

# A MATCHMAKER

BY WILL SEAT.

T would have been hard to find a more disgusted youth than was Alfred Gilson as he plodded along the country road.

When nearly an hour earlier he had alighted from the train, expecting to find his uncle's team in waiting for him, and as the tiny village boasted no livery stable, this meant a six-mile tramp to his uncle's farm.

No rain had fallen for over two weeks and it was not long before Alfred's perspiring face began to assume a streaky look from the settling dust. Fortunately he possessed a sense of humor, which began to assert itself, and a smile showed through the dirt as he said to himself:

"Blest if I don't play them a little joke for this. If they are not willing to receive a respectable nephew I'll see how a disreputable one goes. Can't look much worse than I do anyhow."

He proceeded to move cuffs, collar, rumple his hair and tilt his soft hat, punched all out of shape, far over one eye.

Before long the tall white gates of Bigelow farm loomed up before him through the descending twilight. Assuming the wanderer's slouch, Alfred went up the long drive and to the rear of the big farmhouse.

He paused at the kitchen door and knocked vigorously; then waited in

mischievous anticipation of the surprise he should give Melissa.

When the door opened it was not upon the good humored face of Melissa, the servant, that he gazed, but into a pair of clear gray eyes, whose owner Alfred thought was the prettiest young woman he had ever beheld.

"Good evening," she said kindly. "What can I do for you?"

"But all Alfred's ideas as to the yarn he should tell Melissa if he succeeded in concealing his identity had vanished.

"I beg your pardon, but I am Mr. Bigelow's nephew," he stammered.

An astonishing expression flashed into the girl's eyes, but she replied: "Come in and I will call him. He is with Aunt Jennie."

Feeling decidedly small, Alfred crept the kitchen and seated himself near the door, while the girl went in search of his uncle. She ran swiftly up the stairs and into the room where Mr. Bigelow and Melissa were in attendance on Mrs. Bigelow, who had sprained her ankle.

Mrs. Bigelow was finishing the supper Melissa had brought her when her niece entered.

"O Uncle James, do please come downstairs right away. There is a poor, miserable looking man there, who says he is your nephew, and I thought the best way to soothe him was to pretend I believed it and come for you."

Mr. Bigelow rose at once, saying, "You were right, my dear, and we will soon find out who this impostor is."

Alfred, meantime was making the most of his solitude. The instant the

door closed he gave his face a vigorous scrubbing, smoothed his hair, replaced his collar and was adjusting his tie before the small looking young woman appeared.

The change produced was almost equal to one of the lightning acts of a stage professional, and Mr. Bigelow advanced saying:

"Well, Alfred, I don't see but that you look natural. I guess the sudden entrance of a stranger must have given Sydney a scare."

Alfred felt decidedly foolish as he encountered the look of bewilderment in Sydney's eyes.

"I looked badly enough to frighten anybody when I came in, uncle," and then he explained his intended joke on Melissa. "It was nearly a week ago I wrote you of my coming, and when no one showed up at the station I thought I would have my revenge."

Mr. Bigelow laughed heartily. "We have all been so occupied in looking after Aunt Jennie for the last few days that no one has thought of the postoffice," he said. "Your letter is still there. But let me introduce you to your cousin by marriage, Sydney Thompson."

Sydney looked as if she hardly knew whether to laugh or be angry, when Alfred said earnestly: "Please forgive me for frightening you—I shall never try to be funny again."

"O, don't say that," she replied, "this would be a very dismal world if there were no fun in it."

Then they all went up to Aunt Jennie's, and found her anxiously waiting an explanation of the "poor, miserable man" who had started

probably take place next spring, she concluded to give me a few weeks now."

Alfred felt as if the bright world had turned suddenly black. "I did not know she was engaged, she wears no ring."

"No," said Aunt Jennie. "Her marriage is really a family arrangement."

"How is it that I have never met

better than life it is hard to find she is bound to another man." He left his astonished aunt and strode savagely down the driveway.

Aunt Jennie gazed after him with mingled feelings of pity and dismay. "Poor Alfred, why did I not guess what might happen and warn him?" She spoke aloud in her excitement; and received a second surprise when a soft voice asked:

"O, Aunt Jennie, why didn't you warn me, too?" Sydney came through the open door back of her aunt, and sank down beside her.

There were tears in her eyes as she continued: "I was just coming out to you, and could not help hearing what Alfred Gilson said when he left you. O, Auntie, I never did love Matthew."

Aunt Jennie was at her wits' end. "Don't cry, Sydney dear," she pleaded. "I am sure it will all come out right. Have you learned to care for Alfred?"

"I am afraid so," said Sydney, "for it made me feel so happy when he said he loved me—until I thought of Matthew. The tears came in a flood and breaking away from her aunt, she fled into the house."

Left alone, Mrs. Bigelow did some serious thinking, and apparently was satisfied with the result, for her troubled face grew calm, and rising she slipped into the big desk. She speedily wrote a letter, addressing it to Matthew Chase.

Several days passed uneventfully. Sydney and Alfred, though apparently on friendly terms, took no more long walks or drives together.

On the fifth day after the sending of the epistle to Matthew Chase, Mr.

Bigelow handed Sydney a letter. "That was all for you today," he remarked.

Seeing it was from her future husband, Sydney sought her own room to read it. Mrs. Bigelow was alone when a very bewildered looking and yet happy Sydney came to her after reading Matthew's communication.

"Aunt Jennie, I can't understand it," she began, "Matthew asks me to release him from his engagement. He says he fears he is too old to make me happy, and that he has always known I cared for him only as a friend. He thinks we would be wiser just to continue being friends. Do you suppose he has thought it all over since I came away and feels as I do?"

Aunt Jennie smiled. Her letter to Matthew Chase had been written in the hope that Sydney's happiness need not be sacrificed.

"Matthew Chase is a good man," she answered, "and I am sure he thinks of your happiness first of all. I think he has made a wise decision. Sydney, and you may feel you are doing right in ending your engagement."

After Aunt Jennie told Alfred of this sudden termination to the engagement and he went in search of Sydney. He found her in the old-fashioned flower garden.

"Aunt Jennie has told me that you are free, and I have come to ask if you can give me a little for me, Sydney? I love you more than I can tell—I have known you were the dearest thing on earth to me, since I first saw your face."

Sydney laughed happily. "The first time I saw your face it was so dirty—"



"OH, AUNTIE, I NEVER DID LOVE MATTHEW."

your niece until now?" asked Alfred. "I thought I knew all the family."

"Sydney has been studying hard for years, and has just finished college," she replied. "I could not get her to spare the time for a visit to me before. But she feels the need of rest, and as her marriage will

and as she has known Matthew Chase all her life, she would not hear of a ring. He is years older than Sydney, but I hope he will make her happy," she sighed.

Alfred rose and said bitterly, "I wish you had told me sooner. Now that I have learned to love Sydney

# BY MISTAKE

BY ESTELLE EGAN.

UBY WELLS jumped up hurriedly when the train pulled into the station at New Rochelle. The usual crowd of week-end visitors filled the aisles and Ruby was only one of hundreds who picked up a suit case and escaped to the less crowded platform.

Mrs. Hobbs was at the station to meet her. When their greeting was over hostess and guest jumped into a waiting carriage and were whirled away over the country roads.

John Wade and his host, Billy Avery, had also jumped from the same train and were likewise being driven over the country roads toward the Avery home.

"What's doing tonight?" asked Wade. "It's rather unusual to have to bring dress clothes out here, old man."

"Dinner at the Sutcliffe's—fashionable people, you know—and the big dance at the club."

"Looks good to me," laughed Wade. "Are there some good-looking girls in store?"

"Sure, and I understand from my wife that Mrs. Hobbs has a peach out with her this week. You'll meet her anyway."

"We have to make more or less of a rush for it, won't we?" Wade laughed. "I mean, of course, the dinner."

"O, we'll make it in good time—here we are now."

The two men got out—Avery in-

sisting on carrying his guests' bag. After his greeting to Mrs. Avery, Wade was shown to his room, there to prepare for the dinner party. The first thing he did was to open his suit case that he had brought with him, and he was surprised to find that it was empty.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated. "I've picked up the wrong suit case! O, I say, what a stunning frock!"

Wade lifted out a gown of exquisite yellow chiffon. His heart tripped over several beats when he carefully took out the next garments. They were of foamy white and all drawn with creamy satin ribbons. It seemed to Wade that so many little fluffy bows were quite unnecessary. Next there was a pair of yellow slippers. And last of all, he picked up a wreath of small yellow buds and a creamy pearl peeped from the center of each.

"What a regular beauty you must be!" Wade sank on the couch beside the feminine apparel and felt a peculiar intimacy with the owner of the suitcase.

"I could kick myself for a blind idiot for having, unconsciously, deprived you of all these, but I do hope your hair is red—that gorgeous, sparkling red. I would like to place this wreath on it this minute. If ever you meet—I will never forgive you for having black hair to wear with this costume!"

A knock sounded on Wade's door, Avery's head poked in. "O, I say—aren't you nearly ready? What in the—"

"Yes—O, yes—I'm ready—just come in and have a look at what I've brought in the way of evening clothes for the dinner and dance!"

"Great Scott, man! We are almost

due at the Sutcliffe now."

"I'm sorry, old man, but you will have to go without me—I've picked up the wrong bag in that beastly crowded train!"

"I'll go and speak to my wife," laughed Avery. "We'll have to fix you up somehow. I think my wife's father had a dress suit at one time."

"You got to! Mrs. Sutcliffe would never forgive my wife if she were the cause of an empty chair at one of her dinners!"

Meantime Mrs. Hobbs sat on the edge of the bed in her guest chamber and talked through tears and laughter to the huddled mass of femininity that was Ruby Wells.

"You must go, Ruby. She would never forgive me. My red dress won't look so bad—"

"Alice Hobbs! How can you sit there and suggest that I wear brilliant flaming red with this scarlet

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"Alice Hobbs! How can you sit there and suggest that I wear brilliant flaming red with this scarlet

as you say and if I don't make an impression on some man it won't be your fault."

Alice went off smilingly to get her evening dress and slippers for her guest.

Ruby picked up an immaculate pair of dress trousers. "Humph! You are nice and big anyway—I'm awfully sorry I was so perfectly silly as to take up the wrong suit case. I rather like your pearl studs." She picked up a large box of candy. "I've a good notion to give this to Alice. The one in my own case is exactly the same, and you could give mine to your hostess."

A half hour later the guests at Mrs. Sutcliffe's, well bred though they were, looked up in amazement as Mrs. Hobbs and her guest were announced. They had had a similar shock when Billy Avery entered with John Wade.

The latter looked up when Ruby Wells entered and was being introduced.

"Great Scott! What exasperating taste!" he whispered to Billy Avery. "And look at the bang of the dress—it hakes up in front!"

"Rather the same effect as your vest— isn't it?" covertly suggested Avery.

"And it's pinned in at the waist, I know," went on Wade, waxing into a white heat. "Is this the peach you spoke of?"

"Must be— Even Avery was taken aback. "Sh! Here she is."

"Hello, Billy!" Mrs. Hobbs shook hands with Avery. The introductions took place and Wade made room for Ruby Wells at his side.

He couldn't help himself from falling into the snare of her charms. It

would have been there if her gown had been yellow, red and green mixed.

"I understand we are to be dinner partners," she said, with a twinkling gleam from the deep gray of her eyes.

She cast a quizzical glance at the length of arm and hand protruding below Wade's coat sleeve. Another glance traveled over the shoulder, which strove to proclaim their breadth notwithstanding the meagre proportions of the coat.

She looked up again and their eyes met. Both strove to quell the laughter, but it was too much. They laughed until everyone in the room cast startled glances in their direction.

"What are we laughing at?" asked Ruby when John Wade's eyes had ceased their mockery and her own had grown questioning.

"To be frank, Miss Wells," said Wade, "I laughed because your eyes made me, at my own medication and because—well, because you are so heavenly—well, out of harmony with the clothes you have on."

Ruby lit her lips. He was so serious and apologetic.

"If I am out of harmony—you must be out of tune. If I may have the impertinence to suggest it—a little tussle might coax that coat of yours to meet."

"That's right, laugh at a fellow because he has had the misfortune to pick up the wrong suitcase."

"Suit case?" cried Ruby. "Are you the poor man whose bag I ran off with yours?"

"O, very well—as the suit fits—"

"But it doesn't!"

"And is my perfectly good maize-colored gown—"

"Well, I would have said the things were yellow—"

He stopped confused. "The slow color mounted in Ruby's cheeks."

"I had pictured—just you—in that maize-colored gown," said Wade.

"And perhaps," said Ruby, "my had picture—just you—in that maize suit."

Toward the end of dinner Ruby leaned near Wade and whispered: "I refuse absolutely to go to this dance tonight in this frock."

"No! I—in these clothes. But listen. Immediately after dinner you and I will make a hasty exit. I will explain the circumstances to Mrs. Sutcliffe."

"What are you going to explain?" asked Ruby with wide-open eyes.

"That you on a level gown change to a more presentable before the dance."

Two hours later Wade strolled impatiently about the drawing room at the Hobbs home. He straightened an already immaculately set and cleaned at the perfect fit of his own evening clothes.

Presently he heard a soft little swish on the upper landing of the stairs, and he went to the hall to meet Ruby Wells.

His eyes lit up as she came down the stairs. The new gown clung in graceful folds and her glorious tiffan hair was crowned by a wreath of buds from which the pearls peeped.

"I cannot tell you how beautiful you are," he said, while a slight tremor shook his voice.

Ruby was on a level with him now and her large gray eyes glistened shyly on his face. The unspeakable answer was in her eyes.



TOWARD THE END OF THE DINNER RUBY WHISPERED, "I REFUSE TO GO TO THE DANCE IN THIS FROCK."

"Beat it," put in Wade. "I'll not have of mine—besides—we would go to a dinner in somebody's hand-me-downs!"

"You got to! Mrs. Sutcliffe would never forgive my wife if she were the cause of an empty chair at one of her dinners!"

Meantime Mrs. Hobbs sat on the edge of the bed in her guest chamber

# NOT ANY MORE

BY ED. HILTON.

AC was sarcastic. He found Norton separated from June Witterly, joined up to his disreputable pipe, and flung full length on the grass behind the summer house after dinner.

"How did it happen, Norton? I've been trying to get a word with you for two weeks. It's time for you to go. How about our pact to keep single for each to save the other if he saw him in danger of matrimony? You need rescuing."

Jerry sucked his black pipe and drew his dark-browed forehead into a scowl. "Guess you're right, old man. Cut out the talk, I'll go. I can see my finish as plain as you. Probably she wouldn't have me, but in spite of you I'd ask her to marry me—if she was as poor as I. Decency won't let me even seem to want her confounded money! And we were right—we both need the next ten years to work up in the law unhampered by family cares."

McPherson rubbed his reddish hair and considered his friend longly. He thought what a fool he had been to let Jerry Norton accept Mrs. Grayson's house-party invitation. He should have foreseen what June Witterly would do to his heart. Mac had been brought up with June and was immune to her fascinations.

"I haven't left a hole for you, Jerry. I just told Mrs. Grayson I'd brought you a letter from Carroll asking your immediate return to work on that Lawson case, and that you'd have to leave here on the 9:30 train in the morning. I told her you were

cut up about going. Now you've got to back me up in the lie, and pack your duds. Peters and the little car are to be ready for you at 8. I'm not going until tomorrow."

He glanced at Norton and, hoped he was not acting when it was too late. He knew June Witterly very well.

Jerry rose, knocked the ashes from his pipe and turned toward the door, smoothing his black hair, his blue eyes savage.

"Well, you're way is as good as another. I'll go. It's one way out of an impossible situation. Now get away—I'll see Mrs. Grayson."

"Yes! and you'll see Miss June Witterly! One evening of her in this rose-wreathed garden and the moon that will be up early, and knowing you are going, and you will be lost. I will not let you out of my sight! She's as crazy as you—a word from you—"

He stopped, cursing himself for a fool, for sudden joy gleamed in Norton's face, a pitiful, doubting joy.

"Do you think so—?" he began eagerly, then scowled again. "She cares nothing for me," he said stiffly. "Mind your confounded business! Did you ever see such hair as she has! It's—"

"Pure, molten gold, anything you say!" said Mac with an inward groan. Here was old Norton fairly driving. "I always knew a head of hair would be your downfall! And, unluckily, I know it's all her own. She doesn't take it off nights."

He also knew the girl was genuine, heart and mind and soul; neither did Mac see how she could help loving Jerry Norton, but he strode by his side vowing to clear him of his sentimental complication that would hinder his brilliant beginning in his profession.

Joining the others on the great lawn at the edge of the tiny lake, with the big white moon just sailing over the two young men sought their hostess. The dozen other young people on the lawn sat or strolled about. Most of them were politely regretful that Norton was obliged to leave.

But he knew the mischief had been done, though he thought it repairable.

Poor Mac's plans went awry. He overslept. Norton slept not at all. He was wondering that she had said no word of farewell. She might have given him her soft hand one moment, even before the other, she might have given him a chance for another look at her. He could have shaken Mac off—it was Overholt that hindered him.

He rose in the gray of the morning, dressed carefully, and quietly got his bags ready for Peters. Then he dropped outdoors from his open window on the first floor, and quietly, not to wake anyone, went into the rosy light of dawn.

Jerry Norton somehow felt gray and old and alone. He faced himself, but the thought of a lonely, 10-year fight for mere eminence in a profession made him tired and disillusioned in advance. It would have been different if he had anything but love to offer her—or if she also were poor. He hated her money.

Then he broke off a glorious pink rose, bright and fresh as the dawn. Her window opened from a little balcony and he stood beneath it, the ash was up, even the screen stood open on its hinges but he knew she slept.

With a sudden impulse he threw the rose into the window. She would not tell him good-bye, but she would have this rarest from him. His heart's beating like a boy's, he fled about the corner.

An hour later he was eating his breakfast with Mrs. Grayson, who

put his hand on Norton's arm and drew him into the house. He staid with him until he was undressed and went to his own room, vowing to see him on his train in the morning.

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finished on foot—got the 10:10 train instead. Say nothing to Mrs. Grayson.

A moment later, leaping two fences, and crossing a little strip of pasture, Jerry Norton was in the wood where he and June Witterly had wandered and read the last two weeks. They had discovered his grassy place, and she had loved it.

One languid afternoon, it seemed ages ago, their eyes had met in a sort of shock. He had set his teeth not to tell her how he wanted her. For a moment she had flushed crimson, and had then become quiet and cool and reserved. Had she cared? Could Mac, confounded him, have been right!

Norton, despondently enough, found and followed the crooked little woodpath they had loved together. And a sudden turn came. He stopped, face to face with a golden-haired, slender girl, her eyes wide and angry, a pink rose in one hand—and tears on her cheek. She gave a little cry, her hand, pink rose and all, held to her breast.

"I—thought you were—gone!" she said, then recovered herself almost haughtily. "Didn't you go after all, Mr. Norton? You—startled me! Isn't it a beautiful morning—I came out for an early walk—and—"

He had not spoken but stood scowling at her with a look that made her light words falter on her lips. He took a step toward her and seized both her hands a little roughly.

"Don't," he said. "You hurt! June—can't you see that I couldn't go?"

Suddenly dawn rose in her face, a happiness that went shinning from her eyes to his, so that he put his arm about her shoulder and drew her very close.

"Could you love me? could you?" He shook her a very little, and her

eyes filled with joy for this vehemence. "Could you?" he repeated.

"Not—any more—than I do already that I go—now," she said.

**More Human Nature.**

The world is but a fleeting show and most of us engage to play a star part, don't you know, in the center of the stage. But often after landing we may find, to our disgust, that some fourth-rate, don't you see, have formed a limelight trust.

**How He Got Even.**

Wiseman—Hello! Here comes Stay-long, that chronic bore; but here's where I get even with him.

Windig—What are you going to do?

Wiseman (moving off)—Leave you to entertain him.

**Hard to Beat.**

Myer—A volcano called Fujiyama is reported to have broken loose in Japan.

Gyer—I wonder if its eruption is as bad as its name?

**Gave Himself Away.**

The One—That stranger's talk sounds well, but doesn't mean anything.

The Other—Then it's as I suspected. He's a politician.

**The Wonder of It.**

Little Clarence—Pat!

His Father—Well, my son?

Little Clarence—I took a walk through the cemetery today and read all the inscriptions on the tombstones. For His Father—And what were you doing?

Little Clarence—Why, pa, I was deterred where all the wicked people were buried.



NORTON.



JUNE