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CLARE'S REVENGE

I.

NO VISION of the terrible calamity approaching them so swiftly overshadowed the joyous minds of Guy L'Estrange and May Fielding as they floated that sunny afternoon in June on the bosom of the lake. That lake whose slumberous depths, hidden by sun tinted wavelets, formed one of the principal attractions of L'Estrange Park. And it had many attractions, both to those who knew it well and to those who as visitors came to it for the first time.

It was one of the show places of the county, with its grand avenues of noble oaks, its dense copses, its knolls and dells and lovers' walks, its wide expanses of lawn like verdure.

The house itself was worth a journey to see.

It stood on the summit of a long, sloping hill, overlooking in front an undulating expanse of greensward, with trees dotted here and there, and exquisite parterres of flowers gemming its beauty.

Behind it, and on both sides, were dusky woods—or what seemed to be so; though when entered it was possible to wander at ease through interminable paths, cool even in the hottest day of summer.

The L'Estranges were one of the proudest families in the county.

They could claim an unsullied descent from ancestors who in the good old times had done good service to their country, and never did it seem less likely than on this pleasant June day that a shadow would fall upon the honor of the old house.

They were lovers, these two who were now out on the almost waveless water, and were to be married in a week.

He was handsome, rich, the owner of L'Estrange Park and estates. She was an heiress, young, beautiful, the ward of Mrs. Raymond, of the Lodge, the grounds of which sloped down to the lake side, which here formed the boundary of the property.

May was a girl of whom any lover might be proud.

She was only just past that most beautiful of ages, "sweet seventeen;" bright with a girlhood that was womanly now in its rounded contours and maturity.

Her large, laughing eyes were of a deep pansy hue, and capable of expressing deep emotion; her lips were curved and ripened, her complexion bright, her hair golden and clustering like an aureola round her well shaped head.

Her form was beautifully shaped; the shoulders and bust perfect; a tender grace seemed to pervade her whole person.

She was, as we have said, the ward of Mrs. Raymond, of the Lodge; an orphan, she had no one to defend her from the storm, save this weak woman and Guy L'Estrange.

Her father had left her a large fortune entirely unfettered.

Even at her present age she could dispose of it as she pleased.

But it was not of riches they were thinking now.

They were basking in the delights of love's young dream, never guessing that any cloud could cross the path which seemed so bright.

They had been hours upon the water.

Time had passed with lightning speed as the boat drifted on; she lying in his arms, gazing up into his love lit eyes as he pressed kisses on her soft lips, or whispered to her of sweet delights in the future, when neither day nor night could bring to them the sorrow of parting.

How could they think of evil?

He suddenly, however, rouses himself, after one long, lingering kiss, and took the oars.

May laughed gayly.

"Why, what is the matter, Guy?" she cried. "What sudden resolution has made you discard me in this manner?"

"My dearest," he said, "I must answer you in the words of the poet: 'With thee conversing I forgot all time.'"

"But you are not a business man," pouted May, prettily.

"My love, I am today. I must go over to Barchester today," he said, as he began to row towards shore.

"How lovely the day is, too!" she cried. "It is simply delicious out here upon the water. Must you go over today?"

"Yes, little one," cried Guy L'Estrange gayly. "It is a matter of business which must be settled. I don't want anything of that kind to bother me when my bird has flown to her nest. I sha'n't be long away, and if Mrs. Raymond will only put up with me, I intend spending at least a couple of hours at the lodge tonight."

He helped her ashore as he spoke, and fastened the boat to the mooring post.

"You know you are always welcome," said May tenderly; "but—oh, Guy, what a strange mark that is on your right arm! I never noticed it before."

She had taken hold of his white muscular arm, and was gazing intently on a strange tattoo mark, skillfully wrought—the mark of an anchor and a dagger, a kind of Spanish stiletto.

A dark cloud seemed to pass over his face as she spoke, but it vanished as quickly as it came.

"Some whim of my parents," he said. "I only wish I could get rid of it. But I cannot without disfiguring myself, so I am forced to let it remain."

"Oh, it does not matter," said May; "it is no disfigurement in itself, is it, Guy?"

And as they moved along towards her home she clung to his arm in childlike confidence and love.

How could she imagine the thoughts which had entered his mind as she spoke of those simple marks?

They talked and laughed, and otherwise acted as lovers will do as they approached the house, ignorant of the dark vengeful eyes fixed upon them, dark eyes whose owner glared at them from behind the safe concealment of the curtains of the room opening on to the garden terrace.

They took in with angry distinctness the whole details of the scene; the tall, stalwart formed Guy L'Estrange, looking so well in his boating flannels; the sweet face and svelte form of May Fielding, his fiancee; the tender, caressing attitude of the man, the shy, trustful glances of the girl.

She had taken hold of his white muscular arm.

Clare Raymond, the daughter of Mrs. Raymond, May Fielding's guardian, was four years May's senior, and during all those long, long months which had formed the period of the courtship of her friend and her lover, she had suffered torture unspeakable.

She had set her heart upon Guy when first they had met, years before.

Even in those days, however, when May was only 14 and Guy 21, she was his favorite and companion.

And as time passed, the bud blossomed out and ripened imperceptibly though surely, and without any display of mock modesty or self consciousness, May Fielding drifted from her position of the child playmate of Guy L'Estrange to that of his betrothed bride.

Clare had seen all this, and used desperate means to avert such a calamity.

Failing all else, she had opened her heart to her wondering mother, and entreated her to send May away to school before it was too late.

But this was not to be.

"My dear," said her mother tenderly, "this cannot be done. I pity you, and feel for you, but I cannot help you. I am forbidden to send her to school. All her education must be received in my house. I am precluded by the will from allowing her to leave my house until a husband claims her."

And so time passed; and Guy and May, happy in each other's love, knew nothing of the storm in the breast of her rival.

Clare turned from the contemplation of the scene, with trembling lips and her hand pressed tightly over her swelling bosom.

"Oh, how I hate her!" she cried. "But for her his love would have been mine! And to think I have tried and tried in vain, with all my beauty, which has been praised so much by others, only to be set aside for that golden haired doll!"

She passed into an adjoining room, that she might not witness the entrance of the lovers—that she might calm herself, in fact, before she met them at all.

But her mind was too busy to be tranquilized.

The same thoughts would crowd upon her brain. It was too late now. All her scheming had been for nothing; in a week they would be married.

"Oh, why am I such a coward?" she murmured to herself. "Why cannot I devise and carry out some scheme to part them even now? The thought of their happiness maddens me. I could almost bring myself to wish that something awful would happen to—yes, to either of them," she added, with a spiteful stamp of her foot, "rather than she should live to be his wife!"

Even in the depths of her wicked heart she could never have imagined how swiftly her evil prayer would be answered.

Gay voices in the next room roused her, and she schooled herself to be calm and smiling to meet the lovers, and Mrs. Raymond, who, all unconscious of the vengeful feelings in her daughter's heart, was joking with the young people, and twitting May about her anxiety at Guy's absence for a few hours.

"You'll get used to longer absences than that, May," she cried, "when you are an old, staid matron of a year's standing."

"Oh, no," laughed Guy, "she will never have that to complain of. I'm going to hang on to the proverbial apron string. It saves a lot of bother, and you know of old, Mrs. Raymond, that I'm rather lazy."

"In that case," said May, "I'll drive you over to the station in the pony carriage."

Clare Raymond entered at the moment.

"You naughty, forgetful thing," she said in her sweetest tones, "you promised to drive me and mamma to Linwood today, and"——

"And so she shall," said Guy with a smile; "I'll exert my marital authority in advance, and say she shall. And, moreover, I'm not going to Barchester in my boating flannels. I must pull myself across the lake, and go home to dress."

He bent and lightly touched the girl's forehead. He was not as a rule inclined to be demonstrative in the presence of others, but something in her face—a wistfulness, a yearning look in the eyes—made him suddenly change his determination, and he caught her to his breast and kissed her passionately.

Then, as if ashamed of such an action before Mrs. Raymond and her daughter, he muttered some inarticulate adieu to them and was off.

His slight confusion prevented him from seeing the spasm of anger and hatred which distorted the face of Clare Raymond as he held May Fielding close to his heart.

Unconscious of all threatened evil, his heart still bounding with the love gladness that thrilled his form when the soft, tender arms of his fiancee were clasped round him, Guy L'Estrange hastened to the lake side, entered the boat, pulled himself with a few powerful strokes across to the opposite shore, and, hastening home, attired himself for his journey and set out towards the station at Lowcroft.

He was driven there in the dog cart, and the groom, having received instructions as to what time to fetch him on his return from Barchester, drove off, the skittish mare soon taking the light vehicle out of sight.

It was very quiet in the station when Guy L'Estrange entered it; no sign of bustle or preparation of any kind.

A porter, after a few moments, came forward, touching his hat.

"Going up to London, sir?"

"No, Mason; I want to go to Barchester," said Guy.

"Train gone this ten minutes, sir," said the man; "not another until 5 o'clock, unless you go on to Sandford and change on to the other line."

"Train gone!" repeated Guy in some irritation, as he took out his watch. "Confound the thing, it is twenty minutes slow! No, I sha'n't go on, thank you. I shall be too late for my appointment if I do. Good afternoon, Mason; I shall stroll home, and try my luck again to-morrow morning."

As Guy L'Estrange began retracing his steps along the road, the face of nature seemed to have changed—at any rate, for him.

The nearest way home was by Lockley woods, and these he entered through a gap in the hedge.

It was, to a certain extent, private property, and tramps and gypsies would have been ordered off it.

But Guy L'Estrange, owner of the park, was privileged, and he swung along the beech and oak avenues as if he had a right there.

His mind, in fact, was strangely concentrated on one thing—a desire to reach the lodge as quickly as possible, to see May (from whom he had been separated only a couple of hours) and to be sure she was safe and well.

Guy ridiculed all kinds of presentiments, and everything of a like nature, and yet he was ill at ease and nervous; so much so that when, presently, a female form suddenly appeared from amid a clump of trees, he started violently.

It might have been because he was plunged in a reverie; but, at any rate, the fact remained, and with a half bow he turned rapidly aside to avoid the stranger.

She advanced quickly, however; and before he had time to realize what was happening she had placed her hand upon his arm and thrown back her veil, revealing a face of exquisite beauty.

She looked up into his face with a glance in which eager love and fear were strangely mingled.

"Oh, Roy!" she cried, "how glad I am I have met you! How cruel to have left me without a word!"

For a moment Guy L'Estrange was too petrified with astonishment to speak, but at length he contrived to say:

"Madam, I am sorry if my words give you pain, but you have made a great mistake, one which to me is unaccountable. My name is Guy L'Estrange. I am the owner of the park yonder, the wall of which you can now see. If you are in trouble, I am sure I and my aunt will be happy to give you any advice or (he was going to say assistance, but one glance had assured him she was richly dressed)—or that sort of thing. But you have, I regret to say, made some sad error as regards me."

She gazed at him with a look of mingled scorn and wonder, though there was something of wistful disappointment and tender reproach in her glorious eyes.

"No, I have made no mistake," she said. "You are my husband, Roy Talbot, and why you are masquerading here under another name I am at a loss to understand. However, if this is the way in which you intend to act, it will give me my cue. Your abrupt and cruel letter to me I intended to have passed over and forgiven, but"——

"Oh, Roy!" she cried.

"Madam," said Guy L'Estrange, who saw now that some real danger might lurk for him in the shadow of this woman's error, "I cannot permit you to waste your words or my time any further. I have told you my name and address, and since you compel me to speak rather brusquely, I must add that, as you are well aware, I am not your husband, and I never saw you before. Thank your helplessness and the fact that I am inclined to fancy you have innocently made a mistake that I do not at once hand you over to the police as soon as I can. As it is, there is my card; there also is the card of my solicitor. I have no more to say."

He raised his hat with a polite gesture, but she flung herself on her knees before him and clasped her hands wildly.

"Oh, Roy, Roy!" she cried, "have pity. Think of the vows you took at the altar, of the happy days we have spent together, and, more than all, our dear child. Do not make me desperate, Roy; do not."

Guy L'Estrange was beginning to be angry, and, more than that, a strange feeling of fear was creeping over him, an undefined dread of he knew not what.

He had felt inclined to pity this woman, who might, for all her voluptuous beauty and bright, beseeching eyes, be mad and not accountable for her actions.

But new anger got the better of his tender heart.

Heaven! If her words were believed by others!

May, almost his wife now, would be taken from him!

Anger and loathing took the place of compassion for the beautiful stranger.

He shook her off roughly.

"I have had enough of this," he said, in a hard, cold voice which May Fielding would have found it difficult to recognize as his. "I have given you every information, and offered more than most people would to a stranger. I will listen to no more."

And he strode quickly away.

The woman rounded only one moment on her knees when she had poured forth her earnest entreaties, and then sprang to her feet.

She, too, had changed, and no one seeing that change would have for an instant imagined her to be an impostor.

She had never from the first appeared to be so.

Her manner had been resolute and truthful.

"So my dream of happiness is over," she said, speaking aloud in the silence of those solemn woods. "I had hoped that his letter was but the outcome of some sudden resolve. I could not believe that he had really abandoned me to my fate, after all his protestations, after our years of love; after the birth of our child! But I will not doubt in my endeavors. No! I must go on now to the bitter end for my little Roy's sake."

And with these words she strode away after him.

She had scarcely disappeared when another figure appeared on the scene, that of Clare Raymond.

She looked white and scared, and her left hand was pressed over her bosom as if in pain.

"Fool that I am!" she murmured. "Even now, when Fate is working for me in every way, I seem to have no courage to work things to my own use. What shall I do next? How unravel this tangled skein without assistance? And yet my revenge will be but a poor one after all. If he is married, all is lost! May Fielding will suffer bitterly; but so, also, alas! shall I."

Even as she spoke a loud, shrill cry echoed through the woods, a cry as of some one imploring help.

Clare gave one startled look round, hesitated a moment, and then, brave at last, plunged into the thick plantation where the two had disappeared and followed them.

II.

An influx of visitors had prevented the proposed pony drive; and Clare Raymond, impatient of disappointment, and with a mind inflamed by resentment, had slipped on her walking things and quitted the house.

Never for one moment had she imagined that any discovery was awaiting her in Lockley woods.

But fate plays strange tricks.

She chose that way as if impelled to do so against her will, for it was not a favorite walk of hers.

And she had found—what?

The time passed drearily for May.

At dinner Mrs. Raymond had a headache, and Clare was pale, silent and altogether "mysterious and stupid," as May told her laughingly.

After dinner Mrs. Raymond went to sleep in a capacious chair in the drawing room, Clare subsided into the pages of a novel, and May, pretending to do so likewise, lay on a couch idling with her book and looking up every five minutes at the hands of the clock which ticked so softly, so aggravatingly slowly, as she thought, on the mantelpiece.

Guy had promised to spend two hours with them that night; his usual time was half past 8 when he did not come to dinner, which at the lodge was served punctually at 7.

It was now half past 9.

"What can be keeping Guy?" cried May at last, flinging aside her book petulantly; "he was never late before."

Clare glanced over at the speaker with a look which May could not fathom; it was a strange look, half pity, half triumph.

"Odd and unaccountable things happen sometimes," she said. "You see, Guy said he was going to Barchester on business, and it may have proved more tedious than he imagined. No doubt we shall have news of him soon."

There was a mocking ring in her voice, and a mocking light in her eyes as she spoke, which was intensely irritating to May.

"What is the matter, Clare?" cried the young girl. "You speak so oddly and look so oddly, one would imagine that you were the depositary of some weighty secret in regard to Guy, though I should scarcely think he would choose you for such a purpose."

She spoke with an irritability quite foreign to her nature, but she felt annoyed by Clare's manner and looks.

"Well, it would certainly not be likely while her majesty the bride-elect was in the land of the living," laughed Clare; "but, really, you must learn to be reasonable. Guy may jest about being tied to your apron strings, but, mark me, he is the last man in the world to put the theory into practice."

May was about to make a somewhat angry reply, when a loud ring sounded at the hall door, followed by an impatient knock.

"That is not Guy's ring or knock," cried May, springing up with a somewhat pale face.

"No; but it may be a message from him or about him," said Clare, with a significant look that was lost upon May, for she had quickly crossed the room, and, opening the door, stood listening.

At any other time she would have laughed at the idea of listening because an unusually loud knock had echoed through the house.

But she seemed to be infected by the same kind of presentiment which had seized upon Guy L'Estrange.

At the first sound she had felt a fluttering of the heart and a wild sensation of the mind, such as she had never experienced before.

Foolish, as she told herself she was to be so afraid, she yet listened intently.

She heard a strong, grave voice, which she recognized at once as that of Mr. Paul Armstrong, the family solicitor.

Then the servant came hurrying across the wide, dimly lighted hall.

"Miss Fielding," she said, "Mr. Armstrong wishes to have a few words with you and Mrs. Raymond if you can spare the time."

"Ask Mr. Armstrong to come in at once," said May, in a calm voice, though her bosom was panting with the wild beatings of her heart; and hurrying across to her guardian she awakened her from her sleep.

Mrs. Raymond was by no means heavy headed, and she very quickly realized that a visitor had arrived and was desirous of speaking with her.

By the time that Paul Armstrong entered the room, tall, white haired, florid and kind of manner, she was fully awake and received him gracefully.

The lawyer sat down near her.

He was usually quite at his ease, as a man of the world ought to be, but on this occasion he was just the reverse.

He took out his capacious handkerchief, wiped his forehead, and, though eager to tell his news, subsided into the merest commonplaces.

"Quite unpleasantly hot walking," he said, with a sorry apology for a smile.

"Yes, it must be," said Clare, helping him on, "especially if you are bearer of any news which has caused you to hurry."

"Well, that is just it, you see," said Paul Armstrong, struggling back into his professional courage. "I am the bearer of news, and very bad news, and I wish any one else save myself had had the task of bringing it here. However, Guy—Mr. L'Estrange—desired it should be so, and his word is law to me."

May looked at him with eyes full of terror.

"Guy asked you to come?" she said. "Oh, sir, Mr. Armstrong, do explain! Suspense is far worse than the truth, believe me! Tell me, has any accident befallen him?"

He took her hand and gazed at her wistful face kindly.

"You must be brave, Miss Fielding," he said, "for my news is very bad. Mr. L'Estrange is alive and well, but he is in sore trouble; he has been arrested—now calm yourself, Miss Fielding, for all is bound to come right—on a charge of attempted murder!"

May uttered a gasping cry.

Could this be true, or was it some hideous dream? Guy—her Guy, her betrothed husband—arrested on so foul a charge! It seemed impossible.

At first the world seemed swimming round with her; then, catching sight of a look on Clare's face which she had never seen before—a look of malignant triumph—she roused herself.

"Tell me all, Mr. Armstrong," she said, "I will not interrupt you again."

Briefly then he narrated what had happened in the woods; the claim which the strange woman had made upon him; his hurried departure home and the subsequent finding of the woman in the wood, severely wounded.

"But is that all?" asked May, clasping and unclasping her hands, and looking at them with wild, staring eyes. "Did he send me no message?"

"Ay, that he did, my dear," said Paul Armstrong, placing his hand on her shoulder and bending over her tenderly. "He bade you be of good cheer, for all would be well; that you were to believe him innocent of everything; that he had never seen the woman before in all his life, and that no blow from him had struck her down. 'As long as May thinks me innocent,' he said, 'I can bear up through all.'"

"I think I will go to my room," stammered May, attempting to rise.

But the effort was too much for her; as she rose the room seemed to turn round with her, and she fell insensible into the lawyer's arms.

With the aid of Clare and a servant, Mrs. Raymond contrived, after a few moments, to bear the fainting girl to her own chamber, from which Clare quickly returned.

"This story has proved a terrible shock to her, Mr. Armstrong," she said, "though it is as well she heard it as she did from your lips. She must have learned the facts to-morrow, and, perhaps, not in so delicate a way."

The shrewd lawyer, accustomed to read character, had not passed unnoticed the strange looks which had crossed Clare's face as he was telling his sad narrative.

"What is your opinion of it all, Miss Raymond?" he asked abruptly.

She answered by another question.

"Are you our family solicitor as well as Mr. L'Estrange's, the one upon whom he depends to prove his innocence?"

"Certainly!" cried Paul Armstrong decisively. "I am his legal adviser, as I was his father's before him, and shall move heaven and earth to prove him innocent of this foul charge."

She gazed at him with a strange and inscrutable look.

"In that case, Mr. Armstrong," she said, "I would advise you to leave me and my opinions out of the matter altogether. Good night."

And with a low bow, which seemed to have a spice of mockery in it, she swept from the room.

The lawyer mused a moment ere he thought of taking his departure.

"That girl knows more than she cares to confess," he muttered. "Well, well, it's no use going in for cross-examinations to-night. We will wait and see how the affair goes off before the magistrates to-morrow. Dear me! I wish some one would come down. I can't go back to that poor fellow without any message at all."

After a little longer waiting he was relieved by the appearance of Mrs. Raymond.

"How is Miss Fielding?" he inquired. "Better, I hope—well enough to send a message? I really don't like the idea of facing Guy unless I can carry him a word of comfort."

Mrs. Raymond smiled through her tears.

And she fell insensible into the lawyer's arms.

"Tell him," she said, "that May sends assurances of her complete love and trust. She will be in court to-morrow, if possible, and all the countryside shall know that her faith in him is unbounded."

"That is famous," said the lawyer, rubbing his hands. "You share her sentiments and mine, of course?"

"In every way. I feel sure that Guy L'Estrange is innocent," replied Mrs. Raymond.

"And Miss Raymond?"

The lady of the lodge averted her head.

"My daughter is too upset even to talk over the matter," she said. "She has retired to her room."

"Ah!" was the lawyer's short but meaning rejoinder. "Good night, Mrs. Raymond. If I hear any good news, I will be over."

Guy had told his aunt the adventure at dinner time, and they were wondering what its meaning could be, when a servant entered with the news that a woman had been found nearly murdered in the woods.

The chief constable, accompanied by two of his men, had brought the news, and desired to see Mr. L'Estrange.

Guy at once hastened to meet him in the hall.

He found them awaiting him with very grave faces.

"This is a sad business Mr. Merton," he said. "Surely it cannot be that handsome girl I met in the woods today?"

"Hush!" cried the chief constable, raising his hand. "My duty is hard

Concluded on fourth page.

—"Charlotte, my dear, how is it I find you weeping? Have you had bad news from your husband?" "Oh, worse than that! Author writes me from Carlsbad that he would die with grief at being absent from me were it not that he gazes at my picture and covers it with a thousand kisses every day." "That is very nice of him; but surely you are not crying about that? Most woman would give anything to have such a poetic and devoted husband." "Oh, yes! Arthur is very poetical. But you don's know. Just to try him, I put mother's photo into his traveling-bag instead of my own, and the wretch has never found it out. Boo-hoo-hoo!"

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And 100 men to call at druggists, for a free package of Lane's Family Medicine, the great root and herb remedy, discoverd by Dr Silas Lane while in the Rocky mountains. For diseases of the blood, liver and kidneys it is a positive cure. For constipation and clearing up the complexion it does wonders. Children like it. Everyone praises it. Large size package, 50 cents. At all druggists'

—Even in the best regulated families, the thing that don't seem possible,' occur very often.

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A shocking accident occured at the Union Knitting Mills, whereby Isaac Cox was horribly mutilated. Red Flag Oil the Famous Pain Cure was quickly applied and recovery soon followed you can try this great remedy for 25 cents.

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—A marriage without love is immoral, I don't care how many forms you go through, I don't care if all the churches in the world, united beneath the dome of Heaven, filling all the air with incense, pronounce them wedded, if that sweet perfume called love does not arise there is no marriage.

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Allow a cough to run until it gets beyond the reach of medicine. They often say, "Oh, it will wear away, but in most cases it wears them away. Could they be induced to try the successful medicine called Kemp's Balsam, which is sold on a positive guarantee to cure, they would immediately see the excellent effect after taking the first dose. Price 50c and $1.00. Trial size free. At all druggists.

—Mr. Bertie—"Do you like the engagement ring, dearest?"

Miss Gertie—"Yes it is splendid, and so different from what the others have given me."

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—When a man thinks himself a genius, he lets his hair grow long; when a woman thinks she has a mission to fulfill in life, she cuts her hair short.

Gross Cruelty.

Parents too frequently permit their children to suffer from headache, fits, St. Vitus Dance, nervousness, etc., when they can be cured. Mrs. P. was cured of sick headache, dizziness, dyspepsia, nervous prostration of eighteen years standing, after failure of sixteen physicians; Mrs. K. of sick headache for 35 years; Mrs. P. of twenty to fifty fits a night; others from this vicinity could be mentioned who have been cured by that wonderful nerve food and medicine—Dr. Miles' Nervine, which contains no morphine, opium or dangerous drugs. Free sample bottles may be had at Biery's and Thomas' Drug Stores.

—Seedy customers at flower-show.—Nurserymen.

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—It is the man who can light good fires who is soonest able to hire others to light his fires for him.

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