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A SILVER WEDDING.

In "merric England" it hath been accustomed from olden time (long before the fete at Kenilworth given to the virgin queen by her favorite Leicester down to the modern tournament of Eglinton) to chronicle in their Court journals, their magazines, and even in their histories, the family gatherings of its aristocracy in the banquet halls of their ancestors, and for bards and poets to sing the praises and extol the beauties of their "ladie" loves. In our new country, although our ancestry runs not back many years, and we have no baronial castles or banquet halls to gather in, and the age of chivalry and gallantry is overshadowed by the age of commerce, yet let me record in sober prose, a recent family gathering to which I had the good fortune to be present, to celebrate the quarter-century anniversary of the nuptials of a happy pair---

A silver wedding.

The scene was laid at the south side of Long Island, not a thousand miles from Islip, the ultima thule of the Empire state, and, as I supposed before I went there, beyond the pale of civilization. Accompanied by my better half, we steamed it on the rail, and on alighting at a remote and humble depot, in the middle of a prairie we found the elegant barouche of our friend B--- J---, whose renewed nuptials we came to celebrate. Soon we left the sandy prairie, and entered by winding by-ways thick and beautiful woods, lighted up with the fiery rays of

the autumnal sun. As we approached the sea-side, passing ranges of rich farms and stately country-seats, we were fanned by the soft, fresh breeze from the southern ocean; and on that beautiful fifth of October, and the two subsequent days, (during which the fete continued,) the heavens smiled propitiously on the festivities, and three warmer and more lovely days, and three more beautiful starry nights, never blessed the month of October since first creation's dawn.

On approaching the house, we found a tasteful and elegant mansion of the Elizabethan Gothic style, presenting an embellished front of a hundred feet, with every elegance and luxury of a city palace. The farm in an unbroken, level plain of a hundred acres under the highest cultivation, with graperies, conservatories and peacheries- the fruits and the flowers vying with each other for the mastery, by their tints and senses- the land, in its unbroken level, reaching from a beautiful wood which skirts its western boundry to the ocean bay, In this beautiful and happy home, sanctified by the untiring conjugal affection of five-and-twenty years, we were received with open arms, and still more open hearts, by our respected host and his silver bride, surrounded by their ten children, (five of either sex) all handsome in person, and still more beautiful in character, from the grown girl of twenty years to the lisping infant of twenty months, vying with their parents in their kindness and attentions to all their guests, during the three days festivity, especially Miss L--- J--- and Miss M--- J---, who performed their arduous

duties most charmingly and agreeably. We all exclaimed, "This is a happy family, and God's blessing must be upon this house."

Soon after our arrival, the clans kept gathering in from city and country and remoter parts. There came in quick succession, brothers with their wives, sisters with their husbands, cousins first, second and third. Then came "Uncle John" and Aunt Mary, in their little one-horse wagon, from twenty miles distant, and "Uncle John" was known by no other name. Then came one of the silver bride's bridemaids, bringing with her a bright and sparkling girl just in the middle of her teens; and how she romped and danced and captivated, it will not do for me to record. And, besides, a group of young girls from ten to fifteen, there was a perfect flock of beautiful children, forming the most kaleidoscopic groups as they gambolled and sported on the grass. Soon came the chief and honored one of all this honored family- the venerable mother of the silver bride, whose erect and stately form three score years and ten had not the power to bend; her face of regular features beaming with brightness and intelligence, showing whence came the family beauty that descended on two generations; and this respected lady, to the varied silver presents of the family, added her offering to the silver wedding in her locks, slightly tinged with silver. Almost all of those I have named were lodged with elegance and comfort in this capacious house, which, with an India-rubber faculty, expanded and took in all who came.

The dinner was announced and this extensive party, with a little amiable crowding and accomodating contraction, were all seated at a table not quite as long as a rope walk, groaning with all the good things which the city or the country could produce. There was the partridge, the quail, and the woodcock, the baron of beef and the noble turkey, whose great size and tenderness showed how tenderly it had been reared for this occasion. Champagne flowed like water, and old Maderia and the light wines of France combined to bring out wit and merriment from old and young, everyone throwing in his mite to contribute to the hilarity of the occasion.

When the early shades of evening came o'er the plain, there gathered in, from near and distant parts, invited friends to enlarge this family circle, for now the peculiar ceremonies of the silver wedding were to commence. From the city came my friends Colonel M--- and Judge A--- R---, rollicksome, frolicsome, and beaming with affection for all man-(including woman-)kind, full of fun and wit. Shortly after, Mr. and Mrs. A--- L---, and their graceful and lively daughters, Mrs. H--- and Miss L---; Then came the W---s, and the M---s, and the S---s of the neighborhood, and I might go over all the letters of the alphabet in giving the initials of that most agreeable assemblage of friends and neighbors. I believe that in no part of Europe that I have ever visited would be found so much beauty in a company promiscuously assembled as were drawn together on that festive evening. There were handsome widows there, but they did not throw out

their eyes in search of husbands. There were flirtable married ladies there, but who were too proper to flirt! There were bachelors there who did not ogle, and the girls were too full of dance and frolic to think of petit amours.

"On with the dance" was the cry. Then struck up the music, and all rushed to the floor-- married and single, widows and bachelors, old and young, boys and girls, judges and colonels, lawyers and merchants, and with the merry laugh, the gay heart, and the cheerful step, led on the merry dance, quadrille, lancers, polka, reel, and galop, in quick succession. As this was a silver wedding, everyone felt as lively and active as quicksilver.

Mr. J--- gave out that he had fortified himself by calling around to his support his medical, clerical, and legal advisers, under whose joint protectorate he felt safe. Then one of these advisers (I will not say which) led out Mrs. H--- and Miss H--- to the minuet de la cour, which they went through with grace and rock gravity, to the amusement of the younger members of the party, who had never seen it performed before.

The dance was checked for a season by an amusement, that as theatrical dramas were often represented with intervals of years between the acts, now time would be reversed and the company were invited to join in procession to the adjoining library, where Mr. and Mrs. J--- would receive their bridal visit as of twenty-five years before. The procession was formed, Mr. and Mrs. J--- leading the way, with their children, and the entire company following, when, behold! the doubles of Mr. and Mrs. J---, as they were on their wedding day, and in the identical clothes in which they were married, were seated side

by side with a huge wedding cake before them, and with a mammoth bouquet of white rose buds and tuberoses. These lay figures with masks intended as counterfeit resemblances of Mr. and Mrs. J---, had been most skilfully formed by their children, and Mr. and Mrs. J--- were as much taken by surprise as were their friends. Shouts of laughter followed the introduction of the company to the original groom and bride fixed to their seats; and it was almost killing to see the peculiar smile, or, rather leer, on the mask of the groom. This was one of the great features of the evening.

Supper soon followed. The elastic table again groaned with the weight of good things which the earth, the air and sea gave up for the occasion, and the appetites of the company had been sharpened by exercise and the sea-breeze. The partridges flew, the bivalves disappeared, the woodcocks were winged, the champagne corks bombarded the company, contending with the sallies of wit which should hit the hardest, and we may well say "there was a sound of revelry that night." The three advisers performed their duties at the supper table manfully and fearlessly; the doctor had no dread of his own pills; the minister, it was supposed by some was ahead of the three by a partridge, and he would have been cheerfully backed by the knowing ones against the field; but those who knew the stamina of the lawyer, and his deliberate but sure style on such occasions, declared him a dangerous rival to the clerical representative. The judge and the colonel entered the ring with all the skill and execution of knowing ones, feeling their way gradually, and gauging themselves with care, knowing exactly how far to go in the feast, and remembering that there might be

such a thing as "to-morrow".

The merry dance was resumed, and in spite of secession the Virginia reel was called for; and although all reeled, yet it may be truly said that no one reeled, and it was conceded that the judge, although a heavy man, (not a heavy judge,) was one of the lightest and gayest in the dance.

At Cinderella's hour, the curtain fell upon the banquet, the company broke up, the neighbors to their homes, the inmates to their beautiful and luxurious chambers, the "good-night" resounded throughout the house, and all went to their beds to dream, perchance the married of their weddings that were past, the single of their weddings that were to come.

Early in that evening, I had escaped from the heated room to enjoy the soft embrace of the sea-air; and as I looked upward to the heavens, they seemed to sympathize with the sentiment and happiness within the house. The stars, grouped in their brilliant constellations, seemed to wink approvingly on all that was going on below. In the west was to be seen beautiful Venus, queen of the skies, the goddess of love and beauty, in the full majesty of her brilliancy, the fit presiding divinity of a marriage festival; and just below was the young and virgin moon, a gentle crescent formed of a sliver thread- a sweet emblem of a sliver wedding. The revolving light-house seemed to enter into the spirit of the scene, and flashed across the bay its brilliant light, which played upon the crest of the gently rolling waves.

The next morning the bright beams of the rising sun first awakened the slumberers to as bright and beautiful a day as that which had preceded. The guests soon emerged from their chambers,

and with heads as free from aches as their hearts, gave to each other the morning salutation on the portico and on the lawn, all enthusiastically eulogizing the pleasures of the silver wedding.

The festival continued two more days, and they were days of merriment and pleasure; not an alley- not a contretemps.

Within the house, music, dancing, wit and merriment. Miss J--- delighted by her graceful performances on the harp, and Miss L--- was successful, as usual, in her brilliant and graceful execution on the piano, and all the house joined in the loud chorus of the song. Stories, comedrums, riddles, and repartee filled up the intervals, so that there were but few pauses in the three days festival.

The out of door amusements were equally agreeable- riding parties, fishing excursions, walking parties, visits to the neighbors, made the days and the evenings teenshert for the work that was to be accomplished.

Then came the parting and the separation of this agreeable company. The baggage-wagons were brought up to take away the trunks; ladies gathered up their little odds and ends; the barouche came to the door to transport us to the railroad depot; the wand of Prospero was waved to break up the enchantment of the scene; hands were shaken, hearts were full, and adieus exchanged. The host and hostess, with their children by their side, bade us farewell, and amidst cheers, huzzas, and the waving of handkerchiefs, we rolled off to rail it to modern Babylon, and to enter again upon the battle of life.