

TOO MUCH ENGAGED

Proposed to Four Women and Fled to Avoid Consequences.

By WALTER TOWNE MATHEUS.
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Dick Hammond was the most popular man in his class at college. Every body loved him, both boys and girls. There are young fellows—and girls, for that matter—who achieve social prominence by treating every one in their select circle with a cultivated cordiality. Dick Hammond treated every one, irrespective of station, with a sincere regard. His heart was a spring from which bubbled a perennial stream of love for all mankind.

If this love rannel had been only for men it would not have resulted unfortunately for Dick. The trouble was that the liquid was not agreeable to women as well. While it was water for the former, it was wine for the latter. And it was noticeable that

met. Then she looked up at him, her compassionate heart going out to him through her melting orbs. He kissed her.

And so it was that Hammond, who had called on a girl for sympathy in his complication with three girls, left her engaged to another—herself.

When one awakens after a good night's sleep the brain is usually clearer than at any other time of day. Dick Hammond, opening his eyes on the morning after he had become engaged to the fourth girl, saw at last that something must be done. He lay abed till noon thinking out a plan. The cobwebs of his intellect were swept away, and he formed a plan.

During the afternoon he called to gether three of his male chums, informed them of his complication and asked them to help him out of it. Not one of them but would have plucked out his beard and roared it over a fire of coals for Dick, but there was none of them capable of suggesting how this was to be effected. And here while being in bed during the ante-meridian hours. He suggested that each one of his friends take one of the girls and by his attentions extract, like a plaster, the inflammation of her heart.

The proposition was listened to with respectful attention by the chums, but excited no enthusiasm. Each man thought of Aesop's fable of the fox who, having lost his tail, endeavored to persuade the other foxes to cut off theirs. Presently the spokesman said: "Dick, dear boy, lovingness is so natural to you and you find it so easy to impress the feminine heart that you think it would be equally easy for us. You are the candle about which the moths flutter, and it would require a more virile light to draw them away. None of us is in love-making more brilliant than you—in indeed, compared with you in this respect we are as a glow worm beside a searchlight. We would gladly help you, but it is impossible to do on your plan. We would advise you, however, not to complicate matters further by engaging to marry any more girls."

Following this advice, Dick Hammond resolutely devoted himself to his last fiancée to the exclusion of all others. One day one of his three chums came to him and warned him that his first three fiancées were preparing to serve papers upon him in a suit for breach of promise. Dick asked if his marriage with the fourth lady would settle the matter. He was informed that it probably would. Some of the ladies were acting with the intention of extorting money, but from a desire to prevent a rival from getting the better of her.

The next day Dick was informed that the papers were all to be served at once. Jumping into his automobile, he drove to Miss Carr's house, and the couple soon after came out, entered the auto, and Dick, who drove it, turned it toward the state line.

Now, it was fifty miles to the state line, but Dick, once beyond the city limits, saw no necessity for hurry. On passing a garage he saw the three friends whom he had asked to help him loitering there as if waiting for something. They all doffed their hats, and one of them shouted: "Plenty of time; papers not yet out." So Dick lagged, devoting himself to his so lovely companion. Presently, looking back, he saw an auto far in the distance coming at full speed. He turned on more power and easily kept good lead.

Passing a crossroad, he saw another auto within a hundred yards of him. The driver was muffled and wore goggles concealing his features. A girl sat beside him, and Dick's blood ran cold on recognizing Miss Allen. She shook her fist at him, and he instinctively turned on more power, shooting toward like an arrow.

Presently, looking back, he saw that he was followed by three autos at different distances. Great heavens! Were all of his first three fiancées pursuing him?

All the power of which the machine was possessed was now on, and the machine fairly flew along the road. Dick turned now, and again saw that the machine containing Miss Allen was in the lead of the pursuing machines. He thought that if any of them got him she at least had the best right.

The chase was a short one so far as time was concerned, for the distance was traversed within an hour, and when Dick drove up to a hotel just across the state border, the three pursuing autos were close upon him. He and his betrothed at last stood on the hotel porch, and three other couples, alighting from their autos, joined them. Dick's half stood on end. There were his three deserted fiancées, and with each one was one of the chums he had made his confidant.

"What did you chumps give me away for?" he stammered.

"This isn't a give away," said Miss Allen. "It's a wedding party. We girls are determined that you shall be married so that you can't engage yourself to any more of us."

So Dick Hammond was at last married, and a wedding party of his friends and jilted girls escorted him and his bride back to the city.

Comets of the Past Century.
During the nineteenth century 235 new comets were discovered as against sixty-two in the eighteenth century. The nineteenth century also beheld a greater number of large and brilliant comets than did its predecessor. The finest of these were the comets of 1811, 1843, 1868, 1881 and 1882. In the year 1900 only one periodical comet was known, Halley's. Now many are known, of which at least seventeen have been seen at more than one return to perihelion.

Too Costly.
King George II. once wished to add the Green park, in London, to his palace grounds, whether the people liked it or not. He inquired of his minister as to the cost.

His lordship, mindful of the general discontent then prevalent, answered: "The cost, sir? Oh, it would be a matter of three crowns!"

The king took the hint. The people kept their park and the sovereign his triple throne.

Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence or learning.—F. W. Faber.

MR. MUDGE'S WOOING

A Very Homely Man Who Was a Very Persistent Lover.

By ADELAIDE RUTH HILL.
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Jabez Chute Mudge was his name. Considering that he was the homeliest man in his state it would seem that his parents might have helped him to a more millilithous pair of surnames. Mr. Mudge, however, came of good enough stock, was fairly well educated and was the possessor of a couple of thousand dollars a year. He lived on his own place, where he grew grapes, his only occupation. If he had had anything else to do this story would never have been written, for nine-tenths of his time was devoted to incidents recounted therein.

On a neighboring hill lived Leonidas Meredith, a gentleman whose name was as euphonious as Mr. Mudge's was discordant. Mr. Meredith possessed a daughter, Letta, who was as comely as Mr. Mudge was homely. This story recounts the wooing of Letta Meredith by Chute Mudge.

When Mudge first saw Miss Meredith and how he happened to fall in love with her doesn't matter. His first move in the direction of possessing her was made one morning when his father was getting into his carriage to drive to a train on his daily journey to the city. Mudge stepped up to him and astonished him by asking for the hand of his daughter.

"My daughter?" exclaimed the gentleman, opening his eyes very wide.

"Yes, Mr. Meredith; I have loved her

long. Will you please to give her my love?"

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UNDER A CLOUD.

Accused of Crime, He Lived For Many Years a Cursed Man.

By GERTRUDE ELMENDORF.
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The life lived by the planters of the south before the extinction of slavery was in some respects an ideal one. Most of them were people of refinement and kind to their slaves, by whom they were much beloved. The Lynn family were of this type. Their plantation was one of the largest in the south, and they owned more than a thousand slaves. Their social position in the circle of society embracing the neighboring planter families was very high. Indeed, they were beloved by both whites and blacks.

Alan Lynn inherited this plantation when he came of age. He was a splendid specimen of the highly honorable, sensitive southerner. Among all the young men of the region in which he lived he was the favorite both with his own and the opposite sex. He was very gay, taking a prominent part in all the social affairs of his circle. If a ball were given on a plantation fifty miles away he was sure to be there as if it were on an adjoining place. Yet much of his leisure time was spent in examining into the needs of the negroes on his plantation, supplying them and righting their wrongs.

Among the young men of that region was Sheldon Avery, who lived on a plantation some ten miles from the Lynn home. Notwithstanding the distance separating them Lynn and Avery were much together.

The friendship continued until the two men discovered that they were secretly devoting themselves to the same girl. Martha Tucker was not in the social circle of the planters' families. She was very handsome, however, and possessed traits to render her attractive to men. Avery had known her some time before Lynn

made her acquaintance. Lynn was not aware that his friend had claims upon her, or he would have retired at once from the field. Avery on learning that Lynn was his rival was very angry. He accused his friend of dishonorable action toward him, and Lynn's hot southern blood prompted him to resent the charge. The result was the passing of a challenge.

Two such prominent young men could not fight under the code without the fact being known to all their acquaintances. The fact that they had been bosom friends made the quarrel a matter of still greater interest. They tried to conceal the cause, giving out a manufactured one, but it did not avail. It was generally known that a woman was at the bottom of the meeting.

By the time they came on to the field of honor each had cooled and would have gladly come to a reconciliation. But an imputation on their courage was more to be dreaded than the risk of killing a friend. Shots were exchanged, fortunately without effect; the seconds interposed, and the two enemies again became friends.

For some time after this difference they saw little of each other. Meanwhile young Lynn had been stocking certain words comprised within his property with care. In October he sent an invitation to Avery to make him a visit and enjoy the shooting. Avery accepted and came to his friend's house prepared for an extended visit.

The two men hunted for several days, each being careful to abstain from any mention of the trouble over which they had disagreed. But one day when a number of other persons were hunting with them and the two young men became separated from the rest of the party their voices were heard raised in anger. The girl over whom they had fought had been mentioned between them and, like a glass of liquor to a reformed drunkard, had fired the brain of Avery, who seemed easily excited at any reference to Martha Tucker. Those of the party nearest the disputants paused to listen and heard Lynn say:

"If you do I will kill you!"

At this moment those who were listening started up a flock of birds in which they were more interested than in the quarrel between the two friends. They followed the game and, hearing reports of guns in another part of the wood, supposed that Lynn and Avery had also turned their attention to the sport.

Some time after this Lynn came up with the others. He seemed surprised not to see Avery with them, saying that while he and Avery were together Avery, hearing the reports of their guns and assuming that they had found game, had gone to rejoin them.

When, after another hour, Avery did not appear all started in different directions to look for him. They did not find him. The day ended, and most of the party went to their homes, while

Alabama's Capital.
When Alabama was a territory its capital was at St. Stephens, in Washington county. The convention that framed the constitution under which it was admitted into the Union was held in Huntsville, where the first legislature met in October, 1819, and the first governor was inaugurated. Cahaba became the seat of government in 1820. In 1825 the capital was removed to Tuscaloosa, and in 1840 it was again removed, this time to Montgomery.

The Seventh Son.
"Yes," said the dependant man, "I was a seventh son."

"And didn't it bring you luck?" asked the superstitious one.

"Well, if being obliged to wear the castoff clothes of six other brothers is luck it did," replied the dependant man.—Philadelphia Record.

The Dear Friends.
Miss Thin—Don't you think my new dress is just exquisite? Fannie—Oh, lovely! I think that dressmaker of yours could make a clothes prop look graceful.

The song that nerves a nation's heart is in itself a deed.—Tennyson.

AN EASY VICTORY.

How an Obdurate English Lord Was Outwitted in Naples.

Lord Charles Hamilton used to go about Naples attended by a large, ferocious bulldog. Having decided upon going to Rome, he proceeded to the station and took his place in a first class carriage, the "dawg" taking up a position on a seat opposite his master. The platform inspector, with many gesticulations, declared that the bulldog should not travel in a passenger carriage.

"Very well, then; take him out," was Lord Charles' rejoinder.

In vain the official expostulated. He merely reiterated his former reply, a piece of advice it is needless to say which was not followed, and Lord Charles, apparently master of the situation, threw himself back in his seat and calmly lighted a cigar.

But the Italians were not to be outdone, and, quietly detaching the carriage in which the English "milior" was seated, they made up the train with another compartment and started it off.

Lord Charles sat quietly smoking for about a quarter of an hour and then, surprised at the delay, thrust his head out of the window and demanded when the train was going to start. His feelings when the situation was described to him may be imagined.—London Tit-Bits.

A WONDERFUL DREAM.

The Poor Cobbler Who Found Himself Upon a Throne.

It was in the days of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, that a cobbler mounted a royal throne. As the duke was traveling one night to Bruges he came upon a man stretched upon the ground sound asleep and bade his attendants carry him to the palace, strip off his rags and place him, robed in fine linen, in his own bed.

When the man awoke next morning he was addressed as "your highness" and astounded to find himself among such rich surroundings. In vain he protested that he was no prince, but a poor cobbler. They asked him what clothing he would wear and at last conducted him, splendidly dressed, to mass in the ducal chapel. Every ceremony was observed throughout the day. The cobbler appeared in public in his new robe, was received on all sides by command of the duke with deep respect and ended his brief reign in the palace with a grand supper and ball.

When presently he fell asleep he was reclathed in his rags and taken to the spot where he had been found when this practical joke was conceived. Waking in due time, he returned home and related to his wife what he took to be his wonderful dream.

SACRED NUTS OF JAPAN.

Although well known to travelers and collectors of curiosities, the horn nut, or "sacred nut" of Japan was almost wholly unknown to fruit and nut dealers in this country prior to 1888, when a New York commission merchant received the first large consignment. They are called "sacred nuts" because used in certain forms of Japanese worship, where they are placed on the altar and ignited. Being very rich in oil, they burn with a hot, bluish flame and give off a peculiar odor, the fumes being supposed to rise as an acceptable incense to the gods. They grow under water and have a leaf like an American lily, the form of the nut itself being an almost exact counterpart of an Asian buffalo's head, drooping horns and all. In the raw state they are hard and tasteless, but when cooked the flavor resembles that of boiled chestnuts. They are said to retain their edibility, qualities for upward of twenty years.

VANISHED MOUNTAINS.

It has been observed that in the neighborhood of great ranges of mountains the force of gravity is slighter than elsewhere, and the explanation is that the earth's crust is less dense beneath the places where it has been heaved up. Assuming this to be a general law, one authority points out that it is possible to discover where ancient mountains now worn away and leveled by the action of the elements once existed, because the density of the underlying rocks has not changed. France, it is thought, possessed one of these vanished ranges, running along the parallel of Bordeaux, for on that line there is a lessening of the force of gravity. A similar phenomenon occurs on the plains of southern Russia.—Harper's Weekly.

UNCONSCIOUS SELF CRITICISM.

Mr. X., the subeditor, was asked to write an article on superstition and infidelity.

When the article was printed the opening sentence was found to be as follows: "That infidelity is not on the wane perusal of the following lines will amply demonstrate."—Paris Figaro.

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LISTENED TO IT WITH HEARTFELT SYMPATHY



"I SHALL LOVE YOU FROM A DISTANCE."

a long while and shall always love her. I can take fairly good care!"

"You get out of this mighty quick or I'll find a way to hurry you."

"I shall stay here, Mr. Meredith, till I get your consent."

"Tom," yelled the wrathful father to the gardener, "come here!"

Tom dropped a spade and came running toward his employer.

"Just help me a bit with this fellow!"

Mr. Meredith took the sutor by one arm, Tom took him by the other, and, walking him down to the pond, lifted him and with a "One, two, three," they threw him in.

Mudge came up spluttering. Mr. Meredith hurried to his carriage and was driven away, his blood was son-in-law crying after him: "I'm not discouraged, sir! I'll try again!"

When Miss Letta Meredith heard the story of her wooer's ducking she gave a little laugh, then said, "Poor fellow!"

If Mudge had heard the remark possibly he might have gathered a ray of hope. The young lady's mother asked her if she had ever had any communication with Mudge, to which she replied that she had not known that there was such a person in existence.

This was the first episode in Mr. Mudge's courtship. The second was very different. Jabez kept an eye on the Meredith place and noticed a young man who called rather more frequently than the red headed lover thought might be well for his own suit. One afternoon when this gentleman was leaving the Merediths, Jabez waylaid him and asked him if he could tell him the way to B.

The man replied that he could not. Jabez told him that he believed he was lying. The man promptly slapped Jabez's face, and Jabez as promptly knocked him down. The young man's jaw was pretty nearly broken, and when he got up he was in no condition to renew the fight. He went back to the Merediths for assistance, told of his encounter and spoke of his assailant as a "red headed, monkey shaped devil."

Miss Meredith, who was bathing his jaw, at once recognized her persistent lover. What woman can fail to feel some interest in a man who for her sake will first consent to be ducked by her father and then will permit no other man to pay her attention? She expressed to the gentleman under her care her abhorrence of Jabez Mudge and his act, but for her life she could not but consider him in the light of a victor. When her visitor showed a shrinking from meeting the "red-headed, monkey shaped devil" again and asked to be driven to his only rival, Miss Meredith had more admiration for the monkey shaped man than his opponent.

Not long after this Miss Meredith concluded to walk to the village. Her mother told her she had better go in her pony cart since she might meet Mr. Mudge, and it would be easier for her to drive away from him than to walk away. To this the girl replied that she was not afraid of Mr. Mudge and would not permit him to restrict her movements in the least. Down in the bottom of her heart she had a curiosity to talk with this singular being who was suffering and daring for her and hoped that he might join her.



SHOTS WERE EXCHANGED.

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