

MAD MARRIAGES

That Break Hearts Covered by Calico as Well as by Sealskin Saques.

LOSE MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE LAWS.

Why the Roller Skate Resembles a Woman in More Ways Than One.

EQUAL RIGHTS ARE ALL WORKING GIRLS ASK.

Written for the Dispatch.

"Bavaria has just passed a law forbidding the marriage of people who have received public charity within three years, who have not paid their taxes, or who, by means of dissolute habits, laziness or poverty, are likely to make home wretched." What a blessing such a law would be to our country. What untold misery, unhappiness, and even murder, would be saved. Of late much is written of unhappy homes, brutal husbands, unfaithful wives. Peruse any daily paper; you will read of two, perhaps a half dozen sometimes, petitions for divorce on account of desertion, unfaithfulness, brutality and other similar pleas to have the matrimonial knot cut. Petitions for divorce are as common as marriage notices. Governor Patison's suggestions in his message regarding divorce laws are, to say the least, commendable, but to get to the root of the evil and save all after regrets, dig up the marriage laws, prune them, bud on good, strong, sensible laws and the fruit will be good. Divorce laws will then not be necessary. In fact the better way is to grant no divorce.

In Pennsylvania a man or woman, either drunk or sober, as long as they are able to stand up and clasp hands, can be married without one question as to his ability in supporting a wife, as to her ability to make a good wife, or to make home comfortable. It is not asked if they are capable to raise children in the right way. They promise to "love, honor and obey," without one thought of the solemnity of the vow, without one intention of trying to keep it. Poor men without trades, without homes, without one dollar laid by for a rainy day, with cruel tempers, brutal instincts, with a surprising love for the bottle containing spirits that do not tend to enoble or better them, have the ceremony performed and many women similarly situated, with hot tempers and shrewd tongues. What can such ill-sorted marriages bring forth? They naturally disagree, have a large family—poor man's luck—that they cannot support, are unable to feed, to clothe, to educate, to instruct as to the right way to live; to what end do they come?—to the almshouse, workhouse, reform schools, brothel houses, penitentiary, and in a few short years depart this life with a sin-stained soul to fill an unhonored grave. The sins of the parents are indeed visited upon the children.

Not only to the lowly do such mad marriages bring misery, but in the higher walks. Money, the god that does everything, will many times close the world's mouth, if not its eye. The children born of these will have every advantage; nevertheless as many hearts ache under silk and satins as under calico. The bond of matrimony hangs like a millstone around the necks of as many of influence as of poverty. There are just as many brutal husbands, just as many unfaithful wives, just as many wretched homes among the lordly as among the lowly; but money helps in a great measure to make life bearable.

MARRIAGE A VENTURE.

Reformation is necessary, but how is it to be obtained? By simply making the divorce laws stricter? Surely not. Marriage is truly a leap into the dark. The most common excuse is, "How did I know it would end in this way? He or she was my ideal before marriage, but there has been a dreadful change since." True enough. Young men while courting are all that can be desired—polite, kind, indulgent, generous to a fault, while at home they may be unkind to their mother, disrespectful to their father, tyrant over younger brothers, may even strike their sisters. Where is the girl that would marry such a man? But they are in the dark and eager for the change. It is the same with the sweethearts. The young man finds them neat and kind, the parlor in trim order. She is a good hand at euchre, sings sentimental songs and plays racquets on the piano. He congratulates himself on finding a treasure, an angel, when lo! and behold, she is a Tartar; goes to breakfast with uncombed hair, without a collar, sleeves torn out of dress, shoes unbuttoned, slaps her sister, scowls at mother, gives father impudence and wages a war of words with her big brother. Where is the young man that would marry her as she is; where is the man that would wish to put her queen of his home, mother of his children; that would willingly say the fatal "I will" that would bind them together until divorce released him? But he also is in the dark. The cup of marriage life is before them, and with a vain, conceited idea that they know what it contains, they eagerly snatch it, wine holding it to their lips during their engagement. They dream of the nectar and bliss, they drink, surprise too great for expression awaits them. What looked like the richest of wines turns to the bitterest of gall; the scales drop from their eyes; they behold with disgust each in his true color. Life is not the thing they planned it out, and so grows unendurable; finale—a divorce.

A young man drawing a comfortable income has a widow mother, who has doubtless worked hard to give him a start in life, and helpless sisters. He lets his aged mother work, and allows his sisters to support themselves where and how they will, never has 5 cents or a kind word to give at home, dresses in the height of fashion, has every enjoyment, gives his lady friends costly presents, takes them to places of amusement, tries to keep it a secret that his mother and sisters work. If the fact becomes known, he will assert positively that it is against his most urgent desire. Will he make a good husband, think you? Where is the girl who, knowing this, will give her happiness, her life, into his keeping? But it is not always the case that both parties are deceived.

OLD MAID A BUGABOO.

Some excellent men get wives who make their life a torment; some splendid women get husbands who are brutes; some people marry for money, some for love, and many marry because they don't want to be old maids, these things being to the contrary notwithstanding. To be called an old maid is just as great a "bugbear" as it ever was, except to one that is a very smart and intelligent, whose duties would interfere with domestic life. "I am surprised that she married him knowing him to be a confirmed drunkard," said one lady to a friend on the matrimonial altar the other day. "Yes, it is strange; but then, you see, she got married." Great consolation. Let this man be what he would, she married him and escaped old maidenhood. However, few women will marry a man knowing that he drinks, but if they do walk into misery with their eyes wide open, make no exit for them in case of fire. If they will embrace unhappiness make them do it knowing it is for life. As a rule women will marry a man believing his promises to do better; but men will seldom take women likewise.

Reformation of the marriage laws is necessary. "But for the funeral baked meats that the bridegroom sees in future, would he so joyfully fall in with the marriage procession? But they don't look forward to the 'funeral' now, but to the divorce, as they fall in with the marriage procession.

It is strange, but true, that as people grow more enlightened marriage produces more misery and becomes a less sacred tie. It is not so many years back since they married for life, not with the understanding that if unsuited a divorce could be easily procured. Then, if from some desperate cause they were compelled to be divorced, they were shunned by society and no one had courage enough to marry the divorcee. Let the Bavian law be passed here. It will prevent misery. Let the "leap into the dark" be lighted, so that it may be seen, before you jump, just where and how you will land.

How shall it be done? Can there be a better way than to provide that before marriage a license must be obtained, with testimony of the friends of both parties as to their dispositions, so that they may be seen

as they are, not as they pretend to be? And if after knowing all of each other's bad qualities they conclude to marry, make the law provide that the tie shall last so long as they both shall live. Then strike out the divorce laws. Have a provision also that it will be a criminal act to swear falsely, or for a minister or any party holding the right to marry without the license and accompanying testimony. Let the young girl know that her intended is cross, surly, uncoolly; let the young man know that his affianced is anything that is directly opposite to an angel. Tell all their faults, then if they marry so be it; they cannot say "I did not know," but the world can say "I told you so."

ROLLER SKATES LIKE WOMEN.

Have you stopped to consider what roller skating is doing for the people? Have you thought how many men, while perhaps not making fortunes, are making comfortable livings through roller skating? Hundreds of men are employed making skates; agents and drummers find profitable and easy business in disposing of them; rink proprietors and their purses full, while they give employment to carpenters who would otherwise be idle this wintry weather. Then there are constantly employed managers, instructors, men in cloak department, ticket office, skate room and musicians, in all employing about 20 men to one rink. Doctors derive a benefit from rinks by setting broken limbs, attending to sprained wrists and broken noses; confectionaries come in for a big share, as the rink's refreshment room supplies skaters with candies and soft drinks, the nearest saloon comes in for a big slice, papers get some for advertising, the printers for tickets for admission, shoemakers find business brisker by the skaters always wanting nice shoes; so much attention to shoes has not been paid for years; the skaters must have the very latest, and as small as possible, consequently they last a very short time, which is all the better for business; the hardware, gas and coal men likewise derive a benefit. The only one that is out of pocket is the young man whose best girl insists on going every night. Roller skating in some ways resembles women; they are very deceptive—they are enticing and fascinating; they make the money fly; they make you happy, make you miserable, but once learn to control them and they are just too exquisitely lovely for anything. Now, if the rink proprietors would only go into the undertaking business six or 12 months from now they will catch their trade on the rebound. Girls who have pretty forms and elegant newmarkets—ones that wear fur capes and sealskin saques—would not consent to have them put out of sight. After being heated by three or four hours' constant exercise, they go home through the cold without additional wraps. The consequence is they bring on consumption, pneumonia and fevers. Young men are almost as careless, and bring on severe colds, which, repeated time after time, will result, as before remarked, by making business brisk for undertakers.

An anxious father makes a very strong and unjust assertion when he says: "All they (the lady correspondents are inferred) seem to care about is to complain because men are not thrown out of jobs to make room for women, and to find fault because women work for less wages than men." Women, as a rule, are not selfish, especially where men are concerned. But men are (some of them) terribly mean, greedy and selfish. They want all the good, fat positions for themselves; they don't want to see the "hone female" raised to their eminence. Women do not ask or want men to be "thrown out of jobs" to give them positions, but to simply give them a chance side by side, equally in all things to themselves, to battle with the tide of life, and there is fault, great fault, to find when a

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WOMAN DOES NOT WORK AS WELL

as men and as much, and then receives only half the pay. Wherein doth the selfishness consist? In man, positively. The women only ask justice. Men have been accustomed to looking on women as inferior beings in many ways, and now, when women are realizing that all the happiness in the world does not arise from married life, that to marry does not mean happiness, plenty, &c., and are trying to make a place for themselves, the selfish men would try to keep them back. But the day has passed when they can. There are thousands of girls who must work, and whyfore should they not try to fill the best paying and easiest positions?

"Man is stronger, upon him rests the greater responsibilities of life," says "Quiet Observations." The greater responsibilities should rest on men. As married men they do; and sometimes they find such an easy resting place that they stay there, and the lord of the house sits down under them, while the women upon whom rests the lesser responsibilities, goes out and earns the living. "Man is stronger!" Put a man to be made of all work from childhood until old age, will he be one mile stronger? Men are stronger because they are out more in the fresh air, and because their employments are over some time. A wife is confined when not with household duties with her children and has no time to herself. Women have more to stand than men can ever imagine. She ages faster because of the life she leads.

Women do not take as naturally to the domestic side of life as "Quiet Observer" fondly imagines. In childhood many, it is true, are quick to dress dolls, keep house, &c., but just as many could make a dress, do not care to "keep house," and will leave all the "dish-washing" and "sweeping" to other playmates. There are plenty of those who will play "church," "horse," dig coal banks, harness up the dog and play ball in preference to housekeeping, and are generally known as "tomboys." It may be as much a woman's duty to cook the food as a man's to provide it; but men are not always good providers, and expect their wives to get up a good meal by boiling the tea-kettle. It is not all girls' misison to be wives anymore than all men's to be husbands; and if a girl is fitted to make a good wife it is hard to find a man fitted for a good husband. In fact they are scarce; but it is to be hoped that, after the bush-beating by the many correspondents, the "anxious father" has found light at last, and will immediately commence to fit his five daughters for domestic life and have success in finding five good husbands, for, according to "Quiet Observer," that is the only niche in the world they can fill becomingly.

NELLIE BLY.