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**MARRIAGES IN SERVIA.**

A Land Where Every Father Chooses a Wife For His Son.

A humorous plaint often goes up on behalf of the bridegroom, whose presence at a modern wedding seems merely to be tolerated. But the bridegroom's case is sometimes even worse, for in certain parts of the globe he may not be present even at his own betrothal. The following passage is from Chedo Mijatovich's interesting account of the customs of his countrymen in "Serbia of the Servians."

It is the duty and privilege of every Servian to choose a wife for his son. As soon as the boy has reached his eighteenth year, the Servian peasant asks his friends, confidentially, to help him find a proper wife. He himself visits assiduously all the fairs in his own and neighboring districts, dressing better than usual, and watches the girls dancing. He makes careful inquiries about the families that have marriageable daughters.

In some parts of Servia the young unmarried women carry a special mark in their headgear, generally a red feather, to indicate that they are open to proposals.

When the father has chosen a promising girl, he ascertains, through a friend, whether the parents would consent to give her to his son. If he receives an encouraging answer he invites relatives or friends to go with him on the "requesting errand." They start out, dressed as well as can be. The father carries a flat wheat cake and a bunch of flowers. One of the company must carry a pistol, for it is customary in Servia to announce every joyous event by firing rifles or pistols. They arrive at the girl's house before supper.

After eating and drinking, in which the men alone of the two houses participate, and some preliminary conversation, the father of the prospective bridegroom draws from his bag the wheat cake, puts the flowers upon it and places the whole upon the table. He then takes from his money bag some gold or silver coins and places those, too, upon the cake.

"Brother, let us not precipitate the matter," the girl's father will then say. "Let me first find out what my daughter says."

He then goes out to consult his wife. This is only for appearances, as the matter was practically settled when the father was encouraged to come to "beg" the girl.

After more or less suspense the door opens and a male relative brings the girl in. He leads her to the father of her prospective husband, before whom she bends deeply and kisses his right hand.

The ring is finally brought to the engaged girl on the appointed day by a company of the bridegroom's male friends and female relatives. It is chiefly a pretext for the bridegroom's relatives to make the girl's acquaintance. The bridegroom is not present even on that occasion.

**Origin of the Four Post Bedstead.**

In mediaeval times, when life was very insecure, it was usual for people to sleep on a bed which was surrounded by sides of boards with strong posts at the four corners. These sides contained sliding doors, which could be fastened inside. When men retired to rest they took a weapon with them. If attacked in the night they were aroused by the noise made by the crashing in of their wooden defenses and were able to defend themselves. When the law became strong enough to protect human life the sides of the bedstead were gradually dispensed with, but the four posts remained.

**His Nose For News.**

An English reporter was sent to report the wedding of a musical comedy actress the other day. The reporter, on his return from the church, sat down at his desk, lit his pipe and began to read a novel. "Here," said a subeditor—"here, why don't you write that wedding story?"

"Nothing doing," the reporter answered, with a yawn. "Bride never turned up. So there's nothing to write."

**An Eye to Business.**

Jimmy had been to church for the first time. When he was going to bed that evening his father asked him how he liked it.

"Oh, I thought it was bully," was his answer.

"Well, what part did you enjoy best?"

"Oh, I liked it when they passed the plate. I got a dime; how much did you get?"—National Monthly.

**Making It Worse.**

Lady (at fashionable ball)—Do you know that ugly gentleman sitting opposite to us?

Partner—That is my brother, madam.

Lady (in confusion)—Ah, I beg your pardon! I had not noticed the resemblance.—Dundee Advertiser.

**EMERY POWDER.**

Impure Corundum is the Substance From Which It is Made.

Emery as in use in machine shops is impure corundum, the hardest substance known save the diamond. And corundum is composed chemically of the metal aluminium, two parts by weight, and oxygen, three parts. It occurs naturally in a crystalline state as sapphire of blue color, ruby or red sapphire, amethyst or purple sapphire and adamantine spar, brown.

Polishing wheels made of these gems would be rather costly. But corundum conglomerated with oxide of iron, fragments of mica and other mineral particles is called emery. And this is hard enough for abrading, grinding and polishing. The original emery is pounded up and passed through wire sieves of different mesh. To make emery wheels, buff wheels or glazers, the emery powder is mixed with gum shellac, silicate of soda or vulcanized rubber.

A remarkable source of supply of impalpable emery flour is the air of the room in which emery is being broken and assorted. The room is closed, the inconceivably small particles of emery settle on surfaces, and this fine flour is collected in small quantities and is of great value in refined polishing.

Incidentally, this fact reveals the kind of materials that enter the lungs of the workers in factories.

For centuries emery has been secured in India, Asia Minor and other oriental places, but sources have been discovered in Georgia and North Carolina.

The sparks thrown off by an emery wheel are incandescent particles of the metal worn away by friction. The quantity of heat is not great, for the hand can be held in a stream of the flying, glowing particles without injury. The intensity of heat in each particle for an instant is great, but the masses of metal are so minute that heat sufficient to do much harm cannot develop.—New York American.

**Queer Dolls.**

In the Marshall islands half the husk of a coconut makes a good doll; in the Sandwich islands a stone wrapped in a banana leaf serves the same purpose. In the south of India a straight piece of cane with crosspieces for legs and arms was often used—a construction found also among the aborigines of South America. In Korea straw figures were made. Among the Ojibway Indians a mother whose child died would cut off a lock of its hair, make it into a bundle with its playthings and clothes and carry it about with her. Should she neglect to do so the soul of the child would, she believed, be unable to find its way into the other world. But in spite of its sacred purpose this bundle was used by the surviving children of the family just like any other doll.

**King Victor and the Innkeeper.**

King Victor of Italy on one occasion was shooting in Piedmont with one of his aids-de-camp. Covered with dust, the aid-de-camp, who had noticed a poor looking inn, approached the hostess and asked if she could supply his majesty with a plain omelet and a little cheese. "The king?" exclaimed the woman in surprise. "That little man covered with dust? Come, now, you will not get me to believe that. The king wears a grand uniform, with gold lace, and carries a big sword. I have his picture inside."

His majesty was amused, and after he had partaken of his meal from a table somewhat wine stained he requested the aid-de-camp to give the woman his likeness on two gold pieces.

**The Duration of a Wink.**

The time occupied by the several phases of the movement has been measured, and it is found that the mean duration of the descent of the lid is from seventy-five to ninety one-thousandths of a second. The interval while the eye is shut was in one case only fifteen-hundredths of a second. The rising of the lid occupied seventeen-hundredths of a second. A specially arranged photographic apparatus was used. The popular phrase that something is done "quicker than a wink" is therefore expressive to a degree that may be stated in fractions of a second.—Harper's.

**He Got the Pin.**

Timmins, who believes in the old saying, "See a pin, pick it up, and all day long you'll have luck," one day saw a pin in the street.

Bending down to get it, his hat tumbled off and rolled into the gutter, his eyeglasses fell and broke on the pavement, his braces gave way behind, he burst the buttonhole on the back of his shirt collar, and apoplexy almost claimed him for its own.

But he got the pin.

**MARRIAGES AT SEA.**

Powers That Are Vested in Captains of British Vessels.

Very few people are aware of the power vested in the commanding officer of a British man-of-war or in the captain of a British merchantman when on the high seas or in a foreign port where there is no British representative, as regards marriage, provided one or both of the contracting parties be a British subject. The scope afforded either of the officers is such as might be turned to very good account by enterprising novelists.

The captains of his majesty's vessels are authorized by the foreign marriages act of 1893 to act as marriage registrars just the same as an ambassador, consul or British resident abroad, and the ceremony may take place on the high seas or on board a British man-of-war on a foreign station, subject to certain "prescribed modifications." These indicate that the legality of the marriage depends on the commanding officer fulfilling the conditions of the foreign marriages act, which, with very slight differences, conforms to the conditions as to age, consent of parents, false oaths, residence and so on, applying to marriages in the United Kingdom.

Though no one can question a captain's authority to marry at sea or on board a vessel on a foreign station, if any of the provisions laid down are not fulfilled a secretary of state has the power by means of a warrant to vary or annul the marriage performed under the act.

But in the case of such a marriage the captain who acted as registrar is protected from any disastrous consequences ensuing from his act.

Before this act commanding officers of men-of-war and merchantmen celebrated marriages on board under an old act, and the marriage had to be confirmed on arrival at the nearest port by the British representative there. Where there was none the captain himself had to act as consul and confirm his own deed.

In the merchant service the skipper has even greater power. He is not obliged to give a certificate, the only compulsion on him being the necessity to "log" the marriage in his official log book, where it may be seen entered between reports dealing with the vessel's victualing, her course, the weather encountered, the ships spoken to and the many humdrum details of "writing up the log."—London Tit-Bits.

**Boxing the Compass.**

Can you box the compass, rattling off the points without drawing breath? Here they are, working found from north in the direction of the hands of a clock; there are thirty-two:

North, nor' by east, nor' nor-east, nor-east by north, north-east, nor-east by east, east-nor-east, east by north, east, east by south, east-sou'-east, sou'-east by east, south-east, sou'-east by south, sou'-sou'-east, south by east, south, south by west, sou'-sou'-west, sou'-west by west, south-west, sou'-west by west, west-sou'-west, west by south, west, west by north, west-nor'-west, nor'-west by west, north-west, nor'-west by north, nor'-nor'-west, north by west, north.

**Aided by Ants.**

Burma is the one place in the world where ants come to the aid of man. Sandalwood is worth its weight in silver, and the hewers of it find the ants valuable assistants. The hard and fragrant heart wood alone has value, but as the tree grows this valuable heart is overlaid by a soft and worthless layer, forming two-thirds of the trunk. When a tree is felled and cut into lengths the men let the timber lie. The ants at once begin work upon the soft wood, which is sappy and sweet enough to attract them, and in a few weeks have stripped the heart wood free of all the worthless shell.

**High Praise.**

She was a pretty, dainty Fifth avenue manicure, he a gay old bachelor, noted at the Metropolitan club for his pleasantries, according to the Hampton Magazine. As she added the finishing touches one morning she looked up with limpid eyes, saying: "We are always so glad to have testimonials from our customers. Do you mind?" "No, indeed; I am delighted," whereupon he wrote upon his card and handed her the following: "There is a divinity that shapes our ends."

**Pulse Beats.**

The pulse of a lion beats forty times a minute; that of a tiger, ninety-six times; of a horse, forty times; of a wolf, forty-five times; of a fox, forty-three times; of a bear, thirty-three times, and of an eagle 160 times. It has been impossible to count the beats of an elephant's pulse, but that of a butterfly beats sixty times to the minute.

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