

HOW JEWS GET MARRIED.

THEY ARE VERY PARTICULAR IN MAKING GOOD SELECTIONS.

One of Their Number Tells About the Laws by Which They Are Governed—The Modern Ceremony and What is Orthodox and Not Orthodox.

Every Jew is a promoter of marriage, says a writer in the N. Y. Press. Robbed of the sordid motives of shatehenism this becomes the bulwark of the race. Men and women seeing two young people apparently fitted for each other physically and mentally see to it that they are brought together. I mention the physical fitness because it is a greater essential of the perfect marriage than most people are willing to admit, and few yet recognize it sufficiently except the Jews. There are provisions in his religious law against the wedding of the physically and mentally imperfect, and to an extent he follows them. Hence the fact noted two weeks ago that the Hebrew children, interior in numbers though they be, lead in class standing their Gentile co-students in the public schools. If the Jew, in planning marriages, considers also financial fitness, so much the better. I do not say that he does not carry it too far. I know that my coreligionists frequently deserve censure on that head. I know also the reason that they are, which is not of their making; but this is not a defense of Hebrew faults. Certainly it is well for two young people to know before they marry whether or not the union will bring starvation or surfeit. An empty larder is a fertile breeder of domestic dissension; the woman who wears her dress three seasons is less likely to be contented than she who buys a wardrobeful each year. Sentiment is a great thing, but it is likely to flourish better if it is surrounded by material comfort than it shivers in a cheerless home.

The orthodox Jewish wedding ceremony is impressive and beautiful. It has scarcely been altered in essential detail for many centuries. The ancient Huppah Kadusha or marriage ceremony has been almost discarded by the liberal Jew who has adopted the way of his Gentile neighbors. There are doubtless Hebrews in New York who have never witnessed a Jewish ceremony performed according to the laws of Moses.

All Bible readers know that a Jew was not in ancient days master of himself in regard to marriage. Cursed was the man who did not marry his brother's childless widow, and thus propagate his brother's seed, unless he purchased atonement of the Levites by large donations. In ancient times the question of marriage and of securing suitable matches was entrusted to the Levites and Cohanim (priests), as they were deemed more capable of choosing and arranging the destinies (dowry) than the parties themselves. The power of the Levites increased, and in their place arose the shatehen. As has already been said, the shatehen only flourished in the city among the orthodox Polish Hebrews. He will not stand transplanting to other cities, and in the course of a few years he will exist only in tradition.

Nothing could be more interesting than an orthodox Jewish wedding among the non-progressive. You are received in a room, in which is a large table, covered with balls made of chopped fish, huge platters of fried fish and innumerable small loaves of bread, each about the size of a Vienna roll. Seated around this table, which is always surmounted by a pair of lighted candles, are all the old men, who are listening to the groom and bride, followed by the couple, he has brought together. He is a proud man, for, aside from the pecuniary consideration he receives, he has also performed a mitzva (good deed). For were it not for him, one or both of the to be married pair might have committed a great sin by marrying a Gentile. He by arranging the match, has averted this possible evil.

All have their hats on, as a Jew may not uncover before the eternal, and the Lord is present during a wedding ceremony. Now the marriage procession is forming to march into the back yard, for the religious Jews get married in the open air, indirectly under the canopy of heaven and directly covered by the Huppah—a canopy of silk, supported by four poles at the corners. The procession emerges from the house. First comes the rabbi, with the goblet of wine; then the four bearers of the canopy, each holding a pole; next the parents of the groom and bride, followed by the couple, arm in arm.

The happy pair walk under the canopy. The groom remains standing, while the bride marches around him three times and then takes her place at his right hand. The rabbi now sings a song of praise. When he finishes the groom steps forward, take the hand of the bride, slips the ring (a plain gold circlet, signifying endless union) on her finger and says in Hebrew: "Thus do I make thee my wife according to the laws of Moses and customs of Israel."

Then each takes a sip of wine from the goblet which the rabbi had been holding. Then, stepping back, the groom crushes with his heel this goblet if it be of glass, or perhaps another that has been placed at his feet. The rabbi then says: "No more than can this glass be united again can the couple be parted."

It has been told that once the groom did not stamp heavily enough to break the glass, and the bride refused to live with him because of the evil omen.

This ends the ceremony. Congratulations follow and the guests adjourn to the house to feast.

The custom of crushing the glass goblet is variously interpreted. It may mean that, as the groom has ground it into dust, so also will he crush with his heel all evils that shall come into his house. It is also said to be a reminder of Israel's shattered crown of glory, which even in a moment of greatest joy must not be forgotten.

With the more progressive Hebrews the open air requirement is not regarded. The huppah may be set up in a parlor or in a synagogue. Bridesmaids and groomsmen accompany the contracting parties. The ketubah, or marriage contract, is sometimes read in full before the rabbi's final words; often it is read and signed in private. The feast following the ceremony is given at long tables, instead of small

ones, as with Gentiles, and is the occasion of speechmaking by the fathers of the contracting parties, the groom and sometimes others.

If a widow marries among the strictly orthodox, she does not wear a veil, but a towel tied around her head. Among the more strictly orthodox Slavonic Jews, when the wedding party reaches the house the bride is taken into a room by four old women, who cut off all her hair, then shave her bald head, and henceforth theoretically she does not allow her hair to grow, but covers her head with the shaikel (wig) emblem of married life. Among the orthodox Jews blood marriages are encouraged. But woe to the man by name Levi or Cohen who dares to marry a widow, unless she be the childless widow of his dead brother. Moses forbade Levites or Cohans to marry widows, for what reason there is no satisfactory explanation.

Were it not for fear of exciting the ridicule of their neighbors, the Jewish wedding processions would march from the house to the synagogue. Owing to opposition of reformed Jews these processions have been abandoned.

Many of these ceremonies seem contrary to the spirit of the age. The tendency toward liberalism is growing rapidly. Inter-marriage of Jews with Gentiles becomes more common every year. The Jew himself, self-isolated, is breaking down the barriers that hedge him round. If ancient prejudice is to be overcome the Jew must overcome them. How many agree with the declaration of an eminent New York Jew that "the Messiah for whom the Jews should watch is the man who will arise and say to them: 'Depart from the life of Judea since ye have forsaken Palestine, and conform to the customs of your adopted country, so that ye be not counted as strangers in this great land of milk and honey.'" I do not know, but liberalism's inroads on orthodoxy are constantly growing greater.

DIAMONDS AND SMUGGLING.

The Ease With Which Precious Stones of Large Value are Concealed.

The proposed increase of the duty on cut diamonds from 10 per cent to 30 per cent, has produced considerable anxiety among the diamond importers of New York. There is nothing that a legitimate importer fears more than the smuggler, and there is no question in the minds of honest merchants that the additions to the tariff will largely increase the illegitimate importation of precious stones.

Under a tax of 10 per cent, the number of ingenious methods for bringing in diamonds without paying duty has from time to time awakened surprise. Some of the schemes employed are worthy of discussion.

One of the simplest devices is that of the hollow-heeled shoe. It is asserted that boots and shoes constructed so as to leave a small vacant space in the heels are especially manufactured for the purpose of supplying smugglers with a means for escaping detection.

The porous plaster has often served as a means of secreting diamonds. When it is understood that \$10,000 worth of diamonds or more can easily be enclosed in a paper parcel about as wide as this column, 1½ inches high and about a quarter of an inch thick, it is easy to comprehend that such a package can be kept securely in place by means of an innocent but highly serviceable porous plaster.

One of the most ingenious methods ever employed was the use of a cake of soap, wherein a number of diamonds had been imbedded. It is highly probable that this plan would have proved successful had it not been that the officers of the government had received information that the suspected person had diamonds with him, and searched his effects so thoroughly that they examined even the gem studded block of soap. The wife of this smuggler helped her spouse, and her plan was not less ingenious than that of her husband. Her hat was ornamented with bunches of grapes, which under ordinary circumstances would only have awakened the envy of other wearers of bonnets. Within the grapes were diamonds and fancy stones of great value.

Another smuggler was specially provided by Providence with a smuggling device in the shape of a heavy covering of thick, bushy hair, which he arranged so that it stood up from his forehead like an impenetrable bush. Within this mass of heavy hair he deposited a goodly stock of diamonds, and succeeded for a time in escaping the vigilance of the custom house officials.

As these schemes have become known to the Custom House authorities, the ingenuity of smugglers has been more severely taxed. A recent discovery disclosed the following elaborate plan, which succeeded a great many times before it was discovered. Two smugglers operated in partnership. The first crossed the ocean, and before leaving the wharf reserved a return berth for a certain date. The date and the number of the berth were at once cabled to his accomplice in America.

Having purchased his diamonds, in due time he returned to this country in accordance with the instructions previously cabled. No amount of examination resulted in finding any diamonds upon his person. Meanwhile, however, his partner had secured the same berth. When the day for sailing came, partner number two, accompanied by his family, entered the cabin and abstracted from a secure hiding place several parcels of diamonds left there by his accomplice. These he handed to his tearful family, who, after bidding him good-bye, left the steamer unsuspected and brought the diamonds with them into the market. It took a long time to discover this scheme.

There are ingenious methods for defeating the revenue laws, and how the detectives discover them is a natural question. There is no doubt that the majority of the smugglers are never detected. The unfortunate sometimes owe their ill luck to enemies who warn the authorities, or to Government spies aboard ship. A characteristic that often proves fatal to the smuggler is nervousness. Stationed at the foot of the bridge are two keen-eyed detectives, who carefully scan the features of every passenger. If they discover a sign of uneasiness they watch the man who betrays it, and his effects are thoroughly searched. Often the offender passes the line of the first detectives and is about to step from the wharf when the last of the officers he must pass notices a look, a movement, or a sign that brings down upon the smuggler the hand of the law.—Jewellers' Weekly.

BITS OF SUPERSTITION.

QUEER IDEAS AND CUSTOMS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES.

Death is a Potent Factor in Such Cases—So Is Marriage—Good Luck, and How It May be Spoiled—Hunters and Sailors Who Have Odd Notions.

A strange East Indian superstition relates to the recovery of a drowned person's body. A piece of "blessed" bread is obtained, and into this is stuck a lighted candle. When the bread is set afloat on the water, and carried along by the current, it is expected to stop on passing over the spot where the body lies. Should it, however, continue its course, the candle will at once go out, and it only remains to drag the water in the vicinity.

A somewhat similar custom is in vogue in parts of France. There the peasants procure a cock, which is securely tied up in a bag and taken out on the water in a boat. When the bird begins to crow the watchers know that the body must not be many yards distant.

That it is considered unlucky to break the line of a funeral procession most people are aware, but it is not so generally known that a pin drawn from a dead person's shawl will, if worn constantly, make its possessor fearless and courageous. A still more peculiar fancy holds in Morvan, in the East of France. When a miser, in a sudden and inexplicable fit of absent-mindedness, allows himself to become generous they predict for him an early death!

To turn to a more cheerful subject, that of marriage: we find that this is attended all the world over with some very quaint superstitions. A girl who steps on the tail of a cat (say the good folk of the Vosges) should give up all hope of marrying within the year. Among the same people also, the one who arises first of the bride and bridegroom, after the nuptial benediction has been pronounced, will assume command of the household.

In Russia young girls anxious for their future form a circle, and scatter grains of oats at their feet. That done one of them takes her stand in the centre with a live cock wrapped up in a cloth and held under her arm. Then, shutting her eyes, she turns slowly round several times before letting it loose. The girl whose grain the bird first attacks may count upon a speedy marriage; the greater the eagerness with which the oats are eaten indicating the nearer approach of the happy day.

They are just as curious in Rome, but the mode of procedure varies. At Epiphany a shoe is thrown upon the staircase. If it alights with toe in air the year for her husband, on the other hand, should it remain with the heel pointing upwards her happiness is assured.

Another strange superstition in which the cock figures was, a short time back, brought into prominence in France. A new Mairie (or townhall) was built in a commune of the Canton Boos, but no one would be married there until a cock had been sacrificed, and a few drops of its blood sprinkled upon the threshold. The Mairie had to comply with the popular demand.

The mere setting out on a journey is, to some people's minds, a matter of grave importance. To hark back to India, we are told that pilgrims on their way to a shrine deem it a most unlucky omen if a person sneezes at the hour of departure. Also, the devout Hindoo during his pilgrimage will take care never to step over a rope by which an animal is tethered. Cornish fishermen look upon meeting with a hare as a sign of ill-luck, whilst among the modern Greeks should such a creature cross the path of a caravan a halt is at once called, and no another step may be taken until some chance traveller by re-crossing the path breaks the spell. Just before starting on a voyage many a sea-captain abroad takes care to break some article of furniture, that he may arouse his wife's wrath. Leaving home with the sounds of discord in his ears he is sure of a prosperous voyage and a safe return.

The cutting of one's finger-nails is in various countries an operation of great moment. Nail-parings must be buried or (as also, by the way, cut hair) be burnt. In Andalusia, if it is desired for a young child to become a good singer, its nails should be cut behind a door of the house. Swiss mothers, instead of using the scissors, bite their little ones' nails, that the children may not grow up thieves.

With the Arabs, as with the most Eastern Jews, it is thought unwise to bite the nails, and the pieces are carefully buried or thrown into a fire. A traveller in northern Africa records meeting, a few years ago, with a couple of Arab lads who practised the profession of itinerant barbers and manicures. They owned one pair of large, clumsy, country-made shears between them, and for a price equivalent to little more than a farthing of our money they trimmed the nails of both hands and feet. When finished with a customer the young Arabs sedulously collected all the parings, that they might deposit them in a hole in the ground, and thus drive away any evil charms.

There is a remarkable superstition with hunters and some seafaring folk, that to wish one good luck is but to invoke misfortune. Therefore, in France and Bohemia you make a sportsman your friend for life when you express an earnest hope that he may break his legs. So, too, with

the Breton fisherman—you wish him good fortune in his fishing, and produce a torrent of abuse.

Sailors in general dislike speaking well of a favourable wind, knowing its fickle nature.

An equally curious fancy is found in Pomerania. There a fisherman (like many others of his more civilized brethren) never tells the exact truth about his finny catch. His weakness, however, lies in understating the number, for he believes that by decrying his skill he secures future good luck.

The broom is a significant feature in many superstitions of the sea. On the Norman coasts fishermen's wives seek to hasten the return of delayed boats by burning a new broom. In Spain, and particularly round about Cadiz, a sailor's wife, anxious for his safety, takes great care never to place her broom behind a door with its "business end" upright while her good man is away at sea.

A strange choice is made in many ship-building yards in Europe, especially if those of northern ports. In the construction of a vessel's keel they make a point of using some stolen wood, in the belief that it will insure the ship's being a fast sailer.

Really efficacious remedies for sea-sickness being so few we may be permitted, while on this subject, to notice one or two extraordinary so-called cures. In the department of Seine Interieure, in France, sailors and others to prevent mal-de-mer sprinkle a little salt upon their heads just before stepping on board.

The Icelandic preservative is far more picturesque though, perhaps open to doubt. He places his trust in a handful of grass that has been plucked from a cemetery. What particular virtue is imputed to the grass by its sacred surroundings it is hard to say, but the Icelandic puts it in his shoes, and goes out on the stormy waters with an untroubled mind.—[Cassel's Journal.

HIS BOY WAS TOO BIG.

The Discovery A Famous Astronomer Made in the Tailoring Line.

Bessel, the celebrated astronomer and professor at the University of Konigsberg, was sauntering one day amongst the numerous stalls, looking at the various articles exposed for sale with the eye of a connoisseur, and was struck with the beauty of a piece of new cloth made in England, a small sample of which had been sent to Leipzig. Bessel at last bought a few yards for a coat.

On his return home he sent for his tailor, and, showing him the cloth, the latter, admiring the article, but declaring that the quantity procured was insufficient. Bessel knew perfectly well that he could not get at Konigsberg the stuff required, and in his despair he sent for another tailor, who declared the quantity quite sufficient, and actually brought the coat back in a few days, to the entire satisfaction of the astronomer.

On his walk to the University one morning, a schoolboy passed him with his books under his arm, and clad in a jacket of the very same pattern and cloth he was so proud of. Stopping the lad, he inquired of him to whom he belonged, and was not a little surprised that the father was the very tailor who had made him the coat. There was no doubt that the tailor had found the quantity ample enough to cut out of the excess a jacket for his boy.

He asked the boy to accompany him home for a few minutes, whence he sent for his first tailor. The latter having arrived, he told him to look at the coat and the boy's jacket, and say whether they were made out of one and the same piece. The tailor having affirmed the fact, Bessel told him that the boy belonged to the tailor who had actually made him the coat.

"And now I ask you my good fellow," continued the professor, in a serious tone, "how comes it that you thought the quantity insufficient even for my own coat, while your brother tailor found it enough to spare something for his boy? How do you explain that, man?"

"In the simplest way, professor. My boy Fritz is, by several inches, taller and bigger than his boy."

Sailing Under Sealed Orders.

Sailing under sealed orders, which has such a smack of ancient and perilous times, is a custom by no means abandoned in the United States navy. It is only a few years since a United States man-of-war left New York, crossed the Atlantic, and passed the Mediterranean before those on board learned that it was her duty to visit the Johanns Island, in the Indian Ocean, off the coast of Africa, and there seize an American merchant vessel, carried off by a mutinous crew and supposed to be engaged in the slave trade. It was on this strange quest that the ship's company discovered a former naval officer of the United States, living like an eastern potentate, and exercising the power of life and death over a whole island of his own.—Ex.

Where Ladies are Privileged.

Lady (to African traveller)—Is it true that in Africa women possess certain privileges?

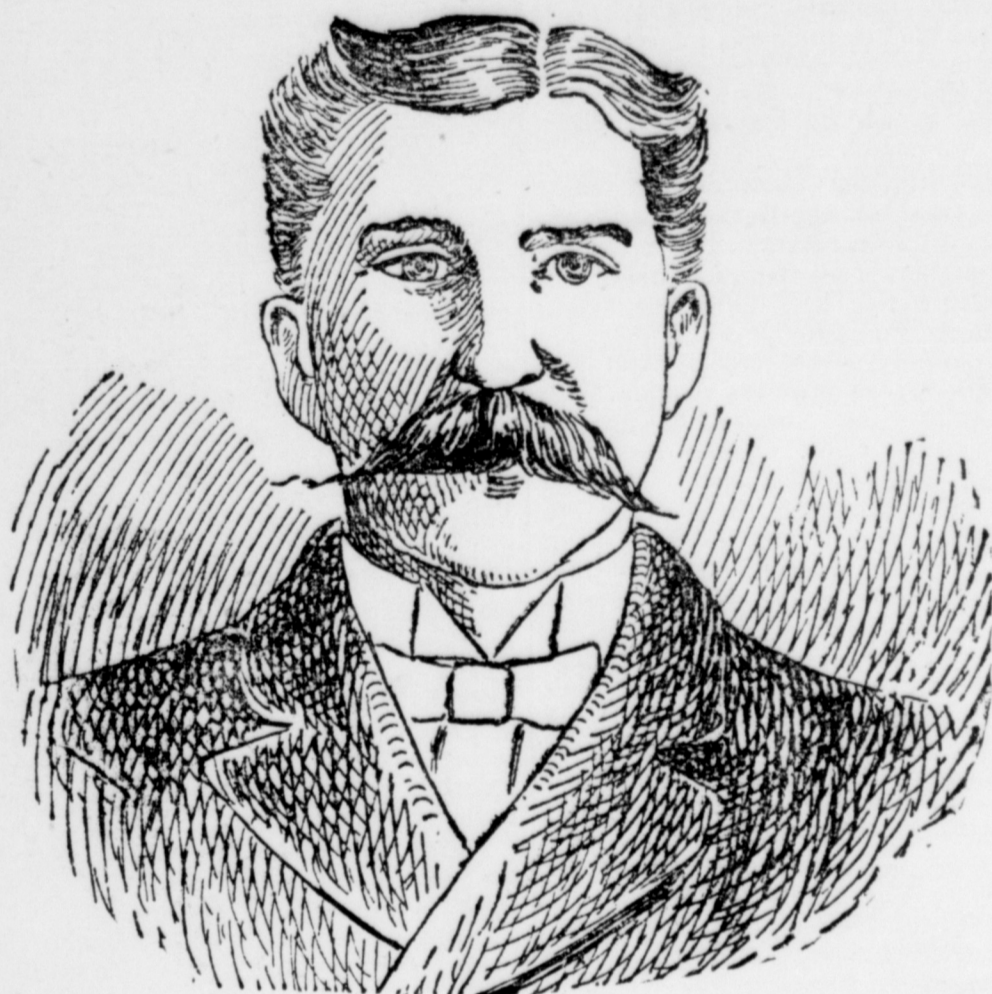
Traveller—Quite true. For instance, after a battle the victors always eat the women first.

The last instance of boiling to death took place in Persia in 1890. The offender was guilty of stealing state revenue, and was put into a caldron of cold water, which was slowly heated to the boiling point. His bones were distributed as a warning among the provincial tax collectors.

AN EMINENT MINISTER

REV. W. S. BARKER

OF PETERBORO.



Mr. W. S. Barker is a young minister of Peterboro who has by his great earnestness and able exposition of the doctrines of the Bible earned for himself a place amongst the foremost ministers of Canada. He, with his most estimable wife, believe in looking after the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare of mankind, hence the following statement for publication:

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"REV. W. S. BARKER."

It is now a scientific fact that certain nerve centres located near the base of the brain have entire control over the stomach, liver, heart, lungs and indeed all internal organs; that, they furnish these organs with the necessary nerve force to enable them to perform their respective work. When the nerve centres are weakened or deranged the nerve force is diminished, and as a result the stomach will not digest the food, the liver becomes torpid, the kidneys will not act properly, the heart and lungs suffer, and in fact the whole system becomes weakened and sinks on account of the lack of nerve force.

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