THE OPELOUSAS COURIER.

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OPELOUSAS, : LOUISIANA.

Inspection of the wreck of the torpedo-boat Pluton confirms the good opinion which the country has had of the converted yacht Gloucester and her gallant crew. The torpedo-boat did not fall a victim to big guns,

Damages of $1000 have been assessed on a telegraph company in a North Carolina suit for "mental anguish" for the non-delivery of a telegram announcing a death.

Great Britain is devoting this year more money than ever before to the increase of her navy. At the same time she is devoting more than ever before to the reduction of her public debt. Great nation, that!

Canada is building ten big steel wheat ships, of 78,000 bushels capacity, to traverse her eighteen-foot canals to tidewater. A mere trifle, perhaps, but it is one of the trifles that tell why Canadian commerce is increasing at the expense of that of New York.

Surveys in Alaska are to be continued this summer by two parties of the United States Geological Survey. One, under W. G. Peters and Alfred Brooks, will locate the sources of the Copper, Tanana and Babesna rivers. The other, under F. C. Schrader, will explore the principal waters of the Koyukuk, an almost unknown region within the Arctic Circle.

It is the testimony of the foremost naturalist in France that if the world were to become birdless, man could not inhabit it after nine years' time, in spite of all the sprays and poisons that could be manufactured for the destruction of insects. Object lessons in this direction are seen, summer after summer, in the orchards browned and parched as by fire, the work of canker worms and caterpillars. By a general movement for the preservation of the birds, there would not only be an æsthetic and moral gain, but the face of all nature would be made more beautiful and attractive in all the vernal season. It is a most worthy object for neighborhood organization and effort, says the Syracuse (N. Y.) Herald. The results in a single year would convert whole communities.

There never has been a time when outdoor sport has offered more varied enjoyment than is promised for the summer season. It is only a few years since our love of athletics had a serious beginning, but the multiplication of clubs to foster manly—and womanly—games has been remarkable. The elderly men who are now on the golf links or pulling lazily somewhere in a shell will tell you how a dozen of them met and started clubs not long ago that were the pioneers in American field and water sports. But to-day the whole country is keenly interested in outdoor recreation, and every city, and almost every village, has its athletic organization of one sort or another. Every game that is worth the playing is being enthusiastically indulged in, and from making records that only tyros are proud of we have come to making in some sports those that lead the world.

England comes over here for some of her material for ships, and the supplying of American steel plates to British shipbuilders has become a regular and increasing business. For instance, the Oceanic, the largest ship in the world, launched in January and soon to make its first trip to New York, is largely constructed of American steel. It is said that the keels of two ships yet larger than the Oceanic, one British and one German will soon be laid; and so busy are some British shipyards that they will take no new contract for five or six years to come. Of the total new tonnage, 1,893,000, of merchant marine built in all the world in 1898, there were launched in the United Kingdom 1,367,570 tons; and the net increase of tonnage in the British merchant marine during 1898 was 209,293 tons over 1897. The increase for 1899 is expected greatly to surpass that of 1898.

A Denver (Col.) church has revived the ancient custom of raising funds for ecclesiastical purposes according to simple Scriptural methods. A chest, with a slit in the top, has been placed in front of the pulpit, and the people are invited to place their contributions therein, the money to be used in liquidating the church debt. This simple Scriptural system was inaugurated by King Joash nearly 3000 years ago, when he needed funds to repair the dilapidated temple. The warrant is found in Second Kings, twelfth chapter, ninth verse, as follows: "Jehoiada, the priest, took a chest and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar. . . . And the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought to the house of the Lord. And there was much money in the chest." There was much money also in the Denver chest at the close of the first day, about $4500 being deposited towards liquidating the church debt of $5000.

THE SONG OF THE PINES.

We are the masts of ships,
Nurtured for centuries;
Storm-wind and mountain-breeze
Taught us our harmonies,
Kissed us with mother lips.

See how the tender and stern
Heavens have bidden us rise,
Crying, "Behold the eyes
Of stars in the faithful skies:—
Lift up your heads and learn!"

Hear how the Sun doth laugh,
"Climb ye thus, sons of mine?
Seek ye for things divine?
Yours is the sunlight wine;—
Take of my warmth and quaff."

Cometh our bard, the Wind,
Bringing us songs, and saith:
"Nay, this is naught but breath;
Striving and love and death,
These I left, far behind!

"Gardens that feared my blast,
Everywhere men, below;
Danger and toil and woe,
Wonders ye may not know,
All these I saw and passed.

"Nay, but new melody
Bring I to greet your ears.
Ye, without doubts or fears,
Not all in vain are the years,
Lo, I behold the Sea!"

Long hath it called to us
Here on our mountain-side.
Patient we wait, we bide,
Dreaming of waves and tide:
Do they not murmur thus?

Masts of the ship to be:—
This is the tryst we keep,
Hearing the unseen deep:
And we answer in our sleep.
We shall behold the Sea!

—Josephine Preston Peabody, in Youth's Companion.

THE TRAMP'S KISS.

A wet, boisterous night. Along a rain-sodden country road a man, with his hat brim pulled forward over his eyes, slowly plodded his way. He had left the city more than two hours before, and its lights had disappeared with the oncoming of the storm.

The weary pedestrian suddenly paused and leaned on the knobbly stick in his hand. No! he was not mistaken; the light he had seen emanated from a cottage window—a cottage that stood just off the turnpike. Surely every heart did not beat unresponsive to the cry of hunger and charity! Surely he was not doomed to die of starvation and fatigue in this, a Christian land!

The grimy fingers closed tightly about the stick, and the starving man approached the door of the little cottage. The sound of voices reached his ears as he stood for a moment irresolute. One was the deep, gruff voice of a man, and the other was that of a woman. He knocked gently upon the door. It was opened, and a stalwart yeoman appeared. The wayfarer's eyes wandered from the cozy fire to the repast on the table before it and from thence to the ruddy face above him.

"Well, what d'ye want?" snapped the cottager.

"A mouthful of food—I'm starving," replied the wayfarer.

"Food, eh! thet's allays the cry," snarled the other. "Why don't yer work fer it, same as Oi do? Ger away, or Oi'll set the dog on yer!" and the door was shut violently in the supplicant's face.

A low moan escaped his lips, and he leaned heavily against the trelliswork before the door. When at length he turned from the cottage and sought the open road a strange light had entered his sunken eyes—the light of desperation—madness! Wild, incoherent words fell from his lips; an exultant laugh gurgled in his throat. Hark! What was that? Something was approaching from behind.

Ah! that something was a cyclist. He could see the small, trembling light of the lamp and could hear the suckling sound of the tires on the wet road. The starving wretch stepped back beneath the shadow of a tree, and as the solitary cyclist drew near he placed himself directly in his path.

"Great Scott, my man! where the dickens have you sprung from?" ejaculated the rider, a young fellow, as he dropped lightly from his machine. "It's a good job I was going easy; if I hadn't either you or me, or both of us, would have been fitting subjects for surgical research by this!" and the speaker gave his broad shoulders a shake to dislodge the rain from his storm cape.

"I wanted you to stop," said the other, his words coming through his set teeth.

"Indeed, and for what reason?" interrogated the cyclist, trying to see the features of the last speaker.

"I—I want help," and the knobbly stick was lifted, undiscerned by the cyclist, a few inches from the ground.

"Help, did you say? Then you're 'on the road?' eh?"

"Call it that if you like, but—I'm starving!"

"Good heavens! Yes, now I see your face I don't doubt it! Here, old chap, for goodness sake go and get something to eat," and the young fellow plunged his hand in his pocket. Suddenly a thought seemed to strike him.

"But money would be no use to you," he said; "you want food, and you can't buy that any nearer than the town. Stay, I know. I am on my way to a house half a mile further up the road—the house is called 'The Hollies'—you can't mistake it; there are two turrets; besides, anyone will tell you which is Mr. Ten[illegible] house. I will ride on—ah! [illegible] know Mr. Templeton; h[illegible] no occasion to be afra[illegible] a justice of the peace, I [illegible] got a soft heart—and if he's daughter has. * * * We[illegible] he's spin along and see there's som[illegible] ready for you to eat when you arr[illegible]"

The young fellow had placed his foot on the step of his bicycle to mount when he felt the tramp's touch on his shoulder.

"Well?—you understand me, didn't——"

"Yes, I understood you, but——"

"But what?"

"Who is this Mr. Templeton whom you just spoke about—is it Robert Templeton, the celebrated architect?"

"Yes."

"And is he related to you?"

A shade of annoyance crossed the young fellow's face, but only for an instant.

"No, not exactly—as yet," he replied with a laugh. "But I may be related to him before long—at least I hope so, as a son-in-law, you know."

"Ah! I had forgotten; he has a daughter."

The knobbly stick lay on the ground now, and its owner was trembling like a leaf. With an agile spring the cyclist seated himself in his saddle, and as his feet found the pedals he looked round over his shoulder.

"Don't forget," said he; "the house with the turrets. I will vouch there is a good, square meal awaiting you." And with that he rode away through the drenching rain.

Robert Templeton, the world-famed architect, sat in his study deep in thought. From some distant portion of the old house the sound of a girl's fresh, young voice, singing "Love's Old Sweet Song," reached his ears. Suddenly the song ceased, and Robert Templeton knew the dreaded moment had arrived—knew that Harold Franklin had called for his (Templeton's) answer.

He had promised to give it that very night—that very hour—and Franklin, anxious lover that he was, had braved the inclemency of that night to hear that which meant either life-long happiness for him or a dreary drag of "stale, flat and unprofitable" existence. Templeton rose from his chair and paced slowly about the room.

The story he had to tell Harold Franklin was inevitable. How would he receive that story? Would he, in his great love for Clarice, laugh the deception to scorn; or would he heap contumely upon the narrator's head and leave the girl who loved him forever? No, banish the latter thought! Harold Franklin was a true English gentleman—not one of the soulless creatures who sometimes pose as such—creatures of veneer and vapidity—but a man with a heart as sound as one of the oaks of his native land; a man who valued his fellow-creatures for their true mind-worth and not solely on account of their wealth of the world's goods.

Half an hour passed, and Templeton was still pacing about his study, when a firm step approached, and a knock sounded upon the door. Templeton went across and threw it wide open. His visitor was Harold Franklin.

"And so you have come for my answer, Harold?" said the architect, after their formal greeting.

"Yes, sir," replied the young fellow, with a quick look in the other's face.

Templeton placed a chair for his visitor and sat down facing him.

"But where is Clarice? It is necessary she, too, should hear what I have to say," he said.

"Clarice is acting the good Samaritan to a poor fellow I met on the road," said Franklin. "He was faint with hunger, so I presumed to invite him to bite and sup beneath your roof, Mr. Templeton. I trust my presumption did not overstep the bounds of my acquaintanceship with yourself——"

"You did perfectly right, Harold," interposed the elder man. "And Clarice, you say, is attending to the poor fellow with her own hands?"

"Yes, sir; she preferred to do so."

A few minutes later Clarice Templeton entered the room, and both its male occupants were surprised to see her eyes were tearful. "You have been weeping, child?" said her father, as she sank down on the hassock at his side.

"Yes," she said softly; "it was something that poor man did and said when he was bidding me good night and thanking me for the food I had placed before him."

Robert Templeton was too much engrossed with his own thoughts to reply to what Clarice was saying.

"My child," he said, after a short pause, "it is only right that you should hear what I am now about to say. It is only right that the man who desires to make you his wife, and who is here tonight for my answer, should know your history—and mine."

The young lovers gazed wonderingly upon the speaker, and their hands sought each other's instinctively.

"History, sir! I scarcely understand you," said Franklin. "I know already that you, the most illustrious architect of the time, were, in your younger days, far poorer than you now are. Have you not told me often that your early struggles were fraught with privation? Your history, sir, is one that redounds to your credit."

"I do not refer to the struggles of my youth, Harold; it is something else—something which concerns Clarice. It is this: Clarice is not my daughter!"

The words were spoken at last.

"Not your daughter?" whispered the girl, her face blanching deathly pale.

"Sit down again, my child, and listen to my story. It is an old story—a common theme for novelists, but true in my case:

"Two brothers fell in love with one girl. One of the brothers is studious and aspiring; the other is wild and careless. The girl chooses the one who thought of tomorrow as a time of pleasure and hated the plodding life of industry. The brother who was studious guarded his secret well; none knew his heart was rent with unrequited love. He smiled and spoke commonplace words to the woman who had unconsciously broken his heart; but in the solitude of the night his thoughts would ever wander from his books to the dream that had been shattered.

"He left his native town and settled for a short time in Manchester. One day he received word that the brother who occupied the place he himself had often dreamed to fill had been arrested on a charge of forgery. The charge was well-founded, and eventually he was sentenced to 15 years' penal servitude.

"This was two years after his marriage and one year after his child was born. His wife never recovered from the shock, and when the husband had served but one year of his imprisonment she was laid to rest. I reached her side a few hours before she died. She begged that I would take care of the golden-haired prattler she was leaving behind—take care of her until he had served his period of imprisonment. I promised, and when the earth closed over the body of her I had loved I took the child away—the child that resembled the mother so much. You were that child, Clarice."

A silence fell on the little group as Templeton finished speaking, and the golden head of Clarice had drooped forward until it found rest on the architect's knee.

"And what do you expect me to say, Mr. Templeton?" asked Franklin at length.

"I expect to hear you say what your heart prompts you to say."

"My heart prompts me to say that nothing you have told me tonight has altered my love for Clarice, and I repeat again—I love her dearly, and she loves me; we ask your consent to our marriage."

"And I give it, Harold," said Templeton, taking Franklin's hand and wringing it. The young fellow stooped and raised Clarice from her dejected attitude, kissed her streaming face, and they passed slowly, side by side, from the room.

An hour later the lovers stood at the end of the wooded drive bidding each other good night. The rain had ceased falling.

"And to think, Harold, that I, who have always felt proud of my parentage, should be so disillusioned; to think that I am the daughter of a felon!" and as the words fell from Clarice Templeton's lips she sought to check the sobs that filled her bosom. Franklin drew her throbbing form closer to his side.

"Nay, sweetheart, let not the news trouble you so. You are not to blame for what your father did, and he, perhaps, by this is sorrowing for his past cruelty and wickedness. However, let us try to forget him and the past and be happy in our mutual love and the golden days to come."

Engrossed as the lovers were, neither of them were cognizant of the proximity of a third person—a man, who crouched in the shadow of the trees.

"Yes, forget him and the past," murmured the latter; "it is only right that you should. As for him!——" and the crouching figure stole softly away.

"But tell me, Clarice," said Franklin, "tell me the cause of the tears I saw in your eyes when you joined your father (I shall always call him such) and me in his study."

"It was the poor man—the tramp——"

"He did not frighten you?" broke in Franklin.

"Frighten me, Harold! No, something quite different. He said I reminded him of one he loved—a daughter who is lost to him forever—and—and he asked me to—to kiss him, Harold."

"And you did?" queried Franklin, smilingly.

"Yes, I couldn't refuse. Besides, he was an old man, you know."

* * * * * * *

The following day there was found in a pool some miles away the dead body of an unknown man. It was the tramp.—Tit-Bits.

UNCOMMON INCIDENTS.

An odd tombstone is to mark the grave of John G. Angelo, a blacksmith of Pocomoke City, Md. It will be the anvil and hammer on and with which he began work as an apprentice in 1828. They were presented to him by his employer on the completion of his apprenticeship, and he has used them constantly ever since. His age is 84, and he is still vigorous.

Cornelius Allen, a Salem county (N. J.) farmer, is the owner of a cat that has from kittenhood slept among a large flock of ducks. Recently the cat was deprived of a litter of kittens. A few days ago Mr. Allen heard the peeping of little ducks in his cellar, and upon investigating found thirteen ducklings huddled about the cat. When the cat lost her kittens she deprived a mother duck of her brood and carried all the ducklings into the cellar to prevent the mother duck from coaxing them back.

The latest and most novel use for old newspaper that has come to our notice occurred the other day says the Lisbon Patriot, when a gentleman stepped into this office and purchased 100 or more to feed his hens. He tears the paper into shreds and soaks it in sour milk until the whole mass becomes a pulp, when he feeds it to the hens, and he claims that it adds greatly to their egg-producing qualities. The newspaper is gradually extending its field of usefulness. From food for thought it has expanded until within its sphere is already included food for goats and hens.

Samuel Hamaker, a cigar manufacturer, who lives at Manheim, Penn., wears a beard 44 inches long. Mr. Hamaker stands 5 feet 9 inches high, and his beard extends two inches below his knees, and is still growing. In 1884 Mr. Hamaker had a beard 7½ inches long. That year he made a bet which required that he cut off the beard in case of Blaine's defeat, and right after that election the beard came off close to the chin. Hamaker immediately started growing another beard, and the present growth has been standing since then. On special occasions the beard is worn flowing to the wind, but ordinarily it is away inside its owner's waistcoat.

When George Gray, a young boatbuilder of Bridgeport, N. J., was taken ill recently he lapsed into a state of coma from which his physician was unable to arouse him. His aged mother nursed him. Gray suddenly awoke from his unconscious state and gazed about the room in bewilderment. When his eyes finally rested upon his mother's eager face a look of intelligence came upon his and he seemed to realize that he was not still dreaming. With a deep drawn sigh he said: "Mother, what day is this?" "This is Wednesday, my son," she said, hastening to smooth his brow. "Well, mother, I shall die on Friday, good-bye." The patient at once passed into the unconscious state again and before darkness settled on Friday night he was dead.

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