

astounded me more afterwards—at the time I was too busily occupied with the scene before me to think of aught else—was the readiness with which my spirit senses received and understood, or perhaps I ought to say, translated the words spoken.

It was Myrina's turn to speak. How eagerly I listened for the sound of her voice, that voice I had so often heard in my dreams. Though I live to the age of the patriarchs and pass through as many troubles as the man of Uz, all the waters of affliction will never wash from the memorial cells of my brain the tones of my Myrina's reply. O ye that love! tell me now do ye remember the first words of your loved ones, be those first expressions the sayings of parent, brother, sister, child, lover, husband or wife, as such, were they not treasured as sacred as the words of the never-to-be-forgotten dead? Commonplace words they may have been—this world is a planet brimmed with commonplace—but words, surely, of import to those who had longed and listened, waited and watched, yea, patiently and petulantly prayed to hear them!

"Jest not because I love the service of the sanctuary, dearest;" replied the maiden called Myrina, "neither chide me because I am tuneless to-day. Your thoughts run not always in a trivial mood, any more than mine. Sister, sister," exclaimed Myrina, after a pause, "what meaneth this?"

"Meaneth what, Myrina?"

"What meaneth my agitation?"

"I know not, your trance has perhaps weakened you."

In my eagerness to catch Myrina's answer, I stepped boldly forward beyond the shrubs that had hitherto hidden me from view, thinking that my spirituality would screen me from these young Martians. I then discovered my mistake. Divining that her words would relate to myself, I cannot say that I was very much surprised when Myrina said:

"Not so, rather it has strengthened me for that which is to come. That which is to come! The moment that our seers, that I too have predicted, comes swiftly now. Nor would I wish to stay, but rather hasten the flight of time. Yea, it is well with me at last; I can dare now to forget the lagging of the hours. Past forever is the lonesome dreariness of waiting. Yea, I know that the presence concerning which I have had so many visions; on whom I have learned to think sleeping and waking, until we have become as one, is very near. 'Twas but now in my trance that I beheld the leafless woods on the slope of Mount Arbora. Methought that I was searching there for him whom my soul loveth. Brief was my search, I called once, yea twice, when the voice that I love most answered. I became

afraid and fled homeward; I entered here, and then it was that I was awakened by thy voice, my sister."

There was a brief pause, but before the younger had time to reply, Myrina exclaimed: "I did not dream, see, he is here!"

Greatly agitated, Myrina started to her feet. Her long hair fell in a golden shower about her, she dashed it away, and with extended arms pointing directly to where I stood, exclaimed: "Stranger from our sister planet, welcome! Many spirits from thy orb of sin have ere this visited our world, have sojourned awhile, have conversed with us a brief space and passed on, whithersoever the Great Disposer of souls directed. They were not as thou art, and I had nor wish nor power to stay them, much less to draw them hither. Thou art different. From thy birth my spirit has been one with thine, to-day my life has become one with thy life; previously united but in thought, we are henceforth united in reality. No more should our thoughts be sad, sad because of unfulfilled longings after a chosen companion. Hope is fulfilled from this precious moment, and come strife, peace, discord or security, separation is not for us, so long as life endures. Let countless obstacles interpose, what care we, who henceforth are one? And what our God hath joined together, a few million miles of vacant space shall surely not suffice to keep asunder."

Unable, had I so desired, to resist such pleadings, or such gracious commands; my bewildered, overjoyed spirit answered her will, and, approaching, knelt beside her feet. My spirituality could not bar me from her sight, Myrina was sinless, and her fair eyes looked down and studied my face as readily as I looked up to hers. She knelt beside me, we registered a vow of mutual affection, we rose simultaneously, reading each other's thoughts and with clasped hands—"There's piercing expression in tightly locked fingers,"—stood up and whispered each the other's name. Affection needed no further introduction, and, "Seybold, Myrina, — Myrina, Seybold," passed from lip to lip.

The sister was amazed, and no wonder. No such occurrence had before found a place in Martian records, lengthy as they are. At last she recovered sufficiently to rise from her seat and extend a hand to each of us, wishing us,—somewhat sadly, I thought—joy and felicity.

To me the pleasure of the hours that followed was a unique experience, never to be forgotten. Is it strange that I have graven it with the pen of sure remembrance in the rock of my memory for life? What remembrance can be as dear as that of the first meeting with our first love? I can almost see us now, moving about in that sylvan retreat, the

fountain plashing, while I greedily listened to their most interesting conversation. Now Myrina explained the beauties of some leafy specimen, anon we were all three seated beside the fountain, I listening to the witching melody of voice and lyre wherewith my Martian betrothed and her lovely sister entertained me.

Do you ask me what was the burthen of those songs of a distant planet? Surely my friend, it should not be very hard to guess. Songs are sung on earth to many themes, so numerous, indeed, are the themes that abject realism has bidden its versifier "sing of a beefsteak" and not bidden in vain. On Mars 'tis different. Less gross, the inhabitants, although of earlier origin, have not degenerated to the extent we have. Therefore they dedicate their songs to better themes, to religion, the arts, the sciences, to the beautiful in nature, and to the noblest deeds of the past; but, more frequently than all these together their poetry has become a poetry of the affections. "That ye love one another," our "New Commandment," is as old as their very existence as a people; has been practised from the beginning, and has consequently fruited to perfection. So it is that on Mars their sweetest singers; their ablest poets, their most gifted musicians, sing of the affections. And how sweet such songs can be made, I leave those who have aspirations after purity to guess, especially those who have learned the mystic charm of solemn music, by listening to those

"Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of heaven's joy,
Sphere born, harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,"

as united by the oratorio writer and the singer of deservedly world-wide reputation.

From song, we drifted again into conversation. It became my turn to talk. I was plied with questions concerning the earth. The sisters sighed frequently at the account I was obliged to give them of mankind's present condition. What surprised them most was the increased approximation of mankind into cities, and the gradual depopulation, or at best, stationary condition of rural districts as regards population. In it they said they saw grave consequences, our race was destined to become feebler, weaker, sicklier and shorter-lived as the centuries moved on. To-day, they pointed out, there existed no semi-barbaric nations or hordes to take the place of the nations whose civilization would eventually destroy themselves. There are, they said, no Goths, no Vandals to-day to overrun modern Italy; no Angles, no Saxons to replace the effeminate Britons and luxurious Romans, no hardy English to drive the redskins off the face of the earth, and the end of your civilization must be senility, dotage, death.

(To be Continued.)