

Opelousas Courier.

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OPELOUSAS, - - LOUISIANA.

"It's only about a hundred years since checks and bills of exchange were first used in the transaction of business," said John Jay Knox, formerly Controller of the Currency, now President of one of the biggest New York banks, to a Star man. "The coin of the realm doesn't play a very important part in the financial operations of the country," he continued. The total coinage of the Government since its foundation has amounted to \$1,890,000,000. This sum vast as it may seem, would not last but six days if paid out by the banks of the country in their daily transactions. The coinage of all the mints of the land for the past year would not make the payments of the banks for an hour and forty-five minutes on any average day's business. The total coinage of the United States is estimated at \$890,000,000, but it would not last three days if used by the banks in making their payments. Coin, then, plays but a small part in the daily commercial life of the nation. It is the basis, but not the vehicle, with which our business is moved.

The New York Journal of Commerce, which favors industrial schools, says of these institutions: "They might well be founded and conducted at the expense of the several trades. It would pay enormously to the trades if they had schools in which girls and boys were educated for the labor in those trades. The regular course to the door of any industry, any workshop, would be through a school. The result of such a system would be a constant supply of skilled workmen, any one of whom at the age of eighteen would earn higher wages for himself and more profit for his employer than is now earned by the average workman of forty. Industrial education instead of the present diffuse, inapplicable and useless sort of education would thus be a blessing to the laborers and the laboring classes first, to the capitalists and employers next, and so to the whole community. And the laborer who had been educated to his trade and had pursued it conscientiously would be infinitely better fitted to represent his fellow-citizens at the Capitol than are nine-tenths of the men now sent to Legislature and Congress. One educated, skilled, and able mechanic is worth more to his country than a hundred half-educated lawyers, physicians or other professional men."

The Providence Journal observes that the petition for the coinage of a half-cent piece, which is being prepared for presentation to the next Congress, may not be supported by any urgent necessity, but it cannot be denied that the request has some elements of reason. It may be said, of course, that we have tried this thing once and gave it up, and it is quite true that the old half-cent, begun to be coined in 1792, was discontinued in 1857 without any remembrance from the people. But though the people apparently consented to its discontinuance, they have gone on persistently recognizing in trade the half-cent value, and it may well be argued that values which play a considerable part in business dealings ought to be represented in a combination of coins. A half-cent would certainly be a great convenience in many kinds of business, and it might do something toward promoting the exercise of economy. Indeed the tendency of narrowing profits, which is everywhere easily traceable, must mean the more general use of the smaller fractional coins; and it would not be surprising if the half-cent should before long come into common demand for the same reasons that have brought the one and two-cent pieces into use in sections of the country where until very recently they were practically unknown.

Some interesting statements regarding the extension of the area of cultivated land in the United States are presented in a recent report of the statistician of the Department of Agriculture, says Broadstreet. It appears that the area under the four principal arable crops—corn, wheat, oats and cotton—increased from 126,000,000 acres in 1879 to 159,000,000 acres in 1895. This represents an expansion in nine years of the area under these crops of 33,000,000 acres, or an extent of land more than equaling the entire area of the three northern New England States. The increase in the area under corn, oats and cotton is greater than the total area of the State of Ohio. This striking result leads the statistician to make the further calculation that if the increase in all tilled and grass land has been in the same proportion as that in the four crops mentioned, we have now a total area of improved lands in farms of 358,000,000 acres, as compared with 285,000,000 acres in 1879, or an increase almost equal to the total surface area of New England, New York and New Jersey, equaling the entire area of improved land in 1880 to the eleven cotton States, with the addition of Delaware and Maryland. The figures of the coming census dealing with the agricultural area should present some interesting comparisons with those of the last census year.

WHISTLE THEM AWAY.

Have you any petty cares, boys? Whistle them away, There's nothing cheers the spirits, Like a merry roundelay. No matter for the headaches, 'Neath silk or hoddie-gray. For the sake of those who love you, Just whistle them away.

The strange how soon friends gather About a cheerful face; That smiling eyes and lips count more Than beauty, wealth, or grace; But I have seen it tried, boys, When trouble comes to stay, The brave heart leaps to work, and strives To whistle it away.

Than as you climb life's hill, boys, Put music in your soul. Turn to your traitor trials, A whistle for a toll. Be steadfast in the right, boys, Whatever the world may say, Temptations never conquer those Who whistle them away! —Mary A. Denison, in Youth's Companion

FEARLESSNESS.

BY ROSE H. LATHROP.

"Genevieve Chamberlain is too silent," remarked Hall Balkan. "When she comes into the room I feel as if I wanted to shake a secret out of her perfect mouth; but, as she is very dainty and very beautiful, I don't really do it."

The young woman who sat near him as he spoke, painting fancy work, and who could not quite compete with a great beauty, thought that Balkan was showing off, being irritated by Genevieve's apparent indifference and was trying to console himself by grumbling at her, although he would have been very critical of any one else who dared to do so. This young woman, who could reflect intelligently, was, nevertheless, a perfect child in guilelessness. She could stand in judgment over people, as a child does, and cause no antagonism at any rate, in a nature as generous as her own. She was the sort of girl who would remain sweet and naive as an old woman.

Nellie Featherly looked round at Balkan, in a moment, and responded: "Now, there is nothing mysterious about me."

"You? I should think not! You are so fearless, straightforward and amusing."

"You have not quite illusion enough about me, I think," Nellie pouted over her satin scarf, which was bursting into flower and leaf. "You have made me out just one of the ordinary, useful tosse-aside kind of women, and, although you are right, I do hate to hear the fact repeated."

"I don't care what you think of yourself or how you construe my appreciation of you," answered Balkan, saucily. "I am perfectly content with enjoying your traits and sitting where you paint."

Nellie went on busily, with a dozen pretty attitudes and motions and a rather dissatisfied expression of countenance. Whether it was her work or her words which annoyed her, Balkan was not sure. "That's exquisite, and no mistake," he went on, peering over at the drawing-board on her knees, upon which the satin was stretched.

"Oh, please don't say pretty things," Nellie cried. "Somehow, you seem insincere to-day!"

"If I may say so, Featherly, I should not hesitate to tell the truth, rather than prevaricate. To be quite honest, I would tell you the truth about anything in the world you could ask me; though with others I might be as silent as Genevieve, instead of confessing to actualities."

"If I ever want to ask you anything I will remember this," the young amateur rejoined, with the nicest smiles into Balkan's earnest face.

Cecil Morton sauntered across the room, during the little pause ensuing and said that the day was too good for staying in the house. Why not go to walk before dinner? The young people, eight when all told, were visiting some dear old country gentefolks to whom Nellie was nearly related, and who had asked them out of town for a week of sleighing, and other winter fun, the snow being in better condition than for years past. That evening they were to go sleighing by moonlight and it was super-energetic for Morton to talk of walking. But we all know how these restless people of energy or muscle rout us out of little lazy tele-phones and fireside luxury. Neither Nellie nor Balkan wished to be stigmatized as loth to exercise and so they rushed out of the parlor to find the others and get well wrapped up against a coolish ramble; while Cecil Morton smiled to himself in a mirror to think of the commotion he could effect at will.

Nellie and Genevieve paired off, intentionally, as the group left the hall-door ten minutes later. Something agitated Nellie's beautiful friend, as the former was able to discover through girlish intimacy, which is a very deep thing indeed. Genevieve's face looked calm and pale as she said, in a low, rather tragic voice, to the affectionate girl beside her: "My heart is almost breaking. I am so wretched, and so surprised. To think of it! Never have I loved before, and every one always on their knees to me. And now, the very one who absorbs my thought—cold, cold, cold!" "Don't be silly, Gen. You're so fired up at finding any one you can become romantic over, that you are as blind as a hickory nut, beside being dreadfully awkward when he's around. Moreover, Hall Balkan is perfectly splendid—so handsome and so manly! I don't wonder wonder you like him tremendously. And the idea of his not coming under your spell! As for me, I just know he thinks you are irresistible. I know you are in his mind!" "You love me, and try to think me a

vanquisher of all hearts, no matter how brave and free," murmured Genevieve. "But my former conquests have not been all-conquering, because Mr. Balkan is really the only true, fine person of enviable position and means whom I ever met in our set. There seem to be a thousand foolish bachelors to one downright hero!"

"I think Hall is a fine fellow," Nellie again admitted, softly, thrusting her little hand upon Genevieve's arm for a few steps, and then stopping her arbitrarily, and letting the others catch up with them. "How far north we seem!" she then exclaimed. "I am sure the Arctic Sea is over that hill of pines by the meadow. Ribbons of white cloud and this exhilarating atmosphere make me feel as if I were somebody else! Oh, we are explorers. Is that a Polar bear or a snow drift?" she concluded, pointing to a white banked gate post by the cattle lane.

Cecil Morton tried to shuffle the little party in such a way that he would come next to Genevieve; but she evaded him, by sheer force of desperation. And, as back would have it, Hall Balkan came up to her with his fine, hearty good cheer, and asked her to walk with him as far as a wide-spreading elm at a considerable distance down the high road; and Nellie Featherly heard him say it. A damask flush all over Genevieve's face made Balkan glance round to see if the sunset had begun yet; but the West was as gray as a flag-stone. Genevieve was willing, and they started off at a huge pace, which the rest tried to imitate; but not too well, as every one of the girls thought that Balkan wanted to propose to his companion, and determined to let him have a chance.

At last the two figures in advance stopped under the delicate tracery of the great, bare elm-tree, and seemed to be talking earnestly. Then a cry went up from Nellie Featherly, for Genevieve had sunk to the ground, evidently in a faint, and Balkan knelt at her side.

"The walk was too rapid for her," exclaimed Nellie, off-hand. "Oh, Mr. Morton, why must you always be asking us to go for constitutional; they'll be the death of us!" And Nellie, whom no one had ever seen really provoked before, gave him a cross glance; and then went on a run, accompanied by the reproved Morton, toward her friend, while the others followed more or less absently.

A faithful Nellie ran, she discerned a strange, black cloud rolling toward them all, down the snowy road. Soon the motion of two prancing horses became apparent; and as Nellie reached Genevieve's prostrate form, in the middle of the road, over which Balkan was bending in absorbed dismay, the plucky girl realized that a runaway team was in full swing at a few yards' distance, and quite unobserved by any one but herself and Cecil Morton, who shouted to Nellie to have a care and jump aside.

But this Nellie never thought of doing. On she ran, beyond Genevieve, whose danger was so imminent—and what could she do to avert the danger? In her muff was a ball of snow, which had been reduced by careful manipulation (under Morton's instructions) to an icy consistency; capable, as her teacher had explained, of killing anybody, if rightly aimed. It is by no means easy to evert the direction of a maddened horse. But one of these was running away because the other wanted to, and he yet retained some common-sense. At any rate, Nellie drew forth her icy ball in a twinkling, and hurled it, by good luck, at the saner horse for they were now close at hand) with such splendid vigor and true aim that it hit him furiously on the nose. He plunged aside, slipped on the hard crust of the old snow beside the road, and keeled over, carrying his rampant mate with him into the ditch. They were a powerful team belonging to Nellie's uncle, and were dragging an empty wood-sledge. Their driver was hallooing in the distance, as he ran wearily along.

Nellie pondered a moment over the success of her defense and gazed at the quivering limbs of the foe, and then turned back to Genevieve, panting. The girls were on the bank at the other side of the road.

Meantime, Balkan had but just looked up, realized the peril and caught Genevieve in his arms, while Morton threw his weight wildly upon the young man's struggling shoulders. It is always in some such way that a person weak in emergencies assists the real actors. So swiftly do runaway horses proceed that it only seemed an instant since Genevieve had fainted.

Now all the girls swooped down from their perch helpfully, and surrounded their pale friend, whose swoon was so much in earnest that she had not stirred an eyelash. Nellie seized Balkan's hand and told him she must speak with him instantly.

"Did you offer yourself?" she severely demanded, when she had led him, perceptibly, out of hearing of the others. "No," he gasped, gazing blankly, as a man does who is confronted with more Greek than he is prepared for.

"Didn't you propose?" exclaimed Nellie, in the same indignant tone, which showed Balkan that he was a criminal, whichever way he pleaded.

"Do explain!" he quavered, gently. But Nellie was off to Genevieve with impetuous haste, kneeling down at her side, calling for soft snow from under a drift and rubbing the beauty's temples and lips with it, while she explained to Morton how to get Genevieve's hands

waru; not to his satisfaction, for she did not object to his covering them with kisses.

The teamster came up, and Nellie found time to scold him for his stupidity. "I know you by sight, Jim," she said. "But that shan't save you. Go you shall from my uncle's service!"

"But, Miss!"

"No 'buts!' You might have killed a dozen people, you goose!"

"As true as I live, Miss, I've always heard as how horses will run in winter, when the moon is near the full, as it's been proved this day! So crisp-like everywhere, Miss, what can you expect of them?"

"Swear you'll never leave your horses without tying them tight," commanded Nellie, laughingly.

"Faith I'll swear while I'm out of your prison, Miss!" Jim humbly answered.

The horses were unhitched from the sledge, and the young people undertook to drag Genevieve home, which the stout poles at the sides of the conveyance assisted them to accomplish, as the girls could take hold of them and propel, while the young men dragged the cumbersome concern. The fair invalid was piloted on muffs and covered with new markets, and was pleased to revive nicely. It was first sunset and then deep dusk when the catastrophe slowly reached home.

It may be supposed that dinner was a little late that evening.

Nellie came into the parlor before the others, looking lovely, in still another of her Worth dresses, and Balkan was waiting for her, ready to pounce.

Nellie's eyes, which looked unusually big and bright, because she had been crying all to herself, filled again with tears. She edged away into the ante-room, and he followed.

"I meant," she replied, soto voce, "that when you love her, and when she loves you, and when you come out into the 'backwoods' and have plenty of opportunities, and when we are all looking on from a respectful distance, it is perfectly stupid of you not to offer yourself to Genevieve, and I should have fainted and died both if I had been in her place! She showed great self-control not to have died. You had no business to stipulate the tree, anyhow, for of course she would expect everything to be settled before she got there. Oh! of course you think me outrageous to meddle with you and talk right out as if I were a novel, without respect of persons and open secrets; but I'm nobody in particular, and I will love Genevieve and put my finger into her affairs if I like to! And I'll just add this: that I'm going to arrange to have you both driven by the coachman to-night in the big sleigh, while we are apportioned off to little cutters. The driver's seat is way up."

"But, my dear Miss Featherly—" "Nellie—" "Now, don't be disrespectful. Of course I can only ask for an outward show of respect after telling you to offer yourself to my dearest friend, whom we all know (goose) you are hoping to win; but that show of courtesy I stipulate for."

"But how can I ask Miss Chamberlain in marriage if I love you?" Balkan squeezed in, desperately.

Nellie laid down on the arm of a chair and looked up at him aghast, blushing and appealing.

"Oh, you can't be in love with me!" she panted.

"I wish you would not be so scornful," he answered. "You ought to have known it. Months ago, I was crazy about Genevieve, like the rest; but only for a week, for then I met you. A man don't sit staring all day at a girl unless he dotes on her! While I stare at you, your utter indifference to me is something appalling; but I had hoped to win you in the end. Then you take me by the throat, yank me in front of somebody else, with orders, martial in their haste, and now cast me into a perfect sea of prematureness; for, of course, you'll spurn my all-unhindered revelation. But I'm as obstinate as you are, and love you I will, by Jove!" Balkan sat down on another chair-arm, and being trim as a marble statue for dinner, and not having time to brush his hair again if he tore it a little, thrust his thumbs in his pockets and glared at the fire.

A faint rustle of heavy silk at his elbow made him feel exultant.

"If she consents to it, you might propose to me, then, in the Russian sleigh!"

He turned, and the little creature's superb eyes met his. He caught her hands, and studied her face with blissful care.

"I thought I was of no great account," she murmured, all of a tremble; and was suddenly kissed in a way that made her feel that for the future she had some one to guard her against all harm, and give her all the happiness she could wish for. —The Independent.

Strange Facts About Willow Trees.

The Government engineer in charge of Potomac, recently announced some strange facts concerning the planting of willow trees. Investigation showed that the water reached a height of two feet seven inches above the high water mark of the freshet of 1877, which was the highest of any known or recorded freshet. The benefit of planting willows upon new lands has been justified. That portion of the newly made flats upon which willows were planted was protected from washing, so that practically no damage was done there, while in portions of the improvement, which were not so protected, there was great loss. —Goodall's Sun.

Mormon converts are more plentiful than for five years past, but the double-winged business in Utah is, asserts the Detroit Free Press, played out forever.

A Duck Farm.

Not far from Boston, in the town of Easton, Mass., is situated the largest duck farm in the world. For years past the business of raising ducks for market has been carried on upon an enormous scale in this neighborhood. The biggest establishment devoted to the industry used to be found along the shore, it being supposed formerly that the web-footed birds could not possibly thrive without plenty of water to swim in. Besides, the ocean was a most convenient source of food-supply in the shape of fish, which were caught in huge quantities with seine and net for quacking stock. The trouble with this method of feeding, however, was that the flesh acquired an undesirable fishy flavor, calculated to diminish its selling value. Then, too, it was discovered at length that ducklings could be raised and made to thrive without any water facilities at all—in short, that natatory exercise was merely a luxury for them and not a necessity by any means. And it is on this theory that the gigantic duck-farm at Easton is conducted.

Everything appertaining to the rearing of the ducklings is performed artificially, for this business is one in which art outdoes nature altogether. Even in old times the device was resorted to of employing the maternal offices of the hen for hatching out the duck eggs and bringing up the broods. But now the motherly barn-yard fowl has been superseded by the incubator, which turns out the fuzzy little yellow creatures by thousands, ready to nestle under an imitation mamma with steam-pipe vitals and gorge themselves to adult fatness on especially-prepared soft food. The duck thus brought by patent methods to marketable size is sure to be tender, juicy and most delicate of flavor. At forty to fifty cents a pound it pays the producer admirably. Most breeders says that the "Pekin" duck, a bird of Chinese origin, is the most desirable for all purposes. It is hardy, matures early, and weighs from fourteen to twenty pounds to the pair. —Washington Star.

Recipes to Overcome Wakefulness. Among the many recipes that have been given for overcoming wakefulness is one devised by a Mr. Gardner, and formerly celebrated in England, but now almost forgotten. It is to lie on the right side, with the head so placed on the pillow that the neck shall be straight; keeping the lips closed tightly, a rather full inspiration is to be taken through the nostrils, and the lungs then left to their own action. The person now imagines that he sees the breath streaming in and out of his nostrils, and confines his attention to this idea. If properly carried out, this method is said to be infallible. Counting and repeating poetry are other means that have been recommended. Combing the hair, brushing the forehead with a soft shaving-brush, or fanning, are all good sleep-inducers, and might well be tried on sleepless children.

To these may be added the Spanish practice of getting a baby off to sleep by rubbing its back with the hand. A sensation of dry, burning heat in the soles and palms, which accompanies certain diseases in some people, is a cause of sleeplessness that will give way to sponging the parts with vinegar and water.

Wakefulness is sometimes the result of lack of food, and a glass of cold water or pale ale, or the eating of a sandwich, will, by setting up activity in the abdominal organs, divert the superabundant blood from the head, thus removing the cause of the unnatural activity of the brain. One reason why the most gifted of minds have frequently been afflicted by sleeplessness is because bodily exercise is too often neglected by people devoted to intellectual pursuits. For such persons there is no better soporific than muscular exertion, carried over, in extreme cases, to a sense of fatigue. —Once A Week.

Live 'Skeeters From Mexico.

Everybody around the rotunda of the Custom House when they heard Edward H. Kreemer, the veteran animal broker, say that he had just entered a big lot of live mosquitoes thought he was either raving or was losing some of the quick sense which enables him instantly to tell a Yorkshire from a Dandie Dinmont terrier. Eddie went on to say in the presence of the credulous-minded brokers and clerks that four packages of the pestiferous insects had arrived on the steamship Alansa from Vera Cruz. Two of the packages contained live mosquitoes and two dead mosquitoes baked in the form of cakes. They came from Mexico, of which country they are natives. Eddie described the pests to be as long as his hand, or many times the size of their famous Eastern cousins.

"What are they for, Eddie?" he was asked. "To feed soft billed birds, such as robins and others." The broker said that he paid duty on the live skeeters at the rate of twenty per cent, and that the insects were consigned to Reich Brothers, of Park Row. "The duties," he added, "amounted to \$21."

One of the Reich Brothers said that the firm was expecting a shipment of mosquitoes from Mexico, but that they were dead ones. If any of the lot get here alive they must have been restored to life on the passage. They are caught in nets in Mexico and dried. They are fed to trushes, nightingales, mocking birds, and other soft billed birds. —New York Sun.

Strawberries as large as tea cups grow wild in Africa.

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Capers of Cannon Balls.

Captain Meredith, John Ritchie and George Shields, known as "old hoeses" and "old-timers," sat around in the Press club one afternoon recently and talked about the times of the war and told of the funny capers that cannon balls and musket balls out. Captain Meredith said he once found a dead Confederate behind a big tree. The dead man was resting on one knee, in a position to shoot. His musket was in his hands, the butt of the gun was against his shoulder, and one eye was open, squinting along the gun-barrel. There wasn't a mark on the body, but the man was stone dead. There was a ten-pound cannon ball buried in the tree. The man had been killed by the concussion. Mr. Shields said that he saw a cannon ball go into the ground about 200 yards in front of where he was standing. He thought that was the end of the matter, but in about three seconds the ball came out of the ground fifty yards beyond the place it struck. It then in its flight struck a stump, carried off, broke a soldier's leg, and, rolling on a few yards further, up a ramp kettle and scalded a man's hands.

John Ritchie said he saw a man hit with a "spent" cannon ball. He walked over to where the man lay to see what he could do for him—give him a drink out of his canteen, or a chew of tobacco, or something—but all that was visible was a mass of about 100 pounds of flesh and blue cloth, mixed up like sausage, with an eye and two teeth sticking out on top.

Captain Meredith said that, speaking of cannon balls, one of the most novel sights he witnessed during the war was a cannon ball about as big as a flour barrel going through a horse lengthwise—that is, lengthwise of the horse. There was left of the horse its head, its four feet and the lower six inches of its tail. The Captain said he could always tell the body of a Confederate soldier from a Northern man on a battle field, because whenever a Confederate was wounded, corn-bread oozed out. —Chicago Mail.

CURIOUS FACTS.

Kentucky has a mail carrier ninety years old.

In Ohio the street-car conductors are all women.

The word "and" occurs 46,227 times in the Bible.

Philadelphia is to have a new church for colored Catholics.

Toddy is from the Hindostanee tarradi, the juice of the palmyra tree.

A Vienna criminal recently made his escape from justice by means of a balloon.

An Illinois man who bet that the world was round and failed to prove it had to pay over \$25.

The largest ruby known is among the crown jewels of Russia; its size is that of a pigeon's egg.

The age of Sato Yukichi, the Japanese dwarf, is about fifty years. His height is fifteen inches.

A pair of elephant's tusks of average length weigh about 200 pounds, and are worth about \$500.

The three Presidents who died on July 4 are John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe.

The American mosquito has appeared in England, and the people are vastly excited by the discovery.

The descendants of Rebecca Nurse, who was hanged as a witch in 1622, had a reunion in Danvers, Mass., recently.

British people drink annually five pounds of tea per head per annum. The French average is only half an ounce.

It is against the city ordinance in Castile, N. Y., for a donkey to appear on the streets unless accompanied by a man.

A cloud-burst in Nevada the other day dropped enough water on a region two miles square to form a lake of ten acres in extent and ten feet deep.

John Moore, of Indiana, declared himself guilty of robbery, paid a constable \$2 to arrest him, and then hired a carriage for \$3 to take them to the county jail.

Sanskrit panchan, meaning five, because the drink was originally composed of five ingredients, viz.: Sugar, arrack, tea, water and lemon juice.

Italian excavators at Adulis, near Zula, Africa, have come upon public buildings and coins. In the sixth century a marble slab was found there giving the conquests of Ptolemy Evergetes.

A number of strange fish, formed like the white fish of Lake Erie, have just been caught at the dam near Mendville, N. Y. Some think they are ciscoes. They are in color regular strawberry blonder, with reddish gills and tails, and, so far as reported, entirely new to those waters. How they got there is a mystery.

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