

POSEIDON'S PARADISE
The Romance of Atlantis

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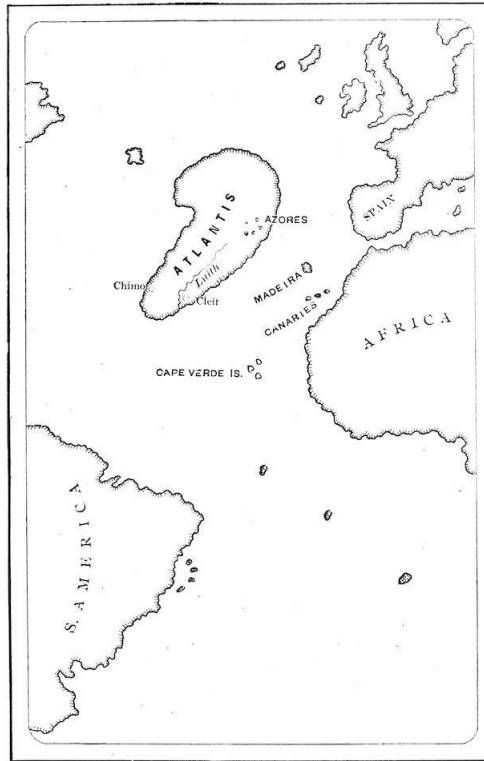
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NOTES.

Poseidon's Paradise

The Romance of Atlantis



Adapted from Ignatius Donnelly's map of Atlantis, page 47 of the "Atlantis," by permission of Harper & Brothers. Cleith, Chimo, and Luith are names fictitious.

“Time dissipates to shining ether the solid angularity of facts. No anchor, no cable, no fences avail to keep a fact a fact. Babylon, and Troy, and Tyre, and even early Rome are passing into fiction. The Garden of Eden, the sun standing still in Gibeon, is poetry thenceforward to all nations.”—EMERSON.

POSEIDON'S PARADISE.

CHAPTER I.

A DECLARATION OF WAR.

It was thousands of years before the Christian era—how many thousands no chronicler has stated. And the island lay, as through the ages past, fair and imperial in the Atlantic. Though now was it becoming wanton, even to its undoing. Else would not this be written.

Midsummer was upon this Atlantis, upon the islands attendant that served as stepping-stones to the continents beyond. Under the soft sensuousness, the morn was taking richer glow, the streams brightening to gold, the gardens and vineyards glorifying in green; whilst hill and mountain grew alluring in shadow and color, the palaces lustrous in their tri-tinted stones, and the temples' syenite a gleaming red that rivaled the flashing orichalcum studding domes and pinnacles. The great island was a gorgeous mosaic: and its setting, sapphire, that royal stone emblematic of calm and truth; for the laving waters were as serene as blue, in such being all suggestive of that repose which comes of perception of the true. The whole was a glory.

About Cleit, that royal city gracing the stream Luith, in the southeastern part of the island, there was an unusual stir. This day was to be observed one of the most ancient, and therefore simplest, of the customs of Atlantis. The king and royal rulers were to give audience to the principal captains of the nation, and receive the certificates of their prowess for the year. And now, from Cleit's harbor, which was a few miles southward of the city, at the mouth of Luith, were speeding the galleys of Cleit's captains; whilst from

points north, east, south, and west, the many other captains were hastening, that all might meet in the grounds of the royal palace before noon of this auspicious day.

Upon the great marble landing place, these captains came together, about them thronging the people in gayest holiday attire. Most evident was it that the latter still took pleasure in this old-fashioned observance, that they wished not to fall behind in its celebration, notwithstanding the times were changing so wofully. Many had been the prognostications of the few conservatives remaining that ere long this simple, this most ancient custom, would come to naught. Indeed, most of these had averred privately that the meeting of the year before would prove the last.

Yet here were again convening these mighty captains—size being a consideration of their office. Here, again, were they towering above the average Atlantean, tall as he was. Fine was it to note their flashing eyes, their grand bearing, as they imparted such information as they were free to give to the curious, fast-questioning ones; but finer to witness the expanding eyes of the latter as their ears took in the wonder, the verity of it all!

But the great silver gong was sounding. It was noon. Then men, women, and children burst into acclamations. Already were the captains forming into line, with the captain general at the head. Again sounded the gong. Therewith, the line filed along the marble pathway to the palace, followed by the cheering throng.

But gradually the throng quieted. Ever was the palace neared reverently. There was a hush, when, from out the thick foliage, it arose upon them lustrous in its stones of red, white, and black, its

facings of alabaster, its columns of marble and orichalcum, its red pinnacles;—a palace well befitting this land of glamour.

Like all the other palaces of the island, this was simple of construction. The main plan consisted of rectangles set about a great court, these rectangles being two-storied. In the lower story, light was admitted through large apertures protected by curtains and shutters of hard wood set in at will. Additional light was also admitted from the upper story, which was supported by columns and open at the sides, curtains excluding the sunshine at pleasure. Some of these columns extended from the lower floor to the roof; others rested on the walls of the lower story, where the thickness would permit; and each was many volumes in its inscriptions and sculptures.

The captains mounted the grand portico with its columns of marble and orichalcum, each innumerable volumes; passed through the narrowing portal, guarded by its colossal winged bulls, to the great hall; and thence to the state chamber—on the right, still followed by the throng.

Great and glittering was this oblong state chamber. Its high, arched ceiling of ivory and bronze was rich in gilding. The walls were paneled in ivory overlaid with silver, many of the panels being inscribed with the laws of Poseidon and Atlas. The pavement was of blue and white marbles. To this fell from the apertures hangings of finest yellow linen. The seats were of carved ebony; and at the farther end were the golden throne, and the ivory chairs of the rulers, priests, and nobles.

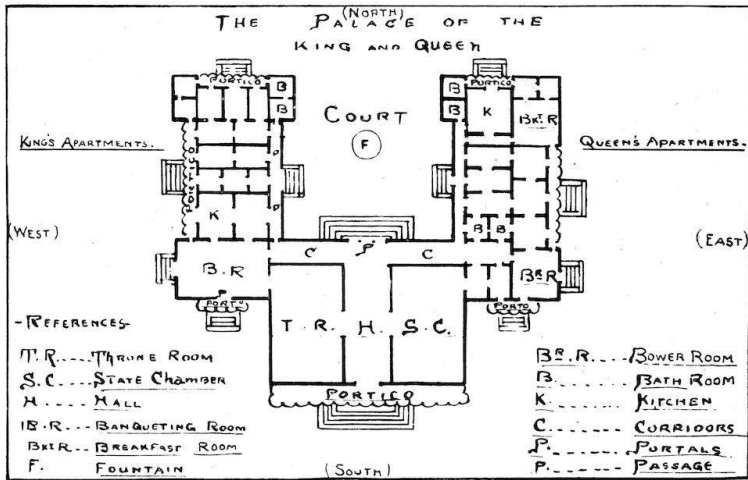
With arms folded on their breasts and heads bent low, the captains advanced until they stood a goodly row before their king. He, of

name Atlano, sat high on a dais raised above another dais; and about him were ranged the royal rulers. On the lower dais sat the priests and nobles, the priests being to the right.

When the apartment could hold no more, the gong sounded. Thereupon the chamberlain, who stood out upon the lower dais, made the sign; and low bent these that had just entered before their king, until the chamberlain said, "Ye will arise."

The king then waved his scepter. As one, the priests and nobles stood to intone a welcome to the captains. Afterward, arose the royal rulers to smile and bow in greeting.

The white raiment and silver circlets of the priests were in strong contrast to the gorgeous robing and jeweled headgear of the rulers and nobles. But the king was dazzling in his royal purple robe, his scintillating crown, and the wondrous mantle sacred to himself. This last was ingeniously fashioned of finest, rarest feathers, varying in color from cream to orange, and was of such length as to sweep the floor behind. Though well he bore this aggregation of rich hues. For Atlano was handsome in the best Atlantean type, though his expression was harsh, cruel. But he was softening somewhat at sight of these brave captains standing in such humility before him. And, smiling, he addressed them.



“Captains, thy king giveth greeting.”

They responded, “O most gracious of kings, Atlano, long may thy great self thus beam upon thy captains!”

Atlano inclined his head. The rulers, priests, and nobles intoned:

“Long, O most gracious king, Atlano, may thy captains thus come before thee!”

“Long live the king!” returned the captains.

Then followed an invocation to the gods by the aged high priest Olto, his son, the chief priest Oltis, assisting. Thereafter, the rulers, priests, and nobles sat down, and the king addressed the chamberlain.

“Shafo, if it seemeth good, the captains may now tell us of their work.”

The chamberlain pointed with his wand: “Captain General, thou wilt begin.”

The captain general stepped out from his fellows, and, in measured tones, replied as if to the king:

“O most gracious of kings, Atlano, this I state to thy great self: I, captain of the war vessel *Atlas*, since leaving the harbor of Cleit, eleven moons since, have sailed around the country of the Afrites, and up its eastern coast. At many places, we fell upon the black people, and took of their gold and ivory; and then sent them into the inner parts to get incense trees, nutwoods, ebony, apes with dog heads,^[1] monkeys with long tails, and greyhounds. It is two weeks since we came into harbor, and yielded our cargo. This showeth its worth, and stateth the sums we of the vessel merit.”

Bowing low, the captain general handed a roll of papyrus to an attendant, who laid it upon a table below the dais.

The chamberlain then pointed his wand toward the captain first in line. He stepped forward, and spoke in uncertain tones that slowly strengthened:

“O most gracious of kings, Atlano, this I state to thy great self: I, captain of the trading vessel *Mestor*, came into Chimo thirty days since from our people of Chimu,^[2] whither I sailed twelve moons ago, bearing a cargo of dried fruits, grains, and rare woods. There I found our people building a temple to the great Amen, that in shape is like unto a pyramid, and in size is half a mile around. Already are the temples, palaces, and tombs of Chimu looking as ours. And great is the decking in gold and silver, for the mines are not far. Of gold, silver, and gems I bring to Chimo large stores.

This showeth the worth of the cargo, and the sums which we of the vessel merit.”

The captain handed his roll to the captain general, who, in turn, handed it to the attendant. When this captain had resumed his place, the next captain, at beck of the chamberlain, stepped out to continue:

“O most gracious of kings, Atlano, this I state to thy great self: I, captain of the war vessel *Azaes*, left Autochthin seven moons since to bear to the fair green island^[3] in the north a band of our people, and with them left the means of living for the time of twelve moons. On my way from there I ran in the passage to the Middle Sea^[4] to look about a little, but at once sped back upon seeing some large vessels, strange and threatening. It is twenty days since I came into Autochthin. I bring to thee, O most gracious King, this written word of the planting of our people in the island, of their further needs, and of the sums that we of the vessel merit.”

And the captain handed in his roll.

At mention of these unknown vessels, the king’s scarcely-concealed indifference vanished. He looked surprised, then alarmed. With increasing emotion, he glanced from rulers to nobles to find their wearied expressions had, at least, become interested.

But on went the harangues. One captain had sailed beyond the western seas, and northward up a mighty river to the colony Missos.^[5] Another had sailed around the country of the Afrites, and eastward to that sultry land that supplied them with gems. Another had been to the land of the Eskaldi.^[6] Thus ran the reports until it

was the turn of the last captain but one. He stepped out with an air important; and, in more important tone, began:

“O most gracious of kings, Atlano, to thy great self I would state that I am captain of the vessel *Paero*. It is eleven moons since I left for Khemi,^[7] with a cargo of rare woods, grains, and wool. I bring from Khemi green stone, red granite of Syene, and the byssus of the Middle Sea. Yesterday came I back to Cleit; and therefore have I not my roll. But within a day will it be ready.”

But this captain, instead of returning to his place, stood waiting.

“What wilt thou, Sir Captain?” asked the chamberlain.

“O most gracious of kings, Atlano, to thy great self I would state more.”

Most eager became the expressions of king and nobles. The captain paused until the chamberlain signed for him to continue.

“Most gracious king, a people across the Middle Sea, to the north of Khemi, causeth fear in the lands about it because of its quick rise to power. It is not long since this people passed over from the far east, and now it ruleth the sea. It is magic.”

The king’s red skin deepened to purple. In a voice grown hoarse, he exclaimed:

“The name of this people!”

And the chamberlain iterated, “The name of this people!”

“O most gracious king, Atlano, their land is Pelasgia. They are called Pelasgians. Their king is Pelasgus.”

“They have a king, then?”

This the chamberlain also iterated, as he did the ensuing questions.

“O most gracious king, Atlano, they have a king.”

“Know they how to war?”

“O most gracious King, they are fond of peace; and think but of trade and tilling the ground.”

“More! More!”

“O most gracious King, I know no more.”

“Let him to his place. Cause some other captain to tell me more!”

The captain who had put back from the Middle Sea stepped out, getting the start of the only captain yet to be heard from. But the latter was willing to bide his time. At beck of the chamberlain, the former declared:

“O most gracious of kings, Atlano, then was it the vessels of this people that so troubled us. Nothing like them have I seen for size and strength.”

The king turned to left, to right, demanding fiercely, “Hear ye this? Hear ye this?”

Senil, the most venerable of the rulers, arose.

“Senil, what wilt thou?”

“King Atlano, we hear; and it seemeth evil.”

“What is the thing we shall do?”

“O most gracious King, that will we do which seemeth good to thee.”

The king’s face testified to his emotions. His anger had given way to wild triumph. He ejaculated:

“Senil, Rulers, Nobles, we will bring them to naught! It shall not be said that any power holdeth the sea with Atlantis!”

He turned to regard the captain, who had not as yet resumed his place; and muttered:

“If this be true—if this be true.”

There was then heard a meaning cough from the last captain, who had been so forgotten. The king noted this, and said:

“Shafu, there is one captain who hath not been heard.”

At the sign, this captain stepped forth with an air even more important than had been that of the captain of the *Paero*, and the captain who had withdrawn from the Middle Sea bowed back to his place. Of due weight were this captain’s tones.

“O most gracious of kings, Atlano, to thy great self I would state that I, the captain of the trading vessel *Osir*,^[8] came back but yesterday to Elasippa from our land of Shaphana, after bringing there grain, cotton, and linen, and taking in corn, wine, and oil. There I heard much of this new power, for, of late, its vessels come within the harbor of Shaphana. Thus far this Pelasgia thinketh not of war, but of trade. Her vessels are marvels of strength and speed.”

“Hear ye this?” interrupted Atlano, turning to rulers and nobles, “Her vessels are marvels of strength and speed!” Then, of the captain, he demanded:

“Thou sayest not that thou didst see aught of these?”

The chamberlain iterated this.

“O most gracious of kings, I have to say that I saw them. Two were speeding into harbor as we left it. Nowhere have I seen vessels that come nigh them!”

The king arose and stared at this captain, until he perforce stammered:

“O most gracious king, I have not my roll; but in two days will it be ready.”

But not of him, nor of his certificate, was the king thinking. His thought was for this new, menacing power. After some minutes’ absorption, his tones rang fierce:

“Is there more?”

The chamberlain iterated, “Is there more?”

“O most gracious of kings, there is no more.”

The captain was waved back to his place. The king, standing most erect, addressed all.

“Rulers, Priests, Nobles, Captains, Leaders, People, let us look to this. Let it be the one mind to fall upon and crush this Pelasgia! What will ye?”

Senil arose.

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