



THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

The professor who announced that "love and romance die out with the sound of the wedding bells," was the first to start the ball rolling. It would seem a brave woman who married with this echo in her ears, yet we have not heard that there were fewer marriages during the year. There are unhappy married lives, but a large percentage of these unhappy homes are due to the illness of the wife, mother or daughter.

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Pianos and Other Instruments Common on Sailing Vessels.

Sailors Glad of Diversion While on Long Voyages—Popular American Aids Sung in Southern Seas.

"You are invited to a musicale on the ship Orinoco, in Erie Basin, Friday evening, August 28."

A number of persons responded to this invitation cheerfully, for they knew the captain very well, relates the New York Times. He had been in the South American trade to this port for a number of years, married a Brooklyn girl, and made money for the owners of his ship in spite of the number of steamers that bore down upon him. The mate received the guests at the gangway, and the cheerful captain and his wife did duty below. The captain displayed with pride a new piano presented by the owners, a beautiful piece of polished mahogany, with works of the best construction; a piano that he said would not move from its bearings if the ship turned turtle.

The captain further explained that he put aboard a cheaper piano at the request of his wife when they were married. Sailors love music, and the good effects of it were so apparent on the crew that the owners had decided to put them on all their sailing vessels, beginning with this. It is nothing surprising these days to hear a piano on a good sailing ship, he said. "Why, only the other day I heard the strains of a piano coming from an old canal boat over there."

When the musicale began the captain, his wife accompanying, sang in a round and pleasant voice Tosti's "Good-by." Then the mate, with the same accompanist, played melodies of South America that seemed to make the ship roll and bow to the waves under the southern moon. The effect of a combination like that in a Fifth Avenue drawing room would be electric. A purser from a South American steamer anchored in the basin played a horn solo. The captain's wife sang songs of the Amazon women, as she had pictured them in her voyages, and then came a rousing glee by the crew.

"It is a rare thing now," said the captain, "to find a sailing ship without a piano, especially if she belongs to a good line. Steam liners haven't any monopoly in this business, by a good deal. How often do you find a tramp or a freight line steamer with a piano? Women in frigates get New York songs sooner than many of our American towns do. They are very quick to play by ear, and some of them copy from my wife's music and learn that of the wives of other captains. When I got there on my last voyage I heard everybody singing: 'The Good Old Summer Time.' They caught the contagion from a Liverpool vessel.

"I invite my men to come into the cabin when off watch and make use of the piano. All sailors on a long voyage have much spare time that they don't know what to do with. They loiter in the fo'c'sle and play cards. They smoke more than is good for them. Some of my crew do that still, in spite of the piano, but the most of them are in the cabin whenever they can get there, singing and playing. They organized the glee club, I didn't. We have a man who can play the concertina, and another who can do wonders with an old flute that he bought in a South street junk shop 30 years ago.

"Another thing—a sailor, like any man, is more careful in his personal appearance if he knows he is to appear with a lady. It is a wholesome thing, in my opinion, for a captain to take his wife to sea."

FARMERS ARE RETIRING.

Many Western Agriculturists Are Enjoying the Fruits of Recent Prosperous Years.

The Nebraska towns are filling up with farmers who have retired from agricultural pursuits to take life at ease and educate their children, says a recent Lincoln report.

Prosperity has prevailed on the farms for five or six years, and the farmers on the west are showing their philosophical view of life by retiring before they are too old to enjoy the fruits of their toil.

None of them are rich in the metropolitan sense of the term. They don't see themselves rich. All they have is a competence, but their early life away from the temptations of the town has caught them frugality and they have no particular desire to get rich. Usually when they come to town they go out to some modest suburb where the price of property is low.

They spend \$2,000 or \$3,000 for a house and lot, fix things up comfortably and enjoy themselves. Their wants are easily satisfied. They have not the theater-going habit nor the society habit; they have learned how to get what they think is good out of life without indulging in many of its frivolities, measured by their ambitions and their wants they are as well off as any millionaire—possibly better. They have enough and are satisfied.

It is possible for a farmer to retire on a much smaller amount than most men who have investments in other classes of property. A merchant may get out of active life but leave his money in his store without feeling that it is safe. Banks, too, may fail, and the price of stocks is liable to fluctuate. It is different with the farm. Nebraska land has a very stable value, and even in panicky days could be sold for fair prices. To-day it is high, but a good living is assured; and if the harvest is big and prices are good there is a large addition to the surplus and money for any little indulgences.

Those farmers who prefer to stick to the farm for a little while longer are demonstrating their possession of a bank balance by improving the appearance of their farms. Lincoln contractors have sent 30 or 40 carpenters out into the rural districts to build new barns and houses in the last six weeks. Out in southwestern Nebraska, in the new wheat section, there is a land boom on an overlap from Kansas, where speculators are forcing up prices. The short grass country wallowed in big crops this year, and there is scarcely any government land left in that section of either Kansas or Nebraska. Real estate agents have been running harvest excursions into the country and syndicate buying is now a feature of the business, whole parties of emigrants from eastern states being landed and settled in the same neighborhood on newly purchased lands.

NATIONS IN THE MAKING.

War Enters Very Largely into the Formation of a New Country.

According to the astronomers, there was fierce conflict of forces in chaos before the worlds were thrown off from the nebular mass; and then there were many a mad flight through space and frequent collisions before the force of gravity set the planets moving in their respective orbits.

On a small scale, natural forces are still at work bringing about a stable political equilibrium on this planet. Chance and war, chiefly war, have thrown together groups of people with unlike interests, states the Youth's Companion. Wherever the interests conflict, their effort to get along together succeeds but indifferently, or fails altogether.

The most recent example of failure is the break-up of the republic of Colombia, which occurred when the people in the department of Panama decided that they would submit no longer to neglect by the central government, a neglect of which the rejection of the canal treaty was only the culminating incident.

The struggle is still going on in Austria-Hungary, where two nations, differing in race, are trying to live under one government. The emperor-king is able to keep his empire together only by making frequent concessions to the Magyars. His consent, in November, to the larger use of the Hungarian language in the army was forced from him at the price of breaking the deadlock which had left Hungary without a ministry for several months.

Germany has a similar problem, although the issue there is the proper relation of the various states to the central government. Bavaria has resented the interference of the emperor in its local affairs with so much vigor that the imperial chancellor has thought it wise to announce that the kaiser does not desire greater centralization of authority.

The British empire is a vast nebular mass, which is to be held together until it solidifies into a homogeneous unit. Mr. Chamberlain fears that it is in danger of flying to pieces unless the force of gravity, operating through self-interest, can be made to bind the colonies to the mother country.

MINT IN THEIR COFFEE.

Mistake of a Society Leader Taken for the Real Thing by Ambitious Emulators.

That the advice, "Watch how others do and then do likewise," is not always good to social aspirants, was illustrated the other evening at a dinner given by a young matron in honor of a guest of acknowledged social standing, relates the Chicago Tribune.

When coffee was served, and with it the brilliant chatter of the guests, the guest was seen to take one of the sweets and say with gracefulness over her coffee cup, "I don't like every woman at the table to do likewise. Evidently some new weight of fashion was about to be established. My eye was on the next individual to do so. I formulated a plan to follow the leader and give no sign that they were not in the habit of doing this new trick every day. I was written on every face. The sudden calm caused the guest to look up, and as she did so she inadvertently dropped her mint in to the tray cup. To her surprise a series of clicks ran around the table as each of the rural ones followed her mistake.

Appreciating the situation, the guest hastily gulped down her coffee to hide her mirth.

Later in the evening she heard one woman remark to another:

"I don't care if it is swell, I don't like mint in my coffee."

"Oh, dear," replied the other, loftily. "It is really delicious. I never think of taking my demitasse without it."

THE COUNTRY NEGRO.

Some of the Advantages He Enjoys Which Are Denied to His City Brother.

The average city negro grows up in the shade. He is completely overshadowed by his overtowering environment. As one walks along the streets of our great cities and views the massive buildings and sky-seeking structures, he finds no status for the negro above the cellar floor. The city negro of education and culture is forced into menial employment because higher forms of occupation are preempted by the more favored class. There are a dozen competitors for every dollar in sight, and in the great majority of cases, the negro is handicapped by his color, says the Southern Workman.

The country negro, on the contrary, is on terms of equality with his environment. He is not confronted by suggestions of inequality at every turn. Nature is a mother who is equally kind and beneficent to all of her children. An acre of ground will yield as much for the black as for the white tiller. The markets are colorblind. No one inquires into the color of the producer of the best produce in the market, except as a matter of idle curiosity. No labor organization has yet placed a boycott upon negro farm labor. The farm offers for the negro the only really unhampered field which is open to him on an unlimited scale.

Solid Virtue.

Youth has its own criteria by which to judge things which its elders assess by other standards. Henry had just come into his mother's kitchen, where she was rolling pie-crust.

"Making pies, mother?"

"Yes, dear."

"Say, mother, your pies taste all right, but why don't you make some like Mrs. Thompson gives me and Billy? You can take a piece in your hand and walk all round the yard eating it and it won't break."—Youth's Companion.

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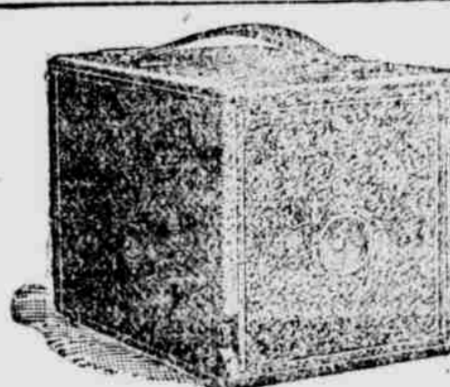
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