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**Life's Mirage.**  
Said would the salt waves be  
And cold the singing sea,  
And dark the gulls that echo to the ser-  
viced lute,  
If things were what they seem,  
If earth had no fair dream,  
No mirage made to tip the dall sea line with  
fire.  
But on the shores of time,  
Hearing the breakers chime,  
Falling by day and night along our human  
sand,  
The poet sits and sees,  
Byrnie on the morning breeze,  
The phantom islands float at a furlong from the  
land.  
Content to know them there,  
Hung in the shining air,  
He trims no foolish sail to win the hopeless  
coast.  
His vision is enough  
To feel his soul with love,  
And he who grasps too much may even him-  
self be lost.  
L'Esperance.

## IF THEY HAD KNOWN.

"So you've come back again, Jerome?" said old Mr. Sewell. "Well, we heard you was thinkin' of returnin' to Elm Mountain. Bad pennies always come back—ha! ha! ha! And you didn't make such a big fortune as you calculated, eh?"  
Jerome Clay leaned over the old zig-zag rail fence and rubbed his eyes. Had time stood still all these years while he had been in the South? For here was Farmer Sewell in the same old blue-checked overalls, with the same battered straw hat, the same wrinkles between his brows, driving the same old red cows home through the twilight lane, where the scent of trampled sparrowgrass came up, and the melancholy notes of a distant whip-poor-will sounded faintly on the purple silence.  
And yet—and yet it was twenty odd years since he had left Elm Mountain, with all his worldly goods balanced in a bundle on his back. He had been a flashing lad of twenty-one then; there were silver hairs in his black locks, now, and he had left a dead past buried under the sweet magnolia groves. And here was Moses Sewell, just the same as ever, only a trifle yellower and more dried up.  
"Yes," Clay said, quietly, "I've come back. And you are right when you say fortunes don't grow on every bush."  
"Goin' to your uncle's house?" said Mr. Sewell, leaning over the bars. "He's dead and buried, poor fellow. Always had a weak chest, you know. And the gals ain't no younger—the three old maids we call 'em—ha, ha, ha!"  
And again the old farmer chuckled himself into a state of semi-suffocation. "Come in and see us," said he. "My daughter Aurilla she's come back a widow and does tailorin' and plain sewin'. The old woman's stone deaf but she's dreadful quick at catchin' a person's meaning."  
And off he trudged over the bruised patches of sweet-smelling sparrowgrass, his broad figure vanishing into the gloom like a shadow.  
"Three old maids, eh?" repeated Jerome Clay to himself. "Clara and Bess and little Kate, the golden-haired beauty, the soft-eyed poetess, the bright little sprite who was a mixture of Undine and Queen Mab. Then, surely, Father Time has not stood still!"  
The light was shining out, as of old, from the red-curtained casement, the great fire of logs was blazing on the hearth, and the three cousins greeted the returned wanderer with unaffected warmth.  
They were changed, of course. What else could have been expected? The Beauty had grown sharp and freckled, and her lovely hair had lost its burnish, and she was not quite as tidy as she used to be in the old days about her ribbons and frills. Soft-eyed Bessie's sweet voice had degenerated into a whine; she had grown round-shouldered and lost one of her front teeth; and little Kate was a stout, middle-aged woman, who reminded one of Undine no more.  
But they were his cousins still—the girls who had romped and flirted with him in the old arithmetical progression. And there still existed a bond of steadfast friendship, and he told them the story of the southern wife who had been buried for five years under the magnolias, and they all sympathized, and Beauty even cried a little.  
"I have brought my three children to the North," he said. "I left them in New York, and if I can get some genuine, whole-souled woman to take charge of my home, I'm thinking of settling here in Elm Mountain. Clara, dear, you used to be fond of me in the old times! What do you say to undertaking this charge?"  
The Beauty seemed to grow smaller, sharper, more business-like, all in a second. If Cousin Jerome had come home a millionaire, she would have jumped into his arms.  
But Clara Neely was not romanti-

cally inclined. To her, love in a cottage possessed no charms.  
"I couldn't, Jerome," she answered quickly. "I'm not very strong, and I couldn't assume any responsibility of this arduous nature. Besides, I'm not fond of children. I'm greatly obliged to you, I'm sure, but I'd rather not."  
Jerome Clay bit his lip.  
"Of course," he said, "it is for you to decide. But if Bessie—"  
The poetess shrugged her shoulders, and laughed a light, shrill-sounding cackling.  
"Cousin Jerome," said she, "it's just as well to be frank about these matters. I wouldn't marry a poor man—not if I loved him like Romeo and Juliet. It's bad enough to scrape along as we do here, with only half what one requires to live on decently. But to plunge into poverty, with two or three children belonging to another woman—no, I thank you!"  
For time, as may easily be perceived, had eliminated a great deal of the poetical element from Bessie Neely's soul.  
The quondam Undine did not wait for the question, as far as she was concerned, but added, promptly, that she quite agreed with her sisters in all these matters.  
"It's such a pity you didn't stay here where you were well off, Jerome," said she, in the pitying, patronizing manner which your genuine man most abhors. "Dear pa, you know, always disapproved of your going South. And you might have got the situation of agent to the White Castle place, at eight hundred a year, and cottage found, if you'd only been here on the spot. Pa used to know the old agent, and could have recommended you!"  
Jerome smiled.  
"White Castle?" said he. "That's the big house on the hill, where we children used to peep at the roses and white grapes through the glass sides of the great green-house. A grand place, as I remember it."  
"And the position of agent is most responsible and highly considered," broke in Bessie.  
Jerome Clay went away, feeling rather depressed.  
It is not the lot of every man to be thrice rejected in one evening.  
"They think I am a failure in life," said he, half smiling, half sighing. "Well, perhaps they are not wrong. People's ideas differ."  
Aurilla Haven, the old farmer's daughter, had been a wild hoyden of a school girl when Jerome Clay went South. She was a silent, pale woman of three-and-thirty now, who did the "tailor's" work of the neighborhood, and had hard work to get along.  
But her dark-brown eyes lighted up when Mr. Clay spoke of his far-off home, and her cheek glowed scarlet when Mr. Sewell chuckled out:  
"So the three old maids wouldn't have nothing to say to you? Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Do you blame them?" said Jerome. "Well, no," confessed the old man. "Gals naturally want to better themselves nowadays. If you'd come back with your pockets full of gold, they'd sing a different song you'd see."  
Aurilla looked pityingly at Jerome Clay. She, too, had found life a failure, and in her quiet way did all that she could to comfort the tall, quiet man who had hired the spare chamber in her father's house for a few weeks, since his cousins had altogether omitted to invite him to be their guest at the old place.  
She was not pretty—never had been—but she had a sweet, oval face, with dark-fringed eyes, and a mild, wistful expression which Jerome Clay liked.  
And one day she spoke out what was in her heart.  
"Mr. Clay," she said, "I can't help thinking of those poor, little, motherless children of yours. If you will bring them here, I'll take care of them I always liked children, and it shall cost you nothing. Father will let me have the big north bed-room for a nursery, and their board won't signify. They can go to the public school, and I'll make their clothes, if you'll buy the material."  
"Aurilla, you are a genuine woman," said Mr. Clay, earnestly. "None of my cousins have spoken to me like this."  
"Perhaps—perhaps they didn't think of it!" faltered Aurilla.  
"Possibly," drily remarked Mr. Clay. "But, Aurilla," gently detaining her hand, "is it of my children only that you think? Have you no tender, pitying feeling—the sweet sensation that is akin to love, you know—for me? Aurilla, will you become my wife?"  
And Aurilla did not refuse!  
"Now that you have promised to marry me," said Jerome Clay, "I will tell you all my plans, Aurilla. I have bought a house here—"  
"Here, Jerome?"  
"Yes, here. Will you come with me to look at it?"

"I will go wherever you wish, Jerome," said the bride-elect in a sort of innocent bewilderment.  
Mr. Clay put her into a little carriage at the door, and drove her up the mountain-side, through the huge, stone gateway of White Castle, to the velvet lawns in front of the colonnaded portico, where statues of Ceres and Proserpine stood in dazzling marble on either side, and an antique sundial marked the golden footsteps of the God of day.  
"It's a beautiful place!" said Aurilla, looking admiringly around. "But why are we stopping here, Jerome?"  
"Because, Aurilla," he answered, quietly, "it is our home."  
"You mean to tell me, dear," cried the delighted widow, "that you've been fortunate enough to receive the agency? I thought Mr. Wright—"  
"Mr. Wright is the agent still," said Clay. "What I mean, is that I have bought White Castle and its grounds. This fine old house is to be your home henceforward, Aurilla."  
"But, Jerome, I thought you were a poor man?"  
"Did I ever tell you so?" he laughingly retorted. "Did I ever tell any one so? If the good people of Elm Mountain chose to believe me a pauper, is it fair to hold me responsible for their rash conclusions? No, Aurilla! In money I am rich—rich beyond my wildest aspirations. But when first I came to Elm Mountain, I believed myself bankrupt, indeed, in the sweet coin of love and human kindness. Sweetheart, it is not so with me now. It was your hand that unlocked the gate of happiness to me! It shall be your hand that is to reap the rich reward."  
He bent and kissed her forehead tenderly.  
"But the children?" she cried.  
"The children are with their maternal aunt, at the Windsor hotel, in New York," he answered. "The boy is soon to enter college, the girls are both engaged to be married to southern gentlemen, and after a brief visit here, will return to New Orleans with their aunt. So, my darling, your tender solicitude was not required after all!"  
Aurilla sighed softly. She had somehow longed for the touch of little children's hands in her own, the sound of small, shrill voices in her ear. But she looked into Jerome's loving eyes, and was satisfied. He loved her—was not that enough?  
And the three old maids are sharper, more untidy and shrill-voiced than ever since they have realized the fatal mistake they made in rejecting the overtures of their cousin Jerome.  
And a maneuvering, managing creature is the tenderest appellation they apply to Mrs. Jerome Clay. Things would have been so widely different if they had only known!  
Hellen Forrest Graves.  
**Thunder-Storms.**  
The tendency of thunder-storms to follow a comparatively narrow track is one of their most characteristic features. Everybody who has lived in the country knows how these storm giants stalk across hills and valleys, pursuing a course that can be traced almost as easily as that of a tornado, drenching the farms in their path with rain and shattering trees and hayricks with lightning, and leaving adjoining farms untouched. In any broad river valley skirted by hill ranges, affording extensive views, the phenomenon of a passing thunder-storm moving at right angles to the observer's line of sight, can be frequently witnessed in the summer. It is like a distant view of a battle, and when beholding it one can hardly wonder that old Thomas Robinson, in his "Short Treatise of Meteorology," printed upward of two hundred years ago, described a thunder-storm as an actual battle between an army of fire and an army of water. A little of his curious description is worth quoting:  
"The Battel by this time growing very hot the Main Bodies engage, and then nothing is to be heard but a Thundering Noise, with continual Flashes of Lightning, and dreadful Showers of Rain, falling down from the broken Clouds. And sometimes random shots flie about, kill both Men and Beasts, fire and throw down Houses, split great Trees and Rocks, and tear the very Earth."  
Although the chances of any particular man being killed by lightning are very small, yet the actual number of persons thus killed in a summer is sometimes startlingly large. Fortunately, lightning can be guarded against, and those who do not expose themselves out of doors during a thunder-storm are not in much danger. In large cities, too, with the exception, perhaps, of the suburbs, disastrous accidents from lightning are less frequent than in the country.—New York Sun.  
They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts.

**PEARLS OF THOUGHT.**  
The brave man carves out his own fortune.  
A life spent worthily should be measured by a nobler line—by deeds, not years.  
He is most to blame who breaks the law—no matter under what provocation he act.  
Nothing can constitute good breeding that has not good nature for its foundation.  
Men are sometimes accused of pride merely because their accusers would be proud themselves if they were in their places.  
By rousing himself, by earnestness, by restraint and control, the wise man may make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm.  
Some people are nothing but money, pride and pleasure. These three things engross their thoughts, and take up their whole soul.  
Perseverance can sometimes equal genius in its results. There are only two creatures," says the eastern proverb, "which can surmount the pyramids—the eagle and the snail."  
The beginning of hardship is like the first taste of bitter food—it seems for a moment unbearable; yet, if there is nothing else to satisfy our hunger, we take another bite and find it possible to go on.  
One ought to love society if he wishes to enjoy solitude. It is a social nature that solitude works upon with the most various power. If one is misanthropic, and betakes himself to loneliness that he may get away from hateful things, solitude is silent emptiness to him.  
Peace is better than joy. Joy is an uneasy guest, and is always on tip-toe to depart. It tries and wears us out, and yet keeps us ever fearing that the next moment it will be gone. Peace is not so. It comes more quietly, it stays more contentedly, and it never exhausts our strength, nor gives us one anxious, forecasting thought.  
**GEMS FOR THE MONTHS.**  
**Talismans Precious Stones—Superstitious Reverence for Jewels.**  
In more modern times each month has had a gem consecrated to it, and the wearing of a particular precious stone, as a talisman, by a lady born in a given month is supposed to be more than usually fortunate. The system of divining applies only to women and theoretically is infallible. She who is born in January should wear only garnets, which would insure her the friendship and fidelity of her associates and will also render her true to them. Those born in February must wear the amethyst, which will make them sincere with others, and will insure them against poisons and passions and cares. Those whose birthday falls in March will be wise, brave and firm by nature, and will be assisted in these qualities by wearing a blood-stone. The diamond is sacred to April, and will keep her who is born in that month innocent till death, while the lady born in May should wear an emerald, which will be certain to make her a loved and happy wife. Those born in June should wear an agate to bring them health, wealth, peace of mind and long life, while the ruby clears away the doubts, anxieties and pangs of love for those born in July. The sardonyx is for those born in August; with it as a finger ring, they are absolutely certain to gain husbands and happiness; with out it they are bound to live alone, and to die unwept, unhonored and unsung. The sapphire is good to prevent or cure insanity, and is especially beneficial to those born in September, while the topaz, an emblem of friendship and love, is dear to those who first saw the light in November, and the turquoise, the emblem of success, must be worn by those whose birthday comes in December. The superstitious reverence with which jewels are often regarded also appears in the habit almost universal in the East of naming the more valuable stones. The Kohinoor and the Kohitor are examples too well-known to need more than mention, but there are scores of others. The treasures of the East from the earliest time have abounded with diamonds, variously known according to their beauty. There were the Sea of Fire, the River of Light and the Sea of God, the Eye of God and the Star of Gabriel, the Ocean of Love and the Mountain of Beauty, the Delight of Women, the Pleasure of the King, the Delight of the Eyes and the Pride of the Treasury; stones were often the Gift of Allah, the Angel of the Mountain, the Boast of the River, the Soul of the Queen and the Star of the Ocean. Nor were diamonds alone in being named, since other equally favored in this way, and the superstitious reverence felt for them is quite clearly manifest.—Globe-Democrat.

**A CHINESE DINNER.**  
The Picturesque Banquet in a Mandarin's Household.  
Our party of five English guests, met in G.'s office, and proceeded in Indian file, each in his sedan chair threading our way through narrow streets dimly lit with Chinese lanterns, says a writer in the Pall Mall Gazette describing a Chinese dinner. We stopped in a narrow lane on the outskirts of the town, entered a shabby-looking doorway and mounted a ladder-like staircase. This led into a suite of rooms, where I found myself wishing for Argus' eyes to take in the hundred new aspects. They were not large or gorgeous, like Sidonia's apartments in Holywell street, but quaint and curiously furnished. A long table of black lacquer, and square-cut chairs with marble blocks down either side, at the end a smoking divan with embroidered silk hangings. This was the ante-room. Two doorways led from it into the dining room, and in the space between them was a sort of kaleidoscope pattern of a colored glass, below which were rich hangings, with grotesque dragons in gold thread sprawling over a crimson silk ground. Over the doorway was open arabesque work of ebony, and beyond the dining-room was a veranda with orange trees and creepers. While we were being introduced, tea was served in Chinese fashion—an inverted saucer is dropped into the cup to keep down the tea leaves (teapots are unknown in China,) and you sip, or, if you are a novice like myself, you spill, the fluid that finds its way between the two. Then we went to dinner, a party of twelve. On my right was an old merchant, sagacious and humorous, to judge by his looks and what I could make out of his broken English. On my left was a young half-caste, educated in the government school here—fluent, sallow and conceited. Chairs, knives and forks had been provided for the English guests, but we soon discarded the chairs for the comfortable lounges on which our hosts were seated, and also took to chopsticks, with the occasional assistance of a spoon. Those chopsticks were a perfect godsend, and I never should have survived without their help. But I must explain. The dinner which consisted of some thirty courses, was all served in teacups. Cup followed cup, each filled with some kind of mince, some in broth and some dry, but all satisfying as raspberry vinegar. Now the chopsticks allowed us to taste each one in succession, and though we were not skilled enough to consume all we might have liked of the few good, we could try with the many nasty ones and leave them without giving offense. The bird's nest soup with which we began was negative—a sort of stringy arrowroot; but the shark's fin and fishes maw stewed with ham were as rank as conger eel. Quail, partridge and lobster are good all the world over, and the bamboo shoots and wood fungus with which they were served were no bad substitute for asparagus and mushrooms. But the stewed seaweed and sinews of the deer? Had it not been for the excellent dry champagne, I must have succumbed. The last course was exquisite, and brought back memories of the "Arabian Nights"—honey cakes, earth nuts and stewed lotus seeds in syrup. Dinner over, we lit cigars, and strains of music were heard from the next room. Two young girls, one of them dressed as a boy, sang alternately, accompanying themselves on a sort of zither, played, however, not with the thumb, but a mallet or rather a minute halberd. My young Chinaman apologized for what he called our national caterwauling; but, though the notes were thin and shrill, yet instrument and voice went so well together, and the air was so natively plaintive, that I listened with pleasure. There was an opium pipe in the divan, and our host, though not a smoker himself, offered to have a pipe prepared for me. The servant brought a small pellet of opium, which he held over a flame till it boiled up to a big bubble. It was then put all hot into the bowl, and I gave as instructed a succession of short, quick pulls. In a minute it was out, leaving a sweet, sickly taste in my mouth, but producing no effect, pleasant or otherwise, on my nerves. Regular smokers swallow the smoke, and no doubt that makes a difference.  
**Taking His Father's Advice.**  
An Arkansas boy, writing from college in reply to his father's letter, said: "So you think that I am wasting my time in writing little stories for the local papers, and cite Johnson's saying that the man who writes except for money is a fool. I shall act upon Dr. Johnson's suggestion and write for money. Send me fifty dollars."—Arkansas Traveller.

**WHY HEARTS BREAK.**  
A Physician's Matter-of-Fact Solution of the Veiling Problem.  
"A healthy man or woman does not die of a broken heart," a well-known physician said. "A healthy heart is only big muscle, and nobody can have grief enough to break it. When, therefore, a blooming young widow shows apparently inconceivable grief at the death of her husband, and in a short time recovers her equanimity, she ought not to be accused of hypocrisy. Neither may it be concluded that another woman who soon pines and dies has had more affection for her husband than the first. The first widow may have even more affection than the other, but has been sustained by physical health.  
"It is erroneous to suppose that death by heart disease is always sudden. It is very commonly protracted for years, and exists undetected by most skillful physicians only to be developed by some sudden occurrence. There was an eminent physician of Brooklyn, in active practice, who died within an hour of the time when he was about to lecture. He was so well, that after examination by skillful physicians of a first-class insurance company, he was declared perfectly sound, and a policy for \$10,000 insurance on his life reached his home before his body was cold. The cause of death was a mystery until the post-mortem examination, by Dr. John G. Johnson, of Brooklyn, showed that a little piece of chalky deposit in the heart had become loosened and formed an embolism. The man had simply taken some specimens out of his desk, and he died in his chair without any excitement or undue effort. Any little excitement might have done it, and then his death would have been cited as that from broken heart.  
"So-called deaths from broken hearts may be frequently traced in this way. One exertion as well as another may furnish the requisite culmination. Medical books are filled with instances of death by heart disease during the performance of pleasurable functions. The case of Bill Poole, living for ten days with a ball in his heart, is often spoken of as remarkable, but Dr. Flint records a case where a man had a ball in his heart twenty years, and finally died of pneumonia. Both these men had healthy hearts, and could not have had them broken by grief. Yet, in fact, more women than men die of heart disease. Out of sixty-one observed cases, thirty-seven were males. Another record showed that in sixty-two cases of rupture of the heart, there was fatty degeneration existing. In other words, where fat is substituted for muscle, the organ is easily broken. If any of these people had been subjected to sudden grief, they might have furnished illustrations of heart-breaking. One medical observer records one hundred cases of rupture of the heart where there was no grief to account for it. In fact, grief is a very rare cause of heart-breaking.  
"Disease is the real cause of heart-breaking, and the various kinds of disease which leads to it are so many that volumes would be necessary to describe them. The cause of these diseases are manifold, and are very much under the control of the individual. There are, of course, hereditary tendencies to heart disease; but aside from traumatic causes, these tendencies may exist for years without fatal result.  
"It is a curious fact that the least dangerous heart disease often creates the most apprehensions. Frequently patients who have only a functional or curable disorder will not be persuaded that calamity does not impend, although there may be no real danger. On the other hand, organic disease, may exist unsuspected. There are sympathetic relations between the mind and the heart, and disorders of the heart are frequently traceable to mental excitement, either pleasurable or painful. Quick beating of the heart is no certain symptom of danger. It has been demonstrated that the pulse may safely range from 100 to 140 per minute for many years.—Alta California.

**The Dude.**  
"What is the dude, papa?" he said. With sweet and inquiring eyes; And to the knowledge-seeking maid Her daddy thus replies:  
A weak mustache, a cigarette,  
A thirteen-button vest,  
A curled-rim hat—a misere—  
Two watch chains across the breast.  
A pair of bags, a lazy drawl,  
A lack-a-daisy air,  
For gossip at the club or ball  
Some little "past affair."  
Two pointed shoes, two spindle shank  
Complete the nether charms,  
And follow filly in the tanks,  
The two bow-legged arms.  
An empty head, a buffoon's sense,  
A posing attitude;  
"By Jove!" "Egad!" "But aw!" "Immense!"  
All these make up the dude.  
—Philadelphia Press.  
**PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.**  
The barber is a man of many scrapes.  
If love is blind, the girls go to a great deal of trouble in fixing up their hair when they expect their beaux.  
Hens may be a little backward on eggs; but they never fail to come to the scratch where flower-beds are concerned.  
The doctor who says it is unhealthy to sleep in feather is mistaken; look at the spring chicken and see how tough he is.  
A fond father boasted that his son would make a great sculptor, because he chiseled his playmates out of their playthings.  
A disappointed tradesman says he wishes he was a rumor, because a rumor soon gains currency, which he is unable to do.  
The condor of the Andes is said to kill its prey with its bill, and the high-toned milliners are trying the same game on the married man.  
Dr. Armitage says, "Man should always be graceful." Did the doctor ever have on a new suit and try to get out of the way of a watering-cart? Guess not.  
"Yes," she said to the gorgeous youth who was her devoted slave, "I keep this gilded new five-cent piece in my pocket, and I never see it without thinking of you."  
"Doctor," asked Z. of a witty physician, "why do you and your brethren never go to funerals?" "Because we should have the air of taking our work home."  
When you see a man sit down in a barber's chair, pin the newspaper around his neck and begin to read the towel, you may put him down as absent-minded.  
**Origin of Thirteen at Table.**  
Says the Milwaukee Evening Wisconsin: There seems to be a universal and widespread superstition against thirteen persons sitting down at table together. Indeed, so prevalent and strong is this feeling, that a hostess arranging for guests is sure to provide against the contingency and eschew, if possible, the fatal number. We have known ladies to rise panic stricken from a table where the number was inadvertently discovered, and the omen is popularly believed to denote either trouble, sorrow or death. Few, if any, seem to know the origin of this strange and mystic superstition, which dates far back to the earliest ages of Christianity. When good King Arthur of Britain, founded his famous round table, he secured the services of the enchanter, Merlin, to devise and arrange the seats. This famous sorcerer accordingly arranged among others thirteen seats to represent the Apostles, twelve for the faithful adherents of our Lord and the thirteenth for the traitor Judas. The first were never occupied save by knights distinguished above all others for their valor and prowess, and in the event of a death occurring among them the seat remained vacant until a knight surpassing in daring and heroic attainments his predecessor should be deemed worthy to fill the place. If an unworthy or effeminate knight laid claim to the seat he was repelled by some secret or hidden spell cast by the powerful magician. The thirteenth seat was never occupied save upon one occasion, as it is said, by a haughty and overbearing Saracen knight, who, placing himself in the fatal seat, was instantly rewarded for his presumption by the earth opening and swallowing him up. It afterward bore the name of the "perilous seat," and among all the adventurous knights of King Arthur's court none were so foolhardy as to risk their lives on the enchanted spot. And now, after 1300 years, the spell of the magician Merlin still survives, and in this nineteenth century the thirteenth seat at the table is as greatly dreaded as in the days of the knights of the famous round table.