MIRAMICHI ADVANCE

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MAKING PERSIAN CARPETS

An Interesting Sight at the Town of Azerbaijan.

According to the British consul at Azerbaijan, in Turkey, it is a most interesting sight at that town to see the carpet looms at work. Eight or nine boys, whose ages range from 8 to 12, sit in serried rows at the looms, and armed with the wool, which they pull from reels suspended above them in their left hands, and a flat knife, crooked at the point in their right, dash, with three movements, the thread through the web-strings, hook it into the desired knot and cut off the surplus ends, starting another knot before the spectator has realized what has been done.

Having been shown the design and coloring of the carpet they are to work, for the first two or three feet these boys rely on their memories for the remainder of their task, for on only two or three looms is the design of the carpet to be seen affixed, and then only its plain pencilled drawing. When merely complicated parts or medallions, a boy aged from 12 to 14, the foreman of the loom, who has the design seemingly imprinted in his mind, walks up and down, calling out in a quaint sing-song manner the number of stitches and the colors of the thread to be used.

A copy of the famous carpet from the Mosque of Ardabil, which is now at the South Kensington museum, is being made by one firm. The design, flowering and coloring of the original are said to be unique, and here, although the boys were working without the design, and at the rate of from thirty to thirty-five stitches a minute, a careful comparison of the hand-painted copy of the original showed the most minute attention in every detail.

Nothing but hand-work is employed in the manufacture of Persian carpets and rugs, and none but natural or vegetable dyes are used, and it is to this latter fact that Persian carpets and rugs are supposed to owe their reputations and lasting colors although it is said that the secret of the beautiful dark blue dye used in the older days has been lost. The dyes in general use in Persia are cochineal, madder root, indigo yellow, berries, yellow-root, walnut and pome-granate husks and gallnut.

WANTED STOPPING UP.

The corgregation had suffered much discomfort from a very perceptible draught in church. The matter came up for discussion at the vestry meeting, when various remedies were suggested. After much talking the vicar addressed himself to an elderly parishioner, who had hitherto been silent:—

"Cannot you help us in our difficulty, Mr. G——? We should be glad to hear your views."

"Well, sir, bein' as you've appealed to me I can only say that agen you're 'alf-way thro' t' sermon we begins to feel like as tho' there's a deal o' waste wind about."

This was greeted with laughter, in which the vicar joined, remarking:—

"Possibly our friend finds my discourses to be of a breezy character?"

"Bear, dear, no, sir! My meanin's simply this. When we've bin perched i' one spot for well-nigh fifty minit a-listenin' to yer, we're more'n ever persuaded t'ee's a 'ole somweer wants stop'ing up!"

My Rival—Don Carlos

I had just bidden my wife good-night—my little Spanish wife—and I had heard her footsteps retreating up the stairs of what she called "our strange English home." I had won her in Spain, and had wedded her against her father's wishes. In fact, she had eloped with me, and we had hastened to England, where I led her to the altar.

She was very beautiful even for a Spanish senorita, and had broken many a don's heart before I won her real affection and brought her to my little estate in England. She had all the hot, impulsive nature of her country, and the romance of the "runaway match" suited her, and for a year we had been perfectly happy.

She loved me with an ardour and passion seldom or never met with in an English wife, and I reciprocated the feeling in a real if not so demonstrative a manner. If there was a little cloud to mar the glorious sunshine of our lives it was the dread she had of a Spaniard by the name of Don Carlos, who had been the accepted suitor for her hand. He was rich, and had been promised her hand by her father, and it was the continual pressure that he brought upon her to marry him—whom she hated—that had induced her to fly with me.

Sometimes she would tell me of him, her frame shaking with fear and her dark eyes flashing with hate, and what he would do when he learned of her marriage. "He will go mad," she said, "and search all over the world for you."

I assured her that the English law would protect me, and that she need have no fear on my account, but every now and then the fear would return, and she would pray me to be always on my guard. She described his features to me, and told me, in her impulsive Spanish manner, if ever I met him to shoot him at once. "Kill him," she would say, setting her little white teeth, "before he has a chance to kill you."

After a year had gone by I began to hear less of Don Carlos, and hoped that I should soon hear of him no more. But I did not then fully understand the true nature of a disappointed and baulked Spaniard; I did not know with what tenacity he pursues the object of his hate and the bloodthirsty manner in which he delights to take his revenge. As it was, I never thought of him save when my wife mentioned his name, and never dreamed that I should ever see him, much less under the terrible circumstances that are here related.

On the night that I referred to at first I heard my wife close the door. Then I lit a cigar and was soon lost again in the novel I was reading. I should think that I had been sitting thus for about half an hour when suddenly the French windows which looked on to a little lawn in front of the house opened, and I saw a man standing in front of me with a revolver in each hand.

I recognized him at once: the high cheek-bones, the black, glittering eyes, and the dark waxed moustaches told me at once that this was the man whom my wife dreaded so much—the Spaniard, Don Carlos. Directly I saw him I read murder in his eyes. Without him telling me so I knew that if I moved he would fire.

Presently he spoke in fairly good English.

"Listen," said he, "and if you move so much as an inch you are a dead man. I loved a maiden once, the prettiest maiden in Spain. She did not then love me, but she would have done so. Her father had given her to me, and she was looked upon as my future wife by everyone who knew us. Then an Englishman came and stole her, won her by his lying tongue, took her away with him and married her. When I learnt of it I took an oath to find and murder him, kill him as he had my hopes. I have found him. You are the man and I intend to have my revenge."

I was cool at the commencement of this discourse; but as he went on, and I pictured my little Antonetta the wife of that villain, my blood boiled, and I answered that I would die with the consciousness that I had rescued a woman from a fate worse than death. I told him that Antonetta hated the mention of his name.

Whilst he was still covering me with his revolvers he made a motion to a confederate. A man came forward, and before I could clearly discern his intention struck me a violent blow on the head, and I remembered no more.

* * * * * * *

When I came to myself and collected my thoughts I found myself lying on the floor of a good-sized room. How long I had been unconscious or in what part of the world I was I could not say, but I could see at a glance that I was not in a room in my own house. I was not bound either hand or foot, and after a few moments I sat up and looked around me. The room was about 14 feet square and the walls appeared to be made of some hard black wood, ebony I think, and were quite smooth and unpapered.

In vain I looked around for a door but there was not even a crease apparent in those smooth, black walls. For a time I sat thus and collected my scattered thoughts; my head was throbbing and my pulse beating at a runaway speed.

The first thing that my thoughts flew to was my little Antonetta. Had they molested her? Was she also to suffer for having married me? Poor little girl, how she would worry at my absence; and the thought ever uppermost in her mind, that I should get into the hands of Don Carlos, was fulfilled at last. But what was the end to be? I was evidently not to be starved to death, for by my side was a plate of bread and meat and some water in a glass.

Then I remembered the horrors of the Inquisition. Was I to be tortured to death? The room was not dark, and I looked round to see from whence the light proceeded, and discovered that it came from several slits in the ceiling about 2 feet in length and a couple of inches wide.

I then rose to my feet and looked round the room for some loophole of escape, but I might as well have tried to escape from a jewel safe. Then I felt drowsiness creeping over me again, and I lay down and slept. It was a troubled, broken sleep, interrupted by rude dreams and alarms When I awoke I thought that the room seemed darker, and I imagined that night was coming on. It was not by any means dark, but the light certainly seemed less than when I had gone to sleep. I lay in a kind of semi-stupor for some time, my mind first wandering to my wife and then to my mother and my old home.

After a time I felt cramped and rose to a sitting posture, and, looking round, I thought that the room appeared smaller than when I had first looked round it; the black walls appeared to be closer, and, glancing up at the slits in the ceiling, I saw that they were not so long; they were partly covered by the walls.

Then I noticed with awful horror that not only were the walls closing in upon me, but in the centre of the room was an opening like a small well, which seemed to be getting larger as the room was decreasing in size. In a flash the awful truth was upon me: the walls would close in towards the hole and I should be gradually forced inch by inch to an awful death, down into that unknown depth.

When I discovered this I was like a madman; I cursed and prayed in the same breath and rushed round the room shrieking and tearing at the ebony walls, and finally fell to the floor exhausted, and lay within a few feet of that yawning black hole.

Then I crawled on my hand and knees towards it and looked down, but saw nothing but inky darkness. I discovered that the hole was now nearly as large as it would get. Two of the centre slabs of the stone floor had been made to recede, leaving a yawning abyss about 6 feet in diameter, and these slabs had now receded their limit, but the walls were still moving slowly, very slowly towards the centre pit.

I resigned myself as calmly as I could to my awful fate. What was it to be, I wondered—death by drowning? Was it water at the bottom of this pit, or should I be dashed to pieces on some huge boulders or impaled upon some iron spikes? I had read of all these stories of the Inquisition, and wondered which was to be my fate.

With the idea of ascertaining if it were water I took off my gold watch (I should not require it again) and dropped it down the black hole and listened. It seemed some seconds before I heard it crash on to some hard substance below. It was not water—I had prayed that it might have been.

After I had dropped my watch I noticed that the inside of the hole was bricked with ordinary red bricks, but so closely built that to get a foothold would be impossible; my case seemed absolutely hopeless. Then thoughts of my wife came over me. I pictured her weeping and searching for me in vain. Heavens! was there no means of escape from these pitiless, closing walls?

Then a strange thought suggested itself to me, only to be put aside as impossible, but a drowning man clutches at a straw, and I determined to try it. It was to remove with my penknife the mortar of four bricks—two in which to put my feet and two for my hands; and to wait thus clinging to the inside of the well until the walls had again retreated.

Then Don Carlos, thinking I was dead at the bottom of the hole, might relax his vigilance, and I might perchance escape. It was a wild hope and desperate in the extreme, but it was better than dying without making an effort to save my life. The room was now only about 10 feet square, and I had, I reckoned, about four hours to do my work, which would give me, if I were successful in removing the bricks, about fifteen minutes to rest myself before getting into the black hole.

I lay down flat and commenced in a wild frenzy at a brick as far down as I could reach. The mortar was terribly hard, but bit by bit I chipped it out until in less than an hour I had removed the first brick, and away it went crashing down to the bottom of the hole. Then I commenced on another about a foot to the right of the one I had already removed. Oh! the torture of working in that posture. The blood rushed to my head and the veins stood out on my forehead like whipcord. But I thought of Antonetta and home, and I went at it with the frenzy of despair. The room was now almost dark. The slits in the ceiling had almost disappeared; but I managed to remove the second brick just as the last glimmer of light disappeared, and now I was left in total darkness.

The horror of my situation was now greatly increased. I could not see now how quickly the walls were nearing the centre, so I worked away at the other two bricks like a madman, for I thought that every moment I should feel the wall behind me pushing me to my awful doom. Oh, the awful horror of that terrible fight against time in the darkness! I had long been unable to do my work lying down, for the ebony walls only left a space of about two feet all round the inky hole.

I had worn away almost the entire blade of my knife, and still there remained a brick to be removed. Nearer and nearer came the walls, and I now had only a foot of space in which to sit and finish my work, and the brick seemed to be in as tight as ever, the perspiration running off my fevered brow and dropping on the stone floor.

At last the brick was loosened, and a moment later went dashing down the well. I paused to wipe my wet face and rest a few minutes. Then an awful thought flashed upon me. When the walls receded would not the stone slabs again cover the well and my only chance of escape be cut off? It was reasonable to suppose so, for the same machinery that was driving the walls towards the centre was most likely responsible for the opening of the pit's mouth.

I was in despair and abandoned all hope, and made up my mind to end it all by springing into the yawning hole. Then again I remembered that the slabs had reached their limit before the walls had reached to within a couple of yards of the pit, so I concluded that they would recede to that limit before the hole began to close. This did not take so long to think as to write, and before I had properly reasoned it out I felt the hard wall touching my back. Still I did not get into the pit, as I knew I should require all my strength to hold on until I could climb out when the walls had again receded.

At last the moment arrived when I could no longer sit on the small and ever-decreasing ledge, and tremblingly I got into the mouth of the pit, hanging on to the top until I got my feet into the holes I had made for them.

I am not a coward, but I confess that I was frightened—terribly frightened—as I was feeling about with my feet for those holes. For some minutes I kept my hands on the edge of the pit, but soon the cold, pitiless walls touched my hot finger-tips, and I had to loose my hold and clutch the back of the bricks from which I had removed the others. I had scraped out some of the mortar behind the bricks under the two I had removed, so that this afforded a hold.

Then commenced that terrible struggle of endurance, the horrors of which almost drove me mad. It could not have been many minutes before the walls began to recede, but to me it seemed hours. Every few seconds I would put up one of my hands to feel the walls. They came to the extreme edge of the pit and seemed to stay there for some time.

At last, when I put up my hand I could not feel the walls, and I knew that they were really receding. They went back much more rapidly than they had closed in, so much so, in fact, that in a few minutes the light was again streaming in through the slits in the ceiling. I had just got my hands on the ledge to lift myself from my perilous position when I became suddenly aware of a great flood of light coming in from a space like a door in one of the walls.

Thinking that someone was entering, I hastily got back into my former position so as to be free from observation. Then I heard footsteps on the stone floor, but could see nothing, as the person had entered the side of the room corresponding to the side of the pit to which I was clinging.

Then I heard a loud burst of laughter, which I at once recognized as proceeding from that villain, Don Carlos. Then he murmured to himself in Spanish something that I could not understand, but I knew that he was gloating over my supposed fate.

Presently he stepped to the edge of the pit, and I knew that I should be discovered, but rather than undergo fresh tortures, I determined to release my hold and drop down the well. Then like a lightning flash came another thought, and almost as quick I acted on it. He had just reached the mouth of the pit, and before he had time to discover me, I loosed one hand, and with a strength born of madness I clutched one of his legs.

To my dying day I shall remember the cry he gave as he went crashing down to the awful doom he had prepared for me. Then with a feeling of horror at what I had done I got out of the ebony room and out of the house of horrors unmolested.

I found myself in Spain, as I had partly supposed, and I lost no time in getting back to England.

I found my wife terribly upset at my prolonged absence. She had quite given up all hope of ever seeing me again, but when I told her of the fate of Don Carlos a glad light came into her eyes. She knew that we could now rest in peace.—London Tit-Bits.

THE SPRUCE OF CANADA.

THE SUPPLY IS THOUGHT TO BE INEXHAUSTIBLE.

Estimate of Superintendent of Forest Rangers of Quebec.

Canada's forests are found to be equal to supplying the world with pulpwood alone for 840 years on the basis of 1,500,000 tons of manufactured pulp a year.

For each province separately, the period of exhaustion would be, for Ontario, 860 years; Quebec, 1,103 years; New Brunswick, 987 years; Nova Scotia, 3,255 years; the rest of the Dominion bringing down the period, as above stated, to 840 years for all Canada.

This is the estimate of J. C. Langelier, superintendent of forest rangers of Quebec. Mr. Langelier takes a million and a half tons of pulp yearly as his basis, that being about the total production of the United States.

AMOUNT STRIPPED EACH YEAR.

The forest areas in the four provinces which would have to be denuded yearly to produce the required million and a half tons of pulp are given as follows:

	Acres.
Ontario	114,914
Quebec	131,119
New Brunswick	11,871
Nova Scotia	8,334

The extent of the spruce forests remaining untouched in these provinces is:

	Feet.
Ontario	52,818,420
Quebec	144,363,454
New Brunswick	11,224,540
Nova Scotia	10,853,544

For a couple of years yet, that is, until the returns for the next census are published, the statistics of 1891 are the only ones that can give complete information respecting the consumption for all purposes of spruce in the four provinces, and by making the proper distinctions and reductions we get the following figures, which represent approximately the quantities:

	Feet.
Sawlogs	2,958,926,740
Firewood	1,566,412,166
Square timber	212,582,464
Lathwood	111,889,150
Pulpwood	130,409,000
Railway sleepers	98,267,801
Shingles	67,749,166
Total	5,146,236,487

The proportion of pulpwood is 2.53 per cent. for the four provinces together, 2.09 per cent. for Ontario, 3.51 per cent. for Quebec, 9.03 per cent. for New Brunswick, .23 per cent. for Nova Scotia.

It may be observed, by the way, that more than 30 per cent. of the pulpwood got out in 1891 was for exportation to the United States.

WHAT COULD BE PRODUCED.

For pulpwood alone the whole quantity of spruce required yearly would be:

	Feet.
Ontario	4,399,417,802
Quebec	4,150,376,076
New Brunswick	1,345,261,706
Nova Scotia	1,423,788,900

The area denuded yearly to get these quantities of wood and the number of years required to exhaust the present extent of the forests are shown in the following table:

	Area denuded yearly. acres	Period of exhaustion. years.
Ontario	879,883	60
Quebec	830,750	173
New Brunswick	269,052	41
Nova Scotia	284,757	38

But it is a well known fact that where operations are carried on in a wise and provident manner a spruce forest renews itself in 15 or 20 years at most, especially when the soil is good and the climate favorable. It is, therefore, reasonable to infer, says Mr. Langelier, that the spruce forests are practically inexhaustible.

HOTEL WORLD OF LONDON

GREAT PALACES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT.

Pioneers of the Improved London Hotel.—Their Origin and Growth.

Twenty-five years ago London had probably the worst hotels of any of the great capitals of the world, says the London Daily Mail. To-day it has some of the best. The hotel habit has become a fashionable craze. People now live in hotels during the season instead of taking town houses. Those who still have London mansions on their hands patronize the hotels for meals. Not content with dining out, your smart woman of to-day must have her afternoon tea at Claridge's, her lunch at the Carlton, and some ultra-smart people have been trying even to create a craze for going out for breakfast.

The twenty leading hotels of London represent a capital of something like seven millions sterling. During a busy month they accommodate about 8,400 guests every night, and find employment for 4,500 servants. The Gordon hotels represent an investment of three and a half millions, and secured a profit last year of £156,000. The Cecil is run on a scale greater than the whole government of more than one South American state.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

The pioneers of the improved London hotel undoubtedly were the Gordon Company, and their great houses the Grand, the Victoria, and the Metropole, were revelations to London. But in recent years they have had very keen rivalry. The Savoy brought luxury to the Thames Embankment. The Frederick Syndicate have fought them on their own ground by building monster palaces in various parts of the country, palaces which count their rooms almost by the thousand, and the ground they occupy by the acre. Then in 1896 came that triumph of barbaric splendour, the Cecil, with its accommodation for 750 people. Not satisfied with this, the Cecil is now busy adding a couple of hundred more bedrooms. Railway hotels have been growing greater and greater, the leaders of them being the Midland Grand with 400 bedrooms, and the Great Eastern with 450. Then Claridge's was transformed, with suites for 480 visitors, and the Carlton came to the fore with accommodation for about 300 guests. The Carlton is considered, and rightly the last word in hotel luxury. Its manager, M. Ritz, is the genius of the European hotel world.

The hotel world of London of course has its romances. Some of the biggest establishments have been created by their proprietors out of little or nothing. In one case the secretary of a temperance society opened a tiny house. This became so crowded that he had to take a second. House was added to house, servants were multiplied, accommodation improved, and if one wishes to see the outcome he need only go to Smith's big hotel in Southampton row. In another case a butler started a boarding house in the West End. His boarding house became a hotel. To-day it stands in the front rank of the big London palaces, and its owner is a great country gentleman, a justice of the peace, a member of Parliament, and the owner of fine estates.

HAVE A TARIFF NOW.

In the modern hotel prices have gone down alongside the improvement of accommodation. The old, uncertain period when you never knew what you were going to pay unless you bargained and chaffered with the hotel clerk before hand, has now passed away. In the up-to-date hotel you can test every charge by the tariff, and even the price of your bedroom is usually recorded on your room ticket or marked on the walls of your room. There is a printed scale for everything. Wines are still ridiculously high, and we have yet to find the hotelkeeper who regards the apple, you will duly find it put down in your bill. In the up-to-date houses to-day the general prices run—For single bedroom, from 6s; a suite of rooms, from 25s; breakfast, 3s 6d; lunch, 3s 6d; dinner, 5s, 10s 6d. You should be able to pay your way in a good hotel for from six guineas to ten guineas a week.

Within the past few years the fashion has very materially increased of living altogether in hotels. Residential hotels, mainly for permanent guests, are gradually being established among us. Queen Anne's Mansions, by St. James' Park, was the first and is still the greatest of these. Every reader of Mrs. Lynn Linton's biography will remember her greatful sigh of relief when she threw off the burden of housekeeping and took residence in one of these mansions. St. Ermin's has recently come to the fote. With new improvements it has accommodation for 1,200 guests, and finds its accommodation too small. But besides these a large number of permanent guests are living in the bigger hotels.

AND CHARACTER OF THEIR OWN.

It is strange now, in spite of exterior resemblances, each great hotel has a distinct character of its own. The man who has money to spend and who wishes to make a show with it, naturally goes to the Cecil. The quieter man seeks the Savoy. None but the fashionable would penetrate Claridge's. And you should be at least a Senator or foreign prince if you wish to stay at Brown's. If you are a hasty business man you go to the Midland Grand or Charing-cross. If you are a cosmopolitan and study your personal comfort you will probably go to De Keyser's on the Embankment. Colonials and Americans have a fondness for the Gordon hotels. The Frederick hotels, the Russell and the Great Central have hardly yet had time to obtain a peculiar stamp.

Some very old hotels in West London, untouched by modern invasion, still retain their aristocratic connection. It may be truly said of them that they provide the least accommodation for the most money. They are small, ramshackle, without any up-to-date conveniences. Their servants are of the most old-fashioned cut, their furniture is usually shabby and out of date, while their prices often enough exceed those of the best known resorts. Yet their patrons are the very best people. Old-fashioned country families, who would regard even Claridge's with disdain, go to these places like sheep. They know the landlord and look on him as a kind of family retainer.

A married couple with an income of from £800 to £1,000 a year can secure luxuries and accommodation in a hotel which would be impossible elsewhere. But they have no home. However long you remain in a hotel you can never put your feet on your own mantle, lock your door, and feel that you are in your own castle, where the world cannot penetrate.

STATES IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Guernsey and Jersey Have Each a Parliament.

"The States," as the legislative assemblies of Guernsey and Jersey are called, are historically interesting on account of their origin, dimly traceable to remote Norman times. In Guernsey you will hear a quaint plurality of language used—indifferent French, English and occasionally a strange-sounding jargon which is really a corrupt dialect of the Norman-French. In Guernsey all the members remain seated while delivering themselves of their opinions, while an undecided member may remain in his place and boldly exclaim "I do not vote," instead of walking out of the House before a division as a member of Parliament would do.

The States House of Jersey is a much more imposing building than the royal court house of Guernsey. As at present constituted, the States of the latter island consist of two branches, the legislative one being called Etats de Deliberation, and the electoral one, les Etats d'Election. The lieutenant-governor and the comptroller have the right to speak, but not to vote; while the bailiff has the casting vote, but no other. The States of Deliberation consists of forty-six voting members besides.

The States of Election consists of the bailiff, twelve jurats, the rectors of the twelve parishes, the prosecutor-general, the whole body of "Douzeniers," 180 in number, and twenty parochial officers called "Constables" who are elected by the ratepayers for three years. Almost the only functions of this body of 224 members are to elect jurats and sheriffs when vacancies occur. The purely legislative powers of the States are limited. In Jersey the jurats are elected by the whole body of ratepayers, and are thus more directly representative than in the sister island.

A CASE THAT WOULD CALL FOR DISCRETION.

"Say, pa, if ma was captured by bandits would you pay a big ransom to get her back?"

"It would depend a little on the size of the ransom, my son."

"Well, s'posen you could borrow the money?"

"I should use great discretion my son. It would be my endeavor to prolong the negotiations until the bandits were ready to give me something to take her off their hands."

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