

# THE LAST MAN AND WOMAN.

## A Graphic Story of the Extinction of the Human Race.

### The Desperate Battle of Science with the Inevitable—Crowded to the Equator by the Conquering Ice.

#### CHAPTER I.

The earth had been inhabited for about twenty-two million years, and its vital history had been divided into six progressive periods. The primordial age, or formation of the first organisms (infusoria, zoophytes, echinodermata, crustaceans, molluscs—a world of the deaf and dumb and almost blind), had taken not less than ten million years to go through its different phases. The primary age (fish, insects, more perfect senses, separate sense, rudimentary plants, forests of horse-tails and of tree ferns) had then occupied more than six million years. The secondary age (saurians, reptiles, birds, forests of coniferous and of cycadaceae) in order to accomplish its work, required two million three hundred thousand years. The tertiary age (mammifers, monkeys, superior plants, flowers, fruits, and seasons) had lasted half a million years. The primitive age, the time of national divisions, of barbarism, and of militarism had filled about three hundred thousand years, and the sixth age, that of intellectual humanity, had reigned for nearly two million years.

During that long succession of centuries the earth had grown older and the sun had become colder. In the beginning of the ages the terrestrial globe was entirely covered by the waters of the ocean. Uplifts caused first islands, then vast continents, to emerge; the surface of evaporation diminished in extent; the atmosphere was saturated with less vapor and could not well preserve the heat received from the sun; so that a gradual decrease of temperature was brought about. During the first human age three-quarters of the globe were still covered by water and the temperature remained high. But from century to century a portion of the rain water penetrated through the soil to the deep rocks and returned no more to the ocean, the quantity of water diminished, the level of the sea was lowered, and the screen of atmospheric vapor afforded only an insufficient protection to the nocturnal radiation. There resulted a slow, century-long decrease in temperature, and then a spreading of the ice, which at first covered only the high-mountains and the polar regions, but little by little invaded the temperate regions and insensibly lowered the line of perpetual snow.

On the other hand, the sun, the source of all light and all heat, radiating perpetually without an instant of cessation, in the centre of cold, obscure, and empty space, slowly lost the calorific power which caused the earth to live. Of an electric and almost bluish white, saturated with incandescent hydrogen, during the geological periods which witnessed the appearance of terrestrial life, it gradually assumed that dazzling whiteness, to acquire the color, perhaps apparently warmer, of glittering gold and such was its real color during the first three hundred thousand years of human history. It then became yellower and even reddish, consuming its hydrogen, oxidizing itself, metalizing itself. This slow transportation of its photosphere, the increase of its spots, the diminution of its protuberant eruptions, brought about a correlative decrease in the emission of its heat.

In consequence of these various causes the terrestrial temperature had, from century to century, become lower. The geographical aspect of the globe had metamorphosed itself, the sea having several times taken the place of the land, and vice versa, and the extent of the sea having considerably diminished, and been reduced to less than a quarter of what it was at the advent of humanity. The seasons which had begun in the tertiary age had perpetuated themselves through the centuries, but with a decreasing intensity for the summer heat. Climates insensibly approached each other near the equator; the glacial zones (boreal and austral) inexorably forced back the temperate zones to the place of the ancient torrid zone. Warm valleys and equatorial regions alone were habitable; the rest was frozen.

From century to century humanity had attained forms of exquisite beauty; and no longer worked materially. A network of electricity covered the globe, producing at will all that was needed. It was then a unified race, entirely different from the rude and heterogeneous races that had characterized the first period. Doubtless the absolute equality dreamed of by the poets had not been attained, and there were still superior and inferior beings, seekers and indifferent, active and inactive men, but there were no more scandalous unfortunates nor irremediable miseries.

About the year 2,200,000 after Jesus Christ the last great focus of human civilization shone in the centre of equatorial Africa, in the brilliant city of Sundown, which had already been several times raised again from its ashes. It was more than a hundred thousand years since the spots where Paris, London, Rome, Vienna, and New York had stood were buried beneath the ice.

The capital of this aristocratic republic had attained the last limits of a luxurious and voluptuous civilization. Leaving far behind it the childish amusements of Babylon, of Rome, and of Paris, it had thrown itself heart and soul into the most exquisite refinements of pleasure and enjoyment; and the results of progress, the achievements of science, art, and industry had, during several centuries, been applied to raising all the joys of life to their maximum of intensity. Electricity, perfumes, music, kept the senses in a state of over-excitement, so that under the brilliant light of enchanting nights, as beneath the veiled shadows of the day, the nervous system could no longer find a moment's rest, and about their twenty-fifth year men and women dropped dead to total exhaustion. Perceiving the increasing coldness of the planet and the approach of eternal winter, they had early maintained themselves a warm and oxygenized atmosphere, milder and more exciting than the old breezes from the woods and prairies, had lived more rapidly and rushed more rashly to the inevitable end. The elegance of costumes, the beauty of forms, had gradually risen to an unexpected perfection in consequence of a passion selection, which seemed to have no other object than immediate happiness. Wives no longer became mothers unless by accident. Besides, some of the lower classes alone remained in condition to undertake

the duties of motherhood, fashion having some time been able to suppress the necessity in the upper social spheres.

Then it was seen that the women of the lower classes were the first to feel the deadly effects of invading cold, and the day came when it was recognized that amid the blind enjoyment of pleasure no woman was a mother or could become one. They no longer desired the inconveniences of maternity, which had so long been left to the inferior women, and they reigned in all the splendor of their unblemished beauty. It was only when a law was passed that the entire fortune of the republic would be given to the first woman who would give birth to a child that they understood the irreparable extent of the misfortune that had befallen the last inhabitants of the earth.

Doubtless the end would not have long delayed its coming, sterilized soil being henceforward incapable of feeding its children. But they were deluding themselves with the thought that perhaps by some ingenious proceeding it would become possible to put off the fatal period, to gain time; and who knows, they said, if the climate may not improve and the sun smile on the unfortunate planet.

But recriminations, regrets, sorrows, reproaches, accusations, despair—all were now superfluous. Life had been, it not dried up at its source, at least rendered irremediably unfruitful. A special congress of the last surviving members of the Medical Academy produced no satisfactory result. They disputed violently, each member being accused by his neighbor of having lent himself to the spreading of that insane fashion; they nearly came to blows; as the issue of the meeting the President of the Academy and the chief of the protectors were even compelled to quench their mutual anger by a duel with swords, and more than a year was spent in physiological and political discussions without result.

But a youth, the last of that race, young Omega, born in the lower ranks of society, came with his mother, already advanced in age, and a rare survivor of the mothers, and before the assembled representatives recalled the improvidence of the governors, stigmatized the public immorality, pointed out to them the general folly of which the human race was the victim, and demanded that the last constructed electric aerostat made in the Government workshops should be put at his disposal. He engaged to conduct an expedition over the whole of the equatorial zone which still remained habitable, and to see whether any human groups still existed on any spot.

The proposition was received with enthusiasm, a real aerial flotilla was constructed, and all the strong men flew away to discover the land of ice.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### A Spring Chorus.

Oh, such a commotion under the ground  
When March called, "Ho there! ho!"  
Such spreading of rootlets far and wide,  
Such whispering to and fro!  
And, "Are you ready?" the Snow-drop asked;  
"This time to start you know."  
"Almost, my dear," the Willow replied,  
"I'll follow as soon as you go."  
Then "Ha! ha! ha!" a chorus came  
Of laughter soft and low,  
From the millions of flowers under the ground—  
Yes, millions, beginning to grow.

"I'll promise blossoms," the Crocus said,  
"When I hear the bluebirds sing."  
"And straight thereafter," Narcissus cried,  
"My silver and gold I'll bring."  
"And ere they are dulled," another spoke,  
"My Hyacinth bells shall ring."  
And the Violet only murmured, "I'm here,"  
And sweet grew the air of spring.  
Then, "Ha! ha! ha!" a chorus came  
Of laughter soft and low,  
From the millions of flowers under the ground—  
Yes, millions, beginning to grow.  
O the pretty, brave things! through the coldest days,  
Imprisoned in walls of brown,  
They never lost heart, though the blast shrieked loud,  
And the sleet and the hail came down;  
But patiently each wrought her beautiful dress  
Or fashioned her beautiful crown,  
And now they are coming to brighten the world,  
Still shadowed by winter's frown;  
And well may they cheerily laugh, "Ha! ha!"  
In a chorus soft and low,  
The millions of the flowers, hid under the ground,  
Yes, millions, beginning to grow.  
—[Harper's Young People.]

#### Cases for Women Lawyers.

The experience of an English judge points out one field of usefulness for the many women who are beginning the practice of the law. He was called upon to decide as to the value of some gowns, and he inspected them to ascertain whether they were properly made and fitted. But what a poor and insufficient judge a man must be of such matters! If a woman had been the counsel against the dressmaker, with what skill would she have criticised the manner in which they were made! And if a woman had been the judge, a single glance would have enabled her to render a more perfect judgment than a long and a careful inspection by a member of the sterner sex. —*New York Tribune.*

The United States census returns show conclusively that the negro population in what is known as the "black belt" in the South is not holding its own. This belt contains fifteen-sixteenths of the entire colored population of the country. According to the census of 1880 the negroes appeared to be increasing at a much greater rate than the whites, but this was due, it is said now, to defects in the census of 1870. According to the census just taken there were 6,990,000 colored inhabitants in the black belt, as compared with 6,142,000 in 1880. The colored element increased during the decade at the rate of 13.90 per cent. The white population numbers 16,868,000 as against 13,550,000 in 1880; that is, it has increased at the rate of 24.67 per cent., or nearly twice as rapidly as the colored population. In 1880 the proportion of white to persons of color in these States was in the relation of 100,000 to 41.45. "During the past decade," says the census commissioner, "the colored race has not held its own against the white in a region where the climate and conditions are, of all these which the country affords, the best suited to its development."

# A SENSATIONAL TRIAL.

## A WELL-KNOWN ENGLISHMAN SUED FOR BREACH OF PROMISE.

### Evidently a Specious Case of Blackmail.

The event of last week, that proved of most interest in the social and political world of London was that of the woman who calls herself Gladys Evelynor, estrade Ellis, as best suits her convenience, against William Henry Hurlbert, well known in Europe and America as a literary man, for breach of promise of marriage. This suit is the result of one of the most extraordinary and dangerous conspiracies that has ever come within the cognizance of an English court. No one who knows Mr. Hurlbert, and is acquainted with his pleasant domestic relations with a charming and cultured wife, would consider the charge of this out-cast woman and her paramour in any other light than that of the ridiculous, if the desperation of the conspirators had not driven them to bring the matter into court.

The woman Ellis charges that she met Mr. Hurlbert in an omnibus in the fall of 1887, and that he followed her home and made her acquaintance, telling her that his name was Wilfred Murray. She says that on May 6, of the following year, he proposed marriage to her. Her paramour, Jackson, one of the lowest of vulgar adventurers, supports her assertion that Hurlbert often called on her at her home in Kensington, and that improper relations existed between them. The same Jackson has been forced to admit that at the same time he and the woman were living together as husband and wife.

Mr. Hurlbert's explanation is that his one-time secretary, Wilfred Murray, is the person who had the intrigue, and that the letters to Miss Ellis, which were said to be in the master's handwriting, were really from the pen of the man. This might be proved easily enough if Murray were at hand, but he disappeared from Mr. Hurlbert's sight a year and a half ago, and although search has been made for him he is not to be found.

Of course there is any amount of evidence brought forward to prove the woman's charge, including a journal covering the period of the intrigue she alleges. There is nothing in the journal, however, that might not have been trumped up, nor is there anything in the testimony offered that is definitely corroborated. On the contrary, the letters offered in evidence are not only of a vile nature that not one of Mr. Hurlbert's friends can possibly believe that he wrote them, but "Wilfred Murray's" use of the English language is of such a nature that it would be out of the question for a man of Mr. Hurlbert's culture even to imitate it.

A correspondent saw Mr. and Mrs. Hurlbert at their home in Devere Gardens the other evening. Mrs. Hurlbert had only just arrived from Rome. She would have been in London to testify during the week, but Mr. Hurlbert did not expect the trial to come off before July. When it was set down for last Monday he at once telegraphed for his wife, whose testimony would disprove many of Miss Ellis's statements, but, although she started at once for London, she was unable to get there in time to appear in court.

Mr. Hurlbert says that in view of the fact that the Judge had not concluded his summing up he was unable to say anything about the case, but that when the verdict of the jury was brought in he should have a great deal to say, and would be prepared to say it. Mrs. Hurlbert was not bound by this convention.

"It is monstrous," she said, "that the English laws are such that an infamous woman like this plaintiff is able to bring into court such a charge against a man like my husband. If I could only have reached London in time I could have proved alibis on several of the most conspicuous charges. We first learned of this conspiracy in September, 1880. On the 5th of that month we paid a visit to Lord North in Oxfordshire, and remained there until the 10th. On the day of our return I received a letter addressed to me in a strange handwriting. It was handed to me just as we arose in the morning. This letter contained two enclosures. One was a letter purporting to be written by Mr. Hurlbert to this woman, and the other was a letter addressed to Mr. Hurlbert. I carried this to him in his dressing room, and a moment afterward he brought it to me in my room. It was written from the Allison Hotel in Bordeaux, and the writer said that unless Mr. Hurlbert was prepared to send £200 at once by draft more letters of the same sort as the one purporting to have been written by Mr. Hurlbert would be sent to me. He was directed to address his reply to Sancho, Nunez, Poste Restante and Bordeaux.

"This communication proves this black-mailer guilty of two lies. In the first place the letter alleged to have been written by Mr. Hurlbert in London was dated Sept. 6, and on that day we were both at Lord North's place in Oxfordshire. Then she testified in court that she did not know that Mr. Hurlbert was a married man until 1890; and yet this very letter written in 1889, was directed to Mrs. W. H. Hurlbert at our home in Southwell Gardens. This woman also testified that Mr. Hurlbert proposed marriage to her on May 6, 1887. On that very day Mr. Hurlbert joined me in Paris, and we went on together to Florence, so that it is impossible that he was in London at that time. I am able to prove her testimony false in a score of similar instances.

"I am very much surprised that the Justice should have considered the similarity between the handwriting of Mr. Hurlbert and his secretary so remarkable. In Talleyrand's memoirs, that have just been published, the similarity of his secretary's handwriting, Perrey, to that of Talleyrand's is noted, and I was reading in *Rainie's Journal* only a very short time ago that the handwriting of Grenfell, secretary to the Duke of Wellington, was so much like that of his master that Wellington himself could not tell the difference. Only a short time ago I opened one of Mr. Hurlbert's books that had been packed and stored for a long time, and a letter fell out. I picked it up, and to my surprise it was addressed to Mr. Hurlbert in what I supposed to be his own handwriting. I wondered why he should have been writing to himself, and opened the letter. It was from Wilfrid Murray, written at the Metropolitan Club in Washington. That was the first time I knew that his writing was so much like my husband's."

Judge—"Single or married?" Prisoner judges deeply. "Oh, yes, I see—married." A snapper up of unconsidered trifles—a fondling asylum.

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