

MR. DAWSON'S "PROPOSAL."

BY F. DELACY.

"I'll do it! for I never before saw a lady who pleased me so much! If on further acquaintance I continue my good opinion of her I will marry her—that is if she will have me."

Such was the soliloquy of Robert Dawson, who was a wealthy broker in the city of New York, and who was generally looked upon as a confirmed old bachelor, as he had arrived at the mature age of forty-eight years, and had never been in love, or had any inclination to marry.

Not that he was opposed to matrimony, but he had a dread of fortune hunters, and was fearful if any one did consent to marry him, it would be for his money, as most of his acquaintances knew that he was rich.

Our readers must not think from this, however, that Mr. Dawson had no other good qualities to recommend him, for though nearly fifty, he looked much younger, and was what would be called a fine-looking man, and was really a man of strict integrity and a worthy citizen.

The evening previous he had attended a party where he had been introduced to a young lady named Helen Norton, who was in the city on a visit to some of her friends, and had therefore accompanied them to the party. During the evening Mr. Dawson and Miss Norton had been together quite often, and each seemed well pleased with the other. The consequence was that he had asked and received permission to call on her and continue the acquaintance so agreeably commenced.

He had been thinking over the pleasant evening he had spent, and well knew to whom he was indebted for the most of that pleasure, and had come to the conclusion that Miss Norton was the woman he had been waiting for so many years. In order to make sure that if she married him it would not be for his money, he had just determined to ask the friend who had introduced him, to see the lady and convey to her the impression that he was a clerk in a broker's office, and though in receipt of a good salary, was entirely dependent on that for his support.

Having come to this conclusion he makes the remark with which our story opens.

In order to carry out his purpose, he at once called on his friend, and asked aid, which was readily promised, and in pursuance of the promise he was to call that evening at Mr. Johnson's residence, where Miss Norton was stopping, and during the conversation was to bring in Mr. Dawson's name, and leave the desired impression.

Thus far all was satisfactory, and Dawson waited with considerable impatience—for he had taken a most decided liking to the lady—until he thought it would do for him to call.

As I have previously said, Mr. Dawson had arrived at the mature age of forty-eight years. Now, I have noticed that when a person gets pretty well along in years without having the measles, the attack is usually more severe than if it appeared at an earlier period in life, and a love attack appears to work much the same way. Of course I can't tell why this is so, but that fact accounts for the impatience of our friend Dawson.

At the time he had concluded that he could, without exhibiting too much impatience, make his call, Mr. Dawson dressed himself with unusual care, and proceeded to Mr. Johnson's residence.

He passed a couple of hours very agreeably, and was surprised when he looked at the watch to find that he had staid so long. The only drawback to the pleasure of his visit being the presence of the other ladies, whom he wished were in the moon or any other far off locality, rather than in the parlor, where they so persistently staid.

For several weeks Mr. Dawson was a frequent visitor at Mr. Johnson's, but for some reason had never yet been able to see Miss Norton except in the presence of others, as all the ladies of the house seemed to think his visits as much for them as for the lady for whom they were really intended.

About this time Mr. Dawson had been urged to join a gentleman, living in a distant part of the city, in an enterprise which promised a liberal return, provided the required amount of capital was invested. This subject he had promised to consider, and having done so, and being satisfied that it would prove a "paying investment," had decided to notify his friend of the decision.

He accordingly wrote a note to him reading as follows:

"I have thought seriously over the matter, and have concluded that we can form a partnership that will be mutually satisfactory. I should be glad to hear from you on the subject, or you can call at my office, where we can quietly talk over the matter.

Yours respectfully,  
ROBERT DAWSON."

The evening previous to writing this letter, Mr. Dawson had again called on his lady-love, but as usual, had no opportunity to speak to her alone. He had been thinking that he should have to write to her, and as he closed up his letter intended for Mr. Christie, had actually addressed it to Miss Norton, and deposited it without noticing the mistake, in the box containing letters for the office. These the office boy had mailed so

that Miss Norton actually received a "proposal" from Mr. Dawson, although it was unknown to him.

As she read the letter her face showed both surprise and pleasure. Surprise at the wording of the letter, while yet she was pleased, as she could look upon it in no other light than a proposal for marriage, and if the truth was told, Miss Norton had a high regard for Mr. Dawson and had secretly hoped for such a proposal. A letter of that kind from any other source would have met with a different reception; but from him, knowing that he was "peculiar," the singularity of it was overlooked, and after a long consideration, she sent him this reply:

"Mr. Dawson, Dear Sir—Your rather singular letter is at hand, and in reply, allow me to say, that I have no objection to a discussion of the "partnership" suggested, if you feel disposed to call on me for that purpose. Yours respectfully,  
HELEN NORTON."

The receipt of this letter was a great surprise to Mr. Dawson, and it was some time before he could, in any manner, comprehend it. But at last, after puzzling over it for several hours, the contents of the letter intended for Mr. Christie, flashed into his mind, and at once he knew that by some means Miss Norton had received that letter. From the tone of her note, he felt sure she considered it a "proposal," as, in fact, she could put no other construction on his letter, and was also confident that she was prepared to give him a favorable answer. But what troubled him the most was, that she must form a singular opinion of him to think he would make a proposal to the woman he loved in such terms.

A few hours later found Mr. Dawson entering the parlor of Mr. Johnson's residence, and to his great delight no person was present but Miss Norton. She welcomed him in a cordial manner while he hastened to explain in regard to the letter, and the partnership intended in that case to be formed. "But," said he, "you can easily see who was in my thoughts when I directed the letter, and from the kindly manner in which you answered it, I will take the liberty of proposing a partnership which shall end only with our lives."

That the proposal met her approbation is rendered certain by the fact that a few weeks later Robert Dawson, bachelor, was changed to Robert Dawson, benefactor.

There is no doubt but what this partnership proved mutually satisfactory, and that it was a paying investment is readily proved by quite a number of little Dawson's.

An Electric Joke.

Some weeks ago, one of those illegitimate sons of science, the vagrant electric man, opened out with his dial for testing how much torture his voluntary victims could stand. To stimulate trade, he kept a standing offer to pay \$5 to whomever could stand as much electric fluid as his machine would furnish. One day a boy presented himself and announced that he had come to win that \$5. The man handed him the "handles," and started the machine. The boy stood it wonderfully. The operator turned the crank faster, and asked the boy how it felt. The boy said it did not feel at all. The man thought that something must be the matter, and commenced an elaborate tightening up of the screws, and then commenced another series of awful revolutions, which ought to have produced a current sufficient to kill the boy; still he laughingly assured the fellow that he did not experience the slightest sensation.

Out of patience, the man demanded to see his hands and then the secret was explained. The boy belonged to the telegraph office, and had picked up one of the pieces of insulated wire now being put up inside the office, and had passed it up one sleeve of his coat, around his shoulders, and down the other sleeve, and then uncovered the ends of the wires in each hand. Thus armed, he had gone to the electric man; of course, the uncovered ends of the wire, pressed against the metallic handles, presented a better medium than the boy's body, and the current simply passed to them and along the insulated wire around the boy's body, without touching him. That "electrician" was very mad, and moreover as the crowd drawn together thought it a good joke, and took the boy's part. The man was so laughed at that he left town.

A gentleman playing at cards at Baden-Baden was much annoyed by an inquisitive stranger, who stood beside him and pried into his hand. At last he took a pinch of snuff and administered it to his tormentor, immediately saying, "I beg your pardon, but you were so near me, sir, that I mistook your nose for mine."

It is said that the following words actually formed the peroration of the counsel's plea for his client in an assault and battery case in Athens, Alabama: "Let the humble ass crop the thistle of the valley; Let the sagacious goat browse upon the mountain's brow, but, gentlemen of the jury, I say John Gundle is not guilty."

A coquette is said to be a perfect incarnation of Cupid, because she keeps her beau in a quiver.

A Reminiscence of General Scott.

ONE evening after our rubber I said to the General, "There is one question I have often wished to ask you, but have been restrained by the fear that it might be improper." The General drew himself up, and said in his emphatic manner, "Sir, you are incapable of asking an improper question." I said, "You are very kind; but if my inquiry is indiscreet I am sure you will allow it to pass unanswered." "I hear you, Sir," he replied. "Well, then, General, did any thing remarkable happen to you on the morning of the battle of Chippewa?" After a brief but impressive silence he said, "Yes, sir; something did happen to me—something very remarkable. I will now for the third time in my life relate the story:

"The 4th day of July, 1814, was one of extreme heat. On that day my brigade skirmished with a British force commanded by General Riall from an early hour in the morning till late in the afternoon. We had driven the enemy down the river some twelve miles to Street's Creek, near Chippewa, where we encamped for the night, our army occupying the west, while that of the enemy was encamped on the east side of the creek. After our tents had been pitched I observed a flag borne by a man in peasant's dress, approaching my marquee. He brought a letter from a lady who occupied a large mansion on the opposite side of the creek, informing me that she was the wife of a member of Parliament, who was then at Quebec; that her children, servants, and a young lady friend were alone with her in the house; that General Riall had placed a sentinel before her door; and that she ventured, with great doubt of the propriety of the request, to ask that I would place a sentinel upon the bridge to protect her against stragglers from our camp. I assured the messenger that the lady's request should be complied with.

Early the next morning the same messenger, bearing a white flag, reappeared with a note from the same lady, thanking me for the protection she had enjoyed, adding that in acknowledgment of my civilities, she begged that I would, with such members of my staff as I chose to bring with me, accept the hospitalities of her house at breakfast, which had been prepared with considerable attention, and was quite ready. Acting upon an impulse which I have never been able to analyze or comprehend, I called two of my aids, Lieutenants Worth and Watts, and returned with the messenger to the mansion already indicated. We met our hostess at the door, who ushered us into the dining-room, where breakfast awaited us, and where the young lady previously referred to was already seated by the coffee urn. Our hostess, asking to be excused for a few minutes, retired, and the young lady immediately served our coffee.

Before we had broken our fast Lieutenant Watts rose from the table to get his baudiana (that being before the days of napkins), which he had left in his cap on the side-table by the window, glancing through which he saw Indians approaching the house on one side, and red coats approaching it on the other, with an evident purpose of surrounding it and us, and instantly exclaimed, "General, we are betrayed!" Springing from the table and clearing the house, I saw our danger, and remembering Lord Chesterfield had said, "Whatever it is proper to do, it is proper to do well," and as we had to run, and my legs were longer than those of my companions, I soon outstripped them. As we made our escape we were fired at, but got across the bridge in safety.

"I felt so much shame and mortification at having so nearly fallen into a trap, that I could scarcely fix my mind upon the duties which now demanded my undivided attention. I knew that I had committed a great indiscretion in accepting that singular invitation, and that if any disaster resulted from it I richly deserved to lose both my commission and character. I constantly found my self wondering whether the lady really intended to betray us, or whether we had been accidentally observed. The question would recur even amidst the excitement of battle. Fortunately my presence and services in the field were not required until Generals Porter and Ripley had been engaged at intervals for several hours; so that when my brigade, with Towson's artillery, were ordered to cross Street's Creek my nerves and confidence had become measurably quieted and restored. I need not describe the battle of Chippewa. That belongs to and is a part of the history of our country. It is sufficient to say that at the close of the day we were masters of the position, and that our arms were in no way discredited. The British army had fallen back, leaving their wounded in our possession.

The mansion which I had visited in the morning was the largest house near, and to that the wounded officers in both armies were carried for surgical treatment. As soon as I could leave the field I went over to look after my wounded. I found the English officers lying on the first floor, and our own on the floor above. I saw in the lower room the young lady whom I had met in the morning at the breakfast-table, her white dress all sprinkled with blood. She had been attending to the British wounded. On the second

floor, just as I was turning into the room where our officers were, I met my hostess. "One glance at her was quite sufficient to answer the question which I had been asking myself all day. She had intended to betray me, and nothing but the accident of my aid rising for his handkerchief saved us from capture.

"Years afterward, in reflecting upon this incident, I was led to doubt whether I had not misconstrued her startled manner as I suddenly encountered her. That unexpected meeting would have occasioned embarrassment in either contingency; and it is so difficult to believe a lady of cultivation and refinement capable of such an act, that I am now, nearly half a century after the event, disposed to give my hostess the benefit of that doubt.

"And now, Sir," added the General, "this is the third time in my life I have told this story. I do not remember to have been spoken to before on the subject for many years." He looked at me, and seemed to be considering with himself a few moments, and then said: "Remembering your intimacy with General Worth, I need not inquire how you came to a knowledge of our secret."

"Well, General," I replied, "I have kept the secret faithfully for more than forty years, always hoping to obtain your own version of what struck me as a most remarkable incident in your military life."

One of Sheridan's Jokes.

Sheridan was fond of practical jokes, one of which he played off upon the Duke of Devonshire. Sheridan was in the habit of frequenting Dolly's chop-house, where he generally called for deviled shin-bone of beef. One day, coming in rather later than usual, he was told that the only shin-bone in the larder was being cooked for his grace the Duke of Devonshire. Sheridan, who knew the duke's person, though not acquainted with him, took a seat within ear-shot of him and began a conversation with a friend in a loud tone of voice. "I always imagined," said he, "that Dolly's chop-house was one of the neatest establishments in London, but I made a discovery this morning which has convinced me that I was mistaken." The Duke listened to him very attentively. "As I was passing the kitchen window," continued Sheridan, "I observed a turnspit boy greedily gnawing a shin-bone of beef. Presently one of the cooks ran up to him, and giving him a blow on the neck, compelled him to drop his prize. 'You dirty little rascal,' said the cook, 'couldn't you find nothing else to eat? Here I've got to cook this bone for the Duke of Devonshire.' Soon after the conclusion of this tale, a waiter entered the room, and advanced to his grace, with a covered dish. 'Your bone, sir!' 'Take it away,' roared the duke, with a face of great disgust. 'I can't touch a morsel of it.' 'Stay, waiter!' said Sheridan, humbly; 'bring it to me. If his grace can't eat it, I can. Fetch me a bottle of claret—I don't wish a better luncheon."

Marrying in Fun.

On a recent evening, as a social party was gathered on Ida Hill, a young lady and gentleman who were betrothed, thought for the amusement of the company, they would go through the marriage ceremony in fun—a sort of rehearsal. A gentleman present agreed to take the part of the minister, and did so in fine style. Immediately at the conclusion of the mock marriage a young lady nudged her partner, who was sitting beside her, and said, "Let us be married in fun." "All right," replied the gent, and up they stood. One of the gentlemen happened to be a Justice, and it struck him that he could make a better job of it than the young man who had just personated the minister. He accordingly offered to marry the couple "in fun." They acceded, and he performed the entire ceremony, concluding by declaring the couple "man and wife." The thought that the marriage had been legally performed, flashed upon the minds of the couple, and the Justice very coolly explained the matter, and said that he was ready for a fee. Upon the circumstances nothing could be done but to yield to circumstances, and the newly married couple being willing, they adopted the finality of the fun, and invited all hands round to a "reception." May they never have occasion to repent.

How to get a Dinner.

A GENTLEMAN who had traveled about pretty extensively was greatly perplexed to understand how it was that other persons were waited upon promptly and well served at the hotels, while he was almost entirely ignored, and could scarcely obtain a square meal, complain to and swear at the waiters as he might. At last his eyes were opened to the dodge of feeing the waiters liberally, and being of ingenious turn of mind, he determined to improve on the plan. The next hotel he dined at, he took his seat very pompously at the table, and took out a well filled pocket-book, extracted therefrom a ten dollar bill, which he laid on the white cloth beside his plate, and placed his goblet upon it. In an instant almost he was surrounded by waiters, who seemed to vie with each other in attention. Every wish was anticipated, and all the delicacies of the kitchen and

pantry were placed before him in tempting array.

Having fared as sumptuously as a prince—to the envy of many of the guests—he took up the greenback, and beckoning to the nearest waiter, was immediately besieged by a half a dozen or so. Holding the bill in one hand, he pointed to it with the other, and inquired of the crowd:

"Do you see that bill?"  
"Oh, yes, sir," they all exclaimed in chorons.  
"Then take a good look at it," he replied, "for you will never see it again." Saying which he departed from the room, leaving the waiters agast.

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