

**WHAT DREAMS
MAY COME. A
ROMANCE**

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What dreams may come. A romance by Frank Lin

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FRANK LIN

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A ROMANCE

BY

Franklin

*"We muse and brood
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in some confused dream,
To states of mystical similitude."*

—TENNYSON.

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DEDICATED
TO
MURIEL ATHERTON

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME.

THE OVERTURE.

CONSTANTINOPLE; the month of August; the early days of the century. It was the hour of the city's most perfect beauty. The sun was setting, and flung a mellowing glow over the great golden domes and minarets of the mosques, the bazaars glittering with trifles and precious with elements of Oriental luxury, the tortuous thoroughfares with their motley throng, the quiet streets with their latticed windows, and their atmosphere heavy with silence and mystery, the palaces whose cupolas and towers had watched over so many centuries of luxury and intrigue, pleasure and crime, the pavilions, groves, gardens, kiosks which swarmed with the luxuriance of tropical growth over the hills and valleys of a city so vast and so beautiful that it tired the brain and fatigued the senses. Scutari, pur-

ple and green and gold, blended in the dying light into exquisite harmony of color; Stamboul gathered deeper gloom under her overhanging balconies, behind which lay hidden the loveliest of her women; and in the deserted gardens of the Old Seraglio, beneath the heavy pall of the cypresses, memories of a grand, terrible, barbarous, but most romantic Past crept forth and whispered ruin and decay.

High up in Pera the gray walls of the English Embassy stood out sharply defined against the gold-wrought sky. The windows were thrown wide to invite the faint, capricious breeze which wandered through the hot city; but the silken curtains were drawn in one of the smaller reception-rooms. The room itself was a soft blaze of wax candles against the dull richness of crimson and gold. Men and women were idling about in that uneasy atmosphere which precedes the announcement of dinner. Many of the men wore orders on their breasts, and the uniforms of the countries they represented, and a number of Turks gave a picturesque touch to the scene, with their jewelled turbans and flowing robes. The women were as typical as their husbands; the wife of the Russian Ambassador, with her pale hair and moonlight eyes, her delicate shoulders and jewel-sewn robe; the Italian, with her lithe grace and heavy brows, the Spanish beauty, with her almond, dreamy eyes,

her chiselled features and mantilla-draped head ; the Frenchwoman, with her bright, sallow, charming, unrestful face; the Austrian, with her cold repose and latent devil. In addition were the Secretaries of Legation, with their gaily-gowned young wives, and one or two English residents ; all assembled at the bidding of Sir Dafyd-app-Penrhyn, the famous diplomatist who represented England at the court of the Sultan.

Sir Dafyd was standing between the windows and underneath one of the heavy candelabra. He was a small but striking-looking man, with a great deal of head above the ears, light blue eyes deeply set and far apart, a delicate arched nose, and a certain expression of brutality about the thin lips, so faint as to be little more than a shadow. He was blandly apologizing for the absence of his wife. She had dressed to meet her guests, but had been taken suddenly ill and obliged to retire.

As he finished speaking he turned to a woman who sat on a low chair at his right. She was young and very handsome. Her eyes were black and brilliant, her mouth was pouting and petulant, her chin curved slightly outward. Her features were very regular, but there was neither softness nor repose in her face. She looked like a statue that had been taken possession of by the Spirit of Discontent.

"I am sorry not to see Dartmouth," said the