

themselves, except woman. They have no compunction, no hesitation. History will show you this, if you accept its annals in an unbiassed spirit. They either eat the lower animals, or else put them into usages of the most severe labour. They leave woman unharmed because nature has so commanded them. But here they are the slaves of an edict which they obey more blindly, more instinctively, than even the best of them know.

"I can't believe that these are your actual views!" now exclaimed Cora. "I can't believe that you rate the sacred emotion of love as something to be discussed like a mere scientific problem!"

Pauline went up to the speaker and stood close beside her while she responded:

"Ah! my dear Miss Dares, the love between man and woman is entitled to no more respect than the law of gravitation. Both belong to the great unknown scheme. We may shake our heads in transcendental disapprobation, but it is quite useless. The loftiest affection of the human heart is no more important and no more mysterious than the question of why Newton's apple fell from the tree or why a plant buds in Spring. All causes are unknown, and to seek their solution is to idly grope."

Cora was regarding Pauline, as the latter finished, with a look full of sad interest. "You speak like . . . like someone whom we both know," she said, hesitatingly. "You speak as if you do not believe in God."

"I do not disbelieve in God," quickly answered Pauline. "The carelessly-applied term of 'atheist' is to my thinking a name fit only for some pitiable braggart. He who denies the existence of a God is of no account among people of sense; but he who says 'I am ignorant of all that concerns the conceivability of a Deity' has full right to express such ignorance."

Cora slowly inclined her head. "That is the way I have heard him talk," she said, almost musingly. Then she gave a quick glance straight into Pauline's watchful eyes. "I—I mean," she added, confusedly, as if she had betrayed herself into avowing some secret reflection, "that Mr. Kindelon has more than once spoken in a similar way."

"Mr. Kindelon?" replied Pauline, with a gentle, peculiar, interrogative emphasis. "And did you agree with him?"

"No," swiftly answered Cora. "I have a faith that he cannot shake—that no one can shake! But he has not tried to do so; I must render him that justice."

Pauline turned away, with a faint laugh. "The clever men, who have thought and therefore doubted," she returned, "are often fond of orthodoxy in the women whom they like. They think it picturesque."

She laughed again, and Cora's eyes followed her as she moved toward the pictures which she had previously been examining. "Let us change the subject," she went on, with a note of cold composure in her voice. "I see that you don't like rationalism. . . Well, you are a poet, as your pictures tell me, and few poets like to do more than feel first and think afterward . . . Are these pictures for sale, Miss Dares?"

Cora's answer came a trifle tardily. "Three of them," she said.

"Which three?" Pauline asked, somewhat carelessly, as it seemed.

"All but that study of a head. As you see, it is scarcely finished."

"It is the one I should like to purchase. You say it is not for sale?"

"No, Mrs. Varick."

"It is very clever," commented Pauline, almost as though she addressed her own thoughts. She turned her face toward Cora's; it wore an indefinite flickering sort of smile. "Has it any name?"

"Oh, no; it is a mere study."

"I like it extremely. . . By the way, is it a portrait?"

Cora did not reply for several seconds. She had begun to put little touches upon her canvas again—or to seem as if she were so putting them.

"It's not good enough to be called anything," she presently replied.

"I want it," said Pauline. She was looking straight at the picture—a small square of rather recklessly rich colour. "I want it very much indeed. I . . . I will give you a considerable sum for it."

She named the sum that she was willing to give, and in an admirably cool, loitering voice. It was something that surpassed any price ever proposed to Cora Dares for one of her paintings, by several hundreds of dollars.

Cora kept silent. She was touching her canvas. Pauline waited. Suddenly she turned and regarded her companion.

"Well?" she said.

Cora flung aside her brush. The two women faced each other.

"I think you are cruel!" cried Cora. It was evident that she was nearly in straits for speech, and her very lovely blue eyes seemed to sparkle through unshed tears. "I—I told you that I did not wish to sell the picture," she hurried on. "I—I don't call it a picture at all; as I also told you. It—it is far from being worth the price you have offered me. It . . . it . . ." And here Cora paused. Her last words had a choked sound.

Pauline was looking at her fixedly but quite courteously.

"It is Ralph Kindelon's portrait," she said.

Cora started. "Well! and if it is!" she exclaimed.

Instantly, after that, Pauline went over to her and took one of her hands.

"My dear Miss Dares," she said, with that singular sweetness which she could always throw into her voice, "I beg you to forgive me. If you really wish to retain that picture—and I see that you do—why, then I would not take it from you even as a voluntary gift. Let us speak no more on the subject."

Cora gave a pained, difficult smile, now. She looked full into Pauline's steady eyes for a brief space, and then withdrew her own.

"Very well," she almost faltered, "let us speak no more on the subject. . ."

"I have been horribly merciless," Pauline told herself, when she had quitted Cora Dares' studio about ten minutes later. "I have made that

poor girl confess to me that she loves Ralph Kindelon. And how suited they are to each other! She has actual genius—he is brimming with intellectual power. I have made a sad failure in my visit to Cora Dares. . . I hope all my valiant exploits among these people who are so different from the people with whom my surroundings of fortune and destiny have thus far brought me into natural contact, will not result so disastrously."

Her thoughts recurred to Kindelon, as she walked homeward, and to the hostile terms on which they had parted but a few hours ago.

"My project begins badly," she again mused. "Everything about it seems to promise ill. But it is too late to draw back. Besides, I am very far from wishing to draw back. I am like an enthusiastic explorer; I want to face new discoveries in the very teeth of disaster."

(To be Continued.)

EVENINGS AT HOME.

DINNERS.

DINNER Parties are decidedly the most popular form of entertainment with those who have passed their first youth, but it is also one that requires more care and attention than any other. It is not only, as some hostesses unfortunately imagine, the *menu* which requires careful consideration; the arrangement of the guests is a matter of at least equal importance. The invitations, if for a formal party, should be sent out a fortnight before. Delay in answering invitations is extremely ill-bred, and the culprits are generally either under-bred people, who fancy that it makes them of importance, or else people who, never entertaining themselves, have no idea of the inconvenience they are causing. Answers should always be sent immediately. The first point for a hostess to settle when arranging a dinner party is the number of guests she wishes to entertain, and it is of the greatest importance that she should avoid crowding them. There is nothing so unpleasant as to be so close to a neighbour at dinner that the elbows occasionally come in contact, and yet it is an annoyance constantly inflicted upon diners out, whose hostesses think more of inviting the greatest number of people to the smallest number of dinners than of the comfort of their guests. When the number, allowing ample space, is settled, the choice of guests remains. It is by no means necessary, as some old-fashioned people seem to imagine, that all the guests at a dinner should know one another; indeed, such a party is apt to be dull, and people prefer to meet some one fresh, but a judicious hostess will always endeavour that each guest should be previously acquainted with some other member of the party. Fourteen is a dangerous number to invite; there always is the danger that some guest may fail, too late to be replaced, and, strange as it may seem to rational people, there really are many persons so very childish as to be nervous about dining thirteen; it is therefore wiser to avoid fourteen, and be either sixteen or twelve, the latter being preferable, unless the room is quite spacious enough for the larger number. A really well-arranged party should never consist entirely of married couples, as such a combination is apt to be dull; a single woman or widow, with a stray man to balance her, introduces a fresh element. Though it is not necessary that all the members of a party should be acquainted, a judicious hostess will contrive that they should all be people moving in something of the same set, or else guests are apt to say, "One meets such strange people at Lady Brown's, people that one never saw anywhere or even heard of." She must also endeavour so to arrange the precedence of her party that each guest may go down with someone suitable in age, and if possible, in tastes. If that is quite impossible, she must endeavour, in arranging the table, that any ill-matched person shall have a more congenial neighbour on the other side. It is the attention to those details which gives an infinity of thought and trouble, which makes the difference between a hostess who understands giving pleasant dinners and, one who does not.

The host, of course, places the lady he takes down to dinner on his right hand, and all the other gentlemen do the same. Properly speaking, the lady who goes down second ought to sit on the host's left. Sometimes, however, this point is sacrificed to what is considered the better arrangement of the guests. In very large parties it is usual for the host and hostess to sit opposite to each other in the centre of the table, instead of at the top and bottom, as is usual in smaller parties. The arrangement of where the guests are to sit requires infinite care and forethought, and must be worked out carefully on a sheet of paper before placing the guest cards on the different plates. Husbands and wives must never be placed opposite each other; when possible they should be on the same side of the table at opposite ends. The ventilation of the dining-room is a point of the utmost importance. The windows should be kept open both top and bottom, during the whole day, excepting, of course, any window on which the sun shines, which must be shut and the shutters closed. A dinner cannot be well waited on with less than one waiter to every four persons. There should be an extra servant outside to carry up the dishes to the door. There should not be less than one *menu* to every two persons, often one is placed to each. It is better style that the cards should not be very ornamental, but the printing should be very clear. It is growing daily more the fashion not to have any dessert on the table, but rely entirely on floral decorations. This, however, necessitates a good many flowers and much trouble, and some ladies compromise matters by having dishes of bonbons and dried fruits on the table, and having the fruit handed round. This is better for the fruit, which loses its freshness in the atmosphere of the dining-room, and also for the guests, as they are not annoyed by the scent of the fruit. It cannot be too often repeated that sweet-scented flowers should never be used for table