

What Dreams May Come

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WHAT DREAMS MAY COME.

by Frank Lin (pseud. of Gertrude Franklin Horn Atherton)

Dedicated to Muriel Atherton

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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, purple 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