

"COURTING PARLORS"

In Boston Have Solved Social Problem

Boston, April 30.—The very great success which has attended the "courting parlors" of the Franklin House for Young Women has been hailed with delight by sociologists, who see in them a solution of a baffling social problem.

Boston is "full of lodging houses," Dr. Perin, pastor of the Every Way church, declares, and it was to meet the disadvantages of them that, with the aid of several men of wealth, he secured the great dormitories of the New England Conservatory of Music.

The project was for the benefit of wage-earning women, and good moral character was the only qualification.

The home has proved self-supporting, and the girls are provided with a sumptuous home at a nominal cost. In order to make the home attractive to the 400 young women who live in it, it was necessary to make it resemble the ordinary family domicile as nearly as possible. So Dr. Perin, who is above all endowed with a liberal equipment of common sense, concluded that it would be wise to provide two dozen "courting parlors" for a starter, and now it is planned to add as many more. Several happy marriages have already resulted.

An inflexible rule of the house from the beginning was that no man might enter any room occupied as a sleeping room, under any pretext whatever. And as the chief drawback to mortality in lodging houses in general is that the girls must entertain their callers in their tiny bedrooms the barriers of virtue are not always unyielding.

These courting parlors are on the

first floor of the great building and all of them are fitted alike. There is nothing of the stiff, formal affair one might expect in such an institution, but there is the warmth and glow of the home everywhere.

The use of the parlor may be obtained by applying to the matron, and girls who have "steadies," if not actually engaged, are given the preference, and the hours are so arranged that all have equal rights.

But, at 11 p. m., 15 minutes after a buzzer sounds throughout the building, guests must depart, and five minutes later lights are out all through the building.

There are wise, safe rules made; the doors are sans locks and are fitted with portieres, but such is the faith in the girls that distasteful espionage is unknown.

The girls are permitted to bring their own little ornaments or bric-a-brac into the courting rooms while they are occupying them, thus allowing one to manifest approval of a sweetheart's gift of a pretty clock by having it tick away the minutes to 11 when HE calls.

Dr. Perin is much gratified with the results so far, and so are the girls. Despite the fact that there are numerous homes in the South End, where the working girls congregate, they have never prospered to the self-supporting degree, while at the Franklin square house there are hundreds of applications on file, and an annex is contemplated.

Dr. Van Ness, pastor of the Second church, Unitarian, has decided to have the church societies of which he is executive emulate Dr. Perin's courting parlor idea, and has already planned such an annex to the Parker building.

"I believe that the courting parlor

is the happy, practical solution of the grievous problem," he said, "and the refinement which it leads enhances the girl's ideals, makes her have loftier ambitions and makes her better fitted for a housewife, while it certainly improves a young man's morals to call upon a young woman in a cosy parlor amid domestic surroundings. His mind easily sees a little home of his own, with this same little woman at the helm, and the very idea appeals to his domesticity far more than a corner bedroom, and I believe that the courting parlor promotes respectable marriages."

The girls also approve the plan, immensely. Not one girl has left the home to lodge elsewhere since the founding, over a year ago.

Some of the bedrooms are elaborately fitted with pianos and expensive furniture, while the very cheapest ones are neatly carpeted, contain brass bedsteads and dressers. The entire home is as dainty as clever philanthropy, wisely directed, can make it.

Girls in every branch of commerce and the professions live in it, from shoe factory operatives to high-salaried lawyers' clerks, models and trained nurses.

There are no social distinctions, and the utmost harmony prevails. In the one courting parlor "Bill," with his hair slicked down with bear's grease, may be "sparkling" Mary Lizzie, from whose town down in Maine he has just come, while in the next an erudite, Ibsen-brained dame, earning a big salary in some banking house, may be analyzing platonic friendship with a Van Dyked young doctor, just beginning to fit Back Bay millionaires for the hereafter.

The courting parlor makes the home its glorious success.

HOME-RUN HAGGERTY

Tells About the Pitcher Who Was Stretched

Nature had inflicted on Chub Pudgely of the old Hayvilles about two and a half hundred pounds, more or less, of flesh, bone and fat, mostly fat, and put it in a body about five feet tall and four wide. He was the limit for fatness of any ball player I ever set eyes on. But nature had also endowed Chub with several pounds of grit, sixteen ounces to the pound, and a lantern jaw. When he made up his mind to do a thing he did it or they had to show him why not. And one of his high resolves was that he'd be a pitcher.

Early in life Chub had learned to pitch curves. And such curves! He had a wide, sweepy out, a sneaky, jumping inshoot, a three-foot drop, a rise that'd lift your hair, and different combinations of the four rudimentary bends that made him appear to be the bright and morning star when the managers tried him out.

He would have been all that in fact but for two things—his shortness and his fatness. His arms were so short he couldn't get his bends up to the plate with any speed, and after he'd fooled a nine about two innings, they'd wait and gauge the slow benders and hammer the ball to a paste. He was fast being recognized as a prize easy mark by the other clubs in the Corndropper circuit, of which Hayville was a part, when Peleg Rodney took charge of the outfit.

Peleg was a scientist in baseball, a scientist in billiards, a scientist at draw poker and stud, and a scientist in natural, every day life. As soon as he saw Chub Pudgely and his case explained to him he was right there with scientific advice.

"Can't get any speed on 'em, eh? Your arms and legs are so short, my man that you don't get leverage in everything. A tall, thin man can run faster'n a short, fat man, 'cause he's got more leverage in his legs. He can reach farther 'cause he's got more leverage in his arms. He can't eat so much, because the short, fat man has got him on a stomach leverage."

"Now, if you were six feet tall, and your arms and legs in proportion, you'd be an ideal speed merchant. Then you'd get the swiftness into those benders of yours that'd make those heavy hitters grope for the ball like a fellow looking for baby's bottle under the bed at 2 a. m. And by thunder! I've an idea—the very cream of science! You shall have it! All that speed, that graceful, long-armed swing, that fawn-like, long-legged ambling, shall be yours."

"By the new stretching method," replied the scientific Peleg. "They put you in a machine and turn on the clamps, and by gentle force and so forth every bone and muscle in your body is stretched to its natural length. Instead of pulling one leg they pull 'em both, and your arms too."

"That's a go! I'll send you up to Chicago to the professor to-morrow, have him put you through their course of sprouts up there, have the fat boiled, baked, stewed and stretched out of you, and you'll come back here a graceful, attenuated guy with a throw on you like Si Seymour, and ready to go in the box to win the pennant for us from the Alfalfas. I'll do it or my name ain't Peleg Rodney."

And do it he did. Chub Pudgely was put on a train for Chicago and duly tagged for the professor's place where they stretch people, and here was where his nerve came in. A man with less grit would have thrown up his resolve to be a pitcher at the idea of having his bones and ligaments and spinal column wrenched but he never turned a hair. He said he'd go through anything to be a pitcher, so he took the treatment. He was away about three weeks, and we thought he'd gone with a dime museum.

He surprised the natives one day by coming out on the field to pitch against us at Hayville, and we rubbed our eyes. Was that the fat and beefy Chub Pudgely who so recently had excited our mirth at his efforts to pass curves fast enough to keep us from battering the fences down? Was that tall, graceful form that galloped after bunts and scooped up grounders, and did other contortions, the old form of Chub Pudgely, which had never did a contort in his life? There was certainly Chub's lantern jaw, and his straw-colored hair, and his mild blue eyes; but we had to be told about the rest.

Well, to make things short, Chub made us look like a lot of tomato

cans set up for the boys to throw at. He gyrated and convoluted and contorted and stretched and wound himself up, and then we'd hear the ball hit the catcher's mit. We didn't get a hit or a run, and scientific Peleg Rodney sat on the bench and chuckled.

"That's Peleg's white-haired boy!" he'd say, as Chub would fan one of us. "Can't fool old Gran'ther Peleg. He knows a pitcher we'n he sees one, even if he is cased up in fat. Science is the thing that wins."

The sum total of my efforts against Chub that day was four little fouls, and some of the bunch didn't do as well as that. Formerly we had lifted his slow ones out of the lot right along. But now there was no slow ones, and we saw right away that some batting averages in that league 'ud look as lean as Chub did if we weren't careful.

We were glad when the Hayvilles left us that time and went swinging around the circle, giving the other clubs the same dose they had given us. The result was that when they got back to Alfalfa again they were hot on our trail. Chub pitched every other day, was the leading pitcher in the league, and they were two games behind us for the pennant, with this the deciding series.

Chub pitched the first game of the three and shut us out. The second game we lost in the tenth inning on a scratch home run by one of their men, and when the night before the last game hove around, with Chub slated to pitch, things looked blue for us. It seemed ours to lose the championship and the extra suits of clothe and the prize money we had bet, and go to hovelng coal for the winter or eating snow balls.

But there was Pinch Hobbs. If I had the eloquence of a Garry Herriman, the facile pen of a Murnane, or the rounded periods of a Ban Johnson I could fittingly describe how that steady-going little tarrier pulled us out of the mud. But as I haven't, I'll just have to tell it as it really happened on that fair day in the early fall, when we played the Hayvilles for that last ball.

Pinch Hobbs rolled over in bed the morning of the big game and said:

"If you can do it, Hag, we can win!"

"Win what?" says I, half asleep. I don't mind saying I had tried to drown my sorrows the night before, and hadn't tried to do it with any sponge bath.

"Win the game today. We can do it, I say, if you can hit the second button on Chub Pudgely's shirt with a hot liner."

"Hot—" I was going to say something mildly profane, but checked myself. "What's the use of talking hot liners to me when I haven't made a hit off him in the last two games—or since he got stretched. That's hot air."

"This is the scheme," said Pinch calmly, sitting up and reaching for his socks. "Now, Peleg Rodney thinks he's just the scientificest gosscon that ever trudged down the pike. But I've got him skinned a mile. I've looked up this stretching business. I know how they do it. I know how to beat it. I tell you that if you hit Chub a hot liner on the second button of his shirt we'll win. Does that go?"

"If you say so it goes, Pinch," said I, seein' he was in earnest. "Anything you say goes. If I kill him with a liner I'll be up for manslaughter or something."

"No, no," says Pinch, "you're in wrong. I don't want you to hurt him. I just want you to hit him hard enough there—the center of the radial extremity of his muscular mechanism, to release the tension the stretching professor put on him when he laid him out and pulled him apart. Are you on?"

"In a minute," says I, my eyes bulgin' out. "Just as soon as I send down and get that guide book of proper language fat Pete Brown has." "er language that Pete Brown has." sense'll tell you. Say, did you ever see one of those articulated dolls?"

"The kind that talk? Yes."

"No, not that kind. The kind—"

"Well, that's what articulate means."

"Back up. I mean the kind that have a hollow body and wires running to their arms and legs and heads, and tied together inside. Now, that's the case with Chub. He's articulated. Them muscles and bones of his that were stretched out are articulated,

and the place where they're tied together is right under the second button of his shirt. You hit that a good welf and what will happen? Them muscles will be relaxed, released, the tension of that radial center will snap and his extremities will again regain their normal proportions and then he can't pitch."

"There you are again," said I. "If you talk plain ball instead o' throwin' in your Greek and Latin I could get wise. I think I see what you mean. But what's the matter with gettin' in a scrap with him and handing him a good one with your fist? That'd do the trick."

"Yes, but it'd be too brutal, too cold-blooded. You're just the villain that'd do it. But I want it to seem accidental. Therefore you got to give him a hot liner there. Be scientific, above all things. When you're playin' ball don't mix up in pugilism."

That's Pinch all over. He's got to do things artistic. So I said I'd try, and Pete Brown, who's good at placin' 'em, was put on and he said he'd try. And we entered the game with a ray of hope peeking through the dark clouds where there had been none before.

In the first inning I put one over his shoulder that made him gasp, but the second baseman got it. Pete hit him on the shin and was thrown out at first. Pinch fouled out.

The second time the three of us came up I batted one down that knocked his cap off and got first on it. Pete flew out to center, getting his too high. Pinch, who bats ahead of me, had grounded to short.

The third time Pinch struck out, I flied to short and Pete hit him on the shoulder. They had scored one run on us up to the ninth, and in that inning we blanked 'em after they'd filed the bags, on a rattling double play by Jimmy Harrison and Brown.

When Pinch went up to the bat in the ninth I could see he duly recognized the fact that it was our last chance.

"One strike!" A beauty went over the pan and he never moved. Josh Haggood grunted. I nudged Pete and says:

"He's waitin' for the right one. Watch him." Pete nodded. We both knew Pinch.

"Strike two!" Another beauty. The Hayville part of the audience was whooping it up for fair.

Chub Pudgely gyrated and convoluted. Straight as an arrow the third ball came up, and right over. We saw Pinch raise his shoulders, dig deep with his spikes, and then he swung. There was an awful crash as the ball hit the bat, a white streak as it shot straight back to the pitcher, and then a smashing noise, a crackling sound and a little snap. Pinch was speeding for first. The ball was rolling around near the box.

Chub Pudgely was unstrutched!

There, in the twinkling of an eye, where he had been long and lanky and lean, he was snapped back to his old pudgy self. The fat that had been stretched out on those long attenuated limbs, had rolled up. His pants hung most to his heels, his sleeves down over his hands. His belt had burst and his stockings were so tight they'd like to burst, too. But there was the same fat lollypop pitcher with the short arms and chorus girl legs we had all known so well.

Pinch was on second by the time Chub had picked up the ball. The Hayvilles started to run in, but he waved 'em back. They could see the change, but he couldn't. He tied up his belt, raised the ball over his head, tried to gyrate, and ended it by putting up an airy little flouter that I just firmly planted against the right field fence, and Pinch and I sailed in and won the game, the pennant and everything else.

That ended Chub. Scientific Peleg Rodney said he wouldn't have him stretched again if he was going to be so careless as to let a bowlegged shortstop with pink hair unstretch him, and he gave him his papers. So he et the snowballs that winter, and not the alfalfas.

GEORGE WILLIAM DALEY.

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