

# Lake Charles Commercial.

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NO. 25.

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(Jan. 25, '96-ff.)

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**IN WOMAN'S DEFENSE.**  
**Bill Arp Speaks for the Mothers and Wives.**  
Another woman killed—killed by her husband. And another and another. Four horrible murders within a few days past. When will this thing stop? We don't read of any husbands murdered by their wives. Is the world getting worse? Is the devil turned loose in this Southern country? Before the war woman was more honored, more respected than she is now. She stood side by side with her husband as his equal partner in everything that became a wife or a mother. Marriage vows were serious and solemn promises then and they were generally observed, but now the vow, when recited by the minister, seems a mere formality and is soon forgotten. The ceremony, the maids of honor, the trousseau, the attendants and the fulsome description in the morning's paper are of more consequence. Fast women and faster men are married nowadays, but not mated. "Who giveth this woman away?" said the preacher, and a fast young man in the gallery whispered to his companion: "I could, but I won't." Before the war maidenly modesty was at a premium, but now in society it is a discount. A girl must be fast to attract attention and catch a lover. The purity of both is suspected—purity of thought and person and hence divorces follow right along in the wake of marriages. They have increased largely in late years. A suit for divorce was a rare thing in the days of our fathers. So was a separation—so were suicides—so was a case of lunacy. Some say that these things were as common as now, but we did not hear of them, for there were few newspapers and no telegraph. This is a great mistake. Since the war divorces have doubled and lunatics trebled according to our white population and suicides follow right along with them.

The race between crime and morality is neck and neck, especially in our cities. How many weeping women who have been deserted by their husbands! How many are supporting vagabonds whom they call husband! How many are enduring oppression and cruelty that they dare not disclose! Only a few days ago a man was tried in our court for beating his wife. He pleaded guilty, thinking to get off lightly, and, when interrogated by the judge, said he only slapped her twice. The pitiful wife was there and the judge asked her if he slapped her often. She reluctantly answered: "Yes, sir; whenever he gets mad." "Does he ever beat you or kick you?" said the judge. "Yes, sir," she said. Her answers satisfied His Honor that he was a brute and he sentenced him to the chain-gang for a full term. A trifling young man married the daughter of one of my tenants. After a few months he told a neighbor that he couldn't do nothin' at all with her and was gwine to take her back to the old man. He said: "I have whooped her and whooped her, and it didn't do her a bit of good." That is the idea that thousands of men have of the marriage state. Domination on his part and slavery on hers. Alas for the women—the credulous, unsuspecting girls who tied themselves in matrimonial chains to such men. No wonder we call them chains, for the wife cannot break them when she chooses, though the husband can.

Will the time never come when the breaking of the marriage vow by the man shall entail upon him the same disgrace that follows the unfaithful wife? When will woman stand side by side with man? There was a time in the blessed past when it was almost universal for her to receive homage and protection from husband and father and brother and children. The idea of woman suffrage was then not entertained. She had love and support and protection and that was she wanted. But now a sad and serious change has come over the condition of woman. There are thousands who cannot marry and have neither support nor protection, and hence they have to become bread-winners and protect themselves. They are in the stores, the shops, the counting-rooms and school-houses all over the land. They are doing the business of the men and should have the rights and privileges of the men in secular affairs. As John Temple Graves said in his beautiful address at Athens, the arguments in favor of woman suffrage cannot be answered. The trials of a woman's married life are awful to contemplate. The pains and perils of maternity—the constant care of children in infancy and youth—the watchful days and sleepless nights. The not unfrequent loss of a husband's love when she has lost her charms. The grief over a wandering son or an unfortunate daughter. Her helplessness in poverty or old age or sickness. Her liability to feminine diseases to which the men are not subject. Her constant confinement at home or her house, or it may be her prison. When all these perils are considered is it not a wonder that any thoughtful woman will venture upon that sea that has wrecked so many of her sex?

If trouble and grief could be measured or weighed, there is no bin large enough to hold that of many a heart-broken wife and mother. If she falls it is nine cases out of ten the sin or the fault of a man. Woman loves attention, admiration, praise, homage, caresses, and if she does not get a moiety of these at home sometimes she looks for them abroad. This is her feminine nature. But, of course, there is another side to the picture. Marriages are not always failures. There is no godlier right in all nature than a considerate, loving husband and wife going down the vale together loved by their children and grandchildren. To them life was not a curse nor marriage a disappointment. Neither money nor fine clothes nor a carriage at the door will secure conjugal happiness. Nothing but duty—conscientious, thoughtful duty—and the performance of every scintilla of the marriage vows will insure it.

**BILL ARP.**  
The Editor's Heaven.  
An editor who died of starvation after making Dr. Tanner ashamed of himself, was being escorted to heaven by an angel, who had been sent for that purpose. "May I look at the other place before we ascend to eternal happiness," said the editor. "Easy," replied the angel. So they went below and skirmed around, taking in the sights. The angel lost track of the editor and went around hedges to hunt him up. He found him by a big furnace fanning himself and gazing with rapture upon a lot of people in the fire. There was a sign upon the furnace which read: "Delinquent subscribers." "Get a move on you," said the angel, "we must go." "You go on, said the editor. I'm not coming. This is heaven enough for me."

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**"Calcasieu Rice Bird" in Louisiana Planter.**  
We have had a very pleasant week without any rain worth mentioning. The threshing is being wound up very fast, and after next week there will not be very much threshing to do about the country. Reports from some sections, where there has been much heavy rain, are of a very gloomy nature, and the loss from the rains is found to be quite severe on the farmers in that section of country. Much bad shocking and stacking will add to the loss, and we do not know at this writing how severe the loss will be. The last reports received from various sections of the country respecting the yield of rice are about as encouraging as ever, and it will only be doing the crop justice to place the average yield at 10 barrels per acre for the entire parish. This will give us lots of rice to handle, and we are going to make a desperate attempt to handle it, and much of it at home if our courage does not fail us, and I guess it will not, for the rice mills have begun to go up at Jennings, and it is hard to state when the mills will cease to go up, as the farmers are so indignant over the way the millers treat them that they are bound to something. There is more rice gossip about the country now than there has been for many years, and rice meetings are being held all over the country where there is much rice-grown, to see if something can not be done to protect the farmer from the rice sharks who are trying to scalp him with skin-flintiam. Some of our farmers have tired of seeing some of their neighbors milling their rice and shipping the clean product to Northern markets and receiving good prices for their goods, while others have been continuously patronizing a selfish, greedy market, and receiving for their goods what was left after the millers got through speculating with it. This feeling is what has got our people stirred up, and we will soon be as independent of the selfish monopoly as they are of us.

There is a good prospect of a rice mill to go up in Jennings whose stockholders will be farmers. Meetings are now being held to see what can be accomplished. Very little rice is being shipped, or sold, when compared to the amount that is going into the storehouses, and when our mills are ready to run they will have all the work that they can do for the next year. Our farmers are finding out that one way to make times better is to mill their rice at home and sell the clean article in the North, where living prices may be obtained. Our farmers are finding out that what they lose when they send their crops away to some foreign markets for others to speculate on would pay their debts and give them money to spare to build rice mills with. The poor and oppressed farmers have learned by experience that it will not do to trust to selfish monopolies for their profits; it is a dear school to go to, but some people can not learn in any other. Some of our large rice farmers will not sell or ship a sack of rice, but will keep it at home and mill it on the farm during the winter and spring, then ship it whenever the market suits them. One large rice farm has already ordered the machinery for a large rice mill, and the building will go up at once. The mill being on the river, it will do a large business outside of the rice which is grown on the farm. The clean rice will be sent down the river to the railroad for shipment to the North.

**The Improvement of our Defenses.**  
There are many evidences that the authorities are awakening to a lively realization of the necessity of improving the defenses and defensive forces of the country. The Pleayune has already commented upon General Miles' recommendations as to the construction of coast fortifications and upon his admission that at present the country is practically defenseless against the attacks of an enterprising enemy. General Miles also recommends that the numerical strength of the standing army be increased from 25,000 to 35,000 men. The population of the country has doubled since the maximum limit of the strength of the army was fixed at 25,000 men, exclusive of officers. That an increased force could be used to good advantage is generally believed. Moreover the increase would make it practicable to inaugurate the three battalion system of regimental organization which is now the prevailing system in Europe. Although there is still a strong disposition to avoid anything like a large standing army, the increasing tension of our foreign relations and our rapidly increasing population may induce Congress to consent to a moderate increase in the strength of the regular army. The War Department is also considering measures looking to the improvement of the National Guard service. In this the approval of Congress can doubtless be readily secured, as the more efficient the National Guard the less necessity there will be for a large standing army. The War Department has long considered the advisability of bringing the National Guard of the various States under some sort of national control. It is also proposed to establish more intimate relations between the National Guard and the regular army. In the event of war the organized and equipped militia, commonly known as the National Guard, would be the first recourse, as it would have to be called upon at once to re-enforce the standing army. In consideration of this fact the War Department believes that better facilities for instructions should be furnished the militia by the National Government, and the equipment should be more carefully looked after. In the same way the Navy Department is awakening to the necessity of devoting more attention to the naval militia. An increased appropriation has been demanded and Congress will in all likelihood be asked to authorize the assembling together of the battalions for several States for drill and instruction. The Navy Department appears to have determined to secure uniformity in the naval militia laws of the various States and to formulate a better defined sphere of activity for the Naval Reserve. Its exact status is to be determined and its connection with the regular naval establishment.—N. O. Pleayune.

The United States is not the only Nation whose finances are strained. England, Germany, France and Italy find the people restive under the burden of taxation imposed upon them for the purpose of keeping up immense standing armies, and the time is not far distant when the mutterings of discontent will give place to open rebellion. In this country the standing army is one of pensioners which takes annually one hundred and forty million dollars from the federal treasury. It is said the limit has been reached and that henceforth the pension upon the people will be gradually lessened. It is to be hoped that this is the case.