

TRANSYLVANIA MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

WHEN the young couple go to church the day after the wedding they are met at the church door by a group of masked figures who surround them, singing and hooting, and playfully endeavour to separate the young matron from her husband. If they succeed in so doing, then he must win her back in hand-to-hand fight with his adversaries, or else he must give a piece of money as her ransom. In general it is considered a bad omen for the married life of the young couple if the wife be separated from her husband on this occasion; therefore, it is customary for the young husband to take his stand close by the church door while his wife is praying within, and then be ready to catch hold of her as soon as she steps outside. For greater precaution the man often holds her round the waist with both hands during the dance which immediately takes place before the church, and at which they assist merely as spectators, taking no active part, as it is not considered seemly to dance in the church attire.

As commonly several couples are married at the same time, it is usual for each separate wedding party to bring its own band of music, and dance thus independently of the others. On the occasion of a tripple wedding I lately witnessed it was very amusing to watch the three wedding parties coming down the street, each accelerating its pace till it came to be a sort of race up to the church door to secure the best dancing-place. The ground being rough and slanting; there was only one spot where anything like a flat dancing-floor could be obtained, and the winning party at once secured this enviable position, while the others had to put up with an inclined plain or a few hillocks accidenting their ball-room floor. The ten or sixteen couples belonging to each wedding party are enclosed in a ring of bystanders, each rival band of music playing away with heroic disregard for the scorched ears of the listeners. "Polka!" calls out the first group; "Walzer!" roars the second, for it is a point of honour that each party should display a noble independence in taking its own line of action; and if, out of mere coincidence, two of the bands happen to strike up the self-same tune, one of them is sure to change to something totally different as soon as aware of the unfortunate mistake—the caterwauling effect produced by this system baffling all description. "That is nothing at all," said the worthy pastor, from whose garden I was overlooking the scene, laughing at the evident dismay with which I endeavoured to stop my ears. "Sometimes we have eight or ten weddings at a time, each with their own fiddlers. That is something worth hearing, indeed!"

BRIGHT WOMEN.

Boston women are intellectually acute; they are mostly born with brains, or, if they haven't brains, they affect them and play they have. They are wide awake, keen of perception, appreciative to excess; they believe in education and mental improvement; they are morally unhappy and depressed, owing to climatic causes, and they are narrow in their views of the world outside of Boston. But their brightness, where does it come in? The scintillations, the nimble wit, the sense of humour, which are included in this genial quality, belong to a very few. Perhaps there are half a score of really bright women in Boston. I can only recall two or three whose mots have any social currency, although it has been impossible to go anywhere this winter without meeting many interesting, cultivated women. This small proportion seems strange to admirers of the gentler sex. We are drawn and attracted to certain people, and we at once invest them with those certain qualities which please us, for nothing is more natural than to see the best in those we like. It is unconscious self-flattering. One of the most brilliant Bostonians, or, rather, cosmopolitans, after living all over the world, returned here not long ago, and, in course of time, met numerous leading society women who have been accounted worth knowing. He was not struck by the mental or physical charms of any of them. At last a quiet, unobtrusive little person, whose husband carried this citizen of the world home to dinner one day, became suddenly elevated to the rank of "the brightest woman in Boston." Her sayings were quoted far and wide; whenever any one else managed to let fall a pearl it was snatched up, and fastened to her newly-acquired

reputation for making droll, exaggerated speeches. By and by this citizen of the world couldn't endure his native land longer, and he flew back to more congenial Europe, leaving the brightest woman to fight out this battle of wit by herself. The consequence was obvious. She ceased to say smart things. Her inspiration had flown. The mind that had acted on others like flint on steel disported itself in other circles, and drew sparks from quick-witted Parisians instead. I have always surmised this temporary cleverness of Mrs. Humdrum was in reality the witty reflections of this thoroughly witty fellow. He thought she said the bright things, while he was the perpetrator. At all events, it was one of the curious psychological studies which now and then creep in among and enliven the commonplace facts and issues of the day.

SELF-MADE WOMEN.

WE hear a great deal about self-made men, and now Celia Logan, herself a self-made woman, has compiled some interesting facts concerning some women who are well known at the present time, from which it appears that some of the most noted began life very humbly.

Lucy Larcom was a mill hand.

Pretty Maud Granger, with the gold-brown eyes and shapely form, first earned her livelihood by running a sewing machine.

Sarah Bernhardt was a dress-maker's apprentice; so was Matilda Heron.

Adelaide Neilson began life as a child's nurse.

Miss Braddon, the novelist, was a utility actress in the English provinces.

Anna Dickinson began life as a school-teacher.

Charlotte Cushman was the daughter of poor people.

Nell Gwynn sold oranges in the streets and theatres. From the pit, while vending her wares, she took a fancy for the stage.

Mrs. Langtry is the daughter of a country parson of small means, but the old proverb of her face being her fortune proved true in her case.

Edmonia Lewis, the sculptress, is coloured. Overcoming the prejudice against her sex and colour, and self-educated, Miss Lewis is now successfully pursuing her profession in Italy.

The great French actress, Rachel, had as hard a childhood as ever fell to the lot of a genius. Ragged, barefoot and hungry, she played the tambourine in the streets, and sang and begged for a dole. Naturally, she was illiterate and vulgar.

Christine Nilsson was a poor Swedish peasant, and ran barefoot in childhood. Jenny Lind, also a Swede, was the daughter of a principal of a young ladies' boarding-school.

Minnie Hauk's father was a German and a shoe-maker, in the most straitened circumstances. Her voice early attracted the attention of one of New York's richest men, who had it cultivated.

Adelaide Phillips, the singer, now dead, was a very poor girl, and so was Sarah Jewett, the actress.

The mother of Clara Louise Kellogg strained every nerve to give Clara a musical education, and at one time was a professional Spiritual medium. Miss Kellogg failed three times.

Miss Maria Mitchell, the astronomer, was the daughter of a small farmer in Nantucket, who was obliged to eke out his income by teaching school at \$2 a week. Maria was constantly occupied with household duties.

The most renowned woman who sprang from the lowliest estate was Jeanne d'Arc, who fed swine.

A TREASURE TROVE.—A treasure dating back two centuries has been discovered in an old house standing in a garden in the Rue Galande, in Paris. The landlady was having some repairs executed and gas laid on, and the workmen, on tearing down the paper in a room on the ground floor, found, artfully concealed in a recess in the wall, an iron box containing wills and family papers dating from the year 1694, with a quantity of coin, among which were about 160 foreign gold pieces of the size of a double-louis. The next day the workmen, in digging in the garden to lay down the gas-pipes, came upon another box with 1,200 pieces of gold and silver of the same kind.