THE OPELOUSAS COURIER.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

OPELOUSAS, : LOUISIANA.

If the eight-hour-a-day idea could be established it would, says the Toledo (Ohio) Bee, probably help more to solve the labor problem than all the acts of legislation that can be enacted.

The Brazilian Congress has declined to vote $1,000,000 for an exhibit at the Paris Exposition. The Rio News, in commenting on the fact, says that "the money can be used to better advantage in paying debts and otherwise improving the financial condition of the country."

When the Aberdeen (Scotland) Journal celebrated its 150th anniversary recently, it declared that it was founded by a fellow-apprentice of Benjamin Franklin. The first number contained an account of the battle of Culloden. The Journal was a weekly till 1876, when it became a conservative daily.

From May 1 next the twenty-four-hour method of marking the time will be applied in Belgium to the railways, the post and the telegraph. The prefixes which distinguish day from night in the railway guide will be suppressed. Upon the clock dials the figures from 13 to 24 will be inscribed beneath the present numerals.

A restaurant in New York displays the sign "Oysters Cooked One Hundred Ways," and a German in Berlin has written a book in which he describes 810 ways to cook potatoes. And yet the best oyster is the oyster that isn't cooked at all, and the best potato is the potato that is baked.

Mexican papers, commenting upon a recent football game in the city of Mexico, declare that the game is much more brutal than bull fighting. It must be confessed that so far as the persons engaged in these amusements are concerned, bull fighting disables fewer men than the American game.

A scientific journal says: "A hurricane holds the best time record for a mile, covering the distance in half a minute. Then a balloon has done the mile in forty seconds. The third place is held by the railway engine in 53.57." If we must get down to speed records, a cannon ball leads the hurricane, a flash of lightning leads the cannon ball, and so on.

Virtue is not always its own reward, even with princes. The Prince of Wales is a man of tender instincts and courtesy, as becomes his exalted rank. One day, relates the New York Mail and Express, alighting from a cab, the Prince saw a blind man and his dog vainly endeavoring to effect a passage across London's Pall Mall in the midst of a throng of carriages. With characteristic good nature the Prince went at once to the rescue, and taking his unconscious charge by the arm safely piloted him and his dog to the other side of the street. With this, so far as His Royal Highness was concerned, the incident was at an end. A short time afterward, however, a massive silver inkstand was received at Marlborough House, on which was the following inscription: "To the Prince of Wales, from one who saw him conduct a blind beggar across the street; in memory of a kind and Christian action." The name of the giver has never become known.

There will be no less than five international expositions in different parts of the globe during 1897. An international display of engineering and electrical improvements will be held at Newcastle, England, in commemoration of the sixtieth year of Queen Victoria's reign. Two immense structures, representing a vast outlay of money, are now in process of erection, and the enterprise will be in every respect worthy of the event which it celebrates. On January 25th an international gas exposition was held in the city of New York, at which time a collection of fixtures and appliances representing the progress achieved in this branch of industry was exhibited. Later on in the year an engineering exposition will be held at Stockholm, where a building with an area of 100,000 square feet has just been completed. During the summer months an exhibition of agricultural and industrial machines will be held at Hieff; while the last and most important of all the year's exhibits will be held at Brussels. Expensive preparations have been made for the Brussels exposition, and the ambition of the management is to eclipse, if possible, the world's fair in 1893. In this connection it might not be inappropriate to mention the industrial enterprise of Nashville, which is rapidly taking shape. Although not an international exposition in the broadest sense of the word it is nevertheless a stupendous undertaking and reflects great credit upon its promoters. These expositions are not only signs of national growth and development, but indications of the sure progress which the world is making in science, [illegible] and manufactures.

The Sweetest Things of Earth.

What are the sweetest things of earth?
A fragrant rose that hides no thorn;
Riches of gold untouched by scorn;
Lips that can praise a rival's worth;

A happy little child asleep;
Eyes that can smile, though they may weep;
A brother's cheer, a father's praise;
The minstrelsy of summer days;

A heart where anger never burns;
A gift that looks for no returns;
Wrong's overthrow; pain's swift release;
Dark footsteps guided into peace;

The light of love in lover's eyes;
Age that is young as well as wise;
A mother's kiss, a baby's mirth—
These are the sweetest things of earth.

—Centenary Magazine.

Miss Marvale's Danger.

"But I tell you, Dode, I heard it!" said Bessie Winship, with her blue eyes very wide open.

"You heard your own breath," I answered, negligently.

"You know, Dode, my room is the last in this part of the house. Well, I always thought it odd that the folks should be so stiff about the south wing, and I have kept my eyes open to what went on there. I have found out that there certainly is some one up stairs, whom they are keeping sly. I have heard noises from the upper floor, and I have seen both Mr. and Miss Markham go up there. They won't go if they see any one looking, but I have seen them go. Then, yesterday, when I didn't come down to breakfast, I heard after a while a step in the hall and a rattle of dishes, as if some one carrying a tray had stumbled. I opened my door, thinking that somebody was bringing me my breakfast, and there was Miss Markham and the old hired man, Jacob, going toward the upper stairs, she carrying a waiter with breakfast and he with a coil of rope in his hand."

Bessie stopped in her low-voiced recital and glanced apprehensively about; but there was no one within hearing. Miss Markham was off attending to household affairs. Mr. Markham was out in the fields mowing with his men, Miss Marvale was sitting under a tree in front of the house, her arms thrown up over her head as she leaned against the great bole, her eyes half shut in some delicious summer reverie; Frank was off trouting and Mr. Alford was in his room.

Bessie drew a little nearer to me.

"I got up very early this morning," she said. "It was hardly light, and must have been about three o'clock. I felt nervous and could not sleep. All night I had been thinking of who and what might be up in that story, and I had got myself into a perfect fever. I wanted to go to Clara's room, but was afraid of disturbing her. I thought that I would try and find out if she were asleep, and if not I might venture in. I opened my door and looked out, and, glancing up the hall, saw that the door at the foot of the upper stairs was open. I had before thought it was left open at night. Well, frightened as I was, I couldn't help creeping along up the hall toward that door. I trembled least some of them should hear me as I passed their doors, but all was still. But as I came near the stairs I heard a whisper from the upper story. I stopped and listened, for I dared not go a step nearer, and I dared not at first retreat. It seemed to be some one whispering to himself, for there was only one voice, and no answer. It was an awful whisper, sharp and as though the person wanted to be heard at a distance, but deep-toned, too. And, Dode, it said as plain as plain could be, 'I will kill them! I will kill them!'"

"Well, what did you do?" I asked.

"I crept back to Clara's chamber and went in," Bessie said. "She was awake, and I told her the whole story. But you know Clara is cold, though she is splendid. Her theory is that we should never try to find out what people try to keep from us, unless it is more our business than theirs. So, of course, she only cautioned me to go no more beyond our own hall, and to try to think nothing of the matter. She was good, though, and let me lock her door and get into bed with her, and when she found that I was really shaking with fear she invented all sorts of plausible explanations to soothe me. Clara is an angel; but the plain fact is, Dode, I am afraid."

I considered. I really was a little impressed by Bessie's story. I had noticed some trifling things which made me think that our host and hostess had trouble on their minds, though I did not doubt their honesty.

"What do you think, Dode?" Bessie asked, after waiting a while.

"I think I don't know anything about the matter," I said. "Of course we can't pry into their affairs. The best thing to do is to keep quiet, have as good a time as we can and fasten ourselves into our rooms when we go to bed. If you get frightened in the night, just knock on the wall between your room and mine, and Frank will go to see what is the matter."

Bessie sighed and remained silent: and at that moment Miss Marvale rose with a languid grace, and sauntered toward the house.

"O, Bessie! have you been telling that story again?" exclaimed Miss Marvale, looking reproachfully at her friend.

"Certainly," said Bessie; "I had no idea of keeping my terrors to myself; and, Clara, they all think more of it than you did. When I scream out in the night I want them to know what is the matter, and if they only half hear me, I don't want them to turn over and go to sleep, but to start up and think 'that's Bessie being carried off by a burglar or a ghost.'"

"You must be very careful not to let the family suspect that you think of such things," Miss Marvale said, gravely. "It would be a very poor requital of their courtesy."

"You have no fear, then?" Mr. Alford said, addressing her for the first time that day.

"No!" she answered, quietly looking up to meet his eyes for an instant.

I was struck by the expression of their faces. I can only describe it by saying that it was at once inquiring and guarded. The tone and manner of both were quiet and gentle, and even a little softened, but whether it was the self-control which veils dislike with a mantle of courtesy, which is all the more scrupulously considerate because it has to be considered, or whether it was that calm mask which covers deep and troubled love, I could not tell.

That evening at tea Mr. Alford announced that he should return to the city the next day.

Bessie exclaimed, and so did Frank, but Miss Marvale said not a word, only went on with her supper and never looked up. I saw him look at her and color at the apparent indifference she displayed. But she didn't eat another mouthful of supper, although she trifled with her teaspoon and broke her cake to crumbs.

After tea she went up stairs to her room and stayed there an hour. When she came down we were all out in the moonlight, walking up and down, Bessie on Mr. Alford's arm, Fred and I with our cigars.

"Clara," Bessie called out, "come and help me coax Mr. Alford to stay another week. Frank says that if he will stay a week longer we might shorten our stay a week, and so go all together."

Clara Marvale sauntered slowly down the walk, the moonlight full and white on her face and dress.

"I could not hope to succeed where you fail," she said, carelessly, pausing as she met the two. "Besides, I don't see why we should interfere with Mr. Alford's business. If he prefers going immediately, I should not ask him to stay."

There was an awkward silence for a moment, then Mr. Alford proposed that we should all retire, since we were to see him off at six the next morning. But I saw that after we had gone up stairs he went out again, and from the parlor window I heard his step pacing to and fro in the gardens. I wondered if Miss Marvale heard it too. It was one o'clock when he came in and went up to his room. Then I dropped to sleep.

How long I had slept I know not, but I was awakened by a loud scream that was repeated before I was out of bed. There was a confusion of sounds as I opened our door—Mr. and Miss Markham were coming out of their rooms, the man Jacob was looking from his and Mr. Alford, fully dressed, was standing in the hall.

"What is it?" he asked, for there was silence.

"Where is he?" cried Mr. Markham, running down the hall with a light, his gray hair streaming back, his face full of affright. "My God!" he cried, seeing Miss Marvale's door open.

Mr. Alford was at his side in an instant, and Frank and I followed them into the room.

The sight we saw was one calculated to justify the old man's exclamation. Miss Marvale, in her night dress, with her hair streaming down her shoulders was standing against the opposite wall of the room, her face perfectly white, her hands clasped on her bosom and her eyes riveted in a gaze of terror on a man who, half-crouching, was slowly approaching her, moving softly and warily as a cat, watching her every motion, ready to intercept any step of flight.

This man was evidently of tall and powerful frame, his hair was long, black and shaggy, and his clothes were in rags. As he heard our steps in the door he straightened himself up, and turned his face for a backward glance. That one look was enough. The wolfish eyes, the haggard and working face, could only belong to a maniac. This glance was but momentary, for, as we all rushed toward him, he gave a cry, and sprang to grasp Miss Marvale.

"I'll finish her!" he cried with a fiendish laugh.

There was not a word said among us, but, as he grasped her, four men were upon him, tearing his hands away from the white throat they had grasped, clasping his own throat with a strong grip, tugging at his waist, tugging at his legs. It took all that we could do, and even then Jacob had added his strength to that of my fingers on the madman's windpipe before he let go his hold. They had a rope and bound him hand and foot, and carried him howling like a demon away. But as I paused to take breath after letting go my hold, I saw a picture suggestive rather of heaven than hell. Miss Marvale was leaning still against the wall, catching her breath after that half strangling, and standing before her was Mr. Alford, glowing, hesitating.

"Oh, Winthorpe!" she said, stretching her hands out to him.

I heard the full, deep breath he gave as he took a step and gathered her closely to his heart, and then I knew that Winthorpe Alford loved that woman as he loved his life.

There was no more sleep for any of us that night. After a while we all gathered in the parlor, Miss Marvale, dressed and blushing, seated on a sofa with Mr. Alford beside her, and glancing at her every movement with his fond and shining eyes. Bessie had me on one side and Frank on the other, and even then was not sure she might not be carried off. Presently Miss Markham came in and seated herself, facing us all, the gray light of early morning shining in her pale face.

"We owe you a full explanation," she began, "and an humble apology also. I will make both as short as I can. The man you saw tonight is my brother's only son, John. He has been crazy off and on for years, and his father hated to send him to an asylum. We thought that we could keep him here just as well, and this is the first time he ever broke out. No one knows about him, and we didn't want them to know. Poor John always said that if people knew he had crazy fits they would never trust him. When he has been so the people of Dover have thought that he was always at sea. It wasn't right to take any one into the house; but we made up our minds that John must go to an asylum, and my brother couldn't well afford to send him without sending something to increase his income. I hope you won't think hard of us. We feel badly enough. My brother and Jacob are going to carry him away this morning."

Of course we pitied and assured her, and offered to do anything in our power to help them. Mr. Alford was so happy he was upon the point of telling the distressed lady that the young man's being a maniac had been a most fortunate circumstance for him, when he was interrupted by the sound of their bringing the poor fellow down.

The rest of us went to the window to see them get into the carriage, but Miss Marvale hung back, covering her eyes from the sight, and her lover leaning toward her, was whispering something that changed her pallor to blushes.

A Considerate Dog.

W. A. Halsey tells a neat dog story which he says will be verified by Architect G. A. Staehlin. One breezy morning recently they were riding down Market street upon the rear of a trolley car when the car passed over a nice, light, soft hat, which had blown between the tracks. The hat was not injured, but the wind gave it a little flirt after the car had passed and dropped it fairly upon one of the rails. A big New York car was coming, and ahead of it a big mongrel pointer dog was trotting along.

The dog glanced at the hat, looked back at the car, and then, picking up the hat in his teeth, ran over to the curb and deposited it upon the sidewalk near a group of pavers who were working alongside of the court house. After putting the hat in a safe place, the dog loped after the big car and took his place in front of it. Mr. Halsey did not see the owner of the hat nor did Mr. Staehlin, but they passed several remarks about the sagacity of the dog, and it is believed that they agreed that it would be better not to speak of the incident except to people who knew them well.—Newark (N. J.) Sunday Call.

Six Miles of Elk.

Wyoming's game warden is credited with the statement that the number of elk wintering in the Jackson Hole country is greater than for many previous years. A conservative estimate fixes the number at 30,000. They are on every hill and in every valley, and the night's sounds are most piteous from the crying of the calves lost from their mothers. Every morning thousands are seen traveling from the great swamps along the Snake river to the Gros Ventre hills. The game warden says:

"I recently gazed upon a sight which far surpassed anything I had ever seen, and it utterly astonished and amazed me. For a distance of six miles a herd of elk was stretched out. The animals had made a trail through the snow which was packed as hard as flinted ice. I know there were 15,000 head of elk in that band."—Sports Afield.

The Fly in the Ointment.

Visitor (in Ruralville)—This is a very pleasant and homelike place, and I cannot understand why so many families should have moved away from it during the last few months, as you say.

Native—You haven't heard our young ladies' brass band yet.—Judge.

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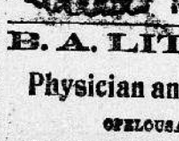
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