

The Marrying Month.

There is a common idea that when men and women fall in love and make up their minds to commit matrimony, the times and seasons have nothing whatever to do with the matter, but that, having resolved to take the desperate leap, they do so without regard to month or day. If this were the case, then according to the doctrine of probabilities, the marriages of the year should be pretty evenly distributed over its months, and no one should have the preference over another. It is, however, a singular fact that there are favorite months for marriage; that even impatient lovers restrain their desire to be indissolubly united and await the season which in their country is deemed most propitious for purposes matrimonial. The matrimonial month, like the festival of Easter, is movable. It is not the same in all countries, for, while some nations prefer one, others choose an entirely different month, often in another season, as the favorite for the solemnization of marriage rites. In Russia, for example, considering the importance and sanctity of Christmas as a festival and of Easter as the holiest season of the year, it would be reasonable to conclude that the greatest number of marriage would take place either in December or in the Easter month. Such, however, is not the case, for instead of selecting one or the other of her favorite festivals at the time for her marriage, the Russian girl chooses the season intervening between the two as the most suitable for assuming the duties and responsibilities of the marital relation. Of every 1000 marriages among the subjects of the Czar there are 232 in January and 270 in February, while in March there is a tremendous falling off in the business of giving in marriage, but twelve of the 1000 couples selecting the month of wind and storm for beginning the new life. The tide then rises to forty-three in April and ninety in May, fluctuating with trifling variations until October, where there are 185, a slight decrease occurring in November, and an almost total cessation of the business taking place in December, only nine couples in 1000 choosing that month.

The explanation of the Russian preference is found partly in climatic conditions and partly in social and religious institutions. The months most in disfavor are March and December. The former is not only the Lenten season, which by the Greek Church, is observed with an iron discipline far more severe than in any other part of Christendom, but is, in Russian parlance, the *rasputyia*, or "change of season." During about thirty days there is every variety of climate that the wildest imagination can devise. Rain, snow, hot sunshine, freeze, thaw, thunder storm, wind, blizzard; the combination defies the skill of the "oldest inhabitant" to predict what shall be the weather of the morrow. Travel is suspended, contracts for the delivery of goods are not binding during *rasputyia*, for the roads are impassable, the rivers are one day soft and the next floods of ice cakes, so it has become the established custom in Russia to drink tea and wait until Providence chooses to put an end to the season which is neither winter nor spring, but a confusing conglomeration of both. In the land of the Czar the idea of being married without a wedding feast attended by every neighbor who is well enough to come, is entirely out of the question; quite preposterous, in fact, and as comparatively few can come in *rasputyia*, that season is almost interdicted. "He married his daughter in *rasputyia*," was the sneering remark made by a droschky driver to a recent traveler, when speaking of a local skinflint, intimating that the old gentleman was too stingy to provide a wedding feast, so chose a season when few could attend, and thus saved his roubles and vodka.

The month of December is the worst of the year among the Russians for marriage purposes, but for a quite different reason from that which makes March unpopular. Throughout European Russia the Advent season is distinguished above all others as the period of courtship. In many of the country villages there are still held "marriage fairs," at which are assembled all the eligible young women of the village, each clad in her choicest finery, and virtually placed on exhibition for inspection by the young men and their parents, for it should be understood that the fathers and mothers are very important factors in determining the course of true love in the land of the Northern Bear. Generally they manage the business from beginning to end, selecting a strong, healthy girl, suitable for their son, then looking up her parents, and chattering with them as to the items of property each family shall contribute to the new establishment. Finally an agreement is reached, the kitchen utensils, the bed, the two chairs, the little stock of provisions and the holy picture to hang in the corner of the room are duly apportioned between the two households. In January, or February, at a date

convenient to the majority of the neighbors, who all have other affairs of the same kind on hand, friends are invited, come with axes and hatchets, put up a house for the young people, and feast for a week at the expense of their parents.

In Hungary the most favorable months for matrimonial purposes are January, February and November, the first having 165, the second 267, and the third 234, out of every 1000. The winter season in the land of the Huns seems, therefore, the most favorable for marriage, a fact which may be noted, however, in nearly all agricultural countries, for not only do the young people of both sexes have more leisure during the winter for those social entertainments which in every country are provocative of matrimony, but they also find this season has its advantages as a time of preparation, marrying and living with their parents until spring, then setting up an establishment for themselves. During the summer months the intense heat of the great Hungarian plain, while possibly having no effect upon the courting, seriously discourages matrimony, for the numbers of marriages in June, July, and August combined, do not equal that of January alone.

In Greece, which is further to the south than Hungary the cooler months are in high favor. Among the people who recently made so signal a failure in their effort to thrash the Sultan, the favorite marrying months are October 161; January, 148; November, 145; and April, 135; the preference for October being probably inspired in part, at least, by the deliciousness of the season. In September the summer heat comes to an end, the autumn rains revive the withered foliage, the flowers once more bloom, the hills are again green and for a few weeks the land of Demosthenes enjoys a second spring.

In Italy, as in Greece, the pleasanter months of the year are preferred for purpose hymeneal, the greatest number of unions taking place in February, November, April and October, which have 167, 139, 119, and 111, respectively. In March, the number falls off to 46 in the 1000, a fact accounted for, not only by the inclemency of the season, for March is to Italy what May is to lands of higher latitude, but by the discouragement of marriages by the clergy during the annual period of humiliation and prayer. There was a time when the church peremptorily forbade the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony by any of its priests during Lent, save in cases where one of the parties was believed to be dying and desired to have the ceremony performed for the benefit of the survivor; but so many eager and impatient couples crawled through this loophole by feigned illness and subsequent recovery that the ecclesiastical authorities finally relaxed the rule, and contented themselves with discouraging Lenten marriages, a still more effective deterrent being found in the conscientious scruples of the guests against eating and drinking the good things provided on such occasions.

The effect of Lent on matrimony may be seen by a contemplation of the marriage statistics of two cities, Berlin and Vienna, on the capital of the German Empire, where protestantism is in the ascendant, the other of a Roman Catholic State. In Berlin April is the best month in the year; in Vienna it is one of the worst; the former city having 168 in 1000, and the latter but 78; the difference representing in some degree, the regard felt in the North for the period of fasting.

In France, where the women at least are devotedly pious, the Lenten influence is almost as strongly marked as in Austria, impatient couples hurrying to be married before the beginning of Lent and after the conclusion of that period, thus making February and April two of the best months, the former having 152, and the latter 111 in 1000. After these two, the months next in favor are November and June, with respectively 131 and 116. July, August, and September are not popular either in urban or rural France; though, of course, there is giving in marriage during the warmest and most uncomfortable months, the business suffers a serious decline in the summer season. This, however, is the rule the world over. When the dog star rages by some curious contradiction the fever of love is tempered to moderation, perhaps on the theory of Similia Similibus, or, perhaps, because young people find the heat of the sun sufficiently oppressive without elevating their own temperature by the fires of love. The most ardent swain doth not protest much when the thermometer is at 100 Fahrenheit; he gives himself a rest and lets the party of the second part take a good deal for granted until the memory climbs down from its lofty perch and the cool breezes of autumn dry up his perspiration, and fan again into a blaze the smoldering fires on the altar of his devotion.

In Scandinavia, where it might be expected that the months of spring, the pleasantest of the year, would be most popular for marrying, there is something of a disappointment in the discovery that this is not the case, but that the clergyman's busy season, is the early winter, the months of November and December being the favorites; one with 169, the other with 156. For this there is a reason quite sufficient to account for the popularity of so unpropitious a season. Throughout Scandinavia the principal industry is fishing. It is carried on to some extent during all months of the year, but when the West Indian storms sweep across the Atlantic in the late autumn and early winter and lash into fury the waters of the narrow fjords on the Norwegian coast,

even the hardy descendants of the Vikings hesitate to venture forth on a useless as well as dangerous task, for winds and waves that imperial the life of the fisherman also prevent the success of his voyage. The spring and summer, with a few pleasant weeks in the autumn, are his fish harvest season, and during these his days and a large portion of his nights are passed in the hardest and most disagreeable toil.

The vessels engaged in deep-sea fishing are gone for weeks, often for months at a time; those employed in the coast fisheries go out at the hour of the morning tide and return twelve to sixteen hours later. For regular rest there is no opportunity. The fisherman sleeps when and where he can; in the bottom of his boat, sprinkled by the briny spray on the wharfs under a sail cloth secured by a large stone at each corner, in the market place in the fish curing and drying establishments; anywhere he may happen to be overcome by fatigue, he lies down and finds speedy oblivion. While leading such a life marriage is out of the question, but when the winter winds bring enforced idleness he feels his loneliness and need of a companion so he finds, or, as often as not, his parents find for him, an eligible young girl of the village; the two go to the many roofed parish church, where the bride puts on the crown and tinsel jewelry kept there for such occasions, and the next annual census records the addition of one more family to the population of the village.

Throughout the English-speaking world the favorite wedding month is June, during which, as a rule, occur nearly two-tenths of the 1000 marriages every year. The antiquarians who are fond of finding far-etched analogies trace the preference for June weddings back to Roman days, when the month of June was sacred to Juno, the patroness of brides and matrimony. If they were correct, it would be reasonable to suppose that the Juno month would be most popular in Italy, where the country people still retain many relics of pagan superstition and observance. The fact that June is no longer the banner month in Italy, but that, as already shown, climatic and religious influences have shifted the majority of the weddings to other months, gives reason to suspect that the same causes, rather than a predilection for the month of Juno, have been at work on the British Isles. In that high latitude the month of June is the season which in the middle United States is represented by May, the seasoning of budding leaves and blooming flowers.

In the spring a livelier Iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Tennyson was right. The idea of looking back 2000 years for the explanation which is furnished by natural conditions is altogether unnecessary, if not absurd. Love-making in the spring (time when the language of flowers is on every lip, when the birds are billing and cooing on every bough, when the balmy breezes invite to outdoor life, is as natural to the inmate of the palace as of the tenement, to the lover of Lucile as to the wooer of "Sally in Our Alley." The early English settlers in America, located in a country whose climate did not materially differ in its season from that of England, and from New England the preference for June spread little by little over the whole continent.

Next after June in popularity comes October. For this month also is a favorite period for the contraction of alliances matrimonial the men of books and learning find an antiquarian explanation in the fact that among both Greeks and Romans in autumn, the season of grapes and vintage, occurred one of the most notable festivals of the year. But in this, as in the former case, it seems useless to seek far-fetched reasons when a plain common-sense explanation is at hand. In this country spring and autumn are the pleasantest seasons of the year, and even in matters of the heart people consult their own convenience far more frequently than is generally supposed.

So far as the day of the week is concerned Wednesday is the favorite. If there were anything in the antiquarian theory, the favorite week day among the Anglo-Saxons ought to be Friday, for Freia, the Saxon goddess after whom our day off ill-luck and misfortune is named, was like Juno, a patroness of matrimony, but no English or American girl, however devoid of superstition, would care to take the risk of being married on Friday. Freia was the wife of Woden, who has given the name to our Wednesday, but the transfer of the favorite week day for weddings from the day of Freia as among the pagan Saxons to the day of Woden, was probably caused by convenience rather than by any regard for the feelings of either Woden or his spouse. Wednesday is the middle day of the week, and therefore the most convenient, for it affords time for preparation after the preceding Sunday, and opportunity for travel before the Sunday following. Thus in the day of the week, as in the selection of the month, the convenience of those interested becomes the most important factor.

A FEMINE EXCEPTION.

Well, ignorance is bliss, you know. Indeed it isn't. When I want to know something about somebody, and can't find out about it, I nearly lose my mind.

THE PROPER GENDER.

David, what makes you call liquid air she?
Why, when it gets started nothing can stop it.

MORE TO THE POINT.

My sympathy, he said, is always with the under dog.
Yes, she replied, but did you ever choke an upper dog loose?

On the Farm.

HOW TO ESTABLISH A CREAMERY.

The proper way to organize a creamery is for the farmers to call a meeting, talk the matter over and adjourn for a couple of weeks. At the end of this time elect a committee which shall visit two or three creameries, inspect them carefully, get prices of machinery, building, etc., and compare notes at the next meeting. If then there is a desire to continue, organize a stock company, elect a building committee and let this committee hire a carpenter and put up their own building. Buy the necessary dairy machinery from some good supply house. When everything is ready, hire a good buttermaker and pay him good wages, as an expert cannot be expected to work for small pay. The buttermaker should refuse to accept dirty or bad milk, as he cannot make good butter from anything but the best milk. The directors should stand by the buttermaker in case of a dispute concerning bad milk, as there are always some patrons who will forget to wash their cans, and the best way to have them remember this is to make them feed a can or two of this tainted milk to their hogs or calves. Ship the butter to some reliable commission house. Do not change commission men unless it is absolutely necessary, as one man's customers will soon recognize your brand of butter and will want it all the time if it is good. If you happen to have a poor lot, do not brand it, but put it on the market and sell it on its merits.

Above all things, a creamery must have good drainage into a running stream if possible, a good water supply and a good ice house. The patrons should hold monthly meetings and discuss the best method of feeding cows, caring for the milk and listen to the suggestion of the buttermaker. These meetings if properly conducted may be made of much benefit.

A GOOD GARDEN.

If one desires to have a good garden this year he should begin to prepare for it very early. One of the important items is a quantity of well-rotted manure made fine. A coarse, strawy manure, has no place on the garden in the spring. If put on in the fall and plowed under it will serve to make the land lighter and more porous, and the surface will dry out in condition to work earlier in the spring, but it should not be plowed back to the surface again. Plow it down deep in the fall, and in the spring plow shallow, or better still, do not plow at all, but work the surface fine with disc harrow and smoothing harrow. But about the fine manure. If there is not a pile already made, make one at once of the best manure to be had, and heap it up that it may ferment. As soon as it begins to throw off steam in the morning, fork it over, making a new heap, breaking up all lumps, or, if any is frozen at time of working over, throw such lumps well into the centre of the pile. This may mean some labor, but if it has to be forked over three or four times to get it fine enough, it will pay.

The garden soil should be drained well enough to allow working it early, working this fine manure into the surface and making a good seed bed. But if it is not so drained, do not touch it until it can be worked to a proper condition. Before planting or sowing time comes, be sure that good seed is at hand. Do not run too much after novelties, or be kept from getting good seed by a little extra cost. Plan so that the early crops may be followed by another crop later in the season.

MILK SIGNS IN DAIRY COWS.

The appearance and form of the udder is an important point in selecting a milk cow. A large udder is not always an indication that the cow is a good milker. The skin of the udder should have the appearance of having been dusted over with bran and have a fatty feeling. It is generally conceded that the escutcheon is of no importance in selecting a dairy cow.

SOME OF THE BEST APPLES TO GROW.

I have had 20 years' experience in raising apples and have found very few varieties that are worth planting writes Mr. D.A. Blalock. Some of the best are: For summer, Red June, which is the earliest of all. It is of medium size and a handsome red, the flesh is white, tender, juicy and subacid. It is an abundant bearer. After this comes the Yellow Transparent, which is a Russian. This is pronounced by all who have seen it to be the most valuable early apple. The tree is an upright grower and a very early and abundant bearer. The fruit is of good size, pale yellow, and the flavor is acid. After the Yellow Transparent comes the Tetsosky, also a Russian variety, which has proved to be a profitable apple. The fruit is large, yellow, beautifully striped with red, and the flesh is white. Early Harvest is an old variety, but it is always ready to bear every year. Red Astrachan is also a good summer variety. I have found the following autumn

varieties good for both home and market: Maiden's Blush, Duchess of Oldenburg, Fameuse or Snow, and Rambo. Good winter varieties are Ben Davis, Salome, Belle De Baskoop, Pewaukee, Lawyer, R.L. Greening Grimes' Golden, McIntosh Red, Stark, Northern Spy, Winesap and Wealthy.

DAMPNESS IN THE HEN HOUSE.

If you must have a cold hen house have it, but never have a damp one. In other words, a damp house is a hundred times worse than a cold house. It is the damp house that always has ailing inmates. Colds and roup make sad havoc there. In short there never has been and there never will be a damp hen house in which the bird will be at all satisfactory.

Sick, moping fowls never are able to do anything in the way of filling the egg basket. So, my friend, if your hen coop is not situated upon a dry site, at your earliest opportunity proceed to rectify the error. Dig out the dirt from the bottom say a foot or two in depth then fill in with rocks, large ones first, then smaller and smaller ones, cover top with a few inches of gravel, and then you will have a dry house, providing any outside water has a good chance to drain away.

Frequent use of dry coal ashes will serve to absorb any moisture accruing from the droppings of the birds, the coal ashes also serving to fix ammonia and therefore keep the air of the house pure and wholesome.

Too often we find the coop or run where the little chicks are penned, from one cause or another, sadly damp. This will not do. Chicks even more than hens require dry quarters. And even ducklings and goslings in their first tender days are peculiarly susceptible to dampness.

We as poultry keepers, must keep dampness at bay, or we shall fall of success in poultry culture.

PLOUGHING WET GROUND.

When the upturned furrow presents a slick, newly varnished-like appearance it is a good indication that the plowing should be postponed a few days. If plowing land when wet is followed in a day or so by a heavy freeze, the damage is not so great as when it dries out and becomes almost as hard as a brick. This of course can only occur in clay or sticky soil. In no case does the grain in two or three days' time compensate for the injury done the land by plowing wet.

From Pain to Health.

A CHIPPEWA LADY TELLS A STORY OF SUFFERING AND RELEASE.

suffered From Heart Trouble for Years— Her Misery Further Aggravated by Kidney and Stomach Trouble.

From the Star, St. Catharines, Ont.

In the village of Chippewa, and along the Niagara frontier, there is probably no better known or respected residents than Mr. and Mrs. David Schabel. Both are of German descent and display much of that old-fashioned hospitality so often found in the fatherland. To a correspondent of the St. Catharines Star, who recently called at Mr. Schabel's home Mrs. Schabel related the following story:—"Years ago my physician told me I had heart disease. I have been troubled at intervals with palpitation and severe pains, and sometimes my heart would almost cease to beat. I would become dizzy, restless and frightened. At other times I slept badly and had troublesome dreams. I lingered in this state until last winter when exposure to cold affected my kidneys and completely prostrated me. The spring came, when my complaints were further aggravated by stomach trouble. I loathed food and could realize that I was daily growing weaker. My physician's treatment would sometimes slightly benefit me, then again I was worse than ever. Finally, after all hope was apparently gone and a large sum of money, had been thrown away for medicines that did me no good, a friend strongly advised me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, two boxes of which were brought me at the beginning of the summer of 1899. I used them and to my joy noticed improvement. I continued the use of the pills faithfully until I had taken eight boxes. I am now able to attend to all my housework, feeling entirely cured. I have never had better health than I am now enjoying, and since discontinuing the pills have had no symptoms of the old complaints. I feel that I am under lifelong obligations for the benefit I have derived from Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and will continue to praise them when opportunity offers."

THE SAME EFFECT.

It is very odd, remarked Mr. Hubbub, that in Africa there is a tribe which cannot wear clothes at all. Clothes make them sick. Isn't it strange, dear?

Not at all, replied Mrs. Hubbub. The same thing happens in this country also.

Oh, surely not. I never heard of such a thing in civilized countries.

Well, Mr. Hubbub, I can tell you that even in this great and glorious land the same phenomenon is by no means unknown. When I see Mrs. Poindexter coming out every month or so with a fine new outfit from head to foot, her clothes make me sick—make me sick, I say, Mr. Hubbub—I reflect that you are just as able to buy me new clothes as Mr. Poindexter is to buy them for his wife, and don't. And Mrs. Hubbub dissolved in tears.