

Gypsy Homekeeping.

Gypsies in all countries call themselves *Roud* which means husband-the idea being the nation and family blended in one. We cannot call the keeping of the Gypsy tent housekeeping; but call it Home-keeping, because we want to include not only the tent and surroundings, but the hearts of these people in their relations to home.

The Gypsies are a virtue loving people-the very foundation for true home-keeping. The men are expected to be just as moral and virtuous as the women. Whenever a marriage takes place the contracting parties give a big feast which causes them to be poor for a long time afterwards. Verily, they are carrying out our idea that the best way to accumulate wealth is to be in debt. Marriage is sacred to them, and a Gypsy woman has never been known to desert her husband; and when the husband leaves the wife, she always thinks he will return to her, and does not think for a minute he has deserted her.

There is a legend among them to the effect that when they left India, they were told never to dwell in houses, but always in tents; and they frequently quote from Scripture passages

that say that they are to live in tents rather than in houses.

The love of the tent is pre-natal, we might say. Each mother tells her child that her father and mother and grand-father and great grand-father dwelled in tents, and that it is the nice and proper thing to live as they have lived. Thus we see a love for their tent home inspired in them while at mother's knee, and under her care.

After a long tramp or after selling horses all day, the Gypsy husband winds his way out of town, turns off the main road, goes round a curve, and there, - away from the sight of those passing on the road is his home. It is in a picturesque spot by a clear trickling stream - a place that delights the eye of an artist. For any reason should he chance to pitch his tent where the view is not pretty, he will apologize for so doing, as we do when anything is amiss in our homes. The smaller the home the greater the love for it, so with the Gypsy - his tent is his mansion humble though it may be.

It is bad luck to have an unchristened baby in the family, so the Gypsy father and mother have the christening as soon as possible. At this occasion is another feast and great

rejoicing - especially if it is a boy, and the first born. The little tot is rubbed thoroughly each day, as is the custom among the Dutch in Pennsylvania, so as to develop and make each muscle supple. The Gypsy mother puts her child on a blanket - never in a cradle - while she is at her work, and there he stays. Should he cry, he cries away until he gets tired, unless of course, he is sick, and then he is given a dose of medicine made from herbs. He never gets Oo'ed and Aa'ed over, and called pet names, nevertheless, naming the children pretty names, such as Albina, Shiva or Madonna, seems an essential part of home-keeping. No wonder, for Gypsy babies are generally pretty, and, if girls develop into fine looking women.

Gypsies love their animals more than do any other people. It seems as though their dogs, horses, and ducks are almost human. It does a person good to see a Gypsy duck stick his head through a hole in the tent and talk to you awhile, then goes off more contented than any other duck you ever saw. The children when not asleep or in the water are with the horses and dogs; and when quite young are skilled in veterinary science.

The Gypsy mother is always a good cook. No matter what is in the stew-pot, when the contents are cooked and seasoned they are good and palatable. Their dinners of fried chicken, ham, potatoes, and other vegetables are enough to tempt any one. We get a hint of this in the scene in the torn-down house where Meg Merriles conducts Dominic Sampson.

The Gypsy mother believes in airing her tent goods well. Did you ever go past one of their tents, and not see a line of clothes out airing? Washing and mending is a part of each day's work. Should you chance to stay all night with your Gypsy friends, you will find yourself ^{put} to sleep in a bed of straw and leaves - but always fresh and clean.

Only he who has lived with the Gypsies and likes it, can thoroughly understand why so much real comfort is taken in the Gypsy way of living. The Gypsy housekeeper believes thoroughly in the four requisites for good health - sleep, good wholesome food, plenty of fresh air and water.

There are not many things about the Gypsy tent in the way of extras. The one book they so much prize is an old, old time fortune-telling

book. It is not a ten-cent one, but looks as though it had been made in Agrippa's time, so the students of old books tell us. One picture, we often see on the tent-walls is that of a dark Italian boy. The music heard around the tent is generally singing, violin and guitar playing.

In the family circle, they speak their secret language, and when they find out any one understands it the expression of the eye changes immediately, and they will take him right in, and treat him as one of their own people.

Many Gypsy families now spend their winters in the cities, and you will find their homes as tastefully arranged and cared for as are our houses. You will notice, though, the arrangement of the furniture is such as suggests a tent. They travel in summer in large covered spring wagons. They often have one large tent and many small ones. Everything is arranged for comfort; and things are as nice and clean as you please.

The Gypsies' life knows no bounds - the green grass is his carpet; the white blossoms of the trees and shrubs are his side-curtains; the blue sky above is his canopy; and he is awakened by

Nature's hall-luaks instead of the dirt and din
of trade. He knows what each herb is, and what
each change in the sky means. This is a free
and easy life. While Gypsy homekeeping is in
reality what we wish for our housekeeping - good
things to eat, everything pure and clean, and a
genuine love for home - humble though it may
be.

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