The Opelousas Courier

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

OPELOUSAS, - - LOUISIANA.

WHERE IS THE BOY?

The aged hands no more shall light
The candle's welcome for the night
Within the chamber door;
The sailor boy who sought the deep
And left those aged eyes to weep
Shall find a home no more.

Did once the wandering feet turn home
And heart and eye forego to roam,
Fond hearts had welcomed him:
The old man climbed each night the stair
And left the burning taper there,
A beacon never dim.

But, ah! perhaps the boat went down,
And nowhere on the billow's crown
The lad looked out to sea;
The tall old man, his aged mate,
Broke hope and life against their fate—
Their last sigh: "Where is he?"

Between the tollings of the clock
Death came with his imperious knock
And summoned forth the twain.
One grief, one funeral, and one grave—
No hand is now to seek or save
The lad lost on the main.

—F. H. Dewey, in Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

BOB'S SISTER.

In a small house at Bigham, Surrey, lived Alice Baines and her sister Bob. Both their parents had been dead for some years, having bequeathed to their daughters a modest patrimony, upon which they were able to subsist in simple comfort. Alice, the elder, was just on the far side of 30; Bob, the younger, was now in her 18th year. There was thus a considerable difference of age between them. But the difference did not end here. Two sisters more dissimilar in looks, in character, in disposition, would have been hard to find. The strength and self-reliance of Alice made themselves appear in every line of her face, in every tone of her voice, in every motion of her body. Her blue eyes shone with a steady, fearless light. The carriage of her mouth was firm and stanch. The squareness of her well-formed chin was full of power. Her manner had the calm ease of perfect assurance. Her beauty was the beauty of a capable woman.

With Bob it was different. Bob had little strength, and no self-reliance. Such a tender, anxious, appealing face was Bob's. It reflected every ray of sunshine, every passing cloud that approached. In those brown and gentle eyes often a hundred varying emotions would be born and die within the hour, and as many smiles and quiverings would ruffle her mobile lips. She was pretty, very pretty; and winning, very, very winning. Yet it was a child's nature that gave its life to her expression; 'twas a child's sweetness that charmed you in her look and manner.

Before she was well 18 Bob had found a lover. Some people expressed surprise that Ronald Armleigh had chosen Bob in preference to her sister Alice. And, indeed, it had appeared for some time doubtful toward which of the two girls his real attention was directed. First of all, Alice had seemed to attract him the more. This was what might have been expected. Armleigh was a man of the world, experienced, and mature in judgment. He prided himself, not without reason, upon his sound sense and his practical views. In his then position—that of a barrister just on the threshold of professional and social success—he had every need of a clever, capable wife. That was exactly what Alice's qualities fitted her for. And it was by these qualities in her that he seemed at first to be attracted.

But after a little came a change. Exactly what caused it would be difficult to say. Perhaps Alice had repelled him by her cold demeanor. Perhaps he had grown alarmed by the signs of masterfulness in her character. Or, perhaps, love had got the better of prudential considerations. It was probably one of these three. It may have been all combined. At any rate, there it was. And soon it became apparent that it was Bob, the winsome child, not Alice, the capable woman, who held the key of Ronald Armleigh's affections.

This circumstance discovered a new side to the elder sister's character. Till now Alice had been more than a mother to Bob. Her love for the younger girl had been a touching thing to see. In furthering Bob's interests, in promoting Bob's happiness, in shielding Bob from harm and annoyance, Alice had never been known to consider herself. She had, in everything, yielded to her sister a pure and unmixed devotion. But from this time forward all this was changed. Alice suddenly began to treat her sister—so the neighbors said, and so the poor child herself felt—with positive cruelty.

Perhaps there never yet lived a woman devoid of jealousy. And though some may manage to conceal it better than others, yet 'tis seldom, indeed, that, upon adequate provocation arising, they are able to conceal it altogether. No one could deny that, in this present case, Alice Baines had received adequate provocation. To be admired by a handsome, fascinating man—a man who, all things considered, was a distinctly eligible parti, was, of course, a flattering thing. To have that admiration unaccountably withdrawn, and then openly transferred to a younger sister, under her very nose, was equally, of course, provoking. And Alice Baines might have been excused any ordinary exhibition of jealousy. There was, however, no occasion for her to behave with such exceptional meanness as she did.

Her meanness was twofold. She tried the effect of one kind first, and upon that proving a failure, she had recourse to the other. Her first meanness was a malicious attempt, worked by an insidious process of suggestions and innuendoes, to blacken Armleigh's character in her sister's eyes. Armleigh had not yet actually proposed to Bob, and Alice wished to bring it about that when he did propose to her, as he was sure to do, her sister would refuse him.

But this plan—very deservedly, the neighbors said, considering its spiteful and dog-in-the manger character—altogether failed. Bob began by indignantly repelling all insinuations against her lover, and went on by refusing to listen to them at all. Alice then took a bolder course. She stooped to a design of unparalleled meanness. She strained every nerve, used every artifice, every charm, every subterfuge to win Ronald Armleigh back from her sister to herself. Now, nobody had ever seen Alice Baines really exercise her charms upon a man before. And all who witnessed this attempt of hers were wonderstruck by the extraordinary powers of fascination which she could discover at will. Poor little Bob's simple, commonplace talk stood no chance against the new and attractive brilliancy of Alice's conversation. Armleigh listened to her with delight. He was clearly impressed. An intellectual man himself, he could appreciate intellectual talk, especially when it was set off by a sweet and musical voice. Then, too, the whole expression of her face seemed changed. The calm immobility, which usually had graced it, was there no longer. It had given way to a new and radiant vivacity. In her eyes, when she addressed Armleigh, shone a brilliant something, which almost looked like a challenge. To meet that look from such a quarter, and not to feel the pulse quicken and the heart leap, would have demanded superhuman restraint. Ronald Armleigh had many fine qualities, but restraint of this description was not among them. He was clearly being fascinated by this new development in Alice's charms.

What "people" say is not always of much moment. They are given to speaking without knowledge and criticising without judgment. But what "people" said upon this particular matter did happen to have some ground-work of reason and good sense. They asserted that if Alice Baines had taken this line in the first instance, nobody could have found fault with her. It would then have resolved itself into a contest a l'outrance between the two sisters for a prize to which neither had greater claim than the other. But to have acted as she had done, to have taken no pains originally to strengthen her hold upon Armleigh, to have let her childish sister's affections become deeply engaged with him, and then, when he was on the point of making that childish sister happy by a declaration, to use every effort to draw him back to herself—at the risk of wrecking poor Bob's happiness, and, perhaps, breaking her heart—why, this was as cruel a thing as jealousy, in its most extreme form, could devise. Such conduct toward a friend would have been odious; toward a sister it was shameful, unpardonable. Heaven grant the effort might meet with that failure which it handsomely merited!

Heaven, however, did not grant it. The effort proved successful. Bob's white face and miserable expression betrayed that, long before Armleigh's engagement to Alice was announced. Bob's little dream of happiness was over. Alice had dissipated it finally and forever. But 'twas not merely the loss of her lover, though this was chief, but also her sister's conduct in the matter, which cut Bob to the heart. Until this unhappy affair, Bob had experienced nothing save the tenderest kindness, the most caressing care, from Alice. And then—on a sudden—to be so treated by her, it was as incomprehensible as it was unnatural and cruel.

Only once had Bob ventured on a timid remonstrance. Alice had answered her thus, hardly, and almost with scorn:

"Why were you not happy and content with Gerald? Gerald is far more suited to you than Ronald Armleigh. You would never have made Ronald happy."

Bob had burst into tears at this unfeeling retort, and, without apology or any attempt at solace, Alice had left the room. No other word on the subject passed between them.

The Gerald of whom Alice had spoken was an old admirer of childish Bob's, and, until Armleigh's appearance, had been that young lady's first favorite. He lacked all Armleigh's brilliance of manner and distinction of bearing. As a love-maker he was his hopeless inferior. Many people called him stupid. That he was not. If rather slow of speech and silent of temperament he had plenty of good sound sense, and, withal, possessed a kind, true heart and loyal dispositon, which far outweighed his external disqualifications. Everyone could see that he was devoted to Bob. Bob had liked, had even been very fond of him. She might, perhaps, have thought that she loved him, had not Ronald Armleigh taught her what love really was. But now her eyes were opened. She knew love now. She knew, also—how many have known it thus?—that with the loss of her beloved had gone from her the capacity of that first sweet sentiment; that its sublime inspirations, its deep intensity, its pure delight, would never throb in her quickened pulses again.

Bob did not feel bitter against her sister. She scarcely felt indignant; she was simply crushed and broken. All who saw her hollow eyes, her sad face, her dispirited bearing, were struck with pity for the poor child. Alice alone remained obdurate, and, so far as could be seen, unfeeling. It was unlike what Alice had ever been before, until this miserable affair. But her obduracy was easily explained. Those of us who have wronged our dear ones are the last to betray pity for them in their sufferings. For those very sufferings are our own condemnation. And we, therefore, concern ourselves to make as light of them as possible.

That is what Alice did.

"Oh, poor Bob will soon get over it. It was a very trifling affair. Her heart would quickly mend. Her happiness wrecked? Pooh! Happiness was not so easily wrecked as that. Besides, it was partly Bob's fancy that was responsible. Ronald had never really been in love with her," etc., etc.

It is unlikely that Alice deceived herself with these excuses, even while she uttered them. It is certain that her friends to whom she addressed them were not deceived thereby, and her attempt to thus exonerate herself did not give them any better opinion of her. Many of them told her frankly to her face that she had treated Bob with unnatural cruelty; and when the time came for her marriage with Ronald Armleigh to take place, most of these friends signified their disapproval by refusing her invitations to be present at the ceremony.

Thus it came to pass that the wedding was solemnized before a very small company, consisting chiefly of the bridegroom's relations. On Alice's side only an aunt or two, and Bob—poor Bob—were present. The ceremony was cold, stiff, and, if the truth must be told, gloomy. That was scarcely wonderful. Bob, indeed, tried hard to hide her misery. But those wan smiles were only the more melancholy for the attempt, and her presence was a spectre at the feast.

People said that if there was such a thing as Providence in this world of ours, Alice would never find happiness in her union with Armleigh, which she had contrived so cruelly at the expense of her little sister. True, Bob did get over the blow sooner that might have been expected; true, the faithful Gerald found favor again in those childish eyes, and something that he one day said to her brought back to them the sparkle of life and happiness. Yet this did not in the least exculpate Alice; who, at the time of inflicting her unnatural blow, could never possibly have foreseen that happy conclusion.

The people who thus expressed themselves had reason, by and by, to be very cock-a-hoop. There was such a thing as Providence in this world of ours, and Alice Armleigh did not find happiness in her union. A year's married life—a year, it was whispered, of quarrels and contentions—proved to be enough for both. At the end of that period Armleigh and Alice separated by mutual consent.

It was, perhaps, a pity that people could not hear what words passed at that final and irrevocable quarrel between Alice and Armleigh. It would have modified their opinions about Providence and other kindred matters, and have induced them, however unwillingly, to view Bob's sister in a somewhat different light.

This last quarrel took place one morning at breakfast. Alice had just said something to her husband which made him white with rage and mortification.

"Do you mean me to understand," he demanded, fiercely, "that you married me simply to get me away from that sister of yours, and for no other reason?"

"Simply for that," answered his wife, regarding him steadily with her clear blue eyes. "Ah, I could read your character better than you thought. I was acquainted with—with—things about you—things which it might have been hard to prove against you, and which I should have been loath to prove before that innocent child—things which would have made your marriage with her a gross pollution. Yes, swear and curse; I am not afraid of you. Why did I not tell my sister this? I did tell her what I could—all that was fit for her to hear. But Bob was too true, too faithful, too confiding to listen to these tales against the man she loved. She would have married you. Nothing would have stopped her, unless an insuperable bar had intervened. I (thank God!) have formed that insuperable bar."

"Curse you," he muttered, in a hoarse voice. "That, then, is why, after repelling me first of all with your coldness, you afterward made such hard play to get me back?"

"Exactly. When I saw that you had entered our home to ruin one of us, I swore to myself that your victim should not be Bob. It has not been Bob, and I am satisfied."

She spoke in a tone of quiet triumph which nearly maddened him. He clenched his fist. I believe he would have struck her, had she not stood before him so fearless, so strong, so scornful. But her aspect cowed him, and he contented himself with a string of coarse abuse.

"You know what happened yesterday," she continued, calmly, never heeding his vile words. "Bob was married to a good, true man, who loves her and will make her happy. All that I aimed at is now accomplished. We have lived together long enough, Ronald Armleigh. I mean to leave you today—forever!"

"And where, pray, shall you go, madam?" demanded Armleigh, trying to force a contemptuous laugh. "And what, do you think, will become of you?"

"I do not know; and I do not care."

Then, as a beautiful smile beamed, for an instant, upon that strong, calm face, she added:

"Bob is safe; and I—I do not matter."—London Truth.

Without Reptiles.

One hundred frogs taken from the marshes near Berlin have been imported into Iceland, where these animals are unknown. Certain portions of the island are infested by swarms of gnats and flies, and these frogs were imported to do away with the plague. The inhabitants near Lake Myvatn (meaning mosquito water) must wear wire nets over the face and hands to protect themselves from the painful stings of the gnats. A Danish physician, Dr. Ehlers, was the first to propose the importation of frogs, since reptiles were absolutely unknown in Iceland. The entire batrachian colony was set free near a warm spring in the environs of Reykjavik, where after the long confinement of the sea voyage, they disappeared, quacking happily. It was interesting to note how the native ducks drew away from the novel intruders, being evidently frightened at the unwonted apparition of a jumping animal that could swim.—Detroit Free Press.

The Armenian Church.

The great patron saint of the Armenian Christians is St. Gregory, surnamed the "Illuminator," who baptized King Tividates in 302 A. D. His most illustrious successors were SS. Nerses, Sahak and Mesrop, the last named of whom invented the Armenian alphabet and translated the Bible into Armenian. After the general council of Chalcedon, in the year 451, the Armenian church adopted the Monophysite heresy, which holds that Christ has only one nature. It returned to the communion of the Catholic church in 626. But at the beginning of the eighth century it fell into heresy again. It became orthodox in 1439, but soon reverted to heresy, and has ever since been regarded as schismatic by the Catholic church. It is noteworthy, however, that the house of bishops of the late Episcopal general convention referred to "the ancient and faithful church of Armenia."—N. Y. Tribune.

The Successful Ones.

"There are just two classes of men who are successful in literature," said the cynic, oracularly.

"Indeed!" returned the library critic sarcastically. "Perhaps you can specify them."

"Certainly," replied the cynic. "There is the class that has the ability to write stuff that commands attention because of its merit. That is small—very, very small, comparatively."

"And the other?"

"It is composed of those who have the gift of inducing men to take them at their own estimate. That is very, very large."—Chicago Post.

PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL.

—Rev. A. Sims, M. D., Baptist missionary at Leopoldville, on the Congo, has received decorations from both the French and Belgium governments, recognizing his medical services to their officials.

—William Waldorf Astor employed a scholar from the British museum to trace his genealogy and get him a legitimate crest. After two years of study in European archives he traced the descent, beyond a doubt, to an ancient family of Spanish grandees, where the desired crest was obtained.

—London's new mayor, Sir Walter Wilkin, made his fortune by the sale of a German yeast. In view of Sir Walter's probable elevation to a baronetcy at the expiration of his term of office, a political antagonist remarked: "'We Have Risen' would make a fine motto for the Wilkin family."

—Mrs. Catherine C. McDonald, of Maspeth, L. I., who was educated in the Perkins institute for the blind, South Boston, originated the thought of a home for blind women, gathered funds, interested other women, and has at last realized the fruition of her hopes and plans. A home has been opened at Maspeth under favorable auspices.

—Isabella and Sallie Broadbent, two Florida girls who gave valuable assistance in rescuing the crew of the wrecked Norwegian ship Ciltherine, in August, 1894, have received silver lockets and chains from King Oscar, of Norway and Sweden. The lockets are inscribed with the crown and monogram of the king, and the words, "For a Noble Deed."

—King Oscar, of Sweden and Norway, recently appeared in a new role at the performance given by Stuart Cumberland in Stockholm. Mr. Cumberland does not know Swedish, and his interpreter failed to appear; so the king, who is an excellent linguist, offered his services, and explained things to the crowded audience with surprising ease and fluency.

—Miss Frances Abdulla, the daughter of an Arab chief, established, January 1, 1895, the Northern Dairy Farm Co., at Allahabad, India, which has achieved remarkable success. She also instituted the Ali Abdulla stables, an equine home, and the Zoe memorial institute, a temporary home for gentlewomen seeking employment. She is a woman of strong individuality, and very persevering.

—Count Okuma, who is the most willing talker and promoter in Japan, is still advocating his scheme for a great world's fair in Japan in 1896, or the year following. He thinks it would be a great advertisement of Japan's resources and progress, and would vastly stimulate commerce with the outer world. His plan is to have a portion of the Chinese indemnity fund—say 10,000,000 yen—set aside for this exposition.

—Miss Helen A. Whittier has for some years been the proprietor and active manager of a large cotton mill at Lowell, Mass. She is building a new mill at the south, and intends that the product of her southern mill shall be of the coarser and cheaper fabrics, which can be made there to good advantage, with inferior help, while the head looms in Massachusetts are exclusively occupied with the finer grades of manufacture.

"A LITTLE NONSENSE."

—The Parson—"I want to sell my horse. He's sound as a dollar, gentle as a lamb, and a good goer." "How old is he?" "Oh, about the usual age of horses."—La Cross Chronicle.

—His Habit of Smashing.—"No, no; I wouldn't dare have my husband help when we move." "Why not?" "He's a depot baggage man, you know, and he'd be sure to forget himself."—Chicago Record.

—"So you lynched the wrong man? Weren't you horrified when you found out the mistake?" "I should shout, stranger. While we was lynching the wrong one the right one got away. It was too bad."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

—The Minister—"My dear madam, let this thought console you for your husband's death. Remember that other and better men than he have gone the same way." Bereaved Widow—"They haven't all gone, have they?"—Puck.

—Didn't Want Him.—"I'm going a nutting," she gayly said. "May I go with you?" inquired young Woodby Witte. "What for?" "Why, to talk to you." "Oh," she rejoined naively; "I'm not going chestnutting."—Washington Star.

—"She—"I was afraid you were going to kiss me then, you pursed up your lips so." He—"Oh, no; I wouldn't dare do that, I merely had some sand in my mouth." She (disgustingly)—"Don't take it out. It might get into your system."—High School World.

—"Do you ever catch any whales, captain?" asked the fair passenger on the ocean liner. "Often ma'am," answered the dignified captain. "How very wonderful! Please tell me how you catch them." "We drop a few of the old salts on their tails, ma'am."—Chicago Tribune.

—Mother (sternly)—"Why did you tell that lie to the teacher?" Johnny—"To save somebody from punishment." Mother (mollified)—"I knew there must be some extenuating circumstances. Who was it you wished to save from punishment?" Johnny—"Myself."—Tit-Bits.

—"What kind of a man is Skinner? Does he do much in the way of entertaining?" "Entertaining! Why, Skinner is a good enough fellow in his way, but he thinks too much of his money to spend it in feeding people. Really, I don't believe Skinner is hospitable enough to entertain a grudge."—Boston Transcript.

Then He Said Good Night.

The subdued light in the room made even his polka-dot necktie a thing of beauty.

For fully three minutes they had sat amid a silence which it seemed cruel to break.

Then he stirred uneasily.

"Don't you think——"

Again he stirred uneasily.

"—Don't you think, Miss Lulu, that it is a great mistake for a man like me to travel through this life alone?"

She regarded him fixedly for a moment.

"Won't your——"

The words came slowly and with firm enunciation.

"——Won't your mother chaperon you?"

To this day she is uncertain whether it was 16 or 17 seconds that elapsed before he took his hat and his departure simultaneously.—N. Y. World.

CALENDAR FOR 1896.

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Oh, "busy bee," exalted so,
We'd work like you, we vow,
If we could loaf six months or so
As you are loafing now.
—Washington Star.

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