

HOUSEHOLD.

Mother.

(Miss Dora May Morrell, in the New York 'Observer'.)

We had no title in her by right of birth. She who bore us died in her youth, crying: 'How can I die and leave my children? God, take care of them!' And in response He sent us Mother.

The first mother had been an invalid for months before she went away, and when she left them the house and children were under no better care than an ignorant, loving young Irish girl could give, aided by the advice of the neighbors who found time to take thought now and then for the motherless. Then Mother came, and the untidy, cheerless place began to be home. First, Mother laid aside all the jewellery, the silver and other personal property of the first mother, that each child as maturity approached should have something to recall her whom they might not otherwise remember. Then she made the house shine with cleanliness, and one does not know how cheering that is until he has been without it. Mother found every article of wearing apparel and of linen torn, and these she put into the shape that the good housekeeper desires. It was discouraging, that mountain of ragged clothing, but the angel in the woman made her face it as happily and contentedly as most women take their pleasures. It was not, however, the way in which most brides would care to spend a honeymoon.

The children loved Mother, and they loved to say the word. Mother said: 'You poor, dear babies, I believe you say "Mother" just because you love the word. You say it over and over as if it were something sweet.' And Mother answered back to that love with a life that never knew selfishness. When the dusk came down, instead of lighting lamps and working then she took the only rest her busy days knew, and the little ones would gather around her to listen to the stories she would tell them, and to hear her play on the piano and sing of 'The Little Boy That Died,' which would bring tears only to be dried by the adventures of 'Three Little Kittens Who Lost Their Mittens.' The children were very fond of an old-fashioned song, 'Tis Home Where'er the Heart Is,' and Mother was pleased when one of the little ones said to her: 'Then our home is where you are, isn't it?' So many of those old-fashioned melodies were heard first from Mother, and to-day a strain will bring back that simple room lighted only by the fire in the grate, Mother at the piano trying to give us the happiness our first mother would have wished us to know.

Mother was afraid the children would forget who had gone, so in the stories they were so fond of there was always one about the days when the first mother and Mother were little girls, how they went to school and played together, and then of the days when the little girls had grown to young ladies, and how the first mother had wished her boys to grow into good men and women, 'which is the best that can be said of anyone,' said this unworldly Mother. 'You can all be good, and that is all that counts, for it is all that goes with you when you go out of this life into the next.'

'Don't you think it would be fine to be rich?' asked the boy of the family.

'Yes, very nice; but it is possible to pay too much for money. The men who have done the most good for the world—men like Agassiz, Audubon, Livingston and hundreds of others—have never had time to make money, but they took what was best worth having, and so I hope you will, and enough money will always come for your needs.'

There is something beautiful to me in the memory of these talks with Mother and in her unworldliness. She really believed, did Mother, that money was a thing of small matter except as a convenience. As for rating one by the amount he possessed, that she never could have done. Mother ought to have known what money meant, for there was little enough of it in the family when she first came into it, and on what there was

there was a claim for debt. Father was not called a poor man in those days. He owned his pretty home, was editor of the village paper, and stood well in the community. There always seemed to be enough in the home, and there were books and magazines unlimited. There were friends, too,—friends who read and talked of what they read. There was much of comfort and something of what are called the luxuries; but father's income outside of what went for business was but eight dollars a week, and of that two must be saved each week. Mother has often spoken of that. How can one think it a small talent which makes a family comfortable, feeds them so that sickness comes seldom, takes an active part in the charity called upon in the neighborhood, and inspires in the children under her charge the love of 'the true, the good, and the beautiful' that such a life must?

Mother feared debt as she did sin. She thought they were akin, so one of the first things she did was to help father stand clear with the world. She sold her watch and other jewellery, she taught music and drawing, she made one dollar do the work of two, and by and by there was no debt, and then there began to be a gain on the right side financially. Father has always said that the success which did come to him later was due to the influence of Mother and her prudence.

If I were to say what were Mother's chief characteristics I would say the sense of duty, fortitude and honor, and, first of all, unselfishness. Mother never thought of herself. She never said, 'I cannot do that; I am too tired.' She said, 'There is something which must be done. I can somehow do it.' And she did.

While Mother's heart was happy in the thought of her own little one's coming, the youngest child of the family was taken seriously ill, and she cried day and night for Mother, and Mother always answered. To those who remonstrated with her for giving of her strength when so much was demanded of it, she replied: 'God gave me this little one who is here. I think He means me to do first my duty to her, and I can't believe that I ought to shirk a present claim for a future; but I cannot stay away and know that dear child is calling for a Mother who will not answer.' That was mother. She has said since that when her own little one was born perfect in body she was so happy that it did not seem as if one heart could contain such bliss.

When I read or hear men say that women do not know what honor is, as a man knows it, I think of Mother. I have never seen anyone whose sense of honor was keener. Her worst enemy might safely have trusted to it and never feared betrayal even to Mother's gain. She who could not think a mean thought could not do an unworthy act. Once to the little girl who had been guilty of some childish prying Mother said:

'It is a kind of stealing to find out what people do not want you to know, and it is the meanest kind, because there is no way of giving back what you have taken. You must respect the rights of others—that is, just as you would not want anyone to find out your secrets, you must not find out theirs, and if by accident you should learn anything one wouldn't want you to know you must forget that you ever knew it, and never even look as if you did. I should be sorry to have my little girl a thief, and it is better to steal dollars than it is to steal secrets—confidences.'

Because she lived as she talked her lessons were vital. It was the same when the small girl told something a former chum had told her, and excused herself, girl fashion, because they did not speak to each other then.

'But you promised not to tell?' asked Mother.

'Yes'm, but we aren't friends any longer.'

'Then you promised only for the time you were friendly?'

'No, ma'am; I promised for ever.'

'Don't you see, then, that you have broken your word and done what is not fair and honest?'

Mother's sense of honor was founded on a verse in a Psalm which she had one day explained to us, 'He who sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not,' and is not that test of honor?

As years went on Mother's life broadened

out in the love of children, their increasing importance socially, their marrying and their children. The days were sweeter if less strenuous, and she prized the esteem her own character had brought her, though she would have been, of all persons, the most surprised if she had been told that there was anything about her to admire. I never heard Mother make an uncharitable remark, and when one speculated on 'how Mary could afford to do this or that,' Mother usually suggested in a quiet way that it was something which concerned Mary alone. She had little patience for innuendoes against another.

At last Mother's life of activity had to be given up. The scourge of New England took her, too, and for five years she fought against it. It was very hard at first for her who had always ministered unto others to be ministered unto, 'as if she had outlived her usefulness,' she said; but when she knew that we felt her usefulness was more in the sympathy she gave us than in the tasks she did for us, and when she was brought to realize that it was a pleasure to do for her as she had done for us, it was not so hard for her to bear it. Human nature is so constituted that those who forget themselves are very often forgotten by those who really love them best, and so, maybe, Mother had sometimes found it when she was well, not that we then remembered, and the sense of what it would be to lose that interest, that love made every moment precious. Perhaps we loved her no more, but we showed her more plainly how dear she was to all of us and to each. Not long before she died she said that the five years of her illness had been the happiest of her life. It was sweet to her who had never thought of self to find family, neighbors, and many who had known her only by sight and name, remembering her with flowers or any of the kindnesses one shows the sick.

It was very hard for Mother to talk of religion or of any of the feelings which were so much to her, but an attack which was nearly the last of her life showed the thought which had animated her during the years when she had been Mother to us all. For a day she was delirious, and the burden of her cry was:

'What shall I tell Lute when she asks me what I did with her children? I loved them all—yes, I loved them all. What will she think I did for them?' And so in heart-breaking tones she asked again and again, and no peace came to her till one of the children said: 'Tell her you were so true a mother that they loved her by loving you, and she will thank you.'

'Poor Lute, not to have known her children's love! I hope she will think I was a good mother to them.'

While the flicker of life lasted Mother was eager to know everything that concerned the children and the grandchildren. Her last words were the expression of a thought for another. To the nurse who was bending over her trying to make her sufferings less she said: 'Go sit down. You will be all tired out. I will go to sleep.' And when she woke it was where pain is no more, and whence no call of ours can bring reply; but we know that all life has been made better because of this beautiful soul, and that though the shell that contained it is no more, somewhere there live the nobility and sweetness that inspired it and unconsciously taught the beauty of truth and love.

How Worry Kills.

We often hear of men who are said to have died of overwork, but it is safe to assume that in nine out of ten of such cases there had been no overwork at all. That too much work has killed some people is not to be doubted, but this does not alter the fact that work pure and simple is one of the rarest of all rare causes of death. The mischief is done by the worry which often goes with the work, and is mistaken for it.

We do not yet understand the process by which worry undermines the general health, induces disease of the heart, of the arteries, and of the kidneys, or kills a man before his time; but that it does do such things is a fact only too well established.

It is true that worry often leads a per-