MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

The Change From the Era When Wives Were Taken by Force.

Marriage customs have changed everywhere with the advance of civilization. Anglo-Saxons in ancient times, it is said, used to capture their wives by force from their fathers or their husbands, it did not matter which.

This was before Augustine came to preach Christianity. Then purchase was more common than capture, although the latter seems to have been frequent enough to the reign of Ethelbert to need regulation by law. By this law a man might run away with a woman provided he afterward paid her previous owner, be he father or husband 50 shillings. If it was husband who had thus been deprived of his wife, the woman's captor had not only to pay him the fine, but also to buy him another wife. In any case the stolen woman belonged to her captor.

If a man had purchased his bride in the days of Ethelbert and afterward concluded he had paid too much for her, it was lawful for him to return her to her former owner and claim again the purchase price, provided that he had not previously expressed satisfaction by making the bride a present on the morning after the wedding.

The next step was the "foster lien," when the bride price was paid on the day of espousal and was supposed to compensate the parent for the cost of bringing up his daughter. It seems however, that this soon fell into disrepute, as there was no law against the father engaging his daughter to numerous suitors, taking from each the "foster lien" and, of course, cheating all but one on the wedding day, which at that time was only the day of betrothal, when the suitor gave a "wed" or pledge for the future performance of his contract. If the suitor did not claim his bride within two years after the wedding day, he forfeited all right to her and to whatever money or goods he had paid for her. If the woman and her father broke their promises, the father had to give the suitor four times as much as the suitor had already paid him.

As civilization advanced the bride price was given to the woman herself and became her dowry, while nowadays the tables are frequently turned and the bride settles the money on her husband.

LADYLIKE GEOMETRY.

Figures of the same shape don't always have the same style.

Figures of the same size never consider themselves equivalent.

A straight line is the shortest distance between two millinery openings.

A plain figure is one all points of which have been neglected by the dressmaker.

A mixed line is a line composing the reception committee of a club's presidential candidate.

A broken line is a series of successive straight lines described by a woman alighting from a street car.

A straight line determined by two bargain tables is considered as prolonged both ways until the store closes.

Women equal to the same thing are not always equal to each other.—Nellie Parker Jones in Chicago Record-Herald.

A Pointed Prayer.

Aunt Dinah had come to see her old mistress, who had just recovered from an illness.

"Yes, Miss Lila, I sho'ly done prayed fer yer to git well all de time, and now yer see how it done turned out."

"Then you believe that your prayers are always answered, Dinah?"

"Sho'ly, sho'ly!" Then, with a sly glance: "Yer see, I neber tempts de Lord, 'case I don't pray fer nothin' dat I don't know I'll git. Dr. John, he done tol' me he tort yer was on de recovery road." After a pause she went on:

"Say, Miss Lila, yer know what I prayed fer last night?"

"No."

"Why, I just p'intedly begged de Lord ter put it into yer heart ter give me dat brown silk dress yer done outgrowed."—Brooklyn Eagle.

Described Him Exactly.

"You're looking for new quarters, aren't you?" inquired Kidder at the breakfast table.

"Yes," replied the talkative boarder. "Why?"

"Here's an ad. in the paper that should interest you particularly: 'To rent; nice room for gent with gas.'"—Philadelphia Press.

The Way to Keep Posted.

"You must read a great many books to keep so well acquainted with current publications?"

"No," answered Miss Cayenne. "I don't take time to read books. It would interfere with the constant study of the advertisements that is necessary to keep really informed."—Washington Star.

Naive.

Mamie—There were three opera glasses leveled on me from the left box in the last act.

Mazie—Was I on then?

Mamie—Yes.

Mazie—Then how could any one see you?—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Quite Likely.

"Some doctors contend that onions are good for weak nerves. Did you ever hear that?"

"No, but I can readily imagine that they'd be good for a weak breath."—Atlanta Constitution.

STORIES OF THE CAT.

Legends and Facts About the Still but Half Tamed Animal.

"There are few tales of cat fidelity and many of dog, yet one thinks no worse of the cat for this," says an observer. "His very independence compels respect. He walks 'by his wild lone, waving his wild tail, through the wild woods,' as an inspired modern writer has set forth. All the generations have not served to tame him, and the most domestic of the race will revert sooner to a wild life at 'the call of the blood' than any other friend of man. It is thus scarcely surprising to find that the most famous cat lovers have been drawn from the ranks of politicians and poets, those whom reasons of state or a sensitive temperament have rendered averse from trusting their fellow creatures and who consequently bestow all their affections upon the 'fireside sphinx.' We are invited to believe that the most famous of all cats, he who brought fame and fortune to his master, Dick Whittington, was no four legged animal at all, but merely the French word 'achat'—to buy and sell at profit—and that the great merchant made a pet only of his merchandise from the very beginning. Thus in later years do the idols of our youth topple about our heads.

"But other legends—nay, facts—are left us. Cardinal Wolsey, for instance, when acting in his official capacity as lord chancellor is said to have had his favorite cat always seated beside him, and another prince of the church, Richelieu, found his only relaxation in keeping a number of kittens in his private cabinet and watching their gambols during his spare moments. We cannot really reckon Richelieu as a true lover of the race, however, for directly the kittens grew to three months he had them sent away and replaced by others. Lord Chesterfield left in his will life pensions to his favorite cats and their kittens. Victor Hugo's great cat Chanoine always sat on a large red ottoman in the center of his salon and received his guests in state, showing marked displeasure if any one failed to caress or praise her.

"Tasso wrote a sonnet to his favorite cat, and Petrarch had one he loved as dearly, we are told, as Laura. No doubt she was the confidant of many of his trials and consoled him for much of the fair lady's disdain, and when pussy died the poet had her embalmed in the Egyptian fashion and carried her mummy about with him everywhere. Baudelaire, the French poet, a very shy man, was always ill at ease in any new house he entered until the family cat was brought up and introduced to him, after which, with the cat on his knee, he was perfectly happy in his silent poet fashion.

"Traditions respecting cats are, of course, legion. From time immemorial they have been regarded as somewhat uncanny, omens of weal or woe, beings to be either conciliated or crushed. The cat worship of ancient Egypt and, later, the Roman creed that the cat was sacred to Diana speak of the one; the wild charges of witchcraft—or concern in it—rife during the dark ages of Europe will attest the latter. But there is another popular belief deserving also of mention, that which sets forth the old maid as the cat's only friend, a legend arising in the mediaeval nunneries overrun with mice, where one or more cats were always kept and were no doubt much petted by the good nuns."—Chicago News.

A Hard Burial.

Some few winters ago a gang of carriage washers was engaged washing carriages on one of our northern railways when one of them remarked to his mate, an old soldier who was famous as a long bowist, "It's awful cold this morning, David."

"Cold! This is nothing," said David. "I remember when I was in Canada in 186— one of our mates died, poor chap. And you will have some idea what sort of frost it was when I tell you it froze the body so stiff and the ground so hard that we had to get hammer and chisel, make a nick in the ground and then drive him in with a pile driver. That was the only way we could give the poor chap decent burial."—London Answers.

Using the Eyes.

A scientific writer quotes Helmholtz as saying that in his work he could only liken himself to the mountaineer, painfully and slowly climbing, often obliged to turn backward, lighting later on new traces leading forward, and finally reaching the goal, only to find to his confusion that a plain road led thither, if he had only had the eyes to see. Darwin said he thought he was superior to the common run of men in noticing things which easily escape attention and in observing them carefully.

Cheap Generosity.

A great smoker handed his cigar case to his right hand neighbor. "Thank you, but I don't smoke," said the man.

He therefore handed it to the man on the left, who made the same reply, whereupon his wife nudged him and said, "Why don't you hand it to the captain?"

"No, thank you; he smokes."—Nos Loisirs.

The Mean Thing!

"Who was that fool you bowed to?"

"My husband."

"Oh, I—er—I—humbly apologize, I"—

"Never mind. I'm not angry. But what a keen observer you are!"—Cleveland Leader.

A SONG, NOT A SERMON.

But It Points a Moral From a Very Ordinary Incident.

It was a merry occasion. The fun was fast and furious. It was in a bar room; the place, Washington.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae we'll face the devil!

And so one of this party invited seven companions to join him in a drink of "red licker," and they sat—

Bousing at the nappy
An' gettin' fou an' unco happy.

The man planked down a dollar crisp and fresh from the treasury. The account was squared; the score was paid. He was a family man and walked across the street to a meat stand and ordered two pounds of round steak. The grocer supplied him and asked 30 cents as the price. "What!" the man roared. "What! Fifteen cents a pound for round steak! It is a high way robbery!"

And so we go through life prodigal in buying luxury and miserly in buying necessity. That man had no conception of his illogical action—spending a dollar for liquor that he and his comrades would have been the better without and kicking a hole in the ceiling on account of a purchase of beef to the charge of 30 cents that he could ill do without. Man can live without booze, but the man has yet to be invented who can get along without food.

This is no sermon. This newspaper never preaches. What we intended to say and all we intended to say was to call attention to the truth.

All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players.

The very best of us have need of the charity of our brothers and sisters.—Washington Post.

GOOD COLLATERAL.

The Way Tom Fitch of Nevada Used to "Raise the Wind."

Tom Fitch of Nevada was a bright fellow and one of the best writers and stump speakers of the west, but he was thriftless and when he got hard up would resort to almost any means to get a stake.

One day he wrote a scathing speech denouncing Sharon, then president of the Bank of California and afterward United States senator from Nevada. In it he charged Sharon with almost every crime known to the Decalogue or the statutes. He put the manuscript in a large envelope and walked into the Bank of California.

"Here," he said to the cashier, handing the package through the window—"here are some securities which I offer as collateral on a loan. Please hand them to Mr. Sharon in person, and I will wait for his answer."

Mr. Sharon was in his private office. Breaking the seal of the envelope, he found the speech and read it through together with a note from Fitch, informing him that unless he was paid $5,000 he would deliver that speech in every town in the state. In a few minutes the cashier, on Mr. Sharon's order, reported that the collateral was all right and paid the happy Fitch the desired amount.

Three months afterward, having gone through the money in speculation and dissipation, Mr. Fitch made his appearance with another speech, this time of a very complimentary character, which he promised to deliver at every convenient opportunity for the same amount. This, too, proved good collateral, and the story would never have come to light if Fitch had not, in a moment of drunken frankness, told it himself.

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