

BRILLIANT

Hygiene May Come To Supplant Romanticism of June Wedding



Mexican Bride Combines Romance and Hygiene in Her Costume

BY CAROLYN CROSS.
WASHINGTON, June 25.—(Special Correspondence.)—A plea for marriage upon hygienic principles rather than upon romanticism has been interesting, if not agitating, the minds of womankind for the past few months. And now, in this, the season of June weddings, the subject looms large on the horizon of Vanity Fair.

"A clean bill of health for both bride and groom and the mating of those only who are fit for matrimony" is the substance of the cry of the adherents of the movement. Though so far none seems to have brought the point forward, it is nevertheless a fact that other races have long since insisted upon the good health and physical fitness of the contracting parties, placing hygienic tests far above romanticism in point of importance.

And this, too, without stripping their weddings of romanticism—by way of assurance to anxious lovers who dread losing the evanescent beauty of drooping brides and anemic-looking—therefore in girl logic aristocratic—grooms. Indeed, so far from lacking in poetry, the "health marriages" of these peoples have actually furnished the origin of many of our most sentimental and universal nuptial customs.

At the National Museum at Washington, D. C., there is a collection that illustrates the marriage customs of couples the world over—and almost since the world began. It is significant that, with every one of them, health ceased to be the chief requisite of matrimonial candidates only after the race had advanced to ultra-civilization.

Dr. Walter Hough, curator of the museum, had given this problem deep thought long before the current advocates of hygienic weddings began to promulgate their doctrine. According to his research work, practically every primitive marriage was controlled by two principles—barter and health.

"We have," he says, with a sense of humor that seems almost incongruous amid the musty relics, "retained the former but abandoned the latter to an alarming degree. Understand, I am not speaking either for or against the measure. It is simply that my observations may be of interest."

"Every custom that even the least superstitious of us observe at the average June wedding had its origin back in the dim ages as a tribute to hygiene or as a preventive of disease. The throwing of rice dates back to the early Chinese. Today, rice is thrown in such large quantities, both at the home of the bride and at the depot, that some railway companies have issued an order forbidding the custom; for many hurrying travelers have slipped on the rice and suffered severe falls. Originally, this showering of the departing couple with rice was meant to descend like a fine dust and blind the Spirit of Evil whose special mission was to ingratiate himself and disturb the health, mental or physical, of the bride and groom."

Origin of Shoe Throwing.
"When the June bride of wealth and fashion or her sister of the tenement sets out on her honeymoon journey an old shoe is thrown after her. Why? For good luck, say the assembled guests. In reality, it is the empty form of a primitive rite believed to be efficacious in hitting the shadow of an evil spirit hovering round. Unless so disarmed, this shadow would fall upon the bridal couple and blight their lives with sickness and misfortune."

"Every barbaric tribe of today indulges in the most stringent of fasting and purifying rites prior to marriage. And do you think a groom from those sections where 'man-meet-by-knife' is still the approved way would make off with a young damsel, who looks as though she might be worth her weight in doctor's bills? Never! Instead, he prowls around until he finds a likely-looking damsel of a huskiness precluding invalidism and then sneaks her away as his wife. Even in the practical countries, where money or estates form the basis of matrimony, the bride must be outwardly and on the word of her parents or guardian in proper health for matrimony."

He was reminded that all these precautions were on behalf of the groom, whereas various woman suffrage leaders today are more concerned regarding the safeguarding of the bride.

"Quite so," Dr. Hough replied, "but even this interest in the welfare of the bride dates back to—well—back to the most poetic and splendidly healthful of all peoples, the ancient Greeks. With them it was religion to mate only normal, physically fit people; and they insisted on perfection in the man as rigidly as in the woman. They had not attained that decadent sense which causes us to see morbid beauty in a 'rag, a bone and a hank of hair' type or in a callow youth with a throbbing Adam's apple. And there are no records to show that their marriages were any less happy than ours."

"People always used to associate disease with evil. Until the past few centuries that belief has existed everywhere, even in America. Take, for example, the 'evil eye.' Dread of it created most of the wedding customs of



Norwegian Bride is A Buxom Lass.



Hopi Indian Bride Must Pass Health Examination of Tribes Medicine Men

the world which have a striking similarity. In fact, the wearing of a wedding veil—directly due to fear of the evil eye—is a part of the marriage ceremony in every clime. In many places it is known as 'covering the face' but its purpose is identical.

"Primitive folks, you know, believed that an uncomfortable sensation of the mind somehow affected the bodily health. For instance, when the eye of the prospective groom met that of the bride both felt nervous and apprehensive—both do in these days. So, it was argued that they unconsciously 'cast the evil eye' upon each other at such a time. Hence it was dangerous, from a health viewpoint, for them to look upon each other's faces. Therefore, the bride was veiled since she was most affected by such a condition. This was done literally to protect her health, it being an accepted fact that she must enter the state of matrimony in an unruffled, normal condition of mind and body. And this very month the most ultra-modern bride would hesitate indeed to have a 'full dress wedding' minus her wedding veil, unless, of course, she were a widow."

Symbols of Health.
From further research it appears that every feature of the modern fashionable wedding was once significant of something that had a bearing upon the future health and happiness of the bridal couple, especially that of the bride. Even among the Tsaidam Mongols, who have genuine trial marriages, there is a condition intended to preserve the health standard; and no head of a household would dare disregard it. This is a law compelling his daughter to marry out of her own tribe in order to prevent degeneracy and disease. Though the remainder of the ceremony be utterly cold-blooded and governed by barter, this law must be upheld.

In modern Greece the bride's father hunts a suitable spouse for his eldest daughter and tries to find one who is well provided with worldly goods and not likely to become a burden upon him through invalidism. The Siberian Yakuts compel a prospective bride and groom to sit for three days with their backs to each other while the assembled guests indulge in what passes for mad revels in that quarter of the globe. The couple that proves incapable of standing the strain of this severe physical and mental endurance test is regarded as unfit for mating.

The Zulus have a custom of marrying at a certain period of the year, which quite parallels our June wedding season. Their principal marriage days are during the Matabili, which is a great dance celebrated just prior to harvest-time. What we call a "long engagement" often exists solely that the ceremony itself may be held on this occasion. It is believed to be an

especially favorable time of the moon for a healthful and fertile marriage, and that the gods presiding over such events will smile on those wedded during this festival. The bride is usually quite young, and wears as her only garment a short skin petticoat. But she makes up in ornamentation for what she lacks in attire, for beaded bandeaux encircle her kinky head, rows of beads hang around her neck and down her arms, and many ropes of them encase her body.

Among certain of the Australian tribes, as well as among the American Indians, marriage is by barter. Never, however, does a young health cease to be a grave consideration. A delicate girl would have as much difficulty in marrying among such peoples as would a groom too poor to offer a respectable number of cattle or a satisfactory amount of cash for a bride.

The Zuni Indians appear to have combined romance, health and good business in their marriage arrangements. The houses in their villages are so constructed that one must, to enter, first climb upward for several flights and then enter a doorway and climb down half as far inside. The would-be suitor for the hand of a selected damsel ties into a bundle samples of whatever would be acceptable to his prospective father-in-law and sets out for the house of his fair one.

As he reaches the threshold of the dwelling, some one of the family with a call out and asks his mission. He replies that he desires to enter. If he is considered likely to be greeted and aided up and down the stairway, and if the size and contents of his bundle please the head of the family the simple matter of a few words unites the couple. But unless the groom is a fine specimen of Indian he must increase his barter price in order to appease the girl and her parents.

Among the Navajos horses usually prove the currency used for such occasions. A bride's physical development and muscular strength must indicate that she can manage the hogan (house), weave those wonderful rugs that are the despair of imitators and raise a flourishing family to help tend the flocks of sheep. But there is romance even in such a marriage. According to a young Navajo half-breed, there are men in the tribe who, disappointed in love, not infrequently die of what we term "a broken heart." Always, he declared, the fair object of such adoration is a buxom damsel of unquestionable health and physical perfection.

Health Part of Dowry.
The Hopi Indian maiden is expected to bring with her a dowry of rugs and a splendid constitution. In these days of the excellent Government schools at Keams Canyon, Arizona, where compulsory education is in vogue, she usually

It Has Long Been Tried in Other Lands And With Due Success—Wedding Customs of Even Unenlightened Peoples Shows Regard For Hygienic Rules—Various Races And Their June Matings.



Hungarian Bride Must Prove Her Good Health by Continuous Dancing

possesses also a knowledge of hygienic housekeeping and dressing; but her future lord and master insists that she be able to pass any examination the medicine man of the tribe may propose. Climbing up and down the precipitous cliffs at Oraibi, where she lives, gives the maiden a vigorous strength.

At the wedding proper, certain incantations and rites are indulged in to ward off evil and illness from the marriage. For this occasion her ankles are wrapped closely with sheepskin; dainty moccasins encase her feet; the universal veil, or "face covering" is donned to protect her from the malignant demons that hover about bridal couples and the carries a rolled wedding mat that would create envy in the breast of even an heiress bride.

Everywhere one finds this tendency to shield the bride with a veil from observation and from the supernatural attack of forces that would mar the perfect fitness she is expected to display at marriage.

The custom of having weddings at night, so generally observed, dates back to primitive times—and is still in vogue among semi-civilized races—who believed that the darkness was additional protection against the evil eye. Today, in a surprising number of countries the bride and groom must go through the entire ceremony and even be wedded for days without gazing directly at each other, so dangerous is it considered to their future health. In Morocco, among the Maoris, in the Barb Islands and among orthodox Jews weddings rarely ever take place in the day time.

The ancient Romans compelled a prospective bridegroom to go to his bride's home through darkness. In the early days in Sparta a groom always had supper on his wedding night with a party of men friends and then went to his newly wedded wife in the dark, for the consummation of a marriage except under the mantle of night was considered detrimental to their well-being. In certain South American tribes a groom never looks upon his intended until after the wedding ceremony. In this case, too, he does so to avoid casting the evil eye upon her. A Persian bridegroom goes through this same form of suspense and for the same reason.

preceding their marriage upon a sort of elevated settee, or throne, and never once does the poor bride dare open her tightly-closed eyes for even a peep at the man who is to rule her life. Though expected to guard her in future, he is then a menace and all sorts of sickness will come upon her if she happens to see him. The next day she is married and conducted to her new home at night by relatives and friends. Carrying candles and lanterns to dazzle the evil spirits that may be about they form a circle about her and conduct her, with her eyes still closed, to her husband's house. To insure her not seeing, she wears a veil.

The South Celebes bride goes to her new domicile completely hemmed in by relatives. Nearly a dozen bridesmaids attend her and also a married woman—in our June wedding scheme known as the matron of honor. Nowdays bridesmaids are but an effective preparation for the bride, and the bride is accompanied by the matron of honor literally guarded the honor of the wife and guaranteed her to be in sound health.

The Jews of Jerusalem have a bridal canopy under which they always stand. This has come down from remote ages as a symbol of protection, though not the superstitious way the heathen tribes see it. With the former it is considered unmanly and unwise for the bride to gaze upon her husband during the ceremony and her eyes are veiled. For quite an interval prior to the marriage the bride fasts and bathes in certain oils and in many diverse ways puts her body through a hygienic preparation while also preparing her mind by meditation. She is kept secluded and not allowed to be bothered by earthly cares.

An American parallel for this custom is found in every home—from that of the helmsman to the shop girl "giving up her job to be married." Always the bride-elect is not allowed to see strangers or to be consulted about the wedding festivities. "The bride must not be harassed," is alike the slogan of the mysterious East and the practical West. But the former obeys it on the grounds that health is essential



Chinese Bride Placates Spirits of Her Ancestors To Insure Good Health



Zulu Bride Marries at Certain Season To Insure Good Health

to happiness at the beginning of marriage, while the latter follows it merely because it is the custom.

Dances Prove Good Health.
The Chinese bride of Manchuria uncovers her face for the first time the day following the ceremony. A Korean bride wears long sleeves to her wedding gown and hides her face behind them when the groom would look upon her. Among the Spanish-speaking brides of Mexico, where their costume is especially picturesque, the girl invariably has a mantilla handy for stretching across her eyes if she finds the groom gazing too intently at her. And unless she can dance a fandango with the nimblest and prove her claims to good health by the clearness of her skin (all of which is reported to the would-be groom by the scout he sends out to look over the girl), the chances are he will never gaze upon her at all with favor.

The Celestials are the most prolific of all in their endeavors to placate the evil spirits opposed to healthy, happy marriage and to browbeat them when the future lord and master insists that she be able to pass any examination the medicine man of the tribe may propose. Climbing up and down the precipitous cliffs at Oraibi, where she lives, gives the maiden a vigorous strength.

American grooms who spend their week previous to marriage in farewell bachelor suppers and in drinking numerous "goodbys" at the club might well take a lesson in hygiene from the prospective bridegroom of New Britain. He literally "takes to the tail timbers" for the bride and remains out in the grass attended by his best man and ushers, who diet him properly and see that his soul and body are in perfect harmony. The Korean custom of permitting the new husband to go on a honeymoon trip all by his lonesome within a week after his marriage seems mighty selfish and unlover-like on the face of it; but it is based on a hygienic idea that it is not well for a couple to be in the same house continuously during the first week or so of marriage.

In Bulgaria the tables are turned. The groom is supposed to remain indoors and pay strict attention to all the mandates of hygiene and to eat two weeks following his wedding, while his bride gallivants around among her relatives—if she is still on speaking terms with them.

One queer tribe does not consider it conducive to the high standard of health desirable in a bride for her to do any housework for at least three years. When an Abyssinian bride has a sister she is expected to wear a head-dress identical with the bride's, in order to confuse hovering devils ready to pounce upon the enraptured girl and ruin her health. For the same reason a groom in South Celebes is attended by a best man dressed exactly like himself—he is the best man on upper Fifth avenue.

Even in the most obscure of marriage ceremonies this endeavor to hoodwink some mysterious enemy of weddings is found. Students have decided that love and madness being akin, the ancients figured the greatest danger would be to the brain; hence brides and grooms frequently exchanged head dresses. "Arry and Arry do it today as they walk out along the Thames; so do the notorious Apaches of Paris. At Hungarian weddings nothing is considered more festive than for the bride to don her husband's cap, while he puts on hers."

In Hungary a wedding lasts for days and includes many customs handed down from an era when they all had significance in coping with malignant spirits. After the ceremony a number of the groom's friends seeks out the couple with a band for serenading purposes; generally it escorts them to their new home. There a continuous dance is started both as a pleasure and as a test of the bride's physical condition. She must dance with each male guest who gives her a "Kreutzer." Before

leaving, guns and pistols are discharged for "good luck."

In Northern Africa where marriage is almost entirely by barter or purchase, health plays a most significant part. No maiden wants her girl friends to think that she "went cheap," and the groom is inclined to base his price upon her physical value.

In Mexico the wedding banns are announced weeks in advance of the ceremony and anyone having reason to know that the couple will not enjoy a healthful life is expected to make such information public. Yet romance seems to suffer in no way through this attention to hygiene. As nearly the entire year is suitable for open-air courtship, a youth of any means woos his lady love with song, sends his open victoria for her use and writes her amorous notes. Yet once the marriage is arranged, he sends a check for whatever amount he can afford to spend on her trousseau, thus receiving a lesson in what he may expect in the future.

Among Moravians, as the bridegroom's party sets out for the home of the bride the best man marches around them three times in succession wielding a sword which is expected to decapitate any lurking enemies of earthly nature that may be tagging along to do harm to the health of the couple.

No dwellers under the same roof in Arabia are ever expected to wed. With nomads, this applies to the tent flap. It is considered entirely wrong from a health standpoint for a girl and a man who live beneath the same canvas to wed.

Adverse influences are driven away by music among tribes of Central Australia, or, at least, such is their belief. The quaint Koreans, perhaps, take health precautions in matrimony more seriously than any other race. Neither bride nor groom has a right to do with the choice of a life-partner there, for a marriage broker, or "go between," and the two fathers attend to the matter. Everything else being satisfactory, a combined horoscope of the young couple is cast by an astrologer. Should it promise invalidism ahead for the wife or husband the wedding is usually called off.

All races, tribes and individuals observe the custom of eating and drinking together at the conclusion of the marriage ceremony. Before a mission any days the Navajo Indians always ate corn pudding from the same dish, thus combining substance and spirit and costing their lots together—for whatever of evil befell one who ate from the dish would surely come to the other. This constituted the sole official consummation of the union. The custom is still in vogue, but a religious ceremony is held. There is a keen regard for hygiene manifested in this custom, for a groom who knows that he is in ill health or diseased will not voluntarily endanger the health of his bride by such close communion of food.

A Loango couple must make complete confession of all their bodily sins before wedding, else they might fall ill when partaking from the same dish later on.

In Norway, where the bride wears a most gorgeous, towering headdress with many mock jewels and a wonderfully hand-embroidered velvet bodice and skirt, it is customary to drink from the same cup at the wedding. They put a very high value on health and the buxom specimen of young womanhood in her bridal attire splendidly illustrates the type considered beautiful.

The Chinese provide refreshments for their guests and for attending spirits of ancestors who might otherwise become miffed and wish ill health upon the bride and groom. The couple drinks from two cups fastened together by a silken thread.

Morocco has the honor of inventing the marriage custom of drinking from a glass and then breaking it. A priest hands the bridal couple a glass of wine after having blessed it. They each drink from it and it is then smashed—that no one may drink from it later to their health or misfortune.

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