

Let the Honeymoon be Brief.

By Mrs. Humphrey.

Among the numerous things that have been revised by society is the old fashioned honeymoon. It used to consist of four more or less happy weeks spent in a dual solitude and bridging the time between the wedding day and the installment in the new home. Now it means anything from a couple of days to a couple of years. This last is exceptional, the tendency being rather towards abridgment. Only the other day the bride of Monday turned up at the marriage of a bride of Thursday and no one was surprised. Commenting on this, some one remarked "Who should turn up this morning but Angelina! She and Edwin have been three days wed and already are bored with each other's society. Their plan is to stop at an out of the way hotel and make a round of the theatres, sitting in the upper boxes to avoid detection. Edwin sneaks past his club in the seclusion of a four wheeler."

Many happy pairs snub the honeymoon even more than this. They pretend that they are going away, but do nothing of the kind. They simply go home and amuse themselves with arranging their wedding presents to their liking. Or, if home is not quite ready, they go to a big hotel for a few days and secrete themselves there. It is easily done. They have their meals in private sitting room. Their names are unknown to any one but the manager, and they enjoy privacy.

One reads in the accounts of fashionable weddings: "The bride and bridegroom left later in the afternoon amidst a shower of rice and old satin slippers for the beautiful country home lent by some one for the honeymoon." The servants at the country house ask each other: "Where are they?" as the hours of the wedding day roll by. Perhaps someone thinks of sending the housekeeper a telegram. Perhaps not. But this is the case of the newly wedded pair. It is out of the question, they think, to drive up to the station with rice or confetti shedding itself from them every time they move. Why not do as the Lovewells did—go to a hotel? They are both so tired that the idea of the railway journey exhausts them even if they could get rid of the rice and the too significant confetti. So the brougham is dismissed, the coachman is tipped, and a cab conveys the couple to a hotel. A day or two later they are supposed to take possession of the country house or proceed "to Niagara Falls or the Italian lakes, via Paris," as announced.

The middle classes are more orthodox about the honeymoon, but even with them it is dwindling even from the fortnight to which it has long been reduced. There seems to be no medium between a few days at some hotel at a lake resort and a voyage to South Africa, a visit to Cairo, a journey up the Nile, or a trip to Japan. A honeymoon tour of the world is not uncommon. In these busy days the bridegroom

never may have had his opportunity for making the modern equivalent of the "grand tour," which used to mean a visit to London, to Paris, to Berlin, to Vienna, and to Rome. That has now shrunk by comparison to a mere excursion. To share one's wanderjahr with a charming bride might be a project with a flavor of tameness in it, but this depends on temperament. To some men the plan strongly recommends itself.

The lakes have been in great favor as honeymoon resorts of late, though the European trip is more up to date. "Via Paris" legislates the bride. Now Paris has its dangers for the husband and it may be remarked that the young couples do not always return via Paris. The shops there are so tempting that even the bride whose trousseau is of the most complete and sumptuous description cannot always refrain from coveting supplementary articles of dress. The bridegroom is but too eager to indulge her; and here is one reason that the honeymoon occasionally has to be abbreviated, though reluctantly. Even those agreeable checks that it is now the fashion for relatives and intimate friends to give as wedding presents are like all other money in failing to do half what one expects of it. "Money melts!" And its melting mood particularly is observable when the owner is traveling. What wonder that anemic purses often cause the happy pair to wend their homeward way a week or two before their friends expect them?

Sometimes a premature return is due to one of those little tiffs which often free the first few months of married life from anything approaching monotony. The honeymoon in such a case is like one of those Italian dishes of which the flavor is compounded of *agro dolce*. The sweet is too sweet, the bitter is most bitter, though the general effect is not unpleasant. But when the bitter temporarily is predominant the bride longs for a talk with mother—the worst thing she could have, by the way. And it is more than likely that by the time the return journey is over the sweet will have surged up and conquered the bitter.

So varied is temperament and so freely is it allowed to rule us nowadays, that there is excellent reason for elasticity in the duration of the honeymoon. While some could enjoy a double moon of bliss, there are others to whom a single fortnight of uninterrupted companionship is wearing. Let such by all means cut it short. Three days are long enough when two have dragged unduly. Then it is time to pack the portmanteaux and away. The month of honey was devised for happy lovers. What of the loveless—the May and December couples? The "matched, not mated"? The partners in a marriage of convenience? The *tete-a-tete* is but a weary business to such as these and the honeymoon is sweet in name only. Let it be brief.



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SEE DESCRIPTIVE ADVT. ON PAGE 15