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LITERARY BUDGET

A PARADOX.

I recollect how grieved I was
When Cousin Amy married.
I thought her very cruel because
For me she had not tarried.
She gave to my affection green
Encouragement in plenty,
For I was under seventeen
And she was five-and-twenty.

Fair Amy is a widow now,
Her sorrow fast outgrowing.
'Tis very singular, I vow,
The way the years are going,
With *me*, at *allegro* rate;
With *her*, a graceful *lente*—
Now, *I* am nearing thirty-eight
And *she* is six and-twenty.

I should be gratified to know
How others, like my cousin,
A twelvemonth only older grow,
One year in half a dozen.
Oh, Chronos! tell the secret me,
The power superhuman
That causes time with man to flee,
But bids it wait with woman.
—*Life.*

HAWTHORNE'S COURTSHIP.

How He and Sophia Peabody Fell in Love With Each Other.

It Was a Fatal Attack at First Sight and They Grew Tired of Waiting for Fortune, and Were Married — Incidents of Their Courtship.

The interesting thing in the life of Nathaniel Hawthorne (as told in two volumes by his son Julian) is his courtship. The mother was a widow and a recluse. The Hawthorne children, Elizabeth and Nathaniel, played timidly with the Peabody children, and, as they grew older, it became apparent that Nathaniel was getting his heart entangled in the charms of Sophia Peabody. But the road of their happiness was full of thorns and stones.

Elizabeth Peabody, who was older than the rest, tells how she read in the *New England Magazine*, between 1830 and 1836, some stories that attracted her attention. She thought they were written by a "New Light" Quaker, who had outgrown some of the peculiarities of the sect, and she went so far as to write a letter to the supposed "old man asking him how he knew "that sensitive natures are especially apt to be malicious." The next year she discovered that the "Hawthorne boy" was the author of the stories. Another year passed before the two families attained visiting acquaintance with each other. One evening Nathaniel and his sister Elizabeth called on the Peabodys. Sophia Peabody was ill, and Elizabeth went up to her room and begged her to come down to see the callers. "You never saw anything so splendid as he is—he is handsomer than Lord Byron." The sick girl was not to be so easily won. She declined to make the effort to see the rising novelist. Miss Peabody recalls the "beauty of the outline of his features, the pure complexion, the wonderful eyes, like mountain lakes reflecting the sky."

Of course he called again and then Sophia saw him. It was a fatal attack on both sides. "As we went on talking she would frequently interpose a remark in her low, sweet voice. Every time she did so he would look at her again with the same piercing, indrawing gaze. I was struck with it and thought what if he should fall in love with her, and the thought troubled me, for she had often told me that nothing would ever tempt her to marry and inflict on a husband the care of an invalid." Years afterward Mrs. Hawthorne used to tell her children how the presence of the young writer exercised upon her from the beginning so strong a magnetic attraction that instinctively and in self-defense she drew back and repelled him. Both found the courage to confess that they had been in love from their first meeting. The determined retirement of Mme. Hawthorne made it very difficult for the son to introduce his friends to her, and the Peabodys called with some hesitation long before it was suspected by any one that the families were to be so closely united.

The widowed mother was a woman of strong will and fine individuality. She wore antique costumes and always looked as if she had stepped out of an old picture. Her face "had a lovely sensibility and great brightness." There was no sentimental confidence between her and her son, although they held each other in mutual esteem and affection. Nathaniel confided to nobody that he had asked Sophia Peabody to be his wife as soon as he was able to provide for her, and the secret of their engagement was kept for three years. He had a petty position in the Boston Custom-house—that of weigher—but he could not marry on it, and when he was dismissed from it by the change of administration in 1841 he entered upon the Brook Farm experiment to see what promise it enfolded for him and his promised wife. His rather more prosaic son says that the chief advantage it brought him was "that it taught him how to plant corn and squashes and to buy and sell at the produce market; and that it provided him with an invaluable background for his 'Blithedale Romance,' written about ten years afterward."

He had no money, but the lovers grew tired waiting for fortune. "Rents were low in New England then," and they married. His mother's attitude toward his wife proved an agreeable surprise. She told him that she had known of his engagement almost as long as he had known it himself, and that Sophia Peabody was just the wife she would have chosen for him. And how did he make love for himself, this teller of the love-making of imaginary men and maids? He rejoices because a pettish cousin has an angry political dispute with him which will separate them for a time and leave Nathaniel more hours to think of her. For "peace overflows from your heart to mine." He cautions her against walking with his robust sister Elizabeth because "she is indefatigable and wants to walk half round the world when once out doors." He assures her that although he loves her deeply he is in awe of her. "I suppose I should have pretty much the same feeling if an angel were to come from Heaven and be my dearest friend—only the angel could not have the tenderest of human natures, too, the sense of which is mingled with this sentiment." He can not understand the mystery of his awe and love; "methinks it converts my love into religion." And he never read a letter from her without first washing his hands.

As time passes and their personal interests become more intermingled he assumes that right to guide, moderate and restrain her feelings which it was inevitable he should assume even to the angel. If, however, he becomes mandatory in the sweetest of loving ways, he also becomes more caressing. He is sure he might have written poetry since he was in love if he had only the gift of making rhymes. He is sure she is a poem. Epic? No. A sonnet? No, "for that is too labored and artificial." She was a "sort of sweet, simple, gay, pathetic ballad, which nature is singing sometimes with tears, sometimes with smiles," and sometimes with both. After this frenzy of the gods had existed between them for a year, she defined beauty with all the gravity of Burke "My definition of beauty is that it is love, and, therefore, includes both truth and good." Suspicious of the logic of her philosophy, she adds: "But those only who love as we do can feel the significance and force of this. The last day of the year she sends him a delicious message: "God bless you this night of the old year. It has proved the year of our nativity. Has not the old earth passed away from us? Are not all things new?"

She has hurt a finger; he warns her that if it is not well soon he will send her the best surgeon in Boston. She paints; the pictures will be more precious to him "than all the productions of all the painters since Apelles!" She painted him and her in a little landscape, and he goes into raptures over tiny figures doubtless looking as much like Sancho Panza and Guienevere as like that of Nathaniel and "his own Sophie." He would not hang the precious things on the wall for fear of dust and the fingers of the chambermaid. Indeed, he was the maddest of lovers, if ever one were madder than another. He closes one letter with "Belovedest, I love thee very especially much to-day. But now it is breakfast time, and"—alas! even Love must eat—"and I have an appetite." That makes her breakfast of the tenderest importance. "What did you eat for breakfast? But I know very well that you never eat anything but bread and milk and chickens." A good enough diet for Love. Still he would know something more: "Do you love pigeons in a pie?"

From Brook Farm Hawthorne wrote his "dearest unutterably" very plain matters—about plowing and planting and manuring and milking; while the "thin frock you made for me" is considered "a most excellent article." It might even attain the dignity of becoming the summer uniform of the community. He assured her that he had also a warm frock, though rather deficient in grace, and that he wore a tremendous pair of cow-hide boots with soles two inches thick. These realities are charmingly sprinkled with the daintiest and sweetest of tid-bits of devotion, all spooned out as it were with the grace of a cavalier and the softness of a nurse coaxing a frail child to try to eat and be good and get well. for Sophia Peabody was an invalid all this time. No proof of her lover's affection could be more explicit than his assurance that he would rather she should never paint or sculpture, if her health was to be in the least injured by the effort. "It would be no trouble to me if you should never touch clay or canvas again."

The sad sarcasm we have had of late on such love—the Bulwer Lytton letters, of similar intensity and surpassing ardor, but lacking the dignity and nobleness of these—happily finds no corresponding sequel in the wedded life of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Sophia Peabody. There was no disenchantment. Faithful and fond to the end, they made life blissful for each other, and the perfume of the roses of their courtship was scattered over their graves. "Year by year we shall grow closer to each other, and a thousand ages hence we shall be only in the honeymoon of our marriage." Twenty-two years of domestic life never surprised a shadow on the heart of either to the other, and when death claimed the widow she anticipated his summons as if she saw the hand of her husband beckoning in the vista of the thousand ages of happiness of which the lover had written.

Turn-About Heels.

When a New York up-town shoe dealer was asked to repair a pair of boots that needed new soles and new heels, he said:

"Will you have patent heels?"

"What is the peculiarity?"

"They are reversible. Both ends of the heel are trimmed alike. The heel is secured with screws, and can be removed by any one with a screw-driver. By turning the heel end for end after it begins to wear off on one side, the wear is thrown equally on both sides, and the heel is kept square. Eventually the wearer learns to stand up squarely on his heels. They will cost you fifty cents extra.—*N. Y. Times.*

—The diameter of trees varies not only from summer to winter, but from day to day. They are larger from noon to twilight the next morning than from twilight until noon; they are smaller in the winter than in summer. Water and the sap of trees expand not only in proportion as they rise above, but also as they go below, the freezing point. Low temperature as well as high promotes evaporation, and the trees evaporate from their branches in winter, and so the colder the weather the more they shrink.—*Prairie Farmer.*

—The superiority of American dredging machines, which has been shown in the work on the Panama Canal, has led to orders for them by fourteen governments. The last of these is from Spain. A drag-boat, with a screw propellor of 100-horse power, five iron barges and two tow-boats have been called for to be used at the port of San Juan, Porto Rico.

LOVE AND WOMEN.

From an Unsentimental and Practical Point of View.

What is love? is a question which has been asked a thousand times, and which in spite of monotony Grenville Murray repeats with a certain freshness and emphasis in his new book, "Under the Lens." He treats the subject with a decided dash of cynicism, like most fashionable writers of the present day. Love, he says, on the part of women is an inclination felt for a man who has made himself more agreeable than other men. He may not be a pleasant fellow at all, but some physical or social superiority he possesses lifts him temporarily on a pedestal, where he lords it till his very arrogance helps to complete the fascination of the simple creature groveling at his feet. I have seen girls fall in love with the veriest cubs for lack of other male society. Don't tell me there was any deep sentiment in these attachments. The girls wanted husbands; that is all. They were obeying the natural law which attracts sex to sex, and the social law which bids a girl get married as fast as she can, lest she glide into old spinsterhood.

If a girl, after deciding to accept a genteel pauper, chances to allure a man who has it in his power to make her a bed of rose-leaves, see how quickly her eyes get opened to the beauties of indolence and luxury. Self-esteem tells her that she was not made merely for the study of that parsimonous arithmetic which consists in paring down baker's bills. She wants to walk in silk attire, and feels grateful to the man who, by his courtship, acknowledges her right to do so. Who can deny the magic of fine linen, jewels, soft-cushioned broughams, champagne, and obedient menials upon a woman's mind? And who can not impute the still greater magic afforded by the prospect of eclipsing sisters and school friends who have married poorly?

Sometimes if a girl has got hopelessly engaged to a fellow with a shrunken purse—if she be so near her wedding-day that it is impossible to break off the match without making a scandal—pride and vanity will induce her to keep her pledge, and this will be simply because the plutocrat came too late into the field. If the two had started at the post together, or if the pauper had had but a half-distant start, the plutocrat would have run him down and come in first with flying colors. Moreover, a woman feels sore all her life at having missed the chance of a rich marriage. The thought of it turns her sour and her wretched husband has uxorial peevishness and contempt poured upon him by the bucketful.

That may be, but we have also instances of rich men's wives who deplored not having married their first loves, poor though they were.

"Which all comes of the contrariness of human nature in never being satisfied with the present lot," responded the misogynist emphatically. The man who wrote the "Praises of Poverty"—Seneca wasn't it?—indited his remarks upon a golden table, and had a couple of slaves to fan the flies away. A woman who sits by her boudoir fire, with her feet well warmed, a novel on her lap, and a five o'clock tea, and cream and crumpets at her elbow, is very apt to dream that she was cut out for the part of a heroine. She gilds poverty with her imaginative touches till it looks all rosy. Her husband bores her, and she thinks of the other man who used to make her laugh and whose muscles were like whipcord. She attributes to him talents which he never had, charms which she never discovered in him while she had the opportunity of observing him every day, and she dreams of herself as fighting life's battles by his side and winning.

It never occurs to her to reflect that the lot she renounced was that living upon mutton hash, and growing up into a dowdy slattern, worried, and perhaps bullied, by a man rendered cantankerous by failure in his profession. It is easy to be happy in fancy with a man whose ideal perfections one may depict at one's leisure. A woman is often found whimpering over a novel which portrays the life of a heroine such as she thinks herself to be; but just let her rich husband die, leaving her penniless, and you'll see whether she doesn't at once set her widow's cap at another rich man sooner than partake herself to that like of struggling which she deemed so exciting when viewed from a distance.—*Chicago Tribune.*

URBAN GROWTH.

The Enormous Aggregation of Population and Wealth in Cities.

The enormous aggregations of population and wealth are not confined to our coast-line cities, but are true of all centers of trade in the interior of the country. Recent statistics show that while our agricultural population has increased four per cent., our urban or city population has increased nineteen per cent. The recent discussion in England as to the basis of representation in Parliament under the new Distribution Bill have revealed some curious facts. The vast majority of members of Parliament will be from the cities, for the reason that the British Islands are now dominated by groups of populated centers. It has been found that the rural districts proper have decreased in number, that the villages and small towns contain fewer inhabitants, but there has been an enormous increase in cities of 100,000 population and over. But the heaviest percentage of growth has been in the very largest cities like London, but more particularly in the suburbs—the ring of towns immediately adjacent to the large cities. The superior attractiveness of great cities over rural districts to human beings is because man is naturally gregarious—he longs to be with his fellows. The multiplication and diversity of modern industries permit men and women to follow their natural bent, which is, to make their way to the most attractive of the human hives. This tendency to aggregate in large centers of population is as marked on the continent of Europe as it is in the British Isles and the United States.—*Demorest's Monthly.*

—Vice Chancellor Sir James Bacon, who celebrated his eighty-seventh birthday recently, is the oldest Judge on the English bench.

SUN SPOTS.

Bill Nye, After an Exhaustive Discussion, Says He Can't Explain Them.

This luminous body is 92,000,000 miles from the earth, though there have been mornings this winter when it seemed to me that it was further than that. A railway train going at the rate of 40 miles per hour would be 263 years going there, to say nothing of stopping for fuel or water, or stopping on side tracks to wait for freight trains to pass. Several years ago it was discovered that a slight error had been made in the calculation of the sun's distance from the earth, and owing to a misplaced logarithm, or something of that kind, a mistake of 3,000,000 miles was made in the result. People can not be too careful in such matters. Supposing that on the strength of the information contained in the old time-table a man should start out with only provisions sufficient to take him 89,000,000 miles, and should then find that 3,000,000 miles still stretched out ahead of him. He would then have to buy fresh figs of the train-boy in order to sustain life. Think of buying nice fresh figs on a train that had been en route 250 years!

Imagine a train boy starting out at ten years of age, and perishing at the age of sixty years with only one-fifth of his journey accomplished. Think of five train boys, one after the other, dying of old age on the way, and the train at last pulling slowly into the depot with not a living thing on board except the worms in the "nice eating apples!"

The sun can not be examined through an ordinary telescope with impunity. Only one man ever tried that, and he is now wearing a glass eye that cost him nine dollars.

If you examine the sun through an ordinary solar microscope, you discover that it has a curdled or mottled appearance, as though suffering from biliousness. It is also marked here and there by long streaks of light called faculæ, which look like foam flecks below a cataract. The spots on the sun vary from minute pores the size of an ordinary school district to spots 100,000 miles in diameter, visible to the nude eye. The center of these spots is as black as a brunette cat, and is called the umbra, so called because it resembles an umbrella. The next circle is less dark, and called the penumbra, because it so closely resembles the penumbra.

There are many theories regarding these spots, but to be perfectly candid with the gentle reader, neither Prof. Proctor nor myself can tell exactly what they are. If we could get a little closer, we flatter ourselves that we could speak more definitely. My own theory is they are either, first, open air caucuses held by the colored people of the sun; or second, they may be the dark horses in the campaign; or third, they may be the spots knocked off the defeated candidate by the opposition.

Frankly, however, I do not believe either of these theories to be tenable. Prof. Proctor sneers at the theories also on the ground that these spots do not appear to revolve so fast as the sun. This, however, I am prepared to explain upon the theory that this might be the result of delays in the returns. However, I am free to confess that speculative science is filled with the intangible.

The sun revolves upon his or her axle-tree, as the case may be, once in twenty-five to twenty-eight of our days, so that a man would have almost two years to pay a thirty-day note. We should so live that when we come to die we may go at once to the sun.

Regarding the sun's temperature, Sir John Herschel says that it is sufficient to melt a shell of ice covering its entire surface to a depth of forty feet. I do not know whether he made this experiment personally or hired a man to do it for him.

The sun is like the star spangled banner—as it is "still there." You get up to-morrow morning just before sunrise and look away toward the east, and keep on looking in that direction, and at last you will see a fine sight, if what I have been told is true. If the sunrise is as grand as the sunset it must, indeed, be one of nature's most sublime phenomena.

The sun is the great source of light and heat for our earth. If the sun were to go somewhere for a few weeks for relaxation and rest it would be a cold day for us. The moon, too, would be useless, for she is largely dependent on the sun. Animal life would soon cease and real estate would become depressed in price. We owe very much of our enjoyment to the sun, and not many years ago there were a large number of people who worshiped the sun. When a man showed signs of emotional insanity, they took him up on the observatory of the temple and sacrificed him to the sun. They were a very prosperous and happy people. If the conqueror had not come among them with civilization and guns and grand juries they would have been very happy, indeed.—*Bill Nye, in Burlington Hawkeye.*

General Gordon.

While Gordon was in command of the fort at Gravesend, previous to his representing England at the Conference held at Constantinople in 1871, he had occasion to read up his French with a professor, who relates the following incident, of which he was a witness: Toward the end of 1871 an ex-officer of the Chinese Legion presented himself at the Fort House and asked to see the General. On his card being given to Gordon, he threw it from him with disgust, and his anger was so great that for a few seconds he was speechless. When he was somewhat calmer, he expressed his feelings in the following words: "Tell that man to enter if he wishes me to blow out his brains." This would seem violent, but when it is known that the officer in question had deserted his colors and joined the rebels against whom Gordon was fighting in China, the righteous indignation of the General can be understood. The servant, who knew his master, repeated the message, word for word, and the officer took his leave as quickly as possible.—*N. Y. Evening Post.*

LATE FASHIONS.

Fashionable Fabrics and Methods of Wearing Them.

Tricotrine is a fashionable dress fabric very popular abroad.

It is now the fashion to braid the Langtry knot of hair worn low in the nape of the neck.

A new violet blue, shading to purple, is a new shade called *Yeux Dagmar*, after the deep peculiar color of the eyes of the Empress of Austria, formerly Princess Dagmar.

The short Russian and the rounding zouave jackets, of the style worn by the Greek *ralikares*, are two natty and picturesque overgarments which are to be in high vogue the coming season both for home wear and for full-dress occasions. For the latter use the material is of the richest velvet plush, or satin, richly adorned with applique bands, lace or embroidery; and for the former the jackets are made of fine French cashmere, tricot or basket cloth, or plain vigogne, simply trimmed with rows of braid or narrow velvet ribbon.

A very stylish evening dress made for a young debutante of this year shows a skirt of cream-colored India cashmere, surrounded by three deep flounces of the goods shirred on at the top. Each flounce is tucked in rows of three with a deep hem below, and edging the hem is an exceedingly pretty design in cream-colored Irish point lace four inches wide. The short cutaway jacket is edged to match, and opens over a pleated blouse vest of pale blue surah. Ribbons of the same delicate shade hold the loopings of the full cashmere tunic at each side.

Removable trains are sent home with most evening toilets. They are very useful, and if well-cut and arranged, should never betray their adjustable nature. Velvet trains are much in vogue, and, as colored bodices are worn above the skirts, black or white, the addition of a train matching the bodice effects an agreeable transformation when required.

Gold and silver laces, used with discretion, are in high favor for ball toilets. The purple shades, becoming so fashionable, harmonize beautifully with the pale gold trimmings, and silver lace, in its filmy exquisite devices, tones perfectly with the pale blues, mauves and pinks that are now so generally worn.

Foreign manufacturers and modistes have made special note of the fact that Queen Victoria has ordered a number of pieces of Irish poplin to be included in the materials for Princess Beatrice's trousseau, and it is supposed by this that royal patronage will give a stimulus to the sale of this fabric. The newest makes are very attractive, both in their beautiful shades of color and also in their qualities, the surfaces being most soft and glossy to the touch. Formerly, in spite of their excellent wearing qualities, Irish poplins did not look worth the high price asked for them. Now, beauty of appearance is associated with durability, and no better combination can be wished for. White poplin is a handsome and economical fabric for an evening dress, as it will bear much making over, and also takes a splendid dye. The Queen, it is said has ordered a pale silver-blue poplin, one of pearl white flowered with forget-me-nots, and a heavy, lustrous one of pure white.

A pretty cutaway basque for slender figures is open from the throat down, with tiny buttons at either side. The full blouse vest of merveilleux is held down by a Swiss girdle of velvet or plush. The sleeves have a puff of merveilleux below the elbow, with a bias band of velvet above and below. Quite frequently the edge of the cutaway basque is velvet-trimmed to correspond.

A pretty little house apron suitable for ordinary home wear is made of one width of goods in a rounding shape, sloping a little at the top and gathered in a belt. The apron and the small round pocket are edged with fine linen lace, four inches wide, and a handsome belt ribbon with bows and ends is tied at the left side. The novel part of the apron consists of a Fedora bib, which is shirred at the throat, brought down narrowly to the belt, and shirred again.

A great deal of velvet and velvet ribbon will be used for trimming even the lightest fabrics both as to texture and color. Silk gauze, broche with velvet figures, embroidered net, dotted silks, merveilleuxs, foulards, both plain and figured, will also be much employed. Very elegant yet not expensive toilets are formed of a silk skirt which has done duty before, veiled by a very deep flounce of ecru lace. The bodice may be either of new silk, lace-trimmed, or of the same silk, cut low and veiled with a high bodice of ecru net.

A very stylish Parisian bonnet lately exhibited had a medium-sized brim of darkest red velvet with a crown covered with Angora lace wrought with pale gold threads. The strings were of velvet, and the trimming upon the bonnet consisted of a cluster of deep red and yellow tulips in shaded velvet on one side, and a graceful fall of the gold-run lace on the other, the airy waves caught here and there on the left of the crown with small jeweled ornaments of real gold.

Large clasps for handsome wraps of velvet, satin or plush, of the new Japanese brown, are made of real bronze, with antique and mythological heads, in raised enamel. A head of Bacchus is one new design, this surrounded by a solid wreath of vine leaves of silver, with tiny clusters of grapes made of rubies. Some of these devices are exceedingly expensive, clasps for sash buckles, hall mantles, and the like, being made of real gold, or silver in lace work patterns, and handsomely carved slides in gold or silver set with diamonds, pearls and other precious stones.—*N. Y. Evening Post.*

—Firm mother to boy—Didn't I tell you that I'd whip you if you played in that water again, say? Boy—Yessum. Firm mother—Then why did you do it? Boy—Because I didn't believe you. Firm mother—Never mind. You shan't go down town with me when I go, see if you do. Shortly afterward the firm mother and the boy go down town together.—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

PERSIAN MARRIAGES.

The Method of Contracting Matrimonial Alliances in the Land of the Shah.

Love at first sight is unusual in a country where the women are habitually veiled, and a glimpse even of a lady's face is seldom to be got save by stratagem or by what is considered immodest—the raising of the corner of her veil by the lady herself. Shrouded as she is from head to foot in an immense sheet of blue, two yards square, a yet further precaution must be taken. Over all this is placed the ruh-band or veil—no transparent or flimsy device as in our own lace "fall," or the thin and gauzy yashmak of the Turkish belle, serviceable alike to triumphant and to fading beauty. The ruh-band is a piece of white calico or cambric, a yard long, which hangs down like a long mask in front of the Persian woman's face, when clad in her hideous and purposely unbecoming out-door costume; which costume, sad to say, is also an impenetrable disguise. In it all women are alike. An aperture four inches long, running transversely across the eyes, enables the Persian lady to see the way, and little more. For even this aperture is covered by an elaborate and curious embroidery, between the threads of which she can only peep. But the Persian belle will yet find a way of rewarding an admirer with a glance; and thus the marriage so carefully brought about by parents and relatives are not infrequently the result of predilections slyly manifested. The out-door dress, being a disguise, cuts both ways, and the intrigante amuses herself with impunity.

Certain marriages take place because in the eyes of the Orientals they are natural ones, such as the union of first cousins. The children have been like brother and sister from the cradle, and they are married as a matter of course; it is their fate, and they submit to it. But outside these marriages of custom, and far more numerous than the marriages of predilection to which we have referred, are the marriages usually arranged by "brokers." These brokers are old women who always keep themselves in a position to quote the state of the market, which fluctuates. In hard times even girls of good appearance are comparatively a drug. In time of plenty they "rule firm." The marriage broker is ever a welcome guest where there are daughters to marry, and also in houses where the sons wish to find a suitable bride. The young people are not consulted by the broker. She deals with the parents, and generally with the mothers. Crafty as a horse-dealer, she runs glibly over the various advantages, mental, physical and pecuniary, of her clientele of both sexes. So-and-so is a steady, quiet man. Such an one has brilliant prospects—has (important consideration) no other wife. As for Yusuf, how good-looking he is! And Hassan, no man was ever so good-tempered. Of the other sex she sings the praises no less. The skill of Bebe as a housekeeper; the wealth of the ugly daughter of the banker; the dangerous charms of the portionless Zuleikha, she can never say too much about. Her main business is to bargain for the sum to be paid to the father for his daughter's hand; a sum which is usually expended by that father in pots and pans (all of copper) and other utensils, which he presents to his child as her separate property. The details being settled after much haggling, the young people are engaged, and the marriage-broker gets her permission, both from the parents of the bridegroom and those of the bride-elect. Among the poor and the laboring classes the bargain is arranged on other grounds. The peasant takes a wife for her thews and sinews, or her skill at weaving carpets or making cheese; while the bridegroom is or is not eligible according as he may be capable of hard work, or may hold some small office, or have a bit of land or a shop. Here the "marriage-broker" is generally an amateur who conducts the negotiations purely from that love of match-making which is such a blessing to the world.

The akd, or marriage contract, is simply a legal form; but it is marriage and not betrothal. A few friends are invited. The bride—perhaps a child of ten—is seated in a room with her parents and relations; over the door hangs the usual curtain. Or, if the ceremony takes place in one room or the open air, the women are veiled. At the other side of the curtain, in an outer room or in the open air, are the male guests; and here squats the moollah or priest of the quarter, who now drones out in a monotonous voice the marriage contract, which has been previously drawn out by him. "It is agreed between Hassan the draper, who is vakeel (agent) for Houssein, the son of the baker, that he Houssein, hereby acknowledges the receipt of the portion of Nissa, the daughter of Achmet the grocer." Here follows a list of the property of the bride in lands, moneys, houses, cattle, dresses, furniture, carpets, pots, pans and so on. Always a copy of the Koran and a certain weight of sewing silk are mentioned. This detailed account of her property, constituting the woman's separate estate, her husband merely holds in trust during their cohabitation. At death or divorce it goes back again to herself or her heirs. And it is this mehr, or separate estate, that renders secure the otherwise precarious position of the Eastern wife in a polygamous county; for the various things enumerated, though acknowledged by the husband as received, may only exist on paper. Still he has acknowledged them, and if he wish to put away his wife, or if they separate by consent, he is bound to refund the mehr of which he has legally acknowledged the receipt, or to obtain her legal discharge for the same. "And," continues the moollah, "he acknowledges the receipt of the aforesaid mehr." Then follows a hum of delight at the extent of the lady's property. "You, Hassan, how do you say as vakeel for Houssein—is this so?" "Yes, yes, I agree," mumbles Hassan. "And you, Achmet, do you give your daughter, Lady Nissa, to be the wife of Lord Houssein?" "Yes, yes, I agree," replies Achmet, the grocer. "And you, Lady Nissa, are you there?" "Yes, yes, she is here, moollah," replies a chorus of women from behind the curtain. "And you agree, Lady Nissa?" Here there is a giggle from the child-bride. "Yes, yes, she agrees," comes in a triumphant chorus from the women. "Then," says the moollah, solemnly, "In the name of God the compassionate, the merciful, and of Mohammed the prophet of God, I declare you, Lord Houssein, and you, Lady Nissa, to be man and wife." Here the moollah puts his stamp or seal to the document; the various parties seal it too, it is carefully witnessed, and formally completed. The moollah receives his fee of a few shillings, and then, and not till then, he hands over the document—her settlement and marriage lines" in one—to the agent of the bride or to her father.

The legal ceremony is over; the young people are married fast—fast as the Mohammedan law can bind. And, theoretically, as yet they have never seen each other's faces. But really Houssein has had many a glimpse of the fair Nissa. Her mother has often allowed him to see her child from behind a curtain or a cupboard door. All this is understood. And the young people are now legally married. The wedding, as distinct from the espousals, may take place the same evening, a week, a month, or not for years, according to the age, rank, or circumstances of the bride and bridegroom. Men and women feast separately; and after many water-pipes have been smoked, many pounds of sweetmeats consumed, and a plentiful banquet has been disposed of, the guests separate. All promise to be present at the actual wedding. No music, no rejoicings—nothing but what we have described is seen at the ceremony we have detailed.—*St. James' Gazette.*

AMERICAN TOWNS.

A Chance For Improvement in Their Nomenclature.

David Dudley Field has been showing himself to be a man of good taste and judgment by remarks he made in a recent lecture on the names of American towns. Mr. Field objected to the manner in which many places in the United States have been christened. The natural supposition, he thinks, would be that the names were selected by a half civilized people. He pities the unhappy lot of the inhabitants of villages afflicted with such names as You Bet, Pop Corn, Wild Cat, Cut Shin, Big Coon, Toad Vine, Black Jack, Skunk Lake, Buzzard Roost, Cat Creek, Dirt Town, Doctor Town, Jug Tavern, Cow Skin, and Cut Off, all of which he found in the list of names in a railway guide.

Such names are certainly bad enough. They are striking instances of absurd nomenclature because of their grotesque singularity. But they are not such violations of good taste as can be found among the pretentious towns of New York. When one goes among the Romes, Troys, Uticas, Syracuses, Ithacas and the many other classical names that renders the map of that State ridiculous, he feels that he could go a considerable distance out of his road to kick the pedants who named them.

Of all names given to towns, that of Rome, an imitation of the eternal city, is the most inappropriate and absurd. There can be but one Rome. Its name applied to any other town or city is a ridiculous affectation and conceit. The New York Rome through the pedantry of its founders missed an appropriate name, and one of which its citizens could be proud, in not being called Fort Stanwix, a designation similar to that of Fort Wayne, which would have associated it with an interesting revolutionary event that happened in that locality. Utica, which as a matter of taste is almost as shocking a name to be imitated as that of Rome, would not today be a blemish to the map of New York if its founder would have had good taste and sense enough to have adopted the term Oneida, which is appropriate to the neighborhood. There is only one other name as applied to a modern town, and particularly to an insignificant town, that is pedantically as bad as Rome, and that is Athens. The nomenclature of places in this country is generally bad, but nowhere else equal in that respect to New York, where the idea seems to have prevailed that stilted titles taken from a classical dictionary were just the thing.

Mr. Fields recommends Indian names. They certainly have the advantage in point of originality, but many of them are barbarous in sound and almost unpronounceable, which is clearly objectionable in the name of a town. This is especially the case with the New England Indian names. Father Wells made a nice mess of it when he christened the ships of the navy after them during the war, making the list of the National vessels such a barbarous jargon that it was enough, in connection with Republican management, to ruin that branch of the National defense.

Mr. Fields very properly objects to "ville" at the end of the name of a town. There is an unreasonable prejudice against the word "town," and a mistaken notion that the substitution of "ville" for it is an improvement. This is an error of taste as well as of judgment. "Town" is an expressive, euphonious and very suitable term. "Jonestown" sounds better than "Jonesville." There is more ring in it, and it is divested of the absurdity of attempting to ornament a very common name with a French termination.

A new horror that is springing up in town nomenclature is the use of the term "city" as applied to insignificant places. It is the offspring of ignorance, conceit and bad taste. The Post-office Department when asked to use it in naming post-offices should sternly put its foot down on the monstrosity. What could be more absurd than Smith City?

It is about time that a movement should be made for reform in the application of names to the towns of this country. The Post-office Department could do much good in this matter. As the town nomenclature now stands it is a disorderly collection of incongruous names ranging from Red Dog to Rome, making a map of the country as ludicrous as a comic almanac. A wide field for improvement in this respect is opened, which should be no longer neglected.—*Harrisburg (Pa.) Patriot.*