

**ICE: A SOUTHERN
NIGHT'S DREAM**

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Ice: A Southern Night's Dream by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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ICE :
A
SOUTHERN NIGHT'S DREAM.

"La razon de la sinrazon que à mi razon se hace."

Don QUIXOTE.



LONDON :

SAMPSON LOW, SON, AND MARSTON,

CROWN BUILDINGS, FLEET STREET.

1871.

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A PREFACE

Is an obnoxious thing, whether to read or write.
Don't read mine.

First of all, to mention the principal books to which I am indebted for historical glimpses of that picturesque land, Portugal, foremost among these is Schæfer's "Geschichte von Portugal," in five volumes, dry enough, but careful and ample; it is the book on which I have mostly relied for the main lines of my work; its dates are not, however, always correct, nor its details in all cases exhaustive. De Veer's "Heinrich der Seefahrer" is well known. Of Portuguese books by which I have been assisted, I may mention that part of the "Monarquia Lusitana," by Fray Rafael de Jesus, ed. 1683, and the part compiled by Fray Manoel dos Santos; the Chronicles of

Duarte Monez do Leao, etc., etc. Although I have made but little use of it, in the present sketches, I can recommend Herculano's "Historia de Portugal" for early Portuguese history. Calderon de la Barca's "Principe Constante," parts of Camoe's "Lusiades," and the tragedy of "Inez de Castro," by Joao Baptista Gomez (of which, however, I know only the translation by Alexander Wittich), all give poetic visions of events mentioned in the text. The "Noticias Ultramarinas," published by the Academia Real das Sciencias, are full of fresh graphic accounts of voyages and discoveries of the fifteenth century.

As to the meaning of Ice. If, gentle reader, it has afforded you a pleasant hour, that is the best of meanings; and if not, all my fruitless, archaic intentions must be stigmatised as worse than meaningless, and you certainly have a right—*moral* right, you know—to have your purchase-money back again. If pressed for an explanation, I shall feel inclined to answer as Jean Paul Richter did to a friend in like circumstances—"When I wrote *that*, only two persons knew

what I meant—the Almighty and myself; and now, alas! only one—the Almighty.”

As to the notes, I owe a word of apology for these uncouth appendages; but I wish it to be clearly understood in palliation of my offence, that though the purchaser of Ice obtains for his money both the text and its notes, he is expected to keep to the one or the other, and not to read both. Should he persist in doing so, in spite of this formal notice, it is not my fault.

ICE:

A SOUTHERN NIGHT'S DREAM.



FITT I.

THE START.

WHITE glare and colourless glowing, the plastered walls are steaming up in their own dry way; the powdery dust has not the strength to rise, and the breeze that laid it is long since dead. Lines of ink in channels of silver, run the dark shadows through the gleaming streets. Our lungs seem to play in a hungry vacuum, yet our limbs are oppressed with a tenfold weight. The shadows creep, the old beggar crawls, the cat prowls; still their movements are but a mockery of motion; if the cat would but sneeze, *that* were grand indeed, and the relief infinite!

But there cometh never a snuffle, you might hear the very plants in the garden grow, were it

not for one obstacle—the starved flowers have not had the means of adding one single cell to their stature for the six sultry weeks last past. It is an age of light, light as impenetrable as darkness, light to turn our weak nerves sick.

Below, the mighty Tagus drops through blank oily spaces down to the cooler Ocean blue. Above, the molten sun floods half the heavens, drawing creation to his burning heart. No air, not a cat's-paw. Not a fin moves in the river, not a wing in the air.

Oh, for some respite or relief! Cool water to drink or to plunge in; a mountain flank where to catch a breeze; ten years' existence for a hummock of ice. But bathing is little better than soaking, and a draught of water brings naught but lukewarm sickness to the innermost heart; the only hills in sight are a pinky-blue ridge twenty miles away, and ice! Don't you wish you may get it?

"And why not?" exclaims the feeble voice of my defunct friend B——, for he has been as good as a corpse since eleven a.m. "Let us take our umbrellas, and venture out into the desert; if I lie here much longer I shall scarce have strength to kill the flies, which—devil take them!—have