CUPID'S ASSISTANT

Marriage Brokers' Methods in Different Countries.

DRAWING UP CONTRACTS

One Agent Brings Unwilling Couples Together and Receives Pay From Parents—Others Paid for Keeping Willing Couples Separated—Demand Made Upon Widows or Widowers.

Wedding customs in the French provinces differ from those of Paris. The old-time marriage festival, lasting at least three days, still prevails among the peasantry. The priests oppose it on the ground that the merriment frequently oversteps the bounds of propriety, but their protests generally go unheeded.

Preparations for a provincial wedding and the settlement of the all-important question of dowry frequently consume several months, and even then the engagement is kept a profound secret until the compulsory publishing of the bans makes known the fact to the world. A certain liberty of courtship, under the vigilant eye of elders, is permitted. A contract dinner is given, attended by the families and relatives of the contracting parties and by the notary, who sees that the papers are drawn up in due form.

Sometimes the terrors of the law are braved by dispensing with the vexatious formalities of the civil marriage; but the wedding in church is celebrated with all possible pomp, and to the richest man in the community belongs the pleasant privilege of giving the bride away. The procession starts from the bride's home to the church, not in carriages, but on foot, and is enlivened on the way by hired musicians—violinists if in Normandy, bagpipers if in Brittany. The bride hangs on the arm of her father, the groom supports his future mother-in-law. The family and friends follow in couples, arm in arm, all brave in bright-colored ribbons, singing and dancing as they go.

The church ceremony being over, the pageant returns in the same order, except that now the new husband and wife walk together. The grand dinner, which has been preparing for days, is held in the open air, in a tent or in a large hall. So eagerly has this feast been anticipated that parents have warned their children for several days beforehand to eat sparingly, so that they can do full justice to the wedding dinner. After the feed is over, the guests are not ashamed to gather up the fragments of goodies and take them home in baskets. This meal is but the beginning of the festival of eating, drinking and dancing, which will continue without interruption for several days.

If one of the parties to the marriage happens to be a widow or a widower there is sure to be a charavari, in which the couple need expect no peace until they generously treat their tormentors. Even the priest will throw aside his ecclesiastical dignity to toll the death bell, and will keep on tolling until offered some sort of inducement to cease his grewsome racket.

The ancient custom of the bride taking off her shoe and handing it to her husband, in token of his authority over her, still prevails in some of the remoter corners of France.

Germany has its marriage markets and Belgium its matrimonial festival, but France has an institution which is still more peculiar and characteristic of the businesslike spirit which dominates over Cupid on the Continent, namely, the marriage agencies. These are in charge of brokers who make a business of bringing young people together, just as the real estate agents bring together landlord and tenant. The walls of their offices are plastered with testimonials from former patrons.

The customer indicates to the broker as near as he can what sort of a wife he desires. He is shown a series of photographs, from which he may select one or more that pleases him most, and a series of interviews is arranged between the customer and the originals of the pictures. If the parties are not too hard to please a marriage is likely to result. Of course, there are tricks in this, as in all other trades. The unscrupulous broker may have in his pay one or more women who will grant interviews to customers, posing as candidates for matrimony. Since the agent is paid for every interview he brings about, and not according to his success as a match-maker, this fraudulent arrangement proves profitable to him and his female confederates, but his client will get no wife. If the broker be enterprising he will keep lady travelers on the road to hunt up girls to replenish the matrimonial market.

There are two other varieties of matrimonial agency. One makes a business of bringing together unwilling young people and making matches between them. The agent gets his pay from the parents, who have set their hearts upon the union. The other sort depends for fees upon his success in keeping willing ones apart.

Ways of the Moslem.

A Moslem in the East will never pass or trample under foot a scrap of paper, lest thereon might be written the name of the Allah. He will pick it up and stuff it into the crevice of a wall, or even carry it for days until he finds out from somebody who can read whether it contains the holy name.

WATCHING THE BREAD LINE.

A Charity That Never Fails of Reaching the Worthy Parties.

"Long before midnight it extends from the door behind the bakery, midway up the block, to Broadway, and round the corner toward the entrance to Grace church," writes Geraldine Bonner of the "bread line," a charity in New York. "As we approached up the loneliness of the deserted, icy street we could see it, dim and motionless, like a sinister black snake, each figure a vertebra in its sinuous length. The cold was intense and the men stood close together. Most of them were silent; they seemed held in the deadly grip of the frost and their own misery. We were near them when midnight struck, and with a slow, shuffling movement the column began to move forward. At the upper end we could see it breaking into dark segments, some of which disappeared into the night, while others stayed about eating their bread in the ice-bound street at midnight. We drew away into a darkened angle where we could not be seen and for a space watched them. Some took their loaves, hid them under their coats and walked rapidly away with firm, quick steps. Others ate them then and there with a hungry, fierce indifference. We saw several who, with the bread hidden, went back to the end of the line and joined it again.

"From the huge pile of coffee at the door a man ladled dipperfuls into tin cups and with his loaf of bread each recipient of the dead baker's bounty was given a cup. Several did not take them. Most did and stood about drinking the coffee and biting pieces off the loaf. Here there were a few desultory remarks interchanged. But for the most part the whole business was executed in a grim silence. It was difficult to see what manner of men they were. One cannot stare at a brother in affliction, even when he is standing at midnight in the 'bread line.' Many of those I saw looked as if they might be of that vast class of incompetents who live upon the city's generosity. But here and there a face struck your eye that was not the face of the drunk, the tramp or the beggar.

"We noticed a young man having the appearance of a gentleman who was without an overcoat and had gloves on. He took his loaf, thrust it under his coat, and fled. A fresh-faced lad, stalwart and ruddy, who looked like a boy in from the country, was embarrassed and ashamed. He kept making jocular remarks to his neighbors and then giving loud, sheepish laughs—the only sound of that sort to be heard in that dismal assemblage. He carried a new shovel in his hand and had evidently been working among the snow shovelers. For these and their like Fleischmann, the baker, must have established the 'bread line.'"

Clever Little Stories.

A certain builder of trolley roads always patronizes them on principle whenever possible and eschews cabs. The other day a New York cab driver accosted him with the regulation "Keb, sir, keb?" "How much to the Long Island ferry?" "Two dollars, sir." "No." "All right, sir; make it a dollar and a half." "Is that your lowest?" "Yes, sir; isn't that cheap enough?" "Oh, I suppose so." "All right, then, jump in." "Oh, I don't want a cab," said the builder of trolley roads; "I only wanted to find out how much I would save by taking a street car."

Commissioner Woodbury of the New York department of street cleaning tells this anecdote of an acquaintance of his who was walking through Central park the other day. Being in somewhat of a hurry he started to cut across the grass at one place but was stopped by a park policeman, who remonstrated with him. "What difference does it make?" asked the New Yorker; "the grass is half dead anyway." "Sure, an' what if it is?" responded the indignant guardian of the peace; "if you had a sick friend would yez be takin' a walk on his stomach?"

"I have known," says a traveler, "beggars of every description—shy beggars, blustering ones, old beggars, robust ones—but the most remarkable beggar of the lot was a man whom I never met yet whom I assuredly never will forget. All I saw of this beggar was his hat and his chair. The chair stood on a corner of the Rue St. Lazare, in Paris. The hat lay on the chair with a few coppers in it and behind the hat was a placard reading: 'Please don't forget the baggar, who is now taking his luncheon.'"

Timid Territory Beauties.

The girls of the territories are strange people, if all that the press says about them is true. Exchanges have been telling of the Wewoka girl who is so bashful that she cannot see a sleeping car without blushing; of an Ada girl who faints at the sight of undressed lumber; the National girl who locks herself in her room when she changes her mind; the Wetumka girl who never thinks of retiring with a copy of Christian Observer in her room; the Shawnee girl who is so shy she will not wear undressed kid gloves. But all these pale into insignificance beside the Holdenville girl who shies at the bare truth of naked facts and has eliminated from her vocabulary garden hose, bureau drawers and dogs pants and always turns her head when she sees the salad dressing. The same damsel refuses to remain in the office when the forms are made up.—Kansas City Journal.

IMPORTANCE OF THE NOSE.

If Knocked Out of Shape Heavy Damages Are Usually Given.

A contributor to the British Medical Journal amuses himself at some length on the relative market value of parts of the human organism, says the Boston Transcript. He begins with the nose. This of itself is sufficient to commend the writer to our respect. He shows some sense of the fitness of things, and we feel we can trust him when he comes to the eye and the ear. The nose is a very fine thing. Life would be incomplete without it. Even Cyrano de Bergerac would have missed his, and we should have missed a great play if Cyrano had been without his nose. Those of us who still possess a nose often forget its immense importance. Let us by all means have somebody to celebrate the nose.

"A misshapen nose," observes this profound thinker, "will spoil the most beautiful face." And at once we have to be thankful for some new strong information, some fresh glad tidings. These truths burst upon us with the shock and thrill of a great new world. "A damaged nose," he continues in his exquisite way, "will blight the happiness of a young woman and blast any man's prospects forever. Recently a young clergyman in the Church of England, who had fallen from a horse and mutilated his nose in the process was dismissed from office by the authorities." Morals may, but noses must, be correct in the Church of England.

"In the case of a woman's nose," the great nose expert pursues, "it is even worse, or, if you will, better. Not long ago one of our English assizes granted the sum of £500 to a woman for a crushed nose. In vain did the lawyer for the defence argue: "If I should break my nose the court would undoubtedly not give me a penny for it, but, of course, a woman is a supernatural being." (The learned gentleman was correct, but stupid.) "He then quoted a case where an electrical engineer had got only £75 for a far more violent bump on the nose than the lady in question. But even this failed to impress the venerable judge, who had some appreciation for art, and held that the loss of it ought to be properly compensated."

A similar sentiment seems to prevail in France, although a man's nose is a little more valued there. Thus a man who had got his nose twisted in a quarrel was adjudged 640 francs from the man who had given the twist. On the other hand, a young lady of twenty, who had foolishly put her nose between an omnibus and an electric car during a collission received 2,400 francs for the sensation she experienced.

From these persuasive facts we gather that the nose is a necessary adjunct to the human face. If you don't know that for yourself, any court will tell you so. We also gather that in all countries except Polynesia and Billingsgate the prime feminine article commands a much higher figure than the noisier nose which aids the male in his customarily vociferous slumbers.

The Variety in Language.

Wherever we may have been born, we use and accept as ours one language, from the Atlantic to the Pacific; it is hard, therefore, for us to realize that in some parts of Europe the real language of the country is confined to the use of the peasant population. In parts of Belgium, for instance, Flemish is used by the workmen, servants, cabmen, and the poorest classes. French is the speech of the rest of the population. The street signs are printed in both. In Finland, the peasants speak only Finnish. In the towns, Swedish (which has no relation whatever to Finnish) is spoken, whereas the official language of the courts is Russian. Cultivated Finns depend for their literature largely upon the outside world, and are, therefore, conversant with English, French, and German.

Germany is fairly uniform in speech, but there are 2,000,000 Wends living in or near the fens and forests of the upper Spree. These have kept their national customs and their Slavic speech, despite the progress of the modern German about them. They publish six journals.

Although in America, we have large numbers of people whose mother tongue is one of the more difficult and rarer languages, this class of the population is not very apparent in our national life.

It is interesting to note that a Russian paper appears in New York, three Swedish ones in Chicago, one in Brooklyn, one in Manhattan, and one in Salt Lake City, a Slovakian monthly in Pittsburg, Slovenian weekly in Tower, Minn., a Hungarian weekly in Cleveland, a Norwegian bi-weekly in Chicago, and a Danish weekly in Cedar Falls, Ia. The Wostotschnoje Obosrenje (Eastern Observer), published in far Ikutsk, sounds cold and lonely. Among the specialty journals one finds, in addition to dozens of ordinary papers, the following: The Dancing Teacher, Furniture Moving, Boarding-House Interests, Stone Setter, Engagement Advertiser, Plasterers and Stucco Workers' Paper, Chimney Sweeps' Organ, and the Corset Advertisers.—Success.

Complaint System in Asylums.

In Belgian lunatic asylums there are securely locked boxes in which any inmate may deposit letters of complaint. These letters are collected three times weekly by outside officials, who investigate every case; and if a person asserts that he is not insane a prompt examination ensues by medical experts.

JAP ACTORS' WIVES.

THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE OF REPRESSED FEMININITY.

Tasks Domestic, Financial and Diplomatic Thrust Upon Helpmeets of Men Absorbed in Their Art—Student of Drama in Family.

Women in Japan are said to be a downtrodden nonentity, except in an actor's family. The wives of the Japanese actors are queens. And to become the wife of a prominent actor requires much strength as well as beauty.

She should be a diplomat for the outside world, as well as a sweet, gentle wife. In Japan acting was not looked upon as a respectable profession until recently, and a girl of any high position would not dare to dream of marrying an actor. However, any woman who was grown "within deep inner windows," as we say in Japan, is out of place in an actor's family.

An actor needs not any dollike woman who dare not step out without taking along two or three maids. There's nothing like a geisha girl who knows life's bitterness and tears—in another phrase, has studied life's true meaning. The geisha is an actress in one way, and quite often she is a clever artist. The actors find their wives among the geisha society.

To be an actor's wife means more than to be an ordinary helpmeet, and she must make good use of her wisdom and tact. She must give wings to her own self-expression, whereas a common Japanese wife is obliged to learn the art of self-concealing and mask wearing, must be meek under any circumstances, and to express her feelings is utterly forbidden.

There is no dramatic school in Japan, and the theatrical aspirants become house students in some well established actor's family. Some actors keep ten or fifteen students with them. The actor's wife must oversee them, and her work is not slight then.

She must treat them at first with much sympathy and give them well pointed encouragement. Also she must use the income to advantage, for to be called mean and niggardly would be suicide for such a profession.

The greater part of the income must be used up in clothes. And also the wife of the actor must look after the clothes of the house students twice a year. And the actor must distribute a silk wrap or fan for greeting among the patrons and such things rise to no small amount every time he plays a new piece.

Besides many other qualifications, the actor's wife should be literary. The Japanese playwrights must undergo her judgment, and her criticism is mightly valued. Before the rehearsal is begun the playwright must appear before the leading actor and read the play carefully. The actor's wife will sit by the side of the playwright and listen to him and continually give a hint to her husband's advantage.

The play will go if it has passed through the wife's approval. Till then the playwright will be uneasy, watching her face every minute and worrying about the result of the play.

After all, to become a first class actor in Japan is no play work, and to be a successful actor's wife is a great achievement.

Rocking Bathtub.

The ordinary bathtub is amply sufficient for the average person, but any one who is more fastidious and desires something unique can have recourse to the bathtub illustrated below. The body of the bathtub is supported upon rockers by uprights at the front and back. Pivoted to

the front of the rockers is an arm which extends to the top of the body. A pulley is attached to this arm, through which passes a rope, the latter being secured to the body of the tub, and, passing through a second pulley, connects with a handle, which is operated by the person in the tub to rock the machine, causing the water to flow up into a back portion above the seat. It will be readily seen that by pushing the handle the upper part of the arm will be pulled forward, raising the front end of the tub. The lining of the tub is arranged somewhat in the form of the seat and back of a chair, with a deeper portion for the feet.

A Good Use for Quilting Frames.

When washing lace curtains, an excellent way to dry them is to stretch them out on the old-fashioned quilting frames in the sun. This is an easier way than with curtain stretchers, as they are much stronger and easier to handle.

HOW TO TELL MUSHROOMS.

Dainty Recipes for Preparing This Delicacy.

The edible mushrooms have a fresh, earthy, pleasing odor; the poisonous ones a rank, acrid, disagreeable smell when broken. The edible field mushroom has a pinkish underneath unless left ungathered too long. The poisonous amanitas has pure white gills, while the base of the stalk is swollen into a bulbous state. This is such a pronounced characteristics of the deadly fungi that Hamilton Gibson, in his illustrated book on "Our Edible Mushrooms," marked the bulbous stalks of the poisonous sort with a skull and crossbones.

The most poisonous of the amanitas family are divided into two classes by mycologists—the chalioides and the muscarius. The latter, often called the "fly amanita," is very conspicuous and handsome, with a shining cap four or more inches in diameter, when expanded and of a brilliant scarlet, orange or lemon color, covered with white or yellowish warts. The gills are white or with a tinge of yellow. The stem is tall, bulbous, stuffed, then hollow. The warts or scales on the top are another distinguishing feature, rubbing off readily, leaving the skin intact. The name "fly amanitas" is most appropriate, as it is particularly attractive to flies. It is always surrounded by a circle of dead ones, proving its poisonous nature.

The edible field mushrooms, when it first comes up, is a little round white ball much like a puff ball. The inside of this little ball is a delicate salmon pink in color. As this little button mushroom continues to grow it spreads out umbrella shape, still retaining the pinky hue unless left ungathered too long.

Mushroom Sauce with Beefsteak.

Mince with a silver knife on a plate one cup cleaned fresh mushrooms, using the stems if they are button mushrooms. Put in a small saucepan with two tablespoonfuls butter, dust with a tablespoonful flour and simmer gently ten minutes. Dust with a scant tablespoonful flour, then add a cup and a half boiling water in which a little beef extract has been dissolved. Season with salt and pepper, simmer five minutes, add half a teaspoonful lemon juice and serve with broiled beefsteak. Many good housewives utilize the stems from mushrooms for a sauce for beefsteak, saving the caps for a special course broiled, baked or stuffed.

Dried Mushrooms.

While mushrooms are plentiful it is a good plan to put some away for use. To dry them, take perfectly fresh button mushrooms, place on plates covered with clean white paper and set in a slow oven to dry. When thoroughly dried, tie in clean paper bags and hang in a cool, dry place. When ready to use put into cold stock or gravy and heat gradually. These dried mushrooms can be purchased cheaply in the Italian quarter, but one feels more secure of cleanliness when they attend to the drying themselves.

Powdered Mushrooms.

Still another way of preserving mushrooms for future use is to powder them. Take any good field mushrooms, clean and place in a saucepan, where they will heat gradually, so as to extract the juices. Then shake the pan over the fire until the juices dry up, taking care that it does not scorch. Dry after this in a coolish oven and roll into a powder. Pack in airtight bottles and keep in a cool place.

To Cook Puff Balls.

Cut the large ones in slices half an inch thick, season with salt and pepper, brush lightly with olive oil or butter and broil over a hot fire. Or season the slices, dip in fritter batter and fry in deep hot fat.

Puff Ball Sandwiches.

Sliced thin, seasoned and eaten raw with bread and butter, the puff ball makes an excellent sandwich for those who like it.

How Table Olives are Prepared.

Consul R. M. Bartleman, of Seville, reports that to prepare olives in the most palatable manner they must be gathered unripe, after the first autumn showers.

Properly assorted according to size and quality, they are first washed in fresh water to remove particles of earth and leaves which usually cling to the fruit. Later they are allowed to soak in a solution of soda and potash, concentrated to between 2 degrees and 6 degrees of the Baume aerometer. If the solution be very concentrated, eight to ten hours of soaking suffice; if diluted, the operation may continue for three or four days. After the solution has penetrated very nearly to the stone of the fruit, fresh water is substituted and renewed every two hours until it remains clean—a sign that the fruit has lost the caustic flavor which the solution had imparted to it. Next, the fruit is pickled according to processes varying in conformity to the custom of each locality. Some use brine, others admix fennel and thyme, while not infrequently, also, salt and vinegar are employed. In this way whole olives are pickled. Whenever it is desired, on the other hand, that the fruit should imbibe a stronger savor of the pickle into which it is steeped, incisions penetrating to the stone are made.

To Clean Flat Irons.

Save all of the pasteboard cracker boxes and rub the irons on the inside which is waxed.

[illegible]

[illegible] Budget.

[illegible] Mrs. M. R. W. [illegible] N. Y. She says that her [illegible] salary is $1,[illegible] a year. On this [illegible] family of four persons [illegible] has had to live.

Inside of the last [illegible] and the cost of provisions [illegible] convinced me that the [illegible] dispensed with. A woman [illegible] two days a week to wash, iron [illegible] clean. Their present expenses are distributed as follows:

Rent, $240; outside help, [illegible] laundry, $24; groceries and [illegible] $384; fuel and gas, $50; [illegible] husband, $115; clothes for wife [illegible] girls, $200; amusement and [illegible] bills, $50; amusement and [illegible] $50.

The second table is that of a family of Washington, D. C. In this case also the husband's salary is $1,[illegible]. The family is smaller—husband, wife, a four-year-old child and one servant. They live in a suburban village near the city, which explains the heavy items for carfare and lunches. One cannot help thinking, however, that the husband might have made out a lunch on less than 40 cents a day. Counting out Sundays, holidays (he was in a bank) and vacation, it would average more than that.

Rent, per month, $30; servant's wages, $12; fuel, $5; cleaning material, etc., $1; clothes, $16; [illegible] food including ice, $20; car fare, $10; husband's lunches, $15; doctor's bills, $1. Total, $112.

The husband of the woman who furnishes the next table takes a sandwich with him from home and gets a glass of milk or a bowl of soup for his luncheon. There are four in this family and they live in Newark on $1,100 a year.

Rent, $270; gas (cooking, [illegible] dry and lighting), $50; [illegible] (about) $120; washerwoman, $[illegible]; clothing (about) $170; [illegible] (dentist, car fare, lunch for my husband, amusements, postage, [illegible] and other extras), $186. Total, $1,100.

It certainly does seem as if a Washington man ought to be in hand; for here is a [illegible] husband who gets $1,[illegible] spends only $2 a week for [illegible] and luncheon, too. His wife [illegible] out her list as follows, for a household consisting of herself, husband, a stepchild [illegible] and one servant:

Income, $1,100.

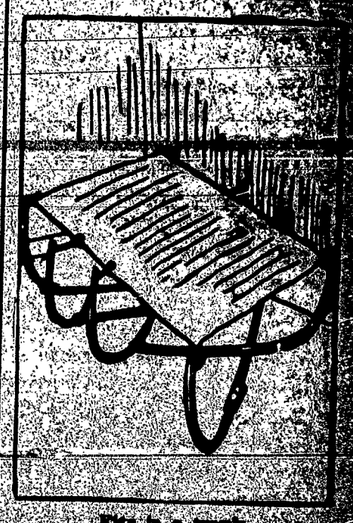
Yearly items—Order [illegible] $550; carfare and [illegible] church pew, $10. Total, $[illegible].

Monthly items—Rent, $[illegible]; servant's wages $12; meat, $[illegible]; [illegible] cories, $80; gas, $[illegible]; [illegible] $112.

The total for each month, $[illegible]. This, multiplied by twelve, [illegible] $1,344 for the year. Add [illegible] $730, total $2,014. This [illegible] from annual income, leaves $[illegible] for extra bills.

Convenient Folding Bed.

The folding bed long since established a reputation for [illegible] not equaled by any other [illegible] furniture. Every family has occasion to need one, and sometimes more, when cousins from the country come to stay for a week. The peculiar feature about the folding bed illustrated below is the use for which it was designed.



Fits in a trunk.

framework which forms the [illegible] sides and supports is made of [illegible] rods. These rods, when the bed is opened for use, assume the position shown in the illustration. The mattress and springs a strong piece of canvas is used, and is secured to the ends of the framework by [illegible] along the edges and at the corners. The rods are provided with [illegible] at certain points, these catches holding the framework extended to its full width. By releasing the catches and removing the canvas mattress framework can be collapsed into a very narrow space—so narrow, in fact, that it can be easily stored within an ordinary trunk.

To Keep Clothes White.

In putting every white article from one season to another [illegible] from yellowing take a long [illegible] an old sheet, wash [illegible] strong bluing water and dry (make very blue). Then drape sheet [illegible] in bags loosely and [illegible] closet. Will keep white [illegible] this way.

Hot milk [illegible] to take hot