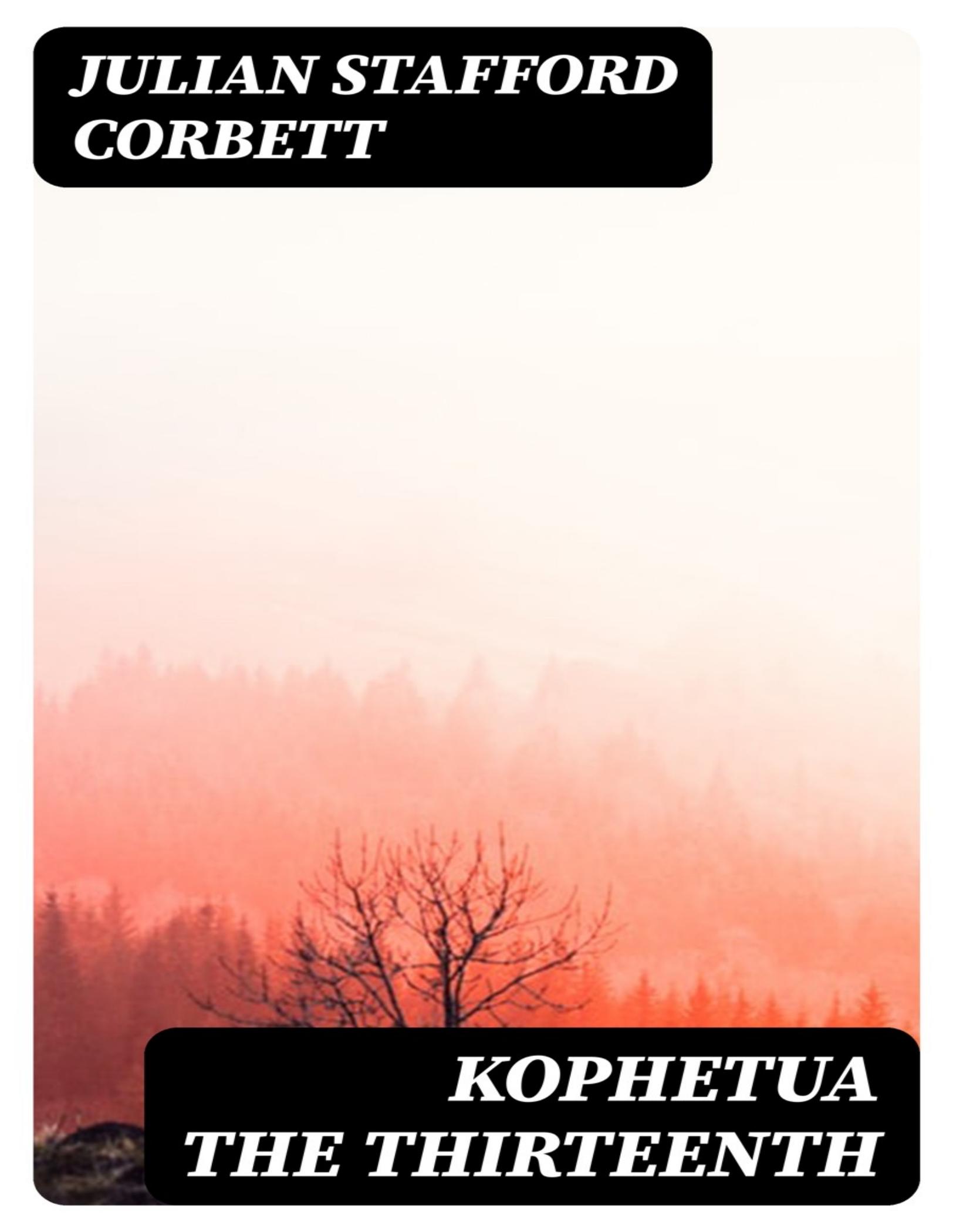


***JULIAN STAFFORD
CORBETT***

A misty, orange-hued forest landscape. The background is a dense forest of evergreen trees, partially obscured by a thick mist or fog. In the foreground, a bare, leafless tree stands prominently. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, reddish-orange tones, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on black rounded rectangles at the top and bottom of the image.

***KOPHETUA
THE THIRTEENTH***

Julian Stafford Corbett

Kophetua the Thirteenth

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CHAPTER I. ONEIRIA.

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"I read that once in Affrica
A princely wight did raine,
Who had to name Kophetua,
As poets they did faine."

The outburst of political speculation which followed the Renaissance is well known to us by its remarkable literature. True it is that the greater part of it is long since dead and sleeps in peace, save where every now and then its ghosts are scared by a literary historian. But this obscurity only adds to its interest, and increases at once the charm, the safety, and the credit we may enjoy in discussing it. For the ordinary Englishman perhaps the only work of the class which is still really alive is the delightful political romance of Sir Thomas More. Yet to those who love the dustier shelves of libraries long ranks of its comrades will be not unfamiliar, standing guard as it were over the memory of an intellectual movement as vigorous and creative as any the world has seen.

It is to the more daring and fantastic of these works that this chapter in the history of philosophy owes its charm and freshness. So entrancing indeed are they that those double traitors to humanity, who not only write books, but write books about books, have led us to look upon these ponderous folios as the only mark the movement has left on history, and we are apt to forget that it also had its practical

side. Yet that side not only had an existence, but it was even more romantic and fanciful than the other.

For many of the pregnant seeds from the tree of political knowledge, which the strong breath of the Renaissance was wafting over Europe, fell on good ground, where pedantry did not spring up and choke them. There were many cultivated earnest gentlemen of that time in whose chivalrous hearts they alighted, and whose imagination was so stirred with the new ideas, that they actually attempted to carry them into practice.

Coming as the movement did contemporaneously with the dayspring of colonial enterprise, it naturally suggested itself to these high-souled scholars to leave the corruption and oppression of the old countries which it was hopeless to reform, and sailing away with a little community of kindred souls in whom the new spirit breathed, to found in some distant land a colony, where a polity established in pure reason should grow to be a model to the world.

Many of these attempts were complete failures at once, nearly all were more or less short-lived, and by the end of the last century there was not one so prosperous as the African colony of Oneiria.

Lying as it did in that remote and little-known corner of the world which is watered by the Drâa and its tributaries, and is intersected by the spurs of the Anti-Atlas, it had been able to enjoy after its first struggle for existence the repose of a well-earned obscurity. There was no one who envied it anything, and consequently it had no enemy, nor even an importunate friend to seek its alliance and lead it into scrapes. The half savage Shelluhs, who sparsely occupied the country, were soon content to remain as tributaries under their own chiefs, in the more inaccessible parts of the

mountains, and to leave the teeming valleys and table-lands to the newcomers.

Through the Canary Islands the colony kept up a small but regular trade with Western Europe. The exports were of a very mixed nature, but chiefly consisted of dates. As the country was practically self-supporting, the imports were comparatively simple. They were confined to books, works of art, and clothes of the latest mode.

For it was the pride of Oneiria, as with most other colonies of the time, that, notwithstanding its remote position, it floated on the surface of European opinion; and so freely did it indulge in this delicious conviction, that it is to be feared it grew but too often to an actual intemperance, and at the time of which I speak there is no doubt that Oneiria sometimes caricatured the fantasies of a fantastic age.

Internally Oneiria was almost as unruffled as in its foreign relations. The elaborate constitution of the original founder worked so smoothly and effectively that crime and even discontent seemed almost unknown. The most ingenious and conscientious politicians had long ago abandoned the hopeless struggle to extract a difference of opinion out of questions of the interior. This dearth of disagreement led to a serious famine in the political world, that had it not been for one recurrent topic, of which I shall have to speak more fully hereafter, politics must have completely perished of starvation.

It is not clear who the founder of the fortunate colony was. From an exaggerated niceness of honour, so characteristic of the age we call Elizabethan, he seems to have taken most ingenious precautions that his very name should be forgotten, lest it might appear that his experiment was a device to feed his personal vanity rather than the disinterested sacrifice it really was.

That he was an Englishman, who had considerably modified his national characteristics by extensive and sagacious travel, is almost certain. His followers were believed to have been recruited from amongst the hardy seafaring population of the coasts of Bohemia, though more recent conjecture points to the fact that London was the real parent of the colony, and it is suggested that by "Bohemia" the "Alsatia" of Whitefriars is really intended. However, as the whole of the evidence on the subject is contained in the following pages, it will be an advantage to allow the reader to judge for himself upon the whole case, and so avoid a tedious and possibly unfruitful discussion.

The fact in the early history of the colony most interesting for us is fortunately beyond dispute. Oneiria was, without a shadow of doubt, founded on the ruins of the kingdom of that Kophetua whose romantic love-story, probably a good deal perverted, is so familiar to us from the beautiful ballads of the "King and the Beggar-Maid." It was this which must have suggested to the founder his first steps towards oblivion when he ascended his new throne under the style of Kophetua II.

Were this fact not established from other sources, beyond all question there is ample evidence in the present story to support it. The ancient kingdom must have been dying, and not dead, at the time. We shall meet with constant traces of an older, ruder, and more Oriental civilisation underlying the scientific superstructure of the English knight.

The results were extremely curious, but perhaps the most interesting phenomenon to which this peculiar fact gave rise, was the extraordinary organisation and privileges of the beggar class, though it is possible that some of their wilder laws and customs were a direct importation from "Whitefriars."

It is a pity that no more is known on these points, but further inquiry is almost hopeless. The colony was entirely destroyed soon after the happy reign of Kophetua XIII. and his beloved Queen came peacefully to an end. There was but a day between their deaths, and so prostrated were the people by the sudden loss of both their idolised sovereigns, that they seem to have been able to offer no adequate resistance to a *Jehad* which, for some unknown cause, was preached against them amongst the neighbouring Mussulman tribes. It is probable that they had made some attempts to intervene for the protection of the last of the Berber Christians. A few of these highly interesting survivals are believed to have been still in existence at the end of the last century, in the remoter parts of the Atlas, and some may possibly have continued even later.

All, however, which we know for certain is that in one of those strange restless upheavals, so characteristic of the north of Africa, the Mussulman Berbers rose and flowed like a flood over what was once Oneiria. As suddenly as the colony had appeared, it disappeared from history; the country is now impenetrable to Europeans, and has not been visited since the destruction of the colony. Rohlfs, indeed, tells us that somewhere in the basin of the Drâa he saw amongst the distant hills what looked like the nave and tower of a church, and he further noticed that in this region the people had a much higher style of architecture, and otherwise seemed distinctly more civilised, than the tribes he was already familiar with. But no other traces of the colony have been met with, and its destruction must have been as complete as it was sudden.

Beyond what has already been related, all that is known or likely to be known of Oneiria is contained in the following pages, which deal with a romantic episode in the life of King Kophetua XIII. We must congratulate ourselves that even so

much was preserved by the taste of a gentleman who visited the colony at the beginning of this century, and brought back with him the notes from which the present romance is taken. For romance it certainly is, and there seems no reason why we should deprive it of that title simply because it is also a record of historical occurrences.

CHAPTER II. HIS MAJESTY.

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"From nature's lawes he did decline,
For sure he was not of my mind:
He cared not for women-kinde,
But did them all disdaine."

Kophetua was undoubtedly the handsomest man in his kingdom. The slightest suspicion of Moorish blood, incurred from a Spanish ancestress, had only added, as it were, a tropical richness to the beauty which he had inherited from the founder, and that was no small inheritance. It was part of the constitution that every king of Oneiria should be known by the name of Kophetua, but a grateful and imaginative people had been dissatisfied with the bald arithmetical distinctions which this law entailed. In the old fashion they had begun to speak of their sovereigns by surnames, till an unforeseen difficulty arose. After the death of the founder, his splendid sons succeeded him one after another with an alarming rapidity, due to the reckless exposure of their persons to the early Berber enemies of the State. Every brother was handsomer than the last, and obviously demanded a surname expressive of personal beauty. It was a characteristic so dazzling that the popular mind could not fix itself on any other of the family qualities, brilliant as they were. To a humorous people the monotony soon became ridiculous, and every one was relieved when, before two generations had passed away, it was found that every word in the Oneirian vocabulary in any way synonymous with "handsome" was already exhausted, and

by tacit agreement the country fell back restfully upon the limitless resources of the ordinal numbers.

So our Kophetua was simply known as "Thirteenth." Yet it made a pretty name when you got used to it. It is a soft-sounding one as it stands, and was still prettier in the popular dialect. As the trade of the country was almost entirely with the Canaries, the common people counted in Spanish, and so by a diminutive of affection their King was known to them as "Trecenito."

Yet of all the line of Kophetuas he most deserved a more distinctive surname. Any one must have so agreed who could have seen him as he sat to-day in his library with a copy of Rousseau's *Origin of Inequality* dropped listlessly on his knees. It was an ideal book-room, in the style of the early French Renaissance. The whole palace indeed was designed in the same manner. It was the most eclectic style the founder could light upon, and everything in Oneiria was eclectic.

Ten panels opposite the ten windows were occupied by fine portraits of the ten successors of the founder. Trecenito's own had to hang on a screen. At either end of the long chamber was a magnificent fireplace reaching to the panelled ceiling. Not that a fireplace was ever necessary in the balmy air of Oneiria, but still, where the capital was situated, amongst the hills facing the Atlantic, it enjoyed a temperate climate, and with considerable discomfort fires could be endured on the coldest days. This discomfort every one was glad to undergo for the sake of the European atmosphere generated by the blazing logs. It was hot but refined, and that was everything to a well-bred Oneirian.

In a smaller panel above one of these sacred hearths was a picture of the first King Kophetua placing with love-lorn gesture the wondering beggar-maid upon his jewelled

throne. It was a beautiful work, obviously by a dreamy and backward pupil of Perugino. By his childish colour, naïve composition, and vague expression of sentiment, the painter had unconsciously given a charm to the subject which the greatest of his contemporaries could never have achieved.

You turned from it with a sympathetic smile to look in vain down the long vista of books for the founder's portrait over the other hearth. Picture there was none. Even his features were forgotten, but where the painting should have been hung a splendid suit of armour of the later sixteenth century fashion. Morion, corselet, tassets, all were richly chased. Below hung a great pair of Cordovan boots armed with heavy gilded spurs. One gauntlet seemed to grasp a five-foot rapier with a great cup-guard and hilt-points of extravagant length, while in the other was placed a shell-dagger of the same design.

It was the very suit in which the heroic founder had stepped from his pinnacle upon the burning sand, and claimed that land for his company "by right divine of inheritance from Adam," and somehow that trophy of arms always gave to Trecenito a vivid sense of the old knight's presence in the room, which no dead portrait could have conveyed. Indeed, it was not hard to fancy a grim face beneath the shadow of the peaked morion, as the gloom of evening fell and the firelight flickered. It was on this the king was gazing with his Rousseau on his knees. Surfeited with philosophy, he fell to musing on his ancestor till he saw beneath the morion the stern, burnt features, as he pictured them, with grey pointed beard and bristling moustache. He could not help contrasting the fancy with his own smooth, shaven face, and the old adventurous life with his own colourless existence.

"Turbo!" he cried, as, stung with the unhappy contrast, he started up and half unconsciously tore off a black patch

which, after the custom of the time, adorned his cheek —"Turbo! I am a miserable man."

"So your majesty is continually hinting. May I die if I know why!"

With an air of well-feigned interest in his monarch's state of mind, the speaker rose from an elegant buhl writing-table, which would have been covered with official papers had there been any business for the King to transact with his Chancellor; but as usual there was none, and the table bore nothing weightier than a half-finished copy of Latin verses, perhaps quite heavy enough for its slender proportions, for the Chancellor was a poet by conviction rather than birth.

Indeed poetry could hardly have dwelt in a form so revolting. His face was distorted by two livid scars. One stretched across the lower part of his nose up to his right eye, which in healing it had drawn down so that it looked like a bloodhound's. The other ran across his mouth in such a way that it exposed his teeth on one side and gave to his face a snarling expression that was acutely unprepossessing. His shoulders, too, seemed in some way ill-matched, and he joined Kophetua at the founder's hearth with an ungainly limp which completed the picture of deformity he presented.

"No! may I die if I know why," repeated Turbo.

"Ah, you will not understand," said the King. "How can I be happy, how can I live according to nature, leading the life I do, without an annoyance, literally without an annoyance? How can I ever rival the knight," he went on, "with nothing to overcome, with nothing to stand in my way? I tell you I am a miserable man."

"If your majesty will have it so," answered Turbo, "I must of course agree."

"And why should you not in any case?" asked Kophetua a little testily. "Look at me. Here before you is practically the only sovereign in the civilised world who at this moment has not a revolution more or less developed in his dominions, while my disgracefully contented subjects will not—why, they will not even read the Jacobin paper we have been at the pains surreptitiously to start for them."

"No," said the Chancellor gravely, "I believe that only six copies were sold this week. There were two copies for you and me, one for the Queen-mother, and one for General Dolabella, who I am sure only lights his pipe with it. There was one went to the beggars for decorative purposes, it is said; and the sixth—let me see," he continued as he limped to his desk and took out a small memorandum on large official paper. "The sixth—ah! yes, that was a presentation copy to the Museum which I paid for myself."

"It is heart-breaking, absolutely heart-breaking," cried the King. "To what end have I spent all these years in the study of politics? To what end have you lavished your inestimable instruction on me, and sacrificed what should have been the most brilliant career in Europe in order to educate me for a throne? Is there a single writer on statecraft, from Plato to More, from Machiavelli to Voltaire, that I have not mastered from end to end, to say nothing of the knight's manuscript?"

"Indeed, sire," answered the Chancellor, "you have made yourself a most consummate statesman."

"No, Turbo," said the King, "be just. It is you that have made me so. Without you these books would have said not a word to me for all their wisdom. But to what end is it all, I say? Here I stand disgraced before the knight's armour, not because I will not or cannot do anything, but because there is nothing to do. I tell you, Turbo, I shrink with shame when I see his grave face look out at me from under the morion,

and yet,"—he went on, pacing the room, with a noble look on his handsome face—"he has no right to scorn me. I know that were there wrongs to right, I have will and power to right them, or at least the courage to die fighting for the same end to which his heroic life was sacrificed."

"Well, be comforted," said Turbo; "to-morrow you will have an annoyance. For to-morrow, I would remind you, comes your mother's last choice for you; at least, I imagine that is the intention. It will be very serious this time. Remember you have entered your thirtieth year, and if at the end of it you are not married——"

"By the constitution," broke in the King, "I shall cease to reign. I know it, and then they will elect you. I cannot help it. I shall dislike and despise this woman, as I do every other. Thank God, I have learnt your lesson well. How I should have been deceived had it not been for the wise misogyny which you, my dear instructor, were at such pains to teach me!"

As he spoke he stretched out his hand as though to lay it affectionately on his old governor's shoulder, when there was a sudden clash of steel overhead. With a start he looked up in time to catch the founder's long rapier as it fell, and in a moment he was standing with its great hilt in his outstretched hand and its point straight at the heart of Turbo, who started back in alarm.

Kophetua turned deadly pale, hardly daring to think what this ghostly warning might mean. As he felt the dusty hilt between his fingers it was as though the dead, war-worn hand of his ancestor were stretched up out of the grave to grasp his own: he stood almost expecting to hear a hollow voice from under the morion, and Turbo watched him with restless eyes.

Even as he held it the King knew the heavy weapon was tiring his arm. It was the last touch to his misery, and he dropped the point with a little nervous laugh.

"One would think," he said, in a voice that sounded very strange in the dead silence which followed the clash of steel—"One would think the old knight discerned in you an enemy instead of my best and only friend."

The Chancellor laughed loud and hoarsely at the King's humour, but did not touch the weapon which his monarch laid down sorrowfully.

"The wire must have rusted away till it broke," said he.

"Exactly," said the King. "Yet it is a most remarkable occurrence." A short but awkward silence followed, till fortunately the chamberlain entered the room to inquire if the King desired to prepare for supper. So the colloquy of the two friends ended, and Turbo was left alone, gazing absently out of the window at the beggars before the palace gate, as one by one they rose from their crouching postures, stretched their cramped limbs, and wandered slowly away to their dens with the air of men conscientiously satisfied with a long day's work.

CHAPTER III. THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

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"The Lords they tooke it grievously,
The Commons cryed pitiously."

It has already been mentioned that there was one recurrent subject of discussion which saved Oneirian politics from entire extinction. This was the great marriage question.

The wise founder, anxious no doubt to perpetuate his race to the ends for which he had lived, and fully aware of the jeopardy to which his descendants would be exposed in the midst of savage Berber tribes, had made it an intrinsic part of the constitution that every king of Oneiria, before he reached the age of thirty, must marry the woman chosen for him by his people.

Formerly the Parliament had taken the greatest interest in its legislative work. Each proposal was debated at length, and with considerable intelligence. In process of time, however, all this changed. The founder had elaborated a system of taxation, something on the lines of that afterwards described by Harrington in his *Oceana*, whereby it was made by a natural development self-extinguishing. An unhappy result of the contrivance was perhaps unforeseen by the founder, but it soon appeared that as the central fund increased and the annual taxes dwindled, it was more and more difficult to get members to attend the sessions.

Before the colony was a hundred years old taxes were declared unnecessary, and at an end for ever. By an

inherent elasticity the central fund grew with the growth of the people, and even began to afford a surplus to be distributed amongst the beggars. There was no need any longer to vote money. No reform of the perfected laws was possible. Parliament became an agreeable club, to which the members when once elected belonged by tacit consent for life. Sessions were, however, still held, where the more imaginative deputies debated the sublime and eternal principles of government, and pointed out to each other, with never fading satisfaction, how divinely the Oneirian statute-book embodied that quintessential spirit of justice which their heated rhapsodies had distilled.

As for their business, it was almost entirely formal, consisting chiefly in the periodical endorsement of the King's choice from among their own number of the great state officers. It will then be easily understood how jealously they valued their last live prerogative of choosing the King's bride. As a matter of fact, of course, she was always selected by the high officers of state, and the Parliament ratified the choice; but this ratification could not be said to be a mere form, for as late as the beginning of the century the House had absolutely refused to endorse the ministers' choice, because the lady presented to them was not sufficiently beautiful.

Since then greater care had been exercised in the preliminary selection, and the attendant ceremonial considerably elaborated. The bride-elect was now presented to the full House, dressed with every care and splendour which was in any way calculated to enhance her attractions, and after question put and carried, the decision of the House was sealed by the Speaker imprinting a kiss upon the lips of the chosen beauty as she knelt before the chair. Thereupon he raised her up, and pronounced her election in

this poetic form, "Reign, beautiful princess, crowned with a people's kiss."

Since the introduction of the new coronation ceremony the office of Speaker had become extremely popular. He was elected annually by virtue of the original constitution and party feeling on the marriage question, began once more to run very high, as the election was always decided on strictly party lines in relation to this single topic.

It will be easy, then, to picture the condition of political circles at the time of which we are now speaking. For some eight years the King had been seen to reject beauty after beauty without reason given, to the acute disappointment of successive Speakers. But now the period had arrived when he must absolutely marry within the year and the excitement over the approaching election to the chair had reached an almost alarming intensity.

The body politic was divided into two main parties, the *Kallists*, who professed that beauty should be the sole ground on which the queen should be chosen, and the *Agathists*, who would have the selection determined by moral worth alone. Such at least was said to be the distinction when intelligent foreigners asked for information. Possibly it was actually so once, but now the principles of the two parties so overlapped that the only real question between them was who should elect the Speaker.

It should perhaps be mentioned that there was a third party styling themselves the *Kallikagathists*. They were a well-meaning offshoot of the Agathists, who, fondly believing that two distinct policies still existed, thought to produce unity by adopting both. So far it had been a failure, and though the party had the names of many superior persons upon it, it was little regarded.

The Court was divided into corresponding groups, and what further complicated political relations was that the heads of the separate palace circles were regarded as the leaders of the Parliamentary parties, although of course their aims were widely different. In the House the occupation of the chair filled the whole political horizon. In the palace that was a matter of complete indifference, and the whole struggle was to see whose introduction would eventually be made acceptable to the King. Thus between the leaders and their followers there existed no more real connection than there did between the professed opinions of the respective parties and their actual aims, and it may be doubted whether any country in Europe had been so entirely successful in elaborating a party system by which it was impossible for any question to be decided on its merits.

The system can only be described as chaotic. Every trace of the original landmarks had disappeared, and yet a good Kallist would rather be called anything than an Agathist, unless perhaps it were a Kallikagathist. An Agathist regarded a Kallist as a frivolous person of low moral tone, while, in the eyes of a Kallist, an Agathist was a detestable outcome of the Puritan taint in the old settlers, a shallow pretender to an impossible standard of virtue. A Kallist who could invent a new way of saying an Agathist was a prig became a marked personality in the House, while a young Agathist who succeeded in inventing a fresh figure to express his contempt for a cynic might at once pose as a coming man.

Cynicism was certainly the prevailing tone of the Kallist salons. There you might hear of a young girl who had hurried for an hour's relaxation from the sickbed of a brother, or a genial old gentleman who had spent his day in extricating a poor relation from a debtor's prison, giving it as their perfected conviction that no excellence could be

credited with existence which you could not see. On the other hand, the atmosphere of Agathist gatherings was decidedly one of moral platitude, where elaborately dressed men and daintily rouged women prattled in polished phrase of the nothingness of exteriors, and the all-sufficiency of truth and goodness. It is certainly remarkable that a similar condition of society has appeared nowhere else, and it is these unique politico-social phenomena which constitute Oneiria's chief claim to find an adequate historian.

At present the Kallists were in the ascendant. With Turbo at their head they were naturally more than a match for the opposition, whose fortunes at court were intrusted to the Queen-mother. The Chancellor was certainly the strongest statesman who had appeared in the colony since its foundation, while the Queen Margaret was fitted for her position rather by disposition than political ability. She was the daughter of a German officer of noble birth who, having entered the service of Spain, rose to be Governor of the Canaries. From him she inherited all the homely simplicity so characteristic of the family relations of his nation. Otherwise she was not without shrewdness and a certain power of resistance, which enabled her to oppose the splendid abilities of the Chancellor as well, perhaps, as any one in the kingdom. It was whispered that there were other reasons why these two naturally found themselves in opposite camps, reasons that were known to none but themselves.

There would have been little doubt that the report was well founded in the mind of any one who could have seen the Chancellor as he stood at the window watching the beggars. Ten minutes after the King had left there was a sound on his ear of a woman's tread in the ante-chamber, and a gentle rustle of a silk dress upon the polished boards. Turbo started

and looked towards the door. It began to open, and as quickly he turned to the window again.

"That will do," said a soft voice full of quiet dignity. "You need not stay. I wish to be alone, and shall remain here till suppertime. Attend me then."

The heavy door closed, and the Chancellor looked round to see the Queen-mother advancing into the room. She was a handsome woman of not more than fifty, with a spare, stately figure. In her powder and rouge and the modish gown she had just assumed for the evening she looked little more than half her age. At least so thought the Chancellor; and, as the fitful firelight lit up her queenly form, she looked to him almost as beautiful as though a quarter of a century had not passed since first they met.

"If your majesty would be alone," said Turbo, with a profound bow, "I pray your leave to retire."

"I would be alone with you, Chancellor," the Queen answered. "I wish to speak with you."

"And your majesty denied me the pleasure of waiting on you?" said the Chancellor, with a smile that made his snarl more hideously apparent.

"Yes," the Queen replied; "because I have that to say which I would have no one hear; and, besides, there are other reasons why none should know of our interview."

"Your majesty interests me strangely," said the Chancellor.

"I wish to speak to you about my son," said the Queen, with a slight tremor in her voice. She drew towards the founder's hearth, and sat down in a great chair that was almost a throne, and, at the same time, motioned the Chancellor to a seat opposite to her.

"Be seated," she said, with the same hesitation as before; "I want to converse with you as an old friend."

She looked at Turbo wistfully, as though to see some softening of his snarl, but he avoided her glance with another profound bow in acknowledgment of her condescension; and the Queen's heart sank as she felt her mission was almost hopeless.

CHAPTER IV. THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

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"Disdaine no whit, O lady deere,
But pity now thy servant here."

For a while they sat in silence looking into the fire. Indeed it was hard for the Queen-mother to know how to begin. Let it be said at once frankly, she and Turbo had loved each other. It was long ago now, and far away—in fair Castile—when he was the brilliant and accomplished young secretary of her father. He was no mere clerk, but a youth of noble family, an aspirant to the great offices of the state, who had taken the post to learn the business of administration.

Thus there was no reason why he should not openly show his adoration for his chief's beautiful daughter, or why she should seek to hide her love for him. Daily they met, and daily his passion grew. He loved her with all the ardour of which his hot Spanish blood was capable, so that it maddened him to see how cold and calm was her northern heart, loving as it was, beside the fever that consumed him.

Yet he was happy in the knowledge of her love, and all went well till one night her father entertained an officer to whom he had taken a liking. He was a man of brilliant wit, but known as a greedy duellist. Yet Margaret was amused, and laughed and talked gaily with him till he departed. Turbo accompanied him to a tavern hard by for a parting cup. The place was full of gentlemen, many of whom the officer knew. They fell to talking, then to boasting, till in an evil hour the

man vaunted his new conquest, and let fall a little light word with Margaret's name. In a moment he had the lie and a stinging blow on the mouth from Turbo's glove.

All efforts of the young secretary's friends to save him from his quixotic folly were in vain. He would listen to no explanation. He would receive no apology. The least he could do, it seemed to him, to show himself worthy of his treasured love, was to chastise the man who had breathed ever so faintly on his mistress's name.

They fought on horseback, with pistols and swords. It was all the youth's friends could do in order to equalise the chances. Yet the affair was little better than murder. The first shot hit Turbo in the knee, the second tore across his lips. Half choking with blood he fell on with his sword; but no sooner were they engaged than a fearful gash across the face blinded him. In the agony of the moment he checked his rearing horse sharply, and the frantic animal fell over on the top of him.

For months he lay in the hospital almost between life and death. Every day came flowers and a little loving note from Margaret, overflowing with pity and gratitude. It made him bear his terrible suffering with a gay heart to see how much his courage had won him. His chief came constantly to his bedside, and spoke to him as a son-in-law; but ere he was fully recovered, and clear of the pestilential air of the hospital, he was taken with the small-pox. Another terrible period of waiting and suffering ensued, and by the time he was able to leave the hospital, Margaret and her father had sailed for the Canaries.

Without a moment's delay he followed them, and at length the longed-for moment was to come, when he should hold his love in his arms once more. She burst into the room with a glad cry when they told her he was come, but no sooner

did she set eyes on his mangled form than she stopped transfixed with horror, and with a terrible scream fell to the ground.

The shock threw her into a dangerous illness, and when she recovered nothing more was said of a marriage. Turbo accepted his fate, but with a bitterness that poisoned his whole nature. His love was no less than before, and it was only by the nursing of a bitter contempt for its object, and all the daughters of Eve, that he could make his life endurable.

And yet he could not tear himself from her side. The months went by, and still he remained at his old post, and when Margaret left to become Queen of Oneiria, he accepted the place which Kophetua XII.—the present king's father—offered him out of admiration for his abilities, and pity for his miserable story.

When the young prince was born, so great was the esteem in which Turbo was held, that he was appointed his governor; and as soon as the boy was old enough to be out of the nurse's hands, Turbo began to win a surprising influence over him. So great was the affection that grew up between the ill-assorted pair, that when the king died it was found that Turbo was named guardian in the will, and it was from this post that he had been elevated to the chancellorship as soon as the boy came of age.

With such a pricking memory in her mind it is not to be wondered at that the poor Queen sat looking long into the fire before she spoke; especially as all her own, and, what was more, all her son's happiness seemed to hang on the result of the interview.

"Do you mean to thwart me again, Chancellor?" she said at last abruptly.