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FORTY-FIFTH YEAR. BENTON, BOSSIER PARISH, LA., THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 1907. NUMBER 48.



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## Drusilla's Choosing

By Constance D'Arcy Mackay

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Gordon Keith and Tod Rogers were eating supper in what they called the "living room" of the shack when the stage, dust covered and lumbering, drew up in front of the door. There was a girl on the seat by the driver. She leaned forward impetuously.

"This is El Paso, Mr. Keith's ranch, isn't it?" she demanded by way of introduction. "I'm Drusilla Cameron, and I've come to surprise my brother Ned."

And before the astonished Keith could reply she had scrambled down over the wheel, while the stage driver grinned widely in delight at the situation and in admiration of the girl.

She was all in brown, from her pongee dust coat to her low shoes. Her hair was chestnut color, and so were the eyes that looked out frankly from under the rim of her smart traveling hat.

"Besides," she continued, "I knew that if I telegraphed beforehand you'd have everything all fixed up for me, and I wanted to see you just as you really are."

"You've certainly done that, Miss Cameron," laughed Keith, with a rueful glance at the helter skelter supper table and the walls, where leather saddles and skins and gayly colored magazine covers jostled for prominence. Rogers, who had sat speechless, coffee cup in hand, at her first entrance, now went to help the driver with her luggage, while Keith, rising to his duties as host, bade her welcome and hung up her hat and coat on a peg on the wall. He apologized profusely for the appearance of the supper table, the heavy china and the plated knives and forks, from which every vestige of silver was fast disappearing, but Drusilla laughed and said it was just as she hoped it would be, and, please since she was ravenously hungry, couldn't she begin right away?

And where was Ned all this time, she questioned, and when would he be

"I WANTED TO SEE YOU JUST AS YOU REALLY ARE."

in? She was dying to see him! He had told her how well and tanned he was and how good Keith and Rogers had been to him during his four months' stay. She could never thank them enough for what they had done for the boy, and—oh, there he was now!

And she rushed out the doorway as a fair headed young fellow of eighteen came galloping up on his broncho.

"We'll clear out and let them have supper together," said Keith to Rogers, "and while that's going on I'll fix up my room for her, and you can ride over to Jessop's and get Mrs. Malone. I guess she'll be willing to cook for us for a couple of weeks. She isn't equal to the Waldorf-Astoria, but she can get a good plain meal."

"This sure is the most excitement we've had since Big Pete shot up Las Gorro," drawled Rogers. "I'm off!"

Later in the evening Drusilla, disclaiming all fatigue, sat outside with Keith's banjo on her knee and sang them all the latest songs till, as Ned declared, "you could just see the lights of Broadway and hear the clack-clack of the hansoms rolling by. Seems strange to think of it out here," he added half beneath his breath.

From where they were sitting they could see the Texas plains rolling away to the sky line, shadowy, immutable, full of the mystery of the night. The wind blew past them sweet with the breath of great spaces. The stars shone very large and bright and clear.

Drusilla's lips parted.

"No, this isn't very much like it," she echoed.

"Are you glad?" Keith challenged.

"I don't know—yet," she answered slowly. "It's the first time I've ever been on the plain. In fact, it's the first time that I've ever been away from the metropolis, for summer resorts full of city people don't count, do they?"

"They do not!" said Keith decidedly. For an instant their eyes met, and Drusilla was conscious of the strength of a man who seemed as immutable as the plains themselves. He was above the average height, bronzed and deep chested, and his gray eyes had the direct, searching gaze of those accustomed to looking at great distances. In the days that followed it was Gordon Keith who monopolized the greater share of her time and thoughts, and it was with him she talked and tramped and rode. Oh, those rides—with the horse's feet thudding under her, her face glowing with the exhilaration and her hair loosening and streaming out like a bright pennant!

"It's wonderful, isn't it?" she said breathlessly, reining in, that she might fasten her rebellious hairpins. "Nothing between you and the sky, or," with a wave of the whip, "nothing between you and the edge of the world."

Keith turned to her.

"Then you are beginning to feel the call of it," he said quietly, "as I hoped you would. And now I can say what I've been wanting to say ever since I first met you: Will you marry me, Drusilla?"

She shook her head.

"I'm sorry," she said softly, "oh, so sorry! It would be venal to tell you how much your friendship has meant to me—you must have guessed that already. But what you ask is impossible."

"Then you do not—care?"

"Care!" Her voice wavered on the word. "Ah, you don't know how near I've come to loving you and how I've fought it down, for I knew I couldn't give up what's calling to me from the city I've left—all the cotillons and dinners and teas of the life I love. And you once belonged to it too. You've confessed as much. Why," she made a little beseeching gesture, "why did you ever give it up?"

"Because I was sick of being a puppet in evening clothes, because I was tired to death of the shams and the tinsel and the falseness, and I wanted to get out where I could breathe deep and look up to the stars and feel that I was a man. Drusilla"—

"No, no," she begged. "Don't ask me, for I couldn't, I couldn't!"

In silence they rode toward the shack. The long light of the sunset glow was across the plains. Bright clouds were piled in the west. Against the molten sky of red and gold a cowboy rider loped in picturesque silhouette.

"It's big and free and beautiful," Drusilla murmured to herself, "but it's not for me!"

A week later she went east, and her going left a great gap in the lives of the three men at El Paso. Ned perhaps missed her least of all, for he was to go home in November. Rogers openly mourned her departure.

"Don't seem natural," he complained, "not to hear her step about the house or her songs in the evening."

But Keith, who felt her going most, kept silent, carrying with him a longing that would not be satisfied.

Drusilla had given her promise to write, yet she was slow in fulfilling it. Even Ned grumbled as day after day went by and no word came from her save a telegram saying she had arrived safely and a few picture postal cards covered with hasty scribbling. Rogers made excuses for going to the mail oftener than was really necessary, and his persistency was at length rewarded, for one day he returned with three letters in Drusilla's handwriting. His was full of amusing incidents. Ned's of gossip and sisterly affection, but to Keith she wrote:

"You are right after all. I am smothered with conventionality and weary of riding my prescribed length in the park. It's all such a social circus. And it isn't the call of the plains that's drawing me. It's the call of the heart. Do you hate the metropolis too much to come here to marry me?"

* * * * * * *

"Well," observed Rogers, standing in the doorway a few minutes later and watching Keith galloping into the distance. "For sheer hustling that beats all I've ever seen. He sure deserves to catch that train."

### Beards and Shaving.

Peter the Great once forbade beards throughout his dominions, but, finding how dearly the Russian loved his beard, Peter allowed him to keep it if he was a noble on payment of a tax of 100 rubles (about $51), and if he was a peasant or a priest, by paying a kopeck (half a cent) every time he passed the gate of a city. A large revenue was produced by the tax, in return for which the collectors gave a small copper coin called the "borodovaia," or "the bearded;" and every man who chose to wear a beard was obliged to produce this when he entered a town. In default he was thrown into prison. Dr. John Bulwer in his "Anthropometamorphosis, or Man Transformed," (1650), writes angrily: "Shaving the chin is justly to be accounted a note of effeminacy. What greater evidence can be given of effeminacy than to be transformed into the appearance of a woman? A shameful metamorphosis!" He declares it to be done "against the edicts of God, the oracles of the prophets, the placits of the councils and the judgment of learned men." But, in spite of these fulminations, the custom soon became universal, among soldiers as well as civilians.

### Tired Women.

What number of women drag their way in pain through the endless duties that crowd brain and hand and heart. But life's work must still go on. Panol is a priceless boon and blessing to suffering women. It gives strength and quiet to the tired nerves, tones the digestion, improves the appetite, brings restful, refreshing sleep, regulates every function, rids the system of malaria, puts roses on the cheeks and joy in the heart. And it does it in a way so different from that of ordinary medicines that it calls forth the loudest praises. Pleasant to take as lemonade. Try it now. Price, 50c, six for $2.50. For sale by Dr. R. H. Gulledge, Benton, La.

## ROAD IMPROVEMENT

### WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN RHODE ISLAND.

**Fine Highways Have Been Built In Every Section of the State With Good Results—The Repair and Care of Roads.**

Much has been done in Rhode Island to improve the highways during the past four years, and there has been a popular demand of the people of the state that there should be built a network of thoroughly up to date and substantial roads, not extravagant, not cheap, but a system where at a minimum of expenditure, yet conserving every qualification of utility and wearing quality, there should be a service for every part of the state. Roads have been built in every section of the state to the furtherance of its social, moral and intellectual interests, and there is not one part of it that has not felt the rebound.

In describing the work done the fourth annual report of the state board of public roads of Rhode Island says:

From every side there goes up the plea for better highways and improved roads, and it is being answered not in the spirit of mere enthusiasm, but out of cold hard sense, for men are coming to see the real value of such roads to the ordinary business and commercial life of the day. Surely it is the best public policy for the state to keep its highways, its feeders of life and commerce, in the best possible state of preservation, for the more compact the life of the community the more necessary do improved, well laid, well kept roads become.

The popular movement for good roads, according to the very nature of the problem, cannot be localized. Therefore the question of a bond issue is one that touches the whole state and one on which the whole state should be heard. There is no question of the expenditure of public money which is more vital than this, and none where a greater number are benefited. Roads cannot in any sense be considered sectional or built for the accommodation of the few. On the other hand, inasmuch as the future is to reap as much if not more of the harvest of utility and is to receive equal benefit, it is only fair that it should pay a proportionate part of the expenses.

The repair of the roads is of vital import. It means the saving of the time, money and engineering skill which have already been invested. It is a question of waste against that of economy. It is a mistaken idea that a macadam road, once laid, needs no further attention. On the contrary, to preserve its fundamental structure it should be cared for continually. The value of a macadam road does not lie in the fact that it is never going to wear out, but in the regulation of grade, the hardened roadbed, the character of drainage that it gives.

The engineering force can make the necessary repairs to better advantage while at work upon the section being extended than should they be obliged to return to it. Repairs should not be left to outside control, which at best would be irregular, spasmodic and unsatisfactory. The causes of disintegration are not altogether travel and usage. There are also those of atmospheric and climatic conditions, those due to the nature of the stone of which the road was primarily constructed. A roadbed will not wear alike in all places. Were it so there would be needed only the occasional extensive reconstruction. It breaks in patches, and the mending process is therefore constantly necessary.

During the year 1905 contracts were awarded for the construction of 22.08 miles of macadam road, to be built upon the highways included in the plan of improvement as adopted by the general assembly, making a total of fifty-seven miles of macadam road completed since the present plan of improvement.

Now that the electors of the state have voted to authorize the expenditure for this public improvement it is but reasonable to presume that they desire and expect to have the use of these improved roads as soon as they can be judiciously and economically built. We believe, however, that they would not approve of an undue haste in the work, which would result in roads of an inferior quality or of an unnecessary cost of construction. Scientific road building on the scale now being done by the state, like every other large building enterprise, requires adequate time as well as money for its proper completion.

### Bill For Good Roads.

Representative Sheppard of Kansas has introduced a bill in congress directing the office of public roads of the department of agriculture to advise with the proper state and local authorities having jurisdiction over the roads used for rural free delivery of the United States mails as to the best methods of maintaining them in a passable condition throughout all seasons of the year, to suggest necessary alterations, relocations and improvements, and, whenever desired by the communities tributary to such routes, to cooperate in the manner now pursued by said office in the construction of such sections of object lesson roads along said routes as are necessary properly to illustrate suitable methods of construction and maintenance. The office of public roads is also required to inspect and report the conditions of said roads to the postoffice department whenever requested by it to do so, with such recommendations as may be deemed advisable.

## TREES AT ROADSIDES.

**Valuable In Prolonging the Life of the Road.**

Now that the work of road construction is in full progress it seems a proper time to consider what to do with the roadside, says Good Roads Magazine. The advantages of setting out trees along the highway, the planting of shrubbery and flowers and the elimination of features which do not tend to make attractive have been frequently dwelt upon in these columns.

In some of the states the question is looked upon as much a part of the system as the roadbed itself, and laws have been passed providing for planting trees and cutting noxious weeds, while in others the subject does not appear to have been given the consideration it deserves.

Many farmers believe that nothing but grass should be allowed to grow along the roadside. The reason for this is no doubt due partly to the fact of their conservatism in following in the footsteps of their ancestors, and this prevents them from looking at the subject in any other light than that it is the proper thing to do to make a clean sweep of everything in the shape of trees and shrubbery.

Among their arguments are that the trees cause drifting during the winter

ONE OF JERSEY'S GOOD ROADS.

season and their shade produces a dampness in summer which is undesirable. The building of macadam roads has materially changed conditions. Trees do make moisture, and that is what is wanted to preserve and prolong the life of the stone road.

The highways of France are noted for the beautiful trees along their sides and the French road builders recognize their value in affording shade and moisture, the latter being considered an essential element in maintenance.

Fruit trees and walnut or other nut bearing trees can be made to yield a profitable income as well as to furnish shade and add beauty to the landscape. Flowers in the yard close to the roadside are always attractive. How to beautify the roadside is certainly a matter that cannot be given too careful consideration.

## STUPID ROAD WORK.

**Piling Weeds In Center of Highway Worse Than Nothing.**

There is no more familiar sight in Missouri these days than to see men in all parts of the corn belt working on the highways with graders building up the center of a road with a mixture of weeds, sods and soil, says the Farmer and Stockman. In a recent drive of nine miles the roads on more than half the distance had been operated on some weeks before and the center piled high with the mixture named above—that is, weeds, sods and soil.

The plan of going over the roads in the county with a heavy grader annually is stupid beyond any power of description. When this is done the work of one year simply means the undoing of the previous year's labor, and as a result such roads are usually in a constant state of unfitness for traffic. Our knowledge of good roads has come through practical experience and, incidentally, through the loss of much perspiration. Our conclusion as the result of this experience is that roadmakers should aim to build a perfect piece of earth road each year. We realize that it is often necessary to employ makeshift methods in order to really make all roads in the county passable, and because of this it is not expected that the labor of the year will be put on a few miles of road.

It is impossible to imagine a poorer kind of road material than weeds and sods, and yet, as stated above, you will often see the center of highways piled high with this mixture. When it becomes necessary to pile dirt in the center of the road those doing the work should take the time to mow, rake and burn all rubbish before starting the graders.

When this is done it is then possible to make some kind of a decent job of leveling the surface when the work is completed; otherwise the traffic center simply becomes an ideal mudhole. Weeds soon decay, and as the result one has almost ideal conditions for the absorption of water.

You have, in other words, humus making material on the center of your road, and such material, as every one knows, retains moisture with a remarkable degree of persistency.

### Motor Cars and Good Roads.

It is announced on behalf of the American Motor Car Manufacturers' association that a department will soon be provided that will have in charge all matters connected with the making of better highways in all parts of the Unit 1 States, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer. The officials say that investigations show that not 10 per cent of the roads in the United States hav been improved and that the showin is one of disgrace for America as against the proportion of good highways found in other parts of the world. It will be the business of this department to not only aid legislation where possible, but also to arouse public opinion.

## A GEM OF A LIBRARY

### ITS WONDERFUL SCHEME IN COLOR TONE AND CLASSICS.

**The Delightful Harmony of the Surroundings Was Only Excelled by the Ingenuity of the Twelve Volume Edition of Ennius.**

A St. Louis professor who makes a specialty of the classic languages and is particularly fond of the Latin literature was treated not long since to a surprise he is not likely soon to forget.

An old friend who for many years resided in a distant state not long ago moved to this city and sent to the professor notice of his arrival. The twain met downtown by appointment, and the new arrival invited the professor to call at his home "as soon as we get things fixed up." After a decent interval allowed for the fixing up the professor called, and as the gentleman of the house was momentarily engaged the man of much Latin was ushered into his friend's library, where he sat delighted with the elegant appearance of the superb carved oak bookcases and the long rows of gilt and Russia. His chair was close to one of the cases, and, glancing round, he noted with keen satisfaction the names of Greek authors who had been his lifelong library companions. He also noted that each half of each case to the middle of the door contained exactly twelve volumes and that each author's works constituted a set of the same number. Homer, twelve volumes; Sophocles, twelve; so also with Aeschylus, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides and even Theocritus, each had its appointed number.

"This is peculiar," said the professor to himself, for he knew that some of these authors wrote little and others much. "Extensive commentaries perhaps," was his reflexion, and, rising, he stepped to the next case, and on the top shelf here was Ennius in twelve volumes, heading a long line of most respectable Roman historians and poets. "What's this?" The professor gave a start, for, although he knew perfectly well that Ennius was the first in time of the Latin poets, he knew also that there were only about a couple of dozen lines of him left and that these had been preserved as quotations in the works of later writers.

"Ennius in twelve volumes! I never heard of such a thing. What in the world can it be?"

He glanced involuntarily at the lock. But there was no key. And while his marvel greater grew the door opened and in came his friend.

Half an hour later, after old times had been discussed and former friends recalled, the professor, who grew more and more curious to find out how any commentator could expand twenty or thirty lines of an old time poet into twelve large volumes, brought up the subject.

"By the way, I notice you have an Ennius here in twelve volumes. Now, remembering that only twenty or thirty lines of his poems are known to exist, I have a great curiosity to know what this can be. Is it a commentary, history or, if not, what is it?"

His friend smiled. "Oh, that's a little idea of my wife. You see, she has a taste for Latin and Greek stuff like that, and when we went to buy books for our library she determined to have a Greek case and a Latin case, but when we looked at the Greek and Latin books she found they were of all sizes, some too big to go in the shelves and some so little that they looked like babies alongside the others, so she would not take 'em.

"But having her heart set on filling up the Greek and Latin cases, she kept worrying about them until finally she hit on a great idea. The ladies always do, you know, if you give 'em time enough.

"She took her idea to the binder and told him the exact length of the shelves and their height. The binder grinned a little to himself as she explained, but he was not the man to lose a job, so he took a lot of thick pine boards, trimmed one side so that it bulged regularly like the backs of books, and she went to a library somewhere and got a list of names for him to put on the backs, and he came and tacked in the boards, and so she filled up her Greek and Latin cases in sets of twelve volumes each, twenty-four volumes on every board, and was perfectly satisfied. I don't know what she did with the keys. Ah, here she is now! Allow me to introduce my friend, Professor Blank. I was just telling him, my dear, of your little idea of the Greek and Latin cases."

"Oh, I hope, professor, you admire the sets!" said the lady. "Aren't they lovely?"

"Perfectly lovely, madam!" echoed the professor.

"And don't you think it's a good idea?" rejoined the lady. "You see nobody ever reads those old books anyhow, but the uniform sets look pretty, and the red contrasts well with the carpet."

"Beautifully," murmured the professor, and the subject was dropped, but he is still wondering how much lower classical learning will sink after that twelve volume edition of Ennius.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.


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