

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

The Change From the Era When Wives Were Taken by Force.

Marriage customs have changed everywhere with the advance of civilization. Anglo-Saxons in ancient times, it is said, used to capture their wives by force from their fathers or their husbands, it did not matter which.

This was before Augustine came to preach Christianity. Then purchase was more common than capture, although the latter seems to have been frequent enough to the reign of Ethelbert to need regulation by law. By this law a man might run away with a woman, provided he afterward paid her previous owner, he be father or husband, 50 shillings. If it was husband who had thus been deprived of his wife, the woman's captor had not only to pay him the fine, but also to buy him another wife. In any case the stolen woman belonged to her captor.

If a man had purchased his bride in the days of Ethelbert and afterward concluded he had paid too much for her, it was lawful for him to return her to her former owner and claim again the purchase price, provided that he had not previously expressed satisfaction by making the bride a present on the morning after the wedding.

The next step was the "foster lien," when the bride price was paid on the day of espousal and was supposed to compensate the parent for the cost of bringing up his daughter. It seems, however, that this soon fell into disrepute, as there was no law against the father engaging his daughter to numerous suitors, taking from each the "foster lien" and, of course, cheating all but one on the wedding day, which at that time was only the day of betrothal, when the suitor gave a "wed" or pledge for the future performance of his contract. If the suitor did not claim his bride within two years after the wedding day, he forfeited all right to her and to whatever money or goods he had paid for her. If the woman and her father broke their promises, the father had to give the suitor four times as much as the suitor had already paid him.

As civilization advanced the bride price was given to the woman herself and became her dowry, while nowadays the tables are frequently turned, and the bride settles the money on her husband.

STAGESTRUCK.

An Incident of the Boyhood Days of William McKinley.

One does not readily associate our martyred president, William McKinley, with an ambition to become an actor, but in a grouping of eminent personages who have conceived at one time or another in their lives a passion to tread the boards we find the subjoined account:

"It was while holding the humble position of clerk at a hat store in Cincinnati that Mr. McKinley became stagestruck and once confessed that he did not outgrow his desire to become an actor for many years afterward. This desire arose through witnessing the Shakespearean plays as presented by the great tragedian, Edwin Forrest, for whom Mr. McKinley conceived a great admiration.

"Imagine my feelings," the president said on one occasion when relating his boyish ambitions, "when Forrest walked into our store one day to make a purchase. I rushed to the front in order to serve my ideal hero of the theater. The sale, however, was made by an older clerk, but I was given the privilege of pressing and stretching the hat. The great actor stood near me, observing my work, and the smile of appreciation which he gave me was one of the events of my youth."—Scrap Book.

Growth of Rocks.

Rocks do not grow in the sense that a plant grows. They may increase by accretion, and they may undergo chemical change. The old sea bed, being lifted up, becomes sandstone and limestone. The volcanic ash and lava strewn over the plains become tufa, hard enough for building stone. The pebbly shore of a river becomes conglomerate. The simple mineral does grow, however, when it takes a crystal form. The sparkling prism of quartz increases from an atom to a crystal as large as a forearm by a process of addition and assimilation, wonderfully slow but beautifully regular, exactly as crystals of ice form on the window pane.

Why Bulls Hate a Red Flag.

In the first place, says an English writer, red is a color to which cattle are unaccustomed, so that they may naturally be supposed to be startled by its very novelty. Scientists show the sensation of red to be the complement of that of green, being induced by exactly opposite affections of the retina. If the eyes of cattle are constructed on a similar principle to our own the continual contemplation of green, as in trees and herbage, must produce a state of retinal fatigue, predisposing a violent excitement of the retina immediately a red substance is presented to view.

Takes No Chances.

"Remember," said the kind elderly gentleman, "that you may be president of the United States." "Yes," answered the boy whose father is connected with the race track, "but look at the population of this country. I've only got one chance in millions. I ain't playing any long shots like that."—Washington Star.

STORIES OF THE CAT.

Legends and Facts About the Still but Half Tamed Animal.

"There are few tales of cat fidelity and many of dog, yet one thinks no worse of the cat for this," says an observer. "His very independence compels respect. He walks by his wild lone, waving his wild tail, through the wild woods," as an inspired modern writer has set forth. All the generations have not served to tame him, and the most domestic of the race will revert sooner to a wild life at the call of the blood than any other friend of man. It is this scarcely surprising to find that the most famous cat lovers have been drawn from the ranks of politicians and poets, those whom reasons of state or a sensitive temperament have rendered averse from trusting their fellow creatures and who consequently bestow all their affections upon the "reside sphinx." We are invited to believe that the most famous of all cats, he who brought fame and fortune to his master, Dick Whittington, was no four legged animal at all, but merely the French word "achat"—to buy and sell at profit—and that the great merchant made a pet only of his merchandise from the very beginning. Thus in later years do the idols of our youth topple about our heads.

"But other legends—nay, facts—are left us. Cardinal Wolsey, for instance, when acting in his official capacity as lord chancellor is said to have had his favorite cat always seated beside him, and another prince of the church, Richelieu, found his only relaxation in keeping a number of kittens in his private cabinet and watching their gambols during his spare moments. We cannot really reckon Richelieu as a true lover of the race, however, for directly the kittens grew to three months he had them sent away and replaced by others. Lord Chesterfield left in his will life pensions to his favorite cats and their kittens. Victor Hugo's great cat Chanoine always sat on a large red ottoman in the center of his salon and received his guests in state, showing marked displeasure if any one failed to caress or praise her.

"Tasso wrote a sonnet to his favorite cat, and Petrarch had one he loved as dearly, we are told, as Laura. No doubt she was the confidant of many of his trials and consoled him for much of the fair lady's disdain, and when pussy died the poet had her embalmed in the Egyptian fashion and carried her mummy about with him everywhere. Baudelaire, the French poet, a very shy man, was always ill at ease in any new house he entered until the family cat was brought up and introduced to him, after which, with the cat on his knee, he was perfectly happy in his silent poet fashion.

"Traditions respecting cats are, of course, legion. From time immemorial they have been regarded as somewhat uncanny, omens of weal or woe, beings to be either conciliated or crushed. The cat worship of ancient Egypt and, later, the Roman creed that the cat was sacred to Diana speak of the one; the wild charges of witchcraft—or concern in it—rife during the dark ages of Europe will attest the latter. But there is another popular belief deserving also of mention, that which sets forth the old maid as the cat's only friend, a legend arising in the medieval nurseries overrun with mice, where one or more cats were always kept and were no doubt much petted by the good nuns."—Chicago News.

A Hard Burial.

Some few winters ago a gang of earriage washers was engaged washing carriages on one of our northern railways when one of them remarked to his mate, an old soldier who was famous as a long bowler, "It's awful cold this morning, David."

"Cold! This is nothing," said David. "I remember when I was in Canada in 186—one of our mates died, poor chap. And you will have some idea what sort of frost it was when I tell you it froze the body so stiff and the ground so hard that we had to get hammer and chisel, make a nick in the ground and then drive him in with a pile driver. That was the only way we could give the poor chap decent burial."—London Answers.

Using the Eyes.

A scientific writer quotes Helmholtz as saying that in his work he could only liken himself to the mountaineer, painfully and slowly climbing, often obliged to turn backward, lighting later on new traces leading forward, and finally reaching the goal, only to find to his confusion that a plain road led thither, if he had only had the eyes to see. Darwin said he thought he was superior to the common run of men in noticing things which easily escape attention and in observing them carefully.

Cheap Generosity.

A great smoker handed his cigar case to his right hand neighbor. "Thank you, but I don't smoke," said the man.

He therefore handed it to the man on the left, who made the same reply, whereupon his wife nudged him and said, "Why don't you hand it to the captain?"

"No, thank you; he smokes."—Nos Loisirs.

The Mean Thing!

"Who was that fool you bowed to?" "My husband."

"Oh, I—er—I—humbly apologize. I—'Never mind, I'm not angry. But what a keen observer you are!"—Cleveland Leader.

Did you ever notice that the size of trouble depends on whether it is coming or going?—Mankato Free Press

CROMWELL'S HORSES.

An Accident That Befell the Protector in Hyde Park.

"As Cromwell rose in power and rank his love of horses began to be more conspicuous," says a writer in Blackwood's. "When he started from London in 1649 to reconquer Ireland he went forth in that state and equipage as the like hath hardly been seen, himself in a coach with six gallant Flanders mares, reddish gray." In 1655, when the Spanish ambassador took his leave of the lord protector, Cromwell sent him "his own coach of six white horses" to convey him to and from Whitehall. "Certain it is," adds the narrator, "that none of the English kings had ever any such."

The protector was not much of a whip, however. In 1654 the Count of Oldenburg sent Cromwell a present of six horses, and the protector's anxiety to make trial of their quality led to his well known adventure in Hyde park. On Friday, Sept. 23, he went with Secretary Thurloe and some of his gentlemen to take air in the park, ordered the six horses to be harnessed to his coach, put Thurloe inside of it and undertook to drive himself. "His highness," said a letter from the Dutch ambassador, "drove pretty handsomely for some time, but at last, provoking those horses too much with the whip, they grew unruly, whereby his highness was flung out of the coach box upon the ground. His foot getting hold in the tackling, he was carried away a good while in that posture, but at last he got his foot clear and so came to escape. He was presently brought home and let blood and after some rest taken is now well again. The secretary, being hurt on his ankle with leaping out of the coach, hath been forced to keep his chamber hitherto and been unfit for any business."

The royalist Scroggs, afterward chief justice, writing of this incident, hoped that the next fall would be from a cart—hinting at the gallows. As to Cromwell's views on the burning question of horse racing it is difficult to arrive at a positive conclusion. His constant aim was to possess as many good horses as he could afford. Whether he entered his horses for races or had the satisfaction of owning a winner history does not say.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

The only thing some people always have ready is an excuse.

Almost any one can be induced to lie if you ask enough questions.

The better you behave the better you get along. It's old, but it's true.

A man nobody can quarrel with has the life problem reasonably well solved.

Lack of opportunity has to stand as an excuse for a lot of general shiftlessness.

The trouble with some people lies in the fact that they consider their faults their misfortunes.

Are you among those who treat their new acquaintances better than they treat their old friends?

If a man has plenty of money to back up a lot of fool notions, people call him eccentric, but if he only has the notions he is a crank.—Acheson Globe.

Tamed the Box Office Man.

A theater box office man whose seats were all sold days ahead was turning away disappointed patrons more than guffly when a man who had watched the process with glowing ire reached the window. "Selling any more seats this season?" he began. The ticket seller answered with a stare. The question, quietly but firmly repeated, finally received an affirmative answer. "Give me two." "When?" growled the seller, recovering. "Any time," said the man. The seller was almost too crushed to ask "Where?" "Anywhere," replied the man. "How much?" whispered the seller, his voice deserting him. "Any price," said the man. The tickets were transferred in an awed silence, and the line of purchasers that had overheard smiled benevolently at the noticeably tamed man in the cage.—New York Post.

Antiquity of Proverbs.

Proverbs existed long before books. In the earliest times they served as the unwritten language of morality and have been passed down through the generations. In Africa there are numerous quaint proverbs. Among them are: "He who dives on dry land will scarify his face." "Two people cannot sit down upon the point of the same thorn at the same time." In the Transvaal the proverb, "Beware of a silent man; he has a brass band in his mouth," is often heard.

Holmes on Shelley.

Shelley vaporized everything in his glowing crucible, but there was gold at the bottom of it. When I look at him spreading the stary wings of his fancy over his chaotic philosophy he seems like a seraph hovering over the unfathomable chasm, whose blackness is the abode of demons.—Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.

Her Reasoning.

Wife (at the costumer's)—Which shall I have—this coat at 40 marks or that one at 70? Husband—I have only 40 marks with me. Wife—Oh, well, then, we'll buy the seventy mark coat on credit, and then you can buy me a hat with the 40 marks.—Lustige Blätter.

Crushed.

"If I could only die and leave you well off," he said after they had had their first quarrel, "I would be glad to go."

"How," she cruelly asked, "could you die and leave me otherwise than well off?"—Chicago Record-Herald.

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