

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

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW DEFENDED.

Mrs. Amelia E. Barr Vigorously Defends Her—She is Often Unjustly Accused—The Other 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.

There are no conditions in a woman's life so like, and so unlike, as those of mother and mother-in-law. In the first relation she is generally beloved and honored; in the latter, she is sure to be suspected of evil, if not actually accused of it.

is too sensitive; she puts unpleasant thoughts out of her mind, and tries again, only to be again wounded. Finally she is compelled to admit to her aching heart, that in getting a son-in-law, she has also got a daughter-in-law.

It must be noted that in this phase of the relationship, the young husband arrays himself particularly against his wife's mother. Her father and brothers are generally so civilly treated, that they find it hard to believe a mother can be less kindly regarded.

The position of the mother-in-law has two sides; she may be mother-in-law to her daughter's 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 to the counter accusation—that her evil report comes from the very men who owe her most and ought to be her readiest defenders.

The second phase of this relationship—that in which the mother becomes mother-in-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 woman who takes the first place in her son's life.

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 husband to her daughter, but a good son to herself. And when he has gained this point, he reaps many privileges from it.

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 miserable jokes of the would-be wits and the pretended funny stories of the comic papers. From what source comes this singular reticence regarding one side of this relationship?

But there is not on earth two more different creatures than the lover and the new made husband. The one is diffident 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.

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 miserable 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.

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 independent. He "thanks goodness that he is now in his own house," and he begins at once to make his mother-in-law feel the circumstance in all the petty ways his possession of her coveted daughter permits him to do.

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.

It is not necessary to point out how easily from this condition spring the looks and words, the small neglects, the positively unkind acts, which first astonish and then wound both the mother and the mother-in-law. No one but herself knows how often she tries to believe that she has been mistaken in Margarita's and John's behavior.

There is one more very important reserve for the loving mother-in-law to practice: she must be so busy with her own affairs 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 house-keepers are very jealous of interference.

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It is extremely likely that both mother and mother-in-law know they are foolish, 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.

The 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 contemptible, is a crime against God and society.

Now, in every community there are a majority of kind hearted, therefore of fine-mannered men, and such men have only to steadily frown down the wearisome, worn-out scolding and laughing at mothers-in-law, to soon make the custom disreputable and obsolete.

AMELIA E. BARR.

A BIG SNAKE HUNT.

How a Stone Cut off the Head of Two of the Reptiles.

One sultry afternoon in August a boy and two of his brothers, were sauntering along the highway, in Indiana, when they crossed a small brook, where the thrower gathered up a half dozen broad, flat stones of the pattern which he was fond of using.

"Look, Harry!" said one of the lads, "there's a turtle swimming for the rock."

"I'll try for him when he reaches the stone," remarked Harry, keeping his eye on the dark speck.

"Hello! There's another!" called the other brother, pointing to the water on the further side of the rock.

Sure enough a second snake was swimming towards the same point. The position and progress of the two indicated that they would reach the spot at the same moment unless something interfered, and nothing did interfere.

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Ellis let fly with the stone he held in his right hand. As the broad, flat missile left his grasp it skimmed through the air, but gradually tipped over until it was vertical, and, curving in a beautiful parabola, dipped down, when directly over the rock, and cut off the heads of both snakes as clean and sick as if done by a keen edged hatchet.

Mischievous Young Raccoons at School. Joe Mitchell was fishing out on Sequatchew Creek, Mass., a few days ago, and tells this truthful tale: "I saw the counterpart of a boy's 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."

"Then the fun began in earnest, and all the mischievous boys that ever made a teacher's heart ache were angels of goodness when compared with these little coons. They pinched each others' tails, nipped each others' ears, bit each others' legs, and worried the old mother until she turned to and gave them a general cuffing all around."

known his lesson perfectly, and was determined to set all the fun possible out of the proceedings, for when the good mother coon got so angry that she made her bites felt, the little fellows got down to business and caught, washed and eight their crawfish with all the ability of veterans."

Old Enough to Marry but not to Promise. A mother asked a London magistrate if her daughter could bring an action for breach of promise against a sailor who had written stating that he had married someone else. He was not yet twenty-one, and had expectations when he came of age.

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