

Zarlah the Martian eBook

Zarlah the Martian

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CHAPTER I.

The strange shadow.

So thrilling were my experiences during that period, so overcrowded with feverish action and strong emotions was each wonderful moment, and so entirely changed are the conditions of life as I now find it, that it is with considerable difficulty that I recall in detail all that happened prior to my remarkable discovery which opened communication between Earth and Mars. One says “discovery” advisedly, but let it not be imagined that communication with the planet Mars was established as a result of any careful and systematic research, or that I possessed a subtle genius for astronomical science that was destined to introduce into society what must eventually revolutionize it. Nothing could be further from the facts. Into the daily grind of my absolutely uneventful career, burst the almost terrifying revelations with a suddenness that stunned me, while I was engaged in experiments of an entirely extraneous nature. Albeit one wonders that the Martian rays, which have swept our planet with their searching gaze for so many centuries, were not discovered long ago. But this is anticipating my story.

I had reached the age of thirty, when, in the Spring of 19—, I sailed out of New York harbor on board *La Provence*, en route for Paris. It was not so much my purpose to seek pleasure as the determination to turn my eight years of experience in the United States to some avenue of profitable livelihood, that decided me to make the journey, although I looked forward with no small degree of pleasant anticipation to meeting some of my fellow students in the Academie des Sciences in Paris, where I had received five years of excellent training.

My trip across and my subsequent arrival in Paris were without any events of particular interest, and one bright morning in the early summer I found myself comfortably lodged in the house where I had previously boarded while a student. Connected with my rooms, which were at the top of the house, was one of considerable size that I had formerly used as a laboratory, and this I now set about fitting up to serve the same purpose. The daylight found its way into the room through a skylight, and though admirably suited for an artist’s studio, it answered my purpose equally as well.

I had collected many new instruments and appliances by dint of days spent in shopping, and was anxious to begin work in earnest, when one evening, as I glanced through the columns of a newspaper, my attention was arrested by an article of particular interest. This set forth the great and increasing demand for a substitute for glass, one which would answer the purpose in every respect, and at the same time be indestructible and a good conductor of sound. The article concluded with an enumeration of the many uses for which such a substitute would be invaluable, hinting at the enormous financial possibilities which would be open to the inventor. The more I considered the matter, the more desirous I became to test several theories which forthwith presented themselves

to my mind, and the next morning found me determined to begin my experiments at once. In theory, I saw the solution of the problem in artificially producing increased atomic motion, and with that object in view I went to work.

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My experiments involved me in weeks of hard work, and it was toward the end of the summer before I could admit having had any important results. I now had a substance resembling glass in appearance, though vastly different in composition, which I made into a film, extremely thin and highly sensitive to vibrations. Running through this film were slender wires made of various metals, about one inch apart, which served not only to give rigidity to the film, but also to conduct a current of electricity through it, engendering a high state of atomic agitation. The current was controlled by a small switch placed in a heavy box-like frame, which bounded the film on its four sides and contained the batteries, coils, etc. To this were attached four legs, supporting it about the height of an ordinary table from the floor. The whole device measured about seven feet square.

This film substance contained certain elements which I had found to be necessary to secure the desired intensity of agitation. It had taken me almost a month to secure the fine quality I desired, and I looked forward to the test with the feeling that results would prove that I was nearing the goal, if I had not actually attained it.

At last the day arrived when my device was ready for the test. I had worked all the afternoon giving the finishing touches and it had grown dusk without my realizing it. But everything was now ready, and moving the switch, I turned the current of electricity through the composition. Just as I was about to begin my test, I noticed what appeared to be a faint shadow of a man move across the surface of the film. My first thought was that someone had entered the room without my knowledge, and his figure had been reflected on the surface of the film, which was highly glazed, but a glance around the room assured me that this explanation was untenable. Moreover, I found, upon further investigation, that the film was lying in such a position that it would be impossible to reflect any person in the room. I then examined the skylight, only to find that, owing to the sharp inclination of the roof, it would be an utter impossibility for anyone to reach it from the outside without the aid of a ladder. I investigated this source further, thinking to find the reflection on the film to be from some street in the city below, but on account of the extent of the roof, no street was visible from the skylight.

Completely baffled, I descended into the room again and turned on the current. Immediately the shadow appeared on the film, and this time, in consequence of the room now being quite dark, I noticed that it was surrounded by a phosphorus-colored glow. The figure was certainly that of a man, although very faint, and it became evident to me, after watching it for a while, that he was trying to signal with his arms.

I now noticed that, in addition to the peculiar light on the film, the entire surface seemed to vibrate with frequent, but scarcely audible, humming sounds. Upon turning off the current all disappeared, only to reappear when I switched it on again. It was evident then that the phenomenon was caused only when the instrument was charged with electricity, and consequently was no ordinary reflection, as I had at first supposed.

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Everything pointed to its being the manifestation of some outside agency; possibly electrical waves which my apparatus received and in a measure responded to, coming through the open skylight from—where? The question reiterated itself in my mind, as I stood gazing perplexedly at the phenomenon. I might have been satisfied with the supposition that, unknowingly, I had made an instrument which was capable of receiving wireless waves from another instrument of similar tone in or near Paris, if I had had only the humming sounds to contend with, but the shadow impelled me to look for the reason further than this. I glanced upward, eagerly seeking some explanation. One star was visible through the open skylight—Mars. Clear and bright it shone in the inky blackness framed by the window.

Once more I climbed to the skylight, feeling that I must seek the explanation in that direction, when my attention was suddenly turned to the apparatus below me. The glow was slowly passing off one side of the film. I hastily descended and examined the batteries, thinking I would find the cause of this in a failing current, but all was apparently in perfect order. Still the glow and shadow moved steadily off, growing fainter every moment, until it disappeared completely.

With a sudden impulse, born of a weird and almost terrifying thought, I bent over until my eyes were on a level with the film, then I looked upward; the star was no longer visible from the position of the instrument, it had risen above the frame of the window. At once I was seized with an intense excitement; could it be possible that my apparatus was responding to waves mysteriously projected from Mars? If not, why had the glow and shadow faded from the film at the same instant that Mars disappeared above the window frame?

Hoping to test this further, I endeavored to move the apparatus to a position where Mars would again be visible, but alas, I found it much too heavy. I felt keenly disappointed at the sudden termination of this strange phenomenon, but, upon reflection, I realized that it was only the simultaneous disappearance of Mars and the glow on the film that had caused me to attribute waves to that far source. The more I pondered upon the matter, the more impossible it seemed, yet, strange to say, the more convinced I became that the theory was correct. Light-waves, I argued, unlike the wireless waves in common use, could be received only when the two objects were in line of vision; but I realized that if they were of Martian origin they were of remarkable magnification, projected through space by some unknown and powerful agent, thousands of times more powerful than electricity as we know it upon Earth. That the shadow on the film had been that of a Martian, I dared not hope. Though my mind continually reverted to this wild conjecture, I impatiently put it aside, as the apparent impossibility of it all would force itself upon me.

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Nothing further could be done that night, and as I had worked hard all day preparing for my experiment, without even stopping for meals, I now felt the effect of the excitement I had undergone and resolved to take a walk in the cool air, I wanted to think, and, if possible, to plan a line of action for the morrow which would bring me better results, if my theory of light-waves should prove to be correct. Needless to say, I determined to cease my former experiments, and devote all my energy to ascertaining whether my apparatus was actually responding to Martian light-waves of remarkable integrity, and if such proved to be the case, to put every effort into improving the device with the hope of obtaining their import. I also determined to keep my discovery a secret, at least for the present.

CHAPTER II.

The Martian.

I returned to my rooms with a much clearer conception of the conditions with which I had to cope, if the waves to which my apparatus responded should prove to be Martian waves. My mind was fully made up to proceed as if this were an established fact, as, in order to give my best efforts to improving my apparatus, I felt that I must eliminate all scepticism. I clearly appreciated the advantage of moving my instrument outside, where I could command a view of Mars for a much longer time, but the necessity of being in my laboratory while I was engaged in these improvements, decided me against any immediate change.

Accordingly I proceeded the next morning to make the changes I deemed necessary, being goaded into a fever of haste by a feeling of suppressed excitement. The composition I had used in the form of a film I now liquefied, having concluded that in the former condition, although necessary in my original experiments, it now only retarded the vibration of the wires.

That this composition was essential there could be no doubt, as it was its elements that responded to the agent used on Mars to project the waves. I therefore liquefied the film substance, being careful in so doing not to alter its properties. I then procured wires, much thinner than those I had previously used, and dipped them-into the liquid. After they had become perfectly dry, I stretched them on the frame as close together as I could without their coming into contact with one another. As light-waves are received in hundreds of different vibrations simultaneously, according to the light or shade of the object projected, I concluded that each wire should be capable of individual vibration. The device now resembled a large piece of mosquito netting with the cross wires removed, the coating of composition on each wire being so thin that it was hardly discernible. The batteries and coils I connected as before, taking great care not to change their arrangement.



My preparations were now completed, and before me stood an instrument as delicate and sensitive to wave vibrations as I could make it. Raising one side of the frame a foot higher than the other, in order that the surface of wires would be squarely facing the star when it appeared above the casement, I waited impatiently for the moment which should prove the truth or falsity of my surmises.

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The day had closed, and I spent the remaining time speculating upon the results of my labors. But even the wildest flights of my imagination did not picture, in the smallest degree, the wonderful transformation which my new instrument would make in what had appeared before as a shadow on the film. Little did I imagine to what an extent the unknown was to be revealed to me.

As I stood by the side of the frame all in readiness, Mars appeared, but it still had a little farther to climb before it would be visible from the level of the wires. Nevertheless, I turned on the current from the batteries. All was darkness; never before had darkness seemed to me so profound, so absolutely appalling. Minutes passed like hours, but still that ominous darkness reigned. I felt the keen disappointment of failure; I grew incredulous as the time passed, and found myself admitting and rehearsing the absurdity of it all. I even blamed myself for having been so easily deflected from my former experiments, by what now seemed to be merely an idle fancy.

Suddenly I bent over the frame and gazed eagerly at the surface of wires, for there, on the top edge, appeared a touch of the phosphorus-colored glow. My heart thumped with wild excitement. I stooped down until my eyes were on the level of the wires, and looking up toward the window I could just see the rim of Mars appearing above the casement. A shout of joy burst from my lips at the sight of it, for it was now beyond all doubt that the phenomenon was attributable to Mars. Brighter and brighter became the light as it covered the surface of wires, until all its resemblance to a phosphorus glow had gone, and it shone with such brilliancy that my eyes, accustomed as they were to the darkness of the room, quailed before it. Turning away so that my eyes might gradually become accustomed to the glare, I noticed that in spite of the brilliant white light on the surface of the wires, the room was in perfect darkness—the light had no power of illumination! Impenetrable mystery enshrouded the agent which Mars was employing to communicate with Earth!

A curious humming sound issuing from the frame, much louder than I had noticed the night before, caused me to turn involuntarily, and as I did so I uttered a cry of wonder at the marvelous vision that met my eyes. There lay before me, as bright as daylight, a picture that a thousand times surpassed my highest, wildest hope. The great secret of another planet was revealed, and I stood motionless, beholding an inhabitant of a star millions of miles away.

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Among the vast multitude who for centuries have yearned for a glimpse into the unknown worlds that surround us, I stood alone gazing upon the image of a Martian. The thought stunned me; I was seized with a wild impulse to rush out into the street and bring in the throng, that they might look upon the form of this wonderful being on our sister planet. But what proof was there to give them that this was so? I would undoubtedly be ridiculed and accused of trickery. The very fact that had brought a cry of amazement to my lips—the remarkable brilliancy and clearness of the image, and the appearance of the Martian himself—would serve to bring discredit upon anything I might say. Personally I had ample proof that the image was that of a Martian, but what instant proof could I give a jeering crowd? I had expected to find in a Martian a strange grotesque being in appearance, if not in mind, much after the weird and fierce character so many authors have portrayed him. Judge, then, my astonishment when I beheld one who, in every particular of form and feature, resembled the people of Earth.

He appeared to be a man of about forty years of age, judging by our earthly standard of time, possessing clear-cut features and dark complexion. His face, which was clean-shaven, was remarkably handsome, and his piercing dark eyes, although they enhanced the smile that greeted my appearance at the instrument, seemed to search into my very soul and to hold me spellbound with mute challenge. Nor could I, upon afterthought, remember having shown the common courtesy of returning his greeting.

My astonishment was so great that every faculty seemed to leave me, and I stood transfixed, staring at the image of the Martian without even the power of thought. Gradually recovering my senses, however, I took note of the man and his surroundings. He stood in a room of about the same dimensions as my laboratory, which seemed to be flooded with bright daylight, though I could not see any windows on three sides of the room to admit the light, nor any shadows to indicate that the light came from a window in the fourth. He held in his hands an instrument unknown to me, and seemed to be perfectly at his ease, showing neither surprise nor curiosity. Evidently this was not the first time that he had seen an inhabitant of the Earth. So unconcerned was he and so natural did he appear, even in the smallest detail of dress, that it was hard to believe I was not looking at an image of some room and its occupant in Paris. His close-fitting clothes seemed to be of a dark green material, and resembled, to some degree, the uniform of an army officer.

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Bending over the instrument he held, he placed his mouth close to the top of it, and immediately the humming sounds, which I had noticed before, emanated from the wires of my apparatus. The thought flashed through my mind that the Martian held in this instrument a means of communicating sound. If so, what were the words—what language? The possibility of what I heard being words, made me strain every nerve to catch the slightest resemblance to such sounds, but alas, with no success. That they were intended to convey a message, I became fully convinced, but I could not rest in the belief that this jumble of sounds was the Martian language. If the Martians themselves resembled, in so striking a degree, the inhabitants of Earth, I argued, then it was in the nature of things to expect a language that, in some way, corresponded to one of our languages. The fault lay in my instrument, I was sure of that, and in the keen disappointment of my failure to receive his message and the excitement of the moment, I gave utterance to an exclamation of despair. Immediately a smile overspread the Martian's countenance, and, to my great astonishment, he put down the instrument and clapped his hands by way of showing his approval.

Before I could recover from my surprise at this new evidence of Martian familiarity with the customs of Earth, the light suddenly grew dim and in a few seconds had disappeared completely, leaving the instrument plunged in darkness. Mars had risen above the frame of the skylight, and I was no longer in contact with the light-waves. I listened intently, thinking that if the sound-waves were of the nature of the electrical-waves we employ in the wireless system, I would still be in touch with my newly found friend, but I heard no further sound from the instrument, thus proving that these waves also were projected by the mysterious agent known only to the Martians.

I had so much to occupy my mind, with what I had just witnessed, and so many thoughts rushed in upon me regarding the perfecting of my instrument so that it might properly respond to the sound-waves, that I did not experience the disappointment I had felt before at the short duration of our contact with each other. I was glad of the opportunity to think; I felt that it was necessary to do so before further action, if I ever hoped to attain the knowledge of Mars and its inhabitants that my remarkable discovery had placed within my reach. I determined that on the morrow, if I did not meet with better results in the sound vibrations, I would try to communicate with the Martian by writing some simple sentence in a bold hand, and in as many languages as I could. This I would expose in front of the instrument, but I placed little hope in the success of the scheme, for it was not possible that the Martian language would be identical with any of ours.

CHAPTER III.

THE VOICE FROM ANOTHER WORLD

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This thought of communicating with the Martian by writing, did not deter me from using every effort to perfect my instrument, so that this might be done verbally, or that at least I might hear a voice and a language spoken on a world millions of miles away. Accordingly I gave the subject of sound-waves my best thought, and the next morning I had formulated clearly laid principles upon which to work. By these I hoped to make an instrument that would be the means of conversing with a Martian.

I had come to the conclusion that the jumble of sound was caused by the prolonged vibration of the wires after each distinct wave from Mars was received, as the wires of a piano will vibrate long after they have been touched. With light-waves it was necessary to have a highly sensitive surface of the composition, capable of responding to many different vibrations, according to the light or shade of the object projected. This accounted for the success I met with upon adopting the coated wires, and I concluded thereupon that they were indispensable. But I now saw that the presence of wires in the composition, though successful with light-waves, was inimical to sound-waves, and it became evident that a firmer but highly sensitive surface was required. The film had not brought good results, either from sound-waves or light-waves, but, it will be remembered, there were wires running through it to give it rigidity, which, although necessary in my original experiments, must be avoided in connection with sound vibrations. Clearly my new film must not be rigid. I thereupon made a film of composition, as thin as possible, and stretched it upon the frame of my instrument, as a diaphragm behind the wires, hoping that the sound-waves would pass between the wires, and vibrate the diaphragm, which, being made of composition, would undoubtedly glow, but not more than the film had done. This, I concluded, would not interfere with the image on the wires, owing to the brilliancy of the latter.

I was now hopeful of success, and anxiously waited for the day to close. Everything was in readiness by noon, and I had at least eight hours to wait before Mars would be in a position for wave contact. But now appeared an adversary with which I had not reckoned. Clouds began to gather, thin and fleecy at first, but growing heavier as the afternoon passed, until by evening the heavens were completely obscured. This was a condition that might last for several days, and the dread of it filled me with despair. How could I wait for days inactive, without seeing or even hearing from my friend in Mars?

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It now occurred to me how absolutely absorbed I had become in the Martian investigation. Ordinarily a sociable person, in the past week I had become a recluse. College friends that I had seen almost daily since my return to Paris, I now completely neglected, even shunned, lest they should call at my rooms some evening when I was in wave contact with Mars. It also occurred to me that, as surely as my friendship and necessity for them was declining, in like ratio was increasing an attachment for an inhabitant of another world. I felt a strange soul kinship for this Martian, which seemed to spring up the moment I saw his image portrayed on my instrument. And the feeling was not one of ordinary friendship. I felt I was drawn to him by some mysterious power, that gave him the place of a brother in my affections—a power that seemed to have brought us together, and now united us with a great common and compelling interest. And yet as I pictured his handsome, almost beautiful face, there was still another face I had seen—but where? The Martian had been alone, yet I was conscious of a face that was wonderfully beautiful, that seemed the goal for which I was striving. It led me to greater effort after failure; the face which I yearned to see and yet strangely dreaded seeing.

It was useless for me to try to understand such thoughts, and to banish them from my mind was impossible. I was overcome with a sense of loneliness. Looking at my watch, I found that it was already past the hour when Mars would be visible through the window on a clear night, but, alas, the sky showed no signs of clearing; though my instrument stood ready, it was useless.

But, obeying some irresistible impulse, I decided to turn on the current and stand by the instrument in case an opening in the clouds should occur, for even a moment. I therefore turned the switch that controlled the current, and immediately, to my astonishment, the surface of wires became as brilliant as on the previous evening under a clear sky. Turning away for a moment, to allow my eyes to become accustomed to the brilliancy, I noticed that the sky was still overcast with heavy rain clouds. My joy at the discovery that the Martian projecting agent was not arrested by vapor was unbounded, for it meant that I could be in wave-contact with Mars every night, during the period that the planet was visible from Earth.

I approached the instrument with the intention of at once testing the diaphragm, but, to my surprise, my Martian friend was not there to greet me. The room and its furnishings, however, were depicted as clearly as before, and I now had an opportunity to note the instruments, the large volumes of books, and the maps of the heavens which hung on the wall. Everything pointed to this being a fully equipped Martian observatory, though the instruments were entirely strange to me. I was examining these latter more closely, when heavy portieres parted, and my Martian friend stepped into the room. So anxious was I to give him a pleasant greeting, instead of staring at him in a semi-stupefied condition, as I had done previously, that I forgot, for the moment, my determination to test my diaphragm at the first opportunity, and greeted him merely with a smile and a bow.

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My serene demeanor lasted but a moment, for simultaneously with his bowed response to my greeting, came in a clear voice, with perfect accent: “Bon soir, Monsieur!”

I started back, for it seemed as if someone in the room had spoken, but then I noticed that the Martian held in his hand the instrument I had seen on the previous evening. Was it possible that this was his voice, speaking French from a distance of millions of miles as clearly as if he were in the room? The thing was incredible! How could a Martian know a language evolved here on Earth? Was the whole thing then a delusion of an overwrought mind? I stood staring at the instrument in amazement.

The Martian, now seeing by my actions that his voice had been heard, raised his instrument and repeated his greeting. The voice rang as clearly as before; there could be no further doubt; through this wonderful instrument the Martian’s voice was projected, almost instantaneously to the Earth—millions of miles in a second. The mysterious power which enabled the Martian to project the waves, compared with our electricity as the telegraph does with the stage-coach. Was it strange that I stood aghast, as my mind slowly comprehended the enormous distance which that voice had traversed almost instantaneously?

It was some moments before my amazement permitted me to respond to this extraordinary salutation, then—my mind still too bewildered properly to grasp the situation—I mumbled something in English about my great astonishment at hearing a language of Earth spoken from a distant world.

The sound of my voice seemed to cause the Martian some surprise, but immediately his voice issued again in clear tones from the instrument.

“I greeted you in what I supposed was your native tongue,” he said in perfect English. “Although now we have but one composite language here, over a thousand years ago we spoke in many languages, as the people of your planet do at the present time.

“For more than six hundred years we have been able to observe the progress of your planet,” he went on, “through an instrument by which light-waves are projected and received, and have found it to be identical with ours of almost fifteen hundred years ago. By the placards in the streets of your cities and towns, we discovered that you also spoke in many tongues, and although the progress was necessarily slow, our astronomers were, by this means, able to learn the principal languages of Earth.

“Anxiously we have watched and waited for the discovery of an instrument that would respond to our projected light-waves and reveal to you the inhabitants of your neighboring planet. At last this momentous time has arrived. I congratulate you upon bringing it about.”

As he spoke, his voice, coming from the diaphragm of my instrument, sounded as distinct as if he were in the room, and his image, depicted life-size, made it hard to believe that he was more than a few feet away. That my informant was, in reality, millions of miles away, my mind absolutely refused to grasp.

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A thousand questions to put to my Martian acquaintance rushed into my mind, but alas, in supposing that I could not come in contact with Mars on account of cloud obscurity, I had lost much of the precious time, and now the waning light on my instrument warned me that the planet would, in a few moments, pass out of range. We therefore hastily bade each other adieu, promising to continue our conversation on the morrow, as though we had parted at a street corner. The light now faded completely, and the instrument, that a few moments previously had been animated with such an exuberance of life and mystery, now stood before me wrapped in profound darkness and silence.

How impossible, how inconceivable it all seemed! How the outside world would scoff if I attempted to explain or publish my discovery! I felt that the time had not yet come to take anyone into my confidence, and I determined still to keep all a secret. I was then unaware, however, that the more I learned of Mars and its people the more closely I would guard my knowledge.

Pacing excitedly up and down my laboratory, I spent most of the night in reviewing what I had heard, and speculating the rare knowledge that the morrow would bring. The secrets of another world would be unfolded to me, and the scientific achievements of a people over a thousand years in advance of us would be mine. What glorious possibilities this disclosed! What a brilliant future as a scientist such knowledge would assure me! And in the exuberance of my spirits I little thought that the possession of this knowledge would come to mean naught to me; for I had yet to learn that man cannot share the riches of another world without also becoming a partner in its sorrows and its passions.

CHAPTER IV.

The story of Martian life.

With a determination of finding a room from which I could command a longer view of Mars, the next day I visited several studios which were for rent, and finally succeeded in securing one formerly occupied by a photographer, which was located on the top floor of a house in the immediate vicinity of my old rooms.

The room was large, in fact it occupied the entire top floor of the building, and this feature pleased me greatly. The only communication with the house was by a door which had every appearance of an outside door, so heavy were the hinges and lock. The landlord, in drawing my attention to this, had smiled and remarked that the former tenant, who lived in another section of the city, had been very careful always to leave his studio securely locked. The ceiling of half the room was entirely of glass, sloping down to the floor at the angle of the roof, and this was the only means of obtaining air and light. It was constructed in two sections, which would slide back and forth, for the purpose of ventilation. This arrangement, I found, would give me an unobstructed view

of Mars for several hours each night. Nothing could be better adapted to my requirements; I could not be observed by anyone outside, and I need not fear being overheard while conversing with my Martian friend.

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I therefore determined to have my instrument moved at once, in order to be installed in my new quarters that evening.

I next bought a crate, used for large oil paintings, and upon its delivery at my old rooms, I immediately commenced packing my instrument in it. Owing to its great weight this was no easy work, and it would express the procedure better if I said that I placed the crate around the instrument. Making sure that it was all covered carefully, I had it moved to my new quarters and set in place, the impression of the carriers being that it was a painting which I was very anxious that no one should see until it was completed.

As it was now within an hour of the time when I expected Mars to appear, I decided to leave my books and other belongings at my former rooms until the next day. I uncovered the instrument, and got everything into readiness, being careful to see that the batteries were all in place, so that nothing might occur to interrupt the long talk with the Martian which I was anticipating.

Having turned on the current, and opened the sliding section of the glass roof, I now awaited the appearance of Mars. There occurred to me question after question that seemed of sufficient importance to prompt immediate inquiry, only to be forgotten as others came into my mind; until the presence of the increasing faint glow on my instrument found me unprepared with any single question of actual importance. Consequently I decided to allow my distant informant to continue with the account of Martian observations of Earth, as being at once the most instructive and surest way of suggesting important questions.

As my eyes got accustomed to the brilliancy I saw the Martian waiting for me, with his instrument in readiness. We greeted each other with the affection we both now sincerely felt, and though I could not clasp his hand, I endeavored in every way to show him the brotherly warmth of feeling I entertained for him.

It now occurred to me that in the excitement of our first communication with each other, we had completely overlooked an important conventionality. I therefore announced that I was known on Earth as Harold Lonsdale.

"My name is Almos," he responded, his dark eyes sparkling as he quickly entered into the spirit of the occasion. "Although it was customary once for us to have two or three names, we found it in better harmony with the changed conditions of the present time to have but one. This you will more easily understand when you have become better acquainted with this planet and its people."

"And as I am most anxious to learn more about the conditions of life in your world," I added, eagerly, "I trust you will continue the account of Martian observations of Earth, which was barely commenced last evening when the wave contact ceased. But first let

me ask how you located my whereabouts, for this morning I moved to another section of the city.”

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"Ah!" he replied, with a smile, "I was not aware you had moved. Experience has taught me about where to look for the large city you call Paris, on the side of Earth that is now exposed to us, and then by systematic search I soon located the response of your instrument.

"As our observations of Earth with projected light-rays have been carried on for seven hundred years, it will be necessary to give you an outline of our history and the progress of science covering that time. This will not only be of interest as a forecast of your own world's future, but will also prove of the greatest value to you, if you decide to visit this planet, an undertaking which I am convinced lies within your power."

His words wrung an exclamation of astonishment from my lips, but, as though not wishing to be interrupted, he went on:

"Seven hundred years ago, a power derived from that substance known on Earth as radium, was discovered on Mars. This power was found to be capable of projecting light rays almost instantaneously through space for inconceivable distances, at the same time preserving their integrity to such a remarkable degree that they would reach the farthest planets without diffusion or diminution. Thus my image, thrown upon the instrument before me, is conveyed to Earth in light-waves by this flow of super-radium with such tremendous speed as to be practically instantaneous; these are received in your instrument, which is responsive to the flow of super-radium, in the same condition as when they left Mars, consequently depicting the image life-size.

"Having come in contact with another body in the heavens, this outward-flowing current of super-radium is changed to an inward-flowing current. In making this change it frees the light-waves it conveyed from Mars, and retains the light-waves of the objects about it, which is merely repeating its performance upon leaving Mars. These light-waves of objects on another globe it now conveys on its return journey to Mars, entering a receiving instrument and depicting the objects therein life-size.

"Possessing rays invisible to the human eye, except when agitated by a substance of its own nature, daylight on a planet becomes an entirely unnecessary adjunct to observations made with super-radium, and we are able to explore the dark side of planets and other heavenly bodies, just as effectually as those illuminated by the sun.

"Thus have we, for seven hundred years, been able to study the country, cities, streets, and people of Earth. And not only did we note a remarkable similarity in the people, buildings, and scientific progress to early Martian ages, but, by the advertisements, placards, and other street signs we were able to learn the principal languages spoken on your planet, and these were found to correspond in a remarkable degree to those in use on Mars, before conditions on our planet made the adoption of a composite language an absolute necessity. And undoubtedly these same conditions in due time will face the people of Earth."

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I could not restrain an exclamation of astonishment at this prediction, but Almos at once reassured me by stating that when the time did come, it would be the beginning of universal peace and happiness on Earth.

“Am I to understand, then,” said I, “that a condition of perfect happiness prevails on Mars?”

“Unhappiness is considered a disease with us,” Almos rejoined. “It is heard of, but very rarely, and is treated as a serious malady. But you will understand these things better as you gradually become acquainted with the conditions here. You must remember that you are in the position of a man over fifteen hundred years in advance of his day.

“Having become convinced, through close observations, that the progress of Earth was identical with that of Mars, and that Earth, being the younger planet, was consequently following our lead, we anxiously watched for the discovery on Earth of the wonderful power that had been the means of bringing us into such close visual contact with you. When you discovered radium, we realized that this would eventually lead to the discovery of the higher power, but we feared that this might not be for hundreds of years.

“That communication was possible through the medium of radium and electricity, we were totally ignorant of. It was the responsive properties of radium in your instrument, however, that first attracted my attention while searching over Paris for an object I had previously been observing. Thereafter my interest in your progress was as great as your own, and every twenty-four hours, when the eastern hemisphere of Earth was turned toward Mars, I searched with the radioscope until I got the response of your instrument.

“I have kept my success in communicating with Earth a secret, as it involves an invention of mine which I have not yet made public, and of which I will now tell you. This invention is the radiphone, through which we are now conversing, and to which the diaphragm of your instrument responds, as it doubtless contains radium also. My entire life has been devoted to the development of Martian-Earthly communication, and this instrument has been the goal which I have striven to reach since boyhood, and yet its success in communicating with Earth came as a great surprise to me.”

So accustomed was I to hear the Martian speak of the most miraculous occurrences in an ordinary conversational tone, that the idea of there still remaining something on Mars to be discovered appeared a still greater wonder.

“We have made a most important discovery,” pursued Almos. “I say ‘we,’ as without the response of your instrument the action of a super-radium current on sound-waves would not have been discovered.”

"I feel that I can hardly share in the honors," I protested modestly. "Without the super-radium current from Mars, I would still be experimenting with the hope of finding a substitute for glass."

I now entered into a full account of the experiments I had conducted, describing how, quite accidentally, I had made a substance responsive to the waves from Mars. He was greatly amused upon hearing of my astonishment at finding that Martians resembled the people on Earth; and when I drew for him a verbal picture of the ferocious creatures the inhabitants of Mars were supposed to be, he laughed aloud.

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"We never suspected that the people of Earth did us such a great injustice," he said, his whole countenance lighting up with good humor. "I have several volumes here giving accounts of observations of Earth, some of them written eight hundred years ago. It would perhaps interest you to hear what the Martian conception of the inhabitants of Earth was at that time."

"Indeed it would," I exclaimed, with rising curiosity.

"Well then," rejoined Almos, bringing one of the books and turning over the leaves, while a curious smile still played about his mouth, "you must understand that this was written over a hundred years before super-radium was discovered, and at that time we had no means of observing Earth except through the telescope, which showed us the mountains, seas, and continents, much the same as your telescope must reveal the physical features of Mars. On the question of whether Earth is inhabited the author says:

"That this planet is inhabited we have no reason to doubt, as it is known to be enveloped in an atmosphere, and it is now a generally accepted theory that the changes noticed in its color throughout the year are the seasonal effects on vegetable matter existing on its surface.... What the inhabitants are like, however, we can only surmise, but a study of the conditions under which they live will help us to picture the wild amphibious creatures they must be. Their planet, more than half covered with water, and being so many millions of miles nearer the sun than we are, is almost continually enveloped in heavy clouds of vapor, which, unless they were half fish, must surely suffocate them. They doubtless seek the depths of water when these clouds of thick vapor arise. Upon emerging, however, they have to face such intense heat as none of us could tolerate a minute and live.... They are no doubt provided with steel-like skin to resist this temperature.... That they are of a fierce temperament there can be little doubt, as their atmosphere, which is twice the weight of ours, is so overcharged with electricity, owing to the heat and clouds of vapor, that violent storms are constantly breaking over them, doubtless killing thousands of them at a time and tending to make the natures of the survivors as fierce as the elements which surround them.... Their year is but half as long as ours, and this—impeding the laws of propagation, thus making impossible the higher order of mankind—would naturally have the effect of rendering their lives a short, reckless, and ferocious existence, full of unrestrained cruelty and passions...."

"And now," continued Almos, with a smile, after closing the volume, "you see there is no occasion for apologies from you."

"No," I answered, somewhat dryly.

“The fact is, my dear fellow,” said Almos, laughing and seeming to enjoy the situation immensely, “the entire solar system is pursuing the same path; what A thinks of B, B has already thought of A.”

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The failing light on my instrument at this moment gave warning of the passing of Mars out of wave contact, and we were obliged to bid each other good-bye, Almos promising important revelations on the morrow.

As I stood for a moment before my instrument, now wrapped in darkness, I was conscious of a strange feeling that, in bidding Almos adieu, I had also parted from another inhabitant of Mars. Though well aware that I had only seen and conversed with Almos, my mind, nevertheless, also reproduced the likeness of a young girl, wonderfully beautiful. I had first experienced this mental image immediately after my first conversation with Almos. At that time I had tried hard to put it from me as merely a delusion resulting from nervous tension. But I found that after each interview with Almos, the image became clearer and more definitely fixed in my mind, until now I firmly believed in the existence of this beautiful being on Mars, and, remarkable though it seemed, I could not deny my growing affection for her. I had not mentioned this mental image to Almos, as I felt convinced that he knew nothing of it, and therefore would be unable to help me in any way. Moreover, my training had taught me to seek a scientific reason for things which might appeal to the superstitious as weird and uncanny. I was therefore loath to speak of it to Almos, until I had proved beyond doubt that it was not an hallucination.

After I had spent many hours in vainly seeking a possible cause for this mysterious mental image, the realization that I was but the veriest infant in the wonderful achievements of our sister planet, finally decided me upon the wiser course of leaving such matters until I had become better acquainted with Martian inventions and scientific progress. I therefore looked forward to visiting this wonderful world with the greatest anticipation, and though I was entirely ignorant of how this stupendous and seemingly impossible feat should be accomplished, such was my faith in Almos' superior knowledge of science, that I did not, for a moment, doubt the possibility of such a thing. Little did I realize the fearful nature of the journey—the success of which was based entirely on theories—or I would have shrunk in horror from such an undertaking.

CHAPTER V.

The hazardous undertaking.

The greater part of the next day was spent in moving the rest of my belongings to my new quarters and in settling down there. Indeed, so occupied was I with this task, that the approach of darkness found me quite unprepared for wave contact with Mars. I had been obliged to take my instrument apart in order to allow the larger pieces of furniture to be brought into the room, and it required almost two hours to put it together again.

When at last all was in readiness and I had turned on the current, I found my Martian friend waiting for me.

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"This is to be the last of my narrative," he remarked, after we had greeted each other.

"What!" I ejaculated in amazement.

"You see, my dear fellow," continued Almos, "it was necessary for you to become gradually acquainted with the advanced contions on Mars, properly to understand them, and I have tried to school your mind accordingly. It is essential, however, for you to see these things, fully to appreciate the advancement of almost twenty centuries, and only thus can my highest ambition be realized."

"How is it possible?"

"When I have told you of several important ways in which life on Mars differs from that on Earth, you will more readily understand.

"I have said that unhappiness on Mars is almost unknown. It is only the presence of ill health that causes unhappiness. If the body can be kept in a condition of absolutely perfect health—and by that I mean something far beyond what is considered perfect health on Earth—then unhappiness is impossible. Its causes, sorrow, jealousy, envy, hatred, and discontent, are eliminated, and a normal condition of perfect immunity from wrong-doing and unhappiness exists.

"It has been discovered on Earth that crime is the result of a diseased brain, and with us this discovery, in time, developed the fact that wrong-doing, even in its minor phases, is the result of physical ill health. Maintain, then, a perfect state of bodily health in a community, and there is no wrong-doing and consequent unhappiness.

"The means of obtaining this bodily health was discovered on Mars, in the form of invisible light rays, almost six hundred years ago, and its discovery led to a complete transformation in social conditions, establishing perfect tranquillity and happiness upon the entire globe.

"Separate governments became intolerable and were abandoned when race distinction was forgotten, and the people of Mars became as one family, speaking one tongue. Friendship for one's neighbor was transmuted into love for one's brother. The pursuit of personal gain was replaced by a desire to work for the good of all, and now a keen individual sense of right and duty actuates the entire population, and is paramount in all things. Duties are performed without other compensation than that which the fulfillment of something well done brings.

"It was soon found that the remarkable regenerating properties of these rays perpetuated life and youth. Not only did they prevent sickness of any kind, but they rebuilt the tissues of the body as fast as they wore out, thus making the aging of the body impossible. A child therefore grows up to full manhood or womanhood and

remains in that state of the body's highest excellence. While the child is developing the rays stimulate his progress; anything beyond that would be decaying, a condition the rays prevent."

Accustomed though I had become to a long recital of the most marvelous accounts without interrupting, I could not suppress an exclamation of astonishment at the information that Martians enjoy everlasting life.

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Almos received my evident amazement with the quiet smile I had grown accustomed to observe upon such occasions, and, with a view of illustrating the point further, said:

“Although one’s actual age becomes a very unimportant matter when, instead of being limited to sixty or seventy years, it extends over hundreds of years, I can readily ascertain my age, from the fact that I was twenty years old at the time these wonderful rays were discovered. I have lived, then, about six hundred of Earth’s years, or three hundred Martian years.”

“Six hundred years!” I exclaimed, as I looked at the reflection of his handsome face; his eyes flashing, his cheeks aglow with ruddy health, his whole countenance animated with the full vigor of manhood.

“Of course, we do not know how long the effects of regenerating rays will make it possible to live,” pursued Almos, “but in theory, it would seem that by their daily use perfect health will be assured, and life itself will continue indefinitely.”

“And death become unknown on Mars!” I added, enthusiastically.

“Not quite unknown,” rejoined Almos. “For lives are sometimes lost in accidents. Instant death defies all our science, and will not be conquered. But in accidents, no matter how serious, where a spark of life remains, we can prevent that from escaping until the body is in a condition to take care of it.

“This is accomplished by a device known as a virator, which, though simple in construction, is the greatest marvel of the age. It consists of a dome, made of material similar to glass in appearance, but which differs from anything else known, in that it is absolutely atomless. This dome fits over the operating table, upon which the patient lies, with just sufficient room for two persons inside, and is kept at the temperature of the body. On its top is a small globe made of the same material, measuring but a few inches in diameter, which is connected with the large chamber below by a neck or passage about an inch wide. The patient is placed inside, and there operated upon. If life leaves the body, either during the operation or after, the spirit ascends through the narrow passage into the small globe above and is there retained, as it cannot pass through the material of which the walls of this chamber are constructed. The body is then kept continually bathed in the regenerating rays, which not only preserve it as if life were in it, but actually carry on the process of healing. This continues until the body is in a perfectly sound and healthy condition again, and well able to retain life.

“And now occurs the most wonderful of all. When everything is in readiness for the spirit to enter the body again, a strong flow of super-radium is sent through the top globe from an instrument attached. Passing through the small chamber and down the narrow passage, it reaches the body, and immediately changes to a return flow. This current is but momentary; the patient is seen to move, and the body is once more

quickened by the life spark. The flow of super-radium has conveyed the spirit of the patient from the small chamber above and released it in the body as it returned, in exactly the same manner as it does with light-waves or sound-waves."

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"Marvelous!" I gasped, though my mind could only slowly comprehend this almost miraculous achievement. With such vast scientific resources nothing seemed impossible to Martians.

Almos had stopped abruptly. A change came over him. His face paled and his lips set in a hard, determined expression. Instantly I felt my every faculty strain to the utmost, in response to the new character of this remarkable being.

Speaking slowly and deliberately, his keen eyes holding mine fascinated by a strange fire that seemed kindled within them, he said:

"A few words more and we have reached that point at which death may await the inhabitant of Earth who would proceed farther. A death that no scientific knowledge can avert. I have tried to school your mind, to the end that you may fully understand the nature of a desperate undertaking, never before attempted by any human being, which, if you wish to attempt, you must risk alone.

"Impelled by a motive that I cannot now explain, I have spanned the millions of miles of universe lying between us by a bridge of theories, which, should they prove realities, would enable you to see and live in another world. Should they prove untenable, however, no power on Earth or Mars can save you; in five hours all would be over. You must consider the possible consequences ere it be too late."

"Never!" I cried. "My dear Almos, I am too vitally interested; I have proceeded too far now to hesitate at any step toward such a goal. Explain your theories to me, and I will test them, even if it costs me my life, for Mars holds that which is dearer to me than life on Earth ever can be."

"Well, my brave fellow," said Almos, his voice softening, "you must follow me closely in all I tell you, and remember every word I say, for to-morrow I can be of no assistance to you. Alone you must undertake the journey."

I was glad Almos had not questioned me regarding the import of what I had said in the enthusiasm of the moment, for I could not help feeling now that I had acted unjustly in not confiding in him, at once, the facts regarding the mental image of the beautiful young girl whom I fully believed existed on Mars, and whose destiny, I was certain, was inextricably bound with mine. I now decided to do so on the first opportunity.

"I have explained to you how the spirit may be retained in the upper chamber of a virator after it has left the body," pursued Almos, "and as it is this apparatus we shall employ, I have but to describe the additions I have made to it to meet our requirements, and also my theories in connection with them.



“To the lower chamber or dome of a virator I have connected the receiving apparatus of a radioscope, first removing the image surface. This can be disconnected easily, and the projecting apparatus substituted, from which I have also removed the image surface. Thus we may have a free current of super-radium flowing from the radioscope to Earth and returning into the virator, and by substituting the projecting apparatus, we have a current flowing from the virator to Earth and returning into the receiving apparatus.

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"This is exactly the condition that exists in a virator in ordinary use with these exceptions: the current of super-radium is made to flow either in or out of the bottom chamber, as well as the top; instead of being local, the current is between Earth and Mars, and consequently much more powerful. The currents from both the top and bottom chambers are controlled by clockwork which I have devised for that purpose, and in place of an operating table in the virator I have substituted a couch.

"And now I enjoin you to summon all your courage, for in this undertaking nothing but nerves of steel will carry you safely through."

"I shall faithfully carry out your instructions, Almos," I responded, trying to appear perfectly calm, though my being fifteen hundred years behind Martian times never seemed so much a handicap as now.

"Follow me, then, word for word," resumed Almos. "Understand all I say, for in the error of a second, the misconception of a word, the hesitancy of a moment, there is death!

"To-morrow, when that part of the Earth's surface on which Paris is situated appears, I shall attach the receiving apparatus of the radioscope to the lower chamber of the virator, so that the return current from Earth will flow into it. I shall then set the clockwork to turn on the current of super-radium in half an hour. In that time my body must be in a condition to receive your spirit."

I could not suppress a shudder upon hearing this, but I deemed it best not to interrupt Almos.

"Filling a cone with the required amount of chloroform, I shall enter the virator, and, reclining upon the couch, place the cone over my mouth and nose. In a few minutes my spirit will have passed into the upper chamber.

"By experimenting, I have found that regenerating rays are contained in super-radium. In fact, my theory is that the regenerating rays and the invisible rays of super-radium are synonymous. Such being the case, when the current of super-radium is turned on by the clockwork, it will flow to Earth and, returning, enter the virator and restore my body to a normal condition, freeing it from the fumes of chloroform and making it capable of receiving its new life.

"The glow of your instrument, in response to the super-radium current, will warn you that this has taken place, and you must then prepare yourself for departure. You will not observe any image, owing to my having removed the lenses of the radioscope, but your instrument will glow in response to the current.

"Having prepared a cone of chloroform, you must move a couch directly in front of your instrument, so that upon lying down your body will obscure the rays from it. You will

thus know that you are in the path of the super-radium current; this is of the greatest importance as, otherwise, your spirit would undoubtedly escape upon leaving the body and be lost forever.

“After taking every possible precaution to safeguard against any movement of the body, place the cone securely over your mouth and nose. Within a short time your spirit will leave the body and will instantly be caught up by the super-radium current, on its return flow to Mars. Entering the receiving apparatus and thus passing into the virator, the flow will come into direct contact with my body, into which it will discharge your spirit.”

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Almos stopped abruptly, consternation written on his face. A moment later, I realized the cause—the two planets were passing out of wave contact. At such a critical moment nothing could be more unfortunate, and I was about hastily to suggest a postponement, when Almos exclaimed: “It is all right!—I shall leave——”

Wave contact ceased before he had time to finish the sentence, and I was left standing before the instrument in a state of irresolution.

How could I arrive on Mars totally unprepared to meet the conditions? Upon my regaining consciousness these might present themselves in the most urgent form, demanding immediate attention and a thorough knowledge of Martian sciences. Almos’ life, indeed, might depend upon just such a condition.

Undetermined upon the course I should pursue the next day, my mind filled with the most formidable fancies of so strange an undertaking, I at last sought repose, hoping that with the morrow would come clearer thought.

CHAPTER VI.

“As others see us.”

The next morning found me resolved to make the journey to Mars at any cost. That Almos had intended to say he would leave further instructions, I had no doubt. The instructions would probably be written, and placed where I would immediately see them upon regaining consciousness. In any event, I argued, if, at the usual hour of Martian contact, my instrument should glow in response to super-radium, it would clearly be my duty to fulfil my part of the agreement, for the glow would be proof that Almos had fulfilled his and that his spirit had passed into the upper chamber of the virator.

I had purchased the necessary articles for my remarkable journey, and had taken the precaution to fasten a notice outside my door to the effect that I would be out during the evening. I could not restrain a grim smile at the thought of the uncanny literal truth in this announcement.

These things done I fell to speculating upon what would be my experience on Mars if, indeed, I ever reached that planet. For the first hours, try as I would to check it, there was, at times, a doubt as to the outcome of this wild soul-adventure. But, strange as it may appear, although I fully realized the danger attending such an undertaking, the success of which was based entirely on theories, it did not, in any way, act as a deterrent. So great was the prize to be attained, that the risk of life seemed unimportant. Indeed, the first step of the journey to Mars was to take my life, as we understand the term on Earth, and, having become reconciled to this, I was not sensible of any danger beyond. So absorbed was I in these thoughts, that the time passed

without my realizing it, and only the fading daylight warned me of the near approach of the hour of Martian contact.

I now made a complete examination of all the batteries and coils of my instrument, as failure in any of these might result most seriously. Finding all to be in perfect working order, I next proceeded to arrange my couch so as to bring it directly between the instrument and the window. Having thus completed my preparations, possessed by conflicting emotions, I now waited for the appearance of Mars.

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Early in the day I had arranged my letters and private papers so that in the event of the worst happening, they could be readily packed, and it now occurred to me that it would be only proper to leave a word of explanation with them. I therefore hastily penned a note to a cousin living in England—my nearest relative—briefly explaining my discovery of the Martian super-radium current, and also the character of the adventure in which I was about to participate. This note I placed with my papers.

Returning to the instrument, I discovered that Mars was already visible. Quickly turning on the current and finding no responsive glow, I knew that Almos was already making the preparations he had described to me. He had said that within half an hour the clockwork would turn on the current, and the glow of my instrument would be the signal for my departure.

No time was to be lost. Securely fastening the door of my room, I prepared the cone of chloroform and extinguished the light, in order not to excite the suspicion of a chance caller during the evening.

I now sat on the couch awaiting with anxiety the current of super-radium that would convey me to the far world of my dreams. Minutes seemed like hours, as I sat in the darkness, with every nerve strained to its uttermost, awaiting Death. What if Death should refuse to release me! Millions have been wrapped in Death's cold arms, but no mortal has returned to give accounting.

What was that!—A blinding flash made me instantly shield my eyes. Ah! The glow at last! But such was its dazzling brilliancy that I could not stand the glare. I had been accustomed to see the glow gradually creep up the surface of the instrument, slowly growing brighter as the rim of the star appeared above the window casement, but this time Mars had risen to full view before the current was turned on by the clockwork. This was ample proof that everything had happened as Almos had planned. It was now my turn to act and I must not hesitate. Stretching myself on the couch so that I came into full contact with the current of super-radium, I seized the cone saturated with chloroform, and fastened it securely over my mouth and nose.

A few moments of a slightly suffocating sensation, then a long, long fall, gradual at first, then quicker, quicker—

* * * * *

With a feeling of exhilaration, such as I had never before experienced, I opened my eyes and sprang to my feet. My brain was perfectly clear, and so active that my mind utterly failed to keep pace with the multitude of thoughts that were crowded upon it—thoughts that were strange to my mind, yet perfectly familiar to my brain, if this paradoxical statement may stand. It seemed as if my mind stood, apart and marveled

at the remarkable activity and knowledge possessed by the brain—of which knowledge my mind was entirely ignorant.

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I was in another world, millions of miles away from Earth. My mind realized that something little short of a miracle had happened, and yet I felt absolutely familiar with all the objects about me. The glass-like walls that surrounded me, reaching up and forming a dome several feet above my head; the narrow passage in the center of the dome (just as the neck of a bottle would appear if viewed from inside), through which the spirit of Almos had passed to the chamber above; all these were wonderfully familiar to me.

I was in the virator, but it was uncomfortable to remain inside, as the air was oppressively warm. Moreover, dictated my brain, I must prepare the virator for my return within five hours, and my hand instinctively grasped a lever in the wall of the apparatus. A door opened and I stepped out, carefully closing it behind me. Again I was astonished at my wonderful familiarity with everything. If I had lived on Mars all my life, I could not have had a more intimate knowledge of my surroundings. I seemed to know exactly how to proceed, and after attending to several important details, and carefully noting the temperature of the virator on a thermometer placed for that purpose, I consulted a chronometer to ascertain how long it would be safe for me to remain on Mars. I found that, allowing a half-hour for the process of arrival and the same for departure, I had just five hours.

My mind, at first stunned by the new and strange conditions to which it was subjected, now gradually began to realize its remarkable position in relation to the brain.

That the mind and the spirit are one, or so closely related as to be indistinguishable and inseparable, was now beyond doubt, as I was keenly aware of all that had happened to me on Earth, showing that my mind not only existed, but also possessed the same faculty of thought in Almos' body as it did in mine while on Earth. Here was a positive proof, in fact a demonstration, of the theory advanced by some scientists, that the mind is separate and distinct from the brain.

But the gulf that lies between life and death remained as wide as ever. Death was still shrouded in mystery, for my mind knew nothing from the moment it left the body on Earth, until it awakened in the body on Mars. Flesh and blood, then, were essential to the mind's existence. Mind or spirit must have expression through some form. Although man may achieve much by scientific advancement, that to which he has progressed is but as a grain of sand in the desert, to the wonders that surround him. Science shall never penetrate the mystery of those things that are withheld from him.

The brain of which my mind now took control, acted merely as the material handle by which the machinery of the body was operated, thus converting thoughts into actions. But although my mind, having by now become perfectly familiar with the strange conditions, was able to record new impressions on the brain, there still existed the impression of Almos' thoughts. It resembled a book which my mind could instantly refer

to and be guided by, and thus was I in possession of a perfect knowledge of Mars, its people, and its language.

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I now realized that my first actions, upon becoming conscious, had simply been carrying out the instructions Almos had left for me. Strange to the conditions in those first few minutes, I had instinctively done what the brain dictated. In this remarkable way had Almos completed the instructions he was about to give me when interrupted by the cessation of wave contact.

Having thus arrived at what I felt to be the true relation of my mind with Almos' body, I now turned my attention to the objects surrounding me.

I stood in a room about the size of my laboratory on Earth. There were no windows to admit light, but the ceiling, which was fully twenty feet high, emitted a beautifully diffused white light, which filled every corner of the room, leaving absolutely no shadows. Its effect was that of daylight, and so closely did it resemble the sky, that, had I not been supplied with Almos' knowledge of Martian science, I would have naturally supposed that there was no ceiling to the room. Immediately upon the question coming into my mind, however, I became aware that the ceiling was coated with a composition, one of the component parts of which was radium in a highly developed state. Its action upon the other elements that composed this substance resulted in a perpetual light without heat, which was equal in every way to daylight.

The tourist, finding himself in a new country, has but one thought, one ambition, that of seeing all he can; yet, strange to say, although a whole new world lay before me, my first thought was of Mother Earth. A desire to view my old habitat as Martians see it seemed almost irresistible.

To touch the radioscope that was trained on Earth, would result in an instant change taking place in my body as it lay in the laboratory, and this would be disastrous. It was only the regenerating properties of the super-radium current that kept it in a state acceptable to my return, and the delicate mechanism of this instrument was regulated so as to keep the current exactly in position, as long as that part of the Earth's surface was exposed to Mars. To interfere then with this current, for a moment, would mean certain death.

Immediately I became conscious of the presence of another instrument, which was in a room adjoining, and, feeling absolutely familiar with every inch of the way, I proceeded thence. The room was a small one, just large enough, indeed, to operate the radioscope, which was exactly the same as the one in the room I had just quitted.

With a perfect knowledge of the mechanism of the instrument, I was soon at work adjusting the projecting and receiving apparatus. An ordinary telescope was attached to the huge tube of the radioscope, and with Almos' dexterity I soon located Earth through it, thus sighting the radioscope for that planet.

I had now but to turn on the current to see the people on Earth and watch their doings, as had done Martians for hundreds of years, but, with my hand on the lever that controlled the current, I paused.

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The sight of Earth, as it appeared through the telescope, was too beautiful to pass by with a mere glance. Half illuminated, owing to the greater distance of Mars from the sun and the position of the planets at that time, Earth appeared about the size the moon looks to the naked eye. But what a wonderful sight! Bathed in sunlight lay the eastern half of the continents of North and South America, faintly outlined by the pale blue of the western portion of the Atlantic Ocean. So familiar was I with the appearance of these two great continents as drawn in an atlas, that I had difficulty in recognizing them as they now appeared. Mexico and Central America seemed almost as broad as that part of the United States from San Francisco to Washington; the whole tapering down from Canada to Cape Horn almost in the shape of a cone.

Aeronauts passing over a lake or river are able to see the bottom, owing to their altitude; this was undoubtedly the explanation of the strange appearance of the continents of North and South America. On account of the enormous distance I was away from Earth, the shallow waters appeared as land, obliterating completely the familiar coast line, and only the extreme depth of an ocean showed a pale blue.

Night covered Europe and Africa, which would otherwise have been visible to me, and the shadow of darkness was steadily creeping across the Atlantic Ocean, as the Earth revolved upon its axis. I could not suppress a shudder at the thought that I must cover that enormous distance ere it revolved too far.

I now moved the lever that controlled the current, and at once the lens in the receiving apparatus shone with a brilliant dark blue color. The current of super-radium had reached Earth and returned in less than a second, and I saw, beautifully pictured before me, an expanse of ocean with waves tumbling and tossing so near me that it seemed as if I were but a few feet above them.

By diminishing the current I found that the image on the lens grew smaller, the effect being exactly the same as that from a balloon rising. The picture at first appeared slanting at an angle of about thirty degrees, owing to the curvature of the Earth, but by manipulating a small lever close at hand that operated a mirror in the radioscope, this defect was corrected.

After searching about with the current, I at last came upon a large steamer, evidently an ocean liner. Throwing huge billows aside in clouds of white spray as she cut through the water, she made a beautiful sight, and it was with difficulty that I kept her in the field of vision. As I appeared to be looking straight down upon her decks, it was evident that she was about in the center of the Earth's surface exposed to Mars.

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I now moved the current in a westerly direction, travelling at what would be a terrific speed on Earth, until I came to land. Not recognizing the small coast town that first came in view, I moved up the coast in a northerly direction, diminishing the current until I could see a large stretch of country. Toward the northwest a large city appeared, which I immediately recognized as Washington. Directing the instrument to that city, I increased the current until the people on the streets measured two or three feet on the lens of my instrument. Here I found that the curvature of the Earth resulted in my looking down obliquely at the objects on its surface, but not at a sufficient angle to see the faces of those who passed across my lens.

But now I became aware of a strange condition that, owing to the motion of the liner at sea, had escaped my notice before. Although I was looking at the people passing before one of the large government buildings in Washington, I had to keep regulating the instrument in order to keep this building in view. Moreover, I discovered that I had to regulate it as fast as I had done with the ocean liner. In fact, obviously the liner's speed mattered but little; it was the rate at which the Earth was revolving upon its axis and journeying around the sun with which I had to contend. Through the telescope this was not discernible, but now that I had come into such close visual contact with the Earth's surface, I realized the terrific speed with which it rushed through space. Hundreds of miles a minute was the speed my instrument had to be regulated to, in order to keep an object on Earth in view—the motion of the liner was insignificant!

Moving the current eastward over the Atlantic Ocean, I discovered that darkness in no way hindered my view of objects on Earth's surface. The reproduction on the lens, however, presented quite a different appearance to that which I had witnessed while observing the part of Earth illuminated by the sun. The beautiful colors which contributed so much realism to the picture were now replaced by a sombre gray tone, greatly resembling a photograph in appearance.

So absorbed had I become in all that this wonderful instrument revealed to me of the different phases of life on Earth, that I forgot all else, until, with a start, I realized that someone was moving about in the large room which contained the virator that I had recently left. I was filled with apprehension. Who could it be? And what was the reason of this unexpected visit? Almos had not warned me against intrusion of any kind, and I felt that to meet and converse with a Martian, thus unprepared, would be impossible. In that room, however, were the instruments that held two lives within their delicate mechanism, and even now they might have been tampered with enough to cause the most serious consequences. I must not hesitate a moment longer. Hastening down the passage that led to the larger room, I pushed aside the heavy portieres and found myself in the presence of a Martian.

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CHAPTER VII.

The melody of flowers and Zarliah.

My visitor appeared to be a young man of about twenty-five, tall, handsome, broad-shouldered, and fair-complexioned, with that frank and open countenance which claims the friendship of all men. Without a moment's hesitation he stepped forward with outstretched hand and, in the composite language of Mars, said:

"Good-evening, Almos. I am afraid this is an intrusion. I have interrupted your studies, I know, but the fact is—"

"Not at all, my dear Reon!" I found myself replying. "I am glad to see you at any time, and now, how can I be of service to you?"

Although I answered him in the composite language, and in a manner that did not excite the slightest suspicion, I did so unconsciously. In spite of the quandary in which I found myself upon coming face to face with an inhabitant of Mars, I outwardly remained perfectly calm, nor did it require any effort to appear so. The brain, in such an emergency, followed instinctively its natural habit. It was as if another man had spoken from within me, one who was perfectly acquainted with the visitor and with Martian affairs. I found, however, when the surprise of the first few moments had passed, that my mind could take control whenever it exerted itself to do so. Thus I was able to say whatever I wished, or, if necessity demanded, draw upon Almos' knowledge for information. Replies came with the ease that Almos himself would have experienced in answering questions, and I soon found that, with discretion, there was no danger of my visitor suspecting the remarkable change of personality in his friend.

I learned that Reon had come with a message from Sarraccus, one of Mars' greatest scientists, who was about to give a demonstration of his latest invention, a remarkable musical instrument called the lumaharp. A recognized authority on anything of a scientific nature, Almos' counsel was sought, and it was desired that he should be present at the recital of this wonderful instrument.

Hastily ascertaining the time, I found that I had only two hours in which it would be safe to remain on Mars. So interested had I been in my observations of Earth, that the time had passed without my being aware of the narrow margin I had left myself in which to see the planet. I, however, informed my visitor that I would be ready to accompany him in a few minutes, and with all haste, prepared myself for this new undertaking.

I realized that once having left the observatory and stepped into a new and strange world, many things might happen to prevent me returning within two hours. But besides feeling that I was in duty bound to Almos to attend this demonstration, I also felt that the risks I had taken were too great to go unrewarded by even a glimpse into the life of this

wonderful planet. The future, too, held that element of uncertainty which made me feel that I might pay dearly for the five hours spent in another world. If the return current failed to do what was expected of it, if I had erred in my calculation of the time I could remain on Mars, or if my room had been broken into and my body moved, the results would be disastrous.

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I must attend this demonstration at any cost, but I would explain to my host that it was most urgently necessary to return to the observatory within two hours. I was now ready for the strange journey, and, approaching my visitor, I said:

“And now, Reon, I will accompany you, but there is no time to be lost, as an experiment I am conducting with one of these instruments demands my attention in two hours.”

I held back the portieres as Reon passed out, and following him down a short passage, we stepped out upon a wide balcony constructed of white marble.

A wonderful sight met my astonished gaze. It was a summer evening, and the dome of the heavens seemed ablaze with the light of myriads of diamonds, so countless were the stars to be seen and so brilliant did they appear in this rarefied atmosphere. Below me stretched out what appeared to be a magnificent park, with white marble buildings scattered here and there, while floating easily in the air were hundreds of small canoe-like airships, containing the inhabitants of this fairyland, reclining on cushions and enjoying sailing through the cool night air. As the question of buoyancy of these remarkable airships arose in my mind, I immediately became aware that they were sustained, in the air by a metal which was used in their construction that was repellent to the surface of Mars. It had been discovered by the Martians that their planet, like a magnet, had both the power of attracting and repelling. The north and south poles were found to be the repelling poles of this immense magnetic sphere. Nothing could exist on these poles that was not a fixture to the planet's surface, consequently no snow or ice existed at the poles themselves. Many explorers' lives had been lost before this discovery was made; those who succeeded in reaching the pole having made the discovery too late to save themselves from being hurled off the planet into space. But so small was the surface of this repelling pole that it was argued that the pole must run through the center of the planet, to make it equal in mass to the attracting force which covered the rest of the surface.

Working on this theory, although it was impossible to reach the pole itself without danger of being hurled off the planet, excavations were made as near it as possible, and a tunnel was run under the surface until the desired point was reached. A change from rock to ore was encountered, with evidences of its having been subjected to intense heat, and upon penetrating farther, pure metal was discovered. This strange metal, unlike any other metal known to the Martians, was found to possess a powerful repelling force. And when it was brought to the surface, it was discovered that it not only retained its repelling force, as a lodestone retains its attracting power, but that this same force was greatly increased, doubtless owing to the close proximity of an unfriendly element in the surface of the planet away from the pole. The repelling force of this metal was found to be ten times as great as the specific gravity of a piece of iron of relative proportions, and by its use in the construction of airships, the problem of aerial navigation on Mars had been solved.

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Almos' knowledge of such matters made me instantly aware of all this the moment the question of buoyancy presented itself in my mind, but, although I could not help marveling at the ingenuity of this wonderful people, I outwardly preserved the calm demeanor which Almos' strong personality had made a characteristic. Indeed, Reon, who had been preparing an aeroid for our use—such was the Martian name for these airships—was quite unaware of my astonishment, and it was plain that with the exercise of due care, when I spoke without the prompting of Almos' knowledge, there was no likelihood of anyone's having a suspicion of my true personality.

The aeroid in which we were going to make our journey differed in appearance considerably from those which I saw floating about us. Cigar-shaped, with windows in its sides and roof like a steamer's portholes, it more nearly resembled a submarine boat than an airship, as it rested on a platform built in the side of the balcony for the purpose. Yet such was the repelling force of this wonderful metal which the Martians had discovered, and which I found was attached in two or more strips to the bottom of the aeroids, that the matter of weight in their construction was of little importance. While resting on the ground these strips were encased in a material that was a non-conductor, thus neutralizing the repelling force. In order to raise the car the casing was merely drawn back by means of a controlling lever, until enough of the metal was exposed to the surface of Mars to cause the repelling force to lift the aeroid, and by preserving this exposure, any desired height could thus be attained.

The entire design of this aeroid indicated that it was built to attain great speed, and yet as I stepped into it through a door that closed flush with the rounded sides, I was astonished at seeing no traces of machinery. Instantly I became aware of the extraordinary means of propulsion, however, and so simple, yet so effective, was it, that I could not restrain a cry of admiration at this new evidence of scientific progress.

Atmospheric pressure, instead of retarding speed, was employed to produce it. Under the floor of the car and occupying the entire rear half, was a chamber of steel, five or six feet broad at one end, and tapering down with the sides of the aeroid until it reached the stern, where it ended in an opening one inch in diameter. By a chemical process the air in the chamber was exhausted, instantly causing a vacuum. Immediately the air outside the car rushed in through the small opening at the rear end, with such great force as to cause a concussion against the forward and broad end of the chamber, thus driving the aeroid ahead. So quick was this action that, when going at great speed, more than one hundred exhaustions would occur in a minute. Simple though this means of propulsion was, gravity having been overcome and the long pointed body of the aeroid offering little resistance, the speed thus attained was remarkable.

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Taking his position at the forward end, where a window in the top of the car afforded a view ahead, Reon now moved a lever at his side and we rose until clear of the observatory building. We then commenced to glide along without either vibration or sound. Slowly we made our way through the many small aeroids that floated about us, and a soft light, coming from a canopy containing the substance used to illuminate the observatory, clearly revealed the occupants to me, as we passed close by them. I now noticed that the women were wonderfully beautiful—beauty that was possible only where sickness had been unknown for hundreds of years.

Leaving this happy gathering, we passed over what appeared to be a river about a mile broad, whose banks rose perpendicularly a hundred feet or more from the water. These were illuminated with lights, placed every hundred yards or so, giving it the appearance of a broad city street stretching as far as the eye could see. At once it occurred to me that this was one of the wonderful canals, visible even from Earth, and as we passed over it I observed another canal, equal in proportions, running parallel. Although both were on level ground, their waters were flowing rapidly in different directions. What new wonder was this!

Into this second canal our aeroid now turned, sinking slowly until within thirty feet from the surface. Gradually our speed increased until the lights along the banks formed one long unbroken line. One hundred miles a minute we sped along, and yet without the least vibration or sound. At such a speed it was possible to encircle Mars in seventy minutes, almost, I thought, as rapidly as could Puck in “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” who boasted of putting a girdle round the Earth in forty minutes.

On we flew down the walled-in track, passing numerous other canals equally as broad, flowing into it, until within ten minutes a faint gray light appeared. It was daylight, and in a few moments sunlight crowned the banks on either side of us. Even as I looked the sun itself appeared, and in the space of fifty seconds it was high in the heavens. In fifteen minutes we had covered almost a quarter of the globe, and now it was the middle of the afternoon.

The importance of having speedways in which to confine aeroids, travelling at the terrific velocity of one hundred miles a minute, was obvious, and what could be better adapted to the purpose than these magnificent waterways, which completely cover the surface of the planet with such geometrical exactness, that they have always been a source of great wonder to astronomers on Earth. Thousands and thousands of years old, the method of constructing this gigantic system of canals remains enshrouded in the same mystery to the Martians, as that which surrounds the building of the pyramids in Egypt.

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I was now made aware of another valuable use to which the canals were put, in fact a most important adjunct to the operation of an aerenoid. The checking of such terrific speed would be impossible, were it not for the water in these canals. We had covered several hundred miles without propulsion, and our speed had not decreased perceptibly, when, moving a lever at his side, Reon turned the aerenoid slightly downward. In an instant we were plunging along the surface of the water, sending high into the air great clouds of spray, which formed snow-white banks on either side of the wake, and made a most remarkable picture. I now realized why this high-speed aerenoid resembled a submarine boat in appearance.

Gradually our speed was reduced until, moving at not more than a mile a minute, we gently left the surface of the water and proceeded down several branch canals. At last we slowly rose above the top of the canal banks. Higher and higher we ascended until we were about a thousand feet in the air, and then proceeded at a greatly reduced speed.

A veritable fairyland lay beneath us. Stretching as far as the eye could reach lay a landscape of pink and green, dotted with white marble buildings of magnificent architecture. Narrow paths, shaded by trees, could be seen winding in and out over rustic bridges and beside sparkling brooks. But nowhere did there appear either cities or towns—not even a road was there to indicate a volume of traffic in any particular direction.

No small aerenoids were to be seen floating about, and as the air in our car was now very close, I realized that in consequence of the light atmosphere of Mars, the sun's direct rays gave great heat. It was evidently the custom for Martians to remain as much as possible under cover in the daytime.

Opening the door of the aerenoid to obtain a fresh supply of air, I was at once struck with the remarkable appearance of the sky, which was intensely blue in color, but of such a dark shade as to appear almost black. It presented all the appearance of night, so many stars were visible and so brightly did they shine, while the sun blazed forth with such brilliancy from the surrounding blackness, that it was impossible to look westward without shading the eyes. I now appreciated the enormous advantage of having an atmosphere as dense as Earth's, which diffused the light to a much more comfortable extent. But the appearance of the Martian sky was magnificent, and I stood lost in admiration until, with a hardly perceptible shock, I discovered that we had come to rest upon a ledge which projected from the circular balcony of a most palatial building.

Jumping out, I moored the aerenoid by means of ropes that were attached to the balcony for that purpose. I was aware that this was my duty upon landing, and when I had made everything secure, Reon left his place at the levers and joined me.

There were numerous other aerenoids moored to the balcony, some of the high-speed class similar to ours, and a few of the lighter class resembling rowboats. The balcony was entirely deserted, however, and it was evident that all were inside listening to the recital of the lumaharp.

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As we proceeded across the broad balcony, I was astonished to discover that the outside walls of this building were entirely covered with beautifully carved reliefs, representing the inventions of Sarraccus. Had it been daylight at the observatory, I would have noticed that it, too, was decorated with the wonders of other worlds discovered by Almos. The mountains on Earth, the seas, clouds, volcanoes, and ships; these and many other objects that do not exist on Mars, were carved with remarkable faithfulness upon the walls of the observatory, and were looked upon by Martians as the wonders of a strange world.

As at the observatory, the doorway was hung with heavy portieres, and, passing through these, we found ourselves in what appeared to be an immense palm garden, in which Martians were to be seen sitting in groups, or walking about admiring the plants and flowers. Sunlight streamed in through the roof, the covering of which had been rolled back, and I became aware that it was in such places as this that the Martians were to be found during the heat of the day.

Rain being unknown, it was necessary to grow the more delicate plants where they might be watered regularly and sheltered from the heat of the midday sun, and also from the hot winds that often came at this season. I now realized that the trees that I had noticed were to be found only upon the banks of streams and lakes, and that, with the exception of the green these afforded, Mars was entirely covered with a small and hardy pink flower of the *antennaria* family, which flourishes in a dry and sandy soil.

Reon now left me, promising to return within an hour, in order that I might reach the observatory in due time. As I walked slowly among the tall palms, taking a path here and there at random and admiring the beautiful beds of flowers, some of which I recognized as flowers also indigenous to Earth, I noticed that all whom I met greeted me in the most cordial way, some pausing to say a few words. I saw the importance of saying whatever was prompted by the first appearance of the individual, and I found that I could thus join in a most enjoyable conversation with these charming people, with a knowledge of their names and the matters of interest to them. All were very enthusiastic about the lumaharp, and I anxiously awaited another number upon this wonderful instrument.

As the paths I turned down were all strange to me, I judged that Almos was not familiar with the interior of this particular building, but as there were many gardens nearer the observatory, he would have no reason to visit this one, except on an occasion of this kind.

Not realizing the enormous size of the building, I had wandered far from the entrance at which I was to meet Reon, and had decided to ask to be directed back, when suddenly I stopped, rooted to the ground, every nerve straining to catch a faint melodious sound that seemed to fill the air. No music on Earth could equal it! Before me arose a vision of beautiful flowers—flowers that had thoughts as beautiful as themselves, and that

through the genius of a man poured forth their souls in a volume of melody, so beautiful as to beggar description.

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As Almos was perfectly familiar with this remarkable invention, a gradual comprehension of the wonderful genius of Sarraccus, its inventor, came to me. Tall, calm, and of dignified bearing; a man of great learning, but of few words; Sarraccus had won the love and admiration of all by his discovery of the regenerating rays that had given the people of Mars perpetual life and health. He it was who had discovered super-radium, and this wonderful power had, in time, been used by others until many important inventions had developed from it, such as the virator, the radioscope, the radiphone, illumination without expenditure of power or material, and several minor inventions, all of which, however, contributed greatly to the comfort and advancement of this great people.

The aeroid, one of his most important inventions, had made it possible to reach any part of the globe within an hour, and this, coming at the time of the great change in the social conditions on Mars, had expedited the movement to a wonderful extent by bringing the inhabitants of every quarter of the globe into daily contact with one another. So easy and rapid was this means of transit through the air, that cities and towns were soon abolished, and in the process of time, Mars attained the ideal, and became a World Beautiful—the magnificent estate of one large family.

And now Sarraccus had given the flowers a voice to sing of their beauty. In the mind of this great genius was conceived the idea that inasmuch as there is ineffable beauty to the eye in the soft colors and shades of a flower—beauty too rare for the hand of man to reproduce—there must also be a corresponding sweetness of sound or vibration, if it were possible to transform its beauty into sound. Light-waves, he reasoned, varying according to the color and shade of the object, might be changed into sound-waves, if an instrument were made sensitive enough to vibrate in response to these extremely delicate undulations of light. The vibrations would then vary in accordance with the light-waves, and a harmony of sound, corresponding in sweetness to the beauty of the flower, would result.

After many unsuccessful trials, Sarraccus found a material that, in the form of a fine wire, twenty or thirty feet in length, vibrated in response to light of a certain color, as a wire in a piano or harp will often be attuned sympathetically to a certain note in the human voice, and will vibrate whenever that note is reached. The vibrations of this wire in response to light, however, were almost imperceptible, and it was only upon testing with a highly sensitive instrument that they were discovered. Several wires were then made of different thickness, and each was found to have a sympathetic vibration to a light of a certain color. The quantity of wires was then increased to represent every possible shade of color, and when these were stretched between two large drums, a faint sound was detected. The drums were then enclosed in chambers that led into large horns, and thus the sounds caused by the delicate vibrations of the wires, though as soft as the sighing of the wind, were diffused and augmented so as to reach into every corner of the large building. Enclosed in a dark room, the wires occupied the position of a plate in a camera, a large lens being adjusted in the wall opposite them.

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The image of a flower, illuminated by the sun's light, was now thrown upon the wires, and a marvelous melody of sound resulted. Each delicate shade of color in the flower found a sympathetic wire which vibrated in response to it, and the harmony produced by all in chorus was the ineffably sweet song of Nature. As Nature expressed its dreams of beauty in flowers, which in their simplicity and radiance defy the hand of man to equal, so did the melody of these flowers far surpass anything that the ear of man had ever before heard. Did not the lilies of the field receive the tribute of Christ? What wonderfully effective yet simple truth would not He have heard in this surpassing melody? As different flowers were placed before the instrument, so would the music change; often sad and appealing as a whispered prayer, it would change again to a joyous triumphal chorus, full of the gladness of life and beauty.

For a moment I stood spellbound, then by some irresistible, mystic power I was drawn to it; and eagerly seeking the paths that led in the direction of the sound, I became aware that as I gradually understood and sympathized with this compelling cry of Nature, so the melody seemed to become my every hope. Ambition, love, aspiration, and passion surged through that grand symphony. It was heard and understood by the soul, as other music ministers to the ear, and as I eagerly listened I was sensible of a yearning for a love—a love that was soon forgotten, and I knew it to be mine. In the wonders of this new world I had forgotten the love that, while on Earth, I had been ready to risk my life for, and now it was the eleventh hour, and who could say whether I should ever return to this paradise?

Seeing a little rustic arbor, and being overcome with the excess of emotion and beauty, I turned my steps thither to rest and think. Situated in a shaded corner of the building, the interior of the arbor was almost in darkness, and I felt that here I would be alone and unobserved. Every instant I grew more sad at heart over the time which I now felt had been wasted, and as the melody died away, my head sank on my arms, as I rested them upon the table before me. My Earth-tuned soul seemed still to linger under the spell of the enchanted music.

I had remained thus but a few moments when I became conscious of a hand softly laid upon my shoulder, and a voice, as sweet and gentle as the melody that had just died away, murmured, "Almos, poor Almos!"

The touch had a healing in it and was as gentle as the fall of snow. Raising my head I started up, giving utterance to the name that instinctively came to my lips—"Zarlah!" It was as if another man had spoken the name while I stood entranced with the small soft hand held a prisoner in both mine, gazing down upon the beautiful being whose image I had so often seen pictured in my mind. It was Zarlah!

I knew, now, that this beauteous image had not been an hallucination, and by what miracle it had all happened I cared not. Enough that this beautiful, radiant woman

actually existed, and in one quick bound of the heart, I realized my all-consuming, deathless love for her.

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What I might have indiscreetly said in the great emotions of those first moments, I know not, but before I could give utterance to further words, Almos' calm demeanor had asserted itself, and in a voice that gave no evidence of how I was torn within, I said:

"How is it, Zarah, that you find time from your studies to linger here?"

"My studies have brought me here," she answered, gently withdrawing her hand and rising as if to go. Then quickly lifting her shining eyes to mine, in a playfully reproachful tone, she said, "And have you no experiments at the observatory that demand your attention that you can afford to linger here, Almos?"

How beautiful she looked as she stood before me thus! Surely I could not hope for a better time than now to tell her all that was in my heart. There was uncertainty in the future—perhaps I would never again be given the opportunity to speak that with which my soul burned.

Placing a hand lightly on her shoulder and looking down into her wonderful eyes, I said tenderly, "The reason I have lingered here, Zarah, was to think of you."

A tremor of her slight form was the only response I received for some seconds that seemed hours to me, then, with her eyes turned away so I could not read in them my fate, she murmured, "Did you not come to hear the wonderful instrument by which Sarraccus gives the flowers a voice?"

"I did," I answered passionately, "and its sweet melody whispered only of you—the radiant rose of the spheres. It told me of the yearning in my heart—it sang of your great beauty, and of my unspeakable love for you, and sobbed at the time I have wasted, a fortune of golden moments; then, as it died away, it led me to you. Is not this melody of flowers direct from God's own hand, Zarah? It must then be decreed by Him that I should love you, for being truth itself, it can appeal only to the truth that is within the soul."

I drew her unresisting form toward me, and, gently pushing back the waves of soft brown hair, I tenderly kissed the beautiful face, radiant with the light of love. A thought of fabled beauties of Earth passed before me. Could any of them compare with my Martian love? Would not the face of Helen—that which "launched a thousand ships" at Troy—have paled into insignificance beside it?

For some moments we remained thus, neither of us caring to break that sacred silence which to lovers means infinitely more than words. The joy of feeling that my love was returned, and that she whom I held in my arms was mine, made me forget all else, until, with a little sob, Zarah whispered:

“Dearest, in our great happiness, we must not forget the duties that have been confided to us. You must return to the observatory at once. Come, and I will accompany you to where Reon waits.”

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The truth of Zarliah's words flashed upon me, and with it a full realization of the terrible mistake I had made. In the eyes of Zarliah I was a Martian, her life-long friend, Almos, and her anxiety for me to return to the observatory was the prompting of her Martian sense of duty—her sole creed. In what words could I ever hope to explain that I was not Almos, when the voice, the manners, the features, and even the knowledge of her affairs were those of her intimate friend? And even if it were possible to make Zarliah believe in the remarkable change of personality, by explaining in full the weird and uncanny details of how the change was effected, what happiness could I hope to derive from it; it was Almos she loved, not a strange spirit of whom she could know nothing—a spirit even from an alien world.

Such were the thoughts that filled my mind, as I walked beside Zarliah through this more than Edenic garden toward the entrance where Reon was to wait for me. But, although utterly crushed by the realization of my own hopeless case, I felt that the knowledge of Zarliah's love, of which I had so wrongly come into possession, had imposed upon me a sacred duty. I therefore gave no outward evidence of my emotions, though my cup of happiness was now changed to one of sorrow and bitterness, and when Zarliah proposed that we should meet the following evening, I quickly assented with all a lover's eagerness.

We had now reached the entrance and, as we stepped out on the balcony, I saw Reon waiting for me with the aeroid in readiness. Seeing a merry party in a large open aeroid, and knowing them to be Zarliah's friends, I would have escorted her to them, but in a low tone she earnestly besought me to lose no time in reaching the observatory.

A few words of farewell—a slight pressure of hands, and we parted; and as I walked over to where Reon stood, ready for the journey, I could not help marveling at the great sacredness in which all duties are held in the eyes of the Martians; duties, too, that have no other reward than their own fulfillment. A feeling of shame came over me as I thought of the endless struggle, selfishness, and crime of another world that is a slave to Gold.

CHAPTER VIII.

A hundred miles A minute in an aeroid.

Reon was at his place by the levers when I stepped into the aeroid, and as I closed and fastened the steel door, we slowly rose, and describing a large circle, sailed toward the canal. As the sun was now low in the heavens, numerous open aeroids were to be seen, but these were soon passed, and within a few minutes we had reached the branch canal where our speed increased.

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My thoughts were now turned to the long journey before me. So deeply absorbed had I been in the rapid events since I left the observatory, that I had given little thought to time. My great happiness at meeting and being with Zarliah had caused me to forget completely the importance of returning to the observatory within two hours, and as the thought now flashed through my mind, I hastily consulted the time. To my great dismay I found I had but twenty minutes in which to cover quarter of Mars. This I knew was possible, but it left such a narrow margin that any delay or accident, en route, would prove disastrous to our plans, thus bringing fatal consequences.

We had now reached the large canal in which we had attained such great speed, and, rising, we proceeded to pass over it. As we crossed the banks there came a rushing sound from beneath us, as of a mighty gust of wind, and, looking through one of the small windows in the side of the car, I saw in the distance a speck, which, in another moment, disappeared. Our aeroid now gently rocked with the motion of a boat that is in the swell of a passing steamer, and I instantly realized that another aeroid, travelling at a terrific speed, had passed in the canal beneath us.

We had now reached the canal that ran parallel to the one over which we had just passed. This was in every way similar to the first and was used by aeroids going in an opposite direction. Into this canal we turned, sinking lower as our speed increased, until, when we had reached our maximum speed, we were travelling not more than thirty feet above the water. Thus, whenever necessary, we were ready for an instant plunge in order to reduce our speed, and thus did this simple rule of starting high and sinking lower as the speed increased make collisions impossible.

As it was late in the afternoon when we started, the daylight soon faded, and in a few minutes we had reached complete darkness, the double line of lights on the canal banks being our only guide. Anxiously did I count the minutes as we sped along, but knowing the danger of distracting Reon's attention, even for a moment, while we were travelling at such a terrific speed, I kept silent, nor did I allow my manner to give any evidence of my anxiety.

I now realized that if I reached the observatory in time, I would owe my life to Zarliah. Twice had she reminded me of my duties at the observatory, and had insisted upon my immediate departure, when, under the influence of her great beauty, I would have lingered until too late. My mind was fully determined as to how to proceed with regard to righting the wrong I felt I had done Almos, in confessing to Zarliah my love for her. I would leave a note for him at the observatory to the effect that I wished to communicate with him the following evening, when I would tell him all.

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The hopelessness of my love was plain, for it was Almos whom she loved, and she believed also that Almos had confessed his love to her; and, with a lover's conviction that everyone must love the one he loves, I felt that Almos undoubtedly loved Zarliah. Indeed, it was probably his affection for her through which I had silently won her confession. Almos would then have no cause to regret my action, and Zarliah would never know the strange circumstances that had brought them together. Thus did I picture in my mind a happy conclusion to my selfish and precipitate action, which, I had feared at first, must bring overwhelming sorrow and humiliation into three lives, two of which were dearer to me than any on Earth.

I was roused from these meditations by the sudden roar of rushing waters as, in order to reduce speed, we plunged along the surface of the canal. We were nearing our destination at last, and my mind at once reverted to the now imminent danger—that of arriving at the observatory only to find that the wave contact with Paris had ceased, and I was too late ever to return to the world from which I had come. In such a case, I determined to write a brief account of my experiences to Almos, and, after arranging the current of super-radium so that it would convey my spirit out of the virator (whither I knew not), I would then enter the virator and deliver the body to its rightful owner.

Although I determined upon this course as being clearly my duty, in the event of my being too late to return to Earth, the desperate nature of such a proceeding roused me to action. We had now risen from the canal and were floating slowly in the air at a considerable height. Striving hard to suppress my agitation, I urged Reon to make more speed, and he at once responded by increasing the power. As it was now after midnight in this part of Mars, we were in no danger of encountering small aeroids in our flight, and in a few moments, to my great relief, I distinguished the observatory lying far beneath us. Describing circles over the building, we slowly descended and in a few seconds we had reached the balcony.

Thanking my companion with a hearty handshake (which came perfectly natural even on Mars), I bade him adieu, and, stepping on to the balcony, made my way into the observatory with all haste. Everything was in the condition I had left it, and I was greatly relieved to find that the necessary time for the process of departure still remained, before wave contact with Paris ceased. My heart now went out in true gratitude and love to her who, in the simple desire to do what was right, had placed duty before her love, and had thus been of such inestimable service to me.

Immediately upon my arrival, I had prepared the virator for my journey back to Earth by substituting the projecting apparatus of the radioscope for the receiving apparatus. It was only necessary now to start the clockwork that would shut off the current to earth in half an hour, and would start the current flowing through the upper chamber of the virator.

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After having written a brief note to Almos, saying that I wished to communicate with him the following evening before making another visit, I made a hasty examination of the current of super-radium which now flowed through the virator to Earth from the projecting apparatus. The instant my spirit was released, it would be caught up in this current and conveyed to my body, where it lay in my rooms in Paris. In half an hour the clockwork would shut off the current flowing to Earth, and would then turn on the current which flowed through the upper chamber of the virator, thus transferring Almos' spirit back to the body, as it lay in the lower chamber.

All was in perfect order, but it was not without a feeling of reluctance and anxiety that I stepped into the virator and, after carefully fastening the door, prepared the cone of chloroform. I realized that there were many dangers attending the return journey that were not present in my journey to Mars. If I had erred in my calculation of the time the super-radium current could be kept on my body in Paris, or if my body had moved in that time, it would undoubtedly mean death to me; and the thought of whether Almos, in such a case, would learn of my fate on the morrow flashed through my mind. Realizing the danger of such apprehensions, not only from the loss of valuable time which they occupied, but also from the fact that they tended to unnerve me at the moment when hesitation meant death, I quickly fastened the chloroform cone over my face and inhaled the fumes.

A moment's consciousness—a flickering light—

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CHAPTER IX.

The realization of A hopeless love.

I opened my eyes—it was broad daylight, and for some moments I lay dreamily surveying the familiar objects in my room, unconscious of all that had happened to me during the previous night. Then, noticing that I was fully dressed, a sudden realization of it all came upon me, and, springing to my feet, I excitedly paced up and down my room, pinching my arms and legs to make sure that they were in normal condition. Satisfying myself upon this point, I then looked at the time, and, to my astonishment, found that it was noon.

As Mars passed out of wave contact about one o'clock in the morning, I must have slept eleven hours after the return of my spirit to Earth. I had greatly feared that even if it were my good fortune ever to regain consciousness, it would be only to discover that I had lost the use of my limbs and was powerless to move. That the super-radium current would preserve my body in such a natural condition as even to induce sleep I would not have believed possible. Yet there was every indication that I had awakened



from a natural sleep. I felt fresh and full of vigor, and there on my couch lay the cone which, in my sleep, I had unfastened and, in turning over, crushed. If I had remained unconscious the entire time there would not have been this evidence of restlessness, and I considered it of importance as being proof that my sleep had been natural. Beyond this, however, I did not consider the removal of the cone from my face as important, as the chloroform must have completely evaporated soon after I became unconscious.

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Now that I was once again in my laboratory with the humdrum life of a matter-of-fact world surging about me, evincing itself by the continual roar of traffic which reached me through the open window, my remarkable adventure of the night before seemed like a strange dream. As there was no tangible proof that I had actually been on Mars, I might have been led to the conclusion that I had chloroformed myself into unconsciousness only, and had passed from this state into a deep sleep, in which I had dreamed my remarkable experiences. But the clearness and consistency of every detail were amply sufficient to convince me of the genuineness of my experiences on Mars, and that the characters, so vividly portrayed in my mind, lived in flesh and blood on a world millions of miles away. Much more convincing than this, however, was the moral obligation that I felt incumbent upon me—a duty I owed to another. No dream could have left me with this keen sense of responsibility.

Alas, I knew only too well that I loved, with an impossible love, a beautiful being of another planet, and that my duty lay in the renunciation of this love to Almos, its rightful possessor.

Thus my discovery had not brought me the joy of triumph. The proud moments in an inventor's career when he holds up to the world the fruit of his ingenuity and study could not be mine. Indeed, the thought of the excitement that the news of such easy communication with Mars would cause, if I demonstrated its truth before reputable scientists, made me determined to guard the secret of my discovery the more jealously. Hundreds of instruments similar to mine would be made, and it would soon become known to all the inhabitants of Mars that they could talk to the people of Earth, resulting in constant communication from all parts of both planets. Such an innovation would soon be a regular pastime of the rich. It would then be impossible for me to visit Mars again, as the crossing of the currents of super-radium would add a grave danger to such an undertaking.

The possibility of my secret becoming known through an accident (someone breaking into my room or overhearing me talk with Almos) now occurred to me, and, in the fear of my being separated from Zarliah forever, I determined upon another visit to Mars that evening.

I had planned to tell Almos at once of my thoughtless confession of love to Zarliah, but in an effort to justify my great desire to see her again, I now saw several important reasons for postponing this. I had given my promise to Zarliah to be with her the following evening, and it seemed only honorable for me first to fulfil my promise to her. Moreover, under the circumstances, it might be embarrassing for Almos to meet her upon such short notice. When a man takes a step of this kind, he usually has spent some time in consideration beforehand, how much more necessary, then, is time for consideration when this step has been taken for him. I therefore decided to keep my promise to Zarliah and to endeavor to visit Mars again during the next wave contact.

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I did not regret having left the note for Almos, however, as I had no means of telling whether the mechanism of the virator had done what was expected of it, or not. Almos' life depended upon the accurate working of this mechanism after I had gone, and I was anxious to learn of his safety. He would also want to learn of my safe arrival before preparing himself for another undertaking of the kind; to see each other was therefore necessary. Almos would undoubtedly have warned me of this, had not the cessation of wave contact prevented him from giving me instructions.

It was late in the afternoon when a feeling of intense hunger reminded me that I had not tasted food for twenty-four hours. I contented myself, however, with a light meal at a neighboring cafe, knowing the danger of eating heavily at this time. To my great surprise, I found that this small amount of food was evidently all my system required. Not only was my hunger appeased, but, while returning to my rooms, I was conscious of a strength and vigor which were entirely new to me, and which I now remembered I had first experienced upon awakening. Could it be that the super-radium current, possessing the wonderful regenerating rays that had brought perpetual life to the people of Mars, was gradually working this change in my body over a distance of millions of miles? Impossible as this seemed there was no other way of accounting for the remarkable change which had taken place in my body.

The intense excitement I experienced at the thought of possessing perpetual life, health, and youth was but momentary, and I reached my laboratory with a full realization of the enormous responsibilities which my discovery was placing upon me. I could no longer keep it secret; each day that I withheld the knowledge of these rays from my fellow beings, hundreds, nay thousands, of lives would be laid to my account. The knowledge had not been given to me that I should guard it selfishly. The hope that, even though I could never call Zarliah my own, I might often spend a few happy hours with her in her Martian paradise was now shattered forever. I must stifle my love or commit a crime against every living soul on Earth; and as I paced my room in agony, with my hands pressed to my temples to ease their throbbing, a great cry of anguish from the multitude in Death's grasp rang through my brain. My heart was torn asunder by two great conflicting emotions, Love and Duty, and in this torture of mind and body I moved restlessly back and forth in my room, until the fading light warned me of the near approach of wave contact with Mars.

There was but one course open to me; I would tell Almos of my experience with the rays, and if he should decide that they were the same as the regenerating rays, possessing all their properties, and that continual life was now within reach of the people on Earth, I would make my discovery public on the morrow. This would be my solemn duty, no matter what sacrifice it involved, and I could not help feeling that this second visit to Mars might be the last.

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A hasty examination of my instrument assured me that all was in order, and, turning on the current, I now watched the surface of wires for the glow that would signalize the commencement of wave contact. Should this glow appear without an image of any kind it would have but one meaning—that the mechanism of the virator had failed to do its work the night previous, and that disaster had befallen Almos.

My heart beat fast, therefore, when in a short time a faint glow appeared on the upper portion of my instrument and rapidly spread until it covered the entire surface. As it grew brighter I was obliged to turn away, before I could recognize any image, and, as I stood shielding my eyes from the strong glare, I felt my heart sink within me. But, before I could approach the instrument again, I heard my name called in the clear, ringing tones of Almos' beloved voice.

I reached the instrument with a bound, and there, standing with his hands extended toward me and a smile of greeting on his handsome face, I saw my brave Martian brother.

"My dear Almos, how glad I am to see you are safe!" I cried, tears of joy springing to my eyes at finding that the fears of a moment ago were unfounded.

"It is entirely due to your forethought in leaving the note, that either of us are safe," Almos responded. "Had you not done this, disaster to one or both of us must certainly have resulted, through ignorance of each other's plans. Let me congratulate you, my brave fellow, for having so successfully accomplished your remarkable journey. This is the initial step in the linking together of the destinies of Earth and Mars.

"But now I should like to hear an account of your experiences here, for although I have gradually become aware of many impressions you left, I find it is only of the things suggested by my mind that I can gather anything."

"Then it is evident that the brain is merely a book of reference for the mind," I replied, "as I was not instantly aware of your knowledge of Martian affairs, but only upon a subject being suggested by my mind, was the information regarding it available. Thus, the mind is aware of impressions it has made on the brain, but is totally ignorant of impressions made by another mind, unless the thought is suggested."

I now gave Almos a brief description of my journey, explaining that, as I intended to make another visit to Mars that evening, I would leave the full account of my experiences until the following night. I was careful not to make any reference to Zarliah, as I felt that my second meeting with her would put me in a much better position to approach Almos on this extremely delicate subject and lay before him my plans. Moreover, I was anxious that nothing should interfere with those few happy hours to which I looked forward with such intense desire.

Almos listened to my narrative with wrapt attention, and not until I concluded by describing the remarkable effects of the regenerating rays, did he give utterance to a word. Then, to my amazement, he said:

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"The result is what I fully expected. The proof that the regenerating rays exist in the super-radium current, lies in the fact that your body was perfectly preserved for six hours, and there is no reason for supposing that they differ, in any way, from the rays which preserve life here for an unlimited time."

"Then I can no longer keep my discovery a secret," I declared resolutely. "It becomes my solemn duty at once to make public the knowledge of these wonderful rays emanating from Mars."

"What you say is indeed the truth," rejoined Almos. "The time has now arrived; the existence of a people on Mars, our early history, progress, and the conditions under which we live at the present day, must now become known upon Earth; our inventions and scientific advancement must be made available to Earth's scientists. Since the discovery of the radioscope, which enabled us to see the people on your planet, Mars has yearned to give a helping hand to her younger sister. That time has now come, and before many years the conditions of life on Earth will be similar to those here. A great work must be accomplished, however, but the burden of that work rests upon me; when it is finished the goal of my life has been reached. There are many things that are not clear to you now, my dear fellow, but there is no time at present for explanations. In half an hour I shall have prepared for your visit—remember, no matter what happens, tomorrow all shall be explained."

Having thus spoken, his voice and manner evincing great earnestness and determination, he waved his hand in farewell, and instantly the instrument was plunged into darkness.

For some moments I stood motionless under the spell that his remarkable personality had cast over me, nor did even his abrupt manner appear at all strange, such perfect harmony of word and action existed in this Martian genius. Indeed, it seemed a fitting conclusion to all that had gone before. Speaking rapidly, as though realizing the loss of time in mere words, his handsome face, strong with determination, holding me fascinated, he had confessed the ambition nearest and dearest to his heart—that of giving to Earth the discoveries and inventions of hundreds of years of advancement in science; all that had resulted in the longevity, health, peace, and happiness which existed upon Mars.

Humbled at my own insignificance and full of admiration for this great character, I turned slowly away, and, procuring a light, commenced to prepare for my journey.

My letters and other papers, with a brief note of explanation, still remained on my desk, and, as my glance fell upon this bundle, I became conscious of a nervousness, which, although to many would be perfectly natural at such a time, was entirely strange to me. I had not experienced the least nervousness on the occasion of my first visit the night

before, yet the mere sight of this package on my desk, with its note of explanation, now caused me an uneasiness, which, try as I would, I could not ignore.

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Making the few necessary preparations about my room for the night, I secured the door with lock and bolt, and, drawing my couch before the instrument, poured out a glass of wine and lit a cigar, hoping thus to steady my nerves.

The day had been warm and close, and a thunderstorm of unusual violence made the night a wild one. Vivid flashes of lightning that seemed to vie with each other in intensity, darted from the heavens, accompanied by deafening crashes of thunder that shook the building to its foundations, while the shrieking of the wind, as though it were rushing through the rigging of a ship at sea, added to the noise of the tempest.

Within a few moments the glow on my instrument would be the signal for my departure, and, as I prepared the cone of chloroform, I could not suppress a shudder at the thought of my spirit going out into the fury of such a storm. It seemed as if Death, in the fear of being driven from Earth and forever despoiled of his cruel victories, had turned loose the elements in his fury, and waited without to wreak vengeance on my audacious spirit as it sped through space.

An instant an intensely white glare on the surface of wires at this moment gave evidence of the super-radium current. It was the signal for my departure, and, with a brief but earnest prayer, I seized the cone, and, taking my position on the couch, inhaled the fumes of chloroform.

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CHAPTER X.

Zarlah's confession.

It was with a feeling of thankfulness that, upon opening my eyes, I found myself in the virator. The storm, which I had feared might prove disastrous, had been passed through safely, and now reigned the wonderful quiet of Mars. The strange uneasiness, which I had experienced upon my departure from Earth, was forgotten in the anticipation of the great joy before me, or I would have noticed that the usual calm, ever characteristic of Almos, was lacking.

It was already past the hour of my appointment with Zarlah, and, eager to be with her, I hastily made the necessary preparations for my return to Earth. Although these consisted merely of changing the current so that it would flow from the virator to Earth, and adjusting the clockwork for the hour of departure, I had decided upon the importance of doing this beforehand, as any mistake made in the haste of departure would prove fatal to either Almos or myself.

These preparations attended to, I now made my way to the balcony. I had relied upon Almos' knowledge to guide me to Zarlah, and, as I reached the open air, I at once felt



his judgment assert itself. Two aeroids were moored to the balcony, a large high-speed one of the submarine-boat type and a small open one. Into the latter I stepped, and, with a perfect knowledge of its operation, glided out upon the cool night air.

Gently rising to about three hundred feet, I lay suspended between the fairyland stretched beneath me and the brilliantly starred heavens. I was perfectly aware of the direction in which I was to go, but for a few moments I lay thus suspended, enjoying as could only an inhabitant of Earth, the strangeness and marvel of it all.

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The little vessel had reached the limit of height to which it was designed to ascend and, upon realizing this, I became aware that, for safety, all aerennoids are limited to a certain height by the amount of repelling metal used in their construction. The high-speed aerennoids, owing to their build, being better adapted to withstand the atmospheric conditions at a great altitude, can ascend several thousand feet, but all are limited to what is considered a safe height for the class to which they belong. The action of the repelling metal being independent of the atmosphere, the danger of an aerennoid getting beyond control, and rising above the envelope of air which surrounds the planet is thus eliminated.

As these thoughts came into my mind, I glanced up into the heavens with its countless stars—one being the world from which I came—when lo! a remarkable phenomenon met my gaze. In the west hung a crescent moon, somewhat smaller than Earth's moon, but extremely brilliant, while out of the east rose another moon at its full. So rapidly did this latter moon rise, that its journey through the heavens was perceptible, and it was evident that within an hour it would sink into the western horizon, having gradually changed its phase to a crescent. In seven hours it would encircle Mars, and again appear above the eastern horizon.

My interest in this moon was intensified when I realized that it was but a few thousand miles distant, and so small, that it would require but a couple of days' comfortable walking to encircle it. Compared with my journey from Earth, this few thousand miles seemed but an insignificant distance, and I immediately thought of the possibility of reaching it in a high-speed aerennoid to which a sufficient amount of the repelling metal was attached to overcome the gravity of Mars. But I instantly was aware of the fact that an attempt to reach this moon had been made many years previously, and that the intrepid Martians who undertook the hazardous journey, never returned. Although their aerennoid carried enough oxygen to supply them for many days after they had left the atmosphere of Mars, it was decided later that they had been lost in space, unable either to reach the moon or return to Mars. The gravity of so small a body would be insufficient to draw them to it, unless they traveled straight in its direction, and, as the moon was moving rapidly around Mars, the chances of this were admittedly small. Moreover, once out of the atmosphere of Mars, it would be impossible to propel the aerennoid, and, having missed the moon, they would travel on and on through endless space. Had they reached the moon they could have returned, as the repelling force on a body with so little gravity, would be greatly increased, and would have hurled them into the gravity of Mars again, as soon as they exposed the repelling metal. There could be no doubt that they had never reached the moon, and their terrible fate resulted in a safe limitation of this dangerous metal upon all aerennoids.

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So absorbed had I become in these intensely interesting details supplied by Almos' knowledge, that time had passed without my realizing it, and, reproaching myself for having wasted the valuable moments I might have spent with Zarliah, I now moved the lever at my side and glided gently forward.

The moon, however, as it rapidly journeyed across the heavens, seemed to hold a strange fascination for me, and my gaze constantly reverted to it. Had I realized that this fascination was caused by the approach of a terrible danger, I might have paid heed to the warning, but desirous now to get to my journey's end, which, according to Earth's proverb, should end in a lover's meeting, I thought only of the time I had lost, and impatiently put the subject from my mind.

Moreover, as my meeting with Zarliah drew near, thoughts that were relevant and of a more serious character filled my mind. My present visit to her now began to appear most unjustifiable. If I had found excuse for my action of the previous evening, in the enthusiasm of so suddenly beholding the object of my adoration, unaccustomed as I was to my strange position, I had no such excuse now. To appear before her again as Almos, after having seen my folly and realized the deceit of my position toward her, would be an act of shameful duplicity. I had not realized this before, for I had thought only of my great love for her and the joy of again being with her, but now the crushing force with which the truth presented itself, caused me to hesitate before taking another step that I now felt would be impossible to justify before Almos. In this great uncertainty of mind I glided slowly along.

The wonderful stillness of the night was broken only by the faint hum of voices and merry laughter that reached me from below. Glancing down, I observed numerous open aeroids floating some two hundred feet beneath me, while now and then those of the high-speed class appeared, slowly wending their way toward the canals, to fly to different parts of the globe. But although I was aware that for convenience of landing it was customary to travel just high enough to escape the buildings, I continued on at my present elevation, as I felt the need of deep and earnest thought, which I realized would be impossible amid the gay throng nearer the surface.

As the highest speed attainable by open aeroids, which were used mainly for pleasure, was but eight miles an hour, my journey of five miles gave me ample time for meditation; and when I at last alighted on the balcony of a small white marble villa, to which I had instinctively guided my aeroid, I had fully determined upon what I felt to be the only honorable course to pursue. This was to confide all in Zarliah, and, no matter at what cost, to reveal to her the strange conditions that hid the identity of a being from another world behind that of her friend Almos.

Having secured my aeroid, I stood on the balcony, entranced at the beauty of the scene before me, which lay bathed in a wonderful starlight—far more brilliant than the light of the full moon upon Earth—shed by a myriad of blazing gems in a sky that knew

no clouds. A perfect stillness reigned, save for the rippling laughter of a little stream, that wended its way through an avenue of trees to a lake of glistening silver, a short distance beyond.

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"What happiness would be mine in such a paradise, with Zarliah for my own!" I thought, and a great anguish filled my heart, as I realized the impossibility of it—and now for the first time I also realized the impossibility of life without Zarliah. A sudden dread of meeting the one I loved came upon me—a dread of seeing the light of love in her eyes, even for an instant, knowing that it was not for me. I felt I could not bear to behold the look of tenderness in her beautiful face change to one of hatred, upon learning how she had been deceived; and in my agony of spirit, I cried in a voice of deep emotion:

"Ah, Zarliah! I have won you, yet you are not mine! You have loved me, yet I am not loved!"

"I am yours, and I love you, Harold," softly protested a voice at my side.

With a start I turned and beheld Zarliah, and for a moment I stood as if gazing at an apparition.

Realizing my bewilderment, she laid her hand gently upon my arm, and in a low voice, full of compassion, said: "It is Harold Lonsdale whom I love!"

In a delirium of ecstasy I caught the small white hand and pressed it to my lips. Passing my arm about her I drew her tenderly toward me, gazing down into her beautiful eyes where lay a world of tenderness and love. My heart was too full for words—it was all too wonderful to understand; enough that I knew Zarliah to be wholly mine, and in those few silent moments of absolute happiness and contentment, the little stream's merry laughter seemed to swell into the great joyous chorus of all creation, behind which is the great love principle.

Together we left the balcony and walked beneath the giant trees toward the lake, Zarliah relating to me how, through an instrument she possessed, which transmitted and received thought-waves, she had not only learned of Almos' communication with Earth, but had desried a mental picture of the inhabitant of that distant world with whom he had spoken.

On the evening of my first communication with Mars, Zarliah was testing this instrument on Almos' mind, when, to her great astonishment, she came into thought communication with Earth. As this was the first trial of the instrument, Almos himself was unaware of the success that had crowned Zarliah's invention, though he had taken much interest in it, and had on several occasions given his advice during its construction. Although this instrument was only capable of transmitting and receiving thought-waves over a few miles, it was evident that through the medium of Almos' mind, which was in communication with mine, the thought-waves were conveyed to Earth by the super-radium current.

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Zarlah had thus learned of my proposed visit to Mars, but had not known when the attempt was to be made, until, seeing Almos in evident distress at the recital of the lumaharp, she had feared that the attempt had proved disastrous. When, however, I evinced my astonishment at seeing her, she knew instantly that before her stood the personality of the man from distant Earth, who had been projected to her in mental pictures, and who was called Harold Lonsdale. When I spoke to her of my love, she realized that her image had also been projected to my mind, and, as she listened to my impassioned words, she recognized in them the thoughts of love that had accompanied the projection of my image. Indeed, my every thought of Zarlah, during wave contact, had been projected to her through the medium of this remarkable instrument.

With a keen desire to see and examine the mechanism, by which thoughts could be transferred over millions of miles, I said: "But where is this wonderful instrument of which you speak, Zarlah?"

We had reached the lake, and now stood on the bank overlooking its glistening surface.

A tremor ran through her slight form as she drew closer to me, and said imploringly: "You must not ask to see it! Oh, Harold! Do you not realize the grief this instrument has brought into our lives? Have you partaken of the sweetness so deeply, that you fail to perceive the bitterness that lies beneath? You can be but a beloved memory to me—the memory of a lover millions of miles away—but we are separated by that which is far greater than distance!"

Her voice died away in a sob, and, as I drew her gently toward me, she wept bitterly. Thus had I of Earth brought tears into a world that had not known sorrow for hundreds of years.

"But, dearest," I argued, tenderly smoothing back the soft brown hair, and striving to cheer her, "we are now commencing on an era of planet communication, and it may not be long before a means is discovered of actually transferring people from one planet to another. Did not explorers, some years ago, have this in mind, when they attempted to reach the nearest moon? And even though they failed to reach their goal, who knows that they were not drawn to some planet that was in opposition at that time, and are now prepared for a return journey at the next opposition? With the complete absence of resistance there is in space, their speed would become terrific—thousands of miles a minute—and at such a rate it would be possible to reach a planet in opposition, long before their month's supply of oxygen became exhausted. Heat would not be generated as there would be no friction until the planet's atmosphere was reached, but long before this they would have applied their repelling force, which would reduce their speed, thus enabling them to sail gently through the atmosphere and alight safely on the planet's surface."

Although I had not as much confidence in such an achievement as I sought to inspire (well knowing the vast difference between a spiritual transfer and a material one over such a tremendous distance), I wished, above all, to cheer Zarliah. Indeed, I feared that grief might bring the most serious consequences on Mars. I was greatly relieved, therefore, upon observing her countenance light up with a sudden interest, as I expressed these sanguine predictions as to the future.

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It was not until some hours later, when I was alone, that this incident caused me much anxiety, as I remembered that, in spite of the keen interest Zarlal had evinced, she had carefully avoided any allusion to the subject afterwards. But in the subsequent events of the evening this escaped my notice, and, glad to observe the soothing effect my words had upon her, I did not pursue the thought further.

We had descended by a flight of stone steps to the water's edge, and, as we stepped upon the narrow strip of pebbly beach, walled in by cavernous rocks, Zarlal, with great earnestness, exclaimed: "You are right, dear Harold, we must be hopeful, and not waste the few precious moments we have together in regrets that are useless. We shall always love each other, and if we are brave—even unto death—Love will find a way!"

Poor Zarlal! Little did I imagine the desperate plan that was already forming in her mind when she uttered these words, that before the close of another day would indeed have proved her "brave even unto death."

Drawing closer to me and turning her beautiful face up to mine, she said, after a pause, in which she seemed to read my very soul: "Before me lies a duty, Harold, which with you at my side I have the strength to perform, but without you the sacrifice is too great."

"What is it, dearest?" I asked, pressing the little hand I held to my lips.

"It is to destroy the wicked instrument of which I have told you. I had not the courage to do this before, as I feared for your safety in returning to Earth, and to have destroyed it then would have left me in fearful suspense. But now I must put away, forever, this awful thing that possesses the power to reveal the thoughts of my fellow beings, that its mechanism may never become known and thus prove an eternal curse to the world."

With these words, Zarlal disappeared for a moment in the gloom of a cave nearby, and, returning with a small metal box, said in a voice which betrayed great emotion: "Take it, Harold, and hurl it far out into the waters of the lake, where it will sink forever from sight!"

The earnestness with which Zarlal had spoken of this device, proved how deeply its existence troubled her conscience, and restrained me from making any attempt to persuade her from thus severing a connecting strand between two hearts so widely separated. I therefore took the box and, with all my strength, hurled it far out into the lake, where it sank to remain a secret for all time.

Swiftly flew those precious moments in which Fate had destined that two hearts from separate worlds should taste of each other's love, and then—what? Alone in our great love we drank deeply the cup of happiness, and the hour of parting, ever drawing nearer, seemed but a cloud on the horizon. At last, yielding to necessity, we retraced

our steps, leaving the scene of our joyous love behind, and the dread of parting filled our hearts and stifled our words of happiness.

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Strange to say, as I stood in that other world, there surged through my alien mind some lines of Clinton Scollard's, which I had once learned, little dreaming of their significance:

“Lo, it has come, the inevitable hour
When thou and I, beloved one, must part;
When heart be sundered from caressing heart,
And ungloomed skies be turned to dreary gray.”

A silence fell upon us, both dreading to put into words the thoughts we knew must be spoken. Then, as our hearts beat audibly in the sacred stillness of night that had fallen about us, Zarliah murmured, clinging to me in despair, “Oh, Harold, my love, how can we bear the agony of being parted!”

“I would give my life to remain with you, dearest!” I answered, pressing her passionately to me, but in a more soothing tone I added,

“We must be brave, love, it is but for a day—to-morrow I shall return, but before my departure from Earth I will speak with Almos, and tell him that I wish to abandon my body forever and to abide in spirit on Mars. In a virator constructed with two upper chambers, my spirit could be retained indefinitely, and I would then see you daily through the medium of Almos. To-morrow, dearest, I shall return to you with good news.”

“Ah! Harold, you do not see the impossibility of such a thing—you cannot behold it through a woman's eyes. No, no! I can never see Almos again! I gave my love to you through his medium, and to see him when you were absent would be greater agony than I could bear. I must go with you, Harold, to the world in which you live, where I can have you always.”

With words of love and assurance I tried to comfort the brave little heart that beat so loyally for me, and, fearing to leave her in this unhappy condition, I lingered until barely time remained in which to reach the observatory before Paris would pass out of wave contact. Explaining this to Zarliah, we hurried to the villa, and, as we ascended the steps to the balcony, I beheld a large high-speed aerenoid resting a short distance from mine. This, Zarliah begged me to take, explaining that by rising a few hundred feet above the elevation of small aerenoids, I could safely exceed the customary speed of local traffic. She explained that her brother had just returned in it from the north, where he had spent the day in the enjoyment of winter pastimes.

My heart was too full of the sorrow of parting to be aroused to enthusiasm at even such a wonder as this, and, realizing that I would be unaccustomed to an aerenoid that was strange to Almos, I decided to trust to the smaller one reaching the observatory in time.

But not a moment was to be lost, and, begging Zarliah to be courageous until my return the following evening, I pressed her to my heart in a last fond embrace.

Oh! the agony of that moment, as I felt the slender form in my arms convulsed with sobs, while I, struggling frantically with the emotions that tore my heart, whispered words of passionate love; and as at last I rose in the night air, condemned by Fate to journey millions of miles from her I adored, my soul cried out in its anguish:

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“Ah, Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to our Heart's Desire?”

CHAPTER XI.

The discovery at the Martian observatory.

Although I well knew the fatal consequences of arriving at the observatory too late, and realized that in this slow travelling aeroid my chances of covering the five miles in time were but slight, so depressed and desperate was I that I gave the matter little thought. Indeed, my mind was entirely occupied with thoughts of Zarah. Vainly did I search Almos' scientific knowledge for a means of transportation over millions of miles of space. All my theories led to but one conclusion—that no material transit over such an enormous distance was possible. My heart sank within me as I thought how brief my happiness had been. But then came the bewildering realization that an eternity of loneliness would not be too much to pay for the unutterable joy which nothing could take from me. Raised aloft to the highest pinnacle of happiness, I had been permitted to experience the joy of Zarah's love—a love that I had thought was for Almos—only to be dashed down into still deeper despair. Then a great anguish filled my heart as I realized that before I was alone in my misery, which, through a thoughtless action, I had brought upon myself, but now my agony was shared by a loving and trusting heart that had been joined to mine by the decree of Fate.

The thought of the unhappiness I had brought into Zarah's life maddened me, and when at last the aeroid rested upon the balcony of the observatory, I stepped out, caring little whether wave contact had ceased or not. I would enter the virator in any case, and at once fulfil my obligation to Almos, through whose generosity I had been permitted to visit this veritable paradise. Then, if wave contact with Paris still existed my spirit would return to my body which lay there, but if not, I felt that Fate would have thus solved the hopeless tangle into which it had precipitated me.

As I proceeded across the balcony, I was astonished to observe a high-speed aeroid lying close to the one I knew belonged to Almos. What could it mean! That a visitor would enter the observatory knowing Almos to be absent, I could not conceive, as I was well aware of the sanctity of a dwelling in the Martian mind, especially when that dwelling was the theatre of such experiments and observations as the observatory conducted by Almos.

Greatly perturbed I turned and entered the building, and, with all haste, proceeded down the corridor. As I reached the portieres of the large room, the sound of someone within

moving about caused my heart to beat wildly, and, thrusting aside the curtains, I beheld Reon.

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For a moment I was mute with astonishment, then, as he smilingly advanced with extended hand, I knew instantly that he was present at Almos' request. Without further time for thought, I grasped his hand and greeted him cordially, realizing that no matter what the object of his visit was, it was known to Almos, and under no circumstances must I appear surprised. Without waiting to be questioned, Reon offered me a slip of paper on which I observed Almos' handwriting.

"I carefully followed your instructions, Almos, regarding the virator, and, half an hour later, I turned off the current of super-radium. I was just preparing to leave. You are late in returning, are you not?"

While Reon thus spoke, I had gained time to glance hastily over the instructions that Almos had written upon the slip of paper which I held in my hand, and I now replied, with every nerve strung in an effort to appear calm:

"I am, Reon, a whole hour late, and very sorry, indeed, to have kept you waiting so long. But now, my good fellow, you must be off; I will not detain you a moment longer than it takes to thank you for your kindness from the bottom of my heart."

So saying, I shook his hand warmly, and accompanying him to the balcony, waved him adieu.

The gratitude which I had thus expressed to Reon, was by no means mere acting. My hasty glance at the instructions had convinced me that he had been the means of saving my life. Without noticing the hour mentioned, I had just time enough, while Reon was speaking, to note that he was instructed to turn on the current from the upper chamber of the virator, and, half an hour later, to shut off the super-radium current. I felt that Almos had in this way prepared to save my life, in case I arrived at the observatory too late to return to Earth. With wonderful forethought—perhaps even a premonition of my late return—he had requested Reon to visit the observatory and instructed him what to do at a certain time, with the result that Almos' spirit had been transferred to my body in Paris, before it was lost forever by passing out of wave contact.

Hastening to the virator, I now examined it, and found that Reon had faithfully carried out the instructions, although he was unaware that in so doing he had saved a life, doubtless thinking that in Almos' absence, he had merely attended to the details of an important experiment.

I felt that I could never repay Almos for all he had undertaken for my safety. The following evening I would enter the virator, and do precisely as Almos had done on previous evenings. When Almos' spirit had arrived, he would then change the current to an outflowing one, and dispatch my spirit to Earth.



Although my thoughts of Zarliah had been interrupted by the excitement incident to finding Reon at the observatory, I was soon absorbed once more in the subject ever foremost in my mind. With my head resting on my hands, I sat hour after hour, endeavoring to conceive some plan—no matter how hazardous—that would result in my being able to remain on Mars with Zarliah. But the gloom of despair only deepened, and all solutions were perforce dismissed.

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At my feet lay the slip of paper which bore the instructions for Reon. Many times during the long hours of deep thought, had my eyes rested upon it, only to seek a new object as a new problem confronted me. Suddenly, starting to my feet and snatching the paper from the ground, I uttered an exclamation of astonishment. For the first time, I noticed the hour at which Reon was to carry out his instructions—*it was three hours before the time for my departure!*

Almos had, then, deliberately planned to take my place on Earth, and in return to give me his on Mars. How I had been kept in ignorance of these plans, I knew not, but, as I stood staring at the paper in my hand, my mind gradually comprehended all that Almos had, until now, so successfully hidden from me.

Impelled by these strange revelations, I hastened to the sleeping chamber, and glanced eagerly around in search of some message that would explain more fully the reason for Almos' departure to Earth. Nor was I disappointed, for upon the couch lay a letter addressed to "Harold Lonsdale." Almos had naturally supposed that I would retire soon after making the discovery that he had gone to Earth, and that I would then find the letter which, in this chamber, was safe from Reon's observation.

As I read the contents my eyes filled with tears of overwhelming gratitude, and my heart went out in sincere affection to him who, in this brief message, which was the sacrifice of a strong and noble character, offered me his life on Mars with the love that he had known was mine, but which otherwise I could never possess.

Pacing the room under the influence of strong emotions, I laid the letter down, only to pick it up again and reread its contents carefully. No other man, living on Earth or Mars, could have done as much for me as had Almos this night. He had not only saved my life, but had given to me the thing that was far dearer. It was a princely gift, and my mind, trained as it had been to the cramped confines of a sordid existence in a mercenary world, was slow to comprehend the limitless wealth of happiness and love which it bestowed upon me. Sleep was impossible, and I longed for the morning, that I might hasten to my beloved, and tell her of the happiness that was ours.

CHAPTER XII.

The warning of danger—the race with death.

Slowly crept the long tedious hours of darkness. The heavy cloud of despair that had so long hung over me, now being dispelled as if by magic, I was all impatience. My heart yearned for the moment when, gazing into the depths of Zarliah's wondrous eyes, I should see there—not the appealing timid look, full of the dread of hopeless separation from her lover, that had so wrung my heart at our last parting—but the radiant happiness of perfect contentment and fulfilled desire. I had thrown myself on the couch,

and, as a miser jealously counts over his gold, fondling each precious bit with eager fingers, so I pondered on the happy hours spent with Zarliah, carefully reviewing each golden moment with its precious burden of Love's confessions.

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Suddenly I sprang to my feet—a piercing, despairing cry of “Harold, my love, save me! save me!” was ringing in my ears.

It was Zarah's voice, and some terrible danger confronted her.

Rushing into the adjoining room, I glanced anxiously about—all was still. The numerous books and instruments lay just as I had left them, and I gradually realized that, tired with the experiences I had lately undergone, I had unconsciously fallen asleep, and Zarah's cry for help was only a dream.

Although greatly relieved by this discovery, my mind remained in a state of unrest. I was oppressed with a sense of danger which, in spite of my endeavor to overcome by occupying my mind with the volumes of Martian astronomical discoveries, I found to be impossible. Laying aside the book I had endeavored to read, I started to my feet and paced restlessly to and fro, but each footfall, echoing in the profound stillness, seemed to be an appealing cry for help. A premonition that a terrible danger hung over Zarah came upon me, and, maddened by the thought that I remained inactive, whilst yet I might save her, I rushed out upon the balcony.

The sun was just rising, but in place of the gray light of dawn on Earth with its beautifully colored eastern sky, there appeared sharp contrasts of the blackest darkness and the most brilliant light, in the long shadows that were cast across the landscape. Without the diffusion of light which the denser atmosphere of Earth causes, night seemed to linger on the very footsteps of day. Though the remarkable effect of this Martian sunrise would have been pleasing under other circumstances, it now served only to increase my apprehension, warning me that I was in a strange world, and that I must be prepared to meet extraordinary emergencies.

I had but one thought, that of reaching Zarah as speedily as possible and saving her from the awful fate which menaced her. What this fate was, I knew not, but I could feel its presence like the hot breath of some ferocious beast, as it stands over its prostrate victim. Greatly did I now deplore the loss of Zarah's valuable instrument.

With eager hands I prepared the high-speed aeroid for the journey, feeling that I must trust to Almos' knowledge of its operation to carry me through safely. Though I realized that the danger was increased a thousand times in an aeroid capable of such terrific speed, the fear that even now I might be too late compelled me to make use of it.

Taking my place in the forward part of the car, I was greatly relieved to find that my hand instinctively sought the levers, and operated them with a judicious care that could result only from long experience.

Rising high enough to avoid small aeroids, I proceeded at a considerable speed and soon came within sight of Zarah's dwelling. The serene and peaceful appearance of

this beautiful white marble villa, as the morning sun glorified it, quickly dispelled the fears that had brought me hither at such an early hour, and I gladly attributed them to overwrought nerves and the loss of a night's sleep.

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Moreover, as I slowly circled over the lake that only a few hours before Zarliah and I had wistfully gazed upon together as we built a world of happiness for ourselves, I felt that I was near to her, should the danger of which I had been forewarned prove real. Here in the scene of our happiness I would wait through the early hours—the last hours of our separation.

Slowly descending, I brought the aerenoid to rest in a spot obscured by trees from the villa. A few feet away, the little brook sparkled merrily in the sunlight as it leaped along on its journey to the lake, and, as I opened the door of the car, its joyous song swelled upon the fragrant morning air, laughing at my forebodings in this world of peace, as it had laughed at my despair of the previous night.

As I stepped out into the warm sunlight and made my way toward the lake, a great joy filled my heart. It would not be long ere Zarliah shared with me the happiness of the knowledge that we need never again be separated.

“Poor Zarliah!” I murmured, as the memory of our last parting with its great anguish of a forlorn hope sent a pang to my heart. “The bitterness in thy cup was indeed great, but it is past. Oh, my beloved, awake to the light of a new day filled with gladness, and sorrow shall not again cross thy path!”

I paused, fancying I heard footsteps, and, glancing back, listened intently. All was still, and I was just about to proceed when again the sound came. This time I could not be mistaken; it was the sound of hurried footsteps some distance off and in the direction of the villa.

I was still hidden from the villa by the trees, but across the stream, some thirty yards away, was an opening from which a view of it could be had. Leaping the stream I hastened thither, anxious to learn the cause of the untimely activity. Another moment, and I should have been too late to see a slight figure, laden with what appeared to be wraps and other travelling equipment, hurry across the balcony and step into the large high-speed aerenoid that I had observed there the previous evening.

It was Zarliah! But what was the reason of this hasty departure at such an hour? Suddenly a frenzy seized me, and, rushing toward the villa, I frantically called to her, but it was too late. She had not seen me, and, before I had taken many steps, the aerenoid rose rapidly to a great height and disappeared over the trees.

Not a moment was to be lost. Turning, I dashed wildly back toward the aerenoid I had so foolishly left in concealment. Reaching the stream, I stumbled over an entanglement of vines and plunged headlong therein, only to scramble, dripping and bruised, up the opposite bank and continue my frantic efforts to reach the aerenoid, before Zarliah’s car had disappeared from sight. What her intention was I knew not, but the early hour, the

haste with which she had departed, and the absence of her brother, all conspired to arouse the fears that had beset me during the long hours of the night.

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Arriving at the aeroid at last, after a journey that seemed to consume hours, I jumped in and closed the door. Frantically I seized the lever that controlled the ascension and, pulling it so that the full repelling power was instantly exposed, the car bounded high into the air with terrific force.

The shock hurled me off my feet, but in an instant my eyes were again fixed upon a mere speck many miles distant, which I knew to be the aeroid containing all that life possessed for me. As the car plunged forward at great speed, the speck disappeared, and I at once realized that Zarah had reached a canal, into which she had turned her aeroid. It was now impossible for me to see which direction she took, and unless I arrived at the canal within a few seconds, I felt that all hope of overtaking her would have vanished, as she would doubtless proceed at full speed and soon be lost to sight.

Opening to its fullest extent the valve that controlled the exhaustion of air in the chamber beneath, the velocity of the car soon became terrific, and, rising still higher as I sped along, I caught sight of Zarah's aeroid proceeding in a northerly direction.

With a disregard for all safety I swerved to the north, thus forming the third side of a triangle, of which the other sides were the course Zarah had taken. This movement reduced the distance between the two aeroids considerably, and upon turning into the speedway of the canal, I was greatly relieved to find that I was but a few miles in the rear. The hope that Zarah might see the car speeding so close behind her, flashed through my mind, but instantly I realized the impossibility of such a thing, for a glance behind, even for a second, while travelling with such frightful velocity, would entail certain destruction by being dashed to pieces against the sides of the canal. My only chance lay in overtaking her and making some signal, and with my free hand I wrenched at the speed valve, endeavoring to open it wider.

On we sped in our wild career over the planet's surface. Hundreds of miles were quickly swept beneath us, but not one foot did I seem to gain. Vainly did I strive to put from my mind the fears that lurked there, by seeking a plausible reason for Zarah's strange action.

On, on we flew, each aeroid going at its maximum speed; surely Zarah had gone far enough north; she must slacken her speed soon to turn down a branch canal, and I would then be able to run alongside of her car and signal my presence. There was a gleam of hope in this, and to it I clung like a drowning man to a straw.

The air in the car, which had steadily grown colder, was now biting in its sharpness, and as I clutched the steering apparatus with numbed hands, a white object loomed up in the distance and in a second flew beneath me—another came, then another, and another, and as they appeared in greater numbers, I observed that they were huge blocks of ice. The sight filled me with grave apprehension. It was now impossible to

stop our terrific momentum, yet in spite of this great danger, on and on we sped, still farther north.

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What could be the reason for this perilous journey? Did Zarliah not realize the danger to which she was exposed, rushing thus madly into the wilds of the North—the region of the Repelling Pole—without the means of stopping?

Suddenly I shrank in horror as a fearful thought entered my mind. My senses reeled, and a strange sensation swept over me, as of an awful Presence in the car with me. “No, no,” I muttered between clenched teeth; “it cannot be! She surely realizes that it would be going to a certain and terrible death!” And as I frantically wrenched at the valve in an effort to get more speed, a strange hollow voice echoed through my brain, laughing at my unutterable agony, and crying with fiendish glee, “Your love has no thought of stopping; she hastens to her bridegroom, Death!”

As hot irons scorching the living flesh, the words burned into my brain, setting it on fire. It was the voice of Death—which voice no living mortal can mistake—and I recognized it also as the fury of the storm which was abroad when I departed from Earth, and the echo of the stream’s song of peace in the midst of danger. Had Death thus followed me from the world in which he thrived to wreak this vengeance upon me, by tempting my bride into his arms, believing that she hastened to her love?

On, on we rushed into the region of the dreaded Pole. All signs of the canal had disappeared, and before us lay only a vast uninhabitable field of ice. I stood at the levers, frozen rigid with the intense cold, but with my eyes ever on the flying object before me, while visions of my beloved one, now so close to death, passed rapidly through my fevered brain. As if Death had thus planned to torture me, before tearing my loved one from my very arms, I seemed to stand impersonally apart and watch two lovers—Zarliah and myself. Bending over her, I tried to console her with a false hope—a story of impossible fulfillment. I succeeded; and now I saw that I had laid the trap which Death had placed in my hands to draw her toward him, and, with a cry of horror, I tried to wrench my hand from the lever to which it was frozen, so that I might shut such a scene from my sight—

I realized the meaning of it all now. Zarliah, unable to obtain the repelling force necessary to carry her off Mars, was rushing toward the Repelling Pole to be hurled off the planet, risking all in the hope of being drawn to Earth, which was in opposition. It was a vain hope—alas, I knew this too well. She was rushing to her death—a death that I had lured her to, and my hands would be stained with the blood of my beloved.

Desperately I wrenched at my frozen hands to free them from the metal to which they adhered, with a wild idea of smashing the window and calling loudly to Zarliah. The skin tore from the flesh like paper at the fury of my efforts, and I freed my hands at last, only to find that my arms hung lifeless at my side.

In a frenzy of grief and despair at my utter helplessness, I fell on my knees, crying aloud, “Oh, my God! Save her from this awful death!”

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A sudden gloom filled the car, and, struggling to my feet, I found that we had entered the belt of semi-darkness that covers the polar caps in their winter season. Our doom was near at hand—nothing could save Zarlal now, and only by swerving my car around instantly and returning could I preserve myself. But life was nought to me without Zarlal—I preferred death to such an empty existence. Condemned by Fate to be separated in life, we would meet death together.

I could dimly see Zarlal's car outlined against the white snow beyond, but, even as I stood now helplessly and silently awaiting the end, a dark line rapidly spread over this field of white. Beyond, all was black, and as this sharp-cut boundary line rapidly approached Zarlal's car, my blood froze in my veins, for in this vast area of bare black rock I recognized the terrible power of the North Repelling Pole. There was another moment in which my heart refused to beat, then a groan of great anguish escaped my lips, as Zarlal's car was hurled upwards into space with frightful velocity.

Shutting my eyes I awaited death. For an instant it seemed to me that I heard Zarlal's voice call to me in clear accents, then came a terrific shock which hurled me to the far end of the aeroid, amid a confusion of furniture, books, and instruments that had been torn from their fastenings. Frozen into a state of utter helplessness, my senses fast leaving me, I lay unable to extricate myself from the heavy mass.

In this comatose condition I remained totally ignorant of the lapse of time, until, feeling the terrible pressure diminish, I opened my eyes and dreamily beheld the heavy instruments and pieces of furniture move gently away, and bump against one another as they floated lightly about within the car.

Relieved of the great weight, I now breathed more freely. My senses grew clearer, and soon I became conscious of a loud hissing noise close at hand. Drowsily I turned my head in the direction of the sound, and discovered that it came from the door in the side of the aeroid. In an instant the full faculty of my senses returned, as with intense horror I realized the cause—the air of the car was escaping into the void of the universe without! Desperately I struggled to gain my feet, but being without weight, the effort resulted only in my drifting helplessly about the car, until, gasping for air, I realized that the end had come.

A moment's consciousness of being drawn gently to the floor of the car again, while the furniture and other articles that had been drifting about piled lightly upon me without any perceptible weight; a slight shock, then, as the suffocating sensation became more intense, a blackness rushed in upon me, and my senses reeled—

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CHAPTER XIII.

The end of A perilous journey.

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A tall, gaunt figure, swathed in black robes, stood waiting some distance from me. I knew that it was Death, for under the hood I beheld the grinning skull with its sightless eye-holes, and I turned away in loathsome dread. But even as I did so, the bony arms were stretched out in welcome, and to them ran a slight girlish form—it was Zarah! For a moment I stood paralyzed with horror, then rushing toward the now retreating figures, I called out wildly, “Zarah! Zarah! Flee not with Death! I am here—your Harold is here!” Suddenly I was seized from behind; instantly my strength seemed to be sapped from me and I fell back exhausted, crying in my despair, “Oh, my God! save her! save her!”

A cool, soft hand was laid upon my burning brow, and a sweet voice gently murmured, “Poor Harold! If you could only know that God in His mercy has saved us both!”

It was the voice of the living, not the dead, and slowly the words formed a meaning in my confused brain, dragging me from the depths of unconsciousness to the life that still existed about me, warmed as it was by the wondrous power of a woman’s love. Opening my eyes I beheld Zarah bending over me, her beautiful face full of compassionate love. It seemed as though in a dream my loved one had come to me, and for a moment I lay peacefully gazing into her face, feeling neither curiosity nor alarm. Then, as my mind awoke to a realization of all that had transpired, a sudden bewilderment came upon me, and, clasping the hand that sought to ease my head, lest the vision should vanish, I cried:

“Zarah, my beloved, speak to me! Are we by a miracle saved from the death that had engulfed us, or is this the strange meeting of our souls after death?”

At the sound of my voice, Zarah clasped her hands in a fervent prayer of thankfulness, then, burying her face on my shoulder, gave way to a flood of tears.

“Oh, Harold, my love!” she sobbed. “Thank God, you have been spared to me! It is indeed by a miracle that this moon, intercepting our aeroids in their wild flight through space, thus brought us together at the eleventh hour, and laid you helpless and dying at my feet.”

“The *moon!*” I gasped, raising myself and staring out of the window at my side in astonishment, as my mind gradually comprehended our hairbreadth escape from death.

A blazing orb of fire, shining from the intense blackness around it, was all that met my gaze, and I sank back, exhausted with the effort, into the arms that awaited me.

“Tell me more, darling,” I said, as a great happiness came over me, and my heart was filled with the simple desire to hear the gentle voice I loved. What mattered it to me whether we ever reached Mars or not? The future held no fears for me now; enough

that I had Zarliah, for the walls of the aeroid that surrounded us seemed to compass the whole universe.

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"Ah, my love!" sighed Zarliah, bending over me and nervously clasping my hands in hers, "now that the danger is past and you are restored to me, the long hours of agony seem like a dream. But, oh, the anguish of that moment when I beheld another aeroid lying close to mine, upon the surface of the moon that had intercepted my journey to Earth! My soul cried out that in it lay my beloved, suffocating to death. Who else would have followed me over the dreaded Pole! With wild haste I attached an oxygen respirator to my mouth, and, releasing the air from the car, sprang out upon the surface, little suspecting the danger that lurked there. But so small is the force of gravity upon this moon that I was without perceptible weight, and the tendency to rise with every step I took filled me with terror, and I crept upon my hands and knees to the aeroid which lay a few yards away. Opening the door, I found you lying apparently lifeless upon the floor. My heart told me that it was my love who lay within Death's grasp, and, desperate at the thought that you had been so near to me, only to be torn away by the hand of Death, I lifted you up and hastened with you back to the aeroid I had left. The small amount of gravity now aided me, and I carried you without feeling the burden.

"Filling the car with oxygen and applying regenerating rays, I waited for a sign of life. Oh, the agony of those moments, as in despair I frantically called your name! At last the sign came—a quiver of the lips, a faint breath—and I knew there was hope. Gradually your breathing became stronger, but a terrible fever raged within you. Through long, long hours on this strange globe I knelt beside you, listening to your piercing cries of delirium, as you lived that awful experience over and over again. Little by little, in the cries of agony that rent my heart, I learned how you had come to me a moment too late; how you had followed my aeroid, and, being unable to stop me, had rushed to the fate that was mine, to be hurled into space, unprepared for such a journey; how you had suffocated, and—oh! my love, as you lay through the long hours, gazing at me with wild unseeing eyes—ever calling my name—imploring me not to rush to my death—I at last despaired of your life, and my soul prepared itself to fly with yours to the life beyond, leaving our bodies clasped in each other's arms, to circle round the world which had denied us our love until the end of time!

"But suddenly the light of reason came into your eyes—your voice lost its wild accents, and I knew that you had been restored to me. In a few hours now, Harold, the rays will have completed their work, and you will be in full possession of your former strength."

What a happy future we now looked out upon! The danger of our position upon a heavenly body but a few miles in diameter, with barely enough gravity to hold us on its surface, was forgotten in the great joy of being together and feeling that we should never again be parted.

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I related to Zarliah all that had happened since I had left her; how I had encountered Reon at the observatory and learned of Almos' departure to Earth, and how I had later discovered the letter in which Almos gave to us the great happiness we had despaired of ever possessing. And now the fast encroaching darkness warned us of the approach of a lunar night. As darkness with us would necessarily mean daylight on that part of Mars to which we had come opposite in our journey round the planet, I felt that now had arrived the time for action, as Mars would become visible. Moreover, as the days and nights of this rapidly moving satellite were but three and a half hours in duration, I realized that no time should be lost in making the necessary preparations for our hazardous journey. But although I was now able to get on my feet and had the use of my arms, I had not by any means regained all my strength, and upon laying my plans before Zarliah, she urged me not to undertake such a journey until the rays had fully restored me. Therefore it was decided to postpone our attempt to reach Mars until the following night.

But soon a strange and unforeseen incident warned us of the great danger to which we were exposed on the surface of this diminutive moon, and left us no alternative but immediate departure.

CHAPTER XIV.

Hurled from the moon.

Together we stood gazing in silence out into the abyss over the small surface of the moon that was visible to us, oppressed with a sense of awe as the sun dropped from sight, leaving us plunged in darkness.

Suddenly there appeared from out of the inky blackness of the heavens a huge crescent, stretching across the sky far above us. The sight of it fascinated us, and, as we stood lost in admiration at the majestic proportions of the beautiful arch of light, ever growing in width, we gradually realized that it was the sun-tipped rim of the planet which our moon was journeying around—the world from which we had been hurled and to which we must return.

A sense of great reverence overpowered me; I realized that we looked upon sights, and felt great forces never before bared to mortals. Through my mind ran lines of Addison's ode:

"The spacious firmament on high
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great *Original* proclaim.

* * * * *

Forever singing as they shine
The hand that made us is divine.”

Slowly the light crept over the planet’s surface until the huge illuminated sphere, almost filling the entire heavens, made a scene of the most exquisite grandeur that human eyes have ever beheld.

“Dearest!” I exclaimed, with sudden impulse, as a most remarkable and terrifying fact occurred to me, “wonderful though our deliverance from death seems to us, it is even more miraculous than we had any conception of! To meet with this moon in our journey through space, we must have described an arc, as this satellite never passes over the pole.”

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"How can such a thing be possible?" returned Zarliah, in tremulous accents, drawing closer to me as the awfulness of our narrow escape appalled her.

"Ah, my love, we may never know that!" I answered. "The Great Creator of all these wonders has, indeed, guided us to this haven in our wild flight through space. We can but theorize that the pole, being several miles in diameter, hurled us from its edge, the tremendous repelling force not permitting our aerennoids to proceed over its surface. The rotary motion of the planet upon its axis would then cause us to describe a curve in our flight from its surface, as only in the center of the pole would this rotary motion lose its effect."

"Oh, Harold," whispered Zarliah, timidly, when I had finished speaking, "the thought of these terrible things and the sight of this immense globe hanging over us fill me with dread! Do you think we shall ever reach our world again? It appears to be so near and yet is so far away from us. What veritable atoms we are in the glory of this tumultuous whirl!"

"I do not think we could possibly miss it, sweetheart," I answered, cheerfully, as I placed my arm about her and drew her away from the window which commanded a view of Mars. "Come, let us look out upon the little globe that supports us; we are entirely missing the beautiful effect of this grand reflection of light"

The surface of the moon was now bathed in a beautiful diffused light, and our surroundings were once more visible. Indeed, many objects, which we had been unable to see in the dazzling brilliancy of the sun's light, as it blazed forth from a heaven unsoftened by any atmosphere, were now clearly revealed. We had approached a window and were looking at these new objects of interest, when Zarliah suddenly cried in dismay: "Look, Harold, look! The other aerennoid is moving!"

Quickly turning my gaze in the direction indicated, I saw the aerennoid in which I had made the journey from Mars move a space of several yards with a jerky motion, then, to my intense horror, glide off the surface of the moon into space. At the same instant, the car in which we stood rocked as though about to turn over upon its side.

Not a moment was to be lost! Some unknown force was exerting its influence over the movable objects on the moon's surface. What this power was I knew not, but the direction in which the aerennoid had glided proved it to be other than Mars. Our position was now perilous in the extreme, for were we suddenly to glide off into space we would undoubtedly be lost, as it was necessary to have air surrounding us in order to propel the car. Without an atmosphere we would therefore be helpless and entirely at the mercy of the unknown and mysterious power. Indeed, it was evident that only our increased weight had saved us from immediately following the other aerennoid, and I felt that at any moment we might do so. Although lacking the power of propulsion, my hope was that our repelling force, which I knew must be increased to an enormous extent by

the slight gravity on the moon's surface, would hurl us off that satellite straight upward into the influence of Mars' gravity.

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Seizing the lever, I cried to Zarliah to He on the floor of the car, but even as she did so, the aeroid rocked again with still greater violence—in another moment it would be too late! Thrusting the lever over, I exposed the full repelling force to the moon's surface. The shock hurled me to the floor, and so terrific was the force with which we shot upward, that I was held powerless to move hand or foot. For a space of time which seemed to me hours I was obliged to remain thus, contenting myself with calling words of encouragement to my dear one, whom I greatly feared must have suffered severely from the awful shock. At last, finding that I could rise, I hastened to her side, and, to my great relief, discovered that she had entirely escaped injury.

As it was impossible in any way to control the aeroid speeding upward through space, it was useless for me to stand by the levers, and, assisting Zarliah to rise, we approached a window in the roof of the car and glanced upward at the planet to which we were rushing. A remarkable phenomenon met our eyes! Mars appeared to be no longer a sphere—the great globe that we had beheld from the moon—but instead a huge dome, which hung over us, ever deepening in the center as we rushed up toward it. Inconceivable though it seemed, I knew that, to produce such an effect, we must already have covered more than half the distance between the two bodies. Upward we shot, and although there was no means of ascertaining how fast we were travelling, I knew by the rapidly changing appearance of the dome above us that our speed must be terrific.

We had steadily grown lighter, and now we discovered that we were entirely without weight, and that it required some effort to keep our feet on the floor of the car.

Still upward we rushed into the center of the dome which now stretched down and encircled us on all sides like an immense umbrella, when suddenly, without the slightest perceptible movement of the car, the dome appeared to swing around until it lay beneath us, and instantly we felt our feet settling upon the floor of the car.

"We are safe from the unknown power now, dearest!" I exclaimed, anxiously examining the lever that controlled the descent, to make sure that the repelling metal was fully exposed. "We are dropping upon Mars, and our repelling metal should soon check our speed."

"Oh, Harold, my love," sighed Zarliah, timidly clinging to me, her eyes filled with tears, and a look of great yearning coming into them, "my heart despairs at the dangers that encompass us! With you as my goal I knew no fear; but now that I have you, I am a coward. Is our love forbidden, that we should be thus pursued by these terrible dangers?"

"Courage, dearest!" I replied, reassuringly. "We shall soon be safe, and then nothing shall interrupt the happiness for which we have endured so much."

I hid from her the anxiety that lurked near my heart, and endeavored to interest her by advancing several theories upon the phenomenal appearance of the planet's surface.

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Like a huge cup the land now stretched up and around us, but we were still descending with frightful velocity. I had noticed that the air in the car was becoming warmer, and now, filled with apprehension, I stretched out my hand and touched the wall. Instantly I withdrew it—the wall was hot! Like a flash the full realization of our terrible danger burst upon me. I had relied upon the repelling metal to check our descent before we entered the region of air, and had supposed that we would float lightly to the ground under perfect control. But now I saw how foolishly I had erred, in omitting to take into consideration the terrific momentum we would attain in our journey of six thousand miles through space. This momentum was now driving us to the ground, in spite of our strong repelling force, and with such a frightful speed that heat was being generated by friction with the air as we rushed through it. The creaking and straining sound coming from the bottom of the aeroid was evidence of the fight the repelling metal was making to overcome this momentum before the surface of Mars was reached, but I shuddered as I realized what little effect it had upon this gigantic force.

In a few seconds the air became unbearably hot, and, with a gasp, Zarliah lay limp in my arms, as she turned her face to me to speak. Laying her tenderly upon the floor, I hastily wrapped wet blankets around her, and, dashing water over myself, I staggered across the car to the window again. We were still descending rapidly, but, as I felt the walls of the car, I found that they were now cooler, proving that our terrific speed had been reduced. The increased pressure of my feet upon the floor of the car was also evidence that our descent was being steadily checked. A wild hope surged within me that the repelling metal would overcome the momentum in time to save us from destruction.

Glancing down, I saw white specks lying far beneath us. My heart stood still as I realized that these were buildings. We could not be more than a few miles from the surface, yet down, down we sped. A few moments more and the buildings became plainly visible, and my heart thumped wildly, as they seemed to rush up to meet us. We would be dashed to pieces! The repelling force could not possibly stop us in time! Turning, in despair, I threw myself down beside Zarliah, and enfolded her in a last embrace.

Instantly there was a terrific shock—a deafening crash. Then all was dark, while a flood of water came pouring in upon us. I staggered to my feet with Zarliah in my arms, only to be thrown to the floor again by an upward bound of the aeroid. Sunlight once more filled the car, and, as I struggled to my feet, a cool breeze wafted in through the shattered windows. To what further extremes of temperature and mediums were we to be subjected?

I was still too dazed by the shock to realize how we had escaped from a death that seemed inevitable, but I knew that we were flying upward with the full force of our repelling metal. Tenderly lifting Zarliah to a safer and more comfortable place, I seized

the lever and gradually decreased the repelling power, until we rested motionless in the air.

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We had already attained a considerable height, and, as I eagerly gazed down, I beheld far beneath us the glistening surface of a lake. With a gasp of horror, I realized what a narrow escape had been ours. Into this lake we had plunged with a velocity sufficient to have dashed us to pieces had we struck the ground; the damage which the car had sustained upon striking the water was evidence of this. Our descent being stopped, the repelling metal, which was fully exposed, had then sent us bounding into the air again, and in all probability had thus saved us from being drowned beneath the waters of the lake.

Death had indeed been close to us many times during our strange adventure, and now that all the dangers were past, I breathed a heartfelt prayer of thankfulness for our safe deliverance.

Freeing Zarliah from the wet blankets I had wrapped around her during the intense heat, I gazed anxiously down upon the beautiful, unconscious face.

"My love! my love!" I murmured, passionately. "How much you have risked—how much you have suffered for my sake! Oh, cruel the fate that thus delays our happiness!"

The sun was setting, and I now realized the importance of descending nearer to the ground, that I might ascertain our whereabouts, as from our present altitude, even with Almos' knowledge of Mars, I was unable to recognize any familiar landmark, and I knew that darkness would soon be upon us.

Bending once again over the form of my loved one, I tenderly kissed the silent lips, but as I did so, her arms closed about my neck, and dreamily opening her eyes, she smiled up at me as a child awakening from a peaceful sleep.

"We are safe now, darling, all the danger is past!" I murmured, and falling on my knees beside her, I took her up into my arms, with the prayer that I might ever shield her in the days to come.

The shadows lengthened; quickly the gloom gathered, and darkness closed in upon us, but still we remained suspended in the cool night air under the dome of the starry heavens, unmindful of all in the joy of our great love; for with the fulfillment of our hearts' long cherished desire, came the realization that our journey was ended.

* * * * *

Paris, February 17, 19—.

Six months have elapsed since that memorable evening when Harold and Zarliah—radiant with their new-found happiness—were portrayed upon the instrument in Paris at which I anxiously waited, after having exchanged my existence on Mars for one on Earth. The account of his strange adventures, which Harold has since given me, I have

endeavored to record in the foregoing pages, as nearly as possible in his own words, trusting that this narration of the events connected with the opening of communication between Earth and Mars will prepare the way for the greater developments soon to be announced by scientists.

Almos.

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THE END.