

Over the Hospital Teacups.

"I THINK the 'bread-and-butter miss' whom Byron so detested, must have gone out when the 'new woman' came in," said the vivacious Pro. "But all the same, like that German woman, I 'go on cutting bread-and-butter' and worse still, having to eat it. Why can't we depart from the traditional ward-tea and invent something fresh to tempt our jaded appetites?"

"The Radicalism of the age, and the discontent with Things that Are," said the quiet Sister, looking into the kitchen, and finding the Pro. perched on a corner of the sink, while the Staff Nurse was briskly turning out the cupboard to see if she could find three teaspoons for the three cups, and a knife that wasn't broken at the handle.

"When I was a Pro. I used to set the table—but that was in the good old times when the Pro. was less seen and never heard," said the Staff Nurse, giving up her attempt to find a teaspoon, and stirring her tea with a table-spoon.

"But to return to our bread-and-butter," said the "guinea,"—a new importation—"there is a monotony about it—breakfast, tea and supper business. But look here, girls" (she had lately come from Girton, and was "fresh" and rather slangy), "why don't we make some cake?"

"Not in *my* kitchen," said the Wardmaid, a-messin' and a-muddlin' when I've cleared up beautiful."

"No, Bessie. We'll do it on your night off, when *we've* cleaned up beautiful—and I hope you're grateful to us, because the cleaning we give it serves about the whole week," snapped the Pro., with memories of spring-cleaning the kitchen sink, and scouring the milk saucepan.

"I've got 'a scrap of paper' like unto a magic white wand; heigh presto! and the teatable becomes fit for a Sybarite feast. Mother sent it to me, and it's the recipe for five-minute cake," said the "guinea-pig."

"Does it take five minutes to eat, or five to make?" said the practical Staff. "Time is valuable, and temperature-taking is more important than school-girl feasts—and what do you girls know of cooking? Where were you Pro.s brought up, I want to know. There isn't one of you can do a bit of toast when you first come, without blackening it on the bars. And there ought to be a special Sub-Committee of the Hospital appointed to inquire into the saucepans of milk 'boiled over' and burned by the greenhorn Pro."

"Go on Staff—fire away. We're seeing ourselves as others see us. The candour of a Staff

to her Pro. is the most delightful thing in nature," said the Girton "guinea," overturning the linseed-meal tub in her enthusiasm.

"*There's* an object-lesson of the 'prentice hand of the 'Pro.," grumbled the "Staff" her eyes dilating as the guinea seized the hearth-brush wherewith to sweep up the scattered linseed. "For microbes' sake don't put *that* back into the tub. In the name of all that's antiseptic, don't you know what would happen if the kitchen floor sweepings were added to the next Lini Cataplasma ordered by Sir Anti-Germ?"

"Perhaps we may be on the brink of a Great Discovery. I read the other day that a woman died through digging in the garden and getting an earth bacillus under her nail. Who knows but that kitchen-sweepings well macerated with beef-essence might not prove to be the antitoxin of the Direful Earth Bacillus."

"Do stop talking of nasty things at tea-time, and tell us about the cake," said the hungry Pro.

"Take two eggs, well beat; two ounces of pounded sugar; two ounces of flour; two teaspoons of baking powder. Mix the baking powder in the dry flour and sugar; add the eggs and beat together. Spread on a flat tin about a quarter of an inch thick, and bake five minutes. Roll up after spreading with raspberry or strawberry jam."

"And then proceed to eat it. What a pity we mustn't give tea parties," sighed the Pro. "To think of all that sweetness being wasted on *us* only."

"You may ask that old maiden aunt we hear so much about," said the Staff Nurse sarcastically. "I think you need *her* lectures as much as the anatomy ones. And I should like to see her face when she was invited to tea in the kitchen!"

"I suppose *I've* got to wash up the tea-things," enquired the "guinea."

"Of course, that's what you're here for. And don't splash about 'a-messin' and a-muddlin' of Bessie's spotless kitchen."

"England expects every woman to her duty," said the heroic "guinea-pig." "And I have something to buoy me up in the performance of trying to dry the tea-things without a towel. It's my evening off and I'm going to buy those eggs and strawberry jam. Oh! bother, there isn't anything like a substitute for a towel. Shall I dry the cups and saucers in the oven, or may I use some lint?"

A. K.

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