

[From the New York Dispatch.]

MAKING BISCUITS; OR, THE YOUNG LADIES.

BY KATE MERIDEN.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! Just to think of it, Edith," sighed Meta Rutland, looking up in the face of her queenly sister. "Pretty accomplishments for a gentleman's daughters! Miss Rutland looking over prosy house-bills, directing servants, and superintending the coughs and colds of the villagers generally; Miss Meta mending linen and making biscuits. Those everlasting biscuits! I almost wish I could turn into one of them."

"Then I would eat you, my dear, and papa would not say Meta, daughter, your biscuits are very nice."

"Well, I suppose I like to please papa; but then you see, but then—"

"Then what?" asked Edith fixing her fine eyes earnestly on the countenance of her sister.

"O, I'm afraid you'll laugh, if I tell you."

"Not if I can help it, little sister."

"One reason is that it's disagreeable to have our visitors suppose we do such things. Only last night, mamma made me feel so badly. General Wild was giving such a grand description of a battle at sea, when asking to be excused for interrupting him, mamma turned to me and said: 'Meta, dear, I think your biscuits are burning. Ann must have forgotten them.' I really thought I should sink through the floor; for what will the General think of my making biscuits?"

"If he's a sensible man he will think you were a sensible girl; if not, what need you care what he thinks? for you know, dear, the greatest and best General the world ever saw, gave his happiness in the keeping of a woman who could not only make biscuits, but knit his stockings, and cook his dinner, if necessary. Yet who will say Martha Washington was not a perfect model of a true gentwoman? What fine lady of the present day has surpassed her?"

"But then you know, Edith, in those days, it were different. Now it is—"

"Unfashionable!" said Edith, finishing the sentence. "Yes, Meta, I have to confess that in these days it is getting sadly out of fashion for young ladies to be useful, yet I doubt if they are happier themselves, or confer more happiness on their unfortunate relatives by being so much like wooden dolls. Look at our city cousins!"

"Way, don't you think Evelina and Carrie are happy? Such beautiful dresses, and so much company, and nothing to do!"

"No biscuits to make!" continued Edith, with a smile, which was followed by a more serious look. "Yet you know, Meta, Uncle Albert is far from well off—papa has already assisted him several times. We will have an opportunity of judging of the amount of happiness existing in his family, for mamma promised Aunt Caroline that we should visit her next week."

"That will be delightful," returned Meta, walking out of the room; and in making preparations for the visit, she quite forgot the tea biscuits and all other similar annoyances.

The eventful day came at last; and after a hurried journey, Meta found herself standing with her on the marble steps of an elegant mansion, such an one as is generally designated the residence of the opulent, though if the secrets of the world were unraveled, how often might it more aptly be termed a hiding-place for the beggar, the insolvent debtor.

Mrs. Grenvill received her nieces cordially, though from her harassed look and listless manner they at once determined that their aunt was not free from care.

In answer to their inquiry for their cousins, she assumed an apologetic tone and begged them to excuse her daughters. "For you must know, my dears," she said, "we city folks don't rise as early as you country people."

Edith looked at her watch, who's tiny finger pointed to the hour of eleven, secretly wondering how any young lady blessed with health and in her sober senses could ever make up her mind to sleep the best part of God's beautiful sunshine away. Her aunt noticed her look of surprise, and resumed the subject by saying,

"I, myself, my dear, don't approve of such an idle habit; I generally rise at six."

Poor Mrs. Grenvill! she might have added that necessity compelled her, for it did not take her visitors long to discover that their aunt was forced to make many shifts for the sake of what she called "keeping up appearances," and as Bridget the one servant heroically declared "that it was enough to be after lookin' tur the faces above stairs, and 'tind tur thay young leddies, as naded a dale of waitin' on, widout asking a dacint Irish girl to be lookin' tu the kitchen fire." Mrs. Grenvill took that office on herself.

Nor was this the only service she saw fit to perform, for alas, like many other silly mothers, she drudged away from morning till night ironing her daughters' finery in the kitchen, while the young ladies did the agreeable in the parlor secretly hoping that at last some silly-minded masculine would take them off her hands.

"Oh, Edith, my dearest cousin," said Evelina Grenvill, rushing into the parlor a week after her cousins arrival, "do you believe, I've just seen my dear delightful Doctor Wilton. I'd almost began to think he'd forgotten me; but no, the dear man is as much my slave as ever."

"Whom do you mean, Eva?" asked Edith, closing the music-book she had been using.

"You silly child, if you hadn't been helping

mamma you'd have seen the Doctor, for he came in with papa the first night of your arrival. By the way, my dear, he read your criticism on 'Adam Bede,' and said it was most sensibly written, a credit to the author, and so forth. I'd half a mind to be jealous, only it would be too absurd."

Vain, silly Evelina! she did not for a moment suppose that Edith's cultivated mind and earnest, energetic character, was worth more than her silly simpering airs and foolish affectionation.

"I should be sorry to be the occasion of jealousy to any one, and I certainly do not care to have the Doctor read what you are pleased to term my criticisms. I find it pleasant and improving when perusing a work to note its striking features and what may appear superfluous to me, though I by no means set myself up for a critic and do not wish a stranger to read my remarks."

"Never mind, my dear, it has done you no hurt. I thought it was some of Carrie's nonsense; and to fix her for trying to captivate the Doctor, I showed it to him."

"Which certainly was not kind. Would you have him think ill of your sister Eva?"

"She'd have done the same thing; but don't lecture me now, Edith darling, for I want to talk about my music."

"And what of your music?"

"Well, you see, *ma chere* cousin, I always thought I played well, in fact much better than many of our visitors, and I'm surprised to find you're a better musician than myself, for I had an idea that country people didn't care for accomplishments. What a pity your papa's a rich man, you might gain a fortune by teaching music."

"You are mistaken as regards country people—that is," quietly returned Edith, "we do care for those accomplishments for which we have a natural taste." She might have added, had not her country manners prevented her from making a personal application, that she had been much surprised that the prevailing fashion in Gotham was for each young lady, from the daughter of the shoddy contractor, who had amassed a fortune by despoiling a government he talked so loudly of maintaining, to that of the aristocrat, who considered himself the upper crust of society, was to waste precious time in obtaining a *melange* of accomplishments for which they had neither taste nor inclination, merely because every young lady must smatter a little French and must play, though she does it indifferently.

"I think, dear," continued Evelina, "I'll practice with you, for the doctor is so fond of music; and, to tell you a little secret, I'm bent on securing him. Then, you know, poor papa's almost used up. Sometimes I think he says to frighten us, but mamma said last evening that things could hardly be worse; and I don't know what's going to become of us if I don't secure the doctor."

Edith made no reply, for her proud spirit and sense of honor were deeply shocked by the alternative her cousin propo ed.

Intent on these disagreeable thoughts, she was leaving the apartment, when her aunt entered, and motioned her daughter from the room, seated herself near her niece.

For a few moments the silence remained unbroken, when Edith turned to her aunt, and was pained to perceive the traces of tears on her careworn features.

"What troubles you, dearest aunt? Do tell me what troubles you?" she said imploringly.

"O, my child, I am troubled!" Mrs. Grenvill returned, wildly. "We can conceal the truth no longer. Your uncle's a bankrupt—worse than a beggar—and what's going to become of us God only knows!" And the poor woman wrung her hands, while her tears flowed afresh.

"And can nothing be done to save uncle's name from dishonor?" Edith asked, anxiously.

"I fear not, child, for your father has assisted him so many times, and Doctor Wilton, his most intimate friend, is one of his principal creditors. No, Edith, it must all out, our name will be a by-word for every one; I've striven to keep up appearances but I can not do it any longer, and what's going to become of the girls, God only knows! for I confess there's not one thing either useful, or ornamental, in which they excel, but I must go," she continued in a hurried and excited manner, "for your uncle is quite ill, and I've sent for Doctor Wilton; besides there's no one to see to anything down stairs, for I've dismissed Bridget."

"Don't say so, Aunt Caroline," said Edith, unfastening her undersleeves, "lend me one of your calico dresses and you see if the biscuits and tea are not to your satisfaction."

"You do everything well, dear," Mrs. Grenvill said as she left the apartment."

Thus it happened that when Doctor Wilton 'whom in the character of physician, considered himself a privileged visitor' made his way to the kitchen to obtain some water for his patient, he found Edith Rutland making biscuits.

That evening the Doctor invited himself to tea and as Mrs. Grenvill was needed in her husband's sick room, and her daughters refused to make their appearance, but forgetful of the comfort of any one save their own dear selves, preferred to pass the evening in their own apartment, bemoaning their hard lot, it devolved on Edith to do the honors of the table; and that she did them with becoming dignity, and to the entire satisfaction of the doctor could not be doubted, for some how, he thought he had never ate such biscuits before, and went home thinking how delightful it would be to always take tea with Edith.

And now for the satisfaction of those who like to hear the end of a story, we will add

that the Grenvills are still living; and we trust are benefitted by their misfortunes, and no longer try "to keep up appearances," but are learning to be useful as well as fashionable.

Doctor Wilton did ask Edith to take tea with him, for though he wouldn't be caught, he was anxious to secure a wife, who possessed domestic virtues, as well as ornamental accomplishments, and Meta Rutland finally came to the conclusion that making biscuits was not inconsistent with the dignity of a gentleman's daughter.

IF MY HUSBAND WERE TO DO SO.

"Poor woman! What a thousand pities it is for her!" said Mrs. Grimes, with feeling; "I wonder how she stands it. If my husband were to do so, it would kill me."

"I could never stand it in the world," added Mrs. Pitts. "It is a dreadful situation for a woman to be placed in! Mr. Larkins used to be one of the best of men, and took the best possible care of his family. For ten years there was not a happier woman in the town than his wife, but now it makes one's heart ache to look at her. Oh! it must be one of the most heart-rending things in the world to have a drunken husband."

"Well, all I've got to say," spoke up Mrs. Peters, with warmth, "is, that I don't pity her much."

"Why, Mrs. Peters! How can you talk so?"

"Well, I don't. Any woman who will live with a drunken husband don't deserve pity. Why don't she leave him?"

"That is easier said than done, Mrs. Peters."

"I should think it a great deal easier to leave than to live with a drunken brute, and have my life tormented out of me. If my husband were to do so, I reckon he and I would part before 24 hours."

Now, Mrs. Peters' husband was a most excellent man, and a sober man withal; and his wife was tenderly attached to him. In regard to his ever becoming a drunkard, she had as little fear as of his running off and leaving her. Still, when she made this last remark, she looked toward him (for he was present) with a stern and significant expression on her countenance. This was not really meant for him; but for the imaginary individual she had supposed as bearing the relation toward her of a drunken husband.

"You would, would you?" Mr. Peters replied, to the warmly expressed resolution uttered by his wife.

"Yes, that I would!" half laughingly and half seriously retorted Mrs. Peters.

"You don't know what you are talking about," spoke Mrs. Grimes.

"Indeed, then, I do! I consider any woman a fool who will live with a drunken husband. For my part, I have not a spark of sympathy for the wives of drunkards—I mean those who live with the men who beggar and abuse them. Mere disgusting brutes—the very sight of whom ought to turn a woman's stomach."

"You were never placed in such a situation, and therefore are not competent to decide how far a woman who continues to live with a drunken husband is or is not to blame. For my part, I am inclined to think that, in most cases, to live with a husband under these circumstances is the least of two evils."

This was said by Mrs. Pitts.

"I think you are right there," resumed Mr. Peters.

"A woman feels toward her own husband, the father of her children, and the man who in life's spring time won her best and purest affections, very differently from what she does towards another man. She knows all his good qualities, and remembers how tenderly he has loved her, and how he would still love her but for the mad infatuation from which he feels it impossible to break away. The hope that he will reform never leaves her. When she looks at her children, even though abused and neglected, she cannot but hope for their father, and this hope keeps her up."

"Any woman is a fool to feed herself up with such fancies. There is only one true remedy, and that is separation. That's what I'll do, and every woman of sense ought to do. Don't tell me about hope of reforming. It's all nonsense. You wouldn't catch me breaking my heart after that fashion for any man. Not I!" said Mrs. Peters.

The more Mrs. Grimes, and Mrs. Pitts, and others present, argued their side of the question, the more pertinaciously did she maintain the position she had assumed, until Mr. Peters could not help feeling somewhat vexed and some little hurt, he being her husband, and the only one who could possibly hold the relation towards which all her indignation was directed, under the imagined possibility of his becoming a tippler.

After a while the subject was dropped, and at the close of the evening the friends separated and went to their homes.

It was, perhaps, two months from the period at which the conversation occurred, that Mr. Peters left his home early in the evening to attend a political meeting, politics at the time running high, and hard cider flowing as freely as water. He was in the habit of attending such meetings and, of partaking of his portion of the cider, and at times of something stronger; but as he was a sober man, and of strong good sense and firm principle, the thought of ever partaking too freely never crossed the mind of his wife.

Regular in his habits he was rarely out after ten o'clock on any occasion. But this time ten came; but he was still away. This was a

circumstance so unusual that his wife could not help feeling a degree of uneasiness. She went to the door and listened for him after the clock struck eleven, and stood there for some time, expecting every moment to hear the sound of his foot-steps in the distance. But she waited in vain, and at last re-entered the house with a troubled feeling.

At last the clock struck twelve, and almost at the same time she heard her husband at the door, endeavoring to open it with a latch key. In this he was not successful, for some cause; and thinking she might have turned the key, Mrs. Peters went quietly and opened the door for him. She found that she had locked it.

As she lifted the latch, the door was thrown suddenly against her, and her husband came staggering in. As he passed her he struck against the wall to keep from falling. Then all the tender emotions of her heart rushed freely into activity. It was her own husband that lay before her, overcome by the master spirit of strong drink.

With almost superhuman strength she raised him up; although a large man, and supported him with her arm until she got him up stairs, and laid him upon the bed. By this time he seemed perfectly stupid and only mumbled incoherent replies to the frequent and tender importunities of his wife.

After some time she got him undressed and in bed. But he grew more and more stupid every moment.

"Oh! what if he should die!" the poor wife moaned anxiously, while the tears that had at first gushed out, still continued to flow freely. She washed his face with cold water and tried various means to arouse him from the lethargy of drunkenness. But all to no purpose.

At last, despairing of success, she laid down beside him, in tears, threw her arms around his neck, and put her face against his. She had lain that way for about five minutes when her husband called her name in a whisper.

Oh! how eagerly did she listen after her response to his call.

"If my husband were to do so!"

As he said this still in a whisper, but a very expressive one, he looked her steadily in the face, with a roguish twinkle in his eyes, a quivering of his lips, the muscles of which could with difficulty restrain from wreathing those expressive organs into a merry smile.

Mrs. Peters understood the whole scene in a moment, and boxed her husband's ears soundly on the spot for very joy, while he laughed until his sides ached almost as bad as his ears.

In her discussions upon the various unfortunate relations of man and wife, Mrs. Peters was very careful how she declared her course of action, were she placed under similar circumstances. If in any case she was led unthinkingly to do so, the remark of her husband, made with a peculiar inflection of the voice: "Oh, yes! If my husband were to do so"—had the happiest effect imaginable, and put an end to the unprofitable discussion.

VARIETIES.

—No girl can become a true lady without the knowledge of household duties. Whatever may be her literary proficiency, and her social qualities, without the ability to do housework, if necessarily demand, her education is defective.

—A wag seeing a lady at a party with a very low necked dress and bare arms, expressed his admiration by saying she "outs ripped" the whole party.

—Keep your temper in disputes. The cool hammer fashions the red hot iron to any shape needed.

—"Madam a good many persons at the concert last night were disturbed by the crying of your baby."

"Well, now, I do wonder that such people will go to concerts!"

—A jolly fellow had an office next door to a doctor's shop. One day a gentleman stepped into the wrong shop. "Is the doctor in?" "Don't live here," said the lawyer, who was in full scribble over some old documents. "Oh, I thought this was his office!" "Next door, sir." "Pray, sir, can you tell me if he has many patients?" "Not living!" The old gentleman told the story in the vicinity, and the doctor threatened the lawyer with a libel suit.

—We are born to trouble; and we may depend upon it whilst we live in this world we shall have it, though with intermissions; that is, in whatever state we are, we shall find a mixture of good and evil; and therefore the true way to contentment is to know how to receive these certain vicissitudes of life—the returns of good and evil, so as neither to be exalted by the one, nor overthrown by the other, but to bear ourselves towards everything which happens with such ease and indifference of mind, as to hazard as little as may be.

—Commodore Wilkes, who is now tried by court martial in Washington, is virtually charged with suffering the Alabama to escape. The specifications set forth that he detained the Vanderbilt, sent to pursue the Alabama, contrary to orders, and afterwards wrote an insubordinate letter to the Secretary of the Navy in relation to the affair.

—It does not follow that two persons are fit to marry because they are good. Milk is good, and mustard is good, but they are not good for each other.