PROGRESS Pages 9 to 16. Pages 9 to 16.

ST. JOHN N. B. SATURDAY, MAY 18 1895.

MOTHER-IN-LAW DEFENDED.

Mrs. Amelia E. Barr Vigorously Defends Her-She is Often Unjustly Accused-The Othe side of the Question-A Lover's Debt of Obligation to His Sweetheart's Mother-A Mother's Altered Place After Her Daughter's Marriage.

life so like, and so unlike, as those of thoughts ont of her mind, and tries again, mother and mother-in-law. In the first only to be again wounded. Finally she is relation she is generally beloved and hon- compelled to admit to her aching heart, ored; in the latter, she is sure to be sus- that in getting a son-in-law, she has also pected of evil, if not actually accused of it. got a daughter-in-law. And yet the same woman usually fills both these relationships at the same time. The singularity of the contradiction goes further; the woman is probably allowed to be a er. Her father and brothers are genegood cau, an affectionste sister, a faithful wife, a loyal friend, a wise mistress, and even a devoted mother, and yet, as a regarded. "Why should she be?" they mother-in-law, is charged with the most ask. And the only answers possible, seem aggravating and despicable domestic crimes. to men not in the exalted condition of a How can such an anomalous woman exist? The fact is she does not exist except in But it is the small considerations that at the imagination of those whose jealous this period most certainly control the sonselfishness and self-conceit render them in-law's conduct; indeed his motives are incapable of seeing any right or privilege so personally petty and mean, that he would but their own.

The position of the mother-in-law has two sides; she may be mother-in-law to her daughter 'husband, or mother-in-law to her son's wife; but it is in the first of these positions she is most bitterly and universally slandered. This brings us the counter accusation-that her evil report comes from the very men who owe her most and ought to be her readiest defenders. For nothing is more certain than that, in the days of courtship, the lover is very attentive to his future mother-in-law, and very dependaccomplishments have very likely teen nherited from and cultivated by her She has grown up under her mother. care, and is still greatly under her influence. So then, in the hopes and fears of courtship, the girl's mother is an important factor. The lover is anxious to please her, he flatters her prejudices, he defers to her opinions, he does his very best to persuade her that he will not only be a good hurband to her daughter, but a good son to herself. And when he has gained this point, he reaps many privileges from it. She influences the male part of the family, and makes his way smooth for the necessary prosaic interviews with the father; and if there is any adverse feelings on the part of the girl's brothers she espouses the lover's cause, and puts herselt squarely on his side. Day after eay she smiles his welcome at her table, and sees that no on e rambles into the drawing-room set apart for his wooing. She often makes considerable financial sacrifices to secure his and her daughter's happiness, and when the ordeal of the marriage ceremony arrives she attends to the troublesome details, and in every posssible way relieves him from the disagreeableness of the event. And in those days he is grateful. He talks to his dearest Margarita of her "mother's thoughtfullness and kindness, and is sure they will never, never, forget it." But there is not on earth two more different creatures than the lover and the new made husband. The one is diffi lent and anxious to please, the other is so amazed at his own perfections and position, that he is totally incapable of any just estimate regarding the good qualities or the position of any other person. He was nothing but a suitor for love. He has now actually won what he believes to be the most desirable woman in the world. Hence his superiority to other men. He was nothing but a lodger i other men's houses. He has become himself a householder, a payer of taxes, a master over servants, and he teels the difference so much, that he is peacocky and self-assertive to a point that would make all who know him resentful, if they did not understand the transition, and were not good-naturedly willing to allow for the circumstances. The first person to feel this new importance is usually his mother-in law. He has been very subservient to her in his courting days; he therefore thinks it necessary to make her understand at once that he is now independant. He "thanks goodness that he is now in his own house," and he begins at once to make his mother-inlaw feel the circumstance in all the petty ways his possession of her coveted daughter | least a few weeks. The self-complacencies,

There are no conditions in a woman's [is too sensitive; she puts unpleasant

It must be noted that in this phase of the relationship, the young husband arrays himself particularly against his wife's mothrally so civilly treated, that they find it hard to believe a mother can be less kindly bridegroom too foolish to be entertaine l. be ashamedto honestly admit them to his own consciousness.

The second phase of this relationshipthat in which the mother becomes motherin-law to her son's wife-is one wherein the woman is most apt to be at fault. A mother's love for her son is a very jealous love, and she never quite forgives the women who takes the first place in her son's life. She must have a nature singularly noble if she acknowledges the girl's good qualities, and excuses her fault. She is naturally far more apt to plume herself a ent on her favor. The girl whom he little when the wife falls below her own date for the same condition; that in fact, professes to desire before all the world is perfections in any respect : and she cannot they have no female relative however close her daughter, and her beauty and ber resist a certain feeling of satisfaction in or houored, who may not at some time beher son's recognition of the fact. But it must be noticed how comparatively seldom this side of the mother-in-law question is commented on. It is always the wife's mother that is the subject for the

as to have no time to look after those of the newly married. Every bird likes to build its nest in its own way, and new housekeepers are very jealous of interference. They believe themselves to be a specially enlightened couple. Their ideas about the furnishing of their rooms they consider to be original and progressive. They are sure that their entertainments excite surprise and admiration; and their very servants are either better or worse than the servants of mere ordinary people, When the first baby comes, it is of a nature entirely beyond the comprehension of the last generation; they have their own ideas about its management and education, and they are quite sure their ideas are correct. It is extremely likely that both mother and mother-in-law know they are toolish, yet it would only be to add folly to foolishness to tell them so. By-and-by experience will speak, and then the love that has been blind to faults, and patient with wrongs, may find its opportunity and its reward. As to the rights of mothers-in-law, there is sure to be a great difference of opinion, but there can be no dispute in regard to the despicable wrong done to all womanhood in the persistent holding up to the scornful mirth of a relationship so personal and so closely allied with every domestic sanctity. And as men are in this respect the chief offenders, it is but just they should be first and most active movers in a crusade for the abolition of the wrong. Let them primarily consider that their own mother is very likely some other man's mother-inlaw; that their own wife, if she is graced with the honor of motherhood, is a candicome the object of this low ribaldry on

she must be so busy with her own affairs



miserable jokes of the would-be withings or the pretended funny stories of the comic papers. From what source comes this singular reticence regarding one side of this relationship? Is it from the wife's nobler forbearauce? Or docs it spring from that unfair division of fault, which man has always forced on woman, because of her sex, or of her inability to defend herself? To put it sharply, is the husband's mother protected by the wife's patience and dignity? Or is the wife's mother the scape-goat for the selfishness of a husband who can brook no other claim on a love, which he is determined to possess so exclusively that it must have no past, no memories, and no obligations, which de

not refer solely to himselt ? For it is only necessary for any one to consider the circle of their own acquaintances, to be convinced that where trouble springs from the relationship of mother-in-law, in nine cases out of ten, it springs from the husband's mother, and not from the wife's mother.

It ought not to spring from either side, The relation is one full of sweet and beautiful possibilities, and, in a large majority of cases, these are fully realized. And as

we hear only of the miserably marriages, so also we hear only of the trouble made by mothers-in-law; the families in which their influence is sweet and binding, being beyond the numbering, as they are beyond the knowledge of the general public. But it may be safely asserted, that wherever the sons-in-law and daughters-in-law are generous and considerate, the relationship grows into a tie of great strength and affection; yet it is precisely of such families the world and its newspaper never hear.

One point is certain, that at first the relationship should be very much left alone. We should give it a year or two to grow in. It is like a transplanted flower, and must have time to root itself, and become accustomed to its new conditions. Secondly, it is a condition to be treated with great outward respect. In no circumstances will familiarity so surely breed contempt. No

confidences must be forced from it; no claims made upon it; and to much formality will be better than to much freedom. Thirdly, the abnormal condition of the young husband and wife must never be lost sight of. The world in all ages has permitted the bride and bridegroom to take which was steadily moving toward the certain licenses. They are not expected rock.

"I'll try for him when he reaches the to act on perfectly sane grounds, for at

mothers-in-law. Whether she deserves it or not, will be of no consequence : the old, wornout pun, or joke, or silly story, is ever on the lips of those who wish to say something they consider witty, and who do not know what else to say.

Tae vulgarity of this senseless abuse ought to make even men who do not mind its immorality, abandon it. For it is immoral. Anything that makes what is good and honorable, to be bad and contempible, is a crime against God and society. Any word that lessens men's respect for womanhood, is a crime against humanity : for when any topic or (any condition becomes food for our laughter, we cease to respect that topic, or that condition. A mother is a sacred thing; a mother-in-law is not a joke and a scoff; she is a great power for good or for evil, and if she is permitted to be so, generally for good.

Now, in every community there are a majority of kind hearted, therefore of finemannered men, and such men have only to steadily frown down the wearisome, wornout scoffing and laughing at mothers-in-law, to soon make the custom disreputable and obsolete. In doing this, they would not only be defending the honor of their own

women, but they might perhaps give to some silly youths "that turn" which would be the first step towards a higher and nobler perception of the obligations and the af fections of life.

AMELIA E. BARR.

A BIG SNAKE HUNT.

How a Stone Cut off the Headsof Two o the Reptiles.

Oue sultry atternoon in August a boy and two of his brothers, were sauntering along the highway, in Indiana, when they crossed a smill brook, where the thrower gathered up a half dozen broad, flat stones of the pattern which he was fond of using. He hurled there, one after the other, at there was no chance about it. such targets as presented themselves, and when he reached a bridge, spanning a s nall creek, he had only one stone left, the have waited." choicest of the lot. He held this back

Mischievous Young Raccoons at School. the hope that something animate might present itself for a target. The boys stopped when near the middle of the creek was a small reck, the top of which was only

a few inches in circumterence. "Look, Harry!" said one of the lads, "there's a turtle swimming for the rock." Only the small black head was visible above the surface of the muddy stream, but a second look of the youths convinced them that it was the head of a water snake

stone," remarked Harry, keeping his eye on the dark speck.

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the heads of both snakes as clean and slick

right hand.

Ellis let fly with the stone he held in his | knew his lesson perfectly, and was determined to set all the fun possible out of the As the broad, flat missile left his grasp proceedings, for when the good mother coon skimmed through the air, but gradually got so angry that she made her bites felt, it skimmed through the air, but gradually the little tellows got down to business and tipped over until it was vertical, and, curvcaught, washed and eight their crawfish ing in a beautiful parabola, dipped down, with all the ability of veterans." when directly over the rock, and cut off

Old Enough to Marry but not to Promise. as it done by a keen edged hatchet. The

feat seems incredible, and yet the two wit-A mother asked a London magistrate if nesses, whose words no acquaintance ever her daughter could bring an action for questioned, declared that it was done prebreach of promise against a sailor who had cisely as described. They insisted that written stating that he had married somethe throw was one of those chance ones one else. He was not yet twenty-one, and which might occurr in a million efforts, had expectations when he came of age. and probably such it was, but Harry Ellis The magistrate said it was no use bringing was equally persistent in declaring that an action, as the young man was merely an infant in the eye of the law, his promise "Why did I wait," he asked, "until their being worth nothing. He was old enough necks touched unless it was to kill both? to get married, but not old enough to Had I not intended to do that I would not make a promise.

YOUR CURTAINS

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TAKE DOWN

Joe Mitchell was fishing out on Sequali-chew Creek, Mass., a few days ago, and

tells this truthful tale : "I saw the counterpart of a boys' school. I was sitting on a log when there came pacing down a little path an old mother coon with five young ones. The little ones were about as large as half-grown cats, and were as full of fun as a basket of monkeys. "If ever there was a hard-worked teacher it was that poor mother coon. She tried to teach the little imps how to catch and eat crawfish. When the old lady got the little fellows in line at the water's edge she sedately walked to a rock and gravely reached down into a hole and brought out a crawfish. She then proceeded to wash it, but just as she was about to eat it one little coon broke rank and stole the crawTHE WORLD'S MEDICINE.

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