CHAPTER IX.

RACING IN ZARA.

On going to my room, I found Vernon, sitting in an easy chair, looking utterly worn out.

"You have been working too hard, Vernon, mentally and physically, burning the candle at both ends we would call it," I said sympathetically.

"Not at all, Frank," he replied despondingly, "the physical work, by aiding the digestion and strengthening the nerves, acts like a shield to keep the candle from burning too fast. To-night I am weary and sad; of all men in Frigida I am supposed to be the happiest. I am envied by men and admired by women. I have succeeded in all things—well, in nearly all things; and risen far beyond my most sanguine hopes."

His eyes looked into vacancy; his face was haggard and depressed. Making an effort, he continued, with the same crushed manner,—

"All my life I have been alone, Frank; I have longed for love and sympathy. I have been loved by my dogs, and my horses, and by women who were unhappy, and turned their broken lives to me for support; but never—never in all my life—has a woman given me the love of her heart and soul, for ever and ever. I have marked out my life and succeeded, in all but bringing the light of love to brighten the joy of success. In my youth I have seen women whom I could have loved, and whose life might have joined mine as the sunshine joins the rain, to bring forth flowers and fruit. Some of them, sweet good women, were poor; and by loving them I should have had to forego all the ambition of my life, and stepped down amongst the humdrum crowd; had I been wise I should have done this, and so gained happiness, and foregone success. Others of them who could have helped me, would not have my love."

His face hardened, and became strong; this lonely man could face failure and be brave; was it cowardice or goodness made him sorrow for his loveless life?

"Frank, women are fools," he continued with contempt, "in their youth and freshness, when men offer them their lives,
they cannot see the happiness at their feet, so eager are they looking up and ogling the men above them. Will they never see the joy and wisdom of entering the portals of womanhood, side by side with a man who is bright with the freshness of youth, and has all its fulness before him; entering life as the Almighty has ordained; to face its battle, and share its joys and sorrows, with the stronger nature of man, which gives its strength for their goodness? Now, in Ura, women in every station of life are brought up in a luxury unattainable to the young men, who work as their brothers do, brought up to ignore the earnestness of life, and seeking only to win as husbands the few men who inherit wealth—for every one of whom there are a hundred longing maids—or those who have reached middle or later life, in acquiring wealth. Misguided women, bringing disappointment on themselves, and driving the men to seek for solace in clubs amongst their own sex only, and then shrieking for woman's rights, which they have refused."

I listened, for I felt that words would relieve this man's grief, as would tears the sorrow of a woman.

"Women's rights!" he laughed, a harsh laugh. "Nature has fixed those rights; she can lead the men, and share the fruits of their labours; but when she competes with them she is sore and sorry. Nature, who gave women, as indeed all feminine creation, the smaller and weaker brain and body, but greater goodness, intended them to lean on man, and brighten his life, as the clematis grows on, and beautifies, the tree that supports it. Frank, the women who were blind to my strength when I was in the joyous spring of my manhood, come to me now that life means labour, and mirth is not to my mind, and pretend that they could love me; sometimes, foolishly, they pretend they do love me. How can I believe them? They but rush to grace the triumph of the victor, thinking nothing of the man."

"Vernon, brave heart," I said, "you are tired to-night, and your own kind self is lost beneath the weight of weariness. Women who go in agony to the gates of death to bring us into the world; who give their every thought for us in the weakness of our babyhood; who guide us aright to manhood, and thence cheer our path to heaven."

I went over to him, and put my hand on his shoulder as I continued,—

"Vernon, the champion of the weak, who has brought happiness almost to his country's hearths, cannot speak hardly of women from his heart, but only from the loneliness that ambition—righteous, splendid ambition—has made in his life. Vernon, there are but few women who would not crown your labours with their lives. Choose one, and you will be ashamed that you ever questioned their goodness; and your life will be rich with the fulness of joy, and the sweetness of content, till
you will forget you are mortal, in the certainty of heaven with her who has become your better self."

He looked up; all the hardness had left his face, which was now gentle with the kindness of good thoughts. His face was splendid, with something far above mere beauty, whose absence is soon forgotten. In all its moods, which were various as the skies above us, his clever face was never repellant.

"You are right, Frank, and I was foolish; I am ashamed of myself," he said with a sigh that was almost a sob. "Do you ever feel that you would like to be tied up and whipped, till pain had purged you of your folly? That is how I feel now. There are women—many women—who have the goodness of their sex, and the strength of ours. Such a one is Mary Vero. You will be told that she has treated me badly, and acted foolishly. Do not believe it; I love her, and thought to make her my wife, but she refused me. I—felt—certain"—he paused musingly for a while, and when he continued, spoke slowly—"I was a vain fool; I thought she would marry me, though I saw she did not love me—love would follow; she would have made my life complete—God bless her!—and I would have made her happy in every way, and raised her up above the world, so that all women would envy her."

I could not doubt his words. Would Mary ever repent her choice?—not if my life would avail. He looked up—

"I wish I had some brandy," he said tiredly, "I hardly ever take it, but I would like some now."

"Go to bed, Vernon," I said, "it is two o'clock; and I'm afraid you will be knocked up to-morrow."

"Good gracious, Frank!" he exclaimed, almost himself again in a moment. "I did not mean to keep you up. You are very kind. Sweet dreams and good luck to you. When you want a friend come to Vernon Dreman, who never forgets."

He never did forget; even the slightest service he returned tenfold. I soon went to sleep, but I am afraid he tossed about for some time.

Early next morning I awoke. I could hardly realize I had been asleep. Vernon lay quiet as a child; the sadness still on his face, while the beautifying shadows of his kindly thoughts seemed deepened and intensified. I dressed quietly and went downstairs. Perhaps I might meet Mary alone, before the crowd had come down. Coming along the passage I saw Nitho; this sprightly damsel seemed to be here, there, and everywhere.

"Good morning, Frank; practise," and Nitho's hand was held out to me, which I kissed with the best grace at my disposal.

"That's better," she said, "now if I were a man, and a woman allowed me to kiss her hand once, I should kiss her lips twice. Mary is in the study, I shall see you are not interrupted. Be of good courage, Sir Knight."
With a sweeping courtesy this merry maid left me, and I turned to the study. Mary was writing.

"I act as a secretary for the Duke, Frank," she said, looking up, "and have at present a great deal to do. To-morrow is Sunday, so of course I shall not work then, and on Monday we go to Pentona, to see that everything is arranged to receive a batch of the incorrigible criminals from Ura."

I had kissed her hand, with a devotion she did not reprove, and continued to hold it in mine.

"Mary, my queen! I said I would be patient, and I will; but Mary, it seems too much to hope that you will love me. I have no position, and no money, or anything but my love to offer you."

"Frank," she said, with downcast eyes, "that is all a woman wants. At Zara we love a man for himself alone, and, Frank, I will—some day—be your wife."

I took her in my arms, and kissed her lovely lips. Can a man ever forget the first time he takes in his arms, and kisses, the woman who becomes his wife? I think not. Though it is years ago, I can remember it all, yea, and bless the day I gained a love that is the light of my life, and a wife who is "More precious than pearls." As it is not seemly to kiss the lips of the woman you love while under the gaze of mortal eyes, so it would be unseemly to write the words of love that passed man's lips for the ear of his darling alone; so I shall not record them.

"Frank, you did not really think that being poor would prevent me marrying you, did you?" she presently asked.

"No, but being poor should have prevented me loving you, because it may be several years before I am in a position to marry you."

"Surely not, Frank; that would be so in Ura, but here any man and woman can marry, and be happy, that is if they love one another. All they want is two rooms, which cost very little to hire, and these they can furnish."

"But suppose they have no money at all?" I asked, thinking of my own case.

"That would not matter, they could pay for these things when they had earned it," she answered simply.

"But would tradespeople give trust under these circumstances?"

"Certainly; any man could soon pay for such things. If he could not get work elsewhere, he could work for the Government, who give employment to all who seek it, though their hours are very long, and their pay very poor.

"But suppose people got things and refused to pay, what then?"

"Why, their creditor would get an order of the court against them, and they would be sent to Pentona, and made to work till they had earned sufficient to pay the debt, which would then be
discharged, less ten per cent. which the Government charge to collect it."

"This all seems to tend to suppress personal energy."

"That is because you have not realized its working, Frank. Everyone strives to get private employment, as the Government hours of work are one-third longer, and they pay a fraction lower than that given by the private employer, while in Pentona the pay is very poor indeed, so you see there is every inducement for private energy."

"I wonder the Government get any good labour at all, under these terms."

"These terms do not apply to the Government employés, but only to those who demand work."

"Then, my queen, pray do not make me wait very long; I am now twenty-seven, and can find no happiness away from you. Waiting for you, an hour seems a day."

She smiled.

"Frank, when our love has been proved, I will become your wife; but of all the acts of our life, marriage is the most momentous. Therefore it must not be hastily entered into."

She was always wise, my lady-love, and sweet as she was wise.

The breakfast bell rang.

"Frank, I have done nothing all the morning," she said in consternation.

"Never mind," I replied, laughingly, "I have done what will secure the happiness of my life, which is surely a good morning's work."

We went in to breakfast, where all our party but Vernon were gathered. I had disconnected his bells so that he might sleep, which accounted for his non-appearance. After breakfast, I went to Vernon, who was still asleep, so I connected the microphone at the head of his bed, and left him. By-and-by he appeared, looking none the worse for his fit of despondency. In the afternoon we went to the races. The race-course was at the other side of the town to the football grounds. The trams worked with the same perfection they had shown the previous day, being in fact an exact duplicate. The race-course was a block of the same size and similar situation to the Recreation Ground. The pavilions were beautifully decorated with flowers, and the three bands of music were in attendance. The pavilions were larger than those at the Recreation Grounds, and sufficient to seat about fifty thousand people. The scene seemed to combine the leading characters of a horse show and a horse-race meeting, with the exception that there was neither betting nor betting men, or the many debasing side shows seen at most race meetings, such as spotted men and women, fire eaters, sword swallowers, fat women, throwing at cocoa nuts, or other similar sights; in place of which there was beautiful music, dancing—the people of Zara were very fond
of this most delightful pastime, and exercised it with a most perfect grace—and the horses and races to see.

At 13 every horse that took any part in the racing was paraded round the main course in procession, mounted, or in harness as if he were about to compete. The sight was splendid as a spectacle, and the best possible means of showing the competing animals, every one of whom had a number plainly marked in black, on a white ground, on his saddle, or straddle cloth, so that he could be identified by a glance at the card, which I produce in its entirety.

UNDARA.

ZARA RACE COURSE.

In honour of the visit of the Delegates from Ura.
20th June, 1870.

13.30. Procession of all horses taking part in races.

First Race, 14.10.

Racers, three miles.

1. Reta, 7 st. 11 lbs. 5. Glona, 7 st. 11 lbs.
2. Pree, 8 st. 7 lbs. 6. Una, 8 st. 2 lbs.
3. Dreman 8 st. 5 lbs. 7. Guin, 9 st.
4. Duke, 8 st.

Second Race, 14.50.

Trotters three miles.

8. Walloon, 8 st. 11. Zesca, 7 st. 11 lbs.
9. Star, 9 st. 7 lbs. 12. Orwell, 14 st. 7 lbs.
10. Gaffer, 11 st. 7 lbs.

Third Race, 15.30.

Victors four miles.

13. Symbol, 10 st. 7 lbs. 16. Pert, 9 st. 7 lbs. 7. Guin, 9 st. 7 lbs.
15. Orna, 9 st. 7 lbs. 18. Narni, 9 st. 2 lbs.

Fourth Race, 16.10.

Trotting Victors four miles.


Fifth Race, start 16.50.

Racers three miles.

1. Reta. 4. Duke. 25. Avillon, 8 st. 28. Pinos, 8 st. 7 lbs.
3. Dreman. 6. Una. 27. Rosa, 8 st. 4 lbs.

Last Race, start 17.40.

Champions, four miles.

29. Ira, 11 st. 33. Leo, 11 st.
30. Pasha, 13 st. 34. Foam, 11 st.
31. Bibbe, 11 st. 4 lbs. 35. Delval, 11 st. 7 lbs.
32. Brien, 12 st.
On the return of the procession to the stable enclosure, seven horses were led out to the centre of the ground, where they paraded amongst the people.

"That must be very dangerous, Mary. Surely those horses will hurt some one, or kill a child?" I said, seeing there were a number of children present, as indeed there were at every crowd in Zara.

"They never have yet done so," answered Mary, "so don't be frightened, Frank, they sometimes knock people down who refuse to move out of their way, for every horse is in the restless joy of perfect physical health and strength, but this is very seldom, and always accidental."

"But surely they sometimes kick or bite?" I asked.

"Never; why, before any animal is allowed to compete publicly, he must be certified as perfect in every way by the Animal Senate, which is a guarantee of his good temper."

"Do you mean to say that I would not be allowed to enter my horse for a public race if I paid the fees?" I asked, in astonishment.

"Not unless your horse was certificated," said Mary. "Racing is kept up for the improvement of the equine race, and the amusement of the public. Now, the first result is attained by only allowing horses perfect in every way to compete, and, by competition, finding their exact position in relation to each other. To see that a horse is perfect, he must be left, with a description, in charge of the Animal Senate for six days, during which time he is tested in every way; and, if sound in body and brain—which, of course, includes temper—a certificate is given, which allows him to take part in any horse competition. The result is that every competing horse is perfectly reliable, and so can be safely taken amongst the crowd."

"But what good results from taking the horses amongst the people?"

"Why, that they may be able thoroughly to see them. The poor people go on the flat, and if the horses were not sent there they would hardly see them at all."

On a board the number of the race and the starters appeared, and the horses left the enclosure and went on to the course. Surely the gathering of a number of beautiful horses, in perfect condition, well managed by gaily-dressed riders, is one of the finest sights in the world; and it is doubly fine when witnessed without the discord of harsh voices shrieking to people to risk money, that they may possibly receive what they have in no way earned. The starter came, mounted as we see him, but without his flag, in place of which he used a pistol, which, though it would terrify horses trained as are racehorses in the Middle Globe, failed to frighten the docile horses of Zara. The racers drew up in line. The pistol echoed—they were off. From start to finish the horses were
in view. The first time they passed the pavilion there were hardly thirty feet between the first and the last. The second time a bay and a grey horse had taken the lead, a second bay came next, and the rest followed close together. On they went. They were now opposite the pavilion, and coming home. They began to straggle apart. The two leaders were neck and neck, the third horse close behind them, and two greys fast creeping up. Now they entered the straight. The grey led, the third bay took second place, and the two greys raced with the late leader. Up they came nearly home. Four horses were close together. Just at the post the grey won, with the bay a good second, and two greys so close together for third place that I could not see which of them secured it. The winning numbers went up—7, 5, 4. Five horses in vehicles like our dog-carts now came out, and slowly passed amongst the people.

"Who handicaps the horses, Mary?" I queried.

"No one; they do not even handicap at Ura now, though they still do at Gurla. The horses handicap themselves."

"That is very clever of them," I said, thinking Mary was quiz­zing me. "I have heard of horses being good fencers, and others who could draw well. How do you enable them to handicap themselves?"

"Simply by their own exertions," she replied. "All untried horses start for the three miles' qualifying race, carrying eight stone weight—in every case mares receive an allowance of three pounds—and no horse is allowed to run till he is four years old. The winner of each race in future carries a penalty of seven pounds, the second horse one of five pounds, and the third horse one of three pounds. When any horse has to carry nine and a half stone, he must go into the next class of horses, who are called Victors, and who receive a similar weight penalty for first, second, or third place. When a horse wins sufficient penalties to make him carry eleven stone weight, he enters the Champion class, where the penalties are the same."

"This is a very simple arrangement," I admitted, admiringly, "and certainly saves the possibility of an unfair handicap. But why are your races so long, your horse barred till four years old, and your weights so heavy?"

"Because," replied Mary, "we simply race to improve the horses and please the public. If you race horses under four, you do more harm than good; and if you race short distances with light weights, you encourage horses without strength or endurance, which are their two most desirable qualities."

"Do stop talking," said Nitho. "There comes Andra: I do hope he will win."

The particulars of the race were notified, as before, and the five harnessed horses came into the course. The trotting horse, all the world over, seems characterized by docility and good temper,
so I was not surprised to see how easily the start was effected. Two of the horses soon went to the front. When the pavilion was being passed for the second time, a big bay horse had a lead of a hundred yards, and looked like winning easily; next came another bay horse, and the grey Andra was driving, very close together; the others followed close behind.

"Why on earth is that front horse going ahead so fast?" I asked, wonderingly. "He gets nothing extra by winning so far ahead, does he?"

"No extra prize," answered Mary, "but extra honour and a better certificate. Our horses are not kept back to get a lighter handicap, or to cheat the public in the betting, as there is neither handicapper nor betting; so they have everything to gain by winning as quickly and easily as possible, and so increase their value."

"Frank, dear, if you will only be quiet," interrupted Nitho, pleadingly, "I will tell you all about racing by-and-by. Poor Andra will never catch up."

The bay was in, AndTa was still a little behind the second horse, and another horse was coming up close behind. They were nearly home. The horses were being urged to their topmost speed.

"Go on, dear Gaffer, only another yard," whispered Nitho to herself in her excitement. The second horse broke into a gallop, and before he could recover his pace Andra gained second place, and his opponent was only fourth. Nitho threw a kiss with the tip of her finger to Andra, and disappeared. In a minute she returned, and breathlessly asked,—

"Please lend me a penny, Mary, I want to go and see Andra and Gaffer."

Mary gave her the money, and she disappeared.

"What does she want the penny for, Mary?" I inquired.

"The gates work with a penny automaton; the turnstile leading to the stables turns once on being operated with a penny, and gives a medal which operates another gate when you wish to return."

"This is certainly handier than having a gate-keeper and passes. Now, tell me about the trotting horses. Do they handicap themselves, too?"

"Yes, almost the same as the racers," said Mary. "The trotting carts are supplied by the Racing Committees, and are all exactly the same. Untried horses must have a driver weighing at least eight stone. The penalties are forty-nine, thirty-five, and twenty-one pounds for first, second, and third place, till they draw fifteen stone, when they go to the Victor class, which they leave for the Champion class when the weight reaches twenty-two stone, the penalties all along being the same."

"Well, your plan is certainly simple. What are your prizes?"

"Seventy, fifty, and thirty crowns respectively, for the first,
second, and third horse in each race, whether it is a trotting or galloping one."

"This seems very little."

"Well, the nomination and entry fees are each small, and the racing places a value on the horse which it would otherwise be hard to get."

Race after race continued, all delightful to witness, but not necessary to record. When the last race of the day came on the interest was intensified, as a horse with an unbeaten record was to run his last race. Victory after victory had piled up his burdens, till he had to carry thirteen stone weight in the four-mile champion race. Mary and I went to the stables to see the horse and his owner, whom Mary knew—though, indeed, she seemed to know and be beloved by everybody. As we passed along, we heard numerous grumblers loudly lamenting the cruelty of a man who would force his brave horse on to certain defeat, and so at last humble his proud record. The horse was evidently loved by the people, who, like all the world, loved and admired strength and pluck. Pasha, the horse in question, was being led about by his owner.

"They say I should not let him run again, Mary," said the man, proudly, "but he likes it; and defeat—if he is defeated, dear old fellow—is not disgrace, for he will do his best; and, win or lose, it's the last race he shall run for."

Pasha, a big bay horse with black points, a perfect star on his forehead, and a white near hind hoof and fetlock, looked perfectly ready for the fray. He arched his neck and sniffed at Mary in the kindliest manner, looking at her with his big, dark eyes as if he loved her. I put my hand on his wither, for he was perfectly quiet, seemingly proud of the notice he was receiving, and found he was just over sixteen hands high. The numbers went up, and the horses came on the course. Five finer animals the world could not produce; bone, blood, beauty, breeding, and strength—everything a horse should possess, was there. Four miles with from eleven to thirteen stone up. It was tremendous! Every horse would doubtless do their very best, but the crowd had only sympathy for the gallant, victorious old champion.

When will a poet rise, tuneful and strong, to sing of the gallant struggle of the loser? oftentimes a greater and braver struggle than has brought many more fortunate to victory. Be not cast down, Sir Knight, brave struggle was never quite unavailing; it will make thy brain and muscle the better able for future effort. The horses were ready to start. The crowd, expectant, looked as with one pair of eyes to watch every movement of the race. Quieter and quieter they grew, till all was hushed. The start was made, a few shouts, and they watched in silence. Four times the horses would pass us. Like a flash they went by; none could judge thus early in the race. On they went, and as they passed
us the second time their nostrils were distended, and the crowd became anxious. For the third time they passed us; and now the struggle commenced in earnest. One horse began to fall behind. Mary's hand clasped mine. With an effort the last horse came nearly up to the two leaders, and then fell away; nature exhausted, he went hopelessly back. They entered the straight, the old horse was still second, a good second; he could never overcome that little gap. They were almost together. A shout—a roar—went up from the crowd. Surely the old horse, who had heard it so often before, heard it now as a trumpet call. The race was over, but which had won? Stride by stride the horses seemed to have passed the winning post together. "Pasha has won—Pasha, Pasha!—Leo, Leo!"—the conflicting cries were roared against each other. Pasha was on the side further from us, and we had seen his head, they only seemed together. Up went the board—30, 33, 31.

So the old horse had won his last race. Again we found the trams waiting, and again they took the crowd away as fast as they could leave the race-course. Fortunately we found our party, and all went home together. Vernon seemed to have quite regained his spirits.

"What do you think of racing at Zara, Frank?" He did not wait for a reply, but continued, "We used to think that without betting racing would fail and the breed of horses deteriorate; but we were wrong, nothing can ever be hurt by depriving it of its evil elements, not even racing, which is more flourishing, and produces better horses in Zara than anywhere else."

After supper we—Mary, Nitho and I—went to see the dancing. "Frank, dear," said Nitho, "it is very good of you to come to the dance, instead of going to the opera. Shall we go and see Vorna Morpha dance, Mary? Frank would like to see her, I am sure."

"So would I, and thank her for being so good to him," said my lady love.

So we went. The room was square, with the musicians—piano, cornet, and two violins—in the centre, half hidden with ferns and flowering plants. The musicians were enclosed in a circle, round which was a narrow ring of painted fretwork, then another circle and another fretwork ring, till the rings extended almost to the cushioned seats against the wall. Over one end of the room was a balcony, approached by a winding skeleton stair, guarded by a turnstile which was opened with a penny; at the other end of the balcony was a similar stair, with a turnstile opening only to people leaving. The dancers were merry with the careless mirth that with us departs with childhood. The dresses were suggestive of a fancy dress ball, shorn of its burlesque costumes; for though numberless styles of dress were present, from Vorna's tight-fitting garments to the dress with a train, each
dress was chosen solely to become its wearer. Gloves were worn, but of all shades and colours. Feathers and flowers were lavishly used, and though the scene was innocent of the ostentation of wealth, or the peacock pride of class distinction, everyone was guided by a true self-respect, which alone constitutes perfect politeness, and the tout ensemble was more perfect, in every way, than anything seen in the Middle Globe out of pictures. From the centre of the musicians two balls were elevated on a pole, the top one being the smaller; each were divided into three equal parts of different colours, in each part of the upper was the figure “One,” and in the lower the word “Waltz.” The music played. From various parts of the room couples rose, and, gliding into the rings, went circling round the room to the graceful rhythm of the melody. The purpose of the rings soon became evident; instead of the dancers being an unguided mass, steered only by rule of thumb, and occasionally bumping and being bumped, they became a lovely procession, circling to the right or the left, but always going in the one direction, unbumped by awkward or careless neighbours, and happily progressing without impeding, or being impeded. A further use was to keep the waltzers from encroaching on those looking on, or being inconvenienced by them, as the rings were kept only for dancers, and dancers only for the rings. Nitho was sailing round the room with Diso.

“What a pretty couple they would make, Mary: would the Duke like it?” I asked.

“Certainly they are a pretty couple,” said Mary, “but they would not be a suitable one. Nitho’s mirthful jesting would make the sensitive Diso perpetually unhappy; in the tickling of a jest he would feel the venom of a sarcasm; while Nitho wants a quiet phlegmatic nature as a foil for her mirthful ways. Though they are both clever, they each want a partner with a duller, steadier nature to guide and soothe them.”

“How happy they all look!” I exclaimed.

“Do you dance, Frank? Shall we dance?” asked Mary, looking into my face.

“I dance, my queen,” I said ashamedly, “but for three years I have not done so, and my limbs have become dull in the weariness of ceaseless labour. I shall therefore be clumsy, and I would not even by so little sink in the eyes of the angel I love. By-and-by you will play, and I will practise dancing with Nitho, that I may enjoy it with you.”

“My dear,” said my queen, as her eyes glowed with love, “only by changing your nature can you sink in my estimation. We will not dance now, for I would not have you seen doing anything imperfectly.”

For the next dance only four couples got up, one of whom was Vorna and her husband. The music sounded and they danced. Do you know what dancing means? It is the perfection of ele-
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gance of motion, to illustrate the meaning of music, in time with its measure. Vorna and her husband together circled to the corner of the room, near where we were. They now separated, and slowly danced apart. Vorna smiling and gay, her husband grave and pleading. The music became slower. Cao's head sank on his breast, and slowly he passed to the measure of the music. Vorna, seeing her lover was overcome by her scorn, showed she only meant to test his love by making him strive for hers. Mirthfully she waltzed to Cao, holding out her arms and smiling the while. His head rose to the measure of the music. He came to Vorna, and sinking on one knee kissed her hand. The music quickened, Vorna dancing fled, Cao pursued, and at last caught her.

Each couple now waltzed round the room, and the dance was done. Mary danced, and I watched. Nothing can equal the pleasure of the happiness of participation, but after that comes witnessing the pleasure of others. Listening to music, and watching graceful dancers—as were all who danced at Zara—was to me a great enjoyment. To a man who has been parched in the desert for many days, the silver gleam of water and its pure taste is a thing to be enjoyed. After the dreary hardships of the snow and ice, the sound of mirth and music was delightful to my ear.

"Your eyes are smiling, Frank; are you thinking of Mary?" asked Nitho, who had come up to me unnoticed while my thoughts were pleasantly wandering.

"I am always thinking of Mary," I replied.

"Then give your mind a change," said Nitho, with a little laugh, "or it will cloy with sweetness."

Mary came.

"I have heard," she said, "that Parson Tona Hamer is to preach to-morrow at the cathedral, so we will go to hear him, for he is very eloquent and wise."

The dance was over. All dances at Zara finished at midnight, for the people were too sensible to try and ignore even those laws of nature that make the night for sleeping, and the day for work and play.

"Mary," I asked one day, "people here speak the English language, but many of the names and some of the phrases are not English—how is this?"

"When the Law-giver and his comrade came," she answered, "the speech of the Rodas was the only speech; they taught the young people to speak English, and as the books were all English the people soon came to speak the new language; but the names were harsh, so they became softened to suit the ear of the Rodas, who speak a much more musical tongue."

"This must have been a difficult thing to accomplish?" I opined.
“I believe not,” said my instructress, “the people were proud to learn the language of the Law-giver, which both elevated them above and separated them from the untaught savages; while to learn anything from books it was necessary to read English, so the people, who are quick and clever, learnt it naturally.”