

# The Dawn

A JOURNAL FOR AUSTRALIAN WOMEN.

Edited by DORA FALCONER.

(REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER.)

FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

VOL. 2: No. 11.

SYDNEY, MARCH, 5, 1890.

PRICE 3D.

## THE DIVORCE EXTENSION BILL, Or, THE DRUNKARD'S WIFE.



THE fate of the Victorian divorce extension bill is a source of keen anxiety to many a miserable wife who has the misfortune to be linked for life to a drunkard. In the helpless innocence of girlhood, she, in good faith, believing her lover all that he led her to think him, trustingly said "I will," and for better or worse, by this she must abide. No matter that he lied and deceived her knowingly. There is no law to punish a man for deceiving his wife. He may do violence to the best feelings of her nature; outrage the holiest emotions of her heart, and there is none to condemn. If he defrauds his fellow man of a shilling the law will deal with him. If he robs his wife by brutal deceit of all faith in mankind, health, peace, happiness, and of her life by the slow torture of a breaking heart—what of it? All he has to do is to bury her and seek another victim in another woman who believes him. All the consolation the wife of such a ghoul could reasonably expect from the world is "Why did you marry him?" About as reasonable a question as asking a condemned criminal awaiting his execution why he committed the act that brought him there. What availeth her to say "I was young, ignorant, inexperienced in the ways of the world; I believed and I loved him; he vowed that I should not want; he loved me and would love me for ever; all these promises he has broken. I have kept mine. He will not support me; he drinks and is cruel to me." And the world's answer is: "As you have made your bed so you must lie on it." A wife's heart must be the tomb of her husband's faults. Ver-

ily, a girl must be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove; she must have trusting innocence, implicit faith, loving devotion, and every soft and womanly attribute, and at the same time be an expert in physiognomy, phrenology and mind-reading, and a veritable woman of the world into the bargain, to ensure herself against matrimonial disaster. With all due reverence for the sanctity of marriage, can there be anything sacred in the bond which binds a good woman to a sot, felon, or brute? Of the three the first is the worst, the felon disgraces her, the brute bruises her flesh, and perhaps breaks her bones, but the sot, makes her perpetuate his ignoble race. What sober, strong, cleanly man would submit to share his bed with another in the worst stage of drunkenness? But the confirmed sot, if he possesses enough command of his tottering limbs to bring him to his lawful wife's chamber, may then collapse in abandoned beastliness upon the floor or conjugal couch if he reaches it, and proceed to make night hideous for her. A nerve of iron truly, must be possessed by frail women, who are expected to endure nightly, this horrid ordeal, and put a cheerful face upon it in the morning, well knowing that this is her fate so long as her power of endurance holds out. How often does the patient wife quietly steal from the chamber of horrors to seek shelter by the bed of her sleeping children, content if but allowed to sit in peace until day brings temporary respite. What patience! what forgiveness must these martyrs possess. To what extent can our good Queen realise the position of these long-suffering women.

HALES & COLE, TEA MERCHANTS, Corner of King and Kent Streets, Sydney.  
—HOUSEHOLDS SUPPLIED AT WHOLESALE PRICES—