

SOCIETY STUDIES.

(Mrs. Arthur Bruce, a young widow, is walking rapidly down a shabby East End street. As she is going down she meets, going up, Miss Amy Hunt. They stop in the middle of the sidewalk, obstructing traffic.)

Mrs. Bruce—Why Amy? Is this you? And what on earth are you doing here. I hear that 'shimming' is out of fashion, so it isn't that! I am hunting a new plumber who is said to 'plumb' according to the latest germ theory. The micrococcus fly at the sight of his bills, I presume. This, however, doesn't seem to excuse you.

Miss Hunt—Don't try your autocratic airs on me, Eva. I won't be brought to book even by you, dear. I am hunting a mysterious little French girl who can mend laces—well, like a French girl—that's enough, goodness knows! How ever do they have such insatiable patience? But if I find her I shall keep the secret.

Mrs. Bruce—Ah, keep her—do! I can mend my own laces; they taught me that, at least, at the convent. It happened to be the one thing one actually could learn there.

Miss Hunt—But what are plumbers to you? I thought you rented and endured in silence like the rest of us. Is there a movement on foot to establish a home for retired members of the species, or a competitive examination in sanitary science, or what?

Mrs. Bruce—Simply that I'm a-building of myself a house, a residence, a domicile, a lair for my laces, and I mean it to be as nice as possible. I've found already that three new wrinkles and seven gray hairs and eternal vigilance is the price, but I believe that I shall finally succeed—a succes d'estime at least, for my \$3,000 house won't cost after all but \$5,000. Isn't that a triumph?

Miss Hunt—How I envy you! When its done do have a "housewarming bee." They are quite the thing now. We all bring our work and sew for you. You get lots of "truck," of course, but usually one or two things you really want.

Mrs. Bruce—Oh! I mean to have everybody there, but I'm afraid I'm a trifle too independent for the thing you mention. I know a woman who got her baby's whole wardrobe that way. Such obligations would keep me awake nights, and I can't afford at my age to lose an hour's beauty-sleep. I am going to have one thing though—a pin cushion! One of those bits of oriental embroidery with lace. Anna Martin is making it for me—(looks at her watch). Gracious! that plumber has had time to make a fortune and retire from business while we've been chattering.

Miss Hunt—Yes, and there comes a policeman to ask us to camp out or move on. Be charitable to people who don't have any new house, and come and see me in my old one.

Mrs. Bruce—I'll try, but it will be a come down. Good-bye. (They separate. Miss Hunt does her errand and returns uptown. On the steps of a store she meets Mrs. Merrithew.)

Miss Hunt—Ah! Mrs. Merrithew, there you are at last. Why weren't

you at the Palmers' last night? I looked round corners and up stairways for you until I was afraid of getting cross-eyed. It was a lovely party, lots of men, lots of punch, and a divine salad.

Mrs. Merrithew—You haven't got a husband to bring, my dear girl. You can't imagine how hard it is to induce Mr. Merrithew to go out. Induce isn't the word either—it ought to be hypnotize, for he won't go when he is in his own mind. The truth is he is growing stout. You know the old joke—"Not lost but gone before"—that expresses it with eloquence! When you do marry, Amy, pick out one of those thin dried up nervous men that never do get stout. They're irritable, of course, but at least they like to go about. Mr. Merrithew has all the inertia of the good natured, and I can't bear to tease him into gayeties that are simply death to him, a real petit maitre.

Miss Hunt—Poor fellow! I know he must be an angel. I've just seen Mrs. Bruce, looking at least ten years younger since her husband's death. Her new house is nearly done, and she is simply crazy with delight. Ah! by the way, Anna Martin is helping her furnish it.

Mrs. Merrithew—That's queer! I thought Anna Martin was a "philanthropist." They never help anybody unless they are awfully poor or awfully wicked, do they? Hasn't Anna Martin an unmarried brother?

Miss Hunt—Of course, Philip Martin, a lawyer, about 37, and a great catch.

Mrs. Merrithew (significantly)—Ah! And is Mrs. Bruce going to live in her new house quite alone?

Miss Hunt—No. With her queer old aunt, of course.

Mrs. Merrithew—Why, of course? She is extremely attractive, I hear, and a woman who had a tough time with her first husband makes an appreciative wife. Any man of sense would prefer her to an exacting young girl or even to a girl like you.

Miss Hunt (sharply)—But Mr. Martin isn't a marrying man.

Mrs. Merrithew—Oh! you've found that out, have you. Don't talk like a baby. Any man is a marrying man until he is dead.

Miss Hunt—So you think—

Mrs. Merrithew—I think—that's my car. Good-bye, Amy. Present me soon to a fiancé of your own. A thin one, mind! (Mrs. Merrithew boards an electric car, and immediately recognizes an acquaintance in a young lady upon her right. They proceed to talk violently, raising their voices to be heard above the noise of the car. At intervals Mrs. Merrithew casts indignant glances at a shabby young man at the door, who is smoking a deleterious cigarette and scribbling on the edge of his cuff)

Mrs. Merrithew (addressing Miss Rose Leaser)—How badly you're looking Rose, dear. You go out too much. But when Lent comes you will take a rest.

Rose Leaser (blushing slightly)—I've been very busy and mamma is not at all well. That's her only luxury.

Mrs. M.—Poor thing! I know just how she feels. Do you know Amy Hunt? I just left her at M's. She's up

on some new "ology." I suppose, but she is miserable just the same. She hates Winnipeg. She came here because she heard that marriageable men were as thick as poppies, and she has found out her mistake. I can always put her into a perfect rage, and I can never resist the temptation. It's one of the crimes of opportunity.

Miss Rose Leaser—Why, Mrs. Merrithew, how can you? If she is so unhappy, one ought to be all the nicer to her.

Mrs. M. (laughing)—What a little prig it is! Oh, I'm not half so wicked as I seem. It does her good to hate me—it's a distraction. She is "madder" than ever to-day because she has just heard of the engagement of a woman who has had one man already, and who is older than she is too.

Miss Leaser—Is it a secret?

Mrs. M.—No, but it is not announced yet. Don't say I told you, any way. It is Mrs. Bruce—Arthur Bruce's widow.

Miss Leaser—That's nice. I'm so glad for her. But who is the gentleman? I never see her out anywhere, except with her little boy.

Mrs. M.—That's just it! It all came about so romantically! Anna Martin helped her to furnish her new house, and she met the brother often, and then cetera va sans dire.

Miss Leaser (slowly)—So it is Philip Martin?

Mrs. M.—So I hear. Why, Rose, dear, you are so pale! What's the matter?

Miss Leaser (quickly)—Nothing! This is my corner. Good-bye.

Mrs. M.—Good-bye! Don't tell anybody it came from me.

SCHERZO.

From the society column of a certain paper: We hinted, some weeks ago, that handsome Philip Martin was contemplating matrimony. To be sure it was only a rumor, but what we are about to tell you is something more. Still we won't vouch for its truth, but give it for what it is worth. It is said that the lady who has captured the heart of the hitherto invulnerable lawyer is no other than Mrs. Arthur Bruce, one of the brightest and most versatile of all the accomplished women who now shine in the social circles of this city.

APPASSIONATA.

(Miss Rose Leaser sits at the piano improvising improvements on Mr. Richard Wagner. There is a spirit of determination about her lips and a twinkle of humor in her left eye. As Mr. Philip Martin is announced and enters, she turns slightly toward him, nods, lightly, and keeps on with her arpeggios.)

Philip Martin (trying to seize her hand as it runs by him to the end of the key-board)—Rose, darling! aren't you glad to see me? Please stop that racket a minute. (Miss Leaser smiles a provoking smile and goes on with a thundering bass.) What is it, anyhow? Anything that's got to be done tonight?

Miss Leaser (significantly)—It is the "fire motif," sir.

Mr. Martin—Well! I wish you would borrow a little more warmth from it then.