

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1897.

SOME SUITABLE GIFTS.

THEY ARE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BRIDE'S STATION.

A List of Gifts at a Country Wedding—Some Women who do not Spend all Their Money on a Trousseau—A Contrast Between now and Half a Century ago.

A short time ago I read an account of a wedding which interested me exceedingly! It was not exactly a society wedding, and it took place in the rural districts of New Brunswick, but the bride had evidently made a study of the descriptions of fashionable weddings and resolved that this should not go undescribed, so after a minute description of the ceremony, her own, and the guests' dresses, and the wedding feast there came an exhaustive list of the presents. Doubtless they would have called up a smile to the face of the fashionable bride who is obliged to engage a policeman to guard the treasures lavished upon her by her friends; but they looked quite imposing in print, and were quite as useful to the little country bride as the elegant array of bridal spoil could possibly be to her city contemporary.

I remember that the rural bride's gifts included such articles as—"flat irons" from an aunt; "rocking chair" from an uncle; "quilt" from another aunt; "rolling pin and tray" from a cousin; "a complete set of washing tubs and board from another relative, several more quilts, a pair of feather pillows, a sofa cushion, and if I remember aright either a cow or a calf, from the bride's mother. The usual number of butter knives, pickle dishes "half a dozen silver spoons" etc., were sandwiched in-between, but it was the homelier gifts that attracted my attention, and after a moment's amusement at the sight of such articles arrayed in print, and so carefully described, I thought "why not?" If the original object of wedding presents was supposed to be the helping of two young people to set up housekeeping, why should not the gifts of their friends and relatives take as useful and practical a form as possible? Where the bride's parents are wealthy, and the groom is well-to-do, it is different, and the dear few hundred intimate friends who are bidden to the wedding are quite right in lavishing as many expensive and useless offerings on the bride, as they like. Cut glass puff boxes and scent bottles with wrought silver tops, and silver backed nail, tooth and hair brushes are quite in her line, and sure to please her. But for the girl in strictly middle class variety whose father has a hard struggle to clothe, educate, provide outfits for three or four daughters, and who is contentedly marrying the man of her heart, a young clerk whose salary is considerably under a thousand a year, what could be more acceptable than a set of wedding presents which would really help her in the important matter of getting a home ready? For instance—in the days of our mother's no girl ever dreamed of being married without providing herself amply with house linen. Long before her own personal belongings were purchased the sheets, table cloths, towels pillow cases were selected, hemmed, laundered and stored away, then, as I heard one of these brides of twenty-five years ago say, "Whatever was left over, of your trousseau money was put upon your own back, and sometimes that was not much." It was quite a heavy tax for the bride's family when they were not well off, because no one ever thought of letting a girl go to her new home with less than a dozen of everything, and house linen cost a good deal more than it does now; so a wedding in the family often meant rigid economy for the remaining members long after the event was a thing of the past. Things are greatly changed and simplified now, and the bride of today is not only quite satisfied with half, instead of a whole, dozen, but it is no longer considered obligatory on her to bring her husband a stock of house linen, and many girls never consider such a thing for a moment, in planning their outfit. Every girl looks forward to being remembered by her friends whether her marriage is a quiet one or not, and her wedding presents are considered a sufficient contribution towards housekeeping.

Of course this is merely a shifting of the burden from the bride to the bridegroom's shoulders and sometimes he can ill afford to assume it. The furnishing of even the smallest house is a serious matter and an expensive one, and few young men save much money now-a-days, so if the bride's friends should happen to make her

a present of enough house linen to begin with it would be a great help.

Suppose instead of squandering their pocket money on silver bon bon dishes and spoons, which are useless in the extreme to people who have little money to waste on bon-bons, the bride's girl friends were to assemble, talk the matter over and each decide to provide some necessary piece of house linen.

"I intended giving Pollie half a dozen solid coffee spoons," says one girl, after the scheme has been unfolded to her, "but perhaps two nice tablecloths would be just as useful, now you suggest it and they would cost the same." "Why yes," says another, "I think it is a lovely idea, for I heard Pollie say they would have to furnish so plainly, as Jim had never saved much. Let me go with you when you choose the tablecloths and I will get a dozen napkins to match. I was so worried because I could get Pollie anything as handsome as the rest of you, but [the napkins] will be just the thing! Another girl is eager to promise a dozen towels, embroidered with the future bride's initials, a fourth takes rapid mental stock of her finances and decides that a good white counterpane will be quite within her means. Another will provide two pairs of sheets hemstitched, initialed, and still another promises a five o'clock tea cloth and half a dozen tea doilies. In fact, by the time the meeting breaks up Pollie is sure of a very respectable amount of linen to begin housekeeping with, and the girls have arranged to meet again when it is all made up and laundered. Pack the different gifts in one good-sized box, and send it to the bride shortly before her marriage, as an offering from her girl friends.

Let no one imagine that such gifts are either poor, or small. The girl who gives her friend one dozen of towels, or two pairs of sheets, is giving her a very substantial present, because a good quality of house linen always costs a good price, and though less showy than a complete set of silver.

When the girl who has very little money to spend in presents, need not despair of being able to give her friend a useful present, for a set of cup towels, dusters, and holders, though they cost little would be a most acceptable present for any young wife and one which would be a source of far more real satisfaction to her than the handsomest piece of silver. I remember once hearing an old lady, whose son had recently been married say—"John's wife had everything that heart could wish for, in her trousseau, more dresses than she can ever wear, lots of everything for her house, enough silver to last her all her life, and the most elegant presents, but not one dish cloth, cup towel, duster or holder and before they could go to housekeeping, I had to set to work and make her enough to start with."

So take this hint girls, try to make the gifts you offer your friends who are on the brink of matrimony, as useful as possible, instead of merely showy and rest assured that even the duster and cup towels will be thoroughly appreciated, and the motive regarded far more closely than the value of the present. There are usually plenty of people to give a bride handsome presents, but it is only the few who love her, that take the trouble to really study her wants, and spend time and thought, as well as money, in the hope of giving her pleasure. Even the washboard that country bride received had something sacred about it, if it was given with a loving wish to please her, and the quilt deserved to be handed down in her family as an heirloom if each of the many stitches required to finish it, was set in with a loving thought.

ASTRA.

WHEN SINGERS SHOULD EAT.
How this Question is Decided by an English Authority.
Among the questions which vocalists have to settle for themselves, says the London Family Doctor, is that of eating. Some of the greatest singers of the world cannot sing for hours after they have eaten while others must eat almost the last thing before attempting even a concert selection. If the digestion of a vocalist be normal, it is best to eat about two hours before singing.

The body should rest for three-quarters of an hour after eating, and if possible, no FOUNTAIN SYRINGES—2 quart, in wood box, with 4 pipes (including regional irrigator) \$1.00. Postpaid to any part of Canada \$1.10. C. K. Snow, Druggist, St. John, N. B.

FOR FEBRUARY ONLY.

MEN'S CLOTHING DEPARTMENT.

THIS is our first CLEARING-UP SALE in this Department, and we intend to make it a great success. We have therefore REDUCED a lot of goods especially for this sale to prices that will make EVERYTHING OFFERED A DECIDED BARGAIN.

All broken lines in Suits, Coats, Vests, Trousers, Ulsters, Overcoats, Waterproof Coats, and Office Coats will be included in this sale.

Boys' and Youths' Clothing Department.

For this sale we intend offering the GREATEST VALUE WE HAVE EVER SHOWN in Boys' Separate Pants, Sailor Suits (long and short pants), Boys' Two and Three Piece Suits, Boys' Reckers and Ulsters, Boys' Spring Reckers, Youths' Suits with Long Pants. All odds and ends and broken lines will be sold at Greatly Reduced Prices, and many lines of New Goods will be offered Special Prices for FEBRUARY ONLY.

Manchester Robertson & Allison, St. John.

faculty should be used arduously during that time. Reading interferes with digestion, and any mental exertion delays the process just so much longer. The animal which eats a good dinner and then lies down teaches a very good lesson, especially to vocalists. The food should be slowly digested and allowed to replenish every exhausted part of the system. Then the voice is prepared to do good work. The stomach should be empty when great vocal effort is to be made, but it should not be in the weak state that follows want of food.

Patti uses so little breath that it seems as if she needed none at all, and this is the way every voice should be used. The facility with which she uses art spares her body any strain, and she exhausts about one-third of the amount of vital force when she sings that most vocalists are conscious they use. She steps from the stage into the green-room capable of going through the scenes again, while others are too prostrated to speak. The voice should be the last organ to show declining power, and, rightly used, ought to be beautiful at 60 years of age. Little food, and only that of the simplest and most nutritious kind, should be the rule by which singers should live.

THE ADMIRAL'S PLAYERS.

A Scene in Coventry During The Days Of Good Queen Bess.

The ancient city of Coventry stands upon a little hill, with old St. Michael's steeple and the spire of Holy Trinity Church rising above it against the sky; and, as the master-player and the boy came climbing up from the south, walls, towers, chimneys and red-tiled roofs were turned to gold by the glow of the setting sun.

To Nick it seemed as if a halo overhung the town—a ruddy glory and a wonder bright, for here the Grey Friars of the great monastery had played their holy mysteries and miracle-plays for over a hundred years; here the trade-guilds had held their pageants when the friar's day was done; here were all the wonders that old men told by winter fires.

People were coming and going through the gates like bees about a hive; and in the distance Nick could hear the sound of many voices, the rush of feet, wheels and hoofs, and the shrill pipe of music. Here and there were little knots of country folks making holiday—a father and mother with a group of rosy children; a lad and his lass, spruce in new finery, and gay with bits of ribbon—merry groups that were ever changing. Gay banners flapped on tall ash staves. The suburb fields were filled with booths and tents and stalls and butts for archery. The very air seemed eager with the eve of holiday.

But what to Nick was breathless wonder was to Carew only a twice-told tale; so he pushed through the crowded thoroughfares, amid a throng that made Nick's head spin round, and came quickly to the Blue Bear Inn.

The court was crowded to the gates with horses, travellers, and serving-men; and here and there and everywhere rushed the busy innkeeper, with a linen napkin fluttering on his arm, his cap half off, and in his hot hand a pewter flagon, from which the brown ale dripped in spatters on his fat legs as he flew.

"They're here," said Carew, looking shrewdly about; "for there is Gregory Goole, my groom, and Stephen Magill, the tire-man. In with thee, Nicholas."

He put Nick before him with a little air of patronage, and pushed him into the room.

It was a large low chamber, with heavy beams overhead, hung with leather jackets

and pewter tankards. Around the walls stood rough tables, at which a medley of guests sat eating, drinking, dicing, playing at cards, and talking loudly, all at once while the tapster and the cook's knave sped wildly about.

At a great table in the midst of the riot sat the Lord High Admiral's players—a score or more loud-swashing gallants, richly clad in ruffs and bands, embroidered shirts, Italian doublets slashed and laced, Venetian hose, gay velvet caps with jeweled bands, and every man a poniard or a rapier at his hip. Nick felt very much like a little brown sparrow in a flock of gaudy Indian birds.

The board was loaded down with meat and drink; and some of the players were eating with forks, a new trick from the London court, which Nick had never seen before. But all the diners looked up when Carew's face was recognized, and welcomed him with a deafening shout.

He waved his hand for silence. "Thanks for these kind plaudits, gentle friends," said he, with a mocking air, "I have returned."

"Yes, we see that ye have, Gaston," they all shouted, and laughed again. "Ay," said he, thrusting his hand into his pouch, "ye fled, and left me to be spoiled by the spoiler, but ye see I have left the spoiler spoiled."

Lifting his hand triumphantly, he shook in their faces the golden chain that the burgesses of Stratford had given him, and the laying his hand upon Nick's shoulder, bowed to them all, and to him with courtly grace and said: "Be known, be known all! Gentlemen, my Lord Admiral's players, Master Nicholas Skylark, the sweetest singer in all the kingdom of England!"

Nick's cheeks flushed hotly, and his eyes fell; for they all stared curiously at him, and then at Carew standing up behind him, and several grinned mockingly and winked in a knowing way. He stole a look at Carew; but the master-player's face was frank and quite unmoved, so that Nick felt reassured. "Master Skylark," by John Bennett, in St. Nicholas.

PRETTY LONESOME WORK.

That of the Lighthouse Keepers Along the Florida Keys.

More ship's bones lie upon the outer reef girdling the keys of South Florida than perhaps upon any other shoals, excepting Hatteras, in this country. Capt. Thomas S. Eells, agent of the Lloyds in this city, has a record of shipwrecks on the coast of Florida for many years, and the aggregate of losses foot up surprisingly high in the millions of dollars.

The strait of Florida has long been an ocean highway for steamers and sailing ships bound from foreign and domestic ports to New Orleans, Central, and South America. In fact, the outlet of the great Gulf of Mexico, surrounded by rich

and fertile countries, has been this narrow strait between the keys and Cuba, through which the Gulf Stream passes. Consequently, it is not surprising that in this narrow strait, the cauldron, where the West Indian hurricanes generate, with its concealed reefs of coral, thousands of vessels have ended their careers, and more than thousands of men have lost their lives. Few sailors pass through the strait now without being reminded of the brave men and the brave ships whose skeletons whiten the sands beneath the surface of the limpid-green waters, and some of them, as they watch the storm scud fly across the moon and listen to the moan of the reef buoy mingling with the creaking of the spars of the ship, perhaps have good ground to believe that this place is haunted by demons of the deep and the souls of dead comrades.

It is no wonder that the inhabitants of the keys, the "Conchs," have grown rich in wrecking. In these latter days, however, there are fewer wrecks in the strait than there were some years ago, for Uncle Sam has marked the contour of the dangerous hidden reef with a fine system of light-houses, each with a light of separate and distinct character, so that the mariner may know how to shape his course in the blackest and stormiest of nights.

The job of lighthouse keeper is about the loneliest way of making a living in the catalogue of occupations. The mental strain has proven so great in several instances that the keeper grew melancholy to such an extent that he ended it by blowing out his brains. The system is now so arranged that the sudden darkening of an important reef lamp by a suicide's bullet is not probable, for two keepers are stationed in each light for company's sake as well as to guard against sickness.

These two keepers of the key lights for two months on a stretch seldom see any faces except their own and converse with nobody except each other. The light-houses are, on an average, twenty miles from land, and ships pass from ten to twenty miles away. The lighthouses are built of four great iron pillars, founded deep in the coral and towering toward each other. Platforms of steel bind the pillars together; sleeping and storage rooms are constructed and the lamp crowns all. The place is not perilous, but in a storm must be what the colored folks call "lonesome" to an uncanny degree.

Most of the keepers have developed into omnivorous readers. Some of them, however, have pursued a steady purpose, and one we have in mind prepared himself for admittance to the bar, and has since become one of Key West's most eminent lawyers. He has a dramatic manner of expression, and learned it, so 'tis said, by "noratin' to the winds and the waves, and his single companion.—Florida Times Union.

Pill Clothes.

The good pill has a good coat. The pill coat serves two purposes; it protects the pill, and disguises it to the sensitive palate. Some coats are too heavy; they won't dissolve, and the pills they cover pass through the system, harmless as a bread pellet. Other coats are too light, and permit the speedy deterioration of the pill. After 30 years exposure, Ayer's Sugar Coated Pills have been found as effective as if just fresh from the laboratory. It's a good pill, with a good coat. Ask your druggist for

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