

angry reply, and the next day came a little packet of letters and a lock of golden hair, and Margaret Britman's romance was hidden out of sight for ever.

A few years, and Robert Derwent died, leaving nothing but difficulties behind him. Miss Britman took a lodging in a distant part of the City, and toiled for the child for long weary years, late and early, through trials that would have overwhelmed a less resolute and devoted woman; she toiled on to give her niece a good education, and enable her to earn her own bread when she should be called away. And now, here was some one stepping in—Philip Ferris returned from India—Philip Ferris who had said farewell to her in anger eighteen years before—the one love and lover of her life was coming to see her next day to ask for the child, the motherless baby who had so unwittingly separated them eighteen years before. It certainly was passing strange.

The next day was grey and gloomy, fog overhead, damp underfoot, cold everywhere, but Dot was in high spirits, in spite of the atmosphere.

"I dare say Mr. Ferris will be shocked at seeing what a hideous house and street we live in, auntie. I can imagine him saying, 'What a distinctly dreadful place!' In truth, I shan't be sorry to leave Berry Street. Now good-bye, dear. Be very gracious to Mr. Ferris; and oh, auntie darling! I do hope you'll like him, because, you know, we've got to live with him, perhaps."

"Dot, my love, do you really think that you like this gentleman well enough to marry him? He's old enough to be your father."

"So he is, auntie dear; but that don't matter much if he's nice and kind, and ever so rich—and he is."

Nice and kind, and ever so rich. That was Dot's idea of a husband, and her aunt felt sad and sorry, and some way disappointed; she did not know where the child had got such ideas. And then came the awful thought of losing her, for she remembered what Mr. Ferris had said about a divided love. She would have but a small place in Dot's new home and new life.

Never did a day seem so long to Miss Britman. She had put on her best black dress in the morning, and taken a little extra care with the arrangement of her still abundant hair: that was all the external prepara-

tion she had made for the visit, but her heart throbbed wildly at every ring of the bell or step on the carpetless stairs. But the morning passed—three, four o'clock, and she breathed more freely; perhaps he wouldn't come that day, perhaps he wouldn't come at all. So she went on more patiently with her pupil, a dull, tiresome child.

"One, two, three, four!" she repeated over and over again. She did not hear a step on the stair, nor a gentle tap at the door, did not observe it open, and when she looked up Philip Ferris stood beside her. For a moment her brain reeled, and she had to hold on to the chair-back to steady herself; then she held out her hand in welcome.

"You may go now, my dear, and I'll give you the remainder of your lesson to-morrow," she said gently, and the child wriggled off the stool, and departed joyfully.

"Margaret!" That was all he said when they were alone, with one hand holding one of hers, and the other on her shoulder—"Margaret!"

"You have come to speak to me about—about Dorothy," she faltered, feeling all the colour forsake her face.

"No; I have come to speak about myself and you—to ask you to forgive me, if you can: to ask you to let me make atonement for my cruelty and folly: to ask you if it is too late for us to be happy even now. Dear, I only learned yesterday how true and loyal you had been; I fancied I alone was faithful. Can you, will you forgive me, Margaret?"

"There is nothing to forgive, Philip."

"Then it is not too late. We may be happy still."

"But Dorothy?" Miss Britman said faintly.

"Dorothy knows. It was her resemblance to you that first attracted me. But the child must not come between us and our happiness a second time, and we will both take care of her. I think she will be better pleased to have me for an uncle than a husband."

"But, Philip, she thought—"

"Yes, dear, but now she understands. Margaret, you belong to me, and you must be obedient, so prepare to leave Berry Street to-morrow."

"But my pupils, Philip?"

"Dear, I will arrange all that. My brave patient Maggie, you have given your last lesson."

## MEAT PIES, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM.

**M**OST of us will agree with Sam Weller that "veal pies is werry good," and I think that the whole family of meat pies are equally delicious, presuming the crust is properly made, the meat judiciously seasoned, and the pie thoroughly baked—the three essentials in their manufacture; and if you fail in one you might almost as well break down in all of them. Does not your mouth water at the

thought of a hot pie of beef-steak, rabbit, chicken, or mutton and kidney on a cold day in winter; and is not a cold one of veal and ham equally acceptable in summer time?

I am here speaking of pies made in dishes only, as the raised ones require somewhat different treatment; and I trust that the following hints will be of service to amateurs in this branch of cookery, as the *modus operandi* is really very simple.

The various kinds of crust are too well known to justify me in giving recipes here for their manufacture. I will say, however, that I prefer "short crust" to any other for meat pies, and after that the "half-flaky," or "rough puff;" for the simple reason that rich puff pastry should only be served in small quantities, and lovers of meat pies always feel inclined to follow the example of *Oliver Twist* and ask for more.

With regard to the meat, my directions are brief and simple—viz., always partially cook by stewing slowly, and let it become cold. Before covering, remove the fat from the surface, and take out some of the gravy, which can be re-heated and served with the pie; for if the cover is laid on over a dish full of gravy it will bubble up in the baking, and cause the crust to present a sodden, unappetising appearance, resulting in the waste of a great portion of it, for only the top layer, as I may term it, would, under those circumstances, be eatable.

Now, gravy is a great stumbling-block in the way of many so-called cooks; for a careless, indiscriminate sprinkling of salt, pepper, and flour, with a dash of cold water, and *Hey presto!* the thing is done, so they think. Now don't take it for granted that I am about to recommend an extravagant purchase of gravy-beef—nothing of the kind; but I will ask you to remember that different kinds of meat require different treatment. For instance, good beef-steak yields rich gravy that only needs careful thickening and seasoning, and the addition of a little sauce—Yorkshire relish, or something similar—with a spoonful of browning, not forgetting a pinch of dried mixed herbs, a bottle of which should be in every house; for, besides imparting to the pie an additional delicious flavour of their own, they bring out to the full that of the meat, game, or poultry of which it is composed.

A little piece of kidney is a great improvement to mutton pies, and by all means use stock instead of water for the gravy, not forgetting that a drop or two of vinegar will tend to make the meat tender.

Milt, or "melt," as it is commonly called, will enrich the gravy considerably, so will a piece of onion first fried and then stewed with the meat; and while a whole volume might be written on the subject of seasoning, the great thing is to adapt it to the dish. And bear in mind when making a pie to be eaten cold it must be seasoned more highly than one to be cut into while hot, and that no amount of added seasoning after the pie is baked will make up for an insufficient quantity cooked in it; for it is the blending of the various ingredients that will result in a perfect whole.

Take care that your crust is of uniform thickness,

not too soft, and smoothly made; also that it fits the dish easily without stretching, or it will surely crack and fall in the baking; and please add enough salt to cover a sixpence and a pinch of white pepper to each pound of flour.

Let the inner strip of crust be only just wide enough to cover the edge of the dish; for if cut irregularly and allowed to slip into the gravy it will be spoiled.

Make a couple of incisions with the point of a knife in the top of the pie, for the steam to escape, then ornament it according to fancy with the remnants of crust, which may be made into a plait or twist and laid round the pie near the edge; or a wreath of small leaves overlapping each other, with the addition of a nice centre ornament, and a few larger leaves surrounding it, will have a good effect; but taste may be exercised *ad libitum* in this respect.

Next brush over your pie, not forgetting the edge, with a fourth portion of an egg (three-fourths of it having been used in the mixing of the crust) beaten up with a tablespoonful of milk. This is far better than egg yolk alone for the brushing over process, for that is apt to become too brown in the baking.

Now for the baking. Well, on this point I cannot give explicit instructions as to time; I can only say bake a moderate-sized pie—say for six or eight persons—*about* an hour and a half, more or less, according to the heat of your oven and the thickness of your crust. The oven must be hot enough to fetch up the latter, but by no means fierce, or the pie will be brown before it is half baked; then a gradual, steady heat must be kept up, sufficient to cook it thoroughly; and if it becomes too brown before it is done, cover it with a thick sheet of paper; and if not dark enough, an extra flash of heat the last ten minutes or so will finish the operation. But experience, and that only, must be your guide; for no amount of reading without practical knowledge ever did, or ever will, teach the art of cooking to anybody.

And if by chance a cook, to whom my directions seem superfluous, should read this paper, she will at least ratify my statement that in nine houses out of ten among middle-class families a properly-made meat pie is an unknown luxury.

A cold meat pie should be set upon a meat dish on which has been laid a spotless serviette, and then surrounded with a border of fresh parsley; thus pleasing the palate through the eye.

May I end my paper with a word of practical instruction? viz., that if you fail in this or any similar task, try and ascertain the *reason* of failure; for depend upon it the remedy is never far off when the want is clearly seen.

LIZZIE HERITAGE.

