THE OPELOUSAS COURIER.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

OPELOUSAS, : LOUISIANA.

While Russia took the lead in 1898 in selling grain to Germany, the German importations from the United States in 1899 exceeded those of Russia by 19,860,000 bushels.

Oregon has a fish commission, a dairy commission and a fruit commission, but it has no state mining bureau, and is beginning to realize that it is a lamentable lack for the state not to have anybody to inquire into and make known its mineral resources.

Speaking of irrigation, there are ditches at Las Cruces, N. M., that have been in continuous service for three centuries, with the result that famine has never been in evidence in that section, and yet there are people, otherwise sensible, who question the efficiency of irrigation.

The price of $60,000 for one horse seems very large. But the value of his yield will, it is claimed, in a year or two exceed the amount paid for him. Rich men spend money freely, but they are apt to spend it wisely, that is in the way to make more money with it. What seems to be extravagance often proves investment.

The huge meteorite that fell not long ago in Porte Allegre, Brazil, could not be got into any ordinary museum room, but would require a museum built around it. It is as big as a church, being 85 feet long by 56 wide, thus being by far the largest known. It is a matter for mathematicians to calculate how much its bombardment has affected the length of the earth's day and year.

The wonderful dam across the Nile, which has been building for some years, is practically completed, and in a short time Egypt will, by the storage for water thus provided, be relieved from the difficulties resulting from the rise and fall of the river. This will bring about the development of two-thirds of the country, which have hitherto been waste land. A great increase in the production of Egyptian cotton may be expected.

Irrespective of what he writes about us after he gets home, your French critic rarely denies us the grace of courtesy while he is here. M. Deschamps, en route to lecture at Harvard, now tosses America a garland. "I have seen in Athens, Smyrna, Halicarnassus the splendors of death," he said; "I have been drawn here by the desire of witnessing the triumphs of life." It is to be hoped he will at least find us alive to the compliment.

A letter which was addressed to a lady at Hungerford, England, and posted at Swindon in 1871, became lodged in some woodwork and escaped notice for 29 years. The other day it was posted. Life's belated messages are all too many. Many a discouraged soul is waiting yet, perhaps after more than 29 years, for the writing or uttering of words of confession, apology, counsel, sympathy or simple friendship which if they only reached it would put a new song of hope into its life, reflects the New York Observer.

As reported to the adjutant-general at Washington, the total available strength of organized militia in the United States foots up 113,967 officers and men, about 85 percent being infantry. How slight a proportion of the fighting strength of the Republic is denoted in this service is apparent from the returns to the adjutant general's office of the unorganized available force—10,432,043 men. It is apparent that in a season of grave emergency the government would be enabled to set from 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 soldiers in the field without seriously embarrassing the commercial and industrial demands of national existence. No nation on earth can boast such enormous reserved military strength.

The increase in the debts of American cities and towns in the last few years has amounted to a general movement. A study of the subject shows that there is hardly a growing place in the country that is not going more and more heavily into debt to pay for new schoolhouses, sewers, public buildings, street improvement, etc. New York City leads off with a debt of $390,000,000, or more than one-third the whole national debt; Boston owes $56,000,000; Philadelphia, $43,000,000; Baltimore, $31,000,000; Chicago, $26,000,000; Buffalo, $14,000,000; Cleveland, $9,200,000; Columbus, O., $6,000,000; Detroit, $4,600,000; Kansas City, $4,600,000 and the heavy indebtedness shown by these random instances is general. One thing that has brought this on is the decrease in interest rates. City bonds now commonly bear only 3 percent to 5 percent interest and the low cost of money has led to liberal expenditures for public improvements.

AN OLD-FASHIONED SOUL.

Not hers the New Time's lofty lot—
To questions big replying;
She only knows to keep the cot
And soothe the children's crying.

Not hers to stand in temples bright,
Sad strife for strife returning;
She only knows the lamps to light
And keep the home fires burning.

Not hers to move with iron will
In paths of strange endeavor;
She only knows that Home is still
The sweetest name forever!

There are her joys, and there her tears—
A life so sweetly human,
The world shall whisper through the years:
"God bless that little woman!"
—Frank L. Stanton, in Atlanta Constitution.

Good For Nothing.

BY IMOGENE H. SYKES.

Crash went the beautiful cut-glass vase on the stone steps, and down at the feet of the culprit lay the crushed roses amid the glittering ruin.

"Oh, Maud!" cried a low, grieved voice.

A white robe, dainty and perfumed, flashed through the open door in angry haste, and paused beside the gingham dress of the culprit.

"I knew it!" retorted a high-pitched voice, in calm despair. "Each day sees my opinion of you verified, Kathleen. You are not to be trusted!"

"Surely, Maud, you do not think I purposely broke your vase?" asked the girl in gingham, looking half-proudly at the angry face of her elegantly-clad cousin.

Maud Severn shrugged her shoulders—she had learned how from her French master; and with her head on one side, the action gave her quite a foreign air, she thought.

"What matters it whether you did it purposely or not?" she retorted, contemptuously. "Those great, awkward hands of yours are forever doing mischief—they are truly good for nothing!"

Kathleen looked down at her brown hands, and smiled sadly.

"True," she said, as she bent down and gathered up the lovely roses, "good for nothing as things count in your world, Maud; but we are not at the end of time yet, and my record may read differently then!"

"What nonsense! You will never be ladylike or graceful, so do your best with your other virtues!" cried Maud, angrily, as the proud, quiet manner of Kathleen betrayed a natural dignity she could not imitate. "Put the roses in another vase, and clear away that rubbish!"

Kathleen was looking at the broken glass with a glad relief in her face.

"I can mend this, Cousin Maud," she quietly said; "and it can be used with safety."

"It will take gentler fingers than yours," laughed Maud. "But do as you please. Only, Kathleen"—she paused at the door, looking back over her shoulder—"you needn't think it worth while to appear to-night. Mamma thinks three unmarried daughters sufficient to entertain the guests without——"

"A portionless niece of her dead husband's," quietly interrupted the girl, with a far away smile. "I understand, Maud. Don't think I shall regret it. I do not like good-for-nothings any more than you do."

Maud stamped her foot angrily.

"At least the new doctor is good for something!" she cried, eagerly, betraying her own tactics for the evening.

"So he should be, to fill the position he assumes. I trust he has more ambition than vanity, or the poor of Gilford will suffer."

Kathleen carried the vase within doors, and though she was quick at repartee, there were tears none the less in her gray eyes, and a wistful pain at her heart.

But she quickly completed her task of arranging the table and flowers, besides numerous little touches to fruits and ices, without which the effect would have been marred, if left to the one clumsy servant, or the indolent daughters of the house.

When all was done, she felt free to seek her own pleasure on that lovely evening. And a strange pleasure it was for one so young.

She took down a broad-brimmed hat from its familiar hanging-place behind the kitchen-door—it was needed too often in her daily duties to rest idly beside her cousins' on the hall-rack—and she hastened quickly through the back garden out on to the highway, and took the road to the village.

"The new doctor!" she pondered. "Ah, how he has disappointed me! I did hope that a clever, earnest physician would come to Gilford and help the poor, and instead we have a fashionable, gay young man, who frequents lawn parties and flirts with silly girls. Oh, if I were only a man!"

Kathleen was crossing a muddy patch in the road as she arrived at this wish, and, making a quick spring to the dry side of the road, she turned her ankle with sickening pain and fell prostrate upon the grassy bank.

"Oh, dear! Maud is right, after all," she moaned, in despair, half-comical and yet painful withal. "Two miles from the village or home, on a bylane very few frequent, and unable to move with a sprained ankle."

And after summing up her position, she first laughed, then cried.

"Poor old granny!" she sobbed. "She will think I have deserted her, and she is so poor and ill, with no one to care for her but me, and now I cannot go to her."

"Perhaps I can help you," said a pleasant voice from the bank above her.

Looking up quickly, Kathleen met a pair of frank, brown eyes, that looked sensible enough to help her in her foolish predicament.

"I don't know——" she began dubiously.

"Well, there's nothing like trying," laughed the man on the bank, and down he came with a flying leap to her side. "What is it? Broke anything, eh?"

Kathleen had to laugh, he was so pleasant and breezy.

"Oh, no; only twisted my ankle," she said, shyly.

"Only! Humph! You are used to making light of great matters, I see."

And to Kathleen's horror down he dropped on his knees, and coolly took possession of her foot.

"So much for wearing a low shoe," he said, half-angrily, as he looked at the active little foot, clad in an Oxford tie, and then deftly untied it and drew it off.

Kathleen grew indignant and red.

"You need not trouble yourself——" she began.

"Be still. I am a doctor, young lady, and know what sprains mean," he coolly retorted, moving the foot gently, though her lips quivered with the pain.

A doctor! Kathleen looked full at him in astonishment. Not the new doctor, surely!

"You are going to spoil two engagements for me this evening, with this foot, young lady, so you must repay me with obedience. At one place, music, laughter and bright smiles await me, to welcome me to my new home! at the other, a poor old woman is waiting to thank me for looking up my poor, the first thing after I take possession of my practice."

His frank eyes met the conscious gray ones looking so eagerly at him.

"You speak of my home and my poor old woman!" she cried out, gladly. "Oh, I am so rejoiced you are good for something!"

He laughed heartily.

"Which you doubted. And so you were going to see the old woman when this happened? Then you are——"

"Kathleen Severn," said the girl, quietly.

"Doctor Oscar Ware, at your service," retorted the cheery voice, as its owner raised his hat. "Now, Miss Kathleen, I know all about you, for Granny Duff is garrulous, and as you are used to obedience I expect you to mind me now. My horse is at the blacksmith's across the field, where I left him to be shod, while I came over here to gather wild-roses for a sick lad in the village, and while I go after him you must sit still and wait for me."

Kathleen started. Would he drive her home?

"Oh, but you must not!" she protested, in terror.

"Very well. Then I'll leave you sitting in the mud, waiting for a deliverer more to your taste," said the doctor, coolly, rising from his knees.

Kathleen felt her eyes droop with sudden pain.

"Thank you!" she said, gently with a sadness, in her voice that made him look at her. "I will accept your help since I must."

"Only because you must?"

"I am used to helping myself, but at last I am useless."

"I am glad to be the first to offer you help in your weakness," said the frank voice, gently; and then away he sped across the field, leaving Kathleen dazed with sudden ideas and emotions, yet laughing low and shyly.

In a short while the doctor appeared on the road, driving a light wagon behind a strong brown horse, which he drew up before the mud-puddle, and then he sprang down lightly beside the girl.

He raised her by her hand on to one foot; she put the other down carefully, winced, turned pale, and, before she knew what next would happen, she was caught up in a strong pair of arms and lifted high above the mud into the wagon.

"There!" said the cheery voice, as the self-reliant young man took up the reins. "Your foot is all right, Miss Kathleen. It is only strained a little; and by the day after tomorrow you may try another jump."

Kathleen listened shyly; she was feeling emotions so new and strange that silence seemed to protect her from herself, and throughout the drive home she could only listen and rejoice at the brave nature of the new doctor.

Once only she spoke, to ask him to drive in the back gate and through the barn-yard, so that her entrance might not be seen from the house. Then, as he left her at the kitchen-porch, and gave her a little glass bottle, with the direction to apply its contents to her foot until the pain ceased, she raised her eyes, and said:

"I am glad you have come here, Doctor Ware. So many sad hearts need you."

"But not brave ones like yours?" he asked, sharply.

"Even I," she softly said, as she turned away.

Kathleen grew more cheerful as the months went on, for her earnest, helpful nature rejoiced that there was now another to care for and assist the poor and sad-hearted in the village.

A great pride grew in her as she heard her cousins condemn the new doctor as too commonplace and hard-working to suit their idle tastes; and her eyes and lips grew brighter each day as some new tale of his cheery kindness came to her through village gossip.

They met but seldom, and then only a few words were uttered; but Kathleen felt the need of even those few words, and knew they helped her.

One day a letter came. She was not surprised; it seemed to her as if the time must come when his nature would claim hers, and she was tremulous with proud joy.

He spoke of their first meeting:

"Of that task were enamored my fingers, I ween,
For they lingered full long o'er those fetters of sheen."

"She smiled me her thanks, and returned from the spot,
With a look in her eyes I never forgot,
For it seemed to say, in language too true,
'Thou'st fettered thy heart in the string of my shoe!'"

"God for something at last!" said Kathleen softly, as she told her tale to her aunt and cousins; and in the great light that beamed from the gray, earnest eyes, they felt their selfish natures shrink and grow pitifully small.—Saturday Night.

CHOOSING A CAPTAIN.

Curious Custom of Japanese Fishermen In Hawaii.

Where several years ago the fishing for the supplying of the Honolulu market was done almost exclusively by the natives in their canoes and a few Chinamen now the bulk of the work is done by the Japanese, who are at it in great numbers.

The boats which they use are built here after patterns used in Japan, and once in a while an Oriental steamer arriving from the West brings an imported fishing boat, which the fishermen think is superior to those of local manufacture. The boats are of a peculiar shape and are of different sizes, some able to accommodate but three men, which is an ordinary crew, and others are large enough for seven or eight men.

Now that the fish are getting scarcer it is necessary for the fishermen to go farther for their catches than was formerly necessary and very often these apparently frail and cranky-looking boats go nearly to Molokai and Mokapuu Point, where the fishing is good. Only the larger boats are used for the deep-sea fishing, as they are sometimes out several days and must have room to carry the fish caught and provisions necessary for the trip.

Notwithstanding the frail appearance of the boats, they are strongly constructed and good sea boats, and as a usual thing are fast sailers.

On Punchbowl street, in Kakaako, a great many of the boats are built, and the launching of one of the larger kind is always an event of a great deal of interest to an onlooker and of great importance to the men who are to operate the boat. When the boat is completed the owners and builders and their friends decorate her with Japanese flags, lanterns and flowers. Then they take her to the water, into which she glides amid a great shouting and halloing by the crowd.

Up to the time that the vessel is launched there is no captain selected for the boat. The choosing of this important factor in every case is left until the boat is in the water. It is known who the members of the crew are, and from them the captain is selected. A knowledge of seafaring is not apparently necessary for a man to be a captain of a Japanese fishing boat, as the following will show:

When the boat is in the water and moored securely the members of the crew, who are generally the owners of the boat, strip themselves and get into the boat. Then the fun of making the selection of the commander begins. There is no voting or drawing of lots to settle the matter. At a given signal from one of the crowd on shore, who are watching, the men in the boat begin with all their might to try to throw each other out into the water. Each man is against the other, and so the struggle as a usual thing lasts a long time and is remarkably exciting.

All the time the play goes on the friends of the contestants yell words of cheer to the struggling men in the boat and throw buckets of water on them and into the boat, seemingly with the idea of making the battleground more slippery as well as refreshing to the men at work. As soon as a man is thrown out of the boat he must stay out, but may assist with water if he so desires. The man who stays in the boat longest, or rather who is able to put all the others out of the boat, has by his prowess shown himself competent to be captain, and so he is greeted with much applause and showered with congratulations at the termination of the scuffle. There is no appeal from the selection so made, and the man so chosen continues to be captain until he voluntarily retires or sells out his share in the boat.

This novel way of getting a skipper seems very satisfactory to the fishermen, and it certainly affords a great deal of amusement to strangers who happen to be about during the selection of a commander.—Honolulu Republican.

Famous Lucky Stone.

A good deal has been heard of the "Lia Fail," or stone of destiny, which is placed under the seat of the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey; but few people realize the extreme antiquity of this uninteresting-looking, rough, gray block. It was brought to Ireland about 1200 B. C. by the Tuatha-de-Danaans, a mysterious eastern race, who conquered Ireland at that period. No one is quite clear as to their identity, but many savants suppose them to have been Chaldeans, Persians or Phoenicians. Those races were certainly highly civilized, even so long ago as the date mentioned. They attached the greatest possible value to the stone and used to crown all their monarchs on it.

Three of the Tuatha-de-Danaan queens regnant who sat upon the stone of destiny rejoiced in the curious name of Fodhla, Bamba and Eire—the last a name that is creeping into use again of late, after long eclipse. In the sixth century Fergus, King of Scots (an Irishman by descent), borrowed the stone for his coronation at Scone, and "froze on to it" when he had it. It never went back to Ireland, and many historians date the commencement of the distressful country's woes from that loss. Edward I. of England, carried off the stone from Scone and placed it in Westminster Abbey, where it still remains.—Modern Society.

A Foe to Happiness.

After all, it is well that we cannot see our own faults. Introspection is a foe to happiness.—Chicago Times-Herald.

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