

## PHRYNETTE MARRIED

but they would still be my children—my children, my twins, my babies, *mes bébés* ! It feels sweet to say it, almost as sweet as to touch them. They are so soft—just like pink putty—and small, and warm, and trusting. I do love them, though I say they are ugly ; but what makes me fear that I am not one of these great mothers, a mother by vocation, is that I remember enjoying almost as much pleasure and the same love in handling little boneless puppies (with their darling little paws that look like tiny pink stars underneath), and furry kittens, and even other people's babies. Still the twins are my very own, and they will grow up and be able to play with me, and love me, and become real beings like Austen and me ; and their noses may change, at least that of the boy. Oh, clement fate, don't let him be a Cyrano ! A beautiful nose is the centre of all happiness. I wonder how I had the courage to joke about it to Austen when I first saw my babies.

" Sir," I said, " you have deceived me. This boy is no child of mine. Look at his nose ! "

" Phrynette, really—dearest ! "

Those three mild-looking little words—no one would believe how effectually they put out any effervescence in me, whether mental or physical. I am the boiling, swelling milk, and Austen the watchful hand that lifts it from the fire. How quickly it subsides—the white foam, the glad sizzling, the palpitating shiny dome—flop, a collapse, and I stand with my vitality diminished, a chided little woman feeling cold and sad ! Yet milk can't be left on the fire, can it ? Why am I not sensible enough to understand that ? And I wish Austen would