

"Ah! there's an old lady for you; I'll never live to half her age; but you, Miss Chip, will be lively and young if you see ninety, or even a hundred; you'll never take time to grow old."

"There, sir; what a smooth tongue you have; as if I'd believe half your nonsense. Is the liver good?"

"Thanks, one would eat anything you offered him, it is sure to be good," said the boarder, who doubtless paid his way in no coin but compliments, and so used plenty of them.

"You'll be in early, and give us a little music, Mr. Goldspray; one of your own songs, now?"

"Well, perhaps."

"Be sure now, and there'll be tripe for supper."

Mr. Goldspray finished his breakfast, Miss Chip went to the door with him, said some words in a low tone, and we made sure she called him "Bobby."

"Dinner and supper are the fullest meals," said Miss Chip.

The Dragon and the Tea-Kettle, being a very ancient building, was but low; its walls were ceiled, not plastered. It had probably been once a post-house, or a house of call, for drovers, farmers, peddlers, then a mere drinking-house, with beds to let, and would, Miss Chip told us, have been torn down, only that she interested the old gentleman who had fallen heir to it, in giving her a twenty years' lease of it for a temperance eating-house.

"The rent is fair and not too heavy, and it suits me. I wanted to be opposite Whaling's. I've a score to settle with him," said Miss Chip, as she led us up-stairs. The house had the full story below, a half story with a sloping roof and dormer windows above, and a long, narrow attic under the pitch of the roof. In this attic were three beds, occupied by Miss Chip's six servant-women.

The floor below had eight bedrooms, devoted to the ten lodgers. As we expected, we found Mr. Goldspray's room the best, having a larger square of carpet, some pictures on the wall, a toilette table in pink cambric, and other accessories, such as a mother might arrange for a daughter. There was also a room for bedding and linen, which, Miss Chip said she hoped to get filled some day.

On the first floor, immediately behind one-half the eating-room, stretched back a long kitchen. It was very clean, not very well lit, and had a huge stove. "Here," said Miss Chip, "I have spent most of my money, because here is where it paid me the best. I could not afford to buy my bread; we bake it ourselves, ten large loaves every day.

The cook was a woman of fifty, tidy, silent, sad, busy. "She can do all a baker's-shop could," said Miss Chip. "She was a baker's wife once."

Immense cauldrons for cooking meat, and a big tin boiler for coffee, were on the stove or range.

Across the hall from the kitchen was a cellar, with wood and coal stored on one side, boxes for vegetables on the other, locked cupboards for tea, coffee, sugar, rice, and other groceries of the kind, and a great table where the meats were laid.

"I give out everything," said Miss Chip, briskly; "I see to every