#### Life's Mirage.

Sad would the salt waves be And cold the singing sea, dark the gulfs that echo to the sevenstringed lyre,

If things were what they seem, If earth had no fair dream, No mirage made to tip the dull sea line with

But on the shores of time, Hearing the breakers chime Falling by day and night along our human

The poet sits and sees, The phantom islands float a furlong from the

Content to know them there Hung in the shining air, He trims no foolish sail to win the hopeless

His vision is enough To feed his soul with love, And he who grasps too much may even him-Edmund Gosse. self be lost.

#### 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 zigzag 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 spearmint 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, a bundle on his back. He had been a dashing 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

"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,

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 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 spearmint, 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 Father Time has not stood still"

great fire of logs was blazing on the the returned wanderer with unaffected | the old place. 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. Softeyed 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 due 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- to look at it?"

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 cachinnation.

"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

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 with all his worldly goods balanced in 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 "tailoress" 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 widow and does tailorin' and plain home, and her cheek glowed scarlet when Mr. Sewell chuckled out:

"So the three old maids wouldn't | Hellen Forrest Graves. 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 little sprite who was a mixture of Clay. She, too, had found life a fail-Undine and Queen Mab. Then, surely, ure, and in her quiet way did all that she could to comfort the tall, quiet The light was shining out, as of old, man who had hired the spare chamber from the red-curtained casement, the in her father's house for a few weeks, since his cousins had altogether omithearth, and the three cousins greeted | ted to invite him to be their guest at

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 knowfor 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

"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 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 sun-dial 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 re-

He bent and kissed her forehead ten-

"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 omehow 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, nore 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!-

# 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 varying demand during the hours of skirted by hill ranges, affording exten sive views, the phenomenon of a ing 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 1888: battle, and when beholding it one can hardly wonder that old Thomas Robin son, in his "Short Treatise of Meteorol" ogy," 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 quot-

"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 partic ular man being killed by lightning are very small, yet the actual number o persons thus killed in a summer is sometimes startlingly large. Fortunate ly, lightning can be guarded against, and those who do not expose themselves out of doors during a thunderstorm 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 ac companied with noble thoughts.

#### TOPICS OF THE DAY.

Official reports show that railroad accidents are steadily increasing in number and fatality in the United

British government figures estimate that one-fifth of £350,000,000 earned by the British workingmen and women yearly goes for beer and liquor.

It is said that the Bible revisers find the "rayens" which fed Elijah were gypsies, according to the original, and that the originally word used was "rovers."

The Georgia gold mining belt extends from Virginia to Alabama and Florida, with an average width of 130 miles. Thousands of men are engaged in working the mines. In one place in Lumpkins county there are 27 stamp mills, each employing from 10 to 50 men. This statement of the extent and value of the gold mines of Georgia will probably surprise most Northern people.

John Pearson, a trembling old man, who has been a resident of Fort Smith. Ark., for forty-three years, claims to have been the actual inventor of the revolver patented by Colonel Colt. He says that in 1834, while he was working in Baltimore with a gunsmith named Baxter, Colonel Colt hired him to make experiments, which resulted in the perfected revolver, with six charges in the cylinder and one barrel. Pearson never received any reward for his invention.

A little twelve-years-old girl in Knoxville, Iowa, was frightened to death during the night by a severe thunder storm. She had been quite well the day before, but awoke during the storm and besought her mother to take her to her bed, "for she was afraid of thunder." Her supplications were unheeded, and soon the mother was aroused by the child's difficult breathing. Approaching the bed with a light she found her dying, and in a few minutes she breathed her last.

The Japanese authorities are about to devote special attention to the capabilities and prospects of Japan as a teaproducing country. In response to numerous applications from tea cultivators, they have decided to invite delegates from the various tea growing districts throughout the country, who will meet at Kobe next October. Japan Mail adds that, if possible, the authorities will take the opportunity of holding at the same time and place an exhibition of the different varieties of Japanese tea, and of objects connected with their production and prepparation.

There is a man employed in the Philadelphia gas-works whose fidelity for almost half a century deserves recognition. He is a hale old man of eighty years, and his name is Timothy Keating. Forty-seven years ago he was brought from England to teach the manufacture of gas in Philadelphia, and he has never once been absent from his post in working hours during that long period of service. For twenty years his duty has been to regulate the pressure of gas according to the darkness and he goes to work every evening at six o'clock.

The following is the estimated railway mileage of the world January 1,

United States, - 113,000 Australia - - 3,200 Europe, - - 109,000 Africa, - - - 2,200 Asia. - - - 8,000 Mexico, - - 2,100 South America, 7,000 Canada, - - 8,500 Grand total, 253,000

These figures, says the Chicago Railway Age, are not claimed to be exact. It is absolutely impossible to obtain official returns for the same period within a year or two after date, and so it is necessary to use the latest available statement and add the probable increase since that time.

Once in a while a dishonest man shows the sincerity of his reformation in something more tangible than words. In Quincy, Ill., a few years ago, a man occupying a position of trust stole \$10,000 and decamped to Mexico. According to the popular belief, his ill-gotten wealth ought to have brought nothing but disaster to him; but on the contrary, the investments that he made brought him a handsome fortune. As he now had plenty of money, his conscience impelled him to restore the money which he had stolen. He did so; and having a competence, will probably be strictly honest in the future.

A club of fourteen-years-old boys in ized to compete with one another in Monthly.

he cultivation of one acre of corn each. The lad who produces the largest crop of corn on his acre is to receive five bushels of corn from each of the other members of the club. Each selects his own acre and manures and cultivates it to suit himself. Suppose there are twenty members of the club; the lucky one will receive ninety-five bushels of corn, which will be a handsome premium. Every member will be benefited by the increased yield and the practical experience of Two pointed shoes, two spindle shanks, all secured by the contest.

The danger of uncovering the head at the grave on the occasion of a funeral, is causing consderable discussion in the papers here and in England. The London Telegraph says on this subject: "Many of the distinguished and more elderly mourners at the interment of the Duke of York died from bronchitis within a few weeks of the royal obsequies; the Marquis of Londonderry's funeral in Westminster abbey in 1822 was equally disastrous to the aged or delicate among those who gathered around his tomb; and the funeral in Pere La Chaise of the celebrated French jurisconsult M. Robert de St. Vincent is said to have decimated the senior ranks of the Paris bar, one of the victims being Brillat Savarin, the author of the 'Physiologie du Gout.' "

Dr. Mary Howard, an American woman doctor, is creating quite a stir in social life in China. She attended the mother of Prince Li Hung Chang, and although she did not save her life, she showed so much skill that she was called in to treat the wife of the great minister. From all parts of North China letters from the wives of mandarins and high officials are pouring in on her, entreating her to come to them or to "send other wise women from America." Eastern women of rank die with obscure diseases rather than submit to operations performed by surgeons. An American physician who spent some time in Turkey was called in to prescribe for the wife of the bey ill with typhoid fever. The patient was wholly covered with a heet in which one hole was cut large enough for him to put his fingers in to feel her pulse, and another through which she thrust her tongue. Dr. Howard has been loaded not only with fees by her grateful patients, but jewelry, furniture and priceless curiosities enough to stock a bric-a-brack ware-Go East, young women, go

# Chinese Thrift.

It seems that notwithstanding the vigorous and complicated anti-Chinese egislation in California, and the new treaty forbidding the emigration of Chinese laborers to this country, the Pacific coast beyond all other races. They have secured control of several manufactures and trades, and no effort can avail to overthrow the monopoly. It is said the pork trade is entirely in their hands, and every pound of fresh hog meat eaten in San Francisco pays tribute to a Chinaman. When they ompete for a trade they not only secure it, but monopolize it. They enjoy a monopoly of the clotheswashing industry, and none can compete with them, cigars, and in spite of their repeat come, but those already there are thriving in spite of the opposition to them, of the population.

# Not Always Fatal.

A clinical proof of the fact that a few trichinæ can be swallowed without fatal result is related by M. Rathery in a French journal of medicine He found a man with numerous nodules (each about the size of a pea) located about his waist. One of these nodules, when examined, was found to contain a trichinæ parasite, which had probably made its way from the stomach to the surface of the body. When but a few are taken at once, sometimes they skirmish about the body till they find a resting place without causing any great distress, but when a large number are swallowed at a meal they pierce the tissues in many directions and cause so much disturbance as to Webster parish, La., has been organ- kill the subject.-Dr. Foote's Health

The Dude. "What is the dude, papa?" she said, With sweet and inquiring eyes; And to the knowledge-seeking maid Her daddy thus replies: A weak mustache a cicarette. A thirteen-button vest, A curled-rim hat-a minaret-

A pair of bags, a lazy drawl, A lack-a-daisy air, For gossip at the club or ball Some little "past affair."

Complete the nether charms,

Two watch chains across the breast.

And follow fitly in the ranks, 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 dade. -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 con-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 chisseled 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

Rill its prey with its bill, and the hightoned 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 physi-

cian, "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 Mongolians manage to prosper on the 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 They monopolize the business of mak- and mystic superstition, which dates far back to the earliest ages of Christi ed pledges not to smoke Chinese-made anity. When good King Arthur of cigars, the San Francisco smokers Britain, founded his famous round tasmoke nothing else, except a few im- ble, he secured the services of the enported brands. They are now gradual- chanter, Merlin, to devise and arrange ly securing the manufacture of boots the seats. This famous sorcerer acand shoes, brooms and underwear; cordingly arranged among others thirindeed, it is asserted that one-half of teen seats to represent the Apostles, the manufacturing business in the city twelve for the faithful adherents of is performed by the hated Mongolians our Lord and the thirteenth for the who, Kearney said, must go, but who traitor Judas. The first were never never went. The Chinese population occupied save by knights distinguished of California is not increasing, of course, above all others for their valor and as the new treaty forbids them to prowess, and in the event of a death occurring among them the seat remained vacant until a knight surpassand will probably remain forever a part ing 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 scat, 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.