

Ludington's Sister." It is written to suggest the propriety of assigning a new meaning to the term "individual" as used with reference to human beings. In this novel but few characters are introduced, the development of the plot being made of secondary importance by the novelty of the leading idea suggested.

Miss Ida Ludington in her youth was the belle of her native village. At the time she was twenty years of age, disease deprived her irrevocably of her beauty. When after five years of sickness she had recovered health, the changes already made in the little village annoyed her. Her former joyful life had departed, and she resented any change in her surroundings which tended to efface the memory of the past, and bring more forcibly to her mind the realization of her present forlorn condition. In time she fell heir to a large sum of money, and with the means thus obtained she caused to be built in another place an exact counterpart of her native village where she determined to end her days. At length the infant child of her cousin was intrusted to her care, and life was brightened henceforth by the presence of little Paul de Riemer. From his youth he was charmed by the picture on the mantel representing Miss Ludington as she appeared before the dread disease had deprived her of beauty. The older he became the greater was his love for the Miss Ludington of former days. On the day of his graduation from college he wrote his aunt a letter in which he advanced the somewhat startling opinion that the individual is no more the unit of humanity than the tribe or family; that the term "individual" stands for a number of distinct persons whom he called infancy, childhood, youth, etc. Applying his theory to Miss Ludington's case, in which the transition from youth and beauty to the opposite had been so sudden and painful, he held that if the belief in the immortality of the soul had any sound basis there was reason to believe that the soul of the youthful Miss Ludington was then in the land beyond the grave.

Soon after Paul's return from college Miss Ludington was visited by a friend of her youth. Paul's strange theory was explained to this friend, who not only received it with favor but at once suggested the possibility of summoning by the aid of a medium the departed spirit of the youthful Miss Ludington. Paul and his aunt were delighted at the suggestion of such a possibility. A medium was consulted and a seance held. The young lady appeared to the enraptured gaze of Paul and his aunt, an exact counterpart, as they observed, of the picture on the mantel. So great was Paul's desire to have her with him always who had charmed him, that he began to speculate on the possibility of retaining in human form the one summoned, provided the medium should die during the seance, thereby depriving the spirit of the agency that had called it from the land of spirits and which would then be unable to secure its return thither. He suggested this possibility to the husband of her who was the medium. The husband was of the same opinion as Paul, namely, that it was not a possibility but a probability. Accordingly another seance was soon held, during which, conveniently enough, the medium died, her vitality passed to the one summoned from the land of spirits, and Paul's desire, the human companionship of the youthful Ida Ludington was realized. He and his aunt took the bewildered girl to their home. She recognized in every particular the counterpart of the home of her youth. It was impossible to name her relationship to the older Miss Ludington, or to give the girl a name to distinguish her from the elder lady. Thus several months were passed in recalling scenes of childhood and remembrances of former days. The young lady had been informed of Paul's love for her, and in return had expressed affection for him; had promised to marry

him, but always gave way to uncontrollable emotion when asked to set the marriage day. Supposing that her sojourn in the spirit world caused her to loathe the idea of an earthly union, Paul desisted at length from his entreaties.

One morning the young lady was missing. A letter found in her chamber explained the whole affair—cruel deception had been practiced and she was filled with remorse for the part she had acted. She was not Ida Ludington but Ida Slater, the daughter of the woman who had first advised them to consult a medium. An ingenious plan had been devised whereby the daughter should become the heir of Miss Ludington's wealth. Paul and his aunt were amazed: but so great was their love for her and their admiration for her conduct in voluntarily revealing the deception she had practiced when the reward was in her grasp, that they at once instituted vigorous search for her. She was found and forgiven, and Paul soon rejoiced in a wife not so ethereal as the being that had inspired his youthful love.

The indefinite possibilities of human life, were Paul's theory correct, would form an interesting topic for contemplation. Especially would the spiritualist find therein food for thought. As it is the story gains added zest by the introduction of an element so supernatural. Although the plot is but little complicated, one's interest is sustained to the close. The author shows masterly skill in causing the fantastic idea incorporated in the novel to germinate in the brain of one about to become a college graduate. It is in the ambitious mind of such a person that one may most reasonably expect to find ideas that can be fittingly woven into a "Romance of Immortality."

CURRENT COMMENT.

A joint resolution lately passed by the senate provides that a statistical census of the territory of Alaska shall be taken, and shall include an accurate statement of its natural resources and the extent to which they may be developed. This has never been done before in the history of that territory but it is certainly a move in the right direction. The purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867 has proven to be a profitable investment, but as yet we know very little about Alaska. We know that the seal fisheries and salmon fisheries are extensive, and that is about all we do know. There are probably mines that could be worked to advantage and possibly other industries, not now thought of, could be developed so as to be a source of profit to the present owners of Alaska. As far as the climate is concerned it is not so cold but that people could live there comfortably. Sitka is not as far north as St. Petersburg and there the people live all the year round and not complain of the severe weather.

It seems, from all accounts, that the articles published by George Kennan about Russian cruelty and other later reports of Russian atrocities, have stirred up no small amount of excitement among the authorities of Russia. There has long been in the minds of the American people a sense of the injustice done by Russia to her subjects and the Kennan articles have only fanned into a flame the fire that has long been smouldering. Russia is now being assailed on all sides by Americans that wish to see a reform. They wish her to use caution and judgment in condemning her subjects to exile in the wilds of Siberia. Unless this is done, the United States and Russia will not be on as friendly terms as they have been heretofore. Russia knows this and as she has always desired the friendship of this country, both government and