

A RUSSIAN MARRIAGE

Everything Depends on the Bride's Outfit.

DAY OF "BENEDICTION"

Parents' Negotiations—Her Possessions Carefully Examined by the Groom's Family—If Everything Is Not in Order Contract Is Broken Off—Youth of Both.

The only unmarried servant we had in the establishment during my three years' residence in Russia was my chambermaid, Kacha—a nice, pretty, and obliging peasant girl, who had been with me for about two years. For some time I had observed that she seemed discontented, and on one occasion, asking her why she was not so gay as usual, she replied that she was nearly eighteen years old and not yet married. I had quite forgotten the circumstance, when one night late, hearing a great disturbance down in the servants' offices, I went to see what was the matter. As I entered the servants' room all was confusion, boxes were being opened, bundles ransacked, dresses measured, boots thrown about, under linen inspected, beads counted (the Russian costume is never worn without as many as six to eight rows of beads round the throat), stockings examined, bed linen antimacassered upon, jewelry valued, zolotshas felt, and fur mantles tried on.

This scene that I had been witnessing was neither more nor less than a preliminary before marriage. The sturdy old peasant sitting there was the father of the young fellow who had just gone out, and he had come up from the country to find a wife for his son. He had heard of this young woman from a traveling peddler who went every three months to Moscow to replenish his pack, and who knew half the girls by name who were in want of husbands. On the strength of this information from her peddler the old peasant (the father of the father of the bridegroom-elect), his wife, and son had come to judge for themselves as to the eligibility of the girl's goods and chattels; but, if they had found any article or articles wanting to the bride's trousseau, there would have been no marriage. Everything depended upon the bride's clothes; but all was there, even to the 154 roubles of the hard-earned savings of the peasant girl. So she was to be married! and she considered herself fortunate in having a husband given her; not that she liked him, for she had only seen him for the first time that day. He and his father, the old peasant, lived far away in the country; but as the spring was coming on, and the old father would want somebody besides his own wife to help prepare the earth for the seed to be sown, the best thing was to get a wife for his son, and thus secure the help of another pair of hands during seed time without the expense of extra wages.

Friday came, the day of "Benediction." Macha went about her work as usual; she neither seemed anxious nor nervous. As she had been a good servant, we were all going to honor her by appearing at the ceremony. At about 7 p. m. a small table covered with a white cloth was arranged in one corner of our large family dining room, two or three images of saints, ornamented with flowers and precious stones, were placed on the table, together with a large, round sort of bread or cake which was to play no mean part in the ceremony. A few minutes later the steps of the priest were heard on the marble staircase, together with the heavier tread of the peasants' feet, and in another moment the room was full of the bride's friends, arrayed in the most gorgeous chintz dresses, and of the bridegroom's mates, dressed in the usual outdoor black leather "pelisse," lined with sheepskin. After every one was arranged in place a slight stir and bustle were heard, and the crowd making way, the future bride came sailing in beautifully attired in a salmon-colored silk and tulle dress, lent her by her mistress. She passed awkwardly up the aisle and took her place before the effigies of saints, or "images," as they are called, and immediately after her future husband (who seemed half frightened) slipped from the crowd, followed by his father, and took up his position on the right side of the bride. Then the ceremony of "Benediction" commenced; it lasted about forty minutes, the priest reading and chanting, together with his clerk, many psalms and prayers, while the future man and wife continually bowed themselves to the ground, touching the floor with their foreheads. Then the round cake or bread was put into their hands by the priest, and it was kissed by the recipients, afterward by the bridegroom's father, and then again by the bride's mother, father or friends. The "Benediction" being over, nothing now remained to take place but the "marriage" ceremony, which was arranged for the following Sunday at the church.

There the ceremony was somewhat long, in fact, so much that the bride's cousin was unable to continue holding the wreath over her head throughout the whole ceremony; he was relieved by another peasant, who took kindly to the task, and who was heard to mutter: "The bride is a bonnie lass, I'd give six years to have her!" After the ceremony all the party adjourned to a public house or "Traktir," where they made as jolly as they possibly could with five or six quarts of "vodka" for the men, and as many quarts of Limonade des cochons, for the women.

COLONIAL AFFAIRS.

Congress Will Be Asked to Create a New Department to Take Charge of Them.

Another effort will be made during the coming session to induce congress to create a colonial department with a secretary at its head who will be a member of the president's cabinet.

Those who are engineering the movement will call it the department of insular affairs, and try to have Col. Clarence E. Edwards, at present the head of the insular bureau of the war department, made the first secretary.

Senator Foraker has announced his purpose to introduce a bill creating such a department. Col. Edwards is an Ohioan. At present the insular bureau has a force of 100 clerks. That is the chief argument in favor of the creation of the new department. As the colonel conducts the affairs of this bureau he exercises almost as much authority as the average member of the cabinet, which is another argument for the creation of the new position.



COL. C. E. EDWARDS (Head of the Insular Bureau of the War Department.)

The name "insular department" has been agreed upon by Senator Foraker and others interested, as being the least objectionable, but it is not proposed to confine the authority of the department to the administration of affairs of the insular part of the national domain. The idea is to include Alaska in the sphere of activities of the department, notwithstanding it has a territorial form of government.

MGR. MERRY DEL VAL. Former Apostolic Delegate to Canada Appointed Papal Secretary of State.

The pope has appointed Mgr. Merry del Val, the former apostolic delegate to Canada, to be papal secretary of state. The announcement of this appointment was made in a letter presented by the pope to Mgr. Merry del Val. The nomination, however, will not be made officially until the next consistory, when the monsignor will also be made cardinal. Mgr. Merry del Val has long engaged the confidence of the pope, and it was made known last August that he would be the first cardinal created by Pius X. He was also a great favorite with Leo XIII, for whom he acted as private secretary.

Mgr. del Val is 37 years old and is a descendant of one of Spain's noblest families. His mother was an Englishwoman and he was born in England, receiving his early education from the Jesuit fathers in Stonyhurst college. His higher education was received in the Academy of Nobles in Rome. He was ordained to the priesthood soon after the appointment of his father as Spanish ambassador to the vatican, and was almost immediately made private secretary to Pope Leo. While delegate to Canada he settled the troublesome school question there. He has been acting as secretary of state since the office was vacated by Cardinal Rampolla.



MGR. MERRY DEL VAL. (Recently Appointed Secretary of State by Pope Pius X.)

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Discover Honey in Skull. Thomas Sumner, of Red Rock, Pa., and his two sons felled a tree on a timber tract at Hickory Grove. The tree seemed alive at the top, but dead and hollow at the base. After the trunk had fallen one of the boys began sawing it into sections. Suddenly his saw struck a hard impenetrable substance. The log was split and to Sumners surprise the skeleton of a large-sized bear fell from the cavity. With it came a swarm of bees which had built their nest in the bears skull, where they had stored several pounds of honey. It is supposed that years ago the bear crawled into the tree to steal honey which the bees were making in the hollow trunk, and, being unable to extricate itself, slowly starved to death.

BIG GUN HUNTING

[Copyright, 1903, by C. B. Lewis.] "It was in 1880 that I reached St. Paul de Loando, on the African coast," said a sailor to me the other day, "and when I had been there for a couple of weeks a British survey steamer came in to fill up her crew. She had been surveying up the Congo and was bound south to the Great Fish river. The steamer carried forty men all told and was outfitted with two 9-pounders and plenty of small arms. She had lost five men up the Congo by fever, and when I offered myself I was at once taken.

"We were a week working up to the forks of the Great Orange river, and then the fun began. The Great Fish, for about 100 miles above the forks, is about as wide as the Hudson, with a depth of from four to seven fathoms. There never was an hour in the day that we couldn't see elephants, lions or rhinoceroses along the shores.

"We had been steaming slowly up stream for about ten days before the river narrowed to about half its former width, and then we began to have trouble with the natives. They had no firearms, but they could hurl lances or shoot arrows from the banks to the steamer, and we had to be on the dodge all the time. Our 9-pounders were kept loaded, and now and then when the black fellows got too daring we sent a shell whizzing among the thickets and scared them half to death.

"One day, when the fringe of forest along the right bank suddenly ended and gave place to a long stretch of grassy plain, we came to anchor, and three of the survey men landed to stir up a big rhinoceros who could be seen standing under a tree half a mile back from the water. They were young fellows and full of daring, and I heard the captain caution them when they left the steamer.

"We could see all that subsequently took place. The old rhino had never seen a steamer before, but he wasn't a bit curious. If he had ever seen hunters before he had no fear of them. He just stood there in the shade, bows on to us, and didn't trouble to figure out what might happen. The three men separated on landing to get in the rear of the big beast and cut off his escape, but he wasn't thinking of running away. He let two of the men creep up till within range, and it seemed to us as if we heard the thud of their bullets when they struck against his thick hide. They were ounce bullets, driven by big charges of powder, but they might as well have been fired against a stone wall. The rhino gave a start as they struck him, and then down went his head and up went his tail, and he charged at the man who was creeping head on.

"The surveyors had made a mess of the thing, and there was bound to be a calamity. They had taken the rhino for a noodle head, whereas he knew his business to a dot. The man at whom he charged had no cover except here and there a bush. I don't know whether he should have run to the right or left or stood still, but what he did do was to fling down his gun and make back for the river. He had pretty near half a mile to go, and he was a good sprinter, but that rhino had a full head of sail on him.

"He came on like a ship running before a hurricane, and about ten rods from the bank he overtook the fleeing man and tossed him ten feet into the air. As the body came down he caught it and tossed it again and then flung it about in a way that could have left no life in it after a few minutes.

"The other chaps pluckily ran down and fired two bullets apiece into the beast, but when he charged them they made a bolt for and climbed the tree under which he had been standing at first. When he found them beyond his reach the rhino began running about in a circle, and it was then that we cleared away one of the 9 pounders and opened fire on him. As he was on the move the first two shells didn't even throw dirt on him, but the third struck him fair amidships and exploded.

"Another boat was sent ashore, and I was one of those who landed from it. We found the surveyor dead and with every bone broken, and as for the rhino he was a sight to see.

"Two nights after that and twenty miles above we anchored in midstream for the night. It was a bright moonlight night, and up to midnight things passed off very quietly. Then a troop of elephants came down to the shore to drink. It was in my watch, and I counted fourteen big fellows and two kids. They were just opposite us and not over forty rods away, but were not at all alarmed by our presence.

"After drinking and splashing around for awhile, two big bulls got into a row. I couldn't make out the cause of it, but they hadn't been scrapping over two minutes when the rest of the herd joined in, and there was a row to beat the band. Some of the officers brought their rifles on deck and opened fire, and the captain ordered us to raise a shout, but the elephants had got their mad up and couldn't be frightened off by popguns. Then we were ordered to slew a 9-pounder around to bear on the mob. It was loaded with a percussion shell, and the target was too big to be missed at that short distance. That shell went through one elephant from port to starboard without bursting, but it struck a big bone in the next and exploded and killed two others and wounded three. The dead ones lay right there in the water next morning, while the wounded ones had dragged themselves up the bank and were lying down. We landed to look them over, and, finding them badly hurt, they were put out of their misery with bullets from the rifles." M. QUAD.

THE QUALITY OF GENIUS.

Its Practical Absorption of a Man's Best Faculties.

To be a great lawyer is incompatible with being a great poet. Nevertheless, Shakespeare was fond of showing his little legal knowledge, and Bacon has written some verse. There have been writers of eminence, like Walter Scott and Thackeray, who were lawyers by profession, but they must have made law quite subordinate to literature, although some of them, like Walter Scott, have got money by following the law. Hoffman, the author of "The Pot of Gold" and other imaginative stories, was a man of genius, who was also a judge or a magistrate. I think, however, that his legal duties sat lightly on him. His connection with the law seems somewhat similar to that of Walter Scott. It was neither absorbing nor permanent. Politicians turn to literature. Literary men, like Chateaubriand and Lamartine, have held high places as politicians, but they never were real statesmen, and I should not call them men of great genius. A man of action may be great in more fields of action than one. Julius Caesar and Napoleon Bonaparte were statesmen and generals, but they were not and could not be poets, though Julius Caesar was a writer. Among the ancient Greeks and later Spaniards and Portuguese we find poets who were soldiers and even generals. They, however, were not wholly military. Only a part, and sometimes a small part, of their lives was spent in service. Horace's experience of war was very short, and, although he was a military tribune, he was not a distinguished soldier. A man may be excellent in more ways than one, but he cannot be a man of genius in two different ways. A few instances, such as that of Sheridan, might be given which seem to be exceptions to the rule. I doubt whether they are so. The same inclination made Sheridan an orator and a writer of comedy, Notes and Queries.

STEPS THAT BETRAY.

Steps that are quick are indicative of energy and agitation. Tiptoe walking betrays surprise, curiosity, discretion or mystery.

Turned in toes are often found with preoccupied, absent minded persons. The miser's walk is represented as stooping, noiseless, with short, nervous, anxious steps.

The proud step is slow and measured. The toes are conspicuously turned out, the legs straightened.

Slow steps, whether long or short, suggest a gentle or reflective state of mind, as the case may be.

The direction of the steps wavering and following every changing impulse of the mind inevitably betrays uncertainty, hesitation and indecision.

Obstinate people who in argument rely more on muscularity than on intellectual power rest the feet flatly and firmly on the ground, walking heavily and slowly, and stand with the legs firmly planted far apart.

Box Office Superstition.

A newspaper man was the second in line at the box office of one of the popular theaters on the opening night. The first man asked for four seats, and when he started to pay for them the man in the box office said:

"Oh, that's all right. There's no charge at all for those seats."

The man looked surprised, thanked the ticket manipulator and went on. Then the newspaper man had his turn, and he said:

"Please satisfy impertinent curiosity and tell me why you wouldn't take that man's money."

"Well," said the treasurer, "I expect you didn't notice that that man was cross eyed. If I had sold him the first tickets we wouldn't have had a bit of luck through the whole engagement." —New York Times.

Wasp's Method of Attack.

Belt in his "Naturalist in Nicaragua" draws attention to the methods of attack used by different species of wasps. One accustomed to animals and not to men takes care to crawl down the outstanding hairs to the skin before inserting its sting, while others which live in the midst of human dwellings fly straight at a man's face. The first species, true to inherited instinct, when it attacks unfamiliar human beings attaches itself to their hair or their beards. But there must have been a time when the second species discovered that the face was the vulnerable part, and the discovery was the outcome of the action of brain.

Art Treasures.

"I understand you have a number of art treasures." "Any number of 'em," answered Mr. Comrox.

"By the way, how would you define an art treasure?" "An art treasure, as nearly as I can figure it out, is something that is considered all the more valuable for being secondhand goods." —Washington Star.

Saw His Finish.

"Oh, oh," exclaimed Mrs. Naggs, "I've bitten off the end of my tongue!" "Well, I certainly feel sorry for myself," rejoined the heartless Naggs. "Hereafter there will be no end to your tongue." —Buffalo News.

A Hardware Talk.

"Yes," said the nut to the nail; "it gave me a terrible wrench to part from him, but I knew it would be only a matter of a few days before he would bolt anyway."

Sweet Simplicity.

"Auntie, ought Bertie Wilson to have smiled so often at me in church?" "No, dear. Where was he sitting?" "Behind me."

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