

WRITING UP WEDDINGS

By LUCY DOYLE



Please, Ma'am, Have You Any Jap-a-lac? I Can't Keep House Without it—

I'm very particular about my kitchen and with no disrespect to the girl who was before me—you'll excuse me for saying it—it's about time yours was fixed up.

The pantry shelves need a coat of Jap-a-lac badly. It will not only make them look nicer, but being like enamel they're cleaned so much easier.

And the table needs coats of white Jap-a-lac, too. It costs less than oilcloth and don't need constant recovering. When a girl has a nice, bright, sanitary kitchen, she takes so much more pride in it; beside I like a kitchen fit to receive company in.

JAPALAC
Made in 18 colors and natural (clear)—renews everything from cellar to garret.

If you can get me some Oak Jap-a-lac, I can restore these old battered chairs. No need to buy new ones—they'll seem just like the day you bought them. All you have to do is to wash off the dirt with a little bit of warm water and some soap, dry carefully and refinish.

The woodwork on the refrigerator looks awfully shabby, but in ten minutes I can change it into a new ice box.

What else can you use Jap-a-lac for? My last missus varnished her furniture with it every spring and fall.

There's a clear Jap-a-lac, called Natural, for that purpose, and it's a splendid thing for hardwood floors, too. Dries very quickly and doesn't show heelmarks or footprints at all. She used it on her linoleum as well—kept it like new all the time—and if you could have seen her old bath-room after a half day's work with white Jap-a-lac on that tin bath tub—her husband thought she'd ordered an enameled one. She went over the woodwork of course, and then silvered the pipes and the radiators with Aluminum Jap-a-lac.

Where can you get it? Olit's sold everywhere. Thank you, ma'am. I'll have a lot of it sent up right away.

THE GLIDDEN VARNISH COMPANY
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MANY girls who yearn for journalistic life fondly imagine that society reporting must be the ideal newspaper work. "Oh! you write up all the weddings. How delightful that must be. I should just love to do it," cried a gentle young thing, fairly bubbling over in her enthusiasm to start then and there. It seemed cruel to disillusionize her. The facts appeared anything but attractive beside her dreams of the joy of daily witnessing white-robed visions plight their vows before flower-embowered altars to the strains of sweet music. For, after all, to keep in touch with the matrimonial intentions of a city of three hundred and fifty thousand requires nothing more romantic than the combined temperament of a female detective and a book agent. You first find your victims, then—extract the information.

"Why, I thought people just wrote out accounts of weddings and sent them to the papers," says a surprised reader. Some do, we may inform her, but as frequently they merely send them to their own particular paper, the others are forced to look after themselves. Again a paper must be sure any such matter is thoroughly correct. For that feather-brained personage, the practical joker, loves nothing so well as a wedding to show what he can really do. Woe betide the innocent editor who, on receiving a notice, without further investigation, announces that: "Mystical mass was solemnized this morning at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church for Miss Bridget Murphy and Mr. John Ulster." The latter gentleman, a prominent Orangeman, may turn up later with blood in his eye, looking for the scoundrel who published such a slander about a man who was not even engaged. Some years ago there appeared a lengthy account of the marriage of two young people of a nearby town, well known in Toronto society. Included was a list of the guests. Later the editor of that sheet had a rather interesting interview with the groom of the story whose wedding was still a year distant. A fellow townsman, with whom he had quarreled, had concocted the whole affair. The guests mentioned, by the way, were prominent residents of the negro colony in addition to a few of the town's most notorious characters, who were then doing time in the local jail.

It can readily be seen from these instances why a newspaper assigns to one individual the task of personally looking after any such events. A daily minute scrutiny of all the papers for announcements of engagements, presentations or "showers" is only the beginning of her work. Sometimes no addresses of either bride or groom are available, and then it is the reporter requires to become a veritable Sherlock Holmes. In time, perhaps, she may develop a wonderful sixth sense that leads her directly to the scene of a bridal festivity, but until that appears eternal vigilance is her only motto.

One absolute qualification for such work is tact. It is always well for her when meeting ladies of uncertain age to ask them if they are the bride's sister, never blurt out: "Are you the mother of the bride?" If she runs across that most irritating feminine type, the lady who shrinks from publicity, but all the time is wild to get into print, she again has to exercise great care. When even church members solemnly assure her they will send an account of a wedding to her office the next day and it fails to turn up, she must still continue to be a perfect lady. If when she enters the stately mansions of the *nouveau riche* and hears a supercilious voice say, "Oh, see here, mamma, it's always well to be nice to those people," she must smile sweetly on the feminine members of that household and pick her prettiest phrases for their frocks and frills.

But there are some amusing characters met in the daily round that vary the monotony of the various "pretty" or "quiet" affairs. Ushered one day into the drawing-room of an unpretentious looking place by a bustling buxom lady, we proceeded to get a few simple details of her daughter's wedding. Mamma, however, grew restless. She seemed to feel that the meagre information she was imparting was not going to do her Mamie justice. "You know," said she, "we were thinking of writing this up ourselves. We saw such a pretty description in a paper. It

said," the lady paused, "The bride was a vision of girlish loveliness." And, you know," a most insinuating pause, "My Mamie's only eighteen, and so pretty." We're afraid after Mamie's mother saw our humble account of the proceedings she must have developed as deadly a hatred of the modern press as a certain Englishman we once encountered. Calling one afternoon after a morning wedding at a house, a dapper little man with a most important air escorted us to the mother of the bride. Still clad in her festal finery, she looked tired but oh! so happy. The little man seemed to have appointed himself master of ceremonies, for the interview, for he kept close tab on mamie's remarks and did not hesitate to correct her if she erred in the material or shades of the various gowns. He rather irritated us, and we paid no attention to him, until in a piqued voice, with positively no regard for his aitches he piped up: "I guess you don't know who I am?" We confessed our ignorance. "Oh," said he, "do you remember about two years ago, readin' that waiter at a down town hotel had fallen heir to a fortune, at 'ome, of £6,000." Still further acknowledgments of our ignorance. He drew himself up in a most impressive manner. "H'm 'im," he declared. We remained unsubdued, and he went on rapidly: "Yes, h'and right 'ere I should like to say a few words about the miserable papers you 'ave in this town. I look in the social columns and see that Miss Thingabob is a-summerin' at 'Amilton, and that Mrs. Thingame is a-spendin' the week-end at 'Anlan's Point, but"—with a look of supreme disgust—"look at me. 'Ere I've been touring Europe with my wife for the last two years a-spendin' money like water, buyin' 'er the most expensive gowns and jewels. When I come back 'ere, where do I come in? I am not even mentioned." It was no use trying to pacify that troubled soul.

Brides may well congratulate themselves that newspapers now employ women to report the all-important event. There was a time when men prevailed, but we tremble at their daring. It is enough that that sex still remains as printers to mangle our choicest collection of adjectives. Try to imagine the feelings of a bride who sees herself in print as arrayed in "navy satin with tulle veil and orange blossoms." It never strikes a mere man that "ivory" is the word. Is it not enough to make even the haughtiest social editor cringe when she listens to the expression of the wrath of a bride's mother whose violet costume is translated "violent." But what can you expect from a man whose idea of "noinon" is "union"? However, victims of these trifles should forget their own troubles in sympathizing with the poor bride for whom the printer skipped a line of copy and informed the public that she was "gowned in a tulle veil with orange blossoms, and carried white roses."

Perhaps the most agonizing moment of a wedding reporter's day is to find herself in a street car beside a strange female who is declaring to a companion that she has tired herself out hunting for a wedding present for Henry's cousin. The reporter pricks up her ears. "Has she Henry's cousin's name on her list?" Hark! Perhaps she can discover something more. Perfectly shameless, she listens. But no. That aggravating woman does not deign to mention the poor bride by her rightful name, and the W. R. sits and squirms. If there is such a thing as mental wireless telegraphy she will try that. She concentrates all the powers of her mind on Henry's wife. It is useless, the car stops, and the lady disappears, and the mystery will never be solved.

But the climax of everything is reached in June. That word which suggests such a wealth of beauty and joy to most mortals spells only hard work to the faithful wedding reporter. The same tradition which upholds Wednesday as "the best day of all" makes the month of roses the favorite one for brides. It is then matrimony becomes a perfect obsession with the wedding artist. Does she spy a cab? She eagerly cranes her neck to see if it bears white ribbons. If it does, she must instantly find out from whence it came or whether it is going. Does she discover an awning before a church or ground, or confetti scattered on the

tem if she has not heard of that particular event. The writer had a wierd adventure one night when on her way home about half past ten. A strangely familiar air floated out from a nearby church. Surely she knew those notes. Ah! they were the bridal march. Some organist rehearsing for a coming wedding. A little investigation next morning and she had an item which had escaped the other gatherers of news. These incidents, however, come under the heading of "luck," and are somewhat rare. Unceasing toil has a more familiar sound to the reporter's ears. "It's a toss-up between a bath and my dinner to-night," said a fellow-sufferer to us last June. We had had only one meal since the night before at that time, so we spared a moment to commiserate with her.

One Wednesday in June may mean from twenty-five to thirty matrimonial events that are of interest to the general public. The mere "writing up" is a light task. You simply have to vary the monotony by trying to say the same thing in twenty-five different ways. Your first trouble is in finding them out. Then you have to interview the people. Here is where you receive a liberal education. A young newspaper woman after eighteen months' experience, declared that her work in that time had taught her more than an entire college course and a year abroad. We quite believe it. If you realize that one purpose of education is to enable you to know your fellow beings better, then you can readily understand her statement. You have to come in contact with people at the crises in their lives to really know them, and surely a wedding is one of the crucial times in feminine existence. There are some women who recognize the fact that weddings, as one of three important events of human life, can quite legitimately be considered news upon which the public has some claim. The press is too big a factor of modern existence to be denied certain privileges. You read of other people's joys and sorrows, they in turn have a right to know of yours. On the whole, the reporter meets with sensible women who, with the matter-of-fact dignity of a man, give her the required information without equivocation or false modesty. But ask some women for information about their daughters' weddings and they almost faint. Or if it be a bride, she may be gently coy. "Oh, nobody wants to know anything about poor little me." "Oh, no, I couldn't think of giving any information." Then the poor reporter nearly has to use forceps to extract the desired details.

"But I never read the weddings. That's one part of the paper I never look at," says the strong-minded woman, in her most decided tones. Then possibly she will proceed to give you such a minute account of the obnoxious details that you might almost believe that she now and then did take a sly peek at them. The writer met a lady of this type two years ago, when an unusually large wedding had stirred Toronto almost as much as do the international matches of American heiresses in their home cities. Happening to be out to dinner a night or two after the event, we were almost surrounded by an animated feminine group eager to hear more of the entrancing details. Just then the gentlemen came in. "I cannot see why the papers went to such length with that wedding the other day," said one. "Nor I," exclaimed the lady who had just been most eager to know each little detail. "I thought it perfectly ridiculous." In the face of this, how can an editor ever make up his mind what people really do want? They say one thing and mean another. It was the good old country editor who knew what the people liked. There the bride was always described as "the fairest of this village's many fair daughters." She always looked charming in a beautiful and recherche creation. Her father was never anything less than "one of the most prominent and esteemed citizens." The wedding guests never failed to partake of a sumptuous repast from a festal board amid magnificent floral decorations, and "the happy couple" were invariably "the recipients of many beautiful and costly presents." After all, a city is often only a collection of small towns filled from the surrounding countryside. Perhaps this fact explains the popularity of the personal item in the journalism of the day.