

THE MAIL

A PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE.

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MARRIAGE PROPOSALS

EVERY MAN HAS HIS OWN WAY OF ASKING THE IMPROBABLE QUESTION.

Sir Arthur Helps believed that never since the world began did two lovers make love in exactly the same way as any other two lovers. Whether he was right is equally beyond proof or disproof. Certainly, no question has been put in such a variety of ways as the most momentous one a man can ask or a woman answer; how it is put depending on time, place, circumstances, and the temperament of the individuals concerned.

A MARRIAGE WITH A GENEROUS MOTIVE.

A curious marriage proposal was made by a reverend bachelor who entered the matrimonial state on his death bed. When in his seventy-third year the minister had a severe attack of paralysis which left him so weak and helpless that, feeling his end was not far distant, he proceeded to set his worldly affairs in order. His parish being an exceedingly small one, and having been always a most liberal man, he had not much money to leave, which circumstance, had it not been for one reason, he would not have minded.

For the last twenty years he had had as housekeeper a steady, sensible woman, who had served him honestly, tenderly and with a daughter's love, and for whom he had quite a fatherly regard. It was on her account that he mourned his poverty. It would have been a matter for thankfulness could he have left her as much as would have supported her comfortably and respectably in her old age. He was now about forty-five. After weighing and considering the matter for some weeks in every possible light, a way out of the difficulty suddenly flashed upon him; and, knowing the precarious state of his health, he resolved to execute his purpose at once. He called his housekeeper, and when she entered the room he made her sit down; and after telling her how anxious and sorrowful he had been because he had no money to leave her, he continued:

"Of course you are aware that there is a Ministers' Widows' Fund, so that if the husband dies, his wife will have an annuity during life. Now, supposing you marry me, although I am almost at death's door, you will be amply provided for in the future. Will you consent to this?"

"Master, dear, you must be joking! What would people say?"

"I was never more serious in my life, Mary, and I am sure people will say we have both acted wisely in this matter. Take till the evening to think it over, and then bring me your answer."

In the evening, Mary told him she would take him. So ten days after they were married, and the good old man died; but his widow still enjoys her share of the "Widows' Fund."

A SOLDIER'S PROPOSAL.

A young officer was dancing a set of Lancers in a crowded drawing room with an extremely pretty girl, to whom he made himself most agreeable. After the dance was over, he took her to a chair, and seating himself beside her, began to mourn his celibacy.

"It is exceedingly easy to remedy that," said she.

"I don't think so at all: in fact I do not know a girl who would marry me."

She laughed, and replied:

"Just go and ask some one here to-night, and I venture to say you will be accepted by the first."

"Ah! I am not so sure about that. But—will you—take me?"

"With pleasure."

And a few months later they were married.

SHE CHANGED HER MIND.

A big, good natured doctor was desperately in love with, and had been twice refused by, a fair haired little woman. But instead of the disappointment curbing his love, it only made the passion grow more intense. After the last refusal, he told her that if she ever changed her mind to let him know, his love for her was unchanged, and he would be proud to be her husband. Some months later he was driving home from seeing a patient, when he saw his lady love riding in his direction. Supposing she would merely bow and pass on, as she had often done before, he did not pull up his horse. But the moment Miss Dixon came up to him, she reined in her horse, stopped, and called out:

"Won't you stop, Dr. Hill?"

"He raised his hat, and replied:

"I shall be happy to do so," then waited for her to speak.

She was gazing at the ground and blushing deeply, and quickly looking up, she filled the doctor's honest heart with surprise and gladness by saying:

"Dr. Hill, I have been closely watching you lately, and see nothing but goodness and noble mindedness in your character, and believing you will make an excellent husband, I am willing to marry you."

NO OBJECTIONS.

Mr. Smith, coming all the way from Australia on the lookout for a wife, saw a young governess on board a Glasgow steamer, whom, from her kindness and attention to some children under charge he fancied would suit him. So he went and introduced himself, and, taking a seat beside her, said:

"I am fifty-three years of age; have an income of a thousand a year; am a total abstainer from intoxicating drinks; have a good house near Melbourne; and all I want is a good wife to complete my possessions; would you mind taking me?"

She quietly replied:

"I have no objections."

And a few weeks later they were made one.

NOT TO BE FOOLED.

A young man of 23, with neither money nor prospect of getting any, came to the conclusion that the best thing he could do was to marry a "rich wife" and live on her money.

Among his acquaintances was a widow lady twice his age, with three children, but with a steady income of two thousand dollars. Her husband had died, and in order to cultivate her friendship, took her flowers and rides on his horse. The lady kindly received his attentions, gave him the liberty of her house, and treated him in every respect like a younger brother.

He interpreted her kindness to suit himself, and believed he had nothing to do but ask her, and so ventured one

evening on the subject in the following manner:

"I wonder very much why you don't re-marry, Mrs. L—."

"Simply because," no one wants a widow with three children," said the

widow, feeling the worst well over.

"Indeed, you are most flattering this evening."

"No, I am not flattering; I love you, and would be proud to be your husband."

She looked coldly on him, then replied:

"You mean you would be proud to own my money, sir. I have been vastly deceived in you." Then pointing to the door, she continued: "Leave my house, and while I live, never dare to re-enter it."

QUANT AND LUDICROUS PROPOSALS.

When Lord Strangford sat down to criticize a book of travels, by Miss Beaufort, he little dreamed that he should soon write to the young authoress:

"I was thinking the other day about a communication from the Emperor Akbar to the King of Portugal, which contained a request for copies of the holy book of the Christians, and in which the following sentence occurs:

"In the world of humanity, which is the mirror and reflection of the world of God, there is nothing equal to love, or comparable to human affection."

For many years I have felt and known this, though I never said it till to-day to any one. When you next write, please give me the possessive pronoun of the first person."

Surely, never was a declaration made in a quainter fashion, saving, perhaps, by the Scotch housewife who led the manse housemaid to the churchyard, and pointing with his finger stammered:

"My folk lie there, Mary, and wad ye like to lie there?"

Or the lugubriously humorous Irish lover who took his girl to see the family vault, and then asked her if she would like to lay her bones beside his bones.

A couple de Savoie popped the question to Bourbon, but had to take "No" for her answer, the constable curtly declaring that the disparity of years between them, and his own feelings, rendered the union impossible.

A LADY'S PROPOSAL.

If ladies sin against propriety in taking the initiative, they cannot be blamed for bringing a shilly-shally or over-bashful lover to the point when a good opportunity presents itself.

Such an opportunity sufficed to end what had been a somewhat tedious courtship: The young man paying his usual evening visit, asked his lady-love how she got along with her cooking.

"Nicely," replied she, "I'm improving wonderfully, and make splendid cakes now."

"Can you?" said the young fellow, ignorantly rushing on his fate. "What kind do you like best?"

"I like one with flour and sugar, with lots of raisins, currants and citron, and beautifully frosted on top."

"Why, that's wedding cake?"

"I mean wedding."

And there nothing left for him but to say he meant wedding too.

WOMEN FIND A WAY.

Equally cleverly cornered was the Western man whose girl told him she was a mind reader; whereupon he naturally inquired if she could read what was in his mind, eliciting for reply:

"O yes, you have in your mind to ask me to be your wife, but you are just a little scared at the idea."

It is plain the notion did not scare her, any more than it did the Galloway girl, who when Jack, coming into the kitchen while she was preparing breakfast, said to her:

"I think I'll marry ye, Jean."

And she answered:

"I would be muckle obliged to ye if ye would."

And so concluded the bargain; not even stipulating, like another ready lassie, on accepting as sudden an offer, "But ye maun gie me yer dues o' courtin' for a' that James."

The right of courtship is one out of which no woman should allow herself to be defrauded.

PROPOSING BY PROXY.

Little as faith-heartedness in a lover may be to the liking of fair lady, it is sufficiently flattering to be condoned; but when any Cateb in search of a wife chooses to sue by delegate, he deserves to fail ignominiously. Love is not to be won by attorney; and oftentimes the attorney has thrown his client overboard, and carried off the prize himself, as happened when William Grimm went courting in his brother's behalf.

Hooker escaped that risk by leaving everything to the selection of the lady, to Mrs. Churchman, who found him a wife, and achieved a son-in-law herself at the same time.

Proposing by proxy is the rule not the exception, in Greenland. Time was when the Greenlanders won their wives by capture; but since their conversion to Danish missionaries, have become the tamest of wooers. Now a candidate for the holy state goes to a missionary and tells him he wants a wife.

"Whom?" asks the missionary.

Sometimes the man answers:

"She is not willing; but thou knowest womankind."

Usually the answer is "No."

"Why have you not asked her?" inquires the missionary.

"It is difficult; girls are prudish; thou must speak to her."

The good man sends for the girl, and after a little conversation, says:

"I think it is time for thee to be married."

The girl declares she has no mind to wed.

"That is a pity. I have a suitor for thee."

Of course the damsel is curious enough to want to know whom the suitor may be, and of course her curiosity is satisfied.

"He is good for nothing," she explains with a toss of the head. "I won't have him."

"But," the go-between urges, "he is a good provider; he throws his harpoon with skill, and moreover he loves thee."

Still pretending to be obdurate, the girl answers that she will not consent to the match.

"Well, well; I will not force thee; I shall soon find a wife for such a clever fellow," says the missionary, making their is an end of the matter.

The girl does not go; she stands silent for a little while, then in a low voice sighs out:

"Just as thou wilt have it."

"No; it is as thou wilt; I'll not persuade thee," replies the clergyman.

Then with a deep groan, the maiden says "Yes," and the matter is settled.

SPILLING THE WINE.

Tyrolean lassies are by old custom spared the necessity of giving tongue to their "Ays" or "Nos." The first time a young man pays a visit as an avowed suitor he brings with him a bottle of wine, of which he pours out a glass and offers it to the object of his affections. In any case she will not refuse it point blank—that would be too gross an insult; but should the wooer not be agree-

able to her, or his declaration come a little too prematurely, she declines the proffered wine, pleading that it looks sour, or that wine disagrees with her, or for some other plausible reason, and so touches it, or any other excuse feminine ingenuity may suggest.

If she like the lad and is equal to owning it, she empties the glass, taking especial care not to spill any of the wine, for if she does so, or the glass or bottle be broken, it is a most unhappy omen. "They have spilled the wine between them," say the peasants when a marriage turns out badly.

A CANDLE PROPOSAL.

Dumb declarations are in vogue too among the Boers of South Africa. Mr. Anthony Trollope tells us that when a young Boer goes in quest of a young wife he puts on his best clothes, sticks a feather in his cap, provides himself with a bottle of sugar plums and a candle, and goes to the house holding the young woman he would honor, hangs the reins on the gate, dismounts and enters. His smart gear, his feather, and his candle bespeak his errand. To make the point quite clear, however, he offers the candle to the daughter of the house. If she takes it, it is lighted; the mother sticks a pin in the cradle to show how long the young people may remain together without interruption, and she and everybody else retire. Mr. Trollope says a little salt is sometimes put in by somebody to make the wick burn slowly, but when the flame reaches the pin, mamma comes, the "frying" is over, and a day or two afterward the pair are made one.

THE TEXAS WAY.

They manage the things differently in Texas. This is how a fond couple come to an understanding, according to the "Texas Star." He sits on one side of the room in a big wicker rocking chair, she on the other in a big wicker rocking chair. A long eared dog bound is by his side, a basket of sewing by hers. Both the young people rock incessantly. He sighs heavily, and looks out of the west window at the turnip patch. At last he remarks:

"This is mighty good weather for cotton picking."

"Tis that," the lady responds, "if we only had any to pick." The rocking continues. "What's your dog's name?" asks she.

"Coony." Another sigh broken stillness.

"What's he good for?"

"What is who good for?" says he abstractedly.

"Your dog Coony."

"For fetching 'possums."

"Yes, for fetching 'possums." He sits on one side of the room in a big wicker rocking chair, she on the other in a big wicker rocking chair. A long eared dog bound is by his side, a basket of sewing by hers. Both the young people rock incessantly. He sighs heavily, and looks out of the west window at the turnip patch. At last he remarks:

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