

# A GOLDEN DREAM.

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## CHAPTER I.—WHICH SIDE.

"Help! Help!"

"Call louder, Nousie. There is no one to hear."

But all the same, the last speaker, as he

seized a handsome mulatto girl round the

waist, clapped his hands over her lips and

pressed it there in spite of her struggles.

"You foolish girl!" he whispered; "the

women have gone down to the town to see

what is going on. Why do you treat me

like this?"

"How dare you!" cried the girl, wrench-

ing her head free. "My husband shall

be silent, you silly little bird. You

know I loved you long before he ever spoke

to you, and that I love you now more than

ever."

"Mr. Saintone, it is an insult. Help!

Help!"

There was a quick short struggle in the

creepers-hung verandah. A little work-

table was overturned, and, flushed and

excited, the girl wrestled herself free, and

darted through the open door into the

shadowy-inner room of the cottage, closely

pursued by her assailant; but, before he

could fling his arms round her again, she

had caught a sleeping child from the cradle

in which it lay, and held it before her as a

shield, while she stood panting, the blood

coloring her creamy cheeks, and her full

lips drawn back from her white teeth—at

bay.

"Yes, you look handsomer than ever

now, Nousie," said her assailant, a hand-

somer man of five and thirty, with but a

slight crispness in his black hair to tell

of a faint mingling of another blood in his

veins. "But this is acting. How can you

be so foolish? Come, listen to reason."

The girl's handsome dark eyes flashed as

she drew back, pressing the child more

closely to her breast, and watching every

act of her assailant, lest he should take her

unawares.

"I shall tell my husband everything

when he comes back," she panted. "What

will he say to his friend when he knows

What have I ever done that you should

treat me so?"

She burst into a passion of tears, sob-

bing violently.

"Hush, you foolish woman," he whis-

pered; and he looked sharply towards the

door.

"Yes, he will come soon, and I will tell

him all."

"No, you will not, dear. If you told

him, he would come to me, and I should

shoot him."

The girl's jaw dropped, and she gazed

at the speaker wildly.

"Yes," he said, seeing his advantage,

"I should shoot him. I never miss. Tell

him, Nousie. He is in my way."

The girl drew a deep, sobbing breath,

and gazed at the speaker as if fascinated,

and he saw it and laughed.

"There!" he said, "I am going now.

Next time I come you will be more sen-

sible and—"

"Ah!" cried the girl, joyously. "George

—George. He is coming."

She darted to the door with the child in

her arms, passed through from the cool

darkness into the hot sunshine, and he saw

her dart in and out among the great vivid

green leaves of the bananas and out into

the road, down which she hurried toward,

where, a quarter of a mile away, a white

figure could be seen approaching.

Jules Saintone stood in the doorway for

a few moments, watching the hurrying

figure of the girl, with her white muslin

dress fluttering in the breeze off the sea.

"No; she will not tell him," he said

through his compressed teeth. "She will

not dare."

Then passing into the broad verandah

he bent down and hurried to the end,

passed out into the lovely, half-natural

garden, and made his way to the shelter of

the forest behind, among whose heavily

foliated branches he disappeared.

By this time the girl was some distance

along the road, hurrying on with her

drooping child clasped close to her heaving

bosom, her lips parted and her eyes

strained towards the approaching figure.

"Oh, George, George," she panted,

"make haste, make haste!"

Then a cold shiver ran through her and

she checked her headlong pace.

"He said he would shoot him."

She nearly stopped, for her brain reeled

as she recalled the different bloody affrays

which had taken place in their unhappy

island, where the hate of race was sufficient

cause for the frequent use of pistols or

knife, and the laws were so lax that the

offender was rarely brought to justice.

"And he would kill him if I told," she

said despairingly, as she gazed wildly at

the approaching figure, which waved a

hand to her and then took off his straw hat

and waved that.

"And we were so happy," she added

after a pause, as she walked slowly on

now, trying to recover her breath and

quell the agitation which made her tremble

in every limb.

"Oh if I only dared!" she panted, as a

flash of rage darted from her dark eyes.

"If I went to the papaloi and asked him,

he would be stricken and would die."

"No, no, no," she cried, as she strained

the child to her breast; they would poison

him, and it is too horrible. I—I must not

speak."

The figure was fast approaching, now

standing out clear in the dazzling tropic

sunshine, now half hidden by the dark

shadow of the heavy leafage which hung

over the road, till with a sigh of relief, as a

strong arm was passed around her supple

waist, the girl let herself rest upon the

support, and her troubled face grew calm

as that of one who has found sanctuary at

last.

"My darling! Impatient? Have I been

so long?"

"Yes, yes; so long George—so long."

"But—why are you overdone with the

heat and carrying that child. You foolish

little thing to come out in this roasting

sun."

She looked at him wildly.

"No, no, no," he cried, kissing her

fondly. "I'm not cross little one, but you

should not have come to meet me. And

then to bring the poor pet. Ah!" he

cried, as he tenderly took the sleeping

child from her arms, and kissed its closed

eyelids and tiny pouting lips in a way that

sent a thrill of joy through its mother.

"Why, Nousie, darling, were you afraid

the Vaudoux people would come and steal

it for their next feast?"

"Hush! she whispered excitedly, and

with a look of horror she gazed wildly

round and into the dark shadows of the

forest, at whose edge their cottage stood.

"Bah! little coward!" he said, smiling,

as he passed his arm about his wife again;

and they walked gently back, taking ad-

vantage of every bit of shade. "But,

Nousie, dear, I must talk seriously to you

about that."

"Not about the Vaudoux people,

George," she said hurriedly.

"Yes, dear; about the Vaudoux. My

little wife must wean herself from all those

beliefs."

Nousie hung more heavily on her hus-

band's arm, and the tears filled her dark

eyes as she shook her head slowly, and

despondency seemed to be clouding her

soft creamy face.

"Why, Nousie," cried the man, a sun-

burnt French colonist, who years before

had left gay Paris to try his fortune in

Hayti, "you would not like our darling,

my tiny dawn of a bright day, my precious

Aube, to learn all their horrid fetish rites

and degrading superstitions."

"Oh, no, no, no," cried the girl

excitedly.

"Then why not forget them yourself.

Can you not see, dearest, that this is the

savage religion of the African, brought

over here by the wretched slaves."

The color began to appear once more in

the girl's pallid cheeks, and she turned her

eyes to his reproachfully.

"They were hidden among the trees,

though at that hour not a soul was in

sight; white, and indolent black, in the

scattered dwellings were asleep, and he

drew her closer to him, and kissed her

tenderly.

"Don't look like that, pet," he said.

"You don't suppose it was meant for a

reproach to you for what you cannot help?

What is it to us? We love, and you

might blame me because my ancestors were

French. But promise me you will try and

forget all that."

"I will try," said Nousie, fixing her eyes

on those of her husband with a look of

yearning love. "But it is so hard, George.

My grandmother used to believe so much,

and she taught me, and she used to tell me

that if I dared to forget them, the people

and the priests had such power—they were

everywhere—and that if I forsook them I

should die. And I could not die now and

leave you."

He drew her to him again, and they walk-

ed more slowly as he looked from the sweet

dreamy eyes, fixed so earnestly on his, to

the sleeping child and back.

"No, darling, and you shall not die,"

he said, half pitying her. "There, some

day your faith in all the horrible old super-

stitions will grow weaker, and you will see

the truth of all I say."

"I do now, dearest," she whispered,

"for you are so wise and learned and good.

I want to forget it all, but it is so hard,

and it seems like a cloud over me some-

times, and fills me with fear for you and

our little one."

"It is like a cloud over the beautiful un-

happy land, Nousie," cried the man, draw-

ing himself up. "It is a curse to the coun-

try, and it is so hard to see peace. Oh,

my wife, he continued excitedly; "there is

a land blessed by the Creator with every-

thing that should make it a paradise for

man, but man curses it with his jealousy

and passions till it is a perfect hell. Black

against white—white against black, and

the colored people hating both. And as if

this was not enough, here is all this

revolutionary trouble, and I do not know

which side to take—which to help into

peace to save the land."

"Side—help!" cried Nousie wildly.

"You—you will not go and fight?"

He gazed at her fondly for a few

moments as they stood fast beneath the

broad spreading leaves of a dwarf palm.

"Fight?" he said sadly. "If I could

help it, no, Nousie, darling. I came out

here to seek a place where all would be

peace, where I could have my home, and

win land from savage nature to give me

the richest fruits of the earth. I have

done this, and I have my home made beau-

tiful with the voice of the sweetest

woman upon earth, with our little one

here; but it is of no use to hide it from

you—there are great troubles coming

again. We shall have bloodshed till one

party has full power. Callet is the man I

believe, but black La Grasse is making

head, and he is not a bad fellow, he wishes