

# The Democrat.

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## THE AGE OF STEAL.

The world, bath great progressive periods known;  
The first was called the "Age of Stone,"  
The next the "bronze," and then the "iron" came,  
While the present lacks a distinctive name,  
But always spelled distinctly with an a.  
For far too many think that thieving pays,  
And live by robbery in a thousand ways,  
And seek with cunning and inventive brain,  
Some self-advantage rapidly to gain.  
Though "wooden nutmegs" may be out of date,  
The cheats are quite as "Xauked" and great;  
A long-faced deacon of the days of old—  
A country grocer, as the tale is told,  
With a sharp eye for principal and trade,  
These plain instructions to his clerk conveyed:  
To "sand the sugar and dilute the rum,  
And then to morning prayers come."  
With pious scruples and perception rare  
He eased his conscience in his daily prayer.  
But the skillful sawdinders of to-day  
Ne'er stay their cheatings long enough to pray,  
Nor their unlawful seekings after gain  
To "rum and sugar" profits oft restrain.  
Though as an "item" in that kind of trade—  
"One" "Superfine" and "Special" in its grade—  
May be quoted "crooked whiskey," which can claim  
A double-twisted and extended fame.  
In this Age of Steal all knavery thrives,  
And scientific cheating wrongs our lives;  
We know not what we eat, or drink, or wear,  
Or what processes and combinations rare,  
Compounded ingeniously and sly,  
All life's ceaseless necessities supply.  
The "peck of dirt" allowed each human-kind  
Is put up "sugar coated" and refined;  
Nor one such measure is a lifetime's fare,  
But many times over one eats his share.  
The tricks of "Tweedledee and tweedledum"  
Have in this age to tip perfection come,  
And doubtful traffics readily command  
The highest powers and talents of the land,  
Until all truly honest hearts exclaim,  
With rising wrath, yet overhelming shame,  
"Upon what meat do these our Cæsars eat?"  
That thus they stoop to wrong and cheat,  
And find in private want and public need  
Some chance to satisfy their vicious greed.  
Ages of all ages, may this soon be past,  
And an honest millennium dawn at last.

## SECOND THOUGHTS ARE BEST.

"LOOK, WALTER; that young girl's face would make an artist's fortune!"  
"By all that's wonderful, if it isn't my cousin May!" said Walter, reigning in his horse so suddenly as to throw him upon his haunches.  
"Well, you gipsy, what are you doing fifty miles from home this morning? Some mischief, I'll warrant."  
"Visiting," May answered succinctly and concisely, from her station by the lawn gate.  
"Visiting whom? some ancient maiden like yourself?"  
May was sixteen, and could afford to be rallied upon her age. So her blooming cheeks dimpled with a smile as she answered:  
"Not so bad as that, Walter. I'm helping Susie Arnold nurse her uncle—a crusty old bachelor, who can sympathize with your sufferings from the gout."  
Walter laughed. "It still takes some trouble to get the start of you, little coz. Susie Arnold here! I'll just run in and see if she has a place in her memory for an old friend. Jump on May, and take a ride. My friend here will be most happy to escort you. By the by, I must introduce you. Philip, this is my cousin, May—Mr. Orine, Miss Alleyn. Steady, Gyp; there, May, let me assist you to mount."  
"Thank you, Walter, I am sorry to disappoint you, but I must decline to make my debut without a side-saddle."  
"Gyp is gentle as a lamb; not the least danger in the world. Fie, May, I thought you were as brave as you are easy."  
By this time the spice of daring in the girl's nature was aroused, so she suffered Walter to assist her to a seat upon Gyp's back, saying:  
"Well, I see you wish me to appear ridiculous, so I will gratify you."  
She adjusted her dress, and assumed an erect, graceful position, which did not tell of an inexperienced equestrian; and taking the reins in her hand, she turned her arch face toward her cousin's friend, saying:  
"Mr. Orne, I challenge you to a trial of speed—that distant oak to be the goal." She touched Gyp lightly with the whip and started off, her curls flying in the wind; Philip followed closely, but she kept the advantage gained by her sudden start, and reached the tree first.  
Philip's exterior was that of a hero of romance, but as yet himself and sentiments were strangers, and he was cold and haughty.  
This was the gentleman whose claims to consideration May Alleyn decided to ignore.  
She read the pride upon his curved

lips, and mischievously resolved to punish him for it.  
May was an enigma to him—a new specimen of the human family. So pretty and lady-like in her looks—so wild and untamed in her actions.  
He looked at her much as he would at a velvet furred kitten—pleased with her beauty, but wondering what freak would next amuse him.  
"I think Walter has by this time made his call, and will be looking for Gyp's appearance." "I would be good enough for him if we didn't come. Tried to break my neck; don't you think so, Mr.—Mr."  
"Orne, at your service."  
"Ah, yes, Orne—a peculiar name, is it not?"  
If Philip had a weakness, it was pride in his family name; and his tone was very cold as he said:  
"I believe it is peculiar to our family. There is but one head to the Ornes."  
"Adam, probably?" The fringed lids dropped demurely as Philip's blue eyes flashed out of their goldness, and touching her horse lightly with her whip she centered off, with a gay:  
"Good-bye. Tell Walter I'll be back before night," and was away before Philip had time to recover his good humor.  
"I wonder if this is a fair specimen of young ladies," was Philip's thought as he rode slowly back to where he had left Walter, wondering how he would relish his cousin's jest—when there, by the gate, was the runaway girl, dismounting from her horse, and looking as dignified as though she had not mystified him to the best of her ability.  
"Miss Alleyn, are you a magician?—How in the name of wonder did you reach this spot?"  
"When Mr. Orne turns priest, I'll maybe measure him for my confessor.—Until that time 'guess' must be his oracle."  
May was secretly delighted at the success of her ruse, which consisted of a cross-cut home that saved some distance, and taken at full speed had brought her there considerably in advance of her companion.  
Just then Walter made his appearance, and after a few parting words the two friends turned their faces homeward, and were soon out of sight.  
Philip Orne and Walter Alleyn were together in the latter's room. Philip was reading, and Walter was sending a cloud of smoke from a fragrant Havana as he glanced through his letters.  
"Well, I declare, can I believe my eyes? That little humming bird to be caged at last!"  
Philip looked up inquiringly, and Walter tossed a little perfumed note toward him, saying:  
"Read that, and see what you think of it."  
He took the note and read:  
"DEAR COZ:—Come and visit us as early as the 10th of this month, and, if possible, bring your friend, Mr. Orne with you. A wedding is to come off on the 12th, and I want you to officiate as groomsmen. I have two very pleasant young ladies selected to stand as your *vis-a-vis*. Do not be frightened and stay away, thinking I may inflict myself upon one of you, as I have a more important part to act. I am in a great hurry, so cannot stop to explain particulars, but will do so when we meet. Good-bye."  
"Will you go Orne? I think it would be a pleasant change from this dusty old city. Say yes, and I will write May to the effect to-night."  
Philip consulted his calendar, and finding that he had no pressing business set down for that time, made up his mind to accept the invitation.  
The appointed day arrived, and with it the two gentlemen, who were duly introduced to the young ladies who were to be bridesmaids. As May had said, they were pretty and attractive, and the five formed a pleasant party.  
"But, May, you have not told us who is to be the happy man. Where is he, and why don't you introduce him?" said Walter, after a time.  
The girls smiled amusedly at each other, and Mary answered:  
"I can't very well introduce him until he arrives in town; and I shall not describe him, as I wish him to make a wonderful impression, and a description would spoil all."  
Philip Orne made himself very agreeable. May modified her tendency to mischief, for was she not the hostess, and in duty bound to make every one as happy as possible?  
She was more dangerous to Philip's peace of mind in this mood than when in such wild exuberance of spirits; as sweet strains of some familiar song is more effective when we know that the tenderly modulated voice has capacities of power and passion held in abeyance.  
An undercurrent of sadness formed a minor eadence to the harmony of his visit, as he saw more of May, and thought that the morrow would see her transported from her girlhood's home to that of another.  
On the evening of the wedding, the

four young people were awaiting the entrance of the two so soon to be united for life.  
A sudden silence fell upon them as the gentleman came into the room supporting upon his arm the lovely girl whose floating veil, fastened in its place by orange-blossoms, concealed her blushes.  
It was not May. This lady was tall and stately—May was petite and slight. The momentary pause of astonishment that followed was broken by the entrance of May, who introduced them as "My friend, the Rev. Duncan Ware, and my schoolmate, Miss Albe Holmes."  
The gentlemen were too well-bred to express their surprise, and the girls thoroughly enjoyed their mystification.  
After the ceremony was over, and congratulations were offered to the newly-married couple, Walter seized the first opportunity to question May as to her motive in misleading them.  
"Why, what do you mean, Cousin Walter?"  
May's voice and manner expressed great surprise, but Walter detected lurking dimples at the corners of her mouth.  
"You know what I mean very well, you little deceiver. You are as bad as ever. I thought you had at least made up your mind to behave yourself."  
"Will you please explain yourself, Walter? What is it that I have done, that you lecture me in this way?"  
The brown eyes looked very clear and innocent, and Walter burst out with:  
"Didn't you write to me that you had a more important part to perform?"  
"So that is the trouble! You dear old goose so I have! Am I not the hostess?"  
She made him a deep courtesy, and walked over to where Philip Orne was standing.  
"I have been wishing to see you, Miss Alleyn, to apologize for my extraordinary mistake, in considering you the bride elect. Your friends must feel very happy that you are not to be monopolized just yet. But how did we make such a mistake?"  
"Perhaps Walter has an idea that a bride plays a more important part than the lady who entertains the guests," said May, innocently.  
Philip looked at her keenly. As their eyes met May struggled for a moment to retain her gravity; then the pent up mischief laughed out of her brown eyes, and in the curve of her red lips.  
"I understand you, Miss Alleyn; I have put a wrong construction upon your note, and, of course, you feel so badly about it we ought to beg your pardon upon our bended knees. But, jesting aside, may I tell you how very glad I am that the evening still finds you Miss Alleyn?"  
His voice is low, but very earnest, and his eyes, blue and clear as the sky in June, were very thrilling as they sought an answer in those which dropped before them in sudden shyness.  
May hastened to turn the subject.  
"I must tell you who our bridal couple are. The lady was a favorite school friend of mine, and is an orphan who has no home but that which a boarding-house provides. The gentleman is a missionary; and as my father is interested in the particular locality to which he is going, he proposed to give them a wedding party when he heard of their engagement."  
The wedding guests were invited to remain for a week or two at the Alleyn Mansion; and walks and drives about the picturesque neighborhood filled the time very pleasantly.  
As Philip saw more of May he became completely charmed with the little maiden.  
May's feelings were enigmatical to herself. The *beau ideal* pictured by her girlish fancy had borne a very different exterior to that of Philip.  
She could not help liking him, and she was secretly vexed with herself for it. He was so fair—so effeminate looking—he must be deficient in manly strength and courage. She would not think of him—a man of that stamp should not win her heart.  
Her studied indifference probably added to her charms in Philip's eyes. He had a fancy for overcoming obstacles. In his legal capacity he would often undertake cases for their very difficulty, and was never so triumphant as when he could make a jury agree upon points which only an acute lawyer could make clear.  
One morning the rest of the party had gone to visit some mineral springs at a distance. May had a slight headache, and excused herself from joining the excursionists, and Philip stayed at home to write some letters.  
After awhile the fresh morning air wooed them forth for a ramble, and, meeting on their return, they walked along together.  
A pretty child was walking along the sidewalk, under the charge of a nurse. Philip and Mary were both fond of children and they watched the little thing with great interest, admiring the effect of her long golden hair as it floated down over her white dress.

"Mad dog! mad dog!" and on, on, on, directly toward the little prattler came, with long, leaping strides, that most fearful of dangers—a huge dog, whose blood-shot eyes and foam flecked mouth, out of which lolled the red tongue, showed the truth of the alarm.  
May's feet seemed frozen to the ground—a horrible helplessness held her there. The panic stricken nurse left the child, and ran inside a garden gate, and closed it after her.  
The unconscious little one laughed and put out her chubby little hands, evidently thinking that the rabid animal would play with her, as did her pet dog at home.  
Philip retained his self possession, and just at the critical moment when all seemed lost, he caught the creature by the nap of the neck, and held him in a powerful grasp. In vain did the maddened animal snap at his captor, and wreathe and struggle to escape. The white fingers which May had secretly stigmatized as weak and effeminate, seemed made of iron.  
A few moments of this horrible uncertainty—then the brute's eyes glazed and went into a fit. The danger was no longer immediate, and Philip relaxed his hold.  
By this time a policeman had arrived on the spot, and with his pistol he soon ended the poor creature's sufferings.  
May felt deeply humiliated at her inefficiency in the hour of danger. For all that she had done, with her fancied firmness of nerve, that dimpled little form might now have been mangled and torn by those huge fangs, in which lurked a poison as deadly, and more to be dreaded, than that of the rattlesnake.  
She caught the child in her arms, and almost smothered her with kisses; then she turned to Philip.  
"Mr. Orne, I owe you a debt which nothing can repay. If this little darling had been bitten, I should have felt all through my life that it was owing to my lack of presence of mind in not snatching her from the threatened danger."  
Her overstrung nerves relieved themselves in a burst of tears.  
"Don't speak of it—it is best forgotten. Will you take my arm? You are looking very white."  
May accepted the proffered arm, and they walked on in silence.  
Philip did not underrate the danger he had escaped. He well knew that a false aim in seizing the rabid animal, or the slightest relaxation of his iron muscles, would have exposed him to sufferings compared to which the tortures of the Inquisition were but as shadows. He felt as a man does who has met death face to face.  
May was of a frank, open nature, and she felt that she had done this man injustice. She had underrated him, and she must make a confession, or never again feel at ease in his society.  
"Mr. Orne," said she hesitatingly, "will you forgive me? I did not give you credit for such courage. I thought—"  
"Say no more, Miss May," Philip answered, as he gazed into her brown tear-clouded eyes. "It would not be in mortal man to resist so fair a pleader, whatever might be her offence. May I not reverse our present positions, and become the entreating party myself?"  
There was a meaning in his quiet tones which thrilled to May's heart and made it throb tumultuously.  
Philip saw her agitation and took her little hand in his warm, firm clasp.  
"Miss Alleyn—May—will you prove your contribution by giving me the sole right of this soft little trembler?"  
As May listened she knew that Philip Orne would henceforth be to her life as the sun to the flower, but a strange timidity sealed the lips usually so ready with her gay retort.  
Blushing and confused, she strove to withdraw her hand. Her lover's ardent glances studied the sweet face, with its downcast eyes.  
"If you do not answer, I shall think silence means consent."  
One swift glance at his face.  
"Please, Mr. Orne, my fingers are not made of iron."  
He dropped her hand, with a pained look.  
"I beg your pardon—"  
The rest of the sentence was unuttered, as May was flying up the walk like a wild thing.  
This evasion of a direct answer was a new phase in May's character, but Philip read its meaning correctly. A denial of his suit would have been prompt and decisive. Her girlish timidity caused hope to fold her snowy wings and make her dwelling within his heart.  
He did not succeed in seeing May alone until the morning of his departure, but the previous evening he gave her a bouquet of English violets with a note hidden in its fragrant depths, requesting her to wear his offering as a breast-knot if she could respond to his love.  
When she appeared at breakfast, the sweet shy face was suffused with blushes as Philip's eyes rested upon it; for beneath it, breathing forth their precious meaning, reposed his gift.  
When Philip returned to his city home

he bore with him the hope that, with the coming daisies, he might claim his "May-flower," as he loved to call her.  
It seems fitting to him that the earth should be dressed in a garniture of bloom upon her wedding-day, who is to him the fairest blossom of them all.  
**All Sorts.**  
A matter of Form—Fitting a dress.  
A very Unsatisfactory Sort of Bread—The roll of fame.  
Mr Philips' lecture about the "Lost Arts," does not concern the ladies. They haven't lost any.  
In New York an india rubber car is about being invented which, when crammed full, will hold a couple more.  
A New York carpenter, in advertising for a situation, frankly says that work is not so much of an object as good wages.  
When may a man be said to be thoroughly "sewn up?" When he has pins and needles in his foot and a stitch in his side.  
"Goodness me!" cried a nice old lady the other day; "if the world does come to an end next year, what shall I do for snuff?"  
"I do declare, Sal, you look pretty enough to eat!" "Well, John, ain't I eating as fast as I can?" replied Sal, with her mouth full.  
"To what sect or fraternity do you think I belong?" asked a contemptible little fop of a lady. "To the insect fraternity," was the reply.  
An exchange describing a funeral procession, said: "The procession was very fine, and nearly two miles in length, as was also the prayer of Dr. Perry, the chaplain."  
Wanted—A cover for a bare suspicion, veil for the face of nature, buttons for the breeches of privilege, binding for a volume of smoke, cement for broken engagements.  
"Is it wrong to cheat a lawyer?" was recently very ably discussed by the members of a debating society. The conclusion arrived at was that it was not wrong but impossible.  
Mrs. Boots has left her husband, Mr. Boots has gone to parts unknown. We cannot say, however, that Mrs. Boots is right, but there can be no mistake about Mr. Boots being left.  
How the Chinese manage their deities—After a long period of wet weather, when they have prayed vainly for relief, they put their gods out in the rain to see how they like it.  
A widow once said to her daughter, "When you are at my age it will be time enough to dream of a husband." "Yes mamma," replied the thoughtless beauty, "for a second time."  
A witness being interrogated as to his knowledge of the defendant in the case, said he knew him intimately—"he had supped with him, sailed with him, and horsewhipped him."  
A mischievous girl living in Thirty-fourth street, New York, being bothered by a number of lovers, has incited them to a public velocipede race for her hand—the winner to win her.  
An old man of our acquaintance says he was born at the wrong time. "When I was young, young men were of no account, and now that I am old, old men are of no account."  
A printer on West, whose office is half a mile from any other building and who hangs his sign on the bough of a tree, advertises for an apprentice. He says, "A boy from the country would be preferred!"  
We know of a beautiful girl who would be a capital speculation for a fortune-hunter of the right sort. Her voice is of silver; her hair of gold, her teeth of pearl, her cheeks of rubies, and her eyes of diamonds.  
A company of young ladies lately discussed this question: "What is the great duty of man?" One of them dressed a *la mode* from head to foot contended that it was to pay milliners' bills. This was agreed to without a dissenting vote.  
A paper in southern Illinois regrets that it went to press "one day too early to record the death of John Bates." This is not quite as cool as the paper which said, "Just as we are going to press John Smith is being run over by the cars!"  
An Irishman was one day observing to a friend that he had a most excellent telescope. "Do you see yonder church?" said he. "It is scarcely discernible, but when I look at it through my telescope it brings it so close that I can hear the organ playing."  
Mr. Smith can't see why his wife should object to his staying at the club so late simply because he said, when he came home the other night, "My dear it's the coldest year for many nights; at fifteen degrees past 10 the clock stood sixteen minutes blow freeze."