

## MY FAR-BETTER HALF

And now he is going, and he will not be back for three months ! It is damnable, as Vi says when she is excited. But I dare not ask him to stay, for he has a sort of extraordinary prejudice against people going back on their word.

When I am stronger—this is my first day up since the twins came—it is decided that we go to Biarritz—Vi, Gracieuse, the twins and I—and wait there until Austen has had enough of despatching the poor, beautiful tigers. Since my husband is such a moral man, I wonder he does not see what a big sin it is to kill anything that is beautiful. If he absolutely wants to kill, why not go to Paris, become the chief of the amateur police, and kill a few Apaches ? I don't blame him for his destructive instinct—it is part and parcel of man—but it might be accompanied by discernment. I never could understand why the *sans-culottes* could not be satisfied with cutting off the nobles' heads without damaging their pictures and furniture. Ugh ! men without art !

Austen says tigers are dangerous beasts. Most beautiful things are dangerous—does not the sea drown us, the fire burn us, the mountains make frozen meat of our poor bodies ? Does not the sun give us freckles ? And look at the ravages a beautiful woman causes—though I have nothing on my conscience—as yet.

Why should not the natives of India protect themselves ? That is the very thing they want, I am sure.

Austen has had a special gun made with complicated straps and things, so as to enable him to shoot with his left hand. I almost wish sometimes his left arm had