

THE OLDEST FRIEND.

BY LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

Oh, life, my life! 'tis many a year since we
Took hands together, and came through the
morn.
When thou art a day and I were newly born—
And fair the future looked, and glad and free,
A year as long as whole eternity.
And full of joys that could not be outworn;
And time was measureless for thee and me.

Long have we fared together, thou and I;
Thou hast grown dearer, as old friends must
grow;
Small wonder if I dread to say good-by
When our long pact is over, and I go
To enter strange, new worlds beyond the sky.
With death, thy rival, to whom none saith
"No."
—Harper's Magazine.

PRECIOUS POLL.

BY ALMA E. M'KEE.

CHAPTER I.

"There, just so; a little more to the right, perhaps. It does seem as though that window affords me more satisfaction, as regards light and sun, than either of the others. Do sit down now, Mehitable; it makes me nervous to see you on your feet so much."

"Oh, auntie, in a soft, sweet voice, don't worry about me. I am doing nicely, I assure you. But I'm afraid you are not nearly so well to-day, are you? You look paler than usual."

"No, niece, I am not quite as well to-day as yesterday; for, do you know, I worry so much about your future. Here we are eating up our small income, inch by inch, and when that is gone we must of necessity starve. That servant is not worth her salt. I fear I shall be obliged to discharge her; and Marion is so thoughtless. What need has she—a poor girl—wasting her money and time in such foolishness as drawing and painting and nonsense?" And Aunt Cynthia Crowell looked the picture of vexation.

"Oh, auntie, I trust we are not quite so destitute as that. Why, that gold pin of mine would sell for something, I dare say, if it should come to that extremity; and, besides, there is a man around paying quite a price for all species of birds for his museum, and I thought that that old parrot of yours, auntie—"

"Mehitable Ryder! Do you dare to intimate such a cruel, utterly monstrous, proposal as that to me? My darling Poll, that I have had since my babyhood! That I have taught to talk and wink and blink at me, and who shows more real affection for me, accordingly, than either of my nieces? No! I shall keep her until she dies, and then have her stuffed. I fear it will not be long until that occurs, for she seems to be drooping of late. Don't you notice it, Mehitable?"

A smothered laugh, followed by a forced cough from behind the heavy folds of damask, screening one of the windows, drove the similar inclination from the lips of Hettie, as it sounded too derisive when proceeding from those of another; and, forcing the smile from her lips, she said, abruptly:

"Aunt Cynthia, this is a lovely day. May we not (that is, Marion and I) give you a turn or two under the laurels, in your invalid chair? Please say yes, auntie."

"Well, niece, I suppose I may as well submit at once, or stand the chance of being teased out of my senses. But make sure that you wrap me up good. Marion! where are you? Put away those fol-de-rols, and come immediately to assist your cousin; you always were lazy. I shall leave my precious Poll to Mehitable; see if I don't, she muttered under her breath.

Marion appeared in an incredibly short space of time, judging that she was not visibly near before her aunt's call, and at once took up her station by the side of Hettie.

"Are you easy, Aunt Cynthia?" kindly inquired Hettie, as she was being propelled on the thick green grass.

"Well, I shouldn't wonder," answered that eccentric individual, leaning back comfortably in her well-cushioned chair. "But, I say, who is that insolent-looking young man staring in here? I wonder if he ever saw me before, or is it you he's conferring so much honor on, Marion? I have half a mind to ask him, the impudent fellow."

"Oh, aunt, please, please, do not; indeed, he is not impudent," exclaimed poor Hettie, coloring to the roots of her bright golden curls, while mortification looked from her pretty blue eyes. "He is admiring our flower-beds; don't you see that he is moving away now?"

"Yes, and it's high time he did, too; after making such big eyes at you, and scraping and bowing like a conceited monkey that he is. Why didn't you cut him, Mehitable? What is he to you?"

"What is he to me, aunt? I love him, and have promised some time in the future to marry him!" exclaimed Hettie, her face now pale with apprehension.

"Indeed!" scornfully. "Well, niece, I must say, you have taken the reins into your own hands entirely, you and he. Never come near the old woman to ask consent or leave, but ignored my advice altogether. Now, let me tell you plainly, Mehitable, you are not of age, as yet, and with my consent you'll never marry that brazen dog! I've heard that; and the irate old lady turned full round in her chair, that she might better view the effect of her words. "And I may say, right here, that I do not admire your taste in the least."

And she laughed a hard, discordant laugh as she watched his retreating figure, almost out of sight.

"Had we not better go in now, aunt?" asked Hettie, anxious to fly to her own chamber and solitude.

"Oh, yes; anything to be agreeable. I am sure I don't care! But it appears to me you tire of this beautiful landscape and bright sunshine remarkably soon to-day. However, let us go in!"

They entered the house and the invalid room, assisted Aunt Cynthia to bed, then sat down, Hettie at some lace work, Marion with her drawing material. Very soon the aunt, apparently, slept profoundly; at least she snored "horribly," as Marion termed it.

"Yes!" responded Marion, "I have a letter or two, to write."

"What do you think put aunt out so to-day?" asked Marion.

"Oh, I'm sure I don't know; except it was that she heard you snicker be-

hind the curtain, and deemed it unkind. But then she is sick, and that is reason enough. I daresay I should be no better in her place." And tender-hearted Hettie flushed with sympathy for her queer old aunt.

"Well, by the way, Het, I admire your pluck and candor exceedingly. How ever did you have courage to acknowledge your acquaintance with that 'conceited monkey?' asked Marion, laughing merrily.

Hettie colored a little indignantly, as she answered:

"I meant to have told aunt long ago. I advised Gordon to leave all to me, as I, perhaps, might gain her consent best, understanding her nature as I do."

"I presume I ought to congratulate you, too; but the fact is, I think you are throwing yourself away! In fact, you are too good for such a he. I always considered Gordon Lyle a perfect dandy; and he has nothing to boast of, with let alone a place of shelter and such comforts as you have always been accustomed to!" exclaimed Marion, positively.

"I did not suppose, for an instant, that you could look with favor upon any more than the one of the male sex!" exclaimed Hettie, somewhat sarcastically. "If Val Merivale is more than reputed wealthy, I shall be very much mistaken." And Hettie felt as though she had sent that arrow home.

"Well, we will not quarrel, Het; but I like Algernon Sydney's little finger better than Gordon Lyle's whole body, to use a familiar saying; and if love was not blind, as it is in your case, you would have said 'yes,' instead of 'no,' to him a month or two ago, when he laid his honest heart at your shrine."

"You are getting more eloquent as you progress, fair coz; but I'm sorry it is all lost on me. Every person in this civilized age has a right to his own opinion. I claim that privilege as mine, therefore, and yield up very willingly to you the marrying the bear for the sake of his den," laughingly responded Hettie. "I will visit you in your palace, and after that, if you are not too far above me, you may come to my hotel. Now is not that fair?"

"Yes, perfectly. And I shall not envy you your precious poll-parrot, either, I promise you. You may keep feathers and all," and the fun-loving Marion laughed as though she enjoyed the joke at her cousin's expense.

"What do you mean, girls, by such hoydenish proceedings?" came in sharp, shrill tones from the curtained alcove. "Loop back this curtain, and drop forever those vile slang phrases. How many times have I cautioned you, not to use them, and how will people think I have brought you up? No credit at all; no, none! You may leave the room, both of you, if you choose. The sun is declining, and I should like a short time alone, to think, ere you ring for lights." Marion, only too glad to be dismissed from her aunt's vigilant eye, fled precipitately from the room, singing as she went, "Come, haste to the wedding," looking teasingly at her cousin's more leisurely gait, over her shoulder; and said, as they reached the hall below, "Come out on the balcony, Het, and we will watch the glorious sun decline, as aunt expresses it."

And while the two cousins are thus employed, we will return again to the sick room, and learn the mind of Aunt Cynthia, if possible, as she sits, propped up with pillows, her old, withered hands fondling the plumage of her pet—her parrot. "So it was Gordon Lyle! How neatly I found out all about him! Cynthia Crowell, you were always called clever! And now to ascertain whether your niece or her prospects is the object of his visits. Let me see! Yes, I have it; a brilliant idea, too. We'll see how it will work. Patience, Cynthia, you are worth two dead women yet."

"Polly wants a cracker," came in shrill but faint tones from the fast falling bird. "Poor Poll wants a cracker—er!" "And you shall have one, too, pet."

CHAPTER II.

Love flies out at the window
When poverty comes in at the door.

Seated in a fashionable restaurant, at one of the many round tables, were two young men.

"Well, Algernon, what shall you order?" exclaimed the taller and more slender of the two, mopping the perspiration from his broad, white forehead.

"Champagne, I think, in the line of drink."

"Well, I guess I'll have lemonade. It's denuded hot, and that will quench the thirst more, to my notion, than the best of wine. Whew! How uncomfortable I feel!"

"And Algernon Sydney leaned back in his chair, and certainly did look warm."

"Any news up your way, Gordon?"

"Well, no; not special. I was down last evening."

"Indeed! I think I may guess where, without any trouble. I believe you're rather sweet in that quarter; and depend upon it, she's a treasure."

"Yes, if that meddlesome old woman was not in the way. By George, she's a tartar!"

"I'm not much acquainted with the aunt, but know the young ladies well. In fact, Lyle, if you desire to know, I think more of one of them than is really good for me, for it is not returned."

"I presume that must be Miss Marion Grey. Well, she is a nice kind of a girl, but is actually dowerless."

Sydney allowed him to believe as he would, and said:

"Do not deceive yourself, Gordon Lyle," his companion said, his lip curling with scorn. "I, myself, was there this morning, and Miss Grey was mourning over the loss of her pet parrot. But, after all, she said, it is well, perhaps, poor Poll died first, as I shall now see that she is properly stuffed, and that her glass eyes are made to look natural, for she is the legacy that I am to leave my dear niece Mehitable! All of the remainder shall go to Marion!" So, you see—why, what is the matter, Lyle? Are you ill? And sure enough, his teeth were chattering, his eyes glaring at his companion, as though he had gone suddenly demented, and his face was fairly livid.

"Oh, nothing, Al; except the oppressive heat. Great Scott, but it's hot! I believe I'll make for my boarding house. Good-by, old fellow!"

"Good-by, Lyle! Take care of yourself!" and the two friends so much unlike parted.

"Well, of all things, that beats me!" soliloquized Algernon Sydney, making his way leisurely toward his hotel. "I did not suppose Gordon Lyle was one of that sort, to marry a woman for the sake of her money. No, hum! Wonders will never cease in this world. I wonder if my news had anything to do with his sudden illness. I wish I was in his place, though, as regards Miss Hettie; what a lucky dog he is." And having arrived at his destination his thoughts turned into another channel.

CHAPTER III.

CONCLUSION.

Three days after the opening of our story, so uncertain is the disease called consumption, Aunt Cynthia was taken much worse. She ordered her lawyer to be sent for without delay. And the parrot which she had been very particular about, and which was placed in the most conspicuous place in the room (perched on the high mantel-shelf just in range with her own bed, where she could feast her eyes on it constantly), looked down from its lofty perch with those wonderful glass eyes, "which seemed to blink and wink," the old lady said, "with its accustomed affection at her."

She bade her nieces good-by, lingering longest over the bowed head and fast falling tears of Hettie, whom she impulsively kissed, then said faintly: "You have been a good girl, niece, and I leave you all I have. But, Mehitable, grant me a dying request, will you?"

"Oh, anything, auntie!" replied the sobbing Hettie.

"It will be harder than you think for, I fear, niece, so prepare. Promise me, on this, my death-bed, that you will never marry Gordon Lyle."

"Oh, auntie, is it really necessary? Must I sacrifice my love—?"

"Enough, Mehitable! If you wish to see me die happy you will not hesitate. It is for your own good, believe me. He is not worthy your pure love, and some day you may remember my words. I am going—niece! Be quick—ck, or it will be too late—"

"Oh, yes, auntie, I promise!" said the poor girl, chokingly; "only bless me before you leave me."

The dying woman placed her hand on the bowed head of the weeping girl, and, in faint, quivering tones, said: "Bless you, my darling Mehitable! May God be good to—"

Her breath grew fainter, and she was no more.

The next day as Hettie and Marion were making some preparations for the funeral, a note was brought by the postboy for Miss Ryder. Wonderingly Hettie opened it, read it, then, with pale face and flashing eyes, mechanically handed it to Marion.

"Read that!" she said.

"Did I not read him aright? The wretch!" exclaimed Marion, angrily. "How dare he?"

The note was from Gordon Lyle, and ran thus:

MISS RYDER—MY DEAR HETTIE: I scarcely know how to begin. I esteem you very highly; nay, love you as a brother loves a sister; but I have made a mistake in asking you to marry me, under the circumstances. In fact, I care for some one else, and thought it the more honorable way to write you at once. I hope you will mind this much, but rather, think of me as one not worthy of your true, loving heart. Yours, regretfully, GORDON LYLE.

"The faithless—"

"Stay, Marion. Perhaps, after all, I have been very fortunate to escape him. This note saves me the trouble of acquainting him with my promise to the dead. How I dreaded it! It seemed so hard to give him up. But now, I do not know but my love for him may turn to contempt. That note is cruel, heartless in the extreme."

The funeral over, the will was read, which bequeathed to Mehitable Ryder Precious Poll, and the house and lot to Marion Gray, a few articles of well-worn clothing to her servant, and the vast property was disposed of.

A few days after the events recorded, the following conversation took place between Marion and Hettie Ryder:

"Poor aunt!" exclaimed Hettie. "I think I will remove my legacy to my room to-day, Marion! It will remind me so much of the giver. That is, if you will allow me to remain here with you, coz?"

"You foolish girl to ask such a ridiculous question!" exclaimed Marion, while her eyes filled with tears. "Of course, this home is as much yours as mine; at least just as long as either, or both of us remain single," said the noble girl.

"But how am I to reach his perch? I never was good at climbing! A ring at the door! Who can it be, May?"

"A gentleman to see, Miss Ryder!" announced the girl at the same moment. "Show him up, Jape; I will receive him in my boudoir."

"Ah! Mr. Sydney; glad to see you!" Hettie was heard to say, in her clear, dulcet tones. "As it is you, an old friend, would you think it presumptuous in me if I requested you to assist me a little?"

"Most certainly not, Miss Ryder. Shall be only too glad to serve you."

"Please step this way."

"We came up here to search for a valuable gold pin which Hettie has had the misfortune to lose; and while here, she thought she would remove her bird to her own room, but cannot climb so high very well. The stepladder is here, and that was the request she was about to ask of you, Mr. Sydney."

"I am at your command, Miss Ryder," the young man glibly said, as he moved the ladder from its resting place to a spot directly under the glass-eyed parrot. "Has Gordon Lyle been here of late? I met him to-day, and he looked extremely blue, I thought."

"I think you will require some rest after you descend from that high pinnacle," Hettie said, as she moved toward the door. "Marion, I have left my duster down stairs, and will be back directly," and she walked quickly from the room, glad of any excuse to conceal the emotion which the mention of Gordon Lyle had power to occasion.

"Speaking about Gordon Lyle," said Marion, as the echo of Hettie's footsteps died away on the stairs, "should you like to see a note he had the audacity to send her the very day that our aunt died? Well, here it is," producing a delicately perfumed note. "You must have seen that there was more than common affection between my cousin and him. They were to be married this coming fall, if aunt approved, and that is the first intimation she had of his faithlessness."

"The scoundrel!" ejaculated Algernon Sydney, angrily. "How dare—"

"Sh—, Hettie is coming back!" exclaimed Marion, raising a warning finger.

With a much lighter heart than he had had for many a day, he sped up the ladder, and soon had his hands on the parrot. But, oh, horrible to relate! In reaching to seize a light, airy object, as he supposed, what was his amazement to find it leaden instead of feathery, and, being totally unprepared, it slipped from his grasp and fell, with a loud crash, to the floor!

"Oh!" exclaimed the two young ladies, with clasped hands, while the gentleman began to apologize and call himself stupid, awkward, etc. Hettie stooped to pick up Precious Poll, when the stuffing fell out in the form of pure solid gold.

A year from that time a double wedding was performed in the little chapel near by, when two happy couples were united—Mr. and Mrs. Sydney and Mr. and Mrs. Merivale. But Hettie Sydney cherishes Precious Poll.

The Boy and His Mother.

A young fellow at Council Bluffs writes as follows: "What do you think of a young lady, while in the company of a dude masher, remarking of an old schoolmate of hers, 'that he is a good boy, but tied to his old mother's apron strings, and is of no good on earth.' Will not the boy come out ahead if he supports and cares for the mother?" Come out ahead? Well, of course he will. A girl who would make such a remark is not worthy to blacken the shoes of a boy who is kind to his old mother. Such a girl has got no more heart in her than a turnip, and is only fit to be taken across the knee of her own mother until she thinks it is about the middle of August. It is such girls as this one that we hear of playing the piano while the mother is mending her stockings or washing her white clothes. It is such a girl that tells her mother to mind her own business when the old lady advises her not to stay out more than two or three hours after midnight with a dude. It is such girls that go to the devil flying, at the least possible excuse, and the first opportunity. The meanest men in the world are those who have allowed themselves to drift away from their mothers and forget all about them. The best and bravest men in the world are those who have never been so proud as when doing something pleasant for the kind old mother. The most heartless thing in the world is for a person to make such a remark as that quoted above about a young man who is proud of his mother, and loves her so that a tear in her eye is like a drop of melted lead in his heart. The young man who heard of such a remark being made about his relations with his mother, no doubt felt that he had rather not have heard of the remark, but it is lucky that he did, if he thought he had any affection for that girl. She would not have said it in his hearing, which shows that she is a hypocrite and a two-sided person. If he married that girl he would have a little hell of his own. Such a girl would make a man with he had never seen any woman except his own mother. No matter how close the relation between a mother and son, a day is liable to come when the son will find a girl that he will marry, and though he may not think less of his mother, he will not have quite as much time to devote to her, but if he is such a son as the one above mentioned, there will never be a day but he will think of something that can be done for his mother. His good wife, if she is good, will join him in anything that can make the mother who bore him happy. And a day will come when the mother will lay down her knitting, and take off her spectacles, and her burden of life will be laid down, and her last prayer will be for the son who has been joked by a fool girl for being tied to her apron strings, and she will close her eyes in death with the feeling that of all God's best gifts to a mother, a dutiful, loving son is the greatest. Those sons who have followed the counsels of a loving mother, and who have perchance followed the remains of that mother to the grave and heard the cold clay rattle on her last resting place, and who have gone away from the scene with hearts bowed and broken, will never, in their choice of a partner for life, take one who has ever spoken unkindly of a son who is kind to his mother. No boy need ever be ashamed to be called his mother's boy, and no person with a soul to save will ever make trifling remarks on so sacred a matter as the love of a son for a good mother. The Council Bluffs young man is advised to keep tied to the apron strings of that mother of his until he finds a girl different from the one he has quoted. Let the dude have her! All a dude is fit for is to carry a pool for such a female idiot.—Peck's Sun.

Coating for a Leaky Roof.

Dr. Kedzie, of the Michigan Agricultural College, says: "Some inquiring friends have been experimenting with coal-tar for 'revamping' old roofs that begin to leak, and extending their usefulness. The difficulty, so far, is to find a cheap and effective 'drier,' as the tar does not 'set' between the shingles and in cracks, drips from eaves under a hot sun, and during rains washes to cisterns, injuring the water for stock. One correspondent says: 'I don't think "body" in paint of this sort and use is of any great account; saturating the shingles with the tar so as to be measurably impervious to water, thus causing the water to run off readily and leave the roof dry, is the idea. The material promising best results in such a case is water-lime. It can be used combined with coal-tar as paint, or it can be thoroughly dusted over the surface after the coal-tar is applied. I think the best results will be secured by combining both uses as follows: Thin the coal-tar by adding common benzine, one part of benzine to twelve of coal-tar, then stir in good water-lime (entirely freed from lumps by sifting) until you have the consistency of a strong paint, and paint this on the leaky roof, covering every part and filling all cracks. Apply at once a good dusting of water-lime to this painted surface before it dries. The water-lime retards the running of the tar, forms a hard coating by the action of the water, and conceals the very disagreeable odor of the coal-tar. Of course, fire must be kept from this paint, lest the inflammable benzine should start a combustion difficult to control. The benzine reduces the stickiness of the tar, enables it to combine or mix more easily with the water-lime, makes it easier to spread on the shingles, and it soon evaporates, leaving a firm and even covering. The paint can be applied with a mop if it is moderately warm when applied.—Chicago Times.

The Size of Texas.

The distance from Dallas County, in the Texas Pan Handle, to Brownsville, at the mouth of the Rio Grande, is 800 miles, but we can better realize how far it is by saying that it is nearer from Dallas County, Texas, to St. Paul, Minn.; or to Bismark, Dakota; or to Helena, Montana; or to Yellowstone Park, in Wyoming; or to Salt Lake City, Utah, than it is from Dallas County to Brownsville, Texas. It is also nearer from Brownsville to Guatemala, in Central America, than from Brownsville to Dallas County. Again, it is nearer from Lipscomb County, Texas, to St. Louis, than from the same county to Galveston. And even Chicago and Cincinnati are nearer to Texas than Dallas County is to Brownsville. It is further from Texas to El Paso than from Texas to West Virginia, Old Virginia, or North Carolina. Suppose a gentleman should start from Savannah, Ga., on the Atlantic, to look at a tract of land at El Paso. After traveling three days and nights on a passenger train he might arrive at Orange, Texas. Of course when he puts his foot on Texas soil he would begin to look around to see how he liked the country by way of deciding whether he would buy El Paso land or not. But if told that he was not half way from Savannah to El Paso, he might turn back discouraged, but such would be the fact. Again, Texas wants deep water at Galveston. But it is nearer from El Paso, Texas, to the deep harbor of San Diego, Cal., than from El Paso to Galveston. In fact, more than 1,000 miles of the Pacific coast, extending from Los Angeles, Cal., to Mazatlan, Mexico, is nearer to El Paso than any part of the Texas Gulf coast.—Greenville, Texas, Banner.

Life—The Tenacity of Women.

It appears from the gathered statistics of the world that women have greater tenacity of life than men. Despite the intellectual and physical strength of the latter, the softer sex endures longest, and will bear pain to which a strong man succumbs. Zymotic diseases are more fatal to males, and more male children die than female. Deyverga asserts that the proportion dying suddenly is about 100 women to 750 men; 1,080 men in the United States committed suicide to 285 women. Intemperance, apoplexy, gout, hydrocephalus, affections of the heart or liver, scrofula, paralysis, are far more fatal to males than females. Pulmonary consumption, on the other hand, is more deadly to the latter.

Females in cities are more prone to consumption than in the country. All old countries, not disturbed by emigration, have a majority of females in the population. In royal families statistics show more daughters than sons. The Hebrew women are especially long-lived, the colored man exceptionally short-lived. The married state is favorable to prolongation of life among women. Dr. Hough remarks that there are from 2 to 6 per cent. more males born than females, yet there is more than 6 per cent. excess of females in the living population. From which statistics we conclude that all women who can possibly obtain one of these are from the other sex.—Modern Age.

I LIKE to read about Moses best, in the Old Testament. He carried a hard business well through, and died when other folks were going to reap the fruits; a man must have courage to look at his life so, and think what'll come of it after he's dead and gone. A good, solid bit of work lasts; if it's only laying a floor down, somebody's the better for it's being done well, besides the man as does it.—George Eliot.

It looks as if another short-hair frenzy was going to strike the ladies," says a New York letter-writer in the Chicago Tribune. "A good many in their teens now consider it the thing to cut off their hair and wear it curled close to their scalps, and yesterday I saw a row of bonnets in a milliner's window, each decorated with a little ruff of frizzed hair sewed under their rims at the back."

HUMOR.

A MEDICAL writer says that girls are so constructed that they cannot jump. Just make one of them an offer of marriage and see.

A BAND of Italians brigands captured a duke recently and held him for thirty days. Any American heiress can do that, and hold him longer.

A LADY, and gentleman accidentally touched each other's feet under the table. "Secret telegraphy," said he. "Communion of soles," said she.

A READY-MADE rejoinder: He—"You made a fool of me when I married you, ma'am." She—"Lor! you always told me you were a self-made man!"

SOME one interrogated little Georgie in regard to his sister's betrothal. "How old is he?" "I don't know?" "Is he young?" "Yes—he has no hair yet."

A BALTIMORE man killed himself because his wife would not support him. It beats thunder how lazy some women are getting to be nowadays.—Newman Independent.

"No, LOVE," he said, "I cannot afford to take you sleighing, but I'll do the next best thing. Come down to the store any day and I'll let you see me shoot a rat."

A NEWMAN man is trying to out-talk his mother-in-law. At last accounts the young man had talked his head off, and his left ear was still working up and down.—Newman Independent.

"How do you extract the cube root?" asked the school teacher of the son of a dentist, who had been assisting his father. "Extract the cube root? Just trot out your cubic tooth, and I'll extract the root in three shakes of a sheep's tail."—Texas Siftings.

"I AM choost as full ash a bag of flour," remarked an inebriate to a sober friend. "There is a difference between you and a sack of flour, however." "Whas ish difference?" "When a sack is full it can stand up, but when you are full you can't even lie down on the ground without holding on."—Texas Siftings.

HOSTESS (to gentleman her husband has brought home to dinner)—How well you speak English, Mr. —. Mr. — (not understanding)—Yes, I ought to. Hostess—"But you speak it remarkably well." Mr. —, I ought I have lived here all my life. In fact, I was born in New York."

Hostess—"Why, how strange! I am sure my husband told me you were a Bohemian."—New York Life.

A MEDICAL journal states that the average Chinese baby weighs but five pounds. The journal did not state whether the Chinese baby's capacity for squalling was less, in proportion to weight, than that of any other baby, but if they howl in the Chinese language as loud as the American kid does in the United States language, how the poor mother must suffer. If any one has ever heard two Chinamen holding a convention in their native tongue, they can readily see that a child who is just learning to lip a few syllables in the Chinese language would make Romo howl.—Peck's Sun.

Mrs. MULCAHY—Good mornin'. Mrs. O'Hollihan—Good mornin'. Mrs. Mulcahy. Mrs. Mulcahy—An' how's the old man, Mrs. O'Hollihan? Mrs. O'Hollihan—Och, purty well, thankee, Mrs. Mulcahy, but dhrukn agin last night though. Mrs. Mulcahy—Och, dear, dear, the poor man! Mrs. O'Hollihan—Did you hear the news about the increase in Mrs. McCarthy's family, Mrs. Mulcahy? Mrs. Mulcahy—Och, did not. Was it a bye or a gurrul? Mrs. O'Hollihan—Twaz nayther. Mrs. Mulcahy—Nayther? Mrs. O'Hollihan—Nayther, 'twuz twins. Mrs. Mulcahy Pull, wull, wull.—San Francisco Post.

SECRET SORROW.
Why does he wear it?
Emblem of woe!
For whom does he bear it?
Is some one laid low?

Say, was it a mother
That crossed the deep sea?
His mother that nursed him
In youth on her knee?

Or was it a father
Deceitful and old?
Or a golden-haired rosebud
He laid in the mold?

Perhaps 'twas a brother!
A boyhood, may be,
They trokked together,
He laid in the mold?

Or was it his partner
Who fell by his side?
Now none to console him,
No heart to confide.

Say, why does he wear
The black band, O, for what?
He wears it to cover
The grease on his hat.