

BRIDES THE WHOLE WORLD OVER

Queer Customs in Foreign Lands in Contrast With Our Own.



ADORATION ALONE AT LAST

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SOLEMNIZATION OF THE NUPITAL CEREMONY

PEASANT BRIDE IN SPLENDID COSTUME AT MANDRA, GREECE

BY ALBERT EDWARD ULLMAN.
THERE may be special months or seasons favored by brides-to-be in different climes for the ringing of wedding-bells, but any old time is a good time. From China to America and from Iceland to Patagonia the whole earth is perpetually smiling with brides. Think of the trousseaus that are being prepared, from the red silk veil of the Orient to the white tulle of the Occident; of the gifts that are being given, of the odd strange ceremonies that are being performed, of the rites and feasting! Indeed it is a wonderful time, and a time when all should be happy. And, in general, we may suppose that all brides are happy, but—

In the land of the Joss, the little Chinese maid, who is about to be married, doesn't seem to look forward to the venture with anything like the enthusiasm of her American sister. It is a time of wailing and lamenting with her. She is looked upon from her very birth—if indeed she is not snatched as a babe—as something despicable. A girl baby finds no favor in the eyes of the gods of the Flowery Kingdom; all honor goes to the male child over there. Hence when the girl-baby grows up there is small wonder that she is disposed of lightly to some man who, instead of looking upon her as a wife, views her rather as a servant, and a profitable one, too, inasmuch as he doesn't have to pay her anything for her services. And this is even shown in the marriage service; for at the conclusion of the rites she is received by the austere groom as he sits upon a high stool, indicating his superiority, and is made to prostrate herself at his feet! The women of the East, it must be observed, are far more abject and dependent than the women of the West.

In Japan, the dear little island of cherry blossoms, the woman is treated with more respect; inasmuch as this modern country is rapidly taking on the customs and manners of Europe, their treatment of the fair sex is considerably "fairer," and this is shown in many ways. The young girl is given the opportunity of refusing her suitor if she doesn't want him, a privilege that is frequently denied the Chinese bride. In Nippon the wooer comes and places a sprig of shrubbery on the house of the maid he would like to marry; if the shrub is neglected, it shows him that he is rejected. If it is taken into the house and placed upon the wall, it means that the young lady "has no objections." Then she, to show him that she returns his affectionate regard, blackens her teeth. After they are married she plucks out her eyebrows, and then the husband and wife are allowed to talk together; for, you must know, the young men are not often allowed to talk to the girls over in the Mikado's realm.

In Korea, close at hand, men of all ages take up the benedict's life. It frequently happens that young boys, scarce 12 years old, are married to girls of the same age. The price of a wife is a bullock, and, needless to say, a good bullock is regarded over there as a thing of much more value than a mere woman. The photograph shows a bridegroom on his way to the wedding; it is taken at Seoul, in the Southern part of the island, where the sun is hot and a servant is seen protecting the speeding groom from the rays of the sun with a large umbrella. A curious and left-handed custom with Korean weddings is that concerning the bridegroom's hair. Before his marriage it is left long and braided down his back; but afterward it is coiled on top of his head, such as the American woman coils up her hair, and is surrounded by a wire apparatus not unlike a birdcage or a mousetrap and left that way as a sign, doubtless, to all scheming widows that he is already "look" and is not to be tampered with.

In Norway the crown is on the woman's head, as can be seen by a reference to the photograph. It is a magnificent affair, but it is rather cumbersome and unwieldy and while no doubt it is considered quite a luxury, the mere fact that the bride has to wear it night and day for a week would make it a decidedly unpopular custom in this country. The methods of the suitor are unique, as is the case in almost every foreign country. If a man and maid happen to eat off of the same piece of bread it is taken for granted that they are sure to fall in love; then, after the marriage, the bride



NORWEGIAN BRIDE AND GROOM WITH GUESTS AND PARENTS, BRIGDAL, NORWAY



BRIDEGROOM GOING TO HIS WEDDING AT SEOUL, KOREA

runs away the next day and hides. She is sought out by the whole village and, when found, is brought back, set up in her new home, and made to dispense liquor to villagers. A week is generally given over to the bridal festivities. The "match-maker" is always a prominent institution among foreign brides and bridegrooms; he (or she, as the case may be) is a sort of bride-merchant, a middle-man, who sorts out a likely husband for an anxious wife, and vice versa. Generally it is the other way; generally the wife has to be sought, and sought with care. The matter of the dowry has to be arranged, and the match-maker has to be paid by the wife's parents. In the United States we frequently hear, among the "Ghetto" tribes, of the "shatchem," which is the same thing as the Old World "match-maker." Greece, Palestine, Persia, India, practically all the Eastern countries have this sort of traffic, and these wily wife-merchants make a very good living, indeed.

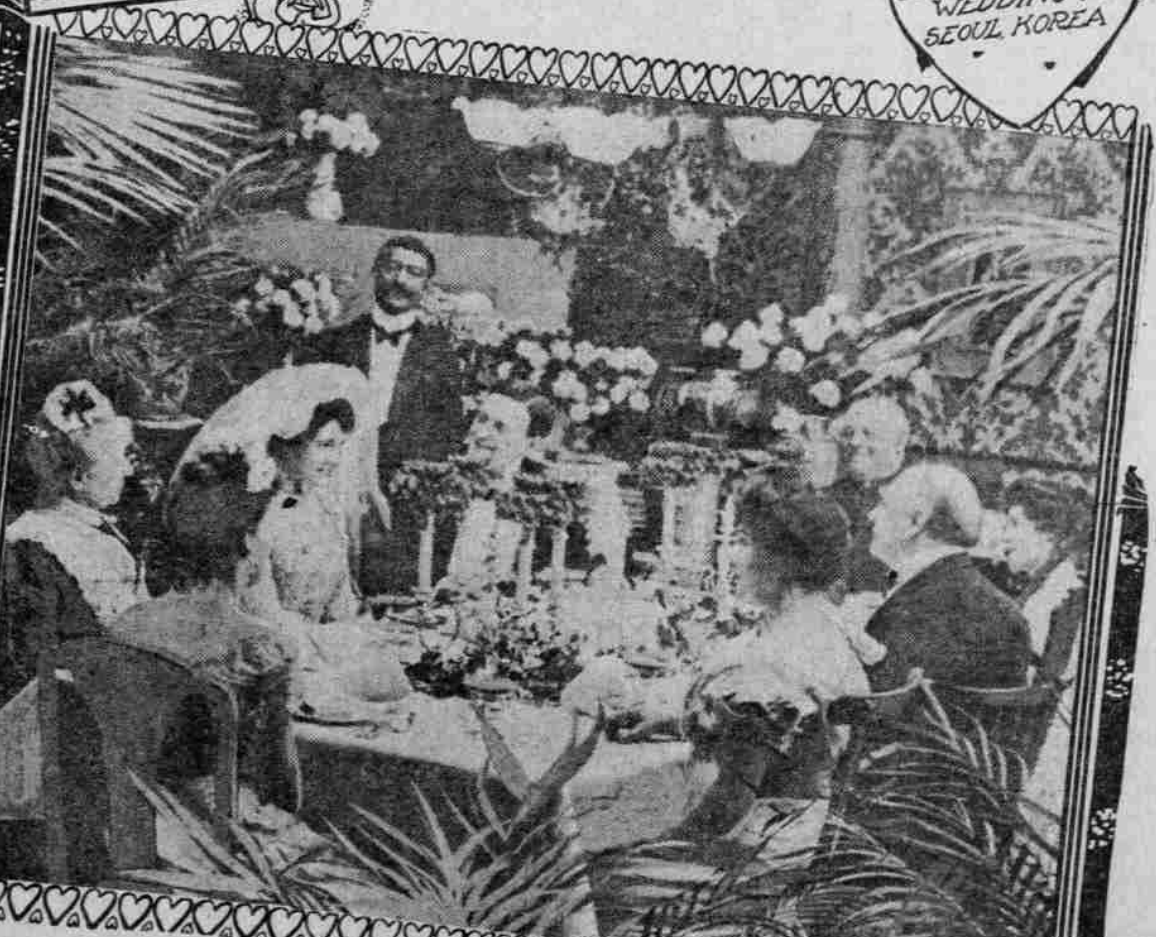
In Greece the "match-makers" practically arrange all the marriages among the lower classes. There, too, are orange blossoms used, one of the few countries besides our own in which this flower has the same special significance. There also the best man has a rather delicate job which probably would not be popular in this country. The groom presents his bride with a pair of shoes and it is part of the best man's duties, during the ceremony, to get down and put these shoes upon her dainty feet. In the photograph here given the Grecian woman has arrayed herself in a splendid costume and is standing mock simplicity (the usual Grecian custom) while a part of the ceremony is being performed. It is this traditional affection of hers which has given rise to the Greek saying, "as affected as a young bride." In India there is a curious way of "getting rid of the woman," if it may be said in that brutal phrase. There a young

bachelor is apt to wait a long time before purchasing a bride, because the cost is too great. Widows, however, are cheap. What does the wily father of the rapidly aging daughter do, in order to make her readily marriageable? He marries her to a bouquet of flowers and then throws the flowers in a well! This makes her technically a widow and as such very cheap, on the market. After that, the process of wedlock is easy. A wife is a decidedly handy thing to have around the premises. She can work equally as well as the man, in time of debt, she is accepted by the creditor as so much cash. The "match-maker" above alluded to is an accepted go-between in Persia, nearly all the marriages there being arranged by these dealers. When she has given birth to a son she is allowed more freedom than formerly; in fact, she is even allowed to go about the town heavily veiled, if she is accompanied by her mother, or mother-in-law! What would our American women say to this?

We are apt to gather from the Rubayat of Omar Khayyam and from other Persian poets that the Persian is a very poetical man, yet here is the burden of one of his wedding songs: "Ah, Laila, Laila, you have made roast meat of my heart!" The Dauphine maiden is past mistress in the art of encouraging or discouraging a lover's attentions besides saying in so many words that he is welcome or had better be gone. When a swain's visits are pleasing to her she makes his soup thick with grated cheese; if the contrary, he will find a handful of oats in his pocket. Should he persist, she will turn the blackened ends of the fire-brands towards him, a sign there is no

mistaking. The peasant girl admits a favored lover to a parliment, which corresponds to a consent to "keep company," as we say in this country. The swain is now allowed to dance with and call upon her, and to make himself useful in a thousand little ways. Should no better suitor come forward, the two will probably become man and wife. But French women have a shrewd turn for business, and if a richer loon comes across her path who is equally attractive to her, the chances are Jeanette will not let him slip in vain. So Jean, who has been admitted to a parliment at the New Year, may find his privileges withdrawn at Easter; while Jacques, who has a rich uncle, now carries her basket and chats with her at the well.

But with the better classes in France there is little opportunity for courtship. In Paris young unmarried girls go out occasionally into society; in the provinces this is not allowed. When a young man resolves on matrimony, and hears of a young lady whose family and circumstances are in every way suitable, he makes informal inquiries through a priest or some lady of her circle, about the girl's domestic qualities—and amount of dowry. This last particular is of the highest importance. It is rare for a dowryless girl to marry in France, though the portions which wives, even of the comfortable middle class, bring their husbands only consist of a sum of three or four figures. On receiving satisfactory information the suitor, who wishes to do the thing in a decorous manner, commits the affair to some elderly woman, perhaps his mother or aunt. This good lady hastens to acquaint the girl's family with the offer, and in her turn informs them of the suitor's unimpeachable character and good circumstances. Marriage is more difficult of accom- (Concluded on Page 8)



CONGRATULATIONS—THE WEDDING-SUPPER