



Origin, Development and Malignancy of The House Maid's Knee

Just as soon as "mein herr" had skinned his fellow humans enough to warrant it, the "missus" felt the need of, and hired a house maid: Gentle, kind-hearted soul that she was, she picked out "poor girl," one whose father was not so good at skinning, and gave her a home in the attic and money besides—not so much in the spirit of dodging the house work as to have some one around the house to bawl out for a change ("mein herr" having become quite case-hardened to her preachments). A good many times it happened the "poor girl's father was the very man that "mein herr" had skinned and therefore it may have seemed eminently proper for Mrs. Mein Herr to peel the bark from Miss Poor-Girl

It had come early in life to Mrs. Mein Herr that the scrubbing of floors was highly destructive of the dimples on her knees, something she took special pride in and over which Mr. Mein Herr had complimented her times without number. So, it can be seen, the need for a maid was genuine and the hiring of one was purely in self-defense (in the protection of dimples the like of which Mein Herr would have to wander the world over to find duplicates). The law of self-defense is recognized in all uncivilized countries—there being no others—and Mr. Mein Herr's right to admire dimples cannot be questioned in this unenlightened age of knee-warship—hence, it follows, Mrs. Mein Herr was entirely within law and order in the attempt to salvage her precious dimples as a recurring pleasure and satisfaction to her lord and master, Mr. Mein Herr, just so she did not obligate Miss Poor Girl in any shape or manner.

But floors had to be scrubbed—Mr. Mein Herr having an inherrant habit of prowling about the house in bare feet and being averse to jumping in bed with them in any but the most immaculate state of sanitation and pulchritude—and Miss Poor Girl, being no faster thinker than her daddy, and oblivious of the terrible devastation attendant to floor-scrubbing, would drop down on her knees—ruin them for all time—and wield a wicked brush.

Mebbe she didn't give a darn, any now, as the saying goes—that is the origin of the epidemic of housemaid's knees so prevalent in the last century, lord help us all.

But once the housemaid's knee got a foothold it spread rapidly and eftsoon the country was flooded with maids whose knee-caps approximated the thickness and hardness of a turtle-shell, and great big muscles like hams would bulge out in the most unexpected places—(to such an extent that the then young republican party was considering making it a campaign issue.) Millions of dimples were destroyed and half as many millions of maids were made almost wholly unfit as objects of adoration—what with parchment like callouses and spavins, ugly blotches of leathery protuberances in place of velvety dimples—indeed the more advanced journals of those trying days, when inspired to print the true picturesque beauty of womanhood, were compelled to rush off to the Gold Coast and dig up, likely as not, Mrs. Mein Herr and have her pose for a series of "Before and after the Bath."

Things were in terrible straits. But just as the gloom was thickest and hardly a girl in the country in condition to march to the altar, up steps a deep thinking Finlander and invents a broom—"I'll get those Janes off their knees", were his immortal words. (No bull, the Finns are inventive people and were the first to use windows in houses. Before that, the democrats and republicans dwelt in caves or roosted in trees)—Inventive? Am I not looking at a picture in Chicago Tribune this Saturday, Dec. 27, 1930, of a bunch of Finn "sailors", (the paper calls them) floating on a raft they threw together from timbers of their wrecked "boat" (picture taken from "ship" that rescued them.) What other nationality would have had the ingenuity to go into raft building in the middle of the ocean?

As I said before, just as the housemaid's knee was about to put a final ki-

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