

**THE QUEEN
OF SHEBA**

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The Queen of Sheba by Thomas Bailey Aldrich

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THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA



BOSTON
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY
Late Ticknor & Fields and Fields, Osgood, & Co.

1877

To H. L. P.

This Story, the greater part of which lies amid scenes indissolubly linked with the memory of days and nights passed in your companionship, is affectionately inscribed to you by

THE AUTHOR.

November, 1877.

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THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

I.

MARY.

IN the month of June, 1872, Mr. Edward Lynde, the assistant cashier and bookkeeper of the Nautilus Bank at Rivermouth, found himself in a position to execute a plan which he had long meditated in secret.

A statement like this at the present time, when integrity in a place of trust has become almost an anomaly, immediately suggests a defalcation; but Mr. Lynde's plan involved nothing more criminal than a horseback excursion through the northern part of the State of New Hampshire. A leave of absence of three weeks, which had been accorded him in recognition of several years' conscientious service, offered

young Lynde the opportunity he had desired. These three weeks, as already hinted, fell in the month of June, when Nature in New Hampshire is in her most ravishing toilet; she has put away her winter ermine, which sometimes serves her quite into spring; she has thrown a green mantle over her brown shoulders, and is not above the coquetry of wearing a great variety of wild flowers on her bosom. With her sassafras and her sweet-brier she is in her best mood, as a woman in a fresh and becoming costume is apt to be, and almost any one might mistake her laugh for the music of falling water, and the agreeable rustle of her garments for the wind blowing through the pine forests.

As Edward Lynde rode out of Rivermouth one morning, an hour or two before anybody worth mention was moving, he was very well contented with this world, though he had his grievances, too, if he had chosen to think of them.