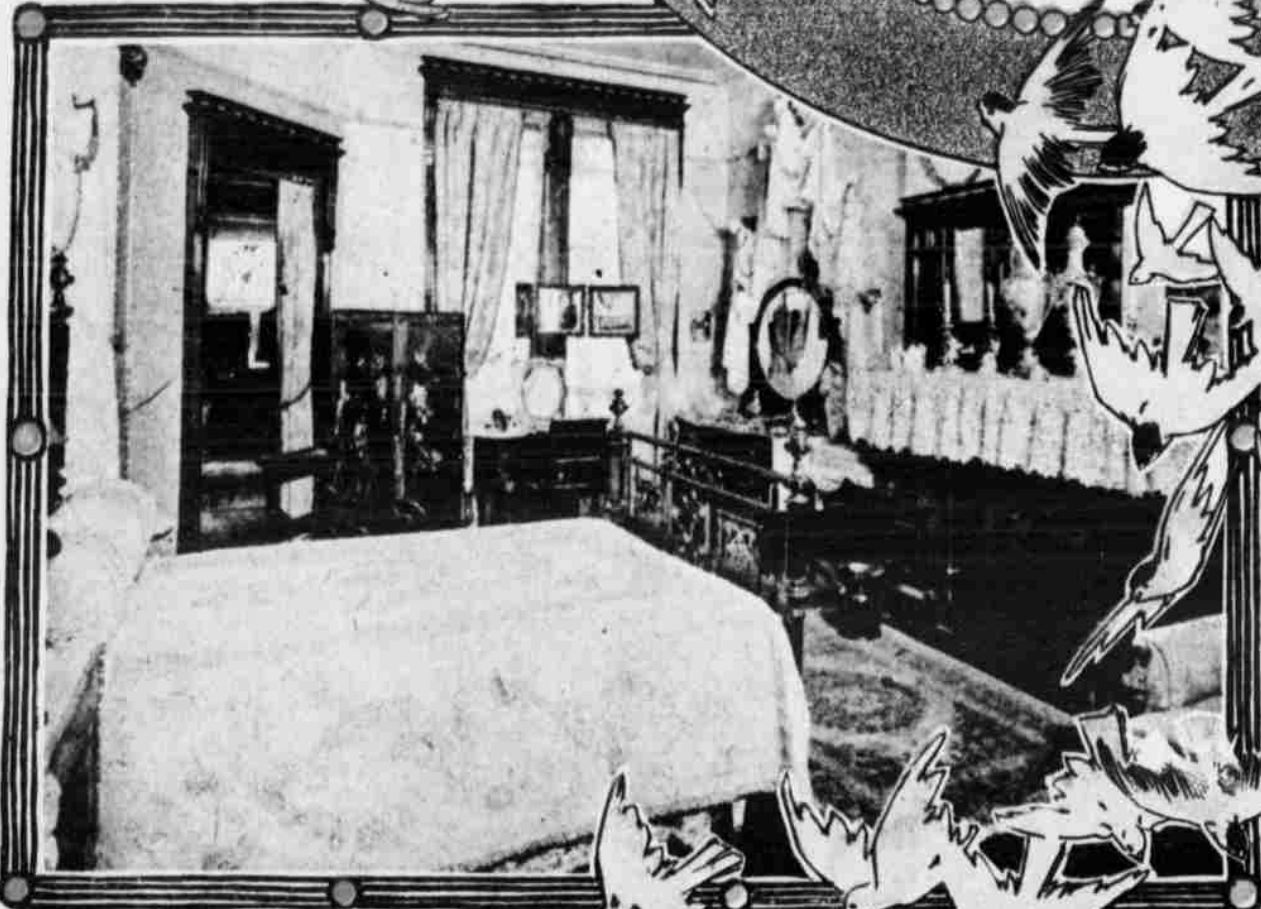


# A SONG-BIRD'S NEST

LILLIAN  
RUSSELL'S  
BEAUTIFUL  
HOME



Attractive Cozy Corner  
in her Den



Her Bedroom in Pink and Gold

**W**ON'T you step into my parlor?" said Lillian Russell. It really is "the prettiest parlor that ever you did spy." Before I asked the prima donna to show me through her home I used to wonder why she gave up her work on the road to remain with Weber & Fields in New York. Afterward I marveled that she ever left the borough of Manhattan. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't drag the average woman from a place like that.

Miss Russell's address is 161 West Fifty-seventh street. The house is directly opposite Carnegie hall, and looks so much like the other houses on the block that one is inclined to compare them all to a row of gigantic brown teeth. The only indication of what is inside is derived from the fine curtains hanging at the windows.

"A hasty trip from cellar to garret," Miss Russell told me when first I spoke to her about the dwelling, "is like a journey down the Pike at the world's fair. Henri Duxren, who planned the house for us, arranged for rooms in the period of Louis XVI, of the first empire, and of the Norman conquest. There are also an old English supper room, a Dutch dining room, a Turkish den, and a plain, comfortable American bedroom. It is eclectic, except that one walks over the magic carpet instead of merely sitting on it."

### Like a Bit of Fairyland.

No. 161 West Fifty-seventh is more like fairyland than the product of ordinary necromancy. It is as beautiful a home as one could desire. The drawing room represents the days of Marie Antoinette, and there are other drawing rooms at Versailles. There is a perquetry floor partly covered by a deep blue rug. The walls are of wood painted white, and into this wood have been let various panels of a delicate blue silk. Winter and summer a tiny fire burns in a tiny grate, over which is a shelf bearing a bust of the unfortunate queen. On either side of this grate are cabinets containing miniatures and carved ivory. Between them is a tapestry screen, and still further to the left and right are bronze mirrors. A queer old chair with a back shaped like a sea shell occupies one corner of the apartment, and a broad couch laden with pillows stands opposite. Through glass doors directly across from windows looking on the street one catches a view of the music room and a glimpse of Napoleon in bronze glaring at Marie Antoinette on the mantelpiece.

### Glimpse of the Music Room.

The music room is a little bit of a place, with a piano filling most of it. On the piano are a magnificent scarlet plush robe embroidered in gold, with the Napoleonic bees, the bronze figure just mentioned, and the score of "Lady Teazle," the opera in which Miss Russell soon is to begin her season at the Casino. John Kendrick Bangs, who collaborated with Rodric Penfield in writing the libretto of this piece, is the only unusual person represented by photograph or statuette. There are several plaques of Schubert, Mozart, Schumann, Grieg, and Beethoven. Also, item, one gilt music rack, one small harp, and a quantity of scarlet drapery.

The music room has no wall on the side to the left as one enters from the drawing room. Instead, there is a foyer and a staircase with a landing so commodious that it looks like part of a stage setting. Here are a hanging lamp and more plush covered with bees. This time the plush, which is draped gracefully over the balustrade, is purple.

### Dining Room of Oak.

A pungent odor of grapes drew me toward the dining room, and Miss Russell followed. You know the average dining room, with its stiff sideboard and its pictures of dead birds. Well, this is a dining room that would have inspired Byron to poetry. De Maupassant to gluttonism, and Montequieu to tears. The apartment is cut out of oak, or, to be more accurate, its walls are all of oak. Flemish tiles have been let into this oak everywhere, principally over the enormous grate on the right—a grate in which real logs lay on big andirons ready for the match. To match these tiles there are blue curtains at the windows and a small blue rug on the polished oak floor. The left wall is a sideboard—this is no exaggeration—carved by hand and glittering with glass and silver. On top of the sideboard stands a quantity of

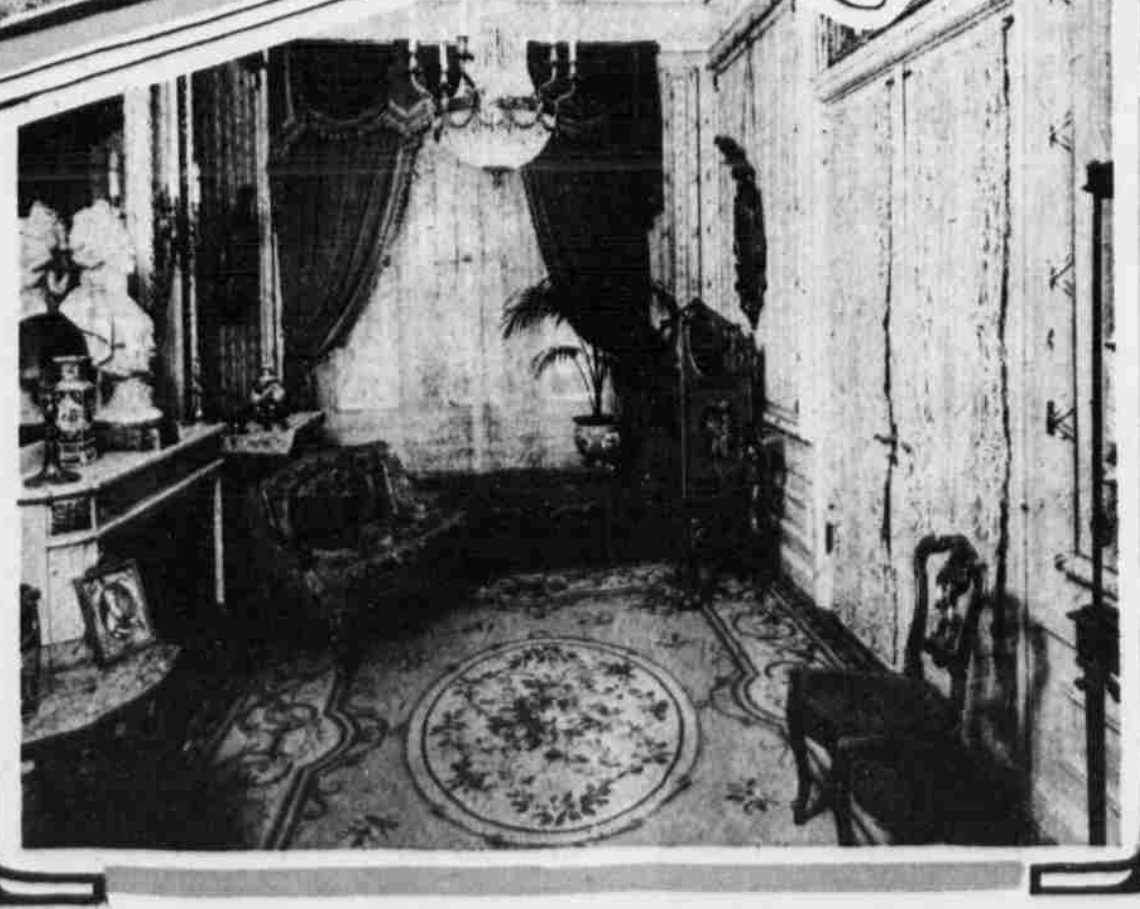


The Drawing Room Represents the Days of Marie Antoinette

blue pottery. A ponderous oak table, set as for guests, takes up the middle of the room. Around it are carved chairs, upholstered with leather on which Miss Russell's initials have been stamped in gold. At one's back a marvel of a Dutch clock, six feet tall, could be heard measuring off the seconds. It measured them so gloomily and so insistently that it might have taken the place of the skeleton at a feast in Pompeii. Miss Russell did not in the least suggest Arbaces, however, and the heavy oaken beams visible overhead hint at Rotterdam much more than at the City of the Dead.

### Where She Reads Sometimes.

The library is to a house what the pulse is to a patient. Miss Russell and I walked up the stairs to see her, which is over the drawing room. En route she told me how she first heard the script of "Lady Teazle." "Mr. Bangs and I slipped away from a number of guests," she replied, "and I sat on the steps while he read the libretto to me. Funny, wasn't it?"



The Library is Old English

Dining Room with Walls of Oak

"For the sake of the public, I hope so," I replied. Side by side on Miss Russell's library table I found George Bernard Shaw, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sir Edwin Arnold, Sir Francis Bacon, Jerome K. Jerome, Omar Khayyam, and Mooksee, who isn't an author, but a particular ugly toy spaniel. Mooksee's full face is astonishingly like that of a dowager at the horse show.

The library is old English. One wall is hidden behind shelves of books, most of which look as though they were there to be read. Dumas was positively dogeared. "The British Essayists, in forty-two volumes" seemed suspicious. All in all, however, I should say that Miss Russell is a woman who enjoys reading. On the opposite wall hang Munoz's little picture, "The Spy," Lejeune's "The Defense," and photographs of Alice Nielson and Edna Wallace Hopper. These last bear endearing messages and are signed "Alice" and "Edna." This room is in a pale green, tempered by a dark green carpet. There are several cabinets of curios, a shelf of amphora, and a large phonograph.

### Keeping Tab on Her Weight.

Miss Russell's own room is in pink and gold. It contains a handsome brass headboard with a cover and pillows of Irish lace. At the head of the bed is a small table bearing a telephone, a reading lamp, and various push buttons, by which the maid may be summoned or the lights extinguished. The lamp is of a Pompeian glass. At the back of the apartment is a glass dressing table under a canopy of lace, and a French bureau bearing a set of gold toilet articles. Through a narrow door one sees a bathroom, and, in the bathroom, a scale on which she may weigh herself daily. Apparently the end of Miss Russell's fight over her waist line is not yet.

On the next floor up are a dream of a spare room and a den. "Men and bears are supposed to have a monopoly on the house," said Miss Russell, "but this is my favorite part of the house."

### Her Cozy Oriental Den.

The apartment is oriental in nature, its prominent feature being the inevitable cozy corner. This cozy corner, however, is as attractive as a cozy corner can be. The walls are upholstered with Persian rugs and the ceiling is a tent top of cloth of gold. The lighting is accomplished by the aid of open lamps suspended from the ceiling. There is a cabinet full of carved jewels, there are a half a dozen heathen gods, there are several tabourets inlaid with pearl, and on top of these things—a card table and an assortment of autographed pen and ink sketches by Outcault, O'Neill, McCutcheon, Martin, Stanlaw, Gibson, Remington, and Archie Gunn. "Did M. Duxren approve of these?" I asked.

"No," replied Miss Russell, "but one must have civilized comforts even in an oriental room."

"Meaning Outcault?"

"Meaning the card table."

We looked about for a few minutes and then I began putting on my gloves. I had noticed that among all the pictures in the house there was not one of Miss Russell. I asked her about it, but she only laughed. "It's a notion of mine," she said. "After awhile I may have a photograph of myself as Lady Teazle." Perhaps Miss Russell finds her most flattering likeness framed in the gold border of the mirror in that delightful Marie Antoinette drawing room. For, beautiful as the house at 161 West Fifty-seventh street undoubtedly is, the queen of comic opera was the most attractive thing I saw in it.

CHANNING POLLOCK.

PHOTOS COURTESY  
OF BYRON N.Y.