

PHRYNETTE MARRIED

nothing, but a young wife !—one can leave her without care, without a backward glance. Lost, stolen, or astray cannot apply to young wives, of course—only to umbrellas or dogs ! Médor, in truth, I tell you, the most modest man, from the day he gets married, becomes a conceited fool. And I am not sorry if I have shaken his conceit somewhat. No, I am not regretting, I am simply in an ebullition of revenge, anger, indignation, and naughtiness. Of course, God made man stupid so as to give us muscleless women an equality of power, but he did not foresee how it would exasperate us sometimes to have to deal with those great simpletons."

Médor and I are in the summer-house at Mount Hazel. Médor is sad ; I am exasperated. I cannot endure this life any longer. I could put a bomb in the cellars and blow up the whole lot of us. I mean this literally. If Austen had planned this life for a punishment for my bad thoughts and my bad acts, he would be punishing me too cruelly. But, of course, he did not. He thinks he is treating me magnanimously. We never see each other but in the presence of somebody or other. Austen has his breakfast at purposely unearthly hours ; then he goes out or works in his study. Médor and I prop each other up as well as we can, but we are both acutely miserable. We speak low, as in a church, and only breathe properly outside the house. Austen has luncheon with us, unless he is hunting or staying with other people. We all three dine together. The meals are ghastly. Médor, who is of rather a taciturn nature, assumes abnegatively the responsibility of the conversation