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A HOUSE TO LET.

BY MRS. HOWITT.

Reader, had you ever a house to let? Did you ever make known, through some first-rate house-agent, that such and such "a Desirable Residence," or "Genteel Cottage Residence," or "Comfortable Family Mansion," was to let; and then set forth in the most attractive and approved phrases its number and style of rooms, with all their peculiar advantages; the kitchens, pantries, cellars, and other family conveniences; the excellence of its garden and conservatory; the beauty of its shrubbery and lawn; its extensive prospects; the convenience and good condition of its stables and out-buildings; its excellent and abundant supply of water; its good neighbourhood; and, in short, such a long array of attractions, as to make it quite irresistible to house-hunting people? If you have not, then listen, for we have; and if you have, listen also, and say if what follows be not something like your own experience.

Such an announcement as I have mentioned having been entered on the books of Mr. Rawlinson, house-agent, — Street, London, we had a quiet questioning with ourselves when it would begin to take effect. In a week or ten days, perhaps, we thought; and, therefore, in the intermediate time, we resolved that we would do so and so; we must visit some particularly favourite places in the neighbourhood; invite a few of our choicest friends for a nice little evening party; and, above all things, finish sundry pieces of literary work, which had begun to hang like millstones on our consciences, and yet which, withal, would be interesting in the writing, so that every thing might be fairly cleared out of

the way, before the days were broken up with the interruption and distraction of house-wanting people coming to look at ours. This was on the Saturday night. Sunday passed as deliciously calm as Sundays in the country always pass. The very air seemed filled with a Sabbath stillness; all was wrapped, as it were, in a sense of holy rest, as if there was no agitating business upon earth to disturb either man or beast. Full of repose, however, as the Sunday is, it is the day of all others wherein the business of the week is laid out and concocted. People have time to think on a Sunday, and accordingly they determine to do so and so on the Monday. "We have talked of going to such a place," say they; "why not go to-morrow?" "I always like to begin with the beginning of the week," says some methodical person; "and as to-morrow is Monday, I'll begin so and so." Merchants, lawyers, tradesmen, mechanics, all lay out business on the Sunday, which the busy and capacious Monday is to begin. Idle or industrious, rich or poor, it matters not—every body does so. We laid out our business, however, on the Saturday night; talked it over a little, it is true, on the Sunday; and, according to the regular routine of things, set about it on Monday.

Very busy, indeed, had we been all the morning, and were in the marrow of our story, when a loud ring at the gate announced visitors. "Bless us! what is the time?" we exclaimed, starting up and looking at the watch that lay on the table. "And it is only twelve o'clock! Who can come thus early? And all this mess of papers—and this dishabille!" In the midst of these hasty ejaculations, a large card was handed in—"Mr. Rawlinson, house-agent, — Street, London;"