D

y

Auto. of J. Reed Brantsby
(back of title-page)

Australiana

BEYOND THE ICE

BEING

A STORY OF THE NEWLY DISCOVERED REGION ROUND THE NORTH POLE

EDITED FROM

DR. FRANK FARLEIGH'S DIARY

BY

G. READ MURPHY

Inventor of the "Victoria Torpedo"

AUTHOR OF "THE REV. A. DOX," ETC.

LONDON

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & COMPANY

Limited

St. Dunstan's House

FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET

AND

M. L. HUTCHINSON, MELBOURNE.

From G Read Murphy

Malvern
10-10-95

HOW I WAS ENTRUSTED WITH THE DUTY OF PUBLISHING THIS HISTORY.

NEXT to my chambers, on the same flat, is the residence of a celebrated publisher, who is an excellent fellow and also my valued friend, for both of which reasons, and many others, I often feel sorry that I have deprived him, though quite innocently, of the pleasure of editing the accompanying history of the travels of Doctor Farleigh and sketch of the commonwealth of Undara.

The way I came to do it was as follows, viz.:—

One evening, having returned very early from my office, to that chief consolation of the bachelor, my study, I sat soothing my tired brain with the aroma of a cigar, preparatory to doing some literary work, when I heard a knock at my front door. As my servant was busy cooking, I went to the door myself, and there I found a tall, grey-haired old gentleman, with a perfectly happy-looking bearded face.

He was dressed in the ordinary frock-coat and silk-hat style, which make men look very much alike, so much so in fact that it is hard to tell whether you are addressing a prize-fighter, a duke, or a draper's assistant. I asked him to walk in, which he did, and sat down, after carefully depositing a big bundle of papers on the table and his hat and umbrella on a chair. He was leisurely in all he did; and his happy face again attracted my attention: if you think of it, you will be able to remember but few, if any, old gentlemen who look as if they were perfectly contented with their life. The successful soldier has in his mind memories of carnage which cast their shadow on his face; the leading lawyer has a face furrowed with days of watching and nights of study, anxiously spent in the service of some hard-pressed client. The unsuccessful man is weary with hope deferred, and depressed by the death and burial of the bright promise of his early manhood. I remember only one man past middle age with a perfectly happy face, it was red and round and shining. In his early days, when he was a big, shy innocent youth, he was married by a fine handsome girl, who looked thirty—she had once seemed older, but that was when she

was not ashamed of looking her age—and had a mind, a temper, and some money in the funds. After the honeymoon she took a farm, and he developed a talent for poetry, to which he devoted all the time that he could spare from drinking beer, smoking, and growing fat. Once his wife had been rude and nasty, spoken slightingly of the verses he intended to write, and, worst of all, ordered in place of the freshly emptied cask of brown October, a barrel of small beer. The poetic temperament rebelled at the small beer; he took their three-year-old son, and left his wife for ever. He went into the next county and worked, on trial, at a farm where there were two very handsome girls. After a week the wife repented, sued humbly at his feet, and was forgiven.

When men generally get to recognize the joy of having a wife to work for them, while they encourage their artistic temperaments, more perfectly happy faces will be found amongst them. As this kind old gentleman showed no sign of telling me the reason of his calling on me, I asked,—

"To what am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"Sir," he said, "I am Dr. Farleigh, graduate of the Edinburgh University. I have been abroad for many years, and have now come to ask you to edit a sketch of my travels and a history of Undara."

This was interesting; the old gentleman, though mysterious, had that air of conscious superiority that comes after a successful career.

"I have," he continued, "no friends in England, or, indeed, in any part of the Middle Globe. I have therefore come to you, an utter stranger, after learning the life of yourself, your father, and your grandfather, to ask you to edit and publish this history, at my expense, as I feel I can trust you."

"He is an Australian," I thought, "and perhaps Grandfather Read has helped him long ago." I expressed my thanks for the honour he had done me, in selecting me for so onerous and confidential a post, and told him that I would call on him in the course of a day or two at his hotel, when we would make final arrangements for the publication of the manuscript.

I was asked to call between nine and ten in the morning, after I had considered the manuscript, and Dr. Farleigh shook hands and left.

I opened the parcel, and found it contained type-written copy on a thin strong paper that was foreign to me, with marginal corrections in a distinct, small feminine handwriting. I commenced to read it, intending to see what it was about, and then return to my work. When dinner was announced I was still reading. It seemed but a few minutes since Dr. Farleigh had gone, so engrossed had I been. After dinner I lit a cigar and thought the matter over. Esquimaux stories tell of a fertile region beyond the

ice, and it now seemed that this region was an actual fact, and not the fruit of some imaginative brain. The open sea that scientists believe to be round the North Pole was in reality a fertile region.

I went back to the typed history. My housekeeper, who knew my ways, came up at a quarter to twelve, and lit the fire. Fires go out if you do not attend to them. I was left alone, and read on, till by-and-by the room got so hot, I had to take off my coat and waistcoat, and open the doors to get the atmosphere cool again. I took some diluted whiskey, and lit another cigar. Whiskey keeps you up to concert pitch, and I know of nothing that soothes a man like a cigar. A married friend of mine says a wife is a wonderful help if she happens to be in a proper humour, but that this happens very seldom. Of course no bachelor believes the very seldom part.

The book had set me thinking of wives and that sort of thing. Such books make bachelors discontented, and ought to be carefully avoided by them. Again I returned to my reading, and this time I finished the type.

Some books are like going through a garden, they please you while you are reading them, and then are forgotten; others you read, and they leave you something to think of—Dr. Farleigh's book was one of these. I left the papers scattered about and went to bed.

My housekeeper—good soul—was always careful of my papers; she is under the impression I am a genius, and, if I can only keep her from reading what I write, will entertain that belief till the day of her death.

I dreamed I was married, and had just returned from the honeymoon; I was repeating to my wife the new rules she had drawn up for my guidance in my altered condition. Shave every morning is the only one I remember, you see I never learnt them properly, in fact, I repeated them so badly that she commenced to beat me. It was only my housekeeper knocking at my door; she always woke me at ten, after I had been up very late; ordinary mornings at nine.

I wrote to Doctor Farleigh, saying that I should call on him next morning at half-past nine. That evening a note came inviting me to breakfast at nine. Ten minutes to nine next morning I was chatting to the Doctor, and told him I would undertake, with pleasure, the publishing of his history. Presently Mrs. Farleigh came in; she was a tall, handsome woman of the Jewish type of beauty.

"Allow me to introduce Mr. ——, my dear; Mr. ——, this is my wife, Mrs. Farleigh."

I shook hands.

"I am afraid you have made a mistake, Dr. Farleigh, and taken me for my neighbour. My name is Murphy—Read Murphy. I

shall, of course, return your history, and never mention what has passed between us."

I was disappointed, as evidently was the Doctor.

"If you will undertake the editing and publishing of the sketch of Undara, Mr. Murphy, I am sure the Doctor would like you to. Is that not so, Frank?"

"Certainly I should," said the Doctor, evidently gratified at his wife's suggestion.

And so, after discussion, the matter was arranged. At first I felt loth to accept what had been given to me in error, but at the earnest wish of my new friends, whose good opinion I had been fortunate enough to gain, I undertook the task, which was quite in accordance with my own inclinations.

The sole reason Dr. Farleigh has for not appearing in this matter is, that he is afraid he would be inundated with questions of all sorts, and made a martyr to idle curiosity; he has therefore asked me to receive and forward to him any letters asking for further information on any matter that could not be fully described in the limited space of his book; these he will with pleasure answer.

Having explained the way I became entrusted with the editing of this very important work, nothing remains for me to do, but to sign myself,

Yours very truly,

G. Read Murphy.

5, Victoria Street, Westminster.

CONTENTS.

BEYOND THE ICE.

CHAPTER I.

AN UNKNOWN PEOPLE.

"FRANK, I'm dying."

It was Jim Richards who spoke. Poor fellow, his vitality had sunk so low that the cold had become too much for him.

"Cheer up, Jim," I said, as cheerfully as I could; "don't leave me alone. Take a little brandy, and you'll pull through."

I took the flask from my pocket, where I kept it to prevent it freezing; it contained all the brandy we had left, diluted with water. Little by little he drank it up, and then he seemed better.

"Frank," he said, with an effort, "you've been very good to me, no woman could be more gentle. The sleigh may come in the morning and take you."

"And take us both," I replied, almost overcome with grief.

"No, Frank, not me; I'll soon be gone. If I could have the Sacrament I'd die happy. If you ever see mother, cheer her up; there are lots left to take care of her, thank God."

The effort he had made to say so much seemed to have exhausted him. He spoke again once or twice, but it was disjointedly, and then he died.

I had him in my arms, so that we might keep as warm as possible. By-and-by he began to get cold, and I knew his troubles had ended. I got up, closed his eyes, put him on a rug, and then went back to the warmth of the skins again. Poor Jim and I were the last of the crew of the steamship *Prospector*, that had started on an Arctic expedition from Quebec nearly a year before, and now we were alone in a snow hut, about 104 latitude and 76 longitude.

Jim Richards and I, Frank Farleigh, had been at the Edinburgh University together, where, year after year, we had worked side by side, passed the same examinations, and finally got the degrees of Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Surgery. We then left the

University, and shortly afterwards joined the *Prospector*, Jim as doctor, and I as naturalist.

We had no money; and, apart from the interest we felt in the voyage, hoped it would give us sufficient notoriety to enable us successfully to commence the practice of our profession in some large town, besides supplying us with sufficient capital to enable us to meet the initial expenses of establishing ourselves.

We were both big, strong men, as, indeed, were all the crew of the ill-fated vessel, from captain to cabin-boy, the latter of whom was only a boy in name, for on these expeditions only men are taken.

As all the particulars of this expedition, and its purpose, are fully and ably given elsewhere, I shall not occupy these pages with repeating them, nor shall I describe the many hardships we went through up to the time of Jim's death.

The hardships and adventures of all expeditions such as this are so similar, and so harrowing in their horrible details, that any of my readers can easily learn the main features of all of them by consulting any authentic work on the subject. Besides, I shall have all my time and attention taken up to describe the wonderful state of civilization, and general happiness, I discovered in that long-suspected region of fertility at the North Pole.

Next morning, when I awoke, I lit a fire, on which I put pieces of moss, so that I might obtain warmth, and make sufficient smoke to attract the attention of the person or persons who had the sleigh, the trail of which Jim and I had seen the evening before. The discovery had been just in time to prevent us from dying of sheer exhaustion and despair; and though I had some dim hopes of the sleigh returning: after a short elation, poor Jim sank back to his former state of despondency, and died.

Jim was neither wanting in vitality nor courage, as was proved by the fact that of the party of twenty-three men, of whom we formed two, that left the *Prospector* when she was nipped in the ice, we alone had survived the hardships, and diet of meat only, that had so long been our lot.

The remaining members of the crew went their own way, and have never since been heard of.

Having lit the fire, I ate as much seal-flesh as I could force myself to swallow. It was a food against which you take the deepest loathing if you have to subsist on it long; and one of the main reasons that enabled Jim and myself to survive the others of our party was, that we always ate some of this horrid meat three times a day, while the others only ate when forced to by starvation, and so died one by one.

It was a beautiful calm morning, and the smoke rose up in a well-defined straight column, so that it could be seen for an immense distance. This gave me hope, and I went to ascend a

slight rise, so that I might get a good view of my surroundings.

The hill was about half a mile from the hut, and consisted of some huge rocks covered with snow. When I had gained the commencement of this eminence I saw, to my horror, a polar bear coming in a direction that would bring him very close to me; he seemed alarmed about something, so I concluded he might be chased by another bear, and stooped down in the hope that he wouldn't see me; in this, however, I was disappointed, for he stopped an instant, growled, and then charged direct at me.

I was panic-stricken, and commenced to run toward the hut; though, had I thought, I would have known that the bear would overtake me before I got half way.

I didn't think, but relied on my legs, instead of my wits, to save me.

I was so weak, that before I had gone many yards I tripped and fell.

In an instant I sat up; the bear was now within fifty yards of me. In the distance I saw an object, like a boat upside down, coming towards us at a terrific speed.

I was too exhausted and terrified either to move or think; I could only sit still petrified with fright.

It's all very well to think I was a coward—I was nothing of the sort. But I was nearly dead with starvation and cold, and so weak that I could only just crawl along; under these circumstances it was not wonderful my nerve deserted me.

Physical courage is only for those who have health or strength; I had neither.

It seemed that the bear would have me in another four or five seconds, for though the speed of the machine was tremendous, it had so very much greater distance to travel than the bear.

The huge white animal was almost on me; the machine was still some two hundred yards away; he rose on his hind legs as he came up to me, and as he did so saw the approaching vehicle: terrified, for he evidently knew what it meant, he stood transfixed, when, like a flash, it passed, almost within reach of him, striking him with a forked rod as it went by.

The bear gasped, as a man would if he had a bucket of cold water thrown over him, and dropped dead; and in less time than it takes me to write, or you to read this, the machine had described a circle and returned to me.

It stopped as a skater does, when he ploughs the ice with his skates.

A door opened in the side of the vehicle, which was a sleigh on four wheels, shaped like the half of a huge cigar cut down the middle and placed flat side down. It had a sort of centre board that it let drop when it wished, and so stopped itself.

Out stepped what seemed to be two fine men, wrapped from head to foot in skins, with only their eyes visible.

One of them threw back the visor-like face-covering, and stood revealed a beautiful blue-eyed woman.

"This is the strangest Esquimaux I ever saw," she said, in a sweetly modulated voice. "Can he be from the middle Globe?"

"I think he must be," said her companion, a strong man in the first promise of maturity, "but he seems very ill; shall I give him some food?"

"Please, dear Ion," answered the woman, who now knelt beside me and took my head in her lap.

"Poor man!" she said. "I wonder where he comes from?"

"I am an Englishman, madam," I said, faintly.

"I have never heard of that country, but I am glad you speak our language." She spoke with a childish wonder on her face.

"Give him this, Edie," said the man whom I had heard called Ion, handing a cup to the woman, who put it to my lips, and I drank.

It was warm, and the first palatable food I had tasted for very many days; it was delicious, and seemed like soup of the thickness of oatmeal porridge. I afterwards discovered that it was oatmeal with minced meat boiled in it.

I felt much revived, and, with the aid of the woman, stood up.

"Sir," I said, addressing the man, who stood sympathetically near, "sir, I am doubly indebted to you for my life. In the first place, you saved me from this bear; and in the second, from death consequent on hardship and a diet of only flesh food, that has killed all my comrades. Will you shake hands?"

"With pleasure," he replied, with a pleasant smile. "I am very happy to have been of service to you; but you are trembling all over."

"Sit down," the woman said. She had seen my weakness, and, woman-like, had ministered to my wants.

"This is my betrothed, Edie Shanna," explained the man; "and I am Ion Wolner Mura. What is your name?"

"I am Doctor Frank Farleigh," I answered, "sole survivor of the first party of men who left the steamship *Prospector*. My friend, Dr. James Richards, lies dead in yonder hut."

"Well, Dr. Farleigh, we'll skin the bear that you may thank for saving your life, for had not Edie seen him we would have left you alone, thinking that the smoke from your fire indicated the presence of a party of Esquimaux."

"Let us give Dr. Farleigh the skin."

"Certainly, Edie; but let us first take it off the bear."

"Let me help you," I said, and got up from the stool; but my knees were so weak they gave way under me, and I sank down again.

"You must not try to help, for you are too weak," said Edie,

with kindly firmness. "You may either sit and watch us, or go into our electocar."

"I will sit and watch, if you please."

Edie went to the electocar, and returned with some knives and a bone scissors, while Ion took off his gloves.

Together they commenced to operate, the man doing the heavy work and the woman assisting in every way; and so skilfully did they aid one another, that in some ten or twelve minutes the bear was beautifully skinned, the end joints of the limbs being cut off and the skin pulled over them, so that it was fit to be stuffed when they had finished.

"Miss Edie," I said, admiringly, "permit me to congratulate you and Mr. Ion on the way you have skinned that animal."

"My name is not 'Miss Edie,'" she said, simply, "but Edie Shanna, so please call me Edie; and as my Ion's name is not 'Mister,' you had better, I think, call him Ion."

"Yes; Edie is right. But let us come to the hut."

They put the skin, and me, in the electocar, and Edie got in, and by touching some knobs, made it travel to the hut, while Ion walked.

Edie helped me, and we all went into the hut.

The few things that were left we gathered together, and put them, and the corpse of poor Jim, in the car; we then all got in, closed the doors, and sped away. The nose of the car was glass, so that we could see the places we passed through. Edie lay in the front of the car, and Ion and I in the middle part, so that as we sped along he and I could talk.

"Where are we going to now?" I asked.

"First we will go to the third magazine," answered Ion, "where we will leave your weapons and take in fresh power; we will then proceed to the second out-station, where we will stay for the night; we will then again take power, and in the morning go to my father's house in Zara."

"Where is Zara?"

"Zara is the capital of the country of Zara, situated on the river Voa, in the fertile region round the North Pole; but we are yet about 260 miles from there; however, as it is early in the day we will get to the first out-station by the evening, and to Zara by about fourteen o'clock to-morrow."

"Ion, we are nearly there," said the woman.

"I am glad, my Edie."

Our speed slackened, and we stopped near a rough pillar-like boulder and got out.

"Here is the magazine," said Ion.

"Where?" I asked, gazing round; "I cannot see it."

"I will show it to you in a minute."

Edie went to the pillar, and with a ruler-like stick cleared out a hole that was in it, about five feet from the ground, and put in

a tube which ended in a glass disc with two strings crossing in the centre; this she looked through, the while beckoning to Ion with her hands.

Ion, who had taken a screw-like auger and a lever from the boat, put the screw in the position to which Edie directed him, and then commenced to turn its handle, and so screw it into the ice, when it fastened in something; he then took his lever and forced it up, when I saw it had wormed into a square plate, which left a hole about a foot across in the ice. Ion enlarged this hole, and I then discovered the door of the magazine, from which we took a fresh supply of electricity, and deposited all my things.

We then had some dinner and started on; previously, I asked Edie to show me how she directed Ion, which she did.

First, as I have stated, she put the disc-ended tube in the hole; in its centre two strings crossed; this she could verify by turning the disc round; if, then, the point where the strings crossed did not move, they met in the centre; otherwise, the strings were moved till the centre was found.

The centre was now on the spot exactly over the hole into which the screw was to go; in case, however, the screw was not put in quite straight, the hole was placed at the botton of a funnel, so that it would be guided by its sides into its proper position. When it was wrenched out the gate of the magazine was exposed, and you could get what supplies you wanted. These precautions were taken to prevent the Esquimaux plundering the magazines.

When the door of the magazine was closed, the ice was filled in, some water, boiled by electricity, thrown over it, and the place again became hidden.

The Esquimaux had plundered one magazine; so they were all now guarded by electric traps. When the cover was removed, a handle was seen, this would be caught hold of by anyone not in the secret, and pulled, in the hopes of opening a second door; the pull, however, connected a battery, the shock from which was sufficient to kill the would-be thief.

Again we sped onwards, and this time Ion directed the car; we now travelled at the rate of thirty miles an hour, and the gleaming surface of the frozen snow seemed to be alive with millions of dancing sunbeams.

"Why is your wife not with you?" said Edie. "Did she die?"

"No," I answered, "I had no wife, I came with forty-nine other men, on an expedition, to try and discover the North Pole."

"You will never do that," said Edie, and after a pause continued, "I thought all men had wives. Is it not so in the land you come from?"

"No! is it so with you?" I asked in wonder.

"Yes!" she replied unhesitatingly. "Our great Law Giver decreed that every fit man should be allowed to have a wife, and

every fit woman a husband; so that as we all wish to marry, we of course all do, when we reach the fitting age."

I was very weak, and the good food I had taken, made me lethargic; so Edie wrapped me up, and I soon fell asleep in the comfortable warmth.

I was awoke by the barking of some dogs, and found we had arrived at the second out-station.

The out-station consisted of a big round tower, like an Irish tower trebled in size, with a very pointed roof. This tower was surrounded by six large windmills, that circled it, at even distances.

Three men and two women, had come out to meet us, one of the latter having a little child in her arms; they all were like very handsome specimens of the best class of Britishers.

I was in turn introduced to each of them, and on turning to the one who was carrying the child, it put out its little arms to me, and when I took it, kissed and caressed me. For nearly two years I had not seen a woman, or heard the babble of a baby voice, so that the former looked doubly fair, and the sound of the latter was like the murmur of music to my famished ear.

They were all very merry and kind, and even the great dogs that gathered round us, wagged their tails civilly, though they were evidently willing, and able, to tear me to pieces, if their owners so desired them.

They took me in to a big room on the ground floor, that looked half library, half kitchen. In one corner was a cooking stove, the flames and smoke from which went into two tubes that went right round the room in opposite directions, and met at an upright tube, which they joined, and which apparently took the smoke up through the ceiling.

In the centre of the room was an oval telescope table; while on its walls were a double row of shelves, which contained labelled tins, and cooking utensils on one side of the room; and on the other, books, pictures, guns, and sundry nick-nacks. In this room was a woman cooking, whose peculiar dress and handsome face and person riveted my attention. Her dress consisted of a tight-fitting knitted garment, that displayed to perfection her beautiful, shapely limbs; her feet were encased in black cloth boots, which had a striped bow below each instep; she had only the natural curve of the waist, and her front figure was hidden by a loose stomacher that went from her neck to her trunks; her features were extremely regular, and her beautifully shaped head was shown to advantage by the simple setting of her hair, which was brushed off her forehead and fastened in a knot at the back of her head.

Her dress was similar, though far superior, to that of some of the acrobats one sees performing in various parts of England and America.

On the others hanging up their cloaks and taking off their pattens, I saw that they were each dressed differently, seemingly; and I found afterwards that this was the case; they each wore what most suitably set off their good points, and hid their bad ones.

Vona Gartha Morpha, the woman whose dress I have described, came up to me. "Poor man, you are ill!" She put me in a big easy chair, and asked one of the others for something for me, but Edie said,—

"Do not give him anything more to eat or drink, he has been half starved, and we must not overtax his stomach." Then she turned to me and asked, "are you strong enough to have a warm bath? I think it will do you good; and I will get you some fresh clothes."

"I should like it very much, you are very kind," I replied gratefully.

The two men took me away, and gave me a warm bath; it was delicious! They then dried me, and dressed me with some warm underclothes, and Turkish-like outer garments.

"The women will do your hair for you," they said. My tangled hair and beard were knotted with the neglect of many weeks.

I was put on a big chair-bed, and watched them have their dinner; they were merry as a lot of children, but kind to me as mothers to their babies.

After dinner Vona and Edie sat on either side of me, and combed my hair and beard, while the others cleared away.

Beside me on the chair was the child, she soothed me with her tiny hands, and baby chatter, which I could not follow. Very gentle were the women, and careful not to hurt me. When they had unravelled the tangles of my hair and beard, which they did with knives and combs, they oiled them with a violet-scented pomade, and brought me a mirror that I might see myself.

I had seen my comrades grow gaunter and paler; their hollow-eyed faces, grimly looking from a frame of filthy tangled hair, till one by one they died; but I had not realized that I, who was one of them, had changed as they had changed. In the glass I saw my reflection, which did not seem myself. My forehead looked higher, my eyes were sunk in my head, the bones of my cheeks seemed bursting through my skin, my mouth was hidden by my moustache, which, dandified by the fingers of the women, curled on the Orson-like beard, which covered my breast.

A little woman, who had been sitting beside or flitting about a big quiet man all the evening, began to sing; and I fell asleep.

CHAPTER II.

A NEW CIVILIZATION.

In an instant the room where I lay was filled with light, and I saw beside my bed-side the figure of an angel; that is such a figure as we attribute to the angels.

The face was like to that of the Apostle John, as he is shown in the pictures of the old masters; and had that lovely blending of masculine strength, and feminine sweetness, that is emblematical of all that we hope for in human nature.

The extended wings closed, and the angel spoke.

"Frank, fear not," it said, "you are now in a land that is better than the one you have left, and here you must qualify yourself for a better still, and then again for a better, till your spirit, as well as your body, is a likeness of God, and then, but not till then, you will go to heaven."

I groaned, "Let me return to my life on earth, good angel; for there I have left my work but little more than commenced, and if I do not return, those whom it is my duty to comfort will suffer. Let me go back to those I love."

The angel frowned, and his aspect became terrible; slowly his right arm raised till it pointed at me, and then he spoke.

"Fool that you are, you are not worthy of elevation, you shall be sent to a lower world than the one you have left, and from there you will rise higher, or sink lower, according to your works."

The light left me, and I struggled in an agony of fear.

"Frank, Frank, lie quiet, you will be better soon."

The light returned, and I saw beside my bed-side, the little woman who was singing when I went to sleep.

"Frank," she said soothingly, "you have been dreaming, you are quite feverish. The food you have taken has been too strong for you, after your long period of starvation."

"Are you sure I am awake?" I asked in terror.

"Yes, dear, you are awake, but you must make an effort to keep quiet, or you will get delirious."

She stroked my hair; and I took her hand in both of mine, and kissed it; it was real, and gave me courage.

"You must not talk, and then I will stay with you for a little while. Go to sleep if you can."

I could not go to sleep, I had too much to think of. The change, the wonderful change, from a period of starving misery; from the murderous hug of the bear; the corpse-strewn journey, where day by day famine, or cold, took my companions, one by one, till only I was left, with my dead friend, at the gates of death.

From all this—which had only ended the previous morning—I had been suddenly, taken to a life of plenty, warmth, love, and the joy of the companionship of beautiful women and brave men.

You who have never known starvation, misery, the hour of loneliness, or the want of love; think of it! and the sympathy born of the thought may make you do acts of kindness to sorrowing fellow-creatures, that will cause you to glow with the comforting knowledge of a generous deed, and to have a happier place in the hereafter.

The little woman saw I could not sleep, again she had given me her hand to hold; it was such a comfort to me. I was *so* weak and nervous.

"How did you know I was dreaming?" I asked after a while.

"There is a microphone at the top of your bed, which bends slightly over, and transmits the slightest sound you make, along a telephone wire, to a microphone at my pillow; so that I heard you groan, and came in at once."

"That was kind of you; I am a stranger and weak, is that why you are so good to me?"

"Partly that; and also because I am in sorrow."

She was a quickly susceptible little creature. In a moment her eyes were swimming in tears.

"Will you tell me about it some day, please?" I asked.

"I will tell you now if you like," she said, drying her eyes.

"I think you should leave me now, or you will be tired in the morning."

"Oh, that will not matter, but I must think of you. You went to sleep so early, and Edie told me you slept in the sleigh, as they came along; so if you are awake now, for a little while, it will do you good, and my story will take your thoughts away from your dream and your trials."

I could only kiss her hand. How good and thoughtful she was.

"I am Daisy Mura," she began, "Cula Brei Dero and I are betrothed; we were to have been married nine months ago, but the Marriage Senate decreed that our union must be postponed, as a punishment for Cula, who had gone too far into the country of the savages, and so caused the State to lose the life of my brother Seena Wolner Mura."

She paused for a moment, and then she continued,—

"Cula, and Mary Vero, who was betrothed to Seena, advocate the subjugation of the savages, who are dangerous to our people; but whom we hope to civilize.

"When a maiden has her marriage postponed, and her betrothed becomes ambitious, she cannot be otherwise than sorry, hence am I sometimes sad."

Again her face clouded, but soon her mood changed, and she continued brightly,—

"Cula is one of the captains of the outposts, he is the big man I sat next last night. He is very strong, and very handsome. Do you not think so?"

"Yes," I said, "he seems very strong, and is certainly a handsome man."

Cula was like a Greek athlete, but taller. His curly hair, square features, and thick neck, all showed the gladiator; but still he seemed decidedly intellectual. His betrothed set off his strength, and he acted as a foil to her merry face, and active figure. I found afterwards they called her the singing bird, because of her beautiful voice, and bird-like movements.

"He carried me through Lake Walla, which is over three miles from side to side," said Daisy, in a tone which demanded my admiration.

"Please tell me all about it," I entreated.

"We were at the outstation, on the borders of the land of the Rodas, who are a savage people, when one day Cula, Seena, and I, went to look at some arable land which the parliament intended to demand from them. We took our rifles and a carrier gull, so that if we got amongst the savages we could free the gull, who would then return with a message that would bring us assistance. Mary did not come, as she was busy. We went along the edge of Lake Walla, which is in a country prohibited to the Rodas, and here we came on six of them, who had killed a deer, which is against our law.

"Cula loosed the hounds, who pulled down two Rodas that we took prisoner; these they left with me, and Seena and Cula pursued the others into their own country, which they were forbidden to do. Their duty was to report the matter to the War Senate, who would duly punish the offenders. The Rodas, who had got a start, were fortunate enough to meet a party of their countrymen, who were hunting, and, so reinforced, they turned on their pursuers, who fled. Easily Seena and Cula distanced the savages, till they came to me; when I heard them coming, I pasted a card on the back of the gull, and on it wrote, 'Send help at once, we are pursued by the Rodas, come to,' then I left a blank; when they came up, Cula put, 'Black Wharf,' which is at the other side of the lake, signed the card, and freed the gull, who at once sped homewards.

"We had now to take the prisoners, which delayed us, and by this time the Rodas had come up with us, though the delay was only one of a few seconds.

"I took the prisoners, and with my spear drove them to the lake. Occasionally a Roda would discharge an arrow at us, but it was always caught by Cula on his shield.

"We had reached the lake, and waded in nearly out of the reach of the missiles, when three savages rushed into the water, and each fired an arrow at us. Hardly had the arrows left their bows, when two of them dropped dead, killed by bullets from the rifles of Cula and Seena; but, alas for Seena, one of the arrows struck him where the neck joins the shoulder, and he fell dead. The third savage had turned back to reach the shelter of the trees, when Cula fired, and he fell on his face.

"I stooped down; poor Seena was quite dead.

"'He is dead, Cula!' I said, terrified; so we left him.

"We let our prisoners go, and Cula took me in his arms, and waded on till we reached the wharf at the other side.

"One of the hounds had disappeared, but the other was unharmed. Shortly after we reached the wharf, four soldiers came to our aid, and we returned and got poor Seena, whom we brought home.

"For disobeying orders, it was decreed that our marriage should be postponed for twelve months, nine of which have gone, and I shall be glad when the others have passed."

"Is it not strange," I queried, "for you to go on such an expedition?"

"No, the women always accompany their betrothed. You must sleep now, we will talk no more,"

She settled my pillow, and I was soon asleep. When I again awoke, the sunshine was struggling past the edges of the blinds, and the room was light. Soon Cula came in.

"Good morning," he said, cheerfully; "Daisy heard you moving, so she sent me to you. You are not to get up, for when breakfast is ready, Ion and I will come and take you down."

He left me, and shortly after returned with Ion; my bed was the chair-bed I had been put in when I came from the bath, and Ion now manipulated it, so that I was supported in a reclining position; they then pushed the chair into a lift, that I had not before noticed, and we went to the ground floor. This lift was worked by compressed air, supplied by the wind-mills to a reservoir at the top of the house, and thence used for operating it, and many other purposes.

The women gathered round me, and were as kind as if I had been an old and valued friend. Again the child came to me, and I felt quite as if I was one of the family.

For breakfast we had tea made of a sort of hops, several kinds

of scones, and fish, all of which were served by Vona with the whitest linen and the nicest taste.

After breakfast they took out my couch, and I sat in the sun till they were ready.

All round, as far as the eye could see, was the same stretch of ice and snow; but Ion told me there was an arm of the sea quite near, where fish, and seal of all sorts, abounded, though it was now frozen over.

The dogs I could now see properly; they were magnificent specimens, and seemed to be half blood-hound, half stag-hound, though bigger than either; they were rough-coated, with a head rather like the former, but evidently had the best qualities of both. In colour they were either black and tan, or tan and black.

Ion let loose an Arctic hare that they had got that morning from a trap before I was awake, and two of the hounds went after it. At first the hare seemed to be able to run right away from the dogs, who followed, one behind the other, but soon its speed decreased, and the dogs began to catch up to it.

"That first dog will have it in a few more seconds!" I said expectantly.

"Don't be too sure," said Ion, quietly.

In an instant, just as the leading hound seemed almost to touch the hare; it turned at right angles, and was saved. But now the second dog made a great rush, and the first followed behind; and so they changed places, till the hare delayed turning too long, and met her death from the powerful jaw of one of the hounds; then they came panting back.

They did not hunt according to coursing rules, to make points, but according to their own sagacity, to kill their game, and, notwithstanding their poorer speed, would have killed more hares in a day than any two greyhounds in England or out of it.

Ion caressed them. "Are they not beauties?" he said proudly. "They have nothing to learn in hunting, but act together, so that only the bear can escape them. Come and see their kennels."

He wheeled my chair to the foot of one of the windmills, where there was a great kennel, on a pivot, so that it could be turned round. On its top was a spear-head shaped piece of metal, that by always turning its point to the wind, kept it always blowing on the wedge-shaped back of the kennel. It was double walled, and lined with felt, and its door was fixed with a weight, so that though it kept shut, it could be opened inwards or outwards.

"When we retire for the night," Ion explained to me, "each dog has his kennel, on which is an alarm spear; these alarm spears we wind up to go at intervals of an hour and a half, so that there will always be a dog parading about to warn us of the

approach of strangers. For instance, this alarm goes, and the dog leaves his kennel, for he knows that in two minutes the spear will fall. At the end of an hour and a half, the spear is again drawn up, and the dog returns to his kennel, and so it continues with one kennel after the other."

"What are you afraid of?" I asked.

"Well, here there is little to fear, for the Esquimaux are very timid, but other outposts are surrounded by fierce savages called the Rodas, and we take similar precautions with all."

Cula now came over to tell us that everything was ready, so we returned.

The good-byes were said, our positions taken in the sleigh, and away we sped.

The country began rapidly to change; we passed a group of stunted trees, then another, and soon we were in a snow-covered forest. As we went along Edie told me about Daisy and Cula. He was one of their ablest and bravest soldiers, though given to rashness, and a strong advocate of the subjugation of the Savages, who were a race of barbarians, that practised horrible tortures, and refused civilization. Daisy was his guardian angel, who restrained his undue ardour, and guided him, as only a clever woman can guide an able and energetic man; but I should hear all about them at Zara.

"Is it not unusual for betrothed couples to travel about alone?" I asked Edie.

"No," she replied, "it is the proper thing. They get to know one another thoroughly, and as each helps to improve, and bring out the good qualities of the other, they become as highly developed and excellent, as they are capable of being."

I didn't say so, but I thought it evident there were no Mrs. Grundies at Zara.

In a little over two hours we had travelled fifty miles, and come to the second out-station. It was an exact reproduction of the first, windmills, dogs and all, but it was peopled by a man, his wife, their three children, and a betrothed couple. I noticed that the two elder children seemed each to be about three years older than their junior, while at the "Middle Globe" there is hardly ever more than, and seldom so much as, two years' difference in age, between the various children of the same family.

It seemed to me peculiar that at these places, which seemed like light-houses on land, there should not be respectable caretakers of a class suitable to the position, instead of the intelligent and educated people of refinement whom I saw.

These people did the work which we call menial, but the way they did it made that term quite inapplicable.

Here we left our sleigh, and took a three-wheeled carriage worked by compressed air, and shaped like a double-seated buggy. In the front seat sat Ion and Edie, while I took the back one,

and off we started. The tyres were india-rubber pneumatic, so that we sped over the snow smoothly and rapidly, at the rate of about seventeen miles an hour.

The first hour's journey was up a hill, on reaching the top of which we saw stretched at our feet a beautiful country of cities and arable land, through which ran a splendid large river. On reaching the foot of the hill, which descended very gradually, we came to an excellent wood-paved road passing through a beautifully laid-out country, with large windmills noticeable everywhere.

I was too much occupied in admiring the country through which we passed to ask Ion for information, not that it mattered much, for hardly had we gone a mile along the road, when we entered a big establishment.

We were now in a district of tramways, which seemed to be on every road. In one of these we got, and away we went at the rate of about ten miles an hour. I need neither include nor exclude stoppages as nearly every one got either in or out as necessity arose, without the tram being stopped. All the place was laid out at right angles, and most of the houses were eight or ten storeys high. We were now in the outskirts of the city of Zara, which was in its beauty far beyond anything I could imagine. Strange to say there were no poor people to be seen, and the courtesy of the citizens was complete, yet without even a suspicion of either servility or affectation. The people were all fine, and as a rule handsome; but dressed in costumes the most various, becoming, and peculiar.

Lots of tricycles and bicycles were to be seen, but no cabs, and only an exceptional vehicle of any kind. Many of the streets were roofed in with glass, and all of them were wonderfully handsome.

For the first time the tram stopped; it was at the house of Duke Muras, to let me be taken out.

I took Ion's arm and went into his father's house; here we were welcomed by the Duke and Duchess Mura.

The Duke was a tall, upright, strong man, with long grey hair and beard, straight features, and blue eyes. He shook hands with Ion, who said, "My Lord Duke, this man, Doctor Frank Farleigh, is a stranger from the 'Middle Globe,' whom we saved from death in the snow, and have brought to you." The old man looked at me, and then he held out his hand.

"First we will nurse you back to your strength, then you must tell your story to the Supreme Senate, and submit to it."

Edie kissed the old man, and they all kissed the Duchess.

"Come," she said, "take Mary's arm, and she will take you to your room, and be your nurse till you get strong."

Mary—it was Mary Vero, of whom I had heard—took my arm and we went to a lift, which brought us to the landing on which was my room.

The room was square, without fire-place, but in one corner was a stove with dome-like cover, on three stays, held about three feet above it; like the stove at the second outpost, the smoke was taken in two tubes, each of which traversed the room in opposite directions, to meet and discharge their contents into a perpendicular pipe.

Mary placed me in an easy chair, then felt my pulse, and examined my tongue.

"You are very feverish, Doctor," she said, "and must keep very quiet, or you may get fatally ill. You have a very good constitution, have you not?"

"I think I have almost a perfect constitution, I have never till now been ill in my life, which has been one of hard work, and my present sufferings are caused by the effect of the fright the bear gave me, when I had been brought to death's door by cold, starvation, and misery. I am only twenty-seven, so my recuperative powers are at their best."

"Then, I shall soon make you strong again," she said, with a sweet calm smile, "and meanwhile I prescribe rest, rest, rest; so shut your eyes and think of nothing."

I shut my eyes and thought of her. She was divinely tall. I am six feet two inches in height, and when she stood next me, she seemed nearly, if not quite, as tall as I; but then I was bent with weakness, while she was straight as a poplar. Her dark brown hair arranged on the top of her head, and brushed back from her forehead, showed her facial outlines to perfection.

Her head was large, her ample forehead high and broad, her aquiline nose long, and in harmony with her pointed chin, her eyes dark brown, and her whole face, the most intellectual I had ever seen. Her graceful figure, neither pinched by tight corset nor burlesqued by bustle, was shown in all its lovely outlines by a frock like that worn by the women of the time of George the Fourth.

Shortly she spoke. "You only half obey me, for though your eyes are shut, your brain is busy. What are you thinking of?"

She sat down beside me and I opened my eyes.

"I am thinking of you," I replied. "Daisy told me of you."

"Dear little Daisy, and did you see her Cula?"

"Yes, he is a magnificent man. Daisy tells me that you and he advocate the complete subjugation of the savages. Is this so? It seems very cruel, for it would cause great slaughter, and seems unnecessary, for the savages do very well as they are."

"It seems to you cruel and unnecessary," she replied, "because you do not know the facts of the case, which are these:—We now, from time to time, take tracts of land from these people, and so force one tribe to encroach on the land of another, which causes war, and so brings about treachery, torture, famine, murder, and all unhappiness. If we conquered them, we would certainly have

to kill a great number, but the rest would be freed from all their present barbarism, and so made happy."

"But you do not think—" I commenced.

"I think," she said, interrupting me gently, "that you must not think, so take this draught, and I will darken the room, and leave you for a little while."

I did as I was told and she left me. Presently I dozed, for what she had given me to drink was narcotic in its effects. The room was such as one would suppose a magician to have. Should I wake, and find I had only been dreaming, and this goddess-like woman but a shadow of my fancy?

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

When I awoke the room was still dark; I examined the head of the bed to see if there was any microphone; there evidently was, for I found the same construction I had noticed at the head of my bed, at the second outpost. I thought I would test it, so I said softly,—

"Where are you, Mary?" The answer came distinctly,—

"I am here, Frank, do you want me?"

"I should like to see you, if you are not too busy."

"I will come," and in a minute there was a knock at my door. "Come in," I called, and Mary entered. She touched a button at the head of the bed, and the room was lit up by electricity.

"Are you better?" she asked.

"Yes, very much, and quite hungry."

"That is right," she said, kindly, and took my wrist in her beautiful hand to feel my pulse. She smiled, and continued, "I shall soon make you well; we have been talking about you, and making all manner of surmises as to the land you have lived in. It certainly must be uncivilized, but you will tell me all about it by-and-by."

The land I had left uncivilized? The British Constitution uncivilized, even in the eyes of the goddess of the land of the North Pole? I smiled.

"The land I have left is the most civilized on the face of the earth, and is the centre whence comes nearly all civilization."

"And yet you use a gunpowder rifle, and are not married?" she said, evidently certain that civilization could not exist under these circumstances.

"Well, such a rifle is surely the best, and no civilization could have all its men of twenty-seven married."

She looked at me in wonder for a moment, and then replied,—

"Such a rifle is not to be compared to the compressed gas gun, as you will admit when you see it; and no civilization can have even nearly reached its best, in which all the perfect men of twenty-seven are not married." Was she quizzing me?

"Thank you for the compliment; I am afraid I am far from being a perfect man."

"In Zara every man who has a healthy mind, and a healthy body, is called perfect; and all such men marry between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five. Neither man nor woman are complete alone, but their power for good and happiness is mutually increased by their union."

"But what of the hundreds of men who are too poor marry?" I asked.

"No man can be too poor to marry, in a properly conducted community, when he reaches a fit age; of course those unfortunates who will not work, do not count, for they are sent to Pentona."

"Where is Pentona, and why are they sent there?"

"Pentona is a city on the River Voa, but nearer its source than Zara; and it is there that the Government have their places of detention and punishment; and most of their large workshops and mines. The foolish people are sent there, and are made to work for the Government till they have made sufficient to pay their fines, and keep them for a month after they are liberated."

"That seems to me an arrangement that would interfere with free labour very much."

"It is for the benefit of free labour; which in consequence has its hours of work reduced very much. You have, however, strayed from the point at issue, which was that your country could not be civilized because you used obsolete firearms, and your citizens could not marry in due course. Ion will convince you about the firearms, and the other point we will discuss after dinner, if you are well enough?"

She spoke so kindly, that my admiration began to change to love.

"I shall be well enough if you will keep near me, and not blame me for the faults of my native land."

"I shall never blame you for any faults but your own," she replied, "and perhaps I shall be blind to those."

Her voice softened, and for a moment her eyes which looked into mine were darkened with the shadow of thought. When for the first time, earlier in the day, I saw this woman, and realized the perfection of her strength and beauty, I thought she had everything but a feminine heart; her splendid strength, and evident intellect, seemed to preclude that. I was wrong, she was more perfect than I thought any being of earth, or heaven, could be. I think my eyes must have betrayed my thoughts to her.

"I will go down and see about dinner," she said, "but first I will connect the microphone, so that you can call me if you want me."

This she did, and then she left me. Presently there was a knock at my door, and Ion entered.

"Mary said you might sit up for tea if you wished to, so I have come to get you up, if you do."

"You are very kind, Ion, every one is so good, I can hardly realize that I am still on earth."

He laughed. "It is only the effects of civilization, Frank, nothing more."

He went up to a mirror that hung slightly out from the wall in a peculiar framework, took it down, unfolded it, and revealed an adjustable invalid chair, with a mirror back. The mirror had hid a painting on the wall of an expanse of snow, in the midst of which stood a man shading his eyes with his hand, and looking anxiously into the distance; under the picture was written one word, "Lost." Ion threw a big rug of Arctic hare skin over the chair, and then established me comfortably in it. He next proceeded to make my bed, which he did in a most proficient manner.

"How nice and warm the room is, Ion, how is it managed?"

"Why, from the stove, of course."

"But there isn't any fire in the stove," I said, in amazement.

"Come and see for yourself," he said, wheeling my chair over to the stove, on which the cover had descended; this I found was very hot.

"In the top of this dome is a fan," he explained, "operated by a spring governed by clockwork, and wound up thus." He took a square-shaped key with a wheel attached from a drawer, inserted the key in a hole in the top of the stove, and turned the wheel till it came to a stop. He then replaced the key.

"This fan will now go for ten hours," he continued, "and when it runs down the dome will drop, and smother the fire in the stove, meanwhile it forces the smoke, and hot air, from the stove into these pipes, and so it traverses the room, and leaves by the upright pipe; and in any room higher up, can be turned on to warm it, or turned off and allowed to escape into a smoke consumer in the roof, and thence be discharged heavenwards."

Mary knocked, and entered with a tray. Ion took down a picture of a penguin asleep, with a fox stealing up behind it, under which was written "Caught Napping," unfolded the bars by which it was hung up, and lo! the back of the picture opened out into an excellent table, on which Mary put her tray. Ion handed her a chair, and then left us.

"Ion is good to think of making the bed for us, but I would rather have done it myself," she said, the while producing from her tray a covered silver bowl, two soup plates and spoons, and some toast; she uncovered the bowl, which contained soup, and began to help it. The odour that arose was delicious, but she was so slow.

"I will do the helping, Frank, as you are an invalid." It was just as well she did, for had she handed me the soup bowl I should have drunk it all up. Very rude was I? Not at all.

About thirty-two hours before I was living on seal flesh, had almost forgotten what good food was, and despaired of ever getting any again. My appetite had just begun to assert itself; I was famished, ravenous, craving for food. I restrained myself, and took my soup decently. From the moment the smell of the soup had reached my nostrils, I had been impervious to aught else, but now, though I was hungrier than ever, I looked up. Mary was looking at me, her eyes full of tears.

"Frank," she said, in a voice of sympathy that went to my heart, "how you must have suffered, starving in the snow; and to think that they nearly passed you by, and left you to perish."

Left me to perish. Yes, had it not been for the sleigh I should ere this have been lying dead beside poor Jim.

"What have they done with Jim, Mary? I have not thought of him as I should," I asked in contrition.

"He will be buried to-morrow. Frank, it is our duty to be true to the living, but it is not wise to grieve unduly for one whom the Almighty has taken to a better world."

She was so wise and good, this queenly woman. My appetite had become reasonable, and I felt weak. Mary now took from her tray some fish, and vegetables; after which we had some sweets, and fruit, all of which she served from the one seemingly inexhaustible source, so that we had a sumptuous feast.

"You will soon be well now," she said; "you have only to fear too fully satisfying your appetite. I shall give you another meal before you sleep."

She put everything back on the tray; I was still hungry, but the ravenous feeling had left me.

"Some of the men at Zara smoke tobacco, do they ever do so in your country?" she queried, wonderingly.

I smoked a good deal on board the *Prospector*, but we had our tobacco spoilt with the salt water, and so had not smoked for very many days.

"Oh yes," I replied, longingly, "and I should like to smoke very much now if you would not mind; I think it would soothe my nerves."

"I do not mind at all," she replied, with a smile; "I will get you some tobacco, for the Duke smokes."

She went to the telephone and asked, "Have you done dinner?" The reply came perfectly distinctly, "Yes, and we are all coming up to you by-and-by."

"Please bring up some tobacco for Frank."

"Certainly," said the telephone.

Mary now took the tray. "I will be back soon," she said, and left me. As I looked round the beautiful room I could hardly believe that I was awake, and that everything was real, though after all, things were only what the thoughtful in the "Middle World" advocated.

The harmonious room so beautifully and usefully arranged, the little stove with its simple mechanism. The works of art that in a moment could be changed to necessary pieces of furniture, the microphone, electric light, and many other things that might be used in any British community.

And then these people, who, while being all that our popular fancy attributes to a perfect aristocrat, were still as useful and quick in doing necessary work as a perfect servant or mechanic. And yet though they were very much ahead of what we were, they were still only what we might be. I heard a sound of merry voices, then a knock, and the door was opened by Ion for the Duke and Duchess Mura, who entered, followed by Edie, Mary, Andra Woolner Mura, and Mitho Mura, the two latter being the members of the Mura family that I had not before met.

"Mary has given us all permission to pay you a visit, Doctor Frank; she tells us you are very strong, and your recovery will be rapid, at which we are much pleased," said the Duke, in a manner marked by that courtesy and clearness that characterizes all great men.

"When the carrier gull brought us in news of you, Frank, we feared for your safety, so we now doubly rejoice at your rapid recovery."

It was Mitho who spoke, a blue-eyed, eager maiden of sixteen, who seemed very like her sister when they were apart, but when they were together you saw the resemblance consisted only in family mannerisms, similar blue eyes, and a bird-like grace of movement common to both. The Duke and Duchess sat on my right side in big easy chairs. On the "Caught Napping" table Ion put a big hookah with two stems, one of which he handed to the Duke, and gave me the other. He then lit the pipe, and we smoked. Even in the midst of my novel surroundings I enjoyed the tobacco, which seemed to me the nicest I had ever smoked—surely is abstinence the best tonic for all our appetites, and repletion the killer of their joys.

"I have heard a good report of you, Doctor Frank, from my son Ion, his betrothed Edie, and last, but not least, from Mary," said the Duke.

Mary's eyes met mine with the boldness of innocence, and a complete absence of that sister of shame, prudery.

"My lord Duke, your son has saved my life, and I am overwhelmed with the goodness of your people."

"Our habit is do unto others as we would be done by," said the kind old man. "In your case their inclination went with their duty, so they have my approbation, but not my praise. We are longing to hear of the Middle Globe, so you can repay us when you get strong." It was a consolation to think I could repay their kindness in some way.

"Have you lost your wife, Frank?" the Duchess asked, and

her voice was soft and sympathetic, as if she feared to touch a wound unhealed.

"Frank has never been married or betrothed, dear Duchess," said Mary, "and he says that in his country many of the men cannot marry because they are too poor; so forsooth many of the women must remain maids."

"It must be like the country of Gurla, and peopled by benighted beings," said Mitho; "you are fortunate to leave it, Frank, but we will get you a wife, won't we, Mary?" This merry imp looked at Mary and laughed, but Mary, quite undisturbed, only replied, "I hope so."

"I do not think the marriage customs of the Middle Globe can be as wretched as those of Gurla?" said the Duke. "Pray tell us about them, Doctor Frank."

"There is very little to tell; marriage may be either a civil contract and religious ceremony performed in a church, or a purely civil contract performed at the office of the Registrar. Amongst the most destitute class very many marriages take place between people who are little more than children."

"Surely you cannot mean that any unmarried man and woman who wish, may marry, irrespective of age or other considerations, and careless of their own good, or that of the common weal?" asked the Duke, gravely.

"It is almost so;" I replied, for the first time in my life feeling shame at my country's customs; "all people who arrive at the age of puberty may marry; if they are under the age of twenty-one years they must get the consent of their parents, or some person empowered to consent to the marriage of minors, but this is usually given as a matter of course; so that amongst the poorest the poverty is intensified by the marriage of very young and destitute people, who have a numerous family that they can only barely supply with such things as will sustain life, and whom they allow to grow up in the street."

"This is a dreadful state of things," said the Duke, more gravely still, "and just such as is permitted amongst the Gurlas, where it leads to the production of a population of miserable idlers, the ablest of whom, as a rule, join the criminal class. No state can give to its people happiness, nor claim for them the highest civilization, where people are allowed to marry before they reach the fittest age; or where, when they have reached that age, they are not all enabled to marry, and properly educate the number of children they are allowed to have."

"We regard your first statements, Duke Mura, as describing a desirable, but impossible, state of things; but your last seems to me Utopian."

"All these things have been in force with us for generations, and have led to all desirable results. No woman is allowed to marry till she has reached the age of twenty, nor man, till he has

reached the age of twenty-one; and they are only allowed to have three children, till they do something of sufficient worth to cause the senate to grant them permission to extend their family. Tell us more of your marriage customs, Doctor Frank, I pray you!"

"Amongst the worthy poor, marriage is usually contracted at a fitter age, with the exception of those amongst them who become either domestic servants or soldiers, these who include a very large percentage, hardly marry at all." I could see by the interested faces around me that this state of things was considered wonderful in its barbarism.

"Do they consider, where these customs prevail, that they are within either measurable distance of the highest civilization, or universal happiness?" It was the Duke who spoke; and though his voice and manner were most courteous, I felt hurt, that the wonderful civilization of the British should be regarded otherwise than with approval.

"They certainly do, and I have yet to learn that there is, or has ever been, a higher or happier civilization," I said indignantly.

"That we will show you soon, Dr. Frank, and when we have extended our civilization to our neighbours the Uras, the Rodas, and the Gurlas, probably the Supreme Senate may send you as one of their messengers to proclaim it to the Middle Globe. Do not be angry, Dr. Frank, for we listen to your words with love and interest, though, that a large number of perfectly fit people should be debarred the right of marriage, is cruel to them, and detrimental to society. Pray continue your description." Mitho had gone over to a musical instrument, a sort of harmonium, on which she played, "pianissimo," tuneful melodies that seemed familiar to my ear.

"Amongst the middle, upper and highest classes in European society, there are very many who cannot marry till middle life; and many who cannot marry at all."

"But why?" the Duchess asked.

"Because they have not till then, or never have, sufficient means to live in a style, and with the comforts, even approaching those they have been so used to, as to regard as necessaries."

"Their parents are either very cruel, or very short-sighted, to bring them up to such a state of things," said the Duchess.

"But surely," said Mary, "if they truly love they want so little; the time and thoughts of the man are occupied with his work, which he will learn to love now that it returns him the means to brighten his home; and the woman"—Mary's lovely face—the face I had thought showed an absence of heart—softened with thought and glowed with fervour, as she continued, "Surely, when she has the love of her lover—when she has him, and his work to think of, and strive for—surely she will be happy and want little else; two rooms, some raiment, food, they cost so little, and are easily got. The parks and gardens are open to

all, and in the theatres there are places where those who have but very little money—and no one is so foolish as to feel shame at its absence—can see, and hear, at small cost. They cannot know what love is, or poverty would not part them, or prevent their happiness."

"There are the conventionalities to be considered," I said.

"They are to be ignored, when they hinder proper happiness," replied Mary decidedly.

"The way to civilization is difficult to find, and slow to attain," said the Duke, "and ignorance, and its companion stupidity, obstruct both the finding and the attaining. We consider, and I think by-and-by you will agree with us, that marriage is the foundation of all that is desirable; therefore every proper person should be enabled to marry at a fit time."

"We must not talk to Frank any more," said Mary, "of these subjects that excite his brain, for he is not yet strong enough; do you not think so, Duke?"

"You are, right Mary," said Duke Mura; "please sing to us."

Mary selected a song from some music that Mitho had brought, and facing us, so that she formed the foreground of a tableau of which Mitho at the harmonica was the middle piece, sang and acted the following song:—

Love that is born of a touch, or a sigh,
The sound of a song, the gleam from an eye,
Comes as the zephyrs do, gentle and sweet,
Covering the loved, as with garment complete
In a beautiful light that ye only can see,
If ye love, and are loved in the fullest degree.

Refrain.

Love, gentle love, down from above
Joy of existence, love, gentle love.

Love that is nourished by unknown desire,
Hopes for the future still further inspire,
Strengthened by kiss, and confirmed by caress,
On for a ring and love's fetters to press,
Till the man and the maid in a union are one,
Of one flesh, of one soul, till eternity's done.

Refrain.

Love, gentle love, &c.

No sooner was the song finished, than we heard a knocking at the door; in reply to the Duke's call, to come in, the door opened, and a jolly-looking man and woman entered. They both wore long cloaks reaching to their ankles, and were warmly gloved. After the salutations, which were like those usual in the Middle Globe, the Duke introduced them.

"Doctor Frank Farleigh, this is Clara Bel Ouna, and John Pleo Ouna her husband; Frank is the stranger from the Middle Globe that Edie and Ion found; Bel and John are the head cooks of our block."

These pleasant people shook hands, and Bel offered me some jelly, saying,—

"It is made from the white Smitha seaweed, Frank, and contains more nutrition for those who are weak than anything else."

Mary took it.

"I am his nurse, Bel," interposed Mary, "so I will take care of it, and also thank you for it."

To be entertained by a Duke, of most ducal appearance, and by him introduced to a head cook, was an unusual honour, and a complete surprise. Had the introduction been to a prize-fighter or a ballet girl, I could have understood it.

In the conversation, which became general, and which completely puzzled me, both Bel and John creditably took part, and by adding a jocular element, became a decided acquisition. Shortly they all left, and I was alone with Mary, who now gave me some of Bel's jelly which was extremely nice.

"Are you tired, Frank?" she asked.

"No; but I am more and more mystified; I do not think I can be dreaming, for no dream would show me things that I could not imagine. Can it be that I am in heaven, and you are a goddess?" Mary smiled.

"I suppose I shall realize it all by-and-by," I mused aloud.

"Yes," said Mary; "in a few days it will all be simple to you, and then perhaps you will cease to think I am a goddess. Good-night, sleep well."

Before I could realize it she was gone. In a few minutes Ion came up.

"Mary asked me to give you a warm bath if you were strong enough, as she thinks it will make you sleep."

I thanked him, and he took me in his arms, and carried me to the bath-room, where he bathed and dried me as if I were his brother, or a child; he then put me in bed, bade me good-night, and left me. The scenes I had lately witnessed jumbled together in my brain, like the colours in a kaleidoscope, but the centre round which they revolved was the beautiful woman, Mary.

To man, with manhood, comes a vision of a woman whom he hopes some day to woo and win. The woman whom he hopes for as wife; who with her sweetness will guide and elevate his aims; who will reward his love with boy children to carry on his work when he has ceased to live; and girl children to be the sunshine of his old age.

The woman I had conjured up, the woman I had hoped for, seemed in Mary to be personified. I had come, as a pauper, to an unknown land, and found my Queen. It was presumption to aspire to her.

"'Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all." I had loved, but not yet lost. I had her sympathy, and if I did not win her, it would not be for want of trying.

CHAPTER IV.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

NEXT morning I awoke late, and, as I had quite got over my feeling of strangeness, lay enjoying the comfort of a warm bed, and the luxury of realizing I was in a comfortable room.

There are things you have to do without for a term, if you wish to fully appreciate them. I thought of the endless snow, my dying comrades, the grim despair that haunted us, the seal flesh; ugh! The nastiness of seal's flesh passeth all description. And now? Kind people and the loveliest woman I ever met to attend on me. A man who loves his wife thinks her, for all in all, the most charming woman on earth, and the only way he can realize what she is, is to remember what he thought of her the first time they met, otherwise he can only see her through "love's beautiful light." Now I was not yet quite under the glamour of love, so only saw in Mary charms she really possessed, and they were phenomenal. I soon began to feel lonely, so I turned to the phonograph and said,—

"Good morning, Mary."

In a few seconds a reply came clear and distinct,—

"Good morning, Frank, you're an awful sleeper, I am not Mary."

"Please who are you?"

"I'm Mitho, I've got a holiday, so that I may stay at home and help Mary." There was a pause. Again I spoke,—

"I wish Mary would come."

"Frank, don't you fall in love with Mary, it's no use, because—here she comes."

What could the child mean? I suppose it's presumption in me to aspire to a woman like Mary, who was to have married the Duke's son.

Again the microphone sounded,—

"Shall I bring you up your breakfast?"

"Please." In a little while a knock came, and Mary entered. She was dressed in blue, so dark that in the shade it seemed black; she had on an apron that went from her neck to her feet, and wore large white cuffs. She looked lovelier than ever.

"Clara has made your breakfast herself," she said, "so you must consider that you are very highly honoured; during the morning we will visit her, and see the cooking arrangements of the block."

Mary spread out the breakfast, which consisted of fresh rolls, fish patties, omelets, and hop tea with cream and beet sugar.

"I am going to have breakfast with you, so that you will not feel lonely."

I did feel lonely, very lonely. Mitho's broken sentence had showed me the folly I was guilty of, in letting love for Mary fill my heart. After breakfast was done we left Mitho to clear away, and, going to the lift, ascended to the eighth storey. The lift, which was always moving, was operated by compressed air, and seemed very similar to a class of lift frequently seen in English and American cities. We now ascended a glass rotunda by a winding stair, and reaching its summit, for the first time I began to realize the wonders of Zara, and the wretched way in which cities in the Middle World are laid out. The day was clear, and far as we could see the city and suburbs lay in a bird's-eye view beneath us on either side of the river Voa. The Duke's house was in the middle of the city, which was laid out in blocks of nine squares divided by streets of medium width. These blocks were skirted by very wide streets which ran from the outskirts of the city right through it, at right angles to one another. Down the centre of each of these streets ran trams in either direction, so that you could go from any one part of the city, in the trams, to any other, by simply making one change.

The beauty and splendour of the city was beyond description. All the mansions—for the word house but inadequately described them—were eight stories high, and in the centre of each was a garden, in many cases roofed over with glass, as indeed were very many of the streets. Scattered throughout the town were public gardens, and magnificent towered structures reared their heads on every side. Far away in the distance were large houses each in its own grounds, and farther still, barely visible northwards, a large railway station.

"Zara is certainly a more beautiful city than any in the Middle World. What is its population?" I asked.

"Nearly two millions," said Mary.

The city seemed comparatively a small one, certainly not more than four miles square, and though its suburbs stretched away far in the distance all round it, they evidently contained comparatively few people. Mary took a telescope from an unlocked drawer.

"Look through this," she said, "and your view will be extended, and perhaps your wonder increased."

I looked, my view was extended, and my wonder very much increased. As far as I could see—between ten and twelve miles—

the land continued laid out in blocks at right angles to each other. Immediately around me, and extending on all sides for about two miles, were the square blocks I have described. Beyond these again the same blocks contained only one house; further away still, the trams, which intersected the whole district, decreased, by one terminating here and there, which allowed the blocks to very much increase in size, till they became so large as to contain several hundred acres. Coming down from the direction of some mountains, in the far dim distance, was a silver thread that widened till it became the River Voa, and flowed through the suburbs and city, then away again through the further suburbs, and on, till it became smaller and smaller, and was lost to view. The river was spanned at short intervals to allow the trams and passengers to cross, every second bridge being large enough for the crossing of the general traffic as well. Further it was noticeable that the river was walled, and divided into three channels, the two outer of which were small, and generally covered in, while the centre one contained the main body of the water, and was a highway for vessels that passed up and down, with a smokeless rapidity. I gazed entranced; it seemed a city of common sense, where the obstruction of individual selfishness had been overcome, and the general good alone considered. And again the thought returned to me, Why should I wonder? this is only what all sensible people advocate in the "Middle World," and what, ere the birth, and passing away of a few decades, will be universal everywhere.

"Frank, have you forgotten me?" asked Mary.

The thought of Mitho's words came bitterly back to my mind.

"I shall never be able to do that, though some day the prominence of your memory may be partially effaced, by time and work."

Fool that I was to become enamoured of this woman in an hour. Like a callow youth my existence was flooded with the thought of her. Would that the forgetfulness of youth would come to my relief.

"Frank, do not speak like that," Mary said, with a gentle sweetness that increased my despondency.

"Pardon me, when I have got used to my surroundings I will be better. Will you tell me about Zara?"

"Yes, but tell me when you are tired, and we will go down again. You must not forget that you are only a convalescent, but remember that I am your nurse, and expect you to help me to bring back your strength.

Could it be that this gentle, considerate woman was a heartless flirt, who was sporting with me? Mitho's words had spoiltthe paradise of her presence, by suggesting my expulsion. I would not believe she could be blind to my growing love, or that she would encourage it only to crush it.

"Sit down, and I will wrap you up," she said, "so that you can talk comfortably.

She tucked the rug about me, and as her hands touched me, I glowed with joy. Then she sat next me.

"Now, Frank, ask me about Zara, and I will tell you all I know."

"First tell me why the city and the country are laid out in squares, with such regular method."

"For the better conduction of the traffic of all sorts, and the general convenience, both of which are best suited by trams, which are only universally applicable to streets at right angles. As you see, the extreme distance any part of the city is away from a tram line, is not more than one hundred and fifty yards; and sixteen-seventeenths of the city are within one hundred yards of a tram line. Having once reached a tram, you can go from any one point to any other point in Zara, by twice changing, and if you do not mind walking a distance of one hundred and fifty yards, or less, you can go from point to point with only one change. This is the principal reason, but the benefit is manifold."

"But, surely," I asked, in surprise, "Zara was never laid out so splendidly in the first instance, and the difficulties in the way of bringing an established city to such angular uniformity would be impossible, both on account of the individual opposition and fabulous expense. How was it managed?"

"It was laid out by William O'Brien," explained Mary, in reply, "a civil engineer from the 'Middle Globe,' who, like you, was lost in the snow. He came to Zara in 1784, when it was a camp of the savages, who alone peopled Fregida, as he called all the country of the North Pole."

"How wonderful! Please tell me more about him."

"In the records which he has left behind him, and which are now in the museum under yonder huge Symbol of the Sun"—she pointed to a stately tower near at hand—"which indicates the favourite maxim of the 'Great Law-giver,' as O'Brien is called—'Light, more light!'—it is recorded that a numerous and scientific party of picked men sailed in the ship *Arctic*, from Greenwich, and, after many hardships and dangers, such as you experienced—poor Frank—the ship was frozen in the ice, and the crew left her, believing they were near the North Pole, which was, they truly surmised, a fertile region. Scurvy and cold killed them one by one, till the three survivors were rescued by a party of the Rodas, and brought on here. They were three strong men, and well equipped, so they at once gained authority in the tribe, and each took a wife. They then organized a large party, who returned to the ship and brought away all that was of value, and on their return built the foundation of Zara, where they all lived. Some years after they formed another expedition, which went south, and returned with many weapons, tools of all sorts, and

three women from the 'Middle Globe.' These women they gave to three of the leading chiefs, who married them. Subsequently they founded Gurla and Ura, which were governed by the two men who came with the Law-giver—the first by Edward Vance, who was a seaman; and the second by James Smith, who, like you, was a doctor of medicine and a surgeon. These cities have each progressed in a wonderful way, though Zara is the most perfect and powerful of them all, and will soon be joined by the Uras, with whom they will form one nation. You will then see how easy it is to 'bring an established city to an angular uniformity.'"

"It will be a most interesting experiment," I replied, wonder-stricken.

"Rather say," she replied, "it will be a most splendid and God-like achievement, the result of which will be superb in its immensity for the progress of happiness and goodness."

"I adopt your suggestion, and am glad it will be conducive of both happiness and goodness.

"The two are so inseparable as to be almost one."

"It is not always so with us."

"But it will be when you have reached the highest civilization."

"I hope so. Please tell me more about the usefulness of angularity in a city."

"Well, the trams do away with nearly all other traffic, for during certain periods of the day they go slowly, and heavy goods are carried. Further, they enable all animals for traffic, or other purposes, to be kept off the streets, which are thus enabled to be kept in order for about one-tenth of what it costs to maintain streets in Ura, where the haulage is principally performed by horses. The streets are thus kept easily and perfectly clean, so that dust, such as invades the houses of Ura to the destruction of everything, and the general increase of work, is not known."

"These advantages are both immense and apparent," I said, in amazement. "Permit me to compliment you on the way you have championed the trams."

Mary laughed.

"I have not championed the trams, but only mentioned a very few of their advantages."

"Please tell me some more."

"Well, they enable all the sewerage to be taken to the grower, which is done during the first three hours of every day."

"Do you not take your sewerage underground, and thence away to filtering stations inland, or to the sea?"

"Decidedly not," answered Mary, "though both the Uras and Gurlas do, but very ineffectually. With us the refuse and excreta are taken, through flushed pipes, to a filtering compartment, which is in every house; here the water, strained of its impurities, passes through the sewers—which are kept perfectly

clean—to the Voa, which is an unpolluted river. As I said, every morning, during the first three hours of the day, the scavengers come, and all refuse is removed to the farmers; hence our city is perfectly clean and healthy."

"This seems a most excellent idea, and far preferable to having covered sewers, full of corruption and foul gas, down every street, into which some of their fever-breeding odours must escape."

"It certainly is. Then we have an underground passage beneath every second street, and so all our wires—telegraphic, telephonic, and others—are easily got at when necessary, and these are carried along the edge of the footpath to their destination."

"This is certainly wonderful."

"Remember, I have only told you a few of the advantages of a regularly laid-out town. Now, shall we call on Clara and John Ouna? You will be just as surprised at the way they organize the feeding arrangements for nine hundred and odd people who live beneath this roof."

When we had descended, I asked—

"Is not nine hundred people a great number to be in the one mansion?"

"On the contrary," Mary replied, "it is unusually few, for each mansion contains one thousand and twenty-five rooms, of twenty-five feet square each. From the size of the rooms you must make an allowance for halls, vestibules, and lifts; but even then, you see, there is abundance of room for a thousand people. To feed these, John has a kitchen on either side of the square, and eight dining-rooms; so, you see, he is kept very busy."

"He must, indeed; I suppose he supervises everything?"

"Yes; he and his wife, between them, organize and supervise every detail, from purchasing the provisions up to the disposal of the refuse."

"And how are they paid?"

"They are paid a salary, and have to stand for re-election yearly; the position is a very good one, and he engages everyone under him."

"They, of course, would leave if he failed to be re-elected?"

"Oh, no, they are kept on during good behaviour; it is only the head that has to pass the approval of a re-election every year, though it is extremely seldom he is not re-elected to his old position."

We now entered the kitchen, and shook hands with John.

"My Clara has something to bring back the flesh to your bones, Frank," he said, "and make you feel fit for work when you leave Mary's sheltering care."

"There is lots of time to talk about that, John," said Mary, "especially if he is to wait till his bones are as well covered as yours are."

John laughed merrily, and replied,—

"I was thin enough when Cupid's touch was in my heart, and had only my fat to feed on; but when Clara took possession, the flame went out, and I have since been able to laugh and grow fat."

"Frank is surprised at the city of Zara," continued Mary, "and the splendid way in which it is laid out. Now, I have told him he will be equally surprised at the kitchen and management of Clara and yourself."

"Well, I think he will be much more surprised. My Clara is a genius, and the way she manages is wonderful."

Clara entered, carrying a small tray.

"What has John been saying about my management?"

She did not wait for an answer, but turned to me,—

"Sit down, Frank, and have something to eat. Mary said I might get it for you."

We went over to a small table, and, while I ate the delicacies provided for me, which consisted of raw oysters and brown bread and butter, Clara pointed out the specialities of the kitchen.

"Underneath," she said, "is a cellar, in which we keep vegetables, dairy produce, and meat, in a temperature a little above freezing-point; along that wall we have flour, oatmeal, cornmeal, and similar things. Those vats you see are the filters, in which all the slops are placed. As they are poured in they stir up a sediment of charcoal, chemically prepared, which absorbs any smell they may have. The water then drains away to the sewers, and the sediment is taken by the nightman."

"What do you do with your waste?" I asked.

John laughingly pretended to misunderstand me,—

"What do I do with my waist? why, tie it up with my apron-strings to be sure. There's a good deal of waist about Bel and me."

"Frank comes from a nation like the Uras, or Gurlas, John; so expects waste as a matter of course," Mary interposed.

"The great Law-giver," said John gravely, "preached 'Waste not, want not,' and we waste nothing; all the peelings, broken loaves, and things that can be eaten by pigs or poultry, but not by human beings, are put in those barrels, where all the moisture drains into the filter below, and they, also, are taken away after we go to bed, but not one scrap of meat, bread, or food of any sort is wasted. Waste is the one thing I never forgive, and for which I take no excuse."

"That is as it should be, John," said Mary; "you are a credit to Clara." He laughed.

"I am surprised at your kitchen, John," I said in wondering amazement at the good man's earnestness, "and think Clara is a wonder of management. I have travelled all over the globe, and, amongst the most enlightened people, have seen good food wasted in tons, when people were hungry, and sometimes starving,

within a mile of the place. This I have seen in American hotels, and Americans are second to none in the 'Middle Globe' for enlightenment."

John kissed his wife on the forehead and replied:

"It is a disgrace that such things should be. If I thought I could replace Clara, I would send her to show them management."

"John and Clara cook everything but their bread; that is made at an outside bakery," explained Mary.

The kitchen was wonderful, the busy assistant cooks were well organized, and accompanied their active and intelligent labours with merry chatter and mirthful freedom. I had seen something like it, on a very small scale, in some of the houses in Australia, when the daughters of the house were in the kitchen working and supervising, with the same energy and intelligent grace that they would summon to their aid in the performance of any of their many accomplishments. It seemed beyond belief to see all the work of a kitchen performed by people of the highest intelligence and most perfect courtesy.

"Clara will take you to the dining-rooms now," said John, "and I must ask you to excuse my escort, as I am wanted here."

Courtesy, which is the lubricator of our speech and actions, permeated all the movements of this man, so that they were as soft as his ruddy face or plump body. On entering the first dining-room we found three girls, or rather young women, arranging the tables, which were beautifully ornamented with pot plants, and cut flowers and, were it not for the absence of the wine glasses, might easily have passed for the dining-tables of some wealthy artist of the Middle Globe.

One of the girls, who evidently was in command, came over to us. She had a bright round face, and short curling hair, her dress consisted of knickerbockers, with a jacket, and stand-up collar, such as boys often wear, but which never, for their masculine donners, display such shapely legs and tiny chubby feet and hands.

"This is my daughter, Bel, Frank," said Clara, introducing us. "I was almost jealous of her for taking up so much of her father's love, till a lover came and won her."

Bel smiled, and held out a dimpled hand, that was a model for an artist.

"I am glad to see you are getting strong again, Frank," said Bel. The gentle sympathy of these courteous people was a constant delight.

"Everyone," explained Clara, "has their meals here, and one universal charge is made; it is so small that everyone can afford it."

"Do you really mean to say," I asked, "that there is no dif-

ference whatever made; for instance, would the Duke dine with a scavenger?"

"As a matter of fact," replied Clara, "the Duke very often does dine with a scavenger, which is easily explainable. The scavenging cannot be entrusted to the penal workers, and as it is unpleasant, and has to be done at hours when people wish to be asleep, it has to be very well paid for; otherwise there would be no one to do it; it therefore attracts only the energetic or ambitious, amongst whom is a friend of the Duke, who is an inventor, and too proud to accept assistance; he therefore does the scavenging, as it brings him in the necessary money, while leaving him sufficient leisure to pursue this work."

"But surely he is an untidy man, or worse?" I asked in surprise.

"On the contrary," said Clara, smiling at my astonishment, "he is one of the most fastidious and dandified men in Zara, and one whom the Duke predicts will rise to the highest honours."

This was very strange, and certainly not in accordance with the ideas of the "Middle Globe."

"By-the-bye, I suppose you take the smoke and hot air from your kitchen fires, as you do from your other fires, and conduct it up through the house, so that it gives up its warmth, before it escapes?"

"Well, very nearly," answered Clara, "the only difference is that it is first washed, so that it leaves the kitchen as clean smoke. With us all the heat is absorbed, when required, in the house; while with most of the houses of Ura and Gurla, fully three-fourths of the heat escapes, which is a foolish and needless waste."

And as I thought to myself, so it is with us, our chimneys are very little, if any, better, than those used by the Grecians and Trojans, many centuries ago.

"Supposing any one wants some extra luxury, on account of illness, or for any other reason, can they not have it here, if they pay for it?"

"Certainly not," Clara replied, "they can only have it in their rooms; to allow them to have extra luxuries here would encourage people to be ostentatious, and tend to create envy, or discontent, all of which are feelings common to the Uras and Gurlas, but not in Zara; we always avoid leading people into temptation!"

"All that you say is so wise, and so simple, that I am ashamed of having failed to see it for myself."

The young Bel laughed and said,—

"Do not be ashamed, Frank, the Duke who is very wise, says that you will succeed, and I am sure you will, so far as to make one man wish your cremation was to take place to-day, instead of that of your friend. Do you not think so, Mary?"

"I hope no one would wish another any harm," said Mary

gravely, "and I would do all in my power—as I'm sure we all would—to prevent such a thing."

"You cannot keep your appetite, and eat a good dinner, Mary deary," said Clara Bel, "and an empty heart is worse than an empty stomach."

What could these people mean? I felt miserable, for I was sure they alluded to a lover of Mary's, and still I loved her deeper, and deeper; fool that I was.

"Now, Frank, you can go and get ready for dinner, which will soon be ready," said Mary, so with a heavy heart I went.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN ZARA.

On going to my room, I was gratified to find that my soiled and ragged clothes had been washed and renovated, so that they looked quite presentable; some new collars, handkerchiefs, a pair of boots and a new cap, were all laid out as neatly as if the head steward had given the matter his personal attention.

On resuming my clothes, which consisted of the short jacket suit, usually worn by a ship's doctor, I was gratified to see that they were sufficiently becoming and useful, to be worn even by the artistic and sensible people whom I had discovered.

Though I was still weak, it was surprising the difference the three days of nourishing food and pleasant comfort had made. My thoughtful attendant—probably inspired by Mary—had left a light strong walking-stick for me, and a pair of gloves.

Even when I look back from the vantage of subsequent consideration, I can think of nothing that had been left undone, which could possibly have added to my comfort or happiness; except, perhaps, Nitho's broken sentence.

On entering the dining-room the Duchess came to meet me, making many kindly inquiries as to my welfare.

The Duke, who was talking to a distinguished-looking man, presently saw us, and came over with his companion.

"Frank, this is Vernon Dreman, a friend of ours and a leading citizen of the adjoining land of Ura. Vernon, this is Doctor Frank Farleigh, from the Middle Globe, of whom I have told you."

Vernon Dreman, a very fine athletic man, of about thirty-five years of age, was rather above the middle height. His pale, plain face, denoted tremendous energy of purpose, and the highest courage, linked with great shrewdness and mental activity. His short black hair showed a broad white forehead, very prominent over the eyes, which were blue and restless. His eyebrows and small moustachio were golden brown, his long, low-bridged nose had wide nostrils that extended when he was animated, and his coarse mouth was mounted on a determined-looking jaw and chin. His whole appearance was dandified, pleasant and courteous.

Instinctively, I felt we should come to conclusions, and that as an opponent this man would be dangerous.

"I congratulate you," he said, smiling pleasantly, "on your miraculous escape from the fate of your comrades, Frank, and hope I shall have the pleasure some day of entertaining you in Ura, with the Duke's party."

The electric bells rang.

"These bells ring in every room in the house for dinner, unless they are turned off, which is frequently the case," said the Duke.

Mary and Nitho came in, and we moved to a table that had been prepared for us. Mary said,—

"Frank, you may sit beside me, as you still want nursing."

Vernon smiled and said,—

"While you are nurse, Mary, he will never get well."

"Pardon me, he is getting well very fast," replied Mary.

"Then he cannot fully appreciate his position; I would certainly not get well very fast were I he. Do you intend to have a relapse, Frank?"

I hated this pleasant man, who sat beside Mary, with a quiet confidence that suggested he was her lover.

"Frank," said the Duke, "shall James Richards be buried or cremated?"

"Jim was a devout Roman Catholic, Duke," I replied, "and had a horror of cremation, so I should prefer ordinary burial for him."

"Then he shall be buried." He turned to the waitress, "Let Ion know that James Richards will be buried. The crematorium is on the way to the burial ground, and they are both several miles out of the city."

"How is it, Duke," I asked, "that you have dinner so late? surely it must very much interfere with business arrangements; it was fourteen when the dinner bell rang."

At Zara the hours are spoken of as one to twenty-four, as the case may be.

"For those in active business, a dinner is held in another room, from twelve till fourteen, so as to enable them to pass in and out, without disturbing one another. The regular dinner hour is fourteen, as we find it most suitable for all purposes."

The dinner was simple, but excellent in every way; the absence of wine, in place of which were various syrups, alone distinguishing it from a dinner in a rich man's house.

After dinner, the Duke, Vernon and I, went to a large billiard room to smoke, and Nitho brought in some cigars, and the hookah we had smoked the night before. Presently, Mary came in, and she and Vernon played billiards, and to my extreme delight, she won the game; it was not out of courtesy that Vernon lost, for he played carefully and brilliantly, and though

Mary's play was little better than his, the evident attention they both gave, showed that there was more than an ordinary wish to win in the heart of each.

This man, evidently, strove to excel at everything, though he was foolish to strive to exceed his lady love—for such Mary seemed to be—at even so trifling a thing as billiards.

The Duchess now joined us, and we went to the tram in front of the house, which fortunately took us right to our destination. After Mary's explanation, I could better understand and appreciate the wonders of Zara, the magnificent blocks of houses we passed, the splendid shops, the wonderful river embanked and bridged, and then, as we left the thickly populated town, the beautifully cultivated and irrigated farm gardens. Still further on, some ten miles from the midst of the city, we passed a beautiful large building, which the Duke told me was a hospital.

"Do you not find a difficulty in bringing invalids so far from the town?" I asked the Duke.

"None whatever," he replied, "all sufferers from any disease which is contagious are brought out here; the tram is especially extended, so that invalids may be conveyed without any bad results. Some day I will show you the hospital, which is one of our special prides."

On we sped.

"There is the crematorium," said the Duke, "we have four, on different sides of the town, as cremation is now as common almost, as the ordinary burials."

"Is it not more expensive than the ordinary burials? With us it is too expensive for any but rich people."

"On the contrary," he answered, "the expense is rather less; the ordinary burial necessitates the purchase of the ground for the coffin, the coffin clothes, and the cost of digging the grave, to which you may almost always add the cost of fencing it in, and erecting on it some memorial. Now the cost of cremation is only the crematorium fees, which cover the rent of the crematorium, the cost of fuel and attendance, all of which are very small; while the ashes of the deceased are deposited in an urn, that usually costs only a few pence, so you see cremating is economical."

"With us," said Vernon, "it is very expensive, because cremation is unusual, and the crematorium is an ornate and costly building. After the first few cremations in a day, the subsequent ones cost a mere nothing, so you see if the expense is shared by a number, cremating is economical, whereas if shared by a few it is costly."

We now came to the cemetery, which was a very large field, enclosed with strong wire netting, and studded with ornamental trees; in the centre was a house, with a church attached. Here

we found Ion, Edie, a priest, and a number of people unknown to me.

Poor Jim lay on a shawl-like piece of cloth in an iron coffin ; the cloth was about eight feet by three, and so would have covered him completely.

His gaunt, white, starved face, summoned to my mind spectres of my dead comrades, who, like him had died of starvation. As I looked on his hollow closed eyes, and almost skeleton face, I shuddered, for I thought how narrowly I had escaped his fate.

Truly, I had been dragged back from the jaws of death, after suffering, more keenly than most, the horror of its approach.

I took Jim's hand in mine, for the last good-bye; his cold hand, that so often had returned the pressure of mine. The grasp of a hand from a man we love; the kiss of a woman, whose sweetness has brightened our life, and they pass away to become but memories, and join those we hope to meet in the hereafter.

Mary's hand was on my arm, she covered Jim over, and the service began.

The beautiful burial service of Christian lands was called to my mind by that which was now passing. The earnest priest prayed for the spirit of the dead, "in the land where his actions on earth shall transport his soul." All through the responses of the service I heard the clear voice of Mary—the woman who had been so kind to me, and whom I had falsely repaid by falling in love with. God forgive me!

"Now shall this body return to the earth from whence it came." Four bearers bore out the coffin to the grave, which to my surprise, was only about three feet deep. "Earth to earth, dust to dust," they took hold of the shawl, and so lifted Jim into his last resting-place. Surely all men, who bravely strive onwards for good, will be rewarded with a happier hereafter, irrespective of creed or country. Jim had been brave, kind, unselfish and considerate, surely he would be rewarded. God be good to him!

The grave was covered in, and we went away.

I looked round, in the cemetery were a flock of sheep, who kept the grass nipped down, and so enabled the place more easily to be maintained in good order.

"Here," said the Duke, "our dead, who are not cremated, are buried; we bury them earth to earth, so their bodies may return to the earth whence they came. For twenty-five years the grave is looked after by the care-taker, then, unless a further fee is paid, all traces of it are allowed to disappear, and the casket which held the soul, is forgotten and as if it had never been; while the soul, imperishable, will be striving upwards to perfection."

The day was bright with the keeness of winter, and sweet with the flowers of early spring, but I was weak and depressed.

"Come," said Mary, "I will take you home, Frank, you are tired and sad, and so have need of rest. Duke, we will see you at supper-time."

"My dear Mary," said the Duchess, "my daughter that was to be, you are always thoughtful for others," and she took the girl's face in both her hands and kissed her.

The one woman had thought of her dead son, who was to have been the husband of the other, and their hearts had been drawn together, and their eyes filled with tears. The mother's heart was heavy for the loss of her dead son, and the heart of the maid was sorrowful for her lost lover.

Memories of what might have been should never hinder the fruition of what might and should be; surely Clara was right when she said an empty heart was a sorry thing.

"I will come with you, Mary," said Vernon, "for both you and Frank need cheering up." So together we returned to the tramline, where presently a tram came, returning to Zara, and we started for home.

"These are wonderful trams, are they not?" said Vernon, "and the cost of running them is a mere trifle. They bring in an immense income to the state, who charge one farthing for any ride within the city boundary, and the same price for every stage, which is a mile, or part of a stage, outside."

"Why, how can they manage to keep such perfect roads, and supply such luxurious tramcars, for such a small sum?" I asked.

"Principally," he replied, "because compressed air, which is their motive power, costs them hardly anything; but for many other reasons, one of which is, that everyone uses the trams, which are the most excellent means of transit imaginable."

"How can the compressed air cost so little? Every commercial power simply means carbon, in some form or other, and if you do not bring the coal to compress your air, into the town, you must take your compressed air from the coal station to where you require to use it."

Vernon laughed. "What you say is true of Ura, as it doubtless will be of the land you come from, but here in Zara they so thoroughly understand the laws of force, that they make the wind and the waters toil for them. In Zara, compressed air and electricity do all the work, and they are imprisoned for men's use by the Voa and the mighty winds."

"Your words are pleasantly poetical," I answered, "but I fail to comprehend how your ideas can be practically applied."

"That we will show you when we come to the Voa," said Mary, "for it works for us with the strength of millions of horses, and supplies us with light, luxury, and motive power."

"We are ripe in Ura for amalgamation, Mary," said Vernon, "and I have come with other representatives of our country, armed with definite proposals to effect it; you will be glad to learn that——"

"Pardon me, Vernon," said Mary, "here is the river Voa, let us get out, and we will show Frank our champion worker, who never rests. You are not too tired, Frank?"

"Oh no, you interest me beyond measure," I answered.

We got out at a bridge over the Voa.

"Behold!" said Mary, "and be convinced."

I looked at the river, which placidly ran beneath me. As I had before seen, it was walled into three channels, the two outer of which were about thirty feet wide, and the inner one, which carried the main body of water, about one hundred and fifty feet. The outer channels were covered in along most of their course, while the inner, with its centre pierced by the pillars that supported the numerous light bridges that spanned it, gave its surface to smokeless vessels, evidently driven by compressed air, or electricity, that rapidly moved up or down on either side. The river was a tidal one, and now flowed rapidly inwards.

"I see the Voa," I said, "but cannot realize how it supplies Zara with light and power."

"The Voa rises and falls twelve feet with each tide, so that there is always a stream of water rushing up or down. Part of this we take through the left or outer channels to a large lock-bound stretch of river bed which is emptied or filled by each tide; the channel on the right side carries the waters of the Voa, which rush along its way like a mill-stream. Each of these contain numerous water-wheels, which the tide or the river turns, and so operates the machinery, which supplies all our light and power, or in other words, our compressed air and electricity."

"It is really wonderful," I replied in surprise. "But I should say it would lead to starving the working man."

"Not at all," said Mary, "it only leads to shortening his hours of labour, which are now six, but which will be reduced to five, directly we effect our union with the Uras, and finish their main public works. We have been preparing for this for many years."

"You will not find any difficulty at all, Mary," interposed Vernon. "The large majority of our people have realized, by personal observation, the happy effect of your laws, and the few foolish or selfish among them who oppose the wish of the majority will soon be silenced.

"Is your government different to that of Zara, Vernon?"

"Different in every way," he replied. "With us we have men so rich that they could not spend even the interest of their money on themselves, unless they gambled."

"That is nothing to be proud of," said Mary.

"Then there are hundreds of men, women and children," continued Vernon, "who die every year from starvation, or through want."

"While such is the case," said, Mary indignantly, "those who indulge in laziness or luxury are earning the anger of the

Almighty, and fitting themselves for a more degraded state than that of these starving creatures."

"You should make allowances, Mary," pleaded Vernon, "their education makes them think that this state of things is necessary; besides, they give a great deal for the poor people."

"What they give is only as a narcotic to their consciences, and they will get no credit for it, till it is enough to supply all their fellow beings with sufficient food and clothing. I have seen them driving their fat horses through a district of starving people; I would kill their horses, and give their flesh and the corn they consume to feed the famishing."

Her eyes sparkled and her cheek flushed with earnestness; that she would like to do as she said, there was no doubt.

"We are going to right all this now, Mary," said Vernon gently. "These people are giving up a great many things for the good of their fellow citizens. Remember they only act as they have been taught to, and those who do justly according to their lights must not be too harshly judged."

"I was wrong, Vernon, and you are right." Mary looked up into his face as she spoke. "These things will soon be of the past, for the sunrise of knowledge is dispelling the darkness of ignorance, and happiness shall prevail."

All this time we had been standing on the bridge, forgetful of the passing moments. A tram stopped, we looked up. The Duke and his party were returning home, so we joined them, and all went home together.

At the door we met Nitho.

"I saw you and your attendants on the bridge, Mary. I was in the dome. Vernon, you will share the guests' room with Frank."

"Thanks, Nitho," said Vernon, smiling. "I will go up with Frank now."

So we went to our room together, where we found a second bed had been placed. Before we had been many minutes in the room, we heard a knock at the door, and a woman's voice ask,—

"May I come in?"

Vernon replied, "Come in, sweet voice," and Bel entered.

"Mother sent me up with some oysters and brown bread and butter for Frank. Shall I get you some, Vernon?"

"No, thanks, Bel," he replied. "But you may give me a kiss."

"I'm too old now, Vernon; besides, Savo Reo and I think we shall suit each other and become betrothed."

"What does your mother say, pretty one?" he asked.

"She says, Savo is a lucky man."

"And what do you say, pretty one?"

"That if Savo is lucky, I too must be lucky, for happiness cannot come to a man unless it also comes to his betrothed."

"Wisely said, Bel. Now run away and I will bring down the tray and its contents."

Clara smiled and vanished.

"Isn't she a lovely personification of happiness?" continued Vernon. "You would hardly believe it, but there are people at Ura, who would be shocked at Bel's dress, because it shows the shape of her lovely figure and legs; yet these people see nothing shocking in the exact representation of a naked woman in marble or on canvas. Strange, isn't it? And the people I speak of don't consider themselves fools; quite the reverse, they retend to be patterns to others."

This was evidently a case where silence was golden, so I quietly finished my oysters.

"You will be able to give me a lot of information about the Middle Globe, Frank, by-and-by, meanwhile you must take a fee in advance, or let me act as your banker," said Vernon presently.

I refused at first, but he would take no denial, and the delicacy of his offer almost made me forget that I was laying myself under an obligation to the man who was to wed the woman I loved. He gave me some notes and coins.

"In Zara," he explained, "it is a punishable offence not to give a receipt for any sum over two shillings, so you must get a receipt-book and make out a receipt at your leisure. Though pray don't send it to me."

"I shall send you the receipt," I insisted; "but tell me why this is."

"Principally to enable the income tax to be collected, I believe."

The coins were like ours; there were some farthings, seemingly the same; pennies like ours, with the addition of a silver cross on one side; one silver coin like our florin, another like our shilling, and a coin similar to our sovereign, called a crown.

"These coins," I said to Vernon, "are very like those of the Middle Globe."

"They have a simple decimal coinage here," he replied, "a copper farthing; a groat, which is a copper coin with a silver cross worth ten farthings; a silver florin worth ten groats, and a golden crown worth ten florins, besides pennies or half groats, and shillings or half florins; and notes worth from five crowns upwards.

"This seems a very excellent plan."

"The notes," he continued, "can only be handled five times, as you will see by the lines on the back. When the Bank gives them out, the taker has to sign them, and the Bank stamps his signature. When he passes on a note he initials the signature of the person who receives it, and so on till the last man getting it, returns it to the Bank. By this means, notes are prevented from being too much used, or forged, so that they are always clean and safe."

"Are all your banks safe—do they never become insolvent?" I asked.

"Our only Bank is the State, none other is allowed at Zara."

We went down to tea, the scene was very animated, everybody was well-dressed and merry, and the variety of costumes seemed like a vision from the "Arabian Nights." For the first time I realized that dress was not only a covering to keep its wearer warm, but also a thing to be so arranged as to show the beauties and hide the defects of the person it covered. Fashion is a very different thing, being only an arrangement of dress, that is adopted by some person in power, and so enforced by custom on suffering humanity. Certainly the dress customs of Zara deserved no second-rate praise.

The gaiety seemed contagious. The waiters and waitresses even joining in the laughter without anyone being shocked.

The room was divided into tables of different sizes, the more numerous being arranged for four or six persons, every table was artistically decorated; though, indeed, artistic seemed a word applicable to everything.

The supper was simpler than the dinner, consisting of only one flesh course, which offered a great variety of meats and entrées to choose from; sweets, a variety of hot cakes, and fruit; with the hop tea, or syrups and water to drink.

Everyone seemed to realize that eating was a function necessary to maintain the human energy, and so should be made as pleasant as possible; but that it should not be degraded to gluttony, or pursued solely for its own sake. That gluttony or gourmandism, as it is courteously called, is a common thing we know, and will continue to be as long as there are so many people whose palate is more highly developed than their conversational powers, and who inherit wealth from men who were unable to transmit them their ability.

Much to my gratification, Vernon's official duties called him away to his colleagues. He was very kind and nice, but you cannot really like a man who prevents the possibility of you winning the woman you learnt to love without knowing she was engaged.

We were in the music room, when Nitho came in.

"Mary," she said, "the children are having their bath, shall we go and see them, and take Frank?"

Mary stopped playing. "Oh yes, come along," and she vanished.

Nitho clapped her hands.

"Come along Frank, run!" and away she went. In an instant I was pursuing her at the top of my speed, and only caught her barely in time to enter the moving lift with her and Mary.

"Frank," said Mary, in mock earnest, "you are driving us to conduct that is reprehensible."

"Misconduct, Mary, if you please," said Nitho with a little mow.

We had reached our landing. This time, getting a pretty fair start, I entered the bathing room,within touch of my leaders.

The room contained a stove, two carved marble basins, and a number of easy chairs. In each basin was a baby splashing and enjoying itself, with the abandon of infancy.

A number of women were either drying their babies—all of whom seemed to be from two to three years old—or looking on at the cherub-like atoms, that with or without their night-gowns—generally without—were taking their turn to be tossed by several men, who were kept very busy indeed. I was seized by two toddlers, and implored in baby accents to "jump them," which I did.

This consisted in catching hold of a child by his night-dress, failing which, by an arm and a leg, and lifting him up at arm's length above your head. Encore! Encore!! Encore!!! Everybody who wasn't talking was laughing. Occasionally an urchin would be snatched up by his mother and carried away. But the children enjoyed their fun, or submitted to be taken to bed with the utmost goodness.

Nitho clapped her hands.

"Isn't it splendid, Frank? Cula says it's the best possible exercise for a boxer. Do you box?"

"Of course I do!" I gasped in the pauses of my exercise.

"Give Frank a rest, children," said Mary, and rescued me from my pretty persecutors.

I was panting and perspiring, for it was the hardest work I had done for some considerable time.

Sitting with the matrons, I became a looker on at the prettiest tableau vivant I had ever seen.

The lovely naked children—surely nothing is more beautiful than a nude baby—romping with their pretty mates in long gowns, or being tossed by men; the mothers and attending maids looking the while with beaming joy on their tiny comforters and merry surroundings.

"In Ura," said Nitho, "many of the wealthy women are ashamed to nurse their own babies; but nurse instead little dogs, that they teach to carry a handkerchief, catch a biscuit, or suffer to snore on their sofas; poor benighted things, and many of the men—I know you won't believe me, Frank, but it's true all the same—are actually ashamed to be seen nursing their own babies. I shan't have a husband from Ura, though this house will probably get one without my aid."

When I slept that night, the babies came to my dreams, but when I wanted to toss them, flew away. They had wings, of course. Perhaps though, they were not babies at all, but only angels.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSTITUTION OF ZARA.

In the morning I was wakened by Vernon.

"Wake up, Frank; if you are going to have a bath before breakfast you must look sharp, or you'll be late."

"I'll have a bath with pleasure," I replied, "if you will show me the way."

"Come along, then," he answered briskly, and off we went.

In Zara, the pleasant and modest habit of wearing pyjamas was universal, so without any delay I seized a towel and followed Vernon, who took me to the bath-rooms, which were three rooms enamelled throughout from floor to ceiling, each complete in itself, with a marble bath supplied with hot and cold water, a shower, the heat of which could be regulated from cold to boiling, a drying grating, and every luxury that such a room could contain. At first thought it seemed impossible that so much luxury as surrounded me, and was brought strongly *en évidence* by the beautiful bath-room, which was only a replica of all the others, could be within reach of even the humblest worker; but on mature consideration the remarks of Vernon about the crematorium—if the expense is shared by a number it is economical—came to my mind. And so it was with the bath-rooms, each of which was used by about eighty people, men, women, and children. Now, supposing each of these paid a farthing a week, the amount, 4*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* a year, would pay 5 per cent. interest on 50*l.*, and leave 1*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* as a sinking fund, which would, in the course of a few years, purchase the improvements. But as the cost of making this perfect bath-room would not be 50*l.* more than the cost of making a very common one, nor hardly 30*l.*, while the perfect room would last much the longer, and was much the more easily kept clean, a very much less sum than one farthing per week would make the difference between luxury and dilapidation; and so it was with everything else.

When I was ready to return to my room, Vernon said,—

"You must now either put the room tidy like this," he took up a sponge, which he squeezed dry, and with which he removed the splashes; he then put the soap tray and brushes in order, and so, in less than half a minute, the room was fit for the next comer;

"or you must put a farthing in the waiter, which will summon an attendant when you open the door." This he did, and as he opened the door, the "waiter," operated by the farthing, pulled a handle, and shortly an attendant appeared.

"We have tidied the bath-room, thank you," said Vernon to the attendant, "and I only rang to show Frank how to manage if he wanted you."

After all, the wonder was not that these simple and economical arrangements were on all sides at Frigida, but that they were not in universal operation at the Middle Globe.

On going down to breakfast, Bel told us that we were amongst the last to appear. Vernon's breakfast consisted of only milk and oatmeal porridge.

"My breakfast," he said, "supports my brain and muscle without fatiguing my digestion or stomach," and his words were wonderfully true, though with me my appetite was ravenous, all my organization demanding to be restored after my long fast; so I finished my breakfast with some fish. As Vernon left, Nitho appeared.

"Nitho, I want to talk to you of what you said about my falling in love with Mary." I was very grave. "Of course, you will not mention our conversation to any one? please promise."

"Certainly, if you wish it, Frank," she replied; "though everyone knows what I was going to tell you, and I only spoke out of friendship to you."

"Thank you, Nitho; now please tell me."

"Oh, there is nothing much to tell," she said, "it's only that Vernon wants to make Mary his wife, and everyone thinks they would suit each other." This might not seem much to Nitho, but it was very much to me, though just what I had expected.

"Do you think so, Nitho?" I asked, very gravely.

"Of course I do, Frank, though I think Mary should have told you, or not nursed you herself in the—well—the soft-eyed way she does."

"Mary is not at all to blame, Nitho; she can no more help being kind than the magnolia can help being perfumed, or the sea being salt; we can only act according to our nature."

"That's all very well, but Mary's eyes can look quite different to the way you have seen them. Never mind, Frank, we will get you a nice wife soon; I think it possible I might marry you myself."

This was kindly and seriously meant, but when a man in a strange land falls in love with a woman who is going to marry another man, he does not feel inclined to think of marriage, or any other cheerful subject.

"I am going to do some washing, Frank," said Nitho, after a long silence, "would you like to come and see the laundry?"

"Yes, please, I think I would," I said sadly, for I was utterly depressed.

"All right," said Nitho cheerily, "I will go and get my things, and then come back for you."

Presently she returned with a bundle.

"Come along," she said, and I followed her to the washing-room, which was a room with all the scientific appliances for washing, drying, mangling, and starching clothes of all sorts. Nitho put two farthings in a box, which rang a bell twice.

"Good morning, Frank," said Mary, who was ironing some article that seemed to me like a woman's bodice. "You are looking white, so sit down and give an account of yourself; you surely are going to get strong quickly, if only to please me?"

Had Nitho only left me in ignorance, my recovery would have been hastened by the joy of Mary's presence, and the hope of her love; but as it was, my mind hindered the recovery of my body. Some men, with a folly that is contemptible, or worse, feel anger against the woman they love but lose, as if the fact that she did not appreciate their love either altered her or was a crime; others would marry the woman they love whether she cared for them or not, forgetting that a bride who does not love is not worth having, nay, more, is a curse to any man; to neither of these classes did I belong; I had loved a woman I could not win, and was naturally sad, but I would soon recover and be certainly none the worse, as love for a good woman can never do aught but elevate a sensible man.

"Why did Nitho put those two farthings in that box, Mary?" I asked.

"To pay for the privilege of herself and you staying here. All who are not regular attendants, but live in the block, can come in here on payment of a farthing, and make use of the water and washing utensils; we do this to keep out idlers like yourself."

"Do not go, Frank; invalids are privileged, and my baby, that you tossed last night, has fallen in love with you," said a merry matron.

"You look too sad, Frank," said Mary. "You must not worry about anything; we are all happy in Zara, except when our friends are sad." The logic of this sentence made us all smile. Here, as everywhere else in Zara, the workers were what old-fashioned people would call "gentle folk," in every sense of the word. In Ura, I found most of the women were so ridiculous as to consider all useful work derogatory, and so cultivated idleness, or frivolity, to the detriment of their minds and bodies. In Zara, everyone seemed to try and be useful, which resulted in their gaining an appetite for their many amusements. Mary finished her work, and we went into the dining-room, when Bel brought me some oysters and brown bread.

"You pay all your washers by the number of clothes they wash, I suppose?" I asked Mary.

"Oh, no," she replied; "we pay them all an equal remuneration per month, except the superintendent, who receives double pay, and is very skilled."

"Does not paying them all alike tend to suppress individual effort to excel?"

"No; because those who excel receive the easiest and pleasantest work, and are eligible for promotion; while those who are not careful or expert have to do the general house scrubbing and cleaning, and are given the roughest washing, besides being liable to dismissal."

"Then you do not lose sight of the wisdom of encouraging every one to do their best?"

"No, that is kept in view; but we hold that every one who will do his or her best, no matter how poor that is, has a right to the common necessaries and pleasures of life."

This opinion was certainly excellent, if only it was feasible At dinner we found the duke, and other members of his household. After dinner, as we were leaving, I joined Duke Mura.

"Duke, I should like the benefit of your advice when you are at leisure," I said.

"Come now to my library, Frank," he replied, and I will hear you and assist you." Nothing could be more encouraging than the dignified kindness of this polite man, which promised both the heart to sympathize and the power to assist. He motioned me to a chair, and I spoke.

"Duke Wolner, your son Ion has saved my life, and your people have treated me with a kindness that is more than most men receive from their relatives. I am now strong, and feel I should no longer trespass on your generosity."

"Say rather hospitality, Frank, for that is a duty all men owe to a stranger, though to you the duty is also a pleasure."

I bowed my head and thanked him. Truly, if the wisdom and experience of age were always sweetened with courteous consideration, they would be much more powerful for good.

"I feel now," I continued, "that I should at once commence to earn my bread, and that for the future idleness will neither be desirable nor expedient."

"Idleness is never either desirable or expedient, Frank; for it makes impossible the noble joy of success, or the happy realization of leisure."

"Then, again, I feel it is my duty to return to the Middle Globe, that I may relieve the anxiety of my mother; and, if I have your permission, make known how paradise is regained when a nation is guided by the laws of the Almighty as ineffaceably written on the page of Nature, and expounded by Christ."

"Frank, would you like to stay with us?"

"Were it not my duty to relieve my mother's anxiety, and also bring to my countrymen knowledge that will change rivers of misery into seas of joy, I should crave permission to live and die amongst the people of Zara."

"Mary has told me that your mother has other sons, besides daughters and grandchildren, and a brother of the same ways of thought as herself, who advises her as to the management, or mismanagement, of her wealthy holdings; also, that you have been seldom at home since your youth, and that ere this the *Prospector* and her crew will have been given up as lost; for these reasons, Frank, your mother will have slowly, and almost without grief, come to regard you as dead. Therefore, you need not return on her account. Now, as to bringing perfect civilization to the imperfectly educated communities of the Middle Globe, you could hardly do that at present. Wait till you comprehend our civilization, and have seen it put in force in Ura, which is a community like that which you call the United States of America in the Middle Globe; you can then return armed with knowledge and proof that will enable you to change the unhappy ignorance and suffering of the world to the enlightened knowledge and happiness that exists at Zara."

The duke's wise words woke memories in my mind. This old man, fortified by the experience of a life of wise energy, had rightly realized my position.

"I agree with all you say, Duke Mura, though I feel a longing to relieve my mother's mind, and to see that she is well and happy."

"Such a feeling does you honour, but expediency must prevail."

"How can I be of use in this community, Duke? Doubtless the medical and surgical science is as much in advance of that which I practise as are all other things?"

"You are right, Frank; but here there is an opening for every man according to his abilities; and as in all human communities men of great energy are scarce, for such there is a demand. From what I have seen of you, I give you credit for the energy and good qualities which, I have been informed by Mary, you possess."

"You overwhelm me. In the past I have done nothing worthy of remark, and in the future I can only do my best."

"This evening you will come before the assembled Parliament, over which I preside; they will welcome you as a citizen of Zara. And then I propose that you join the Assembly of Surgeons, commence the practice of your profession, and take that active part in politics and our union with Ura for which circumstances and your ability and energy have fitted you."

What could I say? Nothing. Such a speech could only be acknowledged.

"I feel I do not deserve your kindness and confidence," I replied, brokenly, "though in the future I will strive to do so."

"You will want some money for your immediate necessities," said the duke. "Here is a receipt-book for you; fill out a receipt for a hundred crowns, and I will give you a cheque for the amount."

"Vernon Dreman has already given me fifty crowns; but I will take the receipt-book, with your permission, that I may acknowledge his loan."

"That was thoughtful of him. He is a very clever, ambitious man, and already a leader in Ura; he will one day be a reformer as great as the 'Law-giver' himself. He wishes to marry Mary, and probably will; she is just the wife for him, though as yet he has not won her love. I cannot imagine why, except that perhaps he seeks too much to force her admiration, and not enough to sue for it. Women cannot be measured by any rule."

This fact had been discovered very early in the world's history.

"I am going to the Parliament House," continued the duke; "if you come, I will show you over it."

I thanked him, and away we went. On turning a corner, I saw towering above the block opposite me a dome, on the summit of which stood the statue of a man looking heavenwards, a roll of papers in his left hand, while his right seemed to direct his gaze. The dome rested on a square tower, at each corner of which stood the figure of a man. This tower stood in the centre of a great dome, which surmounted two great squares, the ground-plan of the lower of which, at its base, was 300 feet square. The structure was magnificent. The god-like splendour of the marble figure on the summit seemed symbolical of man's supremacy.

"That is our Parliament House," said the duke; "and the heroic marble figure on its tower is that of William O'Brien, who designed all the building, with the exception that on its summit he intended to have an emblem of the sun."

We went into the middle of the square, and here we saw the wonderful structure, though we were too near to see the dome. The building was square, and approached on all sides by marble steps. Huge pillars, at regular intervals, supported the roof, which slightly projected over the walls of the building. We walked up the steps and entered. Passing through two handsome rooms, we came to the assembly chamber, which was of wonderful magnificence, capable of seating at least 15,000 people. The room was square, with one end partitioned off, from which came a circular-ended part for the meeting of members of the House of Titles and the Senate. This part was surrounded by tiers of seats arranged much as they are in theatres, but with more numerous passages. Here the duke left me, and shortly after I was joined by a strong, ruddy-faced man with brown eyes, straight

features, and a curled auburn moustache. He was perfectly dressed, and from his buttonhole flower and well-gloved hands to the minutest point of his toilet, would have passed for a London dandy in morning dress, had not his energetic walk betrayed the man of action.

"The Duke Mura has sent me to you, Dr. Farleigh," he said, "with orders to introduce myself. I am Diso Car Rota, the head scavenger of the north of Zara, and have the honour of the Duke's friendship, and the benefit of his support." We shook hands, and he began to point out to me various interesting things.

"Of course, you know that this is the great assembly-room where the members of the House of Titles meet the senators to-night?"

"I am in complete ignorance," I answered, "of the Political Government of Zara. And only know of Fregida, that Ura has a Government similar to that of the United States of America. Please tell me how the duke knows about America, and how Zara is governed."

"With pleasure. We are in frequent communication with all other parts of the globe. The reason of our wonderful success is that a great mind—that of the 'Law-giver'—had despotic control over a semi-barbarous but clever race; this control he maintained and enforced by the power he gained through secret communication with what were then the most civilized nations of the earth. This communication we still maintain, and we have always some of our men travelling to obtain any important discovery that may be made elsewhere. This is not yet generally known, as we think the multitude are as yet sufficiently fully employed, by the changes taking place at Frigida. Your second question requires consideration. Let me see. You say you know nothing whatever about our Government?"

"Absolutely nothing whatever," I replied.

"Then I will begin from the foundation, and add fact to fact till I have given you a verbal sketch of it all. Every district is governed by its municipality, which acts under the laws of Zara, which are decreed by Parliament, which consists of a Senate of two hundred representatives, each of whom is elected for four years, and fifty of whom retire every year."

"By whom are they elected?"

"By a majority of the voters of their province, who consist of all the married men, widows and widowers."

"What a strange selection! Do you mean to say that a man who is of age and, say, a lawyer, would not have the same voting power as a widow, simply because he is a bachelor?"

"Certainly I do," replied Diso. "Marriage is the first law of God and nature, and the foundation of civilization. It is not only the duty, but the highest privilege of men and women to marry. So to all who neglect their duty, or are unable to obtain

this privilege, we do not give a vote, as we hold that those who cannot arrange for themselves this simplest matter, are not fit to help to arrange the affairs of a nation."

"Then why not give the married women votes?"

"For two reasons. One of which is that the sensible married women, with few exceptions, control their husband's vote. The second is, that it is unwise to do anything that could possibly bring discord between husband and wife. In every case, if two people work together, one must have at least nominal supremacy, and nature ordains that the male should have it. I say nominal, for in reality the women are the controlling power. They bring up their sons to a career, in which they are guided and controlled by their wives."

"Why do you give widows and widowers votes?"

"Because it would not be just to deprive a man of a privilege because he has had the misfortune to lose his wife; and when a woman loses her husband, who voted for her, she must be allowed to vote for herself."

"Who are eligible for election to the Senate?"

"All male voters are eligible who are nominated by ten per cent. of the electors; who can by a request in writing to the Senate, from at least three-fifths of their number, have the election of any senator annulled."

"Now, who composes the House of Titles?"

"The House of Titles is composed of all the titled men in Zara. We have three titles, that of Sir, Lord, and Duke. These titles are conferred by President and Parliament for services to the State, or to reward any career of great excellence; they can also be purchased for twenty, forty, or sixty thousand pounds respectively. In each case they are only for life, and carry an income of one, two or three thousand crowns per annum. These noblemen can be deprived of their title which carries the income, by a majority of Parliament."

"Is that ever done?"

"Sometimes, but very rarely; for instance, lately a man of excellent character, while sinking a well on his land, discovered by chance a coal mine. The wealth he acquired spoiled him, he claimed credit for the working of chance, and purchased for himself a dukedom for 60,000*l*. The two Houses met at once and cancelled the title, so he lost his money; but this is an extreme case."

"It seems to me rather hard on the man."

"The coal mine was to blame, it took him from a position which he adorned, and placed him in one he disgraced. The House of Titles can also veto any bill of the Senate, for two years, if it has not been passed by a three-fifths majority. There only now remains the President to describe. He is elected for ten years by the Parliament from amongst the members of either House, and can only be deposed by written request to the Senate

and House of Titles, signed by three-fifths of the voters. This, however, has never been done. The President can veto any bill for two years, that is not passed by a three-fifth majority of both branches of Parliament. This also has never been done, for the Senate, who directly represent the people, have the power, and no one is so foolish to oppose them, even if any one wished, which I doubt. They may be delayed, but cannot be denied."

The duke now returned with Vernon.

"Come, Frank," said the duke, "we will show you some of the other chambers before we return to supper. Will you sup with us, Diso?"

Diso answered in the affirmative.

The duke continued, "This is where the two legislating bodies meet on certain occasions, such as to-night, for the election of a president, or a member of the Cabinet."

"How do you elect your Cabinet?" I asked.

"They are elected, or dismissed, by a majority of both assemblies together."

We now went through more magnificent rooms, and came to a chamber like the one we had left, but much smaller. This was the Senate Chamber, we next came to the chamber of the Titled assembly, which was like the chambers we had left, but more luxuriantly fitted up. The President had splendid rooms for himself and his family in the building, and all the attendants were suitably lodged. We passed through libraries, sitting-rooms, billiard-rooms, dining-rooms, and rooms of every description that could be required in a building combining all the advantages of an hotel and club.

"I suppose all these splendid conveniences are to reward the members of Parliament for their labours?"

"Yes," said the duke; "in addition to the senators' three hundred crowns a year, and the President's one thousand crowns above any salary he may have from a title."

"This payment seems either too little or too much. Too little to induce the best men to devote time to the service of the State; and too much, if you have a sufficient number of men, who are able and willing to do so for the sake of patriotism."

"Patriotism alone," said the duke, "is not sufficient. A man's first duty is to earn sufficient to maintain himself and his family. After this duty is done there is not one man in every five hundred who has sufficient time left at his disposal to properly attend to legislating. There is another class which includes all who have inherited sufficient means to maintain them; these are very scarce in Zara, scarce in Ura, and numbering about one in every three hundred in Gurla, which is a Monarchy with hereditary titles, and laws that allow a man who has made money to leave it to maintain descendants in idleness, to their ruin and the detriment of the State. Both these classes in Gurla do not number more

than one in every two hundred, while in Zara they are much less; to these you may add an undesirable class of politicians, who enter parliament as a means of gaining power, and indirectly money. Thus, in a gratuitous parliament you have less than two per cent. of the population to choose from, and these are more or less inbued with class prejudices. In a paid parliament—surely the labourer is worthy of his hire—you have the choice of all those who would devote their life to legislating, for a sufficiency, and a further reward; if successful, of a title and many honours. In Zara every legislator is expected to go among his constituents, and give them reasons for his actions, and elevate their political ideas."

"Does this not tend to cause him to be unduly influenced in favour of gaining for his constituency a greater expenditure of public money than its due?"

"No; because we guard against this by making the districts large, so that if a member corruptly gained votes in one part he would be sure to lose them elsewhere."

"After all," said Vernon, "the main thing is to educate and elevate the people, in which case they will refuse to be badly ruled whether their legislators are paid or unpaid."

"Had we not better return," asked Diso, "so that we may be in time for the President's banquet to meet the Delegates from Ura?"

"You are right, Diso," said the duke, and we returned.

In the sitting-room Mary was waiting.

"Frank," she said, with eager animation, "to-night the President gives a banquet to the members of the House of Titles and their wives, to meet the Delegates from Ura. To this I am invited. After it is over, the Senate and House of Titles meet in the great assembly room. The Delegates will be introduced, Vernon, who is their President, will make a speech, the duke will reply, and then perhaps I shall speak—I am prepared. You will then be introduced, and received as a citizen to Zara. I think you will be asked to speak; if so, tell us of the England you come from, and speak as you feel, and fearlessly. Vernon, who does everything well, speaks magnificently; the duke also is a splendid speaker, but in a different style. Do not be afraid, Frank, I know you will do well, but I want you to triumph. Nitho will take you where you can see the banquet if you wish, now I must go. Be brave."

She was gone. She looked a goddess. Even in the triumph of preparing to hear her lover speak, she was kind to me—the castaway from beyond the regions of the ice. I paced up and down thinking of what I should say; of the kindness I had received; of the land I had left where pale-faced destitution and plethoric waste went side by side; where children were reared to crime, and helpless women driven to the gutters; where ignorance fostered these things, repelled the progress of wisdom, and mis-

used the offering of charity. As I paced to and fro, Nitho came in.

"Frank," she said, "I have been searching for you, go and make yourself as nice as possible, and then come to supper quickly, after which we will go and see the banquet."

I did as I was told, and on my return found Nitho impatiently waiting for me.

"You shall see the loveliest sight you ever witnessed, Frank, so eat your supper quickly. What are you looking so serious for?"

"Because I have to be introduced to the Senate, and I don't know what to say."

"That does not matter, people will be listening to Vernon or thinking of what he has said, he is so clever." Nitho talked on and on; it was awful, and Vernon's magnificence occupied every second sentence. At last we got away, and returned to the Parliament House to see the banquet.

CHAPTER VII.

AN AUSPICIOUS UNION.

We entered at the President's door, where we saw a number of waiters in black with short jackets such as are worn by stewards. To my surprise we found Ion and Diso amongst them. Ion took us into the banqueting-room.

"I did not know you were a waiter, Ion."

"Nor am I," he said, "but, as a reward, certain of us are allowed to act as waiters on state occasions, of which this is one of the most important in the history of Zara."

"I suppose you are well paid?"

"Yes; we are very well paid, though only in honour and not in coin; come, you and Nitho must take your places."

We were conducted to a group of ferns in a corner at the top of the room, behind which were two seats. These we occupied.

"Now, mind you don't talk, Nitho," said Ion, and left us.

We looked round. The room was marble pillared, and profusely decorated with ferns and flowers, amongst which tiny electric lamps sparkled. The light principally came from two chandeliers suspended from the ceiling. Half hidden in foliage, was a string band, of piano, harp and violins.

"Isn't it lovely?" said Nitho.

"Ion said you were not to talk."

"It does not matter if I am not heard."

The tables were arranged like an elongated horseshoe, and on every second chair was a bouquet of red and white camellias, which were the national flower of Ura.

"Hush!" said Nitho. The band played.

The President entered with a lady from Ura on his arm. Next came Vernon with some one I did not know—I was afraid he might have taken in Mary. They were received by two waiters, who marched in front, conducting them on either of the exterior sides of the tables towards the top of the room; the couples continued alternately going to either side till there were two magnificently dressed processions of splendid personages led respectively by the President and Vernon, coming towards the head of the table. At last Mary came, loveliest of them all,

dressed in dark blue velvet, trimmed with velvet of a lighter blue, her hair simply done in a knot on the top of her head, and brushed back from her forehead. Her every movement was grace itself, and with every turn of her head she seemed an apparition of greater loveliness. Almost too beautiful, I thought. Could so lovely and clever a woman have a feminine heart?

The waiters now directed some of the guests down the centre of the table, till presently up the two inner sides went processions similar to those on the outer, and by the time the President and Vernon had got to the head of the table the end of the inner circle had been reached and the room was nearly full. When the last of the guests had entered, the chairs were moved for the ladies, who sat down, and then the men took their seats. The music ceased, and the President stood up and said grace.

"I do wish I was quite grown up and then I might be sitting at the table like Mary," said Nitho.

"You are just as well off where you are."

"That's impossible when I don't think so."

"What has the duke got on his head?" I asked.

"His coronet, of course," said Nitho, surprised at my ignorance. "All dukes have coronets, lords have a gold insignia for their button-hole, and knights a silver one."

As I looked at the faces at the table, I was surprised at the robustness of the men and the healthy looks of the women; of the six or seven hundred persons at dinner, there was not one who was not of large stature and seemingly in perfect health. With this exception, and the fact that there was no wine or beer, and the people were merry, the dinner was such a one as you would expect royalty or a millionaire to give. During dinner the band played continuously, but not loud enough to interfere with the conversation. There were no speeches, and when dinner was over the ladies left. Vernon and the other delegates were conducted through one door by the waiters, and the President and legislators left by another.

"Come along," said Nitho, "I know where to go." And away we went to the Great Assembly Hall, which was now filled with people. Tier above tier was occupied, the only vacant seats being some to the right of the Speaker's throne, and those which the legislators were to occupy.

The members of the House of Titles and the senators now began to take their places; then the ladies I had seen at dinner took the vacant rows of seats; the ones behind, Nitho told me, being filled with the senators' wives.

The scene was magnificent; the brilliant light and assembled thousands terrified me when I thought that I might have to speak before them. "Speak as you feel and fearlessly," the words echoed in my ears. Some announcement was made and the duke entered, while every one stood up.

A short prayer was said, and we all, following the duke's example, sat down. A clerk rose and read from a warrant that Parliament had been called together by order of the President to receive a deputation from the people of Ura proposing their federation with the people of Zara, &c., &c., &c., and sat down. A messenger came to the bar of the House and announced that a deputation came from the Parliament of Ura. Being bid to bring them in, he left and returned with the deputation, at whose head was Vernon, in a dress like our Court dress, with a sword at his side.

As he came, legislators and people rose, the latter of whom applauded until the great hall echoed with the clapping of their hands. Vernon bowed low right and left. How handsome he looked gracefully receiving the ovation of this splendid multitude as his due! No wonder Mary loved him. The seats were resumed, and Vernon spoke. Slowly and distinctly he gravely began. I will give his every word—his gesture, which illustrated his words so that their meaning instantly reached the hearts and minds of his audience—I cannot reproduce; would that I could—they were complete in their perfection.

"My Lord Speaker, Nobles and Senators, to you as the representatives of the people of Zara, I bring a message of love from the people of Ura sent by their Houses of Parliament. This message is to propose to unite these two nations, who are virtually one, being only separated by an imaginary boundary, and slight differences in their laws, which we now propose to assimilate. That our message may the more loudly appeal to your minds, I ask your permission to recall to you things from the past, and to mention things of the present.

"Many generations ago, when we were savages, such as the Rodas are now, the Law-giver and his two companions, being the only survivors from the ship *Arctic*, were rescued by a party of Rodas, and so the darkness of ignorance was dispelled by the bright light of perfect civilization. Mysterious and inscrutable to the finite mind of man are the workings of the infinite Almighty. Can any one say that the disaster to the *Arctic*, which was the cause of bringing happiness to the millions beyond the ice, was but a chance? Does any one believe that the survival of the great Law-giver, from whom alone came the knowledge that has enabled savage people to attain a civilization that has made destitution unknown, disease scarce, and happiness universal, was but the working of chance? If there is such a one, he must also believe that the infinite number of spheres which traverse the universe, and the laws which govern the world are also the works of chance, which is a thing no reasonable person can do. As you have heard, when the Law-giver had founded Zara in wisdom and strength, he allowed his friends, James Smith and Edward Vance, each of whom had received all the wisdom from him that their

smaller minds were capable of containing, to leave the City of the Voa with a picked and trusted band of followers, and establish themselves on the fertile banks of the Yanga and the Warna. Vance, in his vain ignorance, proclaimed himself king on the model of those countries which still try to extend the government of barbarism to meet the requirements of civilization. His doings, however, do not now further concern us. The people of Ura, whom James Smith established, have progressed till their governing system, which was possible when many of them were uneducated, has become impossible now that all are educated. Charity has been extended till now the wise and thrifty maintain the worthless, so that their numbers are increasing faster than are the numbers of the provident, and chaos approaches.

"Before the coming of Grieve Gathos, the wicked and foolish were prevented from becoming unbearably numerous by the deadly ravages of cold, starvation, and disease. Gathos stirred the hearts of the people, which always long for good, to give, to save these creatures from the miseries of their crimes, their faults and the prevailing laws. Gold poured in, in such a stream, and was so wisely expended, that it returned the wherewithal to supply food and shelter to all who would ask it, so that the parasites of society were preserved, to increase and multiply, and entice to their ranks all that were weak, so that now in Ura we have multitudes who feel no shame living on charity, as thriftlessly as the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, who regard not anything beyond the wants of the present. We have now, in Ura, multitudes of people—men, women, and children—who loiter in the streets in filthy rags, or who pursue vocations such as selling trinkets, which cannot possibly gain them a living. These people exist by misdirected charity.

"In our community no one is allowed to keep any animal, even the meanest, unless they can properly feed and maintain it.

"In our community no thing or animal that is detrimental to the general welfare is allowed to increase its species. And yet the community maintains in its midst human beings who are ill-fed, ill-clothed, and oftentimes diseased. And these people who are a greater curse to it than any animal or plant, are allowed unrestrained to propagate and increase, so that the harm they do society will not die with them. This has been because we misinterpreted liberty to mean that a man who does no active wrong must be allowed to do all the passive wrong that suits his disposition. These people are maintained because Christ says, Give to the poor, which does not mean support the unworthy so that they may multiply and maintain all evil. When I think of what has been and is, I am weighted down by sorrow, but when I think of what will be I am elated by joy. For I am as certain that these evils will be suppressed and that good will come in their stead, as I am that the evils of Ura are caused by misdirected good

and that the flow of sympathy in Zara will bear the fruit of action."

Again the great building echoed with the applause of the assembled multitude, to which were added the acclamations of assent from the nobles and senators.

Again Vernon bowed, but now his eyes were active, gleaming with rage or softening with sorrow in accord with his words. His nostrils expanded, his pale face worked and his actions were as eloquent as his words. While he was speaking we heard and saw him only, being oblivious of all but the erect form of the orator, and the magic of his eloquence.

"In Zara you progressed under the directions of the Law-giver. Perfect freedom was deemed to mean the right to lead any life that would repay the person so that he might have a sufficiency of food and raiment. Any one who could not do this was kept by the State, for whom he worked according to his abilities, till he had paid for his keep and earned sufficient to maintain him in freedom, till he could with energy find remunerative work.

"The State belonged to the individual and the individual to the State; therefore, if a man could not maintain himself, he was maintained by the State, and made to work long hours, so that when he should be released the healthful work of self-support would be a pleasure to him. Those who were incorrigible were maintained in comfort by the State in company with their own sex only, that their unwished-for kind might not be multiplied.

"Thus in plenty and happiness have all men lived, the wise increasing and the wicked decreasing, till in Zara the jails are empty, the asylums tenantless, and even Pentona but sparsely occupied. Seeing these things, we come to you, representatives of the people of Zara, and say, Let our laws be repealed and your laws be our laws in their place. Let the Parliament be held alternately at Zara and Ura; let us have representatives according to our population; let us have one coinage; and to commemorate our union, let learned men from each city together issue a phonetic dictionary, so that all our people may speak exactly the same tongue. And lend us the money to bring these things to pass. I am the mouthpiece of my colleagues, and together we represent Ura, whose message we have delivered."

Vernon sat down, and again the applause echoed and re-echoed through the building.

The duke now rose, and with a stately courtesy, almost unaccompanied by action, spoke,—

"Delegates from the people of Ura, having heard your words, I say, in the name of the people of Zara, that you and they are welcome to us."

Again the applause resounded, this time to confirm the duke's words.

"Long have we worked that the people of Ura and Zara, who are of the one race, might have the same laws, and be united in every way. That the Law-giver came to Voa and not to the Yanga is due alone to Providence. To him, under the will of the Almighty, belongs the prosperity and happiness of Zara, for which we should be thankful but not proud. Had we been directed by James Smith, and the people of Ura by the Law-giver, would we have been as wise as they have been to-day? We may hope so, but we cannot be certain. This union will be good for both people, and the foundation of happiness for all the earth.

"Knowing the feeling of the Parliament, I will personally take its vote. All who are in favour of our union with Ura will proclaim that fact by rising and asserting their minds."

Nobles and senators rose with one accord, and their exclamations, "Aye, aye," were lost in the confirming applause of the people.

Again the duke rose.

"It now remains for me to arrange with the President of Zara and President Dreman of Ura the first meeting of the combined legislators. This I will do. For the union which, I feel sure, will shortly be a fact, we are indebted to President Dreman, to whom the United Nations will accord all honour. But President Dreman's labours would not have succeeded for many years yet were they not supported by the efforts of Mary Vernon, to whom praise and honour is also due. Legislators of Zara, shall Mary Vernon be asked to speak?"

Again the legislators rose as one man, and again their "Ayes" were drowned in the applause of the multitude.

Slowly Mary came to the bar of the House. The duke and senators rose and bowed to her, and then resumed their seats. Till the legislators were seated she stood motionless. It seemed many minutes, though it could not have been many seconds; she looked like a divine messenger; her colour was heightened, and she seemed to have the royalty of a queen of heaven.

"My Lord Speaker and legislators of the people of Zara, Mr. President and delegates of the people of Ura, I have a joyful presentiment that this is the last time you will be addressed in these terms."

The applause before had been enthusiastic, but it was now doubly so. The grave "hear, hears," from the duke and every legislator of Zara or Ura were barely heard in the loud enthusiasm that seemed to make the very walls vibrate.

"In the union of two nations, or the union of two people, it ill becomes either to speak of which is giving the most or the least. Success is only gained when each strives for the benefit of the other, and in the other's happiness make their joy. If in a forest are two men apart, they may each be attacked by animals that dare not assail them if they were together, and they can never

rest in safety. If these men unite, a host of enemies that dare attack them when alone would vanish, and they will both be benefited. So with Ura and Zara; the Gurlas and Rodas, who have harassed us apart, dare not approach us when united; and though we gain much, we lose nothing. In Zara, no change worthy of mention will take place; in Ura, those of the generous who have more than sufficient for their wants will give money to the State, to be expended wisely for the support of the destitute, instead of giving it, as they now do, to be spent with little wisdom and great detriment.

"Of those unworthy people who have more than sufficient for their wants and give nothing, a tax will be levied on their abundance, both for their benefit and the good of the State. Those who have only sufficient will no longer be grieved by the sight of their suffering brethren, while the destitute and wicked will be restrained and treated with a kindness they would never otherwise receive. So that temptations will be removed and happiness established. If I have done aught to hasten this, I shall be more than rewarded when I see happiness take the place of sorrow, and know I have laboured to bring about the change; but I shall ask a further favour, namely, that of suggesting a name for the united nations. The Rodas from whom we have all sprung call wedlock 'Undara.' Would such a name, in the absence of a better, be suitable to the wedlock of Zara and Ura? This question the united legislators alone can decide."

Mary bowed and retired, while the audience echoed the new name; till "Undara" the united nations became in the minds of the people.

The duke rose.

"From the land that gave us the Law-giver has come to Zara one who like him was lost in the ice, but who has alone survived his unfortunate companions. In such a time as this, when the civilization of Zara is being elsewhere adopted, it would be interesting to hear of the progress of civilization and happiness at the Middle Globe. Shall Frank Farleigh speak?"

The answer, "Yes, yes," roared in my brain and darkened my eyes;—"Speak as you think, speak as you think, and fearlessly." In the blindness of my terror, Mary seemed to stand before me and beckon me to advance. I moved to the bar of the House and spoke, though my brain was in a whirl, and my words came involuntarily.

"My friends, I was lost in the wilderness of the ice and snow, where all my comrades lay dead; with the coming night I would have joined them, for the hand of death was almost on me. An angry bear came, seemingly to hasten my end, when Ion Mura appeared in his sleigh, killed the bear, and saved me. Since then I have been treated as a favoured guest in the house of Duke Mura.

"Of the civilization of the Middle Globe, I can only say that it has added to the luxury of the rich without detracting from the misery of the poor; that the weight of labour and the hours of toil are but little changed for the better, that neither temperance nor virtue have prevailed, that the plethora of wealth and the misery of starvation are side by side; that the idle and criminal multiply on the alms of the generous, while brave men and noble women live in celibacy rather than bring children into a world, the misery of which is alway watching to overwhelm them. Would that they could see the wisdom of shielding the fool from his folly, and the idler from his loathsomeness.

"Send to them, I pray you, the message of your wise civilization, that joy may come to all."

I returned to my seat, ignorant of what I had said till I saw the papers of next day. A hand was laid on my shoulder.

"Bravo, Frank!" said Diso.

"The Duchess has sent for you, come with me."

I was brought to realize the present. A trumpet sounded, the proclamation of adjournment was made, and the Duke bowed and left the chamber.

"Come," said Diso, and led me away. We found the Duchess in the President's reception room, she spoke kindly of my speech and presented me to the President and his wife, the Duke and Duchess Phedra. The great room was thronged with tastefully dressed men and women, all of the latter who were from Ura being noticeable by their contracted waists and comparatively uniform appearance. Vernon and Mary were each receiving the universal congratulations on their speeches, and being the cause of hastening the desired union; the new name, Undara, was universally used, and had evidently accorded with the popular taste. At last we left, and on reaching home the Duchess whispered to me, "Come to me in the Duke's study, Frank, I have something to say to you." She left and shortly after I followed and found her sitting in the Duke's easy chair. The room was dimly lighted, but I could see she was very grave. I sat down.

"How eager everyone seemed to-night for the union of the sister communities," I said.

She ignored my sentence and asked, "Frank, do you love Mary?"

Why did she want to know? Was she, too, going to tell me that Mary would marry Vernon?

"Yes; who could help loving her?" I said in despair.

"You surely know what I mean?" said the Duchess seriously. "Do you love her with your whole heart and soul? Is she the only woman in the world for you? Do you wish to make her your wife?"

"Aye, that I do, though I know the wish is hopeless. She is the joy of the world to me. With her as my wife, I could be

doubly strong and brave, looking to the future fearlessly, knowing that works I could not finish would be completed by some who would be wiser images of myself with the noble nature of their mother. Knowing that daughters should make happy my old age, and that my lovely Mary would be mine for ever. That together we would rise and rise till we reached the happiness of heaven. Without her I have only my work to cheer and comfort me." My head fell on my hands, I was in despair.

"Frank, my dear, come to me."

I went to the Duchess, resting on one knee by her chair. She took my face in both her hands and kissed me.

"She was to have been the wife of my dear son Seena, who thought as you have spoken, and would have realized what you have said. But he was killed."

The tears were in the mother's eyes, and she sorrowed for her son. Presently she spoke again,—

"Mary's deep grief is past, and her lover is but a memory, this is right, she would have given her life to him, but he is gone. Frank, dear, you remind me of my son, like him you are brave and good. Vernon loves Mary, but she cannot love him. Frank, dear, in Ura—it is horrible—the men do not lead pure lives. In the streets you will see all day long, women, some of them beautiful women, loitering and smiling at the men as they pass. Frank, can a woman love a man whose life has been soiled by these creatures? Can she believe that he will regard her as something quite different from them? Frank, I would have Mary, who is to me as a daughter, marry a man in every way worthy of her, which Vernon is not. Mary knows these things. Go to her to-morrow, early, and tell her of your love. Vernon will ask her to be his wife, and if she has heard you, she may not take him, he is brave and good, but he is a man of Ura and not worthy of Mary."

The advice of the Duchess was wise. I kissed her hand, which trembled with emotion.

"Frank, be here to-morrow, early, before breakfast, and I will send Mary in to write a letter for me, ask her then; after breakfast Vernon will ask her, but you must be first."

CHAPTER VIII.

INFELIX FELIX.

In the morning I awoke early and got up and dressed. Vernon was asleep, and lay quiet as a child. His restless energy and comprehensive brain, so active in the day, needed the kind restorative of a night of rest to fit them for fresh work. Elsewhere than in Zara he would not have found a woman to refuse him, but here the purity of the men was regarded as necessary as the purity of the women. They had indeed reached a state of civilization I thought unattainable. Leaving Vernon asleep, I went to the study to wait for Mary; success seemed too much to hope for, but who could say?--at the worst I could only fail. The time went so slowly; I had so little to hope for. At last she came.

"Frank, what are you doing?" she asked in surprise.

"Nothing," I said, stupidly.

"So I see; but what did you come here to do?"

"To tell you I love you—though that everyone does. To tell you that you are the sunshine of my life, and that if I cannot win you for my wife, I shall not seek for happiness here, but only hereafter. Mary, may I hope that you may learn to love me? Perhaps——"

"Frank, we know nothing of each other; if you love so quickly will you not soon forget?"

"Forget you, Mary, that is impossible, all my life I have been longing for you. Is it only chance that has brought me to you? Not in all the world is there a woman so beautiful, or so good!"

"Oh! Frank, I sometimes thought you loved me, but never like this."

"Mary, let me hope, only let me hope. I will strive for your love and be patient. Do not refuse me yet!"

"Frank, I do not—think— I love you!"

A voice came carolling along the passage, and the door opened. Nitho entered; her eyes opened very wide.

"It seems possible to make hay before the sun has begun to shine. Which of you is to blame for this?" she asked, in mock anger.

"Nitho, you must always knock before you enter a room," said Mary, severely.

"In future I shall not either knock or enter a room where you and Frank are, I have a feeling heart. It's empty at present, and contains apartments to suit a single gentleman."

Nitho's merry audacity was irresistible, even Mary smiled, and I, seeing nothing was to be gained by staying, left. I never felt more elated in my life. Vernon's chance was now not worth much, while mine was excellent. What an angel I had won, or rather, stood a good chance of winning. Starvation was nothing, if I had only known what was to follow. Poor Vernon, I felt quite sorry for him, but he could easily get a wife, while for me it was Mary or celibacy. At breakfast, everyone was doubly gay. The next two days, or rather afternoons, were to be kept as holidays and devoted to sport of all sorts in honour of the visit of the delegates from Ura.

The Duchess saw by my face that I had told Mary of my love and prospered in my suit. Mary was grave, but her sweet face was undisturbed by doubt. Surely in time she would love me, as I felt she could love, with that thoroughness a woman feels for the man who gives his life for her service, and becomes her champion and her hero. Poor Vernon looked a conqueror as he was, little believing the woman he had chosen, and thought he had only to ask, would refuse him, because his life was not up to her standard of right. After breakfast Vernon joined Mary, and they went away together. The Duchess was wise, had I not spoken when I did, the fortress of Mary's heart—a fortress with all women made to be conquered by the knight who comes inspired by love, armed with devotion, and ready, as all true knights are, for victory or death—would have capitulated to the devotion of Vernon; this the Duchess had seen, and, inspired by prejudice, been my friend

"Frank," she said, "I am so glad you have been successful."

"I have not been quite successful; Mary said she did not think she loved me."

"But she did not refuse you," said the Duchess smiling, "and so will feel bound to refuse Vernon, whom she otherwise would have accepted; for he is a lover of whom any girl would be proud, and with a woman admiration begets love. She told me she had met you in the study, and when I said I felt sure you loved her and were worthy of her, she kissed me, and made no reply."

Long afterwards I heard from Mary what I shall now write. Vernon asked her to come to the rotunda tower, and she went; he then told her that his life had been a life of work and victory—which was true—and that in the future he would bring happiness to the land of his birth, which he hoped, and believed, would reward him with the highest honours—all these things afterwards came to pass. He said also that he had had but little happiness, and

though he was honoured in the land, no heart beat for him alone, as his beat for her. He then asked her to share his life and be his wife and his angel.

He was a brave wooer, and nearly won the woman he loved, her heart softened to him, but something—perhaps the Duchess had whispered in her ear a warning of men who come from a land where immorality is but a thing to smile at; perhaps the love I had shown—made her refuse his suit. She said she was honoured above all women by gaining the love of Vernon and myself; mine was no great triumph, though after all if a woman has the love of a strong man, who finds favour in her eyes, it is the foundation of happiness for all her life, and so, for her, a great thing.

Vernon's pale face was paler, but he showed no sign of his sorrow. Like all rulers of the world, he was brave under defeat, and modest under triumph. Though I had won Mary from him, it was not through my strength, but his weakness; and all my life I felt that by her love alone could I be worthy of the place in her heart from which I had driven him.

Early in the day we left by tram for the recreation grounds, which were about seven miles from the centre of Zara. The trams, which were something like those in Melbourne or Chicago, were perfect as a means of transit, passing your doorway at least every minute, or within a hundred and twenty yards of it, they took you on with one charge to your destination. Each tram consisted of two cars, the first of which was open at the sides, the second closed in, and each had a row of seats back to back, down the top, which gave a splendid view of everything they passed. The grounds were enclosed with a corrugated iron fence about six feet high, on top of which was open wire netting, which extended for about two feet supported by barbed wire. On one side was a huge pavilion capable of seating forty thousand people, and of sheltering nearly as many more; in the centre of the grounds was a space divided off for the football match, which was to be played between teams from Zara and Ura, and in another part of the ground a track for foot-racing. The shops and business places closed at noon, and from 12½ till 14 o'clock the trams came from Zara in one long ling at intervals of about three hundred yards. Many of the passengers stepped off the trams before they stopped, and in less than a minute from the time of stopping the last of them had reached the road, and the tram was returning to Zara. On every side of the grounds the trams brought the sight-seers, till in an hour and a half they had carried over sixty thousand people to the sports. I went with Nitho and Mary to see the footballers, and found to my delight that Cula was the captain of those representing Zara. Daisy was with him, and had been staying at the house of his parents, a natural and proper arrangement that would have been at least unusual at the Middle Globe.

The teams, each of twenty as with us, were magnificent men, though those of Zara were much the finer on an average. Cula in his football dress was a perfect model, and in every way suggested an athlete of ancient Greece or Troy. While nearly every player for Zara had his betrothed with him, the Ura team were, with an occasional exception, unbetrothed, and without an exception were not accompanied by their lady loves. The Zara team wore grey, trimmed with pink, and those from Ura black and yellow; each of the uniforms being both handsome and effective.

Looking round on the assembled multitude of men, women, and children, the complete absence of poverty or coarseness was a striking feature in the scene.

"I have never seen so splendid a crowd in all my life, Mary," I said; "it is like a scene from the future painted by a hopeful dreamer. Is there absolutely no poverty in Zara?"

"Oh, yes," she replied, "there is lots of poverty in Zara, but no destitution; destitute people are sent to Pentona; at Ura you will see lots of wretched mortals in every crowd who have little more reason than the wolves, and are much more degraded than any animal could be."

"But now," saith Nitho, "that Ura is the second city of Undara, all the destitute people and loafers will be sent to Pentona, and then the crowds will be shorn of their objectionable elements."

A bell rang, and the players, most of whom wore Inverness capes, as their clothes were of the lightest possible decription, threw off their overcoats and entered the enclosure. Every one's attention was directed to the gate, and in the midst of hand-clapping, a man dressed completely in white entered, to whom they all rose their caps. His back was towards us, but his graceful strength was strikingly displayed, in a tight knitted singlet, and tight knickerbockers. Everything he wore, from his silk cap to his running shoes, were at once suited to display his strength, and load it in the slightest degree. They came to the centre of the ground, and so approached us.

"Why, that is Vernon in white; what is he doing here?" I asked, in surprise.

"Acting as central umpire," said Nitho; "of all umpires he he is the best, he can do nearly everything well, and though he never competes, as he says he is too old, he is the leading supporter and advocate of athletic sports. I do wish you could hand him over to me, Mary!"

"You certainly are in love with him, Nitho," said Mary, severely; "but if you are sensible you will choose a husband for personal goodness, and not because he excels others in great things. A husband is wanted for every-day use, and to be nice

in every little thing, for both of which he is spoilt by great successes."

"Is it not unusual and derogatory for a president of a civilized nation to act as umpire in a football match?" I asked.

"Unusual, yes; but surely not derogatory? It cannot be derogatory to anyone to do a desirable thing well," Mary replied.

"But for a man in the highest position in the state to mix amongst athletes surely brings him down to their level?" I protested.

"If nature has risen him up to their muscular level," said Mary, "his position will be exalted by the exercise of his strength, controlled by a wisdom and tact not accorded to most athletes. When honours and position were given to men on account of their birth, and not their excellence, they were compelled to avoid the populace, to prevent them discovering what poor creatures they were."

"Do be quiet, Mary, Vernon is going to speak," said Nitho impatiently.

Vernon, in the centre of the ground, faced the players and the pavilion.

"Footballers," he asked, "will you have a fast game, a slow game, or a medium game?"

As one voice came the answer from the players,—

"Fast, fast, fast!"

"Gentlemen, permit me to thank you"—Vernon bowed as men should bow. Why are men of this century in the Middle Globe so careless in many graceful courtesies?—"for the honour you have done me in electing me to the position of central umpire, and to remind you that in so doing you have made it my duty to decide on every part of your game, except that relating to goals; that against my decision there is no appeal, and that any one who disputes it, disputes your election of me, by questioning the exercise of that power you have given me. Gentlemen, you have two minutes to take your places, after which the visiting team will kick off."

In an instant the players became animated, and distributed themselves as directed all over the ground. Vernon stood, his left hand before him, consulting a tiny watch strapped on his wrist. The crowd was silent with the intense excitement that comes while awaiting any great contest. Vernon called play, the ball sped towards the Ura goal, and the forty-one splendid men were engaged in a struggle that exercised and increased their muscle, their endurance, good temper, tact, and most of the ennobling qualities of strong men. They played under rules that seemed to me like those known as the Association rules, revised and amended by common sense; indeed, the one difference I found between the laws and customs of Undara and the Middle Globe was that those of the former were such as would have been

in the latter were the Middle Globe governed by wise men, who passed laws and inaugurated customs solely for the good of the commonweal.

"Poor Diso," laughed Nitho, as one of the grey and pink players cannoned off a Ura man and rolled on the turf. In a moment he was up and off again.

"Do they never hurt themselves, Nitho?" I queried.

"Very seldom; there have been ribs and arms broken, but breaks of some sort or other occur at all of the games men like," replied Nitho, airily.

"Statistics show," said Mary, "that the accidents at football are eighteen per cent. fewer than those which occur at rowing and twenty-seven per cent. fewer than are caused by riding, so you see it is not a dangerous game, and at the same time about the finest and most invigorating of all pastimes."

The teams were well matched, the ball passing up and down the ground very evenly; so far, the game stood one goal two behinds Zara, to two behinds Ura.

"Did not the visiting team gain an advantage by having the kick-off, Mary?"

"Yes," replied Mary, "but only a slight one, which is always given to them out of courtesy, and because a team is always stronger at home, as it has all its players to choose from; while, when it leaves home, its choice is restricted to those who can go with it."

"Goodness me!" said Nitho, "what a tumble Cula has given the Ura captain."

The tumbles were common enough, and were principally caused by two players rushing against each other while in pursuit of the ball. Half time was called, and the men rested for ten minutes, when play was resumed from the opposite end of the ground. At the end of the game, Zara had won by three goals four behinds, to one goal three behinds. After the football some coursing took place; the hare was liberated from a box, and two hounds, such as I have before described, released to course it. The dogs, which were picked specimens, while strong enough to kill a reindeer, were fleet enough to catch the hare, though not till it had tired, and so lost its first swiftness. The dogs seemed never to tire, the distance they could travel being almost limitless.

"It seems to me cruel sport, Mary."

"Yes," she replied, "I think it is; but the men say the dogs must be practised, and the hares are used to being hunted by the wolf, the fox, and many other animals, and as one snap kills them, they are not cruelly treated."

Only in one case did a hare escape. At one end of the grounds were boxes, to which the hares retreated as they had no other cover, and in every case when released they made for these. The

dogs turned and returned their game, finally killing them, but this one hare kept bravely on and escaped them.

"Poor brute!" I sighed, "he will probably be killed next coursing meeting?"

"He will not again be coursed," said Mary, "as every hare fleet enough to escape is liberated; because we wish to improve the speed of the wild hares in every way so that they may escape the wild animals, who are our mutual enemies."

The return home was interesting as showing the capability of the trams. Three tram lines came from Zara to different sides of the grounds direct; at the end of the grounds ran a third tram at right angles to all the trams leading to Zara, this acted as two lines, as people wished to go either way; then other trams went to Zara at distances of six hundred yards, the two first of these, and the four first I mentioned making six in all, each took the people away as fast as they could take their places, so that in a very much shorter time than they could have gone by ordinary rail, this numerous multitude had disappeared and were on their way home. On our return home, I went to my room, where I found Vernon changing his football clothes.

"Are you very tired?" I asked. "You worked as hard as any of the players."

"I am not tired a bit," he replied pleasantly; "my work was rather different to that of the players, I escaped their tumbles, and having to run at my very highest speed as they occasionally had; on the other hand I ran nearly as far as any, and further than most, as I averaged about eight and a half miles an hour, or ran seventeen during the game."

"This seems wonderful, and more than I ever knew any man in such a position as yours capable of," I said admiringly.

"Most men in Ura," replied Vernon, "eat so much rich food that their physical energy is quite destroyed, but I prefer a healthy body for a healthy mind, and fancy I have as much satisfaction at my simple meals as they do at their expensive and elaborate ones, while I certainly enjoy all out-door sports immeasurably more than they do. Many men in Zara in the highest positions retain their muscular energy, which is frequently, however, spoiled by their wives' coddling."

After dinner I found the Duchess had reserved a seat at a theatre for me, and very kindly placed me next to Mary. Surely the best ally a man can have in his wooing is a woman who is a friend of his lady love! The theatre was like one of our largest and handsomest, but without private boxes, the whole house being arranged with seats, such as the stalls have with us.

"You said, Mary, that there were places in the theatre where the fee was small—all the seats seem the same?" I asked.

"So they are," said Mary; "but if you are at the back of the stalls (similar to our pit) or the tiers, you neither see nor hear as

well as you would if you were more favourably placed, therefore the charge is less."

"And I suppose you do not book your seats in advance?"

"If you wish to make sure of your seat you do, as every seat is numbered. Frequently every seat in the house is sold weeks before the performance."

In Zara, our plan of boxes, which are a waste of room, and having a part where seats could not be booked in advance, would have been looked on as ridiculous; but then in Zara they had neither the dirty pauper nor sodden idler.

The play, "The Bread-Winner," was a domestic comedy, wonderfully acted and put upon the stage, but unlike our dramas, which never go beyond the honeymoon at most, traced the career of its characters from betrothal till the launching in life of the children. The play opened with the love-making of Ivan Borner and Nina Pansa. Ivan was a handsome, careless man, devoted completely to sport and pleasure, and utterly selfish and heedless of the future. His profession was a pretence of literature. Nina Pansa was a girl, far-seeing, earnest and kind, who devoted her time to painting. She had some money, on the strength of which, and the prospects of a book he was going to write, they got married; she toiled unceasingly; and was in reality the bread-winner, he wasted his time pretending to work, but being in reality idle. This continued till their children were grown up, for whose sake the mother rebels, and, rather than see their lives spoilt, leaves her husband, who eventually is sent to Pentona. The pathos and truth of the story were so well conceived and sustained, that the simple materials made a sublime drama. It is needless to say that in a land where a scavenger was a polished dandy of unusual ability and received into the highest society, the noble profession of acting, which in the Middle Globe is still a slighted calling, containing many undesirable people, was here an honoured vocation, to which all who were especially fitted turned their attention.

On scanning the audience, I noticed that every one, not excepting the women, took off their hats, which called to mind the many times I had been half cheated of my view of the stage by the high hat of some woman in the pit, who could without any trouble have removed the offending head-gear to her lap, till the play was done. After the performance we returned home, many of us on foot, and Mary and I amongst the rest. The streets were so brilliantly lighted that everything was as distinct as at noonday.

"Is not the cost of lighting the streets so brilliantly very heavy, Mary?" I asked.

"No," she replied. "Economy is one of its chief advantages; when we commenced to progress, we doubled the number of our lights, and reduced our police force one half."

"That would be a saving in the police pay of at least five times as much as the extra cost of the light. But was the new plan as good as the old?—and how do you justify dismissing one half of your police force?" I asked, thinking I had found a weak spot in the plan described.

"The new plan," replied Mary, smiling at my earnestness, "was so much better than the old, that it almost at once did away with theft and burglary, and quite suppressed midnight idlers; as for the police, none of them were dismissed; the increased lights took nearly five years to install, during which death, superannuation, and resignation reduced the ranks of the constables; which was brought to the required strength by drafting some of their numbers into other departments, so they suffered no hardship."

"But surely the greater distance the constables had to go gave the criminals a chance?"

"It did not seem to, each constable had a scarlet bicycle, and at night a hound to accompany him. To each block, which averages ten thousand people, there is one constable always on the beat, so that there is always a constable on two sides of the block, each of whom can see right through, thus no person can possibly be in the streets without being seen. So that light has made theft or loitering impossible."

"Is it not a barbarous plan," I protested, "to use dogs to hunt people with?"

"We don't hunt people with dogs, the dog is company for the constable, and prevents the possibility of his being shot—our airguns make no noise—and some criminal taking his place; these are the only reasons for having the dogs, who, however, would help the constable if they were assaulted."

The constables and their dogs passed and repassed us as we strolled along.

"How silently they go along," I said wonderingly.

"Yes, all the tyres are rubber faced," said Mary, "and the roads are asphalted, which helps the traffic very much, and keeps the place perfectly clean, as a shower of rain washes every particle of dust into the sewers."

There seemed no end to the wonders of Zara, which were each as simple as they were efficient. On reaching home we found Nitho waiting for us.

"How you two manage to keep up your spirits so well is a wonder," she said tiredly. "You always look as if you were trying to learn something, Frank."

"At present," I replied, "I should like to learn how you liked the play?"

"Oh, very well, but I should have preferred going to the dance," said Nitho, stifling a yawn. "How much longer must I stay up to chaperon you two? I think you had better go to bed, Frank."

She looked and smiled, she certainly had not a feeling heart, or she would have left me alone with Mary. I stooped and kissed my lady love's hand, her beautiful, shapely, strong hand. Nitho eyed me critically and said,—

"You do that awkwardly, Frank, you evidently require practice."

"Then help me to practise kissing lips," and I took the audacious young woman in my arms and kissed her. Quite unconcerned she laughed and told me,—

"You should only practise these things with your sweetheart, Frank."

"I know that," I replied, "but children don't count."

Nitho was not a child, but at a period of girlhood—

> That like a bud, grown through its sheltering leaves
> Impelled by nature, turns towards the sun,
> And soon, developed by his glowing kiss,
> Unfolding petals bloom forth from their folds
> Perfume and beauty to the neighb'ring world.

CHAPTER IX.

RACING IN ZARA.

On going to my room, I found Vernon, sitting in an easy chair, looking utterly worn out.

"You have been working too hard, Vernon, mentally and physically, burning the candle at both ends we would call it," I said sympathetically.

"Not at all, Frank," he replied despondingly, "the physical work, by aiding the digestion and strengthening the nerves, acts like a shield to keep the candle from burning too fast. To-night I am weary and sad; of all men in Frigida I am supposed to be the happiest. I am envied by men and admired by women. I have succeeded in all things—well, in nearly all things; and risen far beyond my most sanguine hopes."

His eyes looked into vacancy; his face was haggard and depressed. Making an effort, he continued, with the same crushed manner,—

"All my life I have been alone, Frank; I have longed for love and sympathy. I have been loved by my dogs, and my horses, and by women who were unhappy, and turned their broken lives to me for support; but never—never in all my life—has a woman given me the love of her heart and soul, for ever and ever. I have marked out my life and succeeded, in all but bringing the light of love to brighten the joy of success. In my youth I have seen women whom I could have loved, and whose life might have joined mine as the sunshine joins the rain, to bring forth flowers and fruit. Some of them, sweet good women, were poor; and by loving them I should have had to forego all the ambition of my life, and stepped down amongst the humdrum crowd; had I been wise I should have done this, and so gained happiness, and foregone success. Others of them who could have helped me, would not have my love."

His face hardened, and became strong; this lonely man could face failure and be brave; was it cowardice or goodness made him sorrow for his loveless life?

"Frank, women are fools," he continued with contempt, "in their youth and freshness, when men offer them their lives,

they cannot see the happiness at their feet, so eager are they looking up and ogling the men above them. Will they never see the joy and wisdom of entering the portals of womanhood, side by side with a man who is bright with the freshness of youth, and has all its fulness before him; entering life as the Almighty has ordained; to face its battle, and share its joys and sorrows, with the stronger nature of man, which gives its strength for their goodness? Now, in Ura, women in every station of life are brought up in a luxury unattainable to the young men, who work as their brothers do, brought up to ignore the earnestness of life, and seeking only to win as husbands the few men who inherit wealth—for every one of whom there are a hundred longing maids—or those who have reached middle or later life, in acquiring wealth. Misguided women, bringing disappointment on themselves, and driving the men to seek for solace in clubs amongst their own sex only, and then shrieking for woman's rights, which they have refused."

I listened, for I felt that words would relieve this man's grief, as would tears the sorrow of a woman.

"Women's rights!" he laughed, a harsh laugh. "Nature has fixed those rights; she can lead the men, and share the fruits of their labours; but when she competes with them she is sore and sorry. Nature, who gave women, as indeed all feminine creation, the smaller and weaker brain and body, but greater goodness, intended them to lean on man, and brighten his life, as the clematis grows on, and beautifies, the tree that supports it. Frank, the women who were blind to my strength when I was in the joyous spring of my manhood, come to me now that life means labour, and mirth is not to my mind, and pretend that they could love me; sometimes, foolishly, they pretend they do love me. How can I believe them? They but rush to grace the triumph of the victor, thinking nothing of the man."

"Vernon, brave heart," I said, "you are tired to-night, and your own kind self is lost beneath the weight of weariness. Women who go in agony to the gates of death to bring us into the world; who give their every thought for us in the weakness of our babyhood; who guide us aright to manhood, and thence cheer our path to heaven."

I went over to him, and put my hand on his shoulder as I continued,—

"Vernon, the champion of the weak, who has brought happiness almost to his country's hearths, cannot speak hardly of women from his heart, but only from the loneliness that ambition — righteous, splendid ambition — has made in his life. Vernon, there are but few women who would not crown your labours with their lives. Choose one, and you will be ashamed that you ever questioned their goodness; and your life will be rich with the fulness of joy, and the sweetness of content, till

you will forget you are mortal, in the certainty of heaven with her who has become your better self."

He looked up; all the hardness had left his face, which was now gentle with the kindness of good thoughts. His face was splendid, with something far above mere beauty, whose absence is soon forgotten. In all its moods, which were various as the skies above us, his clever face was never repellant.

"You are right, Frank, and I was foolish; I am ashamed of myself," he said with a sigh that was almost a sob. "Do you ever feel that you would like to be tied up and whipped, till pain had purged you of your folly? That is how I feel now. There are women—many women—who have the goodness of their sex, and the strength of ours. Such a one is Mary Vero. You will be told that she has treated me badly, and acted foolishly. Do not believe it; I love her, and thought to make her my wife, but she refused me. I—felt—certain"—he paused musingly for a while, and when he continued, spoke slowly—"I was a vain fool; I thought she would marry me, though I saw she did not love me—love would follow; she would have made my life complete—God bless her!—and I would have made her happy in every way, and raised her up above the world, so that all women would envy her."

I could not doubt his words. Would Mary ever repent her choice?—not if my life would avail. He looked up—

"I wish I had some brandy," he said tiredly, "I hardly ever take it, but I would like some now."

"Go to bed, Vernon," I said, "it is two o'clock; and I'm afraid you will be knocked up to-morrow."

"Good gracious, Frank!" he exclaimed, almost himself again in a moment. "I did not mean to keep you up. You are very kind. Sweet dreams and good luck to you. When you want a friend come to Vernon Dreman, who never forgets."

He never did forget; even the slightest service he returned tenfold. I soon went to sleep, but I am afraid he tossed about for some time.

Early next morning I awoke. I could hardly realize I had been asleep. Vernon lay quiet as a child; the sadness still on his face, while the beautifying shadows of his kindly thoughts seemed deepened and intensified. I dressed quietly and went downstairs. Perhaps I might meet Mary alone, before the crowd had come down. Coming along the passage I saw Nitho; this sprightly damsel seemed to be here, there, and everywhere.

"Good morning, Frank; practise," and Nitho's hand was held out to me, which I kissed with the best grace at my disposal.

"That's better," she said, "now if I were a man, and a woman allowed me to kiss her hand once, I should kiss her lips twice. Mary is in the study, I shall see you are not interrupted. Be of good courage, Sir Knight."

With a sweeping courtesy this merry maid left me, and I turned to the study. Mary was writing.

"I act as a secretary for the Duke, Frank," she said, looking up, "and have at present a great deal to do. To-morrow is Sunday, so of course I shall not work then, and on Monday we go to Pentona, to see that everything is arranged to receive a batch of the incorrigible criminals from Ura."

I had kissed her hand, with a devotion she did not reprove, and continued to hold it in mine.

"Mary, my queen! I said I would be patient, and I will; but Mary, it seems too much to hope that you will love me. I have no position, and no money, or anything but my love to offer you."

"Frank," she said, with downcast eyes, "that is all a woman wants. At Zara we love a man for himself alone, and, Frank, I will—some day—be your wife."

I took her in my arms, and kissed her lovely lips. Can a man ever forget the first time he takes in his arms, and kisses, the woman who becomes his wife? I think not. Though it is years ago, I can remember it all, yea, and bless the day I gained a love that is the light of my life, and a wife who is "More precious than pearls." As it is not seemly to kiss the lips of the woman you love while under the gaze of mortal eyes, so it would be unseemly to write the words of love that passed man's lips for the ear of his darling alone; so I shall not record them.

"Frank, you did not really think that being poor would prevent me marrying you, did you?" she presently asked.

"No, but being poor should have prevented me loving you, because it may be several years before I am in a position to marry you."

"Surely not, Frank; that would be so in Ura, but here any man and woman can marry, and be happy, that is if they love one another. All they want is two rooms, which cost very little to hire, and these they can furnish."

"But suppose they have no money at all?" I asked, thinking of my own case.

"That would not matter, they could pay for these things when they had earned it," she answered simply.

"But would tradespeople give trust under these circumstances?"

"Certainly; any man could soon pay for such things. If he could not get work elsewhere, he could work for the Government, who give employment to all who seek it, though their hours are very long, and their pay very poor.

"But suppose people got things and refused to pay, what then?"

"Why, their creditor would get an order of the court against them, and they would be sent to Pentona, and made to work till they had earned sufficient to pay the debt, which would then be

discharged, less ten per cent. which the Government charge to collect it."

"This all seems to tend to suppress personal energy."

"That is because you have not realized its working, Frank. Everyone strives to get private employment, as the Government hours of work are one-third longer, and they pay a fraction lower than that given by the private employer, while in Pentona the pay is very poor indeed, so you see there is every inducement for private energy."

"I wonder the Government get any good labour at all, under these terms."

"These terms do not apply to the Government employés, but only to those who demand work."

"Then, my queen, pray do not make me wait very long, I am now twenty-seven, and can find no happiness away from you. Waiting for you, an hour seems a day."

She smiled.

"Frank, when our love has been proved, I will become your wife; but of all the acts of our life, marriage is the most momentous. Therefore it must not be hastily entered into."

She was always wise, my lady-love, and sweet as she was wise. The breakfast bell rang.

"Frank, I have done nothing all the morning," she said in consternation.

"Never mind," I replied, laughingly, "I have done what will secure the happiness of my life, which is surely a good morning's work."

We went in to breakfast, where all our party but Vernon were gathered. I had disconnected his bells so that he might sleep, which accounted for his non-appearance. After breakfast, I went to Vernon, who was still asleep, so I connected the microphone at the head of his bed, and left him. By-and-by he appeared, looking none the worse for his fit of despondency. In the afternoon we went to the races. The race-course was at the other side of the town to the football grounds. The trams worked with the same perfection they had shown the previous day, being in fact an exact duplicate. The race-course was a block of the same size and similar situation to the Recreation Ground. The pavilions were beautifully decorated with flowers, and the three bands of music were in attendance. The pavilions were larger than those at the Recreation Grounds, and sufficient to seat about fifty thousand people. The scene seemed to combine the leading characters of a horse show and a horse-race meeting, with the exception that there was neither betting nor betting men, or the many debasing side shows seen at most race meetings, such as spotted men and women, fire eaters, sword swallowers, fat women, throwing at cocoa nuts, or other similar sights; in place of which there was beautiful music, dancing—the people of Zara were very fond

of this most delightful pastime, and exercised it with a most perfect grace—and the horses and races to see.

At 13 every horse that took any part in the racing was paraded round the main course in procession, mounted, or in harness as if he were about to compete. The sight was splendid as a spectacle, and the best possible means of showing the competing animals, every one of whom had a number plainly marked in black, on a white ground, on his saddle, or straddle, cloth, so that he could be identified by a glance at the card, which I produce in its entirety.

UNDARA.

ZARA RACE COURSE.

In honour of the visit of the Delegates from Ura.
20th June, 1870.

13.30. Procession of all horses taking part in races.

First Race, 14.10.

Racers, three miles.

1. Reta, 7 st. 11 lbs.
2. Pree, 8 st. 7 lbs.
3. Dreman 8 st. 5 lbs.
4. Duke, 8 st.
5. Glona, 7 st. 11 lbs.
6. Una, 8 st. 2 lbs.
7. Guin, 9 st.

Second Race, 14.50.

Trotters three miles.

8. Walloon, 8 st.
9. Star, 9 st. 7 lbs.
10. Gaffer, 11 st. 7 lbs.
11. Zesca, 7 st. 11 lbs.
12. Orwell, 14 st. 7 lbs.

Third Race, 15.30.

Victors four miles.

13. Symbol, 10 st. 7 lbs.
14. Aurata, 10 st.
15. Orna, 9 st. 7 lbs.
16. Pert, 9 st. 7 lbs.
17. Shirley, 9 st. 5 lbs.
18. Narni, 9 st. 2 lbs.
7. Guin, 9 st. 7 lbs.
19. Zoc, 9 st 4 lbs.

Fourth Race, 16.10.

Trotting Victors four miles.

20. Merlin.
21. Snow.
22. Iris.
23. Arlie.
24. Bena.
12. Orwell.

Fifth Race, start 16.50.

Racers three miles.

1. Reta.
2. Pree.
3. Dreman.
4. Duke.
5. Clona.
6. Una.
25. Avillon, 8 st.
26. Beauty, 7 st. 11 lbs.
27. Rosa, 8 st. 4 lbs.
28. Pinos, 8 st. 7 lbs.

Last Race, start 17.40.

Champions, four miles.

29. Ira, 11 st.
30. Pasha, 13 st.
31. Bibbe, 11 st. 4 lbs.
32. Brien, 12 st.
33. Leo, 11 st.
34. Foam, 11 st.
35. Delval, 11 st. 7 lbs.

On the return of the procession to the stable enclosure, seven horses were led out to the centre of the ground, where they paraded amongst the people.

"That must be very dangerous, Mary. Surely those horses will hurt some one, or kill a child?" I said, seeing there were a number of children present, as indeed there were at every crowd in Zara.

"They never have yet done so," answered Mary, "so don't be frightened, Frank, they sometimes knock people down who refuse to move out of their way, for every horse is in the restless joy of perfect physical health and strength, but this is very seldom, and always accidental."

"But surely they sometimes kick or bite?" I asked.

"Never; why, before any animal is allowed to compete publicly, he must be certified as perfect in every way by the Animal Senate, which is a guarantee of his good temper."

"Do you mean to say that I would not be allowed to enter my horse for a public race if I paid the fees?" I asked, in astonishment.

"Not unless your horse was certificated," said Mary. "Racing s kept up for the improvement of the equine race, and the amusement of the public. Now, the first result is attained by only allowing horses perfect in every way to compete, and, by competition, finding their exact position in relation to each other. To see that a horse is perfect, he must be left, with a description, in charge of the Animal Senate for six days, during which time he is tested in every way; and, if sound in body and brain—which, of course, includes temper—a certificate is given, which allows him to take part in any horse competition. The result is that every competing horse is perfectly reliable, and so can be safely taken amongst the crowd."

"But what good results from taking the horses amongst the people?"

"Why, that they may be able thoroughly to see them. The poor people go on the flat, and if the horses were not sent there they would hardly see them at all."

On a board the number of the race and the starters appeared, and the horses left the enclosure and went on to the course. Surely the gathering of a number of beautiful horses, in perfect condition, well managed by gaily-dressed riders, is one of the finest sights in the world; and it is doubly fine when witnessed without the discord of harsh voices shrieking to people to risk money, that they may possibly receive what they have in no way earned. The starter came, mounted as we see him, but without his flag, in place of which he used a pistol, which, though it would terrify horses trained as are racehorses in the Middle Globe, failed to frighten the docile horses of Zara. The racers drew up in line. The pistol echoed—they were off. From start to finish the horses were

in view. The first time they passed the pavilion there were hardly thirty feet between the first and the last. The second time a bay and a grey horse had taken the lead, a second bay came next, and the rest followed close together. On they went. They were now opposite the pavilion, and coming home. They began to straggle apart. The two leaders were neck and neck, the third horse close behind them, and two greys fast creeping up. Now they entered the straight. The grey led, the third bay took second place, and the two greys raced with the late leader. Up they came nearly home. Four horses were close together. Just at the post the grey won, with the bay a good second, and two greys so close together for third place that I could not see which of them secured it. The winning numbers went up—7, 5, 4. Five horses in vehicles like our dog-carts now came out, and slowly passed amongst the people.

"Who handicaps the horses, Mary?" I queried.

"No one; they do not even handicap at Ura now, though they still do at Gurla. The horses handicap themselves."

"That is very clever of them," I said, thinking Mary was quizzing me. "I have heard of horses being good fencers, and others who could draw well. How do you enable them to handicap themselves?"

"Simply by their own exertions," she replied. "All untried horses start for the three miles' qualifying race, carrying eight stone weight—in every case mares receive an allowance of three pounds—and no horse is allowed to run till he is four years old. The winner of each race in future carries a penalty of seven pounds, the second horse one of five pounds, and the third horse one of three pounds. When any horse has to carry nine and a half stone, he must go into the next class of horses, who are called Victors, and who receive a similar weight penalty for first, second, or third place. When a horse wins sufficient penalties to make him carry eleven stone weight, he enters the Champion class, where the penalties are the same."

"This is a very simple arrangement," I admitted, admiringly, "and certainly saves the possibility of an unfair handicap. But why are your races so long, your horse barred till four years old, and your weights so heavy?"

"Because," replied Mary, "we simply race to improve the horses and please the public. If you race horses under four, you do more harm than good; and if you race short distances with light weights, you encourage horses without strength or endurance, which are their two most desirable qualities."

"Do stop talking," said Nitho. "There comes Andra: I do hope he will win."

The particulars of the race were notified, as before, and the five harnessed horses came into the course. The trotting horse, all the world over, seems characterized by docility and good temper,

so I was not surprised to see how easily the start was effected. Two of the horses soon went to the front. When the pavilion was being passed for the second time, a big bay horse had a lead of a hundred yards, and looked like winning easily; next came another bay horse, and the grey Andra was driving, very close together; the others followed close behind.

"Why on earth is that front horse going ahead so fast?" I asked, wonderingly. "He gets nothing extra by winning so far ahead, does he?"

"No extra prize," answered Mary, "but extra honour and a better certificate. Our horses are not kept back to get a lighter handicap, or to cheat the public in the betting, as there is neither handicapper nor betting; so they have everything to gain by winning as quickly and easily as possible, and so increase their value."

"Frank, dear, if you will only be quiet," interrupted Nitho, pleadingly, "I will tell you all about racing by-and-by. Poor Andra will never catch up."

The bay was in, Andra was still a little behind the second horse, and another horse was coming up close behind. They were nearly home. The horses were being urged to their topmost speed.

"Go on, dear Gaffer, only another yard," whispered Nitho to herself in her excitement. The second horse broke into a gallop, and before he could recover his pace Andra gained second place, and his opponent was only fourth. Nitho threw a kiss with the tip of her finger to Andra, and disappeared. In a minute she returned, and breathlessly asked,—

"Please lend me a penny, Mary, I want to go and see Andra and Gaffer."

Mary gave her the money, and she disappeared.

"What does she want the penny for, Mary?" I inquired.

"The gates work with a penny automaton; the turnstile leading to the stables turns once on being operated with a penny, and gives a medal which operates another gate when you wish to return."

"This is certainly handier than having a gate-keeper and passes. Now, tell me about the trotting horses. Do they handicap themselves, too?"

"Yes, almost the same as the racers," said Mary. "The trotting carts are supplied by the Racing Committees, and are all exactly the same. Untried horses must have a driver weighing at least eight stone. The penalties are forty-nine, thirty-five, and twenty-one pounds for first, second, and third place, till they draw fifteen stone, when they go to the Victor class, which they leave for the Champion class when the weight reaches twenty-two stone, the penalties all along being the same."

"Well, your plan is certainly simple. What are your prizes?"

"Seventy, fifty, and thirty crowns respectively, for the first,

second, and third horse in each race, whether it is a trotting or galloping one."

"This seems very little."

"Well, the nomination and entry fees are each small, and the racing places a value on the horse which it would otherwise be hard to get."

Race after race continued, all delightful to witness, but not necessary to record. When the last race of the day came on the interest was intensified, as a horse with an unbeaten record was to run his last race. Victory after victory had piled up his burdens, till he had to carry thirteen stone weight in the four-mile champion race. Mary and I went to the stables to see the horse and his owner, whom Mary knew—though, indeed, she seemed to know and be beloved by everybody. As we passed along, we heard numerous grumblers loudly lamenting the cruelty of a man who would force his brave horse on to certain defeat, and so at last humble his proud record. The horse was evidently loved by the people, who, like all the world, loved and admired strength and pluck. Pasha, the horse in question, was being led about by his owner.

"They say I should not let him run again, Mary," said the man, proudly, "but he likes it; and defeat—if he is defeated, dear old fellow—is not disgrace, for he will do his best; and, win or lose, it's the last race he shall run for."

Pasha, a big bay horse with black points, a perfect star on his forehead, and a white near hind hoof and fetlock, looked perfectly ready for the fray. He arched his neck and sniffed at Mary in the kindliest manner, looking at her with his big, dark eyes as if he loved her. I put my hand on his wither, for he was perfectly quiet, seemingly proud of the notice he was receiving, and found he was just over sixteen hands high. The numbers went up, and the horses came on the course. Five finer animals the world could not produce; bone, blood, beauty, breeding, and strength—everything a horse should possess, was there. Four miles with from eleven to thirteen stone up. It was tremendous! Every horse would doubtless do their very best, but the crowd had only sympathy for the gallant, victorious old champion.

When will a poet rise, tuneful and strong, to sing of the gallant struggle of the loser? oftentimes a greater and braver struggle than has brought many more fortunate to victory. Be not cast down, Sir Knight, brave struggle was never quite unavailing; it will make thy brain and muscle the better able for future effort. The horses were ready to start. The crowd, expectant, looked as with one pair of eyes to watch every movement of the race. Quieter and quieter they grew, till all was hushed. The start was made, a few shouts, and they watched in silence. Four times the horses would pass us. Like a flash they went by; none could judge thus early in the race. On they went, and as they passed

us the second time their nostrils were distended, and the crowd became anxious. For the third time they passed us; and now the struggle commenced in earnest. One horse began to fall behind. Mary's hand clasped mine. With an effort the last horse came nearly up to the two leaders, and then fell away; nature exhausted, he went hopelessly back. They entered the straight, the old horse was still second, a good second; he could never overcome that little gap. They were almost together. A shout—a roar—went up from the crowd. Surely the old horse, who had heard it so often before, heard it now as a trumpet call. The race was over, but which had won? Stride by stride the horses seemed to have passed the winning post together. "Pasha has won—Pasha, Pasha!—Leo, Leo!"—the conflicting cries were roared against each other. Pasha was on the side further from us, and we had seen his head, they only seemed together. Up went the board—30, 33, 31.

So the old horse had won his last race. Again we found the trams waiting, and again they took the crowd away as fast as they could leave the race-course. Fortunately we found our party, and all went home together. Vernon seemed to have quite regained his spirits.

"What do you think of racing at Zara, Frank?" He did not wait for a reply, but continued, "We used to think that without betting racing would fail and the breed of horses deteriorate; but we were wrong, nothing can ever be hurt by depriving it of its evil elements, not even racing, which is more flourishing, and produces better horses in Zara than anywhere else."

After supper we—Mary, Nitho and I—went to see the dancing.

"Frank, dear," said Nitho, "it is very good of you to come to the dance, instead of going to the opera. Shall we go and see Vorna Morpha dance, Mary? Frank would like to see her, I am sure."

"So would I, and thank her for being so good to him," said my lady love.

So we went. The room was square, with the musicians—piano, cornet, and two violins—in the centre, half hidden with ferns and flowering plants. The musicians were enclosed in a circle, round which was a narrow ring of painted fretwork, then another circle and another fretwork ring, till the rings extended almost to the cushioned seats against the wall. Over one end of the room was a balcony, approached by a winding skeleton stair, guarded by a turnstile which was opened with a penny; at the other end of the balcony was a similar stair, with a turnstile opening only to people leaving. The dancers were merry with the careless mirth that with us departs with childhood. The dresses were suggestive of a fancy dress ball, shorn of its burlesque costumes; for though numberless styles of dress were present, from Vorna's tight-fitting garments to the dress with a train, each

dress was chosen solely to become its wearer. Gloves were worn, but of all shades and colours. Feathers and flowers were lavishly used, and though the scene was innocent of the ostentation of wealth, or the peacock pride of class distinction, everyone was guided by a true self-respect, which alone constitutes perfect politeness, and the *tout ensemble* was more perfect, in every way, than anything seen in the Middle Globe out of pictures. From the centre of the musicians two balls were elevated on a pole, the top one being the smaller; each were divided into three equal parts of different colours, in each part of the upper was the figure "One," and in the lower the word "Waltz." The music played. From various parts of the room couples rose, and, gliding into the rings, went circling round the room to the graceful rhythm of the melody. The purpose of the rings soon became evident; instead of the dancers being an unguided mass, steered only by rule of thumb, and occasionally bumping and being bumped, they became a lovely procession, circling to the right or the left, but always going in the one direction, unbumped by awkward or careless neighbours, and happily progressing without impeding, or being impeded. A further use was to keep the waltzers from encroaching on those looking on, or being inconvenienced by them, as the rings were kept only for dancers, and dancers only for the rings. Nitho was sailing round the room with Diso.

"What a pretty couple they would make, Mary: would the Duke like it?" I asked.

"Certainly they are a pretty couple," said Mary, "but they would not be a suitable one. Nitho's mirthful jesting would make the sensitive Diso perpetually unhappy; in the tickling of a jest he would feel the venom of a sarcasm; while Nitho wants a quiet phlegmatic nature as a foil for her mirthful ways. Though they are both clever, they each want a partner with a duller, steadier nature to guide and soothe them."

"How happy they all look!" I exclaimed.

"Do you dance, Frank? Shall we dance?" asked Mary, looking into my face.

"I dance, my queen," I said ashamedly, "but for three years I have not done so, and my limbs have become dull in the weariness of ceaseless labour. I shall therefore be clumsy, and I would not even by so little sink in the eyes of the angel I love. By-and-by you will play, and I will practise dancing with Nitho, that I may enjoy it with you."

"My dear," said my queen, as her eyes glowed with love, "only by changing your nature can you sink in my estimation. We will not dance now, for I would not have you seen doing anything imperfectly."

For the next dance only four couples got up, one of whom was Vorna and her husband. The music sounded and they danced. Do you know what dancing means? It is the perfection of ele-

gance of motion, to illustrate the meaning of music, in time with its measure. Vorna and her husband together circled to the corner of the room, near where we were. They now separated, and slowly danced apart. Vorna smiling and gay, her husband grave and pleading. The music became slower. Cao's head sank on his breast, and slowly he passed to the measure of the music. Vorna, seeing her lover was overcome by her scorn, showed she only meant to test his love by making him strive for hers. Mirthfully she waltzed to Cao, holding out her arms and smiling the while. His head rose to the measure of the music. He came to Vorna, and sinking on one knee kissed her hand. The music quickened, Vorna dancing fled, Cao pursued, and at last caught her.

Each couple now waltzed round the room, and the dance was done. Mary danced, and I watched. Nothing can equal the pleasure of the happiness of participation, but after that comes witnessing the pleasure of others. Listening to music, and watching graceful dancers—as were all who danced at Zara—was to me a great enjoyment. To a man who has been parched in the desert for many days, the silver gleam of water and its pure taste is a thing to be enjoyed. After the dreary hardships of the snow and ice, the sound of mirth and music was delightful to my ear.

"Your eyes are smiling, Frank; are you thinking of Mary?" asked Nitho, who had come up to me unnoticed while my thoughts were pleasantly wandering.

"I am always thinking of Mary," I replied.

"Then give your mind a change," said Nitho, with a little laugh, "or it will cloy with sweetness."

Mary came.

"I have heard," she said, "that Parson Tona Hamer is to preach to-morrow at the cathedral, so we will go to hear him, for he is very eloquent and wise."

The dance was over. All dances at Zara finished at midnight, for the people were too sensible to try and ignore even those laws of nature that make the night for sleeping, and the day for work and play.

"Mary," I asked one day, "people here speak the English language, but many of the names and some of the phrases are not English—how is this?"

"When the Law-giver and his comrade came," she answered, "the speech of the Rodas was the only speech; they taught the young people to speak English, and as the books were all English the people soon came to speak the new language; but the names were harsh, so they became softened to suit the ear of the Rodas, who speak a much more musical tongue."

"This must have been a difficult thing to accomplish?" I opined.

"I believe not," said my instructress, "the people were proud to learn the language of the Law-giver, which both elevated them above and separated them from the untaught savages; while to learn anything from books it was necessary to read English, so the people, who are quick and clever, learnt it naturally."

CHAPTER X.

AN ECLECTIC DOGMA.

In the Middle Globe, where labour is so severe as to tax the strength to its utmost limit, the o'erwrought brain and tired limbs strive to regain their normal condition by a laziness on Sunday mornings as unnatural to the properly constituted as the excessive strain of week days is hurtful. In Zara, where all worked according to their fitness, to a reasonable extent, there was no overtaxing of nature, so naturally everyone rose as usual on Sunday morning, looking forward to a day of quiet pleasure.

In Ura it was different; there the well-salaried bishop would go to church on Sunday in his carriage, with one or two coachmen, and preach against all manner of work on that day, either by "Thy man-servant or maid-servant," and would then go home to a well-served hot dinner, which necessitated his servants working; probably he would make up for thus in practice violating his precept, by closing all the picture-galleries, museums, and such-like innocent places of amusement, where the poor man could take his wife and children on the Sabbath, and force him to stay at home, so that he might elevate his soul by refusing to yield to the temptations of the public-house. In Zara, Sunday was observed as a complete day of rest and pleasure, cold dishes alone being obtainable, as nearly all the kitchen attendants were relieved from duty for the day. Tea and porridge were the only hot things supplied. After breakfast, the Duke, Vernon, Diso and myself went into the centre garden, where we smoked and talked.

"I have not yet learnt what form or forms of religion are followed by the people of Zara. Will you tell me, Duke?" I asked.

"Certainly, Frank," he replied; "the people of Zara follow a religion founded by the Law-giver, whose energetic and comprehensive mind guides us universally with a wisdom almost divine. The religion he established is founded on the teachings of Christ, whose divinity cannot be proved, but whose words show the highest wisdom, namely, that of forgiveness and charity. The Law-giver did not adopt the teachings of the Bible, as they are quite contrary to human justice, inasmuch as they ordain

that all humanity are to be for ever punished for the fault of two people who lived many hundreds of years ago; with the exception of some who will escape, with the punishment inflicted on this earth, through the sufferings of some one—a man or God called Christ—who also lived many centuries ago. Human laws do not punish people for the sins of their forefathers, and the laws of nature only punish for a few generations; while neither human nor natural laws forgive on account of the suffering of a person antecedent to the sinner. To the teaching of Christ the Law-giver added the laws of Nature, which he asserted were the ordinances of the Almighty, and logically proved that by following them, according to dictates of moderation and wisdom, a human being led the happiest life possible to his organization. The Law-giver further preached that this life was only to fit us, according to our works, for a higher or lower life hereafter, which would bring us nearer to the perfect happiness of heaven, or the awful misery of hell."

"The religion," I said, highly interested, "seems in different points to agree with different religions at the Middle Globe; for instance, the disbelief in the Divinity of Christ is"—here the Duke silenced me with a gesture, and said,—

"The Law-giver neither believed nor disbelieved the Divinity of Christ, but held it unproved, and believed that only by always striving after truth, and treating our fellow men with charity and forgiveness could we be elevated. Charity and forgiveness are the foundation of the laws of Zara."

"Do you forgive the murderer and the thief?" I asked questioningly.

"Certainly we do," replied the Duke, "and extend to them our charity. As, however, it would not be for the murderer's good to allow him to destroy his body and soul with other murders—for what a man does once he may do again—we restrain him to prevent this, and make him, for his benefit, lead a life that will bring to perfection his mind and body, and if in the course of a few years his nature improves sufficiently, we let him free; if not, we restrain him all his life."

"And supply him," said Vernon, "with more comforts and luxuries than are enjoyed by one half the people of Ura."

"That will not be so for long, Vernon," said the Duke. "As to the thief, we forgive him too, but bring the folly of his offence fully to his mind, by making him pay towards the cost of protecting the wise from the foolish."

"Should you not rather say the good from the bad?" I asked.

"No," said the Duke decidedly; "for all humanity is divided into two divisions, the wise and the foolish, of which the good and the bad are only two kinds. All the good are wise, for only by wisdom can they be good. When a wise man passes an open window on which some money is lying, the natural love of money

makes him wish to take it; but wisdom says, 'No, if you take it you may be seen and punished, and if you take it undetected you will seek another opportunity of gaining pleasure without an effort, and so become discontented and unhappy.' When the wise man is wronged he does not retaliate, as he sees that he might so bring on himself more sorrow, but he avoids the man who has wronged him, so that he may profit in the future by the lesson of the past. When the foolish man sees money lying to his hand, he says, 'If I can get this without anyone seeing me, I will gain what all desire, without the trouble of earning it,' so he spies round, and takes it cunningly; he then spends it, and the thought of the pleasure it brought him makes him discontented with his duties, and he ceases to feel the joy of self-respect. When the foolish man is wronged he retaliates, and brings on himself the active hatred and retaliation of the person who has wronged him. From wisdom comes all that is good, and from folly all that is bad, so saith the Law-giver.

"And the Law-giver was right," said Diso. "You go to the laws of God which are the laws of nature, and they are wise, and must be wisely followed. Man has wisdom and must act with wisdom or suffer, the animals have no wisdom and are protected by nature's laws. Man covers himself with clothes, and when he is heated with exertion he feels inclined to throw them off, and sit naked in the cool, but wisdom makes him sacrifice the momentary pleasure for the good of his life, and so he survives. The animal is protected by nature in this and every other case.

The wise sacrifice the moment for the hour, and the day for the year, and are happy. The wicked sacrifice the hour for the minute, and the year for the day, and are unhappy. These laws the Law-giver proved; and the people of Zara illustrate their wisdom with their lives."

As Diso ceased to speak the church bells and chimes filled the air with their silvery tones.

"Come," said the Duke, "let us go in and get ready for church."

We entered, and shortly were joined by the rest of the Duke's family and guests. On entering the street I found the trams were running.

"You do not enforce universal rest, Duke—the trams run, I see?"

"They run," said the venerable old noble, "that rest may be as wisely universal as possible. By running they enable people to go to what church they like, otherwise many would stay at home; during church they cease to run, but afterwards they run to enable the people rationally to enjoy their rest, which they otherwise could not do."

Our party forming in groups walked to church, and I found myself between the Duchess and Mary.

"You cannot have been to church for a very long time, Frank?" said the Duchess.

"For the last few weeks," I replied, with heartfelt gratitude for my preservation, "we had even lost count of the Sunday. We had nothing to hope or pray for; we seemed at the gates of eternity; God's messenger, Death, never left us."

"Frank, do not talk of it, it makes me unhappy," said Mary.

'It must have been a dreadful time, and one that could alone be borne by brave men sure of immortality," said the Duchess reverentially.

"Parson Hamer will be almost sure to preach about the union of Zara and Ura," said Mary.

"Do your parsons usually preach about political events, Mary?" I asked.

"From a religious and philosophical point of view they discuss, and hold up for contemplation, every event of consideration."

"Surely this must often lead to disputes and create unnecessary friction?"

"We do not find it so," said Mary; "in Zara everything is managed for the benefit of the common weal and, as we have no class interests, discussion can only clear up doubtful points without the possibility of creating anger. Everything is decided in the bright light of reason, assisted by facts."

The church, on the banks of the Voa, was a building like one of our cathedrals, with a square plain tower at one end. Inside it was fitted up with pews, seated as are theatre stalls; in front of each seat was a small shelf for the books, and a folding stool to kneel on. At the top of the church was a slightly raised stage, in the centre of which was a pulpit. In rows on the walls, arranged in the form of pyramids, were urns containing the ashes of the departed dead. The congregation arrived punctually, as this first element of courtesy was universally and strictly recognized. I found afterwards that the seats, which were leased by the congregation, as they are with us, were only reserved till the commencement of the hymn with which the service opened, during which the visitors who were waiting were shown by the verger to any vacant seats. The music of the organ was sounding as we took our places; its full deep notes filled the church, as with the majesty of God's voice. Hardly had I realized the simple grandeur of the building, when the music ceased and the parson entered. He was a tall, strong man, looking doubly broad and strong in his plain white surplice. His broad white forehead, from which his black hair, parted in the middle, was brushed back, surmounted large blue eyes, a broad irregular nose, full firm lips, a wide jaw and a square chin; his grave, kind face was very mobile and clean shaved. For a minute—a full minute—he covered his face with his hands, and prayed. He then gave out the first hymn, which we all sang standing up. I

noticed now those who were waiting entered, and every seat in the church was filled. The opening hymn, which was written by Vernon, at the request of Parson Hamer, I will give, as it is a fair sample of the religion of Zara.

CHRIST'S PRAYER.

"Almighty power, in heaven above
We praise Thy name in hallowed love,
And strive to cause Thy will be done
As 'tis in heaven and here begun.

Give us, we pray, our daily bread,
That by our strength, Thy will be sped;
Forgive our sins, we pray the Lord,
As we forgiveness do afford.

Protect us from temptation's way,
And 'gainst us powers of evil stay;
For Thine the kingdom, glory, power,
For ever, from creation's hour.
Amen.

The hymn finished, the parson spoke,—

"My friends, we will now in silence consider our acts since the time of our last self-examination. A folly sorrowed for is half forgiven, and not likely to be repeated. Let us examine our hearts as to what we have done that we should not have done, and as to what we have left undone that we should have done, and may the Almighty shield us from the result of our folly, and guide us to the paths of wisdom. Amen."

The amen was repeated by the congregation, who then knelt, and with bowed heads thought and prayed. After about ten minutes, another hymn was given out and most of the congregation stood up and sang. Some of the people still knelt, but one by one they rose from their knees and joined in the singing. Mary was one of those who rose last, and Vernon one who rose first. He considered he was punished on earth for all his follies, and that his life was one long prayer, as he strived with brain and muscle to wisely work for the good of his fellow men and his own glory. She, with that true religion which nearly all women feel, but which reaches very few men, humbly reviewed her life, hoping to gain wisdom by the mercy of God rather than her own strength. When she rose from her knees her face had that joyful calm which passeth all understanding. I who had thought but little, feeling only her presence, and while the others prayed leant over and kissed her forehead, felt ashamed. Surely she had remembered me in her prayers, and surely also her love would make me certain of heaven, for I felt that not even the power of God could bring her joy while I was in grief. I have always

believed and now I am sure, that to those who worthily love, and are worthily beloved, heaven here and hereafter is almost assured. Parson Hamer entered the pulpit, and the people settled themselves with an evident expectancy of hearing something worth listening to. Their manner contrasted forcibly and favourably with the stolid indifference with which many congregations resign themselves to suffer in silence the torrent of words their preacher may think fit to inflict on them. Parson Hamer spoke slowly, and with great distinctness,—

"My friends, on this the first occasion that has occurred to me, I shall address you on the wise union of Ura and Zara under the Republic of Undara. I shall take as my text the wise and beautiful prayer of that man or God called Christ. A prayer which must make many people think he was more than man, if less than God. To this prayer you have given tuneful utterance in the first hymn of this service, kindly written by President Dreman at my desire." Parson Hamer paused for a moment, and then proceeded fluently and eloquently: "'Our Father, who art in Heaven.' To the Almighty power to whom we are indebted for our being, we direct our prayer; to Him in that perfect happiness of wisdom to which we shall all arrive after having, little by little, elevated our lives, in the happy path to perfection. 'Hallowed be Thy name.' Surely we cannot think of this infinite power which our finite minds can only realize, without comprehending, without reverencing it. For ever be it hallowed. 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.' To this end have we made a great advance, through combining with our neighbours; to suppress the suffering of folly, and enforce the happiness of wisdom." And so he proceeded, moving the hearts of his hearers, and foreshadowing the things that happened, and which it will be my privilege to recount, therefore it is not now expedient for me to give this very feeling and able sermon in full. After the sermon, the service concluded with a hymn. As we walked home, I asked Mary,—

"Is it not usual to make a collection after the sermon, or during the service?"

"No," she said, "as it encourages ostentation instead of charity. There is a box at the door into which people can put their offerings, but only those who have no seats or come on Sunday to pray after service put money in. The church is supported by the rent from its pews."

"What was the platform for?" I asked. "In the Middle Globe, such an arrangement is never seen."

"The platform is necessary when the stage is used either for lecture or concert purposes," said Mary, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"You surely do not have lectures or concerts in church?"

"We have both; religion teaches the necessity of educating and amusing people, which is done by both lectures and concerts."

"It would not be sanctioned with us. Personally I do not see that any harm could come of it, but the clergy would not allow it."

"Stupidity alone could make them object. Some years ago many of the people of Ura tried to make religion out to be a gloomy and mournful thing, but we teach that it is both bright and joyful."

Religion I have never studied, and perhaps that is the reason that I think the Almighty Being who sent the sunshine, the song birds, and the flowers with their beauty and perfume, never intended His worship to be aught than a thing of music and joy, to bring happiness to the human beings He has put into this beautiful world. After dinner we went to the Zoological Gardens, which were in a great park with an artificial stream of water taken from the Voa flowing through it, making ponds for the seals and marshes for the birds, so that every animal might live with favourable surroundings. The birds were in great aviaries, down the centre of which ran passages covered in with wire netting, so that we could see the birds and animals as plainly as if they were restricted to the little places in which we put them. The great eagles sailed round and round a big circular aviary in the centre of which was a winding stair, which people went up one side and down the other, and from where these kings of birds could be watched. Even the great fields, wooded in the centre to shelter the deer and other animals, were entered by arched steps, which took you to a covered path that went through the wood to the other side, where you left as you had entered. Not that the animals were frightened, for you could buy food for any of them, from dead pigeons or sparrows for the eagles or hawks, to carrots or such like dainties for the herbivorous animals; though not one amongst them, or the birds, seemed to be afraid of the spectators, whom they regarded as possible donors of delicacies. When we came to the enclosure where the great Polar bears were kept, I noticed that Vernon and the Duke passed on without looking at them.

"Why do they pass by these splendid animals without looking at them, Mary?" I asked, wonderingly, as Vernon was usually so very observant.

"Because," said Mary, in subdued awestricken tones, "Vernon has a savage antipathy to the bears, the sight of which always disturbs him. Do you believe in presentiments, Frank?"

"Of course not. Do you?" I asked, lightly.

"They may be warnings," said Mary, with half conviction. "Surely there is a power that can tell, at least some of the events of the future, and may not that power throw the cold shadow of coming calamity on the human mind as a warning? Vernon has a hatred of bears, he feels they will be the cause of death or sorrow to him. He is the cause of death to them as the people of

Ura seek them and kill them, so that his presentiment may not come true."

We next came to the game enclosure, where partridges and quails were kept in great numbers.

"What do they want with so many specimens of these birds, Mary?"

"For breeding purposes; every spring they turn out dozens of the hens each with their brood of from six to ten little ones, which grow up and provide us with food in the end of summer."

I found these birds, which were quite tame in the aviaries, became wild directly they were turned out in the wilds where food was plentiful. The timid eider duck here had its nest lined with down from its breast, which it plucked bare that its little ones might be warm. We passed representatives of nearly every species of beast or bird common to these regions, all of which were surrounded with such things as they would find in their wild state. After we were tired of the animals we returned, full of wonder, as one could not fail to be at the strange productions of nature. After supper we listened to the music, singing, and reciting, of the occupants of our side of the block in the music-room. Nearly every one seemed to be able to do something to help to make the evening pass pleasantly, and what was done was well done. They had grown beyond that stage of society in which young men, conscious of unearned wealth, and sustained by a good tailor, considered they fulfilled their duties to themselves and society by sitting solemnly with an eyeglass stuck in one eye, while they occasionally break their contemplation of nothing, by uttering platitudes about the weather or some other subject of equal interest. How these merry girls would have shocked the paragons of society who only think of what is fashionable, and value words from the lips of a titled fool more than wisdom from the noble workers. These men and maidens—pity them Miss de Vere, they know no better—regarded only worth and wisdom, and actually felt no shame in any occupation that was not degrading. They actually valued people alone for their worth, and did not strive to hide their natural selves. Alas! they had no rules of fashion to dictate follies to them.

In the morning we were to leave for Pentona, to view and rearrange its capacity so that it could receive and succour the unhappy dregs of many generations of civilization, who led a miserable existence in Ura to its detriment, and who increased and multiplied to the sorrow of posterity.

CHAPTER XI.

PENTONA.

After breakfast we went to the river, where we were to meet the delegates from Ura, and proceed to Pentona. The morning was bright and clear; such a morning as comes at the end of winter to remind us of the glory of spring. The birds sang with an attempt at gaiety soon to be suppressed by the thought of the cold days that were still to come before they could sing to their mates of the beauties of summer, forgetful of the cold. Mary was talking to the Duke. Vernon, who was chatting to a graceful brown-eyed woman, came over to me.

"That is Cora Novel," he said, "one of my secretaries, who attends to all my work in connection with the Federation. She is wonderfully diligent, and takes an absorbing interest in her work."

"Do you prefer a female to a male secretary?" I asked.

"Most decidedly. Could I get a really clever and industrious male secretary who would devote himself to my work, I should prefer him; but that is impossible, as men who are clever and industrious only work for themselves. So I have only the choice between an indifferent male secretary or a perfect female one. Women always can do better for others than for themselves."

"Why do you think so?" I asked, antagonistically.

"Because it is their nature to act under control. You can get really clever women who will devote themselves thoroughly and reliably to your work; I have two such—the one you see, and Gea Barga, who is at Ura. They do all my writing, make calculations and searches, and change a task into a pleasure for me."

The other delegates now arrived, and the launch started. It was driven by compressed air at the rate of about twenty-one miles an hour. As Vernon pointed out to me, other motive powers could not compare with it. The river stored it. It was inexhaustible, safe, clean, and healthy. Every river, if properly treated, would develop millions of horse power, and lose nothing in so doing, while it was the easiest of all powers to carry or to send a distance; for a small canister would hold as much power as a horse would exert in a day, and a small leaden pipe would carry a fabulous quantity of

power in the twenty-four hours a distance only limited by its length. We travelled along splendidly, no smoke or heat; the embanked river was a wonder of forethought which must have taken many years of labour to complete.

"Vernon, how long were they walling in the river this way?" I asked, after long contemplation.

"They have been working at it for about one hundred and twenty years," he said, speaking slowly, the better to draw on his memory, "and are working at it still; but after five years' work they commenced to gain a harvest of power that is inexhaustible, and have now nearly twenty-four miles of the river embanked and working at Zara, besides numerous locks, and about nine miles banked at Pentona."

"What are the walls made of?"

"Concrete and rubble, faced with granite cemented together, which is virtually uninfluenced by the water. Our water-wheels are of phosphoric bronze, so that the decay of a lifetime is quite imperceptible in our river works."

We passed a round structure like a gasometer.

"What is that, Vernon?" I asked, in surprise; "you only use electric light, so it cannot be a gasometer."

"It is a storage station where the compressed air is stored," he replied, admiringly, "and from which it is distributed as required. At that station they can perpetually supply hundreds of horse power, for the river, by operating water-wheels, keeps the power renewed."

"Have you a similar way of obtaining your power from the river at Ura?"

"No; but we soon will, for we intend to make our lazy population quarry the stone, and work for the good of the community, instead of to its sorrow, as they now do, so that in six or seven years the Yanga will be supplying all the motive power for Ura, as the Voa does now for Zara."

"Surely, to bring about all these changes at once will cause great discontent?" I queried, in amazement.

"I do not think so," replied Vernon, with quiet conviction; "we will have the temporary prosperity of borrowed money, so that we can keep the large majority in good humour while we suppress the dregs of our population by sending them to Pentona. The few wealthy people will cause us the most trouble, as they will have to pay the progressive income-tax now in force at Zara. Their grumbling, however, will be unavailing, for directly you educate every member of a community they will insist on relieving themselves from the burden of the very rich, as well as that of the destitute poor. While the majority are uneducated and unenlightened—only human animals, in fact—they can be treated as animals, but no longer."

We passed numerous storage stations, which were receiving power from the water wheels, in the shape of compressed air, night

and day, which they gave out as required to work the launches, trams, vehicles, and all the machinery of Zara. In the distance we saw a lock, which we rapidly reached; it had two gates for letting launches and barges up and down the river, so that we were only a few seconds over three minutes getting through, losing by having to stop and start again about four minutes altogether. Boats were hauled up on two stays, one higher than the other, with revolving half-circular tops, and so taken across. These stays were fixed on a truck, so that when the boat was hauled up and they were turned they could be wheeled across the lock, and the boat put in the water on the other side. The boat was held in two loops, which could be widened by turning a screw to the required size, and could be brought nearer or further apart in a similar manner, so that they could in a few seconds be made to properly hold any ordinary boat. On getting through the lock I noticed, to my surprise, that the water was tidal and going out, a quite inexplicable state of things, as a lock stops a tide, and a river can only run one way, unless they had managed to get water to go up hill in Zara. I was puzzled, so I went to consult Mary.

"What is the cause of the tide flowing behind the lock, Mary; it seems contrary to nature, but I suppose it will be very simple when explained?"

Mary laughed merrily, more because her heart was light, and she felt the exhilaration of the sunshine and bracing air, than at my question, which I felt would be easily answered, for I had got quite beyond surprise.

"Why, Frank, dear, the tide goes in or out through the left channel, and thence fills or empties the six miles reach of the river between the first and second locks. This is necessary to get the full strength of the tide, which thus amounts to millions of horse power every day."

"Well, what is the channel on the other side of the river for? I thought you and Vernon said the tide went up and down in each, and so worked the water-wheels and supplied all the power?"

"We were not sufficiently explicit, Frank; the water-wheels work in each channel, but in the left-hand one by the tide flowing in or out, and in the right-hand one by the water of the Voa flowing down to the sea."

"I understand it now; that explains what seemed an impossibility. I thought the millions of horse power you spoke of was only a figure of speech, Mary, but I see that the power of the Voa is limitless."

The brightness left Mary's face, and she became very grave.

"Pardon me, my queen," I said, apologetically; "in the Middle World we sometimes use a figure of speech to bring the full effects of anything home to the mind of the person we are talking to."

I sat beside her, for she was evidently pained.

"My darling, I am sorry," I continued, humbly. "Your worth alone can make up for my deficiencies, and only your love for me makes me dare to love you."

"In Ura," said Mary very gravely, "people think it proper to tell falsehoods on many occasions; they tell a woman she is an angel, and——"

"The person who told you that spoke the truth, Mary."

"Frank, you are not attending to me."

I looked as grave as an owl, but as I saw my darling thought the assertion she spoke of so unkindly might be sometimes pardoned, I felt quite cheerful. I think that when we call a woman an angel, the latter is the one complimented.

"The people of Ura," continued Mary more serenely, "often tell a falsehood and call it a joke, but, Frank, a falsehood under all and every circumstances is a wicked and objectionable thing. In Zara we never speak anything but the truth, and that is why we are so happy."

This I afterwards found to be the case, and Mary's words were perfectly correct, for a lie is a nasty thing, and can no more be made otherwise than the proverbial pig's ear can be made into a silk purse. We now approached the second lock, which was similar to the first. Here was the end of the tide channel and the commencement of the river channel, and though my mind had before realized the mighty force of the water, my eye conveyed to me more clearly the full realization of this very simple and wonderful plan of obtaining limitless power. The river for several more miles was banked in on either side, and on one side was a huge pipe made of some sort of china ware, and resting on a wall of granite. This puzzled me again, what could it mean in the name of all that is wonderful? At last I turned to Mary and asked,—

"What is that great crockery-ware pipe stuck up on that wall for? I noticed at the second weir it disappeared into a phosphor bronze pipe."

"Why, that is for irrigation," she replied. "That pipe comes from Mount Boro, which is nearly four hundred miles away, and irrigates—I am afraid to say how many hundreds of thousands of acres. Water is an endless blessing."

"So it seems, but that is when it is controlled. Does it never become so mighty as to scorn control, and, like a mad slave broke loose; scatter death and ruin along its path?"

"It once or twice burst its banks, and wrought death and ruin, but that was many decades ago, and there is no fear of it breaking loose again for many reasons. The land, being highly cultivated on either side along its course, absorbs two or three times the amount of water it did in its wild state, and in the mountains there are dams made by closing the mouths of the valleys, which

hold lakes of water, that are drained every summer and take the bulk of the winter rain to fill them; these two causes would alone prevent floods, but in addition to these there is the pipe which puzzled you; it is a great safety valve, as it carries a small river from the mountains; which are the mothers of the waters, which they conceive from the clouds, to the sea, which swallows them. So there is now not even the possibility of a flood, since we save from the superabundance of winter for the want of summer.

"These things are so simple that it puzzles me to think they are not universally adopted," I replied in amazement.

"Wisdom is only simple to the wise," said Mary, "the ignorant cannot attain to the light of wisdom. When all the people in the world are properly educated, then will wisdom be universal, and the powers of nature everywhere control for man's benefit. But till then ignorant people will act ignorantly."

On we sped through a country on either side of the river laid out as farms, with that square method which I was beginning to admire, since I had realized its advantage. The fields were verdant with the growing cereals, and the gardens beautified by the green leaves, and white flowers of the almond trees. Every season has its own beauties, but the early spring in its green freshness seems to me the loveliest of them all. At the next lock we took in a fresh supply of compressed air. It was soon and simply done, a rubber tube encased in a metal chain work, was connected to our compressed air reservoir, which it very soon charged with air of the same pressure as that in the storage tank. Again we sped merrily onwards in the pleasant sunshine and the clear spring air. I had got nearly over my ravenous cravings, but my stomach began to be uneasy, it had not yet reached that placid state consequent on years of plenty, but was thrown into an agony if a meal was delayed for a few minutes. At last dinner was served; the launch was beautifully fitted up, and the saloon was a model of comfort. We were a very merry party, indeed merriment was characteristic of Zara, nowhere else would a number of old and middle-aged men engaged in an onerous labour chat and laugh as pleasantly as they did here. Certainly there was no necessity for anyone to conceal their real feelings, or create an incorrect impression. I had already realized that the art of diplomacy as practised in the Middle Globe, an art which at its best consists in so cleverly acting a lie that there is no necessity to tell one, was a proof that we were very far from the highest civilization and a good many other desirable things. Here men told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, which men only cease to do when they wish to take an unfair advantage of each other. Vernon seemed to have quite got over his loss of Mary. His secretary evidently thoroughly understood him, and seemed rather in love with him. He was

courteous alike to all women, for he only had one manner, except when he was angry. Gradually it seemed forced on my mind that this woman was in love with him, heart and soul. There are some ideas one can realize but not define, and this was one of them. Vernon did not sit near Cora, or take unusual notice of her; but her eyes followed him, and when she thought no one saw her, she looked at him yearningly. By-and-by, while chatting with Mary, I asked her if she did not think Cora was very devoted to her work. She looked keenly at me for a moment, and then said—

"So you see it, do you? I think it is very wrong of Vernon."

"What is very wrong of Vernon?" I asked in wonder.

"Why, the way he treats Cora," said Mary, angrily.

"He seems to treat her very kindly," I said, more mystified than ever.

"And so he does. He ought to be ashamed of himself."

Mary was evidently indignant. So I waited, and she soon continued, angrily,—

"He took Cora as his secretary, gave her pleasant rooms and everything she could desire. Wrote verses for her, and to her, and made her happy in every way, the natural result of which you see."

I looked at Cora, she was evidently a most devoted secretary, but I could not quite see where Vernon's enormity came in. Mary, however, evidently expected me to say something.

"Well, I suppose he encourages her to spend every penny she earns," I ventured at last to remark, "so that when she gets old, or he ceases to require her services, she will be thrown on the world quite destitute?"

I felt I was talking nonsense, and Mary's face confirmed my suspicion.

"There are some things, Frank," she said, in evident scorn, which men are mostly incapable of understanding. Vernon has left money in his will for Cora, so that if he dies she will be provided for, and of course while he lives she will work for him. But he has made her love him and so incapable of loving another man, and he never even contemplates the possibility of marrying her."

I could not even now guess at Vernon's wickedness, but I felt that silence was my only hope. My face, I am afraid, betrayed me, Mary already seemed to be able to read my thoughts by looking at me.

"Frank," she said, after a long look that made me feel to shrivel up, "if a man does not intend to marry a woman, he should only be polite to her, and not be always doing little things to make her happy, for if he does she will love him, and her life will be blighted, for with a woman love is as necessary to her happiness as the light of the sun to her life. Vernon has not

made Cora love him on purpose, in fact I do not think he even suspects she does, but he should not use her merely as a tool to work with. She thinks he is a king amongst men, and has made him the light of her life."

I began to think that this might be a reason that Mary refused Vernon's love. He certainly was very good to Cora, and I thought it very much to his credit; for I failed to see how he deserved Mary's anger. Surely if a woman gives her love without being asked for it, no one is to blame but herself. Fortunately, Cora came over to Mary, and so I was saved from having to be "Diplomatic."

"The President," Cora said, smiling, "is going to write a pamphlet on 'Pentona,' which will remove the little discontent that still exists at Ura on the federation."

Her beautiful round hazel eyes seemed to smile in unison with her pretty lips; she was evidently assured of the power of the pamphlet.

"Who are the class that are least satisfied?" I asked.

"The idlers, who think they will be sent to Pentona," replied Cora, "and the very wealthy, who dread the fresh taxation. The first of these will learn from the pamphlet that Pentona will be a paradise to them, and the latter, that they will be well repaid for the loss of their surplus wealth. Of course, the large majority—nearly every one, in fact—see that nothing but good can come from adopting the laws of Zara."

We saw in the distance a lock.

"That is the last lock we have to pass, Frank," said Mary. "The river is embanked from there up to past Ura—over nine miles in all—to enable them to get sufficient power and light."

On passing the lock, I noticed the great pipes seemed to end here in a large well, which was fed from a race which flowed on one side of the embankment only, and was similar to those on either side of the Voa at Zara. Mary saw that I was puzzled, and explained it to me.

"In summer the main body of the Voa flows down the race, which turns innumerable water wheels. The locks are to keep the river sufficiently deep for a waterway all the year round. The great pipe is broken here, so that the pressure may be relieved; were it not for these breaks, no pipes could be made strong enough to stand the strain of the water which has a fall from Mount Boro. The pipe ends at the next lock, from whence the water is carried in the race."

We now began to pass through the outskirts of Pentona, which were similar to those of Zara, as, indeed, it was throughout. Similar right angles were universally observed, and the same system of trams prevailed. At last we arrived at our destination, and were received on the pier by representatives of the municipal council. The few unofficial people who had come to witness our

arrival were, in dress and appearance, like the people of Zara. I expected to have seen a large crowd, forgetting that only where idlers are plentiful can a crowd assemble to witness any unusual occurrence. We went to the road, and thence by trams to the hotel, where rooms had been secured for us. This simple plan lacked the noise and grandeur with which an important body of men would be received in the Middle Globe; but it neither interfered with the public traffic, nor caused the unnecessary trouble that the more ostentatious plan would. As Pentona was a penal city, I naturally expected some display of police, soldiers, or convicts, but, to my surprise, could see no signs of any of them. Certainly there were a few policemen about, but they are everywhere. I came down to the dining-room early, but found the duke and Vernon there before me.

"I notice you have no display of police or soldiers here, Duke; how is this?" I queried.

"It is not needed," replied the duke. "Prisoners are kept in the jail factories till they are proved thoroughly reliable, when they are allowed considerable freedom, any abuse of which is severely punished."

"I suppose you cut their hair short, and make them wear some distinguishing dress?"

"No, we do neither; we avoid humiliating them as much as possible, and try by every means to establish and increase their self-respect."

"I should imagine that prisoners frequently bolt?"

"No prisoner has bolted for many years. There was a time when people thought it a correct thing to help a prisoner, and when, on account of the vagabond population, it was possible for a convict to elude the police successfully; but now, people are sensible enough to support the laws, which they have a share in making, and which they pay directly or indirectly to uphold. Besides, now there is no vagabond population; a criminal could not escape the police for a day, as every man, woman, and child are known to them."

The supper was similar to that at Zara; excellent, but without the numerous trumpery dishes that at best can only tend to make the palate overload the stomach, and lead to gluttony, which is surely one of the lowest of all pleasures. After the dinner the delegates from Ura, accompanied by the duke and several of the Zara senators, went to see how the prisons were managed at night. We decided to commence with those prisoners who were best behaved, and so given the greatest amount of liberty; these included people imprisoned for debt, and prisoners who showed a strong desire to reform. The male prisoners were separated altogether from the females and children, who occupied a separate part of the town. We first went to a block like the blocks of Zara. In the centre enclosure, of 100 feet square, we found a

band of musicians playing and several hundred men smoking and chatting in a most orderly and contented manner. They did not look at all like prisoners, so I asked one of the officials who was with us if they were all really convicts.

"They are certainly all convicts," he replied, "though some of them are convicted at their own desire. For instance, that pleasant man talking with President Dreman was sentenced to a year's work for discontent. He will not work out of jail; and as he has just served a sentence for not paying for things he had bought, he could not get credit. So he went to the judges and applied to be sent to Pentona, and received the sentence I have mentioned. In prison he gives no trouble, works well, and amuses the other prisoners, so that he will be released before his term is up, and will then return to Zara and spend his prison money, when he will apply to be imprisoned for discontent, and probably get five years."

"What is his prison money?"

"Every prisoner is made to earn a crown and an outfit before he is released, so that he will not be sent away destitute, but be able to live respectably till he can get employment of some sort."

I went and listened to a conversation between the duke and a Ura delegate, who had just asked how the prison was self-supporting. The delegate evidently asked on behalf of the other delegates as much as for himself.

"The daily hours of labour, as you know," said Duke Mura, "are restrained by the law of custom, which is the strongest law, to six; though work such as driving, tram-car conducting, and other light and healthy callings are allowed to extend their hours to a maximum of ten. Government relief and penal work is extended to eight hours, with a maximum of twelve. In the prisons we have factories of all sorts, so that the prisoners not only make everything they use, but make the clothes and boots for the soldiers as well, who in return supply them with grain and meat. This work, however, occupies only a very small portion of their time, the balance of which is expended in working the mines. By prison labour the coal and iron mines are worked, the granite quarries manned, and the rough bricks made; so that prison labour not only supports itself, but enables the free population to have more leisure than they otherwise would."

"How is it the free people can live at all, if your jails do so much?" asked one of the Ura delegates.

"The free people," replied the Duke, "live the easier for the jail work. People only work sufficiently to enable them to supply their wants. Finding that all the necessary work can be done in six hours, they so limit their hours of labour, which will within ten years be further reduced to five. Our laws, which prevent people acquiring very great wealth, have prevented the very wealthy—by making them impossible—from causing the many

with medium incomes to ruin their happiness by apeing the lavish display of millionaires. Thus, and in many other ways, we have removed discontent. No man will work for another more than six hours, and the few who are their own masters create no impression on the commonwealth. When a man cannot get work, the Government gives it to him, with the penalty I have mentioned. Further, directly free work gets scarce, the unemployed turn their attention to reducing the hours of labour so that all may be employed. The outcome of all these facts is that every industrious person can get free labour who wishes, which will enable him to live in comfort, and save sufficient to support him in his old age, failing which he must come to Pentona. When Pentona was first established it was overcrowded with the dregs of many years of vice, but now these people have become extinct Pentona prisons are hardly one-third full, and society is vastly bettered."

We now went through the reading-room, of which there were two, each twenty-five feet square. These rooms were well supplied with papers, magazines, and books, and filled with prisoners who were attentively perusing them. The next rooms we visited were rooms—two to each block, which held two thousand prisoners—where draughts, chess, dominoes, and cards were played, so that the prisoners when well behaved were better off than most free men at Ura. We next visited the bedrooms, which were comfortable little apartments, containing a bed, chair, table, and box, besides pegs for clothes. These rooms were lighted by electricity at 21.45, when the prisoners all went to bed, and at 22 were locked and left in darkness. At 6 o'clock a gong sounded, and the prisoners got up and dressed, reported themselves at 6.30, and breakfasted at 6.45, after which they went to their various occupations. At 8 they commenced work, which they continued till 12, when they had half an hour for dinner, after which they worked till 14.30, when they might either stop or work for two hours more, which many of them did, as a sentence was so many days' work, so that those who worked ten hours a day did five days' work in four, and so shortened their term. After work they were free till supper time, and permission was frequently given them to stay out till 21.30. The next place we visited was the prison for probationers, or those who were under punishment for some trifling cause. Here there was music, and the reading and games rooms, but the prisoners were sent to bed at 20, and their bedrooms contained only a bed and a chair. They were called at 5 in the morning, and treated as were the best behaved, with the exception that they were allowed no liberty. The next prison we visited was laid out more like our prisons in the Middle Globe. Here the prisoners worked for eight or ten hours, after which they were locked up. And they were fed alone morning and evening on

oatmeal, and at mid-day were given a dinner of meat, bread, vegetable, and sweets. The prisoners in the other two prisons were fed on a diet similar, and but little inferior, to that taken by free men. In another part of the prison were solitary confinement cells, and rooms for prisoners who as punishment were made to live and work alone. This prison contained very few prisoners, for almost without exception they acted in the most exemplary manner, and worked their way up to the barrack's prison in the shortest possible time. Experience had proved at Pentona that almost universally men under control would work, and work well; the few who did not were sent to work that could be measured, and where they received punishments if they did not do the proper amount. In fact, the secret of the great success at Pentona was that obedience and good conduct brought reward, while shirking work—industry is a word only to be applied to voluntary labour—or bad conduct brought punishment. The execution chamber and several other details we left till next day, and we returned home tired and conscious of having fairly earned a night's rest.

CHAPTER XII.

OUR ERRING BROTHERS.

On coming down next morning, I found Vernon had been up early, and, with Cora's aid, dispatched his private correspondence. I did not wish to question Mary about the Pentona methods; for, though she would give me any amount of information, I was afraid I would gain her contempt by failing at once to realize the simple common-sense laws and customs of this wonderful country.

She was, however, more surprised at the extreme stupidity of many of the laws of Ura than I was at the laws of Zara, which were perfectly consistent with common sense, while the former were remnants of barbarism and class legislation, quite unsupported by reason.

As the possibility of appearing ridiculous to Mary was a serious matter, and I wished very much to discuss, and fully understand, the penal laws, I hailed Vernon's presence with delight.

"I fail to realize how all those prisoners can be kept in subjection by the few jailors. Is it not inexplicable to you?" I asked him.

"Oh, no," he answered, "for I have studied it all long ago, before I commenced to advocate the Federation in fact. The whole thing is perfectly simple, the prisoners are treated with consideration and fairness, and have all to gain by behaving well, and all to lose by behaving badly. The punishments are not severe, but they are certain. And crimes of all sorts are deterred by the certainty not the severity of the punishment. You must remember that many of the prisoners are only lazy, and very few of them really vicious."

"Suppose," I suggested, "they revolted successfully, what would happen?"

"The revolt would shortly be subdued, and the prisoners made to pay the whole cost of subduing it, and probably get at least a year each in the sixteen-hour cells."

"How do you mean they would have to pay the cost of subduing an insurrection?"

"Exactly what I say. For instance, two men a few days ago

quarrelled over a game of cards; one accused the other of cheating, and struck him in the face. Next day they were tried, and five witnesses lost six hours' work each through giving evidence. These thirty hours were divided between the quarrellers, and the aggressor was further given six days in the sixteen-hour cells. It was proved that the aggressor was in the wrong, but the defendant increased his anger by rudely contradicting him. Thus you see the prisoners had to pay the whole cost of the trial, and so it is with everything, the prisoners must pay for their faults with their work."

"What are the sixteen-hour cells?" I asked.

"Why, those we saw last, where the men are let out of their cells to work for eight hours and then sent back. They have the privilege, like all prisoners, of working two hours extra, which they all do, for they see no one while they are locked up."

Shortly after the rest of our party came down to breakfast, during which we decided to visit the cells for the worst prisoners first. The Chief Governor of the prisoners—there were three Governors—Darcy Prano Brender, and his wife breakfasted with us, after which we returned to the prisons. We were first shown the solitary confinement cells, twenty in number, where prisoners who were very badly behaved were put. The Governor told us that five years' imprisonment was the highest sentence inflicted, even for murder, and that when a prisoner by misconduct brought his sentence up to nine years, or was violent, he was put in these cells; for every day he was kept solitary he had three days added to his sentence, and when that reached ten years he was executed."

"Do you hang or behead here?" I asked.

"Neither," replied Darcy, "from a locked safe outside a tube leads to that hole in the centre of the ceiling; the first night after a man's sentence has reached ten years, at the hour of 24 the ventilation of his room is closed, and chloroform pumped into it with a syringe. At 24.30 the room is ventilated, and the three prison doctors enter, and send a poisonous injection into a vein of the dead man, who next day is sent to the School of Surgeons for dissection."

"Of course he is told that he is to be executed?"

"No, after his sentence reaches nine years he is put in here, and he knows that if he receives a further year's sentence he will be executed, but if he commit a fault, he is never told what his sentence is. We find that a month in these cells brings any man to reason, with only one or two exceptions."

"Then there are very few executions?"

"Within the last twenty years there have only been two. The only serious crimes ever perpetrated in Zara are caused by love. The last man executed killed a girl who had been his betrothed, but who found she could not love him, and transferred her affec-

tions. He was sent here under a five years' sentence; and got very violent through brooding over his crime. He would get reasonable till something reminded him of the woman he had killed, when he would assault his jailors or fellow-prisoners, and refuse to work; he went on this way till his sentence reached the fatal term, when he was chloroformed. The other man was a burglar who came from Ura, and tried to rob a block, but was discovered and captured, though not till he had killed a constable. He was sent here under the maximum sentence, and we found him utterly without reason, though he had the cunning of a fox. He tried to get up a revolt, and when his fellow-prisoners reported him, tried to kill one of them, and so brought his sentence up to the death term."

One of the delegates asked to be shown how the chloroform was sent into the room, so lavender water was put into the chloroform bottle, and he was asked to go into the cell, politely he suggested that Mary would go first, which she did with my escort. The room was unfurnished, but had a mirror fixed in the wall opposite the door. The scent was delicious, and though the surroundings were weird, I could not sacrifice so excellent an opportunity, but took my lady love in my arms and kissed her. There are other things besides food for which men get ravenous. We left the cell, and two delegates went in, the Duke stepped down from a little platform, he was smiling about something, and directed Mary, to get on it and apply her eye to a hole in the wall which she did, and her face became red with blushes.

"I was the only one who looked to see how you and Frank enjoyed the scent, Mary," said the Duke.

I now took a look and lo! through the hole which ended in a shaded round piece of glass, every part of the room could be seen directly or in the mirror. I looked round. The Duke was still smiling. Mary entered no more cells with me.

"In Ura, as you know, Duke," said a delegate, "we execute with electricity; what advantage do you claim for chloroform?"

"In the first place," replied the Duke, "it is the simpler and less expensive; in the second, it does away with the brutal spectacle of witnessing a man being killed, and the publishing of gruesome details to poison the public mind. When a criminal receives the death sentence it is reported to the judges in council, who confirm it, or give the man another chance, as they think fit. And the execution is carried out in a painless manner unwitnessed by any but the Almighty."

We next came to a room with a treadmill, above which hung two ropes with delta handles.

"This," said Darcy Brender, "is a room that has not been used for about forty years, before which time if a prisoner would not work, he was tied by the wrists to those two handles, and made to do a certain amount of labour. By pulling the handles

one at a time and then slackening them he operated a wheel similar to that operated by his feet. If he refused to work, he was hung up by his wrists till he did; as a matter of fact, if a prisoner remained hanging by his wrists for five minutes, he never again refused work."

"This seems to me an excellent plan," said a delegate. "Would it not be better to make prisoners work this way than to execute them?"

"We have not found it so," replied Brender; "the work done on the treadwheel is virtually useless, as by putting up an extra water wheel in the race, we would get as much work done as forty prisoners could do. There always have been, and I am afraid always will be, men who are neither amenable to reason nor force. These while they live are a sorrow to themselves and a nuisance to the community, and so are better dead."

We now went to the prisons for the women and children; these were almost exactly like those we had already seen, but the women almost without exception were well behaved, and hardly ever punished, except for carelessness. They were much lazier than the men, but had a greater dread of having their terms extended, or being sent to the sixteen-hour cells. We found that no woman had been executed for nearly a century. They were all dressed in short skirts, knickerbockers, and stockings. Their dresses were uncontorted with bustle or similar contrivance, and fitted closely to their figures. They wore various sorts of hats; we found that on entering the prison they were supplied with a straw or a felt hat, as they chose; these they were allowed to trim in their leisure if they wished, as they usually did. The girls were dressed similarly to the women, and the boy children, who were kept here up to the age of twelve, were dressed, as the male prisoners were, in a coat like a shooting coat, with knickerbockers, stockings, and either a straw or felt hat, like the women wore, but untrimmed. There were, however, hardly any children in the prisons of Pentona, as no children were born there, and the cases where they came with their parent, or parents, were very few. We next visited the prison factories. First we went to the clothing factory; here the sewing machines were all driven by compressed air. In different rooms we found women employed at work in every stage of development from cutting out to finishing different articles of dress. We were told by the superintendent that she had no difficulty in getting the women to work, or in teaching them how to execute it. They all seemed happy and orderly, and were very much better off than ordinary factory hands in the Middle Globe. The boot factory was managed solely by men, and machinery was very largely used. We next went to the prison stores, which were huge places, well supplied with an excellent stock; we could here see more plainly than in the prisons that the number of convicts had been

very much reduced. Rows of shelves that were labelled, and had evidently once been occupied, were now vacant, and several shelved rooms were empty.

"How many prisoners," Vernon asked Darcy, "can you receive at Pentona from Ura?"

"About three thousand, delivered in gangs of about two hundred every second week," he replied, after a moment's thought.

"That will be more than sufficient," said Vernon, "as our prison population will be reduced very much by the amount of work to be had, and the imprisonment of the utterly criminal who encourage the unfortunate, or idle, to evil ways."

We next came to the justice chamber, which was presided over by three judges, and in which a jury were unknown. Juries had been done away with in Zara for many years and three judges substituted, as it was thought that three men of proved ability, who were educated and used to receiving and weighing evidence, when assisted by experts, were much better able to give a fair decision, than twelve ordinary men selected from the multitude by the working of chance. Another novelty we found introduced into the law courts, namely hypnotism or mesmerism, the former of which was simply a mechanical application of the latter. In every case where the judges were doubtful of the truth of evidence, they had power to order the witness to be examined under the influence of mesmerism. And in all trials where a serious case had been made out against a prisoner who pleaded not guilty, he also was examined under mesmerism. In my college days I had studied mesmerism, so decided to question Darcy.

"If a witness or prisoner refuses to be mesmerized," I asked, "how do you proceed?"

"That never happens now," said Darcy; "when it used to, the witness was strapped down in the mesmeric chair, made to inhale an anæsthetic, and hypnotized with revolving mirrors. Mesmerism is now so thoroughly understood that no one minds going under its influence; and now even a criminal who has something to hide, goes under the influence voluntarily, rather than by force."

"Have you no fear of the mesmerizer influencing the mind of the patient by exercising his own knowledge of the case?"

"No; for a mesmerizer who does not know the parties is retained in every case that may become important, and sworn that he will not learn about the evidence."

We now returned to dinner, after which we went into the country to see the farm prisons, which supplied produce of all sorts for the criminal establishments, and where the very old paupers were sent, for here the longevity of the criminal, or foolish class, as they were called, was remarkable. The trams took us through the suburbs of Pentona, to the farm prison, which was situated

on a block of nearly three thousand acres of land, and worked in connection with a sheep and cattle farm, further down the river, where the prisoners, besides rearing cattle, cleared and irrigated land which the government sold to the people, leaving the prisoners to move on their holding, and clear and irrigate fresh soil. We did not see the second farm, but learnt that it was composed solely of men, who acted as pioneers, after having served a probationary sentence at Pentona. We next visited the farm prison, which was situated almost in the middle of the farm, and consisted of an eight-storey building very similar to those of Zara. On one side was a glass-house covering about five acres, the other sides being surrounded with uncovered gardens. At regular intervals of about one hundred yards were large windmills which surrounded the farm house, and supplied it with electric light and compressed air, though they had sometimes to be assisted by horse labour. On entering, we were taken over the place, which was so similar to the prisons as not to need describing. We then went to the top of the house, and surveyed the surrounding country. The farm was divided by rails and barbed wire into a number of fields containing from five to fifty acres. There were numerous sheds in which the cattle were stabled in winter, and just beyond the garden, several small houses dotted about, which we were told were for the pigs and poultry. These we found were movable, their feet being fixed into hollow iron spikes driven into the ground. We found the prisoners had a band of musicians, and were well supplied with papers and books, so that they had many more comforts than are given to ordinary farmers. They had, in fact, everything but freedom and the society of women. The glass-house was prolific in vegetables, and only by its aid, the gardener told us, could he properly and surely rear young plants all the year round, which out of doors were at the mercy of the frost. All the farm was irrigated, and laid out on the most scientific principles. The fowl and the pig houses especially attracted my attention. The former were movable houses without floors, having from their lower rim or edge projecting downwards a row of three-inch spikes. At each of the four corners were spikes a foot long, which fitted into large hollow ones driven into the ground, so that the house could be moved out into the fields in the spring time little by little, and easily taken up or put down. This they did to enable the fowls to get the grasshoppers, which we were told came in myriads every spring. The pigs' houses were also movable, on a similar plan, and kept perfectly clean, much as they are in Chicago, and are not in most other parts of the world. Having done our duty by seeing all that was to be seen, we returned home. Here we found one of the barrack's prisoners waiting to see President Dreman, who interviewed him, and then returned to us. Vernon told us that a committee of ten old men had been

selected, with the sanction of the prison authorities, to wait on him and offer to do all that lay in their power to aid in watching the prisoners to be sent from Ura, and making them contented with their lot, and that they would wait on him after tea. In due time the ten old men marched solemnly in, each of them gravely shaking hands with Vernon; they seemed more sorry for, than ashamed of, their imprisonment, and while regarding themselves as worthy of pity on account of their wrong-doing, evidently regarded their prison career with pride.

"President Dreman," began the old man who came before supper, and who was evidently the inspirer of the party, "we have followed your career with sympathy, and are proud to think that through you we shall have the honour of living at a time when the blessings of wisdom are to be brought to the people of Ura."

Dreman bent his head in recognition of the compliment.

"We have been thinking, President Dreman," he continued, "that we might assist you in your labour, by assuring you that we will all—I say all, for I speak for my nine friends,"—they bowed their assent—"and together we speak for all the prisoners of the barrack prison—we will all regard the foolish people you send here from Ura as friends, and while watching them carefully to see that they are amenable to discipline, will try our best to make them comfortable and happy."

Vernon thanked them warmly and eloquently; admired the prison arrangements and the excellent work of the prisoners, and concluded by pointing out that though they had unfortunately got into prison, their behaviour, while there, proved that they were wiser than many outside its walls, and gained them universal respect. The old men were evidently moved by the generous courtesy of President Dreman, and each accorded him their heart-felt praise, as they shook hands, and accepted a cigar from his cigar-box. When the last of the ten had left, the duke spoke,—

"Vernon, you will be talked about as a god in Pentona, these men are driven to take a double interest in passing events, having no interests of their own to attend to, and have followed every movement of your career. Henceforth, they will feel that in watching and attending to the Ura prisoners, they are sharing a career that has been a glory to them, and will talk of 'our reform.'"

Vernon smiled. "I shall be happy to share the 'our' with them if they bring happiness to the unfortunates amongst my fellow-citizens who will be sent to Pentona. Every helper is welcome to me."

The duke turned to the delegates and said,—

"This incident shows clearly how we have managed to make our prisoners take a pride and interest in their prison work. And

now you have seen them at some of their occupations, you will recognize that they do not compete with free labour, but shorten the working hours of all. They work the coal mines in connection with the iron mines, and the Government sell bar iron cheaply, and so encourage its manufacture. By making rough bricks, and quarrying the granite they enable waterworks to be carried out, and buildings to be erected that otherwise could not be commenced for many years to come. By cleaning and irrigating the rough land they make it fit for the farmer, so that our rapid increase of population may be provided for; and while they do all this they still only cost the Government the price of their supervision, the wholesale price of cloth, and a few other things, which their work pays for several times over. And last, but not least, our weak and criminal population are kindly provided for, and restrained from reproducing, as a curse for the next generation, children without the wisdom to be good or happy."

CHAPTER XIII.

MARRIAGE.

For a few days, the delegates carried on a minute examination of the prison arrangements, everyone prying as seemed to him fit. In the afternoons we would amuse ourselves in various ways; on the river the popular craft was a launch driven by compressed air with room for about ten people. They had also boats like our racing boats which held two people, and were very easy to row. In everything provision for two was made, boats, tricycles, suites of rooms, everything; this was caused by the early betrothal of the young people, and their, consequently, being very much together and sharing their amusements, which were very little interfered with by their marriage, as a reasonable period nearly always elapsed between the birth of the babies, so that one child was able to toddle before another was born. I rowed Mary up the river, and she told me about Pentona, the ways of which we discussed from both her and my point of view, and finally agreed on an issue. Surely no question can be so fairly argued as that discussed under the emotional reason of a woman, and the cold logic of a man. The one extreme tones down the other, and the golden mean is reached; for when you are discussing emotional beings you must have logic, warmed by feeling, if you would wisely decide. There is certainly no labour so sweet as that which, thus shared, is so made a labour of love. Mary rowed as did all the women, as they were of the opinion that exercises suitable for men were suitable for the mothers of men. The racing and competing they left to their sterner mates, believing that woman's mission is to elevate, and encourage the men, but not to compete with them.

In a land where display is derided, and personal excellence only praised; where great wealth is unknown, and limited means considered the natural accompaniment of the commencement of a career; and where, further, girls and youths are brought up not to seek a wealthy partner, but one who is fitted to accompany them through life, and with whom, though they may possibly rise to wealth and honour, they will certainly attain happiness. Where all these unusual conditions prevailed, a man like myself

who saw he could earn a sufficient income, considered he was acting honourably and wisely in trying to persuade his lady love to become his wife, without waiting till he had earned sufficient to keep her in a state of idleness, that could not fail to deteriorate all her good qualities. We were tired of rowing, and rested under the drooping branches of a willow, some of which Mary held, and prevented the slight drifting that otherwise would have taken place in this lock-bound river. Mary with hatless head, mused on passing fancies, while I smoked a hookah in happy silence. With the perfection of companionship silence ceases to embarrass. She looked perfectly happy; with a woman the courtship of love is not a thing she wishes to hurry, but the more eager nature of man forces everything on to fruition.

"I think we have passed nothing of interest?" I said at last. "What I did not see you saw and pointed out. We were looking different ways."

"Not different ways," she said, with lovelit eyes; "but at the same surroundings from different views."

"Had you not rowed when you did I should have been very tired," I continued, "or we would not have come so far." She looked up at me and smiled, but did not speak, so I continued again,—

"You guided the boat, and kept her on her course. Either would have been lonely without the other."

"We will always be together, Frank," she said.

"When the light has left the earth, and nature becomes still, you leave me; and I do not see you again till after the sun has melted the morning dew, and the birds have sung their songs to their mates. The thought of you is always with me, but, Mary, I long for you, and am very lonely."

"Do you think I am never lonely for want of you, Frank?"

"I hope you often are. Mary, will you fix the day for our wedding very soon? Only with you am I happy, and you are happier with me. In all eternity we cannot recover the time we lose now; be my wife soon; we are foolish to linger at the gates of happiness."

"Frank, it is foolish to gather fruit till you are sure they are ripe. You said you would be patient."

"I am as patient as possible, but why should we delay?"

"We shall delay no longer than you wish. You would not have our wedding till you return from Ura, for you do not wish to leave me before I have worn your ring an hour? When you wish, my love, I will be your wife."

As I rowed back, I felt that my queen would guide the vessel of our happiness on the river of life firmly and well, and would take an oar when I tired, that our vessel might still progress. Though I did less than the delegates, in searching for knowledge of the prison life, I learnt more from daily discussing it with

Mary, who had studied it all. One more journey we took, that we might see the granite quarries, where the stone was got that seemed to defy decay. The quarry was a huge cutting in the side of the hill, which seemed to have a grey granite foundation; here the prisoners rough-hewed the stone, which was then sent to the prison to be finished and fitted for its place. At the end of the week we returned, the delegates having each or severally examined everything from the working of the breeding and clearing farm, and the mines, to the sixteen-hour cells, and execution room. In journeying up the river, I was surprised at the mighty workings of the water, but in journeying back again the simplicity of the natural laws, that were made to work for the community, was what impressed me most. As we sped along the power of the air we breathe, but which seems to us nothing, was brought to my mind by our rapid progress. Vernon was discussing his pamphlet with the duke, having Cora as an audience, and half the passengers were engaged with the study of the statistics they had gathered, when we reached the wharf at Zara. Next day, Mary asked me if I would come with her to the marriage bureau?

"Certainly. Surely you do not countenance such an institution?"

Mary looked at me in astonishment, as she replied,—

"We all support the bureau. At Ura marriage, which is the most important event in the life of a man or woman, is left quite to chance. When a man or woman want to marry, they are restricted, in the choice of a mate, to the few people of their immediate circle; and when they do marry, frequently know nothing but the best behaviour form, and outside appearance, of their partner. In no other event are people so careless. In Ura, if a woman wants a dress, she does not restrict her choice to material made in Ura, but selects from all the material of Fregida, one of a texture, colour, form, and which, well, in every particular, suits her; yet she gives her happiness, and life, to the care of a man of whom she knows hardly anything, and her choice is restricted to the few men she meets. With a man in Ura, if he wants a horse, he finds out all the horses for sale, and then purchases one to suit him in every way, after finding out its pedigree, temper, history, and all about it; yet he only chooses a wife from the few girls he personally knows, and marries her oftentimes in ignorance of her tastes and habits. In Zara a list of every marriageable man and woman is kept, so that when a girl wants a husband she can find out all about every man of a marriageable age."

"Do the girls, then, do the courting?" I asked in surprise.

"Certainly not, but generally one of their friends makes inquiries, and without their knowledge they are given opportunties of meeting a suitable man. The men sometimes make inquiries, but generally inquiries are made by the mothers, for their sons

or daughters, when they are nearly grown up. I am now going to make inquiries for Nitho, who, though a nice girl in every way, has as yet failed to meet her fate."

"Why is that? She seems a most attractive girl."

"And so she is, but she has been very much with Vernon, and is a little in love with him in her childish way, just sufficient to compare him to her would-be admirers, and to have him occupy her thoughts."

"Well, I am surprised at her being in love with Vernon."

"Frank, dear, you are a goose; when a clever girl leaves off romping, she wants something beyond her toys to sympathize with. Nitho turned to Vernon for sympathy, and liked him too much to think of a lover."

"Tell me who are the marriage bureau?" I queried.

"They are five matrons, one of whom is a doctor, and they make a list of the marriageable people in their district, and send a copy of it to every other similar bureau, who send them in return similar lists. So that full particulars are recorded, and can be ascertained of every unbetrothed bachelor or spinster."

We now entered a block and came to the bureau, which bore the inscription "Dr. Nora Luon Alba. Marriage bureau." We entered and I was introduced to a white-haired comfortably proportioned old lady, who I afterwards learned was a widow, and the mother of four married daughters. After I had answered several inquiries, Mary said,—

"Doctor Nora, I am come to see if we can find a mate for Nitho Mura?"

The old lady smiled. "I thought you had come to find a mate for Doctor Frank?"

Mary actually blushed, and the dear old lady nodded to me, and said pleasantly,—

"You are a lucky man, Frank."

I should have liked to kiss her, she looked so kind and good.

"Nitho," she continued, as she opened a ledger, "is registered as pretty, clever, and very merry. Now such a girl should have a clever mate who can gain her respect and laugh with her, or one who can gain her love, and will not mind her laughing at him. In the medical school is a young doctor who is very clever, but is so wrapped up in his work that he goes out very little and is rather quiet. He is a good son and a good brother, and his sisters admire and love him, as therefore his wife is likely to do. Now Nitho's mirth will keep this man from deadening his soul with too much work, and her cleverness will cause her to be a companion to him."

"I think he will do," said Mary. "What is his name?"

"Allan Deo Mona; he is a doctor at the Northern Medical School."

"This is doing formally a little more than is done unformally at the Middle Globe," I ventured to remark.

"In Ura and Gurla," said Doctor Nora, "a man who has money is pursued by the girls and their mothers; if he has dyspepsia or consumption it makes no difference. They want the lazy luxury that money brings; of course they would sooner the man was worthy of their love, but that he is not so does not prevent them using all their powers to entice him."

"Of course that is not so in Zara?" I asked.

"Certainly not," said the old lady, "the women of Zara are too sensible to value a man for his possessions; they value him for himself, and his desirable qualities."

The old lady did not put the marriage customs of Ura and Gurla in a favourable light. I could quite imagine that the poor girls brought up in luxury were often forced to marry rich and unpleasant men, but surely that was their misfortune, and because they could not get men who were rich and nice; certainly their mothers would have been kinder to them, if they had brought them up simply so that they could have been happy with a poor man, and not had to turn from all but rich wooers. We left the doctor, and strolled homewards by the river.

"Who elected the marriage bureau, Mary?"

"The matrons of the district. Every matron is eligible for the position. They receive a salary of fifty crowns a year, and with the exception of the doctor, who is elected for life, retain their position for six years, retiring two every three years."

"Do you have no men connected with the bureau?" I asked.

"No; marriage is a subject that can only be properly treated by the instinctive wisdom of women. If a man is condemned to celibacy the bureau is informed."

"Do you mean to say that in Zara a man's liberty can so far be invaded as to prevent his marrying?" I questioned in consternation.

"Certainly," said Mary, "the community is considered first in everything, though that nearly always includes the welfare of the individual. If a man develops cancer, consumption, or any similar complaint, he is forbidden to marry, though both those diseases are nearly unknown now."

"Your climate is evidently a healthy one?"

"Climate has very little to do with it; it is our laws that stamp out disease. In Ura when a man has consumption, heart disease, or any other disease that weakens him, he is forced to stay at home a great deal, and his longing for a sympathizing nurse generally cause him to marry, while many of the stronger men remain single, so that the people of Ura are getting more delicate and afflicted every year."

Certainly my lady love was wise as she was beautiful. Her loveliness was of a kind that cannot be fully realized at a glance,

for the goodness of her heart and the wisdom of her mind beautified her face, as the sun and the clouds beautify the heavens, and change their aspect, so that they are more beautiful the more you study them.

"Frank, dear," said Mary coaxingly one day, "I want you to go to the medical triumvirate to-morrow, and see Dr. Allan Mona. I know you will like him, and want you to bring him home with you." I promised compliance, and she continued: "He is twenty-two, and Nitho is nineteen, so they are just a nice age; as a two years' engagement will bring them to the marriageable age, and enable them to thoroughly understand each other."

Next day I visited the triumvirate, who were three medical men of eminence appointed by the Senate, who received patients and diagnosed their complaints, but did not prescribe, so that the family doctor had the aid of the highest medical wisdom to guide him. When anyone got unwell they visited the triumvirate who gave them a written opinion, which they took to their own doctor; if they were too unwell, their private doctor obtained the advice of the triumvirs. As a medical man, and a regarder of professional etiquette, I felt it a humiliation to have to follow the opinion of other doctors, no matter how eminent they were; but as a layman I recognized the wisdom of the plan. Allan Mona I found here acting as one of the secretaries. He was a tall, slight man with a brown beard, and coarse dark hair, which stood up from his forehead, which was high and large. His eyes were brown, and of the ordinary size, while his features were straight. He was rather a book-worm, and completely devoted to his profession, which he regarded as most exalted, and one the limits of which were beyond comprehension. In manner he was gravely formal, and devoid of that graceful ease which was usual in Zara, and which is supposed in the Middle Globe to be a characteristic of aristocracy. After going over the rooms of the triumvirate, which consisted of the consulting room, an operating room, and a library, we took the tram and went to the hospital.

"Do you not find it very inconvenient to have your hospital so far out of the city?" I asked.

"No," said Allan Mona; "on the contrary, it has many advantages, such as fresh air and perfect quiet. All contagious diseases are sent there at once, and any accident, such as a broken leg, is attended to where it took place, and then the patient is taken out in an ambulance car, in which he is just as comfortable as if he were in bed."

"I am told you have very little illness at Zara?"

"That is so, heart disease, consumption, and cancer are almost unknown with us, though they are propagated and common in Ura; here all disease is scarce and of a mild form, principally because the people are of so splendid a physique."

The hospital stood in a large garden, and was tiled and enamelled throughout, so that all the surfaces were incapable of absorbing germs of any sort. Like all the other buildings, it was of eight storeys, and contained the most wonderful museum and dissecting room I had ever seen. Considering the population of Zara, the patients were very few, and consisted principally of women who had come there to be confined. Nearly all the work of nursing was done by the medical students; about one-fifth of whom were women, whose college was attached, and most of whom lived at the hospital.

"Have you not great trouble in getting subjects for dissection?" I asked.

"No," replied Doctor Allan; "for everyone who dies in the hospital or at Pentona goes for dissection; and very many people will their bodies to the medical school after death."

There were not ten per cent. of the invalids here that would have been in a population of similar size in the Middle Globe, where disease is so much encouraged. I brought Allan Mona home with me, as Mary had desired, and we became fast friends. Shortly afterwards I got an appointment as a secretary of the same triumvirate. After a few days' stay at Zara, the delegates returned to Ura, and the duke, Mary, and I, with the representatives from the parliament of Zara to that of Ura, prepared for our journey to the latter city, where the laws of Zara were to be forthwith enforced little by little. On reaching the Sherea Railway Station, from which we went to Sherea, a distance of two hundred and eighty miles of our journey, we found an immense glass-covered storehouse, very much larger than any station on the Middle Globe. Corn of all sorts and coal was here stowed in immense quantities. The railway consisted of a double line, each of which carried all the traffic going one way, so that the chance of an accident was minimized. Behind every train was a small trolly, so that when a breakdown of any sort took place a messenger could be sent back to warn the coming trains of danger. Our carriage, which was long, and very much on the plan of a Pullman car, was furnished so that travellers had perfect hotel accommodation on their journey. After we had started, Mary and I went on the dividing platform, so that I might see the country we passed through. On either side the land was laid out in arable or plantation blocks, trees being planted at regular intervals for timber and shelter for the cattle. The houses were few and far between, and of only two or three storeys. On we went, the country, as we looked back, rushing away from us, for we travelled at the rate of forty-two miles an hour. We passed a goods train on a siding.

"I suppose, Mary," I asked, "that train has shunted to let us pass?"

"Yes," she replied, "every fifteen miles there is a telephone station where the slow trains are shunted off to let the fast ones pass. For instance, every station knows when our train is due, and if a slow train comes up not far enough ahead to reach the next station without delaying us, it is shunted till we pass."

As we took up water without stopping, we went right on to Sherea, which was a city laid out like Zara, but containing a population of only about six hundred thousand inhabitants. Here we broke our journey and put up at an hotel. As it was only the sixteenth hour, Mary and I went to the Sherea, where we hired an electric launch and went up the river. The banks were walled in, exactly as they were at Zara, which had evidently been taken as a pattern. The setting sun, whose rays glistened on the grey granite, warned us to return. The unpolluted river, clear and bright, swished past our bows as we glided on our smokeless way. The shadows of the houses crept across the river as the sun set, and the splendour of the scene made us silent.

After supper we went to the hotel tower, and looked on the city, with its brilliantly lighted streets beneath us. There are some things that must be seen to be realized, and which cannot properly be described. The scene beneath us was one of these. Many years ago, while up the country in Australia, I met a man —he was young, with the mind of an artist, and the enthusiasm of youth—who had never seen the ocean. I described it to him till we both believed he had fully realized its immensity and grandeur. Subsequently we went on a holiday trip to the sea-side. Together we rode one evening to a cliff washed by the waves of the Southern Ocean. The hollow roar of the breakers filled the still hot air of summer with the sound one hears in a big shell if it is held to the ear. Suddenly our horses stopped at the top of the rise, and there beneath us the great waves formed far out, commencing in a ripple, to rush shorewards, growing as they went, till they became great crested monsters, that broke on the beach, and sprinkled the cliff face with their spray. Out to sea, a vessel, like a ship in a picture, was disappearing in the distance, while the glass-like surface of the water was lit up by the restless rays of the setting sun. I turned to my friend, and, as I looked on his awestruck face, felt that he had not from my words realized the wonders of the sea. In the grandeur of God's ocean, a woman's face, or a man's love, there is that which cannot be described, and which passeth all understanding, so that it can only be comprehended, and to the duller mind is as a sealed book. If you can get to a height or a tower which overlooks a city, go there at night, and you will see the streets stretching away beneath you with fiery eyes on either side, till they become a thin

luminous streak. The buildings will be dark masses, giving a sense of loneliness. Imagine in place of this, streets which, instead of being dotted with feeble lamps, seem rivers of lgiht that fade away in the distance without even a spot of darkness. This we saw, and our nostrils were not offended with the dust and odour from roads given over to horse traffic, for here, where compressed air took the place of horses, the scent of the gardens alone filled the air, and made pleasant the beauties of the night.

How very many ways there are of looking at the same thing! If a good municipal councillor were with us, looking down on Sherea, he would make mental notes of the saving effected by conducting the majority of the traffic on rails, and the balance with rubber tires on ashphalte. He would chuckle to think of the light cost of maintaining roads free from the iron-shod feet of horses, and his heart would glow when he contemplated, say free education and a remission of a penny in the pound for his beloved ratepayers. The engineer would sigh as he thought how all these ideas had been plagiarized from him, for in his youth he had worked out a plan to do all this, but found individual interests too powerful to allow the good of the community to be studied; and so his plans were neatly tied up and deposited on the top of the bookcase, where they now lie covered with the dust of many years. Alas, those years! not only have they done this, but they have robbed him of his hair so cunningly that he could never detect the theft of a single lock; and then the dreams of his youth, where had they gone?

The poor parson of a hungry parish would wonder if the fat horses had been made into sausages for the hungry poor. He would tremble to think of the day that Smith, the dockman, who had broken his leg, was turned into the street, with his wife and family, for arrears of rent. On that memorable day he had gone to Sir Bere de Reesh, whose carriage horses were the admiration of everyone, and had told him of Smith. Sir Bere declined to interfere. "Political economy; foundation of a great nation." He had gone back to Smith and told the crowd that Sir Bere's horses should be killed to feed the people, and their oats given to the starving. That fat horses should not be allowed in a city where men, and women, and children starved to death in dozens. He was a fool, that parson; he lived in poverty such as was the lot of Christ and His disciples. Perhaps not altogether a fool, who shall say? When Sir Bere, loaded with honour and tortured with gout, was hastened to his grave by the excesses of his eldest son, who inherited his energy and owned the best prize-fighters, the fastest horses, and more lovely members of the corps-de-ballet than any other man in the country, the parson was

officiating at his daughter's marriage. When the splendour of Sir Bere's funeral was the talk of everyone, the parson was christening his youngest daughter's first baby. She married James Dry, the bookseller. Old clothes and short commons are dangerous but not fatal to happiness, which greatly depends on the nerves and liver.

We were tired of gazing at the city, and giving words to our random thoughts, so went to the duke and discussed our next day's journey.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN EXHORTATION TO UNION.

At nine next morning we left Sherea for Ura, which was a train journey of 315 miles.

The cold wind blew the rain in gusts against our carriage windows as we commenced our journey. Presently the sunshine came, and the rain disappeared. Shortly after dinner we entered what had lately been the Kingdom of Ura, but was now Undara. The land showed signs of careless farming; instead of the trees being planted at regular intervals for timber, the fields were either quite bare or clothed with the woods and weeds planted by nature. The hedges were uncut, and everything showed an absence of care. As we passed through the outskirts of Ura we saw that the city was well laid out, though without the symmetrical regularity or uniformity of buildings which characterized Zara. On reaching the station we found Vernon waiting for us, and were taken by him to a compressed air wagonette, which had room for our luggage and six people. On this we went to his house, where we were to be his guests during our stay at Ura. He lived on the banks of the river, about seven miles from the centre of the town. As we passed along, I saw that the houses were built like those in an American city, some very handsome, others hovels, and all sorts between. On the edge of the footpaths were men selling matches or toys, which would not provide them with the necessaries of life even supposing they got them for nothing, which was out of the question—apart from which nobody seemed to purchase their ware. Pale-faced women stood in the gutter, most of whom had a baby in their arms, holding out a box of matches, their whole stock, which they implored people to purchase. Beggars, Vernon told me, were not allowed; but anyone who could purchase a box of matches, or gather a few flowers, might, under pretence of trying to sell them, beg all day long. Loafers of all sorts were in the streets, some in filthy rags, with pinched faces, ready to hold a horse or do any similar thing to earn a penny; others, well dressed and well fed, sauntered about with a piece of glass screwed in one eye, and either a stick or an umbrella in their hand. Trams went down most of

the thoroughfares, and carriages, drawn by well-fed horses driven by stout, strong men, moved along the streets crowded with ill-fed and ill-clad humanity. After being in Zara I could not fail to notice these things, and wonder how the wealthy people could be happy, while living in waste and idleness, amongst fellow-beings who were starving and miserable. Verily, people can get used to anything. Vernon's house was, like himself, unusual in every way. As we approached it we saw, close to the river-bank, a two-storey house, like two houses joined together. The front one had a double veranda, or balcony and veranda, running all round it; on one side, attached to or joined by the verandas, was a second house, similar to the first, but without any veranda. The house was surrounded by some fifteen or twenty acres of land, dotted about which were windmills of various sorts, and several stables and outhouses. Vernon blew a whistle, and the gate was opened by a woman. Two horses and several dogs welcomed us according to their natures, from the fields and yard. In the veranda, Cora Novel and a very tall, clever-looking woman, whom I afterwards found was Gea Barga, stood to receive us. Gea Barga I shall describe as I afterwards found her. What first impressed one was the quickness and vivacious energy of her manner, which, though both polite and charming, was utterly uncompromising. What she made up her mind to she said, and though not obstinate, but open to reason, she swayed not one iota from her opinions till she was dislodged from them, as a garrison from a fortress, after a hard struggle and by a superior power. Her brown hair, parted in the middle, was brushed back from her forehead and done in a simple knot at the back of her head. Her oval face was very expressive, and her brown eyes always moving and full of thought; her nose was nearly straight, and her lips full. In repose she would pass for a healthy country girl, but her manner gave one the idea of restless ability of the highest order.

Cora and Gea disappeared up-stairs with Mary, while Vernon took the duke and me to a large room on the ground floor.

"Duke, I have put you and Frank in the one room so that you may always have a trusty attendant near you. Frank, if you want anything, ring. Now I will leave you."

I looked round the room; it was simply but handsomely furnished, and divided in the middle, by a double set of curtains, into a bedroom with two beds, and a study or sitting-room.

"I see you are interested in Vernon's arrangements, Frank," said the duke.

"Yes," I replied; "Mary told me he had an extraordinary house, but I was not prepared for so much novelty."

"It is a wonder of convenience," the duke asserted with conviction, "and has power of all sorts on tap. The river is working water-wheels and the wind windmills, by the power of which all manner of experiments are always going on. Besides his two

secretaries, he has a very clever mechanic who makes models of all his ideas, so that the amount and variety of work done under his supervision is wonderful."

"I think a man's home should be a place of rest, and not a great workshop, like this seems to be. Do you not agree with me?"

"To a certain extent. Rest with different people means different things. The only rest Vernon can take is change of work; he supervises everything himself, from his horses, dogs, and garden to his inventions, writing, and various enterprises."

"Sleeps six hours and works the rest?"

"No, he is a great sleeper, and sleeps about nine hours out of the twenty-four; but work is a pleasure to him, and he cannot be idle."

"I suppose he has his mother, or a sister, to superintend his household arrangements?"

"No, his mother has a house of her own; his household consists only of women, and the old man who acts as a modeller and lathe-man."

"What an extraordinary arrangement! What is his idea for doing this? He surely is not perfectly sane?"

"He is perfectly sane, but has fancies. He does not like men, he is afraid they would not be kind to his animals; and he likes to be surrounded by women, whose presence soothes him. He is very nervous and ambitious, and resents the slightest opposition in those about him."

Vernon became a greater puzzle the more I saw of him. He did not pretend to understand himself, and believed that he had only met one person who did. We went into the drawing-room, where we found Gea telling Mary of some of the new regulations soon to be enforced, and Cora, as usual, quietly listening. Cora left us, and almost immediately returned with Vernon.

"Well, Vernon," said the duke, "how are your arrangements for carrying out the federation proceeding?"

"Very well, indeed," answered Vernon, with satisfied decision. "A copy of my pamphlet will to-morrow be printed in all the daily papers, and a majority of Parliament, who are to meet your delegates, will be in favour of an early meeting of the Federal Parliament at Ura, when we will propose the commencement of public works and the embankment of the river; three months after which your laws for the arrest of all vagabonds and idlers will come into operation. We will then enforce the progressive income tax, and confer by purchase twenty-eight titles, which will bring the State a sum of over a million of money. The borrowed money, and inauguration of the public works, will cause a state of prosperity that will bring the minority who are now against us over to our side; so that hardly one per cent. of the population will be left to oppose us."

"I have no doubt you will succeed," the duke said, with admiration; "but I think you underrate the opposition you will meet."

"Surely not; the only people who will be against us are the mean rich, who are not one in every five thousand. On our side will be all the clergy and women—a solid and persistent body. These will support us, as we do away with the vagabonds of both sexes, and make marriage again a universal, instead of a decreasing institution. Then all the workers and middle-class people will support us, as we better their condition in every way. The generous wealthy will also support us, so that we have, as I said before, only the mean rich against us."

"What is the progressive income-tax?" I asked.

"All incomes over 200 crowns a year pay a tax of 2½ per cent. on the excess up to 500. That is, on 500, a yearly tax of 7½ crowns is made. This tax is increased 1¼ per cent. for every 500 crowns up to 9000 crowns. For instance, an income of 2000 crowns pays a yearly tax of 82½ crowns, and one of 9000 crowns a similar tax of 1176¼ crowns."

"I think you will have a difficulty in getting any man with a good income to agree to this tax," I asserted, firmly.

"When you read our pamphlet, Doctor Frank," said Cora—every one in Vernon's house used the pronoun "our" for everything they did—"you will see at once how rich and poor alike must support it."

"Will you read the pamphlet to us, Cora?" asked the duke.

"Certainly," said Cora, beaming with pleasure.

Supper was announced, so the reading was postponed. Vernon was a perfect host—vivacious, attentive without being obtrusive, and strong in the faculty of making people appear at their best. The table was beautifully laid, but the supper was more elaborate than was the custom at Zara, wine being on the table, and coffee served after the sweets. After supper, tobacco and cigars were brought out, and the ladies stayed with us while we smoked.

"I always feed my dogs after supper," said Vernon, "so I pray you will excuse me."

Mary and I went with him, as we were both fond of animals.

"Do you always feed your animals, Vernon?" I asked.

"Always. My dogs devote their lives to me. They never leave me of their own free will, and would die for me, without hesitation, as some of my dogs have done when we have been hunting. My horses are equally devoted to me, and it is a very little thing to see they are cared for."

Vernon took an electric lantern, and we went into the yard. Three great hounds and two Esquimaux dogs came fawning round their master, while a big striped cat demurely picked her way after us. The dogs were fed, and we went into the stable, with

them following us, here Vernon offered each of the horses water, and saw they were well fed. Surely animals have a language of their own; rudimentary but still sufficient to express different degrees of love or hatred. The winnowing horses, and the dogs gambolling and uttering half barks, half growls of joy, showed unmistakably their happiness.

"Are they always as exuberant as this, Vernon?"

"Not quite, I have only been home a few days. They miss me very much, and always greet me very impressively for some time after I return."

We went in again, and listened to Cora reading the pamphlet. Her reading at first was spoilt by over-anxiety to do justice to her work, but soon she forgot her audience, and then, her clear sympathetic voice was a pleasure to listen to. The pamphlet commenced by pointing out that innovations were naturally looked on with distrust and suspicion; but that the fact that certain laws and regulations had enabled another community to escape many evils that afflicted us, should induce all wise people to carefully and favourably consider the advisability of giving them a fair trial at Ura. It continued with a statement that though the good of the community was certainly first, every section of the community looked on a new law more or less from their own point of view as affecting themselves; and that therefore it would be best to consider how the new laws would affect the various sections of the community, before their general effect was reviewed. In every community, it continued, the foremost, the noblest, and the most desirable, are the people of wealth, who give generously to support the destitute. The new laws would do away with destitution, and this noble class would as willingly give to the weak and destitute indirectly in the form of a tax, as they did directly in the form of charity. Those few contemptible people—almost unknown in Ura—who had wealth, and gave nothing to their unfortunate fellow-creatures, would be forced by the tax to do their duty; and as a man who was forced to do his duty was far more worthy than a man who evaded his duty, they would be distinctly elevated. Again, the wicked men and women who live by developing and encouraging all manner of wickedness in the young or foolish members of the wealthy class, would be suppressed; so that most of the dangerous temptations that wealth forced on people would be removed. Then he went on to address the middle-class people, but here his task was simple, for they received many benefits, but were hardly otherwise affected by the income-tax at all. Then he addressed the workers of the community, whom he called the body and strength of the nation, and said he felt the glory of the near to-morrow, when even the humblest labourer would gain that self-esteem that alone elevated the wealthier people over his head. When in his thoughts and manner he would be gentle and modest, and

become temperate in all things. He pointed out that he need now never fear that his wife and children would stay hungry at home while he sought for work in vain, as the Government would always supply work, with longer hours certainly, but immeasurably better than idleness. Then he addressed the community, and pointed out how the unfortunate creatures that preyed on society would be removed; how the fiend hunger, that tempted men to thieve and lie, and women to forget their goodness, would be a thing forgotten. That temptations removed, and the people freed of the human parasites that lived on their labour, to drag them down to shame and misery, they would become healthy in mind and body, and happy in all things. The pamphlet, full of able argument, and sweet persuasions, finished with an expression of the pride that Vernon felt in belonging to a country which had progressed with giant strides in the past, and was now within measurable distance of universal happiness. "That such a people have honoured me—honoured me far beyond my deserts—has elevated me beyond myself, and made me live that I may strive on—strive ever to try and deserve some of the applause they have generously accorded me."

"Now, Doctor Frank," said Nora, her eyes bright, and cheeks flushed, "do you still think that rich people will refuse to welcome the laws of Zara?"

"You have not only comprehended our laws, Vernon," said the duke, "but you have written of them, so that those who read will comprehend them also."

Gea Barga and Mary sang and played, till nearly midnight. The duke and the girls went to bed, and Vernon and I chatted of the coming changes at Ura. He brought out a map, and showed me the course of the Yanga, running in a succession of curves that were nearly half circles, and how a new course for the river walled to utilize its power would be made in a straight line which, when finished, would contain the river, and the old course be filled up. This would save an immense cost in making the river walls and bridges, and no power would be lost. He also showed me a new plan of the city of Ura laid out systematically, at right angles, like Zara, which would not interfere with any of the great buildings, and in accord with which the city would gradually be remodelled. These improvements would take years to effect, and the borrowed money would create an enthusiasm that would force them all into being, and crush all opposition. Further, the progressive income-tax would not only bring in a big revenue, but would act beneficially in reducing the amount of extravagant display, enervating luxury and laziness.

"I must not keep you up any longer, Frank," he said at last; "will you come with me to see the horses and dogs, before you retire? I always attend to them last thing at night."

"Thanks, yes," I answered readily.

We went into the stable, where Vernon put on a long coat, and bedded and watered his horses.

"What do you want two horses for, Vernon?" I asked.

"The second horse I keep principally for company for the first; I have had them some time, and would not like to part with either now."

We next chained up all the dogs, except two, which were allowed to sleep in the veranda, on the mat at Vernon's bedroom door.

"You are very good to your animals, Vernon," I said, as I watched the considerate gentleness with which he treated them all.

"And they are very devoted to me. I cannot understand the affection a dog feels for a man; in health or sickness, plenty or hunger, a dog will not leave its master; strangers may tempt him with warmth and food, but he is always true to the man he loves. No other animal is like him. It is one of the most wonderful things in nature."

"Are not your horses the same?"

"No, they love a place, not a person, though they get to understand, and be fond of their master; I am sure mine know when I am tired or unwell, and become gentle and well behaved."

"That is a strange idea."

"Some people think so. One day when I was going out riding, I said to the housemaid who brought out my gloves and whip, "My horse seems to know I am unwell, and behaves very obediently out of sympathy."

"I do not think it is quite that," she said, "but when you are unwell your temper is so free."

CHAPTER XV.

A MORAL GEHENNA.

In the morning Vernon took us into his workshop, where windmills and water-wheels of all sorts were working and being tested. In the garden a water-wheel, worked by the river, supplied the house with compressed air, and the windmills supplied electricity, so that motive power was abundant. Thus two powers—the wind and the water—so much neglected at Ura and the Middle Globe, were at Zara made a leading study, and Vernon, recognizing their great importance, had given them his personal attention.

"Machines like men must be judged by their work," said Vernon, "we have all manner of wheels working here, and as they change the power of the wind, or the water into light or energy, so we keep or reject them."

After breakfast Mary and I went into Ura with Vernon, on his compressed air launch. Leaving him at the wharf, we strolled into the city; presently we came to a street with very handsome buildings on either side containing offices and residential flats; occasionally we passed beggars, pale-faced and filthy, who pretended to sell some trumpery thing as a cloak to their begging. At the corner of the street we came to where a big strong loafer leant against a wall smoking, while a dirty, excited woman abused him for neglecting his work, and idling about the public houses; nobody, however, paid much attention to them. Luxuriantly dressed people passed on with a smile or a scornful sneer; and the carriages drove by with their occupants undisturbed. Presently a policeman came up, and ordered them to go away, which after a while they did. We turned down the street they disappeared in, and hardly had we travelled two hundred yards before we came to a region where poverty was as extreme as was the wealth of the street we had just left.

"Let us come to the poorest quarters," said Mary, "we can then get a guide to show us round."

We went; and called at an out-station of a great charitable organization, where a number of noble men and women devoted their lives to helping the idle and criminal class to live. These

people spent actually hundreds of thousands of crowns, and so enabled the dregs of civilization to live and multiply at the expense of the desirable class, many of whom were too poor to marry. Here we got a guide, borrowed peculiar hats and cloaks, and so commenced our journey of discovery in a garb common to the neighbourhood. Our guide was a large-eyed, thin-faced woman, with a religious enthusiasm that was wearing her to death. She spoke of the Almighty as she would of a kind friend, and expressed perfect confidence in raising the half-starved human miserables to industry and honesty. Poor woman, she sacrificed her life here to gain a place for herself in heaven, and maintain the most undesirable class of civilization. First we went up some dirty stairs; on every side were sounds of swearing and quarrelling, while the air was heavy with stinks: on the fifth floor our guide knocked at a door which was opened by a woman in a state of semi-starvation; the room contained a bed and a chair—nothing more—and three small boys, who with their mother were supported by their eldest brother, a noble youth whose work enabled him to keep his relations alive. The father had run away with another woman, and left them to starve. This woman shortly afterwards died of starvation. We gave her six papers advocating the organization to which our guide belonged, which one of her sons could sell for her benefit, and then we left. The next place was equally squalid; in a room with a bed and some rough furniture sat a very old woman, nursing a chubby, healthy baby. These two were supported by the baby's mother, a girl of sixteen years of age, who worked in a factory close by, from morning till night, and then walked about the dimly-lighted streets in company with other poor creatures of either sex, equally degraded as herself. Scattered about, near to each other were big houses, where intoxicating drinks of various sorts were sold to the miserable inhabitants of this miserable place. Everything was starvation, idleness, filth, and all evil. At night the houseless half of these human vermin would go to a charitable shelter, where they would get supper, a bed, and breakfast, in exchange for a little work. When they had any money they would herd together in big rooms, the atmosphere of which would become fetid before morning. This was the state of things that charitable people maintained. Under the laws of Zara these people would not be allowed to live this life, but would be sent to Pentona and taught habits of work. At Ura people were sent to prison, and taught habits of idleness, as it was said that if they were made to work, the free labourer would starve. These foolish people did not see that the labourer would not starve, but only work shorter hours, and thrive. The community had to keep these people, and it was surely better to isolate them, and make them work, than allow them to live in idleness and perpetuate themselves.

The dreadful amount of human misery and degradation was awful, and the kind-hearted, but unwise charity that increased the evil was sad to contemplate. Soon this hotbed of misery and vice would be removed, and all its temptations and pitfalls for the poor made things of the past. After supper Vernon took me again into the city, so that I might see the degradations that waylaid the rich, as well as those which waylaid the poor. First we went to a big luxurious house called a club, where a pugilistic contest was to take place for a thousand crowns; we paid three crowns each as the price of admission. The place was crowded with well-dressed men of all ages, the majority of whom did not come to see this contest with a view of increasing their fistic skill, which was surely the only right reason for any one to witness such a struggle, but to share the savage excitement caused by seeing two men bruise one another till one of them became insensible, or too weak to continue the contest.

"Yonder man," said Vernon, pointing out an undersized specimen of humanity, "spends on himself a yearly income of thirty-two thousand crowns, which enables him to keep at his beck and call a small army of harpies of either sex. His great ambition is to ride horses at all the races. The progressive income tax will make his money as great a blessing to humanity as it is now a curse."

I looked at the faces of the spectators, the large majority of which belonged to men who possessed but little brain or muscle; and to whom boxing was a thing too manly for their enervated frames. Many of these people belonged to families who were maintained generation after generation on the interest of money earned by some energetic forefather. As Vernon pointed out, men should no more be allowed to live in idleness on the fruits of the work of some remote ancestor, than they should be made to suffer for the wickedness or sloth of some distant progenitor. A man should rise or sink only by his own worth or unworthiness. We next went to another club, where we found a number of well-dressed men and women talking and laughing in an atmosphere of smoke. The men were very similar to those we had left waiting to see the fight. The women had painted cheeks and shameless faces. Some of them were beautiful, and would have been the cause of joy and worth had their natures not been turned to evil. They were drinking a sparkling wine and smoking fragrant cigars or cigarettes. The music sounded, and many of the people danced, some of them very gracefully, more of them indifferently. At a side table sat a handsome woman alone, sipping a flat glass of sparkling wine. She had golden hair and blue eyes, and seemed a guileless, dreaming innocent. Her jaws were wide at the back, and her chin pointed. She was dressed in pink and looked very pretty. A tall man with a hooked nose and black eyes, came up to her, accompanied by a youth with a

noble head and sweet face, that only lacked determination make it perfect. The younger man was introduced to the woman, who lifted her eyes, and bowed. They chatted and drank the sparkling wine. We went near to them.

"May I tell your fortune?" asked the woman.

"Reena can tell fortunes truthfully by palmistry," said the hook-nosed man. "Dunston showed her his hand, and she told him he would die a violent death early in life. Next day his horse lost a great race, and he was ruined. That night he shot himself. Reena can read what the lines tell."

"I am afraid she might prophesy a calamity," said the youth, incredulously.

"I shall prophesy no calamity," said the woman, looking smilingly into his face; "the palm tells fully what the face only suggests; your eyes will never be heavy with sorrow, sunshine only is for you. Give me your hand."

He held out his hand. The woman followed the lines for a moment with one soft finger, and then looked up and laughed—

"I knew how it would be. Soon you will meet a beautiful woman who will love you and gain your love—perhaps it has already happened—you will be happy with her, and she with you; then you will leave her, and she will learn to be good for your sake and live for the welfare of others. You will marry, children will grow up round you, and you will have only one sorrow. The woman you marry you will soon cease to love, and your fancy will often go back to your first sweetheart."

We went away.

"The first part of that fortune will come true, and probably the last," said Vernon. Sometimes he seemed to be able to foretell the future.

"The young men who have lots of money," he stated, "are sought out by pleasant men and beautiful women, and many of them enticed to lead a life of selfish sloth. All their noble qualities are suppressed, and selfishness made the motive of their life. While men's nature is what it is they will seek for excitement, and love the joy of the wine cup and the smile of the wanton. Great wealth is as dangerous as poverty; we will take the curse of the first and apply it as a blessing to remove the curse of the second, so that both will gain."

Certainly these two evils would together disappear, and though no one would lose, everyone would gain, more or less. As I thought that night of the evils that afflict the rich, and the evils that afflict the poor, I saw the face of the starving woman who subsisted in one room with her four boys. It was a brave face, and a pure, and one that would live in the memory of her sons for ever, and be to them a guide to good, and a shield from evil. Surely she would earn a happy hereafter. Then I saw the soft weak face of the man of luxury, and the fair face of the woman

with rosy lips, from which the kisses came as the scent from the violet. Then again I saw the man's face, but it looked older, and had a weary look; beside him was a woman who talked of duty. He turned away, he only wanted pleasure. Again I saw the faces, the wife was laughing, she looked a queen; her longing for duty had gone. Now she, too, only wanted pleasure. She looked at her husband and smiled; love had given way to contempt, her look seemed to say "don't touch me." He was ill at ease. With many women he had failed to find what one would have brought—content. All his life he had searched, but found not, that which comes only to those who go where duty leads—happiness. I realized why it is so difficult for the rich man to enter heaven; he had so many temptations. Surely the man was descending to a lower life, and the thin-faced woman ascending to a higher. In the morning Cora came to tell us of President Vernon's speech to the Senate, and of the additions that other legislators would make to his suggestions.

"The President," she said with evident elation, "has conceived every detail of the federation; but he is always ready to give a colleague the credit of any idea he likes to adopt."

"But surely, Cora," I expostulated, even you do not give the President credit for understanding and originating everything?"

Her round eyes opened wide. Such eyes are common to all animals who are true to their mates. The dove is a leading example.

"He certainly understands everything," she replied, with offended dignity, "and originates nearly everything."

I laughed at her wide belief in the man she had made her hero.

"How does he manage it?"

"He dictates his ideas on some subjects to Gea, and on others to me, so that we each have certain subjects to work out, and arrange, and index, with all the statistics that bear upon them. Thus the President has every subject under his command."

"Fearfully dry work for you and Gea?"

"No, Doctor Frank, it is not," she asserted positively; "it is the *most* delightful work."

Certainly women are as ready to make heroes of men as men are to make angels of women. Poor little Cora! she had made an idol out of an energetic, ambition-stricken man.

At last the meeting of the Ura Parliament took place. It was only to draw up a programme and fix a date for the meeting of the first Parliament of Undara, a sort of final rehearsal for the great performance. The Parliament House was built on the bank of the Yanga, and though a poor building compared with the similar structure at Zara, was very much more imposing than the surrounding edifices. On one end was a high clock tower,

which looked on a straggling series of roofs, covering a commodious, but inelegant building. The two chambers formed themselves into a committee, with President Dreman as chairman. The galleries were so badly arranged that you were above the legislators on one side of the chamber, and could consequently only see those on the other three sides. The suggestions of Vernon were all adopted, as suitable for discussion at the meeting of the first Federal Parliament. Three men were elected to represent Ura in the compiling of the phonetic dictionary; a site for a penal city was chosen on the river above Ura, in the neighbourhood of the coal and iron mines, and a date was agreed on for the first meeting of the Undara Parliament, to which the meeting was adjourned. The unanimity of the proceeding surprised me, as there was no sign of a re-election or appeal of any sort to the people, which seemed to me to be desirable on so important a matter; I therefore asked Vernon, who replied,—

"Before we decided on federation we took a plebiscite, which was almost wholly in its favour."

"This is a matter of tremendous difficulty, is it not?" I asked in surprise, "first to take the voting, and secondly to get all, or nearly all, the voters to record their opinion?"

"We find no difficulty; in every town two men are appointed to receive votes by ballot during certain hours on the day of the plebiscite. Any voter who cannot attend personally to vote is entitled to authorize in writing his wife, or child, if of age, to vote for him. If a voter has neither wife nor child of age, and is physically incapable of attending to vote, he can send his vote in a sealed packet with a declaration to that effect, and it is accepted."

"Suppose he does not vote, what then?"

"He is fined two crowns; for we consider it is a man's duty to the community to vote."

On the day for the first meeting of the United Parliaments we again went to witness the proceedings, but this time they were both memorable and brilliant. The galleries were crowded with spectators, and the Council Chamber contained nearly seven hundred legislators. Vernon took the presidential chair, and, after the prayer was said, rose, and in the name of Ura, welcomed the legislators from Zara, and congratulated all present on the meeting of the Federal Parliament. He then left the chair for the election of a president of Undara. President Phedra in a double resolution then proposed that Vernon Dreman be elected as the first President of Undara, and that the term of presidential office be for nine years, so that, as it was decided that the meeting of Parliament be held alternately at Ura and Zara, the presidents should be alternately elected at these places. He then delivered a feeling and brilliant address eulogizing Vernon. This proposition was seconded by Duke Mura, spoken

on by several senators, and carried by acclamation, after which Vernon was led to the presidential chair by ex-President Phedra, amidst the echoing approbation of the legislators and spectators. Vernon, who usually faced his audience, and everything else for that matter, with an upright fearlessness only saved from being dictatorial by his courtesy of manner, now stood bowing and overwhelmed with the praise that had been heaped on him. When the applause had subsided Duke Phedra again spoke. He stated that, as they all knew, the laws once known as the laws of Zara had been adopted as the laws of Undara, of which Ura was a part. Of these laws was one which empowered the two Houses of Parliament together assembled, to confer any one of three titles on any person who by rendering great services to the State, had, in their opinion, earned such an honour. He went on to point out how Vernon had worked for the federation, and how the welfare of the country had been always first with him. How that the progressive income tax would take several thousands of crowns a year from the new President, as he was one of the richest men in Undara, and one who apparently would become in time by far the richest. Some detractors, he proceeded, might say that as President Dreman gave largely to the destitute poor, who would now be looked after by the State, he had only altered the shape of his donation; but he was sure no sensible man would imagine that such an idea ever crossed the President's mind. He then proposed that a dukedom be conferred on Vernon, as the highest honour the State had to bestow. He made the proposition thus early to show that the Parliament of Undara felt that one of its first duties was to recognize the labours of those who worked wisely and well for the good of the State."

Other legislators spoke in support of the proposition, and in unmeasured praise of Vernon, and the dukeship was forthwith conferred by unanimous vote. Vernon's head sank low, and his whole attitude became one of great humility. When the acclamations had subsided his head rose, and he stepped forward and said,—

"Legislators of Undara. When work or trouble comes we face it with a brave heart, knowing that if we do our best we will either conquer and gain happiness here, or die and gain happiness hereafter. When high honours come to us, we ask ourselves if we have deserved them. We know of faults we have been guilty of, that are unknown to others, for every man best knows his own weakness, and we wonder if we can always live the exalted life that alone befits our new condition. We think these things and doubting ourselves feel weak, as I now do."

His head rose still higher, his nostrils expanded, and his face became brave.

"In the future I shall strive to be, and with the help of the

Almighty, I pray that I may succeed in being worthy of the honours I have to-day received."

He sat down, and again and again the applause echoed through the building. To my surprise I found I had been completely carried away, and oblivious of everything except Vernon's words. Such is the magic of oratory. The conferring of the new titles now took place; so that the province of Ura might be represented in the House of Titles of Undara, as in Ura, which was like an ordinary republic, no titles had hitherto been conferred. First came the seven dukes, who were admonished that in every case honours brought responsibilities, and should be therefore only sought by men who were prepared to make their lives an example to their fellow-countrymen, and to consider patriotism before self. It was a most beautiful and impressive ceremony, which only the necessity for shortening this history as much as possible prevents me giving in full. Each of the applicants then took an oath to recognize his responsibilities, and received the ducal coronet, which consisted of leaves made of malachite joined together with gold wire. The next to come were the nine men to receive the second honour, which was the title of "lord." These were similarly admonished, took a similar oath, and received a decoration of gold which they wore in the left lappet of their coat. Next came the twelve who were to receive the honour of knighthood. These also were admonished, took an oath to respect their responsibilities, and received a silver decoration which they wore as the lords did theirs. These proceedings being finished, the Parliament adjourned till next day. At breakfast I asked Vernon why so many men were anxious to receive a title, and how it could at once be purchasable and a very high honour?

"I will answer your last two questions first," said Vernon. "Titles are honourable because they are only conferred on men who lead noble lives, and have highly distinguished themselves in some avocation, or on men who donate to the purposes of the State a large sum of money. These must also have led at least blameless lives, or their title would at once be annulled. Further, if a titled person is guilty of any immoral or criminal act, his title is at once cancelled; therefore a man with a title is one who leads an honourable life, receives a good income, and belongs to the most exalted class in the land; therefore all wise men wish for a title, and honour all who have one."

"Supposing a titled man gets into debt, so that he has to be sent to Pentona, what happens then?" I asked.

"His title would be made void. As a matter of fact, such a thing never happened, as the creditors know that if a man is sent to Pentona their chances of payment would be small. No man can be sent to Pentona for more than five years' work, which

would give the creditors only from five to eight hundred crowns to divide."

"Do you mean to say that no matter how much a man owes, five years' work in Pentona will release him of all his debts?"

"Certainly; but during that five years, if the Government had to support that man's family—the State supports all destitute children—he would have to work in prison after his five years, till he had paid the cost of their keep."

"It will take me a long time, I am afraid, to learn all your laws and customs."

"You are learning them very fast. They are the easiest laws and customs in the world to learn, because they are the essence of wisdom and the foundation of happiness. If you can arrive at what is wise, you have arrived at what is the law of Undara."

In the evening we all except Vernon again went to the meeting of Parliament. This time the senators and House of Titles each occupied their respective chambers. We went to the former chamber, as nearly all legislation emanated from there. Vernon, who as President was debarred from legislating, had handed over his work to a colleague, who though both able and eloquent, lacked the fearless conviction that made Vernon almost irresistible. First the progressive income tax was passed without debate and sent up to the House of Titles. Then a bill to enable prisoners to be sent to Pentona, and substituting in their sentence days' work instead of days in prison, was similarly treated. Then with little discussion a bill to empower a body of four legislators, under the presidency of the minister of public works, to draw up a plan of how all new buildings should be erected in Ura, and take steps to gradually bring that city under a convenient plan for traffic, and also to wall the river, and lay out a new city like Pentona, on the river Yanga near the mines, and to purchase at a valuation all the required land, passed its first reading. The last two bills were respectively to adopt the law of Zara relating to the imprisonment of all vagabonds, idlers, and destitute people, and to prohibit the granting of any new licences to sell intoxicating liquors. All these bills passed their first reading with hardly any discussion, and were sent up to the House of Titles, where they were similarly treated, so that in the course of three consecutive sittings they all became laws, with the exception of that relating to the arrest of vagabonds, which was suspended for a month, so that scarcity of work would be no excuse for anyone loafing about. That evening I asked Vernon to explain the reason that sellers for intoxicants were to have a monopoly, as they would if no more licences were issued?

"At present we wish to decrease the liquor traffic," he replied. "Now we cannot refuse to renew the present licences, as they were issued under a law of custom which was to the effect that

they were to be renewed during good conduct, unless we compensate the licensees, which we are not prepared to do. Under the laws, licences are occasionally cancelled, and as the population increases, the number of licences per head of course decreases, so that we gradually decrease the liquor traffic—everything should be done gradually—and are only opposed by the distillers and brewers whose opposition, unaided by that of the licensees, we can afford to smile at."

It seemed to me very much like making a compact with the devil, but as it bore good fruit, I must not condemn it.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERNON IS WOUNDED.

My duties took me to inspect the prisoners who were to be sent to Pentona, and assist in bringing in force the new regulation which made prisoners' sentences consist of days' work instead of days in prison, thus enabling them, by working overtime, to shorten their term of imprisonment one-fifth, and by being industrious and well-behaved to have everything they could desire but freedom, or causing them if they were lazy, or ill-behaved, to lengthen their sentences indefinitely, and render their lot a miserable one, consisting of solitary confinement, and wholesome but unsavoury food, as follows: porridge for breakfast, brown bread alternating with meat or pea-soup, for dinner, and porridge again for supper. This distinction was so great, and the rewards or punishments so wise, as to cause the prisoners to at once become industrious and happy, and acquire habits that would make them valuable citizens. Some of them would refuse to work at first, and so lengthen their terms, and cause their period of industry to be extended.

With the exception of one man, who was executed, all the prisoners behaved fairly well. This man was a coarse, brainless brute, who had twice received the lash. At the age of eighteen he and his father received sentences of four and ten years respectively, for burglary with violence. At the expiration of his term he was turned into the streets a lazy, thriftless, human animal, without a friend, and having a contempt for honest work, and an admiration for all lawless bravery. He got money by various undetected larcenies, married, and before the birth of his first child, received another sentence of six years for burglary. This human brute was nearly fifty years of age when sent to Pentona; he first was pleased with the novelty of everything, and behaved himself well, till one day, being accused by a companion of cheating at cards, he violently assaulted him, and received a week's solitary confinement. On getting out, he tried to murder the same man, and brought his term up to nine years, and so caused himself to be placed in the condemned cell. Even this did not quiet him, and he continued his assaults till his execution. I inquired about

the wife who had been deprived of her husband shortly after her marriage, and found her case illustrated the barbarity of the laws of Ura ; first she went to a hospital which she left with a baby in her arms. She was now in her nineteenth year, separated from her husband, from whom she could not free herself by divorce or other legal means, therefore she had to work alone for herself and her baby, and refuse the help that men might have given her had she been free to become their wife. Sometimes we can bear the sorrow of the present, supported by the hope of the future, but she had no such hope. Poor woman, she knew very well that the freedom of her husband meant to her only some kisses, a flogging or two, and a further period of lonely toil in the future burdened by another baby. Suppose by chance—an unlikely supposition—she had got herself a home, her husband would pawn or sell it when he came out, and leave her again destitute. I found such cases were not uncommon, and that these unhappy, hopeless women were supposed to lead virtuous lives, though they would soon learn that the only help they could get was from men who would leave them directly they found the woman would not break her marriage vows. These laws were made for the good of the people, and claimed respect. Verily this and many other of the laws of Ura were the essence of stupidity, and received no one's respect, as they only tended to create wickedness and sorrow. In Zara if a man was imprisoned for three years, or brought his term up to that period, by laziness or bad conduct, his wife could get a divorce on the proof of the imprisonment alone, and, if she had any children, would receive a small allowance from the State for their support, which the man had to pay with his labour. Divorces, however, were very seldom asked for, as women in Zara, or elsewhere, only love the deeper, or rather show their love the more freely, the more their husband by sickness or trouble is in need of it. The prisons were crowded with the scum of humanity, every sin had sent her votaries, though of them all laziness sent more than every other of the crimes put together. Grey-haired old reprobates, and callow youth; men who knew no more of their father than the wolves in the snow, and regarded their mother with a lupine love ; men who cursed their parents, forgetting that they were befouling their own origin; and men who were delicately nurtured, with a father's care and a mother's love, while they were taught everything but self-control and industry, and so fitted only for a prison life. Yonder grey-haired old man grew up in the vagabonds' quarters at Ura, he had heard of his mother, but knew nothing about any of his other relations. Truth, honour, and industry he regards as only fit for fools, he never worked, and periodically came to jail to regain health and be confirmed in laziness. That tall, handsome prisoner to your right boasts of his father, who was a doctor, and inherited money which he spent like a pig, came

to penury, and married a clever girl who had established herself in a milliner's shop. He married her as a means of support, taught her children—that is, those he could—to look down on her, till at last she died of a broken heart. I should say he is like his father, for whom the devil should find a very hot place. That wistful-looking man with a retreating chin is the son of a celebrated judge. He was left fatherless in his twelfth year. His mother and sisters made him think that he had only to ask for what he wanted and get it. He kept on asking till his mother refused to give, and then he forged her name and was sent to prison. These histories would stretch out to the crack of doom.

The prison I found was a great hotbed of crime, where men were robbed of their self-respect and made lazy. Their hair was cut, they were jail-birds. They were pestered by a parson till they hated religion, and looked on it only as a cloak for roguery. They were kept confined till their muscles grew so flabby that work was a martyrdom to them, and by these means they were expected to grow good. The people of Ura were fools. At Zara a prisoner was forced to be industrious, so that industry became a habit. In his trade, or vocation, he was made more expert, and his industry rewarded by healthy pleasures. He was made to think he had been foolish, and to see the wisdom of good behaviour, so that when he was released he at once turned to work, which he found only exercise after the long hours of prison toil. As Mary said, the law that could not recognize the strength of a government under which rewards were worth trying for, and punishments worth avoiding, was only equal in stupidity to the law that tried to improve men by humiliating them in laziness. The management of the women and children was just as bad. Hundreds of women were housed together without books, papers, music, or any other innocent pleasure, and expected to become good. I know you will hardly believe these things, but they are perfectly true. For every shilling the authorities had laid out in books or papers they would have saved at least five in the cost of management. However, all this is past and done with, and I feel that my indignation against it is not sufficient excuse for my enlarging on it. We commenced by sending prisoners to Ura in batches of twenty-five every day, till we had disposed of three hundred of the men. To my surprise only three warders escorted each gang which they were enabled to keep in order by a very simple expedient. The prisoners were all handcuffed together, by chains so long as not to inconvenience them in any way. These chains were connected with a powerful electric battery, which would send the current through them all, either sufficient to keep them awake, or kill them as required, or any intermediate strength. By this means the prisoners were forced to be a guard on each other, as if one man rebelled they would all suffer.

We now brought from Pentona fifty prisoners, who volunteered

to act as warders at Ura. These prisoners were brought down on patrol like a lot of soldiers under care of only one warder; with them came a prison band, so that they marched up to the jail like a triumphal procession. Hardly had they been installed in their new position when nearly every prisoner asked to be sent to Pentona, which was at once made a reward for good conduct. At first the hours of labour were very trying to the prisoners, many of whom had never done a day's work in their lives. Encouraged by the hope of Pentona, and supported by the many new pleasures, they worked with a will. In the evening, directly after supper they would most of them fall asleep. The women were treated on the same principle as the men, and only behaved differently in trying to shirk their work by pretending to be ill; when, however, they found that illness meant being kept in bed, in a solitary room, only periodically visited by a nurse, to administer medicine, they soon gave up this pretence. The female prisoners we had to keep at Ura, as the women of Zara would not allow them to be sent to Pentona on any terms, not that they feared their influence on the community, but they declined to depart from the established rule of keeping temptations out of the way. By the time the operation of the law for the arrest of vagabonds and destitute people had come into force, we had sent nearly all the male prisoners to Pentona, and got the jails into a fit condition to receive the new occupants that we knew would be numerous. The first morning the rush of hopeless miserables to give themselves up was so great that the police received instructions not to rigorously enforce the new law. Passing through the Court House on my way to my office, I was stopped by the sobbing of a child, and turned to find an ill-clad, dirty woman nursing a baby, beside whom was a little child weeping. The sight was a piteous one.

"What is the child crying for?" I asked.

"If you please, sir, she is hungry. She is a good child, and only cries when the hunger hurts her," said the poor creature piteously.

"Why have you come here?"

"To be sent to prison, sir," she said weeping, "my husband drinks, and I have to stay at home to look after the babies, so we have nearly starved."

"Why did you not complain to the police?"

"It would be useless, sir, there is no law to prevent a man getting drunk at home and leaving his wife and children to starve."

That had been so, but now the State recognized the wisdom of making a man treat his wife and children as well as he did his horse or his dog, neither of whom he was allowed to starve. Men, women, and children came in a filthy crowd, anxious for anything to escape the cold and hunger of their wretched existence. They

were washed, reclothed and fed; next day they were sent to work, and then the trouble commenced. Poor miserable beings, they had neither strength nor stamina, and most of them were utterly incapable of hard work; little by little, however, they became stronger, and gradually we got them all to suitable employment. In the evening, like the other prisoners, they would fall asleep directly after their supper, but gradually nature, properly nourished, enabled them to do their day's work, which was often of a very light kind. While I had been working at the prisons, Mary's secretarial duties had kept her busy with Duke Mura, who was the president of the committee that were to draw up the phonetic dictionary. At their first meeting I was present. After the election of president the duke delivered an address, pointing out that as the forefathers of the people of Undara and Gurla had left Zara to form different cities and settlements in various parts of Fregida their pronunciation, affected by their various surroundings, had become noticeably different, and that this difference tended to make them regard each other as strangers, as it enabled them to tell a man from another State by his talk. This was undesirable, as the people should, for their mutual protection, be brought closer, instead of being allowed to drift apart. He also pointed out the incalculable time lost to the community by every person having to learn to spell words, frequently in a different manner to that in which they were pronounced. With a phonetic dictionary issued by the Government every branch of this kindred people would express themselves in the same pronunciation, and the amount of time devoted by young people to learning to spell would be reduced by about three-fourths. An established dictionary was taken as a foundation, and the work proceeded. Before I had finished my prison work, the committee went to Zara, so for the first time since we met I was parted from Mary. After she went, Cora and I became great friends. One evening we stood in the upper veranda chatting. The sun had just sunk below the horizon, and the quiet of the twilight was only occasionally broken by the sound of some bird warbling in the trees. Vernon, who had been working in the garden, we saw going down one of the most distant paddocks to bring up the horses. He was followed by two of his dogs. Everything was quiet, even the birds had gone to sleep. Suddenly a man stepped from behind a bush quite close to Vernon, and we saw a flash. The report of a pistol echoed in the air. Vernon staggered, but only for an instant, and then rushed at his assailant. Almost before we heard the report the dogs sprang at the stranger, who fired two more shots killing one and wounding the other. Vernon now closed with him and they fell struggling on the ground. All this had hardly taken ten seconds. I had heard Cora scream, when I turned she had disappeared. I rushed to help Vernon. As I passed through the yard Cora was unchain-

ing the dogs, who, when free, leaped the fences and rushed to Vernon's assistance. Putting my hands on the fence I vaulted over, before the first dog was unchained, and ran towards the men who were struggling on the ground. A second after a dog passed me like a flash. The men were rolling over each other. Another dog passed me. One man was now on top of the other, and evidently trying to choke him. The front dog caught the top man by the back of the neck and pulled him off. In as many seconds three dogs were worrying one man, while the other lay still and seemingly dead. When I got up I found it was Vernon. The blood was flowing from a wound on his left temple; I lifted his head and found that he breathed. Cora was beside me.

"Is he dead, Frank?" she gasped, her face ghastly with horror.

"No, he is breathing. Take the dogs off that man, they are killing him," I said hurriedly.

"So much the better," replied Cora with a savage cruelty that made me shudder.

The rising moon shone on a revolver in the grass.

"Pass me that revolver, Cora."

She gave it to me; I unloaded it and threw it down. Some of the servants had come up and dragged the hounds off the wretched man, who sat on the grass trembling. It was now nearly dark, but by the glimmer of the moon I could see his teeth gleaming through his torn cheek. A bullet had gone through Vernon's shoulder, and he was insensible from the scalp wound; but otherwise he had escaped I took him up in my arms to carry him in. The dead and dying dogs were being attended to. One of the housemaids had picked up the pistol, and stood beside the man, who was on his legs.

"Bring that man to the house and guard him," I said to her.

"Come on, you fiend!" she said, savagely.

He staggered, and deliberately she pointed the revolver and snapped it in his face.

"Stop! for God's sake! Would you kill the man?" I cried out in alarm.

The woman was gasping, almost in hysterics. The dogs and women had become fiends; only Cora had remained quiet, gazing on Vernon, oblivious of all else.

"Come on, you fool!" I said to the man.

Again he staggered.

"I will make him move," said the woman, brutally; and striking him on the forehead with the barrel of the revolver, felled him to the ground.

In despair, I gave Vernon to Cora, who took him in her arms

and carried him to the house, while I followed with the unfortunate assassin, whom I left in charge of some neighbours that Gea had summoned. I now took Vernon from Cora and carried him upstairs. How she had managed to carry him was a mystery; it showed, however, how any great terror will double a person's strength. I found the bullet had gone right through Vernon's left shoulder, and that his scalp had been cut open by a stick or stone. We attended to his wounds, and gave him some brandy. Presently he opened his eyes, and gradually realized everything.

"Frank," he whispered, for he was very weak, "have you attended to the dogs?"

"No, Vernon; they will be all right."

"Go and see to them now, please; Cora will nurse me," he said, with an effort.

I found one of the dogs dead and cold, and the other with a bullet through his left shoulder. This surprised me, till I discovered that the man, Ben Ava, who had tried to murder Vernon though a first-rate shot, fired generally to the left, as indeed, do most pistol shots.

I found a neighbouring doctor had attended to this wretched man, who was rapidly dying. One of his cheeks had been torn off down to the jaw; his neck was fearfully lacerated; one arm was broken; and he was badly bitten all over. The two great hounds, assisted by an Esquimaux dog, had done their work well. Ben Ava, who was evidently a very strong man, had been able to make but a futile attempt at defence; certainly one of the strongest hounds had caught him by the neck at the commencement of the struggle, and so secured a great advantage.

I returned to Vernon, who insisted on having all the dogs brought up to his room. The dead dog we laid on a table and covered with a great coat of Vernon's, as he said the dog liked anything he wore. We made a special couch for the wounded animal, and the others crowded about Vernon, licking his face and baying with rage and sorrow. The great brutes, with their backs bristling, looked like furies wild with the rage of battle, though even in their excitement they were gentle to their master. Now that Vernon realized that all his dogs were properly attended to, he allowed them to be taken to their kennels, with the exception of the ones that were dead and wounded. He then asked after his assailant, who, we told him, was badly hurt.

"The man must be mad; I never, to my knowledge, met him before, and certainly have done him no harm."

I gave Vernon a narcotic, which soon put him to sleep, as he was very weak from the loss of so much blood. Cora sat beside his bed. Her face was ghastly white, and her eyes still wild with

horror. Little more than an hour earlier we were chatting in the twilight, soothed with the quiet of the coming night, and happy in the leisure of the closing day. What had happened seemed a dream. The report of the pistol, the rush of the hounds, their fierce attack on the madman—for I could not believe he was sane—my friend lying ghastly, done nearly to death. A sad ending to a happy day. And had Cora not released the dogs, it would have been sadder; for I should have arrived too late to save Vernon's life. It was past midnight, yet no one had gone to bed, and the servants whispered in white-faced groups. I went to Ben Ava, who lay seemingly lifeless, watched by the doctor.

"How is he?" I whispered.

"Dying," the doctor answered, in awe-stricken tones. "He cannot last much longer. Those brutes of dogs have torn him from head to foot."

"Surely three dogs could not wound him fatally in so short a time?'

"They have, though; the windpipe is punctured with their teeth."

The wretched man seemed not to breathe, and died at break of day. I went back to Vernon's room, where I found Cora on her knees beside the bed, trying to stifle her sobs in the counterpane.

"Don't touch me, Frank," she said, weeping, "I won't disturb him; I shall be better soon."

Poor girl! she had given her love to a man who was utterly oblivious of the gift, and was now suffering the penalty of her folly. I mixed her some brandy and water.

"Take this, Cora."

She drank it.

"I knelt down to pray," she said, between her sobs, "to thank God—for saving him—and then—I cried—I couldn't help it."

She got up and dried her eyes.

"He is not much hurt, Frank, is he? he will soon get well?" she asked, with piteous grief.

"Yes; in a few weeks he will be as well as ever. He is not seriously hurt."

She sighed, but her tear-stained face was quite calm, for the sobbing had done her good. He slept quiet as a child. If we could only keep him from getting feverish, he would soon be none the worse for this murderous assault. Cora insisted on watching, so I instructed her to call me at four o'clock, and went to bed.

She was a guardian angel to the wounded man, and would have given him the only thing his life lacked—a good woman's love, without which no man's life is complete—had he only asked for it. He, engrossed with his work, gave to his dogs and horses

the love that flowed from his heart—a love which must be bestowed, however humble its object. When, sometimes, his loneliness saddened his mind, he would only sigh and think the void in his life but a part of the sorrow that comes to the happiest lot; and all the time the void was for man's comforter, who waited at hand.

In due time I was called. When Cora left I looked at Vernon. Her tear-stains were on his face; she had carefully tried to remove them, but they still showed. For the first time I realized the reason of Mary's anger against Vernon. He had, unwittingly, gained the love of Cora Novel.

CHAPTER XVII.

CORA LEAVES QUINDIRA.

In the morning two policemen came, and identified the dead man as Ben Ava. He was a bachelor, past middle age, who had lived what is called a life of pleasure. His grandfather had amassed great wealth in a brewery, the beer of which enabled the lowest classes to forget their misery for a moment, by perpetuating it. His two sons had inherited his wealth, and lived in idleness, with men and women to wait on them. His grandson, Ben Ava, was bequeathed sufficient money to enable him to subsist as a drone while he lived on the honey gathered by the working bees. Ben Ava wore on his fingers rings containing precious stones which better men than he risked their lives to get in the mines of Mount Boro; to feed and clothe him, men and women, aye, and even children spent their existence like machines. They worked ten or twelve hours, and rested or slept during the rest of the twenty-four. This man had an income of 3000 crowns a year, every penny of which he spent on himself, yet when the progressive income tax came into force, and he had to pay yearly 163¾ crowns to the revenue, this social parasite, who neither toiled nor spun, nor like the lily added beauty to the joy of the world, feared he might lose some little luxury, and brooded till he became demented, and determined to avenge what he called an iniquitous imposition. He then got a revolver, and attacked Vernon in a manner worthy of his worthless life; the rest we know. Vernon was wonderfully well considering his injuries; his health had never been damaged by any excess, except brain work, which only kills when accompanied by worry; and insisted on giving his evidence, which was taken in writing, on oath, and produced at the judicial inquiry concerning Ben Ava's death. Vernon stated that as he was walking to his horses, a man stepped from behind a bush about ten yards away from him, and without a word fired at him and shot him in the shoulder The dogs rushed at the man, who fired twice again, wounding one and killing the other. As the second dog was shot Dreman seized hold of the revolver with his right hand, the other being helpless, and caught hold of the man's chin with his teeth, and

so they fell down together. They rolled on the ground and he did not again see the revolver. The man got him down, and tried to choke him, but stopped suddenly and picked something up from the ground—we found afterwards, it was a jagged stone—with which he struck him on the forehead, after which he remembered nothing more till he came to his senses in bed. The dogs had evidently been only just in time, as another blow from the stone and Vernon's career would have been ended. A verdict of justifiable homicide was recorded, and there was an end of the would-be assassin. Vernon at once sent a letter of condolence to Ben Ava's family; he lamented the death of Ava, whom he excused on the plea that at the time of the assault he was temporarily suffering from the effects of a fall he had had from his horse some years previously. To Ava's funeral, which quietly took place the second morning after the assault, he sent a wreath of flowers with the inscription attached, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," and so, while he became even more of a hero in the eyes of the populace, avoided the enmity of even Ava's family. Cora made an excellent nurse, and Vernon a fairly good patient. The dogs had a splendid time, all day long to be with their master, whose every movement they watched. Vernon had a big bell placed on a stand at the back door, which he taught the dogs to toll by pushing it with their paw when they wanted to be let in. When a dog tolled the bell, a maid servant wiped his paws and opened the door for him. Vernon, as he got stronger, began to get quieter, and always managed to have Cora near him on some pretence or other. One day she asked—

"Do you notice, Frank, that the duke sometimes looks sad?" Then anxiously, "Can his shoulder hurt him do you think?

I assured her it was only fancy on her part, though I could see—as, indeed, could everyone but Cora—that Vernon Dreman was at last in love. Here was a woman who loved a man with her heart and soul, who understood him so completely that she could forestall his slightest wish, and yet now he looked sad, she puzzled her brains thinking of every reason but the right one, and by her anxious efforts intensified the malady which she failed to guess. She had the same complaint herself, yet did not recognize it in her hero. I think it is one of the most contagious of all complaints, which is as it should be, as it is one which becomes a blessing when it similarly affects suitable people. Here was a man beginning to wonder if he could ever gain what had already been given to him, and beginning to feel quite humble. Some complaints reduce the flesh of the sufferer, others the strength, but this one attacks the pride most; that is in the male victim, the female becomes beautified, less selfish, and generally improved. Too much humility is a bad thing, especially in men like Vernon, who, as a rule, do not know what it means.

The man became quieter and the woman more attentive; they were playing at cross purposes, but a light would come as the lightning comes, and everything be understood. Things had got topsy turvey, but that is not my fault, my duty is only to describe. During all this time the prison work had been going on, and many changes for the better taken place. The ill-clad dirty woman I had met in the Court House, with the baby and the child that cried from hunger, was now established in one of the schools, where she was a model of industry, thanking God for the change that had brought food and happiness for her children, and better still, changed her husband. He, poor wretch, had, after becoming too weak, through starvation, to keep work when he got it, taken to drink, and was making life a hell for himself and his wife and babies when they gave themselves up. In Ura when a man got down to this level it was almost impossible for him ever to rise again. The charities enabled him to live, and when he got quite reconciled to his position and learnt to assume humility, he could comfortably vegetate, as a barnacle on the social commonwealth. After a few weeks in jail with good food, and regular work, his mind and body became healthy and his good qualities asserted themselves, so that he became a unit for good instead of evil. His case was an illustration of the ordinary lot of pauper prisoners. Good food, work, and reasonable recreation, utterly changed them. Of the multitude of men making the new way for the river, I need write nothing, they had regular work, and those who would have enticed them to idleness or drunkenness—kindred evils—were locked up, and passing an enforced and salutary period of industrious sobriety. The over-indulgence in drink could not be suppressed altogether in a day, that would take a generation at least, but the wisdom of moderation had commenced to be universally admitted. The new city progressed rapidly; there no intoxicants were allowed, and music and amusements of all sorts were established. It was useful for many purposes, prisoners who had while free been given to drunkenness had their sentences suspended, on undertaking to live at Zimira, or the City of Promise, as it was called, for six times the term of their imprisonment. For instance, the woman with the starving babies who had given herself up, was sentenced to three months' work in the prison for destitution, and her husband for four months' work for being a vagabond. On the expiration of a month, their sentence was suspended on the man undertaking to live with his family at Zimira for eighteen months, or six times the length of the unexpired portion of his sentence, at the expiration of which it would be cancelled. Of the demolition of the unsanitary quarters I will only give one illustration of the awful misery it exposed and ended. In one small attic, an old woman was discovered, palsied from gin-drinking. Under her charge were four infants and a boy of twelve, misshaped with rickets.

They all lived together in this small room. In the daytime the babies had been hired out to beggar women, who stood on the kerbing all day with them in their arms, soliciting the charity of all who could pity the misery of women and helpless infancy. In the evening the babies were returned, and the wretched hags who used them as decoys would go and drink and feast with their friends, merry with the money they had fraudulently earned. The misshaped boy fed the babies and kept them alive. This state of things had hitherto been allowed, as the politicians of Ura feared to interfere with the liberty of the individual.

Individuals so much belong to the State that they have no more right to destroy their strength with gin, or starve children, than they have to annoy their neighbour or starve their dogs or cats. My term of prison inspection had now ended. The new laws had been enforced with very little trouble, and I was at liberty to return to Zara, and make my queen my wife. In the evening preceding my journey home, Vernon and I sat together by the river, chatting and smoking. Cora had realized the cause of his fits of silence, and was happy; he, with the denser nature of man, had logically reviewed the state of affairs, and only waited in the hope of inspiring Cora with a deeper feeling than that of admiration, to ask her to become his wife, for he was yet quite unaware of the love she felt for him, though it was plain to everyone else. Cora and Gea were watering the flowers, and we could hear the murmur of their voices. Vernon pondered.

"Frank," he said at last, "since poor Ava assaulted me weakness has chained me almost always to my chair, and I have been thinking of all the events of my life; since I was twenty, I have wished for a wife, to brighten my life, elevate my thoughts, and by her love, bring out all that is good in my nature."

He paused, memory was bringing back the thoughts of long ago.

"Frank," he continued reverentially, "I could never pray, it seemed unavailing to repeat words in solitude or to oneself. I knew I was wrong, and would get children and good women, if I had done them a favour, to pray for me. I felt their prayers would come back to me as blessings. Prayers that I did not deserve would surely act as curses on my head."

After all, this man, who was a statesman and a leader, was also a dreamer of dreams, who harboured fancies.

"I felt that if a woman loved me, she would do the praying, and I the work; my actions were the only prayers possible to me."

Again he paused. His rough face had more than beauty. It showed kindness to feel for the weak, and strength that would succour; ability to conceive, and power to execute; it showed

much that was good and brave, and nothing mean or paltry. Surely it was more than beautiful, for it was noble.

"Now that I have conquered," he continued quietly and without a trace of pride; "and am enjoying the fruits of years of work, I should get a wife to share my joys. I should have married before. When a man is middle-aged, if he marries, the woman must change to his ways and become part of his life, for he is too firmly formed in mind and body to change to her ways."

"But you are not yet middle-aged," I expostulated, "thirty-five is comparatively young for a man."

"Then instead of middle-aged," he replied, "let me say after a man is thirty; for if he does not marry till then, his wife will make no change of consequence in his life or habits." He paused, lost in thought, but soon continued: "I have seen many women, but of their inner life I could learn nothing; surely people should find out each other's every-day life before they marry, or even before they love. Had I only wanted a housekeeper and a honeymoon, I should have married long ago, but I wanted a woman who would share my life, sympathize with my aims, and be my better self. I have found such a woman if I can only get her to love me."

His malady had evidently arrived at the acute stage. I dissembled.

"Who is she, Vernon?" I asked in pretended innocence.

"Cora Novel. She is the most perfect, or rather, the only really perfect woman I have ever met."

He was evidently quite convinced of what he said, and yet but a few short months before he had proposed to Mary. Perhaps he was right when he said a man should marry before he was thirty.

"She likes me, but I am not certain that I can gain her love."

I laughed, the situation was absurd; he looked pained.

"You will never gain more of her love than you have at present," I said, controlling my mirth. "She loved you long ago, as everyone but you has seen. Mary has been quite angry with you about it. She says that you should have remembered that Cora was a woman with a heart to love, and should not have treated her as if she were a pet child, giving her presents, and paying her little attentions that are all powerful with a woman, especially as she was susceptible through her admiration for your speeches, works, and successes."

Vernon looked utterly surprised, never before or since have I seen him astonished. He sighed with relief.

"Frank," he said, "I think Mary was right; she is always right, Cora and I have loved each other all our lives, though I am sure she does not know it. When I am tired her voice calms my nerves, all that I do she improves for me, she is my affinity,

and I shall be able to make her perfectly happy. With all the world to work for and one woman to love, I shall be perfectly happy myself."

"Especially," I replied, "if she teaches you that you have done enough for the world, and should place your mutual happiness first, in accordance with nature's first law?"

He had not heard me; he was busy with his own thoughts.

"I am always successful in the end," he said, with a return to his usual brave manner. "I have everything but a perfect woman for a wife, and now I have found her. What does a man want in a wife? A woman he can make happy, who will sympathize with and understand his work, who has a healthy brain, and a healthy body, so that he may hope for sons to carry on his work when he is dead, and daughters to brighten his life. How any man can love and marry a woman with rickety nerves and a rubbishy constitution always puzzles me."

"It wouldn't do for all men to like the same sort of women. Tastes differ."

"And some men you think can, in their sane moments"—he spoke with scorn—"look forward to life as the husband of a woman whose headaches and nerves alternately monopolize her attention; and the father of children who are more or less like their mother?"

"Well, a good man does not mind nursing his wife, any more than a good woman minds nursing her husband, or her adorer. Cora, for instance."

"Cora is an angel, you cannot instance her as an example of ordinary women."

He was suffering from that peculiar state of vision and brain that makes a man think one woman handsomer, cleverer, and in every way superior to all others; and yet had he married Mary, I am sure she would have always been to him the one perfect woman. Surely it is a wise error for a man or woman to deify their partner, for otherwise not one in a thousand would ever be loved.

"Frank," he said, as much to his thoughts as to me, "I think a man lives again in his sons. Life is so short, no man can work any great reform in its little span. Surely the Almighty would not prevent a man carrying on his work through his children when he is dead? In a hundred and fifty years of life one could reform the world, banish destitution, disease and sin, and make happiness universal. In about four generations or less, perhaps three, it could be done. Perhaps it will be done. Think of the joy of watching the work you have commenced carried on to fruition."

"Did you ever hear of the tower of Babel?" I asked quietly.

"Yes, it was a good miracle wasted. It is a pity to waste a miracle on fools."

Cora and Gea came up to us. Vernon became grave. Men often go to their execution with a smile and a jest, yet never, I think, has a man proposed to a woman he loved with a smile on his face.

"Gea, will you come on the river with me?" I asked. "It is a lovely night for a row; the river is at its best in the moonlight."

We took Vernon's outrigger, and I rowed Gea up the river.

"I think, Gea," I said, when we were well on the stream, "that the duke is in love with Cora. What do you think?"

"Of course he is," she replied positively, "he would have fallen in love with some one long ago if he had had the time."

"Surely no man can be too busy to fall in love, if he has the inclination—about two seconds should suffice?"

"When Duke Dreman was young," said Gea, "the sort of woman he wanted would not have him, as he was poor; too poor to marry for love alone. When he succeeded, the women he had admired wanted him to have them, and he wouldn't. Had they let him alone, he would have married one of them, but he will only do some things his own way. When he was hurt, he was kept in the society of Cora and myself all day long, and wisely fell in love with her."

"Why do you say wisely?"

"Because they will suit each other perfectly."

"What makes you think so?"

"With the duke, his work is first, is everything in fact. Now Cora thinks he is a heaven-born genius, who is regenerating the world, and will help him with his work, which she loves. Then he hungers for admiration and love, both of which he will get from Cora, whom he will decorate and deify, and who will manage him as she likes."

"I think you are wrong in believing the duke likes admiration: surely he is above it?"

"Then why does he like orating in public as he does? Because it makes people applaud and admire him. Why does he treat his horses and dogs as he does? Because they love him, and are always ready to show their love. He will have a sick dog in his bedroom, and nurse it with greater care than most women receive in their illnesses, he grudges nothing to his animals because the poor creatures love him. Cora will now receive the love he gave them."

She spoke in a matter-of-fact tone without the slightest sign of spite.

"Do not you think it unkind to imagine that the duke will only transfer his affections from his dogs to his lady love?" I asked.

"No," answered Gea with a smile; "a good man must love something. In loving his animals he kept his heart soft and kind. He will still love them, but not as he did before he had

Cora. She is a fortunate woman, for she has won the love of a man who is a leader of men."

"I am glad you say he is a good man, and a leader of men. I thought from your tone just now that you did not."

"You were wrong. Duke Dreman is not a genius, but he is a man with noble aims, and great organizing abilities. I have never met his equal; but I see his weaknesses, and though I laugh at some of them, I admire him the more on their account, for at worst, they are amiable ones," she said with an affectionate enthusiasm.

When we got back the garden was deserted. We went into the drawing-room. Presently Vernon and Cora entered hand in hand. She was really a very beautiful woman, with that gentle feminine grace that is the characteristic of good women all over the globe. Her big brown eyes were dancing with happiness, and her cheeks rosy with the glow of her new-born love.

"Cora will leave me to-morrow," said Vernon. "She has decided to give up her secretaryship; I should be sorry were it not that she will soon return as my wife."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT ZARA ONCE MORE.

I HAD nearly arrived at Zara. The journey seemed interminable, though much of my time had been pleasantly occupied by chatting to a white-haired old lady who was a fellow-passenger.

When approaching my destination even her kindly talk worried me. I couldn't pretend to take an interest in her grandchildren, as I was too anxious to meet my betrothed. At the station, to my joy, I found Mary and Nitho waiting to meet me. Absence certainly sometimes makes the heart grow fonder, though it is a very dangerous remedy.

"Is Vernon able to walk about yet, Frank?" asked Nitho, garrulously. "Allan and I have come to the conclusion that his injuries will leave no ill effects."

"Oh!" I said, laughing, "it's Allan and you now, is it? You have been expeditious about it."

"Pardon me, Frank," Nitho replied, with great pretence of dignity, "it's Allan that has been expeditious, and I have succumbed to his eloquence. I wonder Mary did not tell you about it. She seemed to be half her time—very nearly—writing to you."

"I had other things to write about," said Mary.

As the tram took us on our homeward way, the beautiful clean streets and well-dressed pedestrians impressed me with wonder. In the few months since the new laws had been enforced at Ura, they had made wonderful progress, but were still much behind Zara, as it would take several years before the dirty and awkward horse traffic could be superseded by vehicles propelled by compressed air or electric power, and much longer before the beer or spirit-sodden faces would disappear, and their place be taken by healthy people who drank only when they were thirsty, and not for the pleasure they momentarily obtain by pouring intoxicants down their throats, to kill their nerves and sap their energy.

The Duchess Mura kissed me, on my return. A kiss from a woman who has reached the winter of life, after having wisely enjoyed a woman's duties and pleasures, is surely an honour. I

was to be the husband of the woman her son had loved, and she loved me almost as she had loved him.

"Mary has shown me parts of your letters, Frank," she said kindly. "We have been busy for you in your absence, so that your wedding may take place soon."

Bel's white teeth showed through her smiling lips as she welcomed me and said, "Come down again soon, Frank, I have some oysters for you. You liked them so much when you came from the snow desert. Mother says they will do you good."

"And what does Savo Rea say?" I asked, laughing.

"Many nice things that I am not going to tell you."

Everyone was so kind that I realized I was home again, for surely home is the domicile of the woman one loves, be she sweetheart, wife, or mother.

In eastern stories they often tell of a vessel from which comes water—the most precious thing in a hot country—in an endless stream, and yet this magic vessel never became empty. I think this vessel must be an allegory for the human heart, which pours out a life-long stream of love and kindness if the flow is not dried up by selfishness or folly. Here the natural goodness of the human will was allowed to run its course unchecked. Temptations were suppressed, so that the folly and weakness of human nature—which is all more or less foolish and weak—might not be caused to overcome its noble aspirations. Every child was reared in love, to strive for good and shun evil. The budding sweetness of girlhood early found companionship with downy-chinned youth; the opposite natures elevating and making joyous each other. In the spring-time of life the man would marry, his life unsullied by the excusable, but undesirable, period of wild-oat sowing, which coarsens and brutalizes a man's nature in the Middle Globe. The woman would go to her husband without having to suffer the degradation of hunting all wealthy men, which can neither elevate her nature nor sweeten her temper. From cradle to grave the love and strength of both sexes were abundantly exercised. The woman who loves her parents, her husband and her children best, has the most love left for her children's mates and her grandchildren. The more goodness and love that is taken from the human heart, the more it has to give. I once knew a woman who had everything she wanted except the moon and a few other things that cannot be bought. Her father was a man with a fine discernment and apprecation for turtle soup, other good things, and money-making. In the course of time he was troubled by the painful efforts his digestive organs made to assimilate the good things he ate, and consequently suffered from gout in the left foot. These things, you know, will happen to the best regulated men. He had married the daughter of an Italian count, who had an English spouse. She was a

beautiful girl, just a quarter of a century younger than he. His age was forty-five.

By-and-by she loved, but not her husband. She had notions about honour and that sort of thing. Perhaps it was her English blood. British women are prone to these weaknesses. She pined and died, as some wild birds die when caged in comfort and plenty, but robbed of freedom and the love of their mates. Fortunately all women and birds are not so foolish. She left my heroine as a legacy to her husband. The child, who had her mother's beauty and her father's mind, showed an early taste for frocks, and a keen appreciation for all good things. Of course she married a duke. Thank goodness the rich American girls cannot buy up all the poor dukes. The one remaining support of the titled aristocrat is the heiress—principally from 'Merica. In heiresses alone they have a monopoly. Now that they are deprived of all—that is, very nearly all—sinecures and monopolies, may the wealthy girls long be preserved to maintain and sustain them in their glittering glory on the face of the earth.

Her carriage one day knocked down and broke the leg of a pauper child. It shocked her very much.

"I have no sympathy with these wretched people," she said.

This woman who loved no one, could not even spare sympathy —which is only love diluted; milk of human kindness and water —for the poor child her carriage had maimed. Her coachman's wife, who had a flock of children to love, could spare abundant affection for this wayfarer, and daily took it something to the hospital. I think Lazarus will give poor Dives a cup of water, even if it is against the rules of heaven, unless heaven robs a man of sympathy.

When I came down, Duke Mura had returned, and kindly welcomed me back. Bel had spread the oysters out, and stood happy in the belief that she was giving me pleasure. I didn't want the bivalves, but ate them to please the merry-faced girl who brought them. It is very nice to have people lovingly thoughtful for your comfort, even if it occasionally causes you to eat when you would rather not.

"I am glad to hear that Vernon is recovering," said the duke. "His clever defence against his wretched assailant was characteristic of him. He is always ready, and never overcome, while he has a means of defence."

"I wonder he had time to think what to do," said Nitho. "I never heard of him biting anybody before. I think it was rather a dreadful thing to do."

"It was the only defence he had," replied the duke, "and therefore quite justifiable. His left arm was completely disabled, and with only one arm he would have been powerless against a strong man like Ava."

"How is he getting on with his love-making?" asked the duchess. "She was very foolish to fall in love with him, but I always thought it would come right in the end."

"He has got on very well," I replied. "Last night he told me that Cora intended to give up her secretaryship."

"Good gracious me!" said Nitho. "What was that for?"

"So that she might become the Duchess Dreman. I suppose that she will want to make some small preparation for the event."

Nitho waltzed round the room, clapping her hands, in a state of great delight.

"It will be a very great event!" said the duke, when quiet was restored. "I expect it will be the grandest marriage that has ever taken place at Fregida, where Vernon is now, as President of Undara, the leading man."

"And Cora as the leading man's leader," said Nitho, airily, "will be the first person in Fregida."

"Don't talk, Nitho!" said the duke, and continued, "He is now on the highest pinnacle of fame and popularity. The wealthy heads of families have had to settle considerable sums of money on their younger relations, to partially escape the progressive income-tax, so that numbers of marriages and general prosperity have been brought about; the result of which has been to make Vernon a hero, even with the wealthy classes. And with all the others he is almost a god."

"Tell the duke about Hugo Marna, Frank, please," said Mary.

"You'll turn to sugar-candy, Mary, if you don't stop looking at Frank," said Nitho, "though that would be nicer than a pillar of salt."

Mary tried to look indignant, but only succeeded in blushing.

"Hugo Marna," I explained, "was one of those who received the honour of a dukedom at Ura. I daresay you well remember him, duke? A tall, bald man with a thin clean-shaved face, and spectacles. He walked on a stick, and was the only bent-shouldered man who received a title. He is a land and coal-mine owner, and has an income of over twenty-seven thousand crowns a year. As he is a frugal old bachelor, his prosperity is increasing very rapidly, and his only pleasure is in adding to his possessions. Notwithstanding the fact that among his many poor relations is a widow with six daughters and three sons, several of whom were engaged, but had to postpone their marriages indefinitely, on account of their poverty. Now the old fellow so hated the income-tax, that, to avoid it as much as possible, he settled five hundred crowns a year on his sister, and a similar sum on each of her nine children, and bought himself a dukedom. He has also endowed the College of Engineers, so as to reduce his income to nine thousand crowns a year."

"Why to nine thousand crowns?" asked the duchess.

"Because over that sum pays a tax of twenty-five per cent. He will now have, with his untaxed ducal allowance, an income of twelve thousand crowns a year."

"And quite enough for any bachelor," said Nitho, decisively.

"I hear," said the duke, "that the class who are most bitter against the tax is the class of idlers like Ben Ava, who only live for pleasure. People who support fighting and betting-men, and unhappy women."

That was certainly so, for this class were so utterly selfish, that they howled with rage at having to give up the smallest of their vices.

By-and-by I took Mary to the drawing-room, where we turned down the lights and talked. Every day we had sent each other a letter, but this was certainly a poor substitute for meeting hand to hand and heart to heart. Sentiments which sound like music from a lover's lips, seem poor and foolish when sent in a letter. I had once thought my darling too clever and strong to feel womanly love. I was wrong. No woman can be too highly endowed to feel love; though if she be low as the animals, she can only love like them.

Before we parted, Mary had fixed the day of our marriage.

In the morning the duchess took Mary and me to see the rooms she had secured for the commencement of our married life. On a higher flat, more in the northern end of the block than the duke's apartments, she took us to two large rooms, handsomely furnished in a harmony of very dark blue.

"I hope you will like them, Frank!" said the duchess, in her sweet motherly fashion. "I have had them fitted up with Mary's favourite colours."

The rooms were delightful, and looked out on the garden square in the centre of the block. They were both large. The sitting-room; furnished with a secretaire, book-case, and piano, besides the ordinary furniture, looked half studio, half drawing-room. The bedroom, apart from a large mirror-faced wardrobe, which wheeled out from the wall, and revealed a bed which could be lowered when needed, seemed a handsome boudoir.

"They are very handsome and nice indeed," I said gratefully to the kind old lady, "but I am afraid that Mary will not be content to be mistress of two rooms only."

"Of two rooms and a husband who loves me. Why not? What more could I want?" said Mary, with a touch of Nitho's manner. "I can eventually extend my dominion."

"I am afraid you will be lonely, and weary for something to do."

"I don't think so! When we get up, we will go to breakfast—sometimes I will give you breakfast here, but seldom, and only as a treat—then you will go to your work, and be away all day. When you are gone, I will put our establishment in order."

"You surely do not mean to say," I asked in shocked astonishment, "that personally you propose to dust these rooms, and make the bed, and act as a housemaid after you are married?"

Mary laughed, and the duchess smiled.

"Frank, dear, you really are a goose," said Mary sweetly, "in some things, though always a good, kind, considerate one. To put my establishment in order, after the ceremony you insisted on my fixing last night, will take me an hour at most every morning. Then I shall do some work."

"What sort of work?" I asked. "Will you make no provision for pleasure?"

"Reading, writing, music, frocks, and woman's work generally. Everything shall be pleasure. Sometimes I shall have someone to see me, sometimes make a call, but generally till dinner time I shall remain in my kingdom. After dinner—you must come home to dinner whenever you can—I shall do multitudes of things, and when you come home, I shall sometimes let you work, and sometimes let you read to me, or take me somewhere."

"You will be better off than if you had a big house, costing six times your income, at Ura," said the duchess, "for you will have the use of baths, library, drawing, smoking, music, billiard and other rooms, and Mary will never be lonely, for she can always make a call without putting her hat on."

Afterwards I learned that these beautifully furnished rooms were a wedding present from the dear old lady and her husband, Duke Mura, both of whom found their greatest pleasure in generous deeds.

Mary and I visited the sittings of the committee who were compiling the phonetic dictionary. Mary had resigned, and the duke had taken Diso Rota in her place. Presently Diso came out to us. He was, if possible, more dandified than ever; that is if extreme neatness and taste in dress can be called dandyism. He had the same springy, energetic walk, and seemed highly satisfied with his new duties. In reply to a query as to how he liked them, he said, "Oh, very much. We are engaged in a work that will do more than anything else to unite the scattered members of the race established by the Law-giver. We not only will cause them all to pronounce words in the same way, but will enable the people who assimilate with us to easily and properly learn our language, and so tend to make it universal."

"Do you think your work," I asked, "will really have so wide a range?"

"Certainly!" Diso replied. "People who speak the same tongue, read the same books, and think much the same thoughts; and as one universal language is wanted, we go far to make ours that one, by making its spelling phonetic, so that it is easily learned."

"Perhaps," said Mary, "we have a greater necessity for a

phonetic language at Fregida than in the Middle Globe. With us our scattered and distant communities, like Gurla, Ura, Bulla, and others have got, during many decades, to speak with different pronunciation, and so intensify their separation. They have also adopted words from Esquimaux, and other languages, the spelling of which they have retained while altering the pronunciation, so that our language has become difficult and ridiculous, as letters have different values in different words."

"Have you quite given up the scavengering, Diso?" I asked.

"I am now one of the Inspectors," he answered proudly. "To improve the means of utilizing the refuse of a city is surely a noble thing. You will have noticed at Ura how the refuse pollutes the river, and is wasted. It is simply sinful; they make the fruitful earth sterile, and the beautiful rivers filthy."

Diso went back to his work, and we watched the rationalizing of a contorted language. Most of the committee were old men—splendid old men—who had reached that age when rapid motion ceases to be a pleasure, and when appetites no longer crave for an excessive indulgence. When armed with the experience of years, and untroubled with the restlessness of early manhood, they can give all their thoughts patiently to their work.

"Surely," I said to Mary, "this dictionary will cost a great deal of money to the State?"

"On the contrary," she replied, "the State will gain by it, as they print the dictionary by contract, and charge a fraction over cost on each edition, for the expense of compilation."

In the morning Mary received a letter from Cora, which she read and re-read, though it was a very lengthy production. She leant back in her chair and considered it. Presently she came over to me, and kissed me. Why does a woman always want to kiss somebody when her emotions are pleasurably roused?

"Frank," she said, "Cora's letter tells me all about it. I am so glad. They will have the most magnificent wedding that ever was. Ours shall be quite a simple one. I prefer it."

Surely she was not repenting her refusal of Vernon, and "the most beautiful wedding that ever was."

"Would you like me to read you some of Cora's letter?"

I saw I was expected to say yes, so I complied.

"The first part won't interest you." She turned over a page and read as follows:—

"When Frank and Gea left us, the duke put his hand on mine, and said in a voice that made me tremble with joy, for it told me he loved me—'Cora, I have been so successful, that men think I have nothing left to wish for, but if I have not one more success, all my triumphs will turn to ashes. I have met many women who were good and beautiful, and whom I thought I loved, when I only liked. I know now, for I have learnt what love is. In the pebbles on the river bank, one often thinks one

has found a jewel, but generally it turns out to be only a common crystal. At last I have found a jewel, a priceless treasure. Other men may only see in my prize a beauty such as they have seen before, but I see more. I see a light that will brighten my whole life, if I can only win it. There are two things one can only hope for, but can never be sure of. They are heaven, and a woman's love. Cora, I see that you are beautiful; that all men can see, and I know that you are good and true; not as other women, but with a steadfastness like that of the planets. This is not given to other men to see. My darling, I love you! I love you! I love you! Will you be my wife?"

Mary ceased reading. She had forgotten Vernon's love for her, in the joy she felt for her friend's happiness. She did not want his love, why should she grudge it to another? I remember when we had been told that an empty heart was a sorry thing. She proceeded with the letter. "I think I said yes, but it didn't matter. He had been very quiet lately. I guessed the reason, but I had to wait. I could not tell him till he asked me. Soon he became bright and happy. I shall never let him be sad again, because now I have the right to tell him everything. Then he began to arrange. No one can arrange things like he can. He said I must go home, and he would settle a thousand crowns a year on me, so that I could always give him a birthday present.

"What a nice way to make a present, Frank?" said Mary, stopping.

Naturally, I felt how nice it would be to be able to make such a present to one's darling. I think she guessed what I was thinking about, for she said,—

"Of course, she would love him just as well if he were poor. She cannot love him better than I love you, my Frank. Can she?"

There was only one thing for me to do, and I did it. I think a woman's love is too measureless to compare with anything. Infinite things are like each other, but beyond comparison.

She continued to read:

"After I was gone, Gea told me he called all the servants together, and told them. He then thanked them for the faithful service they had rendered him, and said that he would give any of them who wished to leave, a small annuity, and would always be their friend. Those who wished to be with him after he was married—and he hoped very much that that would mean them all—must go and see the future Duchess Dreman—when Gea told me, my cheeks burned—and get her to re-engage them. They all came one morning with Gea—they got a neighbour to look after the place—and asked if they might be my servants. They hoped I would let them stay on. They said there never was so kind a man as the duke, and they knew I would make him happy, and—oh, my dear! such lots of nice things, that I

kissed them every one, and said that I would never part with them until they were married. I know I should not have kissed them, but some of them cried, and I had to. I seem to want everything now. Of course, I only want him, but that is everything. It's helping to bring about what is good, and to suppress what is bad, and nothing else counts. Gea tells me he is so lonely and restless without me, that I feel inclined to go to him with a clergyman and a special licence, and marry him and never leave him again."

"You see," I said, "that some women pity their lover's loneliness, and actually wish to get married."

"It is quite possible to wish to get married without saying so," said Mary, reproachfully, and proceeded: "You know he thinks of everyone but himself, and though they are all very thoughtful, I feel that no one but me is able to properly look after him. He is getting the house re-decorated, and sends me harmonies to choose for the different rooms. He says what I like he will like, and he wants everything done exactly according to my taste; but I know what he likes, and I am getting things done as he would do them if he had not me to consider. I feel I am deceiving him a little, but as I really think his favourite colours are the prettiest, it is very little; besides, I intend to tell him some day."

Mary read me no more, and as she put down the letter, said,

"She is a dear good girl, Frank, and will make Vernon the happiest man in the world."

"Except me and some others," I suggested.

Mary only noticed my remark with a glance, and continued,—

"She will be a perfect president's wife, as she has no pride, and lots of dignity and common sense."

"I expect she will coddle Vernon until he becomes fat and lazy, and like an idol, content to sit still and be worshipped."

"There is no fear of that. He is a man that cannot be made lazy, and who will be all the better for petting and love."

Wedding preparations became the only theme of interest. Consultations of various sorts were held all day and every day, till I was only saved from thinking a bridegroom was a superfluous person at his own wedding by the occasional interviews that I had with my lady love.

In the evenings Allan Mona would come home with me to dine, and to see Nitho. He would smile and stroke his beard while Nitho chatted, only occasionally giving an opinion, or venturing a remark. He was clever and good, but his close devotion to his work had prevented his cultivating, or thinking of, amusements and lighter matters. The student, if he would become a successful man, must when he commences his career, devote time and solitude to mentally digesting what his brain has absorbed, or else his learning will be but loads of learned lumber in his head.

Our work kept us very much together, and we became daily closer friends. The period of my marriage was drawing so near, that I had to find a best man, and as Duke Dreman was too busy with his own marriage arrangements to come to Zara and act for me, I asked Allan Mona if he would undertake the office.

"I have never been at a wedding, Frank," he said, "and am afraid that I should fail to perform my duties properly."

"Well, we will teach you. Nitho has been a bridesmaid, so she can instruct you in your duties."

"In that case, I shall be very happy to act."

And so it was decided.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MODEL FARM.

SINCE I had succeeded in getting the date of my wedding fixed, everyone had helped me in their own way. Everybody always does seem to be the best side out when a wedding approaches. If an old man marries a young woman, or an old woman a young man, people persuade themselves that the ancient party is not really old, but only appears so, owing to having been born about twenty years too soon; and so they do not shiver with the shadow of the thought of the man, in the dim future, sitting with shrunken limbs and doting brain by the fireside, whilst his buxom wife irritably scolds the servants, chafing under her ill-assorted union, or piously wishes for the time when the poor old creature will go to heaven, or elsewhere, and leave her free. Nor does the picture of an old woman, miserable with the knowledge of a faithless mate, whose strong manhood turns from her withered lips, come to their mind. Certainly, it is not wise to forestall evil, nor is it wise to pursue a pleasant path, in which there is only going forward, if it ends in a thicket of briars, which can only be traversed with torn garments and bleeding hands, even if they do look pretty and pleasant when viewed from afar.

Our honeymoon was to be spent at Andra Mura's farm, not in billing and cooing, for we could do as much of that as we wished —at least, my betrothed thought so—in our spare time. I was told that the women of Ura allowed their husbands to gluttonize on kisses for the first month after they were married, and were surprised to find that frequently, for the rest of their lives, they viewed kisses as things to be disregarded. I thought that a month for kisses, and one's lady love, would not be too long by one second; but I was told I was wrong, and was asked if I would be content to eat one sort of food, from an inexhaustible pile, every day for a week. I wasn't even allowed to answer, and so the matter ended. On the farm, when I was not working at my books, I was to help Andra, but generally my time would be taken up, so I was informed, seeing the country, and learning about farm arrangements. Presents now began to arrive. Amongst the first was one from Duke Dreman, with a kind, fanciful letter, which perfectly illustrated his character. His present was a gold ring for Mary, with one diamond. Engraved on the inside were the

words, "Love ever, and forgive." In the letter he sent a receipt for all the money he had lent me; and, amongst other things, he wrote, "May your lives be free from evil, as the stone I send you is from flaw. For your future wife I have a deep regard. Further, she is a friend of my darling. For both their sakes, I hope their friendship will continue and strengthen. The settling of the debt you owe is of no consequence to me, and its removal will take an obstacle—a slight one—from your matrimonial path. Judging your love by my own, I feel that the promise I now give, to always be a friend to the woman who is to be your wife, and any who may hereafter inherit your name, will be of more value in your sight than the trinket and scrap of paper I enclose. I have shielded Cora as fully as money and man's love can shield anyone; and if, in the near or far future, she or hers want consolation or a friend, treat them as you would have me treat your darlings, and so will I act to them. Men like us, who have faced toil, and stood at the gates of death, fear nothing for ourselves; but for our loved ones, who have not our strength, we sometimes tremble."

It was a letter that, like its writer, was true and good. Much more it said, and every word went to my heart. My lady read it.

"To have such a friend," she said, "is to be happy, for he will keep his word, as the sun its course. Frank, let us love him and his, as we love ourselves, now and always."

"Now and always, my queen!" I said. And so it was.

When Mary wrote to Cora her eyes were full of tears, distilled of happiness. I did not see her letter, but I know it contained as much love as a diamond contains light. These happy women were strong and fearless, knowing that an infinite and all-powerful love shed its protection over them and theirs. This Vernon could not realize, and so he was a coward for those who were dear to him. The Duke and Duchess Phedra sent a dainty service of porcelain. Its white cups lined with pink were pretty and fragile as the petals of a blush rose. White and pink and gold. It seemed, to my sailor eyes, too beautiful for use. From Ion Mura, and Edie, his wife, came the skin of the great beast from whose clutches they had saved me. It was soft as a glove, and the hair white like snow. As I laid it on the ground its glass eyes seemed to glare at me, and its powerful claws to be ready to rend me limb from limb. Cula sent two compressed-gas rifles, one for each of us, which would discharge sixty bullets in a continuous stream, if necessary, without being reloaded. With very little noise the bullets went on their smokeless, deadly mission. On our wedding-day, these and many other gifts made a great pile, to prove the great kindness of our numerous friends. To our wedding came Cora and her mother. Cora was completely changed in every way. On her fingers precious stones glittered, her dress was richer, and she seemed taller. She felt and looked a queen. She had become dignified, but her big brown eyes alone showed her

happiness. Cula Dero came with his wife. She moved about bird-like as ever, her silvery laughter sweet as a thrush's song. Nearly every one we knew was present, to show their love for the bride and their kindness to me. Our marriage was to take place at Duke Mura's apartments. The marriage-day had come, and Allan Mona and I were on the way to the wedding.

"You ought," I said, "to be able to pass an examination on the duties of a bridegroom with honour, Allan, after the care Nitho has taken to teach you."

"I am letter perfect," he answered, uneasily, "but the uncertainty about the grouping and the interludes are very likely to puzzle me."

"Nitho's instructions should have been more definite."

"They were definite and brief. She says that I must mind you don't hide yourself in your beard, and shut my eyes if I see anyone nicer than her, and then I will be all right."

Parson Hamer officiated at the service, which seemed to me the same as that at the Middle Globe. Mary's father, a tall, intellectual old man, who farmed for a living and studied geology for a pleasure, gave her away. She was dressed in a dark grey walking frock, as we were to start for Andra's farm after the wedding. Amongst a number of tall women—all the women of Zara were tall—she was the tallest. Stately and tall. Strong and gentle. Clever and good. Of them all I saw only her, the rest seemed shadows. Parson Hamer felt and spoke the beautiful words of the marriage service so that they went to both our hearts, purging them of pride and moving them for good. In a little while I was a married man. A man with a double existence for happiness, with a being better and purer than myself, to be ever ready to turn me from evil and cheer me for good. We signed a book, and then commenced the good-byes.

"If you haven't noticed how admirably Allan did justice to my instructions, Frank, I must conclude that marriage has made you selfish," said Nitho.

Duke Phedra had sent his air carriage to take us to the outskirts of the city, where Andra was to meet us, and in it we started on our honeymoon journey, midst a shower of good wishes and rosebuds. Andra and his wife were waiting to meet us with a pair-horse wagonette. Horses, after all, are pleasanter to drive, even if neither so safe nor reliable, than an electro car or a compressed-air carriage. The roads were wide and tree planted. Throughout Zara, the highways and byways were all of uniform width.

The farmhouse was a large two-storey building with a wide veranda, surrounded by a garden, and flanked by outbuildings. Andra's sister-in-law, Nellie Porto, kissed Mary, and was introduced to me. She was a handsome, fair girl of ample proportions and placid manner, whose kind face showed a contented amia-

bility, and suggested a nature too self-satisfied to undertake anything unusual, or to trouble about trifles. The farm hands constituted a considerable and various community, living under hotel-like arrangements. At supper, which was a feast meal in our honour, every person on the farm over ten years of age came to table, except the maids who served and waited. There was no distinction whatever, further than the usual extra respect shown to the master of the house. The term farm labourer was unknown, and certainly would not have been applicable to the educated, intelligent men and women who did the work on the farm. The only difference between them and the people in the duke's household was that they were brawnier, more sunburnt, and of a less restless and perhaps not of quite so keenly intellectual a type. The difference, however, was not greater than is frequently seen among brothers.

The dinner was really good, and like that usually served in an American hotel, but without the endless variety of dishes. The dessert consisted of fruit, freshly picked, bright and mellow, with the perfection that alone comes from the ripening on the parent stem. Andra's buxom wife spoke to him, and asked that the glasses be filled. Mary's hand caught mine under the table, and she whispered, "Speak as you did at the Senate, my husband."

I felt a mighty joy. For the first time she gave me the title I had won of her love. A title that every worthy man has taken with pride since civilization dawned. I noticed that only the women filled their glasses. The liquor was a wine made from a sort of elderberry, that sparkled like champagne, that was exhilarating and slightly intoxicating, though no one ever got inebriated with it.

Andra rose. "My friends, it is my privilege to propose a toast that every maid hopes to hear in her honour, and every man to reply to. As I think the maids are better women after hearing it" (the men applauded), "and I am quite certain the men are much better after replying to it" (they all applauded). "I hope your turns will soon come. I have to propose the health of the bride, Mrs. Frank Farleigh, whom my wife has persuaded to come to Onara Fields" (the name of the farm) "for her honeymoon. When she comes into our gardens we will pick her the ripest fruit and the sweetest flowers. When she comes to our fields we will make her a throne of hay and a bouquet from the hedgerows. When she goes to the farmyard the hens will show her all they know about the management of chickens. To the health and happiness of the bride!"

The women liften their glasses, from which they took a sip, and handed them to the men, who, with a bow to my wife and a "Health and happiness to the bride," drank up the wine. The women then sang the following song, the men joining in the chorus:—

May joy betide thee, gentle bride,
God send thee love, and much beside,
Sweet beauty, in thy husband's eye,
Often to laugh, seldom to sigh.

Chorus.

Joy betide thee, gentle bride,
May love be ever, love be ever, love be ever at thy side.

And other loves may heaven give,
So that your kind may ever live,
And when you seek a heavenly way,
You in your children here may stay. *Chorus.*

The tact to guide to noble aim
The man your heart does not disdain;
And all the joy that women know,
Who wisely on love's path do go. *Chorus.*

The echo of the bass voices had hardly died away when Mrs. Andra threw me a kiss from the end of her fat fingers, and I rose with a full heart to try and express some of the grateful pride that thrilled me.

"Mrs. Andra, Andra, and friends! Andra has told you that a man becomes better after he has replied to the health he has just proposed. I am sorry that the improvement does not take place before instead of after, so that better justice might be done in the reply. On my wife's behalf, permit me to thank you for so kindly welcoming her, and drinking her health. That she will enjoy the fruit, admire the flowers, and sympathize with the hen-mother, I am sure. That she will enjoy them doubly, because they come with love and kindness, I am also sure. Under ordinary circumstances I would help her to admire them, but till my honeymoon is over I decline to admire anything but her. On her behalf, and my own, permit me to thank you for the kindness you have extended to us."

And so we received our welcome. With music we ended the day. On the farm the days commenced and ended early. Most of the songs had a chorus in which three or four voices joined, and made the great room echo with melody. The intellectual surroundings were as much brighter than and superior to those of a farm at the Middle Globe, as was the electric light, generated from windmills, and used at the former, to the grease-dropping candles or kerosine lamps of the latter. The last song, sung by a woman's voice, which was joined by all in the refrain, I shall give, as it is a sample of the songs of Andra's farm.

GOOD NIGHT.

Good night, till light
Comes with the morn.
May sleep, sweet sleep, eyes close,
And sweet repose

Make fresh as flowers
Our happy waking hours.

Refrain.

Good night, sweet sleep,
Till morning bright.
Good night. Good night.

May sweet-voiced bird
With light be heard,
To ope our eyes to dawn:
May loving kiss,
Our lips ne'er miss,
Nor prayer, at every morn.

Refrain.

Day's duty done,
Thank God for one
More day, in joy complete:
Off to thy couch,
Eyes close, repose—
Repose till morrow's dawn.

Refrain.

In the morning we went to the milking sheds, where we found Nellie superintending the first milking of the cows; a beautiful, quiet lot of polled cattle.

"Have none of the cattle horns in Undara, Nellie?" I asked.

"No," she replied, "sometimes a calf show signs of their coming, and it is at once dehorned. Many years ago nearly all the cattle had horns, supplied by nature as a protection against their enemies; but as men did away with their enemies, and, finding they then used their horns only to hurt each other, deprived the cattle of them, nature at last ceased to supply any."

The milk was poured into a huge can, mounted on three wheels. I was then taken to the dairy. Part of it was placed aside for immediate use, and the remainder put into a contrivance which separated the cream from the milk. The cream was then made into butter, and the milk given to the calves and the pigs. At certain times large quantities of cheese were made. Many of the neighbouring farmers sent their milk to be treated at Onara; as the wisdom of co-operation was universally established. Big-wheeled tricycles worked by a maid or youth, and carrying a big tin of milk, kept arriving one after the other, till there seemed to be more milk than could be supplied by all the cows on the face of the earth. Pints and quarts were useless as means of measurement, the milk was in barrels full. While we were watching the cows going to their pastures, a whistle sounded a long-sustained note, which ended up in a shriek, and the buxom women, and the big armed men, came trooping in to breakfast. The men, clad in armless singlets and close-fitting knickerbockers, were models of strength. In a big lavatory they left their boots, and

put on slippers, made their ablutions, and appeared in the breakfast room in thick tight-fitting singlets, fresh as the morning, and merry as children. Many of the maids dressed like the men, with only the difference that their sleeves were long, and the extra smartness which feminine fingers make with any apparel; while the married women wore short skirts, and slightly different bodices. Again the whistle blew, and before the people in the cities were out of bed, we had commenced breakfast, and ere they had dressed, had each disposed of more good food than most of them would consume in a day. After breakfast, Andra and the men prepared to go to the field, where they were cutting and stacking the ripe corn.

"Will you come, Frank?" asked Andra.

I looked at Mary pleadingly.

"I will go if you care, Frank," she said. So we went.

The tall corn heads undulated with the wind, like the sea surface on a calm day, after rough weather. Two horse-drawn machines cut and bound the corn in sheaves, while in another part of the field the wheat was being thrashed and bagged, while the straw was pressed and carted away. Presently Mrs. Andra came up with a fat round-faced baby in her arms.

"Come, Mary," she called out, cheerily, "and see how we get the men their dinner."

I stuck my fork in the ground to accompany my wife. Mrs. Andra laughed, and said,—

"You needn't come, Frank. If men are allowed to be too lavish of their love when the honeymoon is on, they often become bankrupt of it before they are grandfathers."

"You will soon be as gentle under feminine rule as I am, Frank," said Andra, laughing, "and come to think the women are wise in some things; but very few."

Mary would sooner have stayed, but was lovingly marched off by our matronly hostess. At midday, Mrs. Andra, Mary, and several of the women returned with some hand-carts containing the dinner and some light hop beer. A whistle sounded, and the men gathered round, and commenced another substantial meal. The solid breakfast of the morning was quite forgotten, and their early appetite was put to shame by the sustained energy with which they attacked their dinner. Dinner, a rest, and a smoke, occupied an hour, and then work was resumed as energetically as ever. Strolling back with the women, I said questioningly to Mrs. Andra,—

"You don't limit your work to six hours on the farm, evidently?"

"No," she replied, "but the men get a day's pay for each six hours' work they do. Many of the regular farm workers earn two days' pay every day during the harvesting, but most of the men from the towns can only manage nine or ten hours' work."

"You seem to keep them busily employed during their working hours?"

"We do, and very hard work it is."

"Do you pay them all the same?"

"Oh, no. We pay them according to the amount of strength or skill required."

"The farm is taken on a limited co-operative arrangement," said Mary, "which Andra will explain to you after supper."

As I had not heard any details of the co-operative system which was usual in Zara, I asked Andra to tell me how it applied to his farm.

"Well," he said, "my wife and I had been betrothed two years, when the owner of this farm died, and it became for sale. Lucie was an excellent housekeeper, and I a good farmer, while Aubrey Shanna and his betrothed, May Arly, had been working on the same estate as us for over two years, and I knew them to be wise workers, while Nellie had commenced the dairy work, and was getting on very well. So we agreed together to all go into partnership, and take the farm, if we could borrow the necessary money to enable us to do so. I then went to my father, who promised to put three thousand crowns into the partnership. This enabled us to purchase the farm, which we called Onara Fields, and an outlying block of land. Of course, we only paid a deposit, and left the balance—nearly all, in fact—on the place as a mortgage. Still we purchased it, and it was ours, subject to the mortgage. We stocked our land, furnished the house, and established ourselves comfortably, leaving a balance in the bank, for current expenses. We were to receive half of our wages at the end of every week. At the end of the year, half the interest on the money lent was to be paid, and the balance of the profit, if any, to be divided pro rata between the money lent and us. At the end of the first year, after paying half wages and half interest, the interest share of the remaining profits was seventy-five crowns or shares, and the total wages one hundred and eighty-two crowns or shares. Well, we had only one hundred and ninety-two crowns to divide, so the money share received fifty-six crowns, and the wages share, which was us, one hundred and thirty-five crowns. Of course we paid for everything as we went, and for all hired labour in full. At the end of the second year we had three hundred and seventy-seven crowns to divide, so the money share received ninety-five crowns, and the labour two hundred and thirty-two. At the end of the fifth year we gave the money interest notice that we would pay it off after the next division, had a valuation of all our effects according to the agreement, and a division according to increased value. The money interest after being paid its shares to the end of the fifth year in full, received interest at the rate of twenty-one and one-twelfth per cent. per annum, so it did very

well. In three years there will be another complete division of the profits, and the money interest will be paid off in full. Then we will reap all the profits for ourselves and get rapidly well off."

"It seems to me," I said, "that the money share has been like a greedy dragon, devouring a huge slice of the profits earned by you, which it must continue to devour until the end of your tenth year of labour. Surely it is most unfair?"

"On consideration," said Andra, "you will see it is perfectly fair. This money was advanced to enable us to go into business as farmers; had we had a few bad years, and some bad luck, such as disease among the cattle or our crops, it would have been all lost, or rather a large portion of it would have been lost, while we would have received only half wages. Where there is risk, there must be large profits to enable people to take the risk. Further, the person advancing the money does all he can to enable us to sell our produce, so you see it is quite fair. Had we not got this money, we would have been working for other people all our days."

"It enables men like my husband," said Lucy, "who have shown energy and ability, to make a start for themselves, without having to spend the best years of their lives saving sufficient to enable them to do so."

Andra only smiled. He was evidently used to this sort of thing; his wife was too much in earnest even to be aware that she had complimented her husband.

"The co-operation in this plan," I said, "seems to be very limited. Could you not make it include your humblest farm assistants?"

"Impossible, as a rule," Andra replied, "for they would not take the necessary risks, and so would not be entitled to the possible profits. In certain cases we do, however. For instance, at our outlying grazing block we have a man and his family in charge, and have agreed to give him half wages like ourselves, and a similar pro rata share of the profits."

"Before they had been in charge a month the children caught the black stallion," said Nellie.

"How did they do that, and what is the black stallion?" I asked.

"On Mount Boro," Nellie replied, "there are some wild horses, amongst whom was born the black stallion. When he was first seen he was a big two-year-old, black as jet, without a hair or spot of any other colour. When he grew to be four years old he was supposed to be the handsomest and fleetest horse in all Fregida. Lots of people tried to catch him, but they could never succeed, for he was as cunning as he was handsome, and could tell a trap in a minute, people said, by the scent of the human hands that constructed it. At night time he would leap the

fences and join the other horses, till at last they tried to shoot him, but always unsuccessfully. Several times they got him in stockyards, but he would always get out directly anyone came near. People said he climbed the fences. In reality he would leap on the top rail and tumble over. To bring cattle from this farm and return with others takes five days. After Marco Zilla had been settled there a short time he left his wife and three children, and came down to us with some cattle. When he had gone the black stallion, seeing everything was quiet, came to the neighbouring woods, and neighed to a beautiful mare that Mrs. Zella had. Seeing this, she and her boys determined to try and catch him, so they put the mare in the inner inclosure of a double stockyard, giving her a good supply of food and water, while with a very long cord they kept the outer gate open. By loosening this cord, which led to a thicket where they concealed themselves, they could close the gate quietly. When night came the eldest boy and his mother went to the string, and watched from their hiding-place, after putting the other two children to bed. Presently they heard the stallion call and the mare answer him. They continued to call to one another till at last the black stallion entered the yard, and they let the gate quietly close. He looked round, but the mare called him, and he returned to her. Presently he trotted round the yard, but the mare again called him; she seemed to know that she had to keep his attention occupied. Quietly Mrs. Zella and her boy went to bed. Next morning the stallion was still there, trotting round and round the yard, only stopping occasionally to winnow to the mare through the rails. Had anything frightened him he would have made an effort to get over the fence, but fortunately nothing did, and he stayed contentedly near the mare, who was all the time very sociable. At the end of the third day he was half starved and weak with trotting round and round the yard, so they decided to bring the poor mare some food, as she had eaten all hers up the first day, and was beginning to be very hungry. When they brought the mare food, the stallion snorted and reared, and then with a rush and a bound tried to get over the fence, but only succeeded in getting his fore legs on the top and falling back. Again and again he tried, but always unsuccessfully, for he was too weak for want of food and water. The fourth day the poor brute drank out of a bucket, and in the evening when Zella came home he threw a halter over his head and secured him. Weak as he was he made a great struggle for mastery, but after a while, finding that he only received food and kindness from Zella, soon became tame, and now there is no quieter or handsomer horse in Fregida than the beautiful black stallion."

CHAPTER XX.

RURALIZING.

On returning to Onara homestead one evening I found, to my delight and surprise, that Diso Rota had come out to see me on his tricycle. He had arrived about fourteen o'clock, when Nellie was resting and reading, preparatory to the commencement of preparations for the evening milking. During the seven years that she had managed the dairy, from the time when at the age of fifteen she had herself done all the work, to that of our visit, when she was dairy mistress, and did little else than superintend, she had deservedly developed in importance, and become only second to Mrs. Andra in household matters. As Lucy was away when Diso called, Nellie had to receive him. When Mary and I sat down in the outer room to change our walking boots for light shoes, we heard a voice,—

"The long, perfectly straight pipe, with the elbow double screwed joints, is undoubtedly far the best. The subject is one of the greatest importance, if not the greatest."

Mary recognized the style, and smiled. I looked in. Nellie was comfortably seated in a great easy chair, with her feet on a foot-stool. Now, as she did not usually use such a thing, it was evident she must have taken it because Diso had politely got it for her. She looked the picture of contentment, as she listened and wondered at the polite, handsomely dressed man who talked so volubly on a subject that was unintelligible to her. He looked cool and comfortable in a grey suit, as he sat talking animatedly, mistaking the interest she felt in him for an interest in the subject he spoke about. Pinned to Nellie's frock was a piece of white stock with pink-wrapped stem, that had evidently in the first instance adorned Diso's coat.

"How do you do, Frank?" he said on seeing me. "Allow me to congratulate you on your marriage."

He then turned to Mary, and said,—

"Mrs. Fairleigh, I have come to congratulate Frank on his good fortune."

Mary held out her hand, which he took, and gracefully stooping, kissed. Nellie looked on, admiring this gallant exhibition

of good feeling. The men on Onara could feel as deeply as Diso, or any other man, but they could not express themselves as politely or elegantly as he.

"Thank you, Diso," said Mary, smiling, "for your congratulations to my husband, which are a pleasant compliment to me. Soon I hope that he and I may be able to offer you similar congratulations. Put it in our power to do so, and you will see how readily we will rejoice in your good fortune."

"I hope," he said, "that time may soon come. Though as yet I cannot even see its shadow."

Certainly Nellie was no shadow, but a dear delightful lump of plump womanhood. Perhaps in her shadow he would find the one he looked for. Nellie took Diso to see the dairy arrangements, and the cows being milked. When they returned he was introduced to Lucie.

"I was surprised," he said, volubly, "to see the excellent and scientific way Nellie has of doing everything in the dairy. I have seen the cows milked, and the cream taken from the milk and made into butter. The management of the milk must be of the greatest imporance in farming, and the way you have it attended to is perfection."

Nellie smiled, partly from pleasure, partly at Diso's enthusiasm. In the evening the men amused themselves with boxing, and one of their number presently came into the room with a message.

"If Diso Caro Rota cares for boxing, or to see boxing, will he come to the big room?" The messenger paused, and then continued with a scowl, "The boxing will amuse you, but do not box, or you may be hurt. We are too strong for a ladies' man."

Diso laughed, and replied pleasantly, "I will come and take a lesson in boxing; if you hurt me I will forgive you."

"We will follow, Cheno," said Nellie. And the man turned and left.

When he was gone Nellie said to Diso, "Do not box Cheno, he is very strong, and I think would like to hurt you."

"Why?" asked Diso.

Nellie blushed. "I not quite know;—but he is very strong, and I feel sure wants to hurt you."

Again Diso laughed. He was gratified at the anxiety that Nellie showed on his behalf.

"Do not fear, Nellie," he said, "I will box him if you will watch the match."

"We will all watch the match," said Andra. And so we went to the play room.

"Diso will box with you, Cheno. Remember, in good fellowship. Hard knocks or soft, as you will, but only in sport and kindness," said Andra.

With slight preparation the men entered the ring, Cheno a little the taller, and much the heavier, looked the doughtier man

by far; but the hard work of the farm, while giving him great strength, had handicapped him with slowness. He stood like a young bull, quiet and determined. He loved Nellie, but she did not care for him, notwithstanding which he was savage against Diso, who stood alert and smiling, active as a cat, and dandy as a Spartan warrior prepared for battle. His ruddy face, with just sufficient of a laugh to move his curled moustache, was strikingly in contrast with that of the stern, bronzed, and bearded man who so sullenly faced him.

Each man wore singlet and knickerbockers. With one the arms were bare, and the clothing brown. With the other the body covering was white, blue trimmed, and the knickerbockers light grey. Two handsome men. Diso, with swaying figure, keenly alert, stepped up to his opponent, feinted with the right hand, and tapped him smartly on the nose with the left. Cheno struck with all his might, but missed his man. Again and again he struck, but always without result. Like a bull he fought, with strength only, careless of his adversary's methods. Diso, on the contrary, watched his man, and had already comprehended his tactics. Cheno, now panting, struck more fiercely, but less hard. The quick work told on his slow, heavy muscles, while Diso, lithe, and used to nimble exercise, was fresh as ever. Nellie looked on with parted lips and heightened colour. The men were striving for the maid fiercely, as men, all the world over, will fight for the woman they love. The loverless maids looking on envied Nellie her two suitors. Even in Zara sometimes one had more than they could take, while others wanted. As Cheno tired he grew more fierce, and now both men received and gave hard knocks, Diso's blows always striking home, Cheno's but seldom. As the men sparred, suddenly Diso dropped his left arm, and unprotected, stood up to his opponent. With a great effort, Cheno struck with his left glove at Diso's head, who, stepping slightly aside to let the blow pass, struck his opponent on the point of the chin with his right glove, and knocked him clean off his legs. With difficulty he rose, dazed and stunned, to continue the contest, and staggered to his opponent.

"Let us stop now," said Diso, "we are both sufficiently exercised."

"Bravo! bravo!" they all cried.

"If you are frightened we will stop," said Cheno; "but I do not think these soft gloves need alarm you."

Even now we would have stopped them, but Nellie spoilt everything by saying indignantly,—

"Diso Caro is only afraid of hurting you, Cheno. Surely you can see that?"

He did see it; but to be thus humiliated in the eyes of the woman whom he had called to see his triumph, was too much. He was beside himself with jealous rage.

"If that is his reason, we will box again; I will not hurt him for your sake," he sneered in reply.

Diso became angry at seeing Nellie slighted.

"If you will do your best, and not to spare me," he said, with a smile, "I will box you again. I thought you were only playing; your blows had neither direction nor strength."

Sneer for sneer; Diso would now do his best.

"You must only box in good fellowship," said Andra; "I think you have both had enough?"

Cheno insisted, and again they faced each other. This time they each meant fighting. They were completely changed. Cheno, exhausted from the tremendous lunges he had been making and the hard blows from his adversary, was dazed by Diso's lightning skill, and made foolish by his own passion. Diso, simply warmed by the exercise, had completely gauged the measure of his man, and, stimulated by anger, seemed anxious and able to do him harm.

Making no pretence of guarding, Diso commenced by sending his left glove into his adversary's face, ducking his head to escape the return blow, and striking with his right full on his opponent's liver. Cheno staggered, and, before he could regain his balance, Diso's left glove struck him full on the nose, and the right on his ear, and knocked him down almost senseless. Only a few seconds, and the contest was finished. The men shook hands; to the one it was a crowning humiliation, to the other a condescension.

As we returned Diso said, "The fellow made me angry by answering you uncivilly, Nellie, so I punished him. He can neither box nor keep his temper."

We chatted after the others had gone to bed. When we dispersed Nellie held out her hand to Diso, and they said "Good night!" He stooped and kissed her strong, shapely fingers. She blushed.

"May your dreams be rosy as your cheeks!" he said.

"Diso," said Mary, "something has changed you."

"Yes," he replied, "and I hope the change will continue under favourable circumstances, till I receive from you such congratulations as I offered Frank."

Cupid's touch soon makes a blaze of some men's feelings, and, if a maid's heart be thrown into the flames, only a ring will keep the fire within desirable limit.

In the morning neither of the men seemed much the worse for their sparring match. Cheno's bronzed cheeks were unchanged, and a swelling lip and bloodshot eye alone bore witness to the knocks he had received. Diso had not been struck on the face at all, but—hidden—his arms and chest were bruised and sore from the boxing bout. To the women, he was unhurt and a hero. Before he left he had received and accepted an invitation to spend the following Saturday and Sunday at Onara Fields.

One bright morning Andra sent us with Carlo Orna, one of his helpers, to see a large farming establishment. We had a light, low, four-wheeled vehicle, such as is commonly used in America, drawn by one horse. Nellie, for once, left her duties to a deputy, and came with us. She and Mary had become fast friends, for Mary cunningly talked of Diso, and of her own happiness, the while pointing out how clever, but sensitive, he was, and how men improve when they marry—all with an intent to incline a maid's heart to a wooer, that they might both, like her, become bound in the bonds of hymen.

Carlo and I sat in front. He was an old man, hale and hardy, like nearly all the men of Ura. By-and-by he talked. He was seventy-five, and liked to discuss the past events of his life. Old men live only in the past, or in the future of those they love of a younger generation.

"No, Frank," he said, in reply to a question of mine, "I have no children. She—my wife—was consumptive. In the early days, when people cruelly brought into the world children to suffer and die in early life, all her family on the mother's side died of that deadly disease. The new laws came, and her mother, who had escaped the family curse, married. When I met my wife she was twenty years of age, and had been condemned to a childless life by the Marriage Senate, as consumption had appeared in her, and it was not right that she should have children to suffer as she did. She was very pretty. Her hair was black as darkness. Her eyes were big, and blue as the bluebell; while her face was white and pink, and her lips red and full. No one had wooed her, for men do not wish for a childless wife. I saw that she was beautiful and good, that her childless future had made her subdued and patient, but oh, so kind. The love that should have been for husband and children she gave to all who were unhappy. I loved her, but I did not care to woo a woman whose life must be barren, so I left her; but I could not forget her. Everywhere I saw her blue eyes. I longed for her, and felt always lonely. Then I went back, and told her everything, but she would not have me. She admitted she loved me, for she had seen my love for her in my eyes, and guessed why I went away. She told me to love some other woman and forget her; but I would not take no from a woman who loved me—no man should—so I waited till she said 'Yes,' and then we were married."

"It seems hard and unjust, to me," I said, "that a woman should be deprived of the glory of maternity."

"Not so, Frank. But it would be hard and unjust to allow children to be born to a life of certain sickness and sorrow; for they go together. We were both fond of children, so we sent to Ura, and got one from a poor widow woman there. She only let us take it because she knew it would be better off with us than with her."

"Could you not get a child to adopt in Zara?" I asked.

"No, for every child has a chance to get on here, and no one is so poor as to be willing to part with an offspring. He was only two years old when we took him, and he grew up to be a schoolmaster. We will call on him to-day, for we pass his school. She lived to be quite an old woman before she died. She was fifty-two, and, had it not been that a very cold winter came—the coldest ever known—she might have been alive yet."

The old man mused in happy melancholy. The love of all his life had been given to his childless wife, and time—that has made the agony of her death but a gentle memory—had brought him near to the time when he should again meet his darling in the hereafter.

Presently we came to the school-house. In the yard some twenty children of each sex were being drilled, each of whom carried a dummy rifle. The old man introduced us to the man drilling, who was his adopted son. The children were from about nine to twelve years of age, and went through their drill excellently.

"Is it customary in Zara to drill both boys and girls?" I asked.

"Yes," replied the schoolmaster, "it is part of their education."

"Surely not a part of a girl's education, as of a boy's?"

"Yes. We drill them together till they can pass the first examination; after that they drill separately. It improves the physique, and consequently the health of all the children."

"All children," said Mary, "must pass an examination which proves them capable of serving as soldiers before they are allowed to leave school."

"Do your women serve as soldiers?" I asked, in amazement.

"To a certain extent," answered the young schoolmaster, with an amused smile. "Two regiments of women went with the soldiers in the war against Gurla. In time of war, all women who volunteer are drilled, and many of them go on active service with the baggage, and act as nurses. In case of need they fight, for they are all armed like the men soldiers."

"In Zara," said the old man, "the women encourage and assist the men in everything. In the war with Gurla, they cut off the retreat of the enemy, and slaughtered them as they ran, without mercy. Many of them had had husband, lover, or brother killed; and they encourage the rest to slaughter without pity. Women have no mercy on those who kill their men. The sight of their dead loved ones makes them fiends."

Reaching the farm building, we were taken to the tower, and had a bird's-eye view of the surrounding country. It was level, and we could see a very long distance on either side. Stretched out around the base of the building were the glass houses for the less hardy fruit and vegetables, the gardens, and the out-

houses. The roads faded away in the distance, getting smaller and smaller till they seemed to end. Everywhere they ran at right angles, cutting up the country into blocks. Away towards Zara, we could see Onara Fields and the homestead. The green trees and the golden grain, with houses scattered here and there, showed the glory and fruitfulness of summer. Nellie gave me the history of the surrounding houses, and a great mass of buildings that constituted the farm barracks of the soldiers of Zara.

"Have you no poor or almshouses at Zara?" I asked, after noticing their complete absence.

"None; though in Gurla," said Mary, in indignant tones, "they give the working classes so little wages, that they cannot save anything during the time of their vigour, and so are destitute in their old age. There they have both poor and almshouses, where the worn-out workers are kept till they die, at the expense of the generous portion of the wealthy people. The mean employer works them until they are useless, and then turns them adrift. They are worse off in reality than if they were slaves, as a slave-owner must feed his worn-out bondspeople. In Zara no one is allowed to employ an adult at a less wage than will suffice to keep and clothe him decently. In Gurla, many men and women are employed at the rate of about three florins a week—equal to six shillings and threepence English money—out of which they have to pay for their own dress, bed, and board. The result is, that they are driven by hunger and misery to theft, and every other sort of folly."

As we drove home, the old man told us about Gurla, where he had been. It was a country, evidently, where the masses were ground down in poverty and misery, that a favoured few might live in pampered luxury; where priestcraft was killing Christianity; and a foolish hereditary aristocracy begetting a State of Socialism that would wipe them off the face of the earth, with violence and bloodshed.

I could hardly believe that so much stupidity could exist, but I afterwards found out that, unfortunately, it did.

In the evening, while the more enthusiastic were dancing, and the others listening to the music, Lucy gathered Mary, Andra, and me together, and unburdened her mind.

"Now, Mary," she said, "I want to know all about this young man you have been praising up to Nellie so unsparingly."

"Well, my dear Lucy," said my wife, complaisantly, "you had better get a description of him from the marriage bureau, and strengthen it by personal observation, then you will know all about him."

"I would sooner," said Lucy, very much in earnest, "you would give me a full sketch of him, coloured by your personal opinion. I see that he dresses too much like an artist for my

taste, though I am ready to forgive him for that, and for curling his moustache, and for——"

"It curls naturally," said Mary.

"And for making a harmony of the colours of his tie, his button-hole flower, and his dress; as these are faults that are almost desirable, if they do not make their possessor vain, or take up too much of his time. He seems clever, is very chatty, and though rather florid, has a graceful, taking way; but has nevertheless reached the age of twenty-five, without being betrothed. Now what is the reason, Mary dear? Is it temper, or what?"

"Perhaps," said Andra, "it is bashfulness."

"That it certainly isn't," said Lucy, shortly.

"Now, what is it, Mary?"

"It's several things," my wife replied. "His brain is always working, and often at top speed, with the result that his nerves are so highly strung, that they are very easily jarred, especially as, though he has lots of pride, he has no self-appreciation."

"All the more reason that he should get a wife to appreciate him," said Andra.

"Do be quiet, Andra, you're almost as bad as Nitho," said Lucy. "Go on, Mary, please."

"The result of this is," continued Mary, "that when he begins to be in love, the girl jars his susceptibilities, and he leaves her."

"I don't want Nellie to get fond of him," said Lucy, "only to be left lovelorn."

"There is no fear of that," said Mary confidently. "He will only see her once a week, meanwhile he will long for her sympathy, and so teach himself to love her, that he will magnify her good qualities, and be blind to her bad."

"She hasn't got any bad qualities," said Lucy.

"Then her weaknesses," replied Mary.

"He seems a strong, masterful man," continued Lucy, questioningly; "but that I like. You can guide and be proud of such men; besides, they are easily managed with plenty of kisses."

"She knows," laughed Andra. "Experience teaches."

Lucy smiled, but ignored the interruption, and continued,—

"Tell me, Mary, what has he done? What is he doing? What does he hope to do?

"Well, he plays football, and boxes."

"I like the way he boxes. He took and gave some very hard knocks without losing his temper. Strength and good temper are good qualities in one's husband."

"He was first a scavenger," explained Mary, "because that being night-work and well paid, enabled him to continue his studies in chemistry. He invented a movable refuse cart body that was accepted at the College of Engineers and Patents.

This got him his promotion to an inspectorship, and obtained him the friendship of Duke Mura, who thinks very highly of him. He next invented a new system of drainage pipes, and became Superintendent of Scavengers. Now he is Secretary to the Phonetic Dictionary Board, and a member of the Public Health Committee. So he has succeeded very well."

"He has, indeed," said Lucy, admiringly, "I suppose he must be very well off."

"He can have very little money. He made a settlement on one of his sisters when she married, that must have taken nearly all the money he has made."

"Well, I don't mind," said Lucy, hopefully. "Our Nellie will have her share of the farm, which will make them well off with his income."

So it was settled that Diso was to be allowed every opportunity of gaining Nellie's troth, and the two women, generous in their own happiness, schemed to guide the man into the path of true love, and make his journey thereon a smooth and happy one, ending, as all such journeys should, in the unity of two hearts, hopes, thoughts, wishes, and lives. The man had worked and conquered. The two women thought that the best wooer is one who so makes himself worthy of a woman's love. He should be made to see the woman as perfect; excelling all others in womanly worth, and realizing his dream of feminine perfection. Such dreams make the hope of budding manhood. All men should so think of the woman they wed. The maid should hear of what he had done, and what he might do, if strengthened by her love. It would be whispered in her ear, how he gazed at her. That surely in his heart the tiny flower of love had fixed its roots, to be nourished by her smiles till they spread, and it became the dominating power of his existence, or to be—alas, for the possibility—withered by her scorn, and killed in its first growth. His faults would be shown, like briar roses in a garden, as things not quite to be condemned, but to be carefully restrained as of dangerous tendencies. For no woman should think of her lover as quite perfect, but only to be made nearer perfection than other men by her love and sweetening influence. This will be so for ever, for men—all males—have a nature fierce, and tending to evil, while all women—all females—are of a gentler sort, wishing only for good. So it has been since the days of Adam, and will be till human nature becomes totally altered. Really that poor man doesn't receive the pity he is entitled to. Think of it. To be put in a splendid garden, with flowers and fruit and all sorts of animals, but to have no one to talk to, no woman to love.

In Ura, some old maids, women who had quarelled with their husbands, and a few of the women who had married poor, weak, nerveless creatures of men, had banded together and agitated for what they call women's rights. They were the discontented

and unsuccessful who had failed in womanly duties, and for this reason asserted their ability to perform the duties of man. The other women of Ura were contented with their lot, and believed they were enjoying women's rights, and so, consequently, were looked down on by the discontented few, as down-trodden, poor things. In Ura, there had once been a prize offered to the woman who could best describe a perfect husband. The committee awarding the prize were married women, whose opinion was, "A man who leaves his business cares behind him at his office, and never worries his wife with them." So you see that their opinion of a wife at Ura, was that she was only a superior housekeeper, with maternity added to her other duties. In Zara, a woman wished to share her husband's life, and to be his other self. To know all that he thought or did. To be his adviser and comforter in all his failures and sorrows, and to enjoy to the full the fruits and triumphs of his successes. They believed that the women were mainly responsible for the faults of the men, as they considered the men were always guided either by their mothers, their sweethearts, or their wives. They also took to themselves a large share of the honour and credit due to the community, for the rapid progress it had made towards wisdom and happiness, and pointed out that in the nations where the women were the least thought of—such as amongst the Rodas, where they were supposed to be beneath consideration, and only fit to work and bear children—there, folly and unhappiness most prevailed, and as the women had greater power, so the wisdom and happiness increased. This was so. In Gurla—where the women were looked upon as in every way inferior to men, and treated with kindness and deference, certainly, but not as man's equal, being only considered worthy of managing their household affairs—the status of the community was only little better than amongst the Rodas. In Ura the women had greater consideration, and the community was more elevated; while in Zara, where women's influence was everywhere felt, the community had as nearly reached a state of perfect wisdom and happiness as is possible to human nature to attain.

CHAPTER XXI.

DEFENCE NOT DEFIANCE.

THE last week of our honeymoon had arrived. How delightful if life could be one long honeymoon on a farm. You have there sufficient occupation to make you feel that *really* you should be allowed to see a little more of your new made wife. Only to be with her about twenty-one out of the twenty-four hours does seem rather hard. Perhaps after all it's as well as it is. One might at last get tired of even a honeymoon. I was once told of a royal personage who actually got tired of hearing "God save the Queen" played, though I never could believe it.

The committee adjourned from Thursday evening to Monday morning, so Diso came out to see us all, at least, that is what he pretended. He had gradually discovered that Nellie was the most beautiful, cleverest and most superlative of women, while she saw in him the future president of Undara, and the wisest and nicest man that ever was. They were both the happier for their discoveries, and as they duly became engaged, and were married, they remained in ignorance of their error all their lives, which was only as it should be.

Diso, who had brought out with him a handsome compressed-air carriage, took his new found divinity, Mary, and me to see the College of Engineers and Patents.

"I brought the air carriage," he explained, "because I understand it better than a horse, and it is more reliable."

It certainly was an excellent means of journeying, and as a motive power this air, the seeming nothing that we breathe, and in which we live, to escape its metal prison moved us swiftly along. The vehicle on big wheels, tyred by compressed air tubes, was very comfortable and joltless.

"Diso," said Mary, "this country air and sunshine agrees with you. You look very well."

"It is not the air and the sunshine that have made me happy. There are other rays than those of the sun that bring joy and strength. Once I thought that his bright beams alone brought the beauty and perfumes to the flowers, and the music to the voice of the birds, and life to the earth."

He looked at Nellie and smiled.

"After all the sun may be the father of these things, but they owe more to the joy bird who is their mother."

Actually the women blushed with pleasure, and thought this nonsense divine poetry. Well, the man meant it, and the women appreciated it, and other people have—it is to be hoped—passed through the same absurd, desirable delightful state, so it's not for us to make remarks.

The college was on the left bank of the Voa, from which a little stream flowed into an artificial lake, and returned to the river lower down.

This rivulet was embanked, and on either side contained water-wheels of every description, busily working. On this lake were many launches, while scattered round the grounds were windmills of every description. The college was an enormous square pile of buildings. On each corner was a square tower, while from the centre rose still another, but larger and taller by far than any one of the others. We stopped.

"The centre tower," said Diso, "is used as an observatory, and is in the middle of a hollow square of buildings, which are connected with it by a glass roof, and four bridges of different designs."

As we drove up to the gate it opened of its own accord, and as we passed through closed.

"I suppose they did that at the college for us, by electricity?" I asked.

"No," said Diso. "Our own two wheels, by pressing down two levers over which we went, caused the gate to open, and similarly two levers on the other side caused it to close."

Stopping at a portico, we got down, entered, and were taken to the quadrangle, where a number of young men were working at various metals, under the supervision of different instructors. From one group came a man of middle height, grey-haired, grey-bearded and spectacled. His face, smiling and kind, showed the sympathy with which he listened, and anon became animated as he spoke. Diso introduced him as Edena Kerna, the Master of the College."

"I am sorry, Dr. Frank, that you are not an engineer," he said, "as you could then fully realize the wonders of our college. Engineers who have been to the Middle Globe say that engineering has not yet even risen to the dignity of a compulsory degree and learned profession, though lately, I believe, it is being methodically studied."

"It is only different to the other professions," I answered, "inasmuch as in most countries, instead of studying it first in all its branches, men, without general preparation, devote all their attention to one of its divisions only."

"They are wrong," said Kerna, decidedly. "With us a man

who has not passed proper examinations, as he would for medicine or law, is not allowed even to style himself an engineer."

"So Duke Dreman told me."

"He is the most wonderful inventor I ever knew or heard of," said Kerna, enthusiastically. "While others can only invent by calculation, he invents by inspiration, and mentally completes his design before putting it on paper."

First Kerna took us to a library and museum of models.

"This," he explained, "is the Patent Office. If a man or woman, though the latter hardly ever invent, believe they have invented something of value, they make out full plans and drawings, and send them here with a fee. We examine them, and if they are worthless, or already discovered, duly inform the would-be patentee. If they are new and may possibly be of value, they are worked out, either with or without the inventor's assistance, purchased from him and made known for the benefit of everyone."

"Would it not give him greater encouragement, and be as well for the community," I queried, "if you allowed him to register his invention and sell it as he liked?"

"No. A man is encouraged more by the certainty than the greatness of a reward. Anyone in Zara who invents anything, knows he is certain of an adequate remuneration, and the honour of his discovery, so that everyone is always striving to invent. At Ura they do as you say, and find that though in extreme instances inventors may make large fortunes, they are, as a rule, robbed of their inventions, and get neither profit nor honour, therefore many men, who might otherwise invent, do not trouble. As for the community, they are certainly better off by having inventions free to all, while working out or developing inventions is the best possible exercise for engineers at all periods of their careers."

Some of the models of flying machines and balloons were beautifully constructed, and flew round the room like birds. Engines, windmills, water-wheels, and endless machines in miniature were set out in every direction, frequently side by side with the feeble mechanisms they had superseded. Next we were taken to the grounds, where we saw engines running by electricity and compressed air, side by side, on different sets of rails.

"Which power is the best?" I asked Edna Kerna.

"That," he answered, "is a matter we have not yet decided. Since we have invented air taps which do not leak under any pressure, air, as a motive power, is very much used, for it is so much lighter than electricity. When weight is not a consideration, electricity is used."

We next went into the workshops. Here we found the students, employed at and learning metal work.

"All our work is done by the students," said Kerna. "They are taught both theory and practice, commencing with the roughest and simplest blacksmith and surveying work, they pass examinations in both, and finally become educated engineers."

"Do they not object to the physical work?"

"No. Even the Uras are too enlightened for that, and understand that the most perfect man is the one who cultivates both brain and muscle. In Gurla they are so extremely unenlightened, that the ruling class think it degrading to put their muscle to any useful purpose. Neither men nor women are there ashamed of leading perfectly useless lives."

I felt grieved to think that in the country of my birth there were many people as unenlightened. I remember meeting a man who had come to Scotland for the shooting. A handsome, strong man. He shot in the shooting season, hunted in the hunting season, yachted in the yachting season, and spent the rest of his time pleasure-hunting in London, during "The Season," but never by any chance did he do any good work, not even as much as training a dog or a horse.

"Why do not you get married?" I asked him one day.

"I can't afford to," he answered, in the laconic style he cultivated.

"Do you never change your course of life?"

"Once went hunting in India. Never do it again."

"What does your life lead to?"

"Nothing!"

"When you get too old to do these things, what then?"

"Hope I'll be a deader."

I looked at the man in amazement. He was satisfied with, and not ashamed of his life, and society failed to perceive that such an existence is degrading and disgraceful. Of the money he spent on his pleasures, without in any way earning a fraction of it, he contributed less to the State than men who earned a similar sum by labour of the body or brain, while living a noble, unselfish life.

There were hardly any furnaces, which, considering the work done, seemed to me strange.

"You appear to use very little coal, Kerna," I said.

He took us to a group, who put the metal they were welding between two electric arms, and lo, in a few seconds it became red-hot.

"Since we have taken the power from the rivers," he answered, triumphantly, "we want very little coal, as they supply electricity and compressed air, from which we get heat, cold, power, and light."

It seemed wonderful, and yet in the Middle Globe we could do all these things, were we not stopped by petty personal interest, for which the welfare of the many is sacrificed for the good of

the few. We were shown air taps, storage batteries, water-wheels, windmills, and many other things that I could but poorly comprehend. Then we were shown the implements of war, amongst which the torpedoes appealed to me most powerfully."

"These," said Kerna, pointing to some tins shaped like nail cans, "are ground torpedoes, which can be placed under roads, and along the ways likely to be traversed by the enemy, and exploded at will from any required distance. Their presence utterly demoralizes an invading force, so that they have a power of protection far beyond the amount of damage they actually do. With our present implements of war, it is impossible for any hostile nation to do us any serious damage, and it would be equally impossible for us to invade any nation that was armed as we are."

He then showed us a map of the roads of Zara, that were undermined with cellar-like structures, that in time of war held dynamite, to be exploded when required. War is certainly a dreadful thing, but when its engines are developed so as to make it impossible for one nation to invade another, then will all nations soon become civilized by the efforts of their own people.

As we returned home, Diso told us that only few men become qualified engineers, the majority only taking the trouble to learn sufficient to enable them to hold a subordinate position.

Lucy, who had seen us returning, from an upper window, came out to meet us, with her baby in her arms. Mary and Nellie had fondled and petted the chubby mite, till she regarded them as her own property. How healthy women do fondle and love a baby, to be sure. Of all the sights on earth or in heaven, a mother fondling her child is surely the loveliest. The mother—there are no exceptions—patient and regardless of self, as only a mother can be, should never lack the love and duty of the child, though sometimes—alas, that it should be so—she does.

Again Diso's carriage was called into requisition, and this time it took us to the farm barracks. It was a long journey, but passing through the country roads amidst the verdure of early spring was very pleasant. In the distance we saw a captive balloon.

"That," said Diso, "is the war balloon. It is, day and night, captive to the barracks."

"What is the use of it?" I asked.

"It enables the sentries to see an immense distance. In times of war, every regiment is supplied with them, so that they can tell every movement of the enemy."

"The balloonist is in a very dangerous position. Has he to come down to deliver his information?"

"He communicates with the people on the ground by telephone," explained Diso. "His danger is very small indeed, certainly not to be compared with that of a common soldier. He sees the

enemy miles off, long before he is within range of their guns, and even if the balloon were hit, he frees his water ballast, and is hauled down long before it can collapse."

We now came in sight of the barracks, which were half hidden behind a verdure-covered wall, which we found on approaching to be an earth defence, kept together by a wooden network. Behind this were the barracks, which consisted of four buildings of wood and iron, two stories of which were under ground. Our approach had been duly announced by the balloonist, and we found Daisy and her husband Cula Dero waiting to welcome us.

After Daisy and Mary had duly greeted one another in the effusive manner common to young married women, Daisy turned to me,—

"Frank, I can hardly believe you are the same man that two years ago came to us at the outpost. You seemed all eyes and beard." "Mary," she said, turning to my wife, "we combed him out and made him look so nice."

They had done more, they made me feel "so nice." It seemed an age ago. Daisy was bird-like as ever, and Cula seemed, if possible, bigger and stronger. As I looked at his graceful Grecian face, I wondered if he could be one of those who fought against Hector and Troy, born again to a new life. Showy and handsome as were the Grecian athletes, their best performance would only now-a-days be considered second rate.

First Cula took us to the balloon tower, and bringing it to earth, asked me if I cared to ascend. On replying in the affirmative, he directed me to take my seat in the cage, showed me the telephone and telescope, and slowly let the balloon ascend. The swaying motion, at first made me feel sick, but as I looked to the ground beneath me, to which I was only attached by two cord-like wires, the seeming insecurity of the position frightened the sickness away. Steadily I ascended, up and up, till the ground seemed a terrible distance below. The sense of fear relaxed, and I began to look round. The telephone bell rang. I listened.

"The balloon is up to the usual height, but I can let you go up a good deal higher, if you wish."

Quickly I replied that I was up quite high enough, and didn't want to ascend any further. Beneath me the barracks looked like toy houses, and the soldiers like children. Away in the distance the country stretched, a seeming Liliputian territory. Everything was dwarfed. Fixing the telescope again, I looked, and the distant objects became distinct, and I realized the wonderful advantage the balloon gave for spying out the doings of an enemy. A trusty man from my vantage could inform the general in command, of the enemies' movements, so that he could direct the fight as he would a chess battle, that is, with a know-

ledge of the movements of all the pieces. On descending, Cula showed us how the man in the balloon, by moving an electric pencil over a map of the country, caused a similar pencil to make the same journey on a copy of the map on the ground, at the other end of the wire.

"Thus, you see," he said, "the balloonist lets us know, not only every movement of friend or foe, but whether our shots fall too near or too far, or in what respect they err."

"But you don't seem to have a sufficient number of soldiers," I answered, "to be of any use, in case of an attack. How many have you in Zara?"

"Every man in Zara," replied Cula, "must be a soldier till he is fifty years of age, unless physically incapable. As a matter of fact, they are all soldiers until over sixty, and in case of need, half the women would fight."

"You must be a nation of soldiers. But when do they drill? I have seen lots of very efficient volunteers, but no soldiers?"

"They commence in childhood. Every boy has to pass a certain examination before he leaves school. As a matter of fact, nearly all the girls pass the same examination voluntarily. This examination proves the passer fit, in every way, to enter the army —drill, gunnery, rules of war, everything. After leaving school, every male has to become a volunteer, or serve for a fortnight in barracks once every two years, till he is fifty, and every man has to keep his kit in readiness and in good order. The result of this is that in a couple of hours, if necessary, ten thousand fully equipped soldiers would assemble at any point in Zara, and in two days every man would join the army, except a few of the policemen."

"Why do you except the policemen?" I asked. "I thought they would make excellent soldiers?"

"So they do," agreed Cula, "but you must leave some men to keep order, so all of those who are over military service age are made special constables, and placed under the command of those of the regular police who are left behind."

"As you leave no men to butcher the animals, or bake the bread, or do the other necessary things, I suppose the women have to do them all?"

"No, the special constables do it. Each constable wears on his arm a number and the letter of his division, and many of them are told off to do the necessary work; butchers to slaughtering, bakers to baking, and so on. In time of war you want very little done. Boot-making, cloth-making, and similar callings, may cease, for with the present destructive appliances, war can only last a very few weeks."

"I can understand how you have lots of good soldiers, for intelligent men, who can shoot and drill, are the best possible men of the line. But where are your leaders? Soldiers must always

depend on their leaders for their success, more than on themselves?"

"You are right," said Cula approvingly. "That is so. We have an ample staff of leaders, who devote their time to soldiering, commissary, arms, and all other military matters. I have, at present, the honour to be one of the generals. Diso here (Cula put his hand on Diso's shoulder) is second to none in ability to lead soldiers in war, though he is only a volunteer, and I could say the same of many others. Soldiers proper, that is, men who devote their lives to soldiering, have to pass very searching and severe examinations before they join the staff, after which they extend their studies by their daily duties."

"Then you have a small army?"

"We have, and every man in it is a highly-trained soldier. At Ura, they have a larger army which includes the pick of their working population, whom they keep as celibates in high barracks. The civilians, as a rule, would be useless in time of war. With us, every man is a trained soldier, and the regular army are allowed to marry as freely as any other class of the community. Though the Ura plan is the more costly, and tends to deteriorate the working population, by depriving it of its finest men, ours is far the most efficient, and does not deteriorate the strengths of succeeding generations. In fact, the drilling the men and women undergo is one of the main causes of our physical superiority over the people of Ura, Gurla, or Roda."

This superiority was very noticeable, for almost without exception the people of Zara were of large stature, and great robustness and physical strength, though I attribute it largely to the short hours, absence of an idle or a vicious population, and the enforced sterility of diseased persons.

We dined with Cula's division. The officers and their wives sat at the head of the table, while the soldiers, petty officers, and their wives, occupied the lower end. A similar mess was held at each of the four buildings. The men were dressed in grey uniforms, fashioned like those of soldiers, but their trousers fitted much tighter, and their hats were made of felt, with brims. They certainly were a fine body of men, and far superior to any regiment of the Middle Globe. Many of them were citizens taking their fortnight's drill, which they regarded as a pleasant holiday. After dinner, we were shown the military museum, which contained many trophies and pictures of the war between the Zaras and the Rodas, which took place sixteen years previously. The weapons of the Rodas were only powder-guns and spears, and though they outnumbered the Zaras to the extent of over three to one, they had been easily repulsed.

"The balloons were our great superiority," said Cula. "We could see what they were doing, and so always took them at a disadvantage. The buried torpedoes were very effective, not

only in killing, but in utterly demoralizing them. We stationed a regiment of women in the rear, so that when they were routed they fled to avenging rifles, and very few escaped."

"I should imagine the women would hardly care to slaughter a retreating foe," I said, deprecatingly.

"They did though," said Cula, in a suggestive tone of voice. "In an engagement with a detachment of the Rodas, some days previous to the battle of Hoana, nine of our men were killed, and twenty-one wounded. This filled the women with rage and fierce revenge, and they slaughtered without mercy. We took prisoners, but they took none."

Next, we went to see the drilling, and some manœuvres got up in our honour. The movements were quickly and neatly executed, with an utter absence of that shouting which makes people at the reviews in the Middle Globe think the officers must believe that there are numbers of deaf men in the ranks. A small regiment of women in knickerbockers next executed the drill movements with equal precision, fully accoutred with rifle, revolver, and a short poniard. The rifle used compressed gas as a motive power, and was as light as a fowling-piece. They made no smoke, hardly any report, and used a very much smaller cartridge than ordinary firearms.

As we were taken over the remaining parts of the building, the amount of consideration that was given to every pleasure, seemed to me to be likely to exert an enervating tendency. There was a room for dancing, though indeed, everywhere in Zara, provisions for dancing were made, and another for music, besides shooting galleries, billiard rooms, and others for different pastimes.

"You treat your soldiers very well, Cula. It is a wonder they can spare any time at all for their duties."

"They take as much interest in their duties," said Cula, emphatically, "as they do in their pleasures. The first thing necessary to make a man efficient, is to make him satisfied with his occupation. This we do by providing recreation."

. . . . . .

The last evening of our stay at Onara Fields had come. Diso, in a distant corner, was chatting to Nellie about many things she took an interest in, solely because they were his life's work. She, nestling comfortably in a big chair, personified placid happiness. Mary rocked in her arms a sleeping child that had been allowed to stay up, as it was our last evening. Lucy and Andra completed our group.

"Baby will miss you, Mary," said the mistress of Onara Fields.

"And I shall miss the dear little toddler who has adopted me," said Mary, in a loving voice. "See her poor leg, how swollen it

is. She has been complaining all day of headache in her knee. She fell on the floor and hurt it, after breakfast."

"Diso will bring you and Frank out, whenever you can come," said Andra. "He is busy setting all Nellie's churns to work by electricity."

When are they going to get married?" I asked, presently.

"In six months," said Lucy, and then asked,—

"Have you seen the design for the Parliament House at Ura? On the summit of the tower is to be a statue of Duke Dreman, of heroic size."

"It will be like the Law-giver on the summit of the Parliament Houses at Zara," said Andra, "and will for ever mutely direct the people, as he has always led them—Upwards!"

CHAPTER XXII.

VERNON'S MARRIAGE.

NITHO came up to see us the first day after our return and tell us of passing events. It was Sunday morning, and the hush of rest was everywhere. In the privacy of our chambers and the luxury of the common rooms of the block we felt we had a home of our own, and were better off than Robinson Crusoe; for though we were not monarchs of all we surveyed, we had the use of everything we wanted, without the trouble of looking after it, which was more than he could say.

"The marriage is to take place in four weeks," said Nitho. "Duke Hilda is to provide the splendour. What is he like, Frank?"

"He is tall, dark, rather handsome; has a splendid house, and is rather fond of display," I answered.

"That is an unsatisfactory description," declared Nitho, with a pout. "Can't you make me realize the man?"

"I don't know much about him myself. He is the owner of a lot of property and a handsome wife; that is about all I know."

"When I come back from my honeymoon, my husband will talk of a man being owned by his wife," answered Nitho, with demure severity. "But let that pass. He is a relation of Cora's mother, and has only discovered the relationship since Vernon's subjugation by that dear girl. The marriage is to be a thing of splendour and a joy for ever. King Edward of Gurla has even announced his intention of sending a wedding present."

"That shows," said Mary, "that he thinks Duke Dreman may be useful to him if he gets into trouble with the Rodas."

"But he has conquered them, so they are done with," said Nitho, with decision.

"Does that wound on Vernon's temple show much?" I asked.

"Yes," answered Nitho; "very much. He has a long red mark across the forehead, but otherwise doesn't seem much the worse. His house must be perfectly lovely. One drawing-room is white and gold, and the other in two shades of light blue. He wanted to come and live in Ura, but Cora wouldn't let him. She thinks he will be happier amongst his animals and his models,

and that with their apartments in Parliament House they will have all that is necessary."

"Are Cora's notions of necessaries expanding?" I asked.

"No; poor dear! She would like to get married and go quietly back to work as of old; but President Dreman loads her with jewels, and is making lavish preparations to support her through what he calls the 'trials and responsibilities' of a married woman. You seem to bear up under yours pretty well, Mary."

"Duke Dreman," said Mary, ignoring Nitho's last remark, with a smile, "always considers every one. Cora's new position will involve a great deal of work. She will be the leading woman in the country; and instead of only working at a few of Vernon's projects, will take an interest in, and work at, them all, though I expect she will get him to give up a lot of them, as I know she thinks he overworks himself."

Hardly had we settled down to the content of our every-day life and the comforts of home, when we had to leave them to go to Ura, to be present at the marriage of the President and Cora. As Duke Dreeman was not only the leading man in Undara, on account of his official position, but a very wealthy and popular one as well, a number of the leading people of all the cities attended the ceremony.

Our party, consisting of the Duke and Duchess Mura, Nitho, Mary, and I, accepted Vernon's hospitality.

The place had been palatially changed. The white and gold drawing-room was most artistically beautiful, largely brightened by pure white marble and crystal. The furniture was of a light-coloured wood, upholstered with white satin. The walls and ceilings were panelled out and painted to harmonize with the surroundings. The second drawing-room was arranged like the first, but harmonized in two light shades of blue, and in each of the wall panels was a framed picture. Everywhere were signs of artistic improvement and lavish expenditure. Gea Barga and a tall, fair woman who had taken over the secretarial work left by Cora, showed us everything, as we arrived before the President returned.

"The Duchess Dreman will come to the most beautiful home I ever saw," said Gea. "The President has developed a talent for art and loveliness that no one suspected."

"He does everything with his whole heart and brain," said Mary, "and that is the secret of his success. As he thinks nothing too good for his horses and dogs, it is natural he should worship his wife."

"He can never love her as she loves him," said Gea. "She is only part of his life, while he is infallible, perfect, everything to her. She thinks of herself as the queen of the most wonderful man in the world, and has become gracious and regal in her

manner in consequence. I never knew any one to at once change so much and so little. So little, for she is kind and gentle as ever, and has the same love for Vernon's projects; and so much, for while he has bejewelled her till she looks like a Gnome Queen, her exalted belief in her position has made her feel so far above the most influential people as to regard the highest and the lowest virtually on the one level. She is always sweetly self-possessed, and has made every one her friend."

Presently Vernon returned. His accident had done him no harm. Along his temple was a long scar, but he seemed stouter and stronger than ever. After welcoming us and receiving our congratulations, he said,—

"I hope you like the changes I have made in the house. The future duchess spares herself so little that I have taken every precaution to save her trouble. I am afraid she is not very strong."

"Do not fear for her, Vernon," said the Duchess Mura. "When a woman has the devotion of a man she loves, everything she desires, and a husband who shields her from work and worry, no mental labour can do her any harm."

Presently we went to the President's model room.

"You have succeeded in everything, Vernon," said Duke Mura. "When you are married, leave things more to other men. You have earned ease; happiness has come to you; enjoy them. You have done enough for your fellow-men."

"One can never do enough for one's fellow-men," said Vernon, quietly, "till they are all wise and happy. Every success brings greater power, and with it greater responsibilities. I have risen above the heads of ordinary men. I have a power for good or evil that very few attain. My future wife thinks our duty and happiness are one and the same. We will work on."

The duchess, who was listening in an easy chair, spoke.

"Come to me, Vernon; I have had unjust thoughts of you in my mind. No man can be always perfect and wise. You are brave and fearless for the right."

Vernon stood with bowed head in front of the grave-faced matron's chair.

"Come nearer," she said, her voice mellow with emotion.

He sank on one knee beside her, and kissed her hand.

"You are very kind," he said. "I have done foolish things, but I always meant to do the right."

The white-haired woman took his face in her hands and kissed him.

"You have practised as you preached," she said. "Men should work and conquer; be strong and brave. Women should love and forgive. I have not always forgiven. Forgive me for my unkind thoughts of you."

He kissed her hand and replied, quietly,—

"You are very good. I have deserved worse than you or anyone could think of me. Only a man himself knows his own faults. You are too good."

. . . . . .

King Edward of Gurla was represented at the marriage by two delegates, one of whom, General Ance, a man of great ability, subsequently very much distinguished himself. Rather under the middle height, he showed in every movement the highly-drilled soldier. His close-cut grey hair and slight baldness showed a head and face of great ability and decision. His large blue eyes, pleasant smile, and quiet manner, made him appear too prettily womanish for a soldier. But though his voice was low and sweet, and his manner polished almost to effeminacy, under the velvet softness was an iron strength. Though gentle and quiet, as a tiger, in the wars with the Rodas, he had proved himself fierce as a lion and able as Cæsar.

"In Gurla," I asked him one day, "you have a monarchical government and hereditary aristocracy, I believe, but otherwise are much the same as the people of Undara, are you not?"

"No," he replied. "Our founder under the Law-giver, Edward Vance, was a petty officer who believed in applying to general life the despotism necessary on board ship. He established himself as king, and his followers as a titled and hereditary aristocracy, which state of things has been continued. King Edward is a direct descendant of Edward Vance, and has inherited his ideas and his throne."

"Are you as prosperous as we at Undara?"

"That would be impossible," he answered, gravely. "At Undara everything is managed for the general good. The son of the poorest labourer has the same chance as the son of the richest duke, except that he has not so many friends to help him. On the other hand, with you, the son of your leading duke may find that he has no mental capacity, and will take to farming or any other occupation for which his taste and abilities fit him. With us this is not so. We have many men of great ability forced to manual labour for a living, and many men of no ability placed in high positions in the military and civil service of the country, where they do incalculable harm. Our titled aristocracy absorb all the ablest men into their ranks, to become one of them, and so maintain their privileges. But enervated with luxury and laziness, their descendants deteriorate, and become a load on the welfare of the community, while our poor people are mere machines, working harder than the animals, but receiving few of their pleasures. The one class are ruined for want of work, and the other for want of rest and leisure to cultivate their faculties."

"You speak strongly," I exclaimed, in extreme surprise. "Would you change the government of Gurla?"

"I have not the power to prevent its changing," replied the general evasively. "While you have the part of a community only half educated, you can keep them under for the benefit of the favoured few; but directly every member of the community is educated, a change will commence which will end in producing laws for the general good, such as those of Undara."

"Are you reaching, or have you reached the state of universal education that will beget this change?" I asked.

"We have almost reached it. The change has commenced," answered Ance, gravely. "Philanthropists are preparing the public mind—a slow and difficult task—for it. Meanwhile, king and noble see its shadow, and strike to prevent its advent. Zara has absorbed Ura at its desire. Next Undara will be joined by the Rodas, at their wish, as Ura was joined to Zara. Then the Gurlas will similarly join the commonwealth. This is inevitable."

"What makes you think so?" I asked, amazed at the immense comprehension of this aristocrat.

"Because you have on the one side, striving for this, all those who have the sense to realize what is for their own good, and are not of those very few who are benefited by hereditary titles or hereditary wealth. These are aided by those amongst the favoured few who have ability and are unbiassed by class interest, so that against this change is only the selfish ability, and those who are blinded by prejudice, of a section that does not include one per cent. of the community, and those their money can hire, or their show dazzle. The change is coming like a distant sleigh. You can barely see it. It does not seem to move, but the nearer it comes the faster it will seem to approach, yet its speed will not vary, and only when it is on us will we understand that all along it has been irresistibly and rapidly nearing us."

His big blue eyes were soft, but his erect figure and firm face showed the working of his mighty mind. He was one of those noble aristocrats who work first for humanity and then for their order. Did we all do this, how happy would the world be.

"Had you much difficulty in subduing the Rodas?" I asked, to change the course of our conversation.

"A good deal," he replied. "Not on account of their strength, but on account of our disunion. There are large and increasing numbers amongst us who wish to reduce the expenditure on the army and federate with Undara. These people are untiring in their attacks on our decaying institutions, and did we leave our cities unguarded might seize them and make civil war—which God forbid. The Rodas are like us, one section wishing for the laws of Undara and the general good, the other only for the maintenance of their favoured order. Eventually we will join with the Rodas, and either adopt your laws or try and force our institutions on you. I think it will be the latter, and that we

will fail. What chance have a disunited nation against a united one?"

King Edward's present consisted of a tall silver epergne. Three huntsmen, back to back, supported in their upraised hands a silver bowl, fashioned like a three-faced head of a tusked seal, in each of which were natural polished tusks. They stood on a fern-grown island, in a sea of smooth polished silver, the whole thing resting on feet like those of an eagle. The football teams had sent a present cunningly devised to reach the heart of a man who had done so much for their interest. A statue of Cora in marble, with one foot on a football, stood on a pedestal on which were engraved the words: "Thy Queen and Ours," and underneath hung shields, each giving the names and colours of the team from which it came. Of all the presents, this most deeply touched Duke Dreman. In complimenting his darling they had doubly complimented him. Till the day of his death, football and its players were his especial care and pride.

The senators of Zara and Ura had sent two large models, one of Parliament House at Zara and the other of the Parliament House at Ura. Each of them in metal, glass, and wood, were perfect in every detail, and large enough to nearly fill a medium-sized room. From everywhere came presents. Vases, statuettes, jewellery, skins of wild animals, and artificial flowers.

Parson Tona Hamer arrived to assist at the ceremony, and brought as his present an illuminated hymn book, containing amongst others several hymns composed by Vernon Dreman.

In the church the notabilities had gathered through a private entrance, so that when the doors were opened there was little room for the outer public.

Parson Hamer and two other church leaders took their places at the altar. President Dreman came next, with his two groomsmen. He and nearly all the men wore a dress like the English Court suit. The close-fitting coat, buttoned across the breast, and the knickerbockers and silk hose, setting off the shapely men to advantage.

The crowd were eagerly watching. A minute went, then another. Time does seem so long when you are on the tip-toe of expectation. The organ sounded, and the air vibrated with music, so we knew the bride had come. She came in sight, on the arm of a tall, black-bearded man—Duke Hilda—and followed by six bridesmaids, of whom Nitho was one. Her white dress sparkled with gems. Each of her maids wore a diamond brooch, the gift of the bridegroom. Under the gaze of many hundreds of admiring eyes, through a murmur of admiration from many hushed voices, she came with flushed cheeks and bright eyes, like a queen to claim a kingdom. The music ceased and the ceremony began. Most beautiful of all contracts and oftenest violated. Most important of all yet least regarded, often not even comprehended

by either party, yet if it were observed as all other contracts are, and carried out as all contracts should be, misery, vice, sin, shame, and all evil would leave the world. That the concentrated wisdom of all the law-givers since the time of Christ should be rated at by fools, and those who give their tongue double work, and their brain holiday is, alas, not unusual, though it is sadly pernicious and fruitful of evil. The man promised to love, comfort and honour the woman. The woman to obey, serve, love, and honour the man. The man fulfilled his promise—it was his life-long joy to do so. The woman kept her word—well, very nearly. Sometimes when the man told her to go into the sunshine and sit amongst the flowers, idle as a butterfly, she would sit in the shade and do work for him, as she used before she took his name and her throne in his heart. This was not keeping to the letter of the agreement to obey, but it was keeping to the spirit of the bond, which is much better. She loved him first, everything else after.

The gentle-faced bride was the centre of interest. The parson's questions seemed a homage to break the music of her voice. When occasion required the bridegroom spoke, which rather broke the concentration of admiration on the bride. He was a necessary figure, so he was pardoned. Two bridesmaids being married would be far prettier, but they would divide attention, and detract from each other's charms, whereas a bridegroom acts as a sort of background to set off the bride.

The bride spoke the responses clearly and distinctly, even the "obey" didn't seem to frighten her. Like most women—nearly all women—she knew her own powers, and so preferred to reign and let the man govern. In ninety-nine cases she would have her own way, and obey in the hundredth. Alas, that proceeding so beautiful should not be allowed to end in the regular manner. A thing occurred—the vergers called it an outrage. The women smiled, and nodded their heads, though very very slightly. The men grinned broadly, and nudged each other. The bridesmaids only looked, if possible, sweeter than ever, and the ceremony proceeded. Had Parson Hamer not been a friend of Vernon's the first President of Undara might have been doomed to celibacy for ever. This is how it happened. The priest gave the man the ring. He gently put it on the bride's finger, and then—never before did such a thing occur—stooped and kissed the token of eternity in its resting place. Whether the ring or the finger got most of the kiss no one could tell, but that the finger deserved the lion's share there was no doubt. It was done. Two lives were joined. A woman had given herself to her hero. A man his life to his queen.

Again the organ sounded, and the people's hearts danced to the music, as the President Duke and his Duchess passed out of the church on a path strewn with pink and white daisies,

gathered by the children from the fields and the hedgerows. At the threshold of the church a child from the School for Orphans stood with a basket full of flowers; these she gave to the bride, who kissed her, and then turned to go, but something impelled the child. She stopped, walked up to Vernon, and—alas, that she was not taught better—held up her mouth to be kissed. Next there came a child, a pretty pale-faced child with golden hair and pink sash, with another bouquet for the bride, which she duly gave, and then—so strong is the force of bad example—offered her lips to the president duke, which was certainly not in order. Somehow people had got to know that he valued the prayers of children and good women, and so these orphans, in remembering him in their supplications, had got to love him, and so gave him their lips and their kisses.

Occasionally in history there comes a great opportunity, and some lucky man seizes it, and is borne on to success and good fortune. Frequently he forgets the many others as worthy or worthier than himself, who came and found no place, but who have generally prepared the way for his visiting. Generally these men who get famous and wealthy, get blind to the happiness of doing good, and so lose the chief joys in their reach.

Duke Dreman had been worthy and fortunate, but he made wisely and gave well, so that he was a power that was loved and worshipped. If only rich men would be wisely generous, it would be easier for them to enter the kingdom of heaven, and have a kingdom of joy on earth

At Ura the horse traffic, though disappearing, was still in force, and instead of an air or electric carriage, as at Zara, all the vehicles were drawn by horses.

The carriage which was to take back the bride and bridegroom had been seized, the horses taken out, and in their stead were workers, students, and football players.

The mines, trades, professions, and every calling of any standing had each two representatives to help to do all the horses' work.

As the carriage slowly progressed, flowers, wreaths and bouquets of all descriptions were handed up to the bride, till by the time Hilda Towers—the residence of Duke Hilda—was reached, the carriage was filled with a load of scent and beauty.

The carriage drawers were thanked by Duke Dreman, who had the rare faculty of clothing his thoughts in appropriate words, on behalf of the duchess and himself.

The unharnessing of the horses and taking their place, the flowers that would fade and die ere the sun had twice run his course, were things of small moment, but the thought that causes this act and these offerings would remain and bear fruit which would reproduce for ever.

In the great hall of the mansion the wedding breakfast was

spread with splendour, and floral and artistic profusion never before or since witnessed in Fregida.

The bride-cake was cut, the breakfast and speeches over, and the bride had disappeared and re-appeared in a travelling costume of French grey and pink. At the door stood a travelling carriage with two grey horses.

The duke and duchess took their seats, and, amidst a shower of flowers, started on their honeymoon trip.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RUMOURS OF WAR.

Six years had passed since the wedding of Duke Dreman; six happy, prosperous, uneventful years. Zara had steadily progressed, but no change was apparent. Six years are but as six days to an established city, under ordinary circumstances. Pentona was busy and prosperous, through the number of persons sent from Ura. Children had come to bless our union, prosperity to reward my efforts, and I and mine were established and happy. My wife had changed only as all things mortal change, ripening, developing, becoming more beautiful. So it is with flower, fruit, animal or man, till they reach perfection.

As she entered the period of woman's greatest beauty, mind and body became rounder, stronger, more harmonious and happy.

Diso Rota and I had been instructed to inspect and report on the prison arrangements of Ura and Zimera with a view to the adoption of certain of his arrangements in drainage, and the treatment of all refuse.

On reaching Ura, we went to Duke Dreman's house, where we were to stay during our sojourn at that city. The duchess received us. She, like Mary, had developed, more than changed.

On her bridal day she was beautiful as a girl could be, but now she was more, for she was beautiful as a woman could be at the meridian of life. The six years' homage of a man whom she regarded as a hero, had given her a mellow dignity that is not a thing to be acquired in a day.

The fortunes of the president duke had progressed in leaps and bounds. In some land he owned on the banks of the Tanga large deposits of coal and iron had been found, which enabled him to establish a town, which he called Novel, after his wife, on a perfect plan of his own. He had also invented a windmill, which gathered immense power from the forces of the atmosphere.

He came in just before supper. The scar on his forehead had very much decreased, and he showed signs of frontal baldness, but otherwise in person he had changed very little. In manner he was much merrier, and more ready to laugh. The soothing society of his wife and children had released the tension of his nerves by forcing him frequently to rest his brain.

"How is your system progressing at Novel?" I inquired.

"Wonderfully well," replied the duke, animatedly. "I was always certain that four hours' work was necessary to keep a man in perfect health, and sufficient to do all the work of the world. My system is that every man must work four hours for the community, and receive in return the necessaries of life, the rest of his time he devotes according to his inclinations."

"Do you restrict a man's hours of labour to four?" I asked.

"No. He works eight if he likes, but not more. Every man must work four hours till he becomes sixty years of age, or pay daily the price of four hours' work to the State. Four hours' work obtains him board and lodgings. What he earns besides that he spends as he likes."

"Have you professional men in your community?"

"Yes. They, as a rule, work the required time, and practise their profession afterwards, though since we repress disease, instead of continuing it, and reasons for crime of all sorts have disappeared, there is very little for either lawyers or doctors to do."

"Do your women work also?"

"Single women work the same hours as the men, only at different occupations. They do sewing, housework, gardening, and all light work."

"Let him describe all the ways of Novel to you, Frank," said the duchess. "He has given all his sympathies to his new community."

Vernon laughed and said,—

"It has been the wish of my life to establish a community on as perfect a plan as is consistent with human nature as it is, and at last the opportunity came with the discovery of coal on my land. We have free education for all, and every man or woman chooses the occupation for which each feels most fitted, but every man must be a soldier and work, as must also the unmarried women, four hours a day, in exchange for which, they are provided with board and lodgings. We have only two sources of revenue, a progressive income-tax, and a law that all a person has at their death goes to their wife or husband for life, after which it goes to the State, who give the interest of it equally to the children of the parties for life, the shares lapsing one by one with the death of those interested, when the State receives the principal. In all other respects we are the same as the people of Zara."

"Do your married women do no work?" I asked.

"Not of necessity," replied the duke. "As a rule they continue their work for their own pleasure and profit. The State supplies a man, his wife, and three children with board and lodgings for four hours of his work per day. We consider that marriage and maternity are for the general good. As at Zara, extra children

are only allowed on payment of a fee of twenty crowns to the State."

"Do you think your scheme will succeed?"

"I am certain of it now. Everything is managed by the married man, widowers and widows, and every person in the community, or born in it, has an equal share. Outside people are allowed into it, but must either pay or work till they earn for the commonwealth a fixed sum."

"It is," said the Duchess Cora, "the pleasantest community possible. It has already all manner of amusements, though only established four years. And no one has been punished yet."

"Have you a court of law?" I asked.

"Yes," said the duke, "but it has very little to do. The three judges decide all the disputes, and sit in the council of legislators."

Afterwards Vernon showed me how the plans of a large city had been laid out, and a community started on the principle of the commonwealth, owning houses and lands, institutions and factories, while allowing the people to benefit by their own industry or ability, so that the fruit of individual effort, without which no community can be really successful, was maintained and encouraged.

After supper, the children—two boys and a baby girl—were brought in. The boys, sturdy blue-eyed children, were very like their father, on either side of whom they sat. When they had shaken hands with us, and the baby had disappeared, Vernon, the elder of the two, got up, and brought his mother a footstool for her feet.

"My boys," said the duke, "look after their mother and sister, and intend to make us all proud of them."

"I can," said Novel, the younger, "carry baby already."

"And I," said Vernon, "can write my own name, and teach Novel his letters."

They spoke with a conscious pride, each holding a hand of their father, to whom, even more than their mother, they went for companionship; her they looked on as the loveliest and most delicate of beings, and even when they went to sleep in her arms, dreamt of protecting her from unknown dangers, and bringing her gifts of wild flowers, and other things dear to children's hearts, while they regarded their father as an all-powerful being, at once their playmate and protector.

"The President," said Cora, with a proud smile, "intends our boys to bring all Fregida under the wise and happy laws of Undara. Had they been girls, their father's ambition would possibly have extended to sons-in-law."

The duke laughed, and replied,—

"Sons-in-law are chosen to make daughters happy, and not to carry out projects; even if they were, they would be poor substi-

tutes for the sons that have grown up under their father's guidance to finish his ambitions."

The man had but one aim, which, realizing that his life would of necessity be too short to bring to completion, he trained up, and looked to his sons to fulfil. All his life had been subservient to his ambition. The pride of success had been the one joy of his life till the love of his existence had beautified it and made it happy to the full. Even it soon became a means to the end, and in the prattle of his boys he heard the voices that would guide men to continue, as his efforts and eloquence had directed them. The six years which had made no noticeable change at Zara, had transformed Ura from an uneven city—for all cities where plethoric wealth and suffering destitution are within hail of each other, which have the awkward and dirty horse traffic in their streets, begging starvelings on their curbing, and all sorts and conditions of men on their foot-paths, are uneven—into an even city, with an electric tram, and electric or compressed-air traffic, clean streets, no beggars, loafers, costermongers' carts, horse carriages, or any other of the objectionable extremes that had previously hampered it. The new Parliament House, which was finished and almost ready to be opened, stood close to the walled banks of the Yanga. In a garden, its three tower-topped walls rose above the city roofs; the centre tower, reaching high above all, was yet to be topped with a statue of Duke Dreman, of heroic size. The grey granite of which it was constructed gave it a sombre tone, only relieved by its many windows and pointed turrets. From the top of the centre tower we looked on the surrounding city. The streets had been nearly all brought to accord with the plan invented when the improvements were commenced. The new river way had been walled in, and now carried the water which operated wheels similar to those worked by the Voa, and already gave sufficient electricity and compressed air to light the town, and supplied about one-half of the motive power. All the new buildings were like those of Zara, and the small and ill-built houses had been pulled down. The stream of vehicles which used frequently to block the thoroughfares, and which always gave them an appearance of business which they ill deserved, had nearly all disappeared, and in their stead were the trams, which, coming on the same rails, prevented the possibility of a block, and made travelling about the city much more expeditious.

The new laws and improvements had received very little opposition, all of which, except the grumbling of the never satisfied, had long ago disappeared.

At Zimera we found a splendid city had sprung into existence, with reserves, drainage, power, and light, to support a city of over three millions of inhabitants.

The river had been walled in, as was the Voa at Zara, but

with many small improvements, that enabled a larger percentage of the water power to be saved.

On our arrival we found that extra attention was devoted to the drill of the soldiers, and that the volunteer and army arrangements were attracting unusual attention on account of the news that the Rodas and Gurlas were massing large bodies of troops.

Several delegates had been sent from time to time by King Edward to President Dreman, but though their mission had not transpired, a general feeling had gained ground that they were of sinister significance, which had been strengthened by the fact that the president duke had devoted a great deal of attention to military matters, and given large prizes, both from his private purse and the public treasury, to encourage volunteer manœuvring and military competitions.

So deeply had this feeling taken root, that all through Undara offensive and defensive operations were prosecuted with such vigour that the whole State was in a fit state for a protracted campaign.

In the midst of our work, Diso and I were startled by rumours of war, and a report that Cula Dero had arrested for treasonable conspiracy, and thrown into prison, a body of delegates and their attendants, who had been sent by King Edward of Gurla to deliver a message to him.

Vast treasures, we heard, had been seized by General Dero, who had made communications to President Dreman which had induced him to call Parliament together.

As Diso and I were both members of the Senate, we received by telegraph a message to attend a sitting of Parliament, for which purpose we hurried back to Zara, where Parliament was in this year being held.

At Ura, on our way to Zara, we heard that King Edward had tried by his ambassadors to entice Cula Dero to betray the republic of Undara, and that Cula had got documentary evidence to prove their treachery.

Duchess Dreman was pale and anxious.

"The President," she said, "has foreseen this for some time, and is fully prepared. The monarchy of Gurla must either give way to a republic like ours, and king and hereditary titles disappear, or a war must take place, and dispose of the progressive spirits of Gurla, and change the government of Undara."

"Do you really think that no less extreme means will suffice?" I asked, knowing her expressed opinions were those the President thought ripe for utterance.

"I am sure no other means will suffice," she answered, gravely. "No people will live without full freedom and their rights, who have the happy example of a wise people beside them."

As we journeyed to Zara, Diso said,—

"It seems probable that the treasonable offer made to General Cula Dero was the subject of the former State Embassies to the President."

"Probably," I replied; "but he, cautious and far-seeing, has evidently contented himself with quietly rejecting them, and meanwhile preparing for the inevitable struggle between Gurla and Undara, or Oppression and Wisdom."

Arriving at Zara, we found the city in a state of great excitement. Military preparations were being effected, and it was rumoured that a great effort would be made to bring about the subjugation of the Rodas, whose depredations had hitherto been overlooked on account of the great industrial movement, and absorption of public interest in the federation of Zara and Ura under the Commonwealth of Undara.

The city blazed with light, and was busy with martial music and military preparations. The great hall for the meeting of the two legislative bodies had never been so animated since it assembled to meet the Federation Delegation from Ura. Only two legislators were absent, both of whom were prevented from attending by illness. As on all meetings of the two legislating bodies, President Dreman presided.

Impatiently the legislators and crowded audience waited the transaction of formal business, after which the real business commenced.

General Dero, who was the Minister for Defence, rose, but was met by loud and continued cries for the president duke. These only subsided on Cula resuming his seat, and the President rising, which was the signal for tremendous applause.

Duke Dreman commenced by saying that it was evidently the general desire that he should reveal the purpose of the two embassies from King Edward to himself, and the details of what transpired on his meeting them. This, he could assure them, was a matter that would in no way affect their present feelings and future movements; further, he did not feel at liberty to inform them, as the interview had been with him in his private capacity only, and had been so stated and implicitly agreed on. He pointed out that he was informed by the heads of the various departments—who might not, in the press of the momentous event that had called them together, have a chance of making a statement—that the Commonwealth of Undara, though wishing for peace, were prepared for war, and, for the information of the people, he would say that the condition of affairs at Roda and Gurla had not been overlooked, but careful preparations had been made to meet any eventuality.

The applause that greeted this statement was long and continued. The President's efforts to increase the power of the offensive and defensive force, which had been regarded hitherto as a fad, were now properly appreciated, and his reasons were recog-

nized, as well as his reasons for postponing a rupture with the neighbouring countries till Undara was in the most fit condition to meet it.

General Cula was now well received. On rising he commenced by saying,—

"Sometimes, as in the present instance, we have been unable at the time to recognize the reason of President Dreman's actions, though we have never doubted their wisdom."

Loud applause greeted this statement.

"After I have had the honour of informing you what transpired between the delegates from King Edward of Gurla and myself, you will have no difficulty in guessing the message that the delegates brought to President Dreman, and his reason for promising them secrecy. In the custody of the War Office are the splendid presents that King Edward sent to me, and a sealed parchment bearing the king's signature, empowering the delegates to act for and in his name in all negotiations, no matter how weighty.

"The delegates presented the gifts, obtained a solemn vow of secrecy from me, produced the authority I have mentioned, and, after a long conference, in which they pointed out to me that the only way to ensure the wealth and happiness of a man's descendants was by means of hereditary titles and the enforced ignorance of the working community, so that these titles might be continued and allowed, informed me of an alliance between the Rodas and the Gurlas, and offered, by the aid of their armies, to enable me to become the king of Undara, on conditions of my helping to maintain King Edward on the throne of Gurla, and King Wyao as monarch of all the Rodas.

"All this they said we could, if we combined, effect. They then informed me that all preparations were made for the united forces of Roda and Gurla to attack Undara, with a certainty of success, after which, all Fregida would be divided into three monarchies, over one of which I was to reign.

"I delayed my reply, and, on consideration, arrested the delegates with all their attendants, for treasonably conspiring against the discipline and the constitution of Undara.

"Directly this had been done, I communicated with the President of Undara, who instructed me to make to-night a full statement of all the facts. Meanwhile the delegates await their trial before the judges in due course."

After considerable debate—in which General Dero's actions were approved of, and the subjugation of the Rodas favourably discussed, on the ground that it would be for their good to suppress the barbarous customs in force amongst them, and enforce, in their place, the wise laws of Undara, and also on the grounds that it was necessary to suppress their periodical raids to steal stock—the Parliament adjourned for one week.

Meanwhile, all through Undara, preparations for a war were being completed, as it was universally recognized that even if Undara were not attacked by the forces of Gurla and Roda, it would be necessary to subjugate the latter country for the general welfare.

Two days after the adjournment, General Ance came to Zara to demand the immediate release of the ambassadors, and to state that their detention would be regarded by King Edward as an act of war, and would necessitate his invading Undara.

General Ance was courteous, but resolute. It was pointed out to him that the laws of Undara being violated, it was necessary to have the whole case submitted to a proper tribunal. The general replied that he did not come to discuss, but to offer an ultimatum, and at the end of the third day after his arrival left; and so war was declared.

Again the two Houses of Parliament met, and this time President Dreman addressed the legislators in a speech the wisdom and eloquence of which is quoted to this day as the most brilliant effort of oratorical genius ever delivered, and as such will be for ever regarded by posterity.

Commencing with a quiet gravity unusual to him, he pointed out the similarity between the rights of the individual and his duty to his neighbour, to the rights of a community and its duties to its neighbour. That it was no more wise for an individual to allow another to actively attempt to corrupt his manners, than it was wise for one community, such as Undara, to allow neighbouring communities, such as the Gurlas and the Rodas, to persistently attempt to exercise a sinister and corrupting influence on them. That it was their duty to themselves to put an end to this state of things for ever; and further, as a large section of the Gurlas who wished to adopt a system of government similar to that of Undara, were suppressed and oppressed by the reigning party, it was their duty to their neighbours to go to the aid of this oppressed section who were trying for the right, and assist them to triumph, and so gain their friendship and co-operation for ever. Much more he said in this strain, and as he proceeded his manner changed, his voice rose and fell, his gestures became eloquent, and in the fervour of his earnestness his audience were drawn, so that his words reached their emotions and convinced their understanding.

He then vividly described the horror of war, and pointed out to the men how unflinching bravery meant the greatest possible safety and success. How it was a struggle between a free, wise, and contented nation on the one hand, and on the other two nations divided against themselves by opposing factions, and weakened by unjust laws, which kept one section down and another up, irrespective of individual fitness.

All these things were pointed out with force, and illustrated

vividly, so that when the speech was ended, the partly suppressed enthusiasm burst forth in an oft renewed thunder of applause.

One after another, speakers rose and asserted the extreme fitness of the nation for the coming struggle; and praises in favour of the exertions that had commenced and continued since King Edward's secret mission to President Dreman to render the whole of Undara ready for the coming war were loud and unanimous, more especially as the policy had not hitherto been popular.

In the evening my wife and I, with several legislators, gathered at the chambers of General Cula Dero, where the coming war was eagerly discussed.

"We do not," she said, "propose to interfere with the cruel and barbarous government of the Rodas, without having the power to substitute a government in its place, which is wise and happy in its effects."

"Nor do we," said Cula, "propose an indiscriminate slaughter for the purpose of gaining possession of the territory of these people. For many years we have shown them the example of a wise and happy government which they have rejected, and in return for our efforts in their behalf, have raided our territory, and frequently murdered our people when their thefts were opposed. They crown their ingratitude by now joining the forces of the Gurlas, that they may have a chance of pillaging our pastures, plundering the country, and exercising their bloodthirsty instincts by indiscriminate slaughter. When they come to bring death and devastation they shall be received with explosive, bullet, and sword. When they are subdued we will be godlike in our retaliation, and enable the well-disposed to properly govern the country, while in Gurla we will enable the progressive party to bring wisdom and happiness."

As Cula spoke, the chorus of the war song, sang by a passing party of volunteers, filled the room, and gave his words a sinister tone. The windows were thrown open, and several of our party joined in the chorus—

> Woe, woe to the enemy, woe;
> To vict'ry or death let us go;
> Free let us live, or free we die—
> Woe, woe to the enemy, woe.

The streets were thronged, the town swarmed with soldiers. Every band thundered forth the war song, till the air echoed with the words—

> Woe, woe to the enemy, woe.

Anon, in the distance, we heard the sound of cheering. Nearer and nearer it came; louder and louder it echoed in our ears, till dimly we saw the grey uniforms of the nurse soldiers, the successors of those who, fierce from the bedside of men who were

lovers of those in their ranks, had slaughtered the fleeing Rodas till not one escaped their remorseless vengeance. Erect in grey uniforms, braided with pink, they came, through ranks of cheering enthusiasts. In hats with looped-up brims, close-fitting coats, knickerbockers, and boots that laced over their ankles, they looked as soldierly a regiment as was ever seen. Their arms were a small repeating compressed gas rifle, a revolver, and short poniard, the whole weighing about thirteen pounds.

They followed in the rear of two ambulance wagons which carried the band. In the hoarse roar of the cheering walls of people through which they passed, the music of the war hymn was drowned till the chorus was reached, when the cheers were hushed, and every voice joined in the words—

Woe, woe to the enemy, woe;
To vict'ry or death let us go;
Free let us live, or free we die—
Woe, woe to the enemy, woe.

"Can it be," I asked Cula, "that those gentle women, pure and good as the angels, and more beautiful than the flowers, go with the soldiers to face death; to kill or, perchance, be killed?"

"They go," he said, "as nurses and commissary attendants; but in case of need they have fought, and will fight again. Gurla or Roda, if fleeing from pursuit, would sooner meet the fiends of hell in their path than those women, who in their homes are gentle as doves, and, while the chief consolers in sorrow, are the sunshine of human happiness.

"War," said Mary, "needs science, not strength. We would be near the men, to comfort and help them, even when they go to kill or be killed in war—the last war that will ever take place in Undara—a war that is only the bloody and cruel birth of a peace and wisdom which will be as lasting as the region of the North Pole. We go to nurse the wounded and soothe the last moments of the dying, but if the men we love—our heroes and pride—have need of us, we will fight as they have fought. We would all go with the soldiers, but only those amongst the unmarried women and young wives who are physically perfect are allowed to join the regiment of nurses."

"We do not want you to fight," said a young soldier, "we want you to be present at our triumph, and to comfort and nurse those amongst us who shall receive wounds in the service of their country, which confer glory, and the blood from which will wash away all misery from Fregida."

As he ceased to speak another soldier stood up and sang the war song, in the chorus of which we all joined till its ominous refrain made our hearts beat, and we became fierce as the gladiators of old.

For freedom, our homes, and our right,
For justice and wisdom we fight ;
Our face to the foe, on to vict'ry we go :
Let us march, march on, while we live :
Our lives we to freedom will give,
'Gainst oppression we go. Woe, woe to the foe.

Chorus.—Woe, woe to the enemy, woe ;
To vict'ry or death let us go ;
Free let us live, or free we die—
Woe, woe to the enemy, woe.

To coward and vanquished disdain,
Our army no such shall contain ;
We conquer or die, from no enemy fly :
Joy to all our noble brave,
Death to every poltroon slave,
Death to invading foe, death, death to the foe.

Chorus.—Woe, woe to the enemy, woe ;
To vict'ry or death let us go ;
Free let us live, or free we die—
Woe, woe to the enemy, woe.

The heroes who die in the fight,
Losing life in the cause of the right,
Progress maintain, by their red life's blood stain :
To the heroes give all praise,
To their worth sing tuneful lays,
Praise to the heroes brave—to the foe, woe, woe.

Chorus.—Woe, woe to the enemy, woe ;
To vict'ry or death let us go ;
Free let us live, or free we die—
Woe, woe to the enemy, woe.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WAR.

It was past midnight. Sleep had driven most of the excited multitude to bed. Cula came to me, and said,—

"Frank, I want an extra doctor at once, to go to the fort at the summit of Mount Boro. They are ready for a siege. I send at ten o'clock ten nurses and an extra doctor. Nominate a man."

"I will have a doctor ready," I replied, "and with your permission will go with him to see that all is in order in my department."

"Go," he replied, "but if possible, return with the boat, though it will only allow you six hours to superintend."

And so it was arranged.

At two o'clock the doctor and I were in the launch with the grey-clad soldier nurses. Carefully they had stacked their rifles and baggage, and, after a short chat, went to bed, for they recognized the wisdom of taking care of themselves, so that they might the better perform their duties. At nine we all met at breakfast. The soldier nurses were merry, as if they were going to attend a marriage feast, instead of journeying to prepare for the dead and the dying. Youth and health cannot long be sad, even when approaching a chamber of horrors.

In the distance we saw three captive balloons, and on approaching Pentona, found that they were attached to stations that formed a triangle round the city, which was crowded with soldiers.

On the wharf we found Darcy Brenda, in the grey-green uniform of a general, waiting to receive us.

"All our prisoners are soldiers on parole," he told me, "and regard the coming campaign as an excellent holiday."

Martial law, we found, had been proclaimed, and every prisoner who desired—which included them all—was allowed to come out as a soldier, knowing that any disobedience of orders or breaches of discipline would be met by death.

Going to the central station, I found that a report was received from each of the balloons of all that took place within view of their powerful telescopes.

"They can see," said Brenda, "the enemy when they are over a day's march away."

After a brief stay at Pentona, we re-embarked and proceeded on our way. At fourteen o'clock we came to the end of the waterway, and were met by a troop of soldiers on double electric tricycles. These machines had sufficient power to progress slowly, so that it required but little exertion to travel on them at a speed of about fifteen miles an hour.

Mount Boro rose gently from the plain for some twelve hundred feet, when the ascent began to be both steep and rugged. Dismounting from our cycles, we guided them in front of us, and so commenced our ascent to the fort, through the cool shade of the great pines. Presently, on stopping to rest, we looked downwards and saw the road we had come pass beneath us several times, as corkscrew-like it wound its way to the lower part of the mountain. Nearing the summit, on which the fort was established, we entered the open mouth of a tunnel through which we could pass upright, two abreast. Hardly had we proceeded a few yards by the dim light of a few torches, when the tunnel became brilliantly illuminated, and we found that we were confronted by a series of cross bars, which were in the form of an isosceles triangle, three inches at the base, six on the longer sides, and a similar distance apart. On approaching them, we found they were slid down from the roof into a solid base, and were firm as the Rock of Cashel. They rose automatically as we approached, and we saw, some thirty yards behind them, an array of quick-firing machine guns, which sank into a pit, from which they rose when required to send their deadly contents through the network of bars, and again sink to be reloaded.

Our journey had been performed with a stern, silent speed that was rather depressing, and which seemed to us to be quite unnecessary. Coming towards us, we now perceived a dark, grey-bearded man, rather above the middle height. Like every one else, since the declaration of war, he was dressed in the grey uniform of the soldiers. His eyes were almost black, and very piercing. His features were broad and swarthy, and wholly characteristic of the unmixed blood of the Rodas. Saluting me in military style, he held out his hand,—

"Your visit, Dr. Fairleigh, is very welcome, though unexpected. I have heard of you from General Cula Dero. I am Ket Troca, the Governor of the Fortress Borna. And your arrival is opportune. We will be attacked by the Rodas, probably at dawn."

On expressing my admiration for the defence of the tunnel, he replied,—

"You have not seen our best defence."

We passed on as we talked.

"Yonder fans," he said, pointing to some machinery, "will fill

the tunnel with a gas that will kill every man or animal in it; and as they are round a turn, no weapon of the invading force can reach them."

"Would it not," I asked, "take a very considerable time to fill the tunnel with sufficient gas to be effective?"

"No," he replied, stolidly. "Even supposing it were full of men as it could hold, in less than a minute after the fans were set going every man would be insensible, and most of them would be dead."

At the end of the tunnel we came to a perpendicular flight of ladder steps and a double lift, on the latter of which we sent up the cycles and our party, after which Troca and I ascended, leaving the garrison below. The lift was hydraulic, and brought us up a distance of over 800 feet. On reaching the top we found that the fortress consisted of a large observatory, and sufficient accommodation for a considerable number of soldiers. A spring of water and a large stock of provisions made it able to stand a protracted siege, even if all communication with the outer world were cut off, which was very unlikely to happen.

The chief importance of the place was as an observatory and vantage ground, from which the movements of approaching troops could be seen. Communication was held with Pentona by means of a secret buried cable. In case, however, this should be discovered by the enemy, a number of carrier gulls were kept caged and sent to Pentona, when a number were received in exchange; and so communication could always be kept up.

Kit Troca took me to the telescopes, which were very powerful, and enabled any body of men to be seen from an immense distance.

"The Rodas," he said, "have scattered, and so approached in small parties of two or three, each carrying a young pine. There are now about 2000 of them encamped in the thick pine-grove on the mountain slope to the right."

"If they attack you bravely," I queried, in consternation, "surely they will carry the fort by sheer force of numbers? How many fighters have you?"

"Every member of the garrison," said Troca, "over ten years of age is a fighter. I have ninety-seven soldiers. The ten soldier nurses that came with you, twenty-one women and children, and ourselves. If, as I think, the Rodas attack us just before daybreak, over 2000 strong, and fight as they usually do, with fearless enthusiasm, we will slay at least four out of every five of them in a few hours."

The man smiled calmly, amused at my evident surprise.

"It seems an awful slaughter."

"What matter?" he asked with scorn. "They are murderous savages, who are too lazy and selfish to accept civilization. Your wife and General Dero have always advocated their subjugation,

and, had their wishes been carried out, the Gurlas would never have been able to attack us as they soon will."

As I looked at the high walls surrounding the fort, I shuddered at the thought of the awful slaughter that must take place, if it were attacked by a brave foe. On three sides the walls were almost perpendicular, on the fourth they were approached by a very steep slope. The Rodas were expected to try and rush this slope and the tunnel; all the other approaches being impassable. No column of smoke, or other sign, indicated the encampment of the Rodas in the pines.

As we scanned the country far and wide, through the powerful telescopes, we could see in the distance the towns seemingly asleep, and the war balloons motionless, high up above them. The quiet, to my mind, seemed like that which in tropical regions comes before great storms, on a sudden to change, as the air becomes filled with the rumble and roar of the thunder, the vivid flashes of the lightning, and the down-pouring rain torrents. I felt horror-stricken as I thought of the hissing shower of death-dealing bullets from the compressed air guns; the even more deadly current of poisonous gas in the tunnels, and the wounded falling back to be crushed as they rolled, or fell, down the steep approaches to the fort.

A carrier-gull was released, with a full report of the situation, written on two thin sheets of vellum paper, and wrapped round two stripped feathers, in the underpart of its tail.

With a shrill cry, it rose in the air, and rapidly winged its way to Pentona.

"The gull seemed certain of its direction," I said to Troca.

"Yes," he replied, "it has been the journey many times before, and the rapid and direct start it makes, relieves it of nearly all danger from the enemy's bullets."

"Have you sent for assistance?"

"No. I have only given the full details of the situation, and suggested that, if possible, a force be sent to attack the Rodas when they retreat from the fort. This they will do, tired and utterly disheartened, shortly after daybreak, when, if they are assailed by a surprise force, who occupy their camp in the pines, they will be killed almost to a man."

Early in the evening, half the garrison were sent to lie down in their clothes.

I reclined in an easy chair in an unavailing effort to slumber. My thoughts kept me awake. Sentries were stationed, and everything was in readiness, I knew, but the thought of the coming slaughter drove away sleep.

At the first hour of the morning, the sentries and watchers were relieved, and lay down to rest. Everything was dark. I must have gone to sleep. Suddenly I was awoke by a roar of voices, and instantly started up alert.

The fort was bright as day with the electric light. Silently and quickly, without any sign of hurry, the freshly woke garrison took their places. Going to the edge of the battlements, I saw a crowd, a swarm of men, rushing into the tunnel. Another lot were rushing up the slope to the fort, firing the obsolete powder rifles, and shouting as they came.

All in the fort was silent, motionless. Just as the foremost of the storming party had almost reached the turret walls, the gas guns opened fire, and the crowd were swept back to block the way of their still advancing comrades, or fall down the steep mountain sides and disappear amongst the gloomy pines in the dark depths beneath. Suddenly a flame shot out of the tunnel, and with it a crowd of human bodies that appeared like dead flies. The gas in the tunnel had been ignited by the powder guns and an explosion had been caused. The savages, ignorant of the armaments of Undara, were amazed, but undaunted.

With a fearless bravery again they swarmed into the tunnel. The slope was again and again covered, only to be swept of its human freight by the silent hail of bullets. Suddenly an arm caught me by the shoulder and pulled me back."

"Come quickly, Doctor Frank."

It was one of the nurses who spoke.

"The Rodas are scaling the further wall."

Without a word I followed the nurse. Up the seemingly inaccessible wall, a Roda had climbed with a silked cord in his teeth. Reaching the top, he leaped over, crouched under its shade, and hauled up the cord, to the free end of which, his comrade had tied a wire ladder. One of the nurses happened to see the man, and called the attention of the others.

By this time the ladder was put up, and fixed on the wall top. A nurse challenged the man, who replied, "All right!" Being still suspicious, she approached him, and he drove his sword through her heart. In an instant another nurse had shot the man dead, and the Rodas coming up the ladder one after the other, leaped the battlements, to be received by the bullets of the soldier nurses. At the moment I arrived, a Roda, missed by the bullets, fired his revolver and shot a nurse, and in less time than I take to write this sentence, three Rodas were over the battlements. We, with our backs to the walls, were in the shade. The Rodas stood head and shoulders in bold relief against the sky. Faster than we could shoot them they appeared over the battlements, and the fort seemed lost. We had retired into the hospital building, and seven Rodas were over the battlements. Their powder guns had attracted the attention of the men. The next Roda, as he put his hands on the top of the wall to leap over, sank on his face, and lay still and quiet. Two of the seven who had scaled the walls, grasped their comrade, and quietly sank in

a heap on his body. Several men appeared. I went to the motionless Rodas.

"Be careful, Frank," said Kit, "if you touch those corpses you will be killed. A current of electricity runs all round the bar on the top of the wall."

He placed a board on the battlement and said, "Now lean on that, and look over."

I did so. All along the wire ladder hung dead Rodas, grasping a rung with their dead hands. The metal had acted as a conductor, and killed every man on the ladder, their muscles being forced by the electricity to close their hands with a grasp impossible to free.

"Shut off the current," called Kit.

In an instant the dead men loosed their holds, and the corpses fell back into the black depths beneath.

We took in the dead soldier nurse, and the two who had been wounded.

The Rodas fought and were fighting like fiends.

The rosy dawn commenced to melt the darkness, and the Rodas gathered near the tunnel which was choked with their dead, and were evidently in conference. The base of the fort was bare of all covering. On a sudden, from the pines below, came a leaden shower, killing and scattering the Rodas. For a moment they hesitated panic-stricken under the fatal shower of lead. Then, with a shout, they rushed and rolled pell-mell fiercely down on the soldiers of Undara, who slaughtered them from their hiding-places in the pines beneath. Spellbound I gazed, and in a few minutes, which passed as a dream, realized that but a handful of our assailants remained alive, and that even they were prisoners. The carrier gull had duly reached Pentona, and a force been despatched to steal on the Rodas, while they were busy with the assault, and attack them at break of day.

A party were told off to dig a great trench, into which the dead savages were put. Another gang rolled the dead men down the side of the mountain and brought in the wounded. At the end of the day all that remained of our brave assailants, who were estimated at about 2500, was 27 prisoners, 193 wounded, a pile of arms and clothing, and 25 great mounds where the dead Rodas were taking their long last rest.

In all my hospital and dissecting experience, I had seen nothing so dreadful as this awful carnage, and the stripping of the mangled and dead corpses, and huddling them on the top of each other in the one grave.

When evening came, the three fort doctors, the seven soldier nurses and myself, were still busy setting limbs and dressing wounds. Next morning, at daybreak, the soldiers with the prisoners, and such of the wounded who could travel, returned to Pentona, leaving only such of their number as were necessary

to enable us to care for the wounded. When we were left alone, arrangements were made to construct temporary shelter in the forest beneath the fort for the use of the wounded, so that in case of another attack, we would be free from possible traitors in our midst.

The second morning after the soldiers had left, as a soldier nurse and I went our rounds, in the bed of a wounded Gurla who was feigning sleep, we found a tiny six months old baby. The nurse stopped, and warningly held up one hand, as with the other she slightly lifted the bed clothes and showed the tiny mite of humanity, happily sleeping in the man's arms. Something—a movement of the man's arm, a dream fancy, or what not—woke the infant, who commenced to cry. From the shelter of a neighbouring bed, glided a woman, her long black hair streaming down her back, her big dark eyes wide open with terror. Crouching by the bed, she put one arm round the man's neck, the other round the crying babe, and turned a frightened imploring face to the nurse and me. The man, too weak to move, glared at us agonized, fierce, but without a trace of fear. Putting my hand on the poor woman's head I strove with voice and gesture to reassure her. For a moment she looked at me, and then, going on her knees, sobbingly placed my hand on her forehead. A voice from a neighbouring bed spoke, "She and her husband can only speak Roda." We turned and saw that we were observed by every man who was strong enough to lift his head.

"She has brought their baby and come to die with him," continued the man who had before spoken, and with whose aid we now satisfied the poor creature of our good intentions, and left her happy by the bedside of those she loved.

On returning to the fort, Kit Troca told us that many Rodas were concealed in the pines, but even if their fighting men were amongst them, which he doubted, they would abstain from making any attack on the nurses, or the fort, for fear we might retaliate on the wounded. Presently a messenger came from the hospital camp, and told us that Winda Garr, the woman who had come with her babe, had gone out to the pines, and reported to other women like herself who had come to search for their husbands or lovers, the kind treatment she had received, which had caused many of them to come timorously among the wounded.

On receipt of this news, I returned to the hospital, and found a scene even more heartrending than the profusion of open-eyed corpses that strewed the mountain side after the fight. In front of the hospital sheds were a group of women kneeling in a circle, their heads pointing centrewards. Sobbing and moaning, they leant forward on their hands, placing their foreheads on the ground, the while with their right hand from time to time putting earth on their heads. Their long black hair was loose, and at the mercy of a gentle wind that swayed it here and there,

till the heads seemed to be joined, and they appeared like a fantastic representation of grief. As we passed, the women moaned and sobbed, unheeding our presence. Just inside the shed door, two babies of some two or three years of age played in the corner with the ribbon streamers of the spear ends, while in the shed itself, several infants, their hunger satisfied, slept content and happy. Beside several of the beds knelt women, their long black hair hanging down their backs, indicating grief and death, according to the custom of the Rodas. As we passed along, they came out to me, and kneeling, took my hand, and placed it on their foreheads, uttering the while a long moaning groan. Oh, the pity of it! The husband and father dead or wounded; the mother stricken with grief to the full, and—oh, wise and merciful nature!—the little children playing or asleep. The troubles of the men would end with death or recovery, the women's tears be dried, and their sorrows, diluted with the waters of Lethe, become memories to make the eye humid and the heart soft; while the little children, grown to maturity, would, in the future, regard the incidents that agonized their parents, as only facts for a story.

Winda Garr's tears had been dried, her hair combed, and she now sat by her husband's bedside. Him we might have tortured and killed, but fierce to the last, he would have struggled and defied us. No force could subdue him. His wounds had been dressed, his wife received with kindness, and their helpless babe put to sleep on his arm. As I passed his bed, he held out his hand, and, with his dark eyes now beaming with gentleness, signified his desire for my approach. On giving him my hand, he placed it on his forehead as the women had done, and murmured words of submission. The mighty power of kindness had subdued him, and on his recovery he would assist us to civilize his countrymen. Of the other women, those whose husbands were alive, did up their hair and were comforted. Those whose husbands had disappeared, grouped together in witch-like circles, weeping and sorrowing with dishevelled locks.

In the evening, the women still continued with their sorrowing. For five days they gathered at dawn, and, as the sun rose, commenced their wailing, which, fasting, they continued till it sank, when they rose, took food, and, wearied out, lay down to sleep. Exhaustion hushed their woe, and in the stillness of the forest, the music moved the feelings of the wounded and their watchers.

With hardly an exception, the men, though sorrowing for defeat, were reconciled, or anxious to join the people who comforted them in their weakness. Of the exceptions, all but one restrained their rage till future wars gave them a chance to slay their enemies or die for their country. This one man brooded on his fate, till his violent treachery brought on him retaliation and

death. Towards the end of the first row of beds, on the right hand side of the entry, lay a restless Roda chief. His wiry, muscular form indicated physical strength, far superior of its kind to the mental ability shown in the sloping forehead, thick lips, and massive chin and neck. All his life, his brutal strength had enabled him to gratify his greed and lust, and remorselessly crush those who opposed him. Slave of his desires, he now lay fevered and savage, regarding every fresh kindness as an additional reason for revenge. Unhappy man. Strong against outside enemies, he was a victim to his own selfish, uncontrolled passions. As the music, softly rising and falling, soothed the feelings of the conquered Rodas, this human brute lay nursing feelings of revenge, and glaring on his more happy countrymen who surrounded him.

The Roda women had saved the fort nurses so much work, that they had time to soothe and comfort those sufferers who were fevered and restless. In her womanly ministrations, one fair-haired soldier nurse, going from bed to bed, came to the side of this foolish Roda. When she had beaten up his pillow, and smoothed his bed, she sprayed his forehead with scent and water preparatory to cooling it with a fan. Gently he took her hand, and placing it on his forehead, drew her down, muttering feebly some words of thanks. His other hand had gently slid into the bed, then suddenly—as a flash of lightning shows in an instant the nature of the dark surrounding—his face changed, his hand appeared grasping a dinner knife, which, momentarily uplifted, descended with all his strength on the nurse's shoulder. Horror stricken, patients and attendants watched the knife descend on its mission of death. With a shriek, the nurse recognized the situation. The descending blade, glancing from a knapsack strap she wore, pierced the bed clothes, and the nurse escaped. With a blow from a stick the Roda was disarmed, and as he cringed down, expecting death, his bed was smoothed, and he was left and forgiven—that is, by all those who lived under the wise laws of Undara. In the morning he was found cold and dead, with a Roda spear through his heart. Thus the savages, tamed by kindness, had avenged the treachery of their countryman in the way they thought just. They knew no better.

CHAPTER XXV.

ANNIHILATION.

On arriving at Pentona, I was met by a messenger, who informed me that General Dero wished to see me at the Central War Office. Going there, I was shown to his room.

"As you are writing a sketch of our laws and customs, Dr. Frank, I will show you how our wars are conducted."

He took me to a balcony overlooking a large room, the whole floor of which was occupied by a map, on which the country was shown as it would be seen from a great altitude. On three of the walls were similar maps, each of which showed a small section of the country on a very much larger scale. In the balcony were a staff of clerks and officers, who received despatches and moved about on the maps model groups, representing the various bodies of soldiers engaged. Cula and two other generals had each in front of them a plan and a section map, on each of which groups of soldiers were placed, which they moved as information received by telegram or bird post necessitated. As the messages came in, they were read out and filed.

"All battles and movements of the army are directed from here," said Cula. "We get most of our information from the balloons, each of which, by acting separately, is virtually a check on the other. By these means we know the position and can follow every movement of the enemy, so that if they separate, we can attack each of their scattered parts with our whole force, and if they keep together, they are an easy mark for our lead, dynamite, and compressed air missiles, besides being liable to suffer from our land mines."

"What is a land mine?" I asked.

He took from a drawer a map of a section of the country to the north of Pentona, on which the roads and fields were marked with red numbered spots. "Each of these spots," he said, "indicates the position of a dynamite mine, or buried mass of dynamite. These mines are not so much of value for the number of men they kill, as for the demoralizing force they exercise on advancing bodies of troops, who get, after a few explosions, afraid to march on the roads, while they are disheartened and hampered if they march through the bush."

"It seems horrible to scientifically plan and invent to maim and slaughter our fellow creatures in tens of thousands."

"Barbarous remedies must be used to suppress barbarous nations," said Cula, sententiously. "The present war will be the last in Fregida, and in a few days will cause an army to be almost completely annihilated. Deciding disputes amongst men by brute force or skill in the use of deadly weapons has long become obsolete, and soon the settling of national disputes by similar means will also become a thing of the past. Much, however, as I deprecate war, I uphold the present struggle, as it is necessary to crush the last supremacy of evil in the land of the North Pole, so that wisdom may progress without persecution."

The full particulars of receiving information and issuing directions from the War Office, would be both too voluminous and uninteresting for this book; the few particulars I have given, will, however, enable all who are expert in military matters to satisfactorily fill in the obvious details for themselves.

In the afternoon, Cula took me to see the approach of the united forces of the Rodas and Gurla, from the vantage of a balloon. In the balloon-house we found Edna Kerna. His dress was martial, but his face was kind as ever; confining himself to the perfecting of war engines, he regarded his occupation as purely a scientific one, and never realized the horror of the fearful slaughter they would create. After welcoming me, and again expressing his regret at my not being an engineer, and my consequent inability to fully realize the wonder of his inventions, he pointed me out a boat capable of seating three men, in the front of which was a piano-like arrangement of keys.

"Our balloons," he explained, "have a number of separate compartments, into which the buoyant gas is poured, or pumped out, as the occupants wish to ascend or descend. Another advantage is, that even if struck by a bullet, the compartment damaged can be taken off and replaced. We can progress in our aerial machines in any ordinary weather, and they are as safe as any vehicle on land or water."

The learned engineer rubbed his hands together, and smiled with pride.

To the boat was fixed a net containing a number of silk tube-like bags, which were filled with gas.

"I will manage the ship for you, general," said Kerna, as we took our places in the boat and commenced our ascent.

There was very little breeze blowing, and the day was calm and bright. When we had reached the height of about three thousand feet from the ground, a pair of bat-like wings on a steel frame were put out, and with a rapid movement they took us towards the upper part of Lake Wala. Cula was scanning the country with a telescope, and Kerna meanwhile described the

working of the balloon to me. By touching some of the keys, he caused the gas bags to unwind and be supplied with more gas. We commenced to ascend, and progressed very rapidly till soon Pentona was left far behind, and we were in the clouds. He then pressed other keys on the key-board, which caused the gas to be pumped out of the bags and then to be more rolled up. Though still progressing rapidly, this caused us to descend till we had reached our first level, when we progressed on a plane, though with less rapidity.

"Look yonder," said Cula, pointing with his hand as he gave me the telescope. I looked, and saw in the distance, coming round the lake, a great body of men. They were so far off that they seemed stationary.

"You see," said Cula, "all the soldiers that the Gurlas and Rodas can gather. They come in the cause of oppression to attack a free people."

I handed the glass to Kerna.

"Did you notice two spots floating over the army?" he asked, and without waiting for a reply, continued, "They are balloons, but I expect, only great gas bladders that will collapse and fall if struck by a rifle bullet."

"Do you think, Kerna, that with your balloons our engineers can destroy what you call those great gas bladders?" asked Cula.

Kerna took the glass down from his eye, and as he smiled genially said, "I think so!"

"If," said Cula, "they are not destroyed, the enemy will have an advantage that will be dangerous to us."

Kerna still smiled, and again said quietly, "I think we can destroy them without much trouble."

We both knew him and were satisfied. His gentle assurance was more to be relied on than most men's positive beliefs.

"Shall we return, Kerna?" asked Cula.

"I would like to see those great gas bags. We have lots of daylight left to easily see them and return, if you can spare the time," he said gently, evidently in deep thought.

Cula nodded, and we continued on. Kerna devoted himself to the air vessel, and we all kept silence; Cula quietly viewing the invading army through the telescope, and I making the best use of my eyes. The balloon commenced ascending and descending at the same time, progressing with the rapidity of a swallow. In a short time the united army could be plainly seen; infantry, cavalry, baggage-wagons, and all the impedimenta of a great army. The two balloons, like those of the Middle Globe, were what Kerna surmised, simply "great gas bladders." They were captive, and floated over the advancing army, evidently acting more effectively than scores of scouts. The lower parts of the balloon seemed made of basket work, and each held five occupants,

who were in telephone communication with a base which consisted, in each case, of a four-horse wagon.

We had slackened our pace, and now slowly proceeded to skirt the army at a distance of about two miles.

"It is a fearful thing to contemplate the slaughter of so proud and splendid a host of men!" I said, awestruck, thinking of the awful carnage at the fort.

"There are different ways of looking at it," said Cula. "I regard it as a glorious and splendid opportunity of delivering nations from the parasites that oppress, prey on, and prevent their wise progress. You cannot deliver a man from a cancerous growth without giving him pain and shedding his blood; but such pain and bloodshed are more welcome than mirth and feasting, when they are followed by the disappearance of the greedy cancer, and bring about a healthy growth of all the man's organization. So with nations; we will, by pain and bloodshed, for evermore remove the greedy cancerous section that oppresses Gurla and Roda, but even so to assist at the birth of wisdom, justice, and progress, is surely a glorious, godlike thing. Of the soldiers of oppression, few shall survive. They march to their death."

He spoke with an enthusiastic conviction that made me shudder. I shall never forget his words nor his manner, the events of the next few days engraved them on my mind and memory.

Kerna, quiet and thoughtful, had not realized what we were saying. "I think, Cula, we can destroy those great gas bladders."

He smiled on us. The soldiers were of little consequence to him, compared to the triumph of his aerial ships.

All this time we were about two miles from the advancing army, who were evidently watching and discussing our movements. Foremost amongst them was General Ance, on a charger, which, like him, was splendidly decked out in the gaudy glories of military accoutrements. He was moving amongst the regiments, evidently giving orders.

"Something is going to happen in our honour," said Cula.

Something did happen. We continued to move slowly along, keeping carefully, all the while about two miles away from the advancing army, which evidently realized our determination not to approach nearer. Suddenly, a puff of white smoke came from Ance's revolver, the report of which we heard a second later. The moving host came to a halt, and four regiments pointed their rifles at us. Suddenly the balloon darted like an arrow from a bow, away from the army in a downward direction. A tremendous volume of smoke covered the four regiments. A number of bullets rattled against the bottom of the car. A roar of musketry assailed our ears. Still we progressed swifter and swifter onwards and downwards. Our speed was terrific. The

wind sounded with a hissing whistling noise in our ears. A number of the balloon buoyancy bags had been pierced by the bullets. I thought we were speeding to annihilation.

We had now descended more than half way to the ground. Our speed slackened, and continued to decrease, till gradually we circled slightly upwards, and commenced slowly to ascend.

"Take a drink, Frank," said Kerna.

I took a tin containing brandy and water that was handed to me, and drank it up. The sweat rolled in beads down my face. My brain, swift as our flight, had conjured up all the leading incidents of my life. Again I felt that I had miraculously escaped a violent death.

"There is very little doubt about our engineers destroying those great gas bags for you, General Cula," said Kerna. He smiled serenely as ever, and sympathetically looked out through his spectacles. It seemed to me he must have been born in spectacles. "I'm glad to see you smile, Frank, I almost thought you were frightened."

"Frightened! God in Heaven protect me." I mopped my forehead with my handkerchief. I never in all my life, before or since, was so panic-stricken. Cula's face was white. He had taken a tin of strong brandy and water. He was almost a teetotaller, so I judged his feelings by my own.

"Your air vessels are wonders, Kerna," I said as I regained my composure. "Against the power of science, the might of an army is weak as a tree against the lightning. You will easily destroy the great gas bladders."

He laughed loudly.

He had been more affected by the seeming danger of our awful aerial flight than he cared to show.

We were now about five miles from the army, who moved on as before.

The whole incident had only taken a few minutes, and the balloon sailed placidly on. The punctured gas bags had been replaced, and the bullets that struck the car had been too spent to be effective on its slanting surface.

"How is it, Kerna," asked Cula, "that of the many thousand bullets sent against us, so few struck us?"

"They neglected," he replied, "to aim high enough. The rifles pointed at us were harmless, only those fired haphazard were dangerous. I think they expected to frighten more than hurt us, and perhaps," he smiled gently, "they succeeded better than they imagined."

We again commenced to rapidly progress in our ascending and descending flight, and reached home at twilight.

Next day all was activity. In the evening the balloons of the invading army were to be destroyed, and the war to be actively commenced. At midday, Kerna superintended the launching of

five aerial ships, and, going himself in a sixth, acted as admiral of his wonderful fleet. General Cula took me with him in his balloon, and we went to see the fight.

On arriving within about three miles of the army our balloon stopped, and we proceeded at right angles to the advancing host.

"We couldn't manage another of those lightning flights without Kerna," said Cula.

"For my part, I hope I shall never take another, with or without him," I replied.

The six air-boats were now up so high that they looked like so many eagles. The marching army, though unaware of our intentions, were evidently prepared to receive us with a shower of lead. Two balloons separated from the six, and sailed towards the army. As they proceeded, their pace increased, till they travelled faster than the eagle swooping on its prey; faster than a sea-bird that, with outstretched wings, darts from the clouds down into the sea beneath after the swift-moving fish; faster than any bird of the air. Only less fast than the lightning they came, each boat, amidst a shower of lead, dashing through a gas balloon as if it were paper. Each of the great gas bladders collapsed, and their cages fell, to be shattered to atoms on the ground beneath.

The air vessels soared upwards and onwards, and in a few seconds were safe from the rifles that would have ended their career. The army was hidden by the powder-smoke from their firearms, which also hid the air-vessels from the aim of their rifles. The swift vessels were protected by the slanting sides of their boats, which turned off the bullets from their buoyancy bags.

"That was well and quickly done," said Cula; "long practice has made them fleeter in the air than eagles."

"When did they practise? Their prowess has been a revelation to me."

"They practised in the first light of the summer mornings, and in the moonlight. President Dreman and Edna Kerna have, between them, developed the balloons, believing them to be of the greatest use in war. By their aid the united armies of Roda and Gurla will be decimated and panic-stricken."

Three of the balloons returned to Pentona with us. The two that had acted as destroyers were very little hurt. In the first of them one man had been killed by a bullet in the back, and in the second an occupant had had his leg wounded. The air-vessels had, in their attack, relied solely on their power of ascending and descending on their mission, and the sloping bottom of their boat to throw off the enemies' bullets. The only danger was from the stray soldiers on the outskirts of the army, who fired from an angle, which caused their lead to penetrate the sloping sides of the boat.

On reaching Pentona, I found a procession of launches were taking soldiers up the river.

"How is it that they are acting without consulting you, Cula?" I asked. "You can have given no order since the balloons were destroyed?"

"No; but everything was arranged before I started. If the air-ships destroyed the balloons a strong force was to be sent to cut off the retreat of the invading hosts, who are to be attacked to-night."

"You thus leave Pentona without adequate protection. Is not this rash?"

"You will not say so when you learn our mode of attack. We have all the turbulent and foolish men of Roda and Gurla gathered together. They must not be allowed to escape. To-night we will kill them in thousands. To-morrow they will be completely routed, and by the following day very few will be left alive."

He spoke with a quiet conviction, and without a trace of anger, regarding the combined army as a gamekeeper would a nest of stoats. They were to be ruthlessly killed for the general good.

Kerna was very busy in the balloon house. The aerial boats were to take a leading part in the destruction of the invaders.

"Do you care to see the destruction of the armies of Roda and Gurla to-morrow, Frank?" asked Cula. "It will be complete and terrible."

"I should like to see it," I replied. "If my absence would make any difference I should stay away; but as it is, I should like to see all that is done." And so it was arranged.

We retired early, as the attack was to be made before daylight.

At two o'clock I was roused, and, going to the balloon shed, found Cula.

"The regiments that are to intercept the routed enemy are asleep in their camp, and will not be disturbed till late in the morning. We go now to rouse and scatter with dynamite the army that has come to lay waste our country. When they retreat, they will be destroyed by mines under the roads, and when they flee they will meet death from the hands of our untired soldiers who are waiting for them."

I shuddered at the whole terrible programme, which was spoken of with less feeling than would enter into the discussion of a pigeon match. When the wisdom of any action was decided on, these people pursued it to an end with as little hesitation as a gardener would proceed to remove an unhealthy bough, or an excrescence from the bark of his trees. The very fact that things were not put aside or shirked, but at once commenced and proceeded with till they were concluded, was one of the main reasons of the lightheartedness of this merry people.

The balloons commenced to ascend and disappear in the dark-

ness, showing only a small, star-like light. They were heavily laden with balls of dynamite that exploded on striking the earth, and shells containing a compressed gas of great density and deadliness.

The last aerial boat to leave contained General Cula Dero, an engineer, and myself. As we ascended and progressed towards the invading army, Cula said,—

"We will render the army panic-stricken before the day breaks, and will then be able to follow up and destroy its scattered parts."

When the camp fires came into view, we ascended to a great height and proceeded very slowly. As the atmosphere became grey with the shadow of the coming day, two of the balloons proceeded slowly over the sleeping army. They were about 200 feet apart, and as they reached a position above the middle of the army, simultaneously dropped large dynamite shells, and shot up into the air. The shells disappeared earthwards, and in a second the earth seemed to rise and we heard an explosion, the effect of which we strongly felt. The echo of thunder and cannon innumerable seemed concentrated in this awful sound. For the time our ears were deafened, and before we could recover, two other air-vessels flashed their electric light on the hurrying horde of men beneath.

The noise of shouting and of bugle-calls reached our ears, as the soldiers were being summoned together. All the movements beneath us could be plainly seen in the electric light and glare of torches.

Bravely the invaders took their places.

For the moment I had forgotten the balloons, my attention being absorbed by the troops below, when two closely following reports again clothed the army in dust and smoke and forced our vessel up by the awful concussions.

The electric lights were withdrawn as the grey mists of darkness were dispelled by the morning light. Beneath us were four great holes where the dynamite had exploded, and the soldiers of the invaders were flying in all directions, two squads only remaining firm. Over each of these hovered a balloon, which, dropping compressed gas shells, caused the last trace of discipline to disappear, and Rodas and Gurlas fled, frightened as fowls over whom a hawk hovers. Several times they were rallied, and bodies of troops gathered into order by intrepid officers, but the terrible compressed gas shells falling in their midst spread death on the waves of the wind for hundreds of feet from their bursting point, so that the soldiers realized that their only chance was in flight. The air-ships scattered, and, hovering over the fleeing foe, dropped their awful shells. A small body of Undara horsemen came trotting into the deserted camp, which they took possession of, and used as a centre from which to slay

its late possessors. And so an army, with a more deadly and scientific equipment than any ever gathered together in the Middle Globe, was shattered and dispelled in a few hours. Their powder, guns and cannon, their sword and lance, their boasted science and animal courage, were together of no more avail against the air-vessels, and their explosives and compressed poisonous gas than are the dove's wings against the hawk's beak.

As I witnessed the execution of these things, the means employed, like all the doings of these people, impressed me with their simplicity. Their laws and customs are founded with wisdom on the Universal Laws of the Almighty, as written for all to read, in field and forest, river and mountain, sea and air; and the secret of their complete success is that the minute is sacrificed to the hour, the year to a life, and that the evils of idleness and gluttony are removed, while their mechanical laws were only the extension of those employed by the creations of God, on the water, on the land, and in the air. Everything was simple, while everyone was wise and happy. How different from the ways of that Middle Globe I had left, where women, in different parts, think to gain admiration and pleasure by suffering till womanhood, that their feet may be out of proportion to their bodies, by squeezing in their waists, in violation of the laws of nature and of the lines of grace, or by numerous other equally ridiculous customs; where men drank liquor to render them fools for one period and sufferers for another, or robbed the night of rest, that they might line their pockets with money they did not earn, or part with money without getting any return. Where things so like that ordinary people could see no difference, were valued as one is to a hundred, not on account of varying worth, but simply because one was difficult while the other was easy to get. Where reason gave way to folly, lust and gluttony killed appetite, and wickedness, unpunished by law, was looked on as no sin. These things came to my mind, and then I remembered that wisdom is as a giant tree, its growth cannot be forced, but must progress slowly. Wisdom and happiness are so growing all over the world, and presently their shade will protect all creation from the scorching rays or bitter winds of folly, from which all wickedness and unhappiness spring.

Cula woke me from my reverie, "Our plans have succeeded to the full. The scattered invaders, between two walls of rifles, are being driven to Lake Wala."

"Will they escape through the Lake?"

"No, there are armed boats waiting to receive them. Very few will reach the lake. By to-morrow night very few of our barbarous enemies will be left alive."

"Have you no pity?"

"I have pity," said Cula, solemnly. "This slaughter is none of my seeking. When wolves come to the fold, you may pity both

the wolves and the sheep ; but if your pity is wise, you will kill the wolves."

"But you have advocated the suppression of the Rodas, and now slaughter the soldiers almost to a man."

"I advocate the suppression of the wolves, knowing they live to prey on all weaker than themselves, and would exterminate them by every means in my power.

He still spoke quietly, evidently believing that he was carrying out a stern duty for the benefit of humanity.

By night the scattered Rodas and Gurlas were in a triangle, the base of which was Lake Wala, and the sides the soldiers of Undara. Rapid and merciless was the slaughter of the allied armies. The Undara soldiers, well fed and well armed, rapidly closed in and shot down or made prisoners of the remnant of the host that came proudly to meet them. Ere the sun had again risen and sunk to rest, the last of the invaders were slain or taken prisoners, and in a few days the only sign of the conquered hosts was the fresh-turned earth of the innumerable graves in which they lay. The soldiers had been buried as they fell, those in the camp in huge trenches, and those in the woods in smaller ones, where singly or in twos or threes they returned to the earth from which they sprang. So in the course of a few eventful days more men were slain than fell during the years the Grecians fought the Trojans, to avenge the loss of a faithless woman.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

Amongst those brought to the hospital from the heap of dead and wounded was General Ance. Two of his ribs were broken, and he was badly crushed. Deadly pale and scarcely breathing, he suffered as much, or more, from grief at the destruction of the army than from his personal injuries. For several hours he had lain, buried beneath his disabled comrades, whose groaning must have been torture to his sympathetic, high-strung nature. I called to see him the second morning after his arrival, and found him much improved.

"Are our soldiers and allies utterly destroyed?" he asked.

"They were helpless against the war engines of Undara," I replied.

"Are they all killed or wounded?"

"All but those who were taken prisoners."

He shut his eyes; the drawn muscles of his face alone showing his emotion. Presently he spoke, "I knew we were ignorant of your latest inventions, and was prepared for defeat, but the awful effect of those flying machines was beyond my calculations."

"You were hurt in one of the explosions I gather from what I have heard?"

"Yes. I was mounted, and midway between the first two explosions, one of which took place an instant before the other. The first threw me and my horse, with everything else in the vicinity, to the ground. The noise was awful, and the effect beyond belief. Hardly had I fallen, when I was aware of a second explosion, which relieved me from the load of men who were hurled on top of me. My horse had disappeared. I believe he was killed by the first bomb. The soldiers were panic-stricken. Each explosion had made a great hole in the earth, and scattered men, dead or dying, in every direction. Several officers and myself got the men to stand, and tried to allay their fear. In this we had partially succeeded, when another explosion rendered me unconscious, and when I recovered I was in this bed."

"Don't think of your past disaster. Dwelling on it will hinder your recovery, and do no good."

"I must return to Gurla as soon as possible. King Edward was forced to fight or abdicate. Against our advice he chose the former alternative, believing anything preferable to the latter. Nothing is absolutely certain until it has taken place, and so it was with the war. Had the king been wise, he would have faced the inevitable, for victory—an impossible dream for us—would only have postponed the triumph of the party of progress, who have right and reason on their side, and are fighting against the strongly established forms of a state of things only suitable for a time past and gone. Had the king led reform he could have hampered its progress. He tried to obstruct it, but has only dammed it back, and will now be overwhelmed with its onward rush."

"What will be the effect of the present defeat?"

"The deposition of the king, and sweeping away of all kingly props, such as hereditary titles, and the living in idleness of the successors in perpetuity of wealthy men, is the best I hope for; but I feel that all classes, enraged and embittered by the loss of relatives and friends—every individual had one or other in the army, and in many cases the breadwinner will have been lost—will crown their sorrows and the national disaster by pillage, bloodshed, and anarchy; in which case, the coming period of want will be changed to one of famine, with all its attendant horrors."

The man's big, blue eyes opened wide, and his firm, kind face showed that he only thought and spoke of those things that he might find a way to mitigate their severity. As I wrote at his dictation a letter to his wife, I carefully watched his face. It was a beautiful face, too pretty and placid for a man whilst in repose, but splendid in its quiet strength when animated. As an invalid he gave very little trouble, meeting his difficulties with that perfection of courage that makes true men unfrettingly face disaster as composedly, or more so, than they meet victory.

President Duke Dreman had a duly accredited party of messengers at Fort Boro, under the leadership of Diso Car Rota, who had attained to the honour of knighthood. Sir Diso had received full and undated messages and instructions, with which he was, on receipt of telegraphic news of the battle, to proceed to Gurla, where he would arrive before the news of the terrible battle of Dravena, which means in the Roda tongue, strength of freedom or liberty. Diso's instructions were, shortly stated, to inform the Gurlas of the result of the battle, and that the prisoners who were unhurt would be conducted over all the institutions, factories, and places of interest in Undara, the reason and operations of which would be explained to them, each man receiving especial explanations, verbal and written, on those

institutions that bore on his calling, after which they would be safely returned to their homes. Meanwhile, the wounded would be carefully cared for and freed on recovery, or given up to any friends that might come for them. He was also instructed to say that no invasion of Gurla or Roda would be attempted, and that the Government of Undara would assist the defeated nations by every means in their power to avert any disaster that might follow on the war. Diso's effusive courtesy had been tempered by time into urbane fluency that was thought to be especially suited to this mission.

General Ance's rapid recovery enabled him to be present at the meeting of the executive that was to decide the journey to be taken by the prisoners before their release. Duke Dreman and all the cabinet ministers gathered to discuss, with all the officers amongst the prisoners, the division of the men and the cities to be visited. In a very conciliatory speech he stated that Parliament had decided to prove the friendship of Undara to all the prisoners, and also their power to help them, in case their mission to Undara would be followed by a famine, or they in any way needed help. He enlarged on the fact that all the people of Fregida were of the same blood, and that it was to their interest to work for the mutual good. Pointed out the benefit to both the Zaras and Uras since they had federated into the Commonwealth of Undara, and ended by hoping the officers and prisoners, who would be considered as guests, would enjoy their travels, and learn to look on the people of Undara as their friends and kinsmen, as in fact and deed they were. Several other speeches were made to a similar effect. To these General Ance replied on behalf of his soldiers and himself. He commenced by saying that the treatment they had received made it impossible to regard the people of Undara as anything else than their hospitable and generous friends. They could not, however, forget that the mould was yet fresh on the graves of their comrades, that they had suffered a grievous defeat, and that their country was divided and weakened by dissensions. The opportunity of becoming acquainted with the laws and customs that had made the people of Undara so happy and united, and seeing the institutions, and learning the habits that had sprung up under these laws, would be welcome to and highly prized by them all.

General Ance's speech was confirmed by a few words from several of his brother officers, who all looked on the coming journey through Undara as a proof of ostentatious goodwill on the part of their conquerors. It was finally decided that the prisoners should be divided into five parties, who should follow each other at convenient intervals, on a trip through the principal cities of Undara. On the expiration of each trip, each party to be at once conducted home to Gurla. President Dreman, General Ance and I were to go with the first party, but before we started we got

news from Sir Diso, telling us of his arrival at Gurla, and what transpired on the journey. The following, taken from his reports, gives, in his characteristic graphic style, all the interesting and important events of his mission.

"In the early morning of the day after our arrival at Fort Boro, instructions were received, commanding us to at once proceed on our mission. This message was brought to me before I woke. Directly I received it I requested that all concerned in the embassy be at once woke, and summoned to prepare with all haste for an immediate start. These instructions were so well obeyed, that in less than half an hour we had broken our fast, and were on the way. At sunrise we were proceeding on our electric tricycles along the river Warna, and at midday had arrived at the township of Orva, where we were received by the chief personages in the place. We at once telegraphed news of our approach to King Edward, and then had dinner, during which we made public the news of the defeat of the united armies, and the full purport of our mission. The news spread through the town rapidly as the morning light, creating as it went, dismay and grief of the wildest description. On all sides, horror-stricken women fainted, or shrieked aloud in their terror. In one case, a schoolboy, hearing the news, rushed to his mother's house, and told her that his father had been killed in battle. She, poor woman, overcome with the suddenness of the shock, rushed pale and dazed to our hotel, the door of which she tried to push open, forgetting in her grief to turn the handle. Finding it would not open, she beat it with her fists, and, before anyone could go to her aid, fell down in a violent fit of hysterics. With clenched hand, she shrieked and shrieked, till exhaustion made her silent. An old man, white bearded and bald, strong with emotion, spoke in the market place, telling the people that the destruction of the army was a judgment against them for upholding kingcraft and oppression to grind down the poor, and refusing the wise laws of Undara.

When we left Orva a number of people from the grief-stricken crowd escorted us out of the town, and expressed their wish to join Undara, as Ura had joined Zara. Amongst this crowd were many who had lost relatives in the war, but who, nevertheless, expressed admiration for the conduct of the Undara rulers in every respect. As we progressed we passed numbers of people, who, hearing the news, had come out to see us, nearly all of whom exhibited feelings of friendship towards us. When we had gone half way towards Gurla we were met by several electric launches, which brought messengers from King Edward to receive us and bring us back. These exhibited the greatest consternation, and were evidently unable to realize our reason for not invading Gurla, now that it was not only defenceless, but contained as many people who were in our favour as it did those against us. As we neared Gurla the river banks became crowded with an excited

multitude. On arriving, the crowd and excitement increased. Women sobbed, and men fiercely declaimed against the king, and the madness of invading Undara. We were taken to a carriage drawn by horses, and proceeded to the palace, through streets crowded with a similarly excited multitude. Cries against the king, mingled with shouts of "Cheers for Duke Dreman!" and "Join Undara!" but everywhere the sobbing of the women filled the scene with sadness.

On reaching the palace we were ushered into the presence of King Edward. He was walking up and down in a large gorgeous room, in which his Ministers were gathered. As he turned courteously to us as we entered, we saw a tall, strong, bald man, with a coarse, straight nose, small, restless eyes under shaggy brows, and a lower face completely hidden by a beard and moustache.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I hear you come from President Dreman?"

"From the Parliament of Undara, King Edward."

He glared at me as I spoke. Evidently correction was not to his mind.

"It is the same thing."

"You will pardon me, King Edward, it is not the same thing."

He pointed at me with a hand shaking with passion. Twice he gasped; then he said, grinding his teeth,—

"You have put my ambassadors in your prisons. I will put you and your canting crowds in mine."

"King Edward," I replied, "you have sent the pick of your manhood to death. Consider well before you bring the power that slew them to spread vengeance in your defenceless kingdom."

For a moment we faced each other; then he said, "Deliver your message."

This I did, fully and courteously, the while laying great stress on our earnest wish to assist our kinsmen in Gurla by every means in our power. When I had finished he asked,—

"Do you intend to force your laws on my country?"

I replied that we had no such intention, but I believed that further steps would be taken to prevent further raids from the Rodas. He then said, "You can go."

I told him that I hoped that I had not been discourteous, and if I had, begged leave to state that it had been unintentional, and to apologize; after which I left.

We were taken to sumptuous, over-ornamented rooms, and in due time served with an evening meal, consisting of a multiplicity of highly seasoned dishes, served with a number of drinks of a more or less spirituous and intoxicating character. Behind every four of us stood a big strong man, dressed in gaudy, barbarous fashion, whose sole duty consisted in handing round the various

meats and wines. The fearful folly of having strong men to do useless work, that could be better done by a neat-handed maid, while the hedges were untrimmed, and the fields full of weeds, seemed to me the height of foolish wickedness. The solemn and objectionable habit of serving in this manner a number of spiced dishes and stimulating drinks, so that people might be induced to eat more than was either necessary or healthy, is, I was informed, of daily occurrence in the households of all the rich people of Gurla. I learned afterwards that dulness and hypochondria were common amongst this class.

Next morning, soon after breakfast, we were again ushered into King Edward's presence, and found him, seated as before, amongst his Councillors. Very courteously we were shown to seats, and after the king had made some polite inquiries after our comfort, a man of medium height, with a round, coarse, ruddy, but clever, clean-shaved thick-lipped face, rose and stated that since our arrival, news had been received from scouts, giving information of the army being scattered by terrible explosives, and the soldiers then killed or taken prisoners by the army of Undara. The courteous message from the President and Parliament of Undara had been received by the king and ministers of Gurla with great gratification. Being helpless and bound to submit to the wishes of Undara, they would like to know if Undara would help with her soldiers to suppress the rebellious subjects of the king? To this, I replied that as the policy of Undara was not to interfere in matters beyond its boundary, unless requested to do so by a majority of the people concerned, I did not think it would. After some further discussion we left, and were subsequently informed that an embassy would be sent to wait on the President and Parliament of Undara. From our window we noticed that all the haulage of the streets was done by horses, whose iron shod hoofs soon destroyed the paved streets; that the only way that cleanliness was observed, was by having numbers of small boys with a brush and a tin dish to sweep up the thick of the refuse, and deposit it in hollow iron pillars by the roadside; and that the ill effects of riches and poverty were everywhere apparent."

These extracts, I think, will suffice to describe the embassy to King Edward of Gurla, and its results.

A few days after it had been decided that the prisoners were to be shown the chief cities of Undara, they were taken to see the noticeable institutions of Zara.

General Ance was discussing the army system with President Dreman.

"The foundation of all your civilization," he was saying, "is your marriage laws, which cause both sexes to be moral, and suppresses all diseases. The keystone of the social structure you raise hereon is your prison system, which makes all men work,

and brings the lazy and weak to habits of industry and strength. Once given these things and the rest is easy. Without them, your system of soldiery is impossible, and in Gurla the difficulty is to establish them."

"Why not," said Vernon, "establish the whole system at once, as we did at Ura?"

"That would necessitate the abolition of monarchy."

"If what you tell me and I hear from Sir Diso is true, that is doomed in any case."

"I am afraid so. In our present disorganized condition, I dread the change from monarchy to republicanism."

"Why, is your monarch an active power for good?"

"Our monarch is neither an active power for good uor evil. A monarch, like a ship's figurehead, is an ornamental leader that exercises no influence whatever."

"Then why should you fear to remove it?"

"When a ship is in rough weather, to change her figurehead is a dangerous task for the crew, and a useless one for the ship."

"But if the figurehead prevents the steering of the ship, it should be removed at any cost. Better for a few to suffer danger than the ship to be taken out of her course. And when you do get a new figurehead, do not restrict your choice to the first one made out of the wood from which the old one came, but choose the fittest one available according to the united wisdom of the majority of the passengers—the people concerned—and then arrange to have your figurehead examined at certain convenient stated seasons, and changed if a better one be found, or otherwise be replaced in its position."

"At simile you excel me. I will go back to argument, in which the men and things concerned will figure. I shall be against changing our monarchical form of government for that of the Commonwealth Government of Undara, as I think the cost to the country of such a change would be so great, as to more than counterbalance the gain—if any—that would eventuate. A king is the nominal, but necessary head to the Government, whose duty it is to officiate on all great occasions, but who has, in reality, but little power. A president is only a king under another name, whose periodical election upsets and disturbs, to a serious extent, the even tenor of a country's progress."

Duke Dreman smiled. The men were champions of their respective sides. There was no abler man in Gurla than General Ance, nor in Undara than Vernon Dreman.

"We will," he said, "continue the discussion on the lines you have laid down. Supposing a king or a president to be only put in the position of leader of the State, to officiate at important ceremonials, and by personal conduct set a good example to those with whom they come in contact,—a king receives his position, not because of his fitness, but because he is the son of a king who

ascended the throne for a similar reason; thus kings now-a-days are men born and bred in a state which necessitates no personal effort on their parts, and which is likely to develop their appetites at the expense of their ability and energy. If one lives an evil life, such as the majority of kings have led, and such as the majority of men would lead under similar circumstances, he contaminates society, but is still a king. To this you must add that he costs at least a hundred times as much as a president; and now that kings and their relatives do not go to war and get killed, will saddle the country with a crowd of descendants. Now for a president. He is a man chosen from the people to fill the position on account of his fitness. If he is guilty of any misconduct, his position is forfeited. He has always been a man whose personal influence has done much good, and he can never saddle the country with his relations. As for the cost of his election, that is never so much as the difference between what he and the king would receive from the State as a yearly allowance. The cost of changing from Monarchical to Republican Government, I believe, would not be worth a second thought; but if it is a change for the better, the question of cost is not one for grave consideration. Much more I might add, but first I will learn your answer."

"Of one great duty as a king you say nothing—that is, to head a state of government that begets respect for elders and superiors, and reverence for religious and established institutions."

Vernon replied quietly, "I did omit these things, as in a commonwealth, we think every person or institution should only receive the amount of respect it deserves for its own worth, monarchical and hereditary titles stand or fall together. When only a small section of the community was educated, the ignorant could be governed for the benefit of the strong; but directly every member of the community is properly educated they will cause all men to have a fair chance to attain a suitable position for their strength or ability. It is for the good of every community that those whose mental endowments are in the ascendant should live by exercising them, while those who are strongest physically should live by physical work. This, however, is quite against the laws of heredity, which give a man a position on account of his birth, but not of his worth."

"Surely because birth is respected, worth need not be neglected. As for every man having a chance to fill a position according to his abilities, that is at least possible in a monarchy. You value birth in animals—why not in human beings?"

"I value birth in mankind as I do in animals, no more, no less. A man inherits rank from his father, quite irrespective of his mother, while the more distant the noble founder of his family is, notwithstanding the intervention of several worthless members, the greater his position. While men in high positions have

every motive for personal effort taken away, and a host of dangerous temptations substituted. Now, with animals, care is taken to select suitable parents on both sides, while all weak members are degraded to suitable work. Only by managing your hereditary aristocracy in this manner can you have any reason on its side."

"You cannot argue for a nation as you would for an animal, or a machine."

"Wait," said Vernon, "till you have seen the working of our laws and customs, and then compare them with your own."

In Zara we showed the prisoners a city where destitution was unknown, where education was not only free, but connected with scholarships, so that the poorest boy, if really clever and industrious, could get a profession. Where men and women alike were moral, and gambling and all vice unknown. Where self-respect, honesty, and industry were universal. Where disease was suppressed and health valued before everything, and where manual occupations were considered as honourable as mental ones.

The destruction of the invading armies was sufficient proof of the efficiency of the Undara defensive arrangements, which were not only economical, but, by drilling all the boys at school, developed the physical qualities of the nation to the highest degree.

From Zara we went to Shirea, and thence to Ura, where General Ance and myself were the guests of Duke Dreman.

The Duchess Dreman and her two boys received us on our arrival.

Her husband, as was his habit, stooped and kissed her hand. He was always courteous, more as a subject to a queen than as a husband to a wife, yet showed in his eyes and every movement the ideal love of a man to a woman who is to him the ennobler of his thoughts and actions, the lightener of his sorrows, and the brightener of his triumphs; his other better self, without whom earth would be barren, and heaven a desert.

"I am glad to see you recovering so fast, General Ance," said the Duchess. "I sent your wife extracts from my husband's letters, and from my diary, to assure her of your rapid convalescence and early return."

As a noxious weed, planted in suitable soil, and nourished by the rain and sunshine, is strong for evil, so a woman—the last and best of God's creations—whose heart and mind are pure and active for the right when surrounded by all that strengthens her nature, is strong for good, and shows by her daily acts a heart and brain that are as nearly divine as human nature can conceive.

"Such a message from the wife of Duke Dreman will indeed comfort her in this time of her country's deserved disgrace, and her own natural fears," said the general, with feeling.

"Let us hope that the present distress is but the travail of the birth of happier times," replied the duchess, kindly.

Young Vernon, who had been watching the scene from his father's side, realizing only that General Ance was ill and in trouble, let go his father's hand, and going to him, said gravely, "Ask my father to help you; if you are good he will, and I will, too."

The child, fearless and sympathetic, looked as like his father as a child can be like a man. The general, stooping, took the small face in his hands, and kissing it, said, "you are right, Vernon, I *will* ask your father to help me, and," he continued, with a smile, "you also!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

CLASSES AGAINST MASSES.

FINDING General Ance completely knocked up by his journey, I persuaded him to stay with the Dremans, instead of going with his party to see Zimera, and thence proceeding home.

He was sitting in the arbour overlooking the Voa. The duchess sat opposite his easy chair. He had taken the child's advice and asked Duke Dreman to help him, but the help offered was of so thorough a character as to make him pause before accepting it.

The two boys, each with a small wooden wheelbarrow, were busy in the garden searching for snails, which they sold to their mother. This was one of the many ways their father encouraged them to be industrious, and to rely on their own energy for an extra supply of toys or other things dear to children's hearts.

"I cannot gainsay Duke Dreman's arguments," said General Ance, "but I feel that as my forefathers have always stood with the kingly party, I should also stand or fall with it."

"This is only a prejudice, or, let us say, a sentimental idea. Do you not hold that duty is imperative before anything?" replied the duchess.

"Yes; and it is my duty to uphold my party that makes me feel I should shut my eyes to the personal gain that would accrue to me by deserting them."

"We have many duties, but when two clash we must obey the higher."

"So far, I hold with you."

"Man's first duty is to the woman who gives him her love and her life, and to the children who bless their union; as her first duty"—the woman's words lingered and her big brown eyes softened—"and her chiefest joy is with them. Man's second duty is to his fellow-man. Is that not so?"

"That is so, dear duchess," said Ance, dreamily; "and when a man is away from the object of his first duty, he most often remembers she is his chiefest joy, even when he experiences a superlative kindness such as I now enjoy."

The duchess, by a smile, acknowledged this courteous appreciation of her hospitality, and proceeded, "Then you must admit

that, for the sake of a sentimental feeling, you are not justified in ruining your future, on which that of your wife and children depends, because King Edward is either too obstinate or too foolish to see that, by fighting against the inevitable, he is plunging his country into civil war and bringing destruction on his own head. You admit, and everything points to the fact, that monarchy must give way to Republicanism; therefore, if you assist the king, and so enable him to do more harm in the ineffectual struggle to support his position, you violate your second duty as well as your first, and only for the sake of a sentiment."

"My reason upholds your words, but my feelings are against them."

"Though feeling is stronger with a woman than with a man, even she must sacrifice it to reason."

"I must return to Gurla at any cost," said Ance, uneasily; "and if the king cannot be persuaded to do the right, I shall do my duty to my country for the sake of my king and myself, for, if he opposes by force the wish of the people, he will die by their righteous anger. With Duke Dreman's assistance, I hope to be able to prevent a rupture, and establish peace and progress."

"The duke—my husband—will always help in a righteous cause."

"Father," said Vernon, "will never help me to gather snails; he says I am able to get them without him, so if he helped me I should get lazy."

"I want your father's help to enable me to do something I cannot do alone. Do you think he will give it to me, Vernon?"

"I think so," said the boy, with conviction.

"Verney and I are partners," said Novel, anxious to say something. "Count the snails, mother dear."

"Help me, my boys," said the mother. And the snails were separately counted by the elder and then by the younger boy, first from the separate barrows and then together, after which the number of farthings each earned separately and together were counted up, so that the boys for pastime had a lesson in arithmetic.

"In disestablishing a monarchy," said General Ance, "all who benefit by it have to be counted amongst its supporters. These include all holders or possible inheritors of hereditary titles and those they can influence; for such titles, like a monarchy, are only created to establish a certain family in a favoured position, irrespective of their fitness or their unfitness, and so maintain them in a drone-like state on the labours of the workers in the community."

"But even so," replied the duchess, "they are in such a helpless minority that, directly the people see what is for the general good, they must go without a struggle. From the ranks of the people there will be some timid and some brainless seceders, while from

the monarchical ranks to the army of progress will come all those who are wise leaders of men, all those who see the wisdom of going with the times, and all those who are strong or good enough to uphold what is right."

"All that is so, but the struggle remains to be made. There are so many conflicting interests in question that I fear a civil war cannot be averted."

"As the change must come, fears will only tend to increase, or bring on the war you dread. By facing the inevitable boldly, half its dangers are overcome."

"This also I admit. I only fear to bring on disaster by a false move."

"If you are afraid," said Vernon, who had been listening, "you will never learn to swim."

General Ance smiled. "I shall not fear, Vernon."

"Then," said the child, "you will be all right."

On Duke Dreman's return we heard that the first batch of prisoners had been shown Zimera, and started on their journey home.

"They wanted very much," he said, "to learn if I would advocate giving Gurla the same assistance to join the Commonwealth of Undara that had been given Ura to join Zara, but I told them that, personally, I would be guided by circumstances, as I thought the Parliament would be."

"All this," said Ance, "points to the fact of a general dissatisfaction with kings as they are, and a desire for a change."

"And this desire has been quickened since they have seen the fruits and realized the power of our government," said the duke, proudly.

Hardly had the last of the prisoners returned to Gurla when an embassy from King Edward, under the presidency of General Ance—who had, by this, quite recovered from his wounds—arrived at Zara with a proposal to the Parliament of Undara, asking them to assist in establishing their leading laws at Gurla, and to assist the king in restoring tranquility to his kingdom. Before arrangements could be made to officially receive this embassy, another arrived from Gurla, under the care of William Moran, a Progressive leader, to ask Parliament to receive Gurla into the Commonwealth of Undara, and appoint a dictator to establish their Constitution, and then take such steps for the election of parliamentary representatives in the united legislative assemblies as should be necessary.

The Senators and House of Titles again met in the Great Hall, where I had seen and addressed them shortly after my arrival at Zara, and where they had only since met on some few memorable occasions. Again the auditorium was crowded with an interested and intelligent number of men and women. Duke Dreman, in the Presidential chair, was very little changed, only

a careful observer would detect that the temples were barer of hair, and the manner changed from that of the keen, anxious alertness of a succeeding man to the sedate alertness of a successful one. When the formal business was disposed of, General Ance appeared at the bar of the chamber, and with a cold and polished manner commenced to address the legislators. He stated that he felt certain the late war was equally a source of sorrow in Undara as in Gurla, that the defeated were hasty and ill-advised in their disastrous assault they now clearly saw, but felt their conquerors would be generous as they were strong. He went on to point out that through the war, and the sedition actively preached by a band of professional agitators, great discontent and trouble had been created throughout the land of Gurla, seeing which the king and parliament had deputed him to wait on the President and Parliament of Undara, and ask them to appoint a commission to visit Gurla, and there take action to establish the Undara laws in connection with the present monarchical government.

The address, though a brilliant oratorical effort, awoke no enthusiasm. The audience were all educated and intellectual, and so saw the fallacy of trying to establish wise laws in a country labouring under an oligarchy that wanted to keep for a favoured few all the good things in the State.

When Ance retired, William Moran took his place, and the complete difference in the two men was strikingly shown. Moran, short and stout, was carelessly dressed, and rough as Ance was polished. The energy shown in his quick movements bubbled over at every chance, in impassioned speech and rough gestures. His brown eyes gleamed in a strong hairy face, and his voice, strong as a bull's, made the great hall echo with his words.

"I come," he said, "from the people of Gurla, who are against all wars, and the past disastrous one in particular, which was a king's fight and not a people's fight."

In a flood of wrathful eloquence he compared the laws of Undara with those of Gurla, much to the detriment of the latter.

"We want," he said, "only equal rights for all, so that every man may occupy a position according to his energy and ability, and not according to his birth." He ended up his stirring speech by asking, "Let the votes of every man of full age be taken for or against the federation of Gurla with Undara, under all the laws of the latter. Such a vote will show that, with the exception of the interested few, the people of Gurla are in favour of equitable laws and are tired of the oppression of monarchy. Take, therefore—I, on behalf of the people of Gurla, implore you—such a vote, and if it results as I predict, bring us under your laws and let all Fregida be united under the laws of Undara."

This speech touched the hearts of the hearers, and we all felt that the man's mission would bear the fruit of success.

In the evening the men met. Moran held out his hand, "I wish we had you with us, General. The people may be guided, but cannot be driven. By joining the progressive party you can shield your own section and help us."

"I hope," replied Ance, "to guide the people for their good, but to do this I must establish the king and crush treason."

It was decided, after much discussion, to send a portion of the army to Gurla, and to take a plebiscite in favour of bringing it under the laws of Undara in their entirety, or modified by those of the established monarchy.

Before Ance returned home he called on the Duke and Duchess Dreman. "I think, General," said the duchess, "that you have succeeded both in your mission and your wish to avert any civil strife in your country. Both you and William Moran have succeeded in getting your request granted, if you can prove it is wished by the country, as you assert. One of you must be mistaken, but in either case peace will be maintained and progress established."

"I have every hope that things will result as you think, and if so, I am satisfied."

"The result," said Duke Dreman, "will certainly be to establish peace. Cula Dero will go in charge of the soldiers, and will crush any rebellion as ruthlessly as he crushed the invading army."

In a very short time a strong force, under the charge of General Dero, were marching to Gurla, accompanied by those appointed to take the plebiscite, amongst whom I was one. The march to Gurla was without incident worthy of note. On arriving we were received by both parties with equal cordiality, and entered the barracks which had been prepared for the soldiery amidst music and every sign of welcome.

In the evening, by invitation, General Dero and I visited General Ance at the R—— Club, an institution founded for the use of the more exclusive senior members of the army, and which included amongst its members Princes Arthur and Valentine. The former was a young man whose chief interest seemed to be in keeping his waistcoat and cuffs in exactly their proper position; the latter was a nondescript young man, who had either arrived at the conclusion that he couldn't do anything of note if he tried, or else that it was beneath his dignity to do anything unusual if he could. All the members were dressed in black suits in universal use for evening wear in the Middle Globe, and the dead level of their dull monotony was horrible to gaze on, after the bright costumes that allowed individual character to charmingly appear at Undara. The libraries and other rooms were attended by a number of waiters, who came when any of the bells, placed on the tables in all directions, were rung. These were instead of the indexes that, in the Undara libraries, enabled any book, of

which the name or author was named, to be found in a moment. I noticed also that when anything was done with, the person using it put it carelessly down for the waiters to return to its place. By these means the clubmen cultivated dependence, laziness, and selfishness, to a wonderful degree. As we sat smoking and chatting, a number of waiters stood solemnly by, ready at our beck to move a chair, go for a book, or do our slightest bidding, thus spending a useless existence to make others as utterly lazy as nature would permit.

"Have you decided on the mode of taking the plebiscite?" asked Prince Arthur, politely.

"Yes," said Cula, "as soon as arrangements can be made. In every town in Gurla one or more commissioners will be appointed to receive voting papers for two consecutive days."

"What an awful trouble," said the Prince.

"I understood," said Ance, "that it would be compulsory on every man to record his vote."

"So it will be. Against every man who does not record his vote a warrant will issue, committing him to goal for three days."

"I suppose," said Prince Valentine, "you will except men like us?"

"No!" replied Cula. "I except no man from the king downwards."

The prince's eyeglass dropped, and General Ance's big blue eyes opened wide. Cula, in his ignorance of privileged institutions, regarded it as absurd that any one should be allowed to escape his civic duties, and believed the higher the position, the more scrupulously the duty should be performed. When the momentary suspense subsided, Ance asked, "Is a visit to the voting booth necessary?"

"No; any voter who wishes, may sign a voting paper in the presence of two householders, and send it instead of attending."

As the election approached, the excitement was intense, each side, though confident of victory, doing their best to deserve it. General Ance worked for his party with a wisdom that forgot nothing and left nothing undone. Rents were remitted, houses repaired at every suggestion of the tenants, donations lavishly bestowed, purchases profusely made, and an unknown familiar courtesy took the place of the empty superiority so distantly observed by the privileged classes. Every day added to the popularity of the party so wisely and energetically led by Ance; meanwhile Moran, with haggard face and flashing eyes, rallied his forces, confirming the doubters and occasionally gaining over an opponent. The prisoners, who had been shown the inner working of Undara, to a man worked for the party of progress, and aided by a number of men brought from Ura, preached in favour of the Undara laws in their entirety, with a positiveness that carried conviction to the minds of the hearers The prospect

of work and plenty for all was held up to the industrious, and a picture of Pentona drawn for the thieves and loafers, that made them smile with satisfaction. Ance's party—personally, he never preached fallacy—pointed out the prosperity caused by the king and nobles employing carriage builders, gardeners, waiting men and women, and a host of other workers. Where, they asked, will these people go for a living if we are deposed? Builders, florists, servants, and a host of others will be thrown out of work, and forced to compete with other trades, all of which are now over-manned, and so wages will be forced down, and the condition of the labourers be made worse than ever. Our actions have made trade thrive and everything prosperous, we will continue this state if you vote for us and the Undara laws. The lavish expenditure continued, in every way the king's party worked with energy, largely under the generalship of General Ance.

"We will succeed," he said, with triumph on his placid face, "and it will be better for Gurla that we do. Republicanism is the only possible government when all men are educated in mind and manner, but till then, monarchy is best. Gurla is not yet ripe for a change. Undoubtedly we will succeed."

Meanwhile, Moran and his party had been active. The monarchy, and hereditary aristocracy who are its foundation, he argued, spend money freely, but how is it gained? By making you work long hours for short pay. How do they spend it? By dressing in silk and laces, riding in carriages, and having men and women to wait on them, while you dress in rags, trudge home tired after your day's work, and the mothers of your children, unassisted, toil at their housework while the baby cries in the cradle. If these people have to work, instead of living in idleness, and their servitors are at liberty to assist in the work of the world, what will result? Your fields will be better tilled, and so more fruitful; you will have many things beyond your present means, and your hours of labour will be shortened, so that you can cultivate your minds and be intelligent human beings, instead of mere machines. What is the difference between the wealthy and the working classes? Only this. The first have leisure to use their brains, and so become—as a class—cleanly and temperate in their minds and bodies, considerate of each other in everything for the general good, and by cultivating self-respect and self-control at all times and in all things, live what they call the higher existence, when they should call it the more favoured existence. The working class, who toil long hours in penury, so that a favoured few can live slothful, pampered existences, have no time to cultivate their brains, nature demanding rest, when their toil is over, and cannot always be cleanly, as cleanliness necessitates changes of clothes, and time to wash floors, and do the work of cleansing. The pangs of want force them to

intemperance in times of plenty—the starved wolf gorges till he can hardly move, when the chance offers, and any appetite when starved, longs for repletion. They cannot be always considerate when impelled by penury; or a meal for two has to be shared by six. Consideration is a growth of competency. Self-respect is hard to keep in company with hunger, and the dead weariness of overwork, with all its consequent unpleasantnesses, and the unhealthy surroundings of both. When the working-man is given leisure to cultivate himself, he will be the superior of all others, for his calling is the most natural and the healthiest—health and happiness are twin sisters—the healthy brain comes to greatest perfection in the healthiest body—other things being equal—therefore, the working man with fewest wants and fewest cares, will be a model for every one in all good things.

"See," said William Moran, his coat the while open to the breeze; his hair bristling with excitement; his eyes flashing and his splendid voice reaching as distinct to the uttermost member of the crowd who listened to his words, as it was to those beside him—"see the working man in Undara, he is only different from the lawyer or statesman in being more robust. In all else he is his equal. Sir Diso Rota—who brought news of the army to that monarch who, having sent our loved ones to their death, now asks us to continue him and his in their idle influence for evil—was a toiler who studied the earth and the substances his muscles moved, and so devised means to render them more beneficial while less noxious. Upward he climbed, the steps he used being gifts to humanity in the shape of useful inventions, so that his progress benefited others no less than himself. Many there are such as he in Undara, and many such will be in Gurla when we have joined Undara. What Zara has done for Ura, Undara can do for Gurla; if you feel that you are not fit for freedom such as our neighbours have, vote for a continuation of our slavery."

The man's pluck and energy lent itself to the multitude till they thought his thoughts, quoted his words, and felt the fever of a great ambition.

On the first day of the polling each party expressed and probably felt certain of victory. Carriages, bands, feasts, orations, and many other things, all attracted the citizens in their various ways. The king and nobles in their splendid equipages, with gaudy military surroundings, attracted the gaze of all, but excited feelings widely different in various people. To some they seemed the obsolete continuance of the only state of things possible when might was right, and a king fought for his throne as a lion for his lair. Then, when a king becomes weak and governs badly, he was deposed by some able general or distant relative, or perchance had his head cut off. In these days, when rulers can neither be deposed nor beheaded, no matter how unfit they are for their position, surely it is time the head of the State was

chosen for worth, not birth, and periodically passed the approving vote of the people, or gave way to a better man. Others, principally those interested, and women—every woman who is not plain nurses the possibility of joining the hereditary aristocracy by marriage, and so for ever providing for her descendants in laziness—regarded the gaudy procession as one ordained by heaven to be maintained at the expense of the vulgar worker, toiling contentedly in that state of misery to which heaven had appointed him. What a cruel conservatism heaven is according to some people!

At the end of the first day nearly all the votes were recorded, and each side commenced to proclaim their certainty of victory, which only proved how many people run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. The second day went slowly, the few voters who had not voted being brought to the poll by their friends. General Ance and William Moran appeared everywhere. The former calm, soldierly, and ready with composed mien but hawk-like vision, turning where possible everything in his party favour; the latter tornado-like, with flashing eyes and hollow cheek, ceaselessly orated, cheered or urged his party on to increased exertions. As the poll finally closed, cheer and counter cheer echoed in the air, and the streets became blocked with a murmuring multitude. The result could not be declared for some time. The crowd became quieter. I was talking to Moran at its outskirts. A man passing said,—

"Milly is waiting for you at the corner, Moran."

Still we talked on; then another said,—

"Your daughter is looking for you yonder."

"All right," said Moran; "I'll go to her in a minute."

Several more messages were delivered to the same purport, and the same answer given. At last I noticed a healthy round-faced maiden walking slowly and timidly towards us. She was evidently the daughter spoken of, whom some of the passers had informed of her father's position. Presently she slid her hand into his. Involuntarily their hands clasped, and, looking down, he took her up in his arms and kissed her.

"Put me down, father dear, you are too tired to nurse me."

Putting her down, their hands again clasped.

"This is my Milly, Doctor Frank. She's the best little woman in a house that ever was—the tidiest and the kindest."

The child smiled, pleased at her father's praise.

"Go home, father, mother wants you to have your tea. Take the gentleman, and I'll bring you the news."

"All right, Milly, I will." And off we walked, leaving the little maid gazing after us with wistful eyes.

After a sharp ten minutes' walk we came to a small cottage in a well-cared-for garden. The noise of the gate opening and closing brought out two little girls, who rushed out to welcome their

father. On entering the cottage, I found a small, tidy, neatly-furnished room, by the window of which stood a sofa, and in a corner a baby's cot. A pale woman, with a sweet, worn face, came to meet her husband, whose kisses, under my eyes, she shyly received, while for a moment she held his hand. We sat down, and she left us.

"I have five daughters, Doctor Frank, the eldest of whom came for us, and the youngest is asleep in the cradle."

He went over and kissed a baby face that lay quiet and sleeping. As he sat down on the sofa, two little girls came and sat on his knees. My presence made them a little shy.

"Have we won, father?" the eldest child presently inquired.

"I hope so, dear, but we don't know yet."

His wife came in with the supper. Fresh omelettes, hop-tea and scones. Everything was nice, but the niceness was kept within the most economical limits. The cottage was such as I should imagine probable amongst the high-class workers of the Middle Globe. As we commenced to eat, the wife said,—

"He never takes spirits. I think he ought. He has had very little sleep, and it would do him good."

Intoxicants of all sorts were largely used at Gurla, especially amongst the poorest classes, very much to their misery and debasement.

"Spirits would sometimes do me good when I am tired out, but I preach total abstinence, so I must practise it at any cost."

"Why do you so preach?"

"Because intoxicants are the main factor in debasing the working classes."

"I think," said his wife, "he should take some as medicine. He had only four hours' sleep last night, and has not averaged four for the last week."

The man's eyes were bright and active, but his cheeks were pale and hollow, and evidently only excitement and energy kept him up.

"Listen!" He held up his hand. We heard rapid footsteps of someone running. The gate was thrown open. He rose, and as he went to the door, it was thrown open.

"We've won! we've won!" Milly, flushed and panting, held out a paper to her father. Seizing it, he sat on the sofa to read it, for the twilight of evening was deepening to dusk.

"King, 108,259; progress, 189,603; majority, 81,344. We have conquered. Hurrah!"

"But," I said, "you must wait for the returns from Bulla, and all the little towns, before you are certain."

"We will get a double majority in all of them. I only feared we might be too far behind in Gurla, which is largely kept up by the monarchical expenditure, for us to catch up by our outside majorities."

"Well, I am glad you succeeded; General Dero will do all you want now to quickly bring about the federation."

I turned to Mrs. Moran. "I met General Dero the first night after I was rescued from starvation in the snow; he was then unmarried, and—"

I was interrupted by a sound, half snore half sigh. Moran had leant back and had gone to sleep. Milly turned out the light and pulled down the blind. Mrs. Moran loosened her husband's collar and shirt-band, while two of the little girls took off his boots. I motioned them to go on, and finished my supper in silence. Quietly mother and daughter glided about, till in a few minutes the sleeping man was made comfortable on the sofa and covered with a rug.

"He is tired out," said his wife, in a low voice. "I know you will excuse him. He has worked so hard."

I looked at his face, from which the excitement had vanished. It was utterly wearied and worn. His mouth opened, and, slightly turning, he commenced to snore. When there was work to do he had done it; now he had conquered, surely he deserved rest. I kissed the children, bade his wife good-bye, and left him sleeping.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LAYING THE COPING STONE.

THE last returns had come in, and the opinion of the people been declared overwhelmingly in favour of federation with Undara, and the adoption of its laws and constitutions in its entirety.

General Dero had been declared Military Dictator with absolute powers, till the election of senators to represent Gurla in the Federal Parliament.

One morning General Ance came to me, his face grave and anxious. "I am afraid there will be some demonstration of discontent, Doctor Frank, and that General Dero will crush it with needless severity. Can anything be done to influence him?"

"I do not think you will find him more severe than is absolutely necessary," I replied. "Cannot you influence your party to pacific measures?"

"There are a section of the younger monarchical party who are so utterly discontented as to think anything preferable to the present laws, which give no preference to the son of a king over the son of a beggar, but regard only personal worth."

"What do they urge against this?"

"They say their forefathers founded Gurla, and devoted their lives to its welfare, and so they should have the benefit of it sooner than the son of a man who safely worked at home, or perchance, as robber or thief, worked against its progress. Yet now the son of the greatest rogue, if abler than the son of the greatest statesman, can excel him by his worth, so that the father's noble actions are unavailing for the son."

"The good man's son will get assistance denied to the thief's son, but if he still is outstripped it is better for both, and the State, that each fills a position according to his abilities. It is no more just that a man should be punished for his father's sins, than he should be rewarded for his father's efforts. Justice demands that every man should be punished or rewarded solely in accordance with his own actions."

"All this is just and wise, but these young men and their fathers have been enabled to live solely to gratify themselves, simply through the industry of their forefathers, and cannot now

ungrumblingly fight the battles of life on a level with their fellow-men."

Long and earnestly Ance argued for clemency for the young and hot-headed section of his party, adducing only in their favour the fact that, being used to privileges which they were brought up to regard as their rights, they could not at once be content with only justice. Eventually we paid a visit to Cula Dero.

"Cula," I said, "General Ance and I have been talking of the hardship the pampered young aristocrats are subjected to, through being deprived of all their privileges at once, and we have come to ask you to be as lenient towards them, notwithstanding their folly, as circumstances will permit."

"I have," said General Dero, "a duty to perform, which I am not at liberty to sacrifice for friend or foe. The masses say that the classes have enjoyed unfair privileges so long that they should have a turn now. Of course I reply, No! a wrong state of legislation has been in force, sweep it away; those who suffer by just laws have only themselves to blame. If they have lived as drones so long that they cannot now act as working bees, so much the worse for them. We are sorry for these people. They shall be well fed and cared for, as others are, if they cannot work. There are some who are trying to foster rebellion, if they succeed it will be my duty to take such measures as will shield the community from their folly, and prevent a repetition of it. Say from me, General Ance"—Dero's strong face was kind, though decided—"that justice is best for all, for though many will be made happy, wrong will be done to none. Let them do their duty, and they will be happier in their new state than they were in the old. My duty I am prepared to do; I am sure you will do your best to make it a pleasant one, for which I thank you, and wish you success."

He held out his hand to us, and we bade him good-bye and left.

A large section of the dissatisfied soldiers were in a barracks on the outskirts of the city. On one side of them were public parks, and on the other dwelling-houses. These barracks had been newly fitted up, and contained a number of stores of different sorts, and the soldiers were better treated than they had ever been before. We had often discussed the wisdom of Dero in putting all the disaffected, and liable to be disaffected, portion of the army together in the one barracks, especially as they much outnumbered that of the Undara contingent, who were only safe in being in accord with the popular voice. Rumours of a rebellion on the part of the deposed monarchical party had been freely circulated, but the hopelessness of any outbreak made them generally discredited.

One afternoon the Gurla soldiers, with music, and flags flying, appeared in the streets armed, and in marching order. The rebellion had commenced. An attempt would be made to establish

the monarchy by force. General Ance, who had lately appeared anxious and worried, appeared at my chambers more excited than I had ever seen him.

His blue eyes, generally so calm, appeared to glisten, his face worked with passion and excitement.

Without a word he commenced, "Those fools have broken out. Dero has conciliated them at my request, till I believe they think he is frightened of them."

He laughed savagely.

"Frightened of them!"

Again he laughed, but scorn, not mirth, was only apparent.

"That man is as hard as adamant, and fierce as hell. I believe he will annihilate those damned fools, as he did the army."

Ance stopped, overcome with rage and grief.

"Speak to them as you now speak, and if they go back to their duty General Dero will, I feel certain, pardon them, even now."

Ance considered for a moment.

"Come with me to Dero, and I will then go to Prince Arthur and the restless fools who are with him, and point out their folly as forcibly as possible."

On calling on General Dero we learnt that he was in council with several officers, and, after waiting for some time, we were shown into his room.

"This is a serious state of things, Ance," he said, severely. "If these men are not careful I shall have to make an example of them."

"If they unconditionally surrender, will you overlook their folly?" pleaded Ance.

"I can make no terms with them. If they do not send in their submission at once I shall act."

His face was quietly severe. I thought of his words before the battle of Dravena, and shuddered.

"I have sent for them, and they replied that if I would undertake that they should go free after the interview they would come."

"And you replied?" asked Ance.

"I told them to come and receive my orders, after which they could go. I expect them here shortly," said Dero, curtly.

"May I receive them first?" asked Ance.

"Yes!"

"Will you come with me, Doctor Fairleigh?"

"Certainly, if you wish it," and so we went to waylay the foolish rebels, and try and bring them to reason.

When they came he found they were represented by Prince Arthur and two young soldier aristocrats.

Ance motioned them to be seated.

"Gentlemen," he said, deeply agitated, "your present conduct,

if persisted in, will bring death on yourselves. This you may not fear, but it will do more, it will bring destruction on your followers. Surely this prospect will make you hesitate."

The prince pulled up his collar and adjusted his cuffs, "We must assert ourselves. We—ah, we—ah."

A powerful dark man spoke up for the prince, who had become overcome with his oratorical effort. "General Ance, you should be of our party. Why are you not? We ask only for our rights, and that the privileges our fathers fought for should be accorded us. We have lived happily without these invaders, and we will force them to leave us to ourselves, or die in the attempt. There must always be ruled and rulers, and who are so fit to lead a people as their natural leaders?"

The prince pulled down his cuffs, and moved his neck into better adjustment with his collar. Once princes were rulers, but these princes were incapable of anything but badly delivering speeches written for them, and acting as cat's-paws.

"You have the privilege to work and earn as your father did, and the influence of their name," said Ance, sternly. "You are entitled to no more. The people have overwhelmingly declared for a change, you can lead them still, if you have the ability. You could not influence their vote. You have not the power to oppose them, though you may be crushed beneath their advance, if you try to force them to suffer under the laws that were passed to regulate a community, half of whom were ignorant as the animals, and half badly educated. Now all are enlightened and must have equal rights."

"Sir! You preach treason to the throne and to your order," said the first speaker, excitedly.

"You have been misinformed, sir," said the prince, with nervous trepidation.

A knock came at the door. "General Dero was ready to receive Prince Arthur."

"Remember," said Ance, "you do not represent the people, but only yourselves. That you are in a hopeless minority, have reason against you, and can only bring destruction on yourself and your followers."

Without another word we went into Dero, whom we found surrounded by his officers.

"Sit down, General Ance. Be seated, Doctor Fairleigh."

The prince and the others were left standing. General Dero turned to them and said, "I have sent for you to tell you that you have forgotten your duty, and to instruct you to surrender for trial forthwith."

"And if we refuse to obey you?" asked the dark man who spoke before.

"I shall act as I think necessary," replied Dero, with a sternness that made me tremble.

"Do you forget, General Dero, that we have command of two soldiers to your one, and that you are in our power?"

"I forget nothing. Do you represent all the soldiers in your barracks?"

"The prince does."

Dero turned to an officer near him, "When is the moon brightest?"

"At twenty-two to-night."

He looked at the prince, "If you and all the rebels do not surrender before that hour, I will act. Go!" Deo pointed to the door, which an attendant opened, and through which the prince and his party trooped crestfallen.

When they had gone, Ance turned to Dero. "You must be nauseated with slaughter, General Dero. As you are strong, be merciful," he said, his beautiful voice thrilling with emotion.

"I have a duty to perform," replied Dero, kindly, but firmly. "No portion of the community must act to the detriment of any other. I must be just. I would prefer to be generous."

As we left, Ance said, "Those fools will be punished unmercifully. How, I do not know. They are unable to capture the Undara camp, but still less is Dero able to capture, or even assail them. What he will do, I cannot even conjecture."

A feeling of dread and uncertainty pervaded all classes. General Dero's power in destroying the splendid army of Gurla and Roda had inspired the people with an endless belief in his power, but still . . .

The soldiers under the prince were more than twice as numerous as those under Dero, and being in their native town, would receive at least passive assistance from many of the townspeople, while their opponents would be hampered in every way.

General Dero's stern treatment of the prince and his fellow-rebels had spread terror everywhere. Would aerial vessels appear at the appointed time? Was an auxiliary force on the way? What would happen? Meanwhile the prince was not idle. All the houses facing the barracks had been seized and fortified. Cannon were in position, and every preparation made. Slowly the time passed.

The new laws, by causing active preparations to be made for the banking of the river, and other large public works, had caused universal prosperity and content. Only the king and nobles were dissatisfied. They had lived so long on the toil of others, that they were unable to do anything adequate for themselves.

As the appointed hour approached, the barracks were surrounded by Undara soldiers. Hardly enough to stop a mob of unarmed men. What did it mean? Ance and I were watching in the outskirts of the park. Anxiously, from time to time, he scanned the skies. No aerial vessel appeared. It was the custom of the

clocks to peal before the hour, and strike one or more times, as necessary, up to ten, after which it struck the double numbers separately, as two, then an interval, and one, for twenty-one; or one, then an interval, and three, for thirteen. As the time of striking the hour approached, Ance grasped my arm. I could feel him tremble. The suspense was intense. The uncertainty. What would happen? The chimes commenced. Two struck solemnly, and then a long wait, during which, I heard my heart beat loud as a drum. I was sensible of Ance's fingers grasping my arm with a grip of steel. I thought the flesh would be crushed, but still, I only watched, it didn't seem to concern me. The sound of the first of the concluding two strokes of the clock, rang through the air, then the second, and with the sound the middle barrack rose high in the air, dividing as it went, and fell with a crash that shook the earth. A gust of wind from the explosion staggered us. A second and a third explosion, and the three barracks were heaps of ruins. Lumps of stone and masses of timber fell on all sides amidst a cloud of dust. The houses opposite the ruined barracks were shattered and broken in all directions, but as they were held by the rebel soldiers, no civilian suffered. The wind gently blew the dust away, and a heap of ruined walls and shattered timber alone marked the site of the great barracks lately held by the last handful of soldiers who fought for the obsolete government of an hereditary oligarchy.

Ance stood like a man paralyzed. I shook him by the arm.

"All right," he said. "He has annihilated the last of them. "I tried to persuade them to reason, but the young asses, brave in their ignorance, would have their own way."

"How did it happen?" I asked, bewildered.

"Dynamite. I saw it go in, and thought I saw it go out, and so did others, but we must have been mistaken. He is a wonderful man. I believe he would blow up the whole town without compunction, if he believed it to be his duty."

"He is a man who spares neither man nor multitude, yet he is as kind and gentle as a woman on ordinary occasions."

Afterwards, we found that Dero, when the barracks were being renovated, had built a mass of explosives in the middle of each building, filling up the dynamite boxes with the earth taken from the excavation and removing them when the buildings had been given up, thus leading the Gurlas to believe that it was all taken away, and causing them to be completely under his power if they rebelled. Hardly had we recovered from our consternation when we saw a double line of soldiers close round the ruins. With an effort, we gathered our wits together, and following the soldiers, approached as near the ruins as they would let us. They had told off a rescuing squad, who brought from the *débris* all the wounded they could find. All through the night they worked, bringing from the ruined pile the wounded, the dead, and the

dying. Early in the evening, a soldier, pulling from a heap of bricks a rifle by the muzzle, caused it somehow to go off, and fell dead with a bullet through his chest. Under ordinary circumstances, the incident would have created horror, but one, more or less, to the great heap of killed mattered very little. As the morning broke, cold and grey, the stream of litter bearers still straggled to and from the hospital. The great ruin continued to give up the dying or dead, the workers were changed, but the work went on. Midday came, but still the excavators worked on, though the crowd had dispersed and the workers went on their way. "The soldiers courted their doom," they said, "let them bear it the best they can."

When the evening came the scene was quiet. Groups of people gathered to gaze at the ruins and the shattered houses, Moran amongst them. "They have disregarded the voice of the people," he said, "and have suffered justly. Undara is strong to strike as to shelter. All must work that none may starve. Progress has now no opponents. Men shall neither be born to rule nor to slave. There is lots for all if it is fairly shared, as in future it will be."

Some, discontented, grumbled against the nation that brought death to their fellows, but they were soon silenced. The crowd were content. Those who would not go with it must leave it. The women wept in the hospital, or sorrowing, sat by their dead. Mothers, sisters, wives. What did the cause matter to them? Their men were killed; that alone mattered. Women can never look beyond their home, and can only help progress by elevating the ideas of the men who love them, in all else they are hinderers of progress.

Dero's strategy was the subject of universal wonder. Some held that he had enticed the rebels to their death, and was to blame; others, that he had treated them well, and, as he only upheld the wish of the people, was justified in his punishment of those who opposed it by force.

Shortly after, I learnt that when the hour of surrender approached, General Dero sat with his officers waiting the appointed time. On the table, in front of him, stood a mechanism with three wooden buttons and four wires attached. Three of the wires led to the mines, the fourth to a battery; as the buttons were pressed the mines exploded. Only Dero himself knew of the mines. His officers, approving his system of secrecy, waited till he would reveal his plans. When the two hands covered each other on the face of the clock, he discovered his plans, which were unanimously approved. As the hour sounded he touched the buttons at intervals of a few seconds, and the enemies of Undara were destroyed.

"It is better," he said to me, "to strike seldom and strike hard, than to keep a nation in a state of constant ferment, by using

weak remedies for great evils. Henceforth there will be no trouble with Gurla. Twice have they rebelled, and twice have they suffered. A short war leaves no evil in its train. Long wars are followed by famine, pestilence, and all disorders."

The melancholy procession of funerals now commenced to take place. Those who applied for their dead received them to inter as they wished, while the unclaimed were buried far out in the country in shallow graves, earth to earth, so that in a few years no remnant of them remained. Amongst those who were in the fortified houses at the other side of the street, and were made prisoners, was Prince Arthur, who, with his fellow-captives, was tried before a court martial consisting of four officers, presided over by General Cula.

The Court sat in the large room at the head barracks, and first tried the officers in a batch. As they came in, their sunken eyes and pallid cheeks showed the acuteness of their suffering. The prince, who was not quite spoiled by the deteriorating surroundings of his position, now that he was not overcome by the due adjustment of his linen, appeared a fine manly young fellow, of whom any woman might be proud as a son or a husband. He and the other officers were defended by General Ance and a celebrated lawyer named James Williams.

Williams was a man of great ability, with peculiar head and face; the former very large, with the forehead quite overhanging the latter, which was burlesqued with an ugly nose of so irregular an outline as to appear broken, and adorned by vivacious, but small, black eyes, and a ripe-lipped mouth.

When the charge had been read out to the prisoners, and they were asked to plead, Williams rose, and addressing the Court, said, "May it please you, gentlemen, I object to the jurisdiction of the Court, the Constitution of Undara is not yet in force in Gurla, and the prisoners, if guilty of any crime—which I deny—are only answerable to a tribunal of their own country."

Here Cula stopped him. "At the request of the king's representatives, and also of a representative of the people, who asked that the laws of Undara should be enforced under the monarchy and without change, respectively; a vote of the people was taken, which declared overwhelmingly in favour of the latter. Such being the case, the laws of Undara are now supreme in Gurla. Under these laws I am appointed Military Dictator, and have therefore full power in this and every other case. The prisoners must each plead for themselves."

Williams bowed and sat down.

The prince first rose. "I was ready to fight for my rights, and my country, and am so still. We—my officers and I—are the natural and proper leaders of the people. For my slaughtered soldiers I am sorry—I wish I had died with them—for myself, I will be leader, as is my right, or die."

Few as his words were, they powerfully excited the sympathy of his audience, and subsequently that of everyone. All the world over, pluck and good feeling, in victory or defeat, beget regard and admiration. The prince's fellow-prisoners pleaded in a few words a confirmation of his. The prosecuting officer simply stated the acts of rebellion, the messages that had passed between the general and the prisoners, and their subsequent apprehension, after which Ance rose.

His face was pale and grief-stricken, and his whole attitude sorrow-stricken: "May it please you, gentlemen, in this case there is at once more to be said in urging the prosecution, and in mitigation of punishment, than in any case that has ever been tried, or is likely to be tried in Fregida. In urging the prosecution, it will be remembered that the prisoners took up arms in defiance of an authority elected indirectly at the desire of a majority of their country—this is a great crime—but every excuse for it can be brought forward on behalf of the prisoners. Firstly, they have been the rulers of the country, and so still —erroneously I admit—regard themselves. They believe that the vote given was recorded in a time of excitement, consequent on a great national calamity, and not, nor will it ever be, the real heartfelt opinion of the country. Under these circumstances they made a demonstration, hoping to frighten the Undara force to retreat. They made no attack, nor did they contemplate one. What they would have done had they been attacked does not concern us, as we are not here to try what might have been, but only what has taken place. The prisoners are foolish and inexperienced. They have ruined their own future. They are crushed with hopeless grief. The clemency of the Court will be extended to them, I feel certain, to the fullest extent. Death were a relief to them; life can give no worse sorrow."

Ance sat down, overcome with his own feelings. Williams, in answer to Dero, closed the defence.

Dero spoke: "The prisoners armed themselves and those under their control, against constituted authority. This, under the late army regulations of Gurla, is death. Their conduct has caused the death of almost all those associated with, or under, their command. There is no excuse for their not more carefully considering the lives of those under them. They are now under the merciful policy of Undara, hence their sentences, instead of death, will be five years' work in the State prisons."

The sentence was recorded, and a man who on account of his birth, and in spite of any personal unfitness he might show, would be elevated to the highest position in the State, was to be punished for a crime like any ordinary person. Such is the change that can be constitutionally and wisely effected in a few weeks.

The soldiers who were next tried pleaded that they only

obeyed their officers, as in duty bound, and were each sentenced to a year's work.

A numerous body of prisoners came from Pentona, officered by their fellow-prisoners, and fully armed. That such a body of men should be allowed fully to control themselves was almost a miracle to the people of Gurla, who forgot that wickedness is only folly or misapplied energy, and that there are numbers of irresolute men who are always almost useful and happy when under control. The military prisoners were, irrespective of their late rank, formed into unarmed, but unmanacled parties, and marched, on parole, under armed escorts of Pentona prisoners. With the first party I travelled to Pentona on my way home. We started with music, for it was always held at Undara that what was passed should be regarded as a guide for our future conduct but never as a subject of grief; as the best and bravest way to atone for a past folly was to manfully and cheerfully strive in the present to retrieve the past.

At the close of day we came on a camp formed by the waggons that had preceded us; a square of tents, which were enclosed by a fence of two simple wires, with tall metal posts at regular intervals. At a distance stood the electric baggage waggon. Lighting a huge fire in the middle of the tent ground, the prisoners had their supper and went to bed. On the top of each post an electric light showed surrounding objects plainly by its pale rays. Everything was quiet, and I chatted to the sentries long after the others had gone to bed. Nature, always at her quietest at night, seemed now doubly quiet. The lights, like demons' eyes, seemed to be watching the sleeping scene. Even the wind was at rest. I was tired of thinking of the many changes that, with a fabulous rapidity, had so lately taken place. Just as I had made up my mind to go to bed the lights all went out. I sprang to my feet. They were bright again as ever. Had I dreamed, or had they really ceased their power for a few seconds? The sentry, whose watch had taken him away from me, now approached.

"Did the lights go out?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, laconically.

"What was the reason?"

"The electric current has been diverted by the wires being touched."

"What can have done it?"

"Perhaps an animal. A cat could do it. Perhaps a prisoner. If anything with life did it they are now dead."

A creepy feeling of horror came over me, the man was looking keenly around.

"Come," he said, and he continued his round.

As we reached a turning-point, he stopped and pointed. "Do you see?"

In the direction of his finger I saw what looked like two sticks leaning on the lower wire. Something was behind them. We approached. A prisoner was lying on his face, his two hands clasping the wire, which was about eighteen inches from the ground. He had, by pressing the wire, turned on the full force of the current, and in a second been killed by its force.

In three more days we had reached Pentona without other unusual incident.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"QUINDIRA" REVISITED.

SINCE the occurrence of the events recorded in the last chapter to the time of those now narrated nine years had elapsed.

As Duke Dreman had been for a second time elected President of Undara, which now included all Fregida, his wise and comprehensive policy had been uninterruptedly continued. His great wealth, ability, eloquence, and charm of manner rendered his power almost dictatorial, notwithstanding the fact that he himself unceasingly extended the sovereignty of the people; as, however, in every case, he represented and advocated their opinions, which he largely formed, and for which he undoubtedly worked with unselfish consideration, their supreme power was represented by his acts. Of all his great abilities, that to select the fittest and wisest men for all leading positions, and to give them the full credit for all their actions, was probably the one which most largely added to his success.

The progress of Fregida, now known as Undara, had been as rapid as was consistent with safety and permanency. In the State of Gurla alone did any portion of the community suffer. Here, the class who had lately constituted the holders of hereditary titles, and their immediate connections, were the only sufferers. Being lately in a position which caused them to think that they were above ordinary mortals, while its surrounding tended to deteriorate them below their fellows, as it not only sapped their self-reliance, energy, and all their manly qualities, but encouraged all their appetites to the full at the expense of their intellect and finer feelings, they felt—now that they were placed on a footing according to their worth alone—utterly ill-used and discontented. Men who, in the time of their power, they would not condescend to notice, now outstripped them on all sides, and fairly held in society the positions they lately usurped. Prior to the establishment of the Republic, the majority of public positions were thrown open to competitive examinations only; but still, there had been a great number of positions which were filled with men of birth, not worth, and their great and most substantial prop remained, namely, their value

as husbands. Women of marriageable age whose parents, by a life of penurious saving, were able to largely endow them with money, but whose share of wit or charms were small, realized the splendid stability of a position conferred by a title, not only on its possessor but also on his near relatives, and so offered themselves and their money to support and endow the titled classes. By thus absorbing the fortunes of a large number of the heiresses, and also by bringing into their class many men of very great wealth and ability, they had managed to live, till the establishment of the commonwealth, as vampires on the general community; now, however, that sinecures of all sorts were abolished, and their claims to value as husbands had disappeared, though actually on an equality with their fellow-citizens, they were so much hampered by an extraordinary belief in their own superiority to ordinary persons that many of them were reduced to abject mental and physical misery. Poor people! Till they realized that those who were not of keen intellect should do their share of the world's work by physical labour, they suffered extremely; gradually, however, they realized this fact, and that it was as honourable and satisfactory for a man to earn his living by physical as by mental toil, and then they began to be wise. Before, however, these loafers, who lived in idleness through having too much, were brought to reason, the loafers, who having too little, lived in laziness through physical weakness, foolishness, or a preference for idleness, even if accompanied with a hungry, filthy degradation, were being brought to wise ways. These poor creatures, when given good food, proper clothes, shelter, and work, soon realized the loathsomeness of their late life, and became good members of the community. Many, certainly, preferred to live all their lives at Pentona, and so end their irresolute existence, but this was good for both the community and themselves, as it prevented posterity being burdened with a second edition of their individual selves. All temptations were repressed throughout Fregida, when Gurla became part of Undara. Consumption, leprosy, epilepsy, cancer, insanity, and heart disease, being bars to marriage, soon became almost unknown diseases. Destitution was a thing of the past, and now, gradually, crime of all sorts was becoming unknown. Criminal law was considered not as a means of punishing crime, but as a mode of reforming the criminal and suppressing crime. Medical science was not regarded as a means to keep alive diseased people, to propagate generations of unhealthy misery, but as a means to preserve life, stamp out disease, and prevent its propagation. The laws were founded on common sense and a regard for the benefit of the Commonwealth, before that of the individual. This bore the fruit of general happiness. Formerly the laws of the Republic were enacted primarily for the benefit of the few wealthy people, as those of Gurla were for the benefit of hereditary title-holders and

their connections, and in each case made privileged and protected those for whom they were formed.

Slowly wisdom became prevalent, and slowly—alas, too slowly—foolishness of all sorts decreased, though once having gone it went for ever. In Undara I could see no change during the eighteen years I had lived there. Men and women became old and passed away. Children were born or grew up, the cleared land extended, the roads changed for the better. Houses were built; but all these things came gradually as age to early prime, so gradually as to be unnoticed. In Pentona everything had progressed; the town had doubled in size, twice the extent of river gave light, heat, or power to the inhabitants; far as the eye could reach, cultivated fields, or even plantations and fruiteries extended, all of which was due to the army of paupers which had been sent to this haven that they soon regarded as a heaven. Their miserable existence, which had formerly been devoted to the corruption of their fellow-creatures, had been changed to one of happiness and benefit to society.

In Ura the change had been stupendous. In place of irregular streets—too broad in one place and too narrow in another—were straight, wide, handsome avenues, conveniently at right angles. In place of domiciles, replete with selfish, wasteful splendour, or filthy crowded dens of misery, with every grade between, had risen tall, handsome, regular buildings, giving reasonable luxury and comfort to all. In place of the idle plethoric wealth and the pinched miserable existences of perpetual toil had come wealth, with duties that could not be shirked, and a comfortable competence for all. In place of carriages with two horses, and two or more men, to carry two or three healthy people, as if they were weak-spined cripples, huge, slow, overcrowded vehicles, and slow traffic with occasional blocks, were splendid trams which ran down every street, and provided rapid, comfortable, and economical transit for all; while the dirty, ineffectual horse traffic was replaced by infinitely superior vehicles, using electricity or compressed air. The loafing men and women, who spent their time in dressing themselves to move idly about the streets, thinking only of their own selfish pleasure, and the loafers who stood on the pavement, dirty, hungry and ill-clad, were both removed; and only saved from oblivion by being quoted occasionally to show the folly of the olden times. All extremes had disappeared, the evil excess of each moved to the other and changed to blessings. The golden mean had been reached, and in place of prejudice, favouritism, ignorance, intolerance, and folly of all sorts had come wisdom, which is as completely the father of good as light is of life. Zimera, newer than the cities I have mentioned, had grown up handsomer, healthier, more convenient and better in every way. This was only to be expected. A house built today lacks many of the improvements which are possible in a

house built ten years later, and so with a city. With Pentona, the criminal and foolish people who had found a haven there had built the roads, developed the mines and water-ways, reclaimed the land, and made many other improvements that brought prosperity in their train, and enabled everyone to have all that makes life happy, in exchange for a reasonable day's labour with brain or muscle.

In Gurla the progress, though no greater, had been more noticeable. The prison labour, when first introduced, had caused a great outcry, which reminded me of that against the introduction of machinery, which took place in the Middle Globe, when the working classes were as ignorant, and but little better than the animals. Foolishly they cried out, "This machine, that enables ten men to do the work of a hundred, will throw ninety men out of work to starve, and, by overstocking the labour market, reduce the toilers' value." The result, as everyone knows, was to elevate the labourer, shorten his hours, and improve his condition in every way.

"The labour of the prisons," said the foolish people in Gurla, "will throw men out of work to starve, there is not now enough work for all, we will have to work for less, and become virtually slaves." Foolish people! They forgot that the State could not let them starve. The wasted work, now utilized, made the earth fruitful, so that everyone had plenty. By increasing the number of labourers so much, the hours of all were shortened, so that all classes had time to cultivate themselves; than which, nothing is of greater importance to the State, as the cultivation and elevation of its people are as consequent on each other as is heat on fire. Men, who formerly toiled like machines, till wearied in brain and body, they had only inclination and motive power left, to take them to houses that sold spirituous stimulants, which created a deleterious and exhilarating intoxication, which soon made them besotted, and prematurely old; now that they left their work with some energy to spare, cleansed and happy, sat in the public gardens listening to music, or in the galleries, museums or libraries, learning from pictures and works of art; from specimens and models, or from books, as their inclination impelled them, those things that make happy mankind.

Progress, like an avalanche, goes slowly but surely, sometimes imperceptibly, faster and faster every year, till at last it moves onwards, in a majesty of might, crushing all opposition, and brooking no restraint. So, in Gurla, wisdom had been growing in the heart and mind of the people, till now it moved mightily on, overcoming all opposition, and leaving only the ruins of obstruction in its path.

Last, but not least, was Novel, the new city, founded by Duke Dreman from the wealth of his mines, and the wisdom of his great ability and experience. Laid out on fields and river bank,

with the foresight of genius fortified with experience, and, unhampered with prejudice, it represented the embryo of a godlike ambition, and noble love for mankind, of a master mind who saw in it a power to leaven the whole world with wisdom. Already its influence was felt throughout Undara, and of the applicants for admission to its citizenship, not one in three was granted. Mental and physical excellence, combined with unblemished character, alone gave the entry. Wealth had no golden key to unlock its gates, nor influence any secluded path by which to gain admission. Once the power of love, mightiest power in all the universe, tried to pass to citizenship a woman, fair and good, whose mother had died of consumption. Travo Rica, whose sweet voice at opera and concert moved to joy his audience, and whose gardens with flowers and fruits rewarded the industrious efforts of his husbandry, loved a woman of Ura. He was twenty-four, she three years younger. She must be admitted to citizenship, or he resign it, to enable them to be married. Her lungs were weak, but no sign of the fell disease was apparent. In the Supreme Council it was proposed and seconded that the woman be admitted to citizenship, so that she might become Rica's wife. He and she anxiously witnessed the proceedings. Gravely the proposition was negatived without a division, and no similar one was ever made. The vexations of law, and the sufferings of disease were almost unknown in the community, and anything that could lead to either was rigorously excluded or suppressed. Duke Dreman's power, though nominally only the same as that of any other citizen, was actually an absolute despotism, by the wish of his fellow-citizens. Had he, however, tried to inaugurate folly, his power would have vanished as darkness before the sun. The city was the child of his brain, and no one knew its requirements, or sympathized with its wants, as he did. Personally, he was loved, almost deified. The founder of the community, rich, generous, clever, courteous, powerful, yet sympathetic, he had every quality and requirement for despotism. Thus, in a community where every man had an equal voice in the election of its rulers, and where the majority could diselect, one man had gained an ascendency and personal power, such as physical force alone could not give, and which probably in the world's history no other man ever enjoyed.

At this time my wife and I spent a holiday with the Dremans. At the Ura station we were received by the Duchess and her eldest son. She seemed unchanged. Her life contained all that makes existence happy for a woman. Health, wealth, a devoted husband, clever, healthy children, and a splendid ambition. As our electric carriage moved rapidly towards Quindira, the wonderful change that had taken place in Ura since my first visit forced itself on my mind; then destitution and misery was apparent on all sides, now the first was not possible, and the second not

apparent, and reduced to a minimum. Quindira was unaltered; the duke, having a Presidential residence at both Ura and Zara, used it principally as a place of seclusion, where the younger children grew up, and he and Cora kept their pets, and worked out their ideas. The picturesque building, with its quaint, comfortable arrangements of verandah and outhouses, unique in its picturesqueness, was the cradle of the duke's greatness. Here the early years of his energetic manhood had been successfully devoted to the foundation of his future prosperity. Here the ideas that had brought him wealth had been successfully worked out, and his plans, books, and speeches matured to fruition. And here he had found the woman who had crowned and made perfect his life.

At Quindira we found the duke and his second son waiting to receive us. Father and sons were more like friends than relations, the latter absorbing all the ideas of the former, whose future hopes they represented. Vernon, strangely like the duke, strong in mind and body, already spoke and acted with an originality only second to that of his father; the younger son, though physically like the father, had not his originating powers, but owned, to a great extent, a mental application, which patiently worked out what the duke's or his brother's more energetic brains conceived. The duke's five other children were all girls, and though he was as loving to them as a father could be, the boys were his hope and joy, who, in the future, when time had ended his life, were to carry out his plans, and in whom he felt—odd fancy—he was a mixture of stern logic and quaint ideas—he would continue his existence on earth. When Mary and the Duchess had expressed their mutual good wishes the duke said, "In the electric car in which you came the power generated in descending a declivity is saved to assist in moving on the level, or mounting a hill; the idea is Vernon's," he put his hand on his son's shoulders, "and we worked it out together."

They were wonderfully alike, dressed in the same material of the one fashion—knickerbockers, with jumper, and Vandyke collars—the father, vigorous and young-looking, the son tall and strong, the same vivid face and fearless eyes, the same courtesy of manner; they were but a completed and half-finished edition of each other. The younger son, Novel, was like in face and figure, but with larger, softer eyes, and quieter manner; like his mother, he could execute, but not originate. The little girls, with the rest of the household, looked on their brothers, as, after the duke, the most wonderful beings in the universe.

"My boys," said the duke, "will be partners, and what I have commenced they will more worthily finish."

As usual, one sat on either side of the mother, whom they regarded as requiring their constant courteous attention, the ripest fruit, the sweetest flowers, the cream of everything was for her.

In their infancy their offerings took the form of sweets half sucked away, dead butterflies, young animals, and all things dear to the childish heart. Now, the offerings, though no more prized, were more suitable; wild flowers, fruit, books, specimens of handicraft, and all things of greatest value to the givers.

The duke, continuing, said, "All disease has eventually to be stamped out of the world. This task they will have to transmit to their sons as I do to mine. The secrets of nature have to be discovered, and all her forces controlled for man's benefit."

"Father," said Vernon, "we—it was always *we* with them—will do all this while you live to work with us. Mother's hair may be grey"—he stroked the duchess's beautiful brown locks—"you may be a thing of the past, and we may be fathers of families, but together we will see these things."

"Delays may come," said the duke, thoughtfully, and then continued with a pathetic longing, "If I could only see all this before I die," his nostrils dilated and his face looked as it did in the years past, when he was conquering fate. "Difficulties dishearten, and delays damp resolution, my sons, as you have yet to find."

"We have never looked back, father," said Novel, quietly, "you have toiled and conquered in the past, as we will in the future." The mother drew down his head and kissed him on the mouth. "We will see the fruition of our hopes together, we three, I am certain."

Years after we all remembered these words. The mother, with tears and a beaming face, and all others with a feeling of grief that the growth of the tree should not be witnessed by its planters.

"Will you and Doctor Frank come with us to-morrow, Mary?" asked Vernon. "We are going—father and all—to break in the grey foal for mother."

"I should like to come very much," said my wife. "Why should the duchess want the grey colt broken in?"

"Because," replied Cora, "it is said to be the handsomest horse in Undara. Two years ago, when my boys were out shooting at Mount Boro, they saw a grey mare and her foal canter over a rustic bridge, and jump into a field of oats over a big gate. The boys measured it, and found it was over five feet high. They then stole quietly up to the horses, and saw that they were both very handsome animals. Frightening them, they again jumped the fence, and disappeared in the bush. My boys then determined to buy the foal for me, which they subsequently did, and made arrangements with its owner to let it run loose in the mountains, and feed it in the winter, so that it might grow a fine animal. All this the owner promised and did, for everyone loves my boys."

"And," said Vernon, in his clever complimentary way, "my father's sons."

"Were they not loved for their own sakes, they would be for their father's," replied the duchess, who, from use and mother wit, took the loving compliments from husband and son with a charming grace.

"My boys did this," said the duke, proudly, "as they like their mother to ride only the finest and handsomest horses in Undara."

"Not only this, but because a horse used to climbing the hills is as sure-footed as a goat," explained Vernon, "and besides, the way those horses jumped was wonderful. Supposing mother should like to take a short cut over the fences, that animal will carry her safe as a bird."

The idea seemed so very improbable as to cause Mary and me to smile.

"The horse we break in," he continued, unmoved, "we can be quite sure will be reliable in every way; good-tempered and perfect."

Turning to me, he said with a conviction I found contagious, "You must see that horse, Dr. Frank, to properly realize him."

"Father could buy mother the best horse in the market, but there is not, in my opinion, a horse born like this once in a decade," said Novel, who in action became very like his father and brother, though in repose his dreaming, studious face was wonderfully like his mother's.

"We have," said the duke, "made several improvements in harness—principally devised by the boys—which we will show you to-morrow."

"They work splendidly," said Vernon, the boy of practical energy.

"They are correct according to the highest theory of animal training, which proves that we have only to remove the natural fear inherent in the animal, and plant in its place a belief in the power and kindness of man," said Novel, the boy of study and theory, "to make them our willing slaves."

In the stables we found that each of the boys had his horses and dogs, each of which they personally fed, and to a large extent cared for; the duke wishing to make them physically strong and practical, as well as mentally energetic.

"Do you remember the night that Ben Aver shot my husband, Frank, and how Cedro saved his life?" asked the beautiful duchess, in a voice melodious with thankfulness.

"How you saved my life, by letting Cedro loose, my queen," said the duke, with a loving look.

"I remember it perfectly," I replied. "Sometimes, when I think of it in the dark, it all appears before me vivid as life; from

the flash of the pistol, and Cedro's rush past me, to the moment I stooped over the duke's unconscious face, and saw your tear stains there."

"The time was bitter sweet," said Cora, her eyes humid with old memories; "I thought he would die, and the joy of my future be buried in his grave. How I prayed: I seemed to speak direct to the throne of God. I promised my life—anything—if his life were spared."

"The prayer was heard," said Duke Vernon, kissing his wife's hand with a reverent love, "and your life taken, for it has been mine since that day."

The woman's brown eyes were like dew-laden flowers, and her fair face made soft as a Madonna's, with the shadow of sweet memories.

"Poor Cedro," she said presently, "he died on the anniversary of that day. My husband and I went into the field, and he followed us; he was very old, toothless and weak, and nearly blind. We went and sat down on a seat in the fields; it was a bright, frosty night, and our sealskins, wrapped closely round us, barely kept us from shivering. My husband was carrying a satchel, which he put down by our seat, and forgot, on our returning to the house. When we remembered and went back for it, we found the noble old dog dead beside it. He had stayed to take care of it as he had always done, and the cold had killed him. Poor Cedro. We should not have forgotten. He was true to the last."

"He hardly died, mother dear," said Vernon, soothingly, "the cold made him sleep, and he then passed away. He was gentle and brave, breathing only for the right, and lived a very happy life.'

"All such do," said the duke, and his words seemed to me inspired, and the echo of fate.

CHAPTER XXX.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON.

When the morning sun early shone on the meadows and woods, and the buds opened to his light, and the flowers gave their sweetness to his warm wooing, we started on our way to the farm, where the gray foal had been brought. The duke, the duchess, Mary Vero, and Novel rode, while Vernon took the children, their governess, and myself in the large electro car. We moderated the car's speed to allow the horses to keep within sight, and occasionally come up to us. After a pleasant journey through sunshine and shade, meadows and wood, we came to the farm, and dismounting found the gray foal, whose misnomer our first glance proved.

With two quiet horses, timid and strange, moved a tall snorting dapple gray gelding, with dark muzzle and large black eyes. His small head, set on a massive arched neck, fringed with a long dark mane, was a picture for an artist. The forehead broad, half hid with forelock; the nostrils distended with fright, and pink lined; the whole crowning the arched crest set on a short round body, supported by fine legs with flat strong knees, and ornamented by a matted arched tail that reached the ground.

Quietly Vernon put down his harness. "You will let Novel and me do it all," he said pleadingly to his father, "won't you? He is our horse; we will manage him all ourselves till mother takes him."

"Be careful, boys," said the duke, who was anxiously admiring the beautiful animal. "You are more than all the horses in the world to your mother and me."

"We will be very careful," said Novel; his flushed cheeks and eyes bright with excitement belying his words.

The duke, who never feared for himself, looked slightly nervous for his sons. After all, courage, with a perfect nerve, brings the greatest safety.

Seats were brought for the duchess and my wife, and the rest of us took up the best positions we could find. The two boys, alert and eager, entered the yard with the three horses.

Vernon first took from his trappings a strong, light halter,

which he put on a thin pole he held in his hand, the part to go under the horse's chin resting on it.

Novel, with a whip, the long lash of which he kept carefully coiled round the handle, moved the horses round and round the yard. Vernon now brought his halter along the backs and necks of the moving horses.

The lads from much exercise in all manly sports were supple and graceful as tigers. We all looked on, our pulses quickening. The duke, with compressed lip and proud eye, watched the boys who were the hope of his life. First one horse led, then another.

At last the gray foal came to the front, and Vernon, with a quickness devoid of flurry, dropped the halter on his neck, and bringing the pole in front of the horse freed the halter; the animal threw up its head, the rope was tightened, and for the first time in his life the gray foal felt the trammels of man. With an ineffectual shake of his head he rushed into the middle of the yard, then, feeling the strain of the halter, opposed it, and backed into a corner. Puzzled for a moment he stood still, then, with a bound, came into the middle of the yard, and reared straight up on his hind legs. With a quick backward pull on the halter, Vernon threw him over on his back, and Novel, running to his head, held up his muzzle, and kept him from rising.

The gate was opened, and the two quiet horses driven out to leave the other alone. Shutting the gate, Vernon took a bag, which he put under the animal's head, and relieved Novel, who brought a double strap from their tackling, which he put round the horse's forearm, so that the straps dangled about his legs; next he took a lock of the tail, and tied its ends in a knot, after which both boys patted and caressed the fallen animal, who exhausted with his struggles lay quite quiet.

"Your boys manage their purchase with very little trouble," said my wife to the duke, who was elated with pride.

"They manage very well," he answered, with sparkling eyes. "Usually they do not get a chance of throwing their pupil. They have a lot to do yet, however, for he will make several struggles before he is taught wisdom, as he is in splendid condition, from his sovereignty in the mountains."

The boys now strapped up their pupil's foreleg, opened the gate, and let him free. Springing up, he plunged round the yard, wildly rearing, but hampered as a man on one leg.

Vernon now led him out into the soft turf, where, after a few plunges, he stood, flecked with white foam, and panting, tired. Novel took an end of the halter, and Vernon, catching hold of the horse's mane, loosed his leg. Relieved, the panting animal turned to Vernon, who held out a wisp of grass, smeared with a chemical oil, which the horse sniffed and ate; meanwhile, one boy stroked him, while the other held the halter. Novel now reached, and catching the lock of the tail he had tied in a knot, gave it to Vernon.

"What are they going to do now?" I asked the duke.

"Wait," he whispered; "and you will see."

Vernon now put the halter cord through the lock of hair, and gently drawing the animal's head and tail towards each other, tied it in a bow. The horse, trying to get his tail free, pulled his head, and commenced to move in a circle round and round. Quietly the boys watched him, occasionally approaching, which again started him on his circular course; till tired out he allowed Vernon to catch him, and was rewarded by having his tail freed, and being allowed to stand comfortably.

This time he smelt Vernon's hands and clothes, and when he brought out some more oil-smeared grass, ate it with evident enjoyment. A leather headstall with a long strap was now substituted for the halter, and a surcingle put on the gray foal, who, though still timid, regarded the boys with more favour. They now led him up to us, and with a half hoop began to scrape away the sweat which streamed off after his exertions. The beautiful animal already began to be friendly with his captors, and to regard their strength as overwhelming. The boys, who looked so athletic beside their fellows, in comparison with the splendid strength of their purchase seemed slimly fragile; he, with arched neck, sniffed inquiringly at everything. The boys next took the strap attached to the headstall, passed it through the surcingle under the horse's tail, and so back again, tied it to a post, so that if the horse went backwards he pulled on his own spine. After one half-hearted struggle, the horse found this and refused to pull any more.

With a knife the boys now unravelled the never combed tangles of the beautiful mane and tail, and the gray foal began to look a cultivated specimen of equine beauty. Leading the quieted horse, we now went to the farmhouse to have some dinner.

On either side of the mother stood the boys.

"What shall we call him, mother?" asked Vernon.

"We must consider carefully," said the duchess, smilingly, "and ask Mary Fairleigh to help us. She named Undara, and perhaps can suggest some equally happy name for the gray foal."

My wife smiled. She loved the boys, as, indeed, did all who knew them, so brave and thoughtful were they; and though not handsome with a regular-featured prettiness, they had the glorious beauty of health, strength, ability, and goodness, to which they added the most charming manners. I could never quite understand why she refused the duke when he was Vernon Dreman, the progressionist.

Often neither the woman herself nor any human ingenuity can tell why she refuses one man for another, who has less than one half his advantages. No one more thoroughly admired the duke than Mary, and yet she refused his love; still, I think she loved the lads more than she would had their father not paid her the

compliment—the highest man can pay woman—to ask her to be his wife.

"I have thought of a name," said my wife; "but only by a legend can I tell you the reason I think the gray foal should bear it."

"Tell us, please, dear," they asked.

"Amongst the Rodas," replied Mary, "the young men used to regard their mothers as slaves, whose duty was to work for them without further notice than the blows they received when their work did not receive their approval. The young women were dressed and cared for till they were married, when their life of toil began. Now in these times—which were very many years ago—there grew up amongst the Rodas a young man, strong and brave; his laugh was as loud as the north wind, while his heart was as warm and as kind as the sunshine. His canoe was first on the waves, as he was foremost in the hunt. Strong men made way before him, for he was sudden and terrible in his wrath; yet the little children looked up into his face and smiled, for instinctively they knew he was good. Alone he would slay the white bear and the sea-lion, and more seal and walrus fell to his spear than were captured by any other three men of all the tribes. Now when he came from the hunt he would have his mother to sit by him and eat with him, and not, as was the custom, take all the best and leave her afterwards to feed on the scraps. Round her neck he hung strings of bears' claws, and he would bring her the shark's teeth and the skin of the seal for her use and adornment. Seeing this, the men marvelled, and would have scoffed, had they dared, at one who so disregarded their customs. But Motrarer—that was the hero's name—knew not, or cared not, but would have his mother to sit beside him when the feast was done, and smile with kindness when she stroked his beard, which was long and dark as the raven's wing. Now when a man is strong and succeeds, his fellows regard his acts with favour, and soon copy them. So it was in this case, and the young men began to bring their mothers presents, and show them kindness never before received by them. These, after a time, were called Motrarer, after the hero. When the hunter would bring his old mother a piece of seal fat or some bears' claws, he would say 'Motrarer,' and she would he happy, for she knew his heart was kind like that of the mighty man they all loved. You have brought your mother a present, as did the hero I tell of—a hero's deeds live for ever, and for ever bear fruit—will you call it, as the Rodas did, 'Motrarer?'"

The duchess's big brown eyes shone bright.

"My boys are like that hero," she said, moved to emotional joy. "They are brave and kind, and as I now kiss their lips, I shall hereafter stroke their beards, and they will smile with love."

And so the horse was called "Motrarer."

Afterwards, when the two women recalled these things, and looked on the great horse full of pride and strength, the one would weep for sympathy, and the other envy the happy mother who sat by her brave, loving son, and stroked his beard.

After dinner the boys rose. "Mother," said Vernon, always the spokesman, "will you excuse Novel and me? We want to go and give Motrarer another lesson."

"Be careful, boys," said the duke; "think of your mother's grief if you are hurt," and so we were left alone. The boys were always careful, not from fear, for they were fearless, but because they dreaded their parents' grief if they were hurt. Skilful, courageous, and strong, they had never had an accident, though they hunted, shot, and followed more physical exercises than the average youth.

When we went to return we found Motrarer saddled, with Novel riding, and Vernon leading him about the field. Already he had ceased to fear his trainers, and regard their strength as too great to struggle against, so that all that remained was to educate him to his duties. Between them the boys led their captive home, and in a few days had him as docile as a dog. Talking as men will who have helped and befriended each other whenever opportunity occurred, though with few trifling exceptions the duke was the helper, I found all my friend's ideas and fancies had only become the more fixed with time. Personally, he had only altered sufficiently to conform with his surroundings. As we rested one evening while our wives discussed their children, the nature of the man unfolded itself in all its contradictions of masterly logic and far-fetched fancies, on which his godlike ambition was founded.

"Frank, we have been very fortunate," he said, his mind travelling back to the scenes of long ago, as his voice became mellow—it was a beautiful voice, clear and distinct as a trumpet's notes; or soft and sweet with a masculine mellowness, as befitted his words—and his expressive face, gentle and emotional as in the days of our bachelorhood. "Everything has prospered with us; with me especially."

"Perhaps," I interrupted, "we have deserved success?" He hardly seemed to hear me as he continued,—

"Our future was assured, when we won the love of our wives. They are women not only perfect, but of all women the best fitted to bring us near perfection. I always succeed in the end." Again he paused. "Sometimes that end was long delayed; but if I lived and kept my health, I knew I would win at last; and I have—everything. Cora always helped me; always loved me; I thought I loved other women, but I never did. I thought to fit them into my ambition. My ambition is my life. I have conquered. Whatever happens to me now does not matter.

Cora is safe. Novel is established. My boys will live to carry out all my ideas. In my future existence, I shall watch them, and live again. Their sons—one or other, I hope, will have sons—will complete what they cannot finish in their lives."

"Before that time you will have started new projects in your new life."

"Yes, I expect I will, but I want my work here completed first. One language. No disease. Wisdom and happiness for all living creation. I should like to live a few hundred years; but I am certain of the boys." He paused; his voice dreamy, and his brains busy with visions of the future. "They will be partners; Vernon can conceive, and Novel execute."

"What a pity they are not all boys," I said, smiling, for I could never understand the fulness of his ambition. He did not notice my smile; the suggestion fitted in with his thoughts.

"Yes," he said, with a sigh, "for then they could form other Novels, and I could risk them more than I dare with only two."

"Couldn't you do with sons-in-law?" I asked.

"No," he said decidedly, "one cannot rely on them; they are chosen by one's daughters principally; they might help a little, of course. Now, when I am dead, we"—the use of the pronoun seemed peculiar—"will continue Novel, and by its example reform the whole world. When you plant a community, you can direct it root and branch, and make it perfect; and with a perfect community you can set an example to others on the road to perfection."

"We cannot direct worldly matters from beyond the grave," I replied.

"No," he said sadly; "but we can start them in a course we approve of, and leave sons to direct them as we wish."

"I hope so for the sake of the people whom you work to benefit and bring to happiness."

"They will reach that whether or no; but to save the world even a year of ignorance and suffering, by hastening it so much on its road to perfection, is a thing to strive for." The man had everything the world could give, or his heart wish for, except the power to rest. 'Tis well there are such heroes, or else men would retire on their laurels at the time of their greatest use; for never is a man so able for good as when he has in early life, by his own honourable exertions, made a fortune and attained power; and in so doing seasoned his abilities.

Amongst the duke's assistants were two Roda youths he had got to help his sons with their garden, animals, hunting, and machine, and other gear. They were strong swarthy fellows, in each case, about three years older than the boys they assisted. As yet they could speak very little but the Roda language, which, added to a sullen disposition on the part of the elder, caused

the exercise of all the boys' tact to keep them under control, and sometimes sorely tried Vernon's temper; for though he was amiable to a degree, like all very athletic and clever boys, he was sometimes apt to be hasty. These boys had been captured in an expedition into Roda, to make prisoners of some thieves, who had made a raid into "Undara" to steal cattle, and had speared a man who had tried to prevent them.

The savages' camp had been surrounded, and the criminals demanded; as, however, they were great warriors, the only reply received by the soldiers was a shower of spears. Immediately an attack was made on the village, the houses being fired, and the men shot as they came out; only the women and children being allowed to escape.

The Rodas knew that, on surrendering, the lives of all but the offenders would be spared, but still they fought on, probably forced to do so by the criminals, who knew death would be their portion when they were captured. As the fire spread from hut to hut, the men rushed out with spear and shield to attack the soldiers, and die by their bullets. Winda, the elder of the youths, rushing out with the rest, had had his right arm broken by a bullet; instantly he dropped his shield, and taking his spear in his left hand, rushed undaunted at the soldiers. Miraculously he escaped the shower of bullets his appearance caused, and tripping over a stump, fell forward on his face, striking his head, and being stunned by a fallen log.

The Rodas fought till every man amongst them was either killed or wounded, when Winda was found insensible where he fell. His people had been killed, male and female—in the rush and excitement, many women were accidentally shot—so after he left the hospital, Duke Dreman, admiring his bravery, took him and his brother to Quindira, where they were deputed to assist Vernon and Novel.

The young savages' bravery was found after all to be of very inferior kind. In the rush of fight, they fought as a wounded stag would, and by use and instinct displayed great nerve in hunting the seal and bear.

When, however, "Motrarer" was led into the stable, snorting and timid, they were afraid to go near him, and so with everything new to them they were abject cowards; in short, their courage was the lower ignorant courage of the savage, which in every way is inferior to the educated bravery and cool nerve of civilized man. The education of these young savages had developed the tact and patience of the duke's heirs.

With keen gratification, he witnessed the suppression of the filthy ways and nasty habits of the two young brutes, and now that they were made rational and useful, regarded his sons' triumph with evident pride.

Motrarer very soon became docile as the older horses, following

the boys about for biscuits, and other equine delicacies; and would stand delighted under the soothing influence of the grooming brushes. He was a credit to the boys' taste. In handsome condition, his shining coat and dark flowing mane and tail set off the magnificent beauty of his great arched crest and mighty strength.

One day we watched Vernon taking him over some hurdles. The beauty of the boy and the horse, expending the exuberance of their strength, as they rushed over the jumps, entranced us. Beside them Novel rode on a sedate old charger, keeping discreetly behind Motrarer, who had a decided preference for being in the lead. After the exercise was finished the gray foal was brought up to us for the children to feed with biscuits and roots.

"Motrarer will find your mother hardly heavier than a sunbeam," said my wife to Novel.

"Her weight will be immaterial to him," answered the boy, who continued wisely: "as long as strength does not bring slowness it is an advantage."

"But the duchess will never try his strength," said Mary, smilingly, "or want him to take her over fences."

"No," replied Novel; "but it's a consolation to us to know she has a horse that could do these things, or anything else, if she wanted him to; besides, he is a beauty. I think he is handsomer than the black stallion."

He certainly was a most perfect animal. Strong and gentle, he let the little girls sit several at a time on his great back, as he was marched up and down by one or other of the boys. Kindness and skill had in a few days changed him from an animal wild as the wind to one docile and obedient as a good child. Having found it useless to struggle against the trappings of his captors, and learned to like the chemically prepared dainties, and general treatment he experienced, he already showed his appreciation of his surroundings by every means in his power.

"Take Motrarer to the stable, Winda, and give him a feed," said Vernon to his assistant. The man who had completely got over his fear of Motrarer by this time, took the halter and caught the horse by the wither, preparatory to getting on his back.

"Stop," called Vernon; "do not mount that horse on any account."

Sullenly Winda scowled at him; understanding his meaning, but not the full purport of his words.

The duke sternly repeated the command in Roda, and the horse was led away.

"Are you not afraid," I asked; "to let that sullen savage work for Vernon? He has a bad face. "You would be well rid of him."

"There is no fear," answered the duke carelessly; "Vernon manages him perfectly. I got the young savages to exercise my

boys' governing qualities. Novel has no trouble with his Roda; but Winda is a cowardly, untractable brute. I cannot understand his courage at the attack."

"He had no other chance," I replied; "either he stayed to be burnt, or face the soldiers; he was bound to do the latter."

Next morning I was awoke at daylight. A dream, or someone shouting, disturbed me. Getting up, I found it was only just light, and to my surprise, saw Motrarer being ridden furiously up the paddock. Fearing trouble, I slipped down to the duke's dressing-room, and knocked at the door. It was opened in a moment. The duke, in slippers and a dressing-gown, drew me into the room.

"Hush, I do not want to wake Cora," he whispered, warningly; "the boys will hear the noise. I want to see how Vernon will act."

"Are you not afraid?"

"No." He put his hand on two great hounds that he had called into the room from the verandah, where they slept at night.

"If Vernon is in danger, I will let them loose. They, like us, can see all that goes on, and will go to my son's aid, if necessary, in a few seconds. As to that Roda—damn him." The duke's face was set and white with anger; "he may take his chance. The cowardly brute feared to approach the horse at first, and now he is quieted the wretches would ill-treat him."

The horse was still being galloped round the lower paddock, the elder boy up, the younger watching and occasionally clapping his hands. In their fiendish glee, the young savages were oblivious of everything. Winda, swinging one of Vernon's riding-whips round his head, from time to time, shrieked his native hunting cry, and brought it cruelly down on the flanks of the terrified animal under him. The hounds, with bristling backs, watched the scene. The paddock was enclosed with a six-foot fence. Vernon, who had evidently heard the noise, appeared bare shanked, in knickerbockers and boots. He had come out in a hurry. Running swiftly to the fence, he vaulted over it, with only the loss of an instant, and called to Winda, who instantly dismounted, and freed Motrarer, who rushed through the open stable door and disappeared. Vernon approached the Roda, saying something we could not hear, but his actions, imperious and angry, showed his temper. Just as they met, Winda raised his heavy whip and treacherously struck at Vernon, who, parrying the blow with his left arm, struck his assailant on the chin with his right fist, and as he staggered caught his right hand with both of his and twisted it round. The whip dropped, and Vernon, picking it up, stepped away from the Roda. All this passed in a flash, but though we could see all that took place, we could hear very little of what was said. Vernon stood alert, whip in

hand, while Winda with clenched fist faced him with sullen mien. Vernon, who was evidently speaking angrily, several times pointed to the stable with his whip. At last he took Winda, who still stood sullen, by the arm, apparently to lead him to the stable. Hardly, however, had they gone a dozen yards, when Winda suddenly turned round and struck Vernon with his right fist on the cheek.

The duke groaned, his face was white and cruel—never before had I seen it so.

Vernon staggered, nearly knocked down; but by an effort saved himself. Then, for an instant, he faced the Roda. Just such a second as takes place between the flash of a distant gun and the hearing of its report. Then, dropping the whip, he sprang on Winda, and struck him rapidly five or six blows on the face. Each fist came straight from the shoulder to its mark, quick as a lance, and, travelling with the swing of his body twice the length of his arm, staggered the Roda, who was completely dazed. Near them we now perceived the younger Roda firmly held by Novel; neither of whom we had noticed for some time. Winda, now striking wildly with both hands, rushed at Vernon, who, ducking under his arm, struck him on the ear, and knocked him clean off his legs.

I looked at the duke, who was pale and quiet. I had never seen him look so cruel.

"Stop them now, for God's sake," I implored.

"Leave them alone," replied the duke, hoarsely. "Let the boy win his first battle."

The Roda sat up; his face was bleeding profusely. Vernon again spoke, and pointed to the stable. We heard after that the Roda denied striking Motrarer, and Vernon insisted on him coming to see if the horse bore the marks of the whip. Winda at last rose, and, putting his head down, rushed at Vernon, as a bull would charge his fellow.

Duke Dreman gave a short gasp; my heart stopped beating. The savage Roda would surely kill his younger antagonist. Vernon stood still—the whole thing took little more than a second—and, just as the Roda reached him, swung his right knee into his face, and knocked him completely over on his back, where he lay almost helpless. Stooping down, Vernon took his antagonist's ear between his first and second finger, where he secured it with his thumb; and so led him into the stable out of our sight.

"Come down to them, Vernon," again I asked, overcome with dread; "don't delay, that brute may kill the boy in the stable."

"There is no fear of that, all the fight is knocked completely out of him," he answered grimly. "Let us see the end of it. My boy does well."

The duke smiled a smile like sunshine on an iceberg, it made me shiver; long as I had known him, I never suspected a remorseless side of his character. Years ago I had heard how a man, brought before him for beating his stepdaughter—he broke her arm with a walking-stick—and, starving and cruelly treating her, had had the charge against him changed to murderous assault, and been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. And how, when a petition for the mitigation of capital punishment against a man who had kicked his wife to death—a woman, drunken, unfaithful, and utterly vile, but still a woman—had been presented by a deputation of influential men—both these cases were before I knew him, and when he had still to make his fame—he tore the paper into shreds, and ended up an eloquent and impassioned speech by declaring that the man should forfeit all his lives, even had he twenty, and so sent away the deputation humble and ashamed. Under his generous kindness on occasion, deep down, could be found a relentless determination, which made friend and foe alike careful not to needlessly harass him.

The two lads now issued from the stable, where Motrarer's flanks had been found waled with the cruel whip.

Vernon, still holding the Roda by the ear, whose two hands grasped his to protect that organ, remorselessly shook him from time to time. He was evidently tigerishly savage. Forcing Winda on his knees, he commenced unmercifully to flog him, the younger Roda meanwhile sobbing piteously. At last exhausted, he released the savage, and stood fierce and panting.

"Come," I said to the duke; "surely this has gone far enough."

"Wait," he said; "let us see the end of it."

Would the man never be satisfied?

The duchess, in a dressing-gown, now entered. She had evidently looked out of her bedroom window, and seen something of the occurrence. She looked pale and frightened. Going up to her husband, she asked,—

"What is the matter, dear?"

His face softened at last.

Putting his arm round his wife, he drew her to him, and kissed her. I had never seen him do so before.

"That young brute, Winda, flogged Motrarer, and our boy"—Vernon was always "our boy," the others were called by their Christian names—"has properly given him a good flogging."

"Is there no danger, my husband? Winda is so much stronger and bigger than he."

"So is Motrarer," replied the duke; "but he has conquered both, treating each according to their nature."

"Go to them, dear," said the wife caressingly, and so we went.

The horse had been brought out, and now stood by Novel feeding, while the two Rodas gently brushed him down, under

Vernon's directions. When Vernon saw us he came to meet us.

"Father," he said, in a voice shaking with emotion; "Winda has flogged and ill-used Motrarer, and I have flogged him. Are you angry?"

"No, my son," the duke spoke very quietly, and, putting his hand through the boy's arm, went up to Motrarer. On the docile animal's satin-like skin numerous whip-marks stood out like ropes. Trembling from time to time, he put his beautiful head into Novel's arms as he stood caressing him. Father and son meanwhile chatted unconcernedly on different subjects. Standing, arm in arm, they were wonderfully alike. As I looked on them the old proverb, "Like father, like son," repeated itself in my mind again and again.

Vernon's face, disfigured by a black eye, and a swollen, bruised cheek, was otherwise in feature and expression—now steely cruel and remorseless in the extreme—a repetition of his father's.

The young Roda, utterly cowed, sobbing at his work, looked the picture of misery. His broad swarthy face was bruised and cut from Vernon's knuckles, and blood from his mouth and nose trickled on his breast, while his ear, swollen twice its ordinary size, was red and raw.

"Doctor Frank," said Vernon; "will you kindly examine Winda's face, his lip is badly cut against his teeth."

"Certainly, Vernon."

"Shall he go and clean himself first?" the boy asked, in pretended unconcern, though he was vibrating with suppressed excitement.

"Come here, Winda," I said. He came obedient and humble. The cuts on his lips I found would heal of their own accord, but his nose was completely smashed by Vernon's knee, when he rushed at him with his head. He was dreadfully bruised, and had evidently fought as long as he could strike a blow. Stripping him to see if his ribs were all right, I found his back and arms in a state from the flogging that made me pity him. Vernon afterwards said,—

"He selected the whip, not me. Certainly he took it to flog a harmless animal, and for that reason it was, if anything, too good for his own back."

Father and son strode away, each in an unnatural state of calm. Presently the duke returned, and taking me aside, said,—

"My boy has broken down, Frank. Do not let him suspect you know. His mother, overstrung, kissed and cried over him when we went to her, and so set him crying—I have not known him to cry since his babyhood—he has broken the little finger of his right hand, I suppose it is of no great consequence?" He put his arm through mine; he was smoking a cigar, a thing he never

did till evening, except when he was very much excited or troubled.

"I will go to him at once," I said, readily.

"No, don't go yet," replied Duke Dreman. "I think he wishes no one but his mother and me to know of his tears; he behaved splendidly—my boy. You will not speak of it, old friend." The man was himself again, warm-hearted and thoughful to a degree.

Presently I was asked to go to Vernon's room, where I found him lying on a sofa, with the duchess by his side. He was very pale, and the whiteness of his face seemed intensified in contrast with his black eye and discoloured cheek.

"I hurt my eye and finger in that unpleasant affair this morning, Doctor Frank," he said, smiling faintly, still hiding his emotion. "Can you do anything for me?"

"It is unpleasant to have his face disfigured," said the duchess, who always adopted the humour of her husband or son, "and I am afraid his finger may be permanently weak." Mother and son played the comedy perfectly. An ordinary observer would have noticed nothing unusual. Simple remedies made the boy fairly presentable, and that evening, to my surprise, I saw him and Winda moving about the garden together as usual; on calling the duchess's attention to this, she said,—

"He has forgiven Winda. Why should he not, now he has punished him? And though I believe he has given him a lecture for his future guidance, he has, I know, sent him some delicacies to aid his recovery."

Winda was tamed the only way such as a brute could be, namely by physical violence. Mutely, the marks on Motrarer, and Vernon's black eye, gave evidence against him that turned away any pity he might otherwise receive, and as the young hero —now doubly exalted—passed with his tamed assistant, people looking on the now doubly ugly face of the latter, shortly expressed their opinion,—

"Serve him right."

CHAPTER XXXI.

SHADOWS OF DEATH.

One evening we all assembled to see the duchess have her first ride on Motrarer. Danger there was none, but the boys were proud of their present, and their parents, overjoyed at everything, from the idea that caused it, when the gray foal jumped into the oats, to the first ride and final acts of donation. Only the boys and Winda had ever ridden the gray. Neither Winda nor any of us would ever forget his ride, and no one but the duchess, or some one by her special permission, was ever to ride the gray again.

My wife and the two boys were to accompany the duchess. The stable door opened and Motrarer came out, gambolling and neighing in the exuberant joy of perfect, physical health. Still too fat for hard work, his condition was perfect to show off his great beauty. The glossy skin, marked evenly with dark dapples, was set off by a flowing mane and tail; while the thick arched stallion neck made the small head look even smaller than it was. After moving round the yard, he came up to the other horses, when Vernon, taking the reins and wither in his left hand, caught his mother's foot in his right, and so enabled her to spring into the saddle.

Motrarer turned and sniffed suspiciously at the habit, then, seeing the other horses were mounted, sprang away to get a good start; for though he was always ready to race any horse, he always took every advantage he could by getting away first and taking short cuts; two and two, the women leading, the horses disappeared.

Motrarer, giving to the curb, held his head to his breast, and with his tail arched, and an exuberant show of fretting energy, carefully kept the lead.

Mounting the duke's electro-car, we followed, and overtook them as they were entering a racing paddock, on the course of which—a two mile oval—the duchess and my wife were to give their horses a gallop.

"If you take the car to the road, father, you will see the gallop best," said Vernon.

"Cora, be careful," said the duke, anxious for his wife's safety. "Motrarer and yourself seem both in a rash mood."

"To hear is to obey, my lord and husband," laughed the duchess.

Her cheeks were flushed, and in her tightly-fitting habit she looked as young and far handsomer than when she was Cora Novel.

"Be very careful, boys," the duke called out, as we turned and started to our point of vantage; turning to me, he said: "Our queens are girls still, Frank, when there is any excitement to make them forget they are wives and mothers."

We were separated from the oval by about half-a-mile of forest land strewn with great trees, which were being cut up for firewood.

My wife and Novel first took their horses for a mile canter and a mile gallop; Motrarer meanwhile prancing restlessly on the curb, as he watched them.

One of the little girls waved a handkerchief, and her mother replied by waving hers; the gray's attention being thus taken from the other horses, he looked up and neighed.

"Motrarer sees us, father," called out the child gleefully.

Taking a post-horn, I blew a call on it, and now all the horses looked up, and saw us. Before long, I was bitterly sorry they did. The four riders were together, and the duchess, evidently in answer to a suggestion of Vernon's, tapped her horse on the inner side of the fore-leg with her whip, which caused him to go down on his knees, when she got off and let him rise. After caressing him she brought him on his knees in a similar manner, and mounting him let him rise.

"My boy," said the duke, proudly, "loves his mother with a love that is more than filial, for it is paternal in its care." The boy and his brother, following their father's example, made a pet of their mother, for whom they gathered everything they thought either very beautiful or excellent.

"The duchess," I laughed, "does not need a horse to go on his knees for her to mount."

"No," replied the duke; "but Vernon likes to get his mother a horse such as no one else had, and she loves these proofs of his thoughtfulness, which I regard as exercise for their ingenuity and industry."

My wife and Novel cantered round to us, and Vernon and his mother commenced to gallop round the course, Motrarer, hard held, keeping well in the lead; as they turned into a side of the oval directly facing us she said something to Vernon, who extended his horse, and a race commenced. The gray was soon passed by Vernon's fleeter steed. Elated—everyone seemed excited—with the sunshine and galloping, I again blew the horn

just as the horses approached the turn leading home, and away from us, and Novel's horse neighed to his galloping companions. Vernon's horse took no notice, but Motrarer looked up and made a short cut directly towards us ; jumping the fence into the paddock, he took the fallen logs almost in his mighty stride. Right between us and him lay a fallen giant forest king, the top of its great bare trunk over five feet from the ground. On came Motrarer, too eager to notice that Vernon's horse had discontinued the race.

"God protect her," muttered the duke.

By making a short curve the tree could be avoided ; they would surely not be so mad as to try and jump it. The horse seemed coming right at it. For a moment he seemed suspended in the air—he was over, and rushing panting on towards us. In a few seconds the fence was leaped, but Motrarer, foamed, flecked and triumphant, stood beside us. Looking back, he winnowed to the horse that Vernon rode, which came cantering up from the course.

"Cora, you are very rash. You quite frightened me," said the duke, almost scoldingly.

"Dear, I am sorry," replied the duchess gently ; "I couldn't let my horse be beaten. I am never rash except when my husband and boys are with me."

"Bravo, mother," cried Vernon, riding up. "I acknowledge defeat, though I entered for a flat race, not a steeplechase."

"It was Motrarer's idea, and I let him go, as I approved of it."

"And of him ?" asked Vernon.

"I do not think there ever was a horse to compare to him, or sons like mine," said the duchess proudly.

"Then, mother dear, keep him only for yourself, till you tire of him, and take him out whenever you feel inclined."

"I will always keep him for myself, my own dear boys, and shall take him out whenever the sun shines and I can get anyone to come with me."

"Either father, or Novel, or I, will be with you whenever you ride Motrarer, mother."

"Always, Vernon."

"Always," said the lad, and the father and Novel repeated the "always" for themselves.

That any power in earth or heaven would prevent them from keeping their word, the duchess would never believe, and other powers were ineffectual with them. As we returned, our cavalcade was led by the great gray, who, foam-speckled, seemed to want the whole road for himself.

One evening from the upper verandah we—the duke and duchess, Mary, and I—watched the boys with their Roda assistants building a large toy house for their sisters, with wooden bricks, and miniature doors and windows. The Rodas had

become obedient and docile, and seemed quite to love their young employers, though they were still able to understand little of any language but their own.

Vernon was directing the erection of the building principally by gesture. Novel sat with paper and pencil elaborating Vernon's design, and calculating if there was sufficient material to finish it, while the little girls sat round admiringly.

The duke and my wife were discussing the complete subjection of the Rodas.

"At present it is impracticable," said the duke; "but Vernon will have no difficulty in doing it in another ten or fifteen years."

"Why can you not attempt it yourself at once?" I asked; "or at the latest in another five or ten?"

"Because," said the duke, thoughtfully, "the country is too fully occupied to be disturbed by any large new scheme. The Rodas are being improved, and made ready for Vernon's conquest."

My wife smiled, and asked, "Duke, will you tell me your full scheme for Vernon?"

"For Vernon and Novel," he answered, too busy with his thoughts to notice her smiles. "I do not think they will work apart. When I am dead and gone, I want them to extend Novel as a basis from which to make the whole world wise and happy. Their first task will be to conquer the Rodas, after which they will have the whole of the land beyond the ice to work on, by the time they have that inhabited by a perfect people, they will be old, and must bequeath to their sons—they will have sons by then—the task of completing my work, or handing the completion of it to their sons again."

"Notice, Mary," said the duchess, "we are discussing two unborn generations."

"But what is the completion of your work?" queried Mary persistently. "I can guess it, but would like to hear it from your own lips."

"It is," said the duke, whose active, plotting brain and vivid imagination were busily working, and reflecting their actions on his mobile face, "it is simply to make the whole world wise, and to banish disease and folly. This I have commenced, and shall see finished by my sons, and their sons, from the state in which I shall exist when I cease this life. I have commenced the edifice, which my descendants shall complete."

"Nothing is impossible to my husband," said the duchess in that reverential tone in which some people speak of the Almighty. "See what he has done, and then you will believe that he will do what he says."

"I hope he will," said my wife, impressed by Cora's tone; "but I think in his projects for the future he has built a tower of Babel."

"Look," said the duchess, "at the house the boys have built."

Vernon and Novel had nearly finished the building. The little girls moved about admiring the edifice from different points of view, while the boys between them were crowning their handiwork with a pretentious steeple. The boys now stepped back to see the effect of the structure. Calling to Winda, they by word and gesture directed him to move the tower a little to one side, to do which he got a ladder. Energetically the boys directed Winda, but he put the ladder up insecurely, so that just as he reached the tower, to move it, the ladder slipped, and the whole structure collapsed, and came down, with Winda on the top of it. The Roda rose none the worse for his fall, while the boys laughed good-naturedly, and the little girls merrily clapped their hands at the unforeseen turn things had taken. My wife turned to the duke,—

"Is it a prophecy?" she asked, awe-stricken; "the boys have built a tower of Babel."

The seal-hunting season had come, during which periodically expeditions went out from Undara to capture the seal and walrus, which now came out on the ice in great numbers. Last year the duke had taken the boys, who were this year to go alone. For about a month the seal were killed and their skin and blubber sent to the nearest factory for treatment. Fish of all sorts were caught in great numbers, to feed the young and the mother seals; for only the males and a very few females were killed, and so the supply kept up year after year.

The young Rodas were to go as body-guard to the boys, who were industriously instructing them in manifold duties. They were equipped with tent, gas-gun, spears, hunting-knives, and a number of luxuries unusual in the hunting-field, which were more for the boys' friends than themselves, for their tent was always a headquarters, made delightful by the duke's wealth and the charming manner of its possessors. Finally, the electro-car was loaded, and the careful preparations complete, after which the dogs were put in, and, lastly, a double basket containing eight of the carrier gulls, one of which was to be despatched every morning with a letter, written alternately by the boys the night before. After saying good-bye to everyone, each lad kissed his mother and mounted the electro-car, which sped away in the distance, under the control of Vernon, and was soon lost to sight. Every member of the household, and a number of the neighbours, had gathered to say good-bye to the bright boys who had left us, as every heart beat for the sons of the man who had done so much for his country.

"We will have their letters, dear, to cheer us up," said the duke to his wife, as he drew her hand through his arm.

"Yes," she said simply, her heart too full for speech, and her great eyes suffused with tears.

Next day, at noon, the duke and I watched for the gull from

the tower of Quindira. Presently the duchess and Mary joined us, the former looking rather anxious.

"The gull is very late, dear," she said to her husband.

"They would probably be busy till late," answered the duke with affected carelessness, "and leave the letter to be finished in the morning, which would cause a delay in starting the gull."

"Is there no fear of the gull being shot, or caught by some bird of prey?" I asked.

"No one ever shoots them," answered Duke Vernon, "and they fly too fast to be caught by any bird of prey. There is only one swifter bird, the frigate bird, which the Rodas call the 'Cheebra,' and it would not molest the carrier."

At last we saw a speck in the distance. Rapidly it approached. In a few seconds we could see by its flight that it was a gull; then it slackened its arrow-like course, and flew into the gull-house, where it was caught and brought to us. A pretty bird with wings, tail, and general shape like a swallow, but nearly as large as a common duck. The neck black; the back and upper part of the wings thickly speckled; and the other plumage white. Two pieces of thin strong paper were wrapped round, and fastened to two feathers under and on either side of the tail. These being loosened, the bird was given a plateful of pieces of raw fish, which it greedily swallowed, raising its wing the while, and angrily pecking at those who surrounded it. When it had gorged itself to the full, it fluttered down to the river, and swam about in an evident state of satisfaction. The duchess smoothed out the manuscript, and began to read—

"Dear Mother,—We have had a splendid trip. We were too tired to write last night after we had made everything snug, so I am busy writing now—morning eight o'clock. We intended to get up early, but did not do so. I should have sent you a gull and a line to say 'all well,' but I knew you would not be anxious"—["But I was," said the duchess.]—"and I was afraid of using up all the carriers, for we will have a lot of letters to send."—["He is a good, thoughtful boy, dear," said my wife.]—"After our start we went along at a moderate pace till we got to the depôt, when we heard that the other sleigh had gone ahead, so we determined to get to the seal ponds first. To do this we decided to go to the first outpost, get power there, and thence on; this would enable us to travel full speed the whole distance, and much more, make up for the twelve miles we would have to go out of our way. While we reduced our load of everything we could do without, till it came on next day, we sent on a fully charged sleigh, and filled our own chock full of power. We used all despatch, and started away at a tremendous rate over the snow"—

"I am afraid they are rather rash," said the duchess.

"No danger, I can assure you," laughed the duke in great

good humour, "and the only way they could win the race, our clever boys"—

"When we overtook the sleigh, taking forward the spare power, we had gone a fifth of the way to the outpost. Receiving again our full complement of power, we left the helping sleigh, and sped away with tremendous rapidity. When about the third of the way Novel saw two silver foxes, which we decided to get for Mary Vero"—["The dear, kind boys," said my wife.]—"so we started after them. We covered up the dogs to keep them quiet, and soon overtook and electrocuted the first, after which we started after the other, who had got a long way off. I foolishly threw the dead fox into the car instead of coming back for him. Directly the dogs got scent of him, they yelled and tried to get loose, giving the Rodas and Novel a hard time to keep them from breaking out. Just as I approached the fox, Burgen broke away, but the fox was secure and killed before he came up. Off we went again, and reached the outpost without further incident, though we saw some wolves which Novel prevented me chasing."

"That boy's caution will always be useful to his brother," said the duke.

"They were surprised to see us at the fort, where all was well. They gave us fresh power, and off we went, as fast as the car could go. On our journey we passed a number of seals, so the chances are the season will be a good one; this they also think at the station. Reaching our journey's end, we found the other sleighs had not only not arrived, but were not even in sight. A snow hut had been built for us according to the design we sent, and we at once proceeded to erect our canvas frame tent inside it. To do this and put the car and its contents safely away in their proper places took us till nearly midnight; everyone working his hardest; after which we all went to bed"—["Our boys have a splendid energy," said the duke, approvingly.]—"In the morning we intended to wake up early, but did not do so, hence the delay in your receiving this letter. The fishing has commenced: it has been very good, and promises well for the season."

The letter here ended with affectionate messages for the people of Quindira, and the signature "Vernon Dreman"—a signature that was a talisman mightier than the sword of the greatest conqueror in history; for other conquerors have always, more or less, used force, while Duke Dreman's power was strength and justice, which so appealed to the hearts of the people, that they had become content to take what he advocated on trust, knowing they would be shown its wisdom in good time. The women talked of the boys, and the prospect of their hunting, which was both a matter of pleasure and profit; for no animal, not obnoxious to man's interest, was ever killed except to be used. The duke and I pursued our usual duties and pleasures.

Earlier the next day, the carrier-gull arrived with the letter from Novel, whose turn it was to write.

"Dear Mother,—Do not be alarmed if the gull arrives late in the future, as we have decided to write our letters, as a rule, first thing in the morning, instead of at night, as we are so tired when night comes, that we want to go to bed. We have had a splendid day; the seal are numerous, and in splendid condition, and one in three of the females have been marked off for killing. There are a number of walrus and sea-lions, but we have not yet received permission to kill them. We have lots of power here, so Vernon took us out in the evening to see if we could get some silver foxes; we went a long way and the hound killed several wolves, and some hares, but though we found foxes' footprints, we saw none. Coming home, we met a sleigh returning with a young polar bear."

I looked at the duke. No one derided his undefined horror of the polar bear more than he did, but he could neither shake it off, nor account for it, as one often can for such presentiments. The house was littered with their beautiful white skins, which numbers of his friends had sent as presents; for his apathy was known. His face looked pale and nervous.

"I hope the boys will not be rash," he said.

"I think they are a match for any number of bears, unless they are taken unprepared, which is hardly possible."

"It was a beautiful little animal; fat and round, its long, pure white hair, making it look an animated ball of snow. Its temper, however, was bad, and it snapped at people without method, sometimes amicable, and sometimes cross. The men who had it said they had found it asleep, and taken it in its mother's absence, but that its cries brought her back, and they left her in the distance rushing after them."

"Extremely foolish of them," said the duke; "if they wanted the cub they should have killed the mother."

"They said they would have killed her, had they had time to take her skin, but as they were hurried, they left her till their return."

"Extremely foolish," repeated the duke, angrily; "they should have left the cub till their return, if they were so hurried as they say."

"You can see the cub at the Zoological Gardens if you go, and it is worth your while to do so."

"We certainly will go, shall we not, Cora?" asked my wife.

"Yes, dear," answered the mother.

"Vernon has developed a taste for cooking, that makes him a perfect treasure. We had some men to supper last night, and gave them quite a feast. The Rodas are very slow in coming to our ways of cleanliness; when I spoke to Winda, seriously, he asked, 'If meat clean, why it make plate dirty?' alluding to our

changing our plates after each course, and I was forced to admit that after all it is principally prejudice that made us do so. Tell Mary Vero, that to-morrow evening we will again try and get her some fox-skins."

This letter, like the last, ended with affectionate messages for the people of Quindira, and concluded with the signature, "Novel Dreeman."

In the evening we sat supper, chatting merrily. The duke, after his momentary uneasiness from the news of the bears, was unusually vivacious and brilliant, while the rest of us, amused by his conversation, were in our happiest moods. The summer evening was warm and balmy with the scent of flowers, so we lingered lazily over our dessert. The large opened windows showed the garden almost within reach of our hands. The quiet of evening had soothed us all to stillness, which suddenly—without any warning—was broken by a piercing shriek, that went to our hearts like the thrust of a knife. Duke Dreman started up, white to the lips, and in a tone of horror gasped, "That bear, that cursed bear!" We listened! A hurrying of footsteps came along the hall. The door was thrown open, and one of the duchess's assistants rushed in, white and speechless, carrying in her arms a blood-stained gull. The duke rose and took the bird. On its back was a cross marked with blood, and its white breast was crimson; smeared as with a bloody hand.

"Where did you get the bird?" asked the terrified father.

"Vernon—Novel—their bird—" gasped the maid, horror-stricken.

Amongst the others who had come into the room was an old woman, who had acted as nurse to each of the children in turn; stepping forward, she now said quietly, with the calmness of despair,—

"The gull just flew in, and we found it in its present blood-stained state. It has no letter or message, though it must have come from our boys, for it is one of those they took with them."

The duke staggered, his face was ghastly.

"Frank," he gasped, his voice hoarse and harsh, "something dreadful has happened to our boys. It is those cursed bears."

"Damn them! damn them!" he laughed a loud harsh laugh, that made me shudder. His wife, who till now was silent, her eyes opened wide with fear, went over to him and threw her arms round his neck and kissed him; once, twice, quickly in jerks.

"My husband, my hero," she gasped: "nothing may have happened. Nothing can have happened, or the gull would have brought a message. Some animals have attacked the gulls and this one only has escaped."

The man's face was fixed. He seemed not to hear.

"Kiss me, my dear, kiss me, Vernon, Vernon." Her voice rose almost to a shriek. "My darling, do not look like that."

He put his arm round his wife and kissed her. Her head fell forward. She had fainted. He put her down, and Mary sprinkled her face with water.

Turning to the gardener, who had entered with the others, he said,—

"Luo, get the electro-car ready. Charge it, and pack some food and brandy. Do this quickly, but first send Ovy to telegram to the depôt, and tell them to have an electro-car ready for me, and to send out one so that I can get fresh power half-way. I must go to our boys to-night."

The old man left, and the duke, who had now regained his composure, turned to his wife.

In a little while she opened her eyes, and was able to take a stimulant.

"Frank," he said, "you will come with me. Mary, look after my darling. Cora, my dear love, hope for the best."

The woman put her arms round her husband's neck.

"My husband, remember if anything has happened, that you must still live for me and the children." Her wild, pale face looked into his, which was fixed and white: "My dear, I fear for you. Be wise. They are mine as well as yours. You have always been my support, be brave now, my darling, be brave." And breaking into sobs, she wept on his breast. He put her down gently; kissed her once, and then we went out to the car. Everything was ready. We took our seats, and, as we passed into the quiet night, the old gardener called after us,—

"God be good to you, Duke Vernon, for you are a merciful man, and a just. God be with you."

CHAPTER XXXII.

DEATH.

Rapidly and noiselessly we left Quindira behind us, and passed into the still night.

Were ever men before on such a journey? The boys I hoped to find asleep and well, but then . . . . the blood. The awful suspense. The boys; the brave kind boys might be cold and dead. And yet the houses we passed were alight, and merry with the sound of happy voices. On and on, we sped. Once I spoke to Vernon, my friend, true and brave; strong and kind. The old man's words echoed in my ears: "God be good to you, Duke Vernon, for you are a merciful man and a just." When I spoke, he put his hand on my shoulder.

"Frank, let us hope for the best. But always, Frank, think of her, and shield her from harm. God be good to her, and to you and yours, as you treat her."

"Amen, Amen," I said.

We had no need of words. Words are but wind. Actions alone are worthy for men. Till we saw the boys, well and happy or—God be merciful—we were better silent; then we would have much to do. At last through the shadows, and past the happy people, we came to the depôt. An electro-car stood ready.

"Another car will meet you, when you have gone half your journey, and give you fresh power, so that you can go full speed all the way," said the manager.

"Thank you," said the duke quietly.

"Do not fear, Duke Dreman, no harm can come to them. Everyone loves them for their own sake, and for yours. No man in Undara but would shield and help them," said the man kindly, but with ill-concealed anxiety, and continued reverentially, "God guard them also. I hope they are well."

Again we sped swiftly into the darkness, on—and on—in the stillness of the night. Presently we came to the snow, and our way was brighter. Overhead, the stars in myriads gleamed glistening in a clear dome of blue. We seemed a moving dot in a pathless tract of white. On we sped with a lightning rapidity towards a planet that came no nearer. The snow flashed past

us on our flying way, and yet we seemed not to move. The greatness of nature impressed me. My grief-stricken friend must have felt the same thing.

"Frank," it was only the second time he had spoken to me, "I think I should have asked the Almighty power to take my boys into His care. Man's power is so finite. God forgive me for their mother's sake."

"Your acts were prayers," I said; "the best and noblest prayers."

"My thoughts were curses on the boys," he said, in a dreamy voice. "I thought I—I alone—could protect them. God and all heaven must love my wife; she is so good, I thought, her prayers will suffice. Sorrow cannot come to them, and leave her unscathed. Something in my mind defied God and heaven to hurt them. I am struck through them, and my gentle wife. Heaven shield her!"

"We do not know that harm has come to them," I replied.

"They are dead," he said, and I shuddered, for his voice seemed a prophecy.

"They are with me now. My boys, go to your mother, I can bear it alone," with upturned face he spoke to the skies. Was he going mad? I thought.

"They are gone. They always loved their mother. They will protect her now."

I put my hand on his shoulder, I could not speak. My grief had made me dumb. I loved the boys only second to my own, and their father better than any of my kin. I could not see his face in the dark, but he spoke with the certainty of inspiration—or madness. On we sped, neither speaking a word. Soon we saw a light in the distance; and, reaching it, found it was above the electro-car. Again we took in power.

"You will arrive in about two hours," said the man in charge. "You have more power now than you can use."

As we bade him good-night, and moved away, he called out,—"God be good to you, Duke Dreman," and my heart echoed his words.

"That man knows," said the duke. "God help me, they all know but me, and I know best of all. They only think my boys are dead; but I know they are born to eternity, for I feel them with me in the air."

We were speeding rapidly onwards. It was now after the second hour. At last, at break of day, we reached the camp. We could see groups of men about. I shuddered, and felt faint. We stopped in the centre of the huts, and the duke sprang out. I followed him. The boys were not there; something dreadful must have happened. The duke went to a man who stood forward from the others.

"What does this mean?" he asked. "Where are my boys?"

The man put up both hands.

"There has been an accident. It might . . . . " The duke interrupted him.

"The bear has killed them, I know. Bring me to them."

The man turned and walked away in silence, and we followed him. I put my hand on Duke Dreman's shoulder, but he shook me off. We stopped at the door of one of the largest huts; the man hesitated.

"Duke Dreman," and the tears rolled down his cheeks, "you are a brave man and a great; but even you must bow to the will of God. May He be good to you."

"Lead on," said the duke. His voice was calm and passionless.

The man opened the door, and a few steps brought us to a big room, in the centre of which, on a table, the two boys lay cold and dead. The duke went up to them. Novel was the nearer. He stooped over and kissed Vernon on the mouth, the cold dead mouth. For a moment he shivered, then he recovered, and kissed Novel as he had kissed his brother. Sitting down beside the boys, he stroked their hair, and carefully smoothed out some wrinkles in the counterpane. He did it slowly and carefully, as if it were a matter of moment. For the first time since we started I saw his face. It looked old and ashy. Under the sunken eyes were dark rings. The face was grey-looking and wrinkled, while the lips had a bluish tinge as with cold. He continued to look at the boys, and occasionally to smooth their hair, or touch their cheeks. I went out and brought him some brandy. He looked at me, he seemed hardly able to understand at first, then he took the glass and drank the liquor. It did him good.

"They are with their mother, Frank. This only was them." He put his hand on the corpse. "I can bear it better than she can. God help her."

He thought most of his wife, of his own agony he seemed to think nothing. I saw he must be stirred up, or he would go mad or die, so I went out and inquired how it happened. When I had learnt all about it, I brought back the man who seemed to know most.

"Vernon," I asked, "would you like to hear how the boys met their death?"

"It does not matter," he answered. "They are dead. A bear killed them, I always knew the bears would work me sorrow."

He spoke indifferently; at any risk I must rouse him.

"Tell the duke how it happened," I said to the man.

"After dinner," he commenced, "the boys and the young Rodas took the sleigh, and went to hunt and fish. They first came to where I was, and asked me about the silver foxes. After chatting awhile, I volunteered to go with them and show them the foxes' run if they would put me down where I wished to go, and bring me back again on their return. To this they agreed.

"They had not brought the dogs, as they feared they might spoil the foxes' skins. I showed them the foxes' trail, and then left them and went to fish. From the Rodas I learned that they then hunted and caught three silver foxes, after which they went fishing. First Novel was put down with the younger Roda, then Vernon went further back with the sleigh, and commenced to fish, but caught nothing, so he left the sleigh, and walked with the Roda back towards Novel, fishing here and there as he went. They had no luck; as Novel did not come, they guessed he was more fortunate, and so determined to go to him. At last they passed round some large ice mounds, and saw Novel and the young Roda busily fishing, with a heap of fine fish beside them. Hardly had they come in view of Novel, when they saw approaching him, unperceived, a great polar bear. Vernon was now over a mile and a half from the sleigh, and about half a mile from Novel. Had he gone back for the sleigh, the bear would almost certainly have killed Novel before he could return. He and Novel were only armed with a spear each, poor weapons with which to face a bear. He evidently did not hesitate, but Winda was too frightened to go with him and rushed off to me. The younger Roda said they heard a shout, and looking up saw Vernon running towards them waiving a spear in his hand. They went towards him, and soon heard him call out, 'The bear, the bear!'"

Vernon groaned. He looked so old and worn. He seemed to have grown smaller since yesterday.

"Go on," he said to the man.

"Seeing the bear, the young Roda dropped his spear and ran. Novel called after him but without effect. The boys picked up the spear the Roda had dropped, and together faced the bear."

The man stopped, his face distorted with feeling. He showed more emotion than the duke.

"Those cowardly beasts of Rodas, damn them, had they stood by the boys, their four spears would have been more than a match for the bear," the man gasped with indignation. "The boys should have run, they were fleeter than the Rodas, and the bear would have stopped to kill the young savages, and so they could have reached the sleigh in safety."

At last the duke looked up.

"Better as it is. Much better they should die brave, than live as cowards."

Aye, much better. Though I wished for once they had been cowards, and sacrificed the worthless wretched Rodas to save their lives. Lives of precious value to all Undara.

Though still . . . ? Human nature cannot change for once. The brave are always brave. The cowards always afraid.

The man continued: "The boys faced the bear. They walked towards her about eight feet apart. Their footmarks showed they trotted to meet the monster. The footsteps also showed that

Vernon threw one of the spears. It evidently struck the bear, for it lies blood-covered and broken in her footmarks. The brute must then have rushed at Vernon, whose second spear evidently missed its mark, and the bear killed him in an instant. Novel, as the bear caught Vernon, stuck his spear through her, and in turn was caught and killed. The bear, badly wounded, then turned and left them dead upon the ice. The Roda came to me and I returned. He followed at a safe distance. On our way back we met the younger Roda, who joined his brother. When I came to the sleigh, I waited for the Rodas, and together we went to the boys. They lay on the ice, crushed and dead. The bear was out of sight, but her tracts were smeared with blood, so she must have been badly wounded. We took the boys up and brought them home."

Again the duke looked up. This time he shivered.

"I must bring them home," he said, wearily. "God be merciful to their mother."

He thought most of his wife. Always he strove to shield her from harm and all sorrow.

"Winda's hands were covered with blood. When he came in he went to the gull's cage, took one out, made a cross on its back with his blood-smeared finger. Then drawing his hand along the bird's breast, threw it into the air to carry home its bloody tidings of death."

Again the duke shivered.

"Did you kill the bear?" he asked.

"No," answered the man; "it only occurred yesterday evening, the sun had only just risen. We will kill the brute to-day."

"Frank, let us kill the bear," said the duke. "They are savage useless brutes. It may ruin other hopes than mine. Then we will take them back to their mother."

"Leave the brute, Vernon," I implored; "others will kill it if it had fifty lives. Rest and eat, and we will go back to Cora. Think of her, Vernon; for her sake eat and rest. Then we will return."

"I will eat. I cannot rest," he answered wearily—so wearily. "She would have the bear killed, before it does more harm. Frank, we will kill the brute, and then bring the boys back to their mother."

Seeing that opposition was useless, I brought him some food. Together we ate beside the dead boys. He would not leave them. He was numbed with grief.

"I shall write to my wife," he said.

The letter was written, and sent by a gull. I did not see it till afterwards, but I shall reproduce it now. Brief as it was, it told all that there was to say.

"My dear Wife,—The worst has happened. The boys have been killed by a bear. Frank and I are now going to kill the brute, and then we will bring the boys back to you,

"Your loving husband,

"Vernon."

When this was despatched we went after the bear. Two other sleighs followed ours. In half an hour we had come to the scene of the boys' death. Their blood lay bright and scarlet on the snow. The duke shuddered. The footprints plainly proved the story told us. There were the marks where Vernon had stopped to hurl the spear, the footprints deep with the effort of throwing the weapon. Near by the marks where the bear had caught the boys, one by one, and crushed them to death. Then its deep footprints, blood-stained from the wound of Novel's spear. Had they a gun, their revolvers, the sleigh, or had any one of simple things innumerable happened, they would have been saved. It would have been so easy to prevent the catastrophe had we only known. Surely it was the will of the Almighty power that we should not know, and that this awful thing should be. We followed the tracks. A pool of blood marked where the bear had stopped, the footmarks became nearer, and showed the feet had been dragged, or slouched along. Slowly we followed the trail till it came to a snow-covered heap of granite boulders, the jagged peaks of two or three of which stood out bare; too steep for the snow to lodge on; under one of these the bear had gone for shelter. Before we had quite stopped the duke leapt out, only armed with a spear, and sprang up the sides of the steep declivity. Snatching up a rifle, I called out,—

"Stop, Vernon, stop," and rushed after him.

From every sleigh sprang armed men, and hurried in our wake. On sprang the duke. The footprints spotted with blood were plain and distinct on the snow. A frenzy of rage made the sorrow-stricken father fleet as a deer. He was fully ten paces ahead of me. Scrambling steps came fast behind me. The bear, who had crawled into a shallow cave made by two boulders touching, had heard us, and came out. The duke was directly between us, so I could not shoot. On he sprang. The bear stood tall, and strong, on its hind legs. For an instant, as the duke stopped, the spear came backwards over his right shoulder, and with a spring he plunged it at the monster's heart. Quick as lightning the spear was knocked out of his hand, and he lay in my path bleeding and stunned by a blow on the neck from the bear's powerful paw. I fired, not feet ten from the brute. It thew up its forefeet, but before it fell, two bullets whizzed past me to plunge into its great white body. I stooped over the duke; from under his ear came two fountains of blood. The brute's claw had severed the jugular vein. The bear was lifeless; I had hardly time to think; left alone, the brave sorrow-stricken man would bleed to death in a few minutes. I took from my pocket the little instrument-case all doctors carry, and from it a lance and thread. The fingers of one of my hands were pressing the vein to reduce the flow of blood. I wanted two hands to tie up the artery. I looked up; one of the men saw my dilemma.

"Can I help you, Doctor Frank?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, gratefully. "Catch hold with your finger and thumb."

"Vein cut?"

"Artery, yes."

Nothing now was said. The duke opened his eyes.

"Lie still, Vernon."

He closed them, and lay quiet; soon I had tied up both ends of the artery, and bound up the wound. We prepared to take him to the sleigh.

"Show me the bear," asked Duke Dreman.

His voice was very weak. Gently turning him over, I put him so that he could see the great dead brute. It was the bear that had been robbed of its cub, and had come after the fools that had robbed it. Pity it had not met them instead of the two brave boys.

"Poor thing," he said. "It only acted according to its nature, poor thing." He shut his eyes, and we took him to the sleigh. As we sped over the snow, he asked, his words weak and faint: "Am I hurt?"

"A little," I answered.

"Fatally?" he asked, calmly, but weakly.

"Lie still," I answered, broken-hearted, trying to avoid the question. "Thinking will make you worse."

"Fatally?" He repeated the word more gently.

"God help me, I fear so," I replied, the tears running down my cheeks. It was awful. His hand came out from the covering, and caught hold of mine. I put it to my lips. The hand so strong and generous, soon to lie cold and dead. He lay quite quiet. By the time we reached the station I had recovered my composure.

"Take us to Cora, Frank," he asked, wistfully.

Word was sent on, to be flashed along our road, to have everything in readiness for our journey. Soon I commenced the journey back with the dead and the dying. An awful journey. It seemed that horrors would never cease. But a few hours before we had been startled by the blood-stained gull. Then the travelling to the boys. The awful silent journey through the hideous shadows, and under the infinite stillness of the heavens, that seemed to compare us with their immensity, and mock at the bitterness of our grief. After all, that journey was but pregnant with fears and sorrows, while this was bitter with agony from fate's womb. It seemed to me that no more evil could come to the fair woman whose dying husband and dead sons were with me. Was her happy life to end with a great wave of grief? Do great joys bring great sorrows? Would we find the beautiful woman dead with horror? Happy for her if it could be so. No joy could come to her now, I thought. All joy for her would be beyond the gates of death.

As we came to the road, and passed the houses, people stood by the wayside weeping and grief-stricken. Worse than war seemed the evil that had befallen their hero. The men took off their hats and bowed their heads. The women covered their faces, and wept. All the land was in sorrow for the death of the sons of the man who had done so much for the people; of his state as yet few knew. In the dusk of one day, we left in terror of a possible grief. Now, on the dusk of the next, we returned; the boys dead, and the father dying. As we entered the yard, the dogs came fawning round, expecting to welcome one or other of the men of the house who were its light and joy. The horses, hearing the wheels and the dogs, winnowed their welcome. Neither the duchess nor my wife had come to meet us. All the duke's people were gathered, pale and grief-stricken. The duchess had asked that the boys should be brought into her room. We took them in. She was on her knees praying. While the duke relied solely on his own skill and ability, she went with her petitions to the Almighty. She rose and came to the boys. Kissing their cold faces, she sank on her knees beside them; and with her face hidden in her hands, wept and prayed. Leaving her so, I went and brought in the duke, who had wakened up from his sleep of exhaustion. Quietly we put him on the bed. The duchess still wept on. The duke silently watched her. Presently she looked up with streaming face, and for the first time saw her husband. For a moment she looked at him in silence. Then he spoke.

"Cora." His voice was weak and low, but in the dead silence of the room it sounded distinctly. She got up and went to him, moving as if she was dazed.

"My husband, has it brought you to this?" She stroked his pale face.

"Kiss me, dear," he said; "I am very weak."

She kissed his eyes and his lips. My wife sat with folded hands and streaming eyes.

"Dear," he said, "I have much for you to do."

"What has happened, my love—my hero?" asked the poor dazed wife.

"Tell her, Frank," he said, turning his eyes towards me. He was now quite calm and collected; he was always so in times of difficulty and danger. He felt his strength going, and wished to save it. I told her everything as it happened, she the while holding his hand in hers, and caressing it with her cheek. When I had finished, she simply said,—

"God's will be done. Surely my husband has been God's instrument for good, and my sons all that is noble. They will have their reward, but I must wait, I must wait." Her eyes were tearless, and her face fixed and pale to the lips. Presently she slid from the chair on which she sat on to her knees, and prayed. Her husband's hand went slowly to rest on the bowed

head by his bedside, and he stroked the soft brown hair till she ceased praying; when she looked up, he said,—

"My wife, you will be very lonely."

The pitying words thawed the numbness of the woman's grief; and again her tears came and she sobbed on and on, holding one of his hands in hers, while his other caressed her bowed head. When her sobs had almost ceased, her husband spoke,—

"Go and put on your dressing-gown, and come and lie beside me." Obediently she went, my wife leading her from the room. Then he asked, "How long?" I knew what he meant, I had expected the question. "With the morning if you talk," I answered, "to-morrow night, if you are quiet."

"Delirious?" he asked, quietly.

"Possibly," I answered, overcome with emotion.

"Remember, Frank, treat her and them as I would have treated yours, had there been need, kindly as your own." He gave me his hand, and shut his eyes. And so, palm to palm, I watched by the side of the man whose noble career had nearly ended, and who was beyond the power of human aid.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE END OF A HERO.

When the duchess returned, Vernon asked,—

"Are the children gone to bed?"

"No, dear!"

"Please bring them in."

"My husband," said the white-faced woman; "you will tire yourself."

"For the last time, my wife."

She turned and left us. Presently she came back with the baby, a fat, dimpled child of eighteen months, asleep in her arms.

"Do not wake her," he said, and kissed her once.

Then two little girls of four and six came in. They had been crying, child-like, in sympathy with the general grief. Seeing their father looking, as they thought, well, they ran joyously to him and kissed his face, telling him how glad they were he had killed the bear. Then they kissed him for "Good-night."

"Always be good girls," he said, "and love mother."

When they had gone, he turned to his wife.

"Tell them, sometimes," he said; "and then they will remember."

The two eldest girls now came. They were eight and eleven, and realized fully what had happened. The second girl, brown eyed, like her mother, who had always been the father's special pet, took his face in her hands, and sobbed, and kissed it, both children weeping bitterly, discharging their grief in tears, as do the clouds their moisture in rain.

Children and spring allow tears but a passing supremacy. The sunshine of their existence can only be temporarily repressed.

When they had exhausted their grief sufficiently to listen, he said,—

"My little girls, I am going away to the boys in heaven. No one but you will be left to comfort mother. Always remember that that will be your task."

He stopped, he was getting weak. The children could not answer for sobbing.

"Promise, and kiss me good-bye."

They did so and left, and once more the room was quiet.

Cora knelt at the bedside, quiet except for an occasional sobbing sigh. He looked at her lovingly.

"I think it will be well with her, Frank," he said, after awhile. "She is very brave and patient."

He was right, she was very brave and patient. Since her marriage her life had been happy as a bird's in spring, and now the winter of misery was upon her in all the cold distress of overwhelming disaster, she faced it with a heroism a hero might have envied. There never has been, nor ever will there be, a thing so supporting to the finite strength of humanity as that conviction, more common amongst women than amongst men, that they are watched over by an infinite and merciful power, that only sends unhappiness for the individual's ultimate good, and that will eventually unite them in joy with those they love, for all eternity. Fortified by this belief, and trusting to her husband's wisdom, as only second to that of the Almighty, joys did not spoil her, or sorrow crush. Amongst those who had come to speak with the dying president—for the news of the disaster had been flashed along the telegraph wires throughout all the land, as the brain flashes intelligence along the nerves to every part of the body—were the venerable Duke Phedra, Duke Ance, whose wise and energetic labours for the good of Gurla had got him a title, and Sir Diso Rota, who now, with a number of others, were waiting on the chance of once more seeing the duke alive.

Being informed of this, he said,—

"Frank, I will see them all."

"You are not strong enough, Vernon," I said, wondering at his fortitude. "You must only see one or two. Why will you not rest?"

"Not now, tell them." His voice had become very weak and low.

Going to them, I told them what the duke wished, and exactly how things stood, and asked them to select two or three of their number to go to him.

They then selected the three I have named, and we went in together.

Nothing was altered since I left. The duchess was still on her knees.

Each one in turn took and kissed his hand, and the wise old duke spoke:

"We have come to see you once more, Duke Vernon. Together we have worked, but always you have led us. Now" . . . the old man stopped, trembling and overcome with grief, "who shall be our leader?"

"That the wisdom of the people will decide," said the dying

man. "Have no fear, there are lots worthy. When the time is ripe, a fit man will be found; I know of many such."

"Will you nominate a man to carry on the work?" asked Duke Ance.

"No, my friend. Among you there are some more able than I. Say to the Parliament that I thank them for their kindnesses, and dying, asked them to forgive my faults, and always believe I acted for the best. Say to the people, I ask them to shed no tear for me, but for my wife and children I ask their love." He paused from weakness for a moment, and then, with an effort continued: "Tell them I asked in all humility, those who love me, that they will remember all men may err, and always strive to be wise, love and forgive."

He closed his eyes; and the old duke stooped and kissed him on the forehead, as did the others.

Together we returned to those who had sent us, amongst whom were representatives from all Undara and Roda. The old duke, with streaming eyes and trembling hands, told what had occurred, and concluded by saying,—

"Long have I known him, and always has he striven for the right, nobly has he lived, and nobly now he dies."

At the suggestion of Duke Ance, the dying man's message to the people was sent to every town in the land beyond the ice.

It was past midnight, but only the children were in bed. Sleep, work, business of all sorts had been forgotten, and everywhere people waited for news of Duke Vernon. Returning, I gave the dying man a stimulant, and he commenced to speak to his wife. The exertion of talking had reduced him very much, and I could see that the end was nearly come.

"My dear," he said to her, "when I am gone to the boys, you will not have time to sorrow. We will—one or the other of us—be always with you, and watch over you. This the Almighty will not deny us. When you ride Motrarer, we will be with you—Vernon said so. Everywhere one of us will be with you to shield you; you will feel us in the wind. We will be doing our work, and preparing for you; we will all be so lonely separated. You must look after the children for me, as well as for yourself—be father and mother. I thought I should live to bequeath my work to the boys: I was presumptuous in my ambition; but I was always prepared for failure. I always thought of you."

"My husband, my hero," sobbed the poor wife. "Think only of yourself."

"You are my better self, my wife. You have always prayed for both."

"Pray now, my husband."

"Presently. First promise me you will see to the horses and dogs as we did, and keep them all."

"Yes, my dear."

"You promise."

"Yes," said the sobbing wife.

"You will not sorrow. Remember for the children's sake, and though I cannot hold you in my arms, I will be near you, and grieve, if you grieve; or joy, if you be happy."

"Spare me, my husband."

"Remember, dear, I will be always near you."

"Frank," he turned to me, he was very weak and faint, "remember to stay near Cora till she has got over the sorrow of our loss. She will do what you tell her, do not let her change her life. You will cremate the boys and me, and put our ashes in the one urn. When Cora has done her work—which will not be for many years—mingle her ashes with ours. Now, dear, I will pray with you."

Cora, with both his hands in hers, commenced to pray. He shut his eyes, and his lips seemed to move. Parson Hamer had come, and was waiting to see the last of Vernon. I went to him.

"The duke is dying, Parson Hamer," I whispered. "Will you come and pray with him?"

"Did he ask me to?" the parson asked suspiciously.

"No."

"Then I will not."

Of the parson's acts no one could disapprove, but both they and his words were what the middle world would call "extremely unorthodox."

He continued, "What does such a man want with prayer, when he is dying? Nothing. His whole life has been one long, noble prayer, better than the words of ten lifetimes of supplications. His message to the Parliament and the people is a prayer. His death is a prayer. Let him talk to his poor wife—dear good woman—I will pray with her when he is gone. If he can pray, he can talk; I will talk to him." And the parson and I went in without more discussion.

They were still as I left them, the wife's prayers only interrupted by her occasional sobs. She prayed for him and their dead sons. She prayed as she felt, with all the love of a good woman for her husband and children—surely such prayers should move God's mercy. His eyes were opened, and he seemed to be thinking more of her than her words. The parson put his hand on her shoulder. She stopped and looked up. Her face was white and drawn, but alight with the belief that moves mountains. Such a face one would suppose the old martyrs to have, as they prayed between the agonies of torture. She was glad to see Hamer. In only one thing would she have had her husband changed. He could never pray. His acts, he said, were his prayers, for they earned him the prayers of his wife, and other people holy in the sight of heaven. Had he but prayed, she would have had nothing to wish for.

"Parson Hamer," she said, "will you pray with the duke? You have heard?" Again she buried her face and wept.

"His peace has been made with God long ago, dear duchess. He is going to meet his sons, and have his reward, which will be great." Hamer, with firm voice, looked like one inspired. "We will pray for ourselves by-and-by; for we, not he, have need of help from heaven in our heavy sorrow. Now we will talk to him."

The dying man would not talk much more. His voice was hardly louder than a whisper. He could barely move his hands. Only his eyes were bright and lifelike.

"Hamer," he said, "she will be lonely. Come and pray with her often, and cheer her up."

"All Undara will cheer her up, duke," he said huskily.

The dying man's mind commenced to wander.

"All Undara," he said, evidently trying to collect his thoughts. "Vernon, you, and Novel must unite all Undara." He evidently thought someone was speaking. "Do not be severe with the Rodas, they are improving fast," his finger-tips idly catching the counterpane. "Then let your sons complete the work." Again he rested, smiling to himself. "That Roda does not understand you, Vernon—ask Novel to do it." He evidently thought he was watching the boys and the Rodas building the toy-house. Suddenly his face changed, and he said quite clearly,—

"My boys, we have built a tower of Babel."

His eyes closed, and I thought he slept. He seemed strangely quiet. I stooped over him. His brave life was ended, and he had gone to join the boys he so dearly loved.

Parson Hamer looked at me inquiringly. Understanding his glance, I bent my head. He knelt beside the widow and commenced to pray aloud. He prayed for her and her little daughters, that she might be supported in her loneliness, and be enabled to face her loss with cheerfulness and resignation. The good man's voice filled the room with mellow sound and holy Christ-like thought. The parson's prayer now went up for the dead boys, and then for "Vernon Dreman, Thy servant, now lying dead!"

My head was bowed in prayer.

Hardly had he finished his sentence, when a piercing shriek filled the room, and the poor wife threw herself sobbing on her dead husband's breast. She had known that death was near, but now it had come she felt unprepared and stunned. At last tears came to her relief, and then we left her with her dead hero.

. . . . .

The duke and his sons now lay in state in the Presidential residence at Ura. From far and near, from Roda, Gurla, and all

Undara, came men of all grades and opinions. Some there were who regarded the dead man's ideas as too progressive, and him as an enthusiast of extreme ability and energy, and for this reason to be regarded as dangerous ; but everyone admitted his great goodness and wonderful ability, and the almost miraculous good he had done for all the people of Fregida. The former were the rare exceptions, the people who would find fault with anything ; the rest regarded the dead duke with a love and reverence such as no other man ever inspired. His splendid eloquence, great energy and ability, and, above all, his unfailing courtesy, Christ-like power of forgiveness, and desire to give everyone the full credit due to them, supported as these qualities were by his great wealth—pity such qualities should need a setting of gold to complete their power—had enabled him to step into the position of leader when just such a man was wanted, and at the same time to do great good, and cover himself with glory.

Foremost amongst the mourners were Duke Mura (now over ninety years of age, who had known Vernon Dreman from the time he first came into notice, and had loved and helped him almost as if he had been one of his own sons), Duke Ance, and Prince Valentine, who was now known as Duke Vance, having purchased a title and become a leader of progress, the duke's persuasive eloquence having joined the divided factions, so that the only difference between them now was as to the best way to proceed.

William Moran, rewarded with the title of "Sir," who had always regarded Duke Dreman as a heaven-sent leader, now wept by the corpse. Edna Kerna, Sir Diso Rota, and all the leading men, came to gaze on or offer their floral tributes to the great hero. Flowers of every colour, wreathed, or gathered in various forms, were laid around the three dead Dremans, till they reached to their level, and they seemed in a floral lake.

On the day of cremation the streets were lined, and the Crematorium crowded the night before by people anxious to hear the funeral oration of Parson Hamer. Funerals, as a rule, were conducted with the least possible pomp, people regarding it as their duty to be kind to their friends during their life, but not to intensify or keep alive the grief at their loss by useless ceremony, which made the tremendous preparations for this one the more unusual. The funeral car was followed first by the members of the two houses of Parliament; then by the leading officers and people of Fregida ; and lastly, by a mighty concourse of people of every sort.

Issuing from the noble building crowned by a mighty monument of the dead man, the solemn procession slowly wended its way to the Crematorium. In its wake, like the winding of a river, came the sorrowing multitude. The father, with a son on either side of him, lay in an open coffin, visible to the eyes of the weeping

crowd. The mightiness of death gave to the face of the strong man a sweet gentleness of expression that only his friends knew as natural to him. Nearly every person in Fregida had, at one time or other, listened to the living words that came like music from his lips, as living body to the spirit of his genius. Listening to his words, they had seen vividly on his face the picture of the feelings they awoke.

The low, sweet tones, and gentle smile, with humid eyes, that came to him as he pleaded for feuds to be forgotten, or generous deeds to be done; the lofty crest, dilated nostril, and sparkling eye that with the clarion voice urged the wisdom of right and drew the veil from the future; the pointed finger and smile of scorn that lay bare the folly of the selfish, or the fallacy of pretence; all that and more were memories in the minds of most of those who sorrowed at his funeral. But the placid gentleness of the dead man showed him in yet another character. The mothers looked on the dead sons at his side, and wept with a fellow-feeling for the desolate widow.

What would they do had such a fate happened to their children? They wept and prayed God to protect them from the sorrow of the poor woman bereaved in one day of her boy-children and her husband. The maids looked on the dead youths, and wept for the loss of so much promise. The men, with stern faces, grieved for the loss of their noble leader and the youths that they had regarded as the future leaders of their sons. The little children wept because they saw others weep, and smiled because the piles of flowers and passing people pleased them.

At last they reach the cemetery, in sight of the tall tower that bore the monument of the dead duke, and the hearse drew up for the last scene in the being of Duke Dreman.

Only the line of those who followed from the hearse to the gate gained admittance to the crematorium grounds. All around the ground was covered with a sea of human beings, and the houses as far as the eye could see were dotted with spectators.

Parson Hamer, bare-headed and big, on a raised pulpit outside the chapel, stood in view of the bare-headed multitude. The day was sunshiny and calm, yet the voice of the preacher, clear and sonorous as it was, only reached the few surrounding thousands of the numerous throng.

The beautiful service proceeded with all the people joining in; those near the pulpit acting as a guide to those further away, who in turn led those behind them, so that the multitude joined the parson almost as one man. The low-pitched voices of the many thousands of people, as they uttered Christ's prayer in unison, rose from the earth with a noise as of distant thunder or a mighty earthquake. Excepting this, the stillness was only broken by the many uttered "Amens."

When the funeral oration was reached the very air seemed

petrified with silence, so great was the stillness. For a moment—a long impressive moment—the parson stood with open eyes, sightless with many visions, and voice dumb beneath the weight of a flood of thought. Then he commenced—slow and laboured at first:—

"All my life long have I lived to preach what the life of this man, now dead before us, has illustrated. I have preached, and he has proved, that the laws of nature are the laws of God, and if we obey them and conform to them, as taught by Christ we shall attain the greatest happiness here, and raise our souls to a happier hereafter. That sin[1] is punished in this life, and goodness[1] rewarded. The corollary of which is, that our acts here bring us to a higher or lower existence. That all things are in reason and conformity with one great law. That man's mind can comprehend his surroundings, and with these alone he has to do; those who would have us disobey the wise laws that unalterably control us, because they pretend to reveal the wish of the unknown Almighty, prove by their arguments their own folly. You cannot understand our words, they say, because you are finite, and we speak of what is infinite. Our answer is our reason is equal to yours, talk to us in a manner that can be understood; leave the infinite power to manage its own business, which it will in its own good time. We are given the power to help to fill the world with happiness, and banish misery and disease; let us do this; it is our duty, the way is plain before us, it is our only means of happiness. Take from our lives greed, hatred, laziness, presumptuousness, and all folly, and encourage self-respect, forgiveness, industry and all wisdom, as taught by Christ and all great men. These things I preach, and, to the best of my strength, practise; for I know that they are the foundation of wisdom, which bears the fruit of happiness. Our friend Vernon Dreman—(he was a friend to us all; first, he was a perfect friend in the closer relations of life—son, brother, husband, father—then he was a perfect friend to all mankind; only by being perfect in both could he be perfect in either)—our friend, Vernon Dreman, by his life proved my preaching, and caused a host of others to do so.

"Folly is misery; wisdom is happiness. To me it seems but yesterday that Vernon Dreman, young and energetic, was first heard advocating a progress then—a time fresh in the memory of all old people—deemed visionary and impossible. Since then these things, and more, have come to pass. The hour was fit for such a man to pluck happiness from a period ripened by centuries of labour, and Vernon Dreman was the man. The man cannot make the time—that is the work of many men and

[1] These words are respectively "folly" and "wisdom" in the original manuscript, but mean what we designate "sin" and "goodness." In reality, the words are synonymous.—[EDITOR.]

many decades—but he is made by it; he can, however, hasten its progress, as Duke Dreman has done, to the limit of its speed. When he first began to come to the front, men said, 'He is headstrong; a torrent of empty words; there would always be a degraded and unreclaimable portion of human society.' This was necessary under their laws, though impossible under ours. Then when people began to admire his views and actions, the scoffers said, 'He is immoral, worthless,' and in the name of a religion founded on charity and forgiveness, magnified all his actions that could not bear the light, till, from a hasty sentence born of anger, they made a treasonable conspiracy, and held a word and smile to a woman as evidences of every immorality. Certainly he was not in all things above the evil customs of his day, for then there was a latitude in lust; acts within which only caused honourable men to make coarse jokes, and virtuous women to smilingly say, 'It was not all his fault.' He was amongst the best of a bad time. Then he commenced to advocate union with Zara; the happiness of wisdom, and the wisdom of self-respect, industry, and forgiveness. That his splendid eloquence hastened the union of Zara and Gurla under the federation of Undara, there is no doubt. That his wisdom and courage were the cause of a great change for the good in Undara, there is also no doubt. The crushing of the hostile element in Gurla, and its acceptance of the wisdom of Undara, is also largely due to him. Had he lived, he would have reclaimed the Rodas, and brought all Fregida under the happy influence of perfect wisdom. Great have been his achievements for good, and great his reward. In all his career no just man could ever say that he received harm from the dead duke, or that he ever bore malice; and yet there are thousands who have received his favours and forgiveness. Now what has been his recompense? Wealth has rewarded his projects; fame his efforts in the cause of his fellows; and love and happiness been his daily portion. His wife has blessed his love with children, two of whom—oh! heavy loss—lie here dead. That they would in the course of time replace their father, and continue his works, he and every one believed. And now, by mischance, they are dead, and of Duke Dreman's loved ones only wife and daughters live to mourn their loss. Of his life I have spoken; now to speak of his death. Dying, he had no fear for himself, and only thought of others. His children he gave to his wife's care, and for her asked the protection of his friends. To the people he left this message—think of it for ever, 'I ask them,' he said, 'to shed no tear for me; but for my wife and children, I ask their love. Tell them I ask, in all humility, that those who love me will remember that all men may err, and always strive to be wise; love and forgive.' As you remember the message well or ill, so will your lives be the more or less like his."