

CHAPTER XIII.—A NEGATIVED PROPOSAL.

IT may well be believed that we had not yet seen much company in our little house.

To parties my husband had a great dislike; evening parties he eschewed utterly, and never accepted an invitation to dinner, except it were to the house of a friend, or to that of one of my few relatives in London, whom, for my sake, he would not displease. There were not many, even among his artist acquaintances, whom he cared to visit, and altogether I fear he passed for an unsociable man. I am certain he would have sold more pictures if he had accepted what invitations came in his way. But to hint at such a thing would, I knew, crystallize his dislike into a resolve.

One day after I had got quite strong again, as I was sitting by him in the study with my baby on my knee, I proposed that we should ask some friends to dinner. Instead of objecting to the procedure upon general principles, which I confess I had half anticipated, he only asked me whom I thought of inviting. When I mentioned the Morleys, he made no reply, but went on with his painting as if he had not heard me, whence I knew of course that the proposal was disagreeable to him.

"You see we have been twice to dine with them," I said.

"Well, don't you think that enough for a while?"

"I'm talking of asking them here now."

"Couldn't you go and see your cousin some morning instead?"

"It's not that I want to see my cousin particularly. I want to ask them to dinner."

"Oh!" he said, as if he couldn't in the least make out what I was after, "I thought people asked people because they desired their company."

"But, you see, we owe them a dinner."

"Owe them a dinner! Did you borrow one then?"

"Percivale, why will you pretend to be so stupid?"

"Perhaps I'm only pretending to be the other thing."

"Do you consider yourself under no obligation to people who ask you to dinner?"

"None in the least—if I accept the invitation. That is the natural acknowledgment of their kindness. Surely my company is worth my dinner. It is far more trouble to me to put on black clothes and a white choker and go to their house, than it is for them to ask me, or in a house like theirs, to have the necessary preparations made for receiving me in a manner befitting their dignity. I do violence to my own feelings in going—is not that enough? You know how

much I prefer a chop with my wife alone to the grandest dinner the grandest of her grand relations could give me."

"Now, don't you make game of my grand relations. I'm not sure that you haven't far grander relations yourself, only you say so little about them, they might all have been transported for housebreaking. Tell me honestly, don't you think it natural if a friend asks you to dinner that you should ask him again?"

"Yes; if it would give him any pleasure. But just imagine your cousin Morley dining at our table. Do you think he would enjoy it?"

"Of course we must have somebody in to help Jemima."

"And somebody to wait, I suppose?"

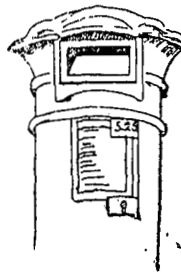
"Yes, of course, Percivale."

"And what Thackeray calls cold balls handed about?"

"Well, I wouldn't have them cold."

"But they would be."

(To be continued.)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(Notes, Queries, &c.)

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

We shall be happy to answer, as far as we can, all questions submitted to us.

Communications, &c., not noticed in our present number will receive attention when space permits.

THE POST-CARD EXAMINATION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Dear Sir,—I have to thank you very much in honouring me with the prize. I should very much like to have "Lectures to Nurses on Antiseptics in Surgery," by Stanmore Bishop; "Norris's Nursing Notes," and Low's "Handbook of London Charities."—Believe me, yours gratefully,
L. SEIDLER.

NURSING AS A LIFE-WORK.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—Will you kindly answer the following questions in the next issue of your paper? If you consider I am too old to enter the Nursing profession (I am 34; 35 next May); and if not, which do you consider the best Hospital in London to enter for training? I have long looked with longing eyes on Hospital Nursing, but have had for years my own to care for and nurse. First a sister, then my dear mother, and lastly my dear father, who only died last week; therefore, I have had a little experience in Home Nursing. I attended a course of St. John's Ambulance Lectures last summer, and passed the examination. I also attended the lectures given by Miss Homersham last December, at Hendon,

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