

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 lacustrum Walton case," the number of tiles in the fireplace, the bolts on the windows, the screws 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 agent at last departs.

For this entertainment you have paid from half a guinea (about \$2.00) upward, according to the rent of your flat.

For the real power of the inventory man 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, which you are quite prepared to pay for 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 tiles have been "chipped," the enamel of the bathtub "slightly marred," a program on a napkin ring "scratched," several saucers "damaged," a safe handle "bent," a number of plates "cracked," and so on. I am writing from a list of "dilapidations" presented to friends of mine who had occupied a flat for two months, during which time, after strenuous cleaning parties, they left the premises in much better condition than when they went.

The bill amounted to £1 18s. 9d., or about \$4.00.

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 document is not legal, costs you from half a crown (62 cents) to a guinea 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 three weeks! You will probably phone your agent calling his attention to the error, and he will inform you it is correct that way.

On renting an unfurnished flat, the longest term for which is three years, you discover that the electric light fixtures are not included in the rental. Most unavailing, you buy them yourself and pay for their installation. You must rent also your own gas cook-stove. You fancy the fenders for the fireplace must have been over-looked, 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 obtain it only by keeping a continuous fire in your kitchen range.

The penetrating, clammy gray fog of an English winter draws on you to appreciate what it means minus steam heat. Your only delights are the coal fires, romantic in appearance, but totally inadequate to defy the narrow reaching, damp cold of London. Bathroom and halls remain at a 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 with English ways and methods it is tempting to watch the explosive American, who in hotel office, at railway station and on steamships holds you as to the various things he will submit to. He is usually listened to with a certain exasperating deference at which the British underling in the master. But nothing is changed. You have to submit, and the sooner you are learned the more comfortable you will be.

ENGLISH SCHOOLS.

Quaint Customs That Are Maintained With Religious Care.

The head master of Manchester Grammar school, in a speech at Rochdale, referred to a custom at Rugby school which forbids a boy of less than three years' standing to turn up his trousers and insists on his doing so after that period.

The custom is only a minor instance of the quaint practices that exist at all the great public schools in England and are maintained with religious care, though in many cases their origin is obscure or unknown. The Shrove Tuesday tossing of the pancake at Westminster school, with its ensuing scramble for the largest fragment, which gains for its possessor a guinea from the dean, is perhaps the best known among them. A curious custom at Marlborough requires every boy to bring to school with him a cushion, technically termed a "kiss"—with the "i" long. This article is his inseparable companion in school time and, in addition to the ordinary functions of a cushion, is employed to carry books from one form room to another.

At Shrewsbury school, at the beginning of each term, "ball elections" are held for the posts of hall crier, hall constable, hall postman and hall scavengers. The genial brutality of youth often selects for the position of hall crier either the most nervous boy in the school or one who is afflicted with a stammer.

The new boy in the schoolhouse at Rugby is early called upon to take his part in "house singing." At this function, which is held in one of the dormitories, he has to render a song to the satisfaction of his audience, the penalty being the swallowing of a mouthful of soapy water.

Another ancient school custom is the parade of the Christ's hospital bluecoat boys before the lord mayor at the Mansion House on St. Matthew's day, when the "Greclans," who correspond to "sixth formers" elsewhere, receive a guinea each and the rank and file of the school are presented with new shillings.—London Mail.

BURGLARS' TOOLS.

Most of Them Made by Supposedly Respectable Mechanics.

Every little while, said a detective recently, the police arrest a man with a set of burglar's tools in his possession, and one naturally wonders where they all come from.

It is easy to buy a gun of any description, and the most reputable person would not be ashamed to be seen purchasing the most wicked looking knife ever made. But who would know where to get a "jimny" or a device for drilling into a safe or any of the many tools used by the professional burglar in the pursuit of his calling?

There are places in the large cities where these things are made and sold to the users, but such places are exceedingly scarce. It may seem a little strange to learn that most of the tools used in burglaries are made by mechanics who are looked upon as respectable men in the community.

When a burglar wants any particular tool made he goes to a mechanic who can do the job and pays him perhaps five times what it is actually worth for making the tool and keeping quiet about it. Many detectives can recall cases of this kind that have come to light.

One in particular occurred some years ago when an escaped convict named Williams went to a blacksmith and got him to make a lot of drills to be used in safe cracking. He personally superintended the tempering of the steel, but when the job was nearly completed it leaked out, and Williams was arrested. In this instance the blacksmith knew nothing of the use to which the tools were to be put. Most of the tools used by burglars are secured in the same way.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Shoemaker's Candles.

I well remember some seventy years ago seeing flat candles in use. To produce what was known as the flat candle, which was also sometimes called "shoemaker's candle," two newly made "dips" were pressed close to each other while soft and then again lowered into the hot fat, thus holding them together as one candle with two wicks. The size could then be increased if desired. This flat candle was most generally used by shoemakers and tailors, but was made use of in some households whenever an extra bright light for working or reading was required.—Cor. Dickensian.

Too Much Like Work.

"Haven't you a home?" asked the sympathetic citizen.
"Yep," answered Plodding Pete. "I had a nice home, but de first t'ing I knew it had a wood pile and a garden and a pump, and den it got so much like a steady job dat I resigned."—Washington Star.

Impossible.

"How do you overcome insomnia?"
"Say the multiplication table up to twelve times twelve."
"But I can't get the baby to learn it."—Cleveland Leader.

Not Slept In.

"Porter, this berth has been slept in!"
"No, sah! I assure you, sah! Merely occupied. It's the one over the wheels, sah."—Puck.

Taking Him Down.

Brown (very proud of his firstborn)—Ah, even now my wife says he is just like me in many of his little ways!
Smith (gravely)—I hope she corrects him for it.

THE MAN IN THE STAGE.

A Tragedy of the Olden Days in New York City.

A good many years ago, long before skyscrapers and rapid transit were thought of and New York was just a big growing town, they used to tell a story that was ghastly enough to curdle the blood of the most skeptical and to keep people of nervous temperament awake of nights.

The tale went that of a summer night a husband and wife, returning home from the theater, entered a Fifth Avenue stage far downtown and for many blocks were the only occupants. A little above Fourteenth street, however, the stage came to an abrupt stop, the door was opened, and three young men entered. One of the three had evidently been drinking heavily, for his companions were obliged to help him to his seat. The door was closed behind them, and the stage continued its journey northward.

About ten blocks farther on one of the young men rose and, bidding his friends good night, stopped the stage and alighted. A few minutes later the second of the three said, "Well, good night, Dick," pulled the strap, stepped to the sidewalk and walked off through one of the side streets. There remained in the stage only the husband and wife and the young man who was obviously under the influence of liquor and who sat in a crouching attitude in a corner of the stage under the dim flickering lamp.

After a time the husband noticed that the young man's head seemed to be drooping as if in sleep, and, fearing that he might be borne beyond his destination, he rose, tapped him on the shoulder and called attention to the number of the street they had just passed. There was no response, and the husband repeated his words, leaning over as he did so. Then he suddenly straightened up, turned to his wife and said quickly, "We will get out here."

She began to protest, but he simply repeated the words, pulled the strap and helped her to alight. As they stood under the corner lamppost she turned questioning and asked him why he insisted on their getting out of the bus so far below their destination.

"Because," he replied, "that young man's throat was cut from ear to ear."

HORSESHOE LUCK.

An Old Myth That Goes Back to the Greeks and Their Sea God.

Of all the emblems for good fortune the horseshoe stands among the first. Everybody knows it is unlucky to pass a horseshoe on the road without picking it up. It is a luck emblem of the greatest power. We are indebted for this statement to old tales centuries in age that have descended from father to son, from mother to daughter, through the years.

The old myths repay research. The luck of the horseshoe has a most respectable beginning. It is traced to the religion of the old Greeks and their sea god, Poseidon, who was identical with the Roman sea god Neptune.

To Poseidon horses were sacred, and to him they were sacrificed. Poseidon was believed to have created the first horse when he struck the ground with his trident and a horse sprang from the hole, which afterward became a spring. The sea god was the lord of springs. To him all springs were ascribed. In the shape of a horse he sometimes wandered by the shores of his ocean domain, and where he struck his hoofs deeply there the waters gushed out and permanent springs were found. This is the reason why horseshoes are reckoned lucky. Going to the root of the matter, one sees a nature myth as the root principle. From the sea all rain comes, and to the sea all springs owe primal origin, and to the rain and the fresh waters, sea derived, we owe all fertility on earth.

The old Greeks therefore worshiped Poseidon as the fortune giver through his springs. They gave him horses, his precious beasts, and they adored the footprints of horses when they found them, for they might be the very footprints of the god himself.

When the horses came to be shod the transition of the luck emblem from the footprint itself to the shoe mark, practically the same thing, was easy.

Pegasus, the winged horse, from whose hoofs the water springs gushed copiously when he came to earth, has been credited with the origin of the horseshoe luck.

The horseshoe was a specific against earthquakes. It would keep a house safe from harm by earth shaking. Again one perceives the sea myth—Poseidon was the shaker of the earth.—Team Owners' Gazette.

Obeying the Autocrat.

That fine old New Englander, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, laid down the rule that the law of the road entitles a man to two looks at every pretty woman. This fair and proper limit provokes no complaint in Kansas City, and it is not commonly exceeded, though we would have to go far afield to find a locality with more women worth looking at than are seen on the streets of Kansas City every day.—Kansas City Times.

Had All the Others.

"Were you ever in love?" asked the sweet young thing.
"No," replied the barbeleur, "but you can't mention any other fashionable disease that I haven't had."—Detroit Free Press.

Wanted Harmony.

Soda Fountain Attendant—What favor, please? Silly Young Thing—Have you anything in pink to match this gown?—Harper's Weekly.

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