

Once again the examiner repeats his directions as to name, number, &c. There is a rustling of papers, and the harvest begins to be gathered. Would anybody believe that, after all, one candidate gives up her papers loose, and another, still more aggravating, sends hers in without either name or number? Is it any wonder that a few very sharp words are spoken on the subject? The room does not clear rapidly, for there are always some who work on to the very last moment, and some who get their manuscript into such utter confusion that it takes ten minutes to put it in order. Gradually, however, they do disappear, and disperse themselves into the dressing-room and into the museum itself, to get half-an-hour's refreshment for mind or body.

The room, meantime, has to be put in order for their return. The ladies go to work vigorously, putting fresh paper, &c., on every table, and restoring its look of fresh, if grim, orderliness to the whole place. All is scarcely finished when the half-hour has expired.

Once again the candidates troop in; the same directions are given, the same silence settles down over the

room, the same little dramas are enacted. To-day's work will not finish till half-past six o'clock, and the examination will occupy the whole week. Few of the candidates, however, take up more than six subjects out of the eighteen or nineteen open to them. The compulsory ones will begin to-morrow, and then the rooms will be full, the numbers growing smaller and smaller as the progress is made from Arithmetic to Greek. But the lady who generously devotes her time and energy to the work of secretary must be here all the while; and whatever may be thought of the mode or of the results of the examinations, there can be no doubt of the gratitude due to her by all interested in the matter, and especially by the candidates themselves.

As for her aids, they come and go; they spend an hour or two in the company of these anxious faces, not surely without interest; and it is to be hoped that the thoughts which must needs pass through their minds in the silence, tend to a fuller comprehension on the part of the fortunate minority of women, of what the battle of life means for the great majority of their sisters.

#### LOCAL DISHES, AND HOW THEY ARE MADE.



WILL you not tell us what amuses you so much, Bertha?" said Frank, as he saw his sister laughing over her book.

"Yes, I must indeed," said Bertha. "I am reading the account of that American minister that papa was telling us about.

It is very interesting, and he is a very clever and original man. I was amused at the way in which he talks about oatmeal porridge."

"Oatmeal porridge!" said Frank. "Is not that rather a queer subject for a minister to discourse about?"

"Perhaps it is," said Bertha. "You see, this gentleman was not born in America. He went out there from some part of Yorkshire, and in his young days he used to eat porridge——"

"And I suppose 'the light of other days' illumined every basinful of that most excellent preparation that he came near," said papa, joining in the conversation. "It is always so. I have been amused many times to see how people really appear to *love* dishes that are peculiar to the part of the country from which they came. Again and again I have met with epicures and grave-looking people who were as particular as possible about what they ate, and if by any chance an uninviting-looking mess was brought to table which belonged to their 'ain countree,' their appetite and enthusiasm knew no bounds."

"It seems to me that local dishes generally are uninviting-looking messes," said Frank. "Nevertheless I like porridge. Whatever enthusiasm Bertha's

friend indulged in about porridge was quite justified, in my opinion. What does he say, Bertha?"

"He has been telling some friends how to make porridge, and he says, 'Porridge is not mush. Mush was never heard of either in England or Scotland. In Yorkshire when we speak of porridge we say "they" are hot or cold, or good or bad. Porridge must be eaten, or, as we used to say, "supped," when they are freshly made. You can no more keep them good if you let them stand round to wait your leisure than you can keep champagne good in a platter. The true way to eat your porridge is to tumble in your milk while they are in the kettle, and stir it well in, then pour your porridge into basins, and eat them up. Don't set them on the table in one dish as the heathen do.'"

"Ah," said papa, "we need no one to tell us that was written by a Yorkshireman. Of course he can tell how to make porridge properly."

"Yes, he puts half a teaspoonful of salt into a quart of water and boils it. When it is boiling quickly he sifts a pint of oatmeal slowly into it with the left hand, and beats it quickly with the right hand. He lets it boil two or three minutes, and has it served at once."

"That is the only right way to make porridge," said Frank. "A basinful of that with milk and treacle would make a breakfast for a king."

"And, taken regularly, would make the king strong and robust, and able to do kingly work," said papa. "I wish all the poor, pale little children in our large towns could have a good plate of oatmeal porridge made in that way every morning. They would soon have a different look. See the Scotch, how hale and hearty they are. It is all because they eat porridge."



"Now, mamma," said Bertha, "what is to be done? We have got papa and Frank upon the subject of porridge. Frank has been educated up to as much enthusiasm about it as papa, and the two together are more than we can put up with. Shall you and I in self-defence fall into raptures about Devonshire junket?"

"Oh, I am listening very quietly," said I. "I will not speak against porridge, though, for I have learnt to like it very much—and spice-cake and cheese too, and parkin. I think they are all excellent. Also I sympathise with Aunt Minnie in her admiration for a Cornish pasty, and squab pie, and saffron cake. I think Wiltshire puddings are delicious, and Gloucester puddings are delightful, and Welsh puddings are most superior, and that there is something wanting even to the roast beef of old England if it is not accompanied by Yorkshire pudding. I think Marlborough cakes, and Tunbridge cakes, and Shrewsbury cakes are very good indeed, that Banbury cakes and Richmond maids of honour are true friends to the doctor, that Norfolk and Suffolk dumplings are—satisfying, and that—"

"Oh, stop! stop! mamma," said Bertha. "I didn't know there was such a long list as that."

"You must not stop me till I have mentioned what I consider the pearl of provincial dishes, and that is Devonshire cream. On a sultry summer's day give me a dish of fresh ripe strawberries with plenty of Devonshire cream, and I will leave the oatmeal porridge to papa and Frank."

"Ah, that is all very well," said papa. "I could say, when my friends are gathered round the tea-table, when the lamp is lighted, when the urn hisses cheerily, when the jest and merry chat go round, give me, among the other good things which are sure to accompany them, a pile of hot Wakefield tea-cakes, soaked in butter and melting with goodness, and I will never ask for the elegance of a London tea-table. Or on a cold frosty winter's night, just before Christmas, far away among the wilds of Yorkshire, when the members of the village choir are going round to the houses which lie perhaps a mile or two apart, singing 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night,' or 'Christians, awake,' or 'The first good joy that Mary had'—let me be the one to summon them indoors to sit down to a table loaded with spice-cake and cheese and mulled ale, and see the smile on their faces, which shows their thorough appreciation of what is set before them, and I will leave Banbury cakes and maids of honour to Bertha."

"I am quite agreeable that you should leave everything that remains to me," said Bertha, "for all are good. Frank said he thought local dishes were generally uninviting-looking messes. I won't defend their appearance, but in themselves they are superlatively excellent. They must be so. They have approved themselves to one generation after another, and owe their long and honoured lives to the excellence of their constitutions."

"Well done, Bertha!" said Frank.

"Now," continued Bertha, "I should like mamma

to teach me how to make all the dishes of this kind that she can. Then when a friend comes to us from a certain district I will endeavour to set before him the 'food that his soul loves,' and at any rate he will not leave us thinking we are heathen, as my American friend thought those people were who did not understand oatmeal porridge."

"I know how to make a good many of these provincial dishes," said I, "and those I will tell you about with pleasure. I could not, however, teach you how to make Devonshire cream. For that you need milk taken from cows which have been pastured in the rich Devonshire country. As for Cornish pasties, they are easily understood, for they simply mean pasties made of almost everything that is eatable, with sometimes most incongruous mixtures of sweet and savoury ingredients. Fruit, meat, rice, eggs, vegetables—all are made into pasties."

"What are these celebrated pasties like, then?" said Frank.

"I can only describe to you what I have seen and tasted. When we were staying in Cornwall with Mrs. Archer, who was a notable housekeeper, it was quite a sight to see, every Saturday, the store of pasties she made. She would arrange the family dinners a week beforehand in this way:—'Sunday, there will be fresh meat; Monday, we will have a rice pasty [that was a pasty filled with boiled rice, sweetened and mixed with currants]; Tuesday, meat pasty [a pasty made of little scraps of meat]; Wednesday, fresh meat again; Thursday, egg pasty; Friday, squab pie; Saturday, I shall make pastry again.' She would make fruit pasties, too, and leek pasties, and the children never seemed to tire of them. They were all kept in a dry closet, and were ready for all emergencies"

"What is squab pie like?" said Frank.

"And egg pasty?" said Bertha.

"Squab pie is made of mutton chops well seasoned, sliced apples, and sliced onions. A large dish is filled with layers of these articles, a good crust is laid over all, and the pie is baked until done enough. If you have never tasted it, I can tell you squab pie is very good. As to egg pasty, Mrs. Archer made hers in this way:—She rolled out a round piece of pastry about a quarter of an inch thick. On one half of this she put the egg, carefully turned out of the shell, so as not to break the yolk, and put little pieces of bacon all about it. Then she folded the pastry over and pinched the edges, and the pasty was ready for the oven. Among the country people there were leeky pasties, or pasties made of leeks, and 'tiddie' or 'tatie'—*i.e.*, potato—pasties."

"So much for Cornish pasties," said Bertha. "Now for the Devonshire junket that you are so fond of, mamma. Devonshire milk is not indispensable for that, because we often have it."

"Devonshire milk is not indispensable, but pure, unadulterated, fresh milk *is* indispensable. Unfortunately it cannot be made with Swiss milk, which is so useful for many purposes. The easiest way of making a junket is as follows:—Buy a bottle of prepared rennet of the chemist. This may be had for 1s. or



rs. 6d., and will last ever so long. Put a quart of pure lukewarm milk into a pretty punch-bowl or something of that sort, which can be taken to table. Sweeten it, and stir into it a little brandy or a few drops of flavouring, and a dessert-spoonful of the rennet. Leave it in a cool place for about a couple of hours or more, and the junket will be ready for use. In Devonshire it would be sent to table with little lumps of clotted cream placed here and there upon it."

"Well, that is easily made," said Bertha. "Now the parkin."

"Yes," said papa, "the parkin. How I remember the delight with which, when I was a child, I hailed the approach of Guy Fawkes Day and parkin! I don't think even the jumping crackers would have seemed complete without parkin."

"There are ever so many ways of making parkin. I believe in country places it is often made by simply mixing oatmeal and treacle together with a little ginger and milk, and baking the mixture in a slow oven. Grandmamma used to make hers in this way:—Rub  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of butter and  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of fresh lard into 2 lbs. of fine oatmeal, or flour and oatmeal mixed. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of ground ginger and  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of moist sugar, and a little minced candied peel if liked. Stir half a cupful of hot milk into a pint and three-quarters of good treacle, and heat the treacle a little as well, so that it may be more easily mixed with the meal. Beat all together to a stiff batter, and bake the parkin in a slow oven. It may either be baked in little buttered

pans or in large dishes. It should be kept till wanted, carefully excluded from the air in a tin box with a closely-fitting lid. I think parkin is most wholesome and excellent, especially for children. A cake of parkin and a cup of milk form a capital supper for any child."

"That is not my kind of parkin," said papa. "I like it made with Scotch oatmeal, and baked in cakes quite an inch and a half thick."

"I like parkin well enough," said Frank, "but I cannot say I ever cared for spice-cake with cheese."

"You are not thoroughbred, Frank," said papa.

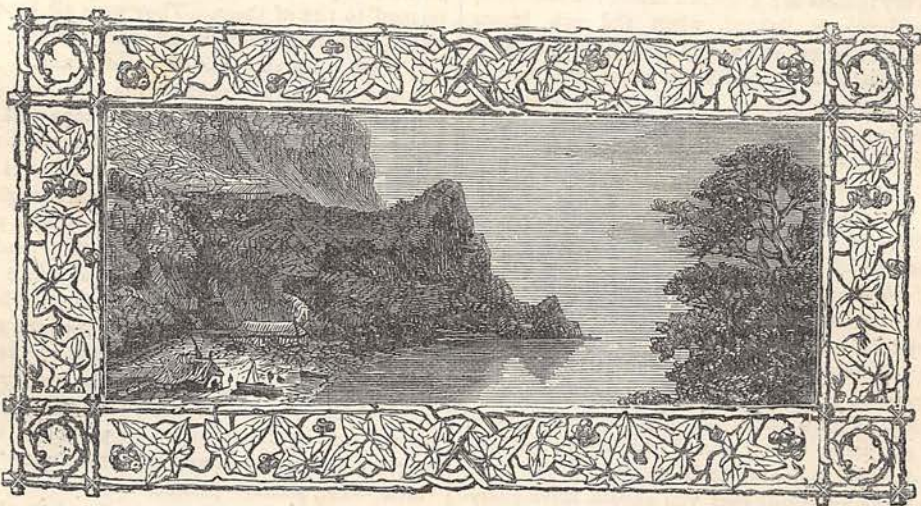
"Spice-cake is nothing but currant-cake, after all," said Bertha.

"It is currant-cake flavoured with spice, and real spice-cake is made with yeast. I think you will find full directions for making it and all other local dishes in our cookery book, Bertha, so I need not tell you them now. At the same time I think they are well worth your attention; and, as you say, it would be a pleasant surprise to any friend who came to visit us, to be able to place on the table a dish which he could only regard as a compliment to himself."

"And what a comfort it would be to the hostess," said papa, "to reflect that, however fastidious the guest might be, there would be before him, besides the usual 'tableful of welcomes,' at least 'one dainty dish.'"

"You always make fun, papa," said Bertha, "but with all your teasing you will not keep me from studying local dishes."

PHILLIS BROWNE.



#### HIDDEN DEPTHS.

**S**WEET pensive, thoughtful eyes, that seem  
To gaze far off as in a dream  
With misty light,  
Like pure calm waters deep and still,  
That soon will flash along the rill,  
And sparkle bright:

Ripe curving lips: a wistful face  
Full of a certain subtle grace,  
That whispers much  
Of hidden depths of tenderness,  
Of many a sweet and fond caress  
And loving touch.