At dinner—which is indispensable—the betrothed are seated side by side, at the center of the table, at the center of the seating chart. They're treated like heroes, because they are. Facing them are the young lady's parents, the young man's father is beside the hostess, the young lady's mother, if you follow me, her mother, next to the host, the young lady's father. I'll leave it at that, it's clear.
The people who negotiated the marriage—because really, it's a question of negotiations, and nothing less—the ambassadors, that's what we should call them if negotiators is too harsh—the young man's ambassadors are next to the fiancés, that is to say, if you put the slightest effort into spatial geometry, across, just the young man's parents, all this is very simple and the whole table can very strictly observe the rules, which I won't get into now, I apologize, but perfectly organized (in theory as in practice).

The dinner menu must be relatively simple. Engagements are solemnly declared at dessert. It's a shock for everyone. No one was expecting it and here again, everyone makes exclamations of thrilled surprise: "Ah..."

If the party includes dancing, the declaration ceremony takes place around midnight. The guests, all the guests wish the fiancés congratualtions.

The young lady is dressed cheerfully—because life is cheerful and should remain so—a tender pink, celestial blue or white with rose-colored ribbons. Cheerful. The other women should stay away from dark fabrics. The young man and the other men dress in formal evening wear.

The following evening, without leaving the fiancés unchaperoned, it is arranged for them to speak without being overheard. It's like this until the wedding. We never leave them alone: but we pretend not to be on guard around their newly-sanctioned love. We keep an eye on them, because surveillance is necessary, but we use tact and discretion.

To avoid comments, because comments, etc., to avoid comments, the smirks and sidelong glances of mean people who aren't involved and whose gossip will be provoked by the young man's persistence, we arrange if possible for the wedding day to be soon after the engagement. We buy time and nip rumors in the bud.

From engagement to wedding, a daily bouquet of flowers is mandatory. They should be composed of white flowers only.

Substantial gifts, intrinsically valuable — which the bride-to-be can exchange or resell herself, blushing the whole time, or by her parents and guardians, if the parents are dead, conceivable — substantial gifts, solids, things or objects which can be resold or exchanged, gifts of substance are to be given only after the terms for dividing money, goods, dowries, future inheritance and legacies are settled in black and white.

The wedding presents are sent and the prenuptial agreement is signed eight days or so before the ceremony. The presents are brought the morning of the day the agreement is signed. The day before. The morning of the previous day. The presents include satin clothes, velvet, etc., in pieces (and the young woman has to put them together by herself)

she laughs

black and white lace—for all life's eventual circumstances, and they won't all be cheerful, that's for sure, better to know that now — made with hereditary stitches, if the ancestors

of the young man had any; modern jewelry, family gems; otter-skin coat, strips of lophophore...

Lophophore.
The lophophore is a species of gallinaceous bird from the mountains of India, with rare, luxurious feathers. It's also an original decoration for dresses and clothes, favored for its durability and surpassing beauty.

Hereditary stitching, modern jewelry, family gems, an otter-skin coat, and strips of lophophore.
The base for a wardrobe, and please understand it's merely a base, the bare minimum, add a little change purse stuffed with gold coins—new ones!—one or more fans, a diary modeled after a medieval masterpiece. But it goes without saying that the wedding gifts can be infinitely more modest, it all depends on the fiancés resources.

Clearly the title of fiancé cannot be imposed. For the same reasons a man of mediocre means, there are some, shouldn't volunteer as a husband. Parents may not be able to refuse and will watch in horror as his obligations are fulfilled far short of their expectations.
I truly believe that it's better if a man of mediocre means doesn't volunteer for anything at all, godfather, fiancé, head of the household, etc.
It's for the best.

All the objects are put in a large, square basket, artfully woven, lined with white satin, so the goods don't get wrinkled. A big bouquet of white roses or a white satin bow is attached to the lid. It's quite lovely. Someone had the idea of replacing these wedding gifts with an envelope full of cash, no more said, easy, a done deal! But this innovation offended the delicate feelings of many a fiancé, and the old ways prevailed. We are all quite pleased. Everyone is pleased. I am very pleased.
The agreement is usually signed at the lawyer's office. But if the lawyer comes to the fiancé's house, all the parties involved meet there. In all cases, the conditions of the contract need to be worked out among both families well in advance — without the young couple present, it goes without saying— to avoid any violent arguments over final stipulations.

When the agreement is signed at the young lady's home, it is always followed by a dinner to which the lawyer is invited. Sometimes the agreement is signed in the middle of a party, which includes a large number of guests. The festivities or conversations are interrupted. There! The lawyer reads the agreement. Everyone is very surprised, they say: "Ahh"
Then the intended (the future husband, the fiancé, the young man) the intended stands up, toasts his bride-to-be, signs the contract and passes her the pen.

After adding her name, she offers the pen to her fiancé's mother, who in turn passes it to the young lady's mother, the two fathers sign after, and next, all the members of both families, by rank of age. It's very simple.

The signature party doesn't have the intimate feeling of the engagement party. However, you still don't invite casual acquaintances.

To resolve this awkward situation, which seems to arise frequently, let me interject that maybe the solution would be never to have casual acquaintances.

When the moment comes to sign, if the lawyer asks the bride-to-be — as is his right, why wouldn't he exercise it? — for permission to kiss her hand, she will allow it after a quick consulting glance at her mother and fiancé. Both of them make a sign of acquiescence with their eyes.
Like this.

she demonstrates.

In asking for the fiancé's permission, there is a tacit recognition of his rights, something touching which casts a clear light on the duties of conjugal life. But, let us say, the bride-to-be still depends on her parents. Not really; she has the ring, she's already committed, and she received, as we have already seen, substantial gifts that obligate her.

The civil ceremony precedes the religious one.

But...

a pause.
But, you don't marry in church between the first Sunday of Advent and the day of the Epiphany, nor...

a pause
nor between Ash Wednesday and the end of Easter. These things are essential to know and remember!

Of course, with influence, money or flatteries, you can get permission to celebrate the wedding during these times. You just have to ask. You can get around anything! Choice and nothing less!

It's useless to describe the ways of celebrating a civil ceremony. It's a legal matter and I have nothing to do with it, will never have anything to do with it. It's quick and easy. The couple just has to answer yes clearly to the sacramental question "Do you take as your husband...?" or "Do you take as your wife...?" Yes and that's it, done.
The wife signs the marriage license first and passes the pen to her husband, who gives a little bow, and says happily, that's a must, and with a smile, that's the least he can do: "Thank You, Madam."
He is the first to address her by this title, it's very amusing.
The religious ceremony.

In general, the religious ceremony is held in the morning; there's more pomp at this time of day because of the mass. Everyone's in much better shape, they just woke up, they look fabulous.

The bride's parents receive their guests in the salon. The groom has arrived first with his parents. They arrived at dawn.

They young bride arrives at the last moment; she descends the stairs, carrying her last white bouquet, which he gave her that morning, the one who is already her husband by law. She glows with morning freshness.

She is dressed with relative simplicity.

Diamonds are excessive and even rich lace should be avoided. Her toilette must be virginal and plain. In winter, a satin dress with long pleats; in summer, airy clothes of