

pair higher and better than the single life? Is wedded affection the greatest source of our virtue and of our happiness on earth? Are the permanence of marriage and the order of the household essential to the formation of character in the children? Then we ought at all events to see our way when we are dealing with these things. Hitherto the family has been a unit before the state; this has been a fundamental law of our social organization, and to repeal it is a grave step and one certainly fraught with serious consequences for good or evil. In the abstract, perhaps it may be said that a spiritual or moral union ought to survive any estrangement of material or political interest; but to assume that it will survive, is unsafe. The foundation of man is in the dust. The union of the heart is rather severely tried when legislators decree that upon a woman's dying intestate the whole of her property shall go, not to her husband, who may be left in beggary, but to a distant cousin; thus abrogating the Christian principle that the woman shall leave her father's house to cleave to her husband, and proclaiming that her remotest cousin is nearer to her than the man on whose breast she has laid her head. But would it survive the introduction into the family of political strife? Would the citizen and citizeness, in such times, for example, as that of the anti-slavery agitation or the Civil War, after struggling against each other in the canvass and at the polls, sit down in unimpaired affection by the hearth and present the same aspect of love and united authority to their children? Beautiful pictures no doubt are drawn of such harmonious conflicts; but are they not mere pictures; are they true at most with regard to any but exceptional characters and quiet times? We shall of course have female planks in every platform, women at all the conventions, and the demagogue in the family. A man when he marries takes on him the heavy burden of maintaining a wife and family; he expects as his reward a loving partner and a happy home. Make marriage too onerous and unattractive to man, whether in regard to property or in regard to the civil status of the pair, and what will follow? License which the legislator will be powerless to repress, unless he can eradicate or subdue the mightiest of all human passions, as some seem to think that they can. In a reign of license, what would be, what has been, the condition of woman?