

with sugar, double refined; jumbles, made to suit either Jackson or Clay; wafers as thin as a blade, and cakes printed with little images of birds, and beasts, and harlequins; sugar-cookies that would melt in the mouth, and loaves of cake stuffed with citron and currants and plums, and trimmed with mignonette and myrtle, were spread out upon a long bench before the admiring eye of Mrs. Judkins. Custards, and tarts, and pies, of various kinds and taring; jellies, comfits and preserves, with liquors and fruit, complete the long array. Mrs. Judkins saw all these envied luxuries, and the very thought that her slender means never did and never would enable her to supply her board with a sixteenth part of what she saw, only instigated her to her projected acts of petty revenge. She took from her pocket several wafers, which she carefully distributed among the fine specimens of the shropshire, that filled two large fruit-dishes upon a bench. The resemblance to real apples was so correct, that it was almost impossible to distinguish them without taking them in hand.

Mrs. Judkins then proceeded to consider the propriety of laying neat pieces of pine shingles between the slices of cheese that were ready prepared for the table. Hardly had she touched them, however, when a heavy footstep on the stairs, and tones of a strong, though not unmusical voice, singing a new version of "Betsy Baker," made her aware that she must conceal herself as quickly as possible. She tossed the scattered shingles into her apron, and sprang into a dark corner and stooped down behind a barrel.— She was a little woman, and could have almost crawled through a knot-hole, if there had been one at hand. Immediately after, the girl whose voice had given warning, entered, her bronzed arms loaded with gooseberry pies. These she carefully deposited on a shelf by the window, and turned to depart, when her eye caught the plate of cheese, which Mrs. Judkins had left disarranged.— She went to the foot of the stairs and cried out—

"Beis, come down here."

"I can't stop," was heard from above.

"Has the cat been down here?"

"No, she's been shut up in the yard all day. Why, what's the matter?"

"Nothing," said the girl, looking round to see if every thing else was in order. "Nothing; only a piece of cheese was off the plate."

Mrs. Judkins still trembled from head to foot; for, if there should be a general search for a rat, there would be a disagreeable sequel to her troubles. She was relieved from her apprehensions by the words of Beis, who screamed—

"Do come up, Sal; the meat is burning up. You knocked the cheese off yourself, you careless plague. Let it alone, and come up; I'm up to my elbows in work."

Sal speedily disappeared, closing the door carefully behind her. The intruder gladly left her hiding-place. "It's all up about the cheese," thought she; "they'll be sure to look at it. It would have been so fine to have heard 'em break their teeth, trying to eat shingles. But here goes for the pies," she added, half aloud, as she rased the covers of two or three successively, and dropped here and there among the spicy gooseberries a small brown bean. She then turned to the liquors. There were several decanters and bottles filled with mead, lemonade, and currant and raspberry wine. The mead she dared not meddle with. The wine, except that which savored too much of elderberries, she passed by. She was aware that the host and hostesses would taste the different drinks,

by way of example to their guests, and they would naturally take the poorest, so she infused into the smallest bottles a little of the dark powder which she had brought for that purpose, and into the lemonade a larger quantity, for she was aware that Mrs. Biggs was so extremely fond of the cooling beverage as to drink three or four glasses, even in genteel company.

Mr. Hope, whom she hated for having once slighted her; Mr. Lane, who, a few years before, cheated her husband out of ten dollars; and Miss Adleton, whom she despised, loved the refreshing sherbet. Mrs. Judkins laughed internally while thinking of her ingenious revenge, and, after finishing her mischievous work, replaced the decanters upon the shelf, and stepped out of the cellar as noiselessly as she came in. She quickly hurried home, and had hardly time to stoff her bonnet and shawl, when a light tap was heard at the door. Mrs. Biggs was there, on her way home from the dressmaker's, and, in a few words, apologized for her remarks of the preceding day, and, in a dignified, yet earnest manner, begged her neighbor to forget the silly circumstance, and come in to dinner. Mrs. Judkins very politely replied that she would, and after a few common-place observations, the visitor departed, rejoicing in her own mind, that Mrs. Judkins should be so deferential and so accommodating.

Toward noon of the eventful day, several of the invited guests, including the Tibbs family, made their appearance at the front door of the merchant's mansion. So very ignorant were they of fashionable customs, that it never occurred to them that the dinner would be later than one, the hour at which the big folks of Mannville usually dined, though the mechanics and farmers, the lower class of people, pertinaciously adhered to the old custom of eating at twelve. Those whom Mrs. Biggs found in her sitting room, on entering it, were of that number of individuals who, like a troop of school-boys going to a muster or a fair, are always to be seen first on the ground, that they may have the exquisite pleasure of seeing and hearing all that is going on. Mrs. Biggs, though she had feared and expected this, was never more vexed in her life; for she well knew that, before half-past three, her visitors, unless they had taken a lunch at home, would be hungry, and out of patience with waiting. She flew, or rather waddled, up and down stairs, bringing chequers, back-gammon and cards, to help them pass away the time.— She was unsuccessful, however, and, in despair, gave up all attempts at rendering them agreeable. No two understood the same game, and no one cared about learning. The old people thought grace, and conversations, and consequences, too simple, and the younger ones thought books and music too dry.— To the anxious eye of Mrs. Biggs all seemed to be discontented and unhappy; and when three o'clock came, and with it some of the fashionables, she had worried herself almost into a fever. Her face, usually pale and dead, was flushed; and glad indeed was she, as Mr. Biggs entered the saloon, as Silvette called it, to leave the room and cool herself with a glass of sherbet and a basin of cold water. When she returned, the most of the company had arrived. The esquires and honorables were there in half an hour, (fashionable folks are always late,) and the lady of the feast, after glancing hastily around the parlor, (which had been thrown open by parting the folding doors that separated it from the sitting-room,) perceived that five or six only of her numerous party were missing. These were Miss Dunnegan, the very

pink of gentility; the two city ladies who had sent in an excuse; Tim Jackson, and the two law students, whom Silvette much wished to see, having a promise from her Ma that, if they should prove to be as rich as they were reported to be, and otherwise a desirable match, one of them should take the place of Mr. Hope, as husband elect.— Mrs. Biggs calculated, of course, that Silvette's charms would be irresistible. While this lady was deliberating with her sister on the propriety of summoning the guests down to the dining-room without further delay, Miss Dunnegan, fortunately, made her appearance, ushered in by an attendant, who mumbled over her name as she stood bowing and curtseying to those whom she knew.— The merchant's lady rose to receive her, while the French lady expressed her thanks that she had not been so shockingly vulgar as to be there too early.

"Really, Mrs. Biggs, I had thought to have waited till seven, and —"

"The customs, my dearest friend, are so different from the high circles where you have shone, that it would seem almost impossible for you to be so decidedly vulgar as to condescend —"

Mrs. Biggs was interrupted in her elegant speech by the ringing of the door bell—a sound for which she was anxiously listening, though without much hope of hearing a noise so remote—and, excusing herself to her dearest friend, she stepped into the entry. Taking upon herself the office of master of ceremonies, she announced Messrs. Dean and Witoraham, of Cambridge, then hastened to find them comfortable seats, near a window. Finding her party complete, she left the room for the purpose of introducing her son and daughter. She met them on the stairs, and, gracefully motioning them into the parlor, pronounced, in her loudest, clearest tones, "my only son" and my "only daughter;" then, suddenly perceiving her mistake, corrected herself, and sunk back into a chair, near her sister, mortified at a blunder so absurd. "Oh! Lizzy, that's always the way I come off, when I try to be any thing ear." she whispered into her sympathizing ear. Poor woman! She was in the constant habit of designating her three children by the expressions, "my only son," "my charming daughter," and "my little darling." Upon the present occasion, however, she had the sense to perceive that it would be very foolish to apply the word charming to the young lady in question, and in her attempt to say eldest, had used the word only.

As Miss Silvette—who paid little attention to the circumstance so embarrassing to her mother—glided along into the midst of the company, followed by the dragon figure of her brother, young Dean turned to his companion and whispered—

"O wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see oursel's as others see us!  
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,  
An' foolish notion!"

"The deuce, Jack! why she's a handsome girl."

"Yes; but, *entre nous*, a little too unnatural—too artificial."

He lowered his voice, for Mrs. Biggs, who had recovered her self-possession, waddled toward them, and formally introduced her daughter; then finding a rocking-chair seated her at a respectful distance, where the young men could steal an occasional glance at her. Silvette, whose complexion was usually so white as to give rise to a vulgar report that she subsisted chiefly on chalk,