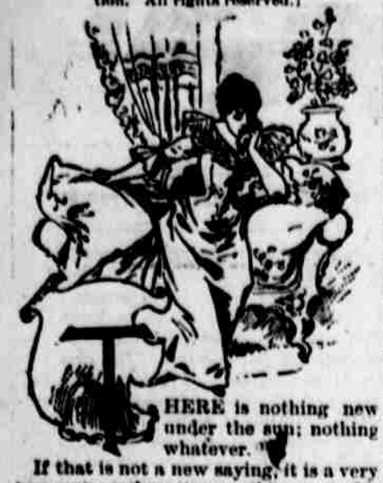
AMERICAN HUSBANDS

A FLATTERING TRIBUTE FROM MRS. FRANK LESLIE.

Notable International Marriages That Have Proved Unhappy—Obey With a Big O. Characteristics of English and Italian Lovers and Spouses.



THERE is nothing new under the sun; nothing whatever.

If that is not a new saying, it is a very true one, and most true things are old, and most old things are true, so that the wonder is why they have not been accepted and done with long ago. The reason, I suppose, is that every new generation, every new individual, in fact, insists upon acquiring his own information for himself and scorns "other men's leavings."

Certainly this question of international marriages is old. I remember as a little child sitting up at a table to look at the pictures in a big Bible, and my favorite was a very spirited cartoon representing the Benjaminites descending upon the vineyards of Shiloh, I believe it was, and each man seizing a struggling maiden to carry away to be made his wife. I used to clamor, they tell me, to be shown the "Gentlemen of Benjamin," as I called it.

There in that same old Bible we are told that the sons of God married the daughters of men, probably the earliest recorded instance of international marriage.

Later on in life I learned the story of the rape of the Sabines, and pondered much upon the probable after life of those unwilling brides, and even ventured in my cynical young mind to wish that a fleet of Sabines might sail into the gulf of Mexico and carry away certain obnoxious elderly maids from the environs of New Orleans.

Neither history nor tradition tells us how any of these international marriages prospered, but I am inclined to judge badly. I dare say the sons of God, whoever they may have been, were prim and priggish and soon concluded that the daughters of men were a bad lot, and they were sorry they had undertaken their conversion. And I dare say those merry maids of Shiloh sighed more than once for the pleasant vineyards whence they had been torn and the careless dances which had been their principal occupation.

As for the Sabine brides, one can well imagine the remarks they would upon occasion make to their bridegrooms, or rather to their masters, upon the rude fashion of their wooing, and how often, in whatever language Sabines used, they would say:

"What else could I expect from such a brute as you showed yourself that day?" And probably the Sabine gentleman responded with a contemptuous flip of his callous fingers or perhaps a touch of his whip.

William of Normandy, wishing to make an international marriage with Matilda of Flanders, waylaid her as she came from church, dragged her from her palfrey, rolled her in the dirt and gave her a good beating with his stirrup leathers. I believe it was after that episode that she and her maidens embroidered the Bayeux tapestries in his honor, so I suppose that she was neither maimed in body nor unforgiving in spirit. But, for all that, I have not the smallest doubts that in moments of conjugal unreserve Matilda often alluded to the leathering scene, and William as often lamented that their acquaintance had not ended there.

But if one goes into royal international marriages there is no end really to the unhappy histories written between the lines of grave annals of state.

The French brides of English kings, with their pathetic attempts to import a little of their national gayety and grace into insular commonplace; the devout Spanish infantas, who found their religion either the deadly horror or the flippant scorn of French and English courts; the haughty Austrian, Maria Louisa, scorning the Corsican-Frenchman to whom she had been bartered; that other unfortunate archduchess, Marie Antoinette, whom the French accused before all things of being an Austrian (l'Auutrichienne)—in fact, the list is endless of unhappy royal international marriages, and we leave them as we find them for warning lights.

In our own day and time we have plenty of examples ready at hand. Probably every one of us is personally cognizant of some international marriage and can answer for ourselves whether, as a general thing, these marriages have been successful. Those which I have observed have not, or at least not when the bride was an American and the bridegroom of another nationality. The truth is that American men make the very best husbands of any men in the world, and American girls are trained in their ideas of the relative obligations of husbands and wives by what they observe at home of their own parents and are utterly ignorant of what any other than an American man expects of his wife.

The American, sincerely and unconsciously, respects and admires woman as a class. He feels that she is a creature to be shielded, protected, petted, caressed, not only while she is a young maiden whom he is wooing, but after she becomes a wife and mother. I suppose there is no civilized woman in the world possessed of so much honorable freedom as the American wife. I say honorable freedom as distinguishing her condition from that of the women of the demi monde in Paris and other places who have secured for themselves a sort of freedom, or rather of lawlessness, which can certainly not be styled *honorable*. No, certainly, there is no woman in the world with more possibilities of happiness before her than an American woman married to a typical American man. There are other men in the world who make better lovers. Romeo, the pattern and model of lovers, could not possibly have been an American. Othello wooed Desdemona as never American wooed or could woo.

One can hardly imagine General Grant, for instance, recapitulating his battles and making much of his "hairbreadth escapes by sea and land" for the edification of a young lady whom he wished to marry. And yet I, for one, would rather have been Mrs. Grant than Mrs. Othello, or even Mrs. Romeo Montague, for even as the Moor killed his wife from jealousy the Italian certainly would have neglected and slighted his wife while he sang under the balcony of some other Juliet. True, he would have expected her to take the same liberty so long as she didn't get found out, but that state of things can hardly be classed under the head of happy marriages.

All men of the Latin races—Italians, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Portuguese—are endowed by nature with the gift of lovemaking. They can look across the room a hundred things more eloquent than a Saxon could say on the fairest moonlight night that ever shone. Give him the moonlight night, and he not only looks but speaks like Apollo, like the syrens, like Mephistopheles himself, who is, as all accounts agree, the most fascinating creature in the world until you become too well acquainted with him.

But this irresistible Latin lover makes an extremely poor husband. In fact, the honeymoon is scarcely over before he resumes the occupation of lovemaking, only now those glances, those whispers, those adoring protestations, are devoted to somebody else. He has coursed his hare and captured her; he has charmed the bird off the bough and caged her. Now he looks for a hare and a bird who are still at liberty and still can give him the pleasure of the chase.

Make love to one's wife! He laughs in good natured contempt at the absurd suggestion, and with a final twist of his moustache, a final survey of his invincible self in the mirror, he walks away leaving la signora or madame to pass her lonely hours as she will.

As a general thing she contrives that they shall not be lonely. But, after all, this is not the ideal marriage, is it? Now, if the signora or madame is an American girl accustomed to an American father and his domestic manners, she doesn't take the new ways at all kindly. She does not want to have some other woman's husband come and sentimentally console her for the desertion of his own spouse. Although in Rome, she declines to do what the Romans do, but persists in demanding that Rome should do as New York or Boston or Philadelphia does. She doesn't succeed in creating a new code of international marriage relations, poor little soul, and the result is, as a usual thing, tragic. Either she beats or bruises herself to pieces in dashing against the walls of the inevitable or she accepts her fate in a reckless spirit that carries her a great deal too far. She does "console herself" with a vengeance, and misery, warfare, perhaps divorce, perhaps death, are the results.

But the more common form of international marriage is not between an American and a Latin, but a sort of cousinly alliance between an English, Irish or Scotch man with the American girl, whose blood is generally derived from one or the other of these divisions of the Anglo-Saxon race.

This arrangement does better than the Latin alliance, for there are points in common between the mother country and her independent daughter which make more harmony. There is a common language, generally a common religion, and an unwritten code of ethics and manners which is pretty generally shared by each.

The British lover and the American lover are about on a par, although the Englishman, as a general thing, assumes as soon as he is engaged a certain air of authority and proprietorship which the American never dreams of at any period of his career as a lover and husband.

I feel sure that in the English marriage service the "obey" is spelled with a big "O," for it seems the principal point of the bride's new duties, and the fiancee is cheerfully ready to begin to practice her obligations. If she tries to rebel, her mother and friends, perhaps her betrothed himself, call her to account with the threat that if she doesn't take care she will lose her opportunity. Jack or Tom or Ned will feel that so untractable a girl will make a poor wife, and he will be off his bargain.

Say that to an American girl, and what walls or roofs would contain her scorn? She would return that young man's rings and letters before the hour was out and not know him the next time she met him. But with the English girl a different heredity and a different training have produced an entirely different temperament. She also has insensibly gathered from the mutual demeanor of her father and mother the standard of matrimonial manners and obligations. She perceives that her mother's first duty is to defer in all thi[illegible] her father; to provide for his pla[illegible] at the expense perhaps [illegible] coax, cajole, persuade or [illegible] consenting to an enter[illegible] expedition, a new gown or a new visitor. The father is a little Jupiter, and the mother is an "ox eyed Juno" whose principal virtue is amiable submission, and whose principal study is how to circumvent the Thunderer.

Of course the girl accepts her father as the highest and noblest type of a husband, and her mother as the inevitable type of wife, and her character molds itself insensibly to these limitations and upon these lines. She becomes another attentive, submissive, furtive wife like her mother, the charming English wife of an Englishman.

But make the marriage international, and the domestic machine declines to run in any such time honored ruts. A broad gauge engine will not, *cannot*, adapt itself to a narrow gauge road, and some fearful jolting, with very likely a catastrophe at the end, will be the result of trying to make it.

The Englishman's estimate of women, her rights, her privileges, her duties, is altogether different from that of an American. Whatever his outward demeanor in his own or other countries, his underlying conviction is that—

Woman is the lesser man;
All thy passions matched with mine
Are as moonlight unto sunlight,
Are as water matched with wine.
Nature made them blinder movements,
Bounded in a shallower brain.

If the woman is bright, keen and well educated, he looks upon her as a phenomenon and rather undesirable as a wife. His highest praise of her achievements is that they are "almost worthy of a man."

Perhaps—for of course neither all Englishmen nor all Americans follow one undeviating rule—perhaps he does honestly admire and appreciate this intellectual phenomenon and wishes to marry her—that is, if she has money—for not even in the sublime porte is marriage more of a commercial transaction than in England. Walpole's famous utterance that "every man has his price" is most applicable to the matrimonial market. Has the American bride of an Englishman a fortune (and she is not likely to become his bride if she has none), she is expected to relinquish it into his hands either entirely or with the reserve of a certain amount settled upon herself and her children. If the property is not of a nature to be definitely settled, she binds herself to make over a stated portion of her income for his sole use, and perhaps in addition she pays all the expenses of the menage—in fact, an Englishman is not ashamed to allow his wife to pay for his bread and butter and in addition to give him the money to buy his cigars.

But women—that is to say, American women—do not generally care much about money and are very willing to give it to the man who professes to love them and whom they intend to love for life, honor so far as he is worthy of honor, and obey in love's sweet humility so long as obedience is the reasonable and voluntary expression of love.

But long before the honeymoon is over the young wife discovers her mistake. The loverlike attitude of the Englishman drops away like the petals of an overblown rose and leaves nothing but sturdy wood and pitiless thorns. The irksome deference he has, through the season of courtship, felt obliged to pay to the delicacy or the prejudices of his fiancee is thrown aside with the wedding coat, and the most negligee of smoking jackets and slippers are figuratively assumed. He tells his wife stories that would startle a messroom or a club parlor. He flatly contradicts her; he leaves her to get around by herself or to be escorted by any one who will take pity on her; he gruffly demands why this or that matter has not been attended to; he leaves her at home while he enjoys himself abroad; he allows her, if she will do it, to wait upon him like a servant while he lounges upon a sofa; he lets her carry her own wraps and escort herself to her carriage. In fact, he utterly fails in that tender deference and ever present care, that prevoyance which is so natural to the American gentleman, the American husband in every class, that American women often fail to appreciate it unless through observing or experiencing an international marriage they discover how precious a birthright they have sold for a mess of pottage and go mourning all their lives.

Every rule has its exceptions, no doubt, but *as* a rule the American husband is the best husband in the world.

Mrs. Frank Leslie

For Soiled Linen.

A bag for soiled linen that is quite ornamental as well as practical is made of light colored sateen. The corners are cut off at the bottom, and the top is left square. The two sections of the bag are joined along the lower and side edges. At the top, a few inches below the edge, a casing is formed for the insertion of a short rod, the fullness above the rod forming frills. A slash is cut at the center of the front and the edges of the slash, and the remaining edges of the bag are bound with ribbon a shade darker than the material in the bag. Across the bag below the slash an embroidered design is done in outline stitch. This bag may be made of linen, cretonne or canvas and may be decorated in a variety of ways.

Another dainty bag, intended more especially for soiled collars and cuffs, is made of white canvas. The lower edge of the bag is cut square. Near the top a casing is formed both back and front, and drawing ribbons are inserted. The edges above the casing give a frilled effect when the bag is closed. A collar and cuffs are outlined on the upper side of the bag at the center with colored embroidery silk. If one wishes, small tassels may be made of the silk and sewn along the lower edge of the bag.

GERTRUDE WILLETT.

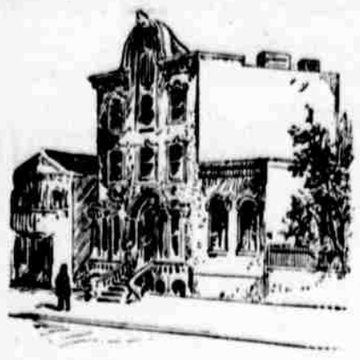
CLEVELAND'S HOME.

HE MAY NOT LIVE IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

The New President Will Probably Lease a Residence and Use the Executive Mansion Only For Office Purposes—The Admiral Porter Mansion.

[Special Correspondence.]

WASHINGTON, March 2.—It will be President Cleveland again the day after tomorrow, and charming Mrs. Cleveland will again be mistress of the White House. But she is to be mistress this time only in name. At least, for an indefinite period, which may be short or long the understanding is that the president will use the executive mansion only for an office, taking up residence for himself and family elsewhere.



ADMIRAL PORTER HOUSE.

Mr Cleveland is always doing something that surprises the people, and this one of the least expected of his decisions. It is a decided novelty to have a president come to Washington and live in any place but the executive mansion or "the president's house," as they used to call it. Never before in the history of the government has a president done such a thing, and the good people of the capital are unable to understand it. The truth is, they don't approve it. But Mr. Cleveland has a way of doing what he likes without much regard to criticism.

Of course Mr. Cleveland may change his mind and conclude, after all, to install his household gods in the mansion provided for them by the government. But he has been negotiating for a lease of the Admiral Porter house, and it is probable that this mansion, already noted, will become historical. The Porter house stands on H street, 3½ blocks from the executive mansion. It is a large, brick structure, the front walls of which have been painted white. Though it presents a somewhat imposing appearance, it is not a very desirable house in which to make a comfortable home. According to the late admiral's servants—and if you want to know what a house is go to the cook or the chambermaid and not to the real estate agent—this mansion is barely fit to live in. It is full of rats, has poor plumbing, is moldy and generally forlorn.

It is, however, a very richly furnished house, containing as it does the antiques, curios and souvenirs gathered by Admiral Porter during his many voyages. The wing at the left of the picture printed herewith is a mere entrance to the courtyard and stables in the rear, except that over the entrance is a large room which Admiral Porter used for many years before his death as an office. It was a curious old junk shop. There were models of naval vessels, marine pictures, ocean curiosities, books, old swords, guns, piratical knives and pistols and a motley collection of the trophies and souvenirs of an old sea dog.

THE TAYLOE OCTAGON.

Here Admiral Porter lived, except at mealtime, working, writing and smoking. He used to smoke 20 or 30 cigars in a day and boast of his prowess in that line as well as of his remarkable agility and strength at an advanced age. His writings brought him in a snug little income for several years and helped him to maintain such an expensive house.

It is a rather odd circumstance that this house was built by a colored man who used to be a slave. His name was Lee, and after gaining his freedom he set up in business as an undertaker and amassed quite a fortune. If I am not mistaken, he once lived in the house himself, and it is a striking commentary on the possibilities of free citizenship in this blessed country of ours that a dwelling built by an emancipated slave may become the home of a president and "the little White House."

Like nearly all the houses in its neighborhood, the Porter mansion has a history. Many years ago Hamilton Fish while senator from New York, lived in it. Then two British ministers to this capital, one after the other, used it as a legation house. One was Lord Lyons and the other Lord Napier. During the latter's occupancy the Prince of Wales visited Washington and was entertained by the minister. To this day the residents of the neighborhood tell stories of the prince's visit. Such a great throng of people rushed to see the heir to the British throne whenever he appeared in public that it was found necessary to rope off the sidewalk in front of the Porter house and to station policemen there to see that the crowd kept itself at a respectful distance.

Notwithstanding these precautions the prince and his retinue made their way with some difficulty from their carriage to the house. The crowd cheered him and he lifted his hat in acknowledgment of the compliment, none of which is very important save in the eyes of the chappies, who still have apartments in the vicinity of the house where H. R. H. the P. of W. was entertained.

Another house which Mr. Cleveland has taken a look at is known as the Barber castle, standing on the hill overlooking the city about a mile and a half north of the executive mansion. It is a very handsome house and is surrounded by spacious grounds. Barring the distance from his office, Mr. Cleveland would find this a much more desirable place of residence, in case he decided to set up a private establishment, than the Porter mansion. Chief Justice Fuller lived here during the first year he was in Washington, and if I remember aright paid several thousand dollars rent. S. S. Cox lived for a time in the same house and converted it into a sort of Turkish bazaar, where his many friends loved to sit about of an evening on oriental rugs and smoke their nargiles while listening to Cox's stories of his experiences as minister to Constantinople. In the immediate vicinity of the Barber house are the houses of Mrs. John A. Logan and ex-Senator Henderson of Missouri, the latter being actually a castle, and a very large and handsome one at that.

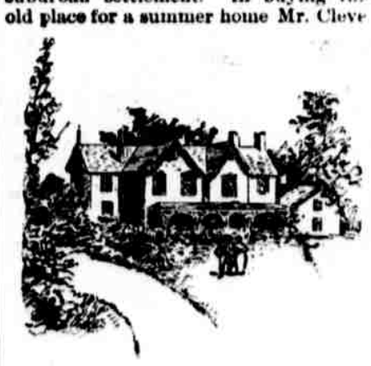
There are now only three houses in Washington, besides the executive mansion, in which presidents of the United States have lived. One is the famous Octagon house, which now stands abandoned and almost in ruins in a quarter of the city no longer fashionable. It was known as the Tayloe mansion and for many years was a social center. After the British burned the White House in 1814 President Madison took up his residence in the Octagon house and made his office there as well. Here he held his New Year's levee in 1815, and in the big circular room over the entrance hall, now inhabited only by bats and rats, he signed the treaty of Ghent in February of the same year.

RED TOP.

In this room Dolly Madison hung the portrait of Washington which she had rescued from the White House before her hasty flight before the foe. On the day the British arrived in Washington Mrs. Madison had issued invitations for a dinner party, as it was not believed the enemy would reach the city that evening. When it was reported that the invaders had reached Capitol hill, she collected a few personal articles, cut from its frame the famous Washington portrait that hung in the east room and fled. The British troops found a fine dinner awaiting them and proceeded to do justice to it.

The second house in which presidents have lived is the cottage at the soldiers' home, 2½ miles from the White House. It is a pretty place, and there a number of presidents have, with their families, passed the summer season. Buchanan was the first to use this cottage as a summer resort, and Lincoln, Grant, Hayes and Arthur have followed his example. This cottage occupies the highest spot of ground in the District of Columbia and affords an excellent view of the Capital City.

The fourth house to be mentioned in this connection is the now famous Red Top, the pretty villa which Mr. Cleveland occupied during his first term and which is now the center of a flourishing suburban settlement. In buying this old place for a summer home Mr. Cleveland eight years ago bade defiance to all traditions, and there is much reason to expect he will now override precedent by establishing a private residence in the capital.



PRESIDENT'S COTTAGE AT SOLDIERS' HOME.

WALTER WELLMAN.

Common Sense and Sanitation.

An exhibit of general interest just at this time, when the methods to be adopted for preventing the introduction of cholera will form one of the features of the World's fair and will be known as the division of hygiene and sanitation, it is proposed as far as possible to make exhibits by models of the following: Sanitarily built houses for town and country, sanitary schoolhouses, public baths, lavatories, etc., quarantine establishments ashore and afloat, crematories for the dead, crematories for garbage, filters and other appliances for purification of water, laboratory for analysis of water, milk, etc., laboratory for bacteriological work. Athletic games, gymnasia and gymnastic appliances, heating apparatus, ventilating apparatus, appliances connected with drainage, sanitary dresses and appliances, dresses for special work, food and food adulterations, modes of food preparation. Illustrations, diagrams and charts showing the work of state boards of health and their auxiliary boards, also of sanitary associations. A donation library of publications relating to hygiene and sanitation.