How Five Bachelors Kept House

Concluded from page six.

"So is the meat!"

"The asparagus is burnt fast to the pan."

"The potatoes?"

"Broken all to pieces, and floating about in the water,"

"These peas are all mushy Minnie!"

"Punctuality is the soul of dinner," cried Joe, from the parlor; "it's ten minutes past three."

"Go set the table," growled George.

It was *unique* in its arrangements, that table, as the gentlemen sat down to dinner. The meat figured on an enormous dish, with an ocean of white china surrounding its shrunken proportions. The potatoes, in little lumps, unskinned, were piled in a fruit dish; the green mass which Minnie had with infinite difficulty fished from the big meat pot, were served on a red earthen plate, and the stalks of asparagus were in the salad bowl. The table-cloth was awry, and the napkins were omitted altogether.

"Where's the gravy?" was Joe's first question.

"There wasn't any."

"The meat's burned," cried one voice.

"It is stone cold," said another.

"What's this?" said a third, digging into the pile of peas.

"Faugh!" followed a daring attempt to eat some asparagus.

"Never mind," said Joe. "Rome was not built in a day. Give us some bread and butter, and pickles George."

"No, not pickles, preserves," said Charley.

"Susy locked both up," cried Harry, laughing. "She declared a woman put them up, and that if we wanted them we must prepare them for ourselves."

Minnie produced the strawberries, and some sugar, and the gentlemen declared they had dined superbly.

"You fellows clear away," said Minnie; "we're tired."

"You wash up, don't you?" queried Joe.

"Yes."

"Where's the water?"

"In the hydrant."

"What do you wash 'em in?"

"Pan, I guess."

Away went Joe on a voyage of investigation, and returned soon with a tin dish full of cold water. The "leavings" as Harry termed the remains of the sumptuous dinner, were thrown from the window into Susy's flower-beds, and armed with a bar of soap and a fine damask table napkin, Joe began to "wash up."

"How the grease sticks!"

Perspiration streaming from every pore he rubbed manfully at the greasy plates and dishes, and if the water was cold, he certainly was not.

"I've wet my shirt-front.!" Splash No. 1.

"Good for white pants!" Splash No. 2.

"*That* went in my eyes; somebody wipe them; my hands are wet. Don't throw them out, Hal!"

"Come, some of you, wipe up!"

The table was cleared at last. Five damp, greasy napkins thrown into the corner of the room, testified that the dishes were washed and wiped. The water followed the "leavings," and the quintet sat down to "cool off." (Do cigars assist that operation?"

Spite of the supurb dinner, five "inner men" called, like Oliver Twist, for more. at about seven o'clock.

"What's for tea?" Four voices echoed

"Let's have coffee; I can make coffee." said George.

"And a steak; I can cook it," said Joe.

"There's bread and butter, said Harry.

George went for the steak; Minnie undertook to make the fire, Harry cut the bread; Joe set the sable; while Charley "cleared the kitchen" by sweeping the pots and pans used at dinner into a closet, washing being omitted in the operation.

Minnie, blowing and puffing making the fire was greated with—

"How it smokes!"

"What ails the fire Min?"

Harry discovered the cause, pulled out the damper, and a merry blaze repaid him. The coffee boiled, the steak sputtered in the pan, and the men panted, perspired, whistled, and used improper words over the heat.

It was a good supper, and, piling up the dishes which it was "too hot to wash" the five bachelors returned to the parlor. It was involuntary, but each pair of eyes rested for a moment on the seat Susy was wont to occupy. A little music, more talk, and still more smoking filled the time till midnight, when each one yawned himself off to bed. Harry, who was always the one to "lock up," stayed the latest. The kitchen looked dreary; no fire, greasy frying-pan placed as a helmet over the coffee-pot, bits of bread lying about loose, dirty pots here, and dirty dishes there. The parlor was in disorder; chairs stood in forlorn confusion; smoke hung over all. The dining-room, with its piles of dirty cups, saucers, and plates, its unswept floor, greasy napkins, and smoky atmosphere, wasworst of all, and Harry inwardly admitted that "somehow, the house *didn't* look as usual."

There was fun the next morning making up beds. The milkman and baker had vainly knocked for admittance, and finally "retired in disgust," and the bachelors breakfasted off the stale bread left from the night's feast, and coffee black and sweet.

"Every man clear up his own room." The order given, each started to obey. Joe pulled off all the clothes from his bed, and, having laid the bolster and pillow on proceeded to put on a blanket, next a spread, and finally the two sheets, finishing off the whole by putting himself on top to rest from his toils. Minnie, after pulling all the clothes off one side in trying to tuck them in on the other, and then correcting the mistake by tucking them in on the other side and pulling them off the first, put his bolster on over the pillow, and concluded it "would do." Charley merely smoothed his down, sagely observing that if he pulled the things off, he never *could* put them on again. Harry and George, who shared the same room, having followed Charley's plan, put on an extra touch by sweeping their room and leaving the pile of dust in the entry. "Excelsior!"

Three day's experience convinced them that bachelors' cookery was slow starvation. Steaks and coffee for breakfast were followed by steaks and coffee for dinner, and both for tea. Charley suggested that they should have their meals sent from a restaurant.

"All *men* cooks, so we stick to the contract," was his final observation.

The motion was seconded, and carried by unanimous vote.

By this time every dish, plate, napkin, pot, and pan in the house was dirty, and, joyfully concluding that they wouldn't want them any more, the gentlemen piled them up in the kitchen sink, on the floor and tables, and left them.

"Harry"—it was George's voice—"I haven't got a clean shirt."

"Nor I."

"Nor I."

"Nor I."

"I've got *one*."

"Nor a hankerchief, nor a collar, nor a pair of stockings, nor—"

"Stop! Two weeks since Susy went, and no washing-day."

There was a dead silence.

"Who knows how to wash?'

No answer.

"I—I've seen it done," said one faint voice, owned by Charley. "You soap the things and rub 'em on a board."

"Can anybody iron?"

They all thought they could manage *that* part.

The kitchen was open for the first time for ten days. One cry burst from five lips. Tables, chairs, floor, dresser, sink, were one mass of roaches, collected by the piles of greasy dishes. They overran every place.

"Shut the door. Now for it," cried George, and dashed at the invaders. Bedlam seemed to have broken loose. In reaching after one of the "critters," Charley upset the table. Crash went the crokery. Screams of laughter, cries of disgust, blows thick as hail, comments on on the heat, jokes, warnings flew about for an hour, and then the panting party ceased from their labors, and viewed sternly the 'cold corpuses" of their foes. A scream from Minnie—

"There's one down my back!"

George cried—"Joe, there's one on your hair!"

"Don't metnion it. Look at the fellow on your shirt sleeve."

A general stampede for the bath-room followed.

"Let's wash up here."

No sooner said than done. The soiled clothes were collected from all the rooms, and the boards and soap brought up from the kitchen.

Joe and Harry washed, blistering hands and streaming foreheads testifying to their efforts. Cold water required a great deal of rubbiug, and somehow the things had a yellow tinge after all, as George remarked as he wrung them out. Minnie, objecting to going into the yard, hung them over the chairs in the dining-room and the banisters in the entry as fast as George and Charley wrung them out. Dinner time came, and found them still at work. Dinner eaten, the dishes carried off by the waiter from the restaurant, they changed places, and the washers wrung and hung up, while the others washed.

Six o'clock saw the last shirt hanging in damp limpness over the parlor chandelier; the handkerchiefs waved from the mantel piece, and the stockings dangled from the bars of the Canterbury.

"They always iron the next day, so they can dry in the night," said Harry.

After another slaughter of roaches in the morning, the fire was lighted, the irons put on, and the clothes collected, rough dry, for the final touches. Every man had visions of smooth, clean linen to repay him for his unaccustomed efforts. Such is hope!

Charley took the first step. Planting his iron on the front of a shirt, a smell greeted his nostrils, and he lifted it again to behold a large brown mark, the precise shape of the flatiron, burned on the bosom of his "go-to-meeting" shirt. Minnie's iron, being almost cold, was travelling briskly up and down his shirt, but producing no visible effect.

It was humiliating, but true, that Joe took an order to a gentlemen's furnishing store that morning for a supply of linen, and the "washed clothes" were consigned to the "pot closet" to await Susy's return.

Susy's return! How can I describe it! Every man on that day found he had an imperative engagement abroad, and the little maiden found an empty house. She went first to the parlor. Dust lay in piles. One curtain was torn from the cornice, and lay in limp folds against the window. Cigars lay about loose, some whole, some half smoked, some reduced to a mere stump; spittoons were in every corner; the chairs were "promiscuously deranged;" on the centre-table three bottles, two demijohns, a pack of cards, and about two dozen tumblers replaced her pretty book. The piano bore two pairs of boots, deposited there when the owners were too tired to go up stairs, and forgotten afterwards; the Canterbury had a dish of chicken salad reposing peacefully upon it; one ottoman supported a hat and cane, another a coat; every chair carried some relic of the departed guests, here a handkerchief, there a cigar-case, on one a pocket comb, on another a toothpick. Susy was dismayed; but, like a brave little woman, determined to face all "the muss" at once. The kitchen came next. As we have described it on the eventful ironing day, so it remained, roaches inclusive, meandering everywhere. The library was next in order, and it was the counterpart of the parlor, only more so; dining-room ditto; bedrooms to match.

Susy looked at the washboards in the bath-room, the market-basket in the library, the parlor chairs in the kitchen ("it was nearest," Joe said when he brought them out); the frying pan in the best room (Charley broke his basin), the bread pan in the spare room (for dirty water, Joe said); the dish-cloths in the bedrooms (towels all dirty). She contemplated the floors, unswept for a month; marked the dust, the accumulation of a similar time; and then went to her own room, the only orderly because undisturbed place in the house. A little note lay on her table:—

We own beat! It takes a woman! We beg pardon! We'll never do so no more! Clear up, and invite us to dinner.

FIVE REPENTANT BACHELORS.

W. C. T. U.

"For God and Home and Native Land."

The Temperance society ought to be an agency of inter-denominational Christian work, bringing all classes and creeds together in united effort for the advancement of one holy common cause. The desirability of this united, special work is the only good reason for the existance of any kind of Temperance society. If we are to have denominationalism among our workers we might as well make Temperance exclusively a part of Church work, and be satisfied with existing sectionalisms without multiplying them. The Temperance society of any locality ought to be larger, stronger, broader than any Church in that locality. It should not be divided into many sections. It should know no rivalries, except rivalry among its members in work for the promotion of its objects. If we had in this country one great, strong Temperance organization, taking in all our workers, developing among these workers confidence in each other, excluding all unworthy jealousies, so simple in its machinery that none would be repelled by cumbersome ritualism, and well organized and pushed, it would be a power for good such as broken-up antagonistic, rival societies can never become.

The Temperance society should then be a bond of Christian union, an educating force, an influential, respected, effective agency for good. It should include in its membership every class in the community, and the members of every religious denomination. Is there no one wise enough and bold enough to devise and project some judicious scheme for the attainment of this greatly-to-be-desired end?

It is yet encouraging to know and note that the evil enemy (the liquor-traffic) owns no invulnerable shield of faith, posseses no rampart more impregnable than vile human license law, which in a christian country, the voting armies of the church militant can scale and capture when ever they so will; and with concentrated forces, and fiery-dart ballots, rush to the triumph. Mere shield-practise must not continue to be accounted the whole "good fight" securing conquest:—

'Gainst cruel arts, and deadly darts,
Piercing fond hearts,—
Killing, decoying;
Fire from above, to swiftly move—
Bright active love
Sternly employing.
War to the knife, and holy strife,
In saving life—
Evil destoying.

History of a Song.

Mr. Bennett a music writer, and Mr. Webster were intimate friends. The latter was subject to melancholy. He came in to where his friend Bennett was at business one day while in a depression of spirits. "What's the matter now?" said Bennett, noticing his sad countenance.

"No matter," said Webster, 'it will be right by-and-by,"

"Yes; that sweet by-and-by,' said Bennett. "Would not that sentiment make a good hymn, Webster?"

"Maybe it would," replied Webster, indifferently.

Turning to his desk, Bennet wrote the three verses of the hymn, and handed them to Webster. When he read them, his whole demeanor changed. Stepping to his desk, he began to write the notes. Having finished them he requested his violin, and played the melody. In a few minutes he had the four parts of the chorus jotted down. It was not over thirty minutes from the first thought of the hymn before the two friends and two others who had come in the meantime, were singing all the parts together. A bystander who had been attracted by the music, and had listened in tearful silence, remarked, "That hymn is immortal." It is now sung in every land under the sun.

Limitations of man's power. Baker—What is the price oi flour to-day?

Assistant—Someweat higher.

"Well, go down and tell the foreman to chuck in more yeast. Thank Heaven, old Hutch can't get up a corner on wind." —*Philadelphia Record.*

His Choice—Proud father (showing off his boy before company)—My sou, which would you rather be, Shakespeare or Edison.

Little son (after meditation)—I'd rather be Edison.

"Yes why?"

"Cause he ain't dead."

A love-sick young man in Philadelphia sent his sweetheart a pair of stockings with her initials in monogram form worked on the instep, and now every society lady in the city of Brother Love is having the same operation performed on her hose. The craze is likely to spread to other cities but inasmuch as the monograms attract attention to the feet when low shoes are worn it is thought that the style will never be in vogue in St. Louis.

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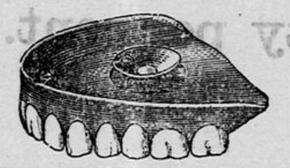

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