

## MATCHMAKING IN CHINA

"When I get married," is a phrase that single men, as well as single women, are fond of using. Crusty old bachelors are occasionally taken unaware with it on their lips, and even they dwell on the words softly, sometimes regretfully. The young people of China do not know this pleasure. And while many women approaching the borderland of spinsterhood in this country and many men who have been disappointed in some affair of the heart may be inclined to think that marriage customs and laws here are all wrong, it is doubtful if any one could be found in this country who would not most seriously object to substituting the Chinese customs of courtship and marriage. The fact is that in China the persons most interested have nothing whatever to do with the matter. The Rev. S. G. Miner, a missionary in China, says in a pamphlet issued for the information of his friends, that the young people there are usually betrothed at a very early age, sometimes when mere babes.

This is the way they go about it. Frequently a man having a friend in a similar station in life proposes to give his daughter in marriage to his friend's son. They have matchmakers and go-betweens in China just as here, but they work in an entirely different way. It is at this stage of the game that the matchmaker is called in. The children's horoscopes are cast, and for some days the matter is weighed by both families. The fate of the unconscious young people hinges on trifles during this period. If any accident happens in either family, such as breaking a piece of china or glass ware, or losing a trifling article, it is regarded as a bad omen, and the match is declared off then and there. But if all goes smoothly the parents decide that the betrothal is desirable, and immediately presents are exchanged, the parents of the girl coming in for the greater share. Among the gifts two cards are exchanged by the families. One is ornamented with a gilt dragon, and has written upon it information relating to the good points and shortcomings of the boy. Of course the shortcomings are few and far between, since Chinese boys are considered nearly perfect beings by their parents. The other card is decorated with the picture of a phoenix, and gives similar information about the girl. A thread of red silk with a needle at each end is passed through each of these cards, which are preserved with the betrothal papers in the two families. The red silk signifies that the feet of people destined to be married are tied together with invisible cords. Lovers in this country generally think that their showing for a great degree of happiness in marriage is a poor one unless their hearts are tied together in this way. These Chinese engagements are as binding as marriage, although the contracting parties may be in absolute ignorance of the arrangement.

Very sad surprises constantly occur at Chinese weddings. So do they at our weddings, or, rather, after them, for that matter. But they aren't the same kind of surprises. Frequently in China no communication takes place between the two families from the time of the betrothal until the wedding. Sometimes one of the families becomes very poor, or maybe one of the betrothed couple becomes a helpless cripple, or a victim to leprosy or some incurable disease. Mr. Miner says that he knows of one instance where the prospective bridegroom was an idiot; but nothing could prevent the marriage. Frequently the betrothed girl is taken at once to the home of the boy's parents. There she is made to be a servant for the family until the marriage ceremony is performed. Poor nuptial blessing shall come to the young pair. Next they return to the reception room and worship in the same manner as before all the groom's senior relatives robe thrown over all. A scarlet silk or cloth veil covers her face and head. With the assistance of her attendants she trips across the scarlet carpet laid for the occasion because her little feet must touch nothing else, and takes her seat on the bridegroom's right. He then removes her veil and crown, the curtain is drawn, and the two are supposed, without so much as glancing at each other, to sit and think, without speaking, until preparations for the service are completed. Ten to one they get a pretty fair idea of what each other looks like out of the tail of their oblique eyes, if they are anything like lovers the world over, during this period of waiting. When everything is ready the bridegroom re-crowns his bride and they walk to the reception room.

A Chinese reception room would make the average Canadian, with his idea of what a reception room should be, open his eyes. The whole end of it is open and looks out upon an open court. Hither the couple make their way, and by bowing their faces to the ground four times worship heaven and earth. They then face right about and worship the bridegroom's ancestors in like manner. Next they worship each other, or pretend to, and retire again to the chamber, where the bride's crown and veil are taken off for the last time, her hair is elaborately dressed, and the bridegroom beholds her in all her beauty, or ugliness for the first time. Then the wedding breakfast is served. Nobody is allowed to partake of it except the couple, and even the bride isn't allowed to do any eating. She just has to sit there motionless and watch the bridegroom enjoy himself. During the meal the mistress of ceremonies chants a song written for the occasion, in which she predicts that every known thing! In addition to hearing about "My mother's pies," if they have pies in China, she has to see her mother-in-law-elect prepare them day in and day out, sometimes for several years. More frequently, however, the two who are to go through life together never see each other's faces until after they are man and wife. In this event the bride is brought to her new home on the wedding day in a hired bridal chair, a grand affair of flaming scarlet, elaborately decorated, and carried by four coolies preceded by a band of music. Two of her near relatives accompany

her until they meet two of the bridegroom's nearest kin, when they hand her over to the care of her new protectors. All her other relatives remain at home and bewail her loss as if she were going to her burial instead of her bridal, which, in most countries, is believed to be the happiest event of a woman's life. Not one of her kin or friends ever attends the wedding. Upon her arrival at the bridegroom's home two women attendants stand ready to receive the bride and serve her during the days of ceremony and festivity. The chair is set down, and as they open it a child and an old woman who has many sons and grandsons come forward and formally invite the bride to accompany them to the bridegroom's chamber. They find him sitting there attired in official cap, gown, and boots. The bride wears parti-colored garments with a or relatives, and are worshipped in turn by all his junior relatives.

The climax of the day's festivities is a grand marriage feast, after which the guests of both sexes are permitted to inspect the bride and make any personal remarks they please about her appearance or her dress. Every Chinese bride has to pass through this ordeal, and furthermore she must appear perfectly unconscious of blame or praise of harsh criticism or friendly judgment. It has always been said that the Chinese women have most amiable dispositions, and they must stand this trial. If possible on the following day the wedded couple visit the bride's parents. If she has a lot of big brothers woe to the bridegroom unless he hands them out a good deal of cold cash; he is liable to have something of a serenade otherwise.

## RUSSIA'S ROAD THROUGH CHINA.

### Advantages Guaranteed to the Government and the Company.

The statutes of the East China Railway Company have been approved by the Emperor of Russia and promulgated by the Senate, and come into force, on Feb. 16. No time is being lost in pushing on the preliminary surveys. A special commission, consisting of several Russian engineers, one French engineer, and some Chinese officials, is engaged on the work. M. Jugovitch has been appointed chief engineer, and he has undertaken that the line shall be completed within five years. It seems that the line will be constructed with French capital by French engineers, under the control and with the guarantee of the Russian government, but nominally will be a Chinese line, administered by China. The Russian influence, however, will be so great as to make it practically a Russian line, and should occasion require, there can be little doubt that the Russians will seize all the advantages mentioned in the treaty, the terms of which they seemed so anxious to disclaim. By the terms of the agreement the company is bound to convey all the Russian trains which may be supplied at the Transbaikal or Ussuri termini, and they have to undertake that the speed shall not be less than on the Siberian railways. It will receive and despatch with the utmost diligence telegrams for or from China, or for intermediate stations, if at any time the ordinary telegraph line be broken down. It undertakes that its rolling stock shall be up to

### THE LATEST REQUIREMENTS.

and it agrees to conform to any directions of the Russian Railway Administration. In case the company should not have funds to carry out these directions, it may always apply to the Russian Minister of Finance for a subsidy, a provision which gives great power to the Russian Government. The decision of the Minister of Finance in all disputes between the Russian and Chinese railways will be final. Tolls and rates of telegrams are to be fixed by agreement with the Russian Minister of Finance for the whole period of eighty years, and are not to be altered without the consent of the Minister. The company shall convey free of cost the Russian mails and the Russian postal officials. In addition, the Chinese Government has granted the company the following advantages: No taxes shall be levied on passengers or goods in transit, on railway fares or telegrams, Chinese customs dues for imports and exports by the Russian frontier shall be one-third lower than in the case of sea-borne goods. The company, further, is to have the privilege of importing its material and corn and other food supplies free of duty. Surely, between the paternal care of the Russian Government and the liberal concessions of the Chinese Government, the railway ought to be a success. The shareholders evidently think so, as the capital has been subscribed many times over. If Chinese corruption and bad management do not prove too much even for the external influences at work, we may look forward to the line being completed within the time stipulated, and its effects will soon be felt in the far East. This east China railway will place Russian and French territory in direct communication, and open to French and Russian enterprise the whole of the densely populated area which it taps. French produce will pour into the country along the railway at preferential rates, which will, no doubt, virtually exclude both British and German goods. Of the strategical value of the line much might be said; but it may suffice to indicate that, assuming the continuance of the Franco-Russian entente, it brings Russia, via Annam, to the very frontier of Burma.

### PROLONGED CONSIDERABLY.

Do you think that it prolongs a man's life to be insured?  
Yes, replied the man who had just been interviewed by an agent, it does something towards keeping him from being talked to death.

### FREE BATHS.

Weary Watkins—Wot you think of this scheme of free baths?  
Hungry Higgins—They won't get none from me. No man is goin' to git me to bathe without paying me for it.

## THE RETIRED BURGLAR.

### A Most Uncomfortable Situation for Him and How He Escaped from It.

"At the rear of a farmhouse that I was looking around one night," said the retired burglar, "I found an extension containing a single room that appeared to be used as a washroom. I thought if I went in through this extension I should be less likely to wake up the folks in the house, and so I got in at a rear window and started for a door at the other end opening into the main part, which I hoped to find unlocked; but I never really did find out whether it was unlocked or not, for when I had got about half way across the room I stepped through a hole in the floor and dropped into a cistern.

"I suppose that of all the uncomfortable places a man can get into one of the most uncomfortable is a cistern. It is a very difficult place to get out of, and it may be impossible to get out of it without help. The water in this cistern was just over my head, but I could swim, and the water wasn't very cold. I kept afloat and felt around the walls for something to climb out by. I did find something; the pipe from the pump; but it wasn't of any use to me, for it left the cistern just where the walls began to arch over to form the top. If it had run up under the arch a little it might have helped me to reach the edge of the opening, but it didn't; it started out from the top of

### THE STRAIGHT WALL.

It was on the side toward the house, and I suppose this cistern must have been outdoors, and they built the extension over it.

"I kept paddling all the time to keep my head above water, and every now and then I looked up at the opening I had dropped through. I could make out the outline of it by the starlight in the washroom, and I wished they hadn't left the cover off. And how I did wish I could get my hands on that rim! But the nearest I could get to it was about two feet away. I found that by making a great effort I could reduce that distance to about a foot and a half, but that was all; and it might as well have been a mile and a half.

"Paddling around in the water one of my feet struck my tool bag, lying on the bottom where I had dropped it when I first went down. The little bound from that, instead of from the floor of the cistern, which I had touched a few times before, threw my head a little higher out of water than usual, and then I found the satchel with both feet and stood on it. That gave me the first rest I had had since I dropped into the cistern. It raised me up as that my head was clear of the water down to just below my mouth; and I could keep in that position without very much effort and breathe easily. It was a very great relief.

"Then, of course there was a chance to think things over with some kind of comfort. I had my jimmy in my bag, a useful tool in many ways; and no doubt I could have got out of the cistern by the aid of it; but the work would have been very difficult, and it would probably have taken too long; and as a matter of fact I had already thought of a very much simpler way of getting out. Standing on the bag not only raised my head above the water, but, of course, it raised me just so much nearer the opening at the top of the cistern. If I could get something a little higher still to stand on

### A FOOT HIGHER.

or even less than that, I could reach the rim, and, of course, the thing to do was to end this bag up and stand on that. This seemed so extremely simple that you may wonder I hadn't thought of it before; but the falling into the cistern had been in the nature of a surprise to me, and I hadn't got around to this idea yet; I would have thought of it in time, even if I hadn't happened to strike the bag with my feet.

"Well, I balanced myself on the bag as it was until I had got a good rest, and then I bent down in the water, and ended the bag up and got one foot on it to hold it, and then I stood up in the water again and got the other foot on it. Then I found I could reach within six or eight inches of the rim of the cistern. But it was a mighty shaky support; rigid enough in itself, with the bones in it, but not fixed, it was wabby, and of no use unless I could get it right in line with my body when I jumped. But I steadied it up under my feet, and tried it up the best I could and made a spring from it. I caught the rim of the cistern with both hands, and then I raised myself up and chinned it. Then I got my right elbow up over onto the floor; and after that it wasn't very long before I had worked myself up over the edge and out; but I didn't try to do any more work that night."

### DAUGHTERS DRESS ALIKE.

In Yucatan, Central America, sisters dress precisely alike, even to the tying of a bow, the turn of a button, or the flower in the hair. In the tropics large families are the rule, and any day you may see in that country girls in groups of from three to a baker's dozen, who belong to the same family, as their clothes will show. It is thus easy to distinguish the members of a family anywhere; and not infrequently sisters are called by their favorite flower or color. In Annam men and women wear their hair in the same way, and dress almost alike; ear rings and finger rings are worn by women only. Lapp men and women dress alike. The men and women of the Crete tribe of America dress alike, but can be distinguished by the ornamentation of their leggings, that of the men being vertical and that of the women horizontal.

### AFRAID OF GUNS.

Blinks—I thought Bluffer challenged you to a duel. You didn't weaken did you?  
Jinks—Not much. I accepted.  
What weapons?  
Guns.  
Eh? He's a dead shot. Wouldn't he fight?  
No, I chose old-fashioned methods of knocking variety, and he bucketed out.

## PRACTICAL FARMING.

### MARKETING FARM BUTTER.

I have read with interest all that has come under my observation on this subject and have not yet found anything that gave any light to those that need it, says a writer. The only advice given is sell to private customers. This, however, is impossible for the great majority of this class of butter makers. The situation is simply this: Every good farmer's wife aims to supply her own table with good butter. She will take just as great pains to make what she expects to use as she would if she was making a large amount for some fancy trade, always remembering that there must be a difference in quality in favor of the greater quantity made. To do this she must aim high enough to cover the entire year, and thus she will have a surplus at some season of the year. The amount is too small to pay for the drive to a special market, even if there was one within 8 or 10 miles. Private customers are not plenty in our country towns, who will pay you more than the retailer's margin above the price at the store. I thought by giving our experience we could be of some help to that class of dairy women.

For many years we were patrons of the cheese factory, and took the ups and downs in price with our fellow patrons, until the fall of 1893, when we concluded that we could do better by making butter and selling to private customers. We had no trouble to contract for the winter, to the first of April, at 25c per lb. A butter shipper said it had never been done in that town before. It was to be an experiment both on our part and our customers. We had 8 miles of a drive every week, rain or shine.

We soon learned that there was not enough demand for butter at that price to pay us for the time and trouble. We learned one thing, however, that was of some value, viz: that our butter was all right. This same butter shipper offered us no less than 16c per lb., and when the market went above that we would get the advance.

This opened a new thought in our mind. If he could ship our butter at that price, why can't we ship it ourselves? We are only 1 1/2 miles from the express office, and 8 miles from his office. We sent to one of the manufacturing firms for small packages and had one sent by mail as a trial package. We filled it with butter and paid express on it to our nearest city market, as a sample. We received a favorable reply, and after the first of April shipped our first lot to the city.

Our anxiety, mingled with fear, while waiting, must be experienced to appreciate. All we had ever heard about the dishonesty of railroad employes and city merchants came to our memory. But in a few days we received a postal card stating: "Butter received. You are credited at 23c per lb. Butter scarce in this market. Send more soon." Butter here was worth 12c, and we felt all right. We have been sending that firm our butter ever since and have not lost one pound nor one penny.

This summer we shipped them our eggs, also, at a good profit above what we could get at home.

Last spring we persuaded a young man just starting into the buying of butter and eggs, to try our 2-lb paper packages. We let him have some to make the trial. It was not long until he had a good market for all he would leave some empty packages at each house as he took up the full ones. One package was pasted a label: "Manufactured for—by—." He paid them two cents extra for their work, and sold it on orders at a fair margin, while all other butter bought on the road was handled at a loss to both parties.

The advantages are apparent at once. The maker gets 2 cents at home. She is accustomed to see the manufacturer's name on everything she buys, but to see her own name go before the public as such, looks altogether different. This will spur her up to her best efforts. The butter will reach the consumer just as it left the maker's care and in a much shorter time than the old way.

Another plan would be for a few neighbors to unite and ship together. One should have no less than 30 lbs per week, or in at least ten days, to ship. They should, however, agree on some one system of making their butter so as to have a uniform quality as near as possible.

While there is still much butter made that is inferior, there is also a great amount made that is good, but the methods used in getting it to market are all wrong. We need a radical reform in the line of business. The market is waiting to receive it. Consumers are fast becoming educated in taste for the better article. The manufacturers of these cheap small packages should advertise more frequently in our farm papers.

### DAIRY NOTES.

An inexperienced dairy hired man is dear at any price. He should not be engaged simply for his physical qualifications in milking cows and cleaning stables, writes George E. Newell in Ohio Farmer. If he is not a competent dairyman you cannot conduct your dairy business profitably. He is the individual under whose care the cows usually come most. On him devolve those little minor details of attention in the stable which if neglected or are improperly performed, help to keep the cows down to a \$25 per year income, when it should run over \$50.

Show me the dairyman who depends on transient or inexperienced help, and I will show you the one who never realizes a profit from his cows. From my earliest recollections my life has been closely associated with milk animals, milk, cheese and butter, and I have studied with keen interest the revolution in methods on the farm and in advance in methods on the farm and in factory is not what it should be, in

view of the diffusion of dairy knowledge, more money is now being made from cows than ever before.

Big dairy prices do not necessarily mean profit. The dairyman who depends solely on the condition of the milk or butter market to measure his profits, can never be counted as really successful.

That the times are desperately hard for all engaged in agricultural pursuits goes without saying, but yet it should be remembered that there is as much money in the country as there ever was, a portion of which stands ready to be exchanged for necessary dairy products. This should act as an incentive for dairymen to produce good winter butter and lots of it.

Dependancy is infectious, and I believe there are thousands of dairymen all over the land despondent at the hard times, who are not putting forth half the effort they might and should, to make their business pay this winter. Now is the time to act, and by stirring profitably around you can make some profit by making your cows make milk. Action is the life of dairying, and unless you act, your cows will not. When I first embarked in the dairy business I wondered why I didn't make any money, but after a time awakened to the fact that I was expecting my cows to do it all, while I stood by and watched their efforts.

Cows count for only half of dairy capital. Their owner or their manager counts for the other half. Thus you see how necessary it is that a dairyman should be as good as his cows.

1897 will prove a prosperous dairy year for those dairymen who strive individually to make it a success. Don't wait till next summer, but begin now, to-day, and you will see that by increased zeal and enterprise in feeding and care, the milk yield of your dairy will feel the stimulation even by to-morrow.

### PIG FEEDING.

The treatment of pigs intended for porkers and those intended for bacon should from the age of twelve or fourteen weeks be somewhat different. The former may be pushed on sharply and fed at least three times a day, says National Provisioner, but care should be taken not to give more food at each meal than is thoroughly cleaned up. A good mixture of two or three sorts of ground corn, either scalded or steamed, with the addition of some boiled potatoes, mangels or swedes, and a little skim milk, will make porkers fit for the market in four or five months.

Pigs that are intended for bacon should and for the first four or five months need only be fed twice a day, on such food as will promote growth, and produce flesh rather than fat, but they be allowed a fair amount of exercise, should never be allowed to stop growing nor to lose their sucker flesh. When put to feed, the change to richer food should be gradual. Opinions vary very much as to whether it is desirable to give meal raw or cooked; for my part, I have found the best results from cooked food.

As regards the diet on which bacon pigs should be fed, it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules. The pig of all animals, thrives best on a mixed diet, and every pig feeder must decide for himself what is the mixture that he can most economically use, having regard to the produce of his county. There is no doubt barley meal is one of the best all round foods for the production of good bacon, with the addition of a small quantity of pea or bean meal, and fourths flour. Maize meal is a most useful food in small quantities, but it should always be scalded or boiled and never be used exclusively, or as the principal ingredient in food where high class, streaky bacon is desired, as its tendency is to produce fat. It is of the utmost importance that pigs should be fed at regular intervals. When this is not attended to they become restless and do not thrive as they ought to do. The food should be varied from time to time, as nothing promotes a good appetite like change of food.

### COOKING FOR THE KAISER.

Since great men must live, and live very much in the same way as do their more humble admirers, one cannot but get a glimpse now and again of those strictly personal-matters that reveal the common every-day life of uncommon people. Such a glimpse is afforded by a peep at the culinary arrangements of the German court, as given by a German paper.

The German Kaiser is evidently not among the men who never trouble themselves about what they shall eat. Though the details of the royal meals are ordinarily arranged by the empress, yet on state occasions the emperor himself deigns to give the matter his attention. In this case menu is prepared a week in advance.

The actual cooking is done on iron stoves. The roasting room contains huge stoves of special construction let into the walls, and a great turnspit worked by machinery.

The department of the pastry-cook is one of immense importance, for the pastry must be embellished with all manner of elaborate designs round the edges of the dishes. They are made of dough, gilded or silvered over, and are strictly for ornament, for they are not intended to be eaten. All kinds of ornamentations, in the shape of figures, hunting scenes and aspies, are to be seen on the dishes, most of them being made of dough or fat, and colored or gilded.

The emperor is evidently not extravagant for he pays only a stated sum for each cover at a dinner, so that strict carefulness must be observed. For ordinary meals the rate is about a dollar and a half a cover.

### BIRTHDAY SONGS.

"Monday's bairn is fair o' face;  
Tuesday's bairn is fu' o' grace;  
Wednesday's bairn's a child o' woe,  
Thursday's bairn has far to go,  
Friday's bairn is lovin' and givin'  
Saturday's bairn works hard for a livin'."  
But the bairn that is born on a Sabbath day,  
Is wise and bonny and good and gay."  
Old Scotch Proverb.