

LONDON APARTMENTS

Renting a Furnished Flat in the English Metropolis.

THE TRICKS OF THE AGENT.

At First Everything Is Pleasant, but After the Place Is Taken the Woes of the Tenant Begin With the Advent of the Inventory Man.

To the uninitiated American the rent of a furnished flat in London seems a very simple and remarkably inexpensive matter. Every one is extremely polite, and your path is made easy. But no sooner have you closed the door of your new quarters than you are beset by the bogey of "extras." While you are taking a contented glance at the new domicile, congratulating yourself on the bargain and thinking how much more a similar place would cost you in New York, your musings are interrupted by the arrival of the man with the inventory. His business is to make an inventory of every blessed thing your flat contains, from a four post bed to a kitchen spoon.

At first you are vastly amused over the listing of such apparently insignificant items as "a linens' Walton frieze," the number of tiles in the fireplace, the bolts on the windows, the locks on the doors, a description of the handles on the dressing chest and the number of screws therein, but when you have been dragged through every room, going over these to us absurd details, you plunge from rage to despair and finally collapse when your tormentor at last departs. For this entertainment you have paid from half a guinea (about \$2.00) upward, according to the rent of your flat.

But the real power of the inventory is only felt when you take your departure. You may be morally certain that the only damage you have done has been to break one or two teacups, for which you are quite prepared to pay an extortionate sum without a murmur. You may be sure of this, but presently you will receive a bill all neatly written out and covering several pages of foolscap and entitled "Dilapidations."

You will find that in every room the walls have been "chipped," the enamel on the bathtub "slightly marred," a monogram on a napkin ring "scratched," several saucers "damaged," a knife handle "bent," a number of plates "cracked," and so on. I am quoting from a list of "dilapidations" presented to friends of mine who had occupied a flat for two months, during which time, after strenuous cleaning efforts, they left the premises in much better condition than when they went in. The bill amounted to £1 18s. 9d., roughly about \$9.68.

Here there is no such fact recognized as ordinary wear and tear on furniture.

For the lease, which is here called "agreement," you have to pay from 10 shillings up to 3 guineas and more, according to rent. Then the government stamp affixed thereto, without which the document is not legal, costs you from half a crown (62 cents) to a guinea or more, again according to rent.

You may have taken your flat by "the month," but when your agreement is sent you find out it is for every four weeks! You will probably phone the agent calling his attention to the error, and he will inform you it is correct that way.

In renting an unfurnished flat, the shortest term for which is three years, you discover that the electric light fixtures are not included in the rental. Protest unavailing, you buy them yourself and pay for their installation. You must rent also your own gas cooking stove. You fancy the fenders for the fireplaces must have been overlooked, but not so; you must buy them yourself! As you have been so accustomed to a continuous supply of hot water, it never occurred to you to inquire into the subject. You find you can obtain it only by keeping a continuous fire in your kitchen range.

As the penetrating, clammy gray horror of an English winter draws on you begin to appreciate what it means to be minus steam heat. Your only defense are the coal fires, romantic in story, but totally inadequate to defy this marrow reaching, damp cold of London. Bathroom and halls remain at arctic temperature, for the grate fires do not radiate beyond a few feet, so you may sit close and burn or retire to a corner and freeze.

After having learned through painful experience the futility of struggle against English ways and methods it is amusing to watch the explosive American, who in hotel office, at railway station and on steamships holds forth as to the various things he will not submit to. He is usually listened to with a certain exasperating deference at which the British underling is a past master. But nothing is changed, and he has to submit, and the sooner the lesson is learned the more comfortable he will be.

The impenetrable stolidity of the average Briton is not to be disturbed, and the longer one remains in this country the more definitely one learns that the English people have a pretty substantial idea of commercialism and that you are paying for the lesson.—London Cor. New York American.

One Wish Unfulfilled.
Wife—You promised that if I would marry you my every wish should be gratified. Husband—Well, isn't it? Wife—No; I wish I hadn't married you.—Illustrated Bits.

Great results usually arise from great dangers.—Herodotus.

"IN THE HOUR OF DEATH."

A Note on the Authorship of a Well Known Poem.

The question is often asked in newspapers and magazines, "Who wrote the poem beginning 'In the hour of death, after this life's whim?'"

The answer is given that nothing is known of the author. It is true this poem was published with only the initials of the writer in the University Magazine in 1879. But I hold the manuscript of the poem, and I have also Blackmore's letter that accompanied it. Blackmore has been so long dead I do not feel that there can be any harm in giving his letter to the public. I submit an exact copy of it; also of his poem.

AGNES E. COOK.

"Teddin', Jan. 5, 1879.

"My Dear Sir—Having lately been at the funeral of a most dear relation, I was there again in a dream last night and heard mourners sing the lines enclosed, which impressed me so that I was able to write them without change of a word, this morning. I never heard or read them before to my knowledge. They do not look so well on paper as they sounded. But if you like to print them here they are, only please do not print my name beyond initials or send me money for them. With all good wishes to Mrs. Cook and yourself, very truly yours,

R. D. BLACKMORE.

"K. Cook Esqre LL. D."

Domitus Illuminatio mea.

In the hour of death, after this life's whim,
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,
And pain has exhausted every limb,
The lover of the Lord shall trust in him.

When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim,
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,
And a man is uncertain of his own name,
The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.

When the last sigh is heaved and the last tear shed,
And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,
And the widow and child forsake the dead,
The angel of the Lord shall lift this head.

For even the purest delight may fall,
The power must fall, and the pride must fall,
And the love of the dearest friends grow small,
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.

—R. D. B. in Memoriam M. F. G.
—London Athenaeum.

DISCIPLINE.

The Way Binks Tried It on His Six-months-old Baby.

Binks had sent Mrs. Binks on a visit to her mother, and he was on the job with the six-months-old baby.

In the night the baby woke and cried. Binks looked at his watch—three-quarters of an hour till bottle time. He said to himself:

"Let him yell. He's a healthy little Indian, and he must be disciplined."

Then Binks tried to sleep.

But Binks couldn't sleep. Every cry grew more pathetic and at times heart-rending and discouraged. Each cry said more and more plainly: "I have no friends or relatives. I'm unhappy and uncomfortable and want someone to be good to me."

But Binks, the stubborn and stiff necked, stuck it out, though each cry stabbed him clear through.

Finally (maybe he set it forward a bit—who knows?) Binks' watch announced the arrival of bottle time. He went to the icebox for the food, heated it and took it to his now faintly sobbing infant son.

But the infant son could not take the bottle. He choked on the first swallow, then put up his hands and renewed his wordless plea to the big man he could see dimly through his tears.

Then that father said, "Discipline be hanged!" Maybe, though, it wasn't "hanged" he said, but the vowel sound is right, anyway. He took up that baby, and the baby stuck to his daddy like fly paper. Further attempts to lay him down were futile. He wanted no food but heart food, no milk but that of human kindness. So the big man laid that baby beside him on the pillow; the baby put one rose petal hand to his father's stubby cheek, gave a long, quivering, satisfied sigh and slept for six unbroken hours.

As Binks lay there, afraid to stir lest he disturb the little one and feeling like a horse thief because he had let the love hungry infant cry his heart out, he repeated frequently:

"Discipline be hanged!"—Chicago News.

She Was Willing.

He—Do you know that as long as I have known you I have never seen you dressed in white? She—Indeed! Are you, then, so partial to the color? He—Not exactly that, but whenever I see a girl dressed in white I am always tempted to kiss her. She—Will you excuse me for a quarter of an hour?

Didn't Believe in It.

The Squire—That's a splendid horse, Giles. I suppose you feed it daily with punctuality.

Giles—Naw, sur. None o' yer no-fangled foods var me. Just 'ay and oats—oats and 'ay.—London Telegraph.

Business.

Miss Coy (at the garden party)—Let you kiss me? Certainly not. I've only known you an hour. Mr. Hustler (looking at his watch)—Well, then, suppose I come around in an hour and a quarter?—Boston Transcript.

He that is ill to himself will be good to nobody.—Scotch Proverb.

QUEER ANIMALS.

The Happy Eagle, the Aye-aye and the Tasmania Devil.

The world has been so thoroughly enlightened that one might imagine it impossible that any noteworthy species of mammal or bird could still remain unknown. Yet every now and then something new turns up. For example, it was not so very long ago that a first acquaintance was made with the happy eagle, a fowl native to the region of the Amazon, which feeds chiefly on monkeys. Another curiosity not long known is the aye-aye of Madagascar, a mammal which has one finger of each hand most curiously skeletonized and elongated for the purpose of dragging from their burrows the earthworms on which it feeds. As is well known, it is from Australia and New Zealand that come the flightless birds, some of which readily breed in captivity.

The fur seal rebels in captivity. The seals which one sees captive and which do such intelligent tricks are hair seals, belonging to quite a different species. So opposed is the fur seal to the very notion of deprivation of liberty that it will invariably starve itself to death rather than submit to such a condition. Likewise it is with the Tasmania devil, a queer little marsupial about two feet long, somewhat resembling in appearance a baby bear, which is found only in Tasmania, a large island formerly known as Van Diemen's Land, to the south of Australia. It is almost incredibly ferocious, preying upon the sheep and poultry of the farmers, and never yet, though captured in earliest infancy, has it responded to kindness by manifesting an amiable disposition.—Philadelphia Ledger.

TALL AFRICAN GRASS.

Beautiful Scenes at Night on the Veldt When Fire Spreads.

Unlike a good deal of South Africa, Rhodesia is largely wooded. In some places the forests are of value, but a large proportion is not valued for its timber. The grass in this part of Africa grows to a phenomenal height in the valleys, and especially in the valleys of the Sabi and Zambesi rivers it reaches its greatest height. To say that the grass is often twelve feet high is no exaggeration. Naturally it is very easy to lose one's way in this grass if one is unfortunate enough to stray from the beaten track. It is the custom there to burn this grass off each year when it gets dry. This is usually in August and September or even in October. Fires burn for miles, and as the country is largely a wilderness little damage is done by this method of destroying the grass. It is a beautiful sight at night in the fire season to see the hills for miles around encircled with flames.

After the grass has been burned the rainy season usually begins, and it is then that the country is at its prettiest. The grass is then green, and the foliage on the trees is beautiful. The old leaves drop off gradually, and the new ones take their place before the trees are bare. The new leaves are of all shades of the rainbow, and it is much like the fall scenery in this country when the dead leaves are falling from the trees. Waterfalls are numerous in the mountains, and there are many of great height, although the rivers are usually small in volume.—Springfield Republican.

The Winze.

The superintendent of a western mine in driving a tunnel struck a body of ore. The vein was vertical and had a sharp dip. To develop it and get ready to mine the ore it was necessary to put down a winze—that is to say, to sink a shaft, in this instance an incline.

Elated over the discovery, he telegraphed the board in the east that he had struck rich shipping ore and received the laconic reply to begin shipping at once.

He wired that he could not ship any ore until he had a winze on the vein.

"How much will a winze cost?" was the telegraphic query.

"One thousand dollars," he replied promptly.

The next query floored him. It read, "Can't you buy a secondhand winze cheaper?"—New York Post.

A Joke of Mark Twain's.

Probably few people are aware that the theatrical gofather of that famous actor Mr. William Gillette was Mark Twain, who was a fellow townsman and a friend of his father. Mark Twain in referring to the matter said that when he used his influence to get young Gillette on the stage he thought he was playing a great joke on the management, for he did not think Gillette had the slightest aptitude for acting. But it turned out to be no joke after all. "I don't know," said Mark Twain, "which I like better—having Gillette make a tremendous success or seeing one of my jokes go wrong."

Careful Sandy.

Meenister—And why didn't ye come to the kirk last Sabbath? Sandy—I had nowt but a shillin' in my claes. That's over muckle siller to pit in th' contribution box all at ain time.—London Tit-Bits.

Mistaken.

"He says he's your friend for life; says you lent him \$50."

"So I did. But he's not my friend for life. I propose to ask him for it next pay day."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

His Role.

"That man made an immense fortune out of a simple little invention."

"Indeed! What did he invent?"

"Invent? Nothing, you dub! He was the promoter!"—Cleveland Leader.

FISH THAT WALK.

Climbing Perch Travel Over Land From Water to Water.

It may seem absurd to speak of fishes as walking. The flying fish is well known, but its flight looks much like swimming in the air. We naturally think of fishes as living always in water, as being incapable, in fact, of living anywhere else. But nature maintains no hard and fast lines of distinction between animal life which belongs to the land and that which belongs to the water. If we can believe the accounts of naturalists, there are fishes that traverse dry land.

It is reported that Dr. Francis Day of India has collected data of several instances of the migration of fishes by land from one piece of water to another.

A party of English officers were upon one occasion encamped in a certain part of India when their attention was attracted by a rustling sound in the grass and leaves. Investigation showed it to be caused by myriads of little fishes that were making for one direction and were passing slowly on. There were hundreds of them moving by using their side and small fins as feet, now upright, now falling down, squirming, bending, rolling over, regaining their finny feet and again pressing on.

These fishes were the famous climbing perch, and they were passing over the country to avoid a drought. When the stream in which they have been spending the season dries up they scale the banks and, directed by some marvelous instinct, crawl to another.—Pearson's Weekly.

A HOPEFUL POET.

Failure to Recognize His Genius Didn't Dampen His Ardor.

Paddy Quinn, a type of bohemian found only between the covers of a cheap novel, was sentenced by Justice Samuel C. Hyde, congressional representative for Washington during territorial days, to serve ten days on the rock pile after confessing that he had worked only seventy-five minutes during his stay of two months in Spokane. Asked by the court to explain how he earned a living, the prisoner said:

"I am a poet, but there is no use explaining to you that which would be unintelligible to your mind. I will recite some of my poetry instead. I will read a few stanzas from my masterpiece."

Before Quinn could give voice to the second line of his latest work the court had imposed sentence and the sweet singer was on the way to the city jail, where his tattered garments, oxford shoes and flesh colored hose were exchanged for overalls, jumper and hobnailed brogans. His long black hair and flowing beard were also trimmed for hygienic purposes, and, armed with a six pound hammer, he started for the rock pile, mumbling as he left the station:

"The muse got an awful job that time at the hands of an unempathetic judge; but, then, there's hope. Recognition will come some time. It must come. Officer, please see that Pegasus is properly cared for until I return!"

The Lunatic's Idea of It.

"I was going through one of the wards the other day," said the superintendent of a lunatic asylum, "when one of the patients—incurably insane, I believe—walked up to me to announce that he wanted to be discharged."

"Why? I asked."

"'Because I've been here three years, and that's long enough,' he replied. 'And I want to be discharged today, too,' he added."

"I looked at him steadily for several seconds and then said:

"My dear fellow, do you realize that I have been here seventeen years and have not been discharged yet?"

"The question appeared to puzzle the man for an instant. Then he snapped out:

"Well, you ought to have been discharged long ago."—New York Globe.

Corset Ancient Armor.

A French historian of women's dress states that the corset was worn by the ancient Egyptians. This assertion is borne out by the figures carved on the tombs of women, who are invariably represented as wearing a garment strongly resembling the modern corset. There does not appear to be any representation extant of Cleopatra VI., the beloved of Antony, but in one of the temples there is a figure of her predecessor, Cleopatra II., in which the sculptor has endowed her with a corset cut on the lines of those worn today. Whalebone was probably unknown to the Egyptians, but a nation capable of constructing pyramids without steam cranes would probably find no difficulty in making stays without busks.—London Chronicle.

His Favorite Song.

There is a young optician in Denver who sings very well, says the Post of that city. The other night he was making a call on a couple of sisters up on Corona street when he was asked to sing.

"What shall it be?" he asked as he went to the piano.

"Your favorite song," said one of the girls.

"All right," he replied, and then the optician sat down and sang "The Night Hath a Thousand Eyes."

Impertinet.

Mrs. Hank—If you won't do no work yer won't get no dinner, and that's all there is to it.

"Tell you what I am willing to do. I will give you a lesson in correct English. Is it a go?"—Life.

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