

## THE FUNNY MAN.

Who is that man who sits and bites  
His pen with aspect solemn?  
He is the Fun-y Man who writes  
The weekly Comic Column.

By day he scarce can keep awake;  
At night he can not rest.  
His moans he hardly dares to raise—  
He jests, he can't digest.

His hair, though not with years, is white,  
His cheek is wan and pale,  
And all with seeking day and night  
For jokes that are not stale.

His joys are few: the chiefest one  
Is when by luck a word  
Suggests to him a novel pun  
His readers haven't heard.

And when a Yankee joke he sees  
In some old book—well, then  
Perhaps he gains a moment's ease,  
And makes it do again.

The thought that chiefly makes him sigh  
Is that a time must come  
When jokes extinct like mammoths lie,  
And jokers must be dumb.

When every quip to death is done,  
And every crank is told;  
When men have printed every pun,  
And every joke is old.

When nought in Heaven, or earth, or sea  
Has not been turned to chaff,  
And not a single oddity  
Is left to make us laugh.

—C. E. Benson, in Harper's Magazine.

## MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

### Strange Nuptial Ceremonies in Various Lands.

#### How Some Brides Are Captured—Courtship of the Kalmucks—Facilities for Marriage Greatest in the United States.

Some interesting survivals are to be found of what is considered the most ancient of all marriage ceremonies—that of securing a wife by capture.

The Kalmuck young man, for instance, has not only to pay a good round sum to the relatives of the damsel he fancies, but he must prove his right to her in a test of the skill of both on horseback. The two are mounted for what we would call a handicap race, the girl getting a time allowance. She rides off at full speed. The lover follows. Should he overtake her then she is his "for better or worse;" but should he fail he must go away feeling a disappointed and rejected man.

The course of true love, however, prevails even among the Kalmucks, and if the girl have a partiality for her pursuer she takes care not to get beyond his reach. It is stated at the same time that unless she does fancy the man who is after her she will not allow herself to be overtaken.

The primitive custom of capture in marriage is clearly typified in such a ceremony. It asserts itself also in the fact that even after the bride is seized she is not permitted to leave until after a sham resistance by her own people. In the same way, among the Kirghese nomads the capture of the bride remains to this day a necessary ending to a successful courtship. The consequence is that the suitor, on entering the camp of the damsel whose hand he seeks, comes attended by a body guard of companions prepared to help him in his mission. When he gets to the "ask papa" stage he is politely told to catch the young lady if he can. It turns out that she has been spirited away by her friends. When her hiding-place is discovered, it is found jealously guarded by all the young men of the settlement; and as they are determined to prevent her capture there is no alternative but a contest between the parties to show which is the stronger. Should victory rest with the defenders, they carry back the girl in triumph to her father's tent, and the suitor can not now claim her until he has handed over gifts and payments to the young men who have so far so successfully stood in his way.

The same custom of marriage by capture was known in Scandinavia. In an old church in Gotland, in Sweden, a pile of lances is preserved. Each of the lances is fitted to hold a torch, and it is said the weapons were used at one time to give light and protection to marriage parties on the way to church, the ceremony taking place at night as a precaution against the bride being taken away by some Lechtigiar who claimed a bet right to her than the duly recognized suitor.

A recent writer, describing a marriage in Khurdistan, says he saw a young man carrying off his bride, escorted by a body guard of some fifty or thirty men. These men were supposed to be protecting the happy couple from a party of young women, who hurled pieces of earth and bamboo at the procession, and made show of rescuing the bride. As soon, however, as the bridegroom reached his own village with his charge the assailants ran home screaming and laughing. Among ourselves the term "best man" is said to be a survival of the time when the bridegroom had to get strong hands to aid him in securing the object of his affections. There is probably also a survival of the assaults that were then made on marriage parties in the showers of rice and old slippers bestowed so freely on the newly wedded.

Marriage by purchase, which is another very old custom, prevails amongst many modern peoples. The Babylonians and Assyrians reduced it to a system. At certain times every year the marriageable women were brought into the market place, and eventually put up at auction. The good-looking brought a high price. The plain-looking, although they may have been worth their weight in gold, found few bidders. The ill-favored, on the other hand, were given away with dowries

made up from the money paid over for their handsome sisters.

Many African tribes follow out the principle of this ancient practice; and that it is not wholly obsolete in Europe was shown recently in a traveler's account of a curious marriage custom among the Roumanians in the Western Carpathians. The statement was made that every year, at the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, a market is held on the crest of the Gains, from five thousand to six thousand feet above the level of the sea, and here the marriageable girls assemble, with their parents, in order to be viewed and claimed. All the relatives on the female side contribute to the dowry of the young woman, and this goes with the damsel to the market. The young men also bring the best they possess, and appear on the occasion gaily appareled. There is a good deal of bargaining at times, and as cattle are included among the gifts, the place resembles a great fair. When the betrothal is effected the pledge of attachment is not a ring, but an embroidered handkerchief.

In Syria certain recognized articles are handed over to the bride's father as a symbol of purchase. The articles are usually a carpet, a nose-ring, a neck-chain, bracelets and a camel bag. They must be passed over to the father for form's sake, as they become eventually the property of the young wife.

The cheapest and simplest transaction of the kind appears to prevail in Lapland. It is said that if one in that country asks the father of a marriageable girl to take a drink and the offer is accepted the understanding is that the person giving the treat is accepted as the girl's suitor. Were a custom like this prevalent in England it might seriously affect a certain branch of the revenue. We should probably also have fewer marriages in Britain were another custom appertaining to the wedded state introduced there.

It seems that in Mexico there is a large percentage of bachelors, but a very small percentage of unprotected females. The anomaly is explained by the fact that the Mexican on his marriage chivalrously undertakes the care of the female relatives and dependents of his wife. There is a sort of hereditary right and privilege in the matter. On the death of a husband a family council is called, and the male relatives of the widow and those of her husband pledge themselves to care for and protect the bereaved family. This is done even though the children are grown up and the widow wealthy. There would appear to be no choice on the woman's part, custom, if not law, prescribing that her male kindred shall administer her affairs, and look after the interests of her children. Even if the widow be poor there is no apparent shirking on the part of the male relatives of the obligation resting upon them, and it is said that when a Mexican marries he virtually contracts to protect and honor all the female relatives of his wife, and to provide for them if need be.

Some exceedingly beautiful rites are introduced in the marriage of a well-to-do Chinese couple, and are copied to some extent by the poorer classes. The bride is conducted by a number of female attendants to her husband's house; but before she crosses the threshold a handkerchief is thrown over her head and every thing is shut out from her sight. This is to teach her that on entering the marriage state she is groping in the dark future, but that if she will trust in her husband and rely on him to guide her she need not fear to go forward, for it will be his duty and pleasure to guide her steps. When she is ushered into the presence of her intended husband the handkerchief is removed from her eyes and she is led to a couch.

Here she takes a seat, and the bridegroom sits beside her, taking care to rest on a portion of the robe she wears. Should she seek to remove the robe out of the man's way the augury is not a pleasant one; but should she allow him to sit upon it she tells him plainly by that token that she is his captive, and willing to be led by him. Certain devotional ceremonies follow upon this introductory ritual, and then refreshments are served. Tea is made in cups after the fashion of the country. The bride and bridegroom take a sip and then the contents of the cups they have been using are mixed together, to signify the blending of the two lives. Other and more elaborate ceremonies take place, and several days elapse before they come to an end; but these preliminary proceedings are the most interesting, and to the parties concerned the most trying of all.

The day of that particular form of the romance of courtship which had its culmination at Gretna Green has passed away. Scotland, still, however, presents facilities for marriage which are not enjoyed in England. The ceremony may be legally performed there at any hour and at any place. There are similar formalities to those we have here in the way of banns and registration, if the parties be so minded, as they mostly are; but a couple may become legally man and wife across the border by a very slender form of publicity. Perhaps that is one reason why actions for breach-of-promise of marriage are so seldom brought in Scotch courts; but suits for divorce are equally rare among our Northern neighbors. In the United States, where facilities for marriage are greater than they are anywhere else among English-speaking people, cases of breach-of-promise are also few in number; but, unlike Scotland, divorces in America are by no means uncommon.

In the old Grecian and Roman States the way to married life was just

as easy as in the States of the new world; but there certain physical requirements were at one time insisted upon. A Spartan law forbade marriage until men and women arrived at their full strength, and there was an Athenian regulation that men should not marry until they were thirty-five. The Athenians at the same time favored married men, giving them the preference when vacancies occurred in official life.

The Romans did the same. They would help a married man so far that if he had not reached the age limit assigned for a position, as many of the years were dispensed with as he had children. These favors did not altogether succeed as a marriage bait. The young men of the empire had at one time, in fact, to be forced as well as bribed into marriage, the censors going so far as to insist on all the bachelors pledging themselves on oath to marry within a given time. Penalties were in addition laid on celibacy, and these and other disabilities of the single men were not removed until the time of Constantine.

Taxes on bachelors have been imposed by many nations, including our own; but no more remarkable law on the subject was ever passed than that by the local authorities of Eastham, in Massachusetts, in 1885. In that year these functionaries passed a law to the effect that every unmarried man in the township should kill six black-birds or three crows yearly while he remained single, and that as a penalty for disobeying the order he should not get married, and no one should marry him until he had destroyed the number of birds he was in arrears. —Leeds (Eng.) Mercury.

## POMEROY'S PHILOSOPHY.

Practical Lessons for Those in Search of Happiness and Content.

Destroy ignorance and let progression progress.

The greatest fool of all is he who fools himself.

Every utterance creates some kind of an impression.

Drop your bad habits and they can not lower you.

Those who go for berries should not retreat from briars.

The man who does not provide for his family is not his head.

Every time you help a lazy person you rob yourself and your family.

Less argument and more work will make any person better off.

Genius beckons a man, and if he attempts to climb, will help him.

How few are those who really understand what the mind is good for.

He who does not engage in the quarrels of others will have few of his own.

Prayers without work and a note without a signature are alike in value.

The sooner you cut loose from one who deceives you the better off you will be.

The world was never so full of opportunities for young men of good thoughts as now.

The more willing you are to let others enjoy their own think the clearer will be yours.

The sooner you begin training your own mind, the sooner you will have a mind to train.

Those who can not readily understand sense are generally the most opposed to nonsense.

You will learn more from reading good books and papers than by talking about your neighbors.

Young man, cultivate your gifts, rather than the mouth of a bottle, and you will succeed better.

Happiness has no time to stay long with those who interfere with the private affairs of others.

Taking interest from the poor, and taking interest in the poor are investing for different results. —Pomeroy's Advance Thought.

## A Remarkable Disease.

In no physiological phenomena is the influence of the nerves upon the body shown so forcibly as in the case of homesickness, which, when prolonged and intensified, becomes a mortal disease. The melancholy of the nature which loves home and despairs of again seeing it preys upon the nervous system until it is wrought into a state of abnormal excitement which presents distinct physical symptoms. Respiration presently becomes labored, and is more like sighing than breathing; the face wears the pallor of a corpse already; the heart beats with the swiftness of great debility; there is no appetite, there is no sleep; secretions become irregular, and congestion a matter of course; the sight becomes dim, fever sets in, and either sudden death closes the scene, or the exhaustion of the fever carries off the patient after prolonged suffering. There is no cure for this terrible illness, after it is strongly established, but return to the native country, and sometimes that cure is undertaken too late. It attacks mountaineers, singularly enough, more frequently than any other class of people, and the only preventive against it is the presence of some other equally strong emotion with the love of home, or some absorbing occupation which leaves no time to think, and hardly to feel. Perfectly sane though the patient be, he has all the impedimenta of insanity in an effort for recovery, and is as pliable as any victim in the records of suffering. —Harper's Bazar.

—Second Husband (to wife)—"I was at the cemetery to-day, my dear, and found your former husband's grave in very bad condition." Wife—"I suppose it is." Second Husband—"Yes, the inscription 'Gone, but not forgotten' is nearly overgrown with grass." —N. Y. Sun.

## COURTS IN FRANCE.

Low French Judges Frequently Browbeat and Anger Prisoners.

A judge presiding over one of the Paris courts was recently removed from his office for two very curious offenses. It appears that after examining a witness for several hours in his court, he invited that witness to dine with him at a neighboring restaurant. Plying him there with wine, the judge put a number of questions to his guest, and, having drawn out of him certain damaging facts, forthwith caused him to be arrested.

His other offense was still more heinous. He talked through a telephone with a witness, pretending that he (the judge) was one of the persons accused in court, and so led the witness to betray himself and his accused friend. It is no wonder that, after conduct so unbecoming a judge, he was deemed unfit any longer to hold his even scales of justice.

Although this judge was thus rightfully punished, his conduct suggests to us the wide contrast which exists between the French courts of justice and method of legal procedure, and those of the United States and England. The whole system, indeed, is different in the two cases.

Our judges have a distinct and dignified duty to perform, and, as a rule, they maintain, as do the English judges, a lofty and impartial attitude in presiding over trials. They remain, for the most part, silent until they have to decide points of law, or until one of the counsel requires correction. After the arguments have closed, it is their duty to address the jury, explain the points at issue, call for the verdict, and deliver the judgment or sentence.

The French judge, on the other hand, takes constant and active part in the trial itself. He questions not only witnesses, but the prisoner himself, and often subjects the prisoner to a severe and searching cross-examination, trying to trap him into damaging confessions, contradicting him, and even sometimes cracking jokes at the prisoner's expense.

When a witness has made a certain statement, the French judge will turn to the prisoner, and tartly ask him what he has to say to that? A prisoner on trial in a French court, in short, is nagged and worried from the beginning to the end of the case, by both judge and prosecutor. The prosecutor is an official who acts in France as public prosecutor, grand jury and adviser of judge in one.

The fact that in the French courts the judge is one of the active participants in the trials, gives a dramatic color to the proceedings which is usually absent from our own courts. The dialogues between judge and prisoner are watched with keen interest, and often with laughter or applause, by the crowd of spectators; for sometimes judge and prisoner engage in a duel of wit and banter. But, from the American point of view, this method of seeking to find out the truth, and to dispense justice, seems far less effectual—to say nothing of its surprising lack of dignity—than that which prevails in our own courts.

The French judge often browbeats or angers the prisoner into making rash answers, which increase the chance of his conviction, even though he may be really innocent. With us, the prisoner is amply protected in every right of defense. He is supposed to be innocent until he is fully proved by proper and legal evidence, which he is unable to overthrow, to be guilty; whereas in France, the judge often seems to set out with his questioning of the prisoner as if the prisoner were presumed to be guilty, and as if the burden of proof were on him to prove himself innocent. —Fouth's Companion.

## GENOA'S CAMPO SANTO.

A Weird City of the Dead Described by George B. Sims.

Imagine a garden surrounded with noble open galleries lined with magnificent white marble monuments, and all shut in by great sunny green hills, which stand around it like sentinels guarding the silent and sacred camp of the dead. Imagine all this, then put above the roses and the blossoms and the fragrant trees, and the yellow immortelles and the green wreaths and the glorious marble statuary, a blue sky and a bright sun, and you have a faint idea of Genoa's "Holy Field."

But you can not imagine the monuments and the memorial statuary. You must see them, because they are so utterly unlike any thing we have in our cold, prosaic land. In long marble galleries, open to the air and the sun, the monuments at first give the cemetery the appearance of an art exhibition. You imagine you have wandered into a sculpture gallery by mistake; but the wreaths of flowers, with broad silk sashes attached, the swinging lamps, and the memorial tablets unobtrusive you. Each monument has, as it were, an arch of the gallery to itself, and is placed against the back wall. The figures are rarely allegorical. A man in his habit as he lived stands life-size in white marble above his own tomb. A little girl in a short frock, with her lap full of flowers, seems dancing on the column that records her death. Over another beautiful tomb is a family group, life-size. The father is dying. He lies on his death bed and the sculptor has realized every detail of drapery. The wife kneels by the bedside, some of her daughters supporting her. The old mother sits in an easy-chair, her eyes raised to Heaven, her lips seeming almost to move in prayer. On the other side of the bed the eldest son stands up and supports one of the daughters,

who has utterly broken down. It is a marvelous piece of work. It is the "Last Adieu" realized in marble. It is naturalism and it is art. It is realistic, and so perfect in detail that you would recognize any of that group of mourners if you met them in the street.

Over another tomb, where a husband and wife lie buried together, this old couple sit in two arm chairs, holding each other's hand. On another a man lies dead on his bed, and his young wife reverently raises the sheet and gazes for the last time upon his face. Over another tomb is the statue of a man who lies within. On the steps of the tomb stands his wife, and she holds their little girl in her arms and lifts her up as though to kiss the dead papa. The door of another vault is represented as half open. The husband lies dead inside. The wife knocks at the door and listens for her dear one's voice to call her in.

There are hundreds and hundreds of these beautiful groups in the Campo Santo. What makes them the more extraordinary to the English traveler is that the living and the dead are all habited in modern everyday costume, and no detail is spared to make the groups and single figures triumphs of realism. One remarkable piece of sculpture I have omitted to mention. It is over the tomb of a beautiful Italian lady who died a short time ago. Her bed is represented with a perfection of detail. The lace on the pillow is perfect. The lady is dead, but the angel has come to fetch her. The angel takes the dead lady's hand and the lady gets out of bed to go with the angel to Heaven. This is the moment depicted by the sculptor. The lady sits on the edge of the bed and the angel points upwards in the direction they are to travel together.

All this is very beautiful, but its intense realism may jar on some. It did on me after a time. I felt that something of the sublimity of death was taken away in the process, and I turned with a little sigh of relief to some of the humbler graves which dotted the sunny garden of fragrant roses that lay so bright and beautiful under the blue Italian sky. —Genoa Cor. London Referee.

## CLEVER COUNTERFEITS.

Something About the Most Cleverly Executed Raised Note Ever Made.

The United States Secret-Service sleuth-hounds have captured and "run in" a raised silver certificate that has been inaccurately described in the papers. At the headquarters of the secret service in the Treasury building the correspondent was shown the spurious curiosity and the true inwardness was told by an official, who said:

"This, which, by the way, is the most cleverly executed raised note ever seen in the department, was seized in the South. The head of Dexter, who was once Secretary of the Treasury, has been cut from a fractional 50-cent piece and pasted over the vignette of Martha Washington. The descriptions hitherto published state that George Washington's vignette was substituted for Martha's, but you see that is a mistake. The figures '50' and the word 'fifty' were also cut from the fractional currency. The figures '50' in the back were taken from canceled revenue stamps." The official then displayed a counterfeit \$20 silver certificate which had been raised from a \$2 certificate. This was not as good a sample of work as the other, but it passes all the same. The figures were cut from a cigar stamp. General Hancock's vignette adorns this elevated currency. The fact is the \$20 silver certificate has not been issued, and it will bear Secretary Manning's vignette when it does come before the public. It is barely ready.

The colored people of the South are generally the victims of the most wretched counterfeiters. The bills used by the students in commercial colleges are frequently passed upon the "man and brother" of the rice and cotton regions, so the service relates. —Washington Letter.

## Modern Definitions.

An Innovation—A Hotel Serenade.  
The Social Whirl—A Hop.  
A Fowl Tip—A Rooster's Comb.  
The Last Thing in Shoes—The Wearer's Heel.  
Cold Daze—A Frigid Stare.  
A Still Hunt—An Internal Revenue Raid.

A Full Hand—A Drunken Employee.  
A Hard Lot—A Marble Quarry.  
A Dark Secret—A Colored Woman's Age.

Your Rumble Servant—Thunder.  
Out of Tune—The Average Tenor.  
Gait Receipts—Horse-Race Winnings.  
A Clothes Friend—The Tailor.  
Lo Lands—Indian Reservations.  
A Bridal Reign—Henry VIII's.  
A Speaking Silence—Conversation between Deaf-Mutes.

A Cheap Garment—A Coat of White-wash.

Much Adieu About Nothing—A Woman's Farewell.

A Shady Set—A Group of Trees. —W. H. Stever, in Puck.

—Mabel—"Lovely day, girls. Where have you been?" Clara and Maud—"We've just come from the matinee. Been to see the new society actress." Mabel—"Was she good? What did she play?" Clara—"O, she played in the worst lot of old dresses you ever saw. And, do you know, she actually wore the same dress through a whole act." Mabel—"Why, how positively scandalous! What was the play?" Maud—"O, I didn't notice. 'Repertoire,' I think the bill said." —Boston Beacon.

—When electricity becomes the agent of punishment for crime, the judge's "charge" will have more significance than it does now.

## HORRIBLE TORTURE.

The Cruel Punishment Inflicted Upon Paricides in China.

The Pekin Commercial Gazette gives the details of the horrible murder of a man by his own son in a fit of insanity. The young man was known to be subject to temporary derangement; but as he had, ever been a dutiful son, his father persuaded the neighbors not to report the matter to the authorities, lest he should be removed and placed in confinement. The punishment for such connivance is one hundred blows, which in the present instance have been duly administered to all concerned. The unhappy son, having suddenly attacked and killed his father, rushed into the street proclaiming that he had done so. He was apprehended, but when brought up for examination vacillated and incoherent answers were all that could be obtained; and medical examination proved him to be really mad. According to the law of China, a parricide is doomed to be done to death by the appalling process known as the ling-chee, or slow death; and the execution of this dread sentence is nowise affected by the sanity of the criminal.

This punishment is inflicted on the murderers of father, mother, brother, husband, uncle or tutor, and also on traitors. The miserable culprit is sentenced to be cut into twenty-four, thirty-six, seventy-two or one hundred and twenty pieces, a large proportion of which must be accomplished ere the executioner dares to touch a vital spot and end the torture of the victim. Only in certain cases does the imperial clemency grant death after the eighth division. The commonest form of this penalty is that of twenty-four cuts; and the executioner prides himself on the anatomical skill with which they are administered. The victim being bound to a cross, the butcher by the first two cuts removes the eyebrows, by the third and fourth the shoulders, the fifth and sixth the breasts, the seventh and eighth the parts between each hand and elbow, the ninth and tenth the parts between each elbow and shoulder, the eleventh and twelfth the flesh of each thigh;—but we will proceed no further in this dread description.

Far beyond the physical torture of such a death is the disgrace which, according to the national creed, attaches in the spirit world to any luckless new arrival whose spirit-body betokens having been put to death in any disgraceful way. Decapitation is bad enough, but to have been subject to the ling-chee is prima facie evidence that the deceased is quite unfit company for respectable spirits in the other world, consequently the new-comer is foredoomed to a very troubled future. Doubly hard, therefore, on the poor lunatic is the sentence of which his sad estate can procure no mitigation. —London Letter.

## THEATRICAL TEARS.

Their Physiology Discussed by a Famous Medical Periodical.

The question of theatrical tears, and whether they are produced by the actor independently of real emotion, has lately been discussed. The question is not without interest, and has been answered in various ways by different actors, some contending that the highest art in this direction is only seen when the artist "feels" his part; while others state that emotional conditions in the actor are fatal to the highest form of theatrical art. To how large an extent our emotions are under control is patent to everybody, for much of our early education is devoted entirely to the formation of habits of control in this direction. Emotions are mainly reflex phenomena, and are produced as the result of thoughts, sounds or sights. It is very doubtful whether an actor can stir up in his audience the higher emotions unless he abandon himself to the situation of the play, and himself feels to some extent the sorrows or terrors of the scene. An actor who can only manage to stir the emotions of the most easily moved of his audience, whether to laughter or tears, has gone a good way toward success; for emotional states are so infectious that the sound or sight of tears or laughter is sure to cause the prevailing emotion to spread. The really great actor, however, must be capable of doing something more than merely touch the biggest fool of the audience—he must make his audience absolutely forgetful of itself, and be himself the direct, and not the indirect, cause of the emotional state into which it is thrown. To do this the actor must be himself a person of intense feeling, and must for the time experience the emotion he is seeking to portray. Really great acting is a matter of feeling rather than of reasoning intelligence, and we doubt whether an actor who studies and puzzles too much over the subtleties of the author is not in danger of checking the manifestations of his histrionic genius. It is a well known fact that Master Betty, the "infant Roscius," could, as a boy, stir the higher emotions of the audience by his portrayal of Shakespeare's masterpieces (the subtleties of which he most certainly could not understand), but that his power was, so to say, knocked out of him by a university education, which probably brought home to him the shortcomings of his performances, and, by teaching him to reason about his character, prevented the feeling portrayal of the prevailing emotions. Two of the greatest actors of the present age—Salvini and Ristori—both belong to the emotional Italian race, and it is impossible to believe that during the portrayal of their most successful parts they are not entirely forgetful of themselves and engrossed by the emotions of the scene. —London Lancet.