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Houdin 80 Years Ago Did the Bullet Trick

Precedent Offered to the Magicians' Convention at Fort Erie, Ont.

Fort Erie, Ontario, has reported how a society of magicians plans a convention there, how one of them makes a specialty of letting bullets be fired at him and catching them in his teeth, how a representative of the Ontario Police Association has challenged the conjuror to a demonstration, how the challenge has been accepted, and concludes with the announcement that the policeman "is ciling up his favourite revolver." He might, says the New York Sun, better read the autobiography of J. E. Robert Houdin, the French mystifier who was so distinguished in his art that his government made him a special envoy to Algeria in 1856, to impress the tribesmen with the superiority of the magic which it could command over the magic available to the natives.

Algerian sorcerers called marabouts were performing miracles and stirring the Algerians to revolt against the French, and it was Houdin's assignment to be more marvellous than they. Since the pretense of invulnerability was part of the marabouts' stock in trade, the French magician did the bullet trick in various elaborate ways.

Quick Thinking Averts a Contretemps

Houdin told how he had been suddenly challenged by a marabout, who produced two pistols, to load one and allow it to be fired at him. Pretending that he had left his protecting talisman in Algiers, but that by spending six hours in prayer, he would be able to do without it, he obtained a respite. He wrote:

"The pistols were handed to me the next morning; I called attention to the fact that the vents were clear (Houdin had explained that the marabouts, by stopping the vents of pistols, prevented their firing, and pretended that this was the result of their spells), and the marabout put in a fair charge of powder and drove the wad home. Among the bullets produced, I chose one which I openly put in the pistol, and then wadded down. We went through the same process with the second pistol, and the solemn moment arrived. I posted myself at 15 paces from the sheik, without evincing the slightest emotion.

"The marabout immediately seized one of the pistols, and, on my giving the signal, took deliberate aim at me. The pistol went off, and the ball appeared between my teeth.

"More angry than ever, my rival tried to seize the other pistol, but I succeeded in reaching it before him.

"You could not injure me," I said to him, "but you shall now see that my aim is more dangerous than yours. Look at that wall!"

"I pulled the trigger and on the newly whitewashed wall appeared a patch of blood, exactly at the spot where I had aimed."

How Marabout Was Easily Tricked

The marabout went up to the spot, dipped his finger in the blood and tasted it, was convinced, and bowed his head in miserable defeat. Houdin then explained how he had worked this "miracle" 80 years ago:

"As soon as I was alone in my room the night before, I took up my pistol case a bullet mold. I took a card, bent up the four edges, and thus made a sort of trough in which I placed a piece of wax taken from one of the candles. When it was melted, I mixed with it a little lampblack I had obtained by putting the blade of a knife over the candle, and then ran this composition into the bullet mold. Bullets thus prepared bear an extraordinary resemblance to lead.

"In about ten seconds I turned the mould over, leaving a hollow ball in the mold. I wanted a second ball, which I made rather more solid than the other; and this I filled with blood, and covered the orifice with wax.

"With this explanation the trick will be easily understood. After showing the leaden bullet to the spectators, I changed it for my hollow ball, and openly put the latter into the pistol. By pressing the wad tightly down the wax broke into small pieces, and could not touch me at the distance I stood.

"At the moment the pistol was fired I opened my mouth to display the lead bullet; I held between my teeth, while the other pistol contained the bullet filled with blood, which, bursting against the wall, left its imprint, although the wax had flown to atoms."



PLEASANT HOMES

by Elizabeth MacRea Boykin

A FORECAST OF FURNITURE FASHIONS

French Is The News in Furniture—Ensembles Are Smarter than Suites—There Aren't So Many Pairs—Colours Are Continental

We've been playing the lag with furniture fashion shows these past weeks. And talking to a lot of the bigwigs in furniture designing and manufacturing. Here are our notes—in case you're on the verge of some August Sale shopping and want to know what's going to be what.

French furniture is coming back in with a bang, so give it more than a passing nod. The simpler types will have the centre of the stage in the present style cycle—the pieces with graceful flowing curves rather than the fussy feminine things. Specifically, the vogue will be for 18th century court furniture in its more restrained moods. And the old finishes will be favoured rather than the shiny patines. Natural waxed woods or dull antique paint finishes will be good; so will wood surfaces that look as if an old coat of paint had been taken off.

Graciously Adaptable

This type of furniture goes pleasantly with much of the furniture that has been popular for some time. It is charming with 18th century English furniture, with Colonial mahogany; with Victorian and with Regency. It does not go with early American maple or any such placid unpretentious period; and it's not for use with the heavy oak styles. Otherwise you'll find it graciously adaptable.

There is no decline in the popularity of the 18th century English furniture periods. If anything they're more widely favoured than ever. There's a trend toward the use of more Sheraton and Heppelwhite and less Chippendale perhaps. But they're being combined interestingly with pieces of other periods. With Regency things—with odd French chairs, tables or chests—with Victorian details.

Smart and Tailored

Early American maple has its own loyally following as usual, because of its hearty comfort, its earthy unpretentiousness. But it too has a bow to make to the present. Soft light honey tones replace the reddish cast; simpler line predominates. And above all, the quaintness is out, for maple can be as smart and tailored a style as any if it's used with contemporary details. When authentic colonial accents are used, they're not so gaudy as they were in their first revival.

As for modern, you may as well bow to the inevitable for it's here and to stay. But don't get excited. It's a gracious modern at last with clean curving lines instead of the hard-belled austerity of its earlier incarnations. A lighter more livable feeling prevails instead of the overweightiness of certain types. And even in traditional rooms modern colours dominate.

The old familiar woods still predominate, and we don't think they need to worry about their places in the sun. Exotic woods are introduced for novelty, as are details of metal, cane, glass or composition. Bleached woods are a high fashion to be used in accent pieces. But the extreme bleaches (the platinum blondes) aren't as good as the more natural looking blondes—in short the moderate bleaches are in far better taste than the extreme whitish looking bleaches. Painted finishes are used with antique finishes. The high glossy shiny surfaces are being put in the shade by the mellow older looking patines.

The Continental Flavour

For the strictly period room isn't a high fashion anymore. A combination of related styles has a chic continental flavour that the leading decorators advocate. So when you shop for incidental pieces this fall, don't hesitate to go off the beaten path as to design and get something that harmonizes without being a dead match.



Pairs aren't the whole show this season—Balance that is achieved asymmetrically is new and smart too.

As far as that goes, you no longer need buy even your dining room furniture—much less the living room pieces—in suites. Groups or ensembles are smarter. For one reason, there's a trend toward varying the usual list of pieces. In the living room, you needn't match your upholstered pieces. The flat top desk is a little newer than the secretary, though both are equally correct. While the breakfast bookcase cupboard is smarter than either. We see often the use of a console-height cupboard with doors with an interesting mirror over it as the important wall piece in the living room. There's a trend toward the larger table for the living room—a long table to go in front of a big window sometimes—or a drop leaf to go against a wall, ready to expand for tea or bridge.

The vogue for pairs of things seems to be abating a bit. Balance is being achieved oftener by less obvious groupings that don't match identically. And yet, pairs are still perfectly good if you have them or want them.

For Interesting China

In the dining room the large buffet is frequently being replaced by a breakfast cabinet that has cupboard space below and shelves above to display interesting china. Then a long narrow table or a console take the place of the serving top of the buffet. Or else a small buffet will be ensambled with a pair of corner cupboards. In the average home where there is no maid, a table on wheels that is somewhat lower than the dining table is a boon to the hostess who wants her meals to be served smoothly. This isn't exactly a tea wagon though it is similar and serves the same purpose.

Graciousness in Bedrooms

In the bedroom, there is a decided increase in the use of small easy chairs with incidental tables to go with them. And much more often now a chaise longue is used, or else an easy chair with a hassock of the same height that can be used as a chaise longue. A high chest and a low chest are generally regarded as essentials but the wood dressing table is often omitted in favour of a draped dressing table. Night tables, two side chairs or one side chair

and a bench are accepted necessities. A large mirror over the low chest goes without saying of course, and if there isn't a mirror door an extra wall mirror is awfully handy. Twin beds are outselling double beds about three to one in many stores.

The colour picture is subtler and exciting. The milky tones continue to lead all forecasts in decorating, but instead of the monotonous effects that have been the vogue, they are picked up by flashes of incisive colour—in a room that's dominantly beige and powder blue, there'll be a lift of cerise or grape. Or in a room where greys and mauves preside there'll be a fleck of chartreuse or lime. The World's Fair colours, both the vivid shades and the pastels, are going to have a decisive influence on home decorating fashions, say those in the know. So watch out for their fresh tang in new fabrics, wall papers, lamps and accessories.

We hope you will greet the furniture furies of August with as many thrills as we do. Because the new fashions in furnishings suggest ways to freshen our homes without changing the whole picture. But most important of all, they enable us to give a sparkle of today to a room furnished in traditional pieces. (Copyright 1938, by Elizabeth MacRea Boykin).

Team of Horses Taken for a Ride Near New Liskeard

New Liskeard, Aug. 24.—Wind which preceded a severe electrical storm is reported to have flattened a barn belonging to Chas. Hastings, Milberta Road, moving the structure almost 18 feet directly north of its original position. A hay rack was moved four feet closer to the threshing and two men were blown off the top of the load. Two teams of horses, tied in the barn, endured the 18-foot ride they received and were removed unscathed when the barn settled.

Detroit News.—America is the richest country in the world and doesn't know what to do about it, but may think of something yet.



Watch several fashion points illustrated in this picture—first, the trend toward French lines as shown in the fireside table—second the use of smaller scaled floral designs for furniture—third the continued importance of the baroque detail as exemplified by the over-mantel decoration in this picture.

With Special Reference to Serviceability of Tile

(By R. Hagerman)
Serviceability of tile is so general we find its use widespread commercially. The plain white tiles have long been recognized for sanitary value in wash room and public toilet installations, but recent progress in the development of colored tiles possessing the same sanitary qualities and durability have extended their use for interior and exterior in unlimited applications.

Permanence has proven the ideal for corridors of public buildings where traffic is heavy and walls are subject to rough usage. There is a tile to meet each individual requirement. Walls may be bright glazed or matte glazed or where subject to abuse can be of unglazed vitrified finish resistant to the destructive elements of man or nature.

For large areas units are often of larger sizes such as 6" square, or 6" x 12" oblong. Designs for base and capping of projecting, flush or offset feature bring the tile surfaces to meet with metal or wood window and door designing. Double radiused tiles for door and window framing and partition nosing in widths ranging from 3" to 6" are complete with angle shapes.

Special tones and colours for hospital operating rooms have been developed in co-operation with the surgeon's search for the least disturbing of eyesight by glaring surfaces.

Wall tiles intended for exterior use are known as "weatherproof" and should be so specified. These are made to withstand freezing and thawing conditions. They serve for store-front and bulkhead decorative purposes with absolute assurance of resistance to the elements. The weatherproof qualities of tile are aptly demonstrated in swimming pool construction. Not only is it necessary to keep water from escaping from the pool, but of more importance that there be no contamination of the pool by outside seepage. One needs only to see the tile floor sharply outlined through the depth of water to realize the sanitary value of tile.

Jenny Morris Visits Canadian Centres

Lady Famous for Kindness to Soldiers in London During the War Visiting Canada.

Montreal Aug. 24.—Jenny Morris, famed for her kindness to soldiers in London during the war spent two days here this week. She was welcomed here by groups of Canadian returned men, the soldiers of the famous Princess Pat Regiment being particularly keen to do her honour in memory of the days of the war when her house in London was an open home for all soldiers and particularly for Canadians whom she "mothered" damed their socks, cheered them, and loaned them money when they were "broke."

"Jenny", as she is known to the "boys," talked over old times with a group of Montreal and Ottawa veterans who welcomed her on her arrival from London—the first step of a "gratitude" trip financed by the men she befriended overseas.

But the real reunion, a spontaneous affair of kissing, hugging and perhaps the odd tear, came a few minutes after the liner Antonia pulled into harbour. There were anxious moments as the boys—followed by reporters—looked for "Jenny" in the pressing crowds.

Then they found her, in a secluded spot along the rail where she had hoped to avoid newspapermen. Practically pushed into a lounge for interviews, news photographers and greetings, she turned aside reporters' questions jokingly.

Everybody talked at once. Old friends brought up "remember whens," newsmen sandwiched in questions and flashlight bulbs flared. But Jenny, nervously tugging at her brown felt hat was reluctant to talk about herself.

About all she would tell about her "open house"—a modest boarding house at 34 Bedford square—was that it was "open to everybody, from buck privates up to generals. They came and had bed, breakfast and tea, and paid their half-a-crown."

But, aside, one of the "boys" said that was only half of it. It was the "friendship and companionship that counted, not to mention the dozens of socks that were darned, letters forwarded and the money she lent when we were broke."

Now, however the tables are turned and the boys will do the entertaining. Across Canada members of the "Princess Pats," who adopted Miss Morris as their "London mother," and other regiments are awaiting their chance to return her hospitality.

Here for two days, Miss Morris will go next to Ottawa, then to Toronto and across Canada to Victoria. After returning to Montreal she will sail from New York Oct. 19.



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