

To print this page, select "Print" from the File menu of your browser

of Ruth, the grandmother of the royal David, to her mother-in-law. Struck with poverty, bereaved and widowed, the disconsolate Naomi turned her face homeward to her own country and kindred, and besought her two daughters-in-law to leave her, and be at peace with their own people. One of them kisses her mother-in-law and turns back. Not so the lovely Ruth, destined to be the progenitor of the Christ. She refused to forsake the woman who has mothered the man whom she loved and lost.

She exclaims: "Entreat me not to leave thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

Beautiful importunity! beautiful devotion! Can human love and tenderness go further than this? One such example should plead trumpet-tongued for a thousand mothers-in-law.

There is another case which, incredible as it may seem, caused a miracle to be wrought in behalf of a mother-in-law. It would seem that Simon's wife's mother was grievously afflicted with fever, and, she being greatly beloved of her friends, they besought the Christ to heal her, which he did with singular dignity.

In these modern days, mothers who are well-to-do in the world like to be surrounded by neatness, order, and taste. They see to all the little details of a household conscientiously. Knickerbocker wives and mothers, New-England wives and mothers, have a living estimate of cheery comfort. They cannot abide any thing slipshod. Food well and wholesomely cooked, garments well made and well preserved, are the *sine qua non* with them. Every thing must be thorough. They themselves last well—are blithe, healthful, and plump, till well on in life. Their boys are used to all this handsome if not faultless house-keeping. They have been church-going, studious, well-conditioned boys—well brought up, if not heroically so. Now, see what may come.

The boy marries some woman of a wholly different training, and the change is utter and entire. He who never knew a slipper out of place can now never find one. He who had his own bureau and closet and desk, which no one invaded, finds every thing topsyturvy, strings and straps and buttons gone to the dogs, and mixed up with combs and brushes, ribbons, petticoats, and all sorts of unmentionables; no towels of a morning, no soap—nothing as it should be. He goes to breakfast: his wife is bedizened with jewelry, her hair is in papers, her wrapper disordered; the bread is heavy, the steak overdone, the coffee "thick as mud." He is not a hero nor a philosopher, but a plain young man without pretension or nonsense. He flings out something about his "mother's good bread," and goes out to get his breakfast at a restaurant.

In the mean while, the terrible mother-in-law sees that matters are going wrong, and—she ventures with all gentleness to give a little advice—to help on the arrangements for the young wife, to show her how things

might be bettered, makes her presents, tells her how many failures she herself made before her own house-keeping became anyway perfect, and encourages her in every way. If the wife is of a teachable, gentle make, wonders are accomplished. Reform is at once inaugurated, and the young pair take a new lease of life and happiness.

But the women of our day are not made to learn or to conciliate. They dominate. Perhaps they are not native-born—perhaps they come from a country where the domestic virtues are little esteemed—where the women are made free only by marriage, and they dress to go abroad, not to beautify a home. The young man finds himself suddenly deprived of all the quiet, peace, and order of the fireside. In vain he tries to instruct—in vain he exercises patience and forbearance. The wife is violent, treacherous, and slatternly; it is her nationality, it is useless to complain. If the mother-in-law ventures a word of remonstrance, she is outraged by the worst kind of abuse, and all sorts of indignities heaped upon her. It is easy to see where all this must and does end with the unfortunate pair. Reverse the picture, say it is a daughter who has married a lord, a count, or something of the sort, and the end is the same—separation, divorce—without aid from the mother-in-law.

No persons should enter into the marriage relation unprovided with a reasonable means of support, and the household should be set up *outside* of the paternal home. It is rarely well for two households to conjoin under the same roof. The young wife, unless of a conscientious, sympathetic make, is sure to give or receive cause for aggression. The difference in years and experience, some touch of natural feeling felt by the mother at finding herself, perhaps, neglected or ignored by the child of her love; mean, petty discontent about precedence, dress, looks, and expenditure, are very apt to supervene and create annoyance, which it is wiser to avoid. I remember my grandfather refused to have any of his children move into the old homestead, though bordering upon a century, saying: "It is better to be lord of the castle one's self."

Lucretia Mott, whose finely-ordered household might be considered a model home, I saw surrounded by her children and grandchildren. Cheerful, bright, and handsome, were they all. She told me they had all lived together for seven years, and never had the first word of disagreement been spoken among them. This was a beautiful experience. All were Americans, cultivated and religious, which greatly diminished any tendency to disorder.

Where differences of religion, nationality, and culture, exist, discords are sure to arise, and that without any sort of aid from the mother-in-law. In all cases a manly young man will do better to cast himself and wife upon their own responsibilities, and both will do well to shoulder their own shortcomings, remembering that the mother-in-law is pretty sure to have as much as she can well carry, without being made to carry their burdens also.

ELIZABETH OAKS SMITH.

ONLY A LODGER!

NO home for the weary one to-night,
Only a lodging-place;
My heart gleams not in its garish light—
Only my face.

Ah, why should be warmth and glow where yet
No loving eyes I see?
Outside of the blinds, the cold and wet
Are more like me.

I do not know but my cottage-eaves
Drip with the chill March rain,
Or round its porch wild Winter weaves
His shrouds again!

Yet if, betwixt me and the storm,
My curtained windows rose,
With a stinger fire my heart were warm
In spite of snows.

Not palaces, where strangers wait
With lavish dole for hire,
Could tempt my feet from my lowly gate
And Love's sweet fire.

I'm a lodger in the town to-night,
Just for the dear ones' sakes;
That love to nourish, whose holy light
Home's sunshine makes!

W. C. RICHARDS.

MISCELLANY.

MARVELS OF NITRO-GLYCERINE.

WITHIN a few years our community have become familiar with the name and terrible effects of a new explosive agent, called nitro-glycerine, and I feel sure that you will be glad to be made acquainted with the remarkable qualities and relations of this truly wonderful substance. Every one knows that clear, oily, and sweet-tasting liquid called glycerine, and probably most of you have eaten it for honey. But it has a great many valuable uses, which may reconcile you to its abuse for adulterating honey, and it is obtained in large quantities as a secondary product of the manufacture of soap and candles from our common fats. Now, nitro-glycerine bears the same relation to glycerine that saltpetre bears to caustic potash. Common saltpetre, which is the oxygenated ingredient of gunpowder, is called in chemistry potassium nitrate, and, although the commercial supply comes wholly from natural sources, it can easily be made by the action of nitric acid on caustic potash. My assistant will pour some nitric acid into a solution of caustic potash, and you will soon see crystals of saltpetre appear, shooting out from the sides of the dish, whose image we have projected on the screen. In a similar way we can prepare nitro-glycerine by pouring glycerine in a fine stream into very strong nitric acid, rendered more active by being mixed with sulphuric acid—oil of vitriol.

We could easily make the experiment, but you could see nothing. There is no apparent change, and it is a remarkable fact that, when pure, nitro-glycerine resembles, externally, very closely glycerine itself, and, like it, is a colorless, oily fluid—the reddish-yellow color of the commercial article being due to impurities. As soon as the chemical change is ended, the nitro-glycerine must be very carefully washed with water, until all adhering acid has been removed. The material thus obtained has most singular qualities, and not the least unexpected of these is its stability under ordinary conditions. After the terrible