

HIGHLAND PARK DAY

THURSDAY

AUGUST

6th

LAKE FRONT PARK

Music Dancing Games

Refreshments

Free Prize Drawing

Everybody Welcome

A Scotch Marriage

How a Man Was Caught in His Own Trap

By F. A. MITCHEL

It was a bright morning in the month of June. Miss Maryweather stood at a window in her city home and wondered why the world defers its annual begonia to the country till July, leaving out the most delightful month in the year for an outing. There was before her nothing but brick and stone houses, while from the street below came a confused clatter of horses' hoofs on the stones, trolley gongs, auto horns and other such city noises.

"I'm going to get into the country if I have to go by trolley," said Miss Maryweather. "After all, wouldn't a trolley ride be nice this beautiful morning? It certainly would, and that's what I'm going to do." And Miss Maryweather straightway got down some maps giving the environs of the city and marked out a route. "I'll go from here to Arlington, that's four miles; get a transfer to Hammondville, that's twelve miles in all, and from Hammondville back home. I can get back to luncheon if I wish to, or I can go farther."

Not long after this soliloquy Miss Maryweather stood on the front stoop putting on a pair of white silk gloves and waiting for a trolley car. When the right one came along she boarded it. There was no vacant seat, but a handsome young man in a new spring suit gave her his seat, with a profound "now, which was interrupted by the starting of the car and threw him on to her lap. He apologized and thereafter became a strap hanger till the car reached the crossing of the trolley line with another at Arlington. There Miss Maryweather alighted and took an open car on the other line.

It so happened that the young man who had given up his seat was going in the same direction. At any rate he boarded the same car, taking a seat in the rear where he could smoke. Miss Maryweather did not see him get on and did not know he was there. When the car reached Hammondville, which was little more than a trolley crossing, she was told that the cars ran at fifteen minutes' interval and one had just passed. So she concluded to walk and let the next car overtake her.

She had not gone far when she came to an attractive country place. The grounds were very highly cultivated, and there was a garden in which Miss Maryweather could see flowers of all kinds nodding under a light breeze in the sunlight. "I'd give anything to go into that garden," she said. "I wonder what kind of persons they are in there—whether they are so selfish as to wish to keep their flowers for themselves or whether they would like to have others enjoy them too."

Coming to the gateway, she saw a man cutting the grass and asked if there would be any objection to her going into the garden provided she didn't take any of the flowers.

"I think not, miss," was the reply "since you're alone. Couples sometimes come in here to spark, and Mr. Summers doesn't like that; but he hasn't any objection to other persons enjoying his grounds."

Thus encouraged, Miss Maryweather entered the grounds and proceeded to the flower garden. There she reared herself with her beautiful surroundings, wishing she might take even a single rose, but refraining. She had seen there only a short time when she saw a man coming in through a rear gate. What was her surprise to see, when he came near her, the gentleman who had given her his seat in the trolley car. What a singular coincidence that this beautiful place should be his home.

"Beg pardon," she said. "The garden looked so attractive from the road that I couldn't help coming into it. But I asked the gardener if there would be any objection, and he said he didn't think there would."

Now, this young man, Bob Shackelford, having been born rich and having nothing to do, was always searching for an adventure. He had been struck with Miss Maryweather's appearance when he had seen her get on the trolley car and, without any definite purpose, felt inclined to keep her in sight for a while. He had therefore taken the same car as she to Hammondville, but when she walked on from there he had waited for a car to take him back to the city. When she stood looking into the grounds he passed on the car. Alighting, he saw her talking with the gardener and then enter. Naturally he inferred that she was not at home. The idea occurred to him to go around to the back gate, enter the place and peruse its owner. Only a man of considerable assurance and confidence in his resource would have dared do such a thing.

"You are quite welcome, I assure you," said the young man. "I am very proud of my flowers, and nothing pleases me so much as to have others enjoy them."

"That is very nice of you. I don't wonder that you object to couples making use of your grounds. The gardener told me about that. He said since I was alone there would be no objection to my coming in."

"Did the gardener say that?" asked the young man, pricking up his ears.

"Yes, and I don't blame you for feeling as you do about it."

"Did he say I objected to married?"—The sentence was not finished, for at that moment a door of the house opened and the real owner of the place came out and made straight for the couple in the garden.

"I'm not the owner of this place," said Miss Maryweather's companion, "and have no more right here than you have. But don't be troubled. I'll make up a story, and all you need do is to assent to anything I say."

Miss Maryweather was by no means pleased by this sycophant. She bit her lip, but said nothing. The young man might stand in the breach. When the owner came up he said:

"Beg pardon, sir, but these grounds are not open to the public."

"So the gardener told us, but he said further that you objected to your grounds being overrun by young couples who come here."

"He spoke correctly," interrupted the other. "I am quite willing that any other class should enjoy my grounds. Are you a married couple?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Shackelford. "Perhaps there was something in Miss Maryweather's reception of this statement that excited the owner's suspicion."

"Do you vouch for the gentleman's statement?" he asked, looking at her searchingly.

Miss Maryweather looked at her companion and saw an appeal there that she would do her part to relieve them from the embarrassing position they were in. She yielded with a faint "Yes."

A change at once came over the owner's treatment of them. He plucked a number of roses and handed them to Miss Maryweather and bestowed a boutonniere on her companion. Then when they had thanked him for his kindness they departed in company. As they passed out of the front gate Miss Maryweather was naturally in no good humor. But she maintained silence.

"I'm very sorry," said Bob, "to have put you in a false position."

"Why did you come in there?"

"I'm obliged to confess," he said, much rattled, "that I was—was very much attracted by your—your appearance and"—He broke down at this point and got no further.

"Leave me," said Miss Maryweather. "I have no acquaintance with you."

"Not till you have forgiven me."

"Forgive you! Suppose we meet the owner of the place again, what kind of a position will we be in? You told him we were married, and I was forced to confirm what you said."

The remark put a new idea into Mr. Shackelford's head. He had acknowledged her as his wife, and she had acknowledged him as her husband before a witness. They were married.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed.

"Well, what now?"

"Did you ever hear of a Scotch marriage?"

"No."

"A Scotch marriage is one where a man and a woman acknowledge each other as husband or wife in presence of a witness."

"Oh, my goodness gracious!"

"But don't concern yourself. Such a marriage will not hold in America. At least I don't think it would."

"You don't think it would? Do you mean to tell me that there is a probability that we are married?"

"Not a probability, only a possibility. I'll see my lawyer about it as soon as I return to the city and let you know."

A trolley gong sounded in the distance, and when the car came along Miss Maryweather got aboard. Mr. Shackelford got on, too, and there was a continued quarrel between them, he defending himself as best he could from her attacks. When Miss Maryweather alighted Mr. Shackelford handed her his card and said he would call with his lawyer's opinion as to whether or no they were bride and groom, to which she declined to reply.

Miss Maryweather held on to the card and made inquiries as to the man it represented. She learned that he was rich, prominent socially, a member of the best clubs and considered by his friends a very good fellow. Miss Maryweather was in moderate circumstances and not in the social swim. From being very angry with Mr. Shackelford she began to think that it would be very nice to be his wife. He called the next day to say that his attorney was of opinion that a marriage to be good in law must be intentional. There had not been intentional, therefore was not valid.

Miss Maryweather tried to appear relieved. She apologized for her harsh treatment of Mr. Shackelford and hoped he would forget and forgive it. In deed, she was so amiable that Mr. Shackelford was very much pleased with her. He went straight from her to a flower shop, where he ordered a big box of flowers to be sent her. This, of course, necessitated a note of thanks, in which the lady said that she would like to see the donor about their supposed marriage and from that time forward kept speaking of it as such till Mr. Shackelford began to wish it was a real marriage. Finally Miss Maryweather admitted to him that she had felt there was a singular bond between them ever since he had so adroitly relieved her from a very embarrassing position.

By this time Mr. Shackelford, whose tastes were all for bachelorhood, began to see that he had been caught in his own trap. He remained away from the lady till she wrote him a note to say that she had confided the matter of their marriage to a lawyer friend, who had told her that there need be no trouble about it provided neither was disposed to make trouble for the other by claiming that it was a real marriage. She hoped Mr. Shackelford would never do that. This brought him to see her, and again under her influence. He never escaped from it.

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