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THE PARLOR.

It Is Rapidly Becoming an Apartment of the Past.

The American parlor is a thing of the past, according to architects, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer. No more will there be a room reserved for state occasions, such as the receiving of formal calls, the visit of the minister and for weddings and for funerals.

"We never take the parlor into consideration any more," said a Cleveland architect recently. "The parlor is merged into the living room. The good old fashioned parlor, which was held in so much reverence in the old days, has no place in modern architecture.

"The demand is for a large living room in a small house, together with a dining room and kitchen. In a larger house there is usually a large living room, library, 'den,' dining room and kitchen.

"I had a client yesterday who desired to have a reception room or parlor not connected with the living room. He decided later to have a sort of reception room in connection with the hallway.

"When the parlor idea began to lose ground we did not make a radical change, but reduced the parlor to a small reception room, isolated from the others, where formal calls could be received. Now we make no provision for the parlor.

"In these days the reception rooms do not have to be closed only to be opened on the occasion of the visit of the family minister or the physician."

There may be many who will regret the passing of the old fashioned country parlor, with all its memories of visitors, courtship and occasions which left impressions which have not been eradicated by the strenuous age of today.

The Sardinians.

Sardinia was a wild place in the middle of the last century. A traveler says: "The men are clothed in goat-skins, one before and another behind, without breeches, shoes or stockings, and a woolen or skin cap on the head. The women have no other habiliments than a long woolen gown and a woolen cap. The peasants always go armed to defend themselves from one another, so that traveling in the interior is extremely unsafe without an escort, and it is even dangerous for ships to send their people on shore for water unless they are well armed. In short, the Sardinians are the Malays of the Mediterranean."

A Taste For Dogs.

Mark Twain was once talking of war and of the hardships and privations of sieges.

"A Frenchman," he said, "called one day on a woman who had two dogs. They were ugly little brutes, and when they came near him the man pushed them out of the way with his foot.

"I perceive, sir," said the woman coldly, "that you are not very fond of dogs."

"The man started in surprise. "I not fond of dogs!" he exclaimed. "Why, madam, I ate more than twenty of them during the siege of Paris!"

A Patient Man.

The endurance of the music lover who sits out one of Wagner's long "Ring" operas has often been commented upon, but perhaps not more forcibly than in London. Well up above the stage was a burly figure in homespun, evidently a Scottish farmer who had come to London to see the sights and hear the sounds. After sitting through three long acts he murmured audibly, "Twas a patient man that wrote all this!"

A Lake of Acid.

In the center of Sulphur Island, off New Zealand, is a lake of sulphuric acid fifty acres in extent. The water contains vast quantities of hydrochloric acid and sulphuric acids, hissing and bubbling at a temperature of 110 degrees F., and great care has to be taken in approaching it to avoid suffocation.

Man carries under his hat a private theater, wherein a greater drama is acted than is ever performed on the mimic stage, beginning and ending in eternity.—Carlyle.

THE LONDON COSTER.

Is the King of the Curb in the British Metropolis.

London's outdoor man is the coster. He is the Ishmael of the gutters. A very jolly Ishmael, it is true, who is more than content to acknowledge the line of demarcation between himself and the true cockney. But, nevertheless, in a modified, twentieth century way he is still the wild man whose hand is against every man's and every man's against his. He is probably the last remnant of the world's old race of wanderers—the last suggestion of the primitive man—left to the cities. He is to us town dwellers what the gypsy is to the countryside. His descent seems to spring from the same roving stock. And he is regarded, from a safe distance, with the same contempt by those who don't know him. His habits and his impulses still savor strongly of the days when tribe warred against tribe and every man's arm was for himself and his clan. And, although his pitch is below the curb, his caravan a barrow and his beast of burden a Russian pony, a donkey or himself, he is as free and exclusive as any other lusty scion of the people who live under the skies. Ishmael he is, and Ishmael he chooses to remain. And the chances are ten to one that whoever goes a-fishing for information among the barrows will come back with an empty creel or a fine show of fishermen's tales, for your coster knows both how to keep silence and how to use his tongue picturesquely in defense of his jealously guarded traditions and the internal economies of his existence.—Outing.

THE ELEPHANT.

He Is Good Natured, Docile, Obedient and Long Suffering.

"The elephant is the best natured beast in all wild creation," said a circus man. "Most people have an idea that the big beast is apt to go wrong any time and make all kinds of trouble for everybody. Now, as a matter of fact, I have never but once seen a freak of this kind. Then the result was directly due to the intolerable abuse of flat headed grooms. It seems to me that if some one was putting a steel point or hook into a soft joint of yours or mine many times a day and without any good reason for it we would show temper and tear up things too. The only difference is the elephant has more patience. He is docile, obedient and long suffering. When an elephant gets a little out of sorts there is always some lightweight attendant, it seems, to fly off and say he is 'daffy.' Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the poor elephant has been badly treated, and, as he cannot talk, he does about the only thing he can do and trumpets his disgust or possibly goes a step further and eases his feelings by taking a crack with his trunk at something within reach. Elephants are as kind hearted and tender as women and respond to little attentions the same way, and in the same way, just like a woman, when they get soured, it takes a long while to sweeten them again if it can be done at all."—Chicago Chronicle.

The Bengali.

The Bengali has the best brains of all the peoples in India and the readiest tongue. His memory is prodigious and his fertility in talk inexhaustible. He is something of an Irishman, something of an Italian, something of a Jew—if one can conceive an Irishman who would run away from a fight instead of running into it, an Italian without a sense of beauty and a Jew who would not risk \$5 on the chance of making \$500. He is very clever, but his cleverness does not lead him far on the road to achievement, for when it comes to doing, rather than talking, he is easily passed by people of far inferior ability.—London Standard.

Where the Rub Comes.

"Well," said the good natured boarder, "there's one thing about our boarding house—you can eat all you like there."

"Of course; same as ours," replied the grouchy one. "You can eat all you like, but there's never anything you could possibly like."—Philadelphia Press.

Fearless Firemen

Thirty Thousand of Them Fighting Flames in the United States—Daring Rescues on Dizzy Ladders—New York's Army.

SINCE fire fighting has become a regularly recognized and well compensated employment in the large cities of this country a great change has taken place in the discipline in vogue among the forces of fire fighters and in the methods employed in extinguishing fires. In the old days of volunteer firemen there may have been more glory in assisting at putting out flames when they had burst into action unbidden and unexpected, but there was much less science about it then. Making fire fighting a paid service under a regularly organized branch of the municipality has cost the large cities of the United States a great deal of money, but it is a change which has paid for itself many times over in the reduced amount of the losses due to outbreaks of fire. Credit should be given the volunteer companies, however, for the work which they did and which many are still doing in the smaller towns or in larger cities as forces auxiliary to the paid departments. For instance, in the city of New York, which has 3,600 paid firemen, the largest number employed by any city in the United States, there are also volunteer companies with a membership of 2,300. These companies exist mostly in the suburbs in parts of New York to which the service of the regular city department has not yet been extended.

Although fire fighting is necessarily a dangerous occupation and requires qualities akin to those of a soldier in men who would enter it, the perils have been much reduced by the perfection attained in many cities in methods of discipline and by the improvements in apparatus. On the other hand, the study given to the subject has resulted in such high efficiency of service that the proportion of disastrous fires is small compared with the number of outbreaks of flames. In such cities as



FIREMEN AT RESCUE WORK ON THE EXTENSION LADDER.

New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston and St. Louis the uniformed and paid firemen are seen so often rushing to fires that their approach and the ringing of the gong for the clearing of the street cause scarcely more than a momentary flurry. Usually the fire is extinguished before it has a chance to do much damage or furnish a spectacle that is worth crossing the street to view. But when a fire does get under headway and firemen find hard work cut out for them they show that their nerve is equal to the occasion. Then is seen the value of such improvements in fire fighting apparatus as the extension ladder, by which members of the force can climb into the windows of a burning building with the least possible delay. It requires courage to mount such a ladder, extended in midair, as it were, but the men are trained to this by frequent emergency drills, and as the ladder unfolds itself they are quick to spring upon the extended rungs and mount into the imperiled structure, perhaps to rescue those imprisoned within burning walls.

The scaling ladder is another great aid to quick attack on a burning building or to timely rescue of those shut off from escape by the flames. The expert climber mounts from story to story by placing its hooks in the window above him, climbing to the sill and then lifting his ladder to another window until he has gained a dizzy height. His nerve does not desert him in crossing from ledge to ledge or crawling along narrow copings, because his drill has accustomed him to work at a great height without fear.

Over 30,000 persons are employed in the United States in protecting the public against danger from fire, and nearly two-thirds of these are members of paid departments. In the days of the volunteer companies in big cities there was plenty of excitement in running with the hose cart in response to the wild alarms rung on the fire bell. Now when the noiseless electric current is used to call the department out the men go to their business without any flurry or bluster. In the "good old times" the volunteers were sometimes wont to demolish more property than they saved. Under up to date methods there is no recklessness of this kind.

GOG AND MAGOG.

Various Traditions Relating to These Two Famous Giants.

Who were Gog and Magog? English tradition says that they were the last of a race of giants who infested England until they were destroyed by some of the Trojans who went to the British isles after the destruction of Troy. Gog and Magog, it is said, were taken captive to London, where they were chained at the door of the palace of the king. When they died wooden images of the two giants were put in their places. In the course of time a great fire destroyed these, but now, if you go to London, you will see in the great hall of one of the famous buildings—the Guildhall—two immense wooden effigies of men called Gog and Magog.

But there are other traditions of the two giants. One is to the effect that when Alexander the Great overran Asia he chased into the mountains of the north an impure, wicked and man-eating people who were twenty-two nations in number and who were shut up with a rampart in which were gates of brass. One of these nations was Goth and another Magoth, from which we readily get the names of the mythical giants. It is supposed, however, that the Turks were meant by Gog and the Mongols were the children of Magog. We shall find mention made of Gog and Magog in many books, including the Bible, but there are the great wall and the rampart of Gog and Magog, whatever may have been the fact that gave the names of the two giants to that portion of the structure.

FEES IN ENGLAND.

The Treasury Has Many Schemes That Swell Its Income.

When a young man determines to become a barrister and enters his name at one of the Inns of court in London or Dublin he has to pay to the government a fee of £25. And when he is a full fledged English or Irish barrister or a Scotch advocate he has to fork out a further sum of £50.

Should he desire to become a solicitor he is fined even more heavily. When he becomes an apprentice his fee to the government is £80, and his yearly duty when he begins to practice is, for the first three years, £3 in the country and £4 10s. in London or Dublin and after the third year £6 and £9 respectively. So that a solicitor practicing forty years in London will have paid the government over £400.

A law agent (Scotland) pays £60 at commencement of study and £55 or £85 on beginning practice in the sheriff's court or court of session.

If you want to change your surname of your own free will the government charges you only £10, but if you do it under the direction of some deceased benefactor it costs you £50.

Bishops pay £30 for permission to be elected and £30 more for the royal assent to their election, and the fees paid on receiving letters patent are: By a baronet, £100; a baron, £150; a viscount, £200; an earl, £250; a marquis, £300, and a duke, £350.—London Express.

The Ashes of the Dead.

James Russell Lowell was a great favorite in the literary circles of London. On one occasion at a large banquet the peculiarities of American speech were discussed with English bluntness. Lord S. called to Mr. Lowell loudly, so as to silence all other speakers:

"There is one new expression invented by your countrymen so foolish and vulgar as to be unpardonable. They talk of the 'ashes of the dead.' We don't burn corpses. No Englishman would use a phrase so absurd."

"And yet," said Mr. Lowell gently, "your poet Gray says, speaking of the dead:

"E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires."

"And in the burial services of the church of England it is said, 'Dust to dust and ashes to ashes.' We sin in good company." A cordial burst of applause greeted this prompt rejoinder.

The Severest Test.

The severest test of manhood is never found in good times, but only in hard times. It is not the man who has success when others are doing well, but it is the man who keeps up his courage and struggles on when everybody else is wavering or going down who is the hero in the sight of God and men. It is an easy matter to make good time when both wind and tide are in one's favor or when one is moving with the current, but it requires character and skill and daring to make head in spite of opposing forces or to work successfully against the current.—Exchange.

Distinguished.

Visitor (in penitentiary)—Who is that distinguished looking convict? Warden—He is known here as No. 1147. Visitor—He seems to hold himself aloof from his fellows. Warden—Yes; you can hardly expect him to associate with the common herd. His trial cost the state \$200,000.

The Only Way.

A person of little tact once remarked to the octogenarian Auber, "What a sad thing it is, this old business!" "Yes," agreed the old musician, "it is sad; but," he added, with witty philosophy, "up to the present time no surer way has been discovered to live a long time."

A Cautious Damsel.

"Dearest, with you by my side, I would willingly give up all I possess—wealth, position, parents—everything." "I know, George, but in that case what would there be left for me?"—Milwaukee Sentinel.

It's a queer fact that the higher a man rises the less chance he has of being above suspicion.—Puck.

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