

name, for the sake of the advantage it would be to him in his profession. I laid it before him as gently and coaxingly as I could, representing how expenses increased, and how the children would be requiring education by-and-by—reminding him that the reputation of more than one of the most popular painters had been brought about in some measure by their social qualities and the friendships they made.

"Is it likely your children will be ladies and gentlemen," he said, "if you prevail on their father to play the part of a sneaking parasite?"

I was frightened. He had never spoken to me in such a tone, but I saw too well how deeply he was hurt to take offence at his roughness. I could only beg him to forgive me, and promise never to say such a word again, assuring him that I believed as strongly as himself that the best heritage of children was their father's honour.

Free from any such clogs as the possession of a wife encumbers a husband withal, Roger could of course accept what invitations his connection with an old and honourable family procured him. One evening he came in late from a dinner at Lady Bernard's.

"Whom do you think I took down to dinner?" he asked, almost before he was seated.

"Lady Bernard?" I said, flying high.

"Her dowager aunt?" said Percivale.

"No, no—Miss Clare."

"Miss Clare!" we both repeated, with mingled question and exclamation.

"Yes, Miss Clare—incredible as it may appear," he answered.

"Did you ask her if it was she you saw carrying the jug of beer in Tottenham Court Road?" said Percivale.

"Did you ask her address?" I said. "That is a question more worthy of an answer."

"Yes, I did. I believe I did. I think I did."

"What is it, then?"

"Upon my word, I haven't the slightest idea."

"So, Mr. Roger! You have had a perfect opportunity, and have let it slip! You are a man to be trusted indeed!"

"I don't know how it could have been. I distinctly remember approaching the subject more than once or twice; and now first I discover that I never asked the question. Or if I did, I am certain I got no answer."

"Bewitched."

"Yes; I suppose so."

"Or," suggested Percivale, "she did not choose to tell you—saw the question coming, and led you away from it—never let you ask it."

"I have heard that ladies can keep one from saying what they don't want to hear. But she shan't escape me so a second time."

"Indeed, you don't deserve another chance," I said. "You're not half so clever as I took you to be, Roger."

"When I think of it, though—it wasn't a question so easy to ask, or one you would like to be overheard asking."

"Clearly bewitched," I said. "But for that I forgive you. Did she sing?"

"No. I don't suppose any one there ever thought of asking such a dingy-feathered bird to sing?"

"You had some music?"

"Oh, yes. Pretty good, and very bad. Miss Clare's forehead was crossed by no end of flickering shadows as she listened."

"It wasn't for want of interest in her you forgot to find out where she lived! You had better take care, Master Roger."

"Take care of what?"

"Why, you don't know her address."

"What has that to do with taking care?"

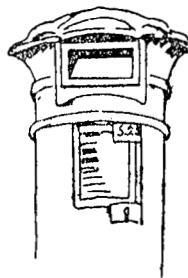
"That you won't know where to find your heart if you should happen to want it."

"Oh! I'm past that kind of thing long ago. You've made an uncle of me."

And so on, with a good deal more nonsense, but no news of Miss Clare's retreat.

I had before this remarked to my husband that it was odd she had never called since dining with us; but he made little of it, saying that people who gained their own livelihood ought to be excused from attending to rules which had their origin with another class; and I had thought no more about it, save in disappointment that she had not given me that opportunity of improving my acquaintance with her.

(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.

MRS. DUYCK FUND.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—I received this morning two votes from Mrs. Underhill, of Derwent Lodge, Thurlow-road, N.W. (through the *Nursing Record*), which please kindly let me acknowledge through its columns with my gratitude.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,
SARAH DUYCK.

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