

## THE REVOLT IN THE KITCHEN.

## A LESSON FOR HOUSEKEEPERS.

BY PATIENCE PRICE.

## I.

"THEN I shall be under the necessity of giving you your week's notice!"

As Mrs. Youngbride said this, just after breakfast, having giving Biddy, cook, directions against which that official rebelled, she left the kitchen, fearing a storm. She trusted for dinner to what the *dii monores* of the kitchen should please, and a bootless trust it was.

The dinner, we need hardly say, was execrable, and execrably served. The husband was a man of amiable temper, and wonderful discretion; and checked his young wife, who would else have gone into a long discussion of her difficulties with the kitchen cabinet. The waiting maid, who had expected to have a full budget to report to Biddy, in the kitchen, as usual, could only state her inferences and deductions. These were, that the gentleman had decidedly reproved his wife for giving the cook her notice; and that, therefore, the said notice would be revoked; and that Biddy might demand increased wages if she remained, and would be a fool if she did not do so. And so in the kitchen a rebellious conclave was held. Waiting-maid resolved upon an increase. Chambermaid ditto. And that included the whole force.

What the lady and her husband did say to each other, when their natural enemies, the servants, were all out of hearing, it is not necessary to relate. Its tenor, however, may be guessed by what followed. The husband had left the house; and Biddy, cook, was sailing out, dressed in her best, without the formality of stating her gracious intentions. Her mistress called her, and said:—

"Here are your wages, including the coming week; and the sooner you leave the house the better."

"But, ma'am, you have not got a new cook yet, ma'am; and I have not got a new place."

"The first is my business, and the second is your own."

"But won't I stay here, ma'am, till I get a new situation?"

"Indeed you won't, if I can help it."

"But where will I go, then?"

"That is your look out, and not mine. I shall not endure your impertinence for a whole week, or suffer you to make use of my house for your new base of operations."

"Base, is it? Base! Sure, if there's any law or justice in the land, I'll take it!"

Bridget did not understand the terms, however well she might the operations of "strategy." So she departed in high dudgeon. But she had good fortune, and soon returned, all smiles and compliments. "Sure I have found

a place, ma'am, and will leave in the morn, ma'am, and we'll part good friends, ma'am, and forget and forgive, ma'am."

"Very glad to hear it, Bridget, and I hope you will do as you should in your new place, and not be dismissed for impertinence and slovenliness."

"That's what I never was yet, ma'am," said Bridget, bridling. "The best of folks may have a tiff, sometimes. I'm soon up, and it's soon over."

"Very well, Bridget," said Mrs. Youngbride, willing to dismiss her, without altercation. But Bridget was not done yet.

"I'm to go to Mrs. Brown's, ma'am."

The lady was cogitating within herself whether she ought not to put her friend Mrs. Brown on her guard, but concluded it was unnecessary. Bridget was honest, as honesty is regarded among her class; and Mrs. Brown might find out her faults at her leisure. But Biddy was not disposed to be content with any such negative proceeding.

"If you please, ma'am, Mrs. Brown said, ma'am, that she would take a line from you, ma'am, if you please, ma'am."

"Do you mean that I am to give you a recommendation?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Bridget, her face lighting up; "that's it, a bit of writin', if you please."

"And not a bit of anything of that sort will you get from me, Bridget, unless you want a certificate that you are so intolerable that I am glad to be rid of you, on any terms."

Terrible was the wrath of Bridget. We cannot undertake to report her harangue, commencing with threats and terminating with a penitent and doleful whining: "Would she ruin a poor body who had only her character and her hands to depend on?"

But the lady was inflexible. And she was none the less determined, when she found that Biddy's fellow-servants took sides with her. Waiter and chambermaid gave notice, and were summarily discharged; and the husband and wife actually took breakfast alone in the house next morning. After breakfast a little search enabled the lady to secure a temporary assistant in a good-natured but not very efficient person who had served them before in similar straits. They declared that her awkwardness was rather amusing than otherwise.

"Now," said the husband, "you must look for new servants."

"Indeed I shall not," said the lady. "There is just the difficulty. They think themselves in too much demand. They must look for me."

The gentleman was amused. That was precisely his opinion too. But wise husbands do not volunteer advice in domestic matters. Very soon the door-bell rang. Mrs. Y. answered it herself. A fierce-looking termagant desired to see the "Missis."

"You do see her."

"And isn't it a shame, now, that the likes of you should be running to the door! You will be wanting a waiter, and, I am tould, a cook. I've lived in the best places, and I've had the best wages. Have you a range, ma'am, and proper conveniences?"

"Who sent you here?"

"I came from the office, ma'am; they tould me of you there, and I thought I would see if the place suited me."

"I don't think you will suit the place. You may go back to the office and tell them that when I want their services I will let them know."

"But sure your name is in their books."

"And sure I did not put it there," said Mrs. Y., now determined to close the conference, and shutting the door in the woman's face.

## II.

A GREAT institution is the "office." It represents, in Biddy-dom, all the power of the State, and is moreover the Temple of Liberty. The custom of other places is here reversed, and the servant is the mistress. She sits enthroned, waiting to receive the homage of dependent and tributary housekeepers. The nominal head of the establishment is tolerated only as the advocate and pleader for the unfortunate employers, who come here desiring humbly the gracious condescension of the kitchen queens.

Great records are the "books of the office." The memoranda of the detective police do not contain more curious and minute particulars of "suspected persons." The entries in the books are made in a kind of professional cipher which the "office" only understands. All housekeepers and employers are, in this kitchen police department, classed as "suspicious," and the "office" is in league with the worshipful sisterhood who spend on its chairs and benches their leisure hours. And it is for the interest of the "office" to keep these clients off the premises, though they retain their situations only for a week at a time. The more charges the more perquisites, and the "office," with even-handed justice, mulcts both Biddy and mistress. If you ask how Mrs. Y. came in their books so soon after the rebellion took place, the answer is easy. When Biddy went for a "situation," of course her deposition, without her special intention, was "taken down," and all the vacancies in Mrs. Y.'s household were noted, together with such circumstances as would guide the "office," in profiting by the domestic discomfiture of the unlucky housekeeper. These are the events on which "offices" grow fat; and it is more than suspected that they promote rebellions, in order, like knavish peace-disturbers, to grow rich by the confusion of other people.

No housekeeper who has once encountered

an "office" in full battle array, cares to do so a second time, if she can help it. So Mrs. Y. was determined not again to face such a battery. All her servants hitherto had come from such sources, and she had employed enough of the sort. As she would not go to the mountain, the mountain, reversing Mahomet's experience, came to her. She had the grim satisfaction of shutting the door in the face of a dozen applicants during the first day. Her husband, as yesterday's "baked meats did coldly furnish forth" the dinner-table, was surprised, but more amused at her account of proceedings. He inquired if with so many applications she did not consider herself as sufficiently "sought."

"Not yet," she said. "I am a little coy, as you may remember. Do not come home to dinner to-morrow till seven o'clock."

"I am all obedience. What are you going to do?"

"Don't ask. And don't come to see. I am not at home to any callers. Like Mrs. Gargery, I am on a rampage, and if you value your peace, keep out of it. Send up your porter from the store, if you can spare him."

And verily she was on a rampage. With a supplementary force, enlisted somewhere by her day-woman, she turned every dust-hole on the premises inside out from attic to cellar. Besoms, brooms, mops were the order of the day. The kitchen department, larder and pantries were so turned up as they had never been before. All the damaged, battered, bruised, and dirty utensils were cast out, or distributed as perquisites to the women who had officiated in the cleansing process; and at five in the afternoon Mrs. Youngbride was ready to rest on her laurels. All the day long the door-bell had jingled in vain. The ringers who had an "office" look about them were permitted to ring at their leisure, and all other applicants were turned civilly away. It was a day of triumph; and Mrs. Y. felt like a heroic commander who has sustained a siege, and successfully repelled all attacks.

The dinner was a success. It was a perfect treat for an epicure, and her liege-lord, who had a little weakness in that direction, asked her how she contrived to get it up.

"I did not," she answered. "It came from the restaurant."

"Good again!" he shouted. "But can we do this every day?"

"Wait and see. I am not done yet. You are not to come to-morrow until seven, again."

On the morrow Mrs. Youngbride made a sortie from her citadel, leaving her sister, whose aid she had now secured, in charge of the garrison. She went to the "office?" Not she. She went to a kitchen furnishing store, and invested judiciously in half a hundred of those really ingenious contrivances which true housekeepers can make use of, but rough Biddies

only destroy. At an early hour they were all in place, and many of them were in operation. And at seven a little dinner was ready to which Lucullus might have been invited.

"Better and better!" cried the husband. "Where did this dinner come from?"

"Our own kitchen," she answered, "and after dinner you shall have a look at it."

"But you and your sister do not really mean to turn cooks?"

"I don't know. She could make better wages at it than many a well educated young lady does at teaching; and a cook's wages and board together amount to a greater sum annually than many a parish pays its clergyman. We might do a great deal worse than turn cooks."

After dinner they adjourned to the kitchen. A nice new oil-cloth was on the floor; bright tins and other utensils, and every possible convenience which ingenuity could devise were in the place. "Upon my word," said Mr. Y., lighting his cigar, and taking a chair, "I could toss you up a supper here myself, fit for the Queen's Majesty. Will you have your oysters stewed, fried, or roasted in the shell?"

"You get up a supper!" said his wife, laughing.

"Yes, indeed. Did I not graduate at Yale? And didn't we have nice little suppers there? Suppers they were, too, got up under difficulties; and here you have all the modern improvements, and more, too. I think I will get up the breakfast to-morrow morning, at any rate."

"Do!" said his wife. And he did. House-keeping was a rare frolic for two or three days longer. Then Mrs. Y. announced that her new servant was coming, and that Mr. Y. must keep out of the kitchen.

"One only?" he asked. "You discharged three."

"Yes, and the best day's work in house-keeping that I ever did. I won't take three overgrown creatures into my house again to overturn all my improvements, and destroy my new kitchen furniture. I shall take one at a time, and break her in."

The one, when she came, was a half-grown girl, who was glad of a home, and knew how to prize it. Mrs. Y. was head and eyes to her, and the small servant was only hands and feet. Breakfast and tea were easy enough. Bread came from the baker's, and about every other day, dinner from the restaurant. And when Mrs. Y. gave an entertainment, it came from the same place, servants and all.

In a few weeks another young girl was taken on trial, and was made to understand that she was the junior. The two, kept distinct as to their duties, worked well together. To make a long story short, Mrs. Youngbride herself overseeing everything, soon had a trio of competent, respectful young girls at work. Not the least of their wages was the instruction

they received. When any cause removed one from her service she supplied her place with another, training them all, like the members of a French theatrical company, to do what they were told.

Her household moves like clock-work. She has asserted her independence of the "office," and maintains it. When she happens to get into a temporary dilemma, she can help herself, or find help, without any difficulty. There are always in cities women ready to do a day's turn, and glad of the chance, if you will be charitable enough to seek them out, and keep them in mind.

Never again, Mrs. Y. protests, will she submit to the impertinence of a professed cook, in a small family, while there is a restaurant left in the city; never will she be browbeaten by a laundress, while there are poor women ready to take her work home; never encounter the assurance of thankless strangers, while she can find poor young girls who are glad to be taught in her kitchen. Her husband says she is a true "sister of charity," a "domestic missionary," and that her kitchen is a training-school of the very best kind. She certainly accomplishes not a little good, while she secures her own comfort, and that of her household.

#### DOES HE REMEMBER?

BY ANNIE CHAMBERS KETCHUM.

Does he remember? 'Twas a golden summer—

Summer among the proud, pine-crested hills,  
Where the gay south-wind—idle, playful hummer,  
Laughed like a truant, with the garrulous rills.

Young vetches, clambering up the papaws slender,  
Peeped, roguish, like the blue eyes of a child,  
And 'neath the white tent of the blooming elder  
Stood the wake-rob-in, like an Arab wild.

Does he remember? Nature, holy teacher!  
Told, through each living thing, her lofty lore;  
But his voice only answered the beseecher  
That still had begged one benefaction more.

Kind words he spake—kind words, though never  
loving,

That o'er the billowy After, drear and blind,  
Came softly back, like sea-gulls to the roving,  
Telling of all the green land left behind.

On her young forehead, sorrow-sore and throbbing,  
She wears the prickly Calvary crown of fame,  
And praises follow all her steps; but, sobbing,  
Through the blank night she breathes one hoarded  
name,

Thinking how gladly she would yield her title  
To Fame's ambrosial food and brilliant bays,  
If she might feast her soul on one requital,  
The simple therf-bread of his earnest praise.

LEARN the value of a man's words and expressions, and you know him. Each man has a measure of his own for everything. This he offers you, inadvertently, in his words. He who has a superlative for everything wants a measure for the great or small.