AMONGST those brought to the hospital from the heap of dead and wounded was General Ance. Two of his ribs were broken, and he was badly crushed. Deadly pale and scarcely breathing, he suffered as much, or more, from grief at the destruction of the army than from his personal injuries. For several hours he had lain, buried beneath his disabled comrades, whose groaning must have been torture to his sympathetic, high-strung nature. I called to see him the second morning after his arrival, and found him much improved.

"Are our soldiers and allies utterly destroyed?" he asked.

"They were helpless against the war engines of Undara," I replied.

"Are they all killed or wounded?"

"All but those who were taken prisoners."

He shut his eyes; the drawn muscles of his face alone showing his emotion. Presently he spoke, "I knew we were ignorant of your latest inventions, and was prepared for defeat, but the awful effect of those flying machines was beyond my calculations."

"You were hurt in one of the explosions I gather from what I have heard?"

"Yes. I was mounted, and midway between the first two explosions, one of which took place an instant before the other. The first threw me and my horse, with everything else in the vicinity, to the ground. The noise was awful, and the effect beyond belief. Hardly had I fallen, when I was aware of a second explosion, which relieved me from the load of men who were hurled on top of me. My horse had disappeared. I believe he was killed by the first bomb. The soldiers were panic-stricken. Each explosion had made a great hole in the earth, and scattered men, dead or dying, in every direction. Several officers and myself got the men to stand, and tried to allay their fear. In this we had partially succeeded, when another explosion rendered me unconscious, and when I recovered I was in this bed."
"Don't think of your past disaster. Dwelling on it will hinder your recovery, and do no good."

"I must return to Gurla as soon as possible. King Edward was forced to fight or abdicate. Against our advice he chose the former alternative, believing anything preferable to the latter. Nothing is absolutely certain until it has taken place, and so it was with the war. Had the king been wise, he would have faced the inevitable, for victory—an impossible dream for us—would only have postponed the triumph of the party of progress, who have right and reason on their side, and are fighting against the strongly established forms of a state of things only suitable for a time past and gone. Had the king led reform he could have hampered its progress. He tried to obstruct it, but has only dammed it back, and will now be overwhelmed with its onward rush."

"What will be the effect of the present defeat?"

"The deposition of the king, and sweeping away of all kingly props, such as hereditary titles, and the living in idleness of the successors in perpetuity of wealthy men, is the best I hope for; but I feel that all classes, enraged and embittered by the loss of relatives and friends—every individual had one or other in the army, and in many cases the breadwinner will have been lost—will crown their sorrows and the national disaster by pillage, bloodshed, and anarchy; in which case, the coming period of want will be changed to one of famine, with all its attendant horrors."

The man's big, blue eyes opened wide, and his firm, kind face showed that he only thought and spoke of those things that he might find a way to mitigate their severity. As I wrote at his dictation a letter to his wife, I carefully watched his face. It was a beautiful face, too pretty and placid for a man whilst in repose, but splendid in its quiet strength when animated. As an invalid he gave very little trouble, meeting his difficulties with that perfection of courage that makes true men unfrettingly face disaster as composedly, or more so, than they meet victory.

President Duke Dreman had a duly accredited party of messengers at Fort Boro, under the leadership of Diso Car Rota, who had attained to the honour of knighthood. Sir Diso had received full and undated messages and instructions, with which he was, on receipt of telegraphic news of the battle, to proceed to Gurla, where he would arrive before the news of the terrible battle of Dravena, which means in the Roda tongue, strength of freedom or liberty. Diso's instructions were, shortly stated, to inform the Gurlas of the result of the battle, and that the prisoners who were unhurt would be conducted over all the institutions, factories, and places of interest in Undara, the reason and operations of which would be explained to them, each man receiving especial explanations, verbal and written, on those
institutions that bore on his calling, after which they would be safely returned to their homes. Meanwhile, the wounded would be carefully cared for and freed on recovery, or given up to any friends that might come for them. He was also instructed to say that no invasion of Gurla or Roda would be attempted, and that the Government of Undara would assist the defeated nations by every means in their power to avert any disaster that might follow on the war. Diso's effusive courtesy had been tempered by time into urbane fluency that was thought to be especially suited to this mission.

General Ance's rapid recovery enabled him to be present at the meeting of the executive that was to decide the journey to be taken by the prisoners before their release. Duke Dreman and all the cabinet ministers gathered to discuss, with all the officers amongst the prisoners, the division of the men and the cities to be visited. In a very conciliatory speech he stated that Parliament had decided to prove the friendship of Undara to all the prisoners, and also their power to help them, in case their mission to Undara would be followed by a famine, or they in any way needed help. He enlarged on the fact that all the people of Fregida were of the same blood, and that it was to their interest to work for the mutual good. Pointed out the benefit to both the Zaras and Uras since they had federated into the Commonwealth of Undara, and ended by hoping the officers and prisoners, who would be considered as guests, would enjoy their travels, and learn to look on the people of Undara as their friends and kinsmen, as in fact and deed they were. Several other speeches were made to a similar effect. To these General Ance replied on behalf of his soldiers and himself. He commenced by saying that the treatment they had received made it impossible to regard the people of Undara as anything else than their hospitable and generous friends. They could not, however, forget that the mould was yet fresh on the graves of their comrades, that they had suffered a grievous defeat, and that their country was divided and weakened by dissensions. The opportunity of becoming acquainted with the laws and customs that had made the people of Undara so happy and united, and seeing the institutions, and learning the habits that had sprung up under these laws, would be welcome to and highly prized by them all.

General Ance's speech was confirmed by a few words from several of his brother officers, who all looked on the coming journey through Undara as a proof of ostentatious goodwill on the part of their conquerors. It was finally decided that the prisoners should be divided into five parties, who should follow each other at convenient intervals, on a trip through the principal cities of Undara. On the expiration of each trip, each party to be at once conducted home to Gurla. President Dreman, General Ance and I were to go with the first party, but before we started we got
news from Sir Diso, telling us of his arrival at Gurla, and what transpired on the journey. The following, taken from his reports, gives, in his characteristic graphic style, all the interesting and important events of his mission.

"In the early morning of the day after our arrival at Fort Boro, instructions were received, commanding us to at once proceed on our mission. This message was brought to me before I woke. Directly I received it I requested that all concerned in the embassy be at once woke, and summoned to prepare with all haste for an immediate start. These instructions were so well obeyed, that in less than half an hour we had broken our fast, and were on the way. At sunrise we were proceeding on our electric tricycles along the river Warna, and at midday had arrived at the township of Orva, where we were received by the chief personages in the place. We at once telegraphed news of our approach to King Edward, and then had dinner, during which we made public the news of the defeat of the united armies, and the full purport of our mission. The news spread through the town rapidly as the morning light, creating as it went, dismay and grief of the wildest description. On all sides, horror-stricken women fainted, or shrieked aloud in their terror. In one case, a schoolboy, hearing the news, rushed to his mother's house, and told her that his father had been killed in battle. She, poor woman, overcome with the suddenness of the shock, rushed pale and dazed to our hotel, the door of which she tried to push open, forgetting in her grief to turn the handle. Finding it would not open, she beat it with her fists, and, before anyone could go to her aid, fell down in a violent fit of hysterics. With clenched hand, she shrieked and shrieked, till exhaustion made her silent. An old man, white bearded and bald, strong with emotion, spoke in the market place, telling the people that the destruction of the army was a judgment against them for upholding kingcraft and oppression to grind down the poor, and refusing the wise laws of Undara.

When we left Orva a number of people from the grief-stricken crowd escorted us out of the town, and expressed their wish to join Undara, as Ura had joined Zara. Amongst this crowd were many who had lost relatives in the war, but who, nevertheless, expressed admiration for the conduct of the Undara rulers in every respect. As we progressed we passed numbers of people, who, hearing the news, had come out to see us, nearly all of whom exhibited feelings of friendship towards us. When we had gone half way towards Gurla we were met by several electric launches, which brought messengers from King Edward to receive us and bring us back. These exhibited the greatest consternation, and were evidently unable to realize our reason for not invading Gurla, now that it was not only defenceless, but contained as many people who were in our favour as it did those against us. As we neared Gurla the river banks became crowded with an excited
multitude. On arriving, the crowd and excitement increased. Women sobbed, and men fiercely declaimed against the king, and the madness of invading Undara. We were taken to a carriage drawn by horses, and proceeded to the palace, through streets crowded with a similarly excited multitude. Cries against the king, mingled with shouts of "Cheers for Duke Dreman!" and "Join Undara!" but everywhere the sobbing of the women filled the scene with sadness.

On reaching the palace we were ushered into the presence of King Edward. He was walking up and down in a large gorgeous room, in which his Ministers were gathered. As he turned courteously to us as we entered, we saw a tall, strong, bald man, with a coarse, straight nose, small, restless eyes under shaggy brows, and a lower face completely hidden by a beard and moustache.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I hear you come from President Dreman?"

"From the Parliament of Undara, King Edward."

He glared at me as I spoke. Evidently correction was not to his mind.

"It is the same thing."

"You will pardon me, King Edward, it is not the same thing."

He pointed at me with a hand shaking with passion. Twice he gasped; then he said, grinding his teeth,—

"You have put my ambassadors in your prisons. I will put you and your canting crowds in mine."

"King Edward," I replied, "you have sent the pick of your manhood to death. Consider well before you bring the power that slew them to spread vengeance in your defenceless kingdom."

For a moment we faced each other; then he said, "Deliver your message."

This I did, fully and courteously, the while laying great stress on our earnest wish to assist our kinsmen in Gurla by every means in our power. When I had finished he asked,—

"Do you intend to force your laws on my country?"

I replied that we had no such intention, but I believed that further steps would be taken to prevent further raids from the Rodas. He then said, "You can go."

I told him that I hoped that I had not been discourteous, and if I had, begged leave to state that it had been unintentional, and to apologize; after which I left.

We were taken to sumptuous, over-ornamented rooms, and in due time served with an evening meal, consisting of a multiplicity of highly seasoned dishes, served with a number of drinks of a more or less spirituous and intoxicating character. Behind every four of us stood a big strong man, dressed in gaudy, barbarous fashion, whose sole duty consisted in handing round the various
meats and wines. The fearful folly of having strong men to do useless work, that could be better done by a neat-handed maid, while the hedges were untrimmed, and the fields full of weeds, seemed to me the height of foolish wickedness. The solemn and objectionable habit of serving in this manner a number of spiced dishes and stimulating drinks, so that people might be induced to eat more than was either necessary or healthy, is, I was informed, of daily occurrence in the households of all the rich people of Gurla. I learned afterwards that dulness and hypochondria were common amongst this class.

Next morning, soon after breakfast, we were again ushered into King Edward's presence, and found him, seated as before, amongst his Councillors. Very courteously we were shown to seats, and after the king had made some polite inquiries after our comfort, a man of medium height, with a round, coarse, ruddy, but clever, clean-shaved thick-lipped face, rose and stated that since our arrival, news had been received from scouts, giving information of the army being scattered by terrible explosives, and the soldiers then killed or taken prisoners by the army of Undara. The courteous message from the President and Parliament of Undara had been received by the king and ministers of Gurla with great gratification. Being helpless and bound to submit to the wishes of Undara, they would like to know if Undara would help with her soldiers to suppress the rebellious subjects of the king? To this, I replied that as the policy of Undara was not to interfere in matters beyond its boundary, unless requested to do so by a majority of the people concerned, I did not think it would. After some further discussion we left, and were subsequently informed that an embassy would be sent to wait on the President and Parliament of Undara. From our window we noticed that all the haulage of the streets was done by horses, whose iron shod hoofs soon destroyed the paved streets; that the only way that cleanliness was observed, was by having numbers of small boys with a brush and a tin dish to sweep up the thick of the refuse, and deposit it in hollow iron pillars by the roadside; and that the ill effects of riches and poverty were everywhere apparent."

These extracts, I think, will suffice to describe the embassy to King Edward of Gurla, and its results.

A few days after it had been decided that the prisoners were to be shown the chief cities of Undara, they were taken to see the noticeable institutions of Zara.

General Ance was discussing the army system with President Dreman.

"The foundation of all your civilization," he was saying, "is your marriage laws, which cause both sexes to be moral, and suppresses all diseases. The keystone of the social structure you raise hereon is your prison system, which makes all men work,
and brings the lazy and weak to habits of industry and strength. Once given these things and the rest is easy. Without them, your system of soldiery is impossible, and in Gurla the difficulty is to establish them."

"Why not," said Vernon, "establish the whole system at once, as we did at Ura?"

"That would necessitate the abolition of monarchy."

"If what you tell me and I hear from Sir Diso is true, that is doomed in any case."

"I am afraid so. In our present disorganized condition, I dread the change from monarchy to republicanism."

"Why, is your monarch an active power for good?"

"Our monarch is neither an active power for good nor evil. A monarch, like a ship's figurehead, is an ornamental leader that exercises no influence whatever."

"Then why should you fear to remove it?"

"When a ship is in rough weather, to change her figurehead is a dangerous task for the crew, and a useless one for the ship."

"But if the figurehead prevents the steering of the ship, it should be removed at any cost. Better for a few to suffer danger than the ship to be taken out of her course. And when you do get a new figurehead, do not restrict your choice to the first one made out of the wood from which the old one came, but choose the fittest one available according to the united wisdom of the majority of the passengers—the people concerned—and then arrange to have your figurehead examined at certain convenient stated seasons, and changed if a better one be found, or otherwise be replaced in its position."

"At simile you excel me. I will go back to argument, in which the men and things concerned will figure. I shall be against changing our monarchical form of government for that of the Commonwealth Government of Undara, as I think the cost to the country of such a change would be so great, as to more than counterbalance the gain—if any—that would eventuate. A king is the nominal, but necessary head to the Government, whose duty it is to officiate on all great occasions, but who has, in reality, but little power. A president is only a king under another name, whose periodical election upsets and disturbs, to a serious extent, the even tenor of a country's progress."

Duke Dreman smiled. The men were champions of their respective sides. There was no abler man in Gurla than General Ance, nor in Undara than Vernon Dreman.

"We will," he said, "continue the discussion on the lines you have laid down. Supposing a king or a president to be only put in the position of leader of the State, to officiate at important ceremonials, and by personal conduct set a good example to those with whom they come in contact,—a king receives his position, not because of his fitness, but because he is the son of a king who
ascended the throne for a similar reason; thus kings now-a-days are men born and bred in a state which necessitates no personal effort on their parts, and which is likely to develop their appetites at the expense of their ability and energy. If one lives an evil life, such as the majority of kings have led, and such as the majority of men would lead under similar circumstances, he contaminates society, but is still a king. To this you must add that he costs at least a hundred times as much as a president; and now that kings and their relatives do not go to war and get killed, will saddle the country with a crowd of descendants. Now for a president. He is a man chosen from the people to fill the position on account of his fitness. If he is guilty of any misconduct, his position is forfeited. He has always been a man whose personal influence has done much good, and he can never saddle the country with his relations. As for the cost of his election, that is never so much as the difference between what he and the king would receive from the State as a yearly allowance. The cost of changing from Monarchical to Republican Government, I believe, would not be worth a second thought; but if it is a change for the better, the question of cost is not one for grave consideration. Much more I might add, but first I will learn your answer."

"Of one great duty as a king you say nothing—that is, to head a state of government that begets respect for elders and superiors, and reverence for religious and established institutions."

Vernon replied quietly, "I did omit these things, as in a commonwealth, we think every person or institution should only receive the amount of respect it deserves for its own worth, monarchical and hereditary titles stand or fall together. When only a small section of the community was educated, the ignorant could be governed for the benefit of the strong; but directly every member of the community is properly educated they will cause all men to have a fair chance to attain a suitable position for their strength or ability. It is for the good of every community that those whose mental endowments are in the ascendant should live by exercising them, while those who are strongest physically should live by physical work. This, however, is quite against the laws of heredity, which give a man a position on account of his birth, but not of his worth."

"Surely because birth is respected, worth need not be neglected. As for every man having a chance to fill a position according to his abilities, that is at least possible in a monarchy. You value birth in animals—why not in human beings?"

"I value birth in mankind as I do in animals, no more, no less. A man inherits rank from his father, quite irrespective of his mother, while the more distant the noble founder of his family is, notwithstanding the intervention of several worthless members, the greater his position. While men in high positions have
every motive for personal effort taken away, and a host of dan-
gerous temptations substituted. Now, with animals, care is taken
to select suitable parents on both sides, while all weak members
are degraded to suitable work. Only by managing your
hereditary aristocracy in this manner can you have any reason
on its side."

"You cannot argue for a nation as you would for an animal, or
a machine."

"Wait," said Vernon, "till you have seen the working of our
laws and customs, and then compare them with your own."

In Zara we showed the prisoners a city where destitution was
unknown, where education was not only free, but connected with
scholarships, so that the poorest boy, if really clever and indus-
trious, could get a profession. Where men and women alike
were moral, and gambling and all vice unknown. Where self-
respect, honesty, and industry were universal. Where disease
was suppressed and health valued before everything, and where
manual occupations were considered as honourable as mental
ones.

The destruction of the invading armies was sufficient proof of
the efficiency of the Undara defensive arrangements, which were
not only economical, but, by drilling all the boys at school, de-
veloped the physical qualities of the nation to the highest degree.

From Zara we went to Shirea, and thence to Ura, where
General Ance and myself were the guests of Duke Dreman.

The Duchess Dreman and her two boys received us on our
arrival.

Her husband, as was his habit, stooped and kissed her hand.
He was always courteous, more as a subject to a queen than as
a husband to a wife, yet showed in his eyes and every movement
the ideal love of a man to a woman who is to him the ennobler
of his thoughts and actions, the lightener of his sorrows, and
the brightener of his triumphs; his other better self, without
whom earth would be barren, and heaven a desert.

"I am glad to see you recovering so fast, General Ance,"
said the Duchess. "I sent your wife extracts from my husband's
letters, and from my diary, to assure her of your rapid convales-
cence and early return."

As a noxious weed, planted in suitable soil, and nourished by
the rain and sunshine, is strong for evil, so a woman—the last
and best of God's creations—whose heart and mind are pure and
active for the right when surrounded by all that strengthens her
nature, is strong for good, and shows by her daily acts a heart
and brain that are as nearly divine as human nature can
conceive.

"Such a message from the wife of Duke Dreman will indeed
comfort her in this time of her country's deserved disgrace, and
her own natural fears," said the general, with feeling.
Let us hope that the present distress is but the travail of the birth of happier times," replied the duchess, kindly.

Young Vernon, who had been watching the scene from his father's side, realizing only that General Ance was ill and in trouble, let go his father's hand, and going to him, said gravely, "Ask my father to help you; if you are good he will, and I will, too."

The child, fearless and sympathetic, looked as like his father as a child can be like a man. The general, stooping, took the small face in his hands, and kissing it, said, "you are right, Vernon, I will ask your father to help me, and," he continued, with a smile, "you also!"