

THE MASTERY OF LOVE.

Love was a stranger. Without look or key He unlocked my bosom...

MR. BELCHER'S PIES.

All men, or nearly all, have an idea that housekeeping is one of the easiest things in the world.

We were congratulating ourselves on the fact that we had invited no one to share our Thanksgiving dinner...

After reading this gushing epistle to me, "dear Martha" said, "Now, Joe Belcher, what on earth am I to do?"

"Why don't you buy some at the bake shop?" I suggested.

"Just what a man would say, and yet they are the first to rail at baker's trash."

Although I had been so severely snubbed, with all the bravery or conceit of my sex I came to the front once more.

"Now Martha," I said cheerfully, "you write explicit directions for making mince pies, and I will try my hand."

"Peals of laughter were the only reply she gave me for a second, then:

"Why, Joe, you make mince pies! Oh, what fun! You know you have burnt the steak to a cinder every day, and yesterday when you tried to make a cake to surprise me, it looked more like a square of yellow flannel than anything."

"You forget, my dear," I answered blandly, "that the first day I made love to you, you were making mud pies."

No notice was taken of this brilliant remark. Martha was deeply thinking, with a very downcast countenance.

"Well," with a sigh, "it is the only thing to be done. We must have mince pies. Just give me paper and pencil and I will write the directions."

Under her directions, which were sometimes difficult to follow, I managed to get the mincemeat "fairly good" as Martha said.

It was nearly twelve o'clock before I laid my aching bones to rest, and dreamed all night that somebody was flogging me, and that I was to be buried in mincemeat.

At last I went to the door and called to Martha and explained the situation.

At last I went to the door and called to Martha and explained the situation. "Why," she said, "you must put flour on the board, and not have it too wet."

"Well, if that isn't like a woman!" I thought. "If I ever write a cook book, I shall head every recipe, 'Have your pan greased in readiness.'"

Well, after getting the two plates, I came back and found that my paste had shrunk to the size of the State of Rhode Island, and when I got it on the plate, a two-cent postage stamp would have covered the whole business.

I rested a bit before I tackled pie number two, and gazed on the festive scene. Flour was scattered in every part of that kitchen, and every time my back was turned, Pickles (the cat) helped himself to mincemeat.

Well, I started in again, but with not quite so much energy and hopefulness as before. I went through the shrinking experience, and only had enough to cover the bottom of the plate.

I called out to my wife: "Martha, you were afraid that the paste wouldn't be short enough, weren't you?"

"Yes, Joe. What is the matter?" "Nothing. You needn't be afraid no longer; the paste was so confoundingly short that the second pie had to go into the oven bald-headed."

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