



LOVE! HONOUR

and Oh, Baby.



WHAT does the word *wedding* bring to the mind? Unwanted presents from distant relations, a decorated church, "Here Comes the Bride", the awful silence after the words "let him now speak or forever hold his peace", weeping women, "I'll Walk Beside You", rice, confetti, the cutting of the cake, nervous speeches, *molte* champagne—and (long sigh) the honeymoon? To those who have been through the ordeal, have murmured "I will", made the unnerving speech, and "left by car for the north, the bride wearing a fur coat, the gift of the bridegroom", the list above will bring back memories. To those who have not yet put their necks into the halter, the list may cause some fears.

Punch's cryptic advice to those about to marry is merely "Don't" but this article is not a cautionary tale. If a man intends to marry a woman he may, and, of course, if a woman intends to marry a man she certainly will. Bernard Shaw has said that it is a woman's business to get married as soon as possible and a man's to keep unmarried as long as he can, but that is at it may be. Socrates, when asked for a spot of advice by a prospective groom, merely remarked, "Whoever you do you will repent". So where are you? Try everything once, the Kiwi's alcoholic motto, could quite well apply to marital adventuring.

Where, how, and why did the strange wedding customs of today arise? Why throw rice at the happy couple? Why does the bridegroom give the bride a ring? (Why does not the bride present him with a collar and leash instead?) Why should the groom's off-sider be called the "best man"? Is it because he, in his wisdom, was "the one that got away"? Why a breakfast, no matter what the hour of the day? Why a *honeymoon*? Why the hell not?

Each of these strange customs may be traced back through the ages. Take wedding presents. (Not intended for advice; the market and the lira have "had it" anyway.) Remember how you dug out one of the fourteen sets of cake-forks you had given you when you took the plunge and how you sent them to Cousin Betty with appropriate but hypocritical wishes? Well there have been millions like you who have had to send off the odd present—sometimes extremely odd, judging by most lumber rooms. It has been going on for centuries.

Probably it began when the feudal lord of the manor away back in the years B.D. (Before Democracy), compelled his tenants to send along money or goods as wedding gifts for his eldest daughter's wedding. When feudalism lost its power, the practice remained, although the gifts became voluntary. Giving presents is still