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MOUJIK WEDDING FEAST.

Russian Peasants Celebrate Nuptials With Riotous Joy.

When the day's work is done the Russian moujik's recreations are of the simplest. Perhaps he dances or plays the concertina or sings some melancholy air. But when a wedding has to be celebrated and the priest has duly united the couple the peasants give themselves up to the enjoyments of the occasion. The writer well remembers peeping into the brightly lit rooms of a tiny two roomed log cabin where such a revel was in progress. The evening was a hot one. In one room, so small that only four couples could with difficulty wheel about, dancing was in progress. The perspiring couples had made up their minds to enjoy themselves. There was a kind of determined-to-see-it-through look on their faces, and evidently they had great staying powers. In the same room, closely packed and lining the walls, were onlookers waiting till a couple should drop out to take their place in the dance.

The second room was laid out with refreshments. A side table groined with all kinds of dishes dear to the peasant palate. One knife, one table napkin and one fork did service for the party, but some scorned even these aids and picked up here a sardine, there a hunch of melon or tore at a hard sausage. One thought of the cave dwellers and wondered what refinements they possessed when they ate. Vodka was being served out by the father of the bridegroom, and it was having its effect.

One tall man was pointed out as the station master of a tiny wayside station near by. He was conspicuous as being better groomed and less savage in appearance than his fellows, and one heard afterward that the seductive charms of a wedding feast made him forget on that evening his duty as signalman. A freight train waits two hours before a signal at danger, and then for the signalman is quaffing his vodka and dancing at the wedding—the train proceeds. The driver reports at the next town. Result—two months afterward the station master for neglect of duty in his capacity of signalman is degraded to a charge at a smaller station. Surely such things happen in few other countries than Russia—Russia, the land of a great future, but whose inhabitants in the main are only awakening out of sleep.—Chambers' Journal.

Misplaced Conductor.

While rehearsing Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto for one of his London recitals the great pianist Rubinstein was at constant loggerheads with the conductor of the orchestra—a very good fellow, but far from a faultless wielder of the baton. Several times the concerto had been tried over, but always was there something wrong. At last, after attempting the finale for something like the eighth time, Rubinstein suddenly stopped and cried out, to the vast amusement of the orchestra and the confusion of the conductor: "Great heavens, Mr. Blank, you ought to be conducting an omnibus! You are always behind!"

The French Father.

The father in France is the recognized head of the family. In him is vested the clan tradition of authority. The law is his right arm, as custom has also handed to him the scepter of rulership. In many cases French law is tyrannical. How stringent, how oftentimes rigorously unjust, are the workings of marriage laws in France! A French son or daughter, though grown to the mature age of five and twenty, forfeits all rights to the continuance of maintenance by marrying without the parents' consent.—Anna Bowman Dodd in Century.

Runs on the Bank of England.

Even the Bank of England has not been entirely free from runs nor from the necessity of saving itself by strategy. In 1745, for instance, it was forced to employ agents to present notes, which were paid as slowly as possible in sixpences, the cash being immediately brought in by another door and paid in again, while anxious holders of notes vainly tried to secure attention. In 1825, too, only the accidental discovery of 700,000 one pound notes saved the bank from stopping payment.—London Standard.

Her Comeback.

A young man who had not been married long remarked at the dinner table the other day:

"My dear, I wish you could make bread such as mother used to make."

The bride smiled and answered in a voice that did not tremble:

"Well, dear, I wish you could make the dough that father used to make."

FLEET DUSKY PETE.

The Nag Responsible For the Expression a "Dark Horse."

Here is the real story of the "dark horse." It came down to the son of a man, who had it from his father, who in turn got it from his father, and so on back to a time when there lived in Tennessee a shrewd old chap named Sam Flynn. He was by way of being about the cunningest horse trader in his state and generally contrived to have in his stable a nag or two that could go along some. These he used for racing purposes, particularly when he chanced upon a town where there was sporting blood in the course of his travels.

Flynn finally picked up in a swap a black horse which he called Dusky Pete. The horse was close to a thoroughbred, and the shrewd horse trader was not long in making the discovery that he was something of a marvel in speed. But this fact he cunningly kept to himself. He roughed up the horse's coat and made him look as little as possible like the real wonder that he was in a race.

Once he had got Dusky Pete to a point where he looked the part of a horse vagabond, Flynn quietly rode him into a town one fine day, where a rustic race meet was in progress. Dusky Pete merely looked like a "likely horse" for swapping purposes. Pretending to be innocent of everything connected with racing, Flynn entered his horse in one of the events. The village sports took his bait to a man. They backed two or three of the local fliers against Dusky Pete for every dollar they could beg and borrow.

The old horse trader moved around in the crowd and took every bet that was offered, most of them being at big odds against his horse. Just as the horses were being saddled for the race old Judge McMinamee, the turf oracle of that part of Tennessee, turned up at the track and was immediately impressed into service as one of the racing judges.

As he took his place in the judges' stand he was told how the betting odds had been going and of the presence of the old horse trader who was so foolish as to think his nag could beat the local cracks. The oracle was also informed that Flynn had taken all bets offered against his horse.

At that Judge McMinamee ran his eye over Dusky Pete and instantly recognized the veteran racer under his ruffled coat of long hair as an old campaigner.

"Gentlemen," quoth the wise judge, "there's a dark horse in this race that will make some of you look sick before supper."

He was right. The dark horse lay back till the three-quarter pole had been reached and then went to the front with a rush, taking the race with ridiculous ease and cleaning out the pockets of all the village sports.

And from this humble origin comes so great an institution of modern times as the dark horse.—New York Times.

England and Lotteries.

The London Chronicle calls England "a nation of gamblers." It points out that "Westminster bridge was built on the proceeds of a lottery. But so solemn an institution as the British museum was founded upon a basis of gambling in 1753. A sum of £300,000 was raised by a lottery authorized by a special act of parliament. The money was spent principally in buying the museum and collection of Sir Hans Soane, the Harleian collection of manuscript and Montague House, Bloomsbury, then the mansion of the Earl of Halifax. And the gamble bought a house big enough to contain the British museum for many years."

Amaranth.

Amaranth is a name frequently used in poetry for certain plants and flowers which on account of their lateness in fading are taken as the emblems of immortality. The famous flowers are still to be found and are known in our gardens as love lies bleeding, prince's feather, cockscomb and globe amaranth. Instead of using holly and ivy, as we do, the people of southern Europe decorate their churches with these flowers, which are said to retain their color for many months.—Exchange.

Patent Leather Shoes.

Before putting on patent leather shoes always rub the surface of the vamp briskly with the warm palm of the hand, thus softening the shoe and rendering it less liable to crack. Many patent leather boots crackle all over the first time they are worn when this precaution might prevent the accident. Another method is the gradual warming of the shoe, and it must always be remembered that shiny shoes are never kept in cold places.



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