

# CLEOPATRA.

Being an Account of the Fall and Vengeance of Harmachis, the Royal Egyptian,

AS SET FORTH BY HIS OWN HAND.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

OF THE FEAST OF CLEOPATRA, OF THE MEETING OF THE PHAROAH, OF THE SAYING OF HARMACHIS, AND OF CLEOPATRA'S VOWS OF LOVE.

THE third night once more was the feast prepared in the hall of the great house that had been retained to the use of Cleopatra, and on this night its splendour was greater even than on the nights before. For the twelve triclinia (couches) that were set about the table were embossed with gold, and those of Cleopatra and Antony were of gold set with jewels. The dishes also were all of gold set with jewels, the walls were hung with purple cloths seven with gold, and on the floor were strewn fresh roses ankle deep, covered with a net of gold, as the slaves tread them sent up their perfume. Once again

was I bid to stand with Charmion and Iras and Meria behind the couch of Cleopatra, and, like a slave, from time to time call out the hours as they flew. And there being no help, wild at heart I went; but this I swore—it should be for the last time, for I could not bear that shame. For though I would not yet believe what Charmion told me—that Cleopatra was about to become the love of Antony—yet could I no more endure this ignominy and torture. For from Cleopatra now I had no words save such words as a Queen speaks to her slave, and methinks it gave her dark heart pleasure to torment me.

Thus it came to pass that I, the Pharaoh, crowned of Khem, stood among eunuchs and waiting women behind the couch of Egypt's Queen while the feast went merrily and the wine-cup passed. And ever Antony sat, his eyes fixed upon the face of Cleopatra, and from time to time let her deep glance lose itself in his, and then for a little while their talk died away. For he told her tales of war and deeds that he had done—ay, and love-jefts such as are not met for the ears of women. But at naught took she offense; rather, falling into his humor, would she cap his stories with others of a finer wit, but not less shameless.

At length, the rich meal being finished, Antony gazed at the splendid room. "Tell me, then, most lovely Egypt!" he said, "are the sands of Nile compact of gold, that thou canst, night by night, thus squander the ransom of a King upon a single feast? Whence comes this untold wealth?"

I brought me of the tomb of the divine Menkara, whose holy treasure was thus wickedly wasted, and looked up, so that Cleopatra's eyes caught mine; but, reading my thoughts, she looked heavily. "Why, noble Antony," she said, "surely it is naught! In Egypt we have our secrets, and know whence to conjure riches at our need. Say, what is the value of this golden service, and of the meats and drinks that have been set before us?"

"Maybe, a thousand sestertia." "Thou hast understated it by half, noble Antony! But, such as it is, I give it thee and those with thee as a free token of my friendship. And more will I show thee now, I myself, will eat and drink ten thousand sestertia at a draught!"

"That can not be, fair Egypt!" She laughed, and bade a slave bring her vinegar in a glass. When it was brought she set it before her and laughed again, while Antony, rising from his couch, drew near and sat himself at her side, and all the company leant forward to see what she would do. And this she did: From her ears she took one of those great pearls, which she had had drawn from the body of the divine Pharaoh; and before any could guess her purpose let it fall into the vinegar. Then came silence, the silence of wonder, and slowly the peerless pearl melted in the acid. When it was melted she took the glass and shook it, then drank the vinegar to the last drop.

"More vinegar, slave!" she cried, "my meal is but half finished!" and she drew forth the second pearl.

"By Bacchus, no! thou shalt not!" cried Antony, snatching at her hands. "I have seen enough." And at that moment, moved thereby, I knew not what, I called aloud: "The hour falls—the hour of the coming of the ears of Menkara!"

An ashy whiteness grew upon Cleopatra's face and furiously she turned upon me, while all the company gazed wondering, not knowing what the words might mean.

"Thou ill-omened slave!" she cried. "Speak thus once more and thou shalt be scourged with rods!—ay, scourged like an evil-doer—that I promise thee, Harmachis!"

"What means the knave of an astrologer?" asked Antony. "Speak, sirrah! didst make clear thy meaning, for those who deal in curses must warrant their wares."

"I am a servant of the Gods, noble Antony. That which the Gods put in my mind that must I say; nor can I read their meaning." I answered humbly.

"Oh! oh! thou servest the Gods, dost thou, thou many-colored mystery!" (This he said having reference to my splendid robes.) "Well, I serve the Goddesses, which is a softer cult. And there's this between me and that: that though what thou put in my mind I say, neither can I read their meaning," and he glanced at Cleopatra as one who questions.

"Let the knave be," she said impatiently. "To-morrow we'll be rid of him. Sirrah, begone!"

I bowed and went; and, as I went, I heard Antony say: "Well, a knave he may be, for that all men are, but this for thy astrologer—he hath a royal air and the eye of a king—ay, and with it."

Without the door I paused, not knowing what to do, for I was bewildered with misery; and, as I stood, some one touched me on the hand. I glanced up—it was Charmion, who, in the confusion of the rising of the guests, had slipped away and followed me.

"Follow me," she whispered; "thou art in danger."

I turned and followed her. Why should I not? I served the Goddesses, which is a softer cult. And there's this between me and that: that though what thou put in my mind I say, neither can I read their meaning," and he glanced at Cleopatra as one who questions.

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crowd, we came, unseen, to a little side entrance that led to a stair up which we passed. The stair ended in a passage; we turned down it till we found a door on the left hand. Slightly Charmion entered, and I followed her into a dark chamber. Being in she barred the door, and kindling tinder to a flame, lit a hanging lamp. As the light grew strong I gazed around. The chamber was not large and had but one easement closely shuttered. For the rest, it was simply furnished, having white walls, some chests for garments, an ancient chair, what I took to be a tiring table, whereon were combs, perfumes and all the frippery that pertains to woman, and a white bed with a brodered coverlet, over which was hung a gnat gauze.

"Be seated, Harmachis," she said, pointing to the chair. I took the chair, and Charmion, throwing back the gnat gauze, sat herself upon the bed before me. "Knowest thou what I heard Cleopatra say as thou didst leave the banquetting hall?" she asked presently.

"Nay, I know not." "She gazed after thee, and, as we went over to her to do some service, she murmured to herself: 'By Serapis, I will make an end! No longer will I wait; to-morrow she shall be strangled!'"

"Why canst thou not believe it, O thou most foolish of men! Dost forget how high thou wast to death there in the Alabaster Hall? Who saved thee then from the knives of the eunuchs? Was it Cleopatra? Or was it I and Brennus? Stay, I will tell thee. Thou canst not yet believe it, because in thy folly thou dost not think it possible that the woman who has but lately been as a wife to thee can now in so short a time doom thee to be hanged to death. Nay, answer not—I know all, and this I tell thee

—thou hast not measured the depth of Cleopatra's perfidy, nor canst thou dream the blackness of her wicked heart. She had surely slain thee in Alexandria had she not feared that thy slaughter, being noised abroad, might bring trouble to her. Therefore she has brought thee here to kill thee secretly. For what more canst thou give her—she has thy heart's love, and is wearied of thy strength and beauty. She has robbed thee of thy Royal birthright, and brought thee a King to stand against her waiting women behind her at her feasts; she has won from thee the great secret of the holy treasure!"

"Ah, thou knowest that?" "Yea, I know all; and to-night thou shalt see the wealth stored against the need of Khem is being squandered to fill up the wanton luxury of Khem's Macedonian Queen! Thou seest how she hath kept her heart to thee, the honorable! Harmachis—at length thine eyes are open to the truth!"

"Ay, I see too well; she swore she loved me, and, fool that I was, I did believe her!" "She swore she loved thee!" answered Charmion, lifting her dark eyes; "now will I show thee how she doth love thee. Knowest thou what was this house? It was a priest's college, and, as thou wottest, Harmachis, their ways. This little chamber of oldtime was the chamber of the Head Priest, and the chamber that is beyond and below was the gathering room of the other priests. All this the old slave who keeps the place told me, and also she revealed what I shall show thee. Now, Harmachis, be silent as the dead and follow me!"

"She bowed the lamp, and by the little light that crept through the shuttered easement led me by the hand to the far corner of the room. Here she pressed upon the wall, and a door opened in its thickness. We entered, and she closed the spring. Now we were in a little chamber, some five cubits in length by four in breadth; for a faint light struggled into the closet, and also the sound of voices, whence I knew not. Loosing my hand, she crept to the end of the place, and looked steadfastly at the wall; then came back, and whispering 'silence!' led me forward with her. Then I saw that there were eyeholes in the wall, which pierced it, and were hidden on the farther side by carved work in stone. I looked through the hole that was in front of me, and this I saw: Six cubits below was the level of the floor of another chamber, lit with fragrant lamps, and most richly furnished. It was the sleeping place of Cleopatra, and there, within ten cubits of where I stood, Cleopatra sat on a gilded couch, and by her side sat Antony.

"Tell me," Cleopatra murmured—for so was this place built that every word spoken in the room below came to the ears of the listener above—"tell me, noble Antony, what pleased with my poor festival?"

"Ay," he answered in his deep soldier's voice; "ay, Egypt, I have made feasts, and been bidden to feasts, but never saw I aught like thine; and this I tell thee, though I am rough of tongue and unskilled in profane sayings such as women love, thou wast the richest sight of all that splendid board. The red wine was not so red as thy boueous cheek, the roses smelt not so sweet as the odor of thy hair, and no sapphire there with its changing light was so lovely as thy eyes of ocean blue."

"What! praise from Antony? Sweet words from the lips of him whose writings are so harsh? Why, 'tis praise, indeed!"

"Ay," he went on, "twas a royal feast, though I grieved that thou didst waste that great pearl; and what meant that hour-calling astrologer of thine, with his ill-omened talk of the curse of Menkara?"

A shadow fled across her glowing face. "I know not; he was lately wounded in a brawl and methinks the blow has crazed him."

"He seemed not crazed, and there was that about his voice which doth ring in my ears, like the rattle of fate. So wild, so wild, he looked upon thee, Egypt, with those piercing eyes of his, like one who loved and yet hated through the love."

"'Tis a strange man, I tell thee, noble Antony, and a learned. Myself, at times, I almost fear him, for deeply is he versed in the ancient arts of Egypt. Knowest thou that the man is of royal blood, and once he plotted to slay me? But I won him over, and slew him not, for he had the key to secrets that I fain would learn; and, indeed, I love his wisdom, and to listen to his deep talk of all hidden things."

"By Bacchus, but I grow jealous of the knave! And now, Egypt!"

"And now I have sucked his knowledge dry and have no more cause to fear him. Didst thou not see that these three nights I have made him stand a slave amid my slaves, and call about the hours as they fled in festival! No captive king marching in thy Roman triumphs can have suffered keener pangs than that proud Egyptian Prince as he stood and shamed behind my couch."

love not to think of men slaughtered in their sleep."

"This morning, perchance, may the hawk have flown," she answered, pondering. "He hath keen ears, this Harmachis, and can smother things that are not of the earth to aid him. Perchance even now he hears me in the spirit; for, of a truth, I seem to feel his presence breathing round me. I could tell thee—but no, let him be! Noble Antony, be my tiring woman and lose not this crown of gold; it chafes my brow. Be gentle, hurt me not—so."

He lifted the crown from her brows, and she shook loose her heavy weight of hair that fell about her like a garment.

"Taking the crown, Royal Egypt," he said, speaking low, "take it from my hand; I will not rob thee of it, but rather set it more firmly on that boueous brow."

"What means my Lord?" she asked, smiling and looking into his eyes.

"What mean I? Why, then, this; hither thou comest at my bidding, to make sense of the things that I say against thee as matters political. And knowest thou, Egypt, that hadst thou been other than thou art thou hadst not gone back to Queen in the Nile; for of this I am sure, the charges against thee are true, in fact. But being what thou art—and look! thou! never did Nature serve a woman better!—I forgive thee all. Even for the sake of thy grace and beauty I forgive thee that which hath not been forgiven to woman, or to patriotism, or to the dignity of age! See, now, how good a thing is woman's wit and loveliness, that can make Kings forget their duty and e'en e'en blindfolded justice to peep ere she lifts her sword! Take back thy crown, O Egypt! my care now it is that, though it be heavy, it shall not chafe thee."

"Royal words are those, most noble Antony," she said; "gracious and generous words, such as befit the conqueror of the world. A man, touching his misdeeds in the past—if misdeeds there have been—this I say, and this alone, then I knew not Antony. For, knowing Antony, who could sin against him? What woman could lift a sword against one who must be to all women as a God—one who, seen and known, draws after him the whole allegiance of the heart, as the sun draws flowers? And what more can I say and not cease the bounds of woman's modesty? Why, only this—set that crown upon my brow, great Antony, and I will take it as a gift from thee, by the giving made doubly dear, and to thy uses will I guard it. There now am I thy vassal Queen, and through me all old Egypt that I rule doth homage unto Antony the Triumvir, who shall be Antony the Emperor and Khem's Imperial Lord."

And he, having set the crown upon her locks, stood gazing on her, grown passionate in the warm breath of her living beauty, till at length he caught her by both hands, and, drawing her to him, kissed her thrice, saying:

"Cleopatra, I love thee, Sweet!—I love thee as never I loved before!"

She drew her from his embrace, smiling softly; and as she did so the golden circle of the sacred snake fell, being too loosely set upon her brow, and rolled away into the darkness beyond the ring of light.

Even in the bitter anguish of my heart I saw the omen and knew its evil import. But these things took no note.

"Thou lovest me!" she said most sweetly. "How know I that thou lovest me? Perchance 'tis Pulvis whom thou lovest—Pulvis, thy wedded wife!"

"Nay, 'tis not Pulvis; 'tis thee, Cleopatra, and thee alone. Many women have looked favorably upon me from my boyhood up, but to never a one have I known such desire as to thee, O thou Wonder of the World, like unto whom no woman ever was! Canst thou love me, Cleopatra, and to me be true—not for my place and power, not for that which I can give or can withhold, not for the crown and scepter of my kingdom, or for the light that flows from my bright star of fortune; but for myself, for the sake of Antony, the rough captain, grown old in camps? Ay, for the sake of Antony the reveller, the frail, the unskilled of purpose, but who never yet did desert a friend, or rob a poor man, or take an enemy unawares? Say, canst thou love me, Egypt, for if thou canst, why, I am more happy than thou to-night. I sat crowned in the Capitol at Rome absolute Monarch of the World!"

And ever as he spoke she gazed on him with wonderful eyes, and in them shone a light of truth and honesty such as was strange to me.

"Thou speakest plainly," she said, "and sweet are thy words unto mine ears—sweet would they be even were things otherwise than they are, for what woman would not love to see the world's master at her feet? But things being as they are, why, Antony, what can be so sweet as thy sweet words? The smooth harbor of his rest to the storm-tossed mariner—surely that is sweet! The dream of heaven's bliss that cheers the poor ascetic priest on his path of sacrifice—surely that is sweet! The sight of Dawn, the rosy-fingered, coming in his promise to glad the watching Earth—surely that is sweet! But, all not one of these, nor all dear, delightful things that are, can match the honey-sweetness of thy words to me, O Antony! For thou knowest not—never canst thou know—how dear hath been my life and empty, since this it is ordained that in love only can woman lose her solitude! And I have never loved—never might I love—till this happy night! Ay, take me in thy arms, and let us swear a great oath of love—an oath that may not be broken while life is in us! Behold! Antony! now and for ever do I vow most strict fidelity unto thee. Now and forever am I thine, and thine alone!"

Then Charmion took me by the hand and drew me thence.

"Hast seen enough?" she asked, when once more we were within the chamber and the lamp was lit.

"Yea," I answered; "my eyes are opened."

CHAPTER XXIII.  
THE PLAN OF CHARMION; CONFESSION OF CHARMION, AND ANSWER OF HARMACHIS.

FOR some while I sat with bowed head, and the last bitterness of shame sank into my soul. This, then, was the end! For this I had betrayed my faith; for this I had lost the secret of the Pyramid; for this I had lost my Crown, my honor, and, perchance, my hope of Heaven! Could there be another man in the wide world so steeped in sorrow as I was that night! Surely not one! Where should I turn! What could I do! And even through the tempest of my torn heart the bitter voice of jealousy called aloud. For I loved this woman, to whom I had given all; and she at this moment—she was—Ah! I could not bear to think of it, and in my utter agony my heart burst forth in a river of tears such as are terrible to weep!

Then Charmion drew near to me, and I saw that she, too, was weeping.

"Weep not, Harmachis!" she sobbed, kneeling at my side. "I can not endure to see thee weep. Oh! why wouldst thou not be warned! Then hast thou been great and

happy, and not so now. Listen, Harmachis! Thou didst swear that thou wouldst be true to the woman; and to-morrow she hands thee over to the murderers!"

"It is well," I gasped.

"Nay, it is not well, Harmachis, give her not this last triumph over thee. Thou hast lost all save life; but while life remains hope remains also, and with hope the chance of vengeance!"

"Ah!" I said, starting from my seat. "I had not thought of that. Ay, the chance of vengeance! It would be sweet to be avenged!"

"It would be sweet, Harmachis, and yet this—vengeance is an arrow that is falling off pierces him who shot it. Myself—I know it," and she sighed. "But a truce to talk and grief. Time will there be for us to heavy grieving, if not to talk, in all the coming years. Thou must fly—before the dawning of the light must thou fly. Leave this place, to-morrow, ere the day-break, a galley that but yesterday came from Alexandria bearing fruit and stores sails thither once again, whereof the Captain is known to me, but to thee he is Syrian merchant, and cook thee as I know how, and furnish thee with a letter to the Captain of the galley. He shall give thee passage to Alexandria, for to him thou wilt serve as a merchant going on the business of thy trade. 'Tis Brennus who is Captain of the Guard to-night, and Brennus is a friend to me and thee. Perchance he will guess somewhat; or, perchance, he will not guess; at the least, the Syrian merchant shall safely pass the lines. What sayest thou?"

"It is well," I answered wearily; "little do I reck the issue."

"Rest thou then here, Harmachis, while I make a plan; be ready; and, Harmachis, grieve not overmuch; there are others who should grieve more heavily than thou." And she went, leaving me alone with mine agony that rent me like a forty-fathom cable, and I thought of the gallies that but yesterday came from Alexandria bearing fruit and stores sails thither once again, whereof the Captain is known to me, but to thee he is Syrian merchant, and cook thee as I know how, and furnish thee with a letter to the Captain of the galley. He shall give thee passage to Alexandria, for to him thou wilt serve as a merchant going on the business of thy trade. 'Tis Brennus who is Captain of the Guard to-night, and Brennus is a friend to me and thee. Perchance he will guess somewhat; or, perchance, he will not guess; at the least, the Syrian merchant shall safely pass the lines. What sayest thou?"

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which can tear a woman's heart, for now I was sure that thou didst love Cleopatra Ay, and so mad was I, even that night was I minded to betray thee; but I thought— not yet; not yet; to-morrow he may soften, and come the morning, and all was ready for the bursting of the great plot that should make thee Pharaoh. And I, too, came— thou dost remember—and again thou didst put me away when I spake to thee in parables, as something of little worth, as a thing too small to claim a moment's weighty thought. And, knowing that this was because—thou knewest it not—thou didst love Cleopatra, whom now thou must straightway slay; I grew mad, and my wicked spirit entered into me, possessing me utterly, so that no longer was I myself. And because thou hadst scorned me, this, to my everlasting shame and sorrow I did—I passed into Cleopatra's presence and betrayed thee and those with thee, and all our holy cause, saying that I had found a writing which thou hadst let fall and read all this therein."

I gazed and sat silent; and gazing sadly at me she went on:

"When she understood how great was the plot, and how deep its roots, Cleopatra was much troubled; and, at first, she would have fled to Sais or taken ship and run for Cyprus, but I showed her that the ways were barred. Then she said that she would cause thee to be slain, there, in the chamber, and I left her so believing; for, great, she said, I knew mad, and my wicked need I grieve. But what said I anon—vengeance is an arrow that off falls on him who looses it! So was it with me; for between my going and thy coming she hatched a deeper plan. She feared that to slay thee would but be to light a fiercer fire of revolt; but she saw that to bind

thee to her, and having left men awhile to doubt, to show thee faithless would strike the imminent danger at its roots and wither it. This plot once formed, being great, she dared its doubtful issue, and need I go on! Thou knowest, Harmachis, how she won; and thus did the shaft of vengeance that I loosed fall upon my own head. For on the morrow I knew that I had sinned for naught, that on the wretched Paulus had been laid the burden of my betrayal, and that I had but ruined the cause whereof I was sworn and given the man I loved to the arms of wanton Egypt."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PRETTY GINGHAM GOWNS.

Colors and Styles That Promise to Be Very Popular.

Scotch gingham for midsummer dresses are brought out at this early season to be made up during the modiste's dull season. The colors fashionable for cashmeres are repeated in these simple cotton fabrics, and a touch of black in stripes or bars is added to many of the newest patterns. The black stripes are of sateen, and look like lines of genuine satin most effectively arranged at intervals on an old-rose gingham that is strewn with darker chine flowers, or on sage green or pale blue of the same design; or there are irregular lines of black marking gray-blue, pink, or stem green stripes, or stripes that alternate with white stripes; there are also plaids of Suede and white with black and rose sateen bars, or pink and gray with black, green and gray with black, and yellow with black and white cross-bars.

Bordered gingham are so wide that the width serves for the length of the skirt, the border trimming the foot; these have a plain ground, with wide Scotch plaid border, or else graduated stripes of the new chine designs in vines. Many light-colored gingham have chine flowers of a darker shade, and narrow sateen stripes, while other new gingham have broad, chine-figured stripes alternating with white or light plain stripes. Bourette stripes with lace-like thin stripes are pretty, and the rough bourette threads, sometimes in black or in white, are strewn about at intervals on otherwise plain gingham. Genuine tartan colors are seen in the newest Scotch plaids in the dark blue and green tartans so much worn in woolen goods, and the gray Stuart plaids of red, green and white. Fancy plaids come in charming soft colors of mauve with yellowish brown, of rose pink with white and green; of gray-blue or porcelain or navy blue with ivory white. Heliotrope, mauve, lavender, yellow and green gingham will be as much worn as they were last year, and there are many of the pretty half-inch stripes of three colors together, as green, cream and old-rose, or gray, brown and green, or lavender, violet and brown, or pale blue, dark gray and clear white. For children are the Scotch plaids and the smaller crossbars and fine stripes of a color on white.

For trimming these gingham are the white embroidered muslins, used as yokes, Spanish jackets, collars, cuffs, and as insertions in the skirt of very simply made gowns, with full waist, slightly pointed in front, either straight or pointed in the back, and with straight skirts. The large sleeves will be worn by many, made precisely as they were last summer, but the modistes advise moderately large coat sleeves, or else the mutton-leg sleeves, made without too much fullness at the top. Gros grain ribbon of the most prominent color in the gingham will be set diagonally on the front of the bodice, and banded on its pointed edge. Wide van dykes of white embroidery will be inserted straight across the front of pointed bodices of solid-colored gingham, somewhat in yoke fashion, or two narrower rows of upturned points will be used, the lower row passing just under the armholes, and that above from sleeve to sleeve. The fashion of fastening the front of the bodice out of sight will be continued in these cotton dresses, the small buttons and loops being hidden under embroidery down the middle of the front, or under epaulettes or a Spanish jacket on the left side. The plaid gingham will be cut bias throughout, and made with a round belted waist very slightly full at the belt, and quite plain on the shoulders. High standing collars of embroidery, and also turned-down collars, with cuffs to match on full sleeves, will be worn with these waists.

—Harper's Bazar.

It is an error to suppose that the operations of the mont-de-piete are in a ratio with poverty and misery. The opposite is the case. When business is brisk small merchants and manufacturers seek from the mont-de-piete the capital they are in need of, and which they can not find elsewhere on so good terms. If there is a lull in trade the business of the mont-de-piete diminishes.

The larger number of those who seek relief in times of need in the pawnshop belong, in Paris, as elsewhere, to the working classes. In the case of strikes, or during a prolonged crisis, the capital of the mont-de-piete is swallowed up. During the siege of Paris it was completely cleaned out. At the end of July, 1870, it had a reserve of 8,000,000 francs, but by February, 1871, this had sunk to 63,000 francs, and it would have collapsed but for a loan of 8,000,000 francs from the post-office savings banks.—N. Y. Sun.

## A FRIENDS WEDDING.

The Entire Ceremony Took Less Than Half an Hour's Time.

A short time since I had the pleasure of witnessing a Friends wedding in the old meeting house at the corner of Fifteenth and Race streets, Philadelphia. To one from New England, where such affairs are not common, it was indeed a novelty. Upon entering the meeting house the extreme plainness and simplicity of the surroundings attract the eye of the stranger. Directly in front, and facing the entrance, are three rows of unupholstered benches. There is a gallery extending around three sides of the building and containing several rows of benches, each one being much higher than the preceding one. The massive pulpit, the customary church organ, the handsome windows of cathedral glass, all these are absent, and their absence tends to give the place a tone foreign to that of the majority of religious edifices of to-day. After taking our seats, and before the wedding party arrive, we have an opportunity to observe our surroundings and the guests who have assembled to witness the ceremony. It is evident that the female portion of a Friends congregation do not come together to exhibit any new style of head-gear, as their sisters in other denominations are often charged with doing.

Suddenly the low murmur of voices ceases, and without any pomp, or being heralded by the swelling sound of some famous wedding march, the bride and groom, preceded by the ushers and followed by the bride-maids and their escorts, come slowly on the aisle, and take their places in the center of the front row of seats, facing the Friends who have come to witness the ceremony. In the second row of seats, and directly behind the bride and groom, are seated the nearest relatives of the contracting parties. All is profound silence for a short time, then the bride and groom rise simultaneously and clasp their right hands, and the groom says: "In the presence of the Lord and divine our friends, I take thee, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife, promising, with divine assistance, to be unto thee a faithful and loving husband until death shall separate us." As soon as he has finished, the bride says, in substance, the same thing, after which they resume their seats. A table is then brought in and placed before them by the ushers, on which the marriage certificate is signed. The certificate is then handed back to the nearest relative of the bride and the table removed. It is necessary that the certificate be signed by the bride-maids and groomsmen also. After a short period of silence the person holding the document arises and reads it aloud. After this reading, it is often customary to have a sermon preached by some prominent person. Another period of silence then follows, and is closed by one of the relatives rising and asking that the guests remain seated until the bridal party have passed out, which is a signal for them to do so.

The entire ceremony takes less than half an hour, and the strange solemnity of it all, together with the absence of a clergyman, gives it a rather strange appearance.—Cor. Boston Transcript.

## PARIS PAWN SHOPS.

The Immense Amount of Business Done By These Institutions.

Some statistics of the amount of business done by the pawn shops of Paris and some account of their working are included in the last published "Annuaire Statistique de la Ville de Paris." The mont-de-piete, says the official report, derives no profit from its operations, and its action is charitable, inasmuch as it shelters borrowers from the rapacity of usurers, but it must not be thought that those who have recourse to it are receiving public aid or that the mont-de-piete is a purely charitable institution. What the mont-de-piete does is to lend money on personal property at seven per cent. interest. This high rate of interest is necessary in order to defray the expenses of the management, the storage of goods, etc. On articles of jewelry, plate and things that will not deteriorate, four-fifths of the value is given. If at the end of the year the mont-de-piete has a surplus the rate of interest is reduced. If it should run short of capital, it receives donations from the Department of Public Aid. In some cities in France—including Montpellier, Toulouse and Grenoble—the working expenses are defrayed entirely by charity and no interest is charged on loans.

During the last year for which figures are given 1,440,636 articles were pledged in Paris, representing a sum of 35,840,450 francs; 750,674 articles, worth 18,961,149 francs, were renewed; a total value of nearly 811,000,000. The average amount of the loan was 85. There were 2,040,927 articles withdrawn, and 297,617 articles upon which payments had lapsed were sold, and brought 4,968,849 francs.

A large part of