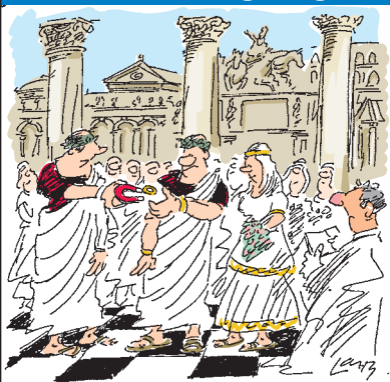


The wedding ring



The giving of a **wedding ring** dates back to early Roman times. Usually made of iron, it represented a pledge of betrothal – since rings originated as seals – and came to mean that a wife had charge of sealing up, or looking after, the house. The Christian church adopted the **wedding ring** in the 9th century. Precious metals were now used and the fourth finger, believed by the Romans to carry the ‘love nerve’ to the heart, took on a new significance. The priest would touch the first three fingers, saying ‘*In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost*’ and, on reaching the fourth finger, ‘*Amen*’