relieve the gentle prisoner of Windsor from her golden cage. The Welsh prince rushed into a luckless war. He purchased his bride and peace at a tremendous sacrifice, for he consented to hold the mountain land of his brave forefathers as a fief of England, and the little remnant of which he was to remain sovereign was to devolve at his death to the English crown.

At last the lovers of so many years were brought together, and one October morning in 1278 they were solemnly married in the Cathedral of Worcester, in presence of the king and queen, and of a noble company of lovely dames and *gallant* knights. A great poet, a contemporary of Shakespeare, depicts the prince as addressing her on their first meeting after the long separation in the following fervent language:—

> "What, Nell, sweet Nell, do I behold thy face?
> This is the planet lends this world her light;
> Star of my fortune, thou that shineth bright,
> Queen of my heart, loadstar of my delight,
> Fair mould of beauty, miracle of fame!"

After the imposing ceremony at Worcester, the Prince and Princess set out for their dominion. She tried in vain to prevent the bursting of the storm among the mountaineers of her adopted country; she travelled to the English Court and wrote gentle letters to the king. In the spring of 1282, the Welsh made a bold effort to achieve their ancient independence. Llewelyn fell in an obscure skirmish, in December, and his head was carried in scornful display through the streets of London.

But, happily for her, Eleanor did not survive to witness the tragic end of her husband, having died in Midsummer, and been laid to rest at Llanvaes, in the Isle of Anglesea, beside the spot where slumbered her kinswoman, Joanna, the wife of another Prince Llewelyn.

The little infant, Gwendolen, whose birth had cost her mother's life, was brought in her cradle from Snowdon and sent by King Edward to a nunnery in Lincolnshire. Her days were spent amid the hushed repose of the convent of Sempringham, where she wore, like other Gilbertines, a hood lined with lambskin, a black cassock, and a white cloak; and in that still retreat the daughter of the last native Prince and Princess of Wales, the granddaughter of that great Simon de Montfort, whom the people long revered as a saint and martyr, breathed her last in the summer of 1337.

The next paper will give the life of the first of the seven English Princesses of Wales.

CURIOUS MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

So numerous are the customs that have clustered round the marriage ceremony in our own and other countries, that a bulky volume might easily be devoted to describing them. It is only natural that this should be so, considering the important place that is attached to the married state from being regarded as the *summum bonum* of human happiness. Thus, it may be remembered how the poet Burns tells us—

> "To make a happy fireside clime
> To weans and wife—
> That's the true pathos and sublime
> Of human life."

It would seem, then, that many of the marriage customs were specially designed as marks of honour to this momentous occasion, whereas others have been instituted from certain superstitious notions, which in a variety of cases may be traced back to a remote period.

Amongst the former may be noticed the popular practice of celebrating a marriage with sports, at which all the principal inhabitants of the neighbourhood were invited. Many an amusing account of this practice is to be found in our old writers, a specimen of which we may quote from the "Christian State of Matrimony" (1543). "After the banquet and feast there beginneth a vain, mad, and unmannerly fashion; for the bride must be brought into an open dancing place. Then there is such running, leaping, and flinging among them." From Bishop Kennett's "Parochial Antiquities," it appears that the quintain was once a popular sport at weddings; and another old authority tells us that in Wales it was played in the following manner:—"A pole is fixed in the ground with sticks set about it, which the bridegroom and his company take up, and try their strength and activity in breaking them upon the pole."

In the North of England it was once customary for a party of villagers to watch for the bridegroom's coming out of church after the marriage ceremony, in order to demand money for a football, a request which admitted of no refusal. In case of non-compliance, however, with their application, they lost no time in showing dissatisfaction by resorting to rough music of a not very complimentary kind, a mode of punishment which very soon caused the bridegroom to relent. With this custom may be compared another known as "running the broose," a race at country weddings, as to who should be the first to reach the bridegroom's house and declare the good news. In some parts it was called "a riding wedding," and in Westmoreland, "riding for the ribbon." It varied, too, in different localities, but was carried to a most extravagant height in Scotland; the person, of course, who won "the broose," or arrived home first, expecting a reward. In days gone, the honour most courted on this occasion was to kiss the bride, an allusion to which occurs in the "Collier's Wedding" (1764)—

> "Four rustics fellows wait the while
> To kiss the bride at the church style;
> Then vig'rous make their fetter'd steeds,
> With heavy heels and clumsy heads;
> So scourge them going, head and tail,
> To win what country call the kail."

In Northumberland, where the custom has been retained, the men of the party, we are told, all start off from the church door on horseback, galloping "like madmen through moss and over moor, till they reach the place where the wedding breakfast is to be held, and he who arrives first may claim a kiss of the bride." To enliven, too, the joyous occasion, the bridegroom frequently scattered a handful of money for the assembled villagers to scramble for, whereupon, as may be imagined, a scene of the wildest excitement ensued. Instead of money, sometimes a plate of wedding-cake was thrown amongst the crowd; this being equally popular, as the smallest portion was supposed to bring good luck.

Turning again to the marriage ceremony, a curious custom still prevails in the North of England of making the bridal pair leap over a stone placed across their path outside the churchyard. A correspondent of "Notes and Queries" tells us how, coming out one day of a country church, he found a sort of barrier erected at the churchyard gate, consisting of a large paving-stone placed on its edge, and supported by two smaller ones, and on either side of it a rustic stationed, who made the happy couple, and everyone else, jump over it. On inquiry, he was informed that it was the "petting-stone," over which the bride had to jump, in case she should repent and refuse to follow her husband. In Northumberland this is called the "louping-stone," and it is said that the bride must leave all her "pets and humours" behind her when she crosses it. At the village of Embleton, in this county, it is customary for two stout young lads to place a wooden bench across the door of the church porch, and to assist the bride and bridegroom to surmount the obstacle, expecting in return a present from the bridegroom. Once more, Hutchinson, in his "History of Durham," speaking of the "petting-stone," says that at the completion of the marriage ceremony "the bride is to step upon it, and if she cannot stride to the end thereof it is said that the marriage will prove unfortunate."

A pretty custom of a very different kind exists at Knutsford, in Cheshire. On the wedding-day, as soon as the bride has left her father's house for the church, a relative spreads on the path before the door a quantity of silver sand, called "pret," in the form of wreaths of flowers, and writes also with it wishes for her happiness. This is soon copied by the neighbours, and if the bridal couple happen to be favourites in the locality, all manner of artistic devices may be quickly seen in front of most houses. In some places it is customary to make devices of real flowers, those being generally selected which have a symbolised meaning. In days gone by, it may be remembered how flowers were strewn before the bride and bridegroom on their way to and from church, constant allusion to which practice we find in many of our old dramatists and poets. Browne, for instance, in his "British Pastorals," says—

> "Full many maids, clad in their best array,
> In honour of the bride, come with their flaskets
> Fill'd full with flowers; others, in wicker baskets,
> Bring from the marsh rushes to overspread
> The ground whereon to church the lovers tread."

Another variation of this custom *formerly* consisted in strewing, in the place of flowers, symbols of the bridegroom's calling in life—such as shreds of cloth before a tailor, shavings indicative of a carpenter, and so on.

Again, in olden times it was customary for the bridesmaids to lead the bridegroom to church, and for the bridegroom's men to escort the bride thither, a practice thus referred to in the "Collier's Wedding"—

> "Two lusty lads, well drest and strong,
> Stepp'd out to lead the bride along;
> And two young maids of equal size
> As soon the bridegroom's hands surprize."

Waldron, in his "Description of the Isle of Man," describing a Manx wedding, says, "They have bridemen and bridemaids, who lead the young couple as in England, only with this difference, that the former have ozier wands in their hands, as an emblem of superiority." It appears, too, that those who lead the bride to church are always bachelors; but it was necessary that she should be conducted home by two married men. In return for the services thus rendered, the bride made a present of gloves in the course of the marriage feast. Alluding to gloves, it may be noticed that they were once occasionally given to those who attended weddings. Thus Pepys, in his "Diary" (1663), tells us how he was at a wedding and had two pair of gloves like all the rest, and Herrick, in his "Hesperides," says—

> "What posies for our wedding rings,
> What gloves we'll give and ribbanings."

Brand, in his "Popular Antiquities" (1849, ii. 127), further relates how at Wrexham, in Flintshire, on the occasion of the marriage of the surgeon and apothecary of the place, August, 1785, were placed "at the door of his own and neighbours' houses, throughout the street where he lived, large boughs of trees that had been cut down and fixed there, filled with white paper cut in the shape of women's gloves, and of white ribbons."

Many curious anecdotes are on record of marriages solemnized in the church porch, a custom to which Chaucer refers in his "Wife of Bath":—

> "She was a worthy woman all her live,
> Husbands at the church door had she five."

In Bridge's "History of Northamptonshire" (vol. i. page 135), we are told how "Robert FitzRoger, in the 6th of Edward I. entered into an engagement with Robert de Tybetot to marry, within a limited time, John, his son and heir, to Hawisia, the daughter of the said Robert de Tybetot; to endow her at the church door, on her wedding-day, with lands amounting to the value of one hundred pounds per annum." It appears that until the time of Edward VI. marriages were generally performed in the church porch, Edward I. having been married at the door of Canterbury Cathedral, September 9, 1299, to Margaret, sister of the King of France.

Among other old customs connected with the marriage ceremony may be mentioned the nuptial kiss in church, a practice of which Shakespeare has made excellent use in the *Taming of the Shrew* (Act iii. scene 2), where he relates how Petruchio "took the bride about the neck and kiss'd her with such a clamorous smack that at the parting all the church did echo." Survivals of this usage still exist in different parts of the country, as, for example, in Yorkshire, where the person who gives the bride away claims the first kiss in return for his temporary paternity. Some, however, assert that the parson who ties the knot ought to have the first kiss, and Mr. Henderson, in his "Folklore of the Northern Counties" (189, page 39), relates how a clergyman, unacquainted with the customs of the neighbourhood, after performing a marriage in a Yorkshire village, was surprised to see the party keep together as if expecting something more. "What are you waiting for?" he asked, at last. "Please, sir," was the bridegroom's answer, "ye've no kissed Molly." He further tells us how within the last ten years, a fair lady from the county of Durham, who was married in the South of England, so undoubtedly reckoned upon the clerical salute, that, after waiting for it in vain, she boldly took the initiative and bestowed a kiss on the much amazed south-country vicar.

According to another old custom, to which Shakespeare refers in the *Taming of the Shrew*, where Katharine, speaking of Bianca, says to her father,

> "She is your treasure, she must have a husband;
> I must dance bare-foot on the wedding-day,"

it was considered necessary that the elder sisters should dance bare-foot at the marriage of a younger one, as otherwise they would inevitably become old maids. At the present day no small importance is attached in many places to the publication of the banns. Thus in some of our northern counties, on the evening of the Sunday when the banns of marriage are published for the first time, it is customary to announce the important fact by a merry peal from the church bells, which is known as the "Spur Peal," the Sunday in question being known as "Spur Sunday." We may also quote another custom connected with the publishing of banns, thus described in the *Notts Guardian* of April 28, 1853:—"Wellow. It has been usual from time immemorial in this parish, when the banns of marriage are published, for a person, selected by the clerk, to rise and say, 'God speed them well,' the clerk and congregation responding, amen!' Owing to the recent death of the person who officiated in this ceremony, last Sunday, after the banns of marriage were read, a perfect silence prevailed, the person chosen, either from want of courage or loss of memory, not performing his part until receiving an intimation from the clerk, and then, in so faint a tone as scarcely to be audible. His whispered good wishes were, however, followed by a hearty 'Amen,' mingled with some laughter in different parts of the church."

Once more in the North of England, hot water is poured over the door-steps as the bridal couple take their departure, as there is a popular notion that before it dries up another marriage will be agreed upon; a custom which is generally known as "keeping the threshold warm for another bride." A correspondent of the *Athenæum* (Nov. 16, 1867) thus describes this practice:—"At a wedding in Holderness the other day, at which my granddaughter assisted, as soon as the bride and bridegroom had left the house, and had the usual number of old shoes thrown after them, the young folks rushed forward, each bearing a tea-kettle of boiling water, which they poured down the front steps, that other marriages might soon flow, or, as one said, 'flow on.'"

How varied and numerous, therefore, are the customs associated with marriage may be gathered from the illustrations given in the present paper, and although many have fallen into disuse, yet others are continually being instituted to do honour to this momentous event in human life.

T. F. THISELTON DYER.

BITS ABOUT BIRDS.

By RUTH LAMB.

THE FOUNDLING THRUSH.

HE was as handsome a youngster of his kind as you need desire to see, and was first introduced to our notice by the dairymaid of the farm at which we were staying. She held him in her apron and told our youngsters that she had caught him amongst the wet grass, at the foot of the hill on which the house stood. He was pretty fully fledged, and I suppose had been trying his tender wings; but these had failed him, owing to a pouring rain, and he was squatting, wet and disconsolate, at the bottom of a low wall which bounded the field.

Poor fellow! All we wished was to nurse him into a condition of fitness to take care of himself, not to keep him in captivity, so we tried to feed him. I should say we offered him food of all kinds likely to tempt the appetite of a youthful thrush; but he had no idea of helping himself. We knew nothing about blowing food into gaping birds' mouths by means of a quill, and what little we got inside our foundling's beak he succeeded in ejecting again.

We let Dick, the canary, out of his cage, hoping the thrush would learn by example. Dick advanced with a friendly mien and cheerful chirrup, delighted to make a bird-acquaintance, but the thrush gave a harsh croak and scrambled over little Dick, to the disturbance alike of his feathers and temper. He was much too big, rough, and ignorant for our polished little canary friend to fraternise with.

Towards evening the rain ceased and the sky cleared. The birds began to sing cheerily and, sweet and loud amongst others, sounded the notes of a thrush. So, having failed in all our attempts to feed our foundling guest, we decided to carry him to the bottom of the field and place him on the little low wall near which he had been found.

His feathers were dry, and we thought perhaps he would find his way back to his home and relatives.

We did this, but waited to see the result.

The youngster cried out in baby-thrush fashion, and to our delight down came the musician from the great ash tree close by and alighted beside him on the wall.

I suppose he must have told the young bird to stay where he was whilst he called the mother, for soon the two old thrushes were busily engaged in feeding our foundling, which remained upon the wall. This went on for some time, until the fledgling's strength was sufficiently recruited. Then it was coaxed into essaying a short flight. Bit by bit, the little creature was cheered onwards, the parents' love and patience never failing, until at last we saw our foundling disappear in a tall thickset hedge, within whose friendly shelter the family abode was doubtless concealed. Then the male parent thrush flew back to the ash tree and celebrated the recovery of the youngster by a glorious song of triumph, and we returned to the farm rejoicing that our feathered guest was once more under the guardianship of those who were not only willing but able to minister to his wants.

IN THE LION'S MOUTH.

ALL visitors to Lucerne will remember the beautiful monument, sculptured after the design of Thorwalsden, which commemorates the fidelity of the Swiss Guards who died in defence of the French Royal Family on August 10th, 1793, during one of the horrible massacres of the first Revolution.

The monument is hewn out of the solid rock, and represents a colossal lion dying from a spear wound; but striving even in death to protect the shield bearing the fleur-de-lys of the Bourbon family.

This beautiful design was carried out by a Swiss sculptor from Thorwalsden's model, and the monument, with its surroundings, forms one of the sights of Lucerne and attracts many visitors.

The last time I stood with a companion admiring the monument we noticed a beautiful water wagtail flying in and out of the mouth of the lion.

It was a member of a very tiny family, but its plumage was beautifully varied in black, white, and rich yellow.

After a little patient waiting we saw its mate, and discovered that the tiny pair had built their nest in the lion's mouth and were rearing a young family in this strangely chosen home.