

## TAKING CARE OF THE FURNITURE

Everything in the Queen's Apartments is scrupulously cared for.

All the furniture in the Queen's palaces, whether it be the property of the Crown or the personal possession of her majesty, is in the care of the Lord Chamberlain. He is represented at Buckingham Palace and at Windsor Castle by a resident inspector, who receives a salary of £500, with a residence and other emoluments. These inspectors have under them various clerks, and at Windsor Castle there are also two brothers holding the office of tapissier, their duty being to superintend the safe packing and unpacking of the Queen's luggage.

A representative of Tit-Bits has been courteously accorded the opportunity of obtaining some interesting details as to the manner in which the royal furniture is cared for.

The foundation of responsibility is to be sought in an immense encyclopædia, which at Windsor comprises more than fifty volumes, and contains an exact inventory of every article belonging to the Queen and of every article whose use she enjoys during her life. Minute particulars are preserved of the origin, description, and artistic value of every item, and the time of one of the inspector's clerks is occupied in writing up those volumes and in taking amateur photographs of the objects with which they deal.

The list is constantly growing, as her Majesty's possessions increase in number every day, and there has been unusual activity in this department during the last twelvemonth, in consequence of the addition to the possessions of Windsor Castle of thousands of Diamond Jubilee gifts. These are now being distributed amongst the royal palaces according to their decorative value, but before they are parted with the precaution has to be taken of preserving at Windsor an exact description of them. In this inventory an entry is carefully made in order to distinguish those articles of which the Queen enjoys the absolute disposal from those which pertain to the Crown.

Many of these, more especially pictures and bric-a-brac in the State apartments, have not changed their position for many years. There are, however, large quantities of miscellaneous objects of interest and utility which have no fixed abode, but are conveyed from place to place with every migration of the Court. The greater number of the articles have had places made for them in the huge wooden travelling boxes used for packing purposes by the tapissiers.

The contents of some of these boxes, indeed, scarcely ever vary, as her Majesty makes it a rule that her surroundings shall be as precise and complete in one palace as in another, and therefore wherever she goes there are certain books, albums, framed photographs, despatch boxes, and so forth that always go with her. When the instructions to move reach the packer from the enquiry on duty, that official proceeds at once to the private apartments and collects from this and that table or sideboard the various objects which have to be taken away.

It is usual for one of the packers to remain at the base of supplies, while the other follows the Queen, as telegrams reach Windsor almost daily asking for one article or another to be at once packed off to the Court. The duties of the inspectors however, do not end here. They have to submit every item of furniture to a rigid examination, in order to discover when repairs are needed. As a general rule, when old furniture is re-upholstered the pattern is reproduced, in some instances special new designs have been invented and used with the Queen's sanction, and often after being submitted to the artistic supervision of the Princess Henry.

There are stories current at the Court as to the rivalry in this direction that sometimes subsists between the Queen's youngest daughter and her sisters, but it rarely happens that either the Empress Frederick or the Princess Christian succeeds in introducing a design contrary to the judgement of the Princess Henry. Although, moreover, the credit for the chief changes that are made is usually given to his Royal Highness, they originate as a rule with the members of the Household who adopt the practice of having specimens submitted to her for sanction as the representative of the Queen.

An amusing story is told which serves to illustrate the great care that has to be exercised in watching over the personal belongings of the Queen. In one of her diningrooms the chairs are of one pattern, but owing to its position at the table one particular chair was for a long time habitually used by her majesty. One day this chair happened to be misplaced, and the change was noticed at once by the Queen, who remarked upon it so pointedly at table that to prevent a



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recurrence of the incident a tiny distinguishing mark was placed underneath the chair for future use.

The amount of destructiveness that goes on is naturally small, although influential ladies of the household have been known to disfigure with sharp instruments valuable old masters whose artistic value they failed to appreciate. When an article becomes too old for use it is seldom sold, as the Queen strongly objects to her cast-off furniture being ignominiously disposed of. For this reason a good deal of the furniture offered by second-hand dealers as having come from one or other of the royal palaces has really no such pedigree.

The items which have to receive the attention of the Lord Chamberlain's officials from day to day vary in interest, from a priceless piece of Sevres to a linen basket for the royal laundry, from a majestic Jubilee gift to a humble chest of drawers for one of the kitchen maids. Everything has to be carefully dusted or scrubbed, as the case may be, and as soon as the Court leaves a palace all the larger pieces are at once protected by Holland or chintz coverings, while the carpets are rolled, and even the silk wall hangings hidden from the light.

Carpet beating alone occupies the full attention of several men for long periods together, whether it be the superb carpet eight feet wide in the Grand Corridor at Windsor, or the humble art square in one of the attics above it. As soon as an intimation is given that the Queen is about to return, the task of making ready for the Court is once more undertaken, and three days are usually required for getting everything in order.

The Queen clings more and more tenaciously to the particular articles of furniture which she herself uses, and on a recent occasion this was pathetically illustrated when, on deciding to drive to a certain place, a carriage was got out merely for the purpose of conveying beforehand, to her destination, the favorite chair in which her Majesty is accustomed to take tea.

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Negro Bandmasters.

The Germany army has a negro bandmaster, named Sabac-el-Cher. Notwithstanding his name, he is a native of Germany. His father came from Lower Egypt, and spent his boyhood at the Court of the Viceroy at Cairo, where he was educated. There he made the acquaintance of Prince Albrecht of Prussia, a brother of the old Emperor William, who took him to Berlin, where he married a Berlin woman, and entered the service of the Prince. His wife presented him with a son in 1867, and they called him Sabac-el-Cher. He was a musical lad, who began to study the violin when eight years old. Later he went to a conservatoire, and in 1895 he entered the military service as oboe and trombone player in the 25th Regiment of Royal Prussian Fusiliers, Prince Henry of Prussia's regiment. Having served in it several years, he went to the Royal High School for Music in Berlin for further study, under the most noted teachers. He passed his examination in 1895, and in that year was appointed bandmaster of the 1st Grenadier Regiment at Königsberg which post he still holds.

A Battleship Eaten by Rats.

The battleship Collingwood, which has been undergoing a refit, was found to be swarming with rats, and as the result of

## THEIR CURIOUS WAYS

The Great Risks They Will Run to be Near Those They Adore.

Surely there is nothing in this wide world more intense than a woman's love! Day by day the newspapers furnish us with accounts of feminine devotion which are positively awe-inspiring, and no danger seems too frightful, no hardship too great, for a love-sick woman to face.

A ship's captain who was remarkable for his manly beauty never made a voyage without capturing, all unconsciously, at least one woman's heart. He was not a flirt and was never more than courteous to the females who travelled in his ship, but they fell in love with him almost universally, and vied with one another to gain a look or smile from him.

Of a different nature, though, was the passion which a plain but wealthy lady conceived for the handsome captain. Not by word or action did she betray her feelings, and he had no idea of her love for him until one night when the ship caught fire. On this fateful occasion the pumps were powerless to stop the spread of the flames, and without loss of time the captain ordered the boats to be got out. The lady passengers went first, then the gentlemen, and finally the whole of the crew, the captain standing staunchly to the blistering deck until the last sailor had dropped into the boat. Then he cast a final look round his beloved ship and prepared to swing himself over the side.

Before he had time to escape, however, a woman rushed towards him with a stifled scream, and flung herself on her knees before him. It was the wealthy lady who had so long worshipped him in secret, and she had actually hidden herself behind a burning cask so that she might stay with the captain until the very last moment. Her face and body were horrible scorched, and she died the same night in the open boat, her final request being that the captain should consign her to the sea with his own hands.

Yorkshire lasses pride themselves upon their common sense, but when love steps in they are just as weak as the rest of their sex. One girl, who fell in love with a stalwart collier, was much too shy to display her affection for him openly, but she was very badly smitten indeed, or she would never have run the risk that she did in order to be near him.

Disguising herself as a boy, she entered the colliery as a "hurrier," and labored in the workings by the side of the unconscious miner, who knew her only by the cognomen of Tom. This went on, until her parents, who had been away for some months, came back and intererred, and the collier was never allowed to know what hardships she had undergone for his sake. In fact, he married another girl, and the poor Yorkshire girl was left with an aching and desolate heart.

When a woman falls a victim to Cupid she will often perform most foolhardy feats in the hope of working her way into the affections of the man she adores.

There is a tall chimney in a northern town which is notoriously unsafe, and only very experienced steeplejacks are allowed to climb it; yet a short time ago a frail woman went right to the very top, and tore her hands almost to pieces in the effort. What caused her to attempt this bareheaded escapade? Love—blind, unswerving love! Her future husband was the steeplejack engaged upon the perilous job, and although this fact had been carefully kept from her, she divined with marvellous intuition that he was on the top and determined that she would join him and share his eminent peril. The startled steeplejack hadn't much to say when she suddenly appeared before him, but he confessed afterwards that the strain of getting her back to the ground thoroughly unnerved him for the first time in his life.

Think it Over.

"Jingo," was the all-conquering empress of Japan.—Daring and prowess, in what ever form displayed, are dear to the Japanese.—Is it true that sardines never swim singly but always in pairs?—It is generally believed that the dragon-fly (devil's darn-needle) feeds on mosquitoes in Japan and in New Jersey. Kites are sent up in Japan 24 to 30 feet square, with tails made of red and blue paper 1000 to 1200 yards long.—Why should not man boast of his self-selected ancestors?—"It is a wise child that knows its own father."—In Bible times man was a "that" and not a who, for many of them suffered woe enough.—I wonder if Galileo had not been to a champagne supper when he discovered the world going round and round?—No one seems to have any use for what we call "hell" but church people.—Patriots can now eat Spanish mackerel with safety.—No man can own land; at best mankind can have but a life lease of it.—Santiago has been considerably shaken of late; they, too, must admit that the war of an overwhelming force is "hell."

A New Man-Killing Bullet.

The army which is marching upon Khartoum is to be supplied with a new bullet, which, when it strikes the enemy, burrs, opens backwards, and lodges in the body. The new bullet has been adopted in order to stop ugly rushes, a purpose which the

Lee-Metford did not serve satisfactorily. Savages have been known to go on fighting after half a dozen Lee-Metford bullets had passed through them. Two million rounds of the new ball cartridge are being manufactured weekly at Woolwich. The new bullet is called a "man-killing bullet," in contradistinction to the "man-penetrating bullet."



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