CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSTITUTION OF ZARA.

In the morning I was wakened by Vernon.
"Wake up, Frank; if you are going to have a bath before breakfast you must look sharp, or you'll be late."
"I'll have a bath with pleasure," I replied, "if you will show me the way."
"Come along, then," he answered briskly, and off we went.

In Zara, the pleasant and modest habit of wearing pyjamas was universal, so without any delay I seized a towel and followed Vernon, who took me to the bath-rooms, which were three rooms enamelled throughout from floor to ceiling, each complete in itself, with a marble bath supplied with hot and cold water, a shower, the heat of which could be regulated from cold to boiling, a drying grating, and every luxury that such a room could contain. At first thought it seemed impossible that so much luxury as surrounded me, and was brought strongly en évidence by the beautiful bath-room, which was only a replica of all the others, could be within reach of even the humblest worker; but on mature consideration the remarks of Vernon about the crematorium—if the expense is shared by a number it is economical—came to my mind. And so it was with the bath-rooms, each of which was used by about eighty people, men, women, and children. Now, supposing each of these paid a farthing a week, the amount, 4l. 6s. 8d. a year, would pay 5 per cent. interest on 50l., and leave 1l. 16s. 8d. as a sinking fund, which would, in the course of a few years, purchase the improvements. But as the cost of making this perfect bath-room would not be 50l. more than the cost of making a very common one, nor hardly 30l., while the perfect room would last much the longer, and was much the more easily kept clean, a very much less sum than one farthing per week would make the difference between luxury and dilapidation; and so it was with everything else.

When I was ready to return to my room, Vernon said,—
"You must now either put the room tidy like this," he took up a sponge, which he squeezed dry, and with which he removed the splashes; he then put the soap tray and brushes in order, and so, in less than half a minute, the room was fit for the next comer;
“or you must put a farthing in the waiter, which will summon an attendant when you open the door.” This he did, and as he opened the door, the “waiter,” operated by the farthing, pulled a handle, and shortly an attendant appeared.

“We have tidied the bath-room, thank you,” said Vernon to the attendant, “and I only rang to show Frank how to manage if he wanted you.”

After all, the wonder was not that these simple and economical arrangements were on all sides at Frigida, but that they were not in universal operation at the Middle Globe.

On going down to breakfast, Bel told us that we were amongst the last to appear. Vernon’s breakfast consisted of only milk and oatmeal porridge.

“My breakfast,” he said, “supports my brain and muscle without fatiguing my digestion or stomach,” and his words were wonderfully true, though with me my appetite was ravenous, all my organization demanding to be restored after my long fast; so I finished my breakfast with some fish. As Vernon left, Nitho appeared.

“Nitho, I want to talk to you of what you said about my falling in love with Mary.” I was very grave. “Of course, you will not mention our conversation to any one? please promise.”

“Certainly, if you wish it, Frank,” she replied; “though everyone knows what I was going to tell you, and I only spoke out of friendship to you.”

“Thank you, Nitho; now please tell me.”

“Oh, there is nothing much to tell,” she said, “it’s only that Vernon wants to make Mary his wife, and everyone thinks they would suit each other.” This might not seem much to Nitho, but it was very much to me, though just what I had expected.

“Do you think so, Nitho?” I asked, very gravely.

“Of course I do, Frank, though I think Mary should have told you, or not nursed you herself in the—well—the soft-eyed way she does.”

“Mary is not at all to blame, Nitho; she can no more help being kind than the magnolia can help being perfumed, or the sea being salt; we can only act according to our nature.”

“That’s all very well, but Mary’s eyes can look quite different to the way you have seen them. Never mind, Frank, we will get you a nice wife soon; I think it possible I might marry you myself.”

This was kindly and seriously meant, but when a man in a strange land falls in love with a woman who is going to marry another man, he does not feel inclined to think of marriage, or any other cheerful subject.

“I am going to do some washing, Frank,” said Nitho, after a long silence, “would you like to come and see the laundry?”
“Yes, please, I think I would,” I said sadly, for I was utterly depressed.

“All right,” said Nitho cheerily, “I will go and get my things, and then come back for you.”

Presently she returned with a bundle.

“Come along,” she said, and I followed her to the washing-room, which was a room with all the scientific appliances for washing, drying, mangling, and starching clothes of all sorts. Nitho put two farthings in a box, which rang a bell twice.

“Good morning, Frank,” said Mary, who was ironing some article that seemed to me like a woman’s bodice. “You are looking white, so sit down and give an account of yourself; you surely are going to get strong quickly, if only to please me?”

Had Nitho only left me in ignorance, my recovery would have been hastened by the joy of Mary’s presence, and the hope of her love; but as it was, my mind hindered the recovery of my body. Some men, with a folly that is contemptible, or worse, feel anger against the woman they love but lose, as if the fact that she did not appreciate their love either altered her or was a crime; others would marry the woman they love whether she cared for them or not, forgetting that a bride who does not love is not worth having, nay, more, is a curse to any man; to neither of these classes did I belong; I had loved a woman I could not win, and was naturally sad, but I would soon recover and be certainly none the worse, as love for a good woman can never do aught but elevate a sensible man.

“Why did Nitho put those two farthings in that box, Mary?” I asked.

“To pay for the privilege of herself and you staying here. All who are not regular attendants, but live in the block, can come in here on payment of a farthing, and make use of the water and washing utensils; we do this to keep out idlers like yourself.”

“Do not go, Frank; invalids are privileged, and my baby, that you tossed last night, has fallen in love with you,” said a merry matron.

“You look too sad, Frank,” said Mary. “You must not worry about anything; we are all happy in Zara, except when our friends are sad.” The logic of this sentence made us all smile.

Here, as everywhere else in Zara, the workers were what old-fashioned people would call “gentle folk,” in every sense of the word. In Ura, I found most of the women were so ridiculous as to consider all useful work derogatory, and so cultivated idleness, or frivolity, to the detriment of their minds and bodies. In Zara, everyone seemed to try and be useful, which resulted in their gaining an appetite for their many amusements. Mary finished her work, and we went into the dining-room, when Bel brought me some oysters and brown bread.
"You pay all your washers by the number of clothes they wash, I suppose?" I asked Mary.

"Oh, no," she replied; "we pay them all an equal remuneration per month, except the superintendent, who receives double pay, and is very skilled."

"Does not paying them all alike tend to suppress individual effort to excel?"

"No; because those who excel receive the easiest and pleasantest work, and are eligible for promotion; while those who are not careful or expert have to do the general house scrubbing and cleaning, and are given the roughest washing, besides being liable to dismissal."

"Then you do not lose sight of the wisdom of encouraging every one to do their best?"

"No, that is kept in view; but we hold that every one who will do his or her best, no matter how poor that is, has a right to the common necessaries and pleasures of life."

This opinion was certainly excellent, if only it was feasible. At dinner we found the duke, and other members of his household. After dinner, as we were leaving, I joined Duke Mura.

"Duke, I should like the benefit of your advice when you are at leisure," I said.

"Come now to my library, Frank," he replied, and I will hear you and assist you." Nothing could be more encouraging than the dignified kindness of this polite man, which promised both the heart to sympathize and the power to assist. He motioned me to a chair, and I spoke.

"Duke Wolner, your son Ion has saved my life, and your people have treated me with a kindness that is more than most men receive from their relatives. I am now strong, and feel I should no longer trespass on your generosity."

"Say rather hospitality, Frank, for that is a duty all men owe to a stranger, though to you the duty is also a pleasure."

I bowed my head and thanked him. Truly, if the wisdom and experience of age were always sweetened with courteous consideration, they would be much more powerful for good.

"I feel now," I continued, "that I should at once commence to earn my bread, and that for the future idleness will neither be desirable nor expedient."

"Idleness is never either desirable or expedient, Frank; for it makes impossible the noble joy of success, or the happy realization of leisure."

"Then, again, I feel it is my duty to return to the Middle Globe, that I may relieve the anxiety of my mother; and, if I have your permission, make known how paradise is regained when a nation is guided by the laws of the Almighty as ineffaceably written on the page of Nature, and expounded by Christ."

"Frank, would you like to stay with us?"
"Were it not my duty to relieve my mother's anxiety, and also bring to my countrymen knowledge that will change rivers of misery into seas of joy, I should crave permission to live and die amongst the people of Zara."

"Mary has told me that your mother has other sons, besides daughters and grandchildren, and a brother of the same ways of thought as herself, who advises her as to the management, or mismanagement, of her wealthy holdings; also, that you have been seldom at home since your youth, and that ere this the Prospector and her crew will have been given up as lost; for these reasons, Frank, your mother will have slowly, and almost without grief, come to regard you as dead. Therefore, you need not return on her account. Now, as to bringing perfect civilization to the imperfectly educated communities of the Middle Globe, you could hardly do that at present. Wait till you comprehend our civilization, and have seen it put in force in Ura, which is a community like that which you call the United States of America in the Middle Globe; you can then return armed with knowledge and proof that will enable you to change the unhappy ignorance and suffering of the world to the enlightened knowledge and happiness that exists at Zara."

The duke's wise words woke memories in my mind. This old man, fortified by the experience of a life of wise energy, had rightly realized my position.

"I agree with all you say, Duke Mura, though I feel a longing to relieve my mother's mind, and to see that she is well and happy."

"Such a feeling does you honour, but expediency must prevail."

"How can I be of use in this community, Duke? Doubtless the medical and surgical science is as much in advance of that which I practise as are all other things?"

"You are right, Frank; but here there is an opening for every man according to his abilities; and as in all human communities men of great energy are scarce, for such there is a demand. From what I have seen of you, I give you credit for the energy and good qualities which, I have been informed by Mary, you possess."

"You overwhelm me. In the past I have done nothing worthy of remark, and in the future I can only do my best."

"This evening you will come before the assembled Parliament, over which I preside; they will welcome you as a citizen of Zara. And then I propose that you join the Assembly of Surgeons, commence the practice of your profession, and take that active part in politics and our union with Ura for which circumstances and your ability and energy have fitted you."

What could I say? Nothing. Such a speech could only be acknowledged.
"I feel I do not deserve your kindness and confidence," I replied, brokenly, "though in the future I will strive to do so."

"You will want some money for your immediate necessities," said the duke. "Here is a receipt-book for you; fill out a receipt for a hundred crowns, and I will give you a cheque for the amount."

"Vernon Dreman has already given me fifty crowns; but I will take the receipt-book, with your permission, that I may acknowledge his loan."

"That was thoughtful of him. He is a very clever, ambitious man, and already a leader in Ura; he will one day be a reformer as great as the 'Law-giver' himself. He wishes to marry Mary, and probably will; she is just the wife for him, though as yet he has not won her love. I cannot imagine why, except that perhaps he seeks too much to force her admiration, and not enough to sue for it. Women cannot be measured by any rule."

This fact had been discovered very early in the world's history.

"I am going to the Parliament House," continued the duke; "if you come, I will show you over it."

I thanked him, and away we went. On turning a corner, I saw towering above the block opposite me a dome, on the summit of which stood the statue of a man looking heavenwards, a roll of papers in his left hand, while his right seemed to direct his gaze. The dome rested on a square tower, at each corner of which stood the figure of a man. This tower stood in the centre of a great dome, which surmounted two great squares, the ground-plan of the lower of which, at its base, was 300 feet square. The structure was magnificent. The god-like splendour of the marble figure on the summit seemed symbolical of man's supremacy.

"That is our Parliament House," said the duke; "and the heroic marble figure on its tower is that of William O'Brien, who designed all the building, with the exception that on its summit he intended to have an emblem of the sun."

We went into the middle of the square, and here we saw the wonderful structure, though we were too near to see the dome. The building was square, and approached on all sides by marble steps. Huge pillars, at regular intervals, supported the roof, which slightly projected over the walls of the building. We walked up the steps and entered. Passing through two handsome rooms, we came to the assembly chamber, which was of wonderful magnificence, capable of seating at least 15,000 people. The room was square, with one end partitioned off, from which came a circular-ended part for the meeting of members of the House of Titles and the Senate. This part was surrounded by tiers of seats arranged much as they are in theatres, but with more numerous passages. Here the duke left me, and shortly after I was joined by a strong, ruddy-faced man with brown eyes, straight
features, and a curled auburn moustache. He was perfectly dressed, and from his buttonhole flower and well-gloved hands to the minutest point of his toilet, would have passed for a London dandy in morning dress, had not his energetic walk betrayed the man of action.

"The Duke Mura has sent me to you, Dr. Farleigh," he said, "with orders to introduce myself. I am Diso Car Rota, the head scavenger of the north of Zara, and have the honour of the Duke's friendship, and the benefit of his support." We shook hands, and he began to point out to me various interesting things.

"Of course, you know that this is the great assembly-room where the members of the House of Titles meet the senators to-night?"

"I am in complete ignorance," I answered, "of the Political Government of Zara. And only know of Fregida, that Ura has a Government similar to that of the United States of America. Please tell me how the duke knows about America, and how Zara is governed."

"With pleasure. We are in frequent communication with all other parts of the globe. The reason of our wonderful success is that a great mind—that of the 'Law-giver'—had despotic control over a semi-barbarous but clever race; this control he maintained and enforced by the power he gained through secret communication with what were then the most civilized nations of the earth. This communication we still maintain, and we have always some of our men travelling to obtain any important discovery that may be made elsewhere. This is not yet generally known, as we think the multitude are as yet sufficiently fully employed, by the changes taking place at Frigida. Your second question requires consideration. Let me see. You say you know nothing whatever about our Government?"


"Then I will begin from the foundation, and add fact to fact till I have given you a verbal sketch of it all. Every district is governed by its municipality, which acts under the laws of Zara, which are decreed by Parliament, which consists of a Senate of two hundred representatives, each of whom is elected for four years, and fifty of whom retire every year."

"By whom are they elected?"

"By a majority of the voters of their province, who consist of all the married men, widows and widowers."

"What a strange selection! Do you mean to say that a man who is of age and, say, a lawyer, would not have the same voting power as a widow, simply because he is a bachelor?"

"Certainly I do," replied Diso. "Marriage is the first law of God and nature, and the foundation of civilization. It is not only the duty, but the highest privilege of men and women to marry. So to all who neglect their duty, or are unable to obtain
this privilege, we do not give a vote, as we hold that those who cannot arrange for themselves this simplest matter, are not fit to help to arrange the affairs of a nation."

"Then why not give the married women votes?"

"For two reasons. One of which is that the sensible married women, with few exceptions, control their husband's vote. The second is, that it is unwise to do anything that could possibly bring discord between husband and wife. In every case, if two people work together, one must have at least nominal supremacy, and nature ordains that the male should have it. I say nominal, for in reality the women are the controlling power. They bring up their sons to a career, in which they are guided and controlled by their wives."

"Why do you give widows and widowers votes?"

"Because it would not be just to deprive a man of a privilege because he has had the misfortune to lose his wife; and when a woman loses her husband, who voted for her, she must be allowed to vote for herself."

"Who are eligible for election to the Senate?"

"All male voters are eligible who are nominated by ten per cent. of the electors; who can by a request in writing to the Senate, from at least three-fifths of their number, have the election of any senator annulled."

"Now, who composes the House of Titles?"

"The House of Titles is composed of all the titled men in Zara. We have three titles, that of Sir, Lord, and Duke. These titles are conferred by President and Parliament for services to the State, or to reward any career of great excellence; they can also be purchased for twenty, forty, or sixty thousand pounds respectively. In each case they are only for life, and carry an income of one, two or three thousand crowns per annum. These noblemen can be deprived of their title which carries the income, by a majority of Parliament."

"Is that ever done?"

"Sometimes, but very rarely; for instance, lately a man of excellent character, while sinking a well on his land, discovered by chance a coal mine. The wealth he acquired spoiled him, he claimed credit for the working of chance, and purchased for himself a dukedom for 60,000/. The two Houses met at once and cancelled the title, so he lost his money; but this is an extreme case."

"It seems to me rather hard on the man."

"The coal mine was to blame, it took him from a position which he adorned, and placed him in one he disgraced. The House of Titles can also veto any bill of the Senate, for two years, if it has not been passed by a three-fifths majority. There only now remains the President to describe. He is elected for ten years by the Parliament from amongst the members of either House, and can only be deposed by written request to the Senate"
and House of Titles, signed by three-fifths of the voters. This, however, has never been done. The President can veto any bill for two years, that is not passed by a three-fifth majority of both branches of Parliament. This also has never been done, for the Senate, who directly represent the people, have the power, and no one is so foolish to oppose them, even if any one wished, which I doubt. They may be delayed, but cannot be denied."

The duke now returned with Vernon.

"Come, Frank," said the duke, "we will show you some of the other chambers before we return to supper. Will you sup with us, Diso?"

Diso answered in the affirmative.

The duke continued, "This is where the two legislating bodies meet on certain occasions, such as to-night, for the election of a president, or a member of the Cabinet."

"How do you elect your Cabinet?" I asked.

"They are elected, or dismissed, by a majority of both assemblies together."

We now went through more magnificent rooms, and came to a chamber like the one we had left, but much smaller. This was the Senate Chamber, we next came to the chamber of the Titled assembly, which was like the chambers we had left, but more luxuriantly fitted up. The President had splendid rooms for himself and his family in the building, and all the attendants were suitably lodged. We passed through libraries, sitting-rooms, billiard-rooms, dining-rooms, and rooms of every description that could be required in a building combining all the advantages of an hotel and club.

"I suppose all these splendid conveniences are to reward the members of Parliament for their labours?"

"Yes," said the duke; "in addition to the senators' three hundred crowns a year, and the President's one thousand crowns above any salary he may have from a title."

"This payment seems either too little or too much. Too little to induce the best men to devote time to the service of the State; and too much, if you have a sufficient number of men, who are able and willing to do so for the sake of patriotism."

"Patriotism alone," said the duke, "is not sufficient. A man's first duty is to earn sufficient to maintain himself and his family. After this duty is done there is not one man in every five hundred who has sufficient time left at his disposal to properly attend to legislating. There is another class which includes all who have inherited sufficient means to maintain them; these are very scarce in Zara, scarce in Ura, and numbering about one in every three hundred in Gurla, which is a Monarchy with hereditary titles, and laws that allow a man who has made money to leave it to maintain descendants in idleness, to their ruin and the detriment of the State. Both these classes in Gurla do not number more
than one in every two hundred, while in Zara they are much less; to these you may add an undesirable class of politicians, who enter parliament as a means of gaining power, and indirectly money. Thus, in a gratuitous parliament you have less than two per cent. of the population to choose from, and these are more or less imbued with class prejudices. In a paid parliament—surely the labourer is worthy of his hire—you have the choice of all those who would devote their life to legislating, for a sufficiency, and a further reward; if successful, of a title and many honours. In Zara every legislator is expected to go among his constituents, and give them reasons for his actions, and elevate their political ideas.

"Does this not tend to cause him to be unduly influenced in favour of gaining for his constituency a greater expenditure of public money than its due?"

"No; because we guard against this by making the districts large, so that if a member corruptly gained votes in one part he would be sure to lose them elsewhere."

"After all," said Vernon, "the main thing is to educate and elevate the people, in which case they will refuse to be badly ruled whether their legislators are paid or unpaid."

"Had we not better return," asked Diso, "so that we may be in time for the President's banquet to meet the Delegates from Ura?"

"You are right, Diso," said the duke, and we returned.

In the sitting-room Mary was waiting.

"Frank," she said, with eager animation, "to-night the President gives a banquet to the members of the House of Titles and their wives, to meet the Delegates from Ura. To this I am invited. After it is over, the Senate and House of Titles meet in the great assembly room. The Delegates will be introduced, Vernon, who is their President, will make a speech, the duke will reply, and then perhaps I shall speak—I am prepared. You will then be introduced, and received as a citizen to Zara. I think you will be asked to speak; if so, tell us of the England you come from, and speak as you feel, and fearlessly. Vernon, who does everything well, speaks magnificently; the duke also is a splendid speaker, but in a different style. Do not be afraid, Frank, I know you will do well, but I want you to triumph. Nitho will take you where you can see the banquet if you wish, now I must go. Be brave."

She was gone. She looked a goddess. Even in the triumph of preparing to hear her lover speak, she was kind to me—the cast-away from beyond the regions of the ice. I paced up and down thinking of what I should say; of the kindness I had received; of the land I had left where pale-faced destitution and plethoric waste went side by side; where children were reared to crime, and helpless women driven to the gutters; where ignorance fostered these things, repelled the progress of wisdom, and mis-
used the offering of charity. As I paced to and fro, Nitho came in.

"Frank," she said, "I have been searching for you, go and make yourself as nice as possible, and then come to supper quickly, after which we will go and see the banquet."

I did as I was told, and on my return found Nitho impatiently waiting for me.

"You shall see the loveliest sight you ever witnessed, Frank, so eat your supper quickly. What are you looking so serious for?"

"Because I have to be introduced to the Senate, and I don't know what to say."

"That does not matter, people will be listening to Vernon or thinking of what he has said, he is so clever." Nitho talked on and on; it was awful, and Vernon's magnificence occupied every second sentence. At last we got away, and returned to the Parliament House to see the banquet.