

debts was 'productive,' and that that which did not pay debts was 'non-productive.' I fear I am still suffering from the same weakness. F. B. R. will not have it so, but makes it a 'sentimental' question, which is the name that Mrs. Oliphant has given to it.

F. B. R. toils up-hill a long way in order to raise the wife to the summit of superiority over the husband, and then drops her down again, telling us that the matter is 'utterly incapable of analysis into what is due to one and what to the other.'

F. B. R. is very strongly of opinion that the qualities of a good wife enable her husband 'to accomplish more and to produce more than without them he could hope to do.' Now then, we come to the 'economic' question, pure and simple,—what the husband's work *produces*. Let us suppose two partners in business or occupation of any kind. Do they divide profits unequally because he who is married earns or produces more than he who is not? Then let us suppose that the latter takes to himself a wife. Does he from that moment find his business or professional capacity improve? but that politeness forbids, I think I might call any such idea as that 'nonsensical.' The 'true wife,' who remains at home, who is true in every sense of the word, and who pretends to nothing that is untrue, is quite sensible that she knows nothing about the processes by which her husband accomplishes or produces his ends, and that she cannot aid them or influence them to the extent of a single dollar, one way or another. What he brings home to her she expends to the best of her power; be it more, she can spend more; be it less, she makes less suffice. She does her duty. She can do no more. It may be lighter or heavier. That is in the chapter of chances. As years pass on, the husband generally produces more; his business facilities are enlarged; his professional connection extends itself; he gets on in life. He makes a successful stroke in commerce; he performs a remarkable cure or operation; his capital or his credit increases. His wife shares in the benefit derived from it, but in what way has she aided it? The *truer* she is, the readier she is to acknowledge that.

From generals let us proceed to particulars. Some have had great success in life; others have had none. Will any-

one be 'nonsensical' enough to draw the line between those who have had wives and those who have not? Shakespeare did not owe what he accomplished to his wife; during all the time when his wonderful works were produced, he lived apart from her. He left her a poor man, he returned to her a rich one. Milton's greatest work was produced after his wife died. Lords Byron and Lytton, and Charles Dickens were all separated from their wives. That did not prevent them from producing works of great genius, acquiring great fame, and earning large sums of money. Neither Johnson nor Goldsmith was married. One of them was poor at first but never in pecuniary difficulties; the other was never out of them. Southey had a good wife; he was in hopes all his life that 'the constable might come up with him.' Walter Scott had a good wife; his pecuniary embarrassments killed him before his time. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Edwin Landseer, Sir Thomas Lawrence all acquired titles and fame and much money; not one of them was ever married. And so on, and so on, *ad infinitum*. In *all* professions, in *all* pursuits, you will find it the same. A man has a successful career, or he plods through life just keeping the wolf from the door. In either case he may have a 'true wife.' If you attempt to establish any such rule as that promulgated by F. B. R., you must make it tell both ways. Such a one made a fortune. Aye, he had a good wife. Such a one was ruined and died a beggar. Aye, he had a bad wife.

In the first paper on this subject F. said 'the husband is the protector and breadwinner.' Most indubitably true. Bread to eat, and protection to eat it in peace, these are the *alpha* and *omega* of existence. Bread is the staff of life. It is none the worse for being buttered, though F. B. R. seems to hold it in some contempt in that condition. We are told that we 'do not live to eat, we eat to live.' Most indubitably true again. Therefore without eating we should not live. Therefore our lives depend upon the bread we eat. Therefore we owe our existence to the breadwinner. Therefore the opportunity of performing all those admirable duties,—and *who* doubts that they *are* admirable—of which F. B. R. speaks so enthusiastically, is due to the breadwinner. Without the breadwinner there would be no bread to eat (let alone butter) no wives, no children, no duties.