

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

ROSE AND ROSE.*

These incidents in the life of a flourishing bachelor general practitioner are written in the first person, and cover some thirty-five years of his life.

The story describes how friendship for the artist father of little Rose constrained him to adopt the child on the early death of her parents.

Previous to this the families had lived in adjoining houses, and the young doctor had ever been attracted to the charming child whom he had ushered into the world.

"She had taken to me at once, or at any rate had taken to my watch, watches having always been useful links between infantile patients and their medical men.

"Mine was a gold repeater, very satisfying to immature gums, and surprising and amusing to the ear.

"My name is Greville—Julius Greville, M.D., if you please—and if there is any sound less like Greville than 'Dombeen' I should like to be told of it; but Dombeen was Rose's translation of what she had so often heard her father call me, and Dombeen I have remained to her."

As may be surmised, Rose as she grew from a charming child into a no less attractive girl, presented many perplexities, and he carried most of them to his old friend, Mrs. O'Gorman, who gave shrewd and humorous judgment.

He consulted her on the propriety of Rose continuing to live under his roof, and she replied that there were three practical courses.

"One, Rose might become engaged to be married and then you would cease to be regarded as an immoral man. Two, you could invite some elderly spinster or widow as a chaperon, and three——." She paused.

"Well, what is three?"

"Three," she resumed, "that you should go on as you are and tell them all to go to the devil. All my votes are for number three."

"Mine too," I said.

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may," she called after me with rather a sinister chuckle.

"The warning brought back all my misgivings, and as I walked home I knew perfectly well that the happiest years were behind me, and that to a large extent my Rose was no more."

Fond as he was of her, the question of marrying her himself never arose; he realised she would want "someone to commit, if necessary, follies with; not an old buffer."

At any rate the thought certainly never seemed to enter into Rose's head.

"Of course, Dombeen," she said in her frank way, "I don't want to leave you before I must, but I want to marry some day; I think every girl who is healthy ought to, and have children."

She stopped and looked into an unfathomable distance.

"Boys," she said. "I don't want girls. I should love to have a boy in the Navy, and see him in his bright buttons, with sun-burned hair and freckles. But it would have to be the right man, of course."

"What kind of a man would that be?" I asked, a little wistfully, I fear.

"Don't be unhappy," Rose said, with one of her gay smiles and a touch on my arm. "It won't be yet, anyway."

She would hate to be tied to a stodge, she said. "Someone who could go long walks and climb a tree, if necessary, and ride and be silly at parties. But not really silly underneath," she added.

It was a pity at that period that though she thought that Ronnie was a dear; he was more to play with, not to be regarded as a husband.

When her choice was made, it unhappily fell on quite the wrong man.

Dombeen studied his picture and didn't like him. His general expression suggested a somewhat condescending benignity with assurance.

"Probably I should have felt cool about any young man who had captured Rose's heart, but to this one I felt positive hostility."

In truth, Eustace was a prig and a bore, but Rose had made up her very decided mind.

For the first year of her married life, things went fairly well and then came the tragedy.

Her first child, a boy, died at the end of three weeks. Rose had been in the seventh heaven of delight in its possession. She squandered herself on it.

"I found the poor child inconsolable, in a kind of stupor of bewilderment and revolt against the blind stupidities of fate. To let this perfect little being fade into nothingness and allow the ugly, blundering world to go on!"

Rose's second baby was a girl.

"The Rose who had given birth to that little boy, and Rose, the mother of this little girl, were worlds asunder.

"This Rose was affectionate, thoughtful, dutiful, protective; the other had been transfigured by maternal ecstasy and pride."

When Rose the Second was five, Rose the elder, without warning or preliminary scandal, quietly went away with Ronnie, the playmate of her youth, and Dombeen again found himself in the position of foster-father to Rose the Second, Eustace having furthered this arrangement. Dombeen was of opinion that if her boy had lived Rose would never have stepped through this door of escape. She had set her heart on being the mother of sons. Dombeen had an Indian summer in the companionship of the other Rose, who had the charm of her mother, and he had to go through a repetition of the pangs of separation when Rose elected to study at the Slade School. A younger generation and a shade harder and more selfish than her mother, she arranges to leave Dombeen lonely without a seeming pang.

Rose the elder returns after the death of Ronnie in foreign lands, and the younger Rose shows her

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