

MARRIED FOR FUN.

"What has been planned for to-morrow evening?" cried a chorus of voices, as a small company of young people, camping out among the New Hampshire mountains, were about to separate for the night.

The question brought two, or three early birds, who were hastening to their tents, back among the rest of the company to discuss some new pleasure or sport for the next evening's entertainment. Several plans were suggested, but none of them met with the approval of the whole party.

"Mr. Carlson, you have as yet suggested nothing. What do you think it would be pleasant to do to-morrow night?" asked one of the young ladies.

"I, Miss Mary?" answered the young man addressed, who until this moment has been leaning indifferently against a tree. "I am going to the village to-morrow, and probably will not return until the following day."

The faces of the whole party fell, while it was evident from their tones of regret that Mr. Carlson was a great favorite in camp.

"Mr. Carlson must have found some modern Maud Muller, who offers attractions much superior to ours, else he would not make such frequent journeys to the large metropolis of Meadville." This remark was made in a very sarcastic tone by a young lady who was stirring the dying embers of the camp-fire, thereby causing a shower of sparks to fly around her.

The blood mounted high into the face of the gentleman addressed, and, reaching out his hand to brush off a spark which had fallen on the young lady's dress, Mr. Carlson said in a low tone: "Miss Thurston, what matters it to you if I go or stay?"

But before his question could be answered, Carlson's sister cried petulantly: "O, friends, let him go. He told me he had a business appointment, and Arthur will never break an appointment, no matter how trivial, unless, perhaps, for a wedding or funeral."

"Well, a funeral we will not have, even to keep your charming company, Art," cried a boyish voice. "We might have a wedding," the owner of the voice continued; "I wouldn't mind being party to that myself," and the speaker looked mischievously at one of the ladies, who colored deeply and walked away in seeming anger.

"Here! here!" cried all the gentlemen, laughingly, "who will volunteer to have a wedding on Carlson's account?"

The boyish voice spoke again:

"No one loves you well enough, Art, to be married for you but me, and I suppose I can't be a wedding all by myself."

"I will help you out in that, Cousin John," gayly cried Miss Thurston; "I have been meditating marriage for some time, and this is the first opportunity—well," she said, rather hesitatingly, "this is the first opportunity which I have cared to embrace."

"But, Margie," replied her Cousin John, as if greatly perplexed, "you see, not anticipating this event, and never having been encouraged by you to consider myself a candidate for such honor, I have spoken to another girl upon the same subject."

Every one joined in the laugh at Miss Thurston's expense but Arthur Carlson. "Miss Thurston," he said, when the laugh had subsided, "you have been jilted, allow me to offer you reparation. If it is only the opportunity you care to embrace, a change of groom can make but little difference. If you will be first party to contract I will agree to be second, and will return to-morrow evening, with all necessary preliminaries, in time for our wedding."

"You are certainly very kind, Mr. Carlson," replied Miss Thurston haughtily. "People who are so generous seldom expect their generosity to be accepted, but I shall surprise you by agreeing to your proposition."

"I was in earnest when I made the proposition, Miss Thurston."

"And I in earnest when I accepted it, Mr. Carlson."

These two were ever at sword's points. They had quarreled together since babyhood, and although, up to this time, each had guarded the secret jealously from the other, yet it was evident to most of their friends that the two were dearer to each other in their quarrels than many other people in their friendships.

The party now separated for the night, elated at the prospects of the next evening's entertainment, but that the jest would become reality never entered their thoughts.

When the party breakfasted next morning Mr. Carlson was already on his way to the village. It was agreed