

MANDY'S LUCK

(A STORY FOR LOVERS.)

IT was not altogether a question of beauty, perhaps, that made "Lish" Thomas hesitate before choosing between Mollie Stivers and Mandy Johnson; there was also the question of utility. Here, too, a difficulty presented itself; for both were equally skilled in hoeing and in picking cotton.

They were of about the same age; and both possessed the same degree of beauty—of its kind. In figure, each was everything to be desired—tall, lithe, muscular. Mandy's foot was slightly larger than her rival's; and it was also wider, more mashed-down, and covered a larger area of soil. Mandy had a slight advantage in complexion, for, just below the lustrous eyes, where the cheek-bone rises highest, there was a suggestion of nut-brownness, while Mollie's face was one long, broad, Arctic-winter night.

One day, after dinner, as the red-faced overseer sat on his front porch, placidly smoking his pipe and surveying the broad acres of cotton surrounding him, Lish shuffled up the walk and approached the plantation White House; he stood before the overseer, and made his request, his hat in hand.

"Well, if that don't beat all, Lish! Maria, come out here!" called Mr. Peters. He leaned back in his chair and looked toward the room behind him, whence childish yells were issuing.

A fat, middle-aged matron came to the door, with a switch in hand, closely followed by a light-haired urchin with tear-stained face. On reaching the door, the young hopeful sped swiftly away into the backyard.

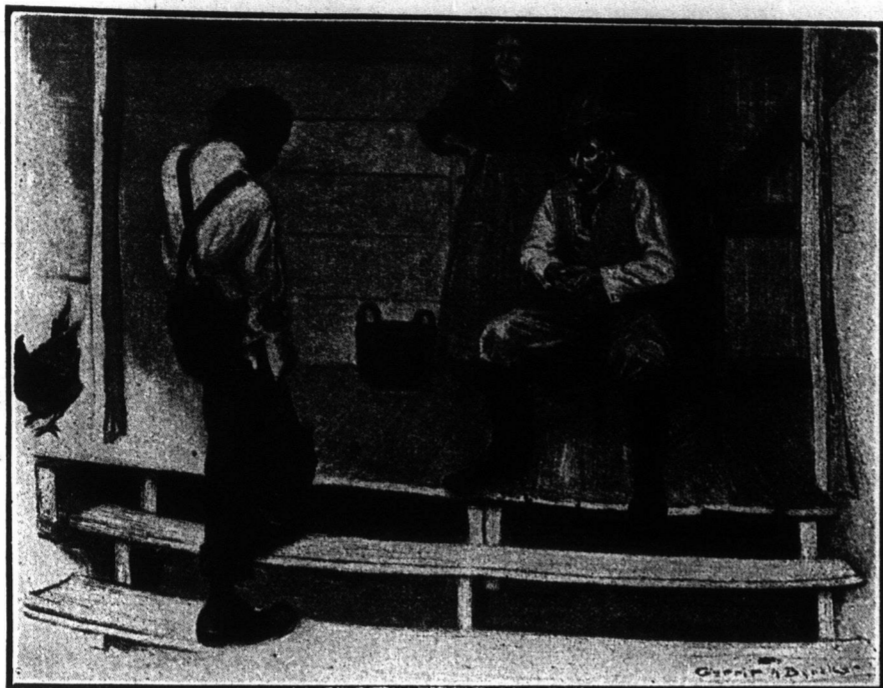
"Here's Lish," said her husband. The woman, dropping her switch, came out upon the porch.

"Well, Lish?" she inquired. "Lish wants me to get him a license to get married; but it's Mollie Stivers, he says."

"Well, I do think, Lish!" exclaimed Mrs. Peters, with an inflection that meant she was outdone.

Lish hung his head in silence. He had done something amiss, he perceived, and he was ready to admit his guilt, though by no means acquainted with the nature of it.

"Well, well," said the overseer, "that's too bad! Tobe told us you were going to marry Mandy; and, as Phoebe has left, my wife hired Mandy to cook for us and put her in the corner cabin. We thought you'd live



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there, too, and be near your land, and not have to walk so far every day from your daddy's cabin."

"Mandy won't stay long there by herself," cried the woman; "she'll leave; and she's the only good cook on the plantation."

"Maybe she'll get another husband," suggested Mr. Peters. "I'm sorry; though, it's not Lish, because the cabin's right near his land. However, it can't be helped."

"Jes' wait," said Lish, shifting his weight from one leg to the other and keeping his eyes on the ground. Over his mind was slowly creeping the recollection of how Mandy had called to him the day before when he was plodding homeward, with mule and plow, to his father's cabin two miles away. She had wished to tell him of her good fortune, he supposed; but he had not gone to her.

"We don't want to interfere with your love-affairs, Lish," said Mr. Peters, laughing. "I'm going to town tomorrow, and I can get the license for you and Mollie."

"Jes' wait," repeated Lish, getting back to the other leg again.

"If you've asked Mollie," interposed Mrs. Peters, "it's too late to wait. Have you asked her?"

"Kinder," admitted Lish, putting one hand under his head, just behind his ear, and still looking at the ground. "I can fix it," he added, suddenly looking up.

The overseer and his wife exchanged glances. Over the man's face an expression of infinite amusement was playing; but the woman said: "Lish, if you've promised to marry Mollie, you must do it. She's a good girl, I am sure."

"Yes'm," answered the young negro, and he moved slowly away.

"Lish," called the overseer, "let me know if you want a license—and who for," he added with a laugh. "And say," he continued, more seriously, "I want you to get through with this marrying business, and finish scraping that cotton before the crabgrass gets the start of you."

It was nearly dark on the following afternoon when Lish Thomas reached Poss Stiver's cabin. The dogs announced his arrival as he came up and stood outside the fence. A large yellow hound rushed furiously down the path leading from the cabin to the rail-fence, but stopped barking when he saw who it was. The pups ran farther, on through the fence, and solicited attention, but received none at Lish's hands. Old man Stivers poked his head out of the cabin door.

"Dar's Lish ergin," said he. Mollie rose from the table and stood in the doorway. She was gowned in a manner that was simplicity itself. The

huge bite of corn-bread she had just taken interfered with free utterance, but, after some manipulation, she was able to say, "Hi, Lish!"

"Come here," said he, mounting the fence. He then leaped down inside, and moved toward a log lying off the path in the weeds.

"Nar," demurred Mollie, "I ain't goin' in no dew in my bar feet. What you want?"

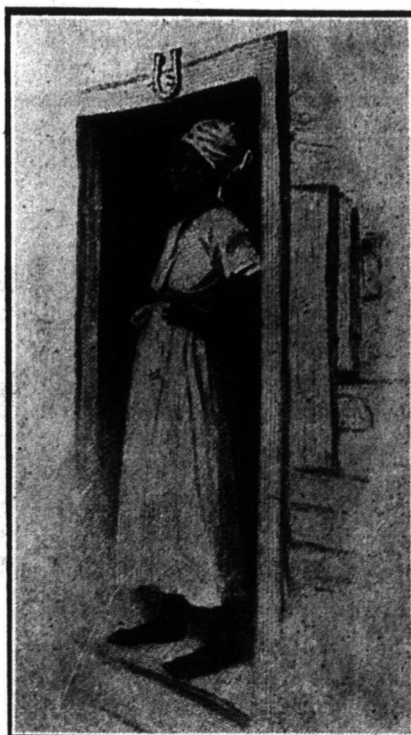
She stepped from the porch to the cypress log which comprised the front steps, and then to the ground. Walking down the path, she leaned against a stump and Lish came up.

"I ain't done eatin'. Ef you jes' come projeckin'—" She paused when she observed Lish more closely. He stood before her, slouched over on one leg, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. Something weighty, she saw, was in his mind.

"You see, it's jes this-er-way, Mollie: I've done all I could; it ain't no fault o' mine. When a man's done all he could, an' can't do what he hankers to do, he got to do what he kin." He paused and scratched his head.

"What you aimin' to say, Lish?" "I've aimin' to say this. I done all I could. I been carryin' on wid you an' Mandy Johnson, but I didn't ax Mandy. I ax you. Why'd I ax you? 'Caze I wanted you more'n I wanted Mandy." He paused again and looked up for approval.

"Er, huh!" said Mollie. She now



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saw that something important was brewing.

"Er, huh," repeated Lish. "I done all I could. But them white folks, they didn't do right. They oughter axed me who I wanten marry. They oughter said, 'Lish, what 'oman you want?' They should have disfigured 'at fact afore they let out the corner cabin. 'Stid o' which, Mr. Peters he lopes hisself off to town an' fetches back here a license for Mandy. Then he say to me, he say, 'Lish, you go marry Mandy. You go scrape that cotton afore the crabgrass choke him up. You go marry Mandy,' he say; darn quick," he say. "An' ef you don't," he say, 'I's gwine to cut me a lickery pole an'—'"

"Lish is sich a fool," Mollie explained afterwards, "Mandy was more'n welcome. He told me the beatenest lie."

June.

June is the time when all the wild things come peeping in the grass,
When the buttercups and daisies bob and curtsy
as you pass;
Such a flushing, such a blushing of the roses,
pink and red,
Such a stirring, such a whirring of wee bird-
wings over head,
Such a tilting, such a tilting of the honny
bob-o-link—
Oh! the June days are the joy days of the whole
glad year, methinks.

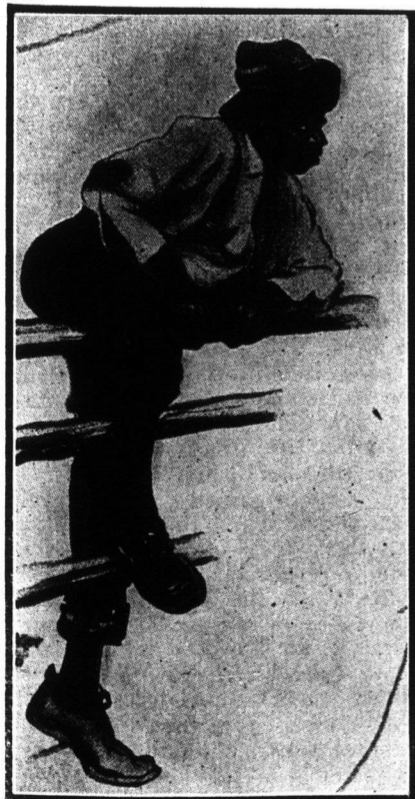
June's the time when all the children come a-
dancing out o' school
Out to find the wild strawberries and the fishes
in the pool;
Such a tripping, such a skipping, such a rush of
eager feet,
Such a sounding and resounding of gay voices,
clear and sweet—
Ah! 'tis you wee lads and lassies, with brim-
fac'd all aglow,
Make the June days just the joy-days of
whole glad year, I know.

Children's Hymn.

Help us to live! Lord Jesus!
That our days
May be bright and loving tokens
To thy praise.
Give to each thy Holy Spirit
From above;
Fill our longing hearts with rapture
And with love.
Be with us amidst earth's sorrow
And its strife;
Be our dearest friend and helper
All our life.
And when Jordan's mighty river
Near us rolls;
Speak the word of peace and comfort
To our souls.
Till at last within the kingdom!
Safe at home!
We shall never from thy presence
Have to roam!
Give thy heart to Jesus
From thy earliest days;
Let his Holy Spirit
Guide in wisdom's ways.
He will keep thee ever
Through life's toil and strife;
Faithful to his promise,
Give Eternal Life!
Come, then, to the Saviour,
Do not longer stay!
Hear him gently pleading,
And no more delay.
In his glorious kingdom
You shall rest in peace,
When—Life's journey ended—
All your wanderings cease.
WINNIPEG —CHAS. D. POWELL

Grandmother.

She sits beside the window wide,
In wooden rocking chair,
Through cup of lace I well can trace
The snowy waves of hair.
So white it shows, so warm it glows,
As sunbeams softly pour
Through the window pane and try in vain
To make it gold once more.
I love her eyes—dim, yet so wise:
And ah, so quick to see
The pitfalls deep, the snares that creep,
The trials that threaten me!
I love her cheek, the lines that speak
Of life's long toilsome day,
The tender touch that tells so much
Of patient love alway.
So old and bent, so weak and spent,
Yet keeping youth enough
To help and cheer when skies are drear
And ways are steep and rough.
I love to sit where shadows flit,
My head upon her knee,
And feel her arm, so soft and warm,
Close gently over me.
I love to hear upon my ear
The broken voice, so mild,
"The long, full day of work and play
Has wearied you my child!"
A tender prayer is in the air.
Oh, sweet the hour and mood!
And sweet the tone, "My little one,
I trust you have been good."
—Jean Blewett.



"Come here," said he, mounting the fence