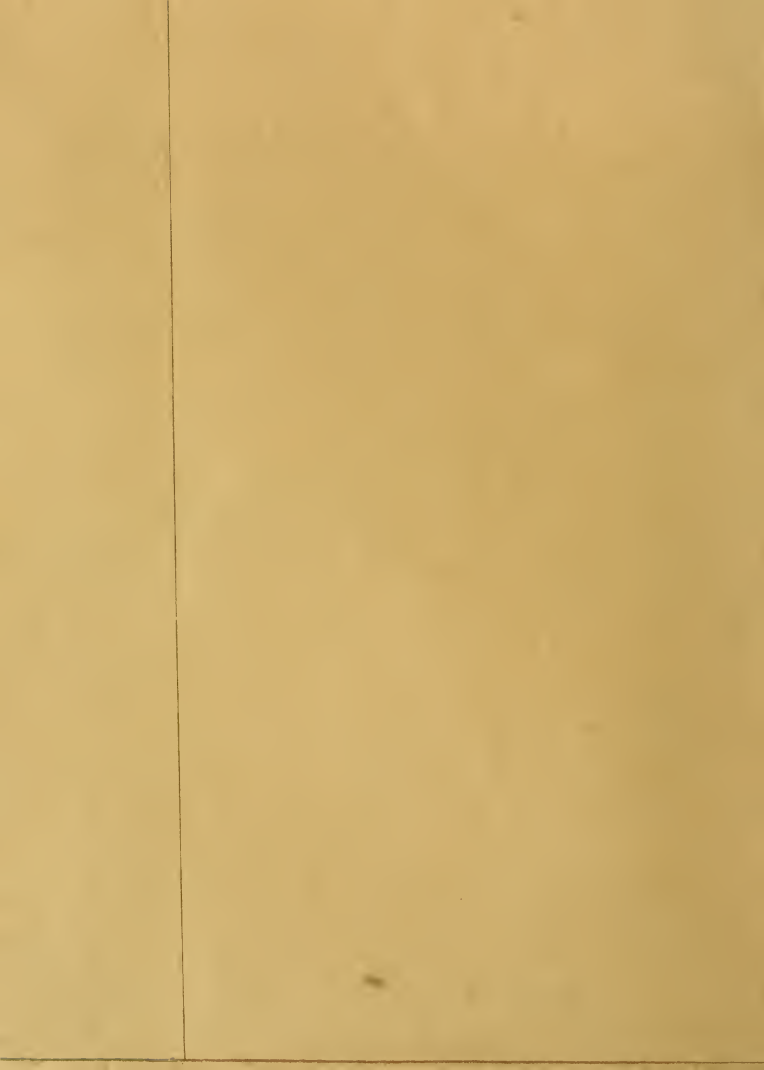


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ROMANZA

DIEUDONNE , FLORENCE
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PRE-HISTORIC

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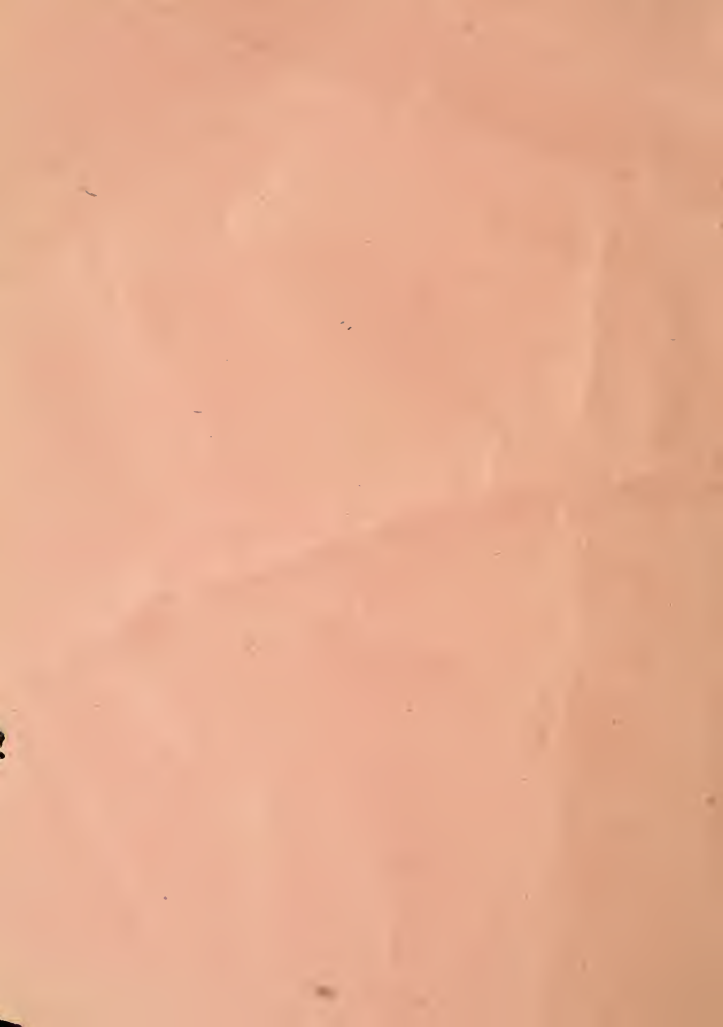
Lucinda ^{BY}

Florence (Carpenter) Dieudonne. Mrs. F. J.
Dieudonné.



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PREFACE.

Baldwin describes to us a wonderful "Extinct Race," whose cities were in ruins before Egypt was inhabited; whose wealth and splendor surpassed all modern conception; whose commerce reached the farthest parts of the earth.

These people built walled lakes in chains with locks, and one could by this means literally float up hill.

They worshiped serpents, with awful rites; and their temples were hewn from mountain sides. The mysterious cave of *Elephanta* is regarded by many as one of these temples.



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A PRE-HISTORIC ROMANZA,

BY

FLORENCE CARPENTER DIEUDONNE

As I read, on Fancy's pinions
Fled my soul into the Past,
Where in misty blue dominions
Of the Mind, unchained at last
From all strong, prosaic fetters,
Bound by nothing surely known,
I could weave Romance. My actors
Dead ten thousand years ago.

SCENE.

Mountain Isle the sea doth sever
By the foamy blue waves, ever
Whitening o'er its rocks, and never
Calmly sleeping on the shore.
Fair, a city on the mountain,
Columns, spires and domes abounding
O'er white walls, where dash the fountains,
Hastening to the sea once more.

Terraced lakes in walls of hewn stone
From the shore to where the black dome
Gloomed, mid clouds whose soft illusion
Veiled the sunny ripples o'er.

By the stair of lakes the greening
Of the forest, scarcely screening
With its giant boughs, the gleaming
Of the palace's high tower.

From the rock-built shelves drooped bowers
Flushed with crimson veil of flowers
Riches, stolen by orient hours.

From the ambient yellow air.
All the marts of commerce settled
On the edge of water fettered
By the dykes all bright and checkered
With the crafts at anchor there.

In the harbor, ships of glory
Whose adornments, like the story
Of a dream would seem before ye,
Should I write them for you here.

Bright from all the masts fly ribbons.
The great hulls are wedged and driven
Through with gilded bolts and riven
O'er with cumbrous brassy gear.

All adorned with hues and gilding,
On the deck a mammoth building
With a curtain-hid pavillion
Caught with ropes of beads and gold.
Sails of many quaint designings

Are upheld; with gay refinings,
 Stripes—and red and purple linings
 Blown about by breezes cold.

THE QUEEN.

Night, is nearing, o'er the water
 Vaprous sheen
 Leads to orange clouds, the altar
 Of Night's queen.

In commotion, merry darkling
 Billows dance
 To Night's portal, faintly marks of
 Glowings glauce.

'Neath the golden banded pillars
 Is a door.
 Fret with gems, strong hinged with silver
 Jewelled o'er.

Leads this to ambrosial hallways
 Burnished bright.
 Ceilings flash with precious riches
 In dim light.

On each side the waving graces
 Of the palms
 And soft fragrance of the spiccs
 All embalms.
 O'er the marble, blocked and shaded,
 Shawls are spread
 Wrought with many hues and braided
 Thick with red.

Silent, through the isles so dreamy,
Stately, dark,
Robed in trailing tissues sheeny,
Beauty walks.

On her oval cheek glows deeply
Angry red
Haughty is the queenly poisoning
Of her head.

Down among the amber glinting
Of her hair
Is entwined the sapphire tinting,
Fastened there

O'er her rounded arms. Arms olive
Of the East.
Netted diamonds cut and polished
Are atwist.

On her feet are bound the sandals
Odorous.
Captive is the Queen—by vandals
Infamous.

At each open door there waited
Watching slaves.
Passing these. There was no haven
But the waves.

THE PRIEST.

Into the hall where the dusk was crept,
Silent, as hushed were the buds that slept,
Hid in the vining's emerald net.

Entered the priest of the serpent god.
Watched he his captive, with no word.
Flashed his dark eye with triumph rude.
Wrapped was the priest in cloth of gold.
Veiled was his head, and there behold
A cone of gems, of worth untold.
Cruel his face. And on his beard
Was woven a veil of jeweled thread,
Which almost the raven curlings hid.

“Speak maid, so fair Is thy heart yet stone?
Come to the Temple. The Gods atone
Now, lest thy crimes bring judgment on!”

Like the vain dread of some haunted fawn
Answered the eyes, but the priest's stern frown
Gave her no hope should her prayer be known.

“Yes I will go, to those gods accursed.
If they have power, O, hear they must
What I shall ask. In their help I trust.”

Echoed the stone halls with a laugh
So fierce and chill with cruel wrath
It seemed to come from the demon's path.

Slaves wrapped the captive in raiment black
Veiled her face, and a priestly casque
Put on her head. Thus hid, she passed
Into the streets.

Into strange streets! The stone walls cut,
Gleamed in the chapel, all richly wrought

Over with marbles. Slow they walked.

Arches upheld by columns grand,
On either side in beauty stand,
While over their heads a crimson sheet
Shut out the dews, and the sun's dread heat.

Blazes of flames in colors green,
Lighted the way. Entranced the ear
Melodies sweet, of music's note
Perfumed the air. Across the moat,
Over a bridge of bronze, afloat,
Slow these walked.

Crowds filled the road. The scene was gay.
Chariots of brass rolled on the way,
Draped with soft curtains decked in hues,
Cars set with silver, crimson and blue,
Horses whose trappings all were glass,
Glistened in rainbow tints as they passed.
Now at their side there stood to wait
The carriage to bear this honored freight.
The priest in his robes (and the captive too)
To the serpent's altar, the gods to woo.
Clad were the steeds, in gold all dressed;
Emeralds gleamed on their helmet crest.
Over each hoof was a jewelled band
Their manes were braided in gem-set strands
Over each head hung a bright red bell,
And loops of gold from their white ears fell.
The sides of the chariot white with pearls,
The cloth over hanging as foam unfurls.

Was opal sheen with gilded fringe
Where green and red in the web were tinged.
Golden the floor and linings were
Under a perfumed snowy fur.
Brought from the North, mysterious. far.
Sleeping in snow 'neath the Polar Star.

Vases of Lapsus Lazuli
Rose from the pearly sides.
Gorgeous blossoms beautifully
Drooped there in rosy pride.

A fount of crystalline design
 Rose in the center tall
And richest perfume, mellifluous showers
 Sprinkled about on all.

Over the raised and broad highway
 Out to the temple cave
The Queen disguised and silent rode
 Hopeless of help to save.

Into that vast and dark retreat
 Cut in the solid rock
By hewn out, devious, hidden ways
 They reached the altar's block.

Over the carved and awful forms
 Holding the temple roof,
Just then, the moon in whitest glow
 Wrought mystic and misty woof
Veiling in shadows deep and dread,
 People, and forest and wall.

Lighting but faint, in freakish glow,
 Changing to phantoms all.
Seated on steps of rock, so still,
 Silent in gown and hood
Waited the witches. Forty there
 Guarding the altar's food.
Horrid their faces; beauty lost
 In forming hideous masks (*)
Varied as taste or freak, or hate
 Had seasoned the cruel task.
Long white strands of untied hair
 Fell o'er their blood red gowns.
Wrinkled and bare their veinous arms
 Gleamed like some skinless bones.
Then from the stone pedestals rose
 Just at the statues' foot
Flames of the bluest fire, and Night
 Fled from the beam's pursuit.
About the altar, raised above
 The many stone cut stairs,
Stood with their emblems all the priests,
 Mumbling incanting prayers.
Over their heads, in gorgeous throne
 Held from the roof above,
Coiled was a giant golden snake.
 God of the heathen's love.

* (NOTE—These were unfortunate and friendless beings who were purposely deformed and distorted in feature for use as altar slaves.)

'Neath him thick clouds of incense rose
 Dimming his dazzling might
That fatal not to human eyes,
 Might be the blazing sight
Of Deity. Nor fall awrithe
 And shrink and faint and die.
For such the foretold fate of those
 Who looked with unveiled eye.

Yellow and blue, and gray and white
 All on the altar burn
And every decked official priest
 To shimmering god did turn.

All of the priests wore golden robes,
 Noble and high their mein
Dreadful the contrast as they towered
 Above the witches clan.

Then while the slumbrous incense rose
 Reached forth the statues' hands,
Stretched o'er the heads of the multitudes
 Holding huge fiery brands.

Wild rose the cry of terror then,
 But changed to a whispered prayer
For there at the altar stood that one
 Whose look could calm their fear.

Over his shining robe was donned
 A mantle of dazzling gems.
A veil of jewels fell about
 From blazing diadem.

Like fabled god he stood, unreal,
 As thing from heaven borne
 And round him, from some hidden lamp,
 A wended light was thrown.
 In silent hush the cries had gone,
 And to a maze of words
 The people listened. When amazed,
 They looked on "Gift of Gods"

THE GIFT.

Down from the roof in 'wilderling cloud
 Sank an ethereal throne
 (Woven of glass and silver hung)
 Hidden neath blossoms blown,
 Quivering, shaken by every breath,
 (Formed of fine crystal threads)
 Crusted again with jewels fair,
 Dotted with serpent's heads,
 Rising in irridiscent sheen
 Out of the depths of flowers.
 Slowly the blossoms fell aside.
 See! Pillowed on rose-hued gauze
 With eyes aflame and face like wax,
 A statute rare! like stone,
 Reclining moveless, strange and dead
 The captive queen was shown.
 Bursting from every side sprang fires
 Off from the heads of gods
 Fluttered white doves: Wild trills of joy
 Freighted the air, as birds

Singing unseen. While on the floor
Gathering about the throne
Numberless hideous serpents writhed
Over the lighted stone.

“Welcome to thee, whom gods have sent
Down from the rolling moon
Answered to offered gifts,” said priests—
“*From gods.*” the people moan.

“Haste thee, my treasure, out of sight,
Sacred as serpents are
Shut from the blight of Earth’s cold night,
Lest harm should come to her.”

With flash and jar the walls seemed rent,
A brightness, like the sun
Dazzled their eyes: Revealed one glimpse
Of floating, starry throne.

In this red glare the car was lost.
Darkness! Then blind, in fear,
The gazers groped, till Night, with shade
Made them again see clear,

In light of moon. Nor dreamed that
Drugs and chains had stilled
The beauteous statute, nor that springs
And slaves (made dumb) had filled

The air with flames. That song of birds
Had but been cunning reeds!
That of all lost in woe, or crushed
With soul-distracting needs

For human help or friends, or cheer
 Of words from one kind heart
 Was she, in shuddering horror hid
 Within dark caves apart.

THE QUEEN'S PRAYER.

“O, for one free and wandering breath
 Of wind from ocean's breast,
 To kiss the aching maze away
 From pained brain. To rest,
 One moment! All *alone* to flee
 To garden's cool and still.
 Freed from that mystic man,
 Away from his chilling smile.”

“O, THAT THE SUN.”

Stern as the Fates
 His cruel will,
 Bound her his prey.

Breathless with rage,
 One brought to bay,
 Lost to despair,

Was she that day:
 O, that the sun,
 Deadly and fast,
 Would send to the earth
 His fire to blast. (*)
 That those firm rocks

(NOTE—Superstition taught them that the lightning was a shattered beam of the sun.)

Shatter and break
 Opening a door
 For her soul's sake.

But no. The chariot
 Burnished and bright,
 Back to the palace
 Carried its freight.

THE QUEEN'S PRISON.

Under the blossoms, poisoned to her,
 Into a prison, blazoned for her
 With walls of bright metals, deep set in jet,
 Sandal-wood pavement, amber inset
 Shining mosaic and statues of glass.
 'Neath pearls, shells and roses
 Chains and locks clashed.
 Viols and gold harps, jewelled and decked
 With wealth of a kingdom on them inflecked.
 Curtains of yellow, orange and red,
 Cushions of broidery for her crazed head.
 Caskets and tripods, urns filled with spices,
 Baskets with rare fruit, fountains and ices.

But,

Abject and mute crouched at those doors,
 (Doors so accursed,) knelt the scourged slave
 Watching like dogs and like dogs in dread
 Lest she escape. Lest she be saved.

THE BIRD.

For their eyes,

ROMANZA.

Eager gazing,
Cared she not,

In her brain,
Madly crazing,
Pride was not.

Nor for foe,
Nor for captor
Recked she now.

To the ground,
In her horror
Doth she bow.

Only mirth
Met her sorrow
And she heard

Midst the leaves,
The low whistle
Of a *bird*,

Bringing back—
As a vision,
Other time,

When in joy
She had dwelt
In other clime.

Conquered now—
Made a subject,
Made a slave!

All the wealth
Of her empire
Could not save.

Still if Death
Would but answer
To her call

Gladly would she
To his keeping
Yield her soul.

“Wretched bird!
Cease thy whisper—
O, my heart—

Ne'er recall,
It is lost us,
Breaking heart.”

“Cruel bird!
O, where are you,
That you sing?

Do you tell me
I am stolen,
Captive thing!”

At the foot
Of a column
Was a slave.

And she stopped
At the thrilling
Look he gave.

ROMANZA.

For his eye,
 Black and piercing,
 Watched her so.

That she paused—
 Thinking, vaguely,
 Why 'twas so

When she saw—
 In the moving
 Of his lips.

Was the song
 Of that birdling
 That had lisped.

Then a thought
 Flashed like Heaven
 To her heart.

Was it slave?
 Was it subject?
 Was it—What!

Crouching there,
 Black and horrid
 In that guise.

Singing low,
 That sweet love-note
 Whose replies—

O, so oft,
 She had echoed
 Back to one

In the shadows
Of that garden
Of her home.

Not again
Sang the birdling.
He was done.

And the stars
Crept towards morning,
One by one.

Closed the eyes,
(Strangely heavy,)
Watching. Hush!

Something moves
Like a shadow
In the dusk.

Slow and still,
On the amber
Colored floor

It moved on
Till it stood
Within the door.

Then she heard
One low whisper
Of her name.

And the arms,
Strong to save her
Clasped again

ROMANZA.

Their lost prize—
 And they hastened
 Out of sight—
While there hung
 Friendly darkness
 Of the night.
O, the sea,
 Gaily tossing
 Chanted glad.
And the night
 Wrapped a storm cloud
 O'er their head.
Foam and spray
 In white wreathings
 Marked her dress.
But the storm
 Brought no terror;
 She was blest.
When the shore
 Once was landed,
 What mad words
Of her love,
 And her joy,
 Zephyrs heard.
And with smiles,
 And with tears
 All together,

She retold
All her woes
And her capture.

AT HOME.

Where the soft hues of summer skies
Climb to the snow of peaks,
Rising 'gainst ethereal crystalline
Which of the cold just speaks;
Where golden streams, hemmed in with vines
Matting from limb to limb,
Kiss off rich flowers and bear them on
To distance golden dim
Where but to breathe and see is such
Of rapture, none would care
To toil or think. But only look
On mystic beauty there,
While yet the earth, with dews still blest,
Grew fragrant in earliest dawn.
Out from the numerous palaces
Marshalled a gorgeous throng,
Where lay the chain of inlocked lakes
From summit down to sea.
The cortege paused and entered boats,
Which soon moved swift and free,
In the cool breeze, with silver sails
And many floating flags
The crowded fleet climbed up the height
And gleamed among the crags,
Where forms of dark and threatening rock

Loomed over the glassy waves.
From higher cliffs the chill of snow
Crawled down. A brightening ray
Over the heights, a pinken glow
Flushed. And in purple deep
The shadows fled. The browns grew red,
The mounts awoke from sleep,
'Neath the cold moon, and yellow fell
Like airy cloth of gold.
The sky puts off its chilling blue,
Morn's radiant gates t' unfold.
The shades swept into the vale,
The blaze of orange suns
Flashed on the silver sail,
And the marriage rite begun.
The robed priest in vestment gay
Of yellow and blue and white,
Lighted the golden altar's urn
With incense, and colored light.
Carpets were spread of crimson flowers
Braided with cunning care.
Silent were all. Then knelt the bride.
In wondrous beauty there.
A robe was hers of woven pearls,
And over her head, where coiled
Her hair, a shining coronet,
In mesh of gold was foiled,
About the taper, tawny arms,
Were twisted jewelled snakes.

Hung from the tinted, dainty ear
Diamonds of wondrous weight.
Long, dark lashes veiled such eyes,
As dark, and soft, and wild,
Captive make souls. And lips were hers,
As if an angel smiled.
From lake to lake, as time passed on
In certain measured space,
The rites continued. Gorgeous swept
The fleet to the last place,
Just as the sun fell in the waves,
Then the white moonlight fell
Pale and soft on the mystic fleet,
Gilding the silver sail.
Out from a thousand silver bells
Chimed many a merry peal,
And now a raft, (invisible,)
The meteor's flare reveals
Phantoms afloat, each one as fate
Or pleasure led their way,
Were sailing on the dark blue waves,
Athwart with moonbeams gay.
Out from the lake rose a fairy frame,
A tower, ethereal, white
Ablaze were all the domes and spires,
Illuming purple night
Leaving the moonlight almost dull.
After it burned away,
The towers fell down to ashes,
Closing the bridal day.

Thus at home, in their kingdom
Fair and free —
Leave the Queen—and the King
Of early day.
When we find, in the markings
On some stones,
Strange told tales, read and tell me
Of these ones.



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