

Evidently it is dangerous trifling with an engagement ring; steal it and you lose your wife; take it when offered, and you may lose your money; leave it, and you may lose your quiet repose, peace of mind—everything.

Though it appears to be a risky thing for a husband to steal his wife's rings—at least when the matter comes before a dissolving judge—still a wife is not guilty of felony if she steals her husband's goods; because husband and wife are considered but one in law, and the husband by endowing his wife at the marriage with all his worldly goods, gives her a kind of interest in all of them. Nor is she guilty of larceny if she steals goods deposited with her husband in which he has a joint property; for instance, if he is a member of a friendly society and the treasurer of the funds, she may take them without being a thief. And even a third party to whom the wife may give these abstracted goods, cannot be held guilty of larceny. If, however, the wife elopes with a lover, taking with her the goods of her husband, and gives them to her naughty companion, who takes them away, this would be larceny, for in such a case the consent of the husband cannot be presumed. (*Rex v. Willis*, 1 Moo. C. C. 375; *Rex v. Tolfree*, 1 Moo. C. C. 243; *Regina v. Kenny*, 46 Law J. Rep. M. C. 156; L. R. 2 Q. B. Div. 307; Schouler, Dom. Relations, sec. 51.)

This state of the law seems rather hard in the present age, when the wife is so highly favored and protected as to her own goods and chattels, *lares et penates*; and when every man does not now at the altar say to his bride, 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow.'

If a married woman be canny enough to keep her husband always by her, she may go through the world running amuck like a wild Malay, and do a great many queer things, for the law in its chivalry and gallantry will presume her to be innocent, and that she is coerced by her husband into doing these unfeminine actions (Russell on Crimes, ch. 1; Schouler, Domestic Relations, sec. 49, 50). For *mala prohibita* she will not be punished, but for *mala in se* she is. Who can forget the words of Mr. Bumble on this point, when he began to fear the unfortunate little circumstance in which his wife had

been engaged might deprive him of his "parochial office," and had remarked, "It was all Mrs. Bumble. She *would* do it." "That is no excuse," replied Mr. Brownlow. "You were present on the occasion, and, indeed, are the more guilty of the two in the eye of the law; for the law supposes that your wife acts under your direction." "If the law supposes that," said Mr. Bumble, squeezing his hat emphatically in both hands, the law is a ass—a idiot. If that's the eye of the law, the law's a bachelor, and the worst I wish the law is, that his eye may be opened by experience—by experience." ("Oliver Twist," ch. 51.)

Speaking of bachelors in these days of increasing taxation and deficits, and when the number of marriageable young women in the settled parts of the country is constantly and persistently becoming greater than that of marrying young men, and when the ballot is passing into the hands of the fair sex, how is it that a tax is not put upon bachelors? William III, of great, glorious, pious and immortal memory, gave his assent to such an Act in April, 1695 (not on the first, but on the twenty-second of that month). The Act was intituled "An Act for granting His Majesty certain rates and duties upon marriages, births, burials, and upon bachelors and widowers, for the term of five years, for carrying on the war with vigor." By this, bachelors and widowers above twenty-five years old paid yearly 1s., but a marquis who was a bachelor or a widower, had to pay yearly 10l., while a duke in that solitary state had to pay 12l. 10s. These taxes were kept on until 1706. The laws of Rome had severe penalties for those who remained celibates after a certain age, and Lycurgus authorized criminal proceedings against those who eschewed wedlock. Louis XIV, throughout the length and breadth of Canada, whipped Hymen, if not Cupid, into a frenzy of activity—as Parkman says. Twenty livres were given to each youth who married before the age of twenty, and to each girl who married under sixteen. Any father of a family who, without showing good cause, neglected to marry his children when they had reached the ages of twenty and sixteen, was fined. Young men were ordered