superb sapphire globe called the Planet of Love and beyond it Mars with his fiery light; then Saturn yellow as an orange; Jupiter all crimson and purple, and farther still, Uranus scintillating with a vivid white light, while at an immeasurable distance Neptune was wrapped in changing shades of blue and green.

The Earth party with their guide passed quickly by the little vari-colored stars and the larger ones which formed the different constellations or groups of stars through which they were traveling, such as the Great Bear, the Pleiades, Leo, and others too numerous to mention, until they came to the satellite island belonging to Venus. Here they

landed and mingled with the inhabitants, first expressing the wish that they become like the planet natives so they could go about unnoticed. This wish their accommodating robes immediately made possible and then they stood dressed in loose flowing Greek robes, with sandals on their feet and hair dressed in a Psyche knot or in clustering curls confined by golden bands.

“My! how becoming that costume is to you. You look like Venus herself come to life,” exclaimed the Princess to Ione.

“Well, I can return the compliment a hundredfold,” answered Ione, for I never saw you look more lovely than you do now with your dark loose ringlets held in place by that band of gold.”

“She certainly does look lovely enough to kiss,” exclaimed the Prince, “and I think I will steal one, for who has a better right?”

“Ione, you really look more beautiful than you did when we were married, and that I thought impossible,” laughed Harold.

The boys had been so taken up admiring

the girls that they had forgotten to wish their clothes changed until Ione reminded them.

“Hurry and change your costumes for I am dying to see how you will appear in the ancient Greek dress with bare neck, arms, and legs and with your feet encased in high laced sandals.”

When Harold's ordinary American clothes were changed for those of ancient Greece, Ione said, “Oh, Harold, you look like a young gladiator with your well-developed muscles and strong round throat. As for the Prince he is a perfect Adonis. Don't you think so, Princess?”

Before the latter could answer their Mercurian guide said, “You certainly are a fine-looking quartette. I doubt if even on this island we find any who surpass you in beauty or in strength, though this is the land where the perfection of physical beauty is supposed to be found.”

“We thank you for the compliment,” said Ione.

This conversation took place in a beautiful park where winding paths led to sylvan retreats; where miniature lakes were studded with pleasure-boats, sailing slowly along filled with happy, laughing people; where flowers of every hue and color filled the air with sweet, spicy perfumes; and where birds of endless variety and color of plumage bathed in the sparkling fountains or flitted and sang among the branches of the trees. Coming toward them, hand in hand along one of the many footpaths, were two beautiful beings accompanied by little flying cupids who at times lighted on their shoulders, then again on their heads, or flew about chasing each other, cooing like so many white doves.

“Is not that a pretty family group?” asked the guide. “The two who are walking hand in hand are husband and wife while the little cupids are their children. All children on this island have wings and at night sleep in huge nodding flowers which fold

their petals about them and sway to and fro until they are lulled to sleep.”

At this moment the two approached and the guide introduced them to the young strangers. Having cordially welcomed the Earth party to the island, they invited them to a four o'clock tea at their home and also for a sail on the lake to which they were now on their way.

Our young people gladly availed themselves of the courtesy extended to them and after walking a short distance through a shady wood they came to the bank of a gleaming blue lake whose rippling waters flashed back the sparkling sunbeams, and on whose surface floated unique and dainty pleasure-boats. Into one of these they stepped and soon were sailing quietly along, enjoying both the refreshing breezes and the beauty of the scene. The shore line was dotted with villas which looked like fairy-palaces, so exquisite were they in coloring and design, while back of them rose purple-hued hills, a most effective back-

ground. While they sailed our young people told their new friends something of themselves and their experiences while traveling in space. All was listened to with intense interest. When they had finished telling about the magic power of their wishing-robes, their entertainers asked if they would mind exhibiting themselves in their native costumes.

“Certainly not,” said Ione, “we would be delighted to do so, but our garments will seem strange and perhaps even ridiculous to you. If they do, you may laugh as much as ever you like for I assure you we will not be offended in the least.”

“One, two, three. Presto change,” said Harold, and there stood four oddly attired people looking unlike anything their Venus friends had ever seen or dreamed of. They might have been mistaken for figures of wax shown in a museum but that Ione laughed outright when she saw the wide-open eyes and astonished expressions on the faces of their friends.

“Well, how do you like our native garments?” she asked. “You know that the Prince and the Princess live on one continent of the Earth, while Harold and I live on another and that accounts for the differences in our style of dress.”

“Which style do you prefer?” asked the Princess of the beautiful little lady from Venus.

“Oh, yours,” she replied. “Your attire is much more artistic and natural than the other more sombre garb. Your white blouse, blue velvet jacket embroidered with gold, soft silken sash, golden anklets, and slippers turned up at the toes, all are harmonious and beautiful I think, while the white turban of the Prince and his white skirts held in place by that knotted sash, and the dagger at his side, all are more to my taste than those queer-looking narrow bags which you (turning to Harold) wear, and which you call trousers or than that high, stiff starched garment you call a shirt. How you can breathe one minute in it is more

than I can tell, while I should think the collar would saw your ears off.”

At this they all laughed for they could well understand how funny and absurd their costumes must look to any one used only to loose robes and soft, clinging draperies. As for Ione, the Islanders wondered why she did not break in two, locked in her steel girdle as they called her corsets. And her French-heeled shoes! They were the limit of absurdity and how she managed to walk and not fall on her nose at every step she took was more than they could understand. The planet people had a great deal of fun over each separate garment and seemed to enjoy inspecting them so much that our young friends decided to give them a surprise and at the same time to show them sights which no native of Venus, alive or dead, had ever before witnessed. They were told to look overhead and there soon appeared reproduced there, panorama-like, the different peoples of the earth. In this way could be seen the native costumes of all

Earth people from the Chinaman to the fashionable French woman.

The Venusians clapped their hands with delight as the different views passed before them for they had not known that there were people who looked or dressed so unlike themselves.

On their way to the Villa where they were to take tea, the Venusians asked our friends if they would not like to walk through the garden where their little cupid babies slept, while they looked to see that they were all tucked in their flower-beds warm and safe for the night. "Over each baby a white pigeon keeps watch so that if anything is wanted or if they cry out, the bird flies to our window, taps, and we immediately come to see what is needed."

"Oh, may we have just one peep?" cried the girls, as they leaned over a large white rose in which was curled up fast asleep a tiny little cupid with light, curly hair.

"You see," explained the mother, "the little blonde cupids sleep in white flowers

while the brunettes repose in red ones. In this way it is easy to distinguish them. Every evening at sundown they fly to their particular flower and cuddle down for the night, while a gentle breeze sways the flowers and nightingales sing until they are lulled to sleep."

"What would I not give for one of the little dimpled darlings," said Ione.

"And I, too," added the Princess. "I should love to have one all my own to hug and kiss."

"Some day a stork or an angel may bring you one," said the little cupid's mother, "for I know they often take babies to Earth."

The Villa looked more like a dainty summer-house than a place in which to live, for it was all open windows, doors and verandas. The sun shone in all day and only soft, warm breezes murmured through it at night. After a dainty repast, our travelers said "good-night" and "good-bye" to their charming and hospitable friends and then wished

themselves on the Satellite Island of Mars and here they immediately found themselves.

CHAPTER IV.

After the soft blue atmosphere of Venus Island, what a contrast was felt on Mars. Here everything was fiery red, even the faces of the inhabitants took on a flame color, just as the people and scene in a theatre are colored by a red spot-light thrown upon the stage. But the coloring round about was not as great a contrast as were the dispositions of the people. The Martians, our young friends soon discovered, were quick-tempered, argumentative, impatient, and quarrelsome; while the Venusians were mild, sweet-tempered, easy-going, kind, affectionate, and peace-loving. The Martians were so fiery and cross that the little Princess wanted to go away immediately, she was so afraid of them. She was finally persuaded

to remain, however, for the Prince and Harold were anxious to see what kind of fire-arms these people used and, as they devoted their whole lives to warfare, how well they were versed in military affairs.

Until now our young people had been invisible, but they decided to don coats of mail and otherwise costume themselves as the Martians, so as to be able to freely mingle with them unnoticed and unknown. On every side one heard the clash of arms and the rattle of musketry. Even the little children could be seen playing at war with toy cannons and pistols.

“What can all this commotion be about?” exclaimed Harold.

“It means that they are preparing for one of their frequent battles, for you must know that they are always quarreling or fighting with some one. At present, they are at war with the inhabitants who live on the opposite side of this island. If you would like, we can go to the summit of yonder hill and from that point look down upon the con-

tending parties, for the battle, I hear, is to be fought on the plain at its foot," said the Prince. Disputes and national problems are not settled here as they are on Earth. When any vexed question arises, a certain number of men are chosen on each side. Drawn up in lines opposite and facing each other, at a given signal the attack is made, and the contending parties fight until one or the other side is conquered. The victorious men then arrange the disputed matter to suit themselves. Neither side is allowed to call out any more men than those first chosen. This is a great saving of lives when compared to the manner in which men are sacrificed upon Earth in time of war.

Just then, stepping aside, Ione bumped into a man who happened to be passing at the time, and she heard him mutter, "Clumsy! Can't you look where you are going so you won't run into a person?"

"What a nice amiable husband that man would make," said Ione to the Princess.

Presently two men passed, talking in

loud voices and one said, "I tell you it is no such thing. You are an idiot for thinking so."

And his companion replied, "What did you say? I'll allow no man to insinuate that I am a liar or to call me an idiot," and before the girls knew what was happening, the man who had first spoken was lying at their feet felled by a blow from his angry companion.

This is only one instance of the quarrelling and fighting that they heard and saw on all sides. Every one seemed touchy, cross, overbearing and as if carrying a chip upon his shoulder for the express purpose of having some one knock it off and thus give provocation for a dispute or fight.

"Come on, Ione," called Harold, "we are going to the top of the hill, for the battle is about to begin. Did you hear the bugle call?"

"Oh, you bloodthirsty boy! How can you wish to see men kill each other? You may go; I do not wish to see the battle, and while

you are there the Princess and I will wander about to see how these people live and what their homes are like," said Ione.

The girls, by means of their magic wishing robes, became invisible and found themselves in front of one of the Martian homes which at first sight appeared like a huge bee-hive with openings at equal distances all around. Through one of these openings an electric wagon passed, loaded with packages, boxes and cans. The labels showed the contents to be condensed foods of all kinds. They afterward found that these people were partial to this kind of foods because they do away with the tedious preparation and long time required to serve, which the food of Earth people makes necessary, besides they sustain life and make one much stronger and healthier than the more hearty meals which Earth mortals indulge in. Much of the food that Earth people eat is a detriment to digestion and health and is often only eaten because of fondness for its taste rather than for its nutritive properties, or

for the sociability it affords one to be at a table dining with congenial friends or associates. From the openings in the building, covered passage-ways ended in small, two-storied outhouses which were the co-operative kitchens, laundries, dairies, cold-storage rooms, etc., and over these the servants lived. In the second story of the main building over the openings before mentioned, were the apartments of the Martians. Everything on the island, from business to the care of children, was carried on through co-operation. They found the interior of the building complete in all of its appointments and furnished as elegantly as the most fastidious lover of apartments could desire.

“Well, I am not fond of apartments, boarding-houses, hotels, or abodes of any kind where several families live together. As soon as different families share the same building it loses its home-feeling and atmosphere, while no dwelling is large enough to hold more than one comfortably,” said Ione.

“Let us now see how the battle is pro-

gressing," said the Princess. Ione was finally persuaded and wishing themselves on the summit of the hill, what was their surprise and dismay on arriving there to find no one in sight!

"What do you suppose can have become of the boys?" cried the Princess in alarm, then noticing Ione's eyes fastened on the battlefield in horrified wonder, she turned to look in the same direction and nearly fainted when she saw Harold and the Prince, each engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter with giant Martians, while all around were strewn the bodies of the dead and dying; for few of the many who had started out so valiantly a few hours before survived the first onslaught of the enemy.

While they watched, Harold caught his foot, stumbled, then fell and the giant raised his sword to pierce his body, but instead of passing through the form of his adversary, the sword was buried to its hilt in the earth at his feet, for nobody was there. The giant rubbed his eyes, looking dazed and incredulous.



COMING TOWARD THEM WERE TWO BEAUTIFUL BEINGS
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lous, but still saw no one who even resembled his late antagonist. I suppose you all know why this was? Harold had just thought of his magic robe and wished himself invisible and at the top of the hill. He reached there just in time to catch Ione in his arms for she had fainted. The last thing she saw had been the upraised arm of the Martian, and the sun shining on the glittering sword as it descended to put an end to Harold's life.

But the Prince! What had become of him? Being an expert swordsman he had killed his antagonist, a man twice his own size and weight, but agility and swiftness of thrust had won the day against size and weight. His fencing lessons in the Palace at home had served him in good stead. He, too, now used his wishing robe and reached Harold and the girls just as Ione was reviving and asking how in the world they ever reached the battlefield and got mixed up with the Martians.

“Well, it happened in this way,” said the Prince. “Harold and I became so excited

watching the fight that we could scarcely keep out of it and when we saw the side we were in sympathy with losing ground, we wished ourselves in the midst of the fray with broadswords in our hands, so of course the first thing we knew we were there fighting like the native Martians. But where is our guide?"

"I am sure I do not know. We left him with you," said Ione.

"Yes, I know, but the last I saw of him he was standing beside us watching the battle."

"You don't suppose that he too engaged in the fight, do you?" asked the Prince.

"But if he did, where is he now, for all are dead but the one man whom Harold failed to kill," said Ione.

"Goodness, gracious, he may be killed too," cried the Princess. "You had better go and look for him."

"I can find him better by staying here than by running all over the island to find him. Have you forgotten our ability to have people and scenes pictured in the sky above us?"

“Yes, I had,” said Ione.

“Well, now I wish that we may see where he is.”

They all looked up and on the blue vault above them saw the reflection of their guide at the corner of a street, defending himself against two burly Martians twice his size. One glance was enough. Both boys disappeared at once, their wish being to be with the guide. The girls sat still and watched the panoramic changes as the boys and their guide joined in the fight. The trouble had come about in this way: The Martians recognizing the Mercurian guide by his quick, agile movements and knowing that all Mercury people had magic robes, had tried to steal the acorn containing his wishing-robe. When the boys arrived on the scene, the Martians were soon routed.

After this exciting escapade our party decided that the strenuous life of Mars was not to their liking, so together they resumed their journey, starting for the next island in order.

CHAPTER V.

“Do you see that crimson ball in the distance?” asked the guide. “That is Jupiter, the planet whose Satellite Island we are now about to visit and I am sure you will admire its inhabitants very much.”

Such handsome people as these Jupitarians proved to be! Far beyond their greatest expectations. They were all tall and commanding in appearance, with features like chiselled marble so perfect were they in outline. With their classic brows, straight noses, and clear, luminous eyes they one and all looked like gods and goddesses. Their manners were dignified yet courteous in the extreme, and in a way they impressed one as being rather haughty and reserved.

When our young people landed on the is-

land they found themselves in the middle of a great square on three sides of which were magnificent buildings dedicated to the arts and sciences, over the colossal doorways of which were symbolical mythological figures.

“It is an excellent idea to have them all here together facing the square with its fourth side opening into a beautiful park containing fountains and marble statues, also representing the gods and goddesses associated with the arts and sciences as well as those symbolical of the peaceful and just natures of this island’s inhabitants,” said Harold. “I imagine the building before us with the broad, sweeping stairway must be the Hall of Justice, for I see mythological figures in marble over the doorway illustrating Justice and Mercy.

“And the building on our right must be their Palace of Art for it is embellished with figures holding harps, flutes, horns, and various musical instruments.”

“Suppose we keep on our invisible robes

until we have made a tour of all these wonderful buildings," said Ione.

"And I suggest," said the Princess, "that Ione and I go to the Palace of Art while you two boys go with Mercury, to listen to the debates in the Hall of Justice, for I am sure Ione and I will not care for the debates no matter how fine they may be." To this the boys assented and all agreed to meet in two hours' time at the fountain where they were now standing.

When the girls first entered the Palace of Art they had a surprise for they saw coming toward them three beautiful smiling women with hands outstretched to greet them. They involuntarily stepped back, when they remembered, all at once, that they were invisible, and on looking closer they found that the women were but wonderfully life-like paintings.

"Well!" exclaimed Ione, "I never had such a start in my life and even yet I can scarcely believe my eyes for there is no frame to mar the effect and the perspective

is so perfect that you imagine they are living, moving people coming to welcome you to the Palace.”

“We must have the boys come here so we can fool them, too,” said the Princess. “I have heard of portraits being so perfect that they were called ‘living pictures,’ but these paintings surpass any ever seen on the Earth. Look! all around us are prancing horses, wild animals devouring their prey, and numberless pictures so realistic that I am actually afraid I shall be trampled upon or devoured. The babies, too, dimpled and smiling are so life-like they make one feel that they will roll off the canvas and get hurt in some way.”

The pictures proved so fascinating to the girls that they forgot how fast the time was passing until they heard steps behind them and, turning, saw that the boys had come to look for them.

“We have been waiting for you and thought perhaps you were lost,” said Harold.

“No, we did not get lost, but we were so absorbed with the paintings that we forgot all about time and our appointment with you, but we are so glad you came for us for we want you to meet three beautiful women who welcome all strangers who enter this building,” said Ione, winking at the Princess, for though they were invisible to the world at large, they could see each other at all times.

“But, perhaps you have seen them already,” said the Princess. “By which door did you enter?”

“We came through the passage-way that leads from the Hall of Justice,” said the Prince.

“Then you did not meet them, so come with us,” said the Princess. “But first drop your magic robes and approach them in your native costume.”

The girls led the boys around until they faced the picture and Ione was nearly suffocated with laughter when she saw Harold tip his hat and extend his hand to one of the

ladies while the Prince bowed almost to the ground. The Princess also laughed merrily at the astonished expression on the faces of the boys when they discovered their mistake.

Later on Mercury said, "Before you leave the island I want you to see the Palaces these people live in and the superb way in which they are furnished, to say nothing of the magnificent grounds that surround them."

"You lead and we will gladly follow," said the young people.

Talk of Aladdin's Palace! It was a paperdoll's house compared to these enchanting palaces built of snow white marble and crystal. Think of it! One palace was built of emerald-colored, crystal-clear glass cut in prisms joined in dainty designs to represent flowers and leaves. Being cut in this manner, no one could look in to get a peep at the occupants; but the sunbeams found their way throughout, the rooms and corridors reflecting an exquisite golden-green light.

This whole palace was held together by wide bands of purest gold, which took the place of our woodwork, while it was furnished throughout with the corresponding magnificence of its structure; for instance, one drawing-room was furnished in white velvet with jewel-set chair-frames of gold; another in rare satin and velvet, while for pictures, mirrors, and statuary, it had no equal on Earth or any of the other planets, for the Jupiter people love to a marked degree splendor and magnificence.

There were many of these rainbow palaces all different in design, for it is against the law for one to copy another in any way—from matters of dress to those of homes and furnishings, each must have an original design. In this way there is an opportunity for great display of taste and individuality and one can tell at a glance from the outside of a person's home how rich the owner is in ideas, for the buildings and surroundings will reflect his nature and tastes.

At the summit of a hill they saw a palace

shining so brightly in the sunlight that it looked like the sun itself. It was built of yellow topaz. Another of sapphire surrounded by green foliage looked like a blue-bell hid in the woods, and so on until one could not tell which he thought the most magnificent or desirable.

“Listen! I hear music!” exclaimed the Princess.

“What you hear,” said Mercury, “are the church bells that ring at sunrise and at sunset. Are they not the sweetest-toned chimes you ever listened to?”

“Indeed they are,” replied the Prince.

When the music of the bells had ceased, Mercury told them it was time to start for Saturn as it would take some time to reach it even with their magic robes, as it was out in space some seven hundred and eighty million of miles away from the sun and they were only part way there, Jupiter being but four hundred and twenty-six million miles distant from the sun.

“As we travel there, Harold will tell you

what a surprise we have for you," said the Prince.

"Oh, how nice, for if there is anything I enjoy it is a surprise," said the Princess. "I hope it is a nice one, though," she added.

"Of course it is, or we would not tell you," said the Prince.

"Do let's hurry and get off, then," said Ione, "for I, too, am anxious to know what it is. I am simply dying with curiosity."

"I never knew a girl to die so often and come to life so easily," said Harold in a teasing voice.

"I suggest that we take hold of hands so that we can keep close together," said Mercury, "if you people talk while we are travelling; otherwise, some one will lag behind and lose part of the story."

His suggestion was followed and soon all found themselves floating smoothly and rapidly through space.

"Now for the surprise!" laughed Ione. "I can't wait patiently any longer. I am not fond of waiting for things."

“In the first place, who do you think lives on the island we are going to visit after we take a look at Saturn? Some one in whom you are interested?” queried Harold.

“Why, no one, you foolish boy,” said Ione. “Why do you stop to tease me when you know the Princess and I are all on tip toe to know your surprise?”

“But I am not teasing this time,” said Harold. “Guess just once.”

“Oh, I can’t,” said Ione.

“Your father and mother,” said the Princess, “or else Ione’s.”

“No, no relation to any of us, but a relative to some one we are all indebted to for most of the pleasant things that have ever happened to us.”

“I know! I know!” cried Ione. “Some one who is related to our wise man, the one who invented the Elephant.”

“You are right, Ione. That was a good guess.”

“Do tell us about him,” cried both girls at the same time.

“Well, it happened in this way. We were sitting in the gallery in the Hall of Justice when an old man got up to speak. He was enough like our old man to be a twin brother, (which he proved to be) and I cried out, ‘There is the wonderful old man who left me the Elephant!’ Mercury said that could not be as this old man had not left the island for a century as he could not get away, being at the head of the wise and learned men here and President of the Island.

“‘I can’t help it,’ I said. ‘If you don’t believe me just look at this picture I carry here in my watch and see if the man speaking is not its exact counterpart even to hair, eyes, and beard; besides, the voice is exactly the same.’

“Mercury looked and said, ‘The picture is certainly a perfect likeness of the man on the platform.’ Then he told me to sit still and when the session was over we would go and speak to him and find out if he were really the one who left the Elephant, or if he were a relative of the man.

“This we did and the old man met us very graciously and told us that he was a twin brother to our old man. ‘And a wonderful old fellow he is,’ continued the sage. ‘I never saw his equal in inventive genius. He originates things and then goes to the earth to try them. His hobby is electricity and finding out the secrets of nature, while mine is to bring peace and administer justice, as well as to promote the arts and sciences. I never go to the earth but remain here and plan, sending my deputees to carry out my ideas.’

“‘In speaking,’ said I, ‘you said *is* instead of *was*, do you mean to tell me that your brother and my wonderful old man is alive still?’

“‘Certainly, I do. You thought he was dead when he fell back on his pillow, but he had merely fainted and after a time when he recovered his senses he found himself, so he said, on a bed of spruce bows, shut in a cave. He knew immediately what had happened and that you had buried him, think-

ing him dead, so he lay still for a time until the coolness of the cave revived him, then having his wishing-robe with him, he wished himself back on his beloved planet Uranus, and there he is now, safe and well. If your travels take you that distance, to that most wonderful planet which all inventors love, you will find him there and I am sure he will be delighted to see you all.'

"Now, what do you think of that for a surprise?" asked Harold when he had finished his story.

"It certainly is a pleasant one," said Ione, "and of course we will go to Uranus, no matter how far it is. I would not miss it for worlds, would you, Princess?"

"Neither would we," cried the boys, "and we will go there as soon as we have seen Saturn. We may remain on Saturn for some time though, for they say it is different from the other planets and that there is more change and variety there than on the other planets."

"How is that?" cried Ione.

“Well, you see it has different colored belts on its surface corresponding to our zones, and a luminous flat ring that surrounds or encircles it about where the equator does the earth, besides it has satellites that belong to it as the Moon belongs to your Earth,” said Mercury.

“Who knows but that different colored races of people live on those different belts?” said Harold.

“I say, let’s go and find out,” said the Prince.

“Agreed,” they all said and, wishing themselves on Saturn, our travelers found themselves on the island itself instead of its accompanying Satellite Island, for it seemed to hold out so many inducements in the way of its belted surface, rings, and seven satellites.

CHAPTER VI.

Our young people landed on the bank of what appeared to be a broad river; so broad that one could just discern the opposite bank by a faint, blue line. Along this river stretched house after house of peculiar design, none more than one story high and each and every one extending over so much ground that it gave the appearance of a little village connected by long and short halls. The inside they found to be furnished with only useful things—stiff, unhomelike furniture, and no upholstered or rocking chairs so dear to the American heart.

“What homely, sour-looking faces they have, and long noses, thin lips, scant hair and small suspicious-looking eyes,” said Ione.

“I really don’t feel like stopping here, I feel so depressed and everything looks so uninviting,” said the little Princess.

Mercury explained that Saturnian people were strict disciplinarians and also very conventional; and that they did not believe in allowing the young to sit in easy chairs for this encouraged a lounging, lazy habit most unbecoming.

Our young people pitied the children who lived here. They had to sit erect in stiff-backed chairs so as to counteract the tendency which all Saturn children have to stoop or lean forward. They also are compelled to go from one task to another with clock-like regularity while even their games are governed by rule or stated hours which seemed to take all interest and freedom out of them.

“I am afraid I should want to drown myself in the river if I had to live here and endure this tread-mill existence,” said Harold.

The walls of most rooms in the houses

were lined with rows upon rows of books. There were schools and schools and schools; while lessons and lessons and lessons were being studied everywhere, recitations being presided over by tall, lank-looking, stoop-shouldered professors with straight, black hair, spectacled eyes, and stern visages. This constant study and grind made the children look older than their years warranted, while their heads were all too large to be supported by their poor, thin, shrunken-looking little bodies. Most children begin their studies at three years of age on this island.

“I have seen enough. Have you, Princess?” said Ione.

“Yes, and more than enough,” answered she.

Mercury now mentioned that there was a most interesting, novel part of the island called “the Black Belt,” which received this name from the color of the ring which encircles Saturn at this part. There are seven openings into this region called “The Gates of Hades.” These openings resemble the

mouths of caves from which red lights shine, reflected from the inner fires.

“If you wish to visit the interior of this planet, now is your opportunity,” said Mercury. “A guide will be sent with us and will insure our safe return.”

Of course the boys were wild for this adventure but the girls were afraid to go until assured over and over again that there was absolutely no danger and that they could return whenever they wished. So at last they started in a most curious air-ship built like a bird which was named “The Sky Lark.” It could be made to fly as a bird and to alight or to arise in the air with equal ease. They all enjoyed the ride immensely, especially when they would alight on some huge tree which looked like the Banyan tree of Asia. Travelling in the air gave them a splendid chance to see all beneath them and the island looked very beautiful from this height because of its numberless bodies of water sparkling in the distance.

“Who invented this novel bird?” asked Harold.

“The most wonderful and experienced inventor that now lives,” said Mercury. “He is centuries old but by the aid of a magic liquid he keeps himself alive and he is always inventing or harnessing nature’s forces to do his bidding until there is no telling when he will stop. One of the most unique things he ever invented was an artificial elephant so like life that even live elephants themselves were deceived and thought it alive like themselves. This elephant could travel on land, in the water or on its surface, with the speed of the wind.”

“Stop, stop!” cried Harold. “What became of that elephant and its inventor?”

“Well,” resumed the guide, “he took a notion to go to Earth, taking the elephant with him and I have never heard what he afterwards did with it, but he is back again at his beloved laboratory on Uranus working incessantly on another invention that will as-

tonish the universe, so he says, when he completes it.”

“And what is it to be?” cried the Prince.

“Another air-ship, but of such large proportions and ease of handling that few people can even imagine anything as perfect.”

“I am sure you would like to know what became of the elephant he took to the Earth,” said Harold, “and I will tell you. That elephant belongs to me and it is now on the Mercurian Island.”

“What!” exclaimed the guide, “You own the elephant and it is now on the Mercurian Island?”

“Yes,” replied Harold.

“But will you kindly tell me how you ever got a big heavy thing like that up in Star-land?”

“Certainly. The balloon carried it up.”

“Balloon! Who ever heard of a balloon in connection with an elephant? I never did.”

“Well, there was one and a very good one at that,” said Harold.

“I believe you, of course, but if any one

else had told me that a balloon could be strong enough to carry an elephant that size I would not have believed it possible, but I can believe anything any one tells me about what that wonderful old man can do.”

They had now arrived at one of the gates of Hades.

“Now let us start down through this first gate, make a tour of the interior and come out at the seventh gate,” suggested the guide.

Just then a burst of flames and the suffocating fumes of sulphur poured out of one of the caves near by and nearly choked them. This settled the girls. They decided to remain where they were.

“I hate to have you go down, dear,” said the Princess; “the fumes may suffocate you.”

“Oh, no,” said the new guide who had arrived, “those fumes only arise when the fires are being replenished. These holes are like chimneys and no one can be entirely overcome. Attendants take good care of

that for they are instructed to prolong the sufferings of their victims but not to kill them."

"What relentless, cruel people these long-faced, sly-looking Saturnians are," exclaimed Ione.

As the boys disappeared through the opening, the girls called after them, "Do be careful and hurry back."

Down and down they went, choking and coughing the while as they penetrated farther and deeper into the very bowels of the planet. The air grew hotter and hotter and peering over the narrow, winding stairway, they could see at the extreme bottom a red hot mass of seething, burning matter.

"Hark! I thought I heard the Princess scream," said the Prince, abruptly stopping on his way.

"I heard no one," said Harold, "so I guess you are mistaken, or it might have been the voice of some one down below."

"Perhaps so," replied the Prince; but love's ears are sharp, and he had heard

aright, though he was overpersuaded and continued on his way.

The Princess had screamed because directly in front of her the ground had suddenly opened like a big door and out of the opening had come a red-clad figure with horns on its head and a staff in its hand.

Ione was too astonished to move and sat there staring at the newcomer, with eyes and mouth wide open. Bitterly she repented her suggestion, which both girls had acted upon, that they remove their magic robes and appear once more to each other as the American girl and the little Oriental Princess.

“I have come for you,” said he. Neither girl moved an inch.

“Come,” he continued, “or I shall have to carry you.”

Still neither girl moved or knew what to do. Stiff with fright, they vaguely wondered what he would do if they refused to go with him.

They soon found out, for he struck the ground three times with his tail which rat-



THE GIANT RAISED HIS SWORD

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tled like that of a great rattlesnake and immediately the ground opened as it had before and out jumped a figure in scales of green. He gave Ione one look, and then at a signal from the other lifted her in his arms which were as strong as iron and followed the red sprite, who had picked up the Princess. It was no use to struggle, thought the girls, and maybe the boys had sent for them, anyway they decided not to do anything until they found what was going to be done with them.

The two sprites approached a large, flat, white stone and both stepped upon it at the same instant. Down it went, taking them with it into the very center of the planet. Not a word was spoken while they were slipping through the long, dark shaft, and the stone platform on which they were standing stopped after a time, while a door at one end of the shaft opened and they found themselves in Hades, proper, as this portion of it was called.

The girls blinked like bats at first when

the vivid light flashed into their eyes but they soon became accustomed to it. They were now put into wheelbarrows that looked as if used for carrying coal, and were wheeled along without a word. The Princess found a chance to whisper, "Do you think they are going to burn us as they would coal?"

"I am sure I don't know. Oh, for our magic robes!" said Ione in a similar whisper.

Presently they began to pass dismal cells in which were chained wicked-looking men and women, and over each of these cells was an account of the deeds each had committed, cut in letters which gleamed like coals of fire. All around them blue, yellow, and green devils were working, stirring the already hot fires, throwing on more sulphur or adding fuel, refusing ever to give the poor inmates the cool draught of water for which they were continuously begging.

Over one of the cells they read the account of a most brutal murder, over another the in-

human treatment of wife and children, and so on past hundreds and hundreds of cells until they were sick at heart to know that such cruelties could exist and had to be in some way punished. Of course they could not but hear the moans and groans of the victims and their horrible language as well, but deaf ears were turned to all pleadings and the girls felt that it would be useless for them to beg to be taken back to the surface and daylight and were beginning to lose their courage, when to their surprise and delight they saw Harold and the Prince coming down a broad passage just ahead of them. What then was the astonishment of the boys to see them being trundled in wheelbarrows down in the very depths of Hades?

“What do you mean by bringing these ladies down here?” said the boys’ guide to the sprites who had carried away the girls.

They explained that they had been told to bring down two people whom they would find in a certain place, and as the girls were in this place they of course brought them

down. With many and profuse apologies for their mistake, made in a language not one word of which the girls could understand, these sprites retired.

The guides now asked them if they would like to investigate further for there were numerous divisions to Hades which they had not as yet seen. These divisions were graded according to the atrocity of the deeds committed. The most wicked criminals were sent to the lowest depths, the punishments there being the most severe, while they lessened as each higher division was reached. The boys declared they had seen all they cared to and as for the girls, they had witnessed much more than they wished to, so they were quickly conducted to the open air.

“This is the very way we were taken down,” said Ione.

“Sure enough, it is,” replied the Princess. “Did you ever see such an elevator in all your life?” for with a one, two, three,

they had reached the open air, while just before them fluttered their air-ship.

“Now where shall I take you?” asked their attendant, “I have orders to show you the sights of our island.”

“Thank you, but we must not tarry longer,” said Harold.

“But surely you will like to visit our satellites and luminous belts which we are very proud of since ours is the only planet in this solar system that has luminous belts.”

“I am sure they must be worth seeing, but we have already stayed so long that we must hurry on now,” said the Prince and, thanking the guide for his courtesy and kindness, they quickly donned their wishing-robcs and started for Uranus, glad to leave the gloom of Saturn and relieved to get away from a place where they had not heard one merry laugh.

CHAPTER VII.

Off, off into space sped our quartette with their guide, past heaven's many-colored star-lamps shining in their vault of blue to light the many worlds that surround as well as our world beneath them. They neither loitered nor stopped at any place on their way for you must remember that they had to travel many million miles to reach Uranus, that planet being way out in space at a distance of from one billion, six hundred and ninety-nine million to one billion, eight hundred and sixty-five million miles from the Sun. It takes this planet about eighty-four years, traveling in its regular path, to make one complete circuit of the Sun.

Without their magic robes it would have

been impossible to reach this distant island, but with them, and by constantly reiterating their wish to be there, they at last came in sight of this glorious planet and were dazzled by its clear white light which gleamed and flashed with the brilliancy of the purest diamond.

“It is well that we are going to the Satellite Island instead of to the planet itself,” said Ione. “I doubt if we could endure its dazzling light for it hurts my eyes even at this distance.”

“Strange, eccentric people live there,” said Mercury. “People who on Earth would be thought foolish or insane, for nothing is too strange for them to tolerate, to investigate, or to experiment with, and they are constantly proving that what Earth people sometimes look upon as impossible or merely as the idea of a diseased brain often proves both possible and practical, while the so-called lunatic, the inventor, is here revered as a man of brains and a genius.”

The buzz of wheels and drills accom-

panied with the pounding of hammers was heard on all sides, for everywhere men were working on newly-invented, highly-perfected air-ships, steamers, war-vessels, air brakes, railroad apparatus of all kinds, machinery for hoisting great weights, etc.; while inside the buildings men were busy in laboratories, bending over retorts in which boiling liquids could be seen. These men were so quaintly dressed and so weird-looking that they reminded one of the alchemists of old trying to turn the baser metals into gold. There were wide-awake young men here also, studying the marvelous properties of the newly-discovered radium, which at the present time is worth three hundred thousand times its own weight in gold, and many elements and metals that Earth people know nothing of.

As they went from shipyard to laboratory and from laboratory to electrical work-rooms, they closely scanned the faces of all about them, hoping to see their wonderful old man. After leaving the men's quarters,

they came to an immense building where none but women were at work, some on tapestries, others on lace that rivaled the cobweb for delicacy of texture. Embroideries they saw in which the flowers literally seemed to grow, blossom, and wait to be plucked; pictures done in illuminated paints whose tints rivaled those of sunset skies—in fact everything that human hands could do was done here to perfection.

“Our old man cannot be here,” said the Princess. “Perhaps he has returned to Earth with another elephant or air-ship.”

They were about to abandon their search for him when Mercury said:

“See that peculiar looking edifice built in the shape of a Greek cross. Let us go and find out what it is. Perhaps it is the especial laboratory of the very man for whom we are searching.”

On arriving at the door they were very much impressed with the beauty and grandeur of the entrance to say nothing of the elaborate decorations of the edifice itself.

The doors were wide open and, entering, they saw in the center of a highly-vaulted chamber, a large model air-ship that looked as light as paper wrought in graceful curves with great beauty of design, but which proved to be on closer inspection as strong as iron. That it would work like magic without hitch or flaw, our young people knew at once, since their wonderful old man was its inventor. And there beside it he stood with a dreamy, far-away expression in his eyes as if he already felt himself speeding through space in it. Harold recognized him at once with his white hair and beard and his loose gown of dark purple corded in at the waist. They all advanced a little nearer and stood directly before him where his eyes would rest upon them immediately he came out of his open-eyed dream.

Mercury told the young people to doff their magic robes, and they were scarcely off their shoulders when the old man started, rubbed his eyes, stared, again rubbed his

eyes as if brushing away some illusion, looked once more, and then said:

“Be ye flesh and blood I look upon or only fancies of my brain?”

“My dear sir,” Harold answered, “we are flesh and blood and if you will but look more closely you will surely recognize me as the young man who entered your elephant when I thought you dying.”

“To be sure! To be sure!” he exclaimed. “But how did you all reach this island?” he asked in surprise.

When Harold had finished giving him a detailed account of all he had done and where they had traveled since receiving the elephant, he said, “Well done, my young hero. I see that my elephant could not have fallen into better hands and from my heart I am glad that you have all enjoyed it.”

“How much we have enjoyed and appreciated your gift we will never be able to tell,” replied Harold, “but we all tender you sincere and earnest thanks,” in which the rest of the party enthusiastically acquiesced.

“And now since you have come all this way to thank me for my gift I will give you another treat. I will take you all for a trip in my newly perfected air-ship of which the one before you is but the model. The ship itself is in a large enclosure on the other side of the building.”

“How perfectly enchanting that will be!” exclaimed the girls, while the boys thanked him profusely for all the trouble he was taking.

“No trouble, I assure you,” he said, “only a pleasure. Follow me and I will show that my air-ship is as far ahead of the elephant as a fast ocean steamer is ahead of a flat-boat.”

“My! what are those people doing who are jumping up in the air and darting about as if shot from a gun?” asked the Princess.

“To be sure! To be sure! It must seem strange to you,” answered the old man, “but that is our mode of locomotion. We propel ourselves through the air instead of walking, as that is too slow to suit our tastes. We do

not fly but we use an electric apparatus about the size of a matchbox which we fasten between our shoulders, and one half as large which we wear under the soles of our feet. If we wish to travel in the air to avoid crowds and hindrances we simply press hard upon the soles of our feet and the little contrivances fastened there send us up almost as rapidly as if blown by an explosive, then by the use of handles connected with the boxes between our shoulders, we propel ourselves forward, backward, sideways or in any direction desired. A great many of our people devote all their time to studying new and improved methods of travel for the use of the inhabitants of Earth, for year by year your people seem to be more and more in a hurry and methods which seem perfectly satisfactory one year are all too slow before twelve months have passed by. Well! here we are," he continued, throwing open enormous doors which led into a large grassy enclosure devoid of trees of any description, in which, pulling at her anchor

with every passing breeze, rested the airship, "Queen of the Heavens," as she had been named.

I shall not attempt to describe this beautiful, graceful, convenient marvel but will leave it to the reader's imagination. I will say, however, that the heaviest metal used in its construction was aluminum, while it was lighted with radium whose dazzling glare was softened by colored globes, and its propelling power was electricity but so perfected that an Earth-born mortal of to-day would not recognize it as such.

"Now, my dear young people, where shall I take you for a sail? Shall it be to the Moon, to the Dog Star, or still further toward Neptune, or would you like to slowly drop to within a mile of the Earth and then sail around it?"

"Oh! the last!" they all exclaimed in chorus, "for it would be such fun to see the people of Earth gazing at us through telescopes thinking we were inhabitants from Mars coming to visit them."

“Very well, just as you choose,” he said.

After they were comfortably seated, the anchor raised and the old man had placed himself at the helm, the ship began slowly to ascend into the blue ether until it was above and free from the high wall of the enclosure, then with a turn of the steerage apparatus, the huge ship glided up as easily as a bird and with slightly lowered bow commenced to sink toward Earth. Past single stars, through groups of stars, still lower down into starless ether, then across the air line boundary into Earth's atmosphere, through thick masses of clouds, they at last came into clear atmosphere half a mile above the earth and could now see numberless people straining their eyes to discover what this strange aerial craft might be. It would take an endless time to relate all that happened on this trip but I will disclose a few events in the next chapter of the voyage of “The Queen of Heaven.”

CHAPTER VIII.

The big ship was poised in mid-air over the Palisades of the Hudson, near New York City. Presently the old man lowered the machine so close to Earth that Harold and the Prince descended a rope ladder and landed in order that they might get some newspapers and discover what was being said about the air-ship, which had evidently been seen at different places all the way from California to the East. They were likewise charged with several commissions from the girls, not the least being one to bring them candy for, as they said, "they were dying for some of Huyler's best."

At about sundown the boys returned, having made good time to and from the city. Their arms and pockets were loaded with

boxes and packages of various sizes, for they had purchased candy, peanuts, gum, papers, magazines, and last but not least a dress for each of the girls which they knew would be needed if they decided to land anywhere. Those they already had were badly out of style and, sad as it may seem, I shall have to tell you that their magic robes would not work below the air-shed line in the Earth's atmosphere.

As the boys were unloading their arms and emptying their pockets, the girls stood close beside them listening to the doings of the day and eating peanuts and candy between questions.

“Well! I will tell you the things that impressed me most forcibly were the dirt and the smoky atmosphere and, what was scarcely less disagreeable, the unmannerly people in the slow-moving crowds. I constantly wished for my magic robe that I might escape from the clanging bells, rumbling wheels, and pushing crowds. It was positively deafening after enjoying the quiet

and peace of the skies, and suffocating too, with its smoke-laden atmosphere. How so many people can live in a city from choice, I cannot imagine. I always disliked noise and dirt but now after our recent experiences in the heavens, it will be unendurable.”

While they had been talking, the old man had quietly steered the ship over New York harbor and now he and Mercury were watching a large white object that was sailing directly beneath them.

“Look over the side,” said Mercury. “See what a beautiful sight the harbor presents with all its ocean-liners and ferry boats moving to and fro in the moonlight with their many-colored lanterns. That fast ocean greyhound is especially majestic and has just entered the harbor with its hundreds of passengers from foreign shores.”

The old man lowered the ship so that they could distinguish voices on the steamer beneath them and could see by the rays thrown from the search-light the frightened faces

of the passengers. As the steamer passed on to her dock the air-ship slowly ascended until she was lost to sight in the clear night sky.

While they were speeding on their way to Europe, Harold took out the papers he had bought, and seating himself beside a shaded reading lamp commenced to read aloud what was being said about their air-ship. One paper had in red head lines:

“Our neighbors from Mars have at last materialized, but either from fright or some unknown reason have failed to land or in any way communicate with us, so that we are none the wiser for their visit.”

Another read, “A wonderful phenomenon has been observed at many points in the West. First at San Francisco, then, within twenty-four hours, in Omaha, later in Chicago, and last in Philadelphia. It is impossible to conjecture whether it is a heavenly body wandering out of its natural course or whether it is a mechanical toy invented by human hands, for it travels too fast for sat-

isfactory examination or observation. It is at present reading an unsolved problem.”

A scientific magazine devoted several pages to theories concerning this aerial stranger:

“Its speed seemed only rivaled by the ease and grace of its motions. It has not been seen to land any passengers, neither is it known that it contained passengers, although judging from its direct and steady course it is reasonable to believe that it is controlled by human agency. People are sleeping on the house-tops hoping to see it sail by, for some one is on watch every moment to give the signal should it appear.”

In the meantime our young people were half way to Europe in the midst of a terrible thunder storm and now it was that “The Queen” showed the perfection of her mechanism, for with sails lowered, and all things shipshape, she was ready for anything, and though the wind blew hurricanes, the thunder sounded with deafening crashes, and the lightning fairly blinded them with its

lurid glare, the ship floated serenely onward. Storms had no visible effect upon this queer-shaped air craft. It shot through the storm clouds like a meteor with no trouble whatsoever, while the rain and hail slipped off doing no damage. Once or twice the girls had a scare when it turned bottom side up and over and over two or three times like a bucket of water when twirled at arms length, but it righted itself at once and all was done so quickly that not even a dish fell from the shelves or a chair moved from its place any more than a drop of water would fall from a bucket swung in that way. At another time it spun round and round like a top until they were all dizzy and could scarcely sit up, then it shot forward hither and thither with lightning-like speed. At last the old man disentangled the wires and adjusted the steering apparatus, when all was again smooth sailing, but he found that in doing so he had sustained several shocks from the electric wires and some bad burns.

“Now is the time for me to experiment on

myself and see what radium will do for me. It is claimed to effect wonderful cures for such things." He made the experiment and found that it not only effected a painless but also a quick cure. "It is an ill wind that blows no one any good," he said, "and now I can recommend the use of this element for burns and blisters." He seemed quite delighted to think that he had been hurt since it gave him an opportunity of proving the wonderful power of this new metal.

While the storm was raging, our party had heard the booming of cannon and had seen sky-rockets ascend.

"Are they signals of distress from some ship underneath us?" asked Harold.

"I think so," answered the captain, as they now called the old man. "I'll lower our ship and see if we cannot assist them."

Presently they saw an ocean-liner breasting the winds and breakers, helpless in mid-ocean, without masts and with a big hole in its side.

"It is doomed!" cried the captain; "but

we can save the passengers. Our ship will float above her steady as a rock and I can lower rope ladders so that her passengers can reach our deck in safety.”

When the frightened passengers saw this magnificent ship in mid-air above them they thought it was a mirage or phantom-ship sent to mock them in their despair, but when they heard through the megaphone encouraging words directing them to mount the ladders to safety, they instantly complied and soon every person on the disabled ship from stevedore to captain was on the air-ship, some with tears and sobs, others with white haggard faces thanking the captain for his timely coming. The last person had barely placed his foot on the step of the ladder when the ocean steamer gave a mighty lurch and disappeared from sight as if pulled under water by some merciless mer-king.

After the passengers recovered from their fright they were profuse with their oh's and ah's of admiration of the majestic ship they

were now on, with its new electrical contrivances, peculiar mode of lighting, and the elegance and comfort of its furnishings. Everything was examined from the bathtubs to the stringed musical instruments that vibrated harmonious, plaintive melodies as the wind swept through them. They were delighted with the frescoes and superb paintings illustrative of scenes in space as well as on land and water, which decorated the ceilings and walls.

The wrecked ship was bound for Liverpool so the captain landed his passengers there one fine morning before half the people of that city were awake.



THEY REMINDED ONE OF THE ALCHEMISTS OF OLD
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CHAPTER IX.

After bidding the shipwrecked people good-bye, our party concluded to steer for Siam, stopping at the city of Paris on their way, for the Prince and Princess had never visited this city of styles and wickedness. They arrived there early one morning just when the first rays of the Sun were lighting the towers of Notre Dame and the captain guided them directly to the Eiffel Tower where they landed, planning to remain in Paris for a few days, the captain, in the meantime, would sail above the city and wait for them.

I will not stop to tell you all that they saw or did during that memorable week, for those who have been in Paris can imagine and those who have not may hold it in anticipa-

tion. Suffice it to say that they all had, as Ione put it, "the time of their lives," visiting theatres, Versailles, the Louvre, shopping, driving in the parks, taking dinners at the best hotels and suppers at the celebrated restaurants. They were pretty well tired out when they at last returned to the ship on the appointed morning.

"And now we are off for Siam to see what has taken place during your absence," said the captain. "I know you have called up the picture of Siam on our magic mirror to see how things were going but you could not talk to your people as you will be able to do now."

"Magic Mirror is an apt name for the blue vault which pictures the wonderful views we have seen," said the Princess.

"A penny for your thoughts, Prince," said Harold.

"They are not for sale but I will give them to you if you will come here. I want to consult you about something."

"I hope it is not that you wish to leave us when we reach Siam," said Harold.

“No, indeed! Quite the contrary. I have concluded that I do not wish to go to Siam even for a visit and if you will come and sit beside me I will tell you why. You see, if I go to Siam my people will know that I am alive and then my brother would have to give up his throne which he so highly prizes, as he would no longer be the rightful heir. Now I care nothing for the throne so why not let them still think me dead and allow my brother to live in peace? When we first thought of visiting Siam I did not realize how my going would complicate matters, but only thought of the pleasure it would give the Princess and myself to surprise and see them once more. Now, I feel that we must forego the pleasure.”

“You are right, Prince. I, too, did not think of the trouble your visit would cause.”

“We must speak to the captain and tell him of our change of plans or we will be in Siam and landing at the palace before we know it at the rate of speed we are now traveling,” said the Prince.

So they told the captain their after-thoughts and he said their decision was a wise one and added that it would have been too bad to shorten the aerial trip of the Princess. If he had stopped to visit his people they naturally would not have been willing that he continue his travels after getting him back, as they thought, from the dead.

“You must not return to Earth to remain until you have first visited Neptune, that mystic planet far out in space on the very borders of our solar system, to say nothing of the beautiful and surprising places bordering on the Milky Way.”

Mercury now spoke, saying that he feared he should not be able to accompany them longer unless they returned to the heavens immediately, for his time of leave would expire before he could get to Neptune and return, it was so very far away. “I want you to see some of the independent islands also, those not under the influence or sway of any of the planets.”

“Goodness, gracious, me! If you are

thinking of leaving us, we will return to the heavens this minute rather than lose you, for no other guide would be acceptable to us after having been led by you," said Ione.

"You are very kind, but there are dozens of other guides far superior to me," said Mercury.

"Of course you would say that," said the Prince, "but we don't know how good the others are and we do know you, so we are going back at once to those mysterious, fascinating lands that float in heaven's blue ether."

Having all agreed to return with Mercury, the captain pointed the bow of his trusty ship in a direct oblique line for Uranus, where he was to hand them over to Mercury once more.

Although "The Queen" traveled with the speed of electricity, it took several days for our party to reach Uranus as, unlike their magic robes, she could not quite do away with time and space. On their way to Uranus the captain told them if they should

ever want for money all they had to do was to go where there was a large deposit of radium and sell enough to supply their needs, for it was much more valuable than gold itself, and he then proceeded to tell them where they could always find this white chemical in the form of crystals, which much resembled salt.

“On Uranus we have no money or specie of any kind,” he continued. “Our trading is done by giving out thoughts and ideas. Each man’s bank is his brain and he who has the best brain is considered the wealthiest man, while he is valued for what he actually has done, and not for what he says he can do, for the good of his race. No repetition of others’ thoughts or bragging can be either traded or taken in account here. A man must do what he says he can do and he who does the most for the public good is looked upon and taken for the guide and ruler of the island. All questions and decisions are referred to him and all depend upon his

judgment as to ways and means of settlement."

"How I wish things were arranged in that way on our Earth," said Harold. "Then the right man would be in the right place every time, and prosperity would be ensured."

"I see it! I see it!" exclaimed Ione.

"See what?" asked Harold.

"Uranus," replied she.

"True enough, she does," said the captain. "You have very sharp eyes, and now that the way is clear I am going to use full speed. Listen to the varied and peculiar tones the air makes as it rushes by."

"Does it not sound weird?" said Ione.

"It makes me feel creepy and afraid," said the Princess.

"Horrors! What is the matter now!" exclaimed Ione, for they had come to a sudden stop.

"Nothing," calmly replied the captain, "only that we have reached our destination and I lessened the speed to allow the ship to

sink quietly down into the enclosure we started from.”

“You mean to tell us we are really back!” they exclaimed in chorus. “Only a few minutes ago we were leagues away.”

“So we were but, if you remember, I said I intended using full speed,” replied the captain, “and behold the result. Distance was soon wiped out and time almost caught up with.”

“We can never thank you enough for this pleasant trip. We have given up entirely ever being able to pay our indebtedness to you for all the charming treats you have given us,” said the Princess.

“Do not thank me, for I have had equal joy in seeing the successful result of my inventions as well as witnessing your pleasure. And now before we part I wish to give you each a memento of the happy hours we have spent together. My gift cannot be delivered now, but some fine morning you will see floating above each of your homes an air-

ship the exact counterpart of the one we are now in.”

They were all too touched by his generosity to be able to speak at first, but the Princess quickly recovered herself and walked shyly toward the old man. Throwing her arms around his neck, she kissed him. Ione did likewise while the Prince and Harold, with moistened eyes, gripped his hands in silent gratitude and appreciation, only saying that it was too much for him to do. But the old man only laughed and seemed exceedingly happy in knowing that he had been the means of giving them pleasure.

You can well imagine how they lingered in saying good-bye and would not be satisfied until he had promised that he would visit them when they were settled in the new homes they were going to prepare when they returned to Earth.

“Now, Mercury, what can I give you?” asked the old man. “I know that material things are not desired by those who live in space, and as a person cannot give a slice of

his brains, the only valuable thing here, I am at a loss to know what to give you to show how much I appreciate your kindness in bringing these young people to me.”

“The pleasure of being with you all has been sufficient recompense for me,” replied Mercury, “and if you do not mind I should like to return and learn from you some of the wonderful secrets of nature you possess.”

“Come, my dear fellow, and come often. I would be delighted to teach you anything I know, for I am getting to be an old man and some times feel that I have done my share of work and would be glad to leave in younger hands the tasks and studies that are still unfinished.”

For a long time after our party had started for Neptune they felt quiet and subdued. Ione did not talk and Harold forgot to tease. They had traveled in silence for some distance when Ione in a revery said, “Neptune, god of the waters. I wonder if we will find the planet’s Satellite Island

nearly all water and its inhabitants floating about in gondolas or queer-shaped barges and boats, as the Venetians do.”

“I expect we will,” said the Princess, “and I have the funniest feeling, as if when I reach there I shall have reached the end of space and can look over the edge as I should if the universe were a plate and Neptune a big ball on its rim.”

“Oh! you queer girl!” exclaimed Ione. “You have the funniest ideas sometimes. You make me laugh.”

“I should think you would be afraid our ‘wishes’ would get out of order and we would get stuck in space like a balky horse or, if our magic robes failed to work, that we would go whirling and speeding through space like a comet,” said Harold.

“Harold, you are the worst tease I ever knew,” said the Princess.

“Well, isn’t it true that all things wear out with constant use? We have kept wishing, wishing, and wishing that we might be first in this place and then in that, or that we

could see this or the other thing until I should think our robes would at least be threadbare.”

“I am sure it is lucky for us that our robes are made of magical stuff or, as Harold says, they would not only be threadbare but full of holes as well,” said the Prince.

“Look sharply and you will see just ahead, first a flash of blue then a flash of green light,” said Mercury. “Those are from Neptune and as we draw nearer the lights will shine with steady brilliancy.”

CHAPTER X.

Neptune was so far away that it required repeated wishing to get there. Think of it! It is 2,791,000,000 miles from the Sun, a distance one cannot realize or grasp from cold figures. It has to be compared to something on Earth for one to form any definite idea of its immensity.

“Now, one, two, three,” said Mercury. “Let us make a last wish and it will surely land us on Neptune’s Satellite Island.”

They complied and in the twinkling of an eye found themselves standing on a high arched bridge facing, well! how can I describe it? A magnificent white temple-like edifice all domes, porticoes, and windows of rainbow hues. It stood in the center of a small island connected with the mainland by

twelve bridges similar to the one on which they were standing. Each bridge faced an imposing column-porticoed entrance, with broad sweeping steps leading to it, on either side of which were symbolical figures that represented the different signs of the Zodiac. The entire temple was built in such a style as to form an eight-pointed star, in the center of which was a circle. The audience hall was a stupendous circular room with twelve doors leading from it. Overhead in the lofty dome, which was of sapphire to represent the blue of the sky, were sprinkled diamond stars and differently colored jewels representing each planet in its characteristic color. Looking closely, one could see that this dome was divided into twelve sections by gold bands and in its center was one enormous diamond representing the Sun, while each division or section was marked by a sign of the Zodiac, and the colored jewels that represented the planets were placed in the sign of the Zodiac in which they were located at the time of the birth of Christ,

while the whole circle was called "The Circle of Life."

Directly underneath this dome was another Zodiacal Circle set in the floor where the planets moved by clock work and were always to be found just where the real planets in the heavens are each day in the year. This temple was one dedicated to the twin sciences Astronomy and Astrology. The people who live on Neptune call Astronomy the backbone and Astrology the soul of the science of the stars.

"Here is where one can have his horoscope or life-wheel calculated, and can learn what his talents, abilities, and future prospects are," said Mercury.

"Let us go and have our future predicted," said Ione.

As they stood on the bridge talking and looking about them, beautiful gondolas had been gliding along on the placid waters beneath. Each gondola had elaborately carved jewel-set figures, representing sea horses, mermaids or Undines for its bow, and car-

ried a minstrel or musician, and its passengers leaned on silken cushions apparently oblivious to surroundings while listening to the soft, plaintive tones that fell from harp, flute or mandolin. The musical plash of the single paddle which guided the pleasure-boats furnished a harmonious accompaniment. This was truly a silent city where carriage wheels were never heard or the clatter of horse's hoofs, for there were no streets, only canals and lagoons.

“Suppose we cross this bridge and enter the temple,” said Mercury. “I have a pass that will admit us to all buildings on the Satellite Islands.”

“That will be agreeable to us,” answered Harold.

So they wished themselves dressed in simple white robes and then walked slowly over the bridge and followed the path that led to the Temple of Astrology. As they approached, they saw a stately old man about to descend the steps. He had a snowy beard and flowing, white hair. A mantle of purple

velvet was thrown across his shoulders and on its hem were embroidered the signs of the Zodiac in threads of gold. On his breast flashed a diamond star, while on the third finger of his left hand he wore a priceless seal ring set with his birth-stone.

Mercury recognized him at once as one of the twelve wise men who presided over the Wheel of Life set in the Temple floor, also one of the "Brotherhood of Twelve," a secret order legally licensed to calculate horoscopes and read the lives of people.

Mercury introduced our party and told the Brother that the ladies would like to have their life-wheels read. He courteously consented and offered also to show them the marvelous telescope, with lens so powerful that the star farthest away in space could be brought into plain view.

"Now, if you will come with me I will tell you a curious thing about this temple, for though you may wonder why, you will soon realize that you are drawn in a certain direction as if by invisible hands. For in-

stance, as you walk around the circular hall, when you arrive at the door leading to that sign of the Zodiac under which you were born, you will feel an irresistible desire to enter and stand on that sign in the Zodiacal wheel set in the floor. Like, they say, attracts like."

"But I do not know which sign I was born under," said Ione.

"It does not matter in the least whether you know or not," replied the Brother. "You will instinctively enter the door and be most strongly attracted to the especial sign which appeared at the eastern horizon at the hour of your birth."

"What fun!" said Ione. "Let us walk around and test it."

"How very interesting," said the Princess. "We can walk slowly and completely around the circle taking a good look at each entrance, then on the second round we can enter the door that seems most attractive."

"And when you find that out," continued the Brother, "as you stand on the sign in the

wheel, I will tell you something of your disposition, nature, and inclinations. Another thing I will mention is that a special color is also assigned to each sign, also a jewel which is called one's birth gem, and which it is fortunate for one to wear. We planet people wear ours on our third finger."

"Why on the third finger?" queried Harold.

"Because three is a sacred number and is symbolical of many things. Another fact about these signs is that each represents one of the four elements, fire, earth, air, or water. Look at the wheel in the dome and you will see that each of its divisions is colored according to the element it represents, red for fire, brown for earth, blue for water, and white for air. There are three red, three brown, three white, and three blue sections.

"When the early astrologers were consulted by two people with regard to marriage, and found that one was born under a sign representing fire, while the other was born under one representing water, they

would advise them not to marry, for one would be warm-hearted, impulsive, and impetuous while the other would be slow and easy-going, so that, not being congenial, they would not be happy together. Fire is quenched by water, while water is disturbed and made to steam or boil by fire.”

“How very interesting this study of the stars must be,” said Harold.

“I mean to pursue it,” said the Prince.

“If you think simply the signs are interesting to hear about, you would find the position of the planets in the different signs perfectly fascinating, but the stars are a life-long study and the longer one studies them the more absorbed one becomes. Shall we begin our circuit around the hall now? I am always interested to know through what door one is inclined to enter.”

As they leisurely sauntered along they plied the Brother with numberless questions and when any of their number would stop unusually long before any door, the others would immediately ask, “Do you think that

leads to your sign?" or "Do you truly feel inclined to enter that door?" and so between questions and much laughter they finished their first round.

CHAPTER XI.

Over the first doorway they saw a ram's head and the first sign of the Zodiac called Aries, while on either side of the broad steps leading to the portico were lambs lying at rest.

“I am sorry to be the first to leave you,” said Harold, “but I am strongly attracted this way.”

“Really, are you?” exclaimed Ione. “I don't feel attracted toward it in the least, and I should think I would, loving you as I do.”

“Not at all! Not at all!” responded the Brother. “That has nothing to do with it.”

“Well, good-bye, we will soon join you in the temple,” they cried as they walked to-

ward the second entrance. Over this door they saw the head of a bull and the second sign of the Zodiac called Taurus, while two ferocious-looking bulls stood on either side of the entrance. No one seemed inclined to pass through here.

Over the third entrance they saw the carved figures of The Twins symbolizing the third sign, Gemini, but all passed by.

As they approached the next door, however, Ione said, "I feel decidedly attracted this way," and entered the door over which was to be seen the Crab, symbolical of the fourth sign, Cancer.

As Ione passed through the doorway, the Princess said, "I wonder what sign will attract me."

"I think you will like Virgo best," replied the Brother, and so it proved, for they all passed the fifth door over which they saw the Lion and when they neared the sixth entrance, that of Virgo, represented by a beautiful carved figure of a virgin, the Princess said, "You are right, Brother, if this is

Virgo, for I want to enter here, so good-bye.”

After leaving Virgo, they passed the door over which was seen the scales or balance representing the seventh sign, Libra; the one over which a huge serpent was curled, representing the eighth sign, Scorpio, one over which was to be seen the Archer, with his bow and arrow, the ninth sign, Sagittarius, then past Capricornus, symbolized by the Goat, on to the eleventh sign, Aquarius, the Water-Bearer. Here the Prince paused. “This is my sign,” he said, “for it is the first I have felt drawn toward.”

“You are right,” replied the Brother. “It is yours and I will enter with you and see what the others think of their respective signs. You have made the complete round of the signs with the exception of the twelfth, Pisces, which is symbolized by the Fishes.”

“We are glad to see you at last, Prince,” Harold cried. “We thought perhaps you

were hard to please and could not find a sign to suit you."

"Oh, no," he replied, "but I had to almost complete the circle before I found where I belonged."

"Now," said the Brother, "I will tell you in a few words some of your inclinations, according to your signs, but you must remember that these will be greatly modified or accentuated as the case may be, according to the position which different planets held at the hour of your births. It would take too long to calculate planetary positions and give you an exact reading of your future, so I will confine myself to what the birth sign shows for each. I will commence with Mrs. Fredericks."

"Oh! Oh!" laughed Ione, "For mercy's sake don't call me Mrs. It sounds so grown up and queer. Please call me Ione."

"Very well then, Ione. Being born under the sign Cancer which belongs to the water division you will largely partake of the nature of that element and will be changeable

and restless, having many ups and downs in fortune and position, also dangers especially of captivity. Journeys or voyages are certain to be frequent and long. You are frequently in danger from falls or hurts from horses, even wounds by human hands are to be feared. As to your inclinations you are gifted with a fertile imagination and you delight in strange scenes and in adventure. You can easily adapt yourself to both places and people, the friendship and attachment of others is an imperative need of your nature. You are discreet and independent and very capable in a variety of ways. As the Moon has great influence over the tides, so too it will strongly influence you, causing you to feel elated and happy then correspondingly gloomy and depressed. But the strongest characteristic of this sign is the sympathy it inspires and the love for home and children. You are very intuitive and can be governed by love rather than ruled by fear. You are impatient of control and have little sympathy or liking for



THEY WERE SOON GLIDING THROUGH CANAL AFTER CANAL

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narrow, conventional people, while very fond of the beautiful whether in nature or in art, having decidedly artistic tastes. Your astral colors are green and russet brown. Your jewels, the emerald and black onyx."

"But you have not told me any of my faults," said Ione.

"These I never tell with this kind of a reading. I only tell them when I give the influence of the planets."

"Mercury read Harold's horoscope, so he can't have his told again but we should like to hear what you can tell the Princess," said Ione.

"Very well! She is modest, reticent and must be well known to be well understood as she keeps her talents in the background and never obtrudes them upon people. She is an exceptionally good nurse as her hands possess and impart a soothing, magnetic influence. She is kind and agreeable in company and very confiding where affection is given. She naturally inspires the confidence of her friends and will be the recipient of many se-

crets which she will loyally keep. She is well endowed mentally, is ingenious and even-tempered, not easily angered but reasonable and just in her disposition. Long voyages in search of wealth or in connection with property in foreign countries, are indicated. Frequent changes of residence are shown, and residences or property in two places. A goodly share of this world's goods will fall to her share, for her symbol the Virgin or the Gleaner promises much. With thrift and an economical nature she combines an almost clairvoyant power of discrimination and foresight. She must be known to be appreciated."

After giving these short readings, the Brother asked if they would partake of some light refreshments, assuring them that if they did not like what was served they could not but be pleased with the beautiful scene which would be laid before them.

They gladly assented and he quickly led them from the Temple to the water's edge where lay a magnificent gondola which they

entered and in which they were soon gliding through canal after canal until at last they shot out from under a low hanging balcony into a Court of Honor, lighted by myriads upon myriads of colored lamps and found themselves surrounded by dozens and dozens of other gondolas floating or at rest while their occupants, leaning back in graceful poses, listened to the most sublime music mortal ears had ever heard. The musicians sat in beautiful boat-shaped baskets made of flowers and suspended in air by most beautiful, silken balloons that floated overhead carrying various colored lamps and giving the scene the appearance of hundreds of fireflies flitting here and there.

In the center of this Court of Honor was an island on which was a pavilion of peculiar but beautiful design where refreshments were served. This Court was so large that the magnificent buildings that surrounded it were seen but faintly, which added greatly to the scene as they seemed wrapped in a bluish purple mist, with only a white column

showing here and there lit by the reflection of some colored light. Here one saw a pink fluted column half wreathed in mist; there another glistening with a pale, green color, while in the cool depths of the water on which they were floating could be seen reflections of the entire scene as in a mirror.

Golden statues of females holding torches in their upraised arms lit this gloriously beautiful court at regular intervals; broad steps led to the water's edge at the gondola landings, while magnificent colossal statues of animals on broad pedestals stood as if guarding the waterways.

“Oh! how beautiful!” they all exclaimed in tones of subdued ecstasy.

After they had feasted their eyes upon this view and had listened to the divine strains of music that were wafted to them on gentlest breezes, the Brother gave a signal to the gondolier to take them to the island. While seated here he asked many questions about Earth and seemed greatly interested in what they related. Then he told them

what great changes had taken place since he had lived there, but what astonished them most was that he had been an astrologer on the lost island of Atlantis, and that he had been on top of a high tower when the island was submerged. "There has never been or ever will be such magnificent men and women as lived then," concluded the Brother, "for so much sin and disease has crept into the world that it has destroyed the race physically and morally to a great extent."

Presently the old man spoke again.

"Have you heard of ambrosia that the gods lived upon? Well, I am going to offer you some of it with some of our wafers."

After tasting the ambrosia Ione said, "It tastes like the honey from a flower wet with dew and has the bouquet of rose and violets, while it makes one feel as if every drop of blood in him was a living cell of life and joy."

"I don't wonder the gods were so powerful," said Harold, "if they lived on this nec-

tar, for it certainly is the most delicious thing I ever tasted.”

This praise greatly pleased the Brother. “Look in the west,” he said, pointing his finger to indicate where the west was, up among the clouds.

They looked and then caught their breath. Forming a background to this beautiful Court of Honor was what appeared to be the lights of an Aurora Borealis while spanning it all was a rainbow of dazzling brightness.

“When these lights appear,” said Mercury, “it is a signal that I must return to my island home shortly and as I want you to see the Milky Way and several independent islands we have in space I think we had best bid adieu to the Brother and hasten on.” With many hand grasps and farewells they bade the Brother good-bye and once more floated off into the blue ether, wrapped in their magic robes.

CHAPTER XII.

The Sun's Satellite Island was most glorious to behold, being bathed in dancing sunbeams which twirled in and around everything and threw a veil of splendor over all. This was called the Isle of Gold, as it looked like one gigantic ball of that precious metal when seen from afar. Gold mines abounded, formed as it seemed of petrified sunbeams. The flowers and leaves of plants and trees opened and shut at the rising and setting of the Sun as do the lotus and marigold. The birds too, sang at sunrise to herald the coming of the messenger of day. A great many large animals were seen here, such as the lion, wolf, bear, bull, and ox. The people were broad-minded, whole-

souled, and cheerful, their one aim in life being to make others happy.

From the Sun Island they went to the island under the Moon, an island locked in the grip of perpetual slumber. What a contrast they found! It was like going from life to death. It had been struck by a blighting blast and everything had been turned to stone; even the trees, birds, and beasts were petrified, although they had retained their natural colors. No one lived here and the only persons seen were visitors from other islands, and these were generally of a melancholy, despondent turn of mind, and they moved about like ghosts, in shroud-like white robes.

After our travelers had visited all of the planets' Satellite Islands, Ione said:

“Why! I never thought of it before, but if all of the planets have satellite or tributary islands the Earth must, also.”

“You are right,” said Mercury. “Earth has its Satellite Islands but instead of one it has many, and they revolve around the

Earth from east to west. Opposite each zone out in space revolves an island corresponding in temperature and in vegetation to the zone it represents and all of these are connected with the earth by rainbow bridges which appear and disappear as there are souls that wish to pass over to any of them.

“The passport to these islands is a pure heart full of love and sympathy for everything that lives and breathes. None other can pass over the frail rainbow bridges to these islands which are called the ‘Isles of the Blest.’ Many people have seen these rainbow bridges when they have been spanned for the passage of a soul to one of the islands but they have not known that instead of the pot of gold, which children have been told was to be found at the other end, there was one of the most beautiful, peaceful, quiet islands that ever floated in space. On the one opposite the Temperate Zone spirits live that prefer that temperature, while those who prefer cold weather go to the island opposite the Frigid Zone, and so

on, for there is a climate suited to every taste, and because of this every one is happy and contented, being in a congenial atmosphere which is conducive to joy and contentment.

“No growling over the weather such as is heard on Earth, is ever indulged in here. Spirits always live with those who are congenial and have tastes similar to their own, so no quarreling is ever heard, neither are divorces ever necessary.

“The most desirable place of all is that island opposite and tributary to the Temperate Zone, for here everything is temperate like the climate, neither too hot nor yet too cold. The inhabitants are high spirited, joyous, and happy, being employed from morning till night in making others happy.

“Deceit, lying, stealing, and anger are all unknown here, so you see, it is very appropriately named The Isle of the Blessed,” concluded Mercury.

By this time they had reached Do-as-you-Please Land.

“What queer-looking people and houses they have here!” said Ione. “No two persons are dressed alike nor are there two houses the same size or color. There is a queer-looking house over there and no two sides are painted the same color.”

“Oh! goodness! look at that funny hat that woman is wearing. It is like a small parasol with the stick cut off and when she enters a building she pulls a string and it shuts up,” said the Princess.

“Yes,” answered Ione, “but look at that woman with the laced-in waist, high-heeled slippers and huge bustle and panniers. She is talking to that tall, slim woman with flat chest and clothes made almost skin tight. Why do the inhabitants of this land dress so differently?” asked Ione.

“Because this is the Land of Do-As-You-Please and every one dresses according to his or her particular idea of comfort or beauty. Come and I will show you some of the queerest homes you ever looked at.”

They were loth to leave the queer-looking,

peculiar people even to see their more peculiar houses, but finally started to walk down the principal residence street. They saw children dressed in the funniest clothes that mortal mind ever thought of or designed. Some had rubber suits so that if it rained or they fell in the water they would not get wet. Others were dressed in silk, satin and laces or Little Lord Fauntleroy styles. Still others were bare-footed with only a calico slip for a dress. Some of the mothers had their hair done up high on the head or in a mass of curls and puffs, others wore it parted in the middle and brushed so smoothly that a fly alighting upon it would slip and break its neck. But the houses! How queer and quaint they were built after original designs of the owners. One, for instance, a yellow frame with white trimmings had one large long room on the ground floor with a high square tower on one corner, four stories high, with steps from the outside. This we called the Light-House.

“Well, of all homely houses this is the

homeliest!" said Harold. "I wonder what they do in rainy weather with the steps on the outside!"

The man who lived next door evidently believed the only way to build a house was to have all the rooms on the ground floor so as to do away with climbing stairs.

The next man had few windows and small ones at that, seeming to like a cool, dark house; while his next door neighbor delighted in light and windows and had so many that his house was called the glass house; and so on, and so on. One liked one thing, another liked its opposite and each built as he pleased.

The grounds surrounding these houses were quite as characteristic of different tastes as the houses. Some yards were laid out in set flower-beds, others with the flowers running wild and untrained while still others had not a flower or shrub to break the even roll of the grass-sown lawn.

Some of the people had their meals served three times a day, some four times, and some

only twice. Some went to bed with the chickens and got up with the Sun while others went to bed at Sunrise, after a night of merry-making or dancing. Some believed in study, others in passing the time as best one can only looking out for the fun of the moment; while still others thought only of the future; and, as there are no Mrs. Grundys, each one did as he pleased and no unpleasant or unkind remarks were made.

All the inhabitants attend strictly to their own business and let others do the same.

“After all, then, these queer people living in their quaint houses have one custom which it would be well for our Earth people to emulate,” said the Prince, in which all the rest of the party laughingly acquiesced.

CHAPTER XIII.

To the east of the North Star our travelers saw a beautiful rose-tinted island and, on consulting Mercury, found it to be the Isle of Candy. On it everything was composed of sweets of some kind. Chocolate took the place of soil, while the benches in the parks were made of twisted molasses candy. Soda waters of different shades and color filled the fountains and looked beautiful as well as inviting as they sparkled in the sunlight. The summer-houses were made of peanut candy representing spotted stone, and the lovely little pagodas throughout the park were of white paste all fluted and carved. The very gravel and walks were made of mixed candies resembling different colored pebbles.

In the very centre of the island was a marvelous castle of sparkling rock candy while its water-pipes ran lemonade, wine and sparkling champagne. A lovely rose-bush clambered over its white porch and on this bush were beautiful pink roses all of candy. This castle was situated on a knoll that sloped to a miniature lake of clear mineral water while on its surface floated tiny canoes of sassafras and cinnamon bark. On the same lake were trim little steamers made of cream candy with striped peppermint sticks for smoke-stacks. On the banks of this lake were candied violets and crystalized sour-grass. Everything to be seen both far and near was a perfect imitation of some natural object. There were candy animals and birds in the park and, had you breakfasted in the castle, you would have been served with candy mutton-chops and candy eggs on candy toast.

“Did you ever see anything so perfectly sweet in all your life?” cried the girls in chorus.

“No, we never did since it is all candy and consequently would be sweet,” said Harold.

“This must be where most of the Christmas candies come from,” said the Princess.

“I wish I could carry away that cherry tree,” said Ione. “See how perfect it is, its bark of brown maple sugar, its leaves of pistache candy and its fruit the real cherries candied. My! but they are good, just taste one.”

After eating all they cared for and drinking at the different fountains, they went to the edge of the island and then flew away toward what looked like a large amethyst. Mercury explained that it was “The Isle of Toys.”

As they approached this island they saw, bordering its coast line, a diminutive city set on seven hills like ancient Rome. At its wharfs lay beautiful little steamers, while tiny sailboats went speeding by, sailing through the blue ether as smoothly as if on the water. They saw also, hurrying crowds

of the prettiest doll-faced people imaginable. And why should they not be pretty and look like dolls when they *were* dolls, only living ones that could both walk and talk. Dolls of all kinds and conditions, Mercury explained, were the only inhabitants of this Island of Toys.

Back from the coast, in the interior of the isle, lived the large dolls; in the mountains, the Indian dolls; in the hot part, the African dolls; in the cold part, the Esquimaux; in the tea-growing district, the Chinese, and so on, for every race of man was represented by these tiny creatures who lived, worked, and talked exactly as these races of people do on Earth. In fact, here was a good place to study the different peoples of the globe for, as Ione said, "Here you have the whole world in a nut-shell."

The dolls that landed from the little steamers at the wharfs represented as many different nationalities as one sees crossing the renowned bridge at Constantinople; the one where rumor says one can see every

nationality on the globe pass every hour in the day.

“Ione, do look at that Turkish doll with his baggy, yellow satin trousers, red fez, and long pipe!” said the Princess.

“Yes, but he is not half as cute as that Chinaman with the long pig-tail and paper umbrella, who is fanning himself as he walks,” she answered.

“I feel like a giant when I look down upon these tiny people,” said Harold. “I am afraid we may step on some of them. The largest one I have yet seen does not exceed six inches in height.”

“There live on the farther shore of this island dolls that are as large as a two-year-old child,” explained Mercury.

“See the dolls getting into street cars and carriages just as we do, when they get to the end of the wharf,” said the Princess.

“And observe those express wagons loaded with trunks and the drays with merchandise, while the Clydesdale horses are no bigger than kittens,” said the Prince.

“Listen,” said Harold, “I thought I heard a locomotive whistle.”

“So you did,” replied Mercury. “Look to your left and you will see the most complete little depot, with waiting-rooms, lunch counters, ticket offices, etc., facsimiles of those on Earth.”

“To be sure,” exclaimed Harold, “and there is a turn-table turning an engine at this moment, with little men working the switches.”

“Had I seen this place when I was a little youngster,” said the Prince, “I should have had to stop to play with these fascinating little trains, especially those bound for the stock-yards, loaded with cows and horses no larger than the animals that furnish a good-sized Noah’s Ark.”

“Let us float over the residence part and see what the houses look like inside and how these people live,” suggested Ione.

“Suppose we follow this little lady who has just come out of that dry-goods store and entered her brougham with a coachman

and footman on the box. The brougham drawn by the bang-tailed bay horses," suggested the Prince.

"Just the thing," cried Ione.

"No," said Harold, "you girls go on while the Prince, Mercury and I go to the theatre."

"Very well. We must be off before we lose sight of our little lady's brougham. See you later, au revoir!" cried Ione.

Away went the girls, while the boys entered the miniature theatre which they were only able to do because of the power of their magic robes.

Presently the little brougham turned into a beautiful park where there were winding drives, fountains, and flowers everywhere, and stopped in front of a lovely palace of white marble. The footman opened the door of the brougham, the little lady alighted, passed up the broad steps to the front entrance and disappeared within the exquisitely carved doors which were opened by a tiny butler in quaint livery.

With a feeling of disappointment, the girls saw her disappear from view. "Oh, isn't she too tiny, sweet, and lovely for words!" exclaimed the Princess.

"How I wish we were not so large and could go inside to see how her palace is furnished," said Ione.

"You have forgotten that our magic robes can make us large or small, as well as invisible," replied the Princess.

"To be sure I had. Let us wish ourselves the size of the little lady and that we may float through one of her windows and be able to explore the palace unobserved and undisturbed."

Once inside, the girls found themselves in a marble tessellated hall with walls lined with ancestral portraits and coats of mail. On either side of the hall were rooms through the portiers of which they caught glimpses of rugs of Oriental splendor, brocaded-satin furniture in solid gold frames, statuettes of Parian marble, while roses and white hyacinths were everywhere. At the

farther end of the hall was the dining-room with its tapestried walls, old oaken furniture, crystal chandeliers, dainty silver, and sparkling cut glass.

“Isn’t this magnificent,” exclaimed both girls in a voice of wonder, “and just as if we were looking through the wrong end of our opera glasses.”

They next ascended a lovely stairway and entered a boudoir with rose pink furnishings. Before one of the many miniature mirrors with which its walls were lined, sat our little lady while a maid was busy in brushing her fluffy golden hair. The adjoining room was a nursery. Here in a pretty basket, all lace and frills, slept a tiny, rosy-cheeked baby no larger than one’s little finger; while on the floor near by sat a small boy doll building a block house, and as he played his nurse read to him from a diminutive Mother Goose Book.

“Well, I declare! They have Mother Goose even in Toy Land!” exclaimed Ione.

They next descended to the kitchen where

they saw the little cook making pies no larger than one's thumb nail and these she baked in a cute little range as perfect in its mechanism as our larger ones.

“I suppose we must be going or the boys will be waiting for us,” said the Princess, “but I should enjoy remaining much longer.”

As they floated away they heard the tones of a piano, for the little daughter of the house was taking her music lesson, while a Canary bird in its golden-wired cage was trying to outvie her by filling the air with sweet, flute-like tremulous tones.

They found the boys awaiting them and were soon floating along together. They saw little farmers plowing the fields; little millers tending the mill and putting the snowy flour into sacks; tiny cattle grazing in the pastures, lying in the shade to rest, or standing knee-deep in the sparkling streams to cool their feet, while on the hill-tops the tiny windmills spun in this and in that direction with the shifting of the wind.



ALL THE CHORUSES ARE HEAVENLY AND HARMONIOUS
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“Isn’t this the cutest isle you ever saw? There is a toy representative of everything we have on Earth even to threshing machines and automobiles,” said Ione.

“It certainly is a most enchanting place. These wee people go about their business as if they were large men and women,” said the Prince.

“Yes, and they seem as independent as Punch or a pig on ice in the way they go about it,” answered Harold.

“What are you going to show us next, Mercury, dear, in this storehouse of space?” questioned the Princess.

“I think I shall take you to the island where all the animals come when they die.”

“Oh, do!” said Ione. “Perhaps I can then see the pets I used to love.”

“Very well, when I say three, all wish yourselves on the island called Isle of Pet Animals and we will be there.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Grazing on the sunny hillsides, lying asleep under the shade trees, or frolicking about the meadows they saw, literally, the lion and the lamb lying down together, for on this peaceful island, where no cruel man's gun had ever been fired or angry master's whip been used, animals of all kinds lived as peacefully as if belonging to the same happy family.

The island was very large and all changes of climate were common to it as well as every kind of animal known to man, from the polar bear of the frigid zone to the hippopotamus of torrid climes, but the most wonderful thing about all these animals was that they could talk, though each had a language characteristic of its particular breed

as well as a language common to all, so that each could make his wants or needs known to any and all about him.

When our young people heard this they were delighted beyond expression. "I was never so glad of any one thing in all my life as to know that a time has come when animals can talk and make themselves understood," said Ione. "I have always felt that they could and would some day because the expression of their eyes is so intelligent, and from the pathetic looks they have often given us, I have been sure they knew our minds and comprehended our troubles even though they could not tell us so."

"Let us show ourselves to them without our magic robes, and see if any of our old-time pets are here and will recognize us," said the Prince.

"Bow-wow-wow!" barked a dog behind Ione and turning she saw a noble Saint Bernard with eyes beaming with love and tail wagging with joy.

“Oh, Hero! you old darling, how are you?” cried Ione.

“I am very well, I thank you,” he replied.

Hearing her old playfellow answer in a deep bass voice came almost as a shock to Ione even though she had just been told that all animals on this island talked.

“Why are you so astonished to hear me speak?” he cried. “You used constantly to say to me ‘Speak, Hero, speak, I know you can talk if you try!’ ”

“Yes; I know, Hero, but now that you do talk, it seems strange and you must give me time to get used to it. Did you always understand everything I said to you?”

“Indeed I did, and it nearly broke my heart when you asked me to speak and I could not. If you will come with me I will show you around and you can see other pets you used to have on Earth.”

When they turned to go they saw her Indian pony that had been her almost constant companion while with the Indians.

“And here is Whistle!” she exclaimed,

patting her pony, so named because he made the wind whistle by as he ran, he was so fleet-footed. "You dear, dear pony. I am too rejoiced for words to see you again, for I never expected to lay eyes on you again."

"All I can say, Sweet-Face, is that I am delighted to know that you escaped from the Indians, for I heard that they were going to force you to marry Mud Face when he returned from his hunting trip, the trip on which Mr. Harold killed him. I had made up my mind to run away with you and try to reach the nearest settlement before I would see you married to that cruel fiend, even if you thought I was going crazy for not obeying the pull on my reins. We ponies as well as other animals are often misunderstood when we try in our own dumb way to help our masters and mistresses, for they cannot always interpret our actions and signals, so often think us disobedient when we are really trying to serve them."

"You dearest darling!" exclaimed Ione, "to think that you were trying to plan a way

to save me and I did not even know that they intended marrying me.”

“I knew you did not, but I overheard it by chance, as I grazed peacefully about while listening to Mud Face and Old Heron Feather talk, wrapped in their blankets near the camp-fire.”

“Oh! here come my pet doves,” she cried, as a flock of white pigeons alighted on her head, shoulders and outstretched hands. “You beauties! Where did you come from and how do you like it up here where you never need to have a fear of being stoned or shot?”

Looking up, she saw Harold riding off on a pet horse he used to own, while the Prince was petting an elephant he used to ride in processions in Siam. The Princess had her arms around the neck of a gazelle and all this time Mercury stood near smiling to see them all so happy.

“Oh mercy! here comes a bear out of the woods,” cried the Princess as she ran toward the Prince for protection. But Mer-

cury quieted her fears by telling her that it was perfectly harmless as were all the rest of the animals here, even to the usually ferocious Bengal tigers.

“I am sorry, but am afraid I must hurry you,” said Mercury, “if you wish to visit all the places yet to be seen.”

“Oh! do we have to go?” said Ione. “I am so sorry to leave my old pets so soon. I would dearly like to take them back to Earth with me.”

“So do I feel sorry to part with them so soon,” said the Prince; “but it is a great comfort to know that they all live again and that we shall see them again some day.”

Then away they all flew. Their next stopping place, Mercury told them, was to be the Frost King’s Isle.

Directly over the North Pole is the island of the Frost King, glistening in the sun like countless diamonds, one mass of pure white snow, frost and ice. Every tree is draped with lace-like festoons of frost and ice; every river is clear as crystal and frozen

hard; while the Ice King's palace is built of blocks of glistening ice. Before the entrance are couchant lions of solid ice. The carving round doors and windows, like chiseled marble apples, pears, and grapes, was all done by Jack Frost. The people of the Isle were dressed in white furs. The only animals were white polar bears, white spitz dogs, and white birds. The combined effect of all this dazzling white was beautiful as a dream, and all was greatly enhanced when colored lights were seen twinkling under the snow-capped windows.

As our travelers sped past, Ione said, "This is the coldest region we ever saw, now please show us the hottest one you have."

"Very well," Mercury replied. "Wish yourselves over the equator on the Isle of Fire and you will find yourselves in a warmer place than you have even dreamed of." Almost before this wish had been formed they found themselves gasping for breath on the Fire Island.

All around them were bonfires, while in

the distance a volcano belched forth fire and hot lava. The streams were liquid fire, with blue flames rising from them, and the shores of the rivers were red hot sand. They did not tarry long on this Isle for their human lungs could not endure the heat for long and they begged to be taken away before they suffocated.

The next place they visited was the Isle of Vinegar, so named because everything there was sour. The faces of all the people looked wrinkled, sour and yellow from eating so many sour things and drinking nothing but lemonade and lime juice. After taking a drink of lemonade without any sugar in it (for sugar is unknown in this land) our young friends started on their way for the Milky Way.

“I am glad that people on Earth like more than one thing. It is much nicer having a variety of things, sweet, sour, bitter and medium than all one kind. After all, medium things and people are generally best. Those who are not too gentle, too

cross, too learned, too stupid, too lively, too quiet but are a combination of each and all, these are the most congenial people to live with," sagely remarked Ione.

CHAPTER XV.

“We will now go to the Milky Way, that broad stream of sparkling stars that sweeps through the heavens like a mighty river and on either side of which are reared the palaces of the gods, goddesses, and heroes of Greece and Rome,” said Mercury.

“What! You don’t mean to tell us that the gods and goddesses of old live here?” exclaimed Ione.

“Certainly I do; and they live in regal splendor as of yore. What is more, you are going to be in time to see them start on their yearly journey to Mount Olympus. The procession they form is considered one of the grandest sights of the heavens and one which none of the planet-people would voluntarily miss seeing. The gods and god-

desses, heroes and heroines sweep down the Milky Way in magnificent floats or barges of gold and silver incrustated with precious stones, while those looking on line the shores or sit in boats at anchor, for no one is allowed the freedom of the Milky Way while the procession is passing," said the guide.

"Oh, what a spectacle it will be!" said the Princess.

"It certainly is one of the most gorgeously magnificent pageants I have ever witnessed," said Mercury.

"Are you sure we shall be there in time?" asked Ione. "I would not miss it for worlds."

"Yes, we can easily reach there if we do not tarry on our way."

"Well, we will pass things by even if we have to return to see them later," said Harold.

"All ready then. One, two, three, and we are off for a cloud bank that juts out into the Milky Way making a fine point for us to

view the entire procession as it turns the bend," said the guide.

In less time than it took them to count one, two, three, they were at their destination and were barely seated when the Princess exclaimed, "Sh! I hear strains of music," and looking in the direction from which the sounds came, they saw a beautiful float gliding smoothly along. On it were standing twelve youths and twelve maidens playing upon golden harps and horns. They were crowned with roses, while violets and myrtle were profusely festooned about them. The youths had only a spotted leopard skin thrown across their shoulders while the maidens were attired in filmy white slips with belts of blue ribbon.

Following them came Jupiter in all his royal splendor like some conquering king or hero. His jeweled chariot was drawn by four milk-white horses; his robes were royal purple lined with spun gold and bordered with precious gems. On his head he wore a helmet of gold on which with outstretched

wings rested an eagle—a bird dedicated to him by the ancients.

Juno, wife of Jupiter and Queen of the Heavens, came next, attended by her faithful messenger, Iris, with wings of gold and robe of rainbow hues. She hovered at the side of her mistress who rode in a chariot drawn by peacocks, her favorite fowls.

Mars followed in a chariot of burnished brass drawn by fiery horses. He was dressed as a warrior armed for battle with red breast-plate, and shield upraised. On his war-bonnet perched a woodpecker while at his feet crouched a wolf. Both the woodpecker and wolf are sacred to Mars.

Twelve white pigeons heralded the approach of Venus in her pink-tinted shell-chariot emblazoned with emeralds, pearls, and corals, and drawn by snow-white swans, which were dedicated to her by the ancients. Her robe was of palest green, sprinkled with pearls and embroidered to represent sea-foam. A magic girdle encircled her waist. In her hands she carried violets and maiden-

hair ferns. At her side stood a basket of pomegranates, sweet pears and figs. As the chariot passed, one could scent the perfume of thyme, myrtle, and musk, perfumes especially pleasing to her, as was the flavor of the fruits at her side.

Then came Mercury, son of Jupiter and messenger of the gods, with winged sandals and tortoise-shell lyre. Slung across his shoulder was his serpent-entwined wand, one touch of which would awaken those who slept, or put to sleep those who were awake.

Minerva, daughter of Jupiter, goddess of wisdom and war, and protectress of the elegant and useful arts, came next. Her barge was appropriately decorated with the olive branch and fruit. In its bow, half hidden, were owls (birds of wisdom), and cocks, which were sacred to her memory. On the corners of her barge were golden plows and rakes, emblems of agriculture; while here and there were also spinning wheels and distaffs, emblems of the useful arts. Her warlike tastes were displayed by her dress,

which was a complete suit of armor, the breast-plate of which was the head of Medusa. She carried a golden staff and looked magnificently beautiful and strong with commanding figure, noble brow, and flashing eyes as she stood tall and erect without turning her head to right or to left as she floated down this silvery stream.

On Diana's barge was a miniature cave to represent the one in the glade where the goddess of the chase and the moon used to repair to bathe and refresh herself after the hunt. Reposing before the cave were her faithful nymphs and all were listening to the sweet music Apollo, her twin brother, was drawing from his lute.

Vesta, the goddess of the hearth or home, was seated in front of an altar before which burned the sacred fire. The barge was festooned in myrtle and guided by twelve vestal virgins.

Vulcan stood before a fiery furnace in the midst of Lotus trees arranged to represent a forest.

Ceres, goddess of fruit and cereals, led two oxen yoked to a plow. In her train were woven heads of golden wheat; under her arm she carried a cornucopia out of which poured luscious fruits.

Neptune's barge was drawn by sea-horses with flowing manes. Their harness was of silver, crusted with pearls. Neptune himself, god of the sea, wore a rich mantle embroidered with sea anemones and shells. On his head he wore a crown of pearls and emeralds while in his right hand he held his trident, studded with precious gems gathered from the depths of ocean.

Following Neptune came Penelope, spinning the web which at night she would unravel, thus representing those who always work but never accomplish anything.

After Penelope rode Bellerophon on his celebrated charger, Pegasus, the winged horse.

Then came Atlas bearing the globe upon his shoulders.

And next, Pandora, with her fatal box.

Aurora, goddess of dawn, followed, sitting in her chariot of gold drawn by pure white horses. She was clothed in garments only equaled in color and splendor by the tints of the Aurora Borealis.

Following Aurora came Perseus, with Minerva's shield, Pluto's helmet, and Mercury's winged shoes and wand.

Then Eolus with the contrary winds tied up in the hide of an ox; followed by Somnus, god of sleep, smelling a poppy.

Bacchus, the god of wine, passed with overflowing cup in hand and wreath of grapes and leaves upon his head.

And now, Medusa with hair of hissing serpents; Rhea, the goddess of Earth, leading a tame tiger to show how she could tame the beasts of the forest; then Flora, the goddess of flowers, scattering a profusion of flowers and blossoms as she passed.

Hercules, incarnation of strength, now appeared dressed in a lion's skin, with its head for a helmet. In one hand he carried his knotted club, while with the other he led

the Arcadian stag with golden antlers and brazen feet, which he had caught. Behind him came his wife, Hebe, goddess of youth, carrying her cup of nectar, ready to wait upon the gods, for that was her office.

Last but not least came Pluto, god of the lower world and of the dead. None of the goddesses would marry him because it was such a gloomy place down in Hades where he lived, so one day he kidnapped Proserpine, the lovely daughter of Ceres, and carried her off to his kingdom. Now he came riding along in what appeared to be that same chariot drawn by spirited black horses. By his side sat the sweet-faced Proserpine, Queen of Hades, and at their feet lay Cerberus, his pet dog, a monster with three heads and a body covered with snakes in the place of hair. On his head, Pluto wore a magic helmet which gave him the power of becoming invisible at will.

Thus they came, following each other in one continuous line as far as the eye could see.

Our young people watched them until the last one had passed by, then they too passed on, in search of other sights and scenes.

CHAPTER XVI.

After the procession had passed, Mercury turned and said:

“Well! What do you think of it for a spectacular pageant?”

“Think of it?” exclaimed Ione, “I never even dreamed of anything so beautiful.”

“It even surpasses the royal elephant and camel processions of Siam, in which all the animals are caparisoned with gold and silver and jewels. Until I had seen this wonderful procession, I thought nothing could surpass that,” said the Princess.

“You certainly have given us a treat,” said the Prince and Harold.

“Now, I think you would enjoy boarding a barge and taking a trip along the Milky Way, visiting some of the strange countries

that border it and inspecting some of the palaces that line this silvery stream on either side.”

Mercury went to procure a barge for them and soon called to them to come down and enter it. It was high at the back with a raised divan shaded by silken curtains and waving palms. The front was high and pointed and stood well out of the stream of sparkling stars beneath it. Its trimmings were of purple and gold which fell over the side in graceful festoons. There were seats for six, two high carved chairs on the divan, resembling seats on a royal throne, while the others were beneath the three steps of the raised platform.

Harold and Ione insisted upon the Prince and Princess occupying the elevated seats and impersonating king and queen while they would sit beneath them as their loyal subjects, but the Prince and Princess would not agree to this.

“But don't you see,” urged Ione, “you were to the purple born, while who ever

heard of a free-born American citizen occupying a throne? Besides it would be too quiet a proceeding for us and I am sure we would jump up at the wrong time or upset a chair during an audience if it proved too tedious."

"You are mistaken," said the Prince. "You could rule by right of judgment and strength while you would have me rule because of the blood of my ancestors."

"Let Mercury decide," said the Princess.

"Very well," he replied, "in that case I think Harold and Ione should take the chairs for we are their guests."

"Good for you, Mercury. You always say the right thing at the right time," said the Prince.

So Harold and Ione took the carved seats, and for fun, wished they *were* a king and queen, so when the Prince, Princess and Mercury turned toward them, they were speechless with surprise for a moment, for instead of two plainly-dressed American citizens, they saw two royal personages with

golden myrtle crowns on their heads, flowing robes of velvet, and ermine mantles upon their shoulders.

“Well, I declare!” exclaimed the Prince. “You two rival all the kings and queens I ever saw for beauty and kingly bearing. Where is your sceptre?”

Harold held up a golden sceptre in the shape of a wand.

All this time they had been floating along on this silent, silvery stream with its myriads and myriads of silver stars, so tiny and closely packed together that they looked like molten silver.

The first country at which they landed was called The Land of Peace and Quietness. Soft, gentle breezes blow across this land, laden with the perfume of thousands of flowers. No destroying electric storms ever rage here to disturb the peaceful, quiet, sunlit days. This is the land where the tired people of Earth come to rest and have peace; peace; everlasting peace, for those who choose to stop. Here are those who have had

to battle with discord at home and rough usage from the world at large and now all they ask is to be let alone and to be allowed to rest and wander through this blessed country, drinking in and enjoying the beauties and quiet of this blissful land.

Here the grass is always green, the hills wrapped in purple mist over which float snowy clouds lit by the sun, while all around are shady groves filled with many birds that trill and warble until it would seem as if their little throats must burst with joyousness. The silvery streams purr through the grassy meadows, or sing a joyous song as they tumble over the rocks down the mountain-side or try to rival the lullaby of the willow-boughs swaying to and fro above them.

The flowers never die here but as fast as one is plucked another blooms in its place. No harsh, loud sounds are ever heard, only harmony and melody float out on the air, resting and strengthening the nerves of the

tired Earth people who come here for peace and quiet.

Just over yonder mountains, further up the stream, is the land called The Land of Joy. Here everything is hustle and bustle, laughter and fun, and wherever one goes he meets picnic parties, some riding on hay-racks, others in pleasure-boats, while still others roll by in open carriages. Brass bands and dance music are heard in every direction, a decided contrast to the soft, plaintive music heard in the Land of Peace.

Here come the people who never had time to enjoy themselves while upon Earth, but who constantly longed to go to balls or picnics in the country, the invalid sister of the society girl or the poor seamstress who spent her life sewing on the garments of her more favored sisters. Every day with the rising of the Sun, merry bells announce to the inhabitants of this land that another day for jolly good fun has commenced. Every one on the streets is either whistling or sing-

ing, too happy to walk sedately or to keep silent.

“And is there no land of sorrow except Hades?” asked Ione.

“No,” replied Mercury, “there is enough sorrow on Earth to supply all the spheres were it allowed to pass the air-shed line.

“Along this stream you will find a land to suit every body’s taste, be it a good one. I think the land most thickly populated is the Land of Music. Such halls and temples you never beheld and all are filled with every kind of musical instrument that was ever invented, while all the choruses are heavenly and harmonious.

“Would you like to travel farther or would you prefer to visit some of the palaces of the gods and goddesses?” asked Mercury.

“I think we would like to explore that castle set on yonder high cliff, that looks like a castle on the Rhine, only a thousand times more beautiful,” said Ione.

“Oh! that one belongs to Jupiter and he

always gives feasts when he returns from his pilgrimage to Mount Olympus. Would you like to return to the Land of Quietness and Peace and wait until the day of the feast and then attend it? You have been traveling pretty fast and might like to rest, or I should say change, for no one who possesses a magic robe knows what fatigue is."

"I believe that would be very pleasant," said Ione and they all returned to the Land of Peace to wait for the feast. Here they threw themselves in hammocks under the shade of the trees, lazily listening the while to the songs of the canaries and nightingales overhead in the boughs. Were they hungry, all they had to do was to wish for something to eat and there spread beside them on a pretty, rustic table was a repast, dainty enough for an angel and substantial enough for a king.

They spent a day and night here and then a swift messenger brought news that Jupiter would not return to his castle for a week and that the feast had been postponed.

When our travelers heard this they were greatly disappointed but concluded not to await his return.

The next morning they again boarded the barge and commenced floating down the Milky Way, admiring the beautiful scenery and castles that bordered its shores until they came to its extreme northern limit, when, chancing to look off toward the North Star, they saw, shining with a splendor that almost blinded them, what seemed to be a colossal human eye surrounded by flashing streamers of light that radiated from it in all directions.

“What is it?” they all whispered in awe.

“You may well ask,” said their guide. “That is The All-Seeing Eye. It is placed there to remind us that God is in all, through all, and back of all these wonders we have seen, and also to mark the limit to which a human being may travel in this space. Thus far and no farther can you go until you have passed through the gate of death and become immortal. And here,” continued Mercury,

rather sadly, "your journey in the clouds must end. As a souvenir, you may keep the acorns in which your robes were encased, but the robes, I am sorry to say, you must leave with me. I will conduct you to your Elephant and see you safely started on your return journey to Earth, and then I must also return to my duties, for my life work is not yet finished."

When our friends at last commenced their return trip to Earth, Mercury waved his hands in adieu, and smiling and repeatedly waving, gradually passed out of sight.

The End.

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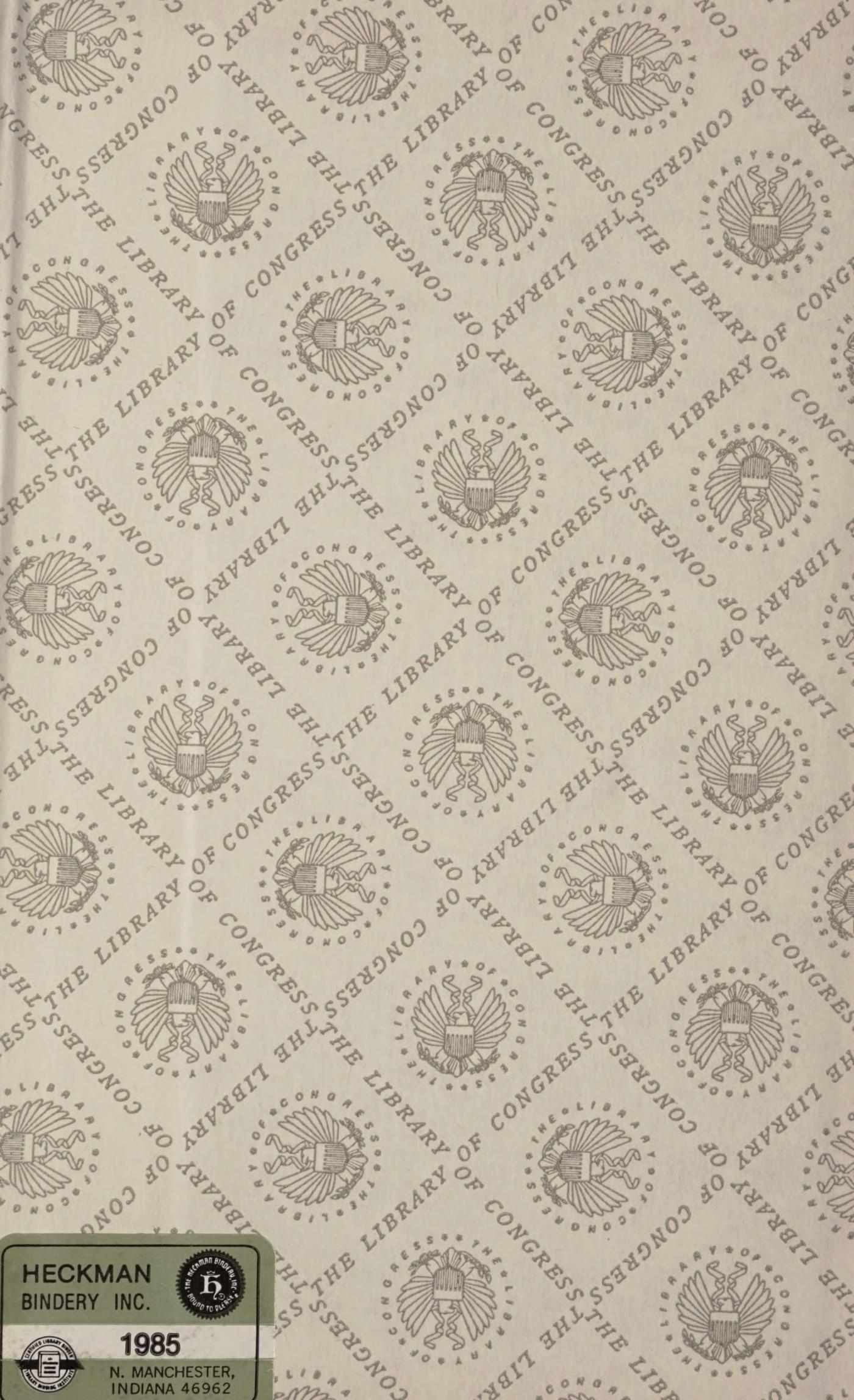
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