

SPHERICAL DOMESTICITY.

Under the above somewhat enigmatical heading the Christian Union repeats its former arguments in favor of the submission of wives to husbands, and in lieu of attempting to reply to the reasoning which recently appeared in the *Woman's Journal* on the other side of the question, contents itself with reiterating its previous exhortation for wives to submit for the sake of peace, printed in small caps at the close — the small caps evidently answering the same purpose that a very loud voice would do if the writer were engaged in personal conversation. The editorial might be briefly summarized thus: "I say 'tis, too, so there, now! I TELL YOU I SAY IT IS, NOW!"

The condition of uneasy irritation in which the article appears to have been written, suggests the first stage of conviction of sin; and we shall watch the Union's symptoms anxiously, tremblingly, hopefully, trusting its present "concern of mind" will result in conversion, and not in further hardness of heart. Indeed, we are so sanguine as to see symptoms of conversion even in this very editorial. Does not the Union almost come to our ground when it acknowledges that there are "certain questions of detail which clearly belong to the wife; and certain others which as clearly belong to the husband;" and adds — "questions of the kitchen and the household belong to the wife; questions of the counting-room to the husband." The Union virtually acknowledges our principle that the wife should decide the questions pertaining to her sphere, and the husband those pertaining to his; but claims that there is a class of questions which belong no more to one sphere than to the other; and these are the questions which the husband is to decide.

To illustrate, the Union cites the example of the treatment of a sick child, the decision of the question where a child shall be sent to Sunday School, and the choice of a home. If these are samples of its questions which do not come within definite spheres, we feel relieved. Certainly if any one thing comes within the sphere of the wife, it is the care of the children, physically, mentally, and morally, and she is the proper person to decide how it shall be doctored when sick, and what education it shall receive. The husband being the business partner of the matrimonial firm, must decide where he can best earn the family bread and choose the home accordingly.

The Union is equally unfortunate in its citation of "organizations" where "there must be some final appeal." It is not true, as has already been stated that in a business partnership either the law or private contract designate one of the partners as a court of final appeal to decide all questions in controversy between the members, of the firm. And it is a little singular that in a country which maintains a republican government, and in the Congregational Church, an intelligent writer should be found to claim the necessity of king or pope to justify family tyranny. It is true he adds the modifying terms, "or plebiscitum," "or the great congregation;" but what do these words mean if they do not mean democracy and not monarchy? And that is all we ask.

The army, composed of hundreds, or thousands of ignorant and turbulent privates, requiring strict discipline, is no fitting illustration of one refined, affectionate, and devoted wife, whom, the Union concedes, should be consulted, deferred to, and within certain limits should decide controverted questions. The chairman of a committee, though giving a casting vote, is otherwise hampered by restrictions, so that his power is certainly not greater than that of any other member; and his position is transient. The principle that in the life-long association of two equally interested parties, one, and

always the same one, should decide every controverted question, is false and dangerous and productive of more domestic discord than any other one element. I have seen the happiness and usefulness of whole families wrecked forever by it.

Selfish and brutal men make it a pretext for tyranny, and will do so to the end of time. There is no remedy but in repudiating the doctrines as a relic of barbarism, unjust, unchristian, and unworthy our country and our age. Let a man repose the same trust in the woman he marries that she reposes in him. If she can trust him to choose and supply the home, he can also trust her to properly guide the household and rear the children. There is no reason why his trust, his love, or his self-abnegation should not be as great as hers; and only where it is so can there be perfect harmony

Lavinia Goodell. Janesville, Wis., Nov. 1, 1879.