CHAPTER II.

A NEW CIVILIZATION.

In an instant the room where I lay was filled with light, and I saw beside my bed-side the figure of an angel; that is such a figure as we attribute to the angels.

The face was like to that of the Apostle John, as he is shown in the pictures of the old masters; and had that lovely blending of masculine strength, and feminine sweetness, that is emblematical of all that we hope for in human nature.

The extended wings closed, and the angel spoke.

"Frank, fear not," it said, "you are now in a land that is better than the one you have left, and here you must qualify yourself for a better still, and then again for a better, till your spirit, as well as your body, is a likeness of God, and then, but not till then, you will go to heaven."

I groaned, "Let me return to my life on earth, good angel; for there I have left my work but little more than commenced, and if I do not return, those whom it is my duty to comfort will suffer. Let me go back to those I love."

The angel frowned, and his aspect became terrible; slowly his right arm raised till it pointed at me, and then he spoke.

"Fool that you are, you are not worthy of elevation, you shall be sent to a lower world than the one you have left, and from there you will rise higher, or sink lower, according to your works."

The light left me, and I struggled in an agony of fear.

"Frank, Frank, lie quiet, you will be better soon."

The light returned, and I saw beside my bed-side, the little woman who was singing when I went to sleep.

"Frank," she said soothingly, "you have been dreaming, you are quite feverish. The food you have taken has been too strong for you, after your long period of starvation."

"Are you sure I am awake?" I asked in terror.

"Yes, dear, you are awake, but you must make an effort to keep quiet, or you will get delirious."

She stroked my hair; and I took her hand in both of mine, and kissed it; it was real, and gave me courage.
"You must not talk, and then I will stay with you for a little while. Go to sleep if you can."

I could not go to sleep, I had too much to think of. The change, the wonderful change, from a period of starving misery; from the murderous hug of the bear; the corpse-strewn journey, where day by day famine, or cold, took my companions, one by one, till only I was left, with my dead friend, at the gates of death.

From all this—which had only ended the previous morning—I had been suddenly, taken to a life of plenty, warmth, love, and the joy of the companionship of beautiful women and brave men. You who have never known starvation, misery, the hour of loneliness, or the want of love; think of it! and the sympathy born of the thought may make you do acts of kindness to sorrowing fellow-creatures, that will cause you to glow with the comforting knowledge of a generous deed, and to have a happier place in the hereafter.

The little woman saw I could not sleep, again she had given me her hand to hold; it was such a comfort to me. I was so weak and nervous.

"How did you know I was dreaming?" I asked after a while.

"There is a microphone at the top of your bed, which bends slightly over, and transmits the slightest sound you make, along a telephone wire, to a microphone at my pillow; so that I heard you groan, and came in at once."

"That was kind of you; I am a stranger and weak, is that why you are so good to me?"

"Partly that; and also because I am in sorrow."

She was a quickly susceptible little creature. In a moment her eyes were swimming in tears.

"Will you tell me about it some day, please?" I asked.

"I will tell you now if you like," she said, drying her eyes.

"I think you should leave me now, or you will be tired in the morning."

"Oh, that will not matter, but I must think of you. You went to sleep so early, and Edie told me you slept in the sleigh, as they came along; so if you are awake now, for a little while, it will do you good, and my story will take your thoughts away from your dream and your trials."

I could only kiss her hand. How good and thoughtful she was.

"I am Daisy Mura," she began, "Cula Brei Dero and I are betrothed; we were to have been married nine months ago, but the Marriage Senate decreed that our union must be postponed, as a punishment for Cula, who had gone too far into the country of the savages, and so caused the State to lose the life of my brother Seena Wolner Mura."
She paused for a moment, and then she continued,—

"Cula, and Mary Vero, who was betrothed to Seena, advocate the subjugation of the savages, who are dangerous to our people; but whom, we hope to civilize.

"When a maiden has her marriage postponed, and her betrothed becomes ambitious, she cannot be otherwise than sorry, hence am I sometimes sad."

Again her face clouded, but soon her mood changed, and she continued brightly,—

"Cula is one of the captains of the outposts, he is the big man I sat next last night. He is very strong, and very handsome. Do you not think so?"

"Yes," I said, "he seems very strong, and is certainly a handsome man."

Cula was like a Greek athlete, but taller. His curly hair, square features, and thick neck, all showed the gladiator; but still he seemed decidedly intellectual. His betrothed set off his strength, and he acted as a foil to her merry face, and active figure. I found afterwards they called her the singing bird, because of her beautiful voice, and bird-like movements.

"He carried me through Lake Walla, which is over three miles from side to side," said Daisy, in a tone which demanded my admiration.

"Please tell me all about it," I entreated.

"We were at the outstation, on the borders of the land of the Rodas, who are a savage people, when one day Cula, Seena, and I, went to look at some arable land which the parliament intended to demand from them. We took our rifles and a carrier gull, so that if we got amongst the savages we could free the gull, who would then return with a message that would bring us assistance. Mary did not come, as she was busy. We went along the edge of Lake Walla, which is in a country prohibited to the Rodas, and here we came on six of them, who had killed a deer, which is against our law.

"Cula loosed the hounds, who pulled down two Rodas that we took prisoner; these they left with me, and Seena and Cula pursued the others into their own country, which they were forbidden to do. Their duty was to report the matter to the War Senate, who would duly punish the offenders. The Rodas, who had got a start, were fortunate enough to meet a party of their countrymen, who were hunting, and, so reinforced, they turned on their pursuers, who fled. Easily Seena and Cula distanced the savages, till they came to me; when I heard them coming, I pasted a card on the back of the gull, and on it wrote, 'Send help at once, we are pursued by the Rodas, come to,' then I left a blank; when they came up, Cula put, 'Black Wharf,' which is at the other side of the lake, signed the card, and freed the gull, who at once sped homewards."
"We had now to take the prisoners, which delayed us, and by this time the Rodas had come up with us, though the delay was only one of a few seconds.

"I took the prisoners, and with my spear drove them to the lake. Occasionally a Roda would discharge an arrow at us, but it was always caught by Cula on his shield.

"We had reached the lake, and waded in nearly out of the reach of the missiles, when three savages rushed into the water, and each fired an arrow at us. Hardly had the arrows left their bows, when two of them dropped dead, killed by bullets from the rifles of Cula and Seena; but, alas for Seena, one of the arrows struck him where the neck joins the shoulder, and he fell dead. The third savage had turned back to reach the shelter of the trees, when Cula fired, and he fell on his face.

"I stooped down; poor Seena was quite dead.

"'He is dead, Cula!' I said, terrified; so we left him.

"We let our prisoners go, and Cula took me in his arms, and waded on till we reached the wharf at the other side.

"One of the hounds had disappeared, but the other was unharmed. Shortly after we reached the wharf, four soldiers came to our aid, and we returned and got poor Seena, whom we brought home.

"For disobeying orders, it was decreed that our marriage should be postponed for twelve months, nine of which have gone, and I shall be glad when the others have passed."

"Is it not strange," I queried, "for you to go on such an expedition?"

"No, the women always accompany their betrothed. You must sleep now, we will talk no more."

She settled my pillow, and I was soon asleep. When I again awoke, the sunshine was struggling past the edges of the blinds, and the room was light. Soon Cula came in.

"Good morning," he said, cheerfully; "Daisy heard you moving, so she sent me to you. You are not to get up, for when breakfast is ready, Ion and I will come and take you down."

He left me, and shortly after returned with Ion; my bed was the chair-bed I had been put in when I came from the bath, and Ion now manipulated it, so that I was supported in a reclining position; they then pushed the chair into a lift, that I had not before noticed, and we went to the ground floor. This lift was worked by compressed air, supplied by the wind-mills to a reservoir at the top of the house, and thence used for operating it, and many other purposes.

The women gathered round me, and were as kind as if I had been an old and valued friend. Again the child came to me, and I felt quite as if I was one of the family.

For breakfast we had tea made of a sort of hops, several kinds
of scones, and fish, all of which were served by Vona with the whitest linen and the nicest taste.

After breakfast they took out my couch, and I sat in the sun till they were ready.

All round, as far as the eye could see, was the same stretch of ice and snow; but Ion told me there was an arm of the sea quite near, where fish, and seal of all sorts, abounded, though it was now frozen over.

The dogs I could now see properly; they were magnificent specimens, and seemed to be half blood-hound, half stag-hound, though bigger than either; they were rough-coated, with a head rather like the former, but evidently had the best qualities of both. In colour they were either black and tan, or tan and black.

Ion let loose an Arctic hare that they had got that morning from a trap before I was awake, and two of the hounds went after it. At first the hare seemed to be able to run right away from the dogs, who followed, one behind the other, but soon its speed decreased, and the dogs began to catch up to it.

"That first dog will have it in a few more seconds!" I said expectantly.

"Don't be too sure," said Ion, quietly.

In an instant, just as the leading hound seemed almost to touch the hare; it turned at right angles, and was saved. But now the second dog made a great rush, and the first followed behind; and so they changed places, till the hare delayed turning too long, and met her death from the powerful jaw of one of the hounds; then they came panting back.

They did not hunt according to coursing rules, to make points, but according to their own sagacity, to kill their game, and, notwithstanding their poorer speed, would have killed more hares in a day than any two greyhounds in England or out of it.

Ion caressed them. "Are they not beauties?" he said proudly. "They have nothing to learn in hunting, but act together, so that only the bear can escape them. Come and see their kennels."

He wheeled my chair to the foot of one of the windmills, where there was a great kennel, on a pivot, so that it could be turned round. On its top was a spear-head shaped piece of metal, that by always turning its point to the wind, kept it always blowing on the wedge-shaped back of the kennel. It was double walled, and lined with felt, and its door was fixed with a weight, so that though it kept shut, it could be opened inwards or outwards.

"When we retire for the night," Ion explained to me, "each dog has his kennel, on which is an alarm spear; these alarm spears we wind up to go at intervals of an hour and a half, so that there will always be a dog parading about to warn us of the
approach of strangers. For instance, this alarm goes, and the dog leaves his kennel, for he knows that in two minutes the spear will fall. At the end of an hour and a half, the spear is again drawn up, and the dog returns to his kennel, and so it continues with one kennel after the other.

"What are you afraid of?" I asked.

"Well, here there is little to fear, for the Esquimaux are very timid, but other outposts are surrounded by fierce savages called the Rodas, and we take similar precautions with all."

Cula now came over to tell us that everything was ready, so we returned.

The good-byes were said, our positions taken in the sleigh, and away we sped.

The country began rapidly to change; we passed a group of stunted trees, then another, and soon we were in a snow-covered forest. As we went along Edie told me about Daisy and Cula. He was one of their ablest and bravest soldiers, though given to rashness, and a strong advocate of the subjugation of the Savages, who were a race of barbarians, that practised horrible tortures, and refused civilization. Daisy was his guardian angel, who restrained his undue ardour, and guided him, as only a clever woman can guide an able and energetic man; but I should hear all about them at Zara.

"Is it not unusual for betrothed couples to travel about alone?" I asked Edie.

"No," she replied, "it is the proper thing. They get to know one another thoroughly, and as each helps to improve, and bring out the good qualities of the other, they become as highly developed and excellent, as they are capable of being."

I didn't say so, but I thought it evident there were no Mrs. Grundies at Zara.

In a little over two hours we had travelled fifty miles, and come to the second out-station. It was an exact reproduction of the first, windmills, dogs and all, but it was peopled by a man, his wife, their three children, and a betrothed couple. I noticed that the two elder children seemed each to be about three years older than their junior, while at the "Middle Globe" there is hardly ever more than, and seldom so much as, two years' difference in age, between the various children of the same family.

It seemed to me peculiar that at these places, which seemed like light-houses on land, there should not be respectable caretakers of a class suitable to the position, instead of the intelligent and educated people of refinement whom I saw.

These people did the work which we call menial, but the way they did it made that term quite inapplicable.

Here we left our sleigh, and took a three-wheeled carriage worked by compressed air, and shaped like a double-seated buggy. In the front seat sat Ion and Edie, while I took the back one,
and off we started. The tyres were india-rubber pneumatic, so that we sped over the snow smoothly and rapidly, at the rate of about seventeen miles an hour.

The first hour’s journey was up a hill, on reaching the top of which we saw stretched at our feet a beautiful country of cities and arable land, through which ran a splendid large river. On reaching the foot of the hill, which descended very gradually, we came to an excellent wood-paved road passing through a beautifully laid-out country, with large windmills noticeable everywhere.

I was too much occupied in admiring the country through which we passed to ask Ion for information, not that it mattered much, for hardly had we gone a mile along the road, when we entered a big establishment.

We were now in a district of tramways, which seemed to be on every road. In one of these we got, and away we went at the rate of about ten miles an hour. I need neither include nor exclude stoppages as nearly every one got either in or out as necessity arose, without the tram being stopped. All the place was laid out at right angles, and most of the houses were eight or ten storeys high. We were now in the outskirts of the city of Zara, which was in its beauty far beyond anything I could imagine. Strange to say there were no poor people to be seen, and the courtesy of the citizens was complete, yet without even a suspicion of either servility or affectation. The people were all fine, and as a rule handsome; but dressed in costumes the most various, becoming, and peculiar.

Lots of tricycles and bicycles were to be seen, but no cabs, and only an exceptional vehicle of any kind. Many of the streets were roofed in with glass, and all of them were wonderfully handsome.

For the first time the tram stopped; it was at the house of Duke Muras, to let me be taken out.

I took Ion’s arm and went into his father’s house; here we were welcomed by the Duke and Duchess Mura.

The Duke was a tall, upright, strong man, with long grey hair and beard, straight features, and blue eyes. He shook hands with Ion, who said, “My Lord Duke, this man, Doctor Frank Farleigh, is a stranger from the ‘Middle Globe,’ whom we saved from death in the snow, and have brought to you.” The old man looked at me, and then he held out his hand.

“First we will nurse you back to your strength, then you must tell your story to the Supreme Senate, and submit to it.”

Edie kissed the old man, and they all kissed the Duchess.

“Come,” she said, “take Mary’s arm, and she will take you to your room, and be your nurse till you get strong.”

Mary—it was Mary Vero, of whom I had heard—took my arm and we went to a lift, which brought us to the landing on which was my room.
The room was square, without fire-place, but in one corner was a stove with dome-like cover, on three stays, held about three feet above it; like the stove at the second outpost, the smoke was taken in two tubes, each of which traversed the room in opposite directions, to meet and discharge their contents into a perpendicular pipe.

Mary placed me in an easy chair, then felt my pulse, and examined my tongue.

"You are very feverish, Doctor," she said, "and must keep very quiet, or you may get fatally ill. You have a very good constitution, have you not?"

"I think I have almost a perfect constitution, I have never till now been ill in my life, which has been one of hard work, and my present sufferings are caused by the effect of the fright the bear gave me, when I had been brought to death's door by cold, starvation, and misery. I am only twenty-seven, so my recuperative powers are at their best."

"Then, I shall soon make you strong again," she said, with a sweet calm smile, "and meanwhile I prescribe rest, rest, rest; so shut your eyes and think of nothing."

I shut my eyes and thought of her. She was divinely tall. I am six feet two inches in height, and when she stood next me, she seemed nearly, if not quite, as tall as I; but then I was bent with weakness, while she was straight as a poplar. Her dark brown hair arranged on the top of her head, and brushed back from her forehead, showed her facial outlines to perfection. Her head was large, her ample forehead high and broad, her aquiline nose long, and in harmony with her pointed chin, her eyes dark brown, and her whole face, the most intellectual I had ever seen. Her graceful figure, neither pinched by tight corset nor burlesqued by bustle, was shown in all its lovely outlines by a frock like that worn by the women of the time of George the Fourth.

Shortly she spoke. "You only half obey me, for though your eyes are shut, your brain is busy. What are you thinking of?"

She sat down beside me and I opened my eyes.

"I am thinking of you," I replied. "Daisy told me of you."

"Dear little Daisy, and did you see her Cula?"

"Yes, he is a magnificent man. Daisy tells me that you and he advocate the complete subjugation of the savages. Is this so? It seems very cruel, for it would cause great slaughter, and seems unnecessary, for the savages do very well as they are."

"It seems to you cruel and unnecessary," she replied, "because you do not know the facts of the case, which are these:—We now, from time to time, take tracts of land from these people, and so force one tribe to encroach on the land of another, which causes war, and so brings about treachery, torture, famine, murder, and all unhappiness. If we conquered them, we would certainly have
to kill a great number, but the rest would be freed from all their present barbarism, and so made happy.”

“But you do not think—” I commenced.

“I think,” she said, interrupting me gently, “that you must not think, so take this draught, and I will darken the room, and leave you for a little while.”

I did as I was told and she left me. Presently I dozed, for what she had given me to drink was narcotic in its effects. The room was such as one would suppose a magician to have. Should I wake, and find I had only been dreaming, and this goddess-like woman but a shadow of my fancy?