

T. S. ARTHUR



***TRIALS AND
CONFESSIONS
OF A HOUSEKEEPER***

T. S. Arthur

Trials and Confessions of a Housekeeper

EAN 8596547353683

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.

CONFESSIONS OF A HOUSEKEEPER.

CHAPTER I.

MY SPECULATION IN CHINA WARE.

CHAPTER II.

SOMETHING ABOUT COOKS.

CHAPTER III.

LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT.

CHAPTER IV.

CHEAP FURNITURE.

CHAPTER V.

IS IT ECONOMY?

CHAPTER VI.

LIVING AT A CONVENIENT DISTANCE.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PICKED-UP DINNER.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHO IS KRISS KRINGLE?

CHAPTER IX.

NOT AT HOME.

CHAPTER X.

SHIRT BUTTONS.

CHAPTER XI.

PAVEMENT WASHING IN WINTER.

CHAPTER XII.

REGARD FOR THE POOR.

CHAPTER XIII.
SOMETHING MORE ABOUT COOKS.
CHAPTER XIV.
NOT A RAG ON THEIR BACKS.
CHAPTER XV.
CURIOSITY.
CHAPTER XVI.
HOUSE-CLEANING.
CHAPTER XVII.
BROILING A LOBSTER.
CHAPTER XVIII.
THE STRAWBERRY-WOMAN.
CHAPTER XIX.
LOTS OF THINGS.
CHAPTER XX.
A CURE FOR LOW SPIRITS.
CHAPTER XXI.
A BARGAIN.
CHAPTER XXII.
A PEEVISH DAY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.
CHAPTER XXIII.
WORDS.
CHAPTER XXIV.
MAY BE SO.
CHAPTER XXV.
"THE POOR CHILD DIED."
CHAPTER XXVI.
THE RIVAL BONNETS.
CHAPTER XXVII.

MY WASHERWOMAN.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MY BORROWING NEIGHBOR.

CHAPTER XXIX.

EXPERIENCE IN TAKING BOARDERS.

CHAPTER XXX.

TWO WAYS WITH DOMESTICS.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A MOTHER'S DUTY.

PHILADELPHIA: 1859.

INTRODUCTION.

[Table of Contents](#)

UNDER the title of Confessions of a Housekeeper, a portion of the matter in this volume has already appeared. The book is now considerably increased, and the range of subjects made to embrace the grave and instructive, as well as the agreeable and amusing. The author is sure, that no lady reader, familiar with the trials, perplexities, and incidents of housekeeping, can fail to recognize many of her own experiences, for nearly every picture that is here presented, has been drawn from life.

CONFESSIONS OF A HOUSEKEEPER.

[Table of Contents](#)

CHAPTER I.

MY SPECULATION IN CHINA WARE.

[Table of Contents](#)

THIS happened a very few years after, my marriage, and is one of those feeling incidents in life that we never forget. My husband's income was moderate, and we found it necessary to deny ourselves many little articles of ornament and luxury, to the end that there might be no serious abatement in the comforts of life. In furnishing our house, we had been obliged to content ourselves mainly with things useful. Our parlor could boast of nine cane-seat chairs; one high-backed cane-seat rocking chair; a pair of card tables; a pair of ottomans, the covers for which I had worked in worsted; and a few illustrated books upon the card tables. There were no pictures on the walls, nor ornaments on the mantle pieces.

For a time after my marriage with Mr. Smith, I did not think much about the plainness of our style of living; but after a while, contrasts between my own parlors and those of one or two friends, would take place in my mind; and I often found myself wishing that we could afford a set of candelabras, a pair of china vases, or some choice pieces of Bohemian glass. In fact, I set my heart on something of the kind, though I concealed the weakness from my husband.

Time stole on, and one increase after another to our family, kept up the necessity for careful expenditure, and at no time was there money enough in the purse to justify any outlay beyond what the wants of the household required. So

my mantel pieces remained bare as at first, notwithstanding the desire for something to put on them still remained active.

One afternoon, as I sat at work renovating an old garment, with the hope of making it look almost "as good as new," my cook entered and said—

"There's a man down stairs, Mrs. Smith, with a basket full of the most beautiful glass dishes and china ornaments that you ever did see; and he says that he will sell them for old clothes."

"For old clothes?" I responded, but half comprehending what the girl meant.

"Yes ma'am. If you have got an old coat, or a pair of pantaloons that ain't good for nothing, he will buy them, and pay you in glass or china."

I paused for a moment to think, and then said—

"Tell him to come up into the dining room, Mary."

The girl went down stairs, and soon came back in company with a dull looking old man, who carried on his arm a large basket, in which were temptingly displayed rich china vases, motto and presentation cups and saucers, glass dishes, and sundry other articles of a like character.

"Any old coats, pantaloons or vests?" said the man, as he placed, carefully, his basket on the floor. "Don't want any money. See here! Beautiful!"

And as he spoke, he took up a pair of vases and held them before my eyes. They were just the thing for my mantle pieces, and I coveted them on the instant.

"What's the price?" I enquired.

"Got an old coat?" was my only answer. "Don't want money."

My husband was the possessor of a coat that had seen pretty good service, and which he had not worn for some time. In fact, it had been voted superannuated, and consigned to a dark corner of the clothes-press. The thought of this garment came very naturally into my mind, and with the thought a pleasant exhilaration of feeling, for I already saw the vases on my mantles.

"Any old clothes?" repeated the vender of china ware.

Without a word I left the dining room, and hurried up to where our large clothes-press stood, in the passage above. From this I soon abstracted the coat, and then descended with quick steps.

The dull face of the old man brightened, the moment his eyes fell upon the garment. He seized it with a nervous movement, and seemed to take in its condition at a single glance. Apparently, the examination was not very satisfactory, for he let the coat fall, in a careless manner, across a chair, giving his shoulders a shrug, while a slight expression of contempt flitted over his countenance.

"Not much good!" fell from his lips after a pause.

By this time I had turned to his basket, and was examining, more carefully, its contents. Most prominent stood the china vases, upon which my heart was already set; and instinctively I took them in my hands.

"What will you give for the coat?" said I.

The old man gave his head a significant shake, as he replied—

"No very good."

"It's worth something," I returned. "Many a poor person would be glad to buy it for a small sum of money. It's only a little defaced. I'm sure its richly worth four or five dollars."

"Pho! Pho! Five dollar! Pho!" The old man seemed angry at my most unreasonable assumption.

"Well, well," said I, beginning to feel a little impatient, "just tell me what you will give for it."

"What you want?" he enquired, his manner visibly changing.

"I want these vases, at any rate," I answered, holding up the articles I had mentioned.

"Worth four, five dollar!" ejaculated the dealer, in well feigned surprise.

I shook my head. He shrugged his shoulders, and commenced searching his basket, from which, after a while, he took a china cup and saucer, on which I read, in gilt letters, "For my Husband."

"Give you this," said he.

It was now my time to show surprise; I answered—

"Indeed you won't, then. But I'll tell you what I will do; I'll let you have the coat for the vases and this cup and saucer."

To this proposition the man gave an instant and decided negative, and seemed half offended by my offer. He threw the coat, which was in his hands again, upon a chair, and stooping down took his basket on his arm. I was deceived by his manner, and began to think that I had proposed rather a hard bargain; so I said—

"You can have the coat for the vases, if you care to make the exchange; if not, why no harm is done."

For the space of nearly half a minute, the old man stood in apparent irresolution, then he replied, as he set down his basket and took out the pair of vases—

"I don't care; you shall have them."

I took the vases and he took the coat. A moment or two more, and I heard the street door close behind the dealer in china ware, with a very decided jar.

"Ain't they beautiful, aunty?" said I to my old aunt Rachel, who had been a silent witness of the scene I have just described; and I held the pair of vases before her eyes.

"Why yes, they are rather pretty, Jane," replied aunt Rachel, a little coldly, as I thought.

"Rather pretty! They are beautiful," said I warmly. "See there!" And I placed them on the dining room mantle. "How much they will improve our parlors."

"Not half so much as that old coat you as good as gave away would have improved the feelings as well as the looks of poor Mr. Bryan, who lives across the street," was the unexpected and rebuking answer of aunt Rachel.

The words smote on my feelings. Mr. Bryan was a poor, but honest and industrious young man, upon whose daily labor a wife and five children were dependent. He went meanly clad, because he could not earn enough, in addition to what his family required, to buy comfortable clothing for himself. I saw, in an instant, what the true disposition of the coat should have been. The china vases would a little improve the appearance of my parlors; but how many pleasant feelings and hours and days of comfort, would the old coat have given to Mr. Bryan. I said no more. Aunt Rachel went on with her knitting, and I took the vases down

into the parlors and placed them on the mantles—one in each room. But they looked small, and seemed quite solitary. So I put one on each end of a single mantle. This did better; still, I was disappointed in the appearance they made, and a good deal displeased with myself. I felt that I had made a bad bargain—that is, one from which I should obtain no real pleasure.

For a while I sat opposite the mantle-piece, looking at the vases—but, not admiringly; then I left the parlor, and went about my household duties, but, with a pressure on my feelings. I was far, very far from being satisfied with myself.

About an hour afterwards my husband came home. I did not take him into the parlor to show him my little purchase, for, I had no heart to do so. As we sat at the tea table, he said, addressing me—

"You know that old coat of mine that is up in the clothes-press?"

I nodded my head in assent, but did not venture to speak.

"I've been thinking to-day," added my husband, "that it would be just the thing for Mr. Bryan, who lives opposite. It's rather too much worn for me, but will look quite decent on him, compared with the clothes he now wears. Don't you think it is a good thought? We will, of course, make him a present of the garment."

My eyes drooped to the table, and I felt the blood crimsoning my face. For a moment or two I remained silent, and then answered—

"I'm sorry you didn't think of this before; but it's too late now."

"Too late! Why?" enquired my husband.

"I sold the coat this afternoon," was my reply.

"Sold it!"

"Yes. A man came along with some handsome china ornaments, and I sold the coat for a pair of vases to set on our mantle-pieces."

There was an instant change in my husband's face. He disapproved of what I had done; and, though he uttered no condemning words, his countenance gave too clear an index to his feelings.

"The coat would have done poor Mr. Bryan a great deal more good than the vases will ever do Jane," spoke up aunt Rachel, with less regard for my feelings than was manifested by my husband. "I don't think," she continued, "that any body ought to sell old clothes for either money or nicknackeries to put on the mantle-pieces. Let them be given to the poor, and they'll do some good. There isn't a housekeeper in moderate circumstances that couldn't almost clothe some poor family, by giving away the cast off garments that every year accumulate on her hands."

How sharply did I feel the rebuking spirit in these words of aunt Rachel.

"What's done can't be helped now," said my husband kindly, interrupting, as he spoke, some further remarks that aunt Rachel evidently intended to make. "We must do better next time."

"I must do better," was my quick remark, made in penitent tones. "I was very thoughtless."

To relieve my mind, my husband changed the subject of conversation; but, nothing could relieve the pressure upon

my feelings, caused by a too acute consciousness of having done what in the eyes of my husband, looked like a want of true humanity. I could not bear that he should think me void of sympathy for others.

The day following was Sunday. Church time came, and Mr. Smith went to the clothes press for his best coat, which had been worn only for a few months.

"Jane!" he called to me suddenly, in a voice that made me start. "Jane! Where is my best coat?"

"In the clothes press," I replied, coming out from our chamber into the passage, as I spoke.

"No; it's not here," was his reply. "And, I shouldn't wonder if you had sold my good coat for those china vases."

"No such thing!" I quickly answered, though my heart gave a great bound at his words; and then sunk in my bosom with a low tremor of alarm.

"Here's my old coat," said Mr. Smith, holding up that defaced garment—"Where is the new one?"

"The old clothes man has it, as sure as I live!" burst from my lips.

"Well, that is a nice piece of work, I must confess!"

This was all my husband said; but it was enough to smite me almost to the floor. Covering my face with my hands, I dropped into a chair, and sat and sobbed for a while bitterly.

"It can't be helped now, Jane," said Mr. Smith, at length, in a soothing voice. "The coat is gone, and there is no help for it. You will know better next time."

That was all he said to me then, and I was grateful for his kind consideration. He saw that I was punished quite

severely enough, and did not add to my pain by rebuke or complaint.

An attempt was made during the week to recover the coat, valued at some twenty dollars; but the china ornament-man was not to be found—he had made too good a bargain to run the risk of having it broken.

About an hour after the discovery of the loss of my husband's coat, I went quietly down into the parlor, and taking from the mantle-piece the china vases, worth, probably, a dollar for the pair, concealed them under my apron, lest any one should see what I had; and, returning up stairs, hid them away in a dark closet, where they have ever since remained.

The reader may be sure that I never forgot this, my first and last speculation in china ware.

CHAPTER II.

SOMETHING ABOUT COOKS.

[Table of Contents](#)

WAS there ever a good cook who hadn't some prominent fault that completely overshadowed her professional good qualities? If my experience is to answer the question, the reply will be—*no*.

I had been married several years before I was fortunate enough to obtain a cook that could be trusted to boil a potato, or broil a steak. I felt as if completely made up when Margaret served her first dinner. The roast was just right, and all the vegetables were cooked and flavored as well as if I had done it myself—in fact, a little better. My husband eat with a relish not often exhibited, and praised almost every thing on the table.

For a week, one good meal followed another in daily succession. We had hot cakes, light and fine-flavored, every morning for breakfast, with coffee not to be beaten—and chops or steaks steaming from the gridiron, that would have gladdened the heart of an epicure. Dinner was served, during the time, with a punctuality that was rarely a minute at fault, while every article of food brought upon the table, fairly tempted the appetite. Light rolls, rice cakes, or "Sally Luns," made without suggestion on my part usually met us at tea time. In fact, the very delight of Margaret's life appeared to be in cooking. She was born for a cook.

Moreover, strange to say, Margaret was good-tempered, a most remarkable thing in a good cook; and more

remarkable still, was tidy in her person, and cleanly in her work.

"She is a treasure," said I to my husband, one day, as we passed from the dining-room, after having partaken of one of her excellent dinners.

"She's too good," replied Mr. Smith—"too good to last. There must be some bad fault about her—good cooks always have bad faults—and I am looking for its appearance every day."

"Don't talk so, Mr. Smith. There is no reason in the world why a good cook should not be as faultless as any one else."

Even while I said this, certain misgivings intruded themselves. My husband went to his store soon after.

About three o'clock Margaret presented herself, all dressed to go out, and said that she was going to see her sister, but would be back in time to get tea.

She came back, as she promised, but, alas for my good cook! The fault appeared. She was so much intoxicated that, in attempting to lift the kettle from the fire, she let it fall, and came near scalding herself dreadfully. Oh, dear! I shall never forget the sad disappointment of that hour. How the pleasant images of good dinners and comfortable breakfasts and suppers faded from my vision. The old trouble was to come back again, for the faultless cook had manifested a fault that vitiated, for us, all her good qualities.

On the next day, I told Margaret that we must part; but she begged so hard to be kept in her place, and promised good behaviour in future so earnestly, that I was prevailed on to try her again. It was of no use, however—in less than a week she was drunk again, and I had to let her go.

After that, for some months, we had burnt steaks, waxy potatoes, and dried roast beef to our hearts' content; while such luxuries as muffins, hot cakes, and the like were not to be seen on our uninviting table.

My next good cook had such a violent temper, that I was actually afraid to show my face in the kitchen. I bore with her until patience was no longer a virtue, and then she went.

Biddy, who took charge of my "kitchen cabinet," a year or so afterwards, proved herself a culinary artist of no ordinary merit. But, alas! Biddy "kept a room;" and so many strange disappearances of bars of soap, bowls of sugar, prints of butter, etc., took place, that I was forced to the unwilling conclusion that her room was simply a store room for the surplussage of mine. Some pretty strong evidence on this point coming to my mind, I dismissed Biddy, who was particularly forward in declaring her honesty, although I had never accused her of being wanting in that inestimable virtue.

Some of my experiences in cooks have been musing enough. Or, I should rather say, are musing enough to *think* about: they were rather annoying at the time of their occurrence. One of these experiences I will relate. I had obtained a "treasure" in a new cook, who was not only good tempered and cleanly, but understood her business reasonably well. Kitty was a little different from former incumbents of her office in this, that she took an interest in reading, and generally dipped into the morning paper before it found its way up stairs. To this, of course, I had no objection, but was rather pleased to see it. Time, however,

which proves all things, showed my cook to be rather too literary in her inclinations. I often found her reading, when it was but reasonable for me to expect that she would be working; and overdone or burnt dishes occasionally marked the degree in which her mind was absorbed in her literary pleasures, which I discovered in time, were not of the highest order-such books as the "Mysteries of Paris" furnishing the aliment that fed her imagination.

"Jane," said my husband to me one morning, as he was about leaving the house, "I believe I must invite my old friend Green to dine with me to-day. He will leave the city to-morrow, and I may not have the pleasure of a social hour with him again for years. Besides, I want to introduce him to you. We were intimate as young men, and much attached to each other. I would like you to know him."

"Invite him, by all means," was my reply.

"I will send home a turkey from market," said Mr. Smith, as he stood holding on to the open door. "Tell Kitty to cook it just right. Mrs. Green, I am told, is a first-rate housekeeper, and I feel like showing you off to the best advantage."

"Don't look for too much," I replied, smiling, "lest you be disappointed."

Mr. Smith went away, and I walked back to the kitchen door to say a word to Kitty. As I looked in, the sound of my feet on the floor caused her to start. She was standing near a window, and at my appearance she hurriedly concealed something under her apron.

"Kitty," said I, "we are to have company to dine with us to-day. Mr. Smith will send home a turkey, which you must dress and cook in the best manner. I will be down during the

morning to make some lemon puddings. Be sure to have a good fire in the range, and see that all the drafts are clear."

Kitty promised that every thing should be right, and I went up stairs. In due time the marketing came home. About eleven o'clock I repaired to the kitchen, and, much to my surprise, found all in disorder.

"What in the world have you been doing all the morning?" said I, feeling a little fretted.

Kitty excused herself good naturedly, and commenced bustling about to put things to rights, while I got flour and other articles necessary for my purpose, and went to work at my lemon puddings, which were, in due time, ready for the oven. Giving all necessary directions as to their baking, and charging Kitty to be sure to have every thing on the table precisely at our usual hour for dining, I went up into the nursery to look after the children, and to see about other matters requiring my attention.

Time passed on until, to my surprise, I heard the clock strike one. I had yet to dress for dinner.

"I wonder how Kitty is coming on?" said I to myself. "I hope she will not let the puddings get all dried up."

But, I felt too much in a hurry to go down and satisfy myself as to the state of affairs in the kitchen; and took it for granted that all was right.

A little while afterwards, I perceived an odor as of something burning.

"What is that?" came instinctively from my lips. "If Kitty has let the puddings burn!"

Quick as thought I turned from my room, and went gliding down stairs. As I neared the kitchen, the smell of

burned flour, or pastry, grew stronger. All was silent below; and I approached in silence. On entering Kitty's domain, I perceived that lady seated in front of the range, with a brown covered pamphlet novel held close to her face, in the pages of which she was completely lost. I never saw any one more entirely absorbed in a book. No sign of dinner was any where to be seen. Upon the range was a kettle of water boiling over into the fire, and from one of the ovens poured forth a dark smoke, that told too plainly the ruin of my lemon puddings. And, to cap all, the turkey, yet guiltless of fire or dripping pan, was upon the floor, in possession of a strange cat, which had come in through the open window. Bending over the still entranced cook, I read the title of her book. It was "THE WANDERING JEW."

"Kitty!" I don't much wonder, now, at the start she gave, for I presume there was not the zephyr's softness in my voice.

"Oh, ma'am!" She caught her breath as her eyes rested upon the cat and the turkey. "Indeed, ma'am!" And then she made a spring towards puss, who, nimbly eluding her, passed out by the way through which she had come in.

By this time I had jerked open the oven door, when there came rushing out a cloud of smoke, which instantly filled the room. My puddings were burned to a crisp!

As for the turkey, the cat had eaten off one side of the breast, and it was no longer fit for the table.

"Well! this is fine work!" said I, in an angry, yet despairing voice. "Fine work, upon my word!"

"Oh, ma'am!" Kitty interrupted me by saying, "I'll run right off and buy another turkey, and have it cooked in time.

Indeed I will, ma'am! And I'll pay for it. It's all my fault! oh dear! dear me! Now don't be angry, Mrs. Smith! I'll have dinner all ready in time, and no one will be any the wiser for this."

"In time!" and I raised my finger towards the kitchen clock, the hands of which marked the period of half past one. Two o'clock was our regular dinner hour.

"Mercy!" ejaculated the frightened cook, as she sank back upon a chair; "I thought it was only a little past eleven. I am sure it was only eleven when I sat down just to read a page or two while the puddings were in the oven!"

The truth was, the "Wandering Jew," in the most exciting portion of which she happened to be, proved too much for her imagination. Her mind had taken no note of time, and two hours passed with the rapidity of a few minutes.

"I don't exactly comprehend this," said my husband, as he sat down with his old friend, to dine off of broiled steak and potatoes, at half-past two o'clock.

"It's all the fault of the 'Wandering Jew!'" I replied, making an effort to drive away, with a smile, the red signs of mortification that were in my face.

"The Wandering Jew!" returned my husband, looking mystified.

"Yes, the fault lies with that imaginary personage," said I, "strange as it may seem." And then I related the mishaps of the morning. For desert, we had some preserved fruit and cream, and a hearty laugh over the burnt puddings and disfigured turkey.

Poor Kitty couldn't survive the mortification. She never smiled again in my house; and, at the close of the week,

removed to another home.

CHAPTER III.

LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT.

[Table of Contents](#)

"THE oil's out, mum," said Hannah, the domestic who succeeded Kitty, pushing her head into the room where I sat sewing.

"It can't be," I replied.

"Indade, mum, and it is. There isn't the full of a lamp left," was the positive answer.

"Then, what have you done with it?" said I, in a firm voice. "It isn't four days since a gallon was sent home from the store."

"Four days! It's more nor a week, mum!"

"Don't tell me that, Hannah," I replied, firmly; "for I know better. I was out on last Monday, and told Brown to send us home a gallon."

"Sure, and it's burned, mum, thin! What else could go with it?"

"It never was burned in our lamps," said I, in answer to this. "You've either wasted it, or given it away."

At this Hannah, as in honor bound, became highly indignant, and indulged in certain impertinences which I did not feel inclined to notice.

But, as the oil was all gone, and no mistake; and, as the prospect of sitting in darkness was not, by any means, an agreeable one—the only remedy was to order another gallon.

Something was wrong; that was clear. The oil had never been burned.

That evening, myself and husband talked over the matter, and both of us came to the conclusion, that it would never do. The evil must be remedied. A gallon of oil must not again disappear in four days.

"Why," said my husband, "it ought to last us at least a week and a half."

"Not quite so long," I replied. "We burn a gallon a week."

"Not fairly, I'm inclined to think. But four days is out of all conscience."

I readily assented to this, adding some trite remark about the unconscionable wastefulness of domestics.

On the next morning, as my husband arose from bed, he shivered in the chilly air, saying, as he did so:

"That girl's let the fire go out again in the heater! Isn't it too bad? This thing happens now every little while. I'm sure I've said enough to her about it. There's nothing wanted but a little attention."

"It is too bad, indeed," I added.

"There's that fishy smell again!" exclaimed Mr. Smith. "What can it be?"

"Fishy smell! So there is."

"Did you get any mackerel from the store yesterday?"

"None."

"Perhaps Hannah ordered some?"

"No. I had a ham sent home, and told her to have a slice of that broiled for breakfast."

"I don't know what to make of it. Every now and then that same smell comes up through the register—particularly in

the morning. I'll bet a sixpence there's some old fish tub in the cellar of which she's made kindling."

"That may be it," said I.

And, for want of a better reason, we agreed, for the time being, upon that hypothesis.

At the end of another four days, word came up that our best sperm oil, for which we paid a dollar and forty cents a gallon, was out again.

"Impossible!" I ejaculated.

"But it is mum," said Hannah. "There's not a scrimption left—not so much as the full of a thimble."

"You must be mistaken. A gallon of oil has never been burned in this house in four days."

"We burned the other gallon in four days," said Hannah, with provoking coolness. "The evenings are very long, and we have a great many lights. There's the parlor light, and the passage light, and the—"

"It's no use for you to talk, Hannah," I replied, interrupting her. "No use in the world. A gallon of oil in four days has never gone by fair means in this house. So don't try to make me believe it—for I won't. I'm too old a housekeeper for that."

Finding that I was not to be convinced, Hannah became angry, and said something about her not being a "thafe." I was unmoved by this, however; and told her, with as much sternness of manner as I could assume, that I should hold her responsible for any future waste of the article; and that if she did not feel inclined to remain on such terms, she had better go.

"Dade, thin, and I'll go to onst," was the girl's spirited answer.

"Very well, Hannah. You are your own mistress in this respect," said I, coolly. "I'm not in the least troubled about filling your place; nor fearful of getting one who will waste a gallon of oil in four days."

Hannah retired from my presence in high indignation, and I fully expected that she would desert my house forthwith. But, no; unlike some others of her class, she knew when she had a good place, and had sense enough to keep it as long as she could stay.

In due time she cooled off, and I heard no more about her getting another place.

"There's that fishy smell again!" exclaimed my husband, as he arose up in bed one morning, a day or two afterwards, and snuffed the air. "And, as I live, the fire in the heater is all out again! I'll have some light on this subject, see if I don't."

And he sprung upon the floor, at the same time hurriedly putting on his dressing gown and a pair of slippers.

"Where are you going?" said I, seeing him moving towards the door.

"To find out where this fishy smell comes from," he replied, disappearing as he spoke.

In about five minutes, Mr. Smith returned.

"Well, if that don't beat all!" he exclaimed, as he re-entered the chamber.

"What?" I very naturally enquired.

"I've found out all about that fishy smell," said he.

"What about it? Where does it come from?"