

Sebold Melbin;

OR,

THE WORLD OF MARS.

By Walter H. Smith.

"World of Mars;
Lives there a human brotherhood on thee
Without the sins and errors of mankind."

CHAPTER V. (Continued)

The day outside was bright and sunny, and the door of this beauteous winter garden ajar. From the interior floated forth melodious sounds such as it had never before been my privilege to hear. Good music has a great charm for me—I think it has for all—and this music seemed—to compare it with the best on earth—like the exquisitely trained notes of a most gifted singer, whose "divinely warbled voice" was accompanied in perfect harmony by some stringed instrument.

As it caught the sound, my soul, enraptured, started forward, believing itself able to examine without fear of discovery. From this idea, however, it was quickly undeceived. The conservatory—for such to all intents and purposes it proved—appeared in the interior an elysium. The Winter season prevailed without, but all was delightfully redolent of the odors of Summer within. Surely, I thought, Martialists excel in floriculture and horticulture. This I found true, not only of the more pretentious, since every dwelling, no matter how small its size or limited its owner's means, is furnished with a winter garden, rivalling, if not surpassing, some of the finest on earth. It is a favorite maxim with them, that the nearer one gets to nature, the more natural one is, and wherever the cold of Winter effectually debarb outside horticulture, there it is on Mars that one finds the winter garden brought to its greatest perfection. In the one I am describing, trailing plants of immense length and variegated foliage, climbed in luxuriant profusion up the sides and across the roof, emitting, from both blossoms and leaves, odors of the most fragrant nature. Jets, or to speak correctly, sprays of water, leapt up from numerous mossy spots, rendering the air moist and favorable to vegetable growth.

"Who loves a garden, loves a greenhouse too,"

says Cowper, and truly; nor lives there a horticulturist but would have instantly fallen in love with this greenhouse. In it were plants which I could not name, for I had never seen their like on earth, flowers, chosen for their perfume, others for their beauty, and plants for their foliage, or fruit. By this means a well ordered Martian household is always kept supplied with fruits, which form one of the staple articles of consumption. In every village, town and city are to be

found greenhouses, botanic gardens and arboretums supported out of the public funds; where the poorer classes can always procure what would on earth be considered "delicacies out of season," at prices fixed by law. Access can also be had at all times to these gardens by the public.

Much taste is naturally displayed in the ordering and laying out of winter gardens. In the one I had entered, everything proved to be grouped in perfect keeping, there was order in disorder, art in nature, yet it was hard to say which was which, for neither predominated. The door I was entering, opened at that end farthest from the mansion, and half way down rose a dome. The conservatory, although a private one, was large, being, so far as I could judge, about two hundred and fifty yards in length, of corresponding breadth and height. Beneath the dome a fountain plashed, leaping and sparkling up to the very top, water rising of course much more readily under pressure than on earth, owing to the lesser gravity of Mars. Around the fountain was a basin, and around it, an open space. In this space, large lounges or couches, suitable for the giant-like forms of the Martian race, were placed.

CHAPTER VI.

MYRINA.

I leave you to imagine my surprise and delight when I discovered myself facing that very affinity my soul had long before shaped out as the perfection of womanly beauty. I started, looked again and again, but so it was; there could be no mistake, 'twas undoubtedly the realization of my imagings. Yes, before me, upon one of the lounges, reclined the fairest, the most beautiful form that it had yet been my privilege to see. At the moment in a fit of abstract thought, her blue eyes were fixed on the spray of the fountain, as it shimmered in the winter sunbeams. Not very much taller than the daughters of Eve, being, indeed, of short stature when compared with another damsel, whom I rightly judged her sister, along-side. Very lovely I thought her face, her cheeks having that deep red-pink glow that students of what are termed "astral influences" on earth attribute to some Mars people. Long golden-hued tresses, the color of ripened wheat, fell about her in light, rippling, wavy billows crowning her head and caressing the reclining beauty's neck and bosom. A lofty forehead, bespoke an intellect of no common order; those dark blue eyes expressed the brilliancy of the mind of their owner; the pretty mouth spoke as much of womanly firmness and resolution as girlish trust, truth and innocence; the long straight nose, giving an otherwise perfect face a thoroughly classic appearance; her chin and neck would have made half the belles of London, Paris and

New York sick for very envy—such was this fair Martian, the offspring of a thousand generations whose purity had never been contaminated by the mire of disease or the murrain of sin. The fittest survival of the fittest—born throughout a million years, how shall words portray Myrina! Ye who love; whose

"Love flings a halo round the dear one's head.
Faultless, immortal—"

remember all that your beloved is, how she is more lovable, more beautiful by far than the rest of womankind, no matter who or what she or they may be; remember this, and thus remembering, picture Myrina even more lovable, more beauteous still.

She had been playing, but had laid her harp—if I may so term that which harp was not—aside, and at the instant of my advent appeared deep in reverie. The forms of both these ladies I noticed were robed, rather than clothed, in loose, but warm outer garments of some costly fabric, a material that could be said to suggest rather than reveal, the rounded outlines of the beautifully moulded forms beneath.

On a cushion beside her sister—for such relations these ladies really bore each other—the younger, who was of perhaps a more lovely cast of countenance, but not with one quarter the individuality of the elder, was playing upon another stringed instrument. I thought of Timotheus, who

"With flying fingers touched the lyre
The trembling notes ascend the sky
And heavenly joys inspire."

But, greater than Timotheus, who

"Raised a mortal to the skies."

Greater than Cecilia, to whom he had to "yield the prize," because Cecilia

"Drew an angel down,"

were these fair musicians, these Martian St. Cecilians, who had drawn a mortal away from his clayey tenement, away through millions of miles of space to pay them a visit upon another planet!

The music ceased. Said the younger, turning smilingly toward the elder:

"Voiceless and tuneless once more my sister, my Myrina. Tell me of whom or what thou dost now dream, falling into a trance, yet with thine eyes open! Truly, sister mine, our seers spoke rightly when they counselled our father Am-Ram to place thee with the priestesses that serve in the inner Sanctuary, in order that thy meditation and quiet might have known no bounds, and thy visions of the worlds that are beyond have been undisturbed."

These words were spoken in exceedingly rapid but very musical accents. The language was, of course, entirely foreign to any I had heard on earth, being incisive, very condensed, apt in expression, and thus conveying a great deal in a few words. What has taken nearly eighty English words to imperfectly translate, the perfect language of Mars expressed better in fifteen! What