

PROGRESS, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1894.

## STOP THROWING RICE.

IT IS A SENSELESS AND ANNOYING CUSTOM.

It Had a Very Pretty Origin, However—Some Remarkable Scenes at Provincial Weddings where Hooligans and Hoydens Acted Unseemly.

The Vicar of Cropely, an Oxfordshire village, has had the following notice attached to the church door with regard to rice-throwing at weddings: "It is particularly requested that no rice be thrown at the conclusion of weddings when the bride and bridegroom leave the church. The bride's house, and not the church, is the right place for observances which have no connection with the religious ceremony, and are sometimes a cause of disorder and irreverence."—South Bucks (Eng.) Free Press.

What a blessed thing it would be, not only for the unfortunate bride and groom, and the immediate wedding party, but also for the guests, and the disinterested spectators, if Canadian clergymen would follow the excellent example of the Vicar of Cropely and discourage by every means in their power that most senseless and annoying custom of pelting people with rice at weddings.

I am willing to admit that the habit had its origin in a praiseworthy and romantic superstition, current in India, where the showering of a young bride with rice was supposed to insure peace and plenty for her. In her new life, since rice was the emblem of plenty. But when the custom has degenerated from its former significance into affording a mere opportunity for the toughs and street gamins of the town, to gratify their natural taste for mischief and gives them liberty to commit a series of what in reality are nothing less than assaults; then it is time the custom was put down with the strongest hand possible—even the hand attached to the powerful arm of the law, if necessary.

It is all very well for the bride's friends and relations to send a shower of rice after her as she leaves the paternal mansion to set out on her wedding journey, or to throw a handful of it rattling against the car windows as the train which carries her, glides out of the station; such a demonstration is hardly the best form in the world, but then form and formality are a good deal lost sight of, in a moment of such general excitement, and it is at least a harmless performance. Of late years however, the ceremony of rice throwing has been almost entirely taken out of the hands of the wedding guests, and appropriated by hordes of ill-behaved persons of both sexes, who crowd to a church wedding, as they would to any other free show, doing their best to make as much disturbance as possible, and devoting special attention to the effort to ruin every garment worn by the bridal party, and to make them suffer just as much inconvenience as possible from the moment they enter the church, until they reach the welcome shelter of their own homes.

It is far from pleasant for a mere guest who is only taking a passive part in the entertainment, to be greeted on leaving the church with a handful of rice flung directly into her face with the full force of some unruly cub of a boy, or half-grown hoyden of a girl who should know better, but unfortunately they do not confine their operations to the rice industry alone, and if rice is disagreeable, when used as a weapon instead of a food, split peas, and whole white beans are infinitely worse; and lately the larger vegetable product is frequently substituted for the smaller, with disastrous effect, and great slaughter for the forces. I have seen a hapless bridegroom vainly endeavoring to extract a split pea from his ear, while standing at the communion rail waiting for his bride to appear; and I have watched with deepest sympathy the efforts of an infuriated groomsmen to gnaw a handful of rice and some white beans from the inside of his collar, and prevent them from slipping down his back; while the person was engaged in exhorting the newly-made husband and wife to treat each other kindly, and not spend too much on dress. And I have seen guests with their handkerchiefs pressed so firmly to their eyes during the whole ceremony that I felt certain their emotions had overcome them and they were dissolved in tears, while in reality they were only nursing a wounded eye, in which a grain of rice had lodged, and positively refused to leave. Worse of all, perhaps in point of deliberate malice, though not so dangerous, is the bag of flour with which some ruffians provide themselves when starting out to attend a church wedding in the character of uninvited and most undesirable spectators. At a very fashionable wedding lately, I saw a girl, and a grown up one too, deliberately empty a small bag of flour, as nearly over the bride's procession as it left the church, as she could reach, and if she did not succeed in ruining the evening dress of the groom and others, it certainly was not her fault. And I heard of a case where the wedding took place on a rainy evening, and such quantities of flour were thrown over the wedding party that the rain made it into

paste, and when that paste was dry the task of removing it, is one that can be more readily imagined than described. In fact I have witnessed so many bear garden scenes at church weddings that the solemnity of the beautiful service was utterly marred, and I no longer wonder that people should prefer being married in the seclusion of their own homes, to going through the ordeal that awaits them in church.

I knew of one bride having her veil completely torn off before she could get out of the church door, so roughly was she handled by the crowd of roughs about the door and porch, and I was present at another wedding where the enthusiastic spectators succeeded in pulling down three joints of the ecclesiastical stove pipe on the heads of the guests in their efforts to gain a nearer view of the proceedings; they used the pipe as a sort of scaffolding to climb up by, and as it had not been built for that purpose it gave way, and the frightened squeals of the small boys who were clinging to it, added greatly to the impressiveness of the occasion.

I have understood on good authority that the elders, wardens and finance committees of the various churches rather object to church weddings on the score of expense, as there is sure to be an extensive bill for repairs to be settled before the church is fit for occupation again, and they are beginning to think that it costs a good deal more than it comes to.

In large cities such a state of affairs would not be tolerated for a moment—it is in the small towns and country places that the nuisance flourishes apparently unchecked, and when I saw the paragraph from an English paper which heads this mournful plaint, I wondered if it would not be possible for Canadian clergymen to adopt some method of checking the freedom with which the great outside public take part in one of the most sacred services of the church. Of course I am well aware that such a mild measure as that adopted by the Vicar of Cropely would be useless in our free and untrammelled civilization, but perhaps a policeman, or a cordon of vestrymen stationed at the church gate, and armed with legal authority to search every small boy, detain every girl who carries a suspicious looking parcel, and confiscate every grain of rice, every split pea, and every bean, found in their possession. A policeman or two thinly scattered amongst the congregation would assist in preserving the inside decorations from destruction, and though these might not prove perfectly effectual remedies they would I think lessen the evil considerably until we all become educated up to the plan of having the admission to society, and indeed all church weddings, exclusively by ticket, or decide to get married either at midnight or in the cold gray dawn, before the world of sightseers is astir.

### AN ORIGINAL ADDRESS.

A Canadian Newspaper gets up One "Out of the Ordinary."

The following is an official copy of the address presented to Mr. William Campbell, private secretary to Earl Aberdeen, by the Victoria, B. C., Colonist staff:

To His Luminosity, William Campbell, Esq., Gentleman, Private Secretary, Craftsman (of the stylographic pen), Taxpayer of the City of Ottawa, and Freeman of the Lover's Walk, Prince of Good Fellows. Companion of the Press, etc., etc., etc.

### MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LUMINOSITY:

We, the midnight toilers of the inky precincts of the Colonist office, having no further use for you until the next occasion, desire to take advantage of your goodness and unsurpassed benevolence toward us during your brief stay in this the choicest gem in the westernmost coast of Canada, where the opaque liquids of the James Bay flats wait their fragrance in the sky as they sweep with majestic vehemence to meet the west-wind's saline waters of the inner harbor that gently lap the borders of the Songes reservation.

Your visit to these our shores where the playful octopus clasps in loving embrace the solitary salmon, and the gushing cascade outstretches its neck toward the vapory heaven, whose dewy contents send the cold thrill down the consumptive's neck and back, will long be held in happy memory. In this city we have all the advantages that go to make up a great and good society, from the knickerbocker dude in spats to the native Sitwah maiden in her pristine loveliness.

We beg Your Luminosity to bring before the Civil Service at Ottawa, the great damage that is done by the destruction of our oysters by the praiser tourist from the United States, and that you will use your endeavors to have passed a law making it compulsory upon newspaper publishers to furnish a tank of "special" in every "local" room.

Again, with parched throats bidding you a fond farewell, and thanking you for the humble burnt offering which we trust we will take pleasure in sacrificing in our behalf.

We subscribe ourselves, The Colonist, Victoria, B. C., 24 m. 9th November, 1894.

Mum's Part of the Word.

"Mum's the word," said the man who goesips.

"No," replied Willie Whistles. "It may have been once, but now chrysanthemum's the word."

## WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

A MESSAGE IN THE MONCTON "TIMES" AGONYCOLUMN.

Who is Miss—, and Who, or What, are her "Accessories"?—A Few Possible Explanations—Danger of Ignorance Becoming Widespread at Moncton.

MONCTON, Nov. 28.—The following startling announcement appeared in last Saturday's issue of the Moncton Daily Times:—

### LEGAL—CAUTION.

MONCTON, N. B., Nov. 23rd, 1894. Will Miss—, and her accessories who made the assertion regarding the young ladies keeping company with the slums of the town and also previous false statements all relating to the one and same thing, slander—please bear in mind that their names are well known and any further comment is on—this—direction will be published in detail and probably cause the foundation, ignorance, to become widespread as well as the names being annexed thereto. Advice is well, better to be sure than sorry.

W. H. WOODWARD.

This is a free translation of the item with a marginal reference appended, as the printing was so very doubtful that it required careful study, especially as the author had been very economical in the matter of stops, so the reader had to draw quite largely upon his imagination in some places. I fancy "s—ums" stood for slums, though it was equally easy to make it into scums; and I hope the inspiration which led me to read "this" where merely the letters "oni" appeared, may have been a correct one. I did not think that "gn—ance" could possibly stand for any other word than ignorance, and so I substituted it left less to the imagination. If I have made any mistake, or misread the author of these lines, in any way, I take the opportunity of offering an apology of such amplitude as I hope will fit the crime, and cause the author to acquit me of all evil intention.

Now I don't think anyone who has read that paragraph carefully, and pondered over its meanings, can fail to glean from it one fact at least, and that is that some one is evidently "mad" about something, and the injured party has no idea of suffering in silence or bearing her wrongs without endeavoring to obtain some redress. I admire her spirit immensely and sympathize with her deeply, but I confess I would like to know what it is all about. Like Mark Twain's celebrated item, it appears to read it over the less plain, it appears to me more like the same remark, so I am relieved to know that my failure to catch the meaning of the mysterious paragraph is not caused by any special dullness of comprehension, or rapid decay of the mental powers on my own part.

Why, I know dozen of people who have spent more time than they could well spare puzzling over that little item, and if it was intended as a prize puzzle its author may rest assured of success, for few things like the missing words contest, the fifteen puzzle and the pigs in clover, have caught the public eye and held the public attention as has that done. But it is only natural that we should all grow a little weary of fruitless speculation and begin to wonder when the answer to this interesting problem is going to appear, and the "further comments" promised "be published in detail" and—awful threat—cause "ignorance to become widespread."

The deep and dangerous significance of that menace is enough to chill one's blood, and awaken a shuddering curiosity as to who the luckless "Miss—," and her "accessories" whose long tongues have led them into such an unpleasant position, can possibly be. It is really a terrible position for any girl to be placed in, standing in imminent danger of causing widespread ignorance in an enlightened town like Moncton where public institutions of learning abound and all intellectual pursuits flourish. Why I wonder the school teachers don't take the matter up! Poor Miss—! What could she and her "accessories" have said about the "Wronged" ones? Surely something much worse than the accusation mentioned—keeping company with the slums of the town—because slumming has long been considered such a praiseworthy and meritorious occupation for young ladies to engage in that it has become a recognized pursuit not only in "the effete monarchies of the old world" but also amongst the upper classes of American and Canadian society, so that it is far from being a reproach to the best and most high bred damsel, to say she is addicted to slumming, and only means that the maiden mentioned as just a little better and more unselfish than her fellows! Perhaps Miss— was unwise enough to express an opinion that the injured parties used rouge or powder to enhance their charms, or that their hair was their own only in the sense of their having paid for it? "Other false statements?" Could those cruel slanders have dared to assert that the traduced young ladies were false teeth? Hardly for then surely a duel to the death would have been the only alternative, and the offenders would have been "sure" of one thing long ere this, that they were very "sorry" they

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had interfered with matters which did not concern them and played ninetails with a can of dynamite, as it were.

But alas, speculation is useless and only a waste of time after all! So the best thing we can do is to dismiss the matter from our minds if possible, patiently awaiting the tragic moment so touchingly referred to when the publication of those further comments will cause enlightenment, as well as ignorance, to become widespread, and the names be "annexed thereto."

GEOFFREY CUTHBERT STRANGE.

### TELEPHONING WITHOUT A PHONE.

An Alleged Remarkable Discovery by a Young Buffalo Electrician.

Walter Wilhelm of Buffalo, a young man not more than 18 or 20 years of age, is developing remarkable genius in mechanics, and has invented, among other useful things, a telephone transmitter of wonderful power, which is likely to greatly increase the efficiency of that most useful instrument and make it more than ever available for long-distance work. The great power of the instrument has been demonstrated in a curious way. By attaching his transmitter to a telephone wire he can make his voice heard distinctly by an operator sitting beside his instrument any ordinary sounder, many miles distant.

This is a great wonder to telegraphy operators, and many of them declare, until they have heard the sounder talk that such a thing is impossible. None of them ever knew anything like it in their experience. The discovery was made entirely by accident, as many great discoveries have been, and the process will doubtless be improved until it will be possible, by attaching a good receiver to the line in the place of a telephone sounder, to fill a large room with the sounds of a human voice whose owner is many miles away at the time.

Several years ago a few young fellows in an up-town neighborhood, who desired to learn something of telegraphy and find amusement at the same time, put in a small telegraphic system of wires and instruments connecting their several places of abode. They did not dream to what magnitude the system would grow. The West Side Private Telegraph Company to-day has thirty or thirty-five members and about thirty-five miles of wire touching nearly every street on the west side of the city from Black Rock to the Postal Telegraph office at the corner of Main and Niagara streets. The members intend that the company shall become an incorporated body. Its lines are in splendid condition, and it uses the regular standard wire, and No. 9 insulated wire where this is required to conform to the city ordinances. As the line is connected with the Postal Telegraph office, each member of the company can sit in his own home or office, wherever his instrument may be, and transmit or receive messages to or from any part of the United States. The expense of maintaining the system is small. It is used to a considerable extent for commercial and business purposes as well as for amusement. Indeed, it was on account of its demonstrated usefulness for other purposes than the use of learners that this class has been frozen out of its membership. On election night each member was able to get all the election returns at his own home. The wire is often used for agents of checkers between two players of the game of checkers. The officers of the company are: William W. Read, President; Dr. C. M. Daniels, Vice-President; S. B. Hain, Secretary, and Walter Wilhelm, Treasurer. There is also an executive committee consisting of the officers named and Byron J. Tillman. The general manager is Mr. Leon Woodruff, who, with Mr. Wilhelm, has worked hard to perfect the system and brought it to an excellent state.

Now we come to the starting point of the story. One of the members of the company was sitting near his instrument at his home the other day when he distinctly heard the call, "Hello! Hello!" two or three times repeated. An investigation convinced him that the calls could have proceeded from no other source than the sounder. Opening the key he began to inquire who had called, and learned that young Wilhelm had been calling through his transmitter, which was attached to the wire. Mr. Woodruff, his way of communicating by means of transmitters and receivers being an ordinary one since telephones came in use. Hardly able to believe his senses, the man asked Wilhelm to sing a song, which he did, the tones of his voice floating out into the room, easily through the line instrument. Other persons have heard the same phenomenon.

Yesterday a reporter visited the residence on North Pearl street for the purpose of hearing a few songs, modified somewhat by distance and by passage through the little telegraphic instrument. Six persons were in the room when the experiment was tried. Wilhelm, at his home, a mile or more away, sang "The Old Oaken Bucket," "After the Ball," "Sweet Marie," "America," and "Old Black Joe." The tune in each instance was easily distinguished, and the inflection and modulations of the singer's voice were accurately reproduced in the sounder, whence they floated out to the furthest corners of the room. It was wonderful, and all present were much amused as well as surprised. To get the best results in receiving in this way the plate is adjusted close to the magnet in the instrument. That is all that is required. There was a large music box in this house, and the host said he believed that by the use of one of these transmitters he could fill the house of every member of the line with music at the same time.

By the way, it should be mentioned that the operator's voice did not come in a direct course to the house by any means, but followed the system of wires for perhaps fifteen miles before reaching there.

### Tooth Worship.

On a foliage-covered hill, just outside the walls of the city of Bangkok, a yearly festival is held in honor of the sacred tooth of the Buddha, a replica of which, brought from Ceylon, is kept in a shrine at the summit. The hill is a small one, in fact, it is an artificial brick-built hill, but yet, as the only hill-like eminence for miles around, it is regarded with great reverence by the natives, and called by the dignified name of the "Golden Mountain," and the temple in connection with it is called "Wat Saket." For a few days, towards the end of November, every year, the people flock to the shrine to visit the holy and sacred relic, and the visit forms the occasion for a great deal of innocent merry-making and jollity. In Ceylon, another famous tooth of Buddha is worshipped, and draws enormous crowds of devotees. In the fifteenth century, a royal devotee in Ceylon offered 6,480,320 flowers at the shrine of the tooth. The Cingalese worship a monkey's tooth; the Malabar Islanders an elephant's; the Tonga Islanders a shark's tooth; while some of the Siamese worship the tooth of a sacred monkey.

### The Longest Balloon Voyage.

The longest balloon voyage as far as we know was one undertaken in 1883 in which the distance travelled was a little more than 1,200 miles. The voyagers on that occasion made an ascent in France, with the intention of crossing the Mediterranean and landing in Algeria. The wind, proving unfavorable, carried them towards Corsica. When they were near that island the balloon descended towards the water, and for a time their lives were in great jeopardy. By throwing out all their apparatus they succeeded in getting the balloon to rise to a height of between 2,000 and 3,000 feet, and, travelling on to Italy, they safely descended in that country at a little village near Brescia.

### No Price for Friendship.

I was at a Canadian seaport on business, some years since, and saw an old, dispirited-looking Highlander making his steady way to board an outgoing ocean steamer. By his side was a handsome Scotch collie dog, chained and locked to the pier. Many passers-by admired the dog, and wished to buy him. Finally a gentleman offered the old Scot \$50 for the dog, but he stoutly declined to part with his companion. A friend with me remarked, "Did not that gentleman offer you \$50 for the dog?" "Aye," "Wasn't that a great price?" "O the price was weel aneuch, but it was na the price for freenship."

### Boarders at Hampton Court.

One of the ladies at Hampton Court Palace recently undertook to increase her income by taking boarders. The Lord Chamberlain was therefore obliged to point out that while rooms at Hampton Court may be temporarily lent with the Queen's consent, and there is no objection to relatives or friends contributing to the expenses of the ladies while on a bona fide visit, the Queen draws the line at attempts to make pecuniary profit out of her hospitality.

### A Roumanian Custom.

A strange custom is still observed in Roumania which reminds one strongly of Robinson Crusoe. When a servant has displeased his or her master, the offender takes his boots in his hands and places them before the bedroom door of his master. It is a sign of great submission, and the boots are either kicked away as an intimation that the fault will not be forgiven or else the servant is told to place them on his feet, which shows that he is forgiven.

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