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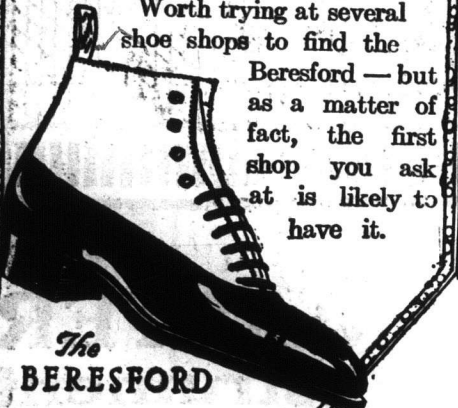
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late-cake, an' little cakes with frosting all over 'em, an' lemonade, an' ice cream. Why! I'd rather go to one wedding than a dozen Thanksgivins."

"I wish I could go to one," said John Henry. "I wonder if I'll ever have a chance to. I s'pose I'll get married, some time, but it seems like an awful long time to wait till then."

"I should think Aunt Margaret and Mr. Blair would get married," said Jessie. "I guess he wants to marry her, but dassent say so. Ma says he's waiting for somebody to propose for him. Wouldn't it be nice if they did get married? I wouldn't wonder the least bit in the world if they'd have a nicer wedding than the one I went to."

John Henry sat in thoughtful silence for some time.

Then—"Why couldn't we do the askin' if that's what he's waitin' for? I'll do it in a minnit, if I thought there'd be a weddin'."

"Oh, do!" cried Jessie, all enthusiasm. "I will," declared John Henry. "I'll do it now. There'll never be a better chance."

Accordingly, John Henry descended to the sitting-room, and marched resolutely up to the table where his Aunt Margaret and Mr. Blair were sitting.

"I say, Mr. Blair, why don't you an' Aunt Marg'ret get married? My ma says—"

the ice, an'-an'-now you know what I'd like to do, an'-I hope you haven't any objections. Have—have you?"

Such a proposal! Margaret laughed till she cried. This actually seemed to encourage Mr. Blair, and make him bolder, for as soon as her face sobered down a little, he said to her, in very much the way an ordinary man might have said the same thing, "I wish you'd marry me. Will you?" But the saying of it apparently cost a mighty effort. He felt that it was now or never, very likely.

"If you want me to," she answered. "Then let's get married right off—now!" said Mr. Blair. "Get your bonnet, and we'll go right over to the parson's," cried this most "peculiar" man.

"But—it's so sudden!" expostulated Margaret.

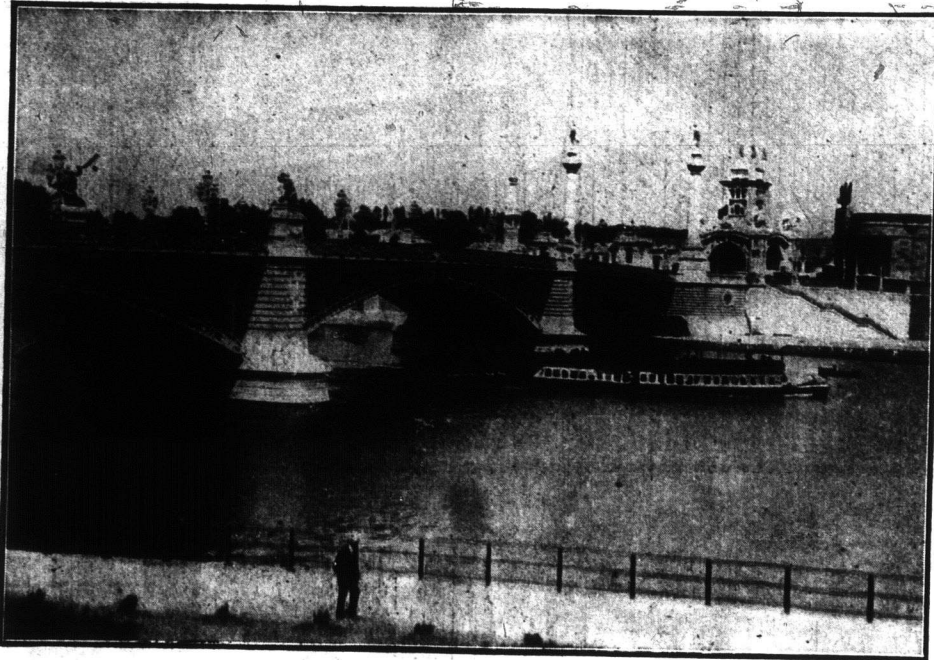
"Sudden! I should say so!" and Mr. Blair, realizing the absurdity of his courtship as he had never been able to do before, actually laughed.

"Shall I?" Margaret turned to her brothers, who had suspended their talk about crops to listen to this most original love-making.

"I don't see any reason why you need wait any longer," said Hugh, with a broad grin. "Strike while the iron's hot."

"Never put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day," advised John.

By this time the women had become aware, in some way, of the condition of



The beautiful bridge that spans the Meuse at Liege, where Germans were repulsed with great loss of life

Poor John Henry! His mother came into the room just in time to hear every word he said.

"John Henry Hunter, you come into the wood shed with me and you'll soon find out what ma says," she said in a tone that had awful meaning in it.

There was no alternative. The prospect before him was quite unlike the rosy one that had filled his mind when he came downstairs, but he knew from past experience, that it must be faced, and he suffered himself to be led out of the room in silent anguish, with dire forebodings of what was in store for him in the wood shed.

Poor Mr. Blair! John Henry's question carried with it as much consternation as would have accompanied the explosion of a bomb. At first the poor man's face was red as fire. Then he grew pale, and he opened his mouth once or twice, as if to say something, but no words came. But as the door closed upon John Henry he made what was apparently a last desperate effort, and what do you think he said?

"What—what—what's the reason we don't get married?"

At first Margaret was indignant. Then one look into poor Mr. Blair's woe-begone face changed her wrath to pity.

"I suppose it's because you've never said anything about having such intentions. It isn't customary for women to talk about such things with a man until he, he—dear me! I don't just know what I meant to say. Anyway, it's his business to tell the woman what he means, and give her a chance to say what she thinks about it."

"I know it!" cried poor Mr. Blair. "But when I've tried, and tried hard!—to say something, I couldn't say a thing. I don't believe I'll ever dared to say as much as this if that boy hadn't seen fit to help me out. He—he kind of broke

affairs, and they both urged Margaret to let Mr. Blair have his way.

"There's plenty enough left from Thanksgiving dinner to make a wedding supper out of," declared John's wife.

So it came about that a visit was paid to the parson's that afternoon, and "these twain were made one flesh."

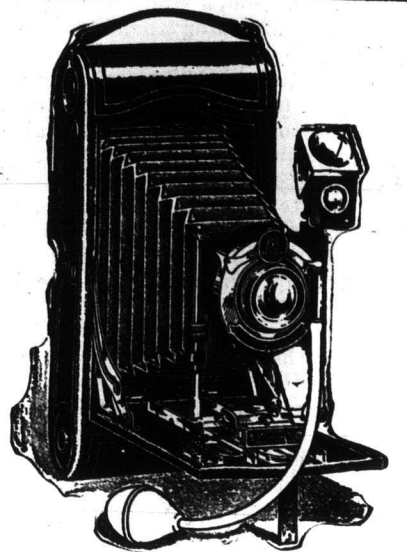
The remembrance of the particulars of the interview with his mother, in the wood shed, came back to John Henry vividly, and stung him with a bitter sense of the injustice of things, when he became aware of what had resulted from his agency in the matter.

"They're all tickled 'most to death over what's happened," he declared to Jessie. "An' they all know he'd never have got down to bis'ness if it hadn't been for me. But, of course, I had to get licked for it! But I ain't sorry I said it. Aunt Marg'ret, she kissed me, an' said boys hadn't ought to be whipped Thanksgiving Day, 'specially when they didn't mean nothin', an' Mr. Blair—he give me this jack-knife—big blade an' two little ones, an' reg'lar bone handle—wouldn't swap with pa for his'n for less'n a dollar to boot,—an' I'm satisfied with the way it came out, even if I did get a lickin'—only,—and here John Henry looked sober and heaved a regretful sigh,—"I'd 'a liked it better if they'd had a reg'lar weddin' 'ith cake, 'n lemonade, 'n ice cream, 'n things."

Refuted.—"There's always room at the top," said the Sphinx.

"Take a look at us and guess again," replied the Pyramids.—"Cincinnati Enquirer."

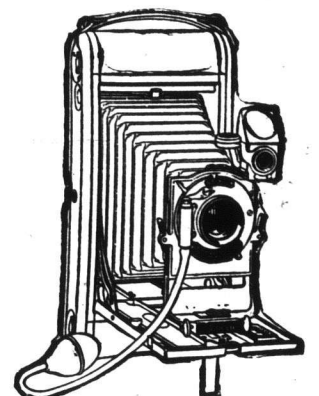
"Shakespeare says there are sermons in stones." "And object-lessons," added the Militant Suffragette, "in windows."



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