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SEEDS

WEDDING DAY SUPERSTITIONS

There are many superstitions connected with the wedding day. June, for instance, was the month the Romans considered the most propitious time of the year for contracting matrimonial engagements, and especially if the day chosen were that of the full moon or the conjunction of the sun and moon. The month of May was especially to be avoided, being under the influence of spirits adverse to happy households. All these pagan superstitions were retained in the Middle Ages, with many others, which belonged more particularly to the spirit of Christianity. People then had recourse to all kinds of divinations, love philters, magical invocations, prayers, fastings and other follies, which were modified according to the country and the individual.

As an example of odd superstition regarding weddings, a girl had only to disturb the water in a bucket or to throw broken eggs over another person's head if she wished to see the image of the man she should marry. A union could never be happy if the bride party, in going to church, met a monk, a priest, a hare, a dog, cat, lizard or serpent; all would go well, however, if it were a wolf, a spider or a toad.

Nor was it an unimportant matter to choose the wedding day carefully. The feast of Saint Joseph was especially to be avoided, and it is supposed that as this day fell in mid-Lent it was the reason why

all the councils and synods of the church forbade marriage during that season of fasting. Indeed, all penitential days and vigils throughout the year were considered unsuitable for

These Joyous Ceremonies.

The church censured those husbands who married early in the morning, in dirty or neglected attire, and reserved their better dresses for balls and feasts, and the clergy were forbidden to celebrate the rites after sunset, because the crowd often carried the party by main force to the ale house, or beat them and hindered their departure from the church until they had paid a ransom.

A considerable sum of money was anciently put into a purse or upon a plate and presented by the bridegroom to the bride on the wedding night as a sort of purchase price; otherwise it was held that he did not entirely possess her and she, if dissatisfied, could easily wed another.

To this day, the Swedish bridegroom has a great fear of the trolls and sprites which are supposed to inhabit Sweden, and as an antidote against their power he sews into his clothes various strong smelling herbs, such as garlic, chives and rosemary. No bridegroom on that day could be induced to stand near a closed gate or where cross-roads meet; he says he takes these precautions against "envy and malice."

On the other hand, the bride, if prudent, will take care to put her right foot before that of the bridegroom, for then she will get the better of her husband during her married life. It is customary to fill the bride's pocket with bread, which she gives to the poor she meets on the road to church, a misfortune being averted with every alms she bestows. On their return from church the bride and bridegroom must visit

Their Cowhouses and Stalls, that the cattle may thrive and multiply.

"Marry in Lent, And you'll live to repent," is a common saying in East Anglia; and so also is:

"To change the name and not the letter Is a change for the worse; and not for the better."

The wedding ring, and why it should be placed on the left hand, a recent writer traces back many centuries. Our ancestors found the left hand more convenient for such ornaments than the right, in that it is less employed. For the same reason they chose the fourth finger, which is not only less used than the rest, but is more capable of preserving the ring from damage, having this one quality peculiar to itself that it cannot be extended but in company with some other finger, whereas the rest may be singly stretched to their full length and straightness.

The old-fashioned notion that a shoe should bring luck at a wedding is another superstition curious to explain. It was in the sense of confirming a sale or exchange that the

Hebrews understood the removal and giving of a shoe or sandal.

In Greece the peasants say that if a crow is seen at any time during the marriage ceremony, misfortune will result unless the guests present arise and shout, "Go away, crow." Similarly the dove as an antithesis to the raven became

The Bird of Nuptials.

In Thuringia, from time immemorial, an almond has been placed in the wedding cake at the marriage ceremony. The person finding it would marry within a year, it was held.

One of the old beliefs attached to wedding ceremonies has to do with the supper, at which everything must be passed to the right. There is an historical anecdote relating to this practice. Henry of Navarre, when he found his great Minister Sully in a dilemma of love, said to him, "Turn to the right if you wish a good wife." Sully did so and entering a corridor on the right found the woman whom he later married. She had, however, beforehand been placed there by Henry himself.

We do not know how these superstitious beliefs attending the celebrating of the nuptials have originated, but in many cases it is possible to trace them to places where they are most common and most connected with the marriage ceremony.

Another tip often given to newly-wedded couples has to do with the honeymoon. Never under any circumstances give out information as to the route of the blissful journey. Besides the inconvenience arising from practical jokes, the dire calamity of a train wreck or delay may take place.

Gray or brown is a lucky color for the wedding dress, and the bride would do well to wear a trousseau of this hue.

Kissing a Baby by the Bride

is considered lucky, and if at any time during the bridal trip she meet with one it is always deemed advisable to do so.

Why do shoes play such an important part in the aftermath of the marriage ceremony? Perhaps because the Jews of old confirmed a sale by giving a shoe of scandal to their customers. The Anglo-Saxon used the shoe in a somewhat similar way. The bride's father gave her shoe to the bridegroom, who tapped his wife to be on the head with it, this signifying a sale and, consequently, his ownership of her. The prevalent custom of throwing shoes at the bride couple is, therefore, a remnant of an old peasant practice.

The wedding ring had its origin away back in the time of Tubal Cain and is a distinctly pagan heritage. Tubal Cain, who made the first ring, had this idea in mind, as expressed by an old treatise: "The form of the ring being circular, that is, round and without end, importeth this much, that their mutual love and hearty affection should roundly flow from the one to the other as in a circle, and that continually and forever." Rings have figured in pre-marriage rites from remote antiquity, and though it was the old custom for marriage rings to be worn by both sexes, the token of bondage which it seems to have represented caused the man to refuse to wear it.

As it is, to-day, every nation has its own assortment of bridal beliefs and superstitions, whether they concern flowers, dress, weather conditions, ring, or what. Few of them are of any importance in the marriage ceremony and seldom do they bear any influence except when the imagination is given too loose rein. Yet as long as there

are marriage rites, no matter how enlightened humanity may be, it is a sure thing that superstition will be in attendance.

NEW DUKE OF ABERCORN

The Marquis of Hamilton, who is now Duke of Abercorn, following the death of his father, succeeds to great possessions. The late Duke held seventeen titles, was a Peer in three kingdoms, and a Duke of France. His successor inherits most of these honors.

The present Duke was educated at Eton, and served eleven years in the 1st Life Guards. From 1900 onwards he sat in the House of Commons as Unionist member for the City of Londonderry, where, despite his personal popularity, he only retained the seat by narrow majorities; for Londonderry is a constituency where the swing of the pendulum is unknown. For a



The Duke of Abercorn.

couple of years he was Treasurer of His Majesty's Household; though in politics he has been somewhat unobtrusive.

The new Duke has two sons and three daughters, so the succession is well assured. Baroness, his Irish estate, is a delightful spot, and with a house in Edinburgh and one in London; the Abercorns maintain residences in the three kingdoms.

The Abercorns have cut a big figure in British public life for several generations. The present Duke's grandfather was nicknamed "Old Splendid," and he appears as "the duke" in Disraeli's "Lothair." Of the first Marquis of Abercorn it is related that he required his housemaids to wear white gloves when they made his bed.

Slick Thief at Banquet.

It was at a birthday banquet given the other evening by a prominent Paris (France) millionaire banker. The fun was at its height when a lady cried out, "My pearl necklace has gone!" The banker had a brilliant idea. "We will place a silver in the middle of the room," he said; "lights will be extinguished and the perpetrator of this silly joke will have an opportunity of restoring the missing necklace." This was done. Then the lights were turned on again and there was more consternation. The silver salver had disappeared.

A man seldom laughs at misfortune after he gets a personal introduction to it.

The Meaning of a Name

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BLACK, GREEN or MIXED

BRITAIN'S NAVY AND ARMY.

Both are Strong, Says First Lord of the Admiralty.

In a recent speech at Dundee Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, spoke with great confidence of the British naval and military forces. He said:—"When I have an opportunity of addressing the House of Commons in March, I shall be called upon to do so on the naval estimates for the year. I am confident I shall be able to show that the navy is not only strong, but is getting stronger actually and relatively, and that there is no danger whatever to the great position we have acquired, and which we have set ourselves to maintain from being diminished or undermined by the progress of time or by the changes in naval science. We have also to co-operate with our sister service by land, and during the passage of the last few years the Admiralty have been working in ever closer accord with the War Office to secure the defence of these islands from all possible danger or menace. The furtherance of British policy, necessarily world-wide in its responsibilities, the guardianship of our empire, spread over the surface of the globe, require the joint action both of the land and sea forces of the Crown. The Army

does not play so large a part in our forces, offensive or defensive, as the navy; does not compare with the standard of other Powers in anything like the same immense proportion of power; but I believe it to be perfectly true to say that the British army, although a small army—very small, indeed, compared to the forces of Continental nations—yet possesses a military science, a knowledge and an originality of professional experience which place its ablest officers on a level with those even of the greatest armies on the Continent of Europe."

Didn't Practice What He Preached

The following announcement recently appeared in an English newspaper:

"The lecture on 'How to Be Always Healthy,' announced for this evening at the Town Hall, cannot be delivered, owing to the fact that the lecturer is confined to his bed with a severe attack of gout."

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