

THE WEEKLY AGITATOR.

MARRIAGE IN EGYPT.—When an Egyptian wants a wife he is not allowed to visit the harems of friends to select one, for Mohammed forbade men to see the face of any woman they could marry—that is to say, any besides their mothers or sisters. A man is, therefore, obliged to employ a "khatbeh," or matchmaker, to find one for him, for which service, of course, she expects "black sheep"—that is, payment. The khatbeh, having found a girl, recommends her to the man as exceedingly beautiful and eminently suitable to him. The father is then waited upon to ascertain the dowry he requires, for all wives are purchased as they were in patriarchal days. When Jacob had no money to pay for Rachel, he served her father for seven years as an equivalent; and when dupes was obliged to serve the second time to secure his prize. (Gen. xxix.) Fathers still refuse to give a younger daughter in marriage before an elder one shall have been married. The people of Armenia, in Asiatic Turkey, forbid a younger son to marry before an elder, and this is likewise the law of the Hindus.

The price of a wife varies from five shillings to \$1,500. The girl may not be more than five or six years old, but whatever her age, two-thirds of the dowry is at once paid to her father in the presence of witnesses. The father then, or his representative, says: "I betroth thee my daughter," and the young man responds, "I accept of such betrothal." Unless among the lower classes, the father expends the dowry in the purchase of dress, ornaments or furniture for the bride, which never becomes the property of the husband. Even when betrothed, the intercourse of the parties is very restricted. The Arabs will not allow them to see each other, but the Jews are not quite so stringent. The betrothal often continues for years before the man demands his wife. Thus, "Samson went down and talked to the woman," or espoused her; and "after a time he returned to take her." Girls are demanded at the age of 10 and between that and 16 years, but after 16 few men will seek them, and the dowry expected is then proportionally low.

Girls in Egypt are often mothers at 12 and grandmothers at 26, and in Persia they are said to be mothers at 11, grandmothers at 24, and past child bearing at 30. When a man demands his betrothed a day is fixed for the nuptials, and for seven nights before he is expected to give a feast, which, however, is furnished by the guests themselves. Thus, one sends coffee, another rice, another sugar, etc. The principal time of this continued feast is the night before the consummation. The conduct is entrusted to "the friend of the bridegroom." (John iii. 29). About the middle of this day the bride arrives at the house and retires to the harem, where she sits with her mother, sisters and female friends. At the third or fourth watch of the night—three or four hours after sunset—the bridegroom, who has not yet seen his fair one, goes to the mosque to pray, accompanied by "meshals," or torches and lanterns, with music. Upon his return he sees his bride, with whom, having given her attendant a present to retire, he is left alone. He then throws off her veil and for the first time sees her face. If satisfied, he informs the women outside, who immediately express their joy by screaming "zuggaret," which is echoed by the women in the house, and then by those in the neighborhood.

It is wonderful what fools boys are. A charming widow of Stillwater, Minn., owns a nice boy, and a man from St. Paul wants to be appointed deputy father to the lad. It was only last Sunday that while the St. Paul man was strolling down Chestnut street with the lad, he asked: "Bab, does your mamma bang her hair?" and that foolish boy answered, "O, no, but you ought to see her bang dad's head. Guess the minister didn't know everything when he told pa to prepare to die. Prepare! why he was aching to die!"

EPTAPH.
Here lies I and my three daughters,
Killed by drinking Vichy waters;
If we had stuck to Ripon water,
We shouldn't be lying in these bare vaults,
Or if Electric Oil we'd used,
We never should have gone and died.

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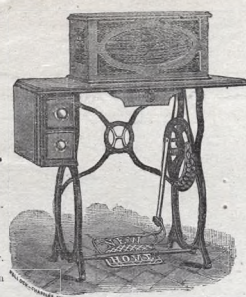
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