



The June Bride and Her Superstitions.

BY MARY TAYLOR-ROSS.

The June bride, God bless her, observes strictly the manners and customs, the superstitions and notions that have come down to her through the long ages, with never a thought as to their origin, and but a passing guess as to their significance.

At other times she may sniff at those of her friends who are frankly superstitious, and openly defy the superstitions themselves, but now, her future weal is at stake, as well as the happiness of one whose welfare is far dearer than her own.

And so she decides that her wedding shall be observed with all that attention to detail which the superstitious declare will bring "good luck!"

"Just suppose there is something in all these notions," she whispers to herself with just a little shiver of foreboding—and the superstition that touches everyone of us at some time in our lives, be it ever so lightly, is very close to the heart of the girl at this time! And why? Well, fate, whether a kindly influence or otherwise, is so very, very potent, and human strength so very puny, human resolves and endeavor so very frail! If it be possible to ward off an evil fate by attention to time-honored customs and a few small details, shall she fail to do so? A thousand times no, and so the little bride is careful to wear,

"Something old, something new,
Something borrowed, something blue,
And a gold dollar in her shoe!"

Nor is this a jumble of words, devoid of significance. The "something old," signifies that the new wife is neither fickle nor forgetful, since old things are still precious in her sight, at a time when so many new things are at hand. "Old things are best," sang Owen Meredith, but the best combination in life is a mingling of the old and the new in our possessions. The "something new," indicates the prosperity which makes possible the purchase of new things, and prosperity generally presupposes thriftiness—good qualities in a wife. "Something borrowed," signifies the ability of the bride to borrow from her friends, and ability and willingness on the part of the friends to lend, should the wife ever need to borrow. Something that does not appear in the rhyme, but is handed down by tradition advises the girl to always borrow from someone better off in this world's goods than she herself, for this will indicate the possession of rich and powerful friends throughout life. The gold dollar in one's shoe signifies that the bride is careful and saving, since she has not spent the gold at a time in her life when a girl is most tempted to spend every sou she can get her hands upon in the purchase of new things, that she may appear at her best upon her wedding day!

"Something blue," explains itself, for blue is the color of faith and honor, truth and fidelity—qualities precious to lovers and doubly important to married lovers!

"Blest is the bride on whom the sun doth shine," is a very old and familiar saying, said to be exactly true, but it is not so commonly known that the day after the wedding is a sure indication of the sort of life to which the groom can look forward as his own portion of domestic bliss—sunshine or storm, and the writer has personally made notes of this saying, and it has, in the six

cases noticed, proved true! Sometimes the wedding day was bright and fair, while the day after dawned cloudy and morose; this bride invariably enjoyed life while her husband was most unhappy or at least seemed to be so; then the opposite has been found as true. The throwing of an old shoe after the bride signifies that her parents have given up all control over her—that henceforth she belongs wholly to her husband. (Mothers-in-law, please take notice!)

The throwing of rice is even more ancient a custom than the throwing of shoes, and, as one might suppose, comes from China, the land where rice is emblematic of every good thing, since it sustains life itself, without any other food. The throwing of rice has rather gone out of favor of late years, for, in the excitement, wedding guests were not always as careful as they might be, and serious accidents—injuries that have suddenly turned a gay party of guests into a band of mourners, have resulted. The tossing of confetti has almost entirely superseded the throwing of rice, and is really a picturesque custom. But perhaps, the prettiest conceit of all, was seen at one June wedding, where the bridesmaids handed about among the guests pretty china and cut glass rose bowls, which were filled by the guests themselves from large punch bowls set here and there in the hall, and filled with rose leaves and orange blossoms. When the bride retired to don her traveling gown, these huge punch bowls were brought in by the servants and set here and there in convenient places, then the rose bowls were handed about among the guests, and when the bride and groom went down to the steps to the carriage they were literally showered with the fragrant petals, with many a merry wish that none of their rose leaves might ever be crumpled, and that they might always have the roses without the thorns. This pretty idea was the girl's mother's, who wished to have something quite original at the wedding of her only daughter!

As to the days of the week on which one should marry, and the months of the year which are propitious for this event, the writer can only pass on the two rhymes over which the engaged maiden would do well to ponder long and carefully, before she decides.

Monday for health,
Tuesday for wealth,
Wednesday the best day of all;
Thursday for losses,
Friday for crosses,
Saturday no luck at all.

Just fancy the state of the maiden who happens to select Saturday for convenience sake, in ignorance of this rhyme!

Then for the months of the year we have this ancient rhyme:
Marry when the year is new—always loving, kind and true.
When February's birds do mate, you may wed, nor dread your fate.
If you wed when March winds blow, joy and sorrow both you'll know.
Marry in April when you can—joy for maiden and for man.
Marry in the month of May, you will surely rue the day!
Marry when June roses blow, over land and sea you'll go.
They who in July do wed, must always labor for their bread!
Whoever wed in August be, many a change will surely see.
Marry in September's shine, your living will be rich and fine.

If in October you do marry, love will come, but riches tarry!
If you wed in bleak November, only joy will come remember.
When December's snow falls fast, marry and true love will last!

It is interesting to note in connection with this rhyme, that statistics tell us that there are more May marriages divorced than those of any other month in the year.

The origin of the wedding veil is quite appropriately shrouded somewhat in mystery, although there are given several possible origins. The most probable of these says that originally the wedding veil was a sort of canopy, held over the couple by attendants, much in the same fashion as the canopy of flowers is held over the peasant bride on the stage; this canopy was merely a cloth, which came in time to be held only over the bride to hide her blushes; then, finally, it came to be a part of the bride's costume, worn as a sort of head dress, instead of having it carried over her head.

As for the wedding ring, as many origins have been attached to it as to the veil, nearly all of them being equally beautiful. Everyone is familiar with the ring as meaning constancy, fidelity, unbroken love, enduring forever; the circlet, having no end, signifying "Eternity." Pliny tells us, and seems to believe, that the wedding ring is worn on the third finger of the left hand because a vein runs from this finger straight to the heart of the wife, so that a ring worn on this finger was right next the wife's heart, while yet it was in sight of all the world. The ring was probably selected as a wedding token on account of its convenience; it need not be removed with different garments, its plainness making it possible to wear it with the richest as well as the poorest of garments. It is also as appropriate to wear in the halls of splendour as in the humble cottage.

The giving of presents to the newly wedded pair was, originally, a sensible and kindly custom, instead of the rather unpleasant and undesirable affair it has become. Many persons of good taste no longer give wedding presents, because they have come to mean little or nothing except an attempt to "keep up with the procession." In days of old, money was scarce; young people had little else than love to start out with, so their friends brought gifts that signified a sincere wish to help them in the rearing of their new home.

It is rather late in the day for this bit of advice, but the girl who thinks of marriage should take the precaution of first measuring the forefinger of her lover with her own, before she commits herself irrevocably. If his forefinger happens to be longer than her own, she would best reject him, for she will never rule her own household, the rule being that whichever has the longest forefinger becomes the ruling power in the home. One engaged girl, upon being told of this test, carefully measured fingers at once, and upon finding that her fiancé's finger was much longer than her own, stoutly declared that she didn't care—"She didn't want to rule the house, anyway!" The man breathed freely once more. It was this very same girl, however, who was observed to make special and strenuous efforts to set her own right foot upon the church step before the groom, and to place this same foot upon the carpet before his! It is a sure sign that whichever sets foot first upon the church step and upon the carpet at the altar, will rule the house!

Which offers a solution of the "longest forefinger" problem! Avoid as you would the pestilence, the tying of your shoe in a carriage upon your wedding day. It is "unlucky!"

Never tempt the fates by wearing green, for this is always the color of evil fortune when worn by brides.

On no account should a prospective bride read over the entire marriage service before the ceremony actually takes place, for this also is most unlucky; some even go so far as to declare that the girl who reads over the entire marriage service before she is married, will never get married at all; some dire calamity preventing it, each time the day of days approaches!

It is said that more unhappy marriages occur in May than in any other month of the year,—and more divorces, and it is also said that

"To change the name but not the letter
Is to change for worse, instead of better!"

A bride always cuts the wedding cake first, and serves the first glass of wine at the wedding feast, in token that she is now a matron and a hostess, and must look to the comfort of her guests.

Of all things, never dare to save a single pin that has been used in the wedding gown. As soon as the feast is over (to do so before would be inconvenient) remove and throw away every pin that was used in dressing the bride. It would be more kindly to put these pins at once into the wastebasket, since it seems that it is no less unlucky for the bridesmaid to pick them up than for the bride herself. Some authorities declare that it is bad luck to have a single pin of any sort used in the bridal garments. This is certainly true if that single pin happens to prick the groom, for all women have noticed that nothing seems to have precisely the same effect upon a man's temper as having a pin prick him just as he is about to throw his arm around the bride.

A bride should always manage to squeeze out a few tears upon her wedding day—I suppose to signify that her weeping days are over—or should be, for "the sweetheart's tears are honey, while those of the wife are poison" says an old eastern proverb. In ancient days a bride was supposed to weep copiously, in order to prove that she was not a witch, for witches, it was well known, could weep only three tears at a clip!

For the groom:—Don't dare to pick up your wife's handkerchief on her wedding day, should she accidentally drop it, for it is a sure sign that whoever picks up the bride's handkerchief will be forever after called upon to do little thankless tasks of all sorts that are never appreciated at their true worth. Let some disinterested person perform this service on this particular day; you'll have all the opportunity you wish to wait upon the lady in the years to come.

As for the color of the gown worn by the bride upon her wedding day, there are numberless rhymes setting forth the consequences, dire or otherwise, which follow the wearing of different shades and colors. But custom sanctions the wearing of white, and every girl should make a special effort to secure some sort of a white gown, even though it be the simplest sort of muslin frock—Have white for your wedding gown, even though obliged to go without something else, secure in the conviction that

"Married in white,
You have chosen all right!"