

TO LET---KIPPLE GRANGE.

BY LUCY RANDALL COMFORT.

Mr. Pixley was a real-estate agent. Mr. Pixley had had a goodly number of houses on his list in his time, but never one so persistently, unalterably, perseveringly on his list as Kipple Grange. Year after year it had figured on his books as a "Desirable Country Residence, to be had on reasonable terms;" and year after year it still hung hopelessly on his hands.

Nor was Mr. Pixley the only real estate agent who had wrestled, so to speak, with Kipple Grange. Other land brokers and rent collectors had had their "try" at it, with equally unsatisfactory results. It had been advertised in newspapers and posted up on bulletin boards, and still it remained "Kipple Grange--To Let."

"Hang the old place!" said Mr. Pixley, vehemently, scratching his bald head. "I wish it would burn down or blow away, or something! It's a disgrace to a business man to keep such an eyesore on his list. I've a great mind to put Miss Briggs into it to keep it in order until I can get a better tenant. She wants a place cheap. I'll let her have that Kipple Grange for nothing."

So when Miss Briggs came tiptoeing into the real estate office--a faded, melancholy little old maid, leading her terrier dog by his string, and wearing a green veil to neutralize the Spring winds--Mr. Pixley told her that Kipple Grange should be hers for the present, at least. "You'll probably find it lonely," said he. "I do not on the country," said Miss Briggs. "And very much out of repair," he added. "I doubt not it will do for me," said the little old spinster, her faded eyes brightening.

"Probably, also, there's a ghost about the premises," jocosely uttered the agent. "It's live people I'm afraid of, not dead ones," she replied.

"Well," said Mr. Pixley, "Kipple Grange shall be yours this quarter, if you'll fix up the garden a little, and give the place a lived-in sort of look. Of course it will be for sale, and I shall expect you to do the best for our interests."

And Miss Briggs courted, and said "Yes, I will," and withdrew, greatly elated in spirit.

Upon the same day, the 25th of April, Mr. Beggarall, the real estate agent of Dorchester, let Kipple Grange to old Mr. Hyde, who was a naturalist, and a botanist, and an entomologist, to say nothing of half a dozen other ists, and who wanted a quiet country home, with woods and meadows in its vicinity, wherein to prosecute his beloved sciences.

And Macpherson & Co., of Long Island, made a bargain with the Rev. Mr. Bellairs, an invalid clergyman, who was in search of country air and complete repose. Mrs. Bellairs was a pattern house-keeper, and gloried in the prospect of grass bleaching, new-laid eggs, wild raspberries, and plenty of plums and apricots for preserving purposes.

And, strangely enough, it occurred to none of the real estate agents to let the other two know of his real estate.

"There is never any demand for Kipple Grange," said Macpherson & Co., indifferently.

"I'll write to Pixley and old Mae when I get time," said Beggarall.

"There's no hurry about Kipple Grange," thought Pixley. "If Miss Briggs keeps it from tumbling all to pieces, she will do very well."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Kipple herself, the plump widow, whose grandfather on the husband's side had bequeathed her this impracticable piece of property, began to think of running down to look at it herself.

"They tell me there's no such thing as letting it," said she. "I've a mind to go down and see for myself. One really pines for the country, now that they are selling lilac blossoms and pansies in the street; and I'm sure a change of air will do me good. I'll take Dorcas, my maid, and a few cans of peaches and sardines, and we'll picnic at Kipple Grange, just for the fun of the thing."

"It never rains but it pours," says the ancient proverb, so upon this windy, blooming April day, when the sunny meadows were purpled all over with wild violets, and the yellow narcissus was shaking its golden tassels over the neglected borders of Kipple Grange, the old brick house, which had stood empty for six good years at least, became all of a sudden alive. It was an ancient, mildewed structure on the edge of a wood, an old red house, whose front garden, tangled over with rose briars, and grown with the fantastic trunks of mossy pear-trees, and apple-trees that leaned almost to the ground, sloped down to the bank of a merry little rivulet. Here the tiger lilies lifted their scarlet turbans in the July sunshine, and the clumps of velvety Sweet Williams blossomed first and sweetest. Great cream-hearted roses swung against the tumble-down wall, and love-in-a-mist, London pride, and all those rare old-fashioned flowers of our ancestors, ran riot, sprawling across the grass-grown paths and packing themselves into the angles of the fence, where the honey-suckles had trailed, and the scarlet poppies looked like drops of blood. The old garden of Kipple Grange was like a horticultural show gone mad at midsummer. And even now it was sweet with tufts of crocus, blue velvet iris and daffodils, while at the rear rose up the silent hemlock wood, still and scented and emerald green, in the twilight.

Miss Briggs, with her terrier dog, her hand-boxes, and her poor little hair trunk studded with brass nails, had got there early. She opened the windows to let in the yellow glow of the April sunset, kindled a fire with straight sticks on the deep-tiled hearth, and was sitting down on a starch-box turned upside down, and was drinking cold tea and feeding her dog with occasional scraps of canned beef and baker's bread.

"It seems rather lonely here," said the little old spinster to herself, "and the rooms are very large and dreary looking; but I dare say I can hire a little furniture in the village, and the garden is really superb. I never saw such tulip roots in my life. The little brook twinkling at the foot of the wall is an idyl in itself."

Miss Briggs, who had a good deal of poetry in her starved soul, set down the can and reached over to look out of the window at the golden western sky.

"So quiet, too!" said she, "so secluded!" But, to her amazement, even as she looked she perceived the figure of the stout old gentleman, bald and spectacled, and carrying an immense flat traveling case under his arm, who was picking his way among the rose briars that lay prone across

the path, stopping here and there to examine the growth of the silver-green house-leeks on the garden wall.

Miss Briggs, who was somewhat near-sighted, jumped at once to the conclusion that this interloper was a tramp. She hurled the tin can recklessly down into the budding currant bushes.

"Go away!" she cried.

Mr. Hyde peered upwards, with one hand back of his ear.

"Eh?" said he.

"Or I'll set the dog on you," squeaked Miss Briggs, encouraged by a shrill bark of the terrier.

"Woman," said the scientist, "who are you?"

"I'll let you know," said Miss Briggs, waxing more and more excited in her great indignation.

"How dare you trespass on my premises?"

"How dare you trespass on mine?" retorted the old gentleman, curtly.

"Here's a madman," thought Miss Briggs; and she remembered, with a thrill of terror, that there was no key to the big front door, and the bolt was rusted into two pieces.

At the same moment the sound of whooping voices was heard through the wide, echoing halls, and three chubby lads rushed hilariously in, tumbling over one another as they came.

"Hurrah!" they shouted; "hurrah! Ain't this a jolly old cavern of a house! My, here's a fire; and here's an old woman!"

Miss Briggs, who had drawn her head in from the window, stared at the three cherry-cheeked invaders, who returned her gaze with interest.

"Boys," said she, severely, "what are you doing here?"

"Why," said Master Bruce Bellairs, aged eleven, "it's our house. And pa and ma are helping unpack the cart at the south door. And I've got a redbird, and Johnny's got a brood of Brahma chickens in a basket, and Pierre has a monkey."

"But, boys," said Miss Briggs, with a little hysterical gasp, "this is my house."

"No, it ain't," said the three Master Bellairs, in chorus; "it's ours; we've rented it for a year, and pa and ma are unpacking down stairs."

"Is that your pa?" asked Miss Briggs, with a sudden inspiration, as she pointed to the old gentleman in the yard, who stood stock-still, like the Egyptian obelisk.

"No, indeed!" said Pierre, very contemptuously.

"Nothing of the sort," said Johnny.

"Our pa ain't such a guy as that," chuckled Bruce.

"I think I must be asleep and dreaming," said Miss Briggs, as the door opened and a stout, blooming matron entered upon the scene, with a kerosene lamp in one hand and a basket of carefully packed china in the other, while from her finger depended a bird cage.

"My good woman," said Rev. Mrs. Bellairs, "I suppose you have come here to see about a situation. If you can bring your reference as to character--"

"You are entirely mistaken, madam," said Miss Briggs, with energy. "I am here because--"

But at that moment Mrs. Kipple herself, with Dorcas, her maid, appeared. She was a tall, handsome woman, dressed in elegant mourning, and she used an eyeglass when she talked, and somehow she seemed to take up a great deal more room than anybody else.

Mrs. Bellairs set down the kerosene lamp and the bird cage, Miss Briggs' terrier stopped barking, and the three boys instinctively retired behind the starch-box.

"Who are you all?" said Mrs. Kipple, surveying the scene through her eyeglass; "and how came you to be here?"

"I have taken this house," said Miss Briggs, with dignity.

"So have I," declared the bald-headed old gentleman, who had by this time made his way up into the ruddy light of Miss Briggs' fire, and stood there, closely hugging his flat traveling case.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Kipple, "this is very singular. And I have come here because the house wasn't rented at all."

And then ensued a general chorus of explanations, laughter and deprecation, whose general effect was heightened by a single combat between Master Pierre Bellairs' monkey and Miss Briggs' terrier.

"What are we to do?" said Miss Briggs, plaintively looking at the hair trunk studded with brass nails.

"Do?" said Mrs. Kipple, briskly. "Why, there is but one thing to do that I see. The house is big enough for us and half a dozen families to boot. Let us all live here together."

"I am sure I have no objection at all," said Mrs. Bellairs.

"Neither have I," said the old gentleman, setting down his flat traveling case with a sigh of relief.

"Birds in their nests agree," quoted the Rev. Mr. Bellairs, who had by this time entered upon the scene with one joint of a bedstead balanced across his shoulder, "and it really seems to me as if we might do the same thing."

So Kipple Grange was let, and good, earnest Mrs. Kipple and Dorcas established themselves in two sunny rooms, facing to the south, where the apple boughs brushed against the lozenge-shaped panes of the casement. The Bellairs family settled down all over the rest of the floor, in a miscellaneous, cosmopolitan sort of way, mixing up birds, old china, sermon paper, patch-work and theology in a manner which amazed the precise soul of gentle Miss Briggs. The scientific gentleman perched himself on the top floor, where he set up his case of specimens without let or hindrance. And Miss Briggs made a home-like little home on the second story, and devoted her whole energy--not without a degree of success--to keeping the peace between Chico, the monkey, and Nip, the terrier.

Mrs. Kipple, however, got tired of rural felicity, and returned to the city in Autumn.

Mr. Bellairs received a call to a Delaware parish, where peaches were thicker than blackberries, and the climate was as soft as that of Italy, and he accepted it promptly.

"What shall we do now?" said Miss Briggs, who was disposed to take a timorous view of things.

Mr. Hyde pushed the spectacles on the top of his head.

"Don't you like the house?" he asked.

"Yes," Miss Briggs admitted; "I like the house."

"And don't you consider the situation salubrious?"

"Certainly," said Miss Briggs.

"Then," said Mr. Hyde, looking at the edge of his geological hammer, "why don't you stay here?"

"What, all alone by myself?" said Miss Briggs.

"No," said the scientific gentleman, "with me!"

"Good gracious!" cried Miss Briggs.

"We both like the place," said Mr. Hyde, "we like the situation, and we like each other. Why shouldn't we settle down here for life?"

"But I have never thought of such a thing," said Miss Briggs, in trepidation.

"Think of it now," said Mr. Hyde, in accents of scientific persuasion, as he laid down the hammer and took her black-mittened hand tenderly in his.

And Mr. Bellairs married them before he went away, and Kipple Grange has never been to let since.--Harper's Bazar.

TONS OF GOVERNMENT LITERATURE.

The other day a Washington correspondent of the Sun stumbled upon an interesting pile of literature. The pile was interesting, although the literature was not. Ten tons of expensively printed public documents and reports were on their way from the store-rooms of the House of Representatives to a junk shop. Two cents and a half a pound was what the choicest productions of the government publishing house fetched in the open market.

Just before going out of office, Le Duc confessed that he alone was responsible for 858,381,675 pages of agricultural documents and reports--pages enough to reach five times around the globe, if pasted together so as to make a continuous strip; reading matter enough to reach ten times further than the moon if printed in a single line, like a telegraphic message on the tape.

Suppose the Harpers or the Appletons should begin to print books for which there was absolutely no demand--books which nobody would buy or take the gift of--and should empty their shelves into the junk-shops every little while in order to fill up again with a new stock of unsalable literature! That is what the government is doing.

Year in and year out the tremendous public publishing concern is busy printing and binding edition after edition of useless, hopeless rubbish. Congress votes so many copies; the people pay for paper and ink, composition, proof-reading, press-work and binding; and the only result is to choke up the channels of the junk industry, and to drive honest rag-pickers out of employment. What becomes of all the stuff? Nobody knows. It finds its way somehow back to the mills, and finally reappears as wrapping paper of the coarser sort. Government literature does not even make good junk.--N. Y. Sun.

GENIUS.

Genius does what it must, and talent does what it can.--Owen Meredith.

Genius makes its observations in short-hand; talent writes them out at length.--Bosce.

Genius is subject to the same laws which regulate the production of cotton and molasses.--Macaulay.

The merit of great men is not understood but by those who are formed to be such themselves; genius speaks only to genius.--Stanislaus.

Genius is to other gifts what the carbuncle is to the precious stones. It sends forth its own light, whereas other stones only reflect borrowed light.--A. Schopenhauer.

Genius does not seem to derive any great support from syllogisms. Its carriage is free; its manner has a touch of inspiration. We see it come, but we never see it walk.--Count de Maistre.

The three indispensables of genius are understanding, feeling and perseverance. The three things that enrich genius are contentment of mind, the cherishing of good thoughts, and the exercise of memory.--Southey.

The richest genius, like the most fertile soil, when uncultivated, shoots up into the rankest weeds, and instead of vines and olives for the pleasure and use of man, produces to its slothful owner the most abundant crop of poisons.--Hume.

Genius is the instinct of enterprise. A boy came to Mozart, wishing to compose something, and inquiring the way to begin, Mozart told him to wait. "You composed much earlier," "But asked nothing about it," replied the musician.--Willmot.

M. Planet has succeeded in engraving on glass by means of electricity. The process is as follows: The glass is laid in a horizontal position and covered with a concentrated solution of nitrate of potash, the liquid being retained by a shallow vessel in which the glass is placed. A platinum wire is dipped in a horizontal position in the solution along the edges of the glass. The wire is attached to one of the poles of a secondary battery of fifty to sixty elements. The lines are traced by hand with the point of an insulated platinum wire, connected with the other pole of the battery. The parts of the glass covered with the alkaline solution become engraved when touched with the end of the platinum wire, however rapidly this is moved, the thickness of the lines varying with the thickness of the wire. The current from either pole may be used in the writing wire.

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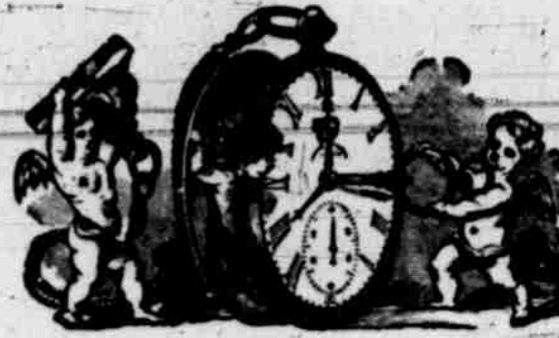
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