

## IMPROVING THE ATTIC.

Suggestions That Will Help In Making It Habitable.

In addition to those familiar uses of attics which are so vivid when it rains or when one is cynical or moody or inclined to be witty at the expense of bedposts and warming pans, there are improved uses an attic can be put to and still remain an attic. The feeling of attics—that sense they give of a friendly-alienation from the world below stairs—must not, of course, be lost. If one desires no more than a place in which to tell fairy tales at twilight the lighting of a candle might be change enough in the usual un-plastered and left over space. But that is too simple. Besides, the taste for fairy tales is not universal, and it is, moreover, a taste more natural in the nursery than in the attic. But a habitable attic must be anything but dingy. A glass trapdoor, such as one too often sees, is not enough. There should be a great dormer window, built low enough for window seats, and ample seats at that, large enough to lounge in. There should be wide sills, too, for flowers, for an attic without flowers would be unimaginable. As for the body of the room the chief thing to do where there are gables would be to insert a wainscot all around of, say, five or six feet in height. Along this could be put shelves for books or odds and ends of whatever kind. A carpet would be improper, for it is traditional that an attic is bare. Inexpensive rugs and skins suggest themselves mechanically, like easy chairs, a work table and a lounge. The fancy includes a piano, pictures, glorious andirons, sconces, while the imagination leaps to armor and cabinets. Yet in a proper attic the furniture should be a little commonplace with a discarded look, if you will, to be in keeping. Things half broken down are fit for a quaint utility there, and as clothes once decent on Sunday come to be so only on Saturday and then on Friday, and so on, so odds and ends they grow familiar and worn in their parts of the house have a last—as old companions in an attic.—Wallace Stevens in *Indoors and out.*

### Diplomatic.

"Mr. Gidsmore," began the young man, "when you proposed to your wife, or to the estimable lady who is now Mrs. Gidsmore, did she tell you to ask her father?"

"She did, my boy," affably replied Mr. Gidsmore.

"And did you try to shirk the job?"

"Well, come to think of it, I did. I believe I tried to get her to do me asking, 'pon my soul. Ha, ha!"

"And when you did ask him—of course you had to speak to him 'nally?"

"Of course I did. Of course."

"And when you did ask him did your knees shake, and was your tongue dry, and did you have stage right generally?"

"I was scared to death."

"Well, that's the way I feel. I old Gladys I knew I could find some mutual bond of sympathy between us when I came to tell you that she has promised to marry me."—Life.

### Took Him Down a Peg.

The young doctor to whom the Esculapian oath was Greek looked contemptuously at the old woman who had come to the uptown hospital where he was an interne to inquire about her son.

"He has cerebros neurosis, I told you once," he said.

"Oh, dear," said the woman, for she was not as ornately educated as the young physician, "is it as bad as that? New—what do you call it?"

"Neurosis," said the surgeon.

"Don't I talk plain enough for you?"

"Is it anything like nervous prostration?" inquired the woman. "You will pardon me, sir. My education was along literary rather than scientific lines."

"That's what some call it," said the young physician as he got ready to make a run for the ambulance at the door.—New York Telegram.

### Feeling Overcrowded.

It was doubtless Mrs. Howe's "sympathetic nature," to which she constantly referred, that made her carry so many burdens which did not belong to her. Her sufferings were many, but the statement of them often roused her family to mind.

"How's your head this morning, my dear?" inquired Mr. Howe one morning in a properly solicitous tone.

"It's no better," came in a hollow voice from behind the teapot. "It won't be any better while I can't get Cousin John's lungs and Mary's china and mother's eyes and Harriet's wisdom teeth out of it for one minute."

## SOLVED IN SLUMBER.

A Problem That Was Worked Out and Written During Sleep.

Many persons have written while wrapped in slumber. Coleridge writing the poem of "Kubla Khan" in his sleep is a classic instance, but there are numerous others. Here is one which Dr. Carpenter mentions in his book on "Mental Physiology."

A professor at Amsterdam had been given by a banking house of that city a question to solve, involving a long and difficult calculation. Several times he tried to obtain the solution, but each time he made some mistake. At last, all wearied out, he gave the problem to some of his students, telling them that if possible he would like the answer in three days. One of them, eager to get into his teacher's good graces, took it home and worked on it for three successive nights in vain.

"At last I bent myself over my figures for a third evening. It was winter, and I calculated till half past 1 in the morning, all to no purpose. The product was erroneous. Low at heart, I threw down my pencil, which already by that time had beciphered three slates. I hesitated whether I would toil through the night, as I knew that the professor wanted an answer the very same morning. But, lo! my candle was already burning in the socket, and the persons with whom I lived had gone to rest. Then I also went to bed, my head filled with ciphers, and, tired in mind, I fell asleep. In the morning I awoke just early enough to dress and prepare myself to go to the lecture, vexed at heart at not having been able to solve the question and at having to disappoint my teacher.

"But, oh, wonder! As I approach my writing table I find on it a paper with figures in my own hand and (think of my astonishment!) the whole problem on it solved quite aright and without a single blunder. I wanted to ask my hostess whether any one had been in my room, but was stopped by my own handwriting. Thus I must have calculated the problem in my sleep and in the dark to boot. And, what was most remarkable, the computation was so succinct that what I saw before me on a single folio sheet had required three slatfuls, closely beciphered on both sides, during my waking state. Professor Von Swinden was amazed at the event and declared to me that while calculating the problem himself he had never once thought of a solution so simple and concise."—Exchange.

### Embarrassing.

"The sexton of a quaint old Maryland church," said a clergyman, "showed me through the cool, dim building one warm afternoon and as we were departing pointed to the Bible on the lecturn and smiled.

"A strange thing happened last Sunday in connection with that Bible," he said. "We had a strange minister preaching here, and when he opened the book he came upon a notice and read it out with all due solemnity. It was a request for the congregation's sympathy and prayers for John Q. Griggs, who had been deeply afflicted by the loss of his wife."

"The sexton paused and chuckled softly.

"You see, sir," he said, "our regular minister has been using that paper as a bookmark more than a year, and John Q. Griggs, in a natty gray suit, sat in a front pew with the new wife he had taken just the week before."

### A Castle In Ireland.

The name of castle for a country house is preserved in Ireland, rather curiously, for Ireland has not the vestiges of French customs so noticeable in Scotland. The dullest little villa, so it be solitary in an Irish country place, bears that name, and the smile of the Saxon when he arrives and sees the castle is cheap and unscholarly. Where the Celt—the female Celt, that is—does earn and deserve that slight sign of derision is in her practice with her visiting cards intended for London use. The word castle there for a second and country address does seem to suggest machicolations, if not sieges and sally ports.—London Chronicle.

### Got His Answer.

An Englishman traveling in Ireland complained that he could find none of the famous Irish wits of whom he had heard. He was advised to speak to the next farmer or teamster he met. A little later he encountered a peasant leading a horse with a load of turf. The horse had a blazed face.

"What a white face your horse has, my man!" said the Englishman by way of an opening.

"Sure," replied the Irishman, "your own will be as white when it has been as long in the halter."—Birmingham Post.

### High Priced Bumblebees.

Many years ago the farmers of Australia imported bumblebees from England and set them free in their clover fields. Before the arrival of the bees clover did not flourish in Australia, but after their coming the farmers had no more difficulty on that score. Mr. Darwin had shown that bumblebees were the only insects fond of clover nectar which possessed a proboscis sufficiently long to reach the bottom of the long, tubelike flowers and at the same time a body heavy enough to bend down the clover head so that the pollen would fall on the insect's back and thus be carried off to fertilize other flowers of the same species. The bumblebees sent to Australia cost the farmers there about half a dollar apiece, but they proved to be worth the price.

### The Very Earliest Coins.

No one knows exactly when or where the original coin was "struck" or what metal was used. Certain passages in Homer would lead to the inference that brass was coined as early as the year 1184 B. C. Tradition affirms that the Chinese had bronze coins as early as the year 1120 B. C., but Herodotus, the acknowledged "father of history," is of the opinion that the Lydians "invented" coins some time during the ninth century B. C. One of the oldest coins now known is a gold daric, coined by the Persians during the reign of Darius. On one side of this coin is a bust of Darius and on the other side a figure of a kneeling archer.

### Mugwump.

"Mugwump" was an old Algonquin word for a chief, which was used in a seventeenth century Indian Bible to translate "centurion," "captain" or "duke" in the English version. It was borrowed by the New Englanders as a nickname for most superior persons, very like the English "great panjandrum," and first applied in its special political sense to Republicans who deserted their party on grounds of principle at the presidential election of 1884.

### Gum Shoe Work.

"James!" she said severely. The butler looked up with a guilty flush.

"James," she asked, "how is it that whenever I come into the pantry I find your work at sixes and sevens and you sprawled out reading the news?"

"Well, ma'am," the butler answered, "I should say it was on account of them old rubber soled tennis shoes you're always wearin' about the house."

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