CHAPTER XXXIV.

L'ENVOI.

Duke Dreman had been succeeded in the presidency of all Undara by Sir Rota, now Duke Rota, who had proved the wisdom of his election by seven years of able management of his many written, and unwritten, duties; the latter of which were by far the more important. His term of office had been marked by a continuation of progress, made without any straining, in the three provinces of Undara; the youngest of which—Gurla—showed far the greatest advance; chiefly on account of its being originally so far behind, and obtaining the active assistance of its two sister states. The language of Undara since it had been rationalized, and so made easy to acquire, had superseded the Roda, and all other languages in Fregida, and had caused the universal adoption of the customs, literature, and beliefs of the conquering race, throughout all their possessions. Thus all Fregida was rapidly becoming one people, united by the same language, laws and customs. Some five months after the duke's death, a son had been born to the Duchess Dreman, and had in due course received the name of his father. A prophecy of the future of a child can only be formed from a knowledge of its parents, its training, and itself. Of young Vernon Dreman's parents I have given a full, true, and detailed account. Of his training much is hoped, and much is feared; of himself much is predicted, and the worst that is feared is that, at manhood, he may leave his evident abilities unexercised, and sink into the happy, uneventful existence of an unambitious man, instead of following in the footsteps of his noble father. The Duchess Dreman, on her husband's death, as he had asked, personally went every night, as he or the boys had done, to see that all the animals were well fed and attended to; and in the daytime, as usual, largely assisted in the education of her daughters. This occupied so much of her time, that she had no leisure to brood over her sorrow. Another strange thing occurred: the duke had told her that he or one of the boys would always be with her when she rode Motrarer, and that they would return to watch over her; this I thought her religion would prevent her believing, but I was wrong. Her late husband, understanding her better than she understood herself, and certainly
better than anyone else did, had evidently asked the promise with a view of occupying her, and made the statement with a quaint belief that he would fulfil it, and a certainty that she would believe and be supported by it. The day after the funeral she had gone out on Motrarer, and let him gallop across the fields, and in the lanes. When she returned, her cheeks were flushed and her eyes bright; going to my wife, she said, with clasped hands, and in an ecstasy of manner,—

"Mary, he came to me last night. I thought so, but now I am certain. They were all with me."

My wife thought that her grief had affected her reason; with upturned face, and hands clasped on her bosom, she prayed as she stood; when she had finished, she turned again to Mary and said,—

"I can bear it now. They will come to me often; they are quite near. Mary, you must not speak of it to any one. Motrarer stood to drink at a trough, and my husband kissed me. He seemed to come to me like a flash, and then I felt his kiss, warm and gentle, on my cheek." She smiled. "It was the ghost of a kiss, but it has made me happy. Often they will come; but he will never kiss me again till I go to him."

My wife kissed and comforted her, thinking that sorrow had turned her brain. Getting her to lie down, she soon fell asleep, and I was sent for. The sweet face had lost its look of agony, and occasionally she smiled. Her husband's strong nature had impressed her with a perfect belief in his power, and she had actually come to believe that his spirit and that of the boys actually visited her. This belief she treasures till the birth of her son; and, as she galloped on Motrarer, fancied she heard the whispering of one or other of the men she loved so dearly. Always they whispered messages of love and hope, such as the dead men would have expressed in life. Perhaps her belief was a reality, and granted by a merciful Power to reward her for her share in the good her husband had worked—for surely the woman who by her love and wifely care supports a hero, deserves half his laurels—and to sustain her under the awful calamity that befell her. Perhaps it was a fancy. Who shall say? In either case it brought her happiness. With her little son came a belief in her husband's hopes for the future which she had almost feared were impious in their magnitude; and she looked on the tiny atom of humanity as her husband had looked on her two dead sons. From his birth he was a strong, vigorous child, and wonderfully like his father in every way. The three Vernon Dremans were in all respects a replica of each other. No one realized more clearly than his mother the danger he ran of being spoilt, brought up without a father's strong guidance, and under the influence of six sisters, and hosts of friends. The father's opinions, sayings, and doings were quoted to, and adopted by,
the child, who bid fair to become a noble man. The tall, strong boy, fearless and true, is already permeated with the idea he expressed by saying,—

"I must be very careful, Doctor Frank, for I am the only man in the family."

The Parliament assembled decided that word of Fregida was to be sent to the Middle Globe, and duly commissioned me to execute the task, which I have done by extracts from my diary which appear in these pages, edited by my friend, Mr. Read Murphy, and approved by me.

Yours very truly,

FRANK FARLEIGH.

THE END.
BEYOND the ice