

"Gentlemen," the junior impatiently exclaimed, "a truce to this folly. I must at least assume what I may call a spectral tuft of mist."

"Where did it come from?" we all exclaimed.

"How could there be mist without air?" the men of property inquired.

We all rose and turned to the window to see such an array of stars as can be but rarely seen in our climate. They seemed to focalise themselves upon our chamber. A million thick they stood on that unmeasured field, yet there was no noise of movement, no rustle as of a crowded host. Even Maderia was quieted by that solemn tranquillity. No man spoke a word, for the vision awed us into silence, and made us feel that speech would trespass upon a diviner eloquence.

In a few moments we settled down, and in a few moments more I said: "Let us come to the origin of man."

The junior was ready. "On that point," said he, "I thought of simply stating that fifteen hundred billions of ages ago man appeared——"

"Stop," said I, "You are making man older than the earth."

"How's that?" the junior inquired.

"Why," said I, "you said the earth was only fourteen hundred billions of ages——"

"Very good, then," the junior replied as if the slip were a mere trifle. "reduce accordingly say, thirteen hundred billions of ages——"

"You cannot be particular to half an hour," said Maderia;

"if you come within a fortnight it will do for me; besides, I think you have given man time enough for reflection."

Then, said the junior, "let us say in the simplest possible terms, terms which even the ordinary mind can at once appreciate, thirteen hundred billions of ages ago the noble outline of humanity was seen emerging from the outworn skin of an ourang-outang."

"Oh, hang it," said Maderia, allowing feeling momentarily to prevail over science. The men of property agree. The men of social habit gave the junior to understand, as if resenting some implied personality, that the less said about ourang-outangs the better and a good deal better, too. The magazine writers thought, with all due respect, that the animal had been needlessly introduced.

"Come," said I, "at this rate we shall make no progress. I propose that the senior scientist be requested to write out a Genesis that will express his maturest thoughts, and that he can recommend as a scientific substitute for the Mosaic cosmogony. His researches will be invaluable to us."

The junior interrupted me. Said he, "If

not taking too great a liberty, I may own that I have such a Genesis in my pocket at this very moment, and if agreeable I can read it. I did not like to tell you at first, and I only tell you now that we may save some time."

The senior scientist (quiet and modest) urged the immediate reading of the paper, and we all joined him in the request. The junior scientist was overjoyed. Here are two or three extracts from the new Genesis:

"Fourteen hundred and eighty-two billions of ages ago there was an infinitesimal and sub microscopical deposit of carbon——"

(Maderia groaned.) which simple substance commenced a series of eccentric and immeasurable gyrations, revolving at a pace—technically called a velocity—which no mathematical formulae can even rudely express——

(Our social friends groaned.) when suddenly there struck out a primary compound, ages afterwards known as quartz.

("Eh?" said Maderia with interest) and in the course of millenniums primary compounds fell into secondary compounds, yielding carbonate of lime, gypsum and silicates,

(The magazine writers groaned.) and then began the mysterious process of crystallization. After countless aeons we come upon the formation of chemical rocks, igneous and aqueous as the case may be, both kinds having concretionary, nodular, or sparry textures.

(I groaned——groaned deeply.) Ages after ages came feldspathic lavas, augitic lavas.

(Maderia stood bolt upright. The magazine writers yawned. The men of property turned pale.)

The junior scientist added, "Gentlemen, in this way you strike a deadly blow at superstition, and without using scientific technicalities in undue measure you at once awaken the clergy and place yourselves in the very van of progress."

After a momentary pause I said, "Now let us look at the Genesis of Moses. Let us have a taste of the old Bible. This is how it reads: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'"

"Never until this moment," exclaimed the senior scientist, "did I truly feel the grandeur of Moses. It covers everything as to time. Compared with that duration all your billions are but as a drop in the bucket."

"My old mother's Bible for me," said Maderia.

"We have not mended it yet." I said. Said one of the magazine writers: "I see by contrast what I had not seen before. If we want to know what the Bible is we have