

# THE DEMOCRAT.

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VERSAILLES. MISSOURI.

## The Choice of Helen

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THE call to arms had come. The street was alive with uniformed men, the air resonant with trumpet call and drum beat.

Drill calls sounded on the green, the busy whirr of sewing machine and needle in church and home. The faces of the men were flushed and stern, those of the women gray and set.

After many weeks of waiting the issue had been joined and a nation sprang to arms. Men and women alike were excited and determined.

A picturesque group stood in the old vestibule of the old Methodist church. A youth of 22, tall, straight, heroic in his uniform with the lieutenant's shoulder straps; a girl of 18, red-cheeked, with flashing eyes and raven hair; another youth of two and twenty, blue-eyed, firm-mouthed, with cheeks of ashen pallor and dogged resolution written on his features—not in uniform.

"Helen," spoke the young lieutenant, imperiously, "the time has come to choose. In three days we move to the front. You know I love you. Can I carry your picture in my pocket, your promise and yourself in my bosom when I go onto the battle field? You have hesitated long enough. I claim a decision before I go."

The girl's cheeks flushed and her eyes dropped. Her lips trembled with unspoken words.

"Helen," broke in the other youth. "For God's sake, listen. I, too, love you as you well know. I cannot, Heaven help me, present my suit in so heroic

door to the inner room, where all the women of the town were sewing industriously upon a big flag. The two youths looked into each other's eyes with unflinching gaze. Then each turned on his heel and went his way.

At last the fateful day arrived. The orders to march had come. In a few hours the company of brave young souls would be on their way to the field of honor—and of death. All was bustle and excitement in the camp on the green. In the homes were women's tears and breaking hearts. As from the beginning, it was men's to do and work, women's to wait and weep.

On the rose-clad porch of a pretty cottage stood a girl of 18. Her eyes were dim with unshed tears, the roses had deserted her cheeks. The sharp commands on the green and the shrill calls of the bugle smote upon her breast. The time for the departure of the company was but a half hour away.

A quick step resounded on the walk, the gate was flung open and the young lieutenant stood before her, hat in hand and with a strange, pale dignity in his face.

The girl had known who it was the moment she heard his step. The color returned to her cheek. She looked into his eyes with a smile.

"I thought you would not go away without saying good-by, Robert," she said.

"I intended to," he replied, sturdily. "I—I am very human, Helen, and I love you more than you can understand. I—I thought it just and right that I should have an answer before I went—away. I—I did not think it was quite fair to string things along the same as when we all were here on the same footing—"

She threw up one hand in involuntary protest—as if to ward a blow.

"I beg your pardon," he went on. "I did not mean to chide you in any way. I was only explaining myself. I felt hurt because you would not choose, and I did a mean and cowardly thing."

She raised her hand, deprecatingly. "Yes, I did," he went on sturdily. "I said something about Ralph which would have been inexcusable if it were true—but it was false, and I knew it. It was my hot blood that spoke, and I have been sorry ever since. I could not go away without telling you."

"Helen," he went on, straightening and placing his left hand on the hilt of his sword, "Ralph is a braver man to stay at home than I am to go to the war. It nearly broke his heart the night we formed the company. But there was nobody to care for his mother and grandmother, and if he left the place they would literally have become paupers. He fairly gritted his teeth when he left the room without signing the roll. Capt. Chalmers said: 'There, boys, is a man who is showing a higher courage than it will take to face bullets and bayonets. Pray God that you all may be as true to your duty as he is to his.' I knew it, Helen, when I made the cowardly fling at him in your presence for not enlisting. I have asked his pardon. I ask yours, and I say to you that Ralph is a braver man for staying at home than I am for going to the front. And—and—he is worthy of the love of any girl."

The bugles sang a sharp call, the drums rattled, and the young soldier half turned to go.

"Good-by," he said, with a half sob. "God bless you."

"Robert!" screamed the girl, as he turned away. "Come back one minute." He turned back just in time to catch her in his arms.

"Robert—Robert," she whispered, as she hung about his neck. "It is you I want, and have wanted all the time—only—only—I thought you were unfair. Oh, I am so happy."

A great joy leaped into the youth's face. He kissed the upturned lips rapturously.

The bugles shrieked again, the drums beat more sharply, sharp commands rang from across the way. The lieutenant gave the girl one last passionate embrace and sprang lightly toward the gate. In a moment his voice could be heard repeating the commands. As the retreating sounds of the marching men were heard the girl still stood on the rose-clad porch, and in her eyes shone the sweetest light ever given to man to see.

## THE HART AND THE VINE.



Find a Third Hunter.

A Hart, being hard pursued by the hunters, hid himself under the broad leaves of a shady, spreading Vine. When the hunters had gone by and given him over for lost he thought himself quite secure and began to crop and eat the leaves of the Vine. The rustling of the branches drew the eyes of the hunters that way, and they shot their arrows that way at a venture and killed the Hart. In dying he admitted that he deserved his fate, for his ingratitude in destroying the friend who had so kindly sheltered him in time of danger.

Moral—Ingratitude is the basest of all crimes, and he who is capable of injuring his benefactors will not scruple in his dealings with others.

## MAN'S TOLERANT STOMACH.

It Puts Up with Many Very Strange Articles That Find Their Way Into It.

The organs of man are extremely sensitive, and the smallest foreign body is often capable of seriously disturbing their functions. At the same time, says Nature, we have cases in which a remarkable tolerance is shown by the stomach, such, for instance, as the child five years of age who was presented to the Academie de Medicine in 1897, after having had a piece of money removed from his esophagus. This example of tolerance is, however, considerably exceeded by the following case, which we presented to the academie at a recent meeting:

The patient was a young man, 22 years of age, pale, of slight intelligence, and epileptic, who had been under the care of Dr. Leroux, of the St. Joseph hospital, for nervous and intestinal trouble. At the end of several days several foreign bodies were observed in the left hypochondrium, and the patient was sent to our surgical ward, where the operation of opening the stomach was performed. What was our surprise when we felt with the finger through the incision a great number of metallic substances. With the aid of long pliers we drew forth the foreign bodies. First we obtained two coffee spoons, varying from five to five and one-half inches in length. The last spoons taken out were the smallest, and were extensively corroded by the acids of the stomach. This, however, was not the end, for, taking a longer plier—the stomach being very large—we found the back of an ordinary fork with three prongs, the handle of the same fork broken, another fork handle, the fourth prong of the fork above mentioned, a pin six inches long, a piece of metal seven inches long with a pointed end, two nails, one needle, one knife handle and two knife blades, a third fork handle, one key and some small particles of oxidized metal; in all 25 pieces, with a weight of 230 grams.

### Not Cheap, Anyway.

Hastening to the assistance of the man who had been run over by the auto, we find him raised up and staring after the machine.

"Well," he whispers, hoarsely, sinking back again, "take me to the hospital. I am satisfied."

"Would you recognize the villain if you saw him again?" we asked.

"Who? The man running it? I don't know; but that is one of the newest models, and it didn't cost a cent less than \$5,000. I'd hate to be killed by a cheap machine."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

### Wisdom of Experience.

"Tommy," said his father, "I was surprised to hear that you had dared to dispute your mother."

"But she was wrong, father," replied Tommy.

"That has nothing to do with it, my son," continued the old man. "I am considerably older than you, and I'm right here to tell you that when a woman says a thing's so, it is so, whether it is so or not."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

### White and Black.

You cannot whitewash yourself by blackening others.—Chicago Journal.

## THE MUSKRAT'S SNUG HOME.

Location Cunningly Chosen and the Structure Is Compact and Securely Built.

The house the muskrat builds for the protection of himself and his family from stress of weather is strictly a utilitarian structure. The entrance, dug with great and persistent toil from the very bottom of the bank, for the better discouragement of the muskrat's deadliest enemy, the mink, runs inward for nearly two feet, and then upward through the natural soil to a point where the shore is dry land at the average level of the water. Over this exit, which is dry at the time of the building, the muskrat raises his house.

The house is a seemingly careless roughly rounded heap of grass roots long water weeds, lily roots and stems and mud, with a few sticks woven into the foundation. The site is cunningly chosen, so that the roots and stems of alders or other trees give it secure anchorage, and the whole structure for all of its apparent looseness, is so well compacted as to be secure against the sweep of the spring freshets. About six feet in diameter at its base, it rises about the same distance from the foundation, a rude, sedge-thatched dam, of which something more than three feet may show itself above the ice.

To the unobservant eye the muskrat home in the alders might look like a mass of drift in which the rank water grass had taken root. But within the clumsy pit is a shapely, warm chamber, lined with the softest grasses. From one side of this chamber the burrow slants down to another and much larger chamber, the floor of which, at high water, may be partly flooded. From this chamber lead down two burrows, one, the main passage opening frankly in the channel of the creek and the other, longer and more devious, terminating in the narrow and cunningly concealed exit behind a submerged root. This passage is very little used, and is intended chiefly as a way of escape in case of an extreme emergency, such as, for example, the invasion of a particularly enterprising mink, by way of the main water gate.

### Part of His Costume.

Mrs. Nuritch (in the carriage)—I do hope we won't be late. I'm sure the Porkleys will have some real distinguished people besides us at their dinner.

Mr. Nuritch—Yep. By Jove! Well, wouldn't that jar you!

"What's the matter? Did you forget something?"

"Well, I should say! I've forgot me gold toothpick."—Philadelphia Press.

### Riding and Deriding.

Don't deride the hobby of your neighbor while riding your own.—Chicago Daily News.

### We're Thankful It Isn't.

It is said that if the "voice" of the elephant were as loud in proportion as that of a nightingale its trumpeting could be heard round the world.

### Knockers.

Are you a knocker? We saw ten men in a group the other day, and nine were knocking.—Washington (D. C.) Democrat.

### Clouds and Sunshine.

Were it not for clouds, people would be unable to appreciate sunshine.—Chicago Journal.

## BRIDGING AN INLAND SEA.

Stupendous Engineering.

We have in times past been told much of wonderful feats in railroad building, and much has been written of the engineering skill and daring that directed the course of the iron horse across the plains and mountains that lie between the Missouri river and the Pacific Ocean. "In the grandeur and magnitude of the undertaking, the Union Pacific-Central Pacific has never been equaled. The energy and perseverance with which the work was urged forward, and the rapidity with which it was executed, are without a parallel in history," were the statements of the special government commissioners to the Secretary of the Interior.

Thirty-five years ago there was no time to spend on work similar to that which has just been completed. Then the world was watching while the builders of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific raced for supremacy. It was a magnificent contest, but nowadays the owners of the road have been brought to consider other problems. One of these necessitated the solution of the grade question and the straightening of the track.

One of the most interesting and difficult feats of railroad engineering ever undertaken has just been completed by the owners of "The Overland Route," Union Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroad—the building of a bridge across the Great Salt Lake between Ogden, Utah, and Lucin, Nevada.

The work being practically completed, the new track was formally opened on Thanksgiving Day when Mr. E. H. Harriman, head of the Harriman Lines, and a big party of railroad magnates partook of Thanksgiving Day dinner in the middle of Great Salt Lake.

The Ogden-Lucin "Cut Off" is 102 miles in length, 72 miles on land and 30 miles on trestle work and fills over the waters of Great Salt Lake. It presents a practically level track except for a short distance on the west end near Lucin, Nevada, where a slight grade is encountered.

The use of this cut off will throw out the transcontinental traffic over the old line from Ogden to Lucin, Nevada, around the Lake. This strip of track is one of the most expensive of the Harriman system, the maximum grade over the long Promontory hill is 104 feet to the mile and helper engines are always necessary. The elimination of the use of those engines will mean the saving of at least \$1,500,000 a day in operating expenses and also a saving of several hours in running time.

Active work was commenced in 1902, and thus the almost impossible task was completed in about 22 months. The last pile was driven during the last week of October. This great work has cost over \$4,200,000.00.

The cut off runs from Ogden west 15 miles over level country before reaching the lake proper, then across the east arm of the Lake 9 miles to Promontory. Then five miles of solid road bed and then 12 miles west over the west arm of the Lake toward Lucin and thence across the Great Salt Lake Desert to Lucin, Nevada. Across the east arm of the Lake, it will be almost a continuous fill supported by trestle. Near the middle of this will be a gap of 600 feet of open trestle work left for the waters of the Bear river which flow into the arm of the Lake.

Across Promontory Point runs five miles of solid road bed and here difficult work was encountered. A cut of 3,000 feet long in sand and rock of barren bluff being necessary. At this point, the most beautiful of this inland sea, surveys have been made for an immense summer resort.

Across the west arm of the Lake is 11 miles of trestle work with a fill approach at each end of four miles. In completing the work of spanning the Lake, one great difficulty was encountered across the east arm by the settling of fills and trestle work. This was caused by the salt of the flow of the Bear river having collected for centuries over the bottom of the Lake and having formed a salt wall of 100 feet. It took 1,000 tons of rock in piles which appear to have reached the bottom of the Lake proper and which has settled in a firm and splendid road bed.

In a speech which he made at the Alta Club, Salt Lake City, on the eve of the opening of the "Cut Off," Mr. Harriman said:

"The completion of this undertaking will reduce the distance between Salt Francisco and Salt Lake by 41 miles, and will eventually bring the time between the two cities down to 22 hours."

"It is intended to reduce the running time from Salt Lake to Chicago to 39 hours, and put passengers into New York in 56 hours from Salt Lake."

"These two railroads—Union Pacific and Southern Pacific—have spent in the last three years somewhere near \$130,000,000.00 in repairs and improvements aside from the expenses of operation or maintenance."

## TOOT FOR MISSOURI CORN.

Poetic Puke Pears a Paragon of Pride—May Have Had Corn Juice on the Inside.

The Joplin Globe's poet, having read that Missouri beats the world in the production of corn, took his horn in hand and blew these few blasts in celebration of the fact:

"When you think about Missouri and are wont to toot her horn, please to give a passing mention to her golden yield of corn. Though she sets the pace industrial in apples rosy red, and in other lines of effort is serenely at the head, it is only very recently she's come into her own as the state where in the biggest crop of yellow corn is grown. The bureau of statistics agricultural relates that Missouri now has distanced all her sisterhood of states in the number of acres dedicated unto corn and the number of bushels from each fruitful acre born. The statistics draw comparisons, which show upon their face that Miss-Prohibition Kansas is assigned to second place, and ambitious Oklahoma, of whom a deal is heard, the facts and figures stick in corner labeled third. So hereafter, when you feel inclined to toot the old state's horn, don't forget to blow a blast or two in honor of her corn."

### Not Without Distinction.

A note of family pride was struck in the conversation between three small Reading boys the other day. The party played by their respective grandfathers in the civil war were being depicted by two of the boys in vivid colors. The career of each, it seemed, had been halted by confinement in southern prisons, and it was on the latter fact that the lads laid particular stress. The third youth, unable to match these recitals with any military achievement of his own forefathers, preserved an envious silence for a while, and then, not to be outdone, said, in a bragging way: "Why, that's not so bad, my grandpa was in jail a long time, and he was never in the army at all."—Philadelphia Ledger.

## INDIANS AND SNAKE BITES.

Chief Tells How His Squaw Was Cured by Medicine Man—Red Men's Curious Practice.

Kot-oh-pee, a venerable, red blanketed patriarch of the Euchee Creek woods, who was reared at the feet of several Ozaukee medicine men, having been asked how the Indians cure snake bites, says the Kansas City Journal, spoke substantially as follows: "No snake ever killed a Zaukee; Zaukee always kills the bad, biting Mutechee-Mahn-ee-toh. My squaw was one night bit by a big rattler. Medicine man cut snake's head off and cooked him in kettle all night. He hung snake over wigwam fire; smoked and fried him till morning. Doctor cook some snake root in kettle with snake head. Squaw sit near kettle all night; medicine man cut little near squaw's heart; bad poison blood all run out; doctor wash squaw's foot from kettle next day;

noon squaw feel good; cook corn for Kot-oh-pee. Mutechee-Mahn-ee-toh big, bad snake, maybe so kill mokaymah (white man). Indian kill snake."

Mat Duhr, who is authority for the above story, states that Indian physicians and surgeons simply perform a quick surgical operation on the biting serpent by cutting its head off and boiling it with snake root, which grows plentifully on most rocky places in this section. They require the bitten person to look at the snake, which is hung over the fire all night, and also advise the patient to pray to the Great Spirit to remove the swelling by next morning. Most Indians persist in saying that no snake ever killed one of their race.

### Passing It On.

Elsie—There's a man at the door, pa, who says he wants to "see the boss of the house."

Pa—Tell your mother.

Ma (calling downstairs)—Tell Bridget.—Philadelphia Press.