

## WEDDING CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS

By Idah McGlone Gibson.

Birth, marriage and death are the three great events of life. Compared with them, all others are insignificant. Of the three, marriage is perhaps the most important—certainly the only one that is voluntary. Birth is forced upon us, we are born to die, but we achieve marriage.

Three wishes hath each maid I know:  
To handsome grow and have a beau,  
And to the marriage altar go.

"Human hearts remain unchanged," and life methods differ but little the wide world over. We conduct our campaign strangely alike wherever, whoever, whatever we are—and from the North pole to the South woolings and weddings are much the same.

The Indian of America proposes marriage by throwing the game he has killed at the feet of a maiden as a symbol that he can and will support her, very much as the high-born Pole throws the wild boar which he has speared at his sweetheart's feet. Betrothed Britons drink brandy and eat white bread together; the Japanese bride and groom drink sake; the Romans had their hymeneal meal, and the Germans their hymeneal ale.

The German peasantry never wed when the moon is full or diminishing. The nuptial luck will decrease if the marriage moon is past its full; if at its full the couple's luck will at best be stationary; while the increasing marriage moon brings increase of health, wealth and happiness.

No German bride wears pearls, not even a royal bride, as it is believed that for every pearl she wears her husband will cause her to shed a flood of tears.

The Russian bride must prostrate herself at her bridegroom's feet and pledge that she will submit herself and her will to him in all things.

Whatever else a Japanese bridegroom fails to do, he must not neglect to send his bride a girdle; it is

the wedding ring of the Japanese. The girdle has also figured prominently in the marriage ceremonies of the old Romans.

The Malays pay for a marriage before they celebrate it. They are easy-going people, but to eat a wedding cake or wear a wedding robe which is unpaid for would be an irretrievable disgrace. According to the Malayan code, all wedding expenses are paid by the bridegroom, and the sum which covers them is sent by him to his father-in-law elect on the day previous to that on which he claims and receives his bride.

The old Jewish law most earnestly enjoins that in choosing a wife the characteristics of her family shall be carefully considered, for "a woman generally resembles her father and the man his maternal uncles." No Jewish marriage can take place when less than ten persons are present—at least ten Jews must be assembled when prayer is offered in any religious service.

No woman is more noticed and more courted before marriage than is the Spanish bride—and certainly few wives are more neglected after the brief span of the honeymoon. While the marriage kisses are yet moist upon her lips her husband lights his cigaret and strolls away.

The Turkish woman must, nominally, at least, give her consent before she can be married, and no betrothal is binding until the bride-elect has thrice and formally assured a high priest of her willingness.

The superstitions connected with the marriage ring in the middle ages were various. In France, to secure protection against diabolical arts, a ring of cane or straw or one made from the nail of a horseshoe was placed on the finger of the fiancée.

Sometimes a ring was passed three times in water while the words, "in