

the entries in it, to be copied into your journal when you have the opportunity.

It has often been remarked that quiet times, when you have most leisure for writing, are just those when there is least to write about, and that in busy times, when there is plenty to say, you cannot spare a moment. Write, say I, let the times be what they may; but write most when you have least leisure, for then you are both seeing and hearing most.

Should a journal be kept in regular form—that is, should it read just like a book? Not at all; at least, not necessarily. Perhaps the more disjointed it is the better, because it is then most natural.

It certainly must not be in the grand style, as if you were a heroine, or in the formal style, as if you wrote for publication and kept one eye on the paper and another on posterity. Let it be nothing more than a quiet and honest record of your daily life, in which you strike no attitudes and aim at being nothing but yourself.

And when should this journal be started? To-day is always the best day; so open the book and make the first entry—"Read to-day an article in THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER on 'How to Keep a Journal,' and this is the result." Good Nanette! May you live to keep it for many a year!

JAMES MASON.

## THE WEDDINGS OF THE WORLD.

By A. H. WALL.

### A WEDDING IN CHINA.

"WHEN a son is born he sleeps upon a bed; he is clothed with rich robes, and plays with pearls; everyone obeys his princely voice. When a girl is born she is cast upon the ground, is wrapped in a cloth, and plays with a tile." Thus wrote Pan-houi-pan of her own sex, in her own country, China, adding, "She can be neither vicious nor virtuous; she has only to prepare the food, make the wine, and abstain from troubling her parents."

Pan-houi-pan wrote with neither regret nor indignation of this strange contrast. In her opinion it was both proper and wise to mark by neglect and indifference the inferiority of a creature born without a soul, even in the helpless days of its infancy. In her still popular works she is continually reminding women that they have no purpose in creation beyond that of being useful and pleasing to the superior sex. The birth of such a being as a woman was a thing to be ashamed of—a sure sign of heaven's disfavour, in the estimation of Pan-houi-pan, and in that of all her countrymen and women.

A modern well-known traveller, M. Huc, describing his adventures in China, says on one occasion when leaving Leang-chan, his Chinese companion, speaking of women being Christians, exclaimed laughingly, "Isn't that nonsense!" And being told that it was not, and that, moreover, certain Chinese women were Christians, he asked, with an air of being completely puzzled, "What can women become Christians for?"

"What for?" was the reply; "to save their souls—like the men."

"But," responded the astonished Chinaman, "they have no souls. You can't make Christians of them!"

"We endeavoured," says the author in question, "to remove the worthy Chinaman's scruples—to give him a few sounder ideas on

the subject of women's souls, but we are by no means sure that we succeeded. The very notion tickled his fancy so much that he laughed with all his might. 'Nevertheless,' said he, 'I will be sure to recollect what you have been telling me, and, when I get home again to my family, I will tell my wife that she has got a soul. She will be not a little astonished, I think.'"

But, despite his laughter, it is not improbable that in his secret heart he regarded this new view of Christianity with no little dread. It seemed to him, doubtless, a veritable serpent in the garden, so that when he got home he may have prayed heartily to his grotesque little wooden god that a knowledge of equality and consequent discontent and rebellion, might never beget evil within the doors of his own little domestic paradise. For the women of China, brought up in a slavish spirit of obedience and servile humility, are generally meek and gentle, patient, timid, and long suffering, deriving from ignorance a degree of content which, as a rule, is not altogether unproductive of happiness. John Chinaman would not have his women either wise or independent. They see no evil in being without



A CHINESE MUSICAL PARTY.

a soul; they have no rights, and they want no rights. He is content with women because they are content to regard the ministering to his luxurious comforts and enjoyments as their highest, grandest, and sole privilege. For that only are they born, bred, and educated. And, again, as a rule, the good-humoured, cheerful, chatty Chinese women, devoting themselves with all their might to parents, husbands, and sons, with a generous abnegation of self which is—dare I say?—worthy of a better and a nobler cause—is admirable. Even amongst the poorest you see them decent in their apparel, modest in their behaviour, assiduous in the pursuit of their heavy monotonous labours, on the water or in the garden, field, farm, or at the loom, and seldom without a pleasant word and smile. Sometimes they are fortunate enough to win gratitude, sometimes happy enough to create love, but, as a rule, I fear the predominant idea they awaken in their masters' minds is merely that cold emotionless one that when they have done their utmost in serving or pleasing, they have but done that duty for which no thanks are fairly due.

The Chinese girl who has poor parents leads the degraded life of a slave; no out-door labour is to long or too hard for her, no treatment too bad, no punishment too severe. If her parents are lowly but not so poor, she

is regarded as the household drudge, whom no kind of work can injure or degrade. In either case she stagnates in ignorance, unable either to read or write; but, strange to say, she does not grow either dull, brutal, or apathetic. A kind word moves her to tears, and to win her heartfelt gratitude is a very easy task. The daughter of wealth fares a little better. She is not so active, and, therefore, not perhaps so happy, but her domestic work is light, and she can read and write a little, and she has amusements. She is taught music and singing, and even what the poor crippled creature calls dancing. She goes to the theatre, receives occasional visitors, and now and then is taken to the temple in a sedan chair, or a kind of wheelbarrow with curtains. But she keeps to her own chamber, has her meals apart from her father and brother, devotes considerable time to her toilet and the growth and preservation of her long claw-like nails, and yawning and sighing over her almost purposeless indolent life, is frequently glad to stupefy herself with the opium pipe.

At length there comes a time when the girl may be married, a time for which she has been longing with all her heart. Amongst those whom the law of China compel to marry, and with one of their own rank, her charms are duly but indirectly magnified, and they all know that she will be the bride of the highest bidder. Her nose is beautifully short, her lips delightfully thick, no lashes disfigure her charming black eyes. The length of her finger-nails is surprising! If these fail to attract and no bidder appears, the disconsolate father says that she was a mistake, regrets that she was not drowned directly after her birth, as thousands of other female infants are every year, and mournfully contemplates the cost of her living.

If a good offer comes, and no more bidders are likely to appear, immediate preparations are made for the wedding. At last the girl will be somebody; she is delighted to find herself for once an object of general interest; it is a grand discovery when she finds that even a girl can make all the people about her glad and merry! Her spirits rise, life assumes a brighter aspect, she dreams day-dreams, sees herself honoured and respected as a house mother, her dignity asserted even by the law, which has hitherto recognised her rather as an object for punishment than protection. She will soon no longer be a mere useless piece of furniture or a domestic drudge; or, as a Chinese author says, she should be "a shadow and an echo in the house." She knows well enough that for a time she will but live her old life over again; that marriage will not give her a right to call anything her own; that she will stand in silence to serve at table and feed on the leavings of the men; and that outside her own inner room or rooms no living soul will acknowledge her authority. But she knows also that she will be the proud mother of boys, that she will have children to love her and to be cared for.

On the day of her wedding the house is early astir. There is the greatest zeal displayed for her adornment; her looks are anxiously watched, and the perfection of her toilet is an object of overwhelming importance. Her splendid silken robes flash, gleam, and glitter with jewels and gold; her long plaits of raven hair are adorned with flowers and precious stones. She totters on her poor cribbled feet into a kind of cage, a brilliant palanquin, where she sits in state like a queen on her throne, and is carefully inspected. Most carefully, for only consider! what a dreadful

thing it will be if when the bridegroom first sees her he should express disappointment; say that those who described her deceived him, and wind up by declaring that rather than have her he will sacrifice all the dowry money he has paid, and submit to the usual fine in a like amount. When the procession is ready to escort her, the lattice work of her cage is closed and locked, and the bearers raise and carry her in triumph to the home of her purchaser. Musicians playing fifes, drums, and hautboys, precede her; torch-bearers and flambeau bearers surround her! her family march in solemn state behind; and everything comprising her portion, clothes, furniture, &c., follows, each article displayed by one person, male or female.

Shut up alone she hears the music and the joyous shouts and the trampling feet; sees the red light of the torches and flambeaux, falling flickeringly upon her gold and jewellery; thinks of her new home amongst strangers whom she has never seen; dreads the little sound to come, that of the unknown bridegroom's key in the lock of her gilded cage; wonders what he will be like, in what words he will first address her; trembles with intense anxiety.

Meanwhile the bridegroom, in another fever of anxiety, stands in holiday attire within his outer door. The feast is spread, the guests have arrived, he only waits his bride. What will she be like? How will he be pleased? Will the blind bargain really prove a good one? At last he hears the approaching music and shouting; at last the procession halts before his house; her gay and gilded bridal cage—the palanquin—is before him. The trusty domestic who bears its key gives it to him with a lowly obeisance, and then, amidst sudden and profound silence, he turns it in the lock. The gilded lattice-work swings open; he looks for a moment upon the girl he has purchased—does not suddenly shut the door and turn away, as she tremblingly fears he may, but gravely assists her to alight, while the merry music bursts forth afresh, and the shouting is louder than ever.

Entering the house, the ceremony which unites them, as firmly as the most ceremonious one can, is thus performed. For the first time she sits down to eat and drink with a

strange man—perhaps she does not even know his name—and having previously prostrated themselves before their parents, and saluted the Tiers, or idol, in the hall four times, they feed together, drink each from the other's cup, and they are then man and wife, united as completely as Chinese law can unite them.

The bride is then given into the hands of her new female relatives, who entertain her and her family for the rest of the day at a feast in their own section of the dwelling,

## FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

A STORY OF TWO ENGLISH GIRLS.

By ALICE KING.

CHAPTER IV.

RUBY had thought life a hard, difficult

thing that first evening when she sat at dinner at Larcombe Priory, and though her lively nature and busy fancy brought her many a radiant gleam of sunshine which none of her surroundings could dim, she continued to find it a hard and difficult matter throughout all the early days of her sojourn in her new home. Miss Lindhurst's narrow sympathies and confirmed habit of bringing everything and every one about her under one standard of her own setting up, made her look with distrust and dislike on whatever was new and different from her own limited experiences. She had known nothing of girls since she was a girl herself, and like many other people she only used the memories of those distant days as a text to discourse about the faults of the present time, forgetting that every era has its share of good and evil. Besides this, Ruby Stanton was no common girl to deal with, and Miss Nancy entirely mistook and misunderstood



AFTERNOON TEA.

while the bridegroom and his friends make merry in another.

One month after there is another ceremonious meeting of the two families, when the bride's family come to see her for the first time, and this is followed by a third, when the bride revisits her old home.



her character. Ruby was eager and enthusiastic about everything that she liked; Miss Nancy carefully damped the girl's warmth, and called her actions unbecoming and unladylike. It was Ruby's way to speak out all she thought and felt; Miss Nancy chose to declare this mere impertinence and forwardness, and deemed it her solemn duty to set her down. Ruby, like many a girl before and since, was inclined to hold extreme opinions on different points and to rush headlong into conclusions;