

DIFFICULTIES IN MARRYING IN THE UNITED STATES.

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Some people in this virtuous Canada of ours appear to think that in the great Republic to the South any one can get married if "Barkis is willing"; that the entrances into the matrimonial Paradise stand ever wide open; that no flaming sword of the law ever flashes to guard the gates; nay, they think the openings into wedded life are so great and numerous that one may stumble into it unknowingly and without desire.

Far different is the truth: the law oftentimes interposes its rough hand between lovers. This will appear to any one who glances at the marriage laws now in force in the various States and Territories. He will find that in that land of liberty would-be benedicts and brides may have to consider the number of corpuscles coursing through the veins of the desired one, or weigh the brain of the longed for partner, and may be hampered or foiled in their choice by questions of color or nationality, of age, or wealth, or health.

A Missourian Judge after due deliberation has declared that no provision of the constitution guarantees to a citizen the right to marry anyone who will wed him. (State v. Jackson, 80 Mo. 175: 50 Am. Rep. 499.)

Let us begin our survey in the East, where wise men are supposed to be.

In Maine no woman can celebrate matrimony unless she is an ordained minister of the gospel, or licensed to preach by some association of ministers, religious seminary or ecclesiastical body and duly appointed and commissioned for that purpose by the governor of the State. In this State a marriage between a white person and a negro, or an Indian or mulatto, is void; nor are paupers permitted to enter the holy estate of matrimony (if in charge of the overseers of the town), notwithstanding the much read and much vaunted Declaration of such self evident truths as "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

In Rhode Island people cannot be married in private, the law insists that some witness must be present to make a marriage