

"So does everybody," says Madame Benjamin, smiling maliciously at Madame Legras.

The new comer opens Madame Legras' basket.

"Oh! you have some fish. But what a little piece. It would not make two mouthfuls for my husband—and pigeons—oh! how thin they are—I must have finer ones than those. Let me taste your butter—hum, by no means the best—my husband is so very particular about butter;—he and I both are very fond of good eating. - We always have good things at our house."

"And do you mean to say we have only bad ones?"

"My dear friend! I never even thought such a thing. But, you know, all people are more or less particular. Adieu, I must go and buy. I am afraid all the best pieces will be gone.

"Poor thing," says Madame Legras, when the tall lady is out of hearing, "don't you pity her? She and her husband are both so fond of good living! Why, I went there one day and found them dining on a red herring and a miserable bit of turkey. She will go all through the market, and at last buy a radish. I understand her."

A little woman, who is no longer either young or handsome, and who comes to market in a dress with flounces, and a hat with flowers, accosts the two friends, exclaiming,

"Oh! Madame Benjamin and Madame Legras! Good morning! Have you bought all you want; as to myself, we have company to dinner to-day. Mr. Bichonneau is so very fond of having his friends to dine with him, and eat up his substance, and afterwards, as I always tell him, they never thank you for it. But it is his way. Nine people to-day with my Phonphonse, that makes twelve. It is very fortunate that he did not ask one more, it would have made thirteen! I declare I would not have come to the table. But, among these nine people, we have that great fat Flemish painter, who eats as much as four common men; and M. Lecarlin—how he drinks! What in the world can I give them all? Is fish dear?"

"Tremendous."

"Then they shall not have any. Instead of a *matelotte*, I will give them a *gibclotte*. How is game?"

"Four francs for a very small partridge."

"Four francs! and it would take two at least for all those people. For game I shall have a chicken done with small onions, and vegetables. What are peas?"

"Dearer than ever."

"I must be satisfied with potatoes, then, and instead of strawberries I shall have two dishes of baked apples. If they are not contented, I can't help it. Good-bye, madames,—shall I see you this evening?"

"We will try."

Madame Bichonneau moves on. The others continue to talk, and exclaim:

"M. Bichonneau's dinner will be a splendid affair."

"I would rather never have any company at all than have them in that style."

"I think so. It is better to do things well, or not at all."

"But, Madame Bichonneau is an old coquette, who spends every thing in her dress, and puts her husband upon potatoe diet, all the year round."

"Poor dear man! He is a good fellow. If I were so unfortunate as to give my husband the same dish, two days in succession, he would not say any thing to me; but he would go into the city to dine all the rest of the week."

"All men are not Bichonneaus. Well, I am glad of it; for I don't think there is any thing so tiresome as stupid men."

"I agree with you exactly. I would rather have a wicked husband than a stupid one. I am going into my butter woman's."

"And I to my butcher. Good-bye, Madame Legras."

"Madame Benjamin, if you hear of a servant-woman that you think will suit me—an honest one, and above all, not pretty, send her to me, will you?"

"I will."

STANZAS.

BY ERNEST HELFENSTEIN.

I WILL spare thee the sorrow of parting,
Will spare thee the pang of regret;
Will be false to myself in departing,
And teach thee the art to forget.

I know thou art sad, and will spare
The wound that my grief might impart;
I will smile lest thou should'st despair,
Lest anguish come home to thy heart.

Thou wilt say I am fickle, false-hearted,
For affection too cold, and too proud;
Yet the pain that the truth had imparted,
The strength of thy spirit had bowed.

I will spare thee the sorrow of parting,
Will spare thee the pang of regret;
Will be false to myself in departing,
And teach thee the art to forget.