

When you have the meat or rich ragout served with the omelette, but not *mixed* with it, you must somewhat vary your method of cooking the omelette. For instance, omelette with kidney is really a savoury omelette with a large ladleful of stewed kidneys; omelette with oysters is an omelette with a mixture similar to the inside of an oyster patty served with it.

When you have a meat or forcemeat of this description you should let your omelette set in the frying-pan in a circular shape instead of a semi-circular, and when it is almost set, place the spoonful or ladleful of meat, &c., on one half, and then turn the other half of the omelette over on to it. Leave a little of the omelette mixture sufficiently *unset* to scrape it quickly round, to fix together the edges when it has been turned over. This requires some little practice.

Sometimes additions are made to the omelette by mixing in other things *with* the beaten egg. For instance, you can add Parmesan cheese—grated, of course—or any kind of grated cheese.

I have mentioned that in making savoury omelettes three eggs are wanted for two ounces of butter; this, of course, is only sufficient to make a small omelette—enough for about two people or one hungry person. When you want to make a larger omelette, you can of course, increase the quantity; but when you do this you will find that you do not want quite so much butter in proportion—*i.e.*, although three eggs require two ounces of butter, six eggs would require rather less than four ounces of butter.

Sweet omelettes are made in exactly the same way as savoury, only, of course, instead of the chopped parsley, salt, and pepper, &c., you require powdered sugar. In making a sweet omelette from three eggs and two ounces of butter you should mix nearly a dessert-spoonful of powdered sugar with the beaten-up egg, and also have a little more powdered sugar ready to shake over the omelette directly it is done.

One very great improvement to sweet omelettes is

to mix in a little essence of vanilla. This essence varies in strength, but if it is good a salt-spoonful would be enough for an omelette made with three eggs.

In adding jam to sweet omelettes the jam must be added similarly to the kidney, &c.—*i.e.*, a spoonful must be placed on one half of the omelette in the pan just as it sets, and the other half must be wrapped over on to it, and the edges mended as before. Nearly every kind of jam can be added to sweet omelettes, but by far the best is apricot jam. When the omelette is just set it can be kept hot for a short time in the oven—just long enough to allow the jam to get hot.

Before concluding the subject of omelettes, I ought to mention the fact that very many cooks add a little milk, and that some—Mr. Francatelli for one—recommend a little cream.

In making sweet omelettes a little milk can be added, and the result is to make the omelette taste less like an omelette, and more like a very rich light pudding.

When you add milk I would strongly advise you to boil the milk first, and add a table-spoonful or more to the eggs, *hot*.

One word in conclusion. Good omelettes cannot be made from stale eggs. I don't mean bad ones, but stale. Some cooks are rather too apt to think that any eggs will do for "cooking." Good omelettes require eggs almost as fresh as those you would serve plain boiled for breakfast. So, too, with the butter. The adulterated rubbish too often sold as butter will spoil any omelette. Indeed, a capital omelette can be made by using *pure* olive oil. But, alas! how difficult it now is to get even oil pure. In fact, we live in an age of adulteration; and to get a first-class omelette I would suggest a country farmhouse, and a personal acquaintance with the fowls who laid the eggs, and the cow who originated the butter.

A SOCIAL REVOLUTION: THE MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT, 1882.

BY A LAWYER.



EW Acts of Parliament are of much immediate interest to the domestic circle, but the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, which came into force upon January 1st of the present year, is an exception to this general rule.

For the scope of this Act is wide enough to affect not only those who are already married or are contemplating matrimony, but also every one who has dealings with married couples. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the Act has wrought a social revolution, by reversing the ancient principle of the Common Law,

through which, upon marriage, the husband and wife became one person (who, in practice, always turned out to be the husband), and by enabling a married woman to stand before the law, in all relations of private life, upon the same footing as, and apart from, her husband.

By the old Common Law the husband acquired by marriage an absolute right to all his wife's property except her lands, in which he had a qualified right of very large extent. He could also sue for any debts that might be owing to his wife; and if a wife owed money, she had not even a legal right to pay her debt without her husband's permission.

But perhaps the most scandalous provision of the old law had regard to the earnings and savings of a

married woman. If a wife was sent out by her husband to do a day's charing, or if she took in washing, or engaged in any trade, service, or occupation for which she received money, the husband could appropriate the money; and, what is more, he had the right to demand that payment should be made over again to himself, unless the other party could prove that the payment had been made to the wife as the husband's agent.

Another frequent case of hardship occurred when a wife who had been deserted by her husband saved a little money by her own exertions. So long as she could conceal her whereabouts from her husband she was safe; but should he once discover her, he was entitled by the law to break into her house at any time of the day or night, and carry off by force every penny she had got together.

Many other instances might be given, did space allow, of the grievous injustice wrought by the provisions of the ancient law; but any reader can supply these for himself by remembering the general principle that all property belonging to the wife, except interests in land, could be instantly disposed of by her husband. He could sell, hire, pawn, or make off with it in any manner that he chose.

It must seem at first incredible that, if this is a truthful picture of the helplessness of married women, such a law should have remained so long unchanged. But the explanation is not far to seek. It was by the upper classes that our laws were made; and but few women of the upper classes were affected by this great injustice. For them, as for all who were rich enough or well enough informed to make use of the devices of ingenious lawyers, there was an effectual means of shutting out the operation of the Common Law. Their position allowed them to employ the law in order to protect themselves against the law. This was the result of the rule adopted by the Court of Chancery with regard to Trusts. If a woman before marriage, or her friends afterwards, assigned property to trustees to hold during her marriage for her separate use, such property was altogether independent of her husband's control. The ownership was considered to vest in the trustees, and not in the married woman; she was only entitled to receive such money as she wanted, and to give the trustees directions as to the disposal of the rest. If, however, the words "without power of anticipation" were inserted in the deed declaring the trust, the trustees could not, even at the wish of the wife herself, allow the capital to be touched. Their duties were then confined to seeing that the money was properly invested, and paying the dividends into the wife's own hands. This effect of the words "without power of anticipation," which was given to them first by Lord Chancellor Thurlow, is not altered by the new Act; and indeed wherever it is desired to protect a married woman against the threats or cajolery of an extravagant husband, it will still be necessary to make use of settlements to effect this purpose. It may also be mentioned that a woman whose property has been given into the hands of trustees for her separate use will be in a better position in

proving for her debts in the event of her husband's bankruptcy, so that the use of marriage settlements will not die out. It is thus plain that properly worded trust deeds or marriage settlements did fully secure a wife in the enjoyment of her own property, and save her from destitution on her husband's death. But where an intended wife neglected to obtain legal advice, or where her property was too small to justify the expensive complication of a marriage settlement, every vestige of her property passed on the marriage to her husband.

The Divorce Acts of 1857 and 1858 were the first serious attempt to remedy these evils by legislation. The method of these Acts, which was followed in the subsequent legislation on the subject, was a provision that in certain cases the law should of itself effect that which the parties had been in the habit of effecting by means of marriage settlements, and should create for the wife a certain separate estate. The Acts in question only applied to cases where the husband and wife were living apart, and in such cases they still apply. Their general result is that a wife who is separated or divorced from her husband, or who, being deserted by him, has obtained from a magistrate a protection order, holds all property, which she may acquire or which may come to her after the sentence or order, as if she were a single woman. It was a patent blemish in these Acts that they only provided for cases where the husband had been guilty of gross cruelty or other bad conduct, and overlooked altogether the more numerous cases of pecuniary dishonesty. A husband was checked if he were thoroughly abandoned, but he might still tyrannise in small matters and pilfer with impunity, whatever hardship this might cause his wife.

Such a state of things could not long continue; and the year 1870 was marked by a great step forward. The Married Women's Property Act of that year was, no doubt, as incomplete and unsatisfactory as most compromises are when the questions at issue involve principles, but it nevertheless forms a conspicuous landmark in the progress of reform. Not to enter into details, this Act had two salient features: first, it introduced the doctrine of separate estate into the Common Law in cases where the husband and wife were living together; and, secondly, it provided certain novel remedies at law, both as between the wife and her husband, and as between her and third parties. Thus it secured to a married woman, whether married before or after the passing of the Act, the enjoyment for her separate use, independent of her husband, of any wages or earnings gained by her separately, and of any money standing in her name in the savings-bank, the funds, a joint-stock company, or any industrial or friendly society; and it further provided that the separate estate should also include all personal estate coming to her during marriage under an intestacy, or any sum of money not exceeding £200 coming to her during marriage under a deed or will, and the rents and profits of land descending to her as the heiress of an intestate. And, in the second place, the Act provided that for the protection and recovery of this separate estate a married woman

might maintain actions in respect of it in her own name; and could apply by a cheap means for the settlement of any dispute as to the ownership of the property, which might arise between her and her husband.

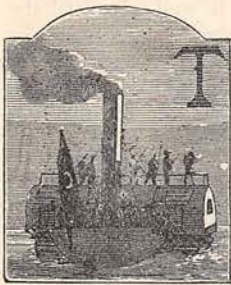
It is plain that the operation of this Act was limited. It applied only to property acquired in certain specified ways; and in all cases not falling under one of these heads the husband's marital right continued. For example, the husband took at once all cash, jewellery, clothes, &c., in the possession of his wife at the time of marriage, and all leaseholds, stocks, shares, or sums of money exceeding £200 coming to her by deed or will after marriage, or any lands acquired by her otherwise than by descent. Nor did the Act say anything of gifts to a wife during her marriage—an omission which, as was pointed out, produced this anomalous result: "that if a working woman managed out of her earnings to purchase, say a mangle, it was her own; but if any one gave it her to enable her to live by her own earnings it was her husband's, and liable to be carried off by him or seized by his creditors."

The first section of the new Act sweeps away all these distinctions, and by the words "A married woman (whether married before or after the commencement of the Act) shall have the same power of acquiring, holding, and disposing by will or otherwise, of any real or personal property as her separate property in the same manner as if she were a *feme sole*, without the intervention of any trustee," has enacted that marriage will no longer affect the ownership of a married woman's property in any respect whatever. The rest of the Act contains little more than explanatory provisions showing how these words alter the existing law. Thus it is provided that a married woman may be made bankrupt, may act as executrix or trustee, and may sue or be sued in respect of her

separate property. With regard to a married woman's right of action, the twelfth section introduces a most important change by allowing her to bring an action against her husband for any wrong towards her, and *vice versa*; and to give effect to this provision husbands and wives are for the first time made capable of giving evidence for and against each other in criminal as well as civil cases. For a wife is even permitted to proceed against her husband criminally, provided they are not at the time living together, and that the injury complained of was not committed while they were so living. If, however, a husband wrongfully took property from his wife when leaving and deserting, or about to leave and desert her, a criminal proceeding will lie, although they were not living apart when the injury was committed. It has been thought that this clause was not sufficiently protective to the wife in consequence of this proviso; but it should be remembered that any magistrate is now empowered to grant a judicial separation upon evidence of ill-usage, and that a thieving husband is not likely to obtain a magisterial commendation for domestic virtue. But although the Act seems to have fully secured a married woman against the deprivations of a husband, it has not left her relations to third parties in a very satisfactory state. It will, we imagine, be risky for a tradesman to give credit to a married woman without first ascertaining whether she has a separate estate, or if not, whether she has power to pledge her husband's credit.

Experience will, no doubt, show that there are other imperfections in the Act; for no legislation can provide for all the delicate relations of married life. An Act of Parliament can only give protection in the grosser cases, which are comparatively few: it must ever remain for the husband and wife to supplement the law of the land by making to themselves a law of love and mutual dependence.

OUR IRON WALLS.



THE building of vessels of the old style has been often told in verse and prose. Longfellow has told of the building of a "vessel as goodly and strong and staunch as ever weathered a wintry sea," with her keel of oak "and timbers fashioned strong and true;" and Whittier has sung

of the ship-builders and their task, when

—"spectral in the river mist
The ship's white timbers show."

But it is work other than that which builds up our vessels now, for the days of the "wooden walls of old England" are past, and rapidly the wooden vessels are dying out, to be replaced by those of iron and steel. Nor are those the only changes in the building

of our vessels, nor in them, for steam-vessels are rapidly taking the part of sailing ships, and there is a desire to obtain an increased speed, a greater structural strength, and a fuller work effected with a given combustion of fuel.

The building of our iron vessels has largely centred itself on the Clyde, on the Tyne, the Wear, at West Hartlepool, and at Barrow-in-Furness. In these parts there are cheap iron and steel—essentials in the profitable conducting of the industry; and there are also workmen who inherit the ship-building skill of generations. Many of these parts have chosen out special portions of the trade—the Clyde, the building of great passenger vessels; the north-east coast, the building of cargo-carrying boats, and so on.

Selecting typical yards, the course of construction may be glanced at. "First catch your order." Let it be for a small or large vessel, for a vessel that may cost from £18 per ton up to £30, ac-