

AT WHAT AGE SHOULD GIRLS MARRY?

The age at which girls should marry is a subject upon which teachers of social economy, philosophers and mothers have discoursed long and learnedly since the time when the first mother began to plan for the future of her offspring.

In the day of our great-grandmothers girls undertook the cares and responsibilities of married life almost before they were out of the nursery. Marriage was then looked upon, especially by the girls themselves, as the chief end and aim of existence. Now, however, in this day of advanced thought, the girl—that is, the sensible girl—usually waits until the right man comes along, even though she be well along in the thirties before this happens. An article on this subject by Sarah Grand appeared in a recent issue of the American "Queen." It is so interesting that I give it here for the benefit of those who find in this subject ground for discussion.

"The age at which girls should marry is one of the questions which people are prone to consider by the light of their own personal experience. Ideas on the subject of the age at which girls should marry vary considerably. When wives and daughters were the goods and chattels and men had the principal say in the matter, little girls were cruelly forced to marry at the beginning instead of the completion of the change from childhood to womanhood. They were made wives, that is to say, while they were still far from being perfectly developed women physically, and were utterly immature mentally, with all their naturally womanly instincts which are the only safe guide in the matter still in abeyance. Fortunately the iniquity and absurdity of this have been thoroughly exposed, and now if parents attempted to pitchfork

their little daughters of from 12 to 16 into matrimony as they did with impunity not so very long ago the whole world would cry shame upon them.

"The whole tendency of the modern education for girls is to prolong their girlhood. The ghastly doctrine that this is necessarily a wicked world, in which misery must be her portion, no longer finds general acceptance. It is a favourite axiom with us nowadays that every age has its pleasure, or should have, with a fair chance—childhood, girlhood, womanhood—and to get the full value out of each. Our intelligent girls begin to have ideas of their own on the subject of the disposition of their lives, prompted, no doubt, by mothers of a new order. They do not care to be put off with half an education and hustled into matrimony while they still should be doing their school course. They like to enjoy as they go along. They combine recreation with study, and delight in everything, and it is not until they have had the foundation of a good general education that they begin to be serious on the subject of matrimony. Serious is quite the right word for their attitude. The meaning of life has begun to interest them, and they pause to inquire. What they demand in a husband is comrade, friend, and lover—a superior in attainments and talents, by all means, if possible—but one who must appreciate her all round for what she is.

"She decidedly objects to marrying an extinguisher, who would tell her that her proper place is in the nursery and kitchen, with an inflection on the words that tell her that the nursery and the kitchen are more worthily regulated without mental advancement, and the care of them necessarily precludes any further degree of cultivation. To such a suitor the modern girl replies, "Not for me, my good man, I am a versatile being, in whom are infinite possibilities, and I mean to make the most of myself.

By so doing I make the most of you, too, and of every one with whom I come in contact." Thinking thus for herself, the modern girl grows gradually more self-respecting. She recognises the full idiocy of being bought up as wares for the market, to be disposed of to a suitor, and sees no sense in it, either. Let the suitor come and find her. She knows that a woman's life is no longer considered a failure simply because she does not marry, and this makes her not only independent, but somewhat defiant, the position being still sufficiently new to be wondered at and not wholly approved.

"The pendulum, however, swings towards approval. We have considerably less jeering at old maids than formerly, and we frequently nowadays hear of single women whose independence and fuller interests make them the envy of many a married sister, whose health has suffered and liberty been circumscribed by what are too often the thankless cares of married life."

THE HEALTHFUL ONION.

If one will eat a bit of cheese, a pinch of ground coffee, or a crust of sweet bread, directly after eating onions, they may not be afraid that their breath will be offensive. Onions have medicinal as well as epicurean qualities. A cold, in its first stages, may often be broken up by a bowlful of hot onion bisque. Boil a pint bowlful of onions in water, changing the water three times. This robs them of much of their odour, and renders them safe for the most delicate stomach. When the onions are tender the water should be nearly all absorbed; add three cups of hot milk, thicken slightly with a teaspoonful of corn starch wet with cold milk, boil three minutes, season with cayenne pepper, and pass through a sieve, pressing all the pulp of the onion through. Serve while very hot.

For a brown soup, fry the onions with a pinch of sugar, dredge with a tablespoonful of flour, cover with a half-pint of water and cook till tender; add a quart of hot broth and press through a coarse sieve.

In the charming French village of Pierrefonds, at a quaint inn on the border of the lake, an inn famous for its omelets and soups, you are served with a delicious onion soup, made as follows: Pare, parboil three times, and cook till tender, a quart of small, white button onions; add a pint of green peas, a quart of chicken broth, and seasonings, and pour into the tureen over inch squares of bread, buttered and toasted in the hot oven.

Another French onion soup calls for four dozen very small white onions; fry these a light brown in a little butter, dredge with two tablespoonfuls of flour, add a quart of cold water and two quarts of veal broth, and simmer till the onions are tender. Pour into a tureen over sippets of dried bread well sprinkled with Gruyere cheese.

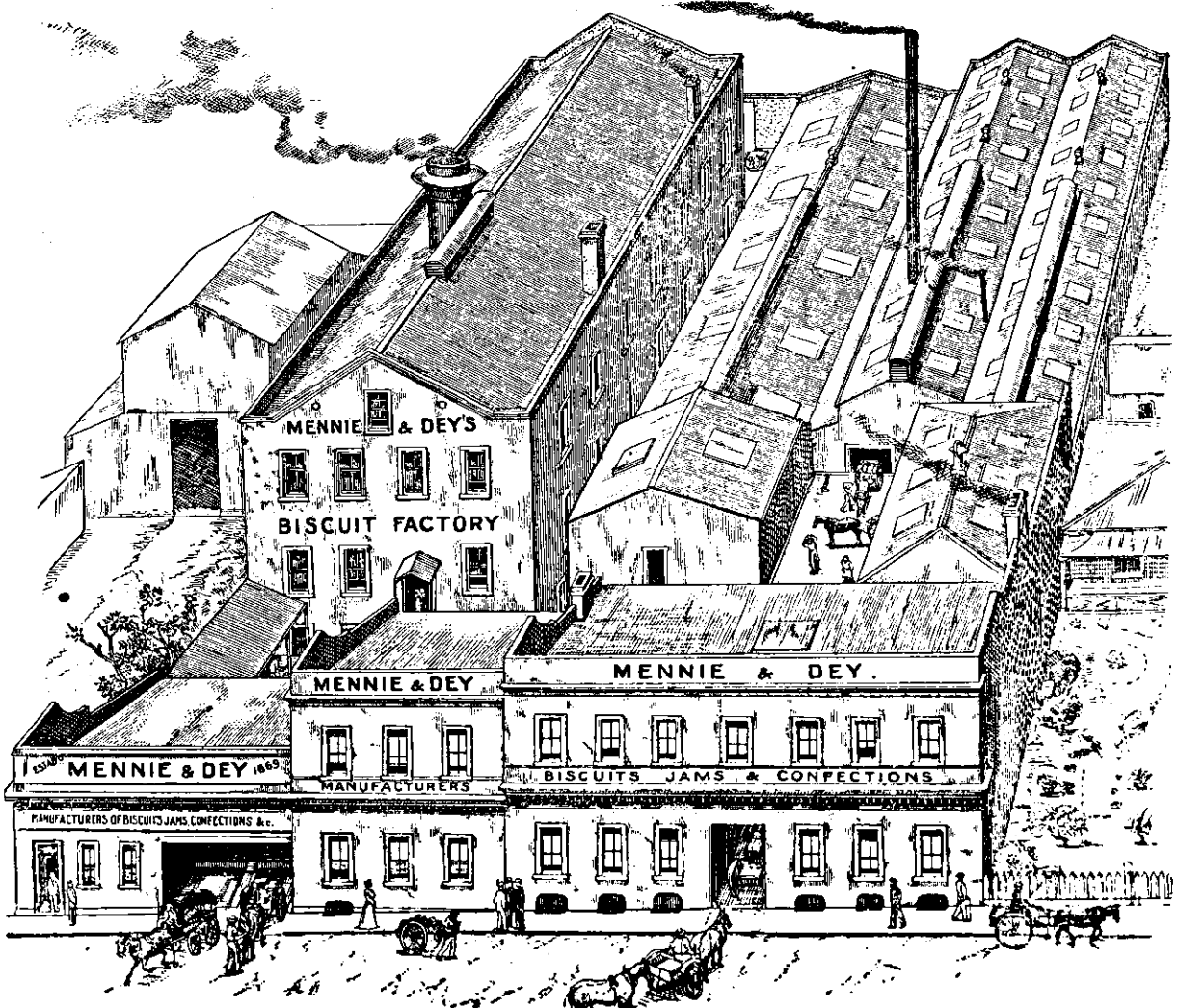
Another onion soup is made by frying four large sliced onions, using beef broth instead of veal, and parmesan cheese for the toast.

An onion soup with eggs is made by frying a pint of sliced onions, adding a quart each of water and broth, and simmering till tender, when four egg yolks, beaten with a little milk, are stirred in. Stir constantly, until smoking hot, and serve with croutons, passed in a separate dish.

Oysters with onions is a noted Philadelphia dish. Remove the layers from four large onions until you have bulbs no larger than English walnuts; cut these in small dice and fry in butter the size of an egg, till yellow. The butter must not be allowed to scorch or burn. Now add fifty oysters with their juice, salt, pepper, cayenne, and a slight pinch of allspice, and as soon as the oysters begin to ruffle their beards, finish with two ounces of butter and a tablespoonful of minced parsley.

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