

ABUSE OF INDOORS.

We Rely Too Much on the Protection of Our Houses.

Houses were made for shelter, not for confinement; for freedom, not for restraint. They were intended to enlarge our sphere of activities, not to diminish them.

They foster the family and make progress possible, but we should not abuse their protection. We have crawled away into their still and comfortable recesses, slept in their dry, clean chambers, toasted ourselves over their sheltered fires, read by their unflinching lights and eaten from their bountiful boards so long that we are grown pale, timid, peevish and thankless within.

We have kept ourselves away from the wind and the sun and the lashing rain, from the feel of the earth underfoot and the sense of the leaves and stars overhead until we no longer know the keen and simple joys of being alive. We have set up barriers against the inclemency of nature and covered before her severe austerity until now we have forgotten how indispensable in all her kindly nurture, how tonic her rugged ways, how full of solace her soothing calm.

Houses were only made to live in when it is too cold or too hot or too wet to live out of doors. Any other time out of doors is best. To sleep out of doors for a month is better than a trip to Europe.—Bliss Carman in Craftsman.

Facts About Building Stone.

Almost everybody knows the rule of the masons that stone used in building should be so placed that it will lie as it lay in its natural bed when quarried. But Francis W. Hoyt in the Engineering News says that this familiar rule is not always to be depended upon and needs in many cases to be supplemented with other precautions. There are three planes of fracture known to quarrymen. The rift is the direction in which the stone splits most easily, the grain that which is next easiest, the head that which offers the greatest resistance. In a paving block the two sides represent the rift fracture, the top and bottom the grain and the ends the head. But in a quarry the natural bed is sometimes considerably inclined to the plane of the rift; hence the imperfection of the ordinary rule for placing the stone in building.

Ysleta.

St. Augustine, Fla., founded by the Spaniards in 1564, is generally said to be the oldest European settlement within the present limits of the United States, but some twenty or thirty years earlier Coronado, the Spanish conqueror and explorer, leading an expedition from the City of Mexico northward, had founded some sort of a Spanish colony at the ancient Indian village of Ysleta, in El Paso county, Tex. In the southwest it is therefore claimed that Ysleta is the oldest European settlement in the United States.—St. Louis Republic.

NEW YEAR'S IN THE ORIENT

The Greetings and the Presents in China and Japan.

The most wonderful ceremonies connected with the new year occur in China and Japan. A Chinese city presents a busy and attractive spectacle on New Year's day. The streets are thronged with people dressed in gala attire. The mandarins are known by the red, blue, white and gilt balls on their caps. Gentlemen of rank and wealth are carried in palanquins. When friends meet they greet each other with "Kung-hi! Kung-hi!" which means, "I respectfully wish you joy." But instead of shaking hands in the American fashion each grasps his own hands, lifts them as high as his chin and with a sweeping motion throws them down as low as possible, bending the body at the same time. This is the mode of salutation among the Chinese. At the dawn of New Year's day the visits of congratulation begin, and New Year's gifts are sent to particular friends, always accompanied by a visiting ticket of red paper, on which are written the name of the donor and a list of the presents sent. These consist usually of silks, fine tea, sweetmeats, ornaments of personal wear, toys and souvenirs of various kinds. In Japan the custom is to send letters on rice paper to those in distant places, conveying the formal expression of the New Year's greetings. Presents of cooked rice, roasted peas, oranges and figs are offered to every one.—Leslie's Weekly.

Good Answer.

A theological student supposed to be deficient in judgment was asked by a professor in the course of a class examination:

"Pray, Mr. E., how would you discover a fool?"

"By the questions he would ask," was the rather stunning reply.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Don't Grow Stale!

Many a man bewails his lack of success in life after he has permitted himself to get into a rut. While dreaming of success he has been as blind as a bat and slower than two snails. He blocked his own way.—Manchester Waleo.

The Masquerader

(Continued from Page Three.)

pered something in her ear. Again the sensation of futility and vexation filled him; again he realized how palpable was the place she held in the world. Then, as his feelings reached their height and speech seemed forced upon him, a small man with a round face, catching a glimpse of Eve, darted from a circle of people gathered in one of the windows and came quickly toward them. With an unjust touch of irritation he recognized Lord Bramfell.

Again the sense of Eve's aloofness stung him as their host approached. In another moment she would be lost to him among this throng of strangers—claimed by them as by right.

"Eve," he said involuntarily and under his breath.

She half paused and turned toward him. "Yes?" she said, and he wondered if it was his imagination that made the word sound slightly eager.

"About that matter of Blessington," he began; then he stopped. Bramfell had reached them.

The little man came up smiling and with an outstretched hand. "There's no penalty for separating husband and wife, is there, Mrs. Chilcote? How are you, Chilcote?" He turned from one to the other with the quick, noiseless manner that always characterized him.

Loder turned aside to hide his vexation, but Eve greeted their host with her usual self possessed smile.

"You are exempt from all penalties tonight," she said. Then she turned to greet the members of his party who had strolled across from the window in his wake.

As she moved aside Bramfell looked at Loder. "Well, Chilcote, have you dipped into the future yet?" he asked with a laugh.

Loder echoed the laugh, but said nothing. In his uncertainty at the question he reverted to his old resource of silence.

Bramfell raised his eyebrows. "What!" he said. "Don't tell me that my sister-in-law hasn't engaged you as a victim." Then he turned in Eve's direction. "You've heard of our new departure, Mrs. Chilcote?"

Eve looked round from the lively group by which she was surrounded. "Lillian's crystal gazing? Why, of course!" she said. "She should make a very beautiful seer. We are all quite curious."

Bramfell pursed up his lips. "She has a very beautiful tent at the end of the conservatory. It took five men as many days to rig it up. We could not hear ourselves talk for hammering. My wife said it made her feel quite philanthropic, it reminded her so much of a charity bazaar."

Everybody laughed, and at the same moment Blessington came quickly across the room and joined the group.

"Hello!" he said. "Anybody seen Witcheston? He's next on my list for the crystal business."

Again the whole party laughed, and Bramfell, stepping forward, touched Blessington's arm in mock seriousness. "Witcheston is playing bridge, like a sensible man," he said. "Leave him in peace, Bobby."

Blessington made a comical grimace. "But I'm working this on commercial principles," he said. "I keep the list, names and hours complete, and Lady Astrupp gazes in blissful ignorance as to who her victims are. The whole thing is great, simple and statistical."

"For goodness' sake, Bobby, shut up!" Bramfell's round eyes were twinkling with amusement.

"But my system!"

"Systems! Ah, we all had them when we were as young as you are!"

"And they all had flaws, Bobby," Eve broke in. "We were always finding gaps that had to be filled up. Never mind about Lord Witcheston. Get a substitute. It won't count if Lillian doesn't know."

Blessington wavered as she spoke. His eyes wandered round the party and again rested on Bramfell.

"Not me, Bobby! Remember, I've breathed crystals—practically lived on them—for the last week. Now, there's Chilcote!" Again his eyes twinkled.

All eyes were turned on Loder, though one or two strayed surreptitiously to Eve. She, seeming sensitive to the position, laughed quickly.

"A very good idea!" she said. "Who wants to see the future if not a politician?"

Loder glanced from her to Blessington. Then, with a very feminine impulse, she settled the matter beyond dispute.

"Please use your authority, Bobby," she said. "And when you've got him safely under canvas come back to me. It's years since we've had a talk." She nodded and smiled, then instantly turned to Bramfell with some trivial remark.

For a second Loder waited; then, with a movement of resignation, he laid his hand on Blessington's arm. "Very well," he said. "But, if my fate is black, witness it was my wife who sent me to it." His faint pause on the word wife, the mention of the word itself in the presence of these people, had a savor of recklessness. The small discomfiture of his earlier slip vanished before it. He experienced a strong reaction of confidence in his luck.

With a cool head, a steady step and a friendly pressure of the fingers on Blessington's arm, he allowed himself to be drawn across the reception rooms, through the long corridors and down the broad flight of steps that led to the conservatory.

The conservatory was a feature of the Bramfell town house, and to Loder it came as something wonderful and unlooked for, with its clustering green branches, its slight, unoppressive scents, its temperately pleasant atmosphere. He felt no wish to speak as, still guided by Blessington, he passed down the shadowy paths that in the half light had the warmth and mystery of a southern garden. Here and there from the darkness came the whispering of a voice or the sound of a laugh, bringing with it the necessary touch of life. Otherwise the place was still.

Absorbed by the air of solitude, contrasting so remarkably with the noise and crowded glitter left behind in the reception rooms, he had moved halfway down the long green aisle before the business in hand came back to him with a sudden sense of annoyance. It seemed so paltry to mar the quiet of the place with the absurdity of a side show. He turned to Blessington with a touch of abruptness.

"What am I expected to do?" he asked.

Blessington looked up, surprised. "Why, I thought, sir"—he began; then he instantly altered his tone. "Oh, just enter into the spirit of the thing. Lady Astrupp won't put much strain on your credulity, but she'll make a big call on your solemnity." He laughed.

He had an infectious laugh, and Loder responded to it.

"But what am I to do?" he persisted. "Oh, nothing. Being the priestess, she naturally demands acolytes, but she'll let you know that she holds the prior place. The tent is so fixed that she sees nothing beyond your head, so there's absolutely no danger. He laughed once more, and then he lowered his voice.

"Here we are," he whispered in pretended awe.

At the end of the path the space widened to the full breadth of the conservatory. The light was dimmer, giving an added impression of distance; away to the left Loder heard the sound of splashing water, and on his right hand he caught his first glimpse of the tent that was his goal.

It was an artistic little structure—a pavilion formed of silky fabric that showed bronze in the light of an oriental lamp that hung above its entrance. As they drew closer a man emerged from it. He stood for a moment in uncertainty, looking about him; then, catching sight of them, he came forward, laughing.

"By George," he exclaimed, "it's as dark as limbo in there! I didn't see you at first. But I say, Blessington, it's a beastly shame to have that thundercloud barrier shutting off the sorceress. If she gazes at the crystal, mayn't we have something to gaze at too?"

Blessington laughed. "You want too much, Gallytry," he said. "Lady Astrupp understands the value of the unattainable. Come along, sir!" he added to Loder, drawing him forward with an energetic pressure of the arm.

Loder responded, and as he did so a flicker of curiosity touched his mind for the first time. He wondered for an instant who this woman was who aroused so much comment. And with the speculation came the remembrance of how she had assured Chilcote that on one point at least he was invulnerable. He had spoken then from the height of a past experience—an experience so fully passed that he wondered now if it had been as staple a guarantee as he had then believed. Man's capacity for outliving is astonishingly complete. The long ago incident in the Italian mountains had faded, like a crayon study in which the tones have merged and gradually lost character. The past had paled before the present, as golden hair might pale before black. The simile came with apparent irrellevance. Then again Blessington pressed his arm.

"Now, sir!" he said, drawing away and lifting the curtain that hung before the entrance of the tent.

Loder looked at the amused, boyish face lighted by the hanging lamp and smiled pleasantly; then, with a shrug of the shoulders, he entered the pavilion, and the curtain fell behind him.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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