

The Bee's Home Magazine Page

The Mother-in-law and the Wife

Answer to a Woman Who Says That She is Unhappy in Her Son's Home—It is Suggested That She Pack Her Trunk and Move Away Immediately : : :

By DOROTHY DIX.

To my mind the most tragic thing on earth is the unnecessary trouble that we poor, foolish mortals make for ourselves. It would seem that there are enough unavoidable griefs—death, sickness, poverty, loss—to tear like vultures at our hearts without our going out of the way to manufacture ourselves a million torments that flay us alive.



But no. We court sorrow, and out of conditions of life that should be filled with nothing but joy and gladness we make misery and tears for ourselves and those nearest to us.

The best illustration of this unaccountable human weakness is to be found in the relations-in-law problem, where people who should dwell together in peace and amity seem to take a fiendish delight in quarrelling and bickering, although by so doing they ruin their own happiness and make life a hell on earth for all about them.

It is literally true that not drink, nor gambling, nor immorality, nor any vice whatsoever, brings a thousandth part of the misery to humanity as does the instability of relations-in-law to be friendly, or even treat each other with decent politeness, for pitiful and petty as a family quarrel seems somewhere in it there is always a broken heart.

In the course of a year I get thousands of letters from women on this subject. Sometimes it is a daughter-in-law who is victimized by a selfish and tyrannical and quarrelsome mother-in-law who feels that she has a perfect right to run her son's home and who jealously resents her son's affection for his wife and the money he spends on her.

More often the letter is the pitiful wail of some poor old mother who is made to feel that her daughter-in-law begrudges her the very bread she eats, or a daughter-in-law who sets herself deliberately to wear her husband from the mother who bore him. Today I have another such letter as this. It is written by a lovely, cultured, gentle lady, full of tact and kindness, who asks for help in solving a problem to which no wisdom has yet found the key.

This woman has a son to whom she is devoted and a grandchild that she adores. She would gladly love her daughter-in-law, too, but the daughter-in-law repulses her at every turn. She is not even civilly polite to the mother-in-law, but criticizes her and sneers at her, and maintains toward her an attitude that is a covert insult in itself.

The man loves his wife, but he loves his mother also, and he is made so miserable by his wife's conduct toward his mother that it has seriously affected his health. The mother fears that he will die in the atmosphere of such an unhappy home, and she asks what I think she had best do.

My advice to her is to pack her trunks and leave her son's home immediately. Fortunately, this woman has plenty of money, but even if a woman had to go to the poorhouse from her son's house I should still urge her to go rather than stay in a home where she was a bone of strife and the source of discord.

This may seem a hard saying. But when does motherhood ever finish from the cross when, by sacrifice, it can secure the good of those it has borne in travail of body and must so often cherish in travail of spirit?

And it is the wonder of love that which we give we keep. The woman who stays in her son's home, making perpetual friction there for him, may lose some of his reverence and affection, but the mother who sublimely renounces all for his happiness remains forever a revered saint to his vision. It may seem hard to her to go away from one she loves so dearly, but in another home she will be nearer to him than she would be under the same roof with him, with a spiteful daughter-in-law always interposing her watchful suspicions between them.

Unhappily there is no panacea for changing a selfish, narrow, jealous daughter-in-law into a broad and noble woman who is capable of appreciating the fact that next to her own mother her husband's mother is the woman whom it is her duty most to love and cherish. You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, nor can you convert a stingy, venomous little woman into a big and generous one.

So the only thing the mother-in-law can do under such sad circumstances is to eliminate herself. That saves her son, at least, from perpetual nagging from his wife, and the sorrow of seeing his mother suffer humiliations and insults from which he is powerless to protect her. Sometimes when the friction of daily life together is removed it is possible to establish a truce with the daughter-in-law, so that it makes it possible for the son to visit his mother in peace and without precipitating a family row. But always it is best for the two women not to dwell under the same roof, and wise are those who never make the foolhardy experiment.

There are two strange things in this antagonistic attitude that so many women take toward their husband's mothers. The first is the incomprehensibility of any woman having so little

The Gold Witch



Being the Adventures of a Golden-Haired Heiress

Fairweather Friends



By Stella Flores

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Before her father's will is read the great newspapers print pages about the Gold Witch—the world's greatest heiress. People who hitherto have greeted her indifferently sue her for friendship. Beautiful Helen Van Burg, the proudest girl in society, runs over before sailing for Europe to say good-bye and to vow undying friendship. Tom alone stands aloof.

When the will is read, all but \$500 is left—not to the Gold Witch, but to her guardian. Stunned at this strange outcome, she congratulates herself on at least having so many friends. But she finds out that the penniless orphan is quite a different person to her wealthy friends. Cut to the heart, she takes refuge in the conservatory, where she tries to realize that she is really alone in the world. No, not quite alone. For Tom, whose pride held him away from the heiress, hurries to sympathize with the forlorn little maid.

sympathy toward a fellow woman as to want to separate her from the child that she has suffered for, sacrificed for, and who is the very bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. Yet you see mothers with sons of their own treating their husbands' mothers as they pray God no other woman may ever treat them.

The second thing that is strange is that any woman could be fool enough

to take such a risk of alienating her husband from her as to be cruel to his old mother and drive her out of her own son's house. A man would have to be the lowest dastard on earth not to resent that with every fibre of his being, and although he may, for the sake of peace, let his mother go in silence while she is being mistreated, it is something that he never forgives his wife. She has laid

the axe to the root of his respect and affection for her. Remember that, you young wives, when you make your husband's mother unwelcome in your homes. Ten million beautiful stings could not wear your husband from you so quickly, and so effectually, as your unkindness to that poor old gray-headed woman going with wet eyes and an aching heart from her son's door.

Carpenter's South American Letters

The Bee is glad to announce a series of letters on South America to be written during 1914 by Mr. Frank G. Carpenter.

Mr. Carpenter started on his trip from New York some weeks ago, and he is now on the South American continent where he will be traveling for some months to come.

His first investigations will be on the Isthmus of Panama, where he will describe the completed canal, or how our great ditch looks as the ships go through. From Panama, Mr. Carpenter will make his way down the west coast of the continent, going inland from port to port and climbing in many places to the tops of the Andes. He will travel for several months upon those cold highlands, traversing the Andean system throughout its whole length and describing the strange features of life and industry there. He will also go over the South American desert, which runs for more than 2,000 miles along the west coast, and will give us some letters about the Strait of Magellan and the wilds of Patagonia.

In eastern South America, Mr. Carpenter will take up the new developments now going on in Argentina and Uruguay, and the strange features of life and work in the coffee lands and rubber lands of Brazil. He will make explorations in Paraguay and the Parana valley, and will go into the Gran Chaco, between the Paraguay river and Bolivia, ending his travels in some of the countries of northern South America along the Caribbean sea.

This tour will be more than one of mere travel and description. It will consist of investigations along the line of the news, and recording movements and measures which affect the business and vast of living of every United States citizen.

WELL KNOWN WRITER WILL VISIT SOUTH AMERICA.



Frank G. Carpenter

Secretary Redfield of the Department of Commerce has asked congress to give him \$100,000 to send expeditions to South America to look into these trade possibilities. This fund is not large, but The Bee will add to it by the investigations of Mr. Carpenter, which, through his trained powers of observation, cannot be of enormous value to every business man among our readers.

Another field of investigation which will be taken up during this tour will be the possibilities of the various South American countries in the reduction of the high prices of food stuffs in the United States markets. Argentina and Uruguay are now shipping frozen beef and mutton to the great cities of Europe, and London lives largely on frozen meat from Australia and New Zealand. Hundreds of thousands of American dollars are being invested in the meat industries of South America, and it is said that the bread possibilities may be equally great. Argentina alone has wheat lands big enough to feed the world.

The Bee thinks also that there should be a reduction in the price of the coffee we drink, as well as of other staple articles, which come from our sister continent. The Agricultural department is sending experts to South America to examine into these matters. The Omaha Bee correspondent has been instructed to report as to what they are doing and at the same time to give us the results of his observations, without fear or favor.

Other matters that will be treated of will be the chances in South America likely to be made through the opening of the canal, the opportunities for investments in the various localities, the chances for young Americans, the development of friendly relations between the two continents, as well as the human interest features relating to the every day life of the people and those things in which the various countries differ from ours.

Club and Club Women

By ADA PATTERSON.

The president of the Dixie club, an organization of southern women, has resigned her office because she says a woman cannot be president of two clubs and give as much time to her home and husband as they deserve. Her reward for her resignation is a country home on Long Island, which she would have forfeited otherwise, her husband declaring that she would not have time to enjoy it unless she gave up the gavel.



The news has stirred to life the old discussion as to whether a wife's membership in a club is a good or bad force in the home. Few of the pleas on either side would have been entertained for thirty seconds in a competent court of law because they were flagrantly beside the point. It was quite

lost sight of in the warm, if somewhat empty debate that the retiring president specifically stated that a woman could not be president of two clubs and give merited attention to her household. Mark that she said "president" and "two clubs." Though she specifically announced that she would continue to be the president of the club that represented her native state in New York, no one seemed to hear, or heed.

The presidency of two large and active clubs situated in the metropolis is a heavy task involving much correspondence, much planning and execution, and a great deal of anxiety about the ever accumulating mass of details.

Resigning from one of these would divide a woman's club cares by two and still permit her enough of the club contact for mental stimulus. That is quite what the woman in question did, proving her possession of a practical mind, as well as the fealty to home which every normal woman has today as surely as her grandmother had fifty years ago.

Her resignation had no more significance than a woman's going to the theater one night and staying home the next, although she was invited for both evenings, her doing so being in the economy of the household happiness. It is the elemental principle of knowing when you have enough of anything. The matter was of no especial consequence to anyone save the overworked president herself, but the few remaining relics of that time when women's clubs were regarded as an evil, chose the circumstance as a hook upon which to hang a few feeble surviving objections to woman's clubs.

Membership in a club of serious purpose never hurt any woman, and it has helped thousands. It is the best means I know for continuing the education of women, except the necessity of earning her living. It sharpens her wits. It broadens her vision. It softens her heart. It is what education is—discipline acquired through gaining knowledge.

Last month I had occasion to meet many members of women's clubs. There was revealed to me with a nearly blinding light how clubs had educated women in the last five years, educated them to quick perception of a situation or a need, trained them to instant action, cleared their vision of petty prejudices and the dust of personalities.

I had seen a child dying in a hospital because the driver of an automobile truck had been hurrying to catch a train. An accident caused the club's president to ask me to tell the club of the accident. I described the child's sufferings, told them that nearly 300 persons had been needlessly killed by careless driving in New York within the year.

It was as though some one had applied a torch to a house. The club caught fire. A committee was appointed to discuss means to stop these atrocities in the name of fast driving. It met two days later, ignoring the fact that that was a holiday. It organized a permanent committee for the prevention of careless driving and street accidents.

They held a mass meeting. It called on the mayor. Some of the women arranged a dinner at which ways and means were discussed. Two plans were followed. The promoters of each wished the other subdued.

"There can't be too many efforts to stop the slaughter," they said. Men looked on applauding. "When the women get interested something happens," they said.

They are organizing a bureau for the prevention of street accidents while I write this. The moral of which is that efficiency in dealing with public questions, and the irresistible force of concerted action are among the beneficent results of women's clubs.

The Many

By WILLIAM F. KIRK.

Why should I worship a perfumed king
Who was born and must die, like me?
Why should I bow when his praises ring
Over the land and the sea?
On the Reaper's day he will fade away
With all of his tinsel pride,
To put him there on his puppet chair
Millions of brave men died.

Why should I worship the monarch Gold?
His boots are licked right well
In every land by the little-souled,
Though his scepter points to hell.
By wars and crime he has made his climb,
Through cities and lands despoiled,
And to keep this drone on his selfish throne,
Millions of brave men toiled.

I worship the many of Now and Then,
And the many yet to be;
They were, they are and they shall be Men
On God's great charted sea.
Brave and true, as they dare and do,
They shall work the Master's will,
Till kings are dust and the world is just
And the many have scaled the hill.