

windows do open at top, but I'll look and see, and if they don't I'll get Tom to make them do so directly. Thank you for telling me, Mrs. Butler.'

'Ah! You're one of those that has the sense to take a telling, I see. But,' with a sigh, 'you may talk till you're hoarse to most of 'em, and they pay no attention, or, may be, laugh in your face.'

'Do they, indeed? There is one of the neighbours, Mrs. Jones, has been in twice to see me cook, and seemed interested.'

'Mrs. Jones! Why, she is just one of the most careless about here. I should never have thought of trying to improve her.'

'I don't know that I thought of it either. But she came to see me, and, though I felt put out at first, it seemed like as if I ought not to refuse to show her anything I knew. It may do good, though it don't seem likely.'

'Well,' Mrs. Butler said, 'no doubt you are right. One ought to help one's neighbours, if they will let one, but it seems as if I could not stand that Mrs. Jones coming about my place. The very look of her seems to make it untidy.'

'Yes,' Alice said with a sigh, 'it does indeed. Perhaps she may not visit me again. We talked of nothing but cooking both times she came, or at least I talked and explained, and she rather jeered at it and told me I was spoiling my husband.'

'Don't listen to her or to any that talk like that. Do your work, whatever it be, in the best possible way, and God will bless you and it. And the work of a wife and mother in one very important respect is to spare no pains to feed her husband and children as well as she possibly can out of what lies to her hand, so that their health and strength may be kept up, and they may have *sound minds in sound bodies*, as the old saying puts it. Now I was making this bean soup when you came in. You know about that, I daresay?'

'Yes, I have made it very often. Our master at the Vicarage was particularly partial to it, and so was Miss Celia, his sister. When she was ill once she got very tired of beef-tea, which the doctor ordered

her every day at eleven o'clock, and a lady came to stay who had taken lessons at South Kensington—that is where the School of Cookery is, you know, that sends out instructors and teachers, both ladies and cooks. That lady taught me how to make this soup, which she said was quite as nourishing as beef-tea, and Miss Celia was so pleased to have it instead.'

'I did not know very sick people could take it,' said Mrs. Butler. 'What a good thing it is, for bean soup is a great deal cheaper than beef-tea, even if one puts a little milk in it.'

'The lady said it had the *same* good in it as meat. I don't know exactly what she meant by the *same*, but I suppose it made you feel like you would if you had drunk beef-tea and not miss the meat.'

'Beef-tea itself is what few people know how to make properly,' Mrs. Butler remarked.

'No, indeed,' agreed Alice. 'The doctor who attended Miss Celia said he was terribly put out sometimes when he ordered beef-tea to find his patients had had little better than water given to them. "Better give 'em water right out," he said, "I should know there was no pretence then at any rate."'

'Did he mean poor people who had not enough meat to put in it?'

'Poor and rich both,' he said. 'The grand cooks didn't take the trouble any more than the poor did.'

'And they have none of them got any sense. Don't we call *tea* something that stands to draw, whatever it is made of, and should we not let the meat draw likewise, if meat it is, of which the tea is to be made?'

'Yes, that is it. I used to cut the beef up quite small at night, sprinkle it with salt, and put it in a jar of cold water. The next morning the juice of the meat was all drawn out into the water, which was deep red, while the meat looked white. There are some bad illnesses, typhoid fever and the like, I have heard, in which the patient drinks this right off as it is; but generally you stand the jar, covered down,