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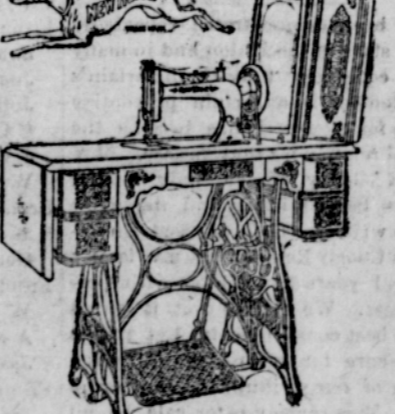
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THE LUCK OF A HOUSE

A SUPERSTITION WHICH SEEMS TO BE BUILT ON FACT.

Few Persons Who Erect Costly Mansions For Their Own Use Ever Live to Occupy Them--If Not Death Then Disaster Bars the Doors.

An instance has recently occurred of a well known man refusing for superstitious reasons to live in a beautiful house he had built until some one else, a perfect stranger, had occupied it for some little time.
 If ever there has been a superstition that appears justified by solid fact and precedent, it is that which prevails about the building of a house. Few who erect costly mansions for their own use ever live to occupy them. An ill fate seems to bar the doors of these abodes upon which has been lavished so much thought and money and hope. Sometimes it is death and sometimes it is ruin that overtakes the owner.

So widespread and so powerful is this strange superstition that one finds even an intellectual man like Lord Salisbury insisting on leasing to strangers for several months the beautiful houses which he has had erected for himself at Beaulieu, on the Riviera, before he will consent to occupy it himself or to permit any member of his family to cross its threshold.

Lord Salisbury, however, has only to look round him in London to find ample grounds for the adoption of such extraordinary and at first sight unnecessary precautions. The completion of Lord Revelstoke's palace in Charles Street coincided with the bankruptcy of the great firm of Baring Bros., of which he was the principal, and it has remained ever since an exquisite monument to the futility of human hopes and ambition.

Mr. Sanford had hardly finished rebuilding the exterior of his magnificent mansion in Carlton House Terrace when the collapse of Argentine securities occurred, involving him in ruin and compelling him to dispose of it to Mrs. Mackay, of "Donanza" fame.
 The Marquis de Sauterre, having purchased the neighboring house from Lady Granville, spent a fortune upon the reconstruction and adornment of the interior. But before the work was completed he in turn was overtaken by the terrible disaster which befell the well known Anglo-Spanish banking house of Murrieta, of which he was the chief director, and he had no alternative but to sell the house to Mr. W. W. Astor.

The downfall of Hudson, the railway king, occurred at the same time as the completion of the great house he was having built for himself at the Albert gate entrance to Hyde park, while in the same manner Baron Albert Grant witnessed the piecemeal sale of the gorgeous palace he had erected at Kensington, but was never destined to occupy. This is why there are, comparatively, so few new mansions of a palatial character either in London or the country. Persons possessed of adequate means and in need of either a town or country residence prefer as a rule to purchase homes that have been lived in to building new ones. If they do any building at all they, in general, cause it to take the form of additions to or alterations of edifices no longer new.

Even then the owners endeavor to safeguard themselves from the possibility of danger by letting their residences for the express purpose, as they say in France, of "wiping the dust from off the plastered walls."
 Nowhere in this superstition more powerful than in Bavaria, where many of the most picturesque spots, especially in the mountainous districts, are adorned with fairylike palaces. None of them has been entirely completed, for insanity and violent death overtook the brilliant and accomplished King Ludwig, who conceived their design, but unfortunately perished before their completion.

Nor even have the builders of many of the splendid structures that adorn the French metropolis been more fortunate. Thus M. Jules Grevy had scarcely completed the construction of his lordly mansion in the Avenue d'Anna when the scandalous behavior of his son-in-law, Daniel Wilson, overwhelmed him with disgrace and compelled him to resign the presidency of the republic amid a perfect hurricane of public obloquy.

The Empress Eugenie's only sister, the late Duchess of Alba, had not occupied the lovely palace erected for her in the Champs Elysees more than a few months before she was seized with a sudden illness and died there in a manner so mysterious as to give rise to rumors of foul play. The building was subsequently pulled down.
 Another equally unlucky house is that now owned by the widow of the late Baron Hirsch. Situated at the corner of the Rue de l'Elysee and of the Avenue Gabriel, it was erected by the Duc de Monchy. He had not occupied the house more than a few weeks before it was the scene of a daring burglary that covered its noble owner with ridicule. Two months after, his daughter died there so suddenly and under such strange circumstances that the duchess would not consent to remain longer in such an ill omened house.—London Mail

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PUNISHING AN EDITOR.

The Curious Method Adopted in a South American Country.

Curious methods of punishing indiscreet editors are in vogue in some countries. In "South American Sketches" Mr. Crawford describes the interesting experience of an editor who had been unfortunate enough to give offense to the ruling powers by the freedom of his criticisms.
 The editor was arrested and confined in a narrow passage between the cages of two jaguars, notorious for their bad tempers and their intense dislike for human society.

The intervening space was so regulated that neither of the ferocious animals could get its paws quite to the middle line between the cages, so that a spare, active person, if very careful to follow the classical advice about the advantages of steering a middle course, might manage to pass without special injury, though the achievement would be both exciting and dangerous.
 Our editorial friend happened to be stout, and therefore was more easily reached by the occupants of the cages. As if to add insult to injury, he was given a chair on which to sit and at the same time was furnished with a copy of his own paper, the issue which had brought him into trouble, in order that he might meditate upon its contents.

He tried to sit motionless and bolt upright, feeling those sleepy, cruel eyes fixed upon him. At the slightest movement or the rustle of the paper uneasy mutterings arose from the cages, and a paw would stretch stealthily toward him. Leaning quickly to the other side, he was sure to be met by the ugly claws of the second jaguar. It was a case of Scylla and Charybdis.

Every few minutes the jaguars became wildly excited and clawed fiercely at the shrinking editor, who, do his best, could not escape those rending toe nails. His clothing was torn to shreds, but except for a few scratches he was not really injured.

AN ENCHANTED PITCHER.

The Relic of a Family, It Is Preserved by Superstition.

About five miles from Aiken, S. C., on the Charleston dirt road and in sight of the railway, is a little place that was first christened Polecat, but afterward changed to Montmorenci, the French for that odorous little animal. Many years ago a young woman came with her pitcher to draw a bucket of water from a well at Montmorenci and set the vessel in the hollowed top of a stone post that some of the railroad men had moved there. While drawing the water a flash of lightning came that struck the chain to which the well bucket was attached, and the woman was killed in her tracks. Her remains were removed, but the pitcher was left just where the dead girl had set it. To this day the pitcher remains in the same place, and so far from being removed, it is said that no living hand has ever touched it save the owner's, although near the side of the public road.

But the most wonderful thing is the superstition attached to the pitcher. There is an indescribable influence surrounding it that prevents its touch. Hundreds of people have gone with the firm determination of lifting the pitcher, but when they approach it a strange repugnance comes over them, and they hurriedly depart without carrying out the object of their visit.
 One night a billy in the neighborhood, while under the influence of whisky, made a bet with some friends that he would go and bring back the pitcher. He left to do so, but soon returned as pale as a sheet and empty handed. "Boys," he remarked, "no person alive can lay hands on that pitcher, and I wouldn't attempt it again for the whole of Aiken county."
 He refused to tell his experience, and said he would not talk about it. Other parties have gone to see it, but met with the same repulsive feelings.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Note.
 Mrs. Hicks (shopping)—Hark! Didn't I hear something smash?
 Hicks—Good heavens, you have good ears. It was only my going broke.—Harlem Life.

THE BISCUIT DIDN'T RISE.

How a Young Cook Thought to Remedy a Mistake.

They had been visiting and while away had been given such delicious homemade biscuit that the memory of them still lingered in the mind. Why shouldn't they have such things themselves? The mistress of the house decided that she should, if she had to make them herself. What good wife would not be willing to take a little trouble to please her husband? So in this virtuous frame of mind she repaired to the kitchen, and there she stirred up her biscuit in the most approved fashion, shaped them daintily and put them in the pan. But she was not accustomed to this work, and it was not strange that she should forget some of the ingredients. It was the baking powder, a small but somewhat important item in the construction of light biscuit. She did not once think of it until the biscuit had been in the oven a few moments. Then, as she stood gazing admiringly at the outside of the range, which contained this precious proof of her ordinary skill, she suddenly exclaimed: "There, I forgot all about the baking powder."

That would have been a heart-breaking thought to most housewives, but not to this one. She was a woman of expedients.
 "Never mind," she said as she hurriedly thought over various ways of mending matters; "those biscuits have only been in a short time, and I will just sprinkle the baking powder over the top, and it can melt and soak in." And she did, but the baking powder did not. The housewife herself tells this story of her cooking now with great gloom, while her husband, being a patient man, never says a word about his part of it in the eating.—New York Times.

In a Wet Season.

"I see," the editor said, "that you have rhymed 'again' with 'rain.'"
 "Yes sir," the office poet assented.
 "Well, it doesn't go. It may be all right in the weather report, but you are hired as a poet."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Smoke as They Wash.

Cigarette smoking is a common practice among the colored washerwomen of New Orleans. They lean over the tub and make a quaint picture as the smoke rolls from their lips.—Nebraska State Journal.

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