

Woman and the Home

How the Ex-Baby Feels

By Anne Guilbert Mahon

"I suppose Edward will take on dreadfully when he sees the new baby," said an easy going mother of her two-year-old

"It was just so with the two older boys," she continued. "James was so jealous of Thomas when he came that we could not leave him alone in the room with him. expect Edward will be the same.'

And Edward was. He fulfilled all his mother's expectations for him. He followed out the course of conduct suggested by her to the utmost extent. When he saw the new baby for the first time, occupying his accustomed place in mother's arms, cuddled against her cheeks—taking his place—he cried and stormed and showed in every way his disapproval. For the first few days, whenever the baby was brought near him, he would hide his face and refuse to look at him. Just old enough to grasp the meaning of the remark made by his older brothers and sisters that "Mother has a new baby now," and the laughing innuendoes of the older ones about his after him to the best of his childish ability. "jealousy," he felt that it was encumbent How hard it is made for some of the upon him to act as he did, that the baby poor little "ex-babies"! How thoughtless

supplanting, and the father and mother made the little fellow feel that just as the new baby had his own place in the household, so he had in their hearts, a place entirely distinct and separate from the one Roger occupied and in no way detracting from him.

Roger was now "mother's little man," "mother's little helper," "mother's dear boy"—a place filled solely by himself. No suggestion that baby was usurping his rights, no intimation that there was cause for feeling or jealously, was ever expressed before him and he never showed the slightest trace of it. He had his own little bed. his own toys, his own belongings, and his own place in father's and mother's hearts. His only feelings for the new baby were those of love and pride. Again and again he would run up to his mother's side and beg to "just tiss baby brother," and when the day came that mother put him out on the porch—with the gate shut—to play and "to take care of and watch baby brother" while the latter lay in his coach, Roger was a proud and happy boy. Never for a moment did his mother fear to trust him alone with "baby brother." She knew he loved him truly and would look



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eral occasions he tried to pinch and scratch the little helpless mite, when he was called "a bad boy" and "jealous," punished and scolded until finally, through many hardships and much bitterness, he became used to the thought that he was supplanted and that "mother had a new baby."

Poor little Edward! His mother loves him devotedly. She is a good mother, but she does not realize the feelings of the poor little supplanted "ex-baby."

Only a few doors away from Edward lives another "ex-baby," just his age, but what a difference there is between the two! Before Roger's baby brother came, his

mother talked to him often-little as he was-of how nice it would be for him to have a little brother or sister, how they would love the dear little briby to come into their home to cherish and to take care of, how he would help mother care for it. Roger looked forward with the most eager expectancy to the arrival of the little stranger, whom he was to love, and help care for, and who, in time, would be a companion for him.

His mother made it very plain how much she loved Roger, that no one could ever take his place with her, she would always love him just as much, but she prepared his baby mind gradually, loyingly, tactfully so that when the tiny brother did arrive he was greeted with joy and

Roger realized that the baby's place was had their places. There was no feeling of rade.

was really an interloper, a supplanter, grown people often are of their feelings—It was only natural that he should dislike how blind to their childish standpoints! the new arrival and even as his mother had There are even now grown people who predicted, he could not be trusted to be tease and joke a child over the advent of a the room alone with the baby. On sev- new baby, telling him that his "nose is out of joint" and that "mother has a new baby and doesn't care for you now." They do not realize, of course, how cruel it is, what effect it has on the child's sensitive little nature, what feelings of bitterness and hatred toward the newcomer it sometimes arouses in him. A wise mother never permits any such thoughtless remarks to be made in the child's presence, or, if they should be made inadvertently, she is quick to explain and make the child see hat he is none the less dear because there is another little one to be cared for.

One very sensitive little girl of three years gazed silently and wistfully at the new baby sister, then she remarked sadly: "Do you wish you didn't have me, mother?"

Poor, little "ex-babies"! They need mother's love and care especially at this trying time. To be deprived of mother's presence even for a short time, to have to give place to another when they are teething or fretful or tired—a place which they had come to know as supremely their own—is a bitter experience. It is a hard, hard time for them, but it can be made so much easier if mothers prepare them for it gradually and tenderly, and, like little Roger's mother, make them feel for, love and be proud of the new baby, rather than to consider it an unwelcome interloper.

Extra love must be shown to the older child after the arrival of the new baby. In entirely distinct from his own. The baby no way should he be made to feel that he longings, his own little clothes—all had their place, and Roger and his belongings their place, and Roger and his belongings also, made to feel that he is a little "com-

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