A GREAT MISTAKE.

CHAPTER XLIX.

When Mrs. Batters came to call "her young lady" next morning, Lucy looked so pale that, though she was nearly dressed, the old woman would have had her gone back to bed and let her bring her a cup of tea.

The girl smiled and shook her head. Who would give George his breakfast if she were not down stairs in time.

"I am quite well," she said nodding in a reassuring way at the old servant's anxious face; "only I lay awake a long time last night, thinking."

"That is what you have no right to do at your age, Miss Lucy," returned Batters crossly. "What will the master say to your white cheeks?"

Lucy rubbed the forlorn little cheeks with a rough towel and tied some pretty ribbons in her bright hair.

"There!" she said, holding up her face to be kissed. "Am I rosy enough now, you dear old scold?"

She ran down stairs while the fictitious color still glowed faintly in her cheeks, making the dark shadows under her eyes look less heavy, and into the breakfast room, where she found that George had not yet made his appearance. It was a bitter cold morning, and a bleak wind was blowing across the bare and cheerless square; the few people who were out walked quickly past the window, with reddened faces and coat collars turned up.

Lucy went to the fire and stirred it, sending a cheerful blaze to flicker on the silver and china of the breakfast table; she drew George's chair to the hearth, and laid his newspapers and letters near it. His boots were standing by the fender; the urn came in, bright and steaming, and a warm fragrance of coffee filled the room.

She knelt down to warm her fingers while the servant disposed of the dishes; and, as her eyes turned to the bleak dark sky, and then back to the cheerful hearth, a little shudder ran through her.

"Thank Heaven for home!" the girl was thinking, though perhaps in not so many words, as she laid her pretty heavy head involuntarily down on the arm of the Doctor's chair.

She was watching rather nervously for George's step. Had Ada told him? She wondered painfully; and had he this fresh annoyance to carry about in his mind all day?

She saw by the young man's face, when he came in, that he had been told. The kind little nod and smile with which he wished her good morning were as forced as her own color. He buried himself at once in the Barlaston Herald, and Lucy poured out his coffee in silence. They never did speak much to each other until Ada came down; and to-day Mrs. March was late.

"Ada is better, I hope?" Lucy said at last, when George laid down the paper and began to look at his letters.

"She will not be down," he answered coldly. "Perhaps, Lucy, you will see that her breakfast is brought up to her—and he busied himself with the letters, and did not speak for the rest of the meal."

When the brougham came round to the door however, and the Doctor was about to start, he said, as he took his hat and gloves from Lucy—

"If you are going to venture out to-day, child, I wish you would call in Upper Brunswick street and tell Bee I have some work for Maria. You must go and see Bee as often as you can; it will cheer you both up."

Lucy nodded. She would not trust herself to speak, but ran and opened the door in order to hide the quick tears that sprang to her eyes. She stood and watched him drive away in the bitter morning air, and then, shivering a little, and rubbing her hands, she went up stairs. And the pain at her heart was aching more sorely than ever.

The invalid looked flurried and upset when Lucy went to help her to dress. Ada had been sitting with her, she explained. The poor thing was greatly distressed, and suffering still from the effects of last night's scene. She had felt quite unable to go down to breakfast.

"What did George say?" the widow inquired eagerly. "Is he still annoyed?"

"Dear auntie," Lucy said gently, "you cannot think that George would speak to me about it. I am afraid he is upset."

"I never thought it would come to this," remarked poor Mrs. Ludlow, beginning to cry; and from her nervous and disjointed sentences Lucy gathered that Doctor March had spoken angrily to his wife, and that he had forbidden her to receive young Throgmorton again.

"I consider Bee Throgmorton's behavior inexcusable, Mrs. Ludlow said, her poor thin hands trembling with excitement. "No matter what favors we may have received from her mother, that does not give her the right to come here and insult Ada in her own house."

"Dear auntie," Lucy pleaded, "Bee only wanted to explain about Jack. She did not mean any insult to Ada. Jack has always been troublesome to his family. And—and—oh, aunt Letitia," the girl burst out, blushing painfully, "I do think Ada let him go about with her too much. I was afraid George did not like it."

"Do you think yourself a better judge, then, of George's feelings than his wife?" retorted the widow, trembling more and more.

Lucy's blushes all faded suddenly away.

"No—of course not," she faltered. "I did not mean that, auntie."

"It looks very like it. And I think, Lucy, if you would divide your attentions a little more equally in the house, it would become you better."

"I don't understand you, aunt Letitia," the girl stammered. "I try to do my best for you all."

"Oh, try!" repeated Mrs. Ludlow excitedly. "It is no wonder, I think, that my poor girl seeks for a little amusement outside when her own home is made so unhappy to her."

"Auntie!"

"And it is rather hard that every little innocent thing she does should be so misjudged because she is surrounded by girls who set up for being better than everybody else!"

Two bright spots were burning in the invalid's wan cheeks as she spoke.

"I hope Bee and I do not set to be that," answered poor Lucy, with pale dry lips. This attack was so sudden, so unexpected, she did not know how to meet it. "I suppose you refer to both of us, aunt Letitia?"

Mrs. Ludlow did not answer.

"When a man is always suggesting invidious comparisons," she went on rapidly, "it takes all heart out of his wife. George has been used to a country life and to women brought up in a quiet way. He does not make allowances for poor Ada's previous habits."

"How could he be more patient and more generous than he is?" urged Lucy, with a certain indignant pathos. "Oh, aunt Letitia, let Ada find as much fault as she likes with me, but she ought not to say a word against her husband—he has been so good to us all!"

"That is just it," cried the invalid—"to us all!" My poor girl has never been alone with her husband since her honeymoon; she has never really assumed the control of her own house. What with Mrs. Batters, and your perpetual fussing after George, Ada feels that she is nobody. There is nothing for her to do; she is not needed even in the nursery."

Lucy listened in painful bewilderment.

"And, when she tries to forget her troubles and to amuse herself," Mrs. Ludlow continued hurriedly, "people talk. She cannot help being attractive. I dare say the women would be very glad if she shut herself up from one end of the year to the other; but that is a little too much to expect at her age."

"No one expects it, aunt Letitia," Lucy forced herself to say. "Why should you think so?"

But Mrs. Ludlow was not to be checked in the outpouring of her latest grievance; and Lucy saw that the poor thing was speaking with a feverish and eager earnestness not usual to her little fits of complaining.

"Her husband is hardly ever at home," she went on, "and I am but a dull companion, goodness knows, for a young woman like her. Poor girl! It is not her fault if she has no taste for dirty children and stifling hospital wards."

"Dear aunt Letitia," said Lucy gently, "I go very seldom now to Primrose Alley or the hospital."

"Indeed!" Mrs. Ludlow answered, with a kind of desperation. "It was high time you gave them up. No young wife would care to have her cousin meeting her husband day after day in such places. I am sure I I wonder at my poor angel's patience all this time."

Lucy stood up now, thoroughly amazed and startled.

"Have I been doing wrong?" she asked. "Is it I who have been the cause of Ada's unhappiness? Oh, auntie"—the girl hid her face in her hands, with a low wailing cry—"why did you not tell me all this long ago?"

"Tell you what?" cried the widow, a little startled at the effect of her words. "I am telling you nothing but what you might have seen plainly enough for yourself. But why should you? You have got a home here for life. What did it matter whether poor Ada was miserable or not?"

Lucy lifted her face from her hands, and, with eyes full of anguish regarded the speaker.

"I did my best to make her happy," she answered quietly—"indeed I did my best!"

"You refused to marry Mr. Olifaunt," protested the invalid, casting aside all reserve. "You preferred to remain here; and I do not think your decision has been for the happiness either of Ada or George."

Lucy started and clenched her two hands as if smitten with some sharp pain.

"You think then," she said faintly, "that my presence in the house is disagreeable to them both, that they would be happier if I were gone?"

"I do. I was opposed to all this from the first; I know what men are. It is always the poor wife who is at a disadvantage. They do not consider all that she has to go through; and a girl is always at their beck and call to run up and down for them and smile and make herself agreeable, and——"

Mrs. Ludlow paused suddenly, alarmed at Lucy's white face.

"You understand me, my dear, I hope?" she said, with anxiety. "I don't say, Lucy, but that you have been a very good girl; but——"

"I understand you, aunt Letitia," Lucy answered, in a dull slow way. "I—I am going to think about it. I will come back."

She went to her room and put on her fur jacket and cap; she felt that she must go out somewhere and be quite alone—away from the sight of George's home and the sound of his child's voice—and try to think calmly of the words which were still ringing horribly in her ears.

She met no one on her way down stairs; and, letting herself out unseen, she began almost to run along the frost-bound flags. Unconsciously she was making in the direction of King's Road. Since they had left the little villa she had often, for the love of old days, walked by the green wooden gate; and now her feet instinctively took the familiar turnings which brought her near it.

It was too cold for any one to be out; the suburban road was almost deserted. Lucy saw the light of happy home fires burning in the houses which she passed; the children were at play in their nurseries, she thought vaguely, imagining little stories about Jack Frost, and looking out with longing eyes at the slides by the roadside.

They were so happy and warm, and she was very cold, wretched and stupefied—she almost forgot why, for a time, as she walked on faster and faster. She felt as if she were somebody else looking at poor Lucy Thrale, and wondering why she was out on such a day with such a great aching in her breast and such a lump in her throat.

It was the sight of the old gate that reminded her first of what had happened. She gave a little cry as she saw it, and put her hands confusedly to her head.

What was it they had said? That George's home was unhappy, and all through her? Yes, she remembered now; and she had come out to think about it, and about the best means for leaving Barlaston without telling any one that she was going away.

This was where she used to live. It was in the pretty old garden under the church tower and in the little room up there so close to the roof that she used to sit and think about her cousin's marriage to Doctor March, the marriage that she could have broken off by speaking one word, and which she had allowed — Heaven forgive her!—to go on.

And yet she had not thought of herself, of her own desires and happiness at all. She had prayed to be enabled to forget these, and to think only of the happiness of those who had been good to her, and for whom she had made the bitter sacrifice. This is what she had tried to do; and now what had befallen them all? To what dreadful pass had h come?

George's home was unhappy—that what people said—and it was she who made it so, she, who was wasting her own existence in vain efforts to repair the harm she had blindly done.

Oh, it was hard! If they only knew would they say such cruel things?

Was her fault so great that it deserved this terrible punishment? She had been crazed with pain and dread in those days, she had been afraid to yield to her own wishes, at the cost of so much suffering to others, and this was what it had ended in!

It nearly drove her wild to think of George. She cared for no one else now. She felt that, if she could have had the last two years over again, she would have considered no one but him—no one at all.

It was not love that swelled in her bursting heart—there was no thought of such a feeling—but an agony of gratitude and pity and nameless yearning, such as she believed would haunt her to her dying day.

He had been so good to her—so manly, so forgiving, so tender. And she—she had kept silent when a word would have prevented all this misery. She had been weak and cowardly and minded too much what people said and thought; and this was what she had brought about—hearts torn and bleeding which but for her might have been happy; a noble life dragged down with paltry and unworthy cares; a wrong done which no repentance could undo or tears wash out.

And, after all, she would be obliged to go away. The misery she had made would endure always, but she would not be permitted to try to lighten it. She must go. She had always been afraid to face the word by herself, but her cowardice had not saved her from it.

It was all over. She could only bow her head. She had no right to complain. For a long time she had been sheltered and cherished and indulged; she had been lifted above the sorrows and perils of her old lonely life, and had shared the sunshine of George's home. She would not shrink now from bearing her part of that burden of darker days that had fallen on it. To her by right, she sadly thought, belonged the heaviest share; and it must be borne in silence, or she might as well lay it weakly down by the roadside.

Cold and bewildered, Lucy pushed open the green gate, and found herself on the little gravelled sweep with its border of black and leafless beds. The house was still empty. The dark and grimy windows blinked coldly at her wistful eyes as she crept up to the steps and sat down.

The wind swayed the leafless poplars above her head. She thought that she would have liked to go into the house. She would have liked to stand in the very room where George had stood that day and kept silence for her sake, though silence meant misery to him, such misery as she had then hardly comprehended. But the house was locked up.

She sat down on the steps, with her head in her two little cold hands, and thought out her plan.

She would write to kind Lady Susan and beg her to take her in. She felt that she must go a long way off, or she would never be able to keep from rushing back to the old house in the square and to little Geordie. If Lady Susan said "Yes," she would tell them at home that she was going on a little visit: and when she was safe at a distance, she would write and explain to Ada that she was not coming back.

Yes; that was the best plan she could think of. She stood up, very stiff and cold and weary, and gave a last look round the desolate lawn; and just then the church clock began to strike with the familiar half forgotten clang from the ivied tower. The sound sent a shiver through the girl's body, and she burst into a flood of bitter tears.

"Many and many a happy hour it has struck for me," she sobbed, "but it will not strike any more. I am going away. It is all I can do now. It is the one poor sacrifice I can make for George. He has given me his life; I am not ungrateful. But all I can do for him is to go away."

CHAPTER LV.

When George March knew that Lucy's visit to Lady Susan had been a pretext for leaving his house, and that she was not coming back, he spent what seemed to him then the bitterest hour of his life.

Not all his love and care for the poor child, it seemed, had been able to save her from the fate she most dreaded. The protection he had so confidently promised her was no longer in his power to bestow. She had gone out of his reach now, and her poor false mistaken sacrifice had wrought no good to him, or to herself, or to the woman whom he had married. It had been a mistake—a terrible, cruel mistake—and life was over for them all before they had well begun to live.

The Doctor communicated immediately with Lady Susan, who was immensely interested in and touched by his letters. She thought, looking at the sweet pale face of her young governess, and seeing the girl's gentle indifference to the admiration of the young men who came to the Rectory, that she could partly guess at Lucy's story.

"Doctor March has written to me about you, Miss Thrale," she said kindly one day, "I must take good care of you, it seems, or I shall have him coming to carry you off from me and the children."

Lucy flushed with a sad delight. It was nothing new for George to be thinking of her and taking care of her, but it seemed sweeter than ever now that she was so far away.

She wrote home very often, long and cheerful letters, describing her new life and the people by whom she was surrounded. They were all very kind to her, and the children were very nice; it was very quiet and homelike in the Rector's household.

Mrs. March used to read her cousin's letters eagerly, and replied to them in the prettiest possible way. She gently reproached Lucy with having found Barlaston a little dull, adding however that she did not blame her for seeking a change, and reminding her that her home was always waiting for her when she chose to return.

As time went on and accounts came from Lucy—who was anxious, poor child, to paint the brightest side of her new life—of visitors in the house, and of all sorts of quiet gaieties in which the little governess was expected to share, Mrs. March became more and more interested in the letters from Silverdale. She declared gaily, when answering them, that she was growing jealous of Lady Susan, and that, if that kind lady did not very soon ask her to come and have a peep at dear Lucy, they must expect to see her take them by storm some day. Was there not an inn in the village, she inquired, where she could find shelter for a week or so.

These letters however were not shown to Lady Susan, as the writer had perhaps intended they should be; and so Mrs. March's threat of invading the village of Silverdale with her army of imperials was never carried out.

It was about this time that Ada declared it to be her duty to reduce the household expenses. She smilingly warned her dear, foolish, noble George that thenceforth he must not expect so much in the way of comfort if he would persist in maintaining his stepmother's family, in keeping up an unlimited sick kitchen for the benefit of his poor patients, and in living in their charming ruinous old barracks, which required so many servants to keep it in perfect order.

"I don't want my clever husband to be a mere provincial physician all his life," she would add, with gentle pride. "I have more ambition than that; and I mean to begin and save money for you, you dear, generous spendthrift, since you will not do it for yourself, sir."

Before many days, old Batters came to the Doctor's study, and told him with tears in her eyes that she was going away, and begged that her duty might be sent to Miss Lucy.

The young man smothered an exclamation of annoyance, and inquired if she had been dismissed by Mrs. March. But the old woman explained quietly that she was going of her own free will, and that it would be impossible for her to remain any longer.

"I've saved enough in the old Doctor's time and in yours, sir, to keep me very comfortable," she said; "and I'm going home to my daughter's to live. But I could have wished to say good bye to my young lady before I went away."

In answer to her husband's remonstrance, Mrs. March assured him gently that she had herself, out of consideration for him, begged the old housekeeper to remain.

"I told her that I was quite sure you would willingly continue to pay her her wages, though there was really nothing for her to do in the house. Of course one does not willingly part with a faithful servant, even when she is superannuated."

George sighed and let poor Batters go. Her place was taken in the household by a lady's maid who had formerly been in Miss Ludlow's service, and who, having been refused a character by her last employer—a lady of rank—had found out Mrs. March's address and applied to her for a situation.

"Tucker can look after Geordie," Ada told her husband, "and so save us the expense of a nurse. She is really quite invaluable as a maid, and will lessen my dressmaker's bill by half."

So little Geordie was parted from his faithful Nannie, as he called the rosy cheeked Susan, to whom he had been entrusted since his birth, and Tucker reigned in the nursery as well as over her mistress' toilet.

The little fellow was so winning in his budding baby graces that perhaps he suffered less from the change than poor Mrs. Ludlow.

With Lucy gone and poor old Batters dismissed, without even Susan's rosy and friendly face to look in upon her occasionally, the invalid was condemned to many solitary hours under the new regime. Even kind Mary Throgmorton found it difficult to come and go with the old ease, now that Bee and Jack were unable to accompany her to the Doctor's house. But, for poor Letitia's sake, she preserved; and certainly Ada received her with undiminished cordiality.

Mrs. March made a point of asking after Jack each time that she met his mother, and of sending him some sisterly and cheering message. She frankly admitted her change of feeling towards Bee, whose maladroit interference had led to such unforseen consequences; but she assured Mrs. Throgmorton that she should always entertain the friendliest regard for poor Jack, who had been her champion ever since she first came to Barlaston.

"It is of course impossible for me to discuss dear George's action in this matter," she would add, with gentle dignity, "even with you, dear Mrs. Throgmorton. A wife may deplore her husband's errors, but she can but sympathise with his distress, no matter how mistaken. The wisest of men are prone to jealousy, I believe, though they do consider that such an essentially feminine failing. I hardly know whether to laugh or to sigh when I think of it all."

Poor Mary Throgmorton was in no such doubt unfortunately.

Now that Jack was practically banished from the house in the square, the foolish boy seemed to find considerable satisfaction in rendering his devotion Mrs. March more conspicuous than ever. Wherever the lady went, young Throgmorton was sure to be seen. At church, though he shunned the family pew, he sat every Sunday within sight of her flaxen head, and never took his eyes off her during the service. He followed her on the opposite side of the street when he happened to meet her; he secured a seat near hers at the town hall, or in the little theater, and fixed his gaze on her instead of the performance. People began to talk about it. Mrs. Throgmorton went into her son's bedroom one night, and knelt down by his bed, praying him to cease this disastrous behavior—to think of his sister—of their old friend Doctor March.

"Can I not even look at a pretty woman," the young man cried violently, "without exciting the comments of this cursed little hole? George March has chosen to make himself ridiculous—that is his look out! I am not answerable for the construction Barlaston sees fit to put on the most harmless acts."

Tom Throgmorton, for his kind Mary's sake, had tried to shut his eyes to a great deal that perplexed and annoyed him in the lad's conduct; but through an accident the inevitable disclosure was made of the troubles in Beaudesert Gardens, of which Jack was principally the cause, and then Mary's husband was wrought to great anger.

It happened that Doctor March, driving one day along one of the less frequented suburban roads, saw his wife and young Throgmorton talking together. The boy stood with his hand on the little pony carriage in which Ada was sitting, and was bending over her in very eager conversation. The Doctor's impulse was to stop and speak to them; but, before he could do so, they had separated, and Jack, lifting his hat, walked back quickly in the direction of the town.

George demanded of his wife that evening when she had last seen young Throgmorton, and Ada, after a hardly perceptible pause admitted that she had that morning met him on the South Road, and that he had spoken to her and complained of the ridiculous and cruel position in which he was placed by her husband and by his own family.

"You do not, I suppose, mind my speaking to the poor boy when we meet, dear George?" Mrs March asked gently, as she went on with her embroidery. "I am afraid, if I cut him on all occasions so determinedly, people will begin to laugh at us all,"

"I am afraid they are doing that already," said poor George sadly. "I consider that you acted injudiciously to day in stopping to speak to a young man whom you cannot receive in your own house."

"Whom you have asked me not to receive, dear," corrected Ada, smiling. "I know of no reason myself why poor Jack should not come here just as usual."

"Except that it is my wish," said the Doctor curtly.

"That of course! And of course I have yielded to your wish, dear George."

"In the letter of it perhaps."

Ada shrugged her shoulders gently.

"That ought to satisfy the local Mrs Grundy," she said with a somewhat weary little smile. "For your own sake, dear George—and who can have your interests so sincerely at heart, pray, sir?—I must decline to yield any further to what I cannot but consider your very ungenerous restrictions. I do not seek poor Jack, Heaven knows; but, if accident throws him in my way, I must really be allowed to use my own discretion as to what follows. Is it not better, dear George"—she looked into her husband's moody and disturbed face as she spoke, with a winning little air—"for me to tell you so frankly than to promise acquiescence and find myself unable to fulfil the promise."

George got up and walked away. Had she any heart in her cool white body, he wondered—this woman whom he had married? Could she indeed have in her veins any of the same blood as ran in Lucy Thrale's? Had she a thought in the world for anything outside of her own frivolous and vain fancies. Had wifehood, motherhood, and all their tears and pangs and joys passed over her and left her untouched by their sacred influences?

The young man felt half frightened sometimes when he looked at the dainty smiling little shape and listened to her silvery talk. She was the same gentle and well bred Ada whom he remembered in the little villa in King's Road; in those days he used to think her a sensible and modest girl enough—not very strong or deep, but harmless and agreeable. What glamour had been over his eyes that he had failed to see through the mask she habitually wore. What had his little lost Lucy not endured during her year of servitude; and how had she come to ruin their two lives for the sake of that smiling unreal bundle of millinery up stairs.

It was after this scene that George March went and spoke to Tom Throgmorton himself about his rebellious young son. Poor George was not ashamed of this tacit admission that his wife was indifferent to his wishes and practically beyond his control. It was too late, he considered, for such scruples.

"Jack has got some romantic notion into his head, sir, that he is being persecuted," he said, with his melancholy smile, "and my wife takes his part; and the consequence is that, so long as Jack stops in Barlaston, people will find something to make mischief out of. It is very silly and very paltry; but between them, you see, they are contriving to make us all very uncomfortable."

Tom Throgmorton looked aghast at the unhappy fellow who was doing his best to put a good face on the matter, and he swore a great and passionate oath. The boy should leave Barlaston that very day.

Jack met his order with a flat refusal. In vain the poor mother tried to heal this last worst breach between father and son. Mr. Throgmorton declared that from that day forth he was done with Jack, that he washed his hands of him, that the boy was no boy of his to behave in such a blackguardly manner.

"All right, sir!" cried Jack, with a laugh, springing up from the table when his father flung his hard words at him in his wrath. "You shall not say it twice! You've turned me out at last, and, by Heaven, I'll never come back to the house again!"

He kissed his mother on the forehead as she clung crying to his arm, and rushed away, upsetting his glass in his flight. There was only his empty place left, and the great red stain on the cloth. It spread and spread. Bee sat and stared at it as if she were fascinated.

Jack kept his word about not coming back to the house, but he did not leave Barlaston. He got some sort of employment; he took rooms in an out of-the way street and refused utterly to see his mother when she came to his door.

Mrs. March received the news of this fresh disturbance with a forbearing smile.

"For so clever a man, dear George," she said, shaking her little flaxen head at him, "you have displayed as little tact as 's possible. I hope that at last Miss Throgmorton is content. For my part, I should have doubted the policy of driving a young man of Jack's temperament to desperation."

Poor Lucy, away in her pleasant Devonshire school-room, knew nothing of George's daily increasing misery. The accounts Mrs. Throgmorton brought back latterly from the house in the square would have broken the girl's heart if she could have heard them. Bee felt that it was useless to repeat them. It seemed as if there was no help for it, any more than for all the other trouble that had fallen on them within the past few years. And how could Lucy have stayed away if she had known how little Geordie was being gradually neglected by the overworked maid, who was compelled to leave him alone for hours, shut in with his grandmother in close air, and pining for the sun, while Tucker and her mistress were busy at their dressmaking?

Doctor March was so little at home that he suspected nothing of all this, and had hardly time to notice that the child was becoming violent in his temper and rude in his habits. A hurried visit to the nursery before he went out in the morning, a little romp of half an hour when he got home in time—this was all that the Doctor was able to see of his little son, round whom nevertheless all the wasted love of the man's strong heart seemed to be gathering.

"Is not Geordie outgrowing his clothes, grandmamma, or something?" he asked one evening when he had found the little fellow playing about in Mrs. Ludlow's room and looking somewhat neglected as to his little garments.

Poor Mrs. Ludlow flushed. The Doctor had come home earlier than usual.

"Tucker has not had time to change his frock," she said. "Ada is going out this evening, and they are very busy. I will see that he is washed and dressed earlier to-morrow, George."

With a sudden pang at his heart, George lifted the little fellow and carried him down to his study. The fire was nearly out; but the young man turned up the gas and set the boy down on the carpet to play, while he got himself into his shooting-jacket and slippers.

"Geordie will stay with papa," he said tenderly. "Papa will buy him some toys to-morrow to play with every evening in his study."

CHAPTER LVI.

So the seasons came and went—seed time and rose time and harvest, and Christmas bells ringing across the happy fields at Croome, for the fourth time, as George drearily reckoned, since his marriage. By the time the winds of March came blustering and rattling about the old house in the square, Lucy had been a year away—a dull dreadful year in George March's life, though he sometimes told himself that he was getting used to his wretchedness.

Lucy did not know how far she seemed now from the young man whose love still followed her with faithful kindness. He thought sometimes that it must have been in some other world she had come to meet him with her cool sweet morning face, or had drawn back the curtains of the lamp lit drawing room to flash a bright welcome at him when he drove up at night to the door.

He did not often allow himself to think of such things; he worked harder than ever, if that were possible, devising all manner of out door occupations, and finding his one gleam of happiness in the hour the child now spent every evening in his study. The Doctor made haste home that he might secure this pleasure for himself and Geordie. Mrs. March, not being at all likely to miss the little fellow from the nursery, George and his boy were allowed to be happy together in the room where the little empty blue chair still stood, and where deep down in the drawer of the Doctor's writing table, lay Lucy's manuscript, a flower or two that she had worn and dropped, and the little ball of scarlet wool that she had been winding on that last sad day in the garden.

This was the young man's one delight.

He was estranged from his old friends; his home was become merely a place in which to eat and sleep, his wife a thought of daily increasing terror. The kind people at Croome and in Upper Brunswick street looked on, helpless to relieve their old friend's unhappiness. For his sake they would have tried to be friendly with his wife, but Ada smilingly rejected all their advances.

During the winter which was just over, Minnie Bryer, while on a visit to a neighboring town, had made an important conquest, and, having married very well, was now Mrs. Solomons, with a fine house in a Birmingham suburb and carriages and smart dresses and jewels, in addition to a pallid little husband with a tuft on his chin and three rings on his little finger.

Mrs. Solomons was just then staying on a visit to her mother's house—not unwilling to display her trousseau to the friends of her girlhood, and especially to Mrs. March, with whom she renewed her old intimacy. They went about everywhere together. Mrs. Solomons declared that dear Ada must come and stay with her at Normanhurst, by which high sounding title her new home was known.

"We will get up some fun together," said the bride, showing all her dimples in a contented smile. "Barlaston is awfully slow. I will have a houseful of people to meet you; it will be awfully jolly"

Minnie looked, with a little good humored contempt, round Mrs. March's carefully arranged drawing room while she was speaking.

"What a mercy it was that Ada came to Barlaston after all!" she was thinking placidly. "If Doctor March had proposed to me, I should never have met Albert or lived at Normanhurst."

Janet declared coldly that Minnie was foolish to take up Mrs. March. Most people were dropping her; she was certainly not a desirable companion for any young married woman. But Mrs. Minnie, tossing her head, retorted that Janet knew nothing whatever about what was or was not desirable for young married women, and recommended her sister to stick to her societies and tracts.

Doctor March saw that this renewed intimacy led to a good deal of fresh extravagence on his wife's part, and that she was out almost the whole day long with Mrs. Solomons; but he was not aware that it had also been the means of bringing Ada and Jack Throgmorton together again in the most natural way in the world. Mrs. March was of opinion that it would be unwise to cause any discussion by pointedly avoiding the young fellow when she met him at the Bryers' or at the houses of their particular friends, with whom she was now becoming very intimate; and her manner towards him was invariably marked with such pretty discretion that the most exacting moralist could have taken no exception to it.

After a while Mr. and Mrs. Solomons went back to Birmingham, and Barlaston lapsed once more into its normal dulness.

The winter was over; the early spring was breaking greenly in the square; the Doctor's life kept soberly on, and he was thankful in those days for a comparative tranquillity. Geordie was growing a splendid little fellow, passionately fond of his father and very domineering to his grandmother, whose feeble life seemed to be fading away as swiftly as the boy's grew in strength and vigor day by day. Lucy, writing home her tender messages to the child and praying for him by her little lonely bed, knew nothing of the undesirable influences among which he was growing up. She was satisfied that her absence had restored at least an outward peace to George's home, and was thankful for the bright tone of Ada's letters.

Bee had tried to induce Lucy to come and stay with her for a few weeks, but without success. Lucy wrote back gaily that she was not sufficiently hard-worked to require a holiday, and that she was going abroad with Lady Susan in the autumn. It was evident that she was resolved not to return to Barlaston.

But one day Mrs. March spoke to her husband on this very subject, greatly to his surprise.

"Lady Susan and the children are going to the Pyrenees," she said, with gentle vexation. "Somehow or other that seems to take dear Lucy much farther away from us than ever. Why should not she come back to us? I am sure she must have repented of this little governess freak long ago."

"I doubt it," returned the Doctor dryly.

"Well of course they are very kind, and it is quite too charming that she has been so fortunate in pleasing Lady Susan; but after all, a young girl is always better at home."

"It is too late to think of that now," George said. "Whatever reasons existed for her leaving the house exist still I suppose."

"Reasons!" echoed Ada with a pretty laugh. "Do you really suppose she had any especial reason? Girls are always taking romantic notions into their heads; and it was quite natural that dear Lucy should wish for a little change. Barlaston is not the most exciting neighborhood, we must admit; and I think she ought to come home."

The young man lifted his dark melancholy eyes and searched his wife's face. He knew by her persistence, and by her tone of voice, that she really meant what she said. He had learnt to detect little symptoms in her manner. But he could not understand why she desired that Lucy should return.

"What is your reason for wishing Lucy to come home?" he asked abruptly. "I presume you have some reason?"

Ada laughed and shrugged her shoulders with a little reproachful air.

"Only hear him!" she cried coquettishly, appealing to the walls and the ceiling. "Dear George, I wish Lucy to come back to us because she is my cousin, and I am not devoid of natural affection, and also because it has struck me that in her last letter she wrote a little less cheerfully than usual."

"I should like to see that letter," replied her husband. Ada was in the habit of reading extracts from her cousin's correspondence; but George very seldom saw the letters themselves.

"Did not I show it to you?" Mrs. March exclaimed, adding, with a little annoyance, "what a pity! I am afraid it is burnt. You know I never keep any letters. After all, I may have been mistaken. It was only a word or two that gave me the impression dear Lucy was in less good spirits than usual."

"If that is all," returned the Doctor, getting up from the luncheon table and putting on his gloves, "I think she is better where she is. Ours is not such a pleasant house," he added bitterly, "that we should ask her to return."

"George, what an unkind thing to say of dear old number nine! I am sure dear Lucy found it pleasant enough"—with gentle reproach. "And, if she did not, I am sure she would gladly sacrifice herself for your—or shall I say for our sake? But of course, dear George, you know best."

When Doctor March had seen his wife drive off to the flower show, for which she was so charmingly dressed, he went straight to Upper Brunswick street and asked to see Miss Throgmorton.

Bee was in the brown room, romping with her small nephew. She exclaimed with pleasure when George opened the door.

"Let me call mamma," she said eagerly, "We so seldom see you now. You shall smoke a cigarette at the window. I have not forgotten how to make them."

"You never forget how to be kind, my dear," said the young man, smiling kindly at her animated face. "But I must not stay. I came to see you only for a few moments. I want you, if you can, to show me Lucy's last few letters."

Bee ran to her davenport and began to turn over her papers.

"Of course I will," she said. "They will amuse you very much."

"She writes in good spirits then?"

"She does nothing but make the most cruel fun imaginable of poor Lord Meldrum. What have I done with them?"

"Lord Meldrum is at the Rectory?" George asked, feeling that he had found the clue he was in search of. "I had not heard that. I thought he was still abroad."

"He has just returned. He has come into his fortune, Lucy says and is more absurd than ever. Oh, here they are!"

"Does that mean more in love than ever?" asked poor George, forcing a smile. "Pray how did he find her out?"

"He is a guest at the Rectory. You can fancy his surprise when he found out who Lady Susan's governess was."

Bee wondered a little that the young man should come to her for information about Lucy; but she wisely said nothing.

"I see. No, thanks, I will not read them," George said hastily, putting aside the offered letters with a somewhat trembling hand. "I was only anxious to know that she had no cause for low spirits; her letters to us had made us a little anxious—that is all. And now I must be off." He caught up William's little son and tossed him, laughing, in his strong tender arms.

"And how is Geordie?" Bee asked. "When are you going to take him to be photographed? Lucy is dying for one of his pictures."

As the young man turned from Mrs. Throgmorton's door the temptation was strong upon him to say the words which should bring Lucy back. Every selfish instinct rose up within him in cowardly revolt against the thought of resigning her for life to another man. A jealous fury burnt in his veins. He had never dreamt of her marrying. All that seemed passed and gone since the day she had refused Mr. Olifaunt. And, while she remained single, poor George felt as if she still belonged in some vague way to him, and to Barlaston—felt that their lives would not be utterly divided, that he should not die out of sight of her face and out of sound of her voice. But now—— Well, it was evident that Lord Meldrum was constant to the attachment which had had such a dire effect upon the poor girl's whole life; and was it likely, George March bitterly asked himself, that Lucy would a second time refuse the offer of a title and money and an adoring husband, when the alternative was a lonely existence spent in a school room and among strangers?

The young man was wearily crossing the square to his own door as he was thinking this. It was a still fair April evening, and the lilacs in the old square garden were almost in full leaf. As the scent of the budding leaves reached him, it seemed to him the longing to see Lucy's face for a moment became almost unendurable. The thought of her seemed a part of that vague yearning and reaction that came with the spring. The creepers on the old red houses were showing patches here and there of a delicate green; the bricks were glowing warmly in the setting sun, beyond the edges of the walls little twigs and tendrils showed clear and dark against the evening sky.

His wife was out he was told; and the Doctor went into his study at once for Geordie, flinging off his hat and coat and taking up his black old pipe—his chief consoler now.

The windows were open to the narrow town garden, and George stood and looked out, as he had so often done in the time that followed his marriage, when he had been so nearly contented, and when Lucy used to come along between the prim box borders with her watering-pot and her muslin gown held up.

The garden was neglected now, and full of weeds; but there too against the high brick wall the young green leaves of the ivy were shining in the evening glimmer and the elm-trees putting forth their buds. The wind that blew in seemed thrilling with sad and happy suggestions and memories; the pigeons were cooing and strutting and flying up to their roost; there was a pleasant little rustling of the branches in the dusk.

George forgot to light his pipe as he stood looking out and thinking—how sadly, poor fellow!—of the days and hours that were done.

A half-forgotton foolish line came into his head—

"Oh, le bon temps! J' etais bien malheureux!"

—and he kept repeating it stupidly over and over again. Yes, he had been unhappy in those days; but it seemed to him that he would have given all he possessed to have that old misery back again, when he had not been utterly forsaken, when he had hoped in time to conquer his futile passion and to live out his life bravely, without a man's dearest joys indeed as compensation for the struggle, but with the reward of a calm and decent contentment gained at last.

Now what was there to look forward to? A hideous travesty of a home, a heap of satin and velvet, all smiles and pretty speeches, for a wife—a little motherless child growing up in the chill air of indifference and distrust and contempt, a hovering dread of even worse things, brooding perpetually over his unhappy hearth.

This was what he would have to endure as long as he lived, not only while he was young and strong, and could work and put his trouble from his mind in the heat and burden of the day, but later, when the dusk of advancing years forbade him to labor any longer, and when he would have to sit alone as the night drew near that comes to us all, hearing no loving voice, feeling no tender hand stretched out to hold his own through the darkness.

Another man would have the right to hold Lucy's till the end. She would sit henceforth by another man's hearth, to bless his life to be the mother to his children.

The poor fellow robbed his hand across his eyes. "Heaven bless her!" he loyally thought. "My little Lucy, you could not love me, and you worked me much sorrow; but you have all my heart—may Heaven forgive me!—all that is not Geordie's; and you will have it till I die."

It was getting late. George was reminded of the fact by the sudden lightening up of an opposite window which shone cheerfully through the dusky elm tops. He went and rang the bell again for the boy.

There was a little pause, and then he heard Lucy's voice say:

"Here is Geordie come to see you, papa!"

George did not turn round or answer. He hought he had dreamt it. But, when the child ran to him with a joyful shout and began to clamber upon his knees, the young man saw that some one was standing half shyly at the door and looking at him, a slender figure in a blue gown.

"Lucy," the young man cried in a hoarse whisper, as he started to his feet—"Lucy, is that you?"

The answer came low and clear:

"Yes, George, it is I."

He strode across the room and seized her by the hands. He looked at her closer—at the beloved pale little face, the sweet grave smile—his great haggard eyes seemed to devour her in the uncertain light; and then he turned away, letting go her hands without a word, and utterly broke down.

"George!" cried Lucy greatly touched and shaken, as the poor fellow dropped into a chair and flung his arms down on the table with a groan. "Oh, George, pray don't!"

The little boy began to cry, startled by the strange scene. Lucy took him in her arms and hushed him against her.

"Did I startle you, George? Forgive me!" she whispered, laying a timid hand for a second on the young man's shoulder.

There was no answer for some minutes. George was fighting fiercely with himself. Lucy stood quietly, holding the boy to her and pressing her soft cheek against his golden head.

"Poor papa," she whispered. "He is tired. Geordie won't make any noise, will he?"

Presently the troublous heaving of the broad shoulders seemed to be wearing itself out; she put the little fellow down very gently by his father's knee. The two small arms went up to clasp George's neck; and then, lifting himself up, the poor fellow caught his little son to his heart and covered him with passionate kisses.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A SUGGESTION.

By Bill Nye.

It is clear to our mind that there ought to be a vigilance committee organized in Washington, District of Columbia. When crime gets too common and life isn't valued very much in the West, there is generally a committee of property holders organized whose object is to discourage murder and throw out inducements for robbers and cut throats to go away.

We do not claim that the people of the West are always right. They haven't the advantages, some of them at least, that Eastern people have. Out here we are generally at least six weeks behind on the latest hitch in poodle dogs and colic, but we aim to do about the correct thing before we get through, regardless of cost.

Colleges are not very thick here, and a man can ride a hundred miles sometimes and not see the codfish ball that is so common to more advanced civilization. Still our people are highstrung and proud. They have rough, crude notions about hanging a red handed murderer that might shock the sensitive nature of a Washington politician, but when men decide on a lynching bee it is generally crowned with success.

The accused may be compelled to stand on a rough kerosene barrel and go through the exercises without his notes, but when the barrel is kicked to one side and quiet is restored, it generally turns out that life is more secure to those who remain.

We have only this to say: Let Guiteau be sent to Carbon station, W. T., from which point Dutch Charlie and Big Nose George were able to look over into the mysterious realm of the bright beyond, or let him come to Laramie city, where the time honored telegraph pole still waits to deal out substantial justice to those who are hankering for the kind that works instantaneously.

We have no idea that this suggestion will be accepted because it is uncouth and lacks the softened and chastened repose of manner and elegant diction which are the results of an older and more refined civilization, but we lay it on the altar of our common country with that open, generous style of ours which is so characteristic.

"Still, there is one weak point in the suggestion, and we admit it. If lynching should once get a start in Washington, or if those who have been in public life in the capital were to become the victims of a fearless vigilance committee, the census of 1890 would look as though the Asiatic cholera had swept the land.

THE CHAMPION THIEF.

The Tienna correspondent of the London Globe says: Last week a certain Hungarian Countess, well known for her riches and beauty (the same spirited lady who last year seconded her brother in a duel) graced with her presence the performance at the Arena, or summer theater.

On one of her fair fingers my lady wore two splendid diamond rings exactly like each other. During an entr'acte there presented himself in her box a big fellow in gorgeous livery six feet of the finest flunkey imaginable. Quoth he, in finest Hungarian: "My Mistress, Princess P——, sent me to beg of your ladyship the loan of one of your rings for five minutes. Her Highness has observed them from her box opposite, and is very anxious to examine one more closely, as she wishes to have one made after the pattern." Without an instant's hesitation, the Countess handed a ring to Jeames, who bowed with a respectful dignity and retired. The performance over, the two great ladies met on the staircase, and the Countess begged her friend to keep the ring at her convenience. "What ring my dear?" Denouement! Tableau! The powdered menial was no flunkey at all, but a thief, and the ring was gone. The police were informed of the impudent trick. Justice seemed to have overtaken the culprit in a very few strides, for next morning the Countess, whilst still in robe de chambre, received a letter informing her that the thief had been caught and the ring found on his person, 'Only,' added the note, 'the man stoutly denies the charge and declares the ring to be his own. To clear up all doubt pray come at once to the police station or send the duplicate ring by bearer.' To draw the second ring from the finger and intrust it joyfully to the messenger—a fine fellow in full police uniform together with a handsome tip for the glorious news, was but the work of a moment. Only when my lady an hour later betook herself to the police station to recover her jewels, a slight mistake came to light. 'Well, my rings? I could not come myself the instant I got your letter.' 'What letter, madame?' Denouement! Tableau No. 2. The thief had got them both."

THE ANATOMY OF AN OYSTER.

The Succulent Bivalve's Mouth, Heart and Digestive Organs.

Every oyster has a mouth a heart, a liver, a stomach, cunningly devised intestines and other necessary organs, just as all living, moving and intelligent creatures have. And all these things are covered from man's rudely, inquisitive gaze by a mantle of pearly gauze, whose woof and warp put to shame the front lace on your windows in winter. The mouth is at the smaller end of the oyster, adjoining the hinge. It is of oval shape, and though not readily seen by an unpractised eye, its location and size can be easily discovered by gently pushing a blunt bodkin or similar instrument along the surface of the locality mentioned. When the spot is found, your bodkin can be thrust between the delicate lips and a considerable distance down toward the stomach without causing the oyster to yell with pain. From this mouth is, of course, a sort of canal to convey the food to the stomach, whence it passes to the intestines. With an exceedingly delicate and sharp knife you can take off the mantle of the oyster, when there will be disclosed to you a half moon shaped space just above the muscle or so called heart. This space is the oyster's pericardium, and within it is the real heart, the pulsations of which are readily seen.

The heart is made up of two parts, just as the human heart is, one of which receives the blood from the gills through a network of blood-vessels, and the other drives the blood out through arteries. In this important matter the oyster differs in no respect from other warm or cold blooded animals. And no one need laugh incredulously at the assertion that oysters have blood. It is not ruddy, according to the accepted notion about blood, but it is nevertheless blood to all oyster intents and purposes. In the same vicinity, and in marvelously proper positions, will be found all the other organs named. But it is very proper to be incredulous about that mouth and organs. At first glance it would seem that they were utterly useless, for the mouth cannot snap around for food, and the oyster has no arms wherewith to grab his dinner or lunch. True, apparently, but only apparently, for each oyster has more than a thousand arms—tiny, delicate, almost invisible. And each one of them is incessantly at work gathering up food and gently pushing it into the lazy mouth of the indolently comfortable creature.

The gills are the thin firps so notably perceptible around the front face part of the undressed oyster, below the muscle. Both of these gills are covered with minute hair like arms, very close together, and perpetually in motion to and fro in the same unwearied direction. They catch food from the water, strain it carefully of improper substances, and waft it upward over the mantle's smooth surface to the gaping mouth, which placidly gobbles it up until hunger is appeased, and then the body goes to sleep without turning over. Any one can observe this singular process of feeding by placing a minute quantity of some harmless coloring matter on the gills. If it will not offend the oyster's delicate palate the coloring matter will be seen at once propelled by invisible hands towards its mouth, and thence slowly down into the stomach. And this is all I know about oyster anatomy, except that the liver almost entirely surrounds the stomach, and is of a dark green color. It may be new to many that oysters are born precisely the same way the shad and other fish come into the world. A well educated lady oyster will lay about 125,000,000 eggs—so it is said: I have not counted enough of them to strike such a large average—and every one of these eggs will ultimately become fit for a stew or fry if they escape the multitude of perils that do environ the infant oyster.

J. WILKES BOOTH STILL LIVES.

Mr. Williard, editor of the Battle Creek Journal, and a very prominent Republican of Michigan, printed the following in his paper:

This being the sixteenth anniversary of the martyrdom of Abraham Lincoln, it brings to mind a recent conversation had by the writer of this with a gentleman prominently identified with the Lost Cause, and who bore a high rank in that service, relative to the fate of Wilkes Booth. As several of the points have never been incorporated into history, it is, perhaps, excusable that we relate them. The name of this person we are not at liberty to give, but suffice it to say the high character and standing he sustains, is enough to guarantee the entire truth of the statement.

This informant said that the real and prime cause of the murder was the condemning to death of a foster brother of the murderer, and that same happened from the following circumstances: In March, 1865, a number of young men of the south concocted a scheme whereby they expected to meet in Chicago, capture by a preconcerted plan an immense quantity of fire arms that were stored there, arm a small army and take up a march of destruction and devastation towards the south.

In some way the scheme became known to has Federal officials almost at the inception, and the leading men were arrested, among the number the youthful foster brother of Booth. The conspirators were promptly sentenced to death; in the hope of saving his brother's life, Booth sought the presence of Lincoln and made an unsuccessful effort to secure his liberty. The refusal aroused the vindictive, deadly hatred of Booth, who said in a paroxysm of passion that the day following the execution of his brother, Lincoln would die. His brother was executed on the 13th, and the next night the beloved President lay a corpse at the hand of Booth.

The sterling point in the related circumstance is, that this gentlemen says that within the last year he has seen and conversed with J. Wilkes Booth; that for many years he knew him intimately and well; and there is no mistake as to the identity of the person. They had a lengthy conversation such as could only occur between two men who had at one time been in close relationship

The doubts as to Booth being killed in Virginia, exists in the minds of a large number of people, those best versed in history and incident being the most firm skeptics on the point.

This statement is made as coming from an undisputable source and may serve as a link in the undecided question of the avenging of Abraham Lincoln's assassination.

MEPHITIS AMERICANUS.

From the Boomerang.

A few nights ago a well organized effort was made to jump the Centennial mine, which came very near being a success. The parties who undertook to jump the mine were two Rocky mountain polecats with a bad record. Almost as soon as they entered the tunnel from the east, the men in the mine began to be suspicious that somebody with a bad breath was in the lower level. The suspicion grew until it assumed about the size of a bale of hay. It was resolved to drive out the invaders. Major Downey went down, and threw a chunk of free milling quartz at the enemy. Then the Major went back to the rest of the party to hold a consultation. The rest of the party did not seem so tickled to see him as he thought they ought to be. They shunned him and evaded him, and told him that his presence wasn't agreeable under the circumstances. Altough the mine is a very valuable one, it was almost decided at one time to abandon it to the jumpers. At last, however, everybody made a grand rush into the tunnel and demolished the enemy with long-handled shovels. Major Downey handed the above information into the office with a long pole. He also told a friend that he would go out of town this forenoon to a quiet spot beyond the graveyard, and change his clothes. The Rocky Mountain polecat, before he is domesticated, he is not prized as a songster very much: but he has a way of making his presence felt wherever he goes, and even in death you cannot forget him. There was one of these docile creatures got into our cellar once, a good many years ago, and the ventilation of the cellar being very poor, the air was soon vitiated to such an extent that the clock stopped. We don't care for death in any form in which it may come. Those who know us will agree that we never weaken. We have faced the deadly watermelon when strong men were falling thick and fast, and we have stood at the muzzle of a daily newspaper and mowed down spring poets like broad swaths of timothy hay and yet never weakened or squealed; but the dappled quadruped with the all prevading presence appeals to our valor in vain. Our victory over him has always been vicarious.

—Bert Wilkerson, a Colorado outlaw who was kindly assisted "over the range" by the vigilantes, was highly connected in Indiana, as well as with the limb from which he made his appearance in public. His granduncle was Joseph Wright, who was Governor for several terms, then United States Senator, and afterwards Minister to Berlin. His grandfather was for many years a member of the Indiana Legislature. His father was a cousin of the Hon. James F. Harlan, of Iowa. Bert had for several years figured as a border barroom hero, and the murder for which his life was taken was wanton, brutal and cowardly. When about to die, however, his bravado proved trustworthy. He adjusted the noose himself, remarking, "Boys, I'll help you all I can," and coolly kicked over the chair on which he stood.

RUBE HOFFENSTEIN'S COURTSHIP.

"Herman, do you still go round mit Rachel Goslinsky," said Hoffenstein.

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk. "I dakes her oud somedimes ven I don't got noding to do."

"Vell, you must keep on daking her oud because she vas velty, you know, and you don't find dem often dese days. Ven I vas making love mit my vife, Leah Heidenheimer, I haf a great deal of droubie but I nefer veakens. Old man Moses Heidenheimer's blace vas in de gountry about von mile from Vicksburg, und I used to go oud dere to see Leah. Von day vile I vas baying a visit to Leah her leetle broder Levi comes running in de house to his fader und says: 'Pa, de old prindle cow has proke de fence all down und vas in de field mit de corn.' I dinks it vill make a good umbression on old man Heidenheimer, und I says: "Misder Heidenheimer, you sday in de house und I vill go und drive de cow avay.' Leah she says: Misder Hoffenstein' you petter had keep avay from de cow, she vill chase you all around.' Never mind, Miss Leah,' I says, I never get sgared in anyding,' und ven I sdarted out to de field old Moses Heidenheimer dells me to bust de cow vide oben mit a sdick, und I says I vill. Leetle Levi Heidenheimer comes along mit me, und ven I get vere de cow vas, I dinks uf vat a man dells me vonce, und dot vos to look at a vild beast in de eye und frown und it vill run avay. Herman, ven ever a mans dells you dat, you dell him he vas a liar. I looked at de cow, und I frowns, but she don't do nodings. I get a leetle closer, und I frowns some more, und vat you dinks, de next minute de cow run at me. Shust as I turns around myself to get out of de vay de cow hits me mit her head. My gracious, Herman, it vas derrible. I feel dat I vas disconnected from myself, und for a vile I dinks dot my head was in New Jersey and my legs vas in de Rocky Mountains. De cow hit me a gouple uf dimes more mit her head, und I gets up und runs dwice faster den I efer did, und de cow comes righd after me. At last I gets to a bersimmon sapling vot vas no larger den my arm, und I vent up de sapling. Ven I gets up do sapling I looks around und sees leetle Levi Heidenheimer sitting on de fence swinging his sore foot around und I dells him to get a sdick und makes de cow go avay. He asks me if I dinks he was a lunadick, und he svings his feet some moro und vistles, und afder avile he dells me as long as I keeps my grip und de sapling don't preak dere vas no danger. De worst uf it was Jacob Heidlingsfelder who vas also in love mit Leah, comes along und sees de fix I vas in. I asks him to make de cow go avay, und he says: 'Vait, Rube, undil I go up to de house und get old man Heidenheimer. Vell, Herman, it vas an hour before I get down from vere I vas, and Leah und all uf dem laughed about it, but I shust keeps on making love mit her undil ve vas married. Recgollect, Herman, vile you vas gourting Rachel Goslinsky don't get desgouraged. A veak heart nefer vins noding."—N. O. Times.

AN INDIAN DUEL.

The Chief of the Choctaws Kills his Man.

A telegram from Little Rock, Ark., says that the celebrated Choctaw chief, Carpenter, is dead. The report comes via Fort Smith, Ark. The cause of his demise is attributed to wounds received in a duel fought by Carpenter some weeks since with Col. J. T. Price, near the Pine Creek Indian Agency. The details of the duel are the strangest on record. The two got into a quarrel about some trivial matter, when Price called Carpenter a liar. Whereupon the chief responded: "Your blood shall wash out this insult."

Price answered fiercely. "My blood is yours when you have got the power to take it."

Price offered to fight out then and there, but the chief refused saying very coldly:

"Meet me at this spot to-morrow."

"When?" Price asked.

"When the sun shines above the top on yon tree," responded Carpenter, pointing to a wild plum tree as he spoke. "At that hour stand here and you will see me."

They separated. The report of the quarrel and the intended duel spread far and wide, and by sunrise the succeeding morning a large crowd had gathered upon the spot to witness the strange scene.

Price arrived first on the field. He was quickly followed by Carpenter, who appeared just as the sun rose above the tree tops and illuminated the open space upon which Price stood.

Both men drew their pistols. Not a word was spoken. Raising their weapons they fired almost simultaneously. Carpenter reeled, but rallying, both fired again. This time Price dropped dead in his tracks. The crowd pressed forward with a wild shout. As they did so the chief fell on the ground senseless. A bullet had entered his breast; blood gushed from his mouth, and he was thought to be dying. Price had been shot through the heart. The chief had the benefit of high medical skill and recovered. If his death, as reported, be true, he has also fallen a victim to his enemy. The annals of the Indian nation contain no more extraordinary event than this duel.

Chief Carpenter was a splendid specimen of Indian manhood. He was tall and straight and comely. He was well educated and possessed natural talents which placed him head and shoulders above nearly all of his Indian associates, as well as the more cultured white man beyond the border.

INGENIOUS SMUGGLING.

Smuggling, as carried on upon the Russo-Polish frontier, must be a highly remunerative pursuit, judging by the elaborate and expensive mechanical appliances utilized by its practitioners. Information having reached the customs authorities at Alexandrovo lately that the locomotive of the express train leaving that station at 6 a.m. for Warsaw had been ingeniously converted into a vehicle for defrauding the revenue, the engine in question was subjected to a careful inspection during its brief sojourn in Alexandrovo station. Nothing was there discovered; but the information received was of so positive a character that the chief collector resolved to send one of his officials, accompanied by two gendarmes, in charge of the locomotive to Warsaw, where it might be taken to pieces and thoroughly examined by skilled mechanics, under the direction of a Government railway engineer. This was done immediately upon the arrival of the train at Warsaw. The engine's furnace and boiler were emptied, and it was deliberately dismembered, bit by bit, until a secret compartment in its interior was discovered, containing 123 pounds of foreign cigars and several parcels of valuable silk. Several arrests were made in consequence of this surprising disclosure, including that of the engine-driver, whose wonder and consternation when his locomotive was proved to be a hardened smuggler were so obviously genuine that he was speedily released and permitted to return to his duties. It is evident that in Russia men of considerable parts and technical education must find it worth their while to practice systematic frauds upon their national Custom House. The devisers of the above ingenious contrivance may certainly claim to rank at the very top of the profession.

—At a recent meeting of the Academy of Science in Paris a communication was read from a man who announced that he had discovered a mode of inoculating vines as a protection against the attacks of the phylloxera.

—An English company places opportunities for making the tour of the world in an easy and elegant style at the disposal of any one who has $2,500 and six months to spare. A steamer has been turned into a pleasure yacht for fifty people. Starting about the middle of October, and taking the Mediterranean route by the Suez Canal, India, China, Japan, San Francisco, the Faulkland Islands, and Montevideo, the voyagers by the beginning of July will have managed to call at many of the most interesting spots on the planet within a reasonable time, and in a pleasant manner, if they can avoid quarreling, a contingency which is guarded against by empowering the captain to land any combative member of the society at any port and dispatch him to London.

—A very funny scene was witnessed recently at the Cincinnati Exposition. Dr. Springer wanted to see what time it was and felt for his watch; it was gone. The Doctor felt confident that he had looked at it not half an hour before, and that he had it in his hand when in one of the corridors. The detectives bustled around, but did not see anybody willing to pass himself off as a pickpocket. Almost an hour after the watch was missed an old gentleman approached one of the police and asked him to see what was hanging to his coat in the rear; that something or other was thumping him and he could not reach it. On examination there was the missing watch hanging to one of the buttons on the back of the old man's coat by the portion of chain that had remained with it. It is impossible to say how the doctor's watch chain got fastened around a button on another man's coat tail, but it was surely novel and an innocent kind of pocket-picking.