

were discovered, and finally, houses similar to those at present in vogue on Mars.

"I presume this collection is unique, we have nothing to compare with it on Earth," I remarked.

"Oh no! there are thousands of other collections rivalling, if not surpassing ours," replied Myrina. "Had your prehistoric artists worked in stone or iron, or something equally as imperishable, you of the earth might now have possessed almost equally valuable records of the past. How interesting would human monuments, equal in age to Stonehenge—even the Pyramids, prove to you now? It is not too late, however, for you to take a leaf from our book, and, beginning at once, leave something to your posterity. If your private citizens are not sufficiently wealthy, let the State do the work."

"I doubt if we have a State existing that would dare apply its funds to such a purpose; we are too greedy after the anticipated successes of the immediate future to care anything for that which is away in the dim distance. Our first, last and only criterion, the question that comes ever uppermost with our peoples, is: 'Will it pay?' If a thing will not pay, no matter how beneficial it may be, we accord it no chance."

"All you say is but too true," replied Myrina, with a little sigh. Just as the expression escaped her we passed from the representation of Martian life, past and present, to that representing Earth-life. Anon we moved through sculpture depicting the forms obtaining on more distant worlds, even the human oysters of the planet in *Prosepe* were not forgotten. Truly there exists nothing on Earth rivalling this private collection of the house of Am-Ram.

Beyond this gallery, we entered a yet larger one, lighted only from above. It was filled with paintings, delineating with master strokes the various portions of Mars as well as scenes from Martian history. Nor scenes from the past alone, since Myrina pointed out several paintings which she told me had reference to future events and concerned persons not yet born.

Although I was growing used to the possibility on Mars of the impossible on Earth, I here could not repress my astonishment, which amounted in this case to incredulity almost.

"Our seers," explained Myrina, "direct our artists. Extended calculations are continually being made, and each event as soon as fully understood is described. It is next transmitted to canvas. All these pictures have some direct or indirect reference to the family of Am-Ram, and pictures of a similar nature may be found on the walls of all our houses. We have, in fact, nothing that interests us more than these galleries of

historic and prophetic family paintings. We are continually studying them, and value them in an educational sense equal to our written and printed records. For instance, what record could teach us more plainly than this picture?"

The canvas to which Myrina pointed showed a submerged forest, amid the tropical branches of whose trees, a house had been erected. Peering from the doorway stood a Martian of much shorter stature than now obtaining. His eyes were directed to the heavens where dense clouds, proclaiming the atmosphere to be at saturation point, hung just above the tall tree tops. In one place the clouds had lifted and a patch of sky appeared. In it was Phobos just past "new" moon, and alongside a brilliant star, the Earth.

"That picture illustrates an incident in the life of my ancestor Jan-Sec, who, with his family, during the pluvial, tropical period of Mars, was forced to live as you see, everything far and near being submerged. The expression on his face is a contented one, nevertheless, because he reads from the reappearance of the Earth and Phobos, a similar promise to the one read by your Noah, when the prismatic bow gladdened his eyes."

Not one picture of famine, pestilence or war was there. There was one, that appeared newly hung, with a drapery over it. "Why, fairest Myrina," I asked, "is your painting covered, tells it any story that should not be studied by the members of your house?"

"That picture," replied Myrina "is new. It was only fixed in position to-day. The artists worked upon it nearly the whole of last night."

"Does it concern you?"

"It does."

"Can I not see it?"

"It were best for you not to look upon it. It concerns us both."

Ere Myrina could stay me, I started forward, I lifted the curtain. Verily, the picture did concern us both, and many more beside. It was a scene of carnage, a battle of giants, and we the cause. A revulsion of feeling overcame me as I looked, and I fell to the floor in a swoon.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A REPEAT.—A THIRD SEX.

When I recovered consciousness I found myself in a room of the Am-Ram mansion, with Myrina beside me.

As I opened my eyes Myrina said: "Now I understand why those of Earth are not permitted to foresee the future. They are not able to bear the griefs that are in store for them."

To this I was obliged to assent.

Evidently with the intention of getting rid of an unpleasant recollection, Myrina remarked: "You must partake of our hospitality to-day."

I began to frame an excuse.

"Tut, tut," she said, "no excuses. The master of the house is always ready to welcome those whom his wife or daughters invite to his table. Ladies here have privileges that you would do well to accord your women on Earth. Hospitality, the management of the house, the choice of friends and associates, the ordering of her surroundings and the disposing of herself in marriage are all left to woman here. You should greatly enlarge the sphere of civilized woman. In so doing you would benefit yourselves."

The room we were in looked out upon an enclosed court-yard, in which a fountain was playing. "I notice that you are exceedingly partial to water," I remarked. "Why is it?"

"Because we wish to keep our atmosphere as moist as possible. Our rainfall has diminished to such an extent that it has become absolutely imperative for us to irrigate and spray the whole face of our tropical and semi-tropical nature."

Supper was served in a spacious apartment. Here I was introduced to Am-Ram, father of my beloved. He proved a tall, stately personage, with fire in his eyes and a martial bearing generally. A man that would have become a Wellington or Bismarck on earth. He received me with the barest civility, having, I did not doubt, learned from the seers of his daughter's unhappy choice. The sovereignty of womanhood obtaining on Mars, however, forbade him taking any other action except moral suasion, prior to holding a conference with the ladies of his family, whose decision although averse to the wishes of Am Ram, would have to be abided by, according to Myrina, who took occasion to transmit me a few ideas on the subject (without speaking) as we took our seats.

Myrina's matron mother, Morna, was also present. Considerably shorter in stature than her husband, Morna was more like Myrina than the rest. Mutually attracted, I was received by her with marked courtesy.

Beside Vessa, the sister of whom I have already spoken, there were two sons, both younger than the sisters. These lads I found very intelligent for their age. They were much interested—boy like—with myself, having learned that I was not a disembodied spirit. They put several questions to me concerning my passage, having wishes—which Am-Ram quickly divined—for a jaunt to Earth. Myrina told me later on that the boys afterwards visited a public observatory—of which there are several open to all comers free—in the adjacent town, obtaining there solar observations, hoping to fall into a trance as I had, and be conveyed in spirit by their own will to Earth, then at inferior conjunction.

(To be Continued.)