

in their private announcement to the book-reviewing fraternity, introduce it by saying :

About six years ago a number of mothers in a certain town in Virginia formed themselves into a club for the purpose of discussing the best methods of discharging their duties to the young people of their families. A careful record was kept of the conversations and discussions in which the circle engaged, and this has just been brought out by Harper & Brothers in the form of a handsome little book, entitled *Mothers in Council*.

The "mothers" here shown in "council" will laugh at being thus transported from their New England home to Virginia. True, the preface of the book is dated "Washington County, Va., July, 1883;" but the Mothers' Club whose deliberations it describes and reports is a club of Cambridge, Massachusetts, mothers. The secretary of the club, who edits the book, completed her manuscript during a summer vacation in Virginia, whence the accident of the date of its preface. The story goes that the publishers, somewhat surprised by the disappearance of a large part of the first edition in the direction of Cambridge, have been heard innocently asking what should be done to meet the expected great demand from the region round about "Abingdon," Virginia!

The staple of the book is a report of meetings and conversations. The members appear under fictitious names, generally taken from the streets of Cambridge, as Mrs. "Brattle," Mrs. "Follen," Mrs. "Mason," and Mrs. "Shepard." Only one real name is used, but that is not applied to the person to whom it belongs, and is misspelled. The editor has taken further, and, we should say, a needless liberty with her materials, assigning to Mrs. "Berkeley," for example, opinions which were advanced by Mrs. "Lee," and charging Mrs. "Way" with objections thereto which were really urged by Mrs. "Washington." But as the names are all fictitious, and nobody is supposed to know "which is which," little harm will be done by this confusing of identities except to the sensitive feelings of the misrepresented parties, some of whom will not like to be held responsible even in the dark for sentiments which they did not express and do not hold.

The idea of this "Mothers' Club" is admirable; its deliberations, as here reported, are marked by great diversity of view, but are eminently practical, and the book will be found suggestive and helpful. The range of topics is wide, including obedience, work for women, self-support, the unconscious influence of parents, bathing, amusements, holidays, what to do with Sundays, reading, early rising, education, putting things in their right places, servants, sugar, hot bread, and sweet things, deference to parents, truthfulness and how to secure it, etc., etc. The club started with the reading of extracts from writers of repute on the training of children, such as Jacob Abbott

and Miss Martineau. Gaining confidence, they advanced to the preparation of original papers. Out of readings and papers discussions easily proceeded, marked by entire freedom and by abundant citations from personal experience. The course of the meetings is sketched in chronological order, some of the more important papers are given in full, others are mentioned by title, conversations are reported at length, and in general the reader is admitted to membership in the club and allowed to enjoy its proceedings; the faces of the speakers only being masked.

The value of this book lies in the fact that it presents not theories, spun out by bachelors like Herbert Spencer and spinsters like Miss Martineau, but the actual experiments, difficulties, failures, and successes, of real mothers, belonging to this Year of our Lord, 1884; mothers with beating hearts and burdened lives; mothers whose qualities and position entitle them to be heard with as much respect as any mothers in the world. We commend the book earnestly to the attention of all parents, and to the attention of fathers as well as of mothers.

A BOOK FOR MOTHERS.*

IT is a wise father," wrote Shakespeare, "that knows his own child." It is a wise publisher, we might add, who knows his own book. The publishers of this book,

* Mothers in Council. Harper & Brothers. 90c.