Where We Hang Up.

THOUGH it is not down in the catalogue, yet a course in boarding houses is required of nearly every student who goes to the Institute. At the very beginning, after having passed the entrance exams., of course, comes the question, Where shall we room? and weary are the travels of the Tech. man before this is decided satisfactorily to his own taste and purse. The boarding-house keepers know we are made of money, and charge accordingly. After getting settled, to a certain extent, we get acquainted with our landlady. She is a many-sided female. Sometimes she is enveloped in mystery, only appearing with fatal regularity on rent days, and passing an unseen existence meantime. Sometimes she is voluble and inquisitive. In that case she wants to know all about your relatives and your affairs generally; and then, having lost time talking, she sweeps in a hurry when you are out, and throws the dirt in the closet on to your best shoes. Sometimes she is forty, fat, and suspicious of your callers; and gazing at them from the barely opened door, generally tells them that you are out rather than risk such characters upstairs. It takes courage and blarney to get around one of this sort, but it has been done. Again, she is of the opposite sort, leaving the front door open, and letting any one go up without question. This is convenient all around, especially to the cove who lifts your new fall overcoat and a few other trifles, some day. Then the house goes back to latch-keys, and forgetting yours the first night, you sit on the step to cool, ringing the bell meanwhile, until some one, generally the top-floor lodger, lets you in.

There is one experience that you can’t appreciate until you have tried it; that is living in a “side room.” When you see one it looks so cozy and snug, and you like it. You ask, though, if it isn’t pretty cold sometimes. Your prospective landlady says, “Well, she had a young man in it for two winters, and he had his window open nearly always.” That settles it, and you take the room. A side room is generally about seven feet by nine, and has a bed, a dressing-case, a table doing duty as a washtand, a chair, a window, and a gas-burner. If it has a closet you improvise a washtand in it out of your trunk stood on end, for you must have the table to write on. Then you get your things out and the book-shelf up. On the latter are your Ganot, the Institute catalogue, the rest of your books, and the increasing file of Techs. Then you get up your “virtues,” pipes, pictures, photos of cousins and your best girl, and mementoes of last summer. If you are of an inscription-studying nature you add from time to time a choice sign to the other decorations. A four-foot sign with “Family Dining-room” on it will fill up one side of the wall very nicely. A red lantern, borrowed from the Street-Paving Department, is also effective. Once settled, affairs go on very well. The warm days of October are delightful. When your friends come to see you of an evening you take turns sitting in the chair, and the bed is quite large enough for the rest to sit on. This is all very well as long as moderate weather lasts, but some morning you wake up to find the water frozen, and your breath hanging in graceful festoons from the ceiling. Then you want to move to a room which can be heated, — and you usually move.

To vary the monotony of too much study, which might be bad for your health, there is generally a maiden across the street who kindly flirts with you, whenever you feel inclined. She is very pretty to your near-sighted eyes, — until you meet her, by accident, on the corner. Then you think you would prefer some one more youthful,— a ballet dancer, for instance. It makes you feel almost as badly as when you broke your first test-tube in the lab., and went to Mrs. Stimson, with tears in your eyes, for another.

In a boarding house a fellow certainly meets all sorts of people. There is the girl who wants to be a great violinist, but who at present, though she practices with the most faithful diligence, doesn’t know how to tune her violin, and really can’t tell when it is out of tune. You can, though, to your sorrow. Another favorite of the board-