The New Northwest.

FRIDAY.....JANUARY 8, 1875.

[illegible]

Boarding--For Single Men Only.

BY MARY GRACE HALPINE.

Mrs. Hepzibah Sharpe was a widow, with three unmarried daughters still on her hands.

She kept a genteel boarding house "for single men." No men with their wives, or "grass-widowers" were admitted into "the charmed circle of this domestic Eden," as Arabella, the eldest of the daughters aforesaid, termed the three-story brick, otherwise known as "Mrs. Sharpe's boarding-house, No. 9 Poplar street."

Miss Arabella was poetically inclined, as the reader will infer. Indeed, she was more than suspected of having contributed several poetical effusions to the *Bugle of Freedom*, in which her pinings for a "kindred spirit" were breathed forth in such plaintive numbers that if said spirit had been within hearing, and possessed a heart of ordinary sensibility, he must at once have hastened to her side.

But this did not seem to be the case, at least not until Doctor Philander Slowboy came into town, taking up his abode at the "domestic Eden" aforesaid, or in the prosy phraseology used by ordinary mortals, "Mrs. Sharpe's boarding-house, No. 9 Poplar street."

But we will not anticipate.

We have said that Mrs. Sharpe's establishment was "for single men;" single women found no favor in the eyes of its astute, sharp-sighted mistress.

She looked upon all such with an eye of suspicion. What business had they to be wandering about without a male appendage or "protector," as she termed it? "None of her daughters had ever demeaned themselves that way; no, and they never should!"

It is but fair to say that none of the Miss Sharpes ever demeaned themselves by being useful, at home or abroad. They generally spent the best part of the forenoon in bed; the rest of their valuable time was spent in alternate frizzing, puffing and powdering, and sitting with folded hands waiting for the husband that was so long in making his appearance, and to whom they would be just about as useful as the China ornaments on their parlor mantel.

It is doubtful as to whether any or all of them could have cooked a decent meal of victuals had their lives depended on it; though they could strum the piano and work unheard-of monstrosities in worsted, whose bright contrasting colors were dazzling and wonderful to behold.

But Mrs. Sharpe was a woman of skill and energy; her method of conducting the matrimonial campaign was "sharp, short and decisive," and singularly successful.

Of the six original Miss Sharpes who had been on her hands when she first opened her establishment, only three remained; the other three had been provided with husbands out of the ranks of "single men" who had been "taken in and done for" in more respects than one.

Mrs. Sharpe's method of procedure was not only somewhat peculiar, but very direct. She didn't believe in "beating about the bush." "If she had anything to say, she said it square and plump," as she often asserted.

Her subjects were selected with great care and skill; nor did she wait long before bringing matters to a crisis. She well knew that delays were dangerous in such cases, and only waited until said subject had been entrapped in paying one of her daughters some civilities, or had been seen a few times in her company.

If he then manifested any backwardness, he was interviewed, and his intentions demanded. If this failed to bring him down, and he was so ungrateful as to be insensible to the felicity in store for him, certain disagreeable contingencies were grimly hinted at, and the enormity of his conduct set before him so strongly and forcibly that there was generally nothing left to the beseiged party but to surrender at discretion.

Yet Mrs. Sharpe occasionally had a tough subject, and she certainly found one in Doctor Phil. Slowboy.

But we are again anticipating.

Upon his first appearance, she had singled him out as a suitable husband for her daughter Arabella.

To a certain extent, the Doctor played very readily into her hands; he read Miss Arabella's poetry, and praised it, displaying no decided repugnance to the society that was continually forced upon him. But here it ended.

Mrs. Sharpe, perceiving this, now commenced her usual plan of operations.

Attired in her best dress, and cap whose high crown added not a little to her imposing appearance, she made a formal request for a private interview.

Doctor Slowboy took the seat into which he was "waved" by Mrs. Sharpe, apparently quite oblivious to the change in her demeanor.

"A very lovely day, ma'am."

Mrs. Sharpe deigned no reply to this, except by an increased austerity of look and manner.

"Doctor Slowboy, I am a woman and a mother."

Having no reason to dissent from this self-evident fact, Doctor Slowboy did not dissent from it. On the contrary, he roundly asserted his belief in the truth of this statement.

"I've not the slightest doubt of that, ma'am; in fact, I could almost swear to it."

Mrs. Sharpe frowned; the cheerful ease of the doctor's manner was far from pleasing to her.

"I repeat it, Doctor Slowboy, I am a woman and a mother, and, as a woman and a mother, I consider it to be my duty to ask you what your intentions are in regard to my daughter Arabella."

Doctor Slowboy looked at the ceiling, and then at the floor, and then at the austere face of the speaker.

"I can't say that I have any particular intentions, ma'am."

Mrs. Sharpe arose, giving the speaker a look that was intended to strike terror to his soul.

"And you have the face, the audacity, the heartlessness, to say that, after doing everything in your power to win the affection of my poor girl's innocent, confiding heart?"

"I wasn't aware, ma'am, that it required either swindling, or any of the other things you mention, to state a simple fact. As for your daughter's affections, I really have no occasion for them, or, is fact, any affections not now legitimately mine."

"It's very easy talking, Doctor Slowboy, but you'll find that you can't throw dust into my eyes, sir! Your attentions to Arabella have been the talk of the whole neighborhood, and I'm not going to have all her prospects in life blighted by your fickleness and falsehood. No, sir! You must either marry her or take the consequences!"

"I'm *sorry* to disoblige you, seeing you make such a point of it, ma'am; but the fact is, there is a certain person who would have a decided objection to my marrying yours or anybody else's daughter."

"I can't help that, sir! I don't suppose my poor girl's the first one whose affections you have trifled with, not by no manner of means, sir! But it's my duty to look after the interests of my daughter, and I shall do it! I want you to understand that there is such a thing as *law*, sir, and that this is actionable!"

"I am aware that there is such a thing as law, ma'am; also that it forbids a man to have more than one wife. I have a very good one at present, who suits me very well, though I am none the less obliged to you for your very kind intentions in my favor."

Mrs. Sharpe sank back into her chair nearly breathless with astonishment and rage.

"You—you perfidious villain! Didn't you tell me you was a single man?"

"I did, when you told me that you took none but single men, and I told you no lie. The fact is, I am very single, both in heart and person, when away from Mrs. Slowboy. But I don't intend to remain single much longer. I have rented the corner house, at the head of the street, and am expecting my wife on the first train to-morrow. I have intimated that she might have some slight objection to my marrying your daughter, but if you have any doubts on the subject, you can have a personal expression of her views. I hope you'll be neighborly. Good morning, ma'am."

A Railway Under the Sea.

For many years European people have talked freely of some way of getting themselves and their freights from the continent to England and back again without the delay and discomfort of that horrible two hours' passage from Calais to Dover. Swinging cabins have been proposed—tried, if we are not mistaken—to relieve passengers of the prostrating nausea that they feel there, if nowhere else. Immense steamers were planned—we believe their building commenced—which should ferry over railway trains without change of load. One intellectual idiot spent much money in perfecting plans for a bridge to be erected on immense piers resting on the ocean bed-rock, and, finally, the wild chimera (as we then called it) of a submarine tunnel was projected.

But the world has advanced since then, and the chimera has assumed a realistic appearance. We have forced a hole through the Hoosac range, we have tunneled Mont Cenis; we have run the sea through the Isthmus of Suez; we have stretched a telegraph round the world; and, finally, we begin to imagine, why shouldn't we tunnel the British Channel? It is only twenty-five miles of boring.

And so work in the first stages has commenced quietly, but understandingly. Eminent geologists are making explorations to discover whether the rock strata are of a character to sustain the weight of the water above, without too much masonry. Upon that rests the whole question. If, as believed, it proves that the gray chalk which forms the channel cliffs stretches across the channel bed in sufficient thickness to encase the tunnel in its waterproof armor, the scheme has no insuperable mechanical obstacle. The expense is then the only question, and it is believed that that can be readily provided for.

Gypsies.

Who and what the gypsies are, whence they came, and what tongue they speak, have been questions that have engaged the attention of learned men for three hundred years, the first specimen of Rommany having been printed as long ago as the year 1597 by a writer who thought the gypsies were Nubians. They have been called, besides, Egyptians, Copts, Tartars and Bohemians; but the English gypsies call themselves the sons and daughters of Rome. They first appeared in England near the end of the 15th century, roaming about in bands, and encamping by roadsides and in lonely places. The women told fortunes, as they do now; and, as they are now, the men were tinkers, basket-makers, and braziers. Soon it was observed that the presence of a gypsy tribe caused a murrain among pigs, whose dead bodies their women would beg; the poultry yards were thinned, horses disappeared, and after the fortune-teller left the house, small articles of value were apt to be missed.

It was said, too, in the time of Elizabeth, that they harbored Roman Catholic priests, and for some years a great and terrible persecution was carried on against them. The persecution has long ceased, but the manners of the people have not changed; they roam still from place to place, they live in tents, they speak their own language, they obey no laws, the women still tell fortunes, the men still make baskets. They are harmless and gentle enough as a rule; they do not intermarry with the outer world, and scorn to be confounded with the vagabonds and hawkers, whose evil doings have been but too often set down to their account.—*Advance.*

Jennie June, (Mrs. Croly), in her new book entitled "For Better or for Worse," says that marriage is "a co-partnership, which is to last a life-time, and which involves the interests of children and the welfare of society." The definition of marriage as "a co-partnership," is the essential point at issue between the existing order of society and the Woman Suffrage party. Society and law define marriage to be a relation of domination on the part of the husband and of subjection on that of the wife. The Suffragists, on the contrary, demand such a reformation of the existing laws which regulate the matrimonial relation, as will define marriage to be a life-long partnership of equals with reciprocal rights and duties.

It may be political heresy, but we confess that the division of the negro vote is to us an encouraging fact in the recent elections. It is especially encouraging when, as in South Carolina, the division was effected by an appeal to the negroes to rebel against their former leaders in order to secure honest government. When the negro gives his vote on that ground, whether he is cheated or not, and ceases to give it under control of a dread or hatred of his former master, he has made a long advance in the direction of becoming a useful citizen.—*N. Y. Times.*

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Portland, December 15, 1874. 4 17

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