

MY HOME-COMING

die thanks thee." The people on board took us for father and daughter. Old ladies looked at me with compassionate eyes ; they were thinking, " Poor girl, consumptive, no doubt ; what a blow it will be for that fond old father of hers ! "

Médor wanted to stop a day or two in Marseilles, but I insisted on going on with the Calvary. I felt that if it were to last much longer I might be capable in sheer funk of asking Médor to take me back to Algiers. It was not so much what Austen would do or say to me that stopped my heart with fear ; it was the thought that our eyes would meet, that he would look at me—that he would look at me with those clear, serious, reflective, humourless, kind blue eyes. What will become of me when he looks at me like that ?

I came to Paris, *and I left it without realising that I was there !* That shows what state of mind I must have been in. I would not stop in London—we spent only a couple of hours at the house, to take a bath, food, and change clothes. We wired from there to Mount Hazel.

What is there so sinister in a station ? To me it is the hall of hell. It is ugly, it is precise, it is utilitarian, it is inexorable. One comes to a station with a purpose—that in itself is depressing. It is in a station where, excepting at a freshly filled grave, the greatest number of people with red eyelids can be seen. It is colder than anywhere else. Porters are the saddest of men ; they look like harassed cab horses, with sore feet. And then there are time-tables !

At first we had other people in our compartment, so