

FINNISH MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

THE Finnish epic poem called the "Kalevala," the oldest portions of which were probably composed three thousand years ago, throws interesting light upon the primitive social and marriage customs of the Finns. The three chief characters of the "Kalevala" are the minstrel, Wainamoinen, Ilmarinen, the magic blacksmith, and Lemminkainen, the wizard. The blacksmith pays court to the Daughter of the Rainbow, who is called "the fairest daughter of the Northland." An account of their bridal and of some of the amenities of married life in those days, is thus given by a writer in a late number of the *New York Times*: "The wedding feast prepared, the beer brewed, the guests feasted, Osmotar, daughter of Osmo, gives the Rainbow bride advice:

"Thou must acquire new habits.
Must forget thy former customs.
Like the mouse, have ears for hearing,
Like the hare, have feet for running."

"But the quick ears and nimble feet are for the service of her husband and his family. The 'Bride of Beauty' must rise early, light the morning fire, fill the bucket from the 'crystal river flowing'; feed the kine and flocks 'with pleasure'; gather fagots from the woodland, bake the barley-bread and honey-cakes, wash the birchen platters clean, amuse the sister's baby, entertain the stranger, 'tend well the sacred sorb-tree' and other vegetation; spin, weave, make clothes, beer, 'lend the needed service' when the 'father of my hero husband' bathes. The week ended, she must 'give the house a thorough clean-

ing.' And all the while she must wear the whitest linen and 'tidy fur shoes' for her hero husband's glory. And she must not gossip in the village, tell of neglect or ill-treatment, to bring shame to her kindred and disgrace to her husband's household. Ostomar, daughter of Osmo, counsels the bridegroom also:

"Never cause the Bride of Beauty
To regret the day of marriage;
Never make her shed a teardrop,
Never fill her cup with sorrow."

But strict marital discipline must be maintained. Those were the days when there were no women's clubs, but clubs for women.

"To thy young wife give instruction,
Kindly teach thy bride in secret,
In the long and dreary evenings,
When thou sittest at the fireside;
Teach one year in words of kindness,
Teach with eyes of love a second;
In the third year teach with firmness;
If she should not heed thy teaching,
Should not hear thy kindly counsel
After three long years of effort,
Cut a reed upon the lowlands,
Cut a nettle from the border,
Teach thy wife with harder measures.
In the fourth year, if she heed not,
Threaten her with sterner treatment,
With the stalks of rougher edges.
Use not yet the thongs of leather,
Do not touch her with the birch whip.
If she does not heed this warning,
Should she pay thee no attention,
Cut a rod upon the mountains,
Or a willow in the valleys;
Hide it underneath thy mantle,
That the stranger may not see it;
Show it to thy wife in secret,
Shame her thus to do her duty;
Strike not yet, the disobeying.
Should she disregard this warning,
Still refuse to heed thy wishes,
Then instruct her with the willow,
Use the birch rod from the mountain,
In the closet of thy dwelling,
In the attic of thy mansion."