THE EVENING NEWS.

Friday, - - - February, 24, 1871.

[From "English Society."]

TWICE MISTAKEN.

"No, thank you; I never eat them," she replies.

"Have you never tasted them?" he says, frowning as if he were a barrister cross-examining a witness, but probably because his glass gives a premonitory slip.

"O, yes; I have tasted them, but I don't care about them," she answers.

He has no comment to make to her reply, and he helps himself in silence.

Six o'clock. Crumms and I solemnly put on the wine and the glasses, push the dessert dishes a little one way or the other, and leave the room.

"Bravo!" whispers Crumms, when we are in the hall. "Bravo, sir! With a little teaching you'd make a capital waiter. And Miss Linton mistaking you for a gentleman, too. What a joke! At least," he adds, as if he suddenly feels that he has made rather a mistake himself, "of course, that is what you are, and a gent is always a gent, I say. But you understand, sir. It was so ludicrous."

"Perfectly. I understand, Crumms. What are you going to do now?"

"Well, sir," he says, coming a little nearer. "I generally have something in the housekeeper's room. Maybe you wouldn't like that, though we should be quite alone."

As I want something to eat, and am not particular where I get it, I follow Crumms down stairs into the kitchen. The servants there are busy washing up the plates and dishes, amid a general smell of dinner and hot water, which is far from pleasant. The housekeeper takes us at once into her room, where there is a cloth spread upon the table, and a row of the good things from upstairs on a kind of dresser.

"You are sure you don't mind, sir," says Crumms to me, when we are alone, "because I'll wait till you are done, if you like. I am not hungry."

But I am, and I shall not begin till you do," I answer; and we sit down together. The soup is cold and fast becoming a jelly; the fish looks mangled and unsavory; so I decline soup and fish. I find that the having a little something in the kitchen after dinner is over upstairs, requires training before it becomes really enjoyable. Crumms evidently has had the full amount of training that is necessary. For a man who professes not to be hungry, and who has had a good dinner a few hours before, he displays a capability for eating that is truly wonderful. I prefer the dishes that have not been touched upstairs; he, on the contrary, is on equally good terms with all of them. However, I get quite enough to satisfy me, and there is a novelty in eating one's Christmas dinner with a waiter in a backkitchen. The wine certainly is the best part. Crumms has taken care there shall be plenty of that, and makes a most liberal host with Mr. Domville's port and sherry.

Seven o'clock. Crumms says he must take the coffee up to the gentlemen, and leaves the room. No sooner is he gone than one of the servants comes in, apparently in search of something. Whatever it is, she does not find it. She hunts about vaguely for a minute, and then stops opposite to me.

"So Miss Linton took you for a gentleman," she says, with a laugh. "How nice!"

"Miss Linton made an unfortunate mistake," I answered gravely, imitating Crumms' manner.

"Well, I don't know about that," she replies. "There is certainly an excuse for her doing so."

This strikes me as being very open flattery; but, under the circumstances, it loses its point; moreover, the speaker is rather warm from standing over her tub of hot water, and very plain into the bargain. As I don't answer, she tries another subject:

"You are out of a situation at present, ain't you?"

I nod.

"Where were you?" she asks.

"In the country."

"Notts?" she says, knowing Crumms came from that part. "And so now you've come to London."

At this moment Crumms shuts the dining-room door; and the girl, without looking farther for whatever it was she had pretended to come in to fetch, immediately makes a rapid retreat.

"Been pumping you, sir?" says Crumms, jerking with his thumb in the direction of the kitchen.

"Trying to," I answer.

"I knew they would," he replies. "They are awful curious about you, them women. I wouldn't stop here too long now. There ain't anything more for you to do, and I can say you've got an appointment to keep, you know."

Acting upon his advice, we go up stairs to the hall, and Crumms let me out, shutting the door very quietly behind me.

It is a fine, clear night, and I turn my face homeward, and stroll slowly along the deserted square. I go all up the long, straight Gower street, without meeting any one. By the University I see figure advancing quickly. We pass under a gas-lamp, and both pull up.

"Herbert, by Jove!"

"Why, Roche, what are you doing here? Going out to dinner?"

"Just had it," he replies; "been to see an old lady home."

He then naturally wonders what I am doing strolling along the streets on Christmas night. I tell him I have been out to dinner.

"They have broken up very early," he says; and then asks suddenly, "You haven't sneaked off to read, surely?"

This is said in a tone as if it were a mortal sin for a man to read for an examination on Christmas day.

"That's right," he says, when I had disclaimed any idea of reading. "Well, you come home with me. My people will be very glad to see you. We always have a carpet dance or something in the evening."

I accept readily, and go back with Roche to his house.

Nine o'clock. We have cleared the room for dancing, and the first quadrille has just commenced. Not being able to get a partner, I am standing on the landing, when a carriage rolls up to the street-door, and there is a loud knock, announcing the arrival of some new-comers.

Mrs. Roche hurries down and meets them in the hall. I hear her say, as they come up stairs, "You are just too late for the first dance, Helen."

The name makes me start.

"By Jove, if it should be Miss Linton!" is my muttered thought.

I half hope it may be; I half hope it may not be; and I haven't time to decide which half is the stronger, before Miss Linton herself comes laughing up the stairs.

At the very glimpse of her, I instinctively draw back into the shade, and she and her mamma pass by without noticing me.

It seems very ridiculous to meet the same young lady twice in one evening, first as a waiter, and then as a guest; but there—it is done, it is *un fait accompli;* and Miss Linton and I are once more under the same roof. I wonder if she will recognize me, and I watch her with interest, as she goes round the room. Sooner or later we must meet face to face; and the awkward moment comes sooner than I expect.

When Miss Linton reaches the door where Roche is standing with his partner, she stops there and talks to them when they are not dancing.

"Is there any lemonade, Edward?" she asks presently. "I want some, if there is."

"That's a bad sign, Nelly, after dining out," he answers with a laugh. "There is some down stairs. I would get you a glass; but you see it is my turn. If you don't mind, you will find somebody outside, I think."

To be continued.

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