

THE HYPOCRITICAL HUSBAND.

"What isn't breakfast ready?"

This is the gentleman's first "salutation to the morn," delivered in a tone of voice admirably expressive of having arisen from his couch with a determination of being in an ill humour for the rest of the day, or, as the saying is, "got out of bed wrong end foremost."

"But, my dear, it is not late."

"Not late! not late! Suppose I choose to have breakfast a trifle earlier than usual, when I'm half starved! But people are so infernally lazy in this house. Ah! here it comes at last! The old story—muddy coffee. It is strange that I can never be allowed a drop of chocolate, of which I am so passionately fond."

"Well, my dear, why do you never mention it beforehand?"

"Why do you never ask me if I should prefer it?"

"You generally take coffee, even when we have chocolate upon the table."

"And what of that! The very reason why I should prefer now and then chocolate for a change. At any rate, it would not give you a great deal of trouble, to ask my pleasure once in a while. Who made that fire? Or rather who was idiotic enough to imagine that pile of green logs could ever be converted into a blaze. Pray, can you inform me what that dark colored mass is supposed to represent?"

"That is brown bread toast."

"I thought so! By heavens! this was put upon the table expressly to enrage me—you know I hate the stuff. I heard some one ring this morning—who was it?"

"Why that young man, that—what's his name—who has been to see you twice before, you know—I told him you had gone out—you say he's such a bore. I knew you wouldn't like to be bothered with him at breakfast time."

The married man throws himself back in the chair and smites the unoffending table with his fist, to the evident astonishment of the cups and saucers.

"And who authorized you to deny me to my friends? You were always making some blunder. I made a particular appointment with that young man to see him this morning. And you have told him I was not at home. It seems to be your sole study to see what you can do to put me in a passion."

And in his rage, he unconsciously brings his elbow in contact with his coffee cup—which consequently losing its equilibrium, the contents are duly delivered upon his dressing gown.

"There now I hope you're satisfied—you have been the means of ruining my morning gown, which cost me twelve dollars the day before yesterday!"

"I'm sure I didn't request you to upset your coffee."

"But you put me in a passion."

"I put you in a passion! You have been cross as a bear ever since you got up."

"Take care! take care! Don't impose too much upon my good nature."

"You're a brute, for all you're so mighty loving before folks."

"Will you hold your tongue?"

"Every body thinks you're a pattern of a husband, and that I'm the happiest wife in the world. Oh! if they knew how you abuse me when we are by ourselves."

"Will you hold your tongue?" (with the grinding accompaniment of the teeth.)

"And yet, before company, I must pretend to be superlatively pleased when you kiss me. Pah!"

"If you don't hold your tongue this instant, I'll throw this cup at your head."

"You dare not! you dare not, you vile monster!"

"Ah! I'm a monster, am I—I'm a"—whizz! and the cup is launched at her head with the very best intentions, which, however, are frustrated by the lady's stooping, with a celerity which could only have been acquired by the most frequent and persevering practice. She escapes the missile, but alas! not the brutal blow, which speedily follows it from the hard hand of the *Hypocritical Husband*, who doubtless considers it his duty to punish her for his having broken a coffee cup and damaged a dressing gown.

Hark! the door bell rings, and the poor wife vainly endeavors to suppress her tears and sobs. The servant announces a visitor. The *Hypocritical Husband* approaches her with a threatening air, and says—

"You're not surely going to blubber before company! Dry your eyes quickly, or else, as soon as they are gone, I'll resume my remarks where I left off."

The visitor is ushered in. The *Hypocritical Husband* immediately assumes a cheerful, amiable expression, and passes the usual compliments in tones of singularly sweet and gentle modulation. The visitor, (a lady,) remarking the appearance of the agitated wife, exclaims:

"Bless me, how pale you look! how red your eyes are! Have you been unwell?"

But our gentleman will not trust to his wife to reply, and hastens to explain with—

"Oh! nothing is the matter! She sat up very late last night reading—ruinous to the eyes you