

A French Country Marriage.

Madame Mesmontagnes was kind enough to give me a description of the wedding of her daughter. When a young man here wishes to become acquainted with a young woman, he mentions it to some friend of the family, who applies to the parents for leave to introduce him. If this is granted, and the parents afterward conclude that he is not suitable, they tell him not to come any more. When a young man comes to demand a young lady in marriage, the parents first interest themselves in the family, whether it is a respectable one, and in the young man himself, whether he is 'sage,' or well-behaved. The young people are never left together without one of the parents being present, even when there is a talk of their being married.

At last the parents of the two young people will meet to plan the marriage; this parlement being held at the house of the young woman, where, after having had a good dinner, after having drunk well, and talked upon a quantity of other subjects, the rest of the family will leave the parents together, understanding very well what business is in hand. Then the young man's father will speak in this manner:

"We have not come here to do nothing; we have come to speak of the marriage of our children," adding, if he is a rich enough land-holder, "I give 25,000 francs to my son; how much can you give your daughter?"

If her parents do not give about as much, the marriage agreement will not be made, and the parents will separate. However, about one time in ten it will be found that the young people are too much attached to each other for the parents to continue their prohibition, and they are allowed to marry. And sometimes it will happen, when the young people are of age, and the parents entirely refuse their consent, that the former will make to them the three respectful summons, and then they can marry without the parents' consent. Such a case will happen in this commune perhaps once in three or four years.

Madame L. gave her daughter, on her own part, and from the father's estate, a vineyard of the value of 18,000 francs, and she is to receive more. The young man's parents gave to him a piece of land worth 20,000 francs, and the young pair occupy two rooms in his parents' home, where they can keep house if they should prefer it. Madame L. added that the young man's mother gave him a furnished bed, and of sheets, table-cloths, towels and napkins, each a dozen; also three dozen shirts of hemp and flax. "I gave my daughter," she added, "two dozen sheets, two dozen table-cloths, two dozen napkins, and two and a half dozen towels; with a furnished bed, a cupboard, *armoire*, and a night table. The young man's parents gave him a large bureau, and he bought the rest of the furniture. The young people are well set out, well matched, and both are industrious. He is, besides, a merchant of sabots, buying the shoes from the makers; and as he has wood of his own, he employs people to make them; and twice a week he goes to — to sell them."

The only legal marriage in France is that at the mayor's office, and there is a mayor in every commune. Madame L. tells me that this marriage does not cost any thing, but at the mass the cure marries them, and puts the ring over the first joint of the bride's finger. For this marriage he receives 12 francs. (All the religious and all the fashionable world have this second marriage. Free-thinkers in Paris—I met none in the country—make a merit of opposing it.)

Madame L. tells me that there were about eighty guests at her daughter's wedding, and all these go to the mass, coming to dine at the house at noon. She herself did not see the ceremony; she heated the oven while the others were gone, "for somebody must take care of things." There were three women, however, to do the kitchen work, and three to wait upon the table.

"And what did you have for dinner?"

"I can not tell you—all sorts of good things—perhaps twenty courses."

"Did you invite the cure?"

"Some do; we did not. We had ham, and beef bouilli—we took forty pounds of beef—we had calf's head, stewed chickens, ducks with turnips, roast leg of mutton, chickens with rice; we had eight ducks, eight turkeys, four geese; and Pierre and one of his comrades, who was invited to the wedding, went hunting the day before, and I sup-

pose altogether we plucked a hundred birds. We had a coarse of little birds—fig-peckers, sparrows, larks; and we had three pies (*vol-au-vent*) made from the livers of the poultry and the little birds. We had food enough for a week after, besides giving to the relations. The pastry cook of the village prepared a complete dessert, and we made pies. They give splendid entertainments here at weddings. There was a piece of wine drunk (about 44 gallons). We also had Champagne and Bordeaux, but there was not much used, and we had other liquors, but nobody got drunk. That is all, madame, I believe. There are people who don't make weddings, on account of the expense; perhaps only one-fourth make wedding."

This great amount of food was necessary on account of the guests staying to three meals.

The two musicians were paid by the young men guests. Dancing was kept up until about three in the morning, when the party sought a little rest wherever they could get it; some going to the barn; the little children and the hired women went to bed; and Madame L. got two hour's rest. She added: "On Wednesday we had the breakfast, and then all went away about ten." —[Phebe Earle Gibbons, in Harper's Magazine for Feb'y.]

Scotch Fare.

Oatmeal is principally used in two ways—for the making of porridge and of oat cakes. Porridge is a principal article of food of the Scottish peasantry, generally accompanied with milk, when milk can be obtained, although, when milk is scarce, butter is sometimes used, sometimes sugar, and sometimes treacle beer. For most people in a sound condition of health there is no more wholesome article of food than porridge and milk; none that contains a larger proportion of flesh-forming and heat-producing substances, while to almost all who have ever been accustomed to its use it is extremely palatable. Generally speaking, there is no better article of food for the nursery, none more likely to maintain a healthy condition of the stomach or to give vigor to the frame, although there are exceptional cases, both among the young and among adults, in which the use of porridge is unsuitable, producing painful distension of the stomach and indigestion. While the caprices of children ought not to be heeded in such a matter, the actual conditions of their constitution ought to be carefully observed and regarded. Porridge is in general made by simply boiling oatmeal in water, stirring all the while to prevent singeing, and to secure the thorough mixture of the oatmeal and water into a homogenous mass without knots. The quantity of porridge very much depends on the amount of boiling which it receives. Imperfectly boiled oatmeal porridge is a very coarse article of food; and, unfortunately, much of the porridge used by the poorer classes in Scotland and elsewhere is of this character, and the porridge prepared for the nursery is often no better, through the carelessness of servants who wish to get through their work with as little trouble as possible. It is not nearly so digestible, and therefore not so nutritious, as porridge really well made. A common mistake in the making of porridge must also here be noticed as tending much to the deterioration of its quality—the adding of meal by degrees whilst the boiling goes on, until the proper thickness is acquired, the result being that part of the meal is imperfectly boiled. The cook ought to know proper proportions of meal and water—knowledge not very difficult to acquire—and mix them at once, so that all the meal may be equally boiled. But it is to be observed that the water must be boiling before the meal is put in, which is not to be introduced in a mass, but as it were, strained through the fingers handful by handful as quickly as possible.—*Food Journal*.

Judging by Appearance.

(Concluded.)

"If they are like their noble old father I'm sure I shall like them. I think he is just splendid," answered Mabel.

The young lady stranger smiled quietly.

Mrs. Glennor answered:

"I daresay they are. Birth and breeding always show, Mabel. I for one could never mistake a person of wealth and culture for a common one."

"Is there only one daughter?" asked Mabel.

"Only one at home, the youngest one, Henrietta. And one son, Richard. I consider it very fortunate that Hamilton invited us to make this

visit, Mabel. Richard Hamilton will be very wealthy, and if you play your cards well who knows what you may do in the way of a settlement!"

"Now, mamma, if you begin to talk in that way I do solemnly declare I will take the next train that passes us back home and not go at all!"

Mrs. Glennor knew the girl was quite capable of keeping her word if she was pushed too far, so she said no more, but betook herself to the prospect in view from her window.

The ride was a warm one, but Mabel enjoyed it, and in spite of her mamma's frowns, chatted with her seat-mate quite sociably.

It was getting sundown when the train stopped at Hamilton, and several of the passengers descended, among them Mrs. Glennor and Mabel.

There was a forlorn-looking station, with a dusty little refreshment-bar in one corner of a dingy room labeled "Ladies' Room." There were two or three village idlers, with hands in their pockets, promenading up and down the platform, and that was all.

"Why, what does this mean?" fretted Mrs. Glennor. "Mr. Hamilton wrote he would be certain to have the carriage to meet us."

"Perhaps it will be here yet, mamma," said Mabel. "Suppose you ask one of these men if it has been seen."

"I believe I will," and Mrs. Glennor marched majestically up to one of the men aforesaid and inquired:

"Can you tell me whether Mr. Hamilton's carriage has been at the station to-day?"

"Yes'm—no'm—I don't know—there it are a-comin' now," was the slightly incoherent answer.

Turning in the direction of his extended finger she saw a handsome carriage rolling rapidly up.

"It is just coming," she announced to Mabel, whose eyes had already informed her of that fact.

They waited upon the dreary platform until it drove up and the driver dismounted.

Then he came up to the steps and addressed Mrs. Glennor, touching his hat respectfully.

"Ladies for Mr. Hamilton's, madam?"

"Yes. Come, Mabel."

"The carriage is ready, ladies. The spring cart is here already to take your baggage over. Will I take your tickets?"

Mrs. Glennor gave him the tickets for their trunks, and the ready coachman soon had them piled in the light cart which had followed the carriage.

"Now we are ready," declared Mrs. Glennor. But the coachman appeared to be looking for some one else.

"Our young Miss Henrietta went up town yesterday. We expected her back by this train."

"Here I am, Sam!" called a familiar voice from the door of the ladies' room; and the homely young lady in plain linen, who had shared Mabel's seat, came out of her retreat inside, and approached them.

"My goodness!" was Mrs. Glennor's dismayed ejaculation, as she flushed up to the roots of her hair.

But Mabel sprung forward with extended hand.

"What! are you Henrietta Hamilton? I am so glad!"

"And you are Miss Glennor! I am glad, too!" said the young lady, offering her hand most cordially. "I would have made myself known in the train, but I am always so shy with strangers, and I was not sure who you were till now. Mrs. Glennor, I am very glad to welcome you to Hamilton. I love your daughter already, and I am sure we shall have a delightful visit. Let us go now; Sam is waiting."

This prompt courtesy so delicately ignoring her own rude behavior in the train, was a greater rebuke to Mrs. Glennor than any show of anger could have been.

For once her ready tongue was at a loss, and she only followed her young hostess to the carriage, silently and with flushed face.

But Henrietta's kindly spirit put her at her ease, except when she remembered her mortifying blunder.

It was a wholesome lesson, however. And the next time Mrs. Glennor meets a lady in the train, whether she is robed like a queen or in plain linen, she will treat her as such, and never judge by appearance.