

Woman and Her Work.

Anybody who goes to Paris decently clothed and in the matrimonial season can see as many fashionable weddings as he wants to attend, provided he will be content to go without them Fridays and Sundays which are not popular marrying days in society. There is nothing in America more democratic than the way in which marrying and burying are attended to in France.

There is no need to worry about invitations, or cards of admission, or even a discreet fee to the sexton. Just keep an eye on the newspapers and a map of Paris in your pocket. Remember that a fashionable French wedding is always at noon and that there are several hundred women who would rather go without their meals than miss the wedding; and finally, that the number of middle-aisle seats—the only one from which a comprehensive view of the gowns can be had—can be counted on one hand without wearing out your glove. In other words, go early.

We went to a grand wedding at St. Philippe du Rouie the other day. The daughter of a count married a son of a duke. According to a French paper, there was a numerous 'assistance,' and for once the paper was right. Accuracy is not the strongest point of French journalism, but it's always safe to announce a numerous assistance when dukes and countesses attempt matrimony.

As a matter of fact there was a crush. We arrived at 11.30, and found the church open as usual. The nave of a Paris church is always inclosed by a railing, and at regular services one must pay for a chair inside this inclosure. But when people are married, even the rich and the great, they either cannot or do not take advantage of this arrangement. With the exception of the space within the altar rail, the whole church is open to the first comers—provided their clothes are presentable. The other day when we arrived there wasn't an usher or anybody connected with the wedding to be seen. The only indication of anything unusual was the floral decorations. These were very pretty, but not at all on the scale which characterizes a swell wedding in New York. Palms were banked around the altar and the chancel rail was covered with vines and flowers. That was all. At the rear of the church two groups of women in ordinary raiment—too ordinary, evidently, for them to venture within the nave—had gathered at the sides of the big door so as to be on hand when the bridal party should arrive. The seats adjoining the centre aisle were already occupied fully a third of the way to the altar.

We had the politeness—which merely passed for ignorance—to ask where we might sit. The little old woman who manipulated the holy water brush told us, with a shrug of her shoulders, to sit where we pleased. So we shrugged our shoulders, too, and sat down in some more aisle seats. We retained enough of our politeness to take seats toward the rear of the church, but other sightseers were not so modest. An English boarding school turned loose into the nave about twenty or thirty tall, angular British maidens. French women by the dozen came in, ostensibly to say a few prayers; but they seemed unable to pray except in aisle seats, where they settled themselves comfortably after a brief season of devotion.

The invited guests did not begin to arrive till ten minutes to 12. They sailed up the aisle majestically but, alas for them! unsuccessfully. The uninvited guests had taken all the aisle seats, and the Counts and Countesses had to dispose themselves as best they might along the borders of the boarding school and the rest of the usurpers. Many of the invited guests could not find any seats at all, and were obliged to stand at the rear of the church or at the side. Not an usher was there. Ushers are not a part of the matrimonial machinery here as they are in America.

By a few minutes before 12 the church was crowded. Two gorgeous beades, in cocked hats, long coats, knee breeches and silver buckled shoes, dazzling creatures covered with gold and silver braid

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and carrying tall wands tipped with big silver balls, stalked down to the entrance and threw open the great central doors. We beheld the bridal procession or most of it. The bride and the bridegroom were not yet there but at the head of the procession as it stood was a gold braided officer escorting a woman in a beautiful lavender velvet gown. As the doors were thrown open the gold-braided officer was disclosed in the act of combing his hair. He calmly finished running the comb through his locks, returned it to his pocket and entered.

The procession had come but a few steps into the church when it divided, the men taking one side and the women the other. Facing one another thus they formed an aisle which extended out through the portico and part way down the steps. Up this aisle came the bride on the arm of her father, followed by the bridegroom in uniform and escorting the bride's mother. The rest of the immediate family followed, all the women in velvet gowns except the two bridesmaids who were back in the middle of the procession. They wore pale blue silk gowns—not alike—hats of the same shape and carried two little bags of blue silk trimmed with lace and artificial forget-me-nots. The purpose for which the bags were carried was apparent later.

The portico and the sidewalks on both sides of the street were packed with spectators. Inside the church the beadle was having a tussle with the women who had secured, as they supposed, good places by the door. Apparently they deeply resented the idea that the procession should line up in front of them. They pushed to the front in their turn. Then the beadle took a hand. Both hands in fact, for he simply spread out his two white-gloved palms and shoved. There were protestations and unpleasant remarks from both sides and while they were still 'a-pushin' and a-shovin', the bride arrived at the door and waited. The beadle was having the time of his life and apparently had forgotten that a bride was expected. But a one-legged man hopped out of the crowd on the portico, stumbled on his crutches in front of the bride, took the enraged beadle by the arm, showed him the waiting procession and then took advantage of his act to slip into a place in the church.

The other functionary was forthwith summoned from some battle he was waging on his own side, the two glittering baubles—that is to say, beades, headed the procession, the organ pealed forth as organs always do on similar occasions, and the wedding march began. The beades thumped on the floor with their tall wands and the procession fell in behind the bride's party.

Everybody in the church was standing and facing toward the door. As for the English boarding school, it did not stand up, but it mounted on the cane-bottomed pious which face the chairs. At every interesting moment of the ceremony which followed the boarding school again climbed the pious dieu. It is to be hoped that the British maidens were excused from gymnastic exercises for the rest of the day.

The bride wore no veil over her face. A beautiful veil of lace was caught up with orange blossoms on her hair and from there fell almost to the end of her train. But her face was uncovered and she smiled at the people along the aisle. She may have wondered at so many unfamiliar faces. Within the chancel rail two large gilded chairs faced the altar. These were for the bride and bridegroom, rows of chairs at each side being for the others in the possession. The bridal chairs were flanked by two large, tall, fat candles which turned out to be not purely ornamental nor yet for religious purposes alone. It seems that these candles take the place of the modest envelope which is an important feature of weddings in America. A French woman explained the affair of the candles.

'You see,' she said, 'if the money was put into an envelope and given to the priest people might get off with giving only a small amount. That would never do. So the priests inaugurated the custom of placing a candle beside the bride and one by the bridegroom. These candles are of wax and the fee for the marriage ceremony is stuck on them. Everybody can see how much is put on, so the

vanity of the families concerned is aroused and they try to make as good a showing as possible. Often they secure, even though it is hard to get them, gold pieces of 100 francs each. Sometimes there is a row of 20 franc gold pieces on each candle and then people say:

'Oa, did you see the candles!'

'There is never any rivalry, of course between the family of the bride and that of the bridegroom. The amount to be put on the candles is decided on beforehand and very often the bridegroom puts the pieces on the bride's candle for her.

There was constant confusion at the wedding the other day throughout the ceremony, which lasted over an hour. First, after some prayers, everybody sat down—everybody who could—and the priest read aloud for one solid half hour out of a little book. It seemed as if he must have read it through. Meanwhile people wandered up and down the aisles hunting for any stray chair which might be vacant. There are no seats in the side aisles of the church, and here there was a constant shuffle of feet as people walked back and forth, talking to friends or hunting for a good vantage point from which to see the group at the altar. After the half hour's reading there was a mass with beautiful music and toward the close of this we found out why the bridesmaids carried their blue bags.

They took up a collection! Each bridesmaid was escorted by a young gentleman and each of these couples were preceded by a beadle. The little blue silk bags were so tiny that they did not hold much but the beades carried the velvet bags of the church, and the little blue sacks were emptied now and then into the larger receptacle. Each bridesmaid made the tour of the church once so that two opportunities were afforded to the generously inclined. We were curious to know what the collection was for.

'For the church!' said the French woman. 'Oh, yes, indeed! And the bridesmaids are as proud as peacocks to go around for it. But oh, they are so jealous of each other! They go out into the sacristy to count the money and if one gets less than the other one, she cries. They go around twice because each one has her friends who wait for her and gives only to her, so that if possible she shall have more than the other one. And the priests don't like it if they don't get a good collection. If it is too small—eh bien! the bridesmaids must go around again.'

Before the ceremony was half over the aisles were so crowded that, with the boarding-school mounted before us, it was impossible to see what was going on at the altar. But apparently there was no serious hitch in the wedding for, at ten minutes after 1 o'clock, the procession went to the sacristy to sign the register, and the guests who had been scattered through the church fell into line and began a slow pursuit, for the purpose of offering congratulations. Outside the church a crowd waited for a glimpse of the wedding party and its 'numerous assistance.' A long string of well-appointed carriages stretched along the two sides of the street. A small crowd examined carefully the bridal equipage. That is one of the features of a swell wedding. Sometimes new carriages are bought for the entire family party and the spectators are quite as interested in the equipages as they are in the gowns.

We enjoyed the wedding of the Duke and the Duchess to be—exceedingly; but then, these swell weddings seemed to be arranged for the special benefit of the rank outsider. The invited guests apparently do not care to go long enough in advance to secure good seats and the consequence is that, at the ceremony, they themselves become the rank outsiders. It is a queer way of doing, but uncommonly propitious for American tourists and British maidens at school in Paris.

One Woman's Ruling Passion.

'There goes a woman,' said the girl, 'who hasn't a thought on earth except dress. I know that superior man attributes this particular weakness to all women—but it's a canard, as of course, are nine out of ten of male estimates of women.'

She conquered a refractory button on her glove before she continued: 'But that woman who passed us is, without a

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doubt, the most dress-crazy woman I have ever met. She knows no topic save dress—can speak of no other subject. She spends one-half of her time at her dress-maker's, and the other half is used in exploiting the handicraft of the modiste. Goodness only knows when she manages to get anything to eat. She's dead to every feeling, I believe, except that which has to do with dress. And what do you think she said Saturday? I met her as we were going out of a house of mourning. A young woman whom we both knew had died—and we had been at the funeral. Coming down the steps I noticed my friend but the feeling of sorrow was too fresh upon me to permit anything more than a nod of recognition. For half a square we walked side by side. Then I said: 'Poor, dear Clara—alive and well one week ago, and now—now she's gone!'

'Yes,' answered my friend, blandly; 'but wasn't she dressed beautifully? Really, it was a treat to see her!'

CONSOLING FACTS FOR SPINSTERS.

More Unmarried than Men Women say to Government Reports.

Someone has proposed a husbands' union for the protection of husbands; just what they are to be protected from is not yet stated. Possibly the union is to be founded on the same lines as the school for wives, established in England.

Still better are the marriage schools which are being developed in Germany on very practical lines. They are for girls and women only, and the value of such a training cannot be overestimated. Girls leave the marriage school competent to undertake the management of a house—and of a husband. The girls who have been graduated from these schools have been extra lucky in getting married, so it is said.

Another society which has been organized in Denmark is the celibacy insurance society. Its object is to provide for those women who either cannot or will not provide themselves with husbands. The premiums begin at the age of 13 and end at 40, an age at which it is supposed most of the members will have abandoned all thought of marriage. Such being the case the woman receives an annuity for life. If she marries at any time she forfeits all her rights.

Old maids in the United States are outnumbered by the bachelors, although it is popularly supposed that the contrary is the case. To come to exact figures, there are 7,427,767 bachelors and 3,224,494 spinsters. This is upon the authority of a government report. Even in Massachusetts where it was thought the old maids constituted a large portion of the population they could each find a husband, and then not exhaust the stock of single men, for there are 226,085 men and only 219,255 women who have not yet entered into the bonds of matrimony.

New York State has 12,000 more bachelors than spinsters. Only one state in the Union has more female celibates than male and that is California, in which there are 59,456 of the former and 22,829 of the latter. The state of Washington has perhaps the largest excess of forlorn single men—80,587 all told, the unmarried women numbering only 9,181.

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Out of an equal number of bachelors and widowers between 25 and 30 years of age, thirty widowers remarry for every thirteen bachelors who enter the bonds of hymen for the first time. For every spinster married between 30 and 65, two widows are remarried. Both facts are eloquent in favor of the comparative advantages of matrimony.

Notes of Fashion.

All sorts of finger rings put on regardless of harmony in color and shape are considered vulgar by those who study effect and good taste in the use of jewels as well as gems and hats.

A pretty evening waist is made of a lattice design in jet over white mousseline de soie, finished around the neck with a drape of white tulle and a bunch of pink roses.

Genache satins, trimmed with chiffon and lace make charming evening dresses.

Tulle hats trimmed with crepe roses are one of the latest novelties.

Tulle evening gowns are made with box plaited skirts, the plaits beginning at either side of the front and extending around the back or all around, as you like, and caught down to the knee. Another skirt of tulle is worn underneath and the silk foundation skirt should have no gloss.

An embroidery of fine jet beads on bands of cloth is one of the vagaries of dress trimming. The beads are arranged in various ways around the plain skirts, for some of the skirts are cut plain without a plait anywhere. Jet beads are also used to outline simple designs in black or braid which trim some of the cloth gowns.

White cloth cut out in diamond shape openings filled in with guipure lace made over pale blue silk forms one princess gowns.

A hair net which fastens at the head with a fancy pin and a button is a novelty to keep the short locks.

She—It's a won her mind.
He—Yes; but does.
She—Where
He—Where

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