Daily Eagle

MY LADY'S RING.

FACTS AND FANCIES CONCERNING MANY HOOPS OF GOLD.

The Engagement and Wedding Rings and the Fingers They Adorn—Superstitions and Omens Connected with Them—The Posy Ring of the Sixteenth Century.

The origin of the circlet that adorns my lady's hand is obscure, though very ancient. There is a tradition which assigns the invention of the ring to Tubal Cain, and the old Latin author who gives circulation to the story, in speaking of the wedding circlet, says: "The form of the ring being circular—that is to say, round and without end—imparteth this much, that mutual love and hearty affection should roundly flow from one to the other, as in the circle, and that continually forever."

The hands of female mummies found in the tombs of Egypt are profusely decorated with rings, thus proving that ring wearing was an established custom at a very early day. The wealthy ladies of Egypt wore rings on nearly every finger—and costly rings they were, too. Their poorer sisters used less costly circlets, and rings formed of bronze, glass and pottery with suitable mottoes were their finger friends.

BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE RINGS.

Marriage by the ring is common in many countries besides our own. The Russians have two rings, which are changed three times. In the first place, the man places the ring on the woman's finger, then the priest changes the man's ring and puts it on her finger, and then priest and man join and give her the ring for life. When Henry VIII espoused Anne of Cleves he sent her a ring which bore the inscription, "God send me well to keep." It was a fatal motto, as we know, for "bluff King Hal" ere long grew tired of her and began to look around for another pretty victim.

Wedding rings have not always been made of metal. Necessity has caused the invention of some singular ones. On several occasions a piece cut from the finger of a kid glove has answered for the wedding circlet. When the gallant Duke of Hamilton married Miss Gunning almost on the spur of the moment, one might say, for the courtship was of but two days' duration, I believe, no proper ceremonial ring was at hand. The archbishop refused to act without a ring, and the lord and his lady were for a while distracted. But at length the knot was cut in an ingenious manner and the young couple were married by the ring of the bed curtain, which no doubt cut a curious figure on the white hand of the fair damsel.

Among the Armenians children are subjected to early betrothal by ring ceremony. This is done by the mothers, who make the occasion a very solemn one, and at any time years afterward the man can claim his bride. But once a year from the date of the betrothal the prospective bride is entitled to receive an Easter dress from the hands of the future husband. Customs similar to this one prevail in various countries of the east, and the ring is made to play a very important part in the woman's life.

In Roman espousals, mentions Macrobius, the man gave the woman a ring by way of pledge, and the woman put it on the third finger of her left hand, because it was believed that a nerve ran from that finger to the heart. The Egyptians ascribed the possession of this important nerve to the fourth finger of the same hand. Coming down to later belief and usage, we find that Madame de la Tour, writing of my lady's ring, says that if the lady is willing to marry, the circlet should be worn on the index finger of the left hand; if engaged, on the second finger; if married, on the third; but if she has no desire to wed, then on the little finger.

The sign language of the ring is varied and quaint. For instance, we are told that a ring on the forefinger indicates a haughty, bold and overbearing spirit; on the long finger, prudence, dignity and discretion; on the marriage finger, love and affection; on the little finger, a masterful spirit.

One would not think that rings were once worn on the thumb, but such was one of the customs that prevailed from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth century. We are quite familiar with Falstaff's extravagant boast that, when young, he was slim enough to "creep into any alderman's thumb ring." But thumb rings never came into general use among the ladies. They preferred to keep the ring on the tapering fingers, where it could be worn with more ease and to better advantage.

Wedding rings in all ages have been regarded sacred. When Mary of Modena, one of the beautiful and unfortunate heroines of history, was forced to dispose of her jewels she kept as most precious to her her wedding ring. Dr. Samuel Johnson kept his wife's ring as a sacred treasure, and the keepsake most valued by Victoria is known to be the ring placed on her finger by Albert on their wedding day. There is a story told of a Russian prince who, on being searched previous to a life long exile in Siberia, begged to be allowed to retain a plain gold ring which kept alive the memory of a happy marriage. And the story goes, I am glad to say, that he went to the mines with the treasure next to his heart.

POSY AND MOTTO RINGS.

Posy rings came into vogue with the Sixteenth century. These were motto rings, and they form one of the most interesting chapters of ring lore. It is said that the famous ring which Essex sent to Queen Elizabeth by the Countess of Nottingham, but which the willful woman did not deliver until after the duke's death, was a posy. These rings were common between lovers and friends all over Europe. They bore rhyming mottoes and affectionate sentiment, and the lady without a posy ring was looked upon as forlorn and with but few hopes of marriage ahead.

Shakespeare knew the posy ring, for in the "Merchant of Venice" he makes Gratiano and Nerissa say:

Gratiano—About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring,
That she did give me, whose posy was,
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, "Love me, love me not."

Nerissa—What talk you of the posy, or the value?
You swore to me when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death.

Some of the mottoes on the old posy rings are beautifully quaint. The list of them is entirely too long to be embodied in this article, but I cannot refrain from giving a few:

"In thee my choice, I do rejoice."
"May God above increase our love."
"Not two but one till life is done."
"My heart and I until I die."
"As gold is pure, so love is sure."
"As long as life your loving wife."
"Love is sure where faith is pure."
"Love is heaven, and heaven is love."
"Not for a day, but, love, for aye."
"When this you see, then think of me."
"In gold I'm cast to bind two fast."
"My heart is thine, true love of mine."—T. C. Harbaugh in Pittsburg Bulletin.

MARK TWAIN ON INTERVIEWS.

He Thinks Most of Them Absurdities and Tells Why He Thinks So.

Mark Twain writes to a correspondent who wanted to "interview" him:

No, no—it is like most interviews, pure twaddle and valueless.

For several quite plain and simple reasons an "interview" must, as a rule, be an absurdity. And chiefly for this reason: It is an attempt to use a boat on land, or a wagon on water, to speak figuratively. Spoken speech is one thing, written speech is another. Print is a proper vehicle for the latter, but it isn't for the former. The moment "talk" is put into print you recognize that it is not what it was when you heard it; you perceive that an immense something has disappeared from it. That is its soul. You have nothing but a dead carcass left on your hands. Color, play of feature, the varying modulations of voice, the laugh, the smile, the informing inflections, everything that gave body, warmth, grace, friendliness and charm, and commended it to your affection, or at least to your tolerance, is gone, and nothing is left but a pallid, stiff and repulsive cadaver.

Such is "talk" almost invariably, as you see it lying in state in an "interview." The interviewer seldom tries to tell one how a thing was said; he merely puts in the naked remark and stops there. When one writes for print his methods are very different. He follows forms which have but little resemblance to conversation, but they make the reader understand what the writer is trying to convey. And when the writer is making a story, and finds it necessary to report some of the talk of his characters, observe how cautiously and anxiously he goes at that risky and difficult thing:

"If he had dared to say that thing in my presence," said Alfred, taking a mock heroic attitude and casting an arch glance upon the company, "blood would have flowed." "If he had dared to say that thing in my presence," said Hawkwood, with that in his eye which caused more than one heart in that guilty assemblage to quake, "blood would have flowed." "If he had dared to say that thing in my presence," said the paltry blusterer, with valor on his tongue and pallor on his lips, "blood would have flowed."

So painfully aware is the novelist that naked talk in print conveys no meaning that he loads and often overloads almost every utterance of his characters with explanations and interpretations. It is a loud confession that print is a poor vehicle for "talk," it is a recognition that uninterrupted talk in print would result in confusion to the reader, not instruction.

Now, in your interview you have certainly been most accurate, you have set down the sentences I uttered as I said them. But you have not a word of explanation; what my manner was at several points is not indicated. Therefore, no reader can possibly know where I was in earnest and where I was joking; or whether I was joking altogether or in earnest altogether. Such a report of a conversation has no value. It can convey many meanings to the reader, but never the right one.

To add interpretations which would convey the right meanings is a something which would require—what? An art so high and fine and difficult that no possessor of it would ever be allowed to waste it on interviews.

No; spare the reader and spare me; leave the whole interview out; it is rubbish. I wouldn't talk in my sleep if I couldn't talk better than that.

If you wish to print anything, print this letter; it may have some value, for it may explain to a reader here and there why it is that in interviews as a rule men seem to talk like anybody but themselves.

Celery.

It is strange that so healthful a vegetable as celery should be used so little, for while in season it ought to be used like any other seasonable green thing. The celery glass, with its bouquet of vivid green, is a bright, attractive ornament to the dinner table. The majority of people never think of eating it in any way but its raw state, yet there are ways in which it may be served that are much more palatable.

Boiled or steamed celery is very nice. Cut up the stalks into inch pieces, put in a saucepan and add just enough water to cover the whole. Throw in a little salt and let boil until soft, but not enough so that it falls to pieces. Drain of the water, put the vegetable into a dish, and while hot serve with butter.

Creamed celery is very nice. Cut in inch pieces and cover with milk, to which, when boiling, add salt and a small piece of butter. Serve hot. This way of cooking celery is delicious.

The green stalks and leaves, usually thrown away, are all useful. Cut the stalks into small bits and use them for flavoring soups, broths, etc. Put the leaves into a pan or dish and place in the oven to dry. Watch them that they do not burn and when dry crumble them and place away in a wide-mouthed bottle and keep closely covered. This will be found good for flavoring soups when the celery is out of the market. Celery seed is good to keep in the house for flavoring, and celery salt is, to many, a necessary condiment.

This plant is a great nervine and those suffering from any nervous trouble are much benefited by a liberal use of it. It is also recommended for rheumatism, some authorities going so far as to say that when freely eaten it is a sure cure for this painful disease. —Boston Budget.

A Man Out of Place.

The average man may receive a fair impression of how a fish out of water feels by paying a visit, in the company of some inveterate female shopper, to one of the mammoth dry goods stores of this city. Penned in by crowds of chattering women, if he attempts to be civil in the matter of making his way along the aisles, he will quickly find himself away in the rear of his guide, and will see that his civility is neither expected, noticed or returned. If he thinks he knows anything about economic buying or the latest fashions, he will soon abandon that delusion. His guide would not think for an instant of buying dress goods until she had seen A's stock; or handkerchiefs till M's bargains had been overhauled; or notions till she had visited O's store. For her every store has its particular excellence, and only a man could be blind enough to think them all alike. Should he even want to buy a necktie that has caught his eye and fancy, she will point out to him with withering scorn that the style has gone out, that the color is almost obsolete and the price at least four cents more than the same thing can be procured for just one block east and four south of where he is then displaying his incapacity. If he humbles himself sufficiently his taste may be consulted once or twice on the tour, but his advice is observed—never.—New York Tribune.

Alum in Baking Powders.

Professor J. W. Mallett, of the University of Virginia, who has been making an exhaustive series of experiments with alum baking powders and studying their effects upon the digestive organs, says that alum itself, when added singly to bread or other food, is positively injurious to health, and that its use, even in the small proportion sometimes used to improve the appearance of bread made from unsound or inferior flour, must be regarded as highly reprehensible, its injurious effect being in no way lessened by its combination with carbonate of soda to form baking powder. — New York Commercial Advertiser.

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THOUGHTS ON NATURE'S AND MAN'S WAYS OF DOING IT.

The Leaves in the Books of Nature Well Written Upon—Papa Never Did Anything Wrong—Moralizing on a Spring Day—Four Perfect Things in Nature.

How many beautiful ideas are framed into language and float all about from somewhere up the stream of time. Why did some one call the thin laminæ of paper which make up a book, leaves? Indeed, it was a pretty thought, for how like the leaves they are, thin, fragile, perishable; and nowadays there are almost as many of one kind of leaves as of the other. Yes, and as for kinds and styles there are almost as many in books as on the trees, but are there any so witty and wise? If you will make a study of the leaves—that is, the book of nature—you will see they are marvelously well written upon. And you will not find one that is not illustrated with finer art than even adorns the pages of our art books. See how well cut are the edges, and enameled, which is better than gilded. Some one has said if we could live as long as Methuselah we should not be able to find out all there is to be learned from a single rose leaf. That is more than we can say of our book leaves, although I know some that seem to be nearly as good as rose leaves.

LEAVES IN OUR LIVES.

"Well, well," said John, as we sat down to the breakfast table this morning, "we must all turn over new leaves today." "'Tis an old saying, father," I answered, "but tell me why we should turn a leaf today more than any other day." "Truly, I do not know," said John. "I suppose if one lives rightly, there is enough in each day to fill a leaf with good things, and then one may turn it over in the morning. But if it be bad, then one had better tear it out altogether." "Only," said I, "one cannot do that, and there is where the likeness fails, for we can pick off the trees a worm eaten leaf, but in the life book it must stay forever." "It is curious," said John, "that one can never forget. Only last night, in a dream, I recalled events to the utmost minutiæ, that I have not thought of in my waking hours for twenty years, and I cannot now possibly by force of purpose bring it back so fully and clearly. But I did it in my sleep, and shall no doubt do it again. What a terrible thing it would be to live forever in a bad dream—never wake up, but never cease to dream on—recalling and rehearsing the evil one has done."

"But, papa," said Ned, "you have never done anything bad, you know—so what's the use of talking about it?" Now, John, Jr., has great faith in me, but Ned has boundless faith in his father. The blessed innocents! but I am glad it is so; for if not life would be a desert to us who see and know our faults. So I said, "Yes, John, I think we will all turn over new leaves today. It is the first day of spring and nature is already at work with her new leaves. She will not turn them over only, but will make them outright, and swing them high, and fill them up as they grow. And then we must not forget that as soon as leaves begin to get large enough for the wind to turn them over, there will also be blossoms, and with blossoms sweetness and wholesomeness." "And there will be fruit also in due time," added John, "if something do not interfere. So I suppose our new leaves must not be quite like book leaves, but more like apple leaves. But there is great difference in fruits."

OUT IN THE FIELDS AND FOREST.

But I do not like moralizing, especially of the old Hannah More sort, because there is no end to it any more than there is to a spider's web, so I proposed that we finish our eating and go out and see nature at her work. What can be finer than a spring day that is full of premonition and preliminaries? It was not yet May by any means, but it was a May day—soft and warm—but above all unutterably quiet. Did it ever occur to you that on some days Nature herself is listening—perhaps trying to hear her own pulse beat? The elms and soft maples were shaking out their infinite plenitude of blossoms, and the English elms looked as if covered with a great crop of hops. I wish these trees would turn over a new leaf, for they begin the year wrong end foremost.

They ripen a vast crop of seeds and fling them down over all the lawns, and all summer they are sprouting and springing in every nook and corner, and outside of all the nooks, too. I said this to John, and he only answered that if I could have my way there would be a funny world after awhile. Did we not come out to turn over leaves and amend things? To be sure! But I wish that men would turn over a new leaf, and get rid of their sarcasm and conceit. Ah, but what splendid creatures they would be after awhile, if we only had the way of it and the making of them.

The lilac is the finest shrub in the world. It has every good quality. It comes so very early, is loaded with blossoms, is not only sweet, but healthily sweet, is as easily grown as a thorn bush or nettle. I like a flower that takes to the poor people and will grow without extra care. That is the lilac exactly; just what the geranium is in pots the lilac is in our yards. We sat down by the great bushes of purple and white Persians, and watched the young tufts of flowers. There were more flowers than leaves and one or two bunches were just opening.

Fresh young grass, full of greenness and dotted with blue violets, is fine, also, for the same reason. They belong to every one, and are never stinted in quantity—neither grass nor violets. Then, overhead, should be, first of all, apple trees. With grass, violets, lilacs and apple trees spring is complete everywhere. These do not need to turn over any new leaves, by way of amendment. They are four of the perfect things in nature.—Mary Spencer in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Training Boys for Contortion.

What, then, is a contortionist? In the first place it appears that a contortionist is a person who has preserved in his spine, and in some cases in his joints, the infantile condition which in most persons is merely transient. This implies a great flexibility of the spine in all directions, great powers of twisting it. It is also very likely that there are many small individual peculiarities all favoring uncommon freedom of motion. If a young boy without any of this special fitness should be trained for contortion, I think he would probably meet with some success, but never achieve distinction. So far as I am aware, children are not educated for this profession from their tenderest years, as they are for several kinds of acrobatic performances. Their capacity makes itself known by accident, from which it is fair to infer that it rests on an anatomical basis.—Scribner's.

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