

IS CONVENTIONAL WEDLOCK AT LAST CRUSHING IDYLIC HAPPINESS OF PRETTY PEGGY MARSH?

Mysterious Shooting of Her Husband at Summer Camp Makes New Chapter in Life of Actress Who Scorns Mrs. Grundy in Her Search for Love

MADE FUTILE FIGHT TO GET SHARE OF FIELD MILLIONS FOR THE SON OF DEAD YOUTH

Scuffed at Need of Marriage and Then Became Bride of Broker Who Gave Up Business Life to Cavort with Her in Cabarets

ARE the rose petals of happiness always to crumple and die in the hands of pretty Peggy Marsh? Is sorrow forever stalking on the heels of love along the life path that the shapely dancer treads? Peggy's "love nest" in London with Henry Field, grandson of the famous Marshall Field, was the talk of two continents. She asserted—and the charge was not denied—that the young man, presumptive heir to millions, was the father of her child "Tony," now six years old.

When Henry Field died, five months after marrying a beautiful Virginian, Peggy's lawyers began a memorable fight to win for "Tony" the \$50,000,000 that Field would have inherited. The battle was lost. The former chorus girl who concealed no details of her life with Henry Field is now the wife of Albert "Buddy" Johnson, nephew of the late Tom Johnson, four times Mayor of Cleveland.

Their wedded life has been happy. At least the public has never heard the slightest whisper to the contrary. Only four months ago Johnson, a former aviator, proved his devotion to Peggy by adopting "Tony," now known legally as Henry Field Johnson.

A short time ago the Johnsons, Peggy, her husband and the little chap she adores, went to Lake Champlain, in Upper New York. They were at the camp of Jack Clifford, one time husband of Evelyn Nesbit Thaw.

Growing fainter in Peggy's memory were those idyllic but unconventional two years in London when love sang for her and Henry Field.

Her new love and her boundless devotion to her boy were building new tissue over the scars of the past. The rose petals of happiness lay fresh and fragrant in her palm. Then a revolver shot.

The bullet tore through her husband's abdomen and penetrated to the back. The accident—they insist it was an accident—occurred near midnight on August 31.

Johnson, gravely wounded, said the revolver was accidentally discharged. The guests at the camp had been at target practice during the afternoon. Peggy alone, it was stated, was with her husband when the accident came, with its threat to deprive her of "Tony's" foster-father.

Clifford washed the wound and then sped across the lake in a motorboat for medical aid. Later Johnson was taken to the Champlain Valley Hospital at Plattsburg.

The State police tried to find the shirt Johnson was wearing when the revolver was discharged. They were told it had been torn up for bandages. Johnson, the police declare, said the revolver belonged to Clifford. The latter insisted that the weapon was owned by the wounded man. The police tried to find the revolver, but failed.

Clifford told investigators that the revolver had been brought to Plattsburg by Miss Olive Sherrington, little "Tony's" governess. At Plattsburg the governess insisted that the weapon was still at the camp.

First Mysterious Shot in Love's New Dream

Sergeant Boyce, of the New York State police, declared he was far from satisfied with the statements obtained at the camp and the hospital. "I have two versions of the shooting," said Boyce. "Once she said her husband had accidentally pulled the trigger. Later she said the revolver was discharged when it was dropped. "We learned it was Jack Clifford himself who made the dash across the lake in a motorboat for a physician immediately after the shooting. That is in the face of a statement by Mrs. Johnson that an unknown camp attaché made the trip.

"We wanted the shirt to see if it was powder-stained. Dr. Thurber, of Brainardville, who went to the camp, said that the wound already had been treated with an antiseptic and that if there had been powder burns about the entrance wound they were not present when he examined the patient.

"Whatever the discrepancies in the accounts given the police they might be explained in part by the hysterical moments for Peggy that followed the shooting. Extreme fright often distorts impressions.

While the State police admittedly were puzzled by some features of the shooting the county authorities shared none of the doubts. District Attorney Jerry J. Sherick Coffey were convinced it was an accident.

Jack Clifford disclosed that Peggy and her husband were planning an Apache dance for an Atlantic City



Peggy Marsh and her son "Tony"

cabaret engagement. On the night of the shooting, he said, some time was passed in going over the dance. "At 10:30 most of us retired," Jack went on. "At 11 o'clock I heard a scream from Johnson's room. Then there were sounds which led me to believe that a fuss was in progress. I hurried up to the door and Peggy ran to me."

Clifford said Peggy cried: "Bud has shot himself."

Says He Gave First Aid to Johnson in His Room

"Bud was lying on the floor," he continued. "He told me that his revolver had been accidentally discharged when he was putting it away. I tore up the nightgown he was wearing, and after washing the wound with iodine, bound it up."

There the matter stands as far as the county authorities are concerned, apparently. Peggy and "Buddy" Johnson have been married now for twenty months, long enough for the honeymoon raptures to be succeeded by loving companionship or disillusion.

Has Peggy changed her attitude toward marriage and the problem of mated lives? The slender, graceful young woman who danced her way into the heart of Henry Field did not give two snags of her tapering fingers for the marriage ceremony.

Even three years after Field's death, as the husband of another woman, and only a year before her marriage to Johnson, Peggy expressed views about wedlock which shocked friend and enemy alike.

"I am convinced that in a few years the necessity of a marriage ceremony will be done away with," she said. "I believe that people are coming more and more to realize that true affection should be the bond between a man and a woman and not the rigid chains of the law.

"Nature tells every woman that she has a right to motherhood and that that is the fulfillment of her life. I do not see how the marriage ceremony can make or mar that right.

"Surely, when a woman loves a man it is her right for that man to be the father of her children if the economic welfare of her children is provided for.

Scorn of Society Is Deemed Uncalled For

"The penalty inflicted by society upon the unmarried mother who cannot provide for her child and whose father makes no provision for it is too cruel for many women to enter that state at present.

"There are thousands of couples who live together wholly because their affection keeps them together, and are truly happy, although unmarried. Often after marriage the novelty wears off. The man thinks: 'Well, she is mine now, I can do as I like.' Often the woman feels that she is tied forever.

"They thus become two miserable



Peggy Marsh Johnson and her husband, "Buddy" Johnson, former broker and now dancing partner with his actress wife in Atlantic City cabarets



Peggy Marsh in her English "love nest," which she left to return to America to make futile fight to have share in millions of Marshall Field estate

Fields, anxious to have Henry's wild oats forgotten.

Discreet advances were made to former Governor Dunne, of Illinois, Peggy's attorney. An annuity of \$4000 was offered the dancer if she would exile herself from New York and live either in Europe or far away in the West.

But Peggy's "No, thank you," was not less emphatic because it was framed in the best legal phraseology that Judge Dunne has at his command. And what was more, she went gallantly ahead with her plans for a stage career. "Buddy" Johnson had tried his hand as a stock broker. He had good business blood in him, inherited from his father, who was president of the Nassau Railroad Company.

But the business blood was counterbalanced by a nimble dancing ability and an indefinable something that was a heritage of war service. Hundreds of returned fighting men found humdrum business impossible after the excitement of war.

Urged by Peggy, Johnson also decided on a stage career. He was a good dancer when he met the former chorus girl, and he became a better dancer under her expert tutelage.

The tracks were clear, the signals were set the right way and success twinkled up the line for the young couple. It was even rumored that Peggy's oceans of publicity would not harm them as box-office attractions.

But an—ounce or less of lead may change all that. And what of little Henry Field Johnson, Peggy's darling "Tony"? Although acknowledged informally as the child of Henry Field, he is not Henry Field's "issue" in the eyes of

the law. The Supreme Court of Illinois decided that, after holy battles in the lower courts. More than \$1,000,000 was spent in legal fees, the Field estate paying the piper.

Peggy's whole fight to make six-year-old "Tony" a multi-millionaire revolved around that one word "issue."

Field Millions Tied Up by Well-Riveted Will

Marshall Field, the Chicago merchant tied up his millions in a copper-riveted trust fund for eventual distribution among his grandsons, Henry and Marshall, 3d.

In his will the merchant directed that if either died "without issue" before the final distribution of the estate, his share was to go to the surviving brother.

In summing up their arguments, the attorneys for Peggy and "Tony," or "Bunny," as she sometimes called the boy, contended that Henry Field left "issue" when he died unexpectedly in July, 1917.

They pointed to Henry Anthony Marsh, now Henry Field Johnson, and said: "There is the issue." In meeting this contention, the attorneys for the Field estate insisted that the founder of the fortune meant "legal issue." They also pointed to the boy and said:

"He may be the issue to Henry Field; we do not dispute it; but he is not the legal, lawful, legitimate issue, such as the will stipulated. In the eyes of the law Henry Field died childless."

This latter contention was upheld by the various judges who passed on the case, among them Judge Dennis E. Sullivan, of the Cook County Superior Court, in Chicago.

in the will meant any issue. Wherever "legal issue" was intended, he said, it was always so specified.

Says Young Millionaire Agreed to Support Son

"After Henry Field and Peggy Marsh had erred they acted pretty decently on both sides," said Judge Dunne. "When faced with maternity Peggy Marsh was neither a coward nor an infanticide. She bestowed upon her son the love of a mother. Henry Field proved himself to be a man. He lavished money upon the son and the mother, left nothing undone that would add to their comfort, and before marrying signed a contract to support them."

The attorney then introduced a copy of the agreement. According to the contract Mr. Field was to pay Miss Marsh during their joint lives \$10,000 a year for the support of herself and the boy. As the boy became five and ten years old the sum was to be increased by \$2500, to go toward his education. Mr. Field also took out an insurance policy for \$100,000, of which in the event of his death \$20,000 would go to the mother and the child, and the

his who had met me. I was appearing at the Gaiety Theatre on the Strand in a musical comedy, and Mr. Field arranged a supper one evening after the performance. I attended under the escort of this mutual friend.

Americanism the Bond That Led to Romance

"I found Henry a charming, unaffected boy and we both discovered a bond at once in our intense Americanism. I was born in Chelsea, Mass., although the greater part of my stage work has been on the other side, solely, however, through the chance which seemed to guide the fortunes of those who live through the theatre.

"Before I went home the night of the supper Mr. Field had asked permission to call, and I had given it. Our attachment seemed instantaneous. On his second visit to me he told me he loved me and it was sure he did. I know that I loved him. We had many a little holiday and week-end trip together.

"After we had known each other about six months Henry proposed that we take a small house and I agreed. For about two years we were as happy



Peggy Marsh in gorgeous ball costume she wore in New York at charity affairs for Babies' Hospital



"Tony" Johnson, who was given a legal name when his mother married "Buddy" Johnson and the latter adopted the son of Henry Field, young Chicago millionaire

as two persons ever can hope to be.

"In 1916, when 'Bunny,' our little son, was born, I think our love for each other was at its height. Henry was immensely happy and proud of the baby. All the arrangements made then for the little fellow's care were Henry's own ideas.

"As I have said, in all those happy months I did not present myself to any one as Henry's wife. As much as I loved him I knew I could never do that. He never tried to deceive me as to what I might expect. He told me honestly of the plans that had been made for his future and how he had been trained with the idea that he was to take his place some day in American business affairs.

The tranquil life of the "love nest" ended when Henry Field volunteered for service with the British Army. He was detailed as chauffeur for an officer of the British general staff and had served for several months, when his health became impaired.

An indefinite leave of absence was arranged for Field and he told Peggy he was going to America to visit his brother and his friends. He left England and letters came regularly to Peggy in her London flat. Then the "love bubble" burst.

Henry Field told her of his approaching marriage to Nancy Perkins, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. T. Montague Perkins, of Richmond, Va. Mrs. Perkins was one of the "beautiful Langhorne sisters," one of whom is Lady Astor, a member of the British House of Commons, another the wife of Charles Dana Gibson, the illustrator.

Peggy had her first great sorrow when young Field became a bridegroom in February, 1917. Her sorrow deepened when he died in the following July after an operation. Her own consolation was "Tony," budding into a chubby, lovable little boy.

Although she had declined so pointedly against the necessity of marriage, she sought to find happiness in matrimony.

Will her happiness fade again, or is she being tried in a crucible that will burn away false sentimentalism and leave the elements of a happier, sweeter life?