

Business of the Plumbers' Examining Board



WIPING A JOINT.



STUDYING SEWERAGE CHARTS.



ELUCIDATING A PROBLEM IN SANITATION.

WHEN jokes about plumbers' bills were now any man who had burned his hand while trying to wipe a joint passed as a plumber. Now ability to lay a tile drain no longer entitles a man to membership in the Plumbers' union. The man who would install plumbing must know all there is to be known about sanitation and ventilation. His knowledge must be practical as well as theoretical. For the modern plumbing board has a fashion of requiring applicants for licenses to do all sorts of work. All the large cities in the United States have plumbing inspectors and plumbers' examining boards. The era of quick plumbing in cities has passed and incompetents have been forced to seek work outside the jurisdiction of plumbing experts.

Nebraska's last legislature gave Omaha a board for the examination of plumbers. The city health commissioner, Dr. Victor

H. Coffman, the city plumbing inspector, J. L. Lynch, Harry W. McVea, journeyman plumber, and James Cameron, master plumber, make up the present board. The law requires that the health commissioner and plumbing inspector shall be members of the board and the master plumbers and journeyman plumbers are always to have representatives named by the mayor and approved by the city council.

In the basement of the city hall is a miniature plumbing shop. Pipes and joints of all sorts are arranged around the walls. Tools of all descriptions are stored away in chests and boxes and a few machines are kept for the embarrassment of greenhorns. Applicants for licenses to do plumbing are summoned before the examining board in small squads. The first part of the examination takes place in the office of the plumbing inspector. Charts representing houses of various sizes are laid before the applicants and they are asked to tell how

they would connect bathtubs and washstands located in various parts of the houses. Questions are also asked concerning the proper location of ventilating pipes.

It is not the purpose of the board to examine the applicants in writing and composition. The plumbers give answers verbally and a member of the board writes them down as dictated. All answers are read to the applicants and they are given an opportunity to make corrections.

After the persons desiring licenses have been quizzed on the proper means of connecting up the various parts of a house they are confronted with charts which show the complete plumbing of buildings, varying in size from a one-story cottage to an apartment house. In many of these charts the plumbing is faulty and the connections are made in the worst possible manner. The applicant who does not pick out the faults in the plumbing charts is certain to find he has struck a snag, for the correction of

errors made by incompetent workmen is an important duty of a modern plumber.

Three of the members of the board are practical plumbers of wide experience and have no trouble in detecting a man who is trying to slip through the examinations on superficial knowledge of his trade. Such an applicant is given a course in practical work which will teach him many wrinkles in plumbing. All sorts of queer joints and connections are stored in the workshop for the mystification of the fellow who betrays his inexperience in answering the questions on the charts.

The man who succeeds in passing the board is competent to do any sort of plumbing. Many capable plumbers will not do work as it should be done because there are cheaper ways, but the board is prepared to handle fellows of this class. It is within the power of the board to revoke the license of any plumber who violates the city ordinances or to impose fines varying

from \$5 to \$100 for violations. Through the plumbing inspector the board keeps thoroughly in touch with the work of all the license holders and can protect the public from frauds.

To the uninitiated the city plumbing ordinance is little better than a puzzle. It makes specific provisions concerning the size of pipes to be used in certain work and lays down rules for the installation of ventilating pipes. The ordinance was drawn after a careful study of similar ordinances in other cities and sets forth the most advanced ideas concerning sanitation and ventilation.

In the plumbers' examining board the public is provided with a safeguard. All plans for plumbing must be submitted to this board for approval. After work is installed it is inspected. If the contractor has slighted the work he must bring it up to specifications before the plumbing inspector will approve it.

Beautiful Feature of English Village Life

LONDON, July 21.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee).—A typical English village. Repeated visits extending back over a long period have made the place as dear and familiar as a second home. Yet in describing it no names will be given, not even the name of the village itself, for the object is, not to draw attention to this one place in particular, but to use this one little spot in the beautiful country districts of old England as an illustration of English village life in general, with all its charms, all its idiosyncracies, all its drawbacks, but with special reference to the changes brought about in it in the last twenty-five years. The topic is freshened and vivified by a recent visit to the annual horticultural show. This in itself has greatly improved upon what it used to be and the very fact of such a show being an annual event in a place in which there is little to see excepting the beauties of nature and little to do beyond the daily humdrum of cultivating the land, has had a distinctly uplifting and broadening influence upon all classes, no less upon the well-to-do than upon the laborers and his family.

First Show a Frost.

Since the first flower show twenty years ago told their story of stern and shine also when I first saw it, eighteen years ago, it was only an experiment, with not much promise of either long life or great usefulness. A single small tent was the only shelter from the sun's rays or the treacherous clouds of this changeable English climate. Very hard did it seem to get the unsophisticated villagers to understand what entries were to be made, how exhibits were to be classified, as well as how impossible it was for every exhibitor to get the first prize. Innovations of any kind have a hard row to hoe in England. This is even more noticeable in the social customs of village life than in the slow-going way in which business is done in the centers of trade. But one thing decidedly favorable to these horticultural exhibitions was the innate passion of the country laborer for cultivating a garden patch and the corresponding fondness of his better half for flowers. There is scarcely a man who hasn't his little allotment of land. It generally goes in with the small rent he pays for his dwelling, but if it doesn't attach to his house he is sure to get it somewhere. In some cases after his long day's work he will trudge a mile to spend an hour or so of joyful labor in his own little garden patch. Similarly, too, will the good housewife be devoted to the little flower garden she usually has at her front door. Such bright, tasteful little enclosures these are and after the eye has

delighted itself with the profusion of flowers, outside the cottage one may then look at the windows and invariably find that these, too, are adorned enticingly in the same way.

Patience Solves the Problem.

Flowers in every window and flowers in front of nearly every cottage seems to be the rule in these trim, quiet country places of old England. Naturally, therefore, these horticultural shows, in seeking room for themselves in the English villages, found congenial soil in the popular taste. The difficulties were all in the business and social department. How to bring the slow-going people to time, how to make them understand and how to blend the classes in a social way so that the gentry should not be too ostentatiously patronizing toward the laborer and the laborer not too obsequious or bashful before the gentry? These were the problems and throughout the length and breadth of the land time and patience have so successfully solved these problems that the annual flower show, with its prizes for gardening and cooking and table-decoration, besides the premiums which encourage horticulture and with its one-day in the year when gentry and common folk all mingle together in the midst of large gleaming tents, topped off by flags, is now the established thing everywhere and is necessarily everywhere having a most happy effect.

Inevitably at these village exhibitions there will be in evidence what an American at first thought would look upon as the remains of an odious caste spirit. The advance schedule will have duly notified the laborer which is his class and tradesmen and others to which classes they belong, but this is really the laborer's interest. One may be as surely outclassed in cultivating turnips or roses as in entering the ring for a prizefight and everyone will see that in competition with the squire at the hall, who has plenty of leisure and plenty of help, or even with the well-to-do tradesman, this would be exactly the predicament of the farm laborer. And as to the caste spirit of which one used to see so much in these out-of-the-way places my observation is that it is yielding gracefully to common sense and the trend of events. One does not find now the bowing and scraping to superiors that was common in this typical English village twenty years ago and really if this custom were still in vogue it would seem more incongruous than it used to, because the class who formerly yielded this homage are so much better looking than they were, not only better dressed and more cleanly and tidy, but with a new look of intelligence on their faces, due no doubt to what

through the years the excellent village school has been doing for them.

Upper Classes Learn Also.

And while the lower orders are becoming more intelligent those higher up in the social scale are evidently becoming much more sensible. They, too, have learned something in the flight of the years, and not a little of this new light has come to them through the school of adversity. Only for the conviction that such discipline will work out is compensation in an enlarged and enriched social intercourse, I should be sorry for the gentry and farmers of England. For long years they've had hard lines. Everything has seemed to be against them, but more especially the increasing importation of cereals and meats from America. Farming hasn't paid. Landlords and tenants have all suffered. In many parts land has depreciated one-half in a score of years. So that the landed gentry have had to get along on incomes cut in two and still there has been no better chance for the farmer, because the reduction in rents is not even yet what it ought to be in view of the low price to which farm produce has fallen.

It was this condition of the landed and farming interests which brought to the village Mr. Rider Haggard and it so happened that his visit occurred while the annual flower show was in progress. Mr. Haggard has given up story writing for the present. He has called a halt to that fervid imagination out of which "She" was born and is gathering facts on the prosaic subject of agriculture. The author of "King Solomon's Mines," himself an English country gentleman, has conceived the notion that there is a mine of immeasurable wealth right at the doors of English people, which they are not working as they should. He is making observations in every county and under the title, "Back to the Land," is writing articles for a London daily, the object of which is to point out, if possible, what is the matter with the country districts and then indicate by what new laws and methods the present depressed condition of agriculture may be relieved. In taking alarm at the situation, Mr. Haggard has caught a fever, which properly of late has become common over here, and in his bugle-cry of "Back to the Land" he is unquestionably calling for a much needed reform. It isn't merely the predicament of farmers and landowners that is involved. With European navies ever on the increase the danger of a blockade becomes more imminent, and that, under present conditions, as everyone is well aware, would reduce the country to starvation within a few weeks.

But it's an ill-wind indeed that doesn't bring good to someone and it has seemed to me that good of a certain kind has already

resulted from the pinch that has fallen upon these lords of English agriculture. They are not so prosperous as they were, neither are they so independent and exclusive. The spirit of fraternity is abroad. In the country districts as in London one cannot help seeing that rich and favored are in these days showing themselves brothers to the poor and lowly. To get everything in order for that flower show involved no end of labor and what an inspiring sight it was to see the rough work of the early morning, when all the exhibits—419 there were—had to be arranged and numbered, cheerfully undertaken by those who are classed amongst the leading families. The vicar was hard at it in his shirt sleeves. The village doctor and the schoolmaster and the leading farmer, who is always an important personage, buckled down to work with as much zeal as they afterwards showed in disposing of the champagne that was passed around, and in all that was done that hot summer morning the squire from the hall was as busy and sweaty and good natured and approachable as any man on the grounds.

Where the Squire Lives.

The residence of this village notable stands far back from the road, embowered in foliage, surrounded by beautifully kept gardens, and is approached through an avenue of trees as tall and symmetrical as one could wish to see. On his mother's side this village gentleman is blood kin to Bulwer Lytton. He is forty and a bachelor—a fine catch for some enterprising American girl. But unfortunately he hasn't a title, though a not distant ancestor had one. Through this titled progenitor a charity was instituted by which for all time the poor children of the village are to be clothed and otherwise helped. The boys and girls who share in this charity are always dressed in green. To keep up this charity and to maintain the other generous traditions of his family, has been at times fully as much as the present squire was equal to, for like other landed proprietors his income has been reduced. But he is still the perfect gentleman, generous and hospitable to a fault. He is always at church on Sunday, where he and his mother and sisters sit in a corner fenced off to themselves, surrounded by the mural effigies of their departed ancestors, and for the rest, he is just as unassuming when every second Monday he sits amongst the magistrates to administer justice as when he lends a willing hand in the miscellaneous work of a horticultural show.

This gentleman spent some years "roughing it" in the United States and Canada. Many of the sons of country

squires do this and it does them good. In roughing it in America they themselves get smoothed down quite a little. They never after that put on quite so many airs, and besides being more approachable they are also more intelligent. This reminds me how many in that English village have relatives on the other side of the big pond. Across from the little cottage in which this writer has spent so many happy days is the village postoffice. It is kept by two estimable sisters, who have another sister in the United States, the wife of an Episcopal clergyman. On the same side, a little farther down, is one of the village public-houses. It has been handed down from father to son for long years. Two out of the family are in America. So one might go through the entire village, finding that the families which do not have some representative near or remote seeking fortune under the stars and stripes are the small minority. Naturally these people do not ask the silly questions about our great country that they used to. Letters and the interchange of visits have convinced them at last that Texas is not a suburb of New York City and that one who lives in Ohio is not necessarily acquainted with everybody who happens to be out in Oregon.

Its Charm is Permanent.

But no influence from the new world and none of the modern improvements that are gradually creeping in can ever divest a village like this of its aspect of oldness or of the charm which far-reaching traditions give to it. We are in that part of England for which the Britons and Danes contended and not far from an immense dyke which was thrown up by the Romans as a defense against the Picts and Scots. The village church has stood on the same spot eight hundred years and a part of the first building still stands. The surrounding graveyard has been buried in over and over again, and there are ghastly proofs that the graveyard formerly exceeded its present limits. If not, why were several skulls turned up when they were excavating for building purposes in the adjacent school-yard? But things like these do not in the least detract from the beauty of the place. In fact, to think of the generations that have preceded you in these sylvan haunts gives an added charm to the lazy, drowsing life of the place. In a certain way you feel that your life is so shut off in so quiet a retreat from the great rushing life of the world at large that you yourself are almost dead. But if this were death, how entrancingly comfortable that state would be and how beautiful the surroundings!

Everywhere the smoothest roads, the trimmest hedges, the stateliest trees. Short

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