

treatment to which the mother-in-law is subjected. Her relationship to others is the butt of every wittling; her endeavors to do what she considers to be her duty are resented and hindered. She is looked upon as an interloper and a trouble-maker, and one whose feelings may be played upon with impunity. It is the wife's mother who is most amenable to this unfair and cruel treatment. The woman who fills a similar relation on the husband's side is comparatively exempt from it, for there is hardly a man so base as to expose his own mother to ridicule or suffer her to be exposed to slight and contumely by others. But what he would not do or allow to be said of or done to his own mother he is often quite willing to say of or do to or allow others to say of or do to his wife's.

The burden of all these poor puny witticisms at the expense of the mother-in-law is her propensity to interfere in the affairs of the rising family. In many cases she is a widow, lonely and without means, and has thankfully accepted the shelter of her children's roof; or if in easier circumstances had, to enjoy their society, consented at their desire to make their house her home. In doing so she had no desire to assume the reins of domestic government; nothing was farther from her mind or wishes, for she well remembers her own early widowhood, and the pride with which she regarded her home sovereignty. She is not likely, recalling this, to willfully encroach on her daughter's domain, much less on that of her daughter's husband. Here and there one may meet with a mother-in-law whose instinct for controlling others and the affairs of others may obliterate these early recollections, and betray her into the folly of undue interference, but such instances observation will show to be extremely rare. We encounter them as we do exceptions in every class, and these are very exceptional indeed. Experience is, in this respect, almost wholly in favor of the mother-in-law, and for every one in this relation who can be charged with encroaching on the rights of the young people there certainly can be found a dozen who can with reason complain of encroachments upon theirs. Most married men, were the question plainly put to them, would be forced in candour to acquit their own mothers-in-law of this hackneyed charge of needless interference.

What is called interference is generally nothing more than advice, which ought, in this case to be respectfully and gratefully received, instead of being resented. Who has a better right to advise a young married couple than the wife's mother. She has a twofold right to tender her counsel. There is the right which springs from natural affection. None but those who have themselves passed through the experience can form an estimate of what a mother gives up when a daughter leaves her side to become a wife. How large a gap in her daily round! How sure a prop removed! How large an accumulation of new anxieties! How oppressive the feeling that her years of motherly training are to be put to a severe test, the result of which may redound to her honor or bring her the greatest mortification! And besides all this she is parting with her dearest treasure, the joy of her soul, her second self. Can one begrudge her the privilege of advising?

She has also the right of matured experience. She is familiar with most of the difficulties which her child and her husband have to face, know how they ought to be encountered, and how they may be best borne overcome. Would it not be unkind of her to stand aloof from them, leaving them to struggle on through difficulties enhanced by their inexperience

We might also mention the right of service; for if the wife fulfil the expectations of the husband—prove to be the helpmeet he has hoped to find in her, to whose credit does this chiefly redound? It is to that of her mother, to whom she owes her housewifely skill, her industrious habits, and in most cases her patience, gentleness and truthfulness of character. No husband can reflect on this and treat his wife's mother with disrespect, especially when he reflects on the keen suffering which he must needs inflict upon his wife by such conduct.

There is the further consideration that if a man be so weak as to be dominated over in his own house by his mother-in-law or anybody else, sneering is very ineffective either in the way of defence or revenge, and as pitiful as it is ineffective.

Dancing.

It is not necessary to define what most of our readers know so well as dancing. Whether we call it the "poetry of motion," or characterize it in any other way we please, it is undoubtedly an amusement very generally resorted to and engaged in by many with infinite relish. But if we do not need to define dancing, or to describe its varied peculiarities, it is very necessary to settle whether or not it be an amusement in which wise men and decent women may with propriety take a part. About some dances there can be no doubt at all, for they are as indelicate and indecent as anything done in public possibly can be. How husbands can ever tolerate their wives, or brothers their sisters, or fathers their daughters, in such exhibitions is a mystery, though they do it, and seem pleased with the performance all the same. It is of no use to reply with the stale—"Evil be to him that evil thinks," for the evil is not a matter of thinking at all, but of right. Even among what are called decent and proper people, it is simply shocking to see how delicate and modest girls are, as one has phrased it, "pawed" by every Tom, Dick and Harry with whom she "will be pleased, &c." The shocking results of such dancing, all fashionable and endorsed as it may be, are too distressing to think about, and far more so to specify.

But apart from these dances, which to be sure are the most popular in most dancing parties, and would have made our grandmothers, however little prudish they might be, hold up their hands in amazement and disgust, is there any thing essentially wrong in dancing itself, when rightly ordered and taken in moderation? We cannot see that there is. It is no doubt exceedingly liable to be abused. It has in all ages been grossly abused for the very worst purposes. But so have many things, which in themselves are praiseworthy enough. For children in a family, or with a few young friends, is there anything more objectionable in a dance, than in those charades—dumb and otherwise—which with some serious people are so popular? Is there any thing worse than those games where forfeits, generally involving any amount of kissing, are in the ascendant? Is there anything so bad as in much of the tittle-tattle that passes for conversation, and is not so careful as it ought to be of other people's characters? We think not. It may look absurd enough to see people capering about like lunatics, but, after all, as a mere amusement, is there any thing in it more foolish than fifty things in the way of relaxation which pass unchallenged as mere matters of course? Can a Christian with any degree of consistency dance? We don't pretend to say. Only a Christian has liberty to do anything that is not sinful. Can a clergyman with

propriety take a turn at the polka? If any Christian can, so can he, for there are not two laws of conduct, one for the clergyman and another for the private Christian. If it is right for the one, it is not wrong for the other. Can a clergyman dance and fiddle and drink until three or four o'clock in the morning? He may if he likes, but how comes it to pass that both saints and sinners would unite in a suggestion to an, clergyman of that type that he had better 'part out of their coats, unless it was felt that that sort of proceeding was scarcely in accordance with being servants of Christ in any capacity whatever? What lots of people in Toronto and all over Canada have dancing parties, at which they would not care to see their "clergyman" leading off *a la* the Governor-General, or calling the company to prayers at three o'clock in the morning! And yet, why not? If Miss Echo were bound to answer the question, we rather guess she would say, "Pon my word, I don't know."

Injurious Talking.

A Frenchman speaking of a person known to his comrades, said: "His mouth costs him nothing, for he always opens it at the expense of others." There are multitudes of persons to whom that remark will apply. Exaggeration and defamation are two fertile sources of social mischief.

But perhaps the most injurious talk is that which detracts from the character of another—that which openly or in disguise strikes at the reputation of a brother pilgrim—that which "cuts men's throats with whisperings"—that which is adopted by the envious rival who seeks to build "his name on the ruins of another's fame."

A lady visited Philip Neri on one occasion, accusing herself of being a slanderer. "Do you frequently fall into this fault?" he inquired.

"Yes, very often," replied the penitent. "My dear child," said Philip, "your fault is great, but the mercy of God is greater; I now bid thee do as follows: Go to the market and purchase a chicken just killed and still covered with feathers; then walk to a certain distance, plucking the bird as you go. Your walk finished, return to me."

The woman did as directed and returned, anxious to know the meaning of so singular an injunction.

"You have been faithful to the first part of my orders," said Philip; "now do the second part and you will be cured; Retrace your steps, pass through all the places you have traversed and gather up one by one all the feathers you have scattered."

"But," said the woman, "I scattered the feathers carelessly away, and the wind carried them in all directions."

"Well, my child," replied Philip, "so it is with your words of slander; like the feathers which the wind has scattered, they have been wafted in many directions. Call them back now if you can. Go and sin no more."

These Died of Laughter.

Chalcas, the sooth-sayer, died of laughter at the thought of his having outlived the time predicted for his death. A fellow in rags had told him that he would never drink the wine of the grapes growing in his vineyard; and added "if these words do not come true, you may claim me for your slave." When the wine was made, Chalcas held a feast, and sent for the fellow to see how his predictions had failed. When he appeared the sooth-sayer laughed so immoderately at the would-be prophet that it killed him. Crassus died of laughter on seeing an ass eat thistles. Margutte, the giant, in the Morgante Magutte, died of laughter on seeing a monkey pulling on his boots. Zeuxis, the Grecian painter, died at sight of a hog he had just depicted. A peculiar death was that of Placut, who dropped dead in the act of paying a bill. There are many men to-day, however, who would probably die of surprise if they found themselves doing the same thing.

Wife-Selling.

The custom of selling and purchasing wives in England, certainly can claim a very respectable antiquity, and probably is based upon the ancient laws of the Anglo Saxons. If a freeman took away the wife of a freeman, he was to pay his full wergeld, to buy another wife for the injured husband, and deliver her at his home. In the reign of Canute the law received some modification; no guardian could compel his ward to marry a man she disliked, and the money paid for her was to be a voluntary gift, and not a compulsory payment. It is not unnatural to suppose that the commodity thus obtained by money was transferable to another for a similar consideration whenever it may have become useless or disagreeable to its original purchaser. It seems, however, not impossible that the commencement of the custom would be found even in times antecedent, when women guilty of unfaithfulness were either put to death or sold as slaves.

The value of a wife seems to have been mostly held in light esteem, for one was sold at Gloucester market by auction in 1811 for half a crown, and it is recorded that the purchaser frequently congratulated himself on his "bargain." Even in a commercial sense he could well afford to be jubilant, for the "lot" was attired in a new white bonnet and a black gown, the usual ornament in the way of a halter being included, which was not had consideration for his money, let alone the lady's charms.

In the year 1859 another instance of this moral degradation was furnished by the town of Dudley, where hundreds of people were assembled in Hall street one evening to attend a wife sale. The first bid was three halfpence, and ultimately reached sixpence. Her husband, in his ignorance, thought that after the ceremony had been repeated three times she actually had no claim upon him.

In 1861 a wife was sold at Sheffield for the paltry consideration of a quart of beer, and in 1862 a similar purchase was made at Selby market at the cost of only one-half that amount, merely a pint of beer, which was thought sufficient for a man's helpmate.

The tariff would seem to be on a downward-sliding scale as we advance in the century, for a case occurs, recorded by the South Wales Daily News, May 2, 1862, at Alfreton, where a woman was sold by her husband for a still lower valuation in a public-house. The modus operandi had the charm of simplicity; in a room full of men he offered to sell her for a glass of ale, and the offer being accepted by a young man, she readily agreed, took off her wedding ring, and from that time considered herself the property of the purchaser.

Gorgeous Treasures.

A French traveller has just returned from Stamboul with a wonderful story of the sights he saw. He is eloquent about two throzes of enamelled gold, with incrustations of pearls and rubies and emeralds. In another room he saw two caskets, even more magnificent, studded with rubies and diamonds, in which the hairs from the prophet's beard are religiously preserved. There are also several curious instruments made of gold and thickly studded with gems on the back, which were used as portable scratching posts. Another room was hung with armour and sceptres; caskets and escrétaires lay on the table. The odd escrétaires are all shaped like a pistol; the inkstand is placed at the spot occupied by the trigger, and the reeds and a penknife are in a barrel. There are also inkstands in the shape of trays, each containing five saucers, for ink dying powder and other odds and ends used by the writers. In another room are the costumes of all the Sultans down to Kaimoud II. Each of the costumes has a silk scarf attached, together with a magnificently chased dagger and a diamond cigarette. Then heaped pell mell are the keys of the fortresses of the empire, and finally come the sacred treasure, consisting of the relics of Islam: the mantle and standard of the prophet, his sword and bow, the swords of the first Caliph, and the oldest manuscripts of the Koran.