

PHRYNETTE MARRIED

latest we have just now. Nothing else to-day—no puppies, kittens, chickens, or guinea pigs ? No ? ”

“ Médor, give it to me. Is it Yvonne’s ? Oh, the dear little rose monkey, how small ? How is she ? I never heard anything. Look, he is moving his fist. What is it a boy ? ”

“ A girl. So you knew about Yvonne ? She told me you did not. You never heard anything because I had her removed to the pavilion at the back of the garden. You are not strong enough yet for all these emotions. She is not as well as she should be—she is fretting.”

“ Fretting ! Isn’t the baby all right ? ”

“ Oh yes, it is a fine baby, you say it’s small, but it is not—I weighed it. When I say fretting, the truth is she feels ashamed.”

“ Ashamed ! The silly one ! I think it will be a beautiful child—it does not look very appetising now, of course, but she should have seen the twins when they were born ! Yet I was not ashamed.”

“ It is not quite that—you don’t understand—she feels she had no right to have that baby because she has no husband. She thinks, perhaps, you’ll be shocked and you’ll send her away.”

“ Isn’t the woman a fool ! She has no right to think such things about me. Husband indeed ! It is the other way about. Every woman has the right to have babies but I am not sure she has the right to have a husband. Wifehood is a vocation. Conjugal life, like convent life, would be the better for a novice. I, for instance, don’t know that I had the right to marry Austen if I cannot bear patiently his marital ineptitude. Pass me