

Courier des Dames.

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

HOUSE-HUNTING.

Did you ever go house-hunting? Of course you have. Where is the lady who has not started off with the evening paper or a list of houses to let in her pocket, only to return after a morning's walk, tired, footsore and weary, and not a bit nearer to what she wants. The first house is too small; the next is too large; this one seems to be very desirable, but close beside it is a stoneyard, the perpetual chip, chipping of which makes one nervous; that one is a great deal out of repair, or it would do, and as a house out of repair involves either a conflict with the landlord or a greater expense to yourself, it won't do; in one you have to pass through one bedroom to reach another, whilst in still another the basement is so low and dark that a light is required half the day, making the place look like a miniature temple.

I have been house-hunting and very wretched work I found it—very much harder than the hard work of which these men complain when they come home to tea, and nothing like so well paid. From Monday morning till Saturday night I kept on the chase, when I rested, weary and disgusted, only to start again the next Monday. North and South, East and West, up the main streets, down the side streets, up this avenue and through that square, past this place and that row, have I searched, and yet success seems as far off as ever. Somebody says "you must be difficult to suit." I am of a humble turn of mind and know what is called a woman's place better than to contradict, but really I don't think that I am. We only want a nice snug house at a reasonable rent, but that seems to be just what we can't get. The snug houses are unreasonable, and the reasonable houses are certainly not snug. A snug house, you say, "that is an easy phrase, but what is your idea of a snug house?" Well, my idea of a snug house is a light, cheerful house, in a respectable locality—that is what all the advertisements of the house-agents say—with about six nice rooms besides kitchen, and not so far from the city that after going to the office, the store, or the market and walking back, one is tired out for the rest of the day. I know that there are cars, which are a great convenience it is true. But then the cars don't run everywhere—although why they should not I don't know—and besides one does not always want to ride, and then if every member of the family rides regularly, the cost at the end of the year makes a hole in the purse, and materially affects the family budget. One street is too grand, another too small, one too busy, another too dull, and altogether the whole affair is very nearly heart-breaking. I would say it is heart-breaking, only perhaps some gentleman may read this ladies' column and sneer, and say—fudge!

There were several curious things struck me when house-hunting. Did you ever notice the different ways different people have of showing the houses? One lady shows you all the good qualities of the house, assures you that it is a most comfortable dwelling, never leaks, is the easiest house she was ever in or keeping warm—in fact praising it up to such an extent that you begin to wonder why she wants to get rid of such a desirable abode. Vague suspicions pass through your mind that she must get a premium from the landlord for letting it off; but perhaps it is only a trap to catch you into suffering the same inconveniences that she has found, and the old Adam—or the old Eve which is it?—peeps out. Another lady tells you of all its bad qualities; that the house is full of draughts, that there never was such a place for rats, that as for the mice no cheese is safe from their depredations, that all the water taps leak, excepting when the cistern is so bad that you have to turn off the water; that to keep it warm costs all your money and bothers out your life, and that altogether it is the most miserable house to which her wretched fate ever sent her. Some receive you pleasantly and show you everything politely enough. Others show you everything as well, but they show also they think it very hard indeed that you should come peering into their homes, criticising their furniture, wondering "where the creature got her taste," and generally making yourself a nuisance, as you certainly are doing. But then somebody said that man is a gregarious animal, and surely woman is one also, and if so it is the least that people having houses to let can do to show you all about them, and do it also as civilly and pleasantly as they know how. And then the trouble is great to you as well as to them. They have only to go up and down the stairs in one house whilst you have been going up and down stairs in perhaps a dozen; in fact, you might just as well have been on the treadmill. Ah, well! we all have our sorrows, and must do penance more or less in this world, and I suppose it is for that benign purpose that we have to go house hunting.

Then did you ever notice the servant girls? I beg their pardon—the young ladies who do

us the honour to assist us in our domestic concerns; who are content, or moderately so, to live as we live, to take our money, do as little work as possible, and generally show us that we are under the obligation and not they. In one house we visited we were received by a girl who had elegant clothes on her back and her hair dressed in the latest fashion, with a fringe on her forehead, but who soon showed the smartness was all outside instead of inside her head—where it ought to have been. She was woefully stupid. She did not know how many rooms there were in the house. Perhaps she was not a type of her class; let us hope so. But we must not trench upon this subject: a committee of ladies have it on hand, and if they cannot settle it, the question must be abandoned as one of the things that will never be known "on this side of the sun."

Then the landlords. One treats his tenants as if they were human beings and were not made only to serve for an orange and be squeezed. Another takes just the opposite course, and presses and squeezes till there is nothing left of you to squeeze. And by the way how is it that the landlords have all been affected with the fever for raising rents this year? My friends used to say that the rents were higher here than in most cities in Canada. But what must they be now?

Then why should all this tedious and wearisome work be thrust upon the ladies. Surely the men ought to take some share larger than they do now in the hunt for a house; and I would suggest to my lady readers whether, as this is the age of associations, some society should not be formed having for its object the reduction of men to their proper sphere of house-hunters.

But in all seriousness, I feel sure that all my readers who have been house-hunting will agree with me that there is a great scarcity of pleasant, moderate-sized houses at reasonable rents. Large mansions can be had in plenty, but houses suitable for a family with moderate means are really very scarce; and it seems to me that if some enterprising person—and I hear my gentlemen friends talking every day about the enterprise of this city—would only build a few blocks of such houses as are needed, it would be an excellent speculation.

BLANCHE B.—

THE FASHION PLATE.

DRESS SASHES.

No. 1. Consists of two black moiré ribbons about 7½ in. in width—the one 30 in., and the other 36 in. long. These are looped together as shown in the illustration, rounded off at the lower end, pleated at top and fastened to the girdle, the fastening being covered with a bow of 2½ in. ribbon. Trimming of black gimpure, 3½ in. deep, and fringe to match.

No. 2. This sash is also made of black grosgrain, 9 in. deep, arranged in loops with long ends. The latter are embroidered in various colours and edged with 5 in. fringe.

COIFFURES.

No. 2. This coiffure consists of a pleated puff of brown velvet, to which are attached two peach-coloured ostrich feathers—one long and one short—and a tuft of heron plumes of a like shade.

No. 1. This consists of a wreath of moss-rose buds, with a bunch of flowers and leaves at one side and a spray falling behind.

No. 5. A spray of white convolvulus, or morning-glory. The flowers are made of silk, and the leaves should be green and brown, veined with red.

No. 6. Similar to the last, but with two sprays falling behind. The materials are purple velvet pannels and light green leaves.

No. 7. The head piece is made up of narcissus blossoms and buds, with a spray of heather falling behind.

HOUSE CAPE.

No. 8. House Cape of pink *crêpe-de-chine*, with a double row of swan's down trimming.

EARLY SPRING BONNETS.

No. 9. Black velvet bonnet trimmed with bows and ends of black velvet ribbon and a long spray of light-blue convolvulus. Three cornered veil of figured black net with a lace edging.

No. 10. Plum-coloured silk rep bonnet with rep trimmings to match. In front an algreto of green feathers. Figured net veil edged with lace.

No. 11. Peach silk bonnet, trimmed with rep ribbons of a darker shade and a spray of roses. Veil trimmed with knotted fringe.

No. 12. Light blue faille is the material used for this bonnet, the double edges of which should be pleated as shown in the illustration.

No. 13. Coiffure for the theatre, of black *crêpe-de-chine*, with long ends terminating with tassels.

No. 14. Violet velvet is the material for this bonnet. The front edge should be turned up. The trimmings consist of violet rep ribbons, lace puff, ostrich feather and variegated plumage.

Dr. Colby's Anti-Costive and Tonic Pills are not a Quack Medicine.

A petition is being got up by the ladies of Glasgow, asking Mr. Gladstone to revive the old law of the reign of Queen Margaret, of Scotland. In those days Parliament passed an act that any maiden lady, of high or low degree, should have the liberty to choose for a husband the man on whom she had set her fancy. If any man refused to marry her he was heavily fined, according to the value of his worldly possessions. The only ground of exemption was previous betrothal.

We read in the *School Board Chronicle*: "It is generally known in educational circles that the teaching personnel of the mixed schools in the United States consists of both sexes. In many cases, indeed, the number of lady assistants has outnumbered that of the masters. I now gather from one of our Dutch contemporaries that the American example has for the first time been followed in Holland, where mixed education has been for years the rule instead of the exception. In one of the Dutch boroughs two ladies, daughters of common councilmen, have volunteered their services as school assistants, and the praiseworthy example of these ladies is likely to be soon followed by other spirited and respectable women in the country."

Sarah Butillon, a factory girl of New Hampshire, has had a fairy history. In a newspaper she accidentally saw the name of a Mr. Butillon, of Natchitoches, who had taken part in some public demonstration. The name being quite uncommon, Sarah wrote a modest letter of inquiry, giving her own genealogy, and suggesting that there might be some relationship. In a fortnight came an answer, cheerfully written, in which a distant relationship was demonstrated. The Southerner added that he was old, without family, and had few friends, and earnestly hoped for a continuation of the correspondence. Agreed to, and kept up for three years; but her last letter remained unanswered for three months, when came a message from Mr. Butillon's lawyer, informing her that the dear old man had left her his whole property, amounting to over \$100,000. Sarah, by-the-way, just before receiving the news, had married a young man of her own rank, and now they have gone down to Natchitoches to look after their assets.

The servant girls of Springfield, Ill., have lately entered into a combination, which has been successful to the extent of seriously embarrassing their employers. They have demanded such a long list of privileges, in addition to increased wages, that the mistresses have been obliged, in self-defence, to refuse compliance. According to the correspondent of the *Chicago Evening Journal*, "the walls and fences are placarded with 'Girl Wanted.'" The papers contain numerous advertisements of the same character, and the ladies of many households are doing kitchen work in preference to submitting to the insolence of aggressive servant-girlism. A servant left a good paying place the other day because she was not permitted to use butter for dressing instead of lard." In a comparatively small city, the opportunities for communication are so extensive that the maids of all work find no difficulty in meeting for the discussion of what they are pleased to call their grievances; and the bond of sympathy between them is so strong that to insult one is tantamount to a declaration of war against the whole number. This, at least, has been the experience at Springfield, and we hope the housekeepers like it.

A Chinese emperor cannot select an empress from the imperial family. He must take a wife from the people, and she must belong to one of the "eight banners." When a bride was to be selected for the present emperor orders were issued to the chiefs who had daughters of the desired age to send them to the palace. Strange to say, families do not desire their daughters to become the wife of an emperor. She is not only lost, as it were, to her friends, but by her marriage her parents and family are brought into a prominent position, which is often dangerous in a country like China. However, on the appointed day six or seven hundred girls appeared. They were minutely inspected, and about sixty selected as the result of the examination. A second and a third inspection reduced the number to twenty; and finally, by a series of examinations, the empress was chosen. The young emperor seems to have felt some interest in this competitive examination, for while it was going on he had a dream. It was that he had fallen in love with a young lady, and that she was hump-backed. As lame and deformed were ordered to the palace—many being reported so by their parents to prevent their being summoned—a hump-backed girl was really among the number, and the emperor took the dream as an omen that this was the one who ought to be his wife. She was one of the first fifty or sixty selected, and medical men were consulted as to the possibility of curing the deformity. After some vain efforts, it is said that a farrier, a very strong man, tried by force alone to push in the hump, and it ended in the death of the poor girl.

The blood is composed of minute particles or discs resembling the scales of a fish. Nervous force is the agent by which these discs are conveyed to the exercised muscles.

In the several members of the body, the muscles are mostly voluntary, those of the heart, lungs, stomach, &c., are involuntary.

In order to restore a diseased or enfeebled organ, it is necessary to promote the strength of muscles through the nervous system.

We have no nervous tonic at once so reliable and convenient as Fellows' Compound Syrup of Hypophosphites, and we, therefore, gladly recommend it in the disease of such organs as depend for health upon involuntary muscular action.

Jacob's Rheumatic Liquid Cures Tooth Ache.

News of the Week.

THE DOMINION.—The Nova Scotia Legislature is summoned to meet for the despatch of business on the 27th inst.—A number of new Post Offices are being established in British Columbia.—The Pacific R.R. charter was signed on Saturday last.—It is rumoured that considerable reductions will be made in the militia expenditure, without, however, reducing the staff.—A commission has been appointed to inquire into the cause of the recent fire at the Quebec Court House.

UNITED STATES.—The motion for a new trial of Tweed has been refused. This ends the prosecution for the present.—A slight shock of earthquake has been felt at San Francisco.—The Misses Greeley have withdrawn from the contest over their father's will.—Evans, the murderer of Georgiana Lovering, has been sentenced to be hung on the third Thursday in February, 1874.—The Directors of the Anglo-American and French Atlantic Cable Companies have resolved to reduce the tariff on messages between Great Britain, France and New York, from one dollar to seventy-five cents per word, on 1st May.

GREAT BRITAIN.—Parliament was opened on the 6th inst. Her Majesty was not present, the speech being read by a commission.—Sir Alexander Cockburn has refused a peerage and has received the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath.—Some of the Welsh colliery proprietors are about to import Chinamen to work in the place of strikers.—The library and clock-tower at Woolwich Academy have been destroyed by fire.—The weather in England has been unprecedentedly cold. One hundred persons were frozen to death in three days. There have also been heavy snow-storms and violent gales. Many cases of shipwreck are reported.

FRANCE.—The Committee of Thirty has agreed to modify the constitutional project by extending the veto power of the Executive, so as to allow the President to suspend the operation of a law by his veto for two months after its passage by the Assembly, and also of giving the President the right to participate personally in debates in the Chamber on interpellations and all questions of general policy.—The amendment proposed by M. Haussenville, providing that the council of members shall decide whether the presence of M. Thiers is required in the Assembly during discussions on interpellations, has been adopted. It is believed that this will lead to a rupture between the President and the Assembly.

GERMANY.—The fortifications at Cologne, Königsberg, Wilhelmshafen, Kiel, and Posen, are to be strengthened.—The R. C. Bishops have protested against the passage of the Ecclesiastical Bill.—A bill has been introduced in the Federal Council imposing taxes on the transactions of the Stock Exchange.—The new bill for the reorganization of the German army provides for a service of twelve years to be divided into three classes, viz: three years' service with the colour regiments, four years in the reserve force and five years in the Landwehr. By the provisions of the bill the army on a peace footing will number 401,689.

AUSTRIA.—The Vienna Exhibition building has been completed. Among the Royal visitors the Sultan is expected to be present at the opening.—The cholera is raging in Hungary.—A resolution has been introduced in the Diet at Pesth, urgently demanding the expulsion of the Jesuits from Hungary.—The Empress Caroline Augusta, widow of Emperor Francis I., and grandmother of the reigning Emperor, died on Saturday, aged 81.

SPAIN.—The infant Prince has been christened Louis Amadeus Fernando.—The captain of the "Murillo" and the officer who was on watch at the time the disaster to the "Northfleet" happened, are held as prisoners on a Spanish man-of-war pending investigation. The crew are under guard and are not allowed to go ashore. The Spanish authorities who have made an examination of the "Murillo" declare that she shows no signs of having been in collision, and it is their belief that she is guiltless of running down and sinking the "Northfleet."—Several Carlist bands have been routed.—A strike of the postmen has taken place.—A Republican deputy has proposed an amendment to the Porto Rico abolition bill, extending its provisions to Cuba, and providing that slaves themselves and not their masters shall receive indemnity.—The bill making military service compulsory on all has been adopted.

PORTUGAL.—The engineers and stokers on the Portuguese railways struck recently, but were compelled by government interference to return to work.

RUSSIA.—Cholera has made its appearance in the south-western districts.—The Berlin *Post* says that in Diplomatic circles at St. Petersburg the assurances given the British Government by Count Schouvaloff are not sustained. The feeling is that the conditions to be imposed on Khiva will depend on the measure of her resistance and Russia's sacrifices.

GREECE.—A terrible earthquake has occurred in the island of Samos, causing great destruction of property and loss of life.

INDIA.—An earthquake has occurred at the city of Lahore, attended by heavy destruction to human life.

CENTRAL AMERICA.—There has been a terrible hurricane at Aspinwall, by which considerable damage has been done to shipping.