

MY BEARDED MAID

You dispose us all around you—one for your feet, one for your elbow, one at the nape of your neck."

"Oh, Médor, why do you say that? You pretend to love me, and then you find fault with me. I—I don't mind you finding fault, but why do you say it? It's the same with all the people who love me—they flaunt my defects in my face. If I have so many or such big defects, why do people love me then?"

"You are right. We should not love you—or we should accept your faults and be grateful—I beg your pardon, Phrynette—and as to the matter of cushions, all pretty women have the same ideas of comfort. I should not worry that dear little *cabouche* about that, if I were you. Why, what do you think men are for, if not for women's use? The very word husband shows you what man's purpose is. Woman is the great treasure that has to be guarded—like the good earth she must be tended, cared for, studied, preserved—husbanded! She is weak that she may be the better taken care of. All precious things are fragile. My dear child, your instinct is right. Use men, abuse them, as you will and please—it's not your privilege, it's your duty to the race—and, after all, a cushion life is a most enviable one."

"Médor, I do not like what you say, it sounds sarcastic. You know, one should not be sarcastic with children, nor women, because they do not understand irony. I do not know whether you mean a single word of all you have said. I understand men much better when they do not talk."

"My dear little girl, I swear to you that I mean every