

"I suppose you are thinking of Shakespeare:—

'The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils,'"

quoted Helen.

"And the Master spoke truth," declared Mr. Gascoigne, dogmatically.

They talked of one thing and another as they roamed the garden ways, but still the theme reverted to music, and at last they sat down upon the seat under the sycamore, the girls grouping themselves, and the young men standing near.

"Do you know," said Helen, "Beethoven's sonatas always seem to me to have a nobler purpose, if one may say so, than much of other music."

"Explain yourself. How can music have a purpose?" observed Arthur.

"I hardly know if I can put it clearly. Much of music, like Brahms's Hungarian dances we played just now, depends for its charm on the vague, plaintive longings stirred. One feels dimly that life is a mystery, sometimes a very sad mystery, and that there is no clue.

"But in Beethoven's sonatas, although much may be perplexed and dark, the end is sure to be joyful and triumphant. The tangled thread is unwound, the discords are resolved into harmony, the end justifies what has gone before. One feels 'All is well.'"

"Yes, but," interrupted Lily, "that does not come until after strenuous endeavour. Many of Beethoven's last movements strike me as a very agony of strife. The struggle is long, and

the solution does not come easily and readily, but in the end *it comes*."

Her face was upturned, and the moonlight fell softly on the sweet expression of the brow and eyes purified by suffering. Oswald was thoughtful.

"After all," he broke out at last, "I think I like merry music best. Why should a man be worried and saddened? I am sure I see human misery enough at the hospital without having anything else to depress me."

"And how noble a thing it is to be able to relieve it!" murmured Helen. He turned away abruptly.

"I must, alas! bid you farewell," proclaimed Mr. Gascoigne, and the party moved back to the house; then, after adieux and thanks, Oswald escorted his guest to the railway station, and silence fell upon the old house in St. Martin's Close.

(To be continued.)

## MONGOLIAN GIRLS.

By the Rev. JAMES GILMOUR, M.A., Author of "Among the Mongols."



MONGOL LAMA.  
(From a Photograph.)

A MONGOLIAN, a native of the desert region north of China, when asked whether the recent addition to his family has been a son or a daughter, replies with pride if he can say it is a boy, but should the new-comer be a girl, he will answer, with visible annoyance, "Ah, a useless thing!"

The father of sons, looking forward a few years, can picture himself the increasingly important head of a family, which becomes more numerous and powerful as each successive son brings home his bride and sets up his tent in his father's "city;" city in that sparsely peopled land being applied to a cluster of tents containing sometimes not more than four or five families. The father of daughters, on the other hand, looking forward a few years, can picture his girls one after another becoming brides, and being incorporated in another man's family, leaving him forsaken and alone;

and, regarding the setting up of a little clan as the great object of life, seeing that his daughters can render him no assistance in this, he describes them as "useless."

But the Mongols have plenty of natural affection, and though sons are more valuable from an ambitious point of view, daughters in their infancy and girlhood, as long as they remain in their father's tent, are treated with quite as much fondness and tenderness as their brothers. A Mongolian child, whether boy or girl, passes most of the first months of its existence lying on its back, wrapped in a sheepskin and trussed up with leather thongs. The face is left exposed, but the little one can scarcely move a limb, and the "parcel" is convenient to hand about or stow away in any desired part of the tent. The child is well cared for, however, and during the day the little bundle may be seen occupying the best seat in the tent, with, in summer, a covering set up to keep the flies off. A girl old enough to run about passes a happy enough existence in a Mongol tent. In the homes of well-to-do parents she leads a free and joyous life, playing about as though she were a boy, more happy than a boy perhaps, for the time being, in escaping all the drudgery of lessons, for, with very few exceptions, no one cares to educate a girl. Few girls, even the daughters of wealthy people, lead idle lives. They are sent to chase the kids down from the roof of the tent, and to take care that the calves do not find out their mothers and drink all the milk. They have to water the flocks and carry water for domestic use, but the great duty and occupation of the girls and women in Mongolia is to milk the cattle—goats, sheep, cows, camels, and mares—and work up the milk into the various forms in which it is finally used, namely, cream-cake, sour-cheese, skim-milk cheese, butter, and whisky. The manufacture of the milk is pleasant enough, but the milking is often dirty cold work. The cattle stand outside, summer and winter; men make a boast of being unable to milk, so the women have to perform this duty, among the mud of the summer rains, and the intense cold of the terrible winter. Every Mongol girl can cook, but cooking is not difficult to learn in a country where an elaborate meal consists, for

the most part, of boiled mutton, followed by boiled millet, the mutton being fished out of the pot with the fire-tongs, and the millet poured into the same pot as it still boils, this second course, prepared before the eye of the guests, having ample time to be fully done by the time that the mutton has disappeared. Such dinners, too, are rare among the Mongols, and many of their meals are very simple and easily prepared, consisting merely of boiling tea poured into wooden teacups containing parched millet, oatmeal, milk curd, cheese, or cold victuals of any kind, the remains of former meals. As regards needlework, Mongolian women have more thorough practice, as they have to make the garments of the whole male and female community, and even spin much of the thread they use; and, on going into a tent, it is not uncommon to find one or two of the females busy with a bunch of camel's hair and a "whirler," making slowly and laboriously the coarse but strong thread with which much of their rough sewing is done. Great is their amazement at foreign sewing cotton, which, compared with Chinese cotton, is so fine and superior that they usually mistake it for silk, and the glittering polished foreign needle is to them a marvel of finish, when seen beside the coarse round-holed "darners" they get from the Chinese.

The arrival of a Chinese travelling trader is one of the few things that vary the monotony of female life on the plain. As he comes along with his ox-cart he is usually noticed some mile or two away, and when he arrives he is found to have something to tempt everyone in the place—whisky for the men, biscuits, sweets, or fruit for the children, and draper's sundries for the women.

Silk for embroidery, cotton for ordinary work, cloth for garments, pieces of silk for ornament, and buttons of both foreign and Chinese pattern are offered and exchanged for such native products as cream-cakes, cheese, skins, mushrooms, camel's hair, or salt, the Chinaman making two profits, one on the article he sells and one on the article he takes in exchange; and the women, unable to leave their home duties and cattle, are glad to have their little necessities supplied at their own doors. These small traders gladden the



TOBACCO POUCH.

women's hearts at intervals all the year round, but the excitement in this line culminates when the Peking traders, in companies of two or three, pay their annual visit, bringing coral beads, snuff-bottles of precious stone, English velvet, furs for cuffs and collars, and even ready-made garments, finished in the superior style of the metropolitan tailors. Cream, cheese, salt, and skins won't do to barter with these dealers; and the Peking men, after slowly selling off all their stock, come back on their tracks, taking up sheep and cattle in settlement of their accounts, till they sometimes may be seen driving little flocks and herds before them. In some parts of Mongolia a few years ago tea was the established currency, and it was a common sight to see men and women going to shop and market with great flat bricks of tea under their arm, or strapped to their saddle.

The dress of a Mongol woman is very like that of a man, the outer garment being a robe that flows from the shoulders to the heels. The men wear a belt, the women do not, hence the common word for a female is "beltless." Married women are further distin-

guished from men by their head ornaments, and maidens are to be known from boys by the latter having the front part of their head shaved; but, for convenience sake, girls often wear a girdle, and at a distance it is sometimes difficult to tell a boy from a girl. Mongol girls, and women too, sometimes resemble men in their habits. They ride horses, sitting in the saddle in the same way as men, and often display bold and dashing korsemanship, as they career over the plain, singing in time to the beat of the horses' hoofs as they gallop along in pursuit of straying cattle. The girls of the northern tribes often assist in the management of caravans, going long journeys, showing a hardiness and power of endurance little, if at all, inferior to that of their brothers and fathers, and I have seen one of them change a warm dress for a cooler one without dismounting or even stopping her camel, as it marched along in the caravan. How it was done I cannot tell. She had been contorting and twisting herself for some time in a curious manner, but I had no hint of what she was doing till the process was



SPECTACLE CASE.



MONGOL GIRLS.

achievements of one girl who attained celebrity as the leader of a successful band of horse-thieves, one of her great qualities being that in the dark she could tell whether or not a horse was worth carrying off simply by passing her hand rapidly along the line of its spine.

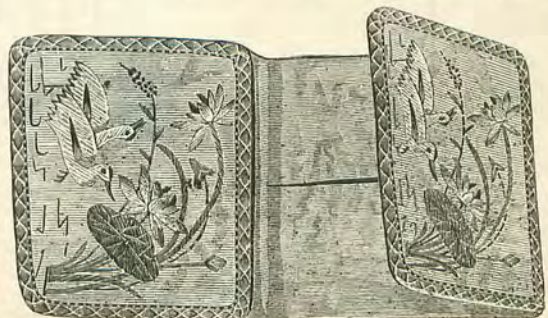
In any family not too poor, girlhood in Mongolia is a free and joyous life. The girls are, as a rule strong, rosy, and beautiful, with teeth faultless in their regularity and whiteness. In a tent their presence is sunshine to strangers, with whom they converse without any timidity, and many of them sing the songs native to the country with great effect. In her home and by her parents, too, not only is the daughter treated with kindly appreciation and love, but as she nears the end of her girlhood she is a valuable possession. "Useless," it is true, is the name for girl, but as long as she is at home she proves exceedingly useful, and when, at some age between fourteen and twenty, someone "begs" her of her parents as his bride, the presents which the son-in-law has to make render her also profitable to her family.

Perhaps nothing amuses Mongols more than courtship and love as known among us. That a young man should select his own wife, should speak of marriage to a girl, and actually ask her consent seems, to them, hardly credible; but that a girl should listen to such advances, and even say "Yes," seems beyond everything. They seem never to have heard

finished, and, throwing off the one robe, she displayed herself arrayed in another better suited to the increased heat of the day. The outer robe of the Mongols is so loose and large that it is to the wearer in the place of a separate tent or room, in which he can be private, or dress in seclusion, though in a tent filled with people. The want of other privacy may have had something to do in determining the shape of the garment, and a foreigner in his foreign robes is sometimes at a loss how to secure privacy in a company. The best thing he can do in such circumstances is to borrow a Mongol gown. Mongol girls and women are sometimes quite as energetic and capable as men, and a Mongol song celebrates the



SCENT-BAG.



PURSE.



WOMEN GATHERING FUEL.—From a Native Sketch.

of such a thing, and hardly believe that practically marriages can be so arranged. Their first fear is that ugly men would not get wives, their next is that plain girls would not get husbands, and many are the laughs they have over such an unheard of system. After they have done laughing, however, they cannot get rid of serious thoughts that such a system as ours is, to say the least, indelicate and disreputable. Among themselves with their present ideas it would be so, and therefore when parents want a wife for their son—he is not supposed to have any wishes in the matter, or even to know what is going on—they call a go-between, who seeks out a suitable girl, communicates with her parents, and opens negotiations between the two families.

According to the pure theory of the thing, if no hitch happens, the final and definite engagement is entered into by the parents before either of the young people are let into the secret. As a matter of fact, in most cases the youth is allowed to know part or even all of the arrangement, and, with the Mongolian

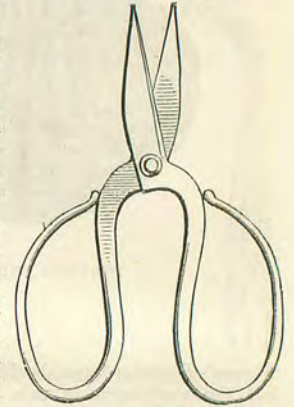
habits of travelling and hospitality, can have no difficulty in seeing his affianced, but would not transgress propriety so far as to speak to her. The kindly gossip of the soft-hearted women no doubt informs the girl of her fate, and paints glowing pictures of her prospects, but yet she is supposed to know nothing. Purchases of material for trousseau may be made in her presence, all her neighbours and friends and she herself may be sewing away day after day at her robes, the click of the hammer of the silversmith who, in her lama brother's tent, is making her matron's head-ornaments may sound in her ears all day long, but still she is supposed to know nothing.

A few days before a marriage a bride, whose excellent match was the talk of the countryside, was sent to me with a message by her father. Nearly every man and woman about the neighbourhood was so busily engaged in preparations for the grand event that they hardly had time to eat, and I thought that politeness required me to congratulate her. I did not say much, but the mere reference to

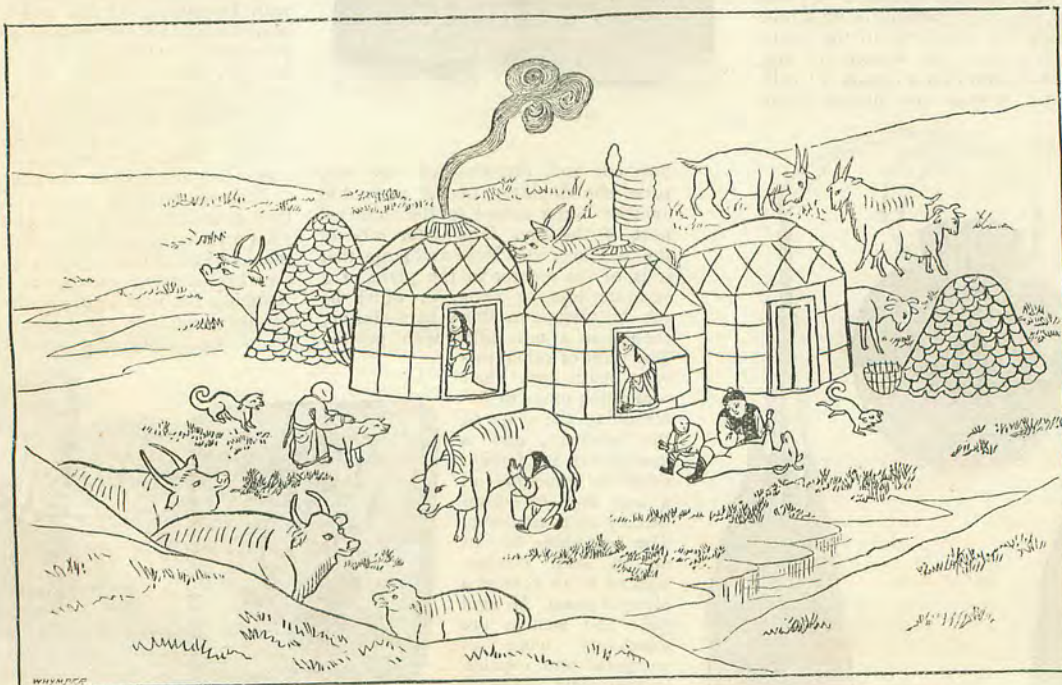
such a thing in her presence filled the tent with consternation, and after the young lady had withdrawn in confusion, I had my mistake pointed out to me in such a way that I was not likely to make it again.

A day or two after this adventure a terrible cry arose in the encampment, and running out to see what accident had happened, there were two matrons coming from the silversmith's tent, leading between them the bride arrayed in her ornaments. She was supposed to have discovered, for the first time, that the preparations were for her marriage, and custom and decency required of her that she should cry, shed many tears, display every symptom of unwillingness and grief, refuse to move, and allow the two dames, who had put on her ornaments, to drag her back howling to her father's tent. These head ornaments, the distinctive mark of a wife, are what

strikes the eye of a foreigner first in looking at a Mongol woman. In different tribes they vary so much that travellers in the desert can tell their ethnographical latitude not by taking observations of the sun, but by looking at the women's heads. In all cases they are expensive, so that, as far as value is concerned, a woman may be said to carry an ox on her head. The weight of them is very considerable, must be felt much at first, and no doubt is partly the cause of the persistent and severe headaches so common among Mongol matrons—"my head has split" being a phrase often in their mouths. But worse than their cost and weight is the incon-



SCISSORS.



A MONGOL CAMP.—From a Native Sketch.

venience of these head-dresses. In the different tribes all are awkward-looking encumbrances, but some are even more cumbersome than others, and, as far as my experience goes, the prize for ingenuity in devising a set of head-ornaments that inflict the maximum of torture on the wearer is due to a tribe in the south of Mongolia, where the wives have a silver plate, studded with coral and coloured stones, standing perpendicular fashion some little distance out from the side of the head, and carried by a brass rod which lies on the top of the head, the two brass rods from the opposite sides being tied together, or stuck into the same plait of hair, and thus balancing each other. In addition to these are some silver hangings, coral mounted, and the whole has to be kept in place by a great silver hook passed through the lobe of the ear. To see the straining of the ear as the metals swing about when a woman is working, or when a child clutches at the ornament, is almost more than one can bear, and worse than this is the sight of torn-open lobes, the results probably of violent treatment from their husbands when in drink. But the absurdity of this fashion is best seen when the women of this tribe on ceremonial occasions put on their hats, because the carrying apparatus of the side ornaments prevent the hat from reaching the head at all, and make it necessary to tie the whole thing so that it shall remain above the head, and, in some cases, almost clear of it. It is almost too much for one's gravity to see a fine lady dressed in this fashion. Furnished with such an elaborate set of ornaments themselves, it is not strange that they should remark their absence in European ladies. But after all, only some European ladies can afford to laugh at their Mongol sisters. Mongol women wear no stays, and, if a tight-laced lady were to appear among them, her figure would seem as absurd to them as their head-dress is to us.

Custom required of the newly adorned bride, spoken of above, that she should keep up her demonstrations of grief till night at least, and she proved herself a dutiful daughter, howling away till dark at the thought of the coming separation on the morrow. To-morrow came, and as the lucky hour for the starting of the bridal procession was found to be about daylight, everyone turned out to be present. A fine horse, but quiet almost as if he had been a gymnastic block, was held ready saddled at the door; the bride, who had recommenced her lamentations, refused to stir, and a young man, at the command of her father, drew aside the curtain, picked up the girl, and came out carrying her under his arm, limp and helpless, as if she had been a bundle of hay. She would not move a muscle to mount the horse, and, covering her face with her hands and weeping violently, she was hoisted into the saddle, held there as if she had been an effigy, the horse, which was as quiet as if it understood the case thoroughly, was led forward a few steps, a halt was called, the bride was taken down and carried howling still by the same young man into the tent next to that she had left, and the company dispersed, remarking that she had started. This is, it seems, a custom common when the proper astrological hour proves inconvenient. Superstition demands that the procession should set out at that hour and no other, but as a start then would bring the party to their destination at an awkward time, the difficulty is got over by reckoning the distance from one tent to another as a stage of the journey, the letter of the law of superstition has been fulfilled, and men's minds set at rest, though the distance accomplished in this first stage has not been much more than from the parlour to the dining-room.

At a reasonable hour in the morning, when all had dressed and breakfasted, and the

neighbours were assembled in full force, the bride, still lamenting and limp, was once more dragged forth, placed in a cart drawn by two horses, and guided by a mounted driver, and, amid general weeping, much of it ceremonial but some of it real, the cavalcade started at a trot on its picturesque way over the desert. Arrived at its destination, the company had to go through the ceremony of being indignant at finding the bridegroom barricaded in his tent, and after going through the further ceremony of saying they had brought his bride, on producing her she was found to be ill. And no wonder; the ceremonial lamentation, the simulated loss of appetite, and the jolting journey of twenty or thirty miles across the desert, were surely sufficient to have worn out anyone. But the Mongols sought for the cause elsewhere, and on someone showing that the hour of the start had been miscalculated, the poor girl's exhaustion was attempted to be removed by the homœopathic remedy of setting a lama to read the almanack through from beginning to end. Such, at least, was the report of those who had accompanied the party.

It would be tedious to tell of the comings and goings that take place for some days afterwards between the parents and friends of the two families; how the bridegroom escorts home his mother-in-law, and how the bride's father goes to see her in her new home. Suffice it to say, that on one pretence or other there is a feast almost daily both at the old and new home of the bride for a week, and even then the business is not finished; occasional feasts occur at gradually widening intervals, and not for a month can the festivities and ceremonies be regarded as fairly completed. Our expeditions and business-like marriage arrangements seem curious to the Mongols, the honeymoon trip seems mysterious; but that which seems most wonderful of all to them is, that some of our marriages are conducted on teetotal principles. Chinese whisky forms one main item in the requisites for a Mongolian marriage feast, and how a marriage can be celebrated without intoxicants a Mongol cannot very well conceive.

In her new home a Mongol bride's first duty might almost be said to be to reverence her husband's parents. She is subject in all things to her mother-in-law, and whenever her father-in-law is heard stepping towards her tent she hastily assumes her hat and stands up. In many cases, perhaps in most cases, marriages turn out well. The young couple though treated still as children have a separate tent, differing in this from the Chinese arrangement, and the Mongols generally have a large share of affection in their nature. But should the new bride prove in any way unsuitable, nothing is simpler than to "send her back." Divorce with them is a very easy matter. If a bride turns out to be awkward, stupid, a poor needlewoman, lazy, or in any way unsuitable in accomplishments or temper to her husband or mother-in-law, the remedy is simple and ready: "send her back." On one occasion I saw a wife sent back simply because she could not get on with her mother-in-law, though she was satisfactory enough in the eyes of her husband. "Sent back wives" are pretty common in Mongolia, nor can their case be regarded as a very hard one. Most of them soon find another husband, no stigma seems to attach to them, and I know a young woman who, after two unsuitable settlements in married life, is now comfortably and happily located with her third husband, who, it would seem, is a man in better circumstances than either of his two predecessors.

To the Mongols the fixed nature of our marriage institution seems very alarming, and if divorce with them was as difficult as with us they would doubtless exercise much the same care as we do before venturing on a

union to last till death do us part. In her home the Mongol wife has no easy time of it. A man seems to have plenty of spare time on hand, but a woman's duties are many and constant. Cows are, in Mongol parlance, a woman's farm, and it is a farm which calls for constant attention. Cooking, though not elaborate, causes a good deal of labour, from the fact that every stranger who happens to call must be offered hot tea, and many a time have I protested that I would not have tea, simply to spare the tired woman the trouble of going on her knees, blowing the fire, setting on the pot, and preparing the hospitable beverage. They themselves regard the fuel gathering in spring as the hardest work they have all the year round. Though the men folks are mostly idle then, they seldom take any part in it, and the women, not accustomed to much walking, find it very tiring work indeed. It has one compensation—gossip. In their tents there is seldom opportunity for quiet conversation, men and children are always about, but away out on the plain fuel gathering, women have full opportunity for that exchange of confidences dear to the female heart, and many a piece of news finds its way about the country which was first told as a secret at "argol" time.

The only real holiday Mongol women have in the year is at the season of the Midsummer Festival. On the great day of this religious celebration they hurry over the milking early in the morning, dress in their best, mount such horses as they may own or have been able to borrow, and make for the temple. There by mid-day may be found assembled nearly every woman and girl that can possibly be spared from their homes, and when they gather in a circle round the temple court to see the sacred pantomime, the place blazes with bright-coloured silks and gleams with polished silver. Religious duties bring them there, but great part of the enjoyment of the holiday consists in the friends they meet then, for the only time in the twelve months; their hearts are not hard, and on these occasions their feelings sometimes find relief in tears.

A Mongol woman's life is, as a rule, hard and short. Understanding little about the danger of damp clothes, and having few changes to use, even if they did understand, they get wet in summer attending to their cattle in all weathers, and, in addition, a woman's place in the tent is next the door—the poorest place—where in many cases she sleeps at night, protected from the cold ground only by a warm ox-hide. One of them said to me once, "You foreigners treat your wives as well as yourselves, but we Mongol women are treated like dogs." There was not much exaggeration in this. One of the results of this bad treatment is that many of them are great sufferers from complaints which more sensible treatment would have prevented. Another result is that most Mongol men outlive their first wife, and marry a second, who is not at all difficult to find, as half the men are priests, and as such not allowed to marry.

Nuns are not unknown in Mongolia, but they are very few in number. I have seen only one young woman with shaved head and priestly garments, denoting that she was devoted to religion; but most women who live to be old, especially if they are widows, enter the priesthood, and pass the close of their life with their heads shaved and destitute of all ornaments. They do not leave their family habitations and retire to temples, nor do they by any means devote themselves exclusively to religious duties. They work and bustle about as actively as before, and have a good deal of influence in family affairs, but theoretically have done with the pursuits and ambitions of life, and are supposed for the remainder of their days to turn their attention more towards the life to come than to the life that now is.