

BARS TO MATRIMONY

FEAR KEEPS MANY MEN FROM THE BLISS OF WEDDED LIFE.

Some instances of a Lack of Sufficient Pluck to Take the Fateful Trip to the Altar—Various Reasons That All Spell "Afraid."

"There is a great deal of speculation," said a well known lawyer, "as to why men are so reluctant to marry, but one reason never seems to occur to the speculators, and that is that many of them are afraid to. No, I am not joking. It is a sober and well considered statement of fact, for which I can adduce as many proofs as you want, that many men would almost as soon think of patting a fierce bull on the head or facing the midnight burglar as taking a trip to the altar.

"I remember as a boy an amusing specimen of this kind of man in Iowa. He was a farmer and was as notorious for his amorous entanglements as for his ingenuity in getting out of them when marriage began to loom near. It was said he had been engaged a dozen times, and though he left all his fiancées in the lurch he never found any difficulty in getting a successor. One day my father, who was his lawyer, asked him: 'Why don't you get married, John? It isn't for want of opportunities, you know, and it's quite time you thought of settling down.'

"Well, sir," John answered, "it's this way: You see, I like courting well enough, but I can never summon up pluck to go any further. To tell you the truth, I'm afraid of getting tied for life to one of 'em."

"If you have heard many breach of promise suits you will have observed that this wholesome dread of matrimony is the cause of a good proportion of them, though all the defendants have not the courage to say so.

"One client of mine had allowed matters to proceed right to the eve of the wedding day, when he disappeared mysteriously and was not discovered for some months. The young lady promptly sued him for damages for breach, and at the hearing the reason for his conduct came out. He admitted that he was fond of the girl, but sundry exhibitions of her temper and jealousy which he had witnessed had so scared him that he simply hadn't the courage to marry her. 'I meant to marry her right enough,' he said, 'but when it came to the point my courage failed me, and I thought it safer to bolt.'

"In another case in which a widow sued a widower for playing her false the defendant put in a singular plea. It seems that the widow's family strongly objected to the match, and as passive opposition was useless to prevent it one of the sons, a stalwart young fellow, called on the middle aged woeber and told him that if he persisted in his suit he (the son) would give him such a thrashing as would effectually cure him of any further sentiment. 'So what could I do?' the defendant pathetically asked.

"The more one sees behind the scenes the more one realizes that there is often a great deal to be said for the man who loves and runs away. One of my clients a few years ago found himself in an awkward quandary. He had engaged himself to three girls at different times and, having canceled his engagements with two, was on the eve of marrying No. 3. No sooner was his intention known than the two jilted ladies threatened him with legal proceedings if he persisted in his proposed marriage, and the favored lady in turn threatened a similar fate if he didn't.

"Here was a dilemma, for whatever he did would end unpleasantly. However, like a prudent man, he decided to run the smaller risk. He pacified his two former fiancées by canceling his engagement and prepared to face the music of the third lady.

"The mother-in-law is often a fatal disturber of love's young dream. One breach of promise defendant declared that he would willingly have married the plaintiff only he couldn't stand her mother at any price, and the prospect of having his married happiness disturbed by her interference so scared him that he decided it was more prudent to break off the engagement, while another frail lover actually stated in court that he was afraid to marry the plaintiff lest she should 'grow up like her mother,' whose 'tongue and temper' had shown him some of the less desirable possibilities of married life.

"One man whom I defended last year seems to have had a constitutional dread of matrimony. He had been engaged to the plaintiff no less than nine years. Four times the wedding day had been fixed, and as many times it was adjourned by his wish. Finally he cried off altogether, and in court he declared that, although he loved the girl, he felt he could never screw up the courage to marry her. When he was asked the reason for his diffidence he said that he had seen so much of the unhappy side of married life and the difference between wooing and wedding that he didn't feel equal to running the risk.

"These are but a few from scores of similar cases which have come within my own knowledge. One man feared to face matrimony on account of his fiancée's extravagance, another quaintly confessed a horror of his wife's cooking and domestic gifts generally, a third defendant was afraid to wed because a distant relative of his lady-love had died in an asylum, and so on. But, whatever the cause, you may take my word for it that the men who are downright afraid to take wives are legion."—Chicago Tribune.

Careful. "Bridget, can I trust you with the china?" "Sure ye can, ma'am. O'll save every piece."—Life.

SIR JOHN SOANE'S WHIM.

The Practical Joke and Celebrated Man Played on Posterity.

One of the most famous of post-mortem jokes was that perpetrated by the donor of the celebrated Soane museum of pictures and other valuable objects d'art to England, the late Sir John Soane, who died in 1837. In his will Sir John made provision for the opening of three sealed cupboards on certain specified dates in the presence of the trustees. In 1866, that is to say almost thirty years after the death of the testator, the first of the mysterious receptacles was with much ceremony and breaking of seals opened in the presence of a committee of men, with the then president of the Royal Academy, Sir F. Grant, at their head. Instead of a priceless treasure or some evidence that would throw an entirely new light upon some doubtful incident in political history the contents of the cupboard proved to be worthless accounts, letters and stationery.

Twenty years passed by, and the interest that had smoldered after the disappointment of 1866 was again fanned into flame at the prospect of breaking the seals of the second cupboard, at which rite there were present among others Dr. Alfred Waterhouse, R. A., and Sir (then Dr.) B. W. Richardson. Like the cupboard mentioned in the well known nursery rhyme, Sir John's second cabinet proved "bare" of any sensation, the contents being chiefly composed of letters relating to certain long forgotten family quarrels that had not even the merit of being interesting. If some of those authorized to be present at the opening of the third and last receptacle of mystery were dubious about the profit that would accrue by letting the light of day fall upon the contents thereof after sixty years' darkness one at least, Sir B. W. Richardson, looked forward with unabated interest to that day in 1896 when the last seal would be broken and the mystery solved, but he, alas, died just two days before the ceremony was performed, and the fact that Sir John had played a practical joke upon posterity was duly confirmed by the presence of a collection of perfectly worthless letters and papers.

MERRY MEALTIMES.

The Table No Place For Fault Finding, Nagging and Strife.

Has it ever been your lot to sit at a table with a group of young folks who ate the meal in silence or, with a few constrained remarks, looked askance at the head of the family before venturing on any remark? I have seen such a sight on more than one occasion. Doctors have told us over and over again of the beneficial results arising from a meal eaten with a contented frame of mind and with cheerful surroundings; but, sad to say, there are many households where each meal is a constant scene of bickering, nagging and fault finding.

This is not only the case where there are young children, who require a reprimand occasionally for carelessness, but I am speaking of those homes where the girls and boys are well into their teens. Wrong is that parent, either father or mother, who chooses the hour when all are assembled round the table to mention some half forgotten grievance or to find some fault.

If any trivial thing has been done wrong or any duty omitted wait until dinner or tea is over before you scold, blame or reprimand. Let the food which God gives us for the purpose of nourishing and sustaining our bodies have the opportunity of accomplishing that end, which cannot be the case if every mouthful is swallowed with either a sarcastic word or an uncomplimentary remark. More indigestion, nervousness and other derangements are caused by the too common fault of uncomfortable mealtimes than many people would suppose, and it is our positive duty, which we should all try to remember, to make those hours of the day cheerful and agreeable to the children and to set them an example which you would be the first to notice and approve in others.—Scotsman.

So Nice and Sympathetic.

A gentleman whose one glass eye has served him for years had the misfortune to drop it. It smashed to atoms. This happened when he was far away in the country. He inquired of a friend where was the nearest place for him to go and get refitted. "Why don't you call upon the girl you were flirting with all last night?" his friend inquired. "She has a first class reputation for making eyes."—Punch.

Prayer of the Convert.

A south sea islander at the close of a religious meeting offered the following prayer: "O God, we are about to go to our respective homes. Let not the words we have heard be like the fine clothes we wear—soon to be taken off and folded up in a box till another Sabbath comes around. Rather, let thy truth be like the tattoo on our bodies—ineffaceable till death."—Carleton's Magazine.

The Temperature.

"Why do you watch the thermometer on the wall so closely?" queried the invalid. "Because," replied the untrained nurse, "the doctor said if the temperature got any higher I was to give you another dose of quinine."

Bewildered.

"John Henry, I'll thrash you soundly if I ever catch you telling another story that isn't true." "And yet, ma, I heard you say to the minister that I had great imagination."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

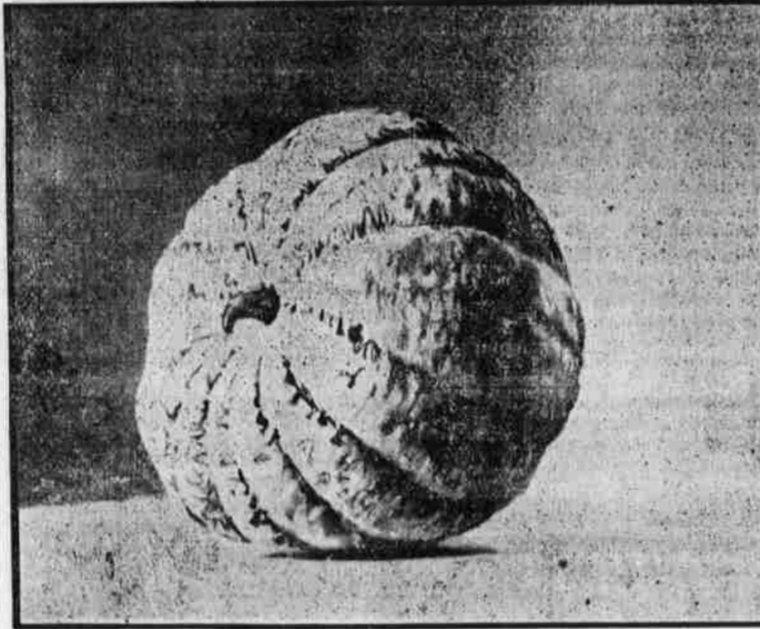
A show of daring oft conceals great cowardice.—Lucas.

THIS IS IT.



The Kimball piano is one of the very best pianos on the market. It is made right. It has good "stuff" in it. It has tone, character and finish. This is a good picture of the elegant Kimball piano now on exhibition in the office of the Oregon City Courier. It is worth every cent of Four Hundred Dollars. To some subscriber to the Courier it will come as a free gift. Every subscriber who pays his or her subscription to the Courier between now and noon of January 1st, 1904 has a chance on it. It is absolutely free. It will not cost you a cent. Just think of it, The Oregon City Courier one year and a \$400.00 piano all for \$1.50. How much more could you ask and how much more could we give?

This is not the "House that Jack Built" but the pumpkin that Lindsey raised. This pumpkin weighs 96 pounds. It is a beauty. It is well developed in every part. How many fully developed seeds are contained within its shell. That is the question we are submitting to you for solution. To the subscriber whether man or woman, boy or girl, who makes the closest and best guess as to the number of seed in the big pumpkin we will give the piano.



This is a Remarkable Pumpkin. It Weighs Only 96 Pounds Yet Contains a \$400.00 Piano. For Whom? That's the Question. Why not for You? A Subscription to the Courier will make this Possible. Your Opportunity Has Arrived.

Mail us your check, or money order or cash for \$1.50 and renew your subscription or become one of our many new subscribers. Send in your estimate on the coupon found below. We will send you a receipt both for your subscription and your estimate. Don't delay the matter. Now is your "pumpkin" opportunity.

Form for subscription coupon with fields for Name, Address, and a note about the pumpkin contest.

The Early Bird Gets the Worm—Be in Time OREGON CITY COURIER, Oregon City, Ore.

ASKING QUESTIONS.

The Art of Interrogation Should Be Devoid of Impertinence.

"Do not ask questions" is the worst piece of social advice which age can give to youth. A man who never asks questions is the dullest fellow in the world. He had better ask too many than too few. We can defend ourselves against curiosity, but no armor avails against indifference. We must resign ourselves to be bored to death.

What is the secret of the art of interrogation? Putting aside quick sympathies, which lie at the root of every social art, we believe the most essential quality for those who would excel in it is directness. The art of asking questions so as to learn, instruct, please and influence is not the art of beating about the bush. The questions which offend and silence are the questions which suggest some ulterior motive. It is a found out scheme which makes men angry. Anything of the nature of a trap keeps us on our guard. If we once fall into one we resolve it shall be the last time. Suspicion kills confidence. Interrogative hints are utterly useless. The average man does not dislike to be questioned. He hates to be startled, crossed, interfered with, reproached, wearied or betrayed. He hates the questions which are not asked with a simple intention.

There are questions which are asked not because the asker wants to know, but because he intends to tell. Others, while ostensibly directed to find out a man's opinion, are really intended to reflect upon his character. Some men inquire as to their neighbors' projects in order to put difficulties in their way. Strings of meaningless questions are poured out by those who desire to pretend an interest in some subject which they neither know nor care anything about.

We believe the conclusion of the matter to be this: The art of interrogation is a serious branch of the social art. Well asked questions are of the essence of agreeable intercourse, but the interrogative mood will not justify an impertinence, an interference, a verbal assault—nor, for the matter of that, a bore.—London Spectator.

ODD NOTIONS OF WOMEN.

Rosa Bonheur treasured a small lead image of St. Anthony of Padua as a lucky charm.

Caroline Herschel firmly believed that if she met a cross eyed beggar in the morning it presaged the discovery of a new star that night.

George Eliot was a slave to the influence of the hunchback and club-footed man and did no literary work upon the day when she saw one.

Lady Millais, the wife of the great painter, was convinced that the crack of doom would sound for any one who stepped on a crack in the sidewalk.

Harriet Beecher Stowe believed that it was bad luck to throw away a toothbrush which had outlived its usefulness and, to the anguish of her household, preserved every one that she had ever used.

Queen Victoria cherished a number of superstitions, and, among them, she believed that the removal of her wedding ring would surely bring calamity and that a pet Manx cat would bring good luck to the royal household.—Everywhere.

Didn't Care to Be Presented.

The wife of a well known naval officer tells an amusing story of some of her experiences in Washington society. On one occasion when she was asked to receive at an army and navy german a congressman entered with a lady leaning upon each arm. One of the floor committee at once approached him, with the polite request that he give his name in order that he might be presented to Mrs. Blank, who received the guests of the evening.

"No, thank you," was the nonchalant reply. "I don't care to be introduced. I have two ladies now to take care of, and that is about as much as I can manage."

Grace In Old Forests.

Some trees are more graceful than others. The elm and oak are noted for their perfect and graceful form. All their branches appear to be perpetually moving, stirred by every wind that blows, and the same may be said of the pine. The graceful movements of its limbs, the sighing sounds of its stems and evergreen needles, send forth a solemn symphony. Everything contributes serene grace and simplicity to old forests.

Behind Her Back.

"She's very studious," said one woman. "Yes," answered the other. "And doesn't seem to care for gossiping in the least." "Oh, I don't know about that," answered the other with a smile; "she merely prefers to talk about Helen of Troy and Romeo and Juliet to paying attention to what is going on in her own neighborhood."—Washington Star.

A Sure Sign.

When a young man talks about the business of "our firm" in a pitch of voice that can be heard from one end of a street car to the other it is a sure sign that his wages have been raised to \$5 a week.

The Prize Winner.

Naggsby—How did the contest in optimism result last night? Waggaby—Gaggster won the prize by laughing most heartily at one of his own jokes.—Baltimore American.

Versatile.

Hobson—How is your brother doing at college? Dobson—Fine. He's singing first tenor and playing second base.—Indianapolis Journal.

ORIENTAL LANTERNS.

How They Are Made and Uses to Which They Are Put.

The lantern of the east is as old as civilization. Its primary object is to protect the flame from sudden drafts. Beyond this is the concentration of light for the convenience of a reader and, last and not least, the regard for beauty. The oldest form is a perforated cylinder or rectangular box. Of this type there are numberless varieties, old and new. The ancient ones which have been preserved are of iron, copper and brass, nearly all simple in construction and finish, but a few richly decorated. Occasionally one runs across lanterns made of silver or ivory. These come from palaces or temples and in most instances are richly carved. Not infrequently the perforations are fitted with pieces of colored glass, rock crystal, amethyst and garnet.

In China and Japan the traveler's or street lantern is a feature. This is a sphere or ellipsoid ranging from six inches to two and even three feet in diameter, made of oiled paper, cloth or silk. In Cathay this lantern is used to show the rank of its owner by the coloring or inscriptions on its exterior. The humble citizen uses a small affair in white or red, the official of low rank a sphere a foot in diameter hanging in front of his sedan chair, while the high mandarin employs a huge lantern, resplendent with his titles in colors, carried by an able-bodied cooly who walks a yard in advance.

It is in house lanterns that the greatest variety is found. Of these the general type is a four, five, six, seven, eight or ten sided box, whose length is usually twice its width. Each side is a pane of glass, plain, ground, frosted or decorated. From the angles hang pendants of many sorts. The framework is usually of teak, but ebony, rosewood, mahogany and other woods are employed. Often the sides of the lanterns are alternately wood and glass, the latter being covered with ground designs and the former richly carved in relief or inset with ivory, mother-of-pearl or silver.

Upon the pendants the artificers put their hardest work. Some are made of colored beads, strung and massed with fantastic shapes and knots. Others are strings of little bells, which ring with every passing breeze. Lines of glittering tinted glass balls betray the origin of a favorite mode of decorating Christmas trees. Quaint objects in gaudy enamel or colored porcelain, connected by threads, chains or wires, constitute a fourth and very pleasing group. Floral festoons made of artificial flowers are popular, especially with the fair sex.—New York Post.

ANCIENT CITIES.

Jerusalem in the days of Solomon probably did not contain 20,000 people.

Constantinople at the time of its greatest splendor as capital of the eastern empire had a population of about 1,500,000.

Babylon, whose name has come to be synonymous with dense population, never had over 1,200,000 inhabitants in its palmiest days, so the archeologists declare.

Athens, when she led the Greek states in repelling the invasion of Xerxes, had only 30,000 inhabitants, but Herodotus speaks of this number as if it was something to boast of.

Rome, the mistress of the world, the great city to which all roads led, "Rome the Eternal," did not exceed 2,000,000 in population. Gibbon, indeed, believes that it had only 1,200,000, and in this estimate he and Milman agree.

A Unique Command.

At Boulogne, during a royal reception, a number of English ladies in their anxiety to see everything pressed with such force against the soldiers who were keeping the line that the latter were forced to give way and generally were—to use the expression of policemen—"hindered in the execution of their duty." The officer in command, observing the state of affairs, called out:

"One roll of the drum—if they don't stand back kiss them all." After the first sound of the drum the ladies took to flight.

"If they had been French," said a Parisian journal, "they would have remained to a woman."—Illustrated Bits.

Policeman's Caution Wasted.

Just now the companions of a recent recruit to the police force are poking fun at him because of a remark he made a few nights ago when he found it necessary to arrest a very old offender. Arrived at the police station, he ushered the culprit in with the injunction to "mind the steps."

"G'lang with you!" said the prisoner scornfully. "I knowed these steps afore you was born!"—New York Press.

Harmony Was In Danger.

"I have here," began the chairman of the political caucus, "some charges against this organization which"—

His voice was overwhelmed by the rumble of rising indignation. When the noise subsided he continued:—"which I will refer to the treasurer. They're for hall rent and light." And harmony continued to reign.—Baltimore American.

His Mark In the World.

"I reckon Josh 'll make his mark in the world one of these days," said the fond mother. "Mebbe he will," answered Farmer Cornstossel, "but I can't help wishin' I put a few dimes into it by way of practice."—Washington Star.

He is richest who is content with the least, for content is the wealth of nature.—Socrates.