

which he took to be a park. Gertrude had remarked the absence of spires and turrets. The architecture of the buildings was not, in fact, at all like our own. Though there seemed to be variety enough, there was not that exhibition of individual taste and preference we meet with on our own planet. There did not appear to be any hovels and mansions side by side. On the contrary the many buildings, which lay in spacious squares and quadrangles, and in curious circles, stars and crosses, though different, were similarly beautiful and attractive. It was our intention to take time to study them, had it not been for the calamity that befell us, and which, leaving me widowed, hastened our return to the earth.

"As we came near the ground we saw that a great crowd had gathered to behold our descent. In a moment we had touched with a slight rebound. A hundred hands grasped the air-ship, and we looked upon a thousand strange and interesting faces. In another moment we stood before a race of beings of a similar development to our own, though of larger stature, and with a serenity of countenance strangely alien to the races that we knew.

"Those in the foreground fell back as we appeared, and while Hermann fastened the "Nautilus," Gertrude and I stood side by side, bearing the scrutiny of the majestic and kindly people, whose shores we had visited.

"Never were wandering strangers more hospitably received. While we stood admiring the grand proportions and calmly beautiful faces of this Martian crowd (there was not an ignoble or vulgar countenance among them) they nodded and smiled and made friendly gestures towards us. So cordial were these greetings that we involuntarily smiled at each other.

"How beautiful and kind they seem," said Gertrude.

"What perfect men and women," ejaculated Hermann.

The sexes were in fact about equally represented. There were youths and maidens, mature men and women who had long passed their meridian. But alike in old and young there was the same calm beauty, the same absence of disfiguring passion, the same simple dignity and repose. They were darker than our race, but their skin was of so rich and clear a texture that it seemed not that they were darker, but as if a people like our own had been given a more generous stream of life. They were attired mainly in white, though many wore coloured garments. These were light and flowing, and more than anything else reminded us of the costumes of the early Greeks.

"We had scarcely time to note these particulars when four persons—two men and two women—came towards us as if for conference. When they were directly before us all four nodded and smiled in the same friendly manner, and we, of course, nodded and smiled in return.

"Our first attempts at conversation were foredoomed to failure. Though Hermann was versed in many languages, of this deep and musical tongue he had not the slightest knowledge. Until now we could not have guessed the capacity for expression of the human voice. Here was an instrument on which the subtlest shades of feeling rose and fell with a depth and sweetness that was almost melodious.

"The women spoke to Gertrude, and she and they, in laughing pantomime, confessed their powerlessness to communicate by speech.

"One of the men pointed to the air-ship, with a word which I do not now recall, and then pointed to the sky. We also pointed upward, and waved our hands to indicate that we had come through the air from far away. They smiled with a sort of intelligent appreciation, as if they both understood and admired.

"As they evinced some curiosity about the air-ship, Hermann led the way to its interior. They examined the mechanism of the vessel, observing the related parts with an attention which betrayed considerable interest, making now and again soft, satisfied comments, as if each thing was what they had expected it to be, and was not at all surprising. Hermann wondered as he regarded them whether

they were accustomed to aerial navigation. He learned afterwards that such was the case, though, strange to say, their visits had so far been confined to the satellites of the larger planets.

"On coming out of the "Nautilus," I noticed that Gertrude was leaning against one of the Martian ladies, whose arm was thrown affectionately about her. Delighted at what seemed the sudden formation of a friendship, I was about to say so, when she turned toward me and I saw that she was being supported by her new friend, and that her face was ghastly pale.

"Dear Rudolph," she said, and her voice trembled and fell, "I do not feel—I think I had better"—the words ceased, and the next moment she would have fallen to the ground had she not been held by the strong-armed, graceful woman at her side. This lady quietly took Gertrude in her arms and moved swiftly away with her. The other Martian lady made a gesture to intimate that we should follow, and, the crowd parting to let us pass, we soon found ourselves in a sort of kiosk or summer-house. Here Gertrude was laid on what I shall call a sofa, for want of a better name, and restoratives were applied. She soon opened her beautiful eyes, and at once fixed them on me.

"Rudolph," she said, holding out her hand.

"Are you better, darling?" I asked. I was terribly anxious, and full of self-accusations.

"O yes," she said, and her voice was still weak. "It was merely a sudden faintness. I shall soon be better."

"In about ten minutes she was able to stand up, but she complained of dizziness and could not walk.

"The two Martian ladies (there were several more outside the door) had been most tenderly assiduous in their care, and now the one who had carried Gertrude took her up again. She led the way as before and we followed. We crossed the park and went some distance along a street, which was as wide as a square. I noted little. I had eyes only for the dear girl who was being borne along helpless in the arms of this gracious stranger. Hermann walked sadly by my side. We were both oppressed by the weight of a dread presentiment. Gertrude was carried through a broad doorway of a circular mass of building in brown stone. I was soon beside my darling, where she lay on a couch in a handsome chamber, which was filled with light from a wide casement fronting on the street.

"O Jack, there is little more to tell! That night Gertrude grew worse, and the next day she was not any better. She was feverish and the fever increased. I was crazed with apprehension, and could not bear to be parted from her even for an hour. Poor Hermann felt almost as badly. He bitterly reproached himself for what he had done, assuming the whole responsibility for Gertrude's illness. Everything our host could do for her was done, yet I think her chances of recovery would have been greater had she been at home. Though the Martian physicians seemed very wise and kind, I do not think they knew much about the forms of disease which assail people of our planet. For their wisdom and kindness did not avail. After seven days of gradual but sure decline my darling died in my arms.

"It is the beginning of something better, Rudolph," she said, a little before she died, "and one day we shall all know it."

"I clung to the dear, dead body and wept. By force they carried me away from her. I wanted to die and be buried with her. To go with her wherever she had gone."

"She lies buried by the side of a gentle hill, in a field of many coloured flowers, with varieties of hue such as are not seen on earth. Near her is a grove of willows, and at a short distance a little brook runs rippling with a sound of silvery sweetness. A simple cross marks her grave, on which is this inscription:—

"GERTRUDE SCHERER,  
Beloved wife of Rudolph Graham,  
Born on Earth, April 1868,  
Died on Mars, October, 1889."

"With the Martians incineration is the custom, but they readily granted me the privilege of burial.

It seemed to me I should always like to think of my darling lying out there among the flowers beneath the beautiful sky of Mars, which she had looked on for so short a time. Yet I knew she was not there. And oh Jack, Jack, the love that is stronger than death will surely again unite us!

"Of course we were obliged to return to Earth at once. It was necessary that Gertrude's friends should be informed of her death. During her illness Hermann had learned something of the Martian language, though not much. When our intention to set out for Earth immediately was made known to the Martians, one of them, a sort of reporter, though something very different from the terrestrial genus, offered to accompany us. Hermann seemed pleased to have him. As for me, I was indifferent. But he came. He is here now. I left him and Hermann an hour ago to come to you. The excitement in the city consequent upon our arrival with such a companion you may imagine. It is more easily imagined than described."

"My poor Rudolph! my poor Rudolph!" I said, taking his arm. "Let us return to my room for a little while. This is very sad, very wonderful—"

As I turned round my foot struck against a stone, and I stumbled. I heard a loud noise behind me, and, looking up, I found that I had fallen from the sofa. The room was in a semi-twilight, and two figures were standing at the open door. I heard a voice saying in a lazy, slow contralto, "Azelmah has brought you a letter Jack, and I think it's the one you expected from your friend Rudolph Graham."

My realistic tale remains to be written,—but it shall be done. To show the marvels of the Real as in a crystal mirror—that shall be my aim. And I mean to set to work upon it at once.

[THE END.]

### Literary and Personal Notes.

Lord Tennyson invariably drinks his wine as it comes from the cellar; he never has it decanted. He is very fond of port.

A peculiar taste of Her Majesty the Queen is to eat powdered cinnamon with nearly all kinds of food. A small silvered dish containing the spice and sugar always figures on the Royal table at every meal.

Mr. James Payn, the indefatigable writer of a hundred volumes, takes very little, if any, exercise, and has never enjoyed a holiday devoid of literary cares in his life. He is an incessant smoker and coffee-drinker, and a great hand at whist.

Cassell & Co. have published Mr. Sladen's "Younger American Poets" this week, and the Minerva Company of New York brought out his "Art of Travel" last week. Mr. Sladen is leaving New York for London, where he has taken a residence.

Mr. Walter Besant is a man of medium height, active in his movements, with a penetrating voice and pleasant smile, dark grey eyes, firm mouth and a thick beard. His study at Hampstead is lined with books on every side. A door opens out into the garden, so that when he wants a brief rest from labour he can take a turn, and come back with renewed zest. He writes on blue paper (large sermon-size), in a neat, small hand. His mornings are always spent in work. Four or five times a week he goes into town, lunches and transacts business at the Society of Authors, or elsewhere.

### Lord Lansdowne and "Canada First."

That our late Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, continues to keep himself *en rapport* with Canadian public opinion is evidenced by the following note received by Mr. Morgan, of this city, some days since:—

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
CALCUTTA, 28th February, 1891.

DEAR MR. MORGAN,—I am very much obliged to you for your kind thought of sending me a copy of your memorial for Mr. William A. Foster. The book has a special interest for me in view of the present position of affairs in the Dominion, which I am watching as closely as I am able at such a distance.

I am yours very truly,  
(Sd.)

Henry J. Morgan, Esq., Ottawa. —Ottawa Free Press.