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MARRIAGE IN MEXICO.

How the Engagement and Wedding Ceremonies are celebrated.

The Mexican people are hospitable to a fault, always welcoming their friends even though they have not enough to eat themselves. And they religiously visit the sick, including those who have contagious diseases. They are also addicted to public social functions, the invariable mode of entertainment being the dance. They are fond of music, though not proficient in the art of making it, probably more from lack of opportunity than from lack of capacity. The violin and guitar are the usual instruments of music, the repertory of the local musicians being usually limited to a few tunes which are in equal demand for the dance and for the funeral.

One of the most interesting and beautiful of the social functions is the pre-dorio. When a young man wishes to marry he asks for the girl of his choice of the parents, not of the girl herself, and if she is given the pre-dorio once follows, ushered in by short and demonstrations of joy. The bride and bridegroom are publicly presented to their future parents-in-law, after which the company pass in procession in front of the couple, each one dropping a piece of money into the hands of the bride. Then follows the inevitable dance. This public betrothal is considered almost as binding as marriage, and I have heard of but one instance in which the compact was not kept, the recalcitrant bridegroom in that case being visited with ostracism. The betrothal is usually followed by marriage just as soon as the services of the priest can be secured. The marriage ceremony is followed by a feast more notable for the abundance of things to drink than for things to eat and by the usual dance. Indeed the festivities are often prolonged for several nights after the wedding.—Southern Workman.

THE AGE OF STARS.

Color Aids the Astronomer in Making His Calculations.

As a star contracts from the surrounding nebulous matter from which it was thrown off its temperature rises, and with this augmented heat occurs a change both in the star's spectrum and color. Red-hot iron is not nearly so hot as white-hot iron. By observing the various changes in tint which the metal undergoes the foundryman is able to tell with considerable accuracy its degree of heat. A somewhat similar method of gauging a star's temperature, and therefore its age, is relied upon by the astronomer. Color, then, and spectroscopic analysis enable the astronomer to estimate the age of stars that are only beginning to exist as stars and others whose light is fast fading.

After having conglutated, as it were, from a nebulous mass, a star assumes a color that may be best described as an intense bluish white, much like that of the electric arc. Stars of that hue are, therefore, in their infancy. Then comes the white stage, followed by the yellow, orange and red, each succeeding hue indicating greater celestial antiquity than the last. Up to the yellow period the star as it contracts grows hotter and hotter. Then a gradual cooling takes place. Accompanying the changes in color are changes in the spectrum of the star—changes that indicate a modification in physical structure. In the bluish white period of a star's infancy the characteristic wide lines of hydrogen gas predominate in the spectrum. As the color changes, the lines of calcium, magnesium and iron appear, the hydrogen lines gradually becoming thinner and those of calcium broader.—Booklovers Magazine.

Traffic in Human Skin.

The skin grafting experiments which have been so successful of recent years have led to a new form of livelihood, which is fairly remunerative. Several of the London hospitals have on their books the names and addresses of many men and women who have undertaken to sell portions of their cuticle whenever the necessity arises, and it is said that quite a regular traffic is now being done in the buying and selling of human skin. The persons who are willing to sacrifice their flesh for money are by no means confined to the poor and destitute class.—London Mail.

The Postal Union.

The first step toward the formation of the postal union, which has had such wide results, came from Germany in the shape of a proposal for an international postal congress. This met at Berne in 1873, when twenty-two countries joined the union, including the whole of Europe. A second congress met in Paris in 1873, when ten other countries came in, and the official title, "International Postal Union," was definitely fixed. Its sphere was further enlarged at congresses at Lisbon in 1885 and at Vienna in 1891.

The Attraction.

Prim Mother—My son, I am afraid you are going to make a mistake in marrying Miss Easyways. Both she and her mother are fearfully lax housekeepers. Son—I know it, mother; that's what caught me. It's so comfortable over there, you know. I can sit down anywhere in the parlor without being told that I'm musing things up!—Detroit Free Press.

An Uneasy Seat.

"Pa," said Tommy, opening the paper, "who sits on the seat of war?" "No one," responded papa, "because the seat of war generally has a tack in it."—Baltimore Herald.

The great question is not so much what money you have in your pocket as what you will buy with it.—Ruskin.

Command great fields, but cultivate small ones.—Virgil.

A LEPAPE PICTURE.

The Work That Bought the Artist Public Recognition.

The label on a certain spring water still in use was designated by Du Maurier, who was probably not overpaid for it, and a New York artist who has since gained distinction ekes out the hardest part of his early struggles by designing advertisements for a commercial house. There have been many more perhaps, but the most conspicuous on record is Bastien Lepage, who through this very fact was forced into fame. He was pursued by unmerciful disaster through his youth in his efforts to study art. His mother worked in the fields to keep a sickly boy at school. At fifteen he went alone to Paris, starved for seven years, painted without success, but still-painted. He had just finished a picture to send to the Salon when Paris was besieged, and he rushed with his comrades to the trenches.

On the first day a shell fell into his studio and destroyed his picture, and another shell burst at his feet, wounding him. He was carried home and lay ill and idle for two years. Then he returned to Paris and, reduced to absolute want, painted cheap fans for a living.

One day a manufacturer of some patent medicine ordered a picture from him to illustrate its virtues. Lepage, who was always sincere, gave his best work to this advertisement. He painted a landscape in the April sunlight. The leaves of tender green quivered in the breeze. A group of beautiful young girls gathered around a fountain from which the elixir of youth sprang in a bubbling stream. Lepage believed there was real merit in it.

"Let me offer it at the Salon?" he asked his patron.

The manufacturer was delighted. "But first paint a rainbow arching over the fountain," he said, "with the name of my medicine upon it."

Lepage refused.

"Then I will not pay you a sou for the picture."

The price of this picture meant bread for months, and the painter had long needed bread. The chance of admission to the salon was small. He hesitated. Then he silenced his hunger and carried the canvas to the salon. It was admitted.

Its great success insured Lepage public recognition, and his later work gained him a place among the greatest of living artists.

PROVERBS OF MEXICO.

The noise is more than the powder—the Mexican way of saying it is "hot air."

When it rains, we all get wet—the Mexican way of saying, "Misfortunes never come singly."

The devil is not astute because he is the devil, but because he is old—used to express the value of experience.

When bread is cut, crumbs are left, expressing the fact that we all have a share in our neighbors' good fortune.

After the child is drowned, cover up the well—the Mexican way of saying, "After the horse is stolen, lock the stable."

It is better to go around than to fall down, expressing the fact that it is often better to avoid a difficulty than to try to overcome it.—Chicago Journal.

Would Make Sure About the Soap.

A little boy who had been blowing bubbles all the morning, tiring of play and suddenly growing serious, said, "Read me that thory about heaven; it fth the glorioth."

"I will," said the mother, "but first tell me, did you take the soap out of the water?"

"Oh, yes; I'm pretty thure I did."

The mother read the description of the beautiful city, the streets of gold, the gates of pearl. He listened with delight, but when she came to the words, "No one can enter there who loveth or maketh a lie," bounding up, he said:

"I gueth I'll go and thee about that thoop!"—New York Observer.

Entangled in a Live Wire.

If a person is tangled in a live electric wire and you want to extricate him therefrom do not take hold of the victim's hands, as is often done in a case of this kind. You will be shocked if you do. Be sure to grab the clothes alone, and then you are safe, and the current cannot reach you. Do not let anything come in contact with your bare hands but his coat and trousers. Of course if you have thick leather gloves on you can handle with impunity the individual in distress.

Appropriate Ending.

The thoughtful little boy with the high forehead tied an oblong receptacle made of tin to the dog's tail and watched the animal go tearing down the alley.

"For a Scotch collie," the boy explained to the bystanders, "I thought he wasn't quite as canny as he ought to be."—Chicago Tribune.

Softening It.

Boothlet—What do you mean by saying I'm the worst actor you ever saw? Coolly—Well, I've no doubt it did seem rather harsh; but, then, you know there are so many actors I have never seen!—Boston Transcript.

Irritating Iteration.

"I don't see why you call him stupid. He says a clever thing quite often." "Exactly. He doesn't seem to realize that it should be said only once."—Philadelphia Press.

For the Serious Moment.

"I hear he refused to take chloroform when he was operated on." "Yes; he said he'd rather take it when he paid his bill."

THE LOST PARADISE

THEORIES AS TO THE LOCATION OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

The Consensus of Learned Opinion Supports the Belief That Adam and Eve's Original Home Was on the Great Babylonian Plain.

Almost every spot of the globe has had the claim made on its behalf that it is the site of vanished Eden. Most persons seem agreed on the fact that paradise has disappeared from our midst. The question is, Where was it situated? To those who deny the Biblical story of man's genesis the question takes another form, and they perplex themselves as to the spot in which man first appeared on this earth. Some evade the difficulty by saying that man appeared in many different spots—that he did not spring from one original.

If we accept the doctrine of the Darwinians we are forced to confess that the place where man first evolved must have been anything but a garden of Eden. It must have been a haunt of mere animalism, and its food would certainly not have been fruit. Roughly speaking, therefore, there are two schools—those who believe that man came from a divine original, but fell away from his first estate, to which with infinite labor he may return, and those who believe that he evolved from the beast and is still evolving to the greatness that he may ultimately attain. Setting aside these somewhat discordant theories, we may well ask, Where was Eden?

The soundest scientists are agreed that mankind came from a single origin—whether a distinct creation or an evolution is beside the mark—and the original man must have had a local habitation. The geographical manuals and maps of the middle ages leave a good deal to be desired in the matter of accurate detail, but they have at least the merit of boldness, and if we go to them for an answer to our question we may get something like a definite reply. According to an old map of the thirteenth century, paradise is a circular island lying near India. It is surrounded by a wall in which is a gateway opening to the west. The gate is closed and the wall quite insurmountable. Our later atlases do not locate this happy island.

Other early maps would have us believe that Eden lay in central China. We can go with these ancient geographers so far as to place the probable site of man's birthplace in Asia, but the consensus of learned opinion does not incline either to India or China. Eminent authority supports the idea that Eden lay somewhere on the great Babylonian plain, watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates—the Perath and Hiddekel of Genesis. Other authorities give their vote for Armenia, possibly influenced by the tradition which says that the Ark rested on Mount Ararat, but this tradition would only point to Armenia as the probable first home of postluluvian man.

Professor Dellitzsch and Professor Sayce favor Babylon; Heidegger favors Palestine; Media, Arabia and the upper Nile have all their supporters. Quotations, treating the subject solely from a scientific standpoint, concludes that linguistic and other human types point to central Asia, but does not decide on any precise locality.

With the author of Genesis, as Dr. Kalisch has remarked, "Eden is geographically described in a manner which leaves no doubt that distinct locality was before the mind of the author." Even to those who think that this author was building on uncertain traditions it must yet be of interest to know what this locality was. Babylon was the most fertile land known to the ancient world; its poorest fields repaid cultivation fiftyfold, its better a hundredfold. Its luxuriance of fruit and grain was so great as to be actually embarrassing. There is no question at all that this district was the seat of Asia's earliest civilization and therefore why not say of the world's?

The idea of man created perfect and living in a garden of fruitful loveliness has always had a fascination for poor humanity, recognizing its present imperfections and the frequent distressing dismalness of its present surroundings. Even those who knew nothing of the Bible story pictured such a spot for themselves. Every early mythology has its fortunate isles, its Atlantis, its Hesperides, its Arcadia and its Golden Age.

Some persons even conjectured that paradise had not been on the earth at all, but was an island floating in the air, something like the island visited by Gulliver. They did not wish to think that the sacred spot could be submerged by the waters of the deluge, and by this device they raised it above any such calamity. On this island dwelt the sacred phoenix; the well of life flowed there, the elixir of immortality; leaves never fell from the trees; the sun shone always on a perpetual summer. Men declined to believe that Eden had been destroyed forever. They preferred to imagine that its gates were closed to them for a season. To deem that such a spot could vanish seemed sacrilegious.

Many an early voyager and explorer had strange dreams of discovering some earthly paradise when he set out for unknown shores—dreams perhaps not spoken, but secretly nourished and strengthened by unconquerable force of romantic superstition that lived in the heart of ages in other ways so dark. Even the Elizabethans dreamed always of some more wonderful country to be discovered. Their tolls and perils and fightings had over the redeeming glamour of romance. In those days was the true poetry of travel. There was always some El Dorado, some hidden Eden, to be reached.—Kansas City Independent.

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