

about with gold, was placed on the tree by the porcelain workers who were its parents.

Scarcely was this accomplished when the myrtle maiden stepped forth from the tree dressed in bridal attire, and appeared to the assembled multitude as the most beautiful lady their eyes had ever seen.

The parents, who had never seen her before, received her with tears of joy, and the happy Prince embraced her as his bride.

There stood the nine wicked maidens as on hot coals. The Prince addressing all assembled, asked, "What would they deserve who wilfully grievously harmed this my myrtle maiden?"

One answer after another came, each bearing a severer punishment than the last; and as the question was put definitely concerning the nine women, the answer came, with one accord—"Let the earth open and swallow them up, and let their hands grow out of the ground."

Scarcely were the words spoken than the earth opened and took them in, and on that spot a weed has grown ever since, called by the people five-fingered grass.

And now came the wedding, not only between the Prince and the myrtle maiden, but between the chamberlain and the tenth maiden.

In time a Princess was born and laid in that little china cradle which the man had presented to his wife in that cottage on the sandy plain, and the whole land rejoiced and was happy.

The myrtle tree after the Princess had left it grew so big and strong that it had to be placed in the open air near to the cottage where it was first planted. In obedience to the Princess's wish the cottage was made into a pretty country house, and in time the myrtle became a forest, in which the grandchildren of the porcelain workers played.

The Prince and Princess will be laid to rest here when their wise and beneficent rule shall have ended. May that be far distant.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES.

BY THE REV. T. F. THISELTON DYER, M.A.

THE custom of celebrating the anniversary of the wedding-day has existed in most countries from an early period, and is one which is not likely to lose its popularity. Indeed, all anniversaries are important, in so far as they keep fresh in the memory the events which they record; and in our social and domestic life, any observance which helps to perpetuate the love and sacred associations of the wedding-day should be honoured with every mark of respect. That this is the popular feeling may be gathered from the fact that special titles of honour have been conferred on certain of our wedding-anniversaries, an illustrious instance of which is familiar to our readers in the occurrence this year of the "silver-wedding" of the Prince and Princess of Wales. This distinction, applied to the twenty-fifth anniversary of married life, has now become a recognised institution in this country, although, as far as its antecedent history is concerned, it would appear to be of German origin; at any rate, it is worthy of ranking amongst our red-letter days; for they who, like our Prince and Princess, can after twenty-five years of married life set forth the enviable example of maintaining a bright and happy home, most deservedly have earned the congratulations which their silver-wedding brings them. The importance attached to this eventful anniversary in Germany was very great in days gone by, and is still so. Thus, a couple who had been married as long as five and twenty years, re-celebrated their nuptial ceremonies with all the external forms, gaities, and amusements which had been celebrated at their marriage-day. In addition to these festivities, too, occasionally they were presented with a silver gift of some kind, whilst medals were distributed to the friends on this joyful occasion. But at the present day, in Germany, the prettiest and most delicate attention shown at this season is the silver wreath which is given to the wife. Although it is true this may lack the much-prized sweet charm of the wreath of orange blossoms which adorns the youthful bride, yet its very *raison d'être* crowns it with a dignity which the other cannot possibly possess. But a more coveted anniversary still is the "golden-wedding," and one which it is earnestly to be hoped our Prince and Princess may be permitted to celebrate—the completion of fifty years of married life. This is a privilege, indeed, which although granted to some married couples on account of their having entered the nuptial state at an early period in life, is denied to the majority; thence from occurring more rarely than the "silver-wedding" its honour is enhanced; for it is unquestionably a distinction of which anyone may be rightly proud. It is celebrated in Germany in much the same fashion as the silver-wedding, golden gifts, of course, being substituted for the silver ones; while the golden wreath holds the prominent place in the honours of the occasion.

But more unusual even than this anniversary is the "diamond-wedding," being still far more difficult of attainment. There seems to be some uncertainty, however, as to what really constitutes a diamond-wedding. According to some authorities, sixty years of married life forms the term required; and some years ago the newspapers noticed the occurrence of "a diamond-wedding which was celebrated with great festivity at Shene, Kent, on July 29th, 1875, on the sixtieth anniversary of the wedding-day of Mr. and Mrs. Tickner, aged respectively eighty-three and eighty-five." Another instance was that of the eminent and well-known ironfounder and coal proprietor of Rahrort, in Rhenish Prussia—Herr Franz Haniel—who with his wife celebrated his diamond-wedding with every kind of rejoicing about the year 1867. Herr Haniel, however, died a year or two afterwards, far advanced towards his ninetieth year, while the widowed companion of this long matrimonial pilgrimage survived her husband yet a short period. According to other authorities, seventy years of married life constitutes a diamond-wedding; while Her Majesty the Queen, it would seem, holds it to be seventy-five years. The following communication, sent by Mr. Edwin de Lisle, M.P., to *Notes and Queries* last year, is worthy of notice:—"About two years ago an aged couple of the name of Wortley, in the village of Sheepshed, in the Mid-Loughborough Division of Leicestershire, celebrated their seventieth wedding-day. A Roman newspaper fell into my hands commenting upon this most unusual occurrence, and I ventured to send it to Sir Henry Ponsonby, asking him to lay it before Her Majesty, and praying the Queen to send the humble couple, who were very poor, some slight token of Her Majesty's regard and interest in so unusual an anniversary as a diamond wedding-day. The Roman newspaper affirmed that seventy years constituted a diamond-wedding, and that in Italy the Sovereign was wont to testify his interest in the happiness of any couple who had dwelt together for seventy years in wedlock by some token of royal favour. I was informed that the Queen would not comply with my wish, since Her Majesty considered seventy-five years the diamond period." Mr. Lisle further adds that he did not contest the point, and ascertained that the threescore years and ten allotted by the Psalmist as the age of man upon earth is held to be the period of a true diamond wedlock. Once more, in the *Guardian* of February 23rd, 1887, we find another notice of a diamond-wedding:—"Yesterday week the Rev. T. C. Cane died at Brackenhurst, Southwell, aged eighty-six. Last year he celebrated his diamond-wedding."

In America we are informed that among other anniversaries of this kind is the "crystal-wedding," which is kept after fifteen years of married life with more or less ceremony.

Then, too, there is the "china-wedding," which is observed five years later, twenty years after the marriage-day, and is the occasion of more or less rejoicing and merrymaking.

In America, too, the fifth anniversary of the marriage ceremony is known as the "wooden-wedding." The following abridged account of such an anniversary appeared some years ago, and is too amusing to be overlooked. It appears that on the day in question a certain Mrs. Hughes was disturbed by a sharp ring of the door-bell, and the entrance of the servant with the card of an intimate friend. "Show the gentleman into the parlour," said Mrs. Hughes. "But there ain't no gentleman there, mum; it's a load of wood that's come with the card, mum, and the man is throwing the wood into the cellar, mum," replied the servant. Mrs. Hughes wondered what it all meant, and meantime the door-bell pealed again and again, and the servant for over an hour was kept *running backward* and forward in response to the summons. Each messenger brought one or more articles of wooden ware, and the cards of well-known friends with little congratulatory notes. In the course of the afternoon Mr. Hughes returned home, and was asked by his wife into the dining-room, which by this time was nearly half filled with wooden ware of every description—from nests of washing-tubs to salad forks and spoons. In the evening the friends and relatives thronged the house, when renewed congratulations were offered, and wishes expressed that their lives might be spared far beyond the diamond anniversary of their wedding.

Lastly, we must not omit to notice the "tin-wedding," which is the tenth anniversary of the happy day. Thus in the *Times* newspaper of September 27, 1876: "Among the birth notices occurs one of a child born on her parent's 'tin-wedding-day.'" A correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, writing from the United States, informs us that cards are sent out, made of tin, on which is printed a suitable inscription, giving the year of the marriage and the current year. Each guest is expected to bring a present, which must be partly or wholly of tin, and "maybe a tin drinking-cup worth twopence, or a costly piece of lace in an old tin mustard-box." Dealers in tin ware prepare articles of all descriptions to cause merriment. The same correspondent further adds that at a *tin-wedding* which he recently attended, a guest brought a tin pail filled with lemonade, and a silver ladle to serve the beverage. Another brought a fog-horn, such as fishing schooners use on the high seas in thick weather, to give warning of their presence. In short, the tin-wedding, apart from its ludicrous character, affords an excellent opportunity for renewing the kitchen tins, and so is not without some utilitarian value.