

OVER THE TEACUPS BOUDOIR GOSSIP FOR LADY READERS . . .

Politeness in Burglars.

The polite burglar will not necessarily stop at words, says the "Globe." He cannot indeed do so the moment politeness is torn within him. His very soul will cry out against such an outrage. What are words when the plate-basket takes to itself wings? What are words when the smartly descending jenny comes in contact with a householder's cranium? Empty nothings. The polite burglar will not stick at words; he at least will leave on the mantelpiece the burglary insurance policy that with kindly forethought he has taken out in his victim's name a month or two before his visit; he will at least leave on the stricken man's chest a note to the effect that the writer is insured in the Burglars' Assurance Company, and that the other party clause entitles the victim of "force majeure" to a sum of thirty shillings a week for a period of not more than six weeks, and that the first instalment will be paid in seven days time in postal orders of face value or bank notes (counterfeit) at a very profitable discount, at the choice of the recipient.

But enough of the William de Sykes of the future and the Albany, what of the present? What have we to show, beyond the message left in the County Council refreshment room in Dulwich Park, that the burglarious fraternity has slipped on a veneer of good manners with the kid gloves that the practitioner of to-day dons in order to avoid leaving tell-tale thumb impressions. The note that rendered the tenth burglarious entry of the Dulwich Park pleasure remarkable was, after all, more self-commiseratory than apologetic. "Dear Sir,—We are very sorry to have spoilt your place, but more sorry that there were no spiritulicks or tobacco.—Yours, Radles and Co." It is to be feared that the writer's regrets in respect to the damage done were not as sincere as they might have been, for the mischief perpetrated obviously represented the form of revenge that the interlopers had adopted to assuage their feeling of disappointment.

Adopters of this feeling, by the way, the County Council might take a hint from the bonifaces of Edinburgh, who, during an epidemic of burglary a few years ago, adopted the plan of leaving 10s. in their tills when locking up on a Saturday night, an expedient that is believed to have saved a great quantity of liquor being wasted through the taps of beer and whisky barrels being wantonly turned on by bona fide travellers disappointed of their booty.

Why the modern house-breaker should show such a pronounced taste for letters as he has done of late it is difficult to say, even in the present depressed condition of the literary market, but it is one of the characteristics of the polite burglar to take up a pen at the best provocation, and not always with the idea of being polite, as the following example, found by a North London policeman on his return from chapel, discloses.—"Sir," wrote the Knight of the Round on this occasion, "Sorry I could not stop, but we may meet on a future occasion. We have both been praying—soon that you might be saved from sin, and me that out of the proceeds of this night's signing I might say something." Richard humourist, how different was your message from that of the gallant gentleman who rided the fat of a Parisian banker a few years ago, and, with new feeling, wrote, apropos of his lifting two silver frames but leaving behind him the photographs they had contained: "It would not be nice of me to deprive you of these photographs, which you must value much more than the mere frames."

Whether the polite burglar has come to stay is a moot point, but there is not

much doubt as to whether it is altogether desirable for a burglar, polite or otherwise, to stay; but of the various classes of house-breaker undoubtedly the most preferable are those whose professional manner is akin to that of the professor who left a packet and note by the bedside of a pretty French lady who was staying with some friends at Zurich early in January, 1904, and who undoubtedly possessed a bedside manner that might provoke the envy of a Harley-street practitioner. When fully awake the hitherto Sleeping Beauty read with astonishment the following lines:—"Last night I paid you a visit, and not having the honour of a personal invitation I entered by the window. You will notice I collected your jewels, which I am ashamed to say I intended to take with me; but when I saw your pretty face, which fascinated me instantly, I sat by the bedside and 'devoured' it for some time in the dim light; and then, ashamed of myself, I quietly left.—Your humble servant." Written in excellent French, the nationality of the writer is not far to seek.

Like Parent, Like Child.

Don't expect good manners in children if they are treated by their elders in an unmannerly manner.

Don't be surprised if children are snappish and quarrelsome if you set them the example by being so to them.

Don't frighten children into being obedient by threats which you have no intention of carrying out. Your future difficulties in managing your children are enormously increased by this unwise but not uncommon practice.

Don't take filivty children with you when you go to pay calls. It is too great a tax on the forbearance of your friends, and it has led to the severing of acquaintance-hips.

Don't—because it is easier to do things yourself than teach the children how to do them—let your boys and girls grow up with slovenly habits.

Don't forget that if you do not make companions of your children in their youth, you can't expect them to be your friends when they grow up.

Wrestling Girl Beats Her Father.

Mr. W. L. James, of Chicago, is regretting that he challenged his daughter long, and nineteen, to wrestle.

The girl was home from college, and had boasted of her physical prowess, which she said was the result of playing basketball for the Rose-Hulmer College team, the champions of Indiana.

In three minutes the father was thrown. The physicians found that one of his legs, the "Mail" says, was broken and his knee-cap split. He is in hospital.

Tax on Bachelors.

Quite a determined agitation is going on in several countries—France, Switzerland, and in some American States—for a tax on all bachelors over twenty-five and under fifty.

There does not seem any particular reason why the man who has not found a mate by the time he is fifty should be exempt from the tax, unless the idea is that his fate is so absolutely forlorn that it carries it own punishment with it! Some bachelors say if they can produce evidence of having been refused by three ladies, they ought to be let off payment of the tax at any age.

Co-operative Housekeeping.

THE SERVANT AND OTHER DOMESTIC PROBLEMS SOLVED.

The house-keeping problem has been solved at last. No, at least, thinks Otto Fick, a clever Dane, who has instituted a system of co-operative living, which, he maintains, will do away with nearly all the worst domestic worries. His scheme has met with high approval, and it has appeared to the Danish Government so reasonable that they have advanced £5,000 to institute an experimental home on Fick's lines in Copenhagen.

The basal notion of the system is that a number of families should live together in one house; but instead of, say, twenty-five separate menages, each with its own separate and distinct forces of Mary Ann and Alphonse, etc., there is to be one great consolidated Mary Ann and one consolidated Alphonse, etc.

In other words, there is a central service which attends to one and every of the domestic wants of the twenty-five, and yet is but one service.

This service does the following things upon the pressure of various buttons by the twenty-five which symbolise their wants:—

It cooks three meals a day. It orders the materials for every meal. It sees the butcher, grocer, baker, milkman, and coal distributor.

It pays one and all.

It makes beds, washes dishes, and sweeps the room—by vacuum process.

It blacks shoes, presses trousers, and does the family washing.

It reduces the servant problem and other kindred affairs to just one twenty-five.

THE DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS.

Mr. Fick has given this very interesting account and explanation of his system:—

"Briefly, my idea is to establish in every large city a number of flats capable of accommodating twenty-five families. By experiment I have found that that is the number that can be handled best in a community. Each flat is commodious, and consists of a drawing room, a library, a dining-room, two bedrooms, and a bathroom. There is no kitchen, none of those box-like regulation affairs that are the bane of the flat.

"Instead, there is one central general kitchen of such dimensions that all within the house may easily draw their food supply therefrom. In this kitchen there is a main chef and three assistants. They are all men. All cooks were originally men, and men are the best cooks despite the modern idea to the contrary. This, I know, seems revolutionary, but it is so.

"But all is not cooking. The kitchen is, perforce, the most important feature; but, then, the basis are to be made, the suites to be kept clean, shoes blacked, and all the countless minutiae of house-keeping to be attended to. For the most of these tasks there are women. Five women and four men can easily do the work of twenty-five separate families, taking the place of possibly fifty or a hundred domestics. Their work includes washing, etc. With system, the whole plan works like magic. The details of various times to be spent with each family are easily adjusted.

"In the Copenhagen house there are dozens of electric buttons. Each means that he or she who pushes it desires some especial thing done. Almost as soon as the bell is sounded in the central servant hall, the work is under way.

HOW THE HOUSE IS GOVERNED.

"The house is governed by an administration department. This department is chosen each six months by the members of the community from its own ranks, and upon it devolves the most important

duty of selecting the help, of overseeing the catering—that is, keeping it in good order—and of attending to all matters of a kindred nature. It acts as the general overseer, to whom all complaints are made.

"As for the menu—each night the chef submits a card for the following day to a quorum of the administering body. It affords ample scope for choice, but here I want to announce another dictum.

"It does not, and never shall as long as I have anything to do with the formation of the system, cater to vegetarians, health cranks, or dyspeptics. We do not aim to create either sanatoriums or hospitals. We offer a healthy, sane solution of the domestic problem for healthy, sane people.

"Finally, there is a time limit for the serving of each meal, and all that the housewife has to do is to touch a button during any of these periods, and instantly there is sent to her by dumb waiter from the central kitchen the meal she desires. A given number of rings denotes the number of covers wished."

Hints for Wives.

There are two successful ways of looking at a husband. One is to make up your mind that he has no faults and to consider him a piece of perfection. The other is to recognise his faults and to make up your mind to love him in spite of them.—"Health."

Thralls of Fashion.

There are few more helpless and pitiable creatures than a woman on a wet and windy day, trying to hold up her skirt with one hand, while with the other she grasps her umbrella and the little bag which serves her in lieu of a purse.—"Black and White."



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