

UNDERGROUND LONDON

METROPOLIS HAS HUGE SUBTERRANEAN AREAS.

Existence of Miles and Miles of Well-Paved, Well-Lighted and Well-Ventilated Streets Forming a Labyrinth Underground is Entirely Unsuspected By the Average Londoner—Kaffirs Were Right.

Eleven years ago, a party of Kaffirs visited London, and after much consideration announced their conviction that there was another great city hidden away beneath the streets of Metropolis. Nothing could shake them in their belief. They argued that it was impossible for such teeming multitudes of people to find house-room above ground. Moreover, had they not seen with their own eyes great crowds daily disappearing down staircases at the sides of the roads?

Of course they were laughed at; but were they so very wrong after all? It is commonly said that the average Londoner knows very little about the great city in which he dwells, and certainly not one in a thousand knows what is daily going on beneath his feet as he hurries through the crowded streets.

It is literally true that London possesses a subterranean city. Hidden from view there are miles upon miles of stone-paved, gas-lit streets, well drained and ventilated, each bearing its own name; the very existence of which is unsuspected, and which only occasionally echo the footfall of a passing pedestrian.

Has it ever occurred to you, asks a London writer, to wonder what has become of the historic Fleet River, the Westbourne, the Eye Bourne—better known as Tyburn—the Wall Brook, and all the other pleasant streams that formerly flowed through the Metropolis and went to swell the stately flood of the Thames? They still exist, but they flow to-day underground.

Have you ever heard that there is a large waterfall under Ludgate Circus, a Roman building still in good repair beneath Bucklersbury, a fine restaurant under St. Paul's Church, a stream—Tany Brook—flowing across Sloane Square Station, and twenty-eight miles of wine vaults beneath the London Docks? Yet all these exist, though very few people have seen them. As one writer has put it:

"You can not only travel by subterranean ways, but you may take your meals beneath the dense traffic in St. Paul's Churchyard; you may buy your newspaper at a bookstall underneath a historic city church; you may have your dinner cooked in a bakery that has never seen the light of day; you may quench your thirst—but do it moderately—in twenty-eight miles of subterranean wine vaults, you may take your plunge in a subterranean Roman bath fed by a holy well that has long since disappeared from view."

Let us first visit some of the subterranean streets of the great city. There are plenty of them, for all modern thoroughfares of any importance are now built—so to speak—in at least two storeys. We choose one of the largest systems—that which includes the Holborn area.

Under the Holborn area, which spans Farringdon street we find a massive gateway which opens only to the privileged few. Possessing the necessary credentials we are admitted, and a short walk takes us into a maze of miniature streets which branch in all directions. It is a city of the dead, for complete silence reigns here, and the roar of the great thoroughfares overhead only reaches the ear as a distant murmur.

The pavement is of Yorkshire stone, and the side walls of white brick have tables bearing names identical with those of the streets above. Presently we find ourselves in the underground Holborn Circus, and close at hand are turnings labelled Charterhouse street, Shoe lane, etc.

At one point we look through a small grating at our feet and see Snow Hill Station beneath us, while our guide tells us that overhead in the front of Holborn Viaduct Station, running along the sides of the underground street at regular intervals are gasjets, and here and there are overhead gratings leading to the streets above. From time to time purses are found lying beneath these gratings—but they are always empty—the pickpockets see to that! Other ventilating shafts are carried up to the roofs of the houses above, and many of the ornamental electric light standards in the streets are made hollow to serve the same purpose.

At the sides of these subterranean ways run huge pipes. These are the water and gas mains. In addition, there are troughs carrying the wires of the electric light supply and the

TELEGRAPH WIRES: Overseas are the pneumatic tubes through which written telegrams are blown from the branch offices to the General Post-office.

Here we should mention that the walls bear not only the names of the streets but the numbers of the houses overhead. Thus, the connections for water, gas, and electric supply can be made without breaking up the street. It may interest the householders to know that each connection has a tap; and this serves a very convenient purpose. Should he prove recalcitrant in the matter of payment, an official will just visit his number below ground and turn off the tap without any more fuss!

But these subterranean highways are only one feature of underground London. Let us pay a visit to the great open space in front of the Royal Exchange. Here, as we gaze upon the massive buildings that surround us, we might imagine the ground on which they stand must be solid enough. But we should be greatly mistaken. The ground beneath our feet is simply honeycombed.

TOO WELSH.

London Society Criticizes Chancellor Lloyd-George's Home Life.

Whether Chancellor David Lloyd-George is too Welsh and too unconventional in the great question among his feminine critics in England to-day. They say this bright particular star of the political firmament is not dignified enough and allows his little daughter Megan to skylark about the room when he is debating affairs of state at his official residence in Downing street.

Mrs. Lloyd-George has now given her views on these personal topics. "I cannot expect English people to understand a genuine Welsh home," she said. "My house is Cymric both in spirit and in its management. Most of my servants are Welsh, and there is no difference between 11 Downing street in the matter of homeliness and the remotest Welsh homestead of the mountains of the Principality."

This attitude raises an interesting point. In an English home the distinction between mistress and servant is usually sharply defined, but among even the Welsh well-to-do families a servant often takes her meals at the same table as her mistress.

Children, again, are not kept away from visitors in the Welsh home, but are generally the first to run into the drawing-room to greet them. And similarly the first to greet a visitor to 11 Downing street is often the Chancellor's little daughter, with her perennial smile of childish happiness.

"And, to be frank," added Mrs. George, "it is pure nonsense to lay stress on the point that a little child should not be present when important political questions are being discussed. A little boy seven years of age is far more likely to repeat in an unexpected quarter statements he has heard than a little girl of the same age. But I daresay that at a later age a boy is more trustworthy, diplomatic and tactful than a girl. However, as a matter of fact, little Megan is invariably shown out of the room before the Chancellor turns to business."

By Water To the Sea.

The question of connecting up the Black Country and the Midlands of England, generally with the sea is being revived. There are many schemes. On paper the easiest seems to be the development of the existing canals and striking the Severn at Worcester.

To do that would be to make use of the Birmingham Canal, which is not one, but many canals, and which altogether total up 160 miles of waterways in and around Birmingham and South Staffordshire. A portion of it came into existence over 140 years ago, and is now practically in the hands of the railway company. It was once a good paying concern. In 1816 the company paid \$180 per annum per share, and the high water mark reached was \$200. The shares greatly depreciated in value in subsequent years, and it eventually came about that whenever the net income was insufficient to produce a dividend of \$20 per share on the capital, the London & Birmingham Railway Co. should guarantee it.

The canal company, down to 1874, were able to pay their \$20. Then came a slump, and the London & North-western Railway Co. have had to find goodly sums every year.

"What's happened to him?" "Why, he's had to leave the guards, don't you know?" "And what have they done with him?" "Put him in a common fighting regiment, by Jove!"—London Mail.

Because you are satisfied with your own opinion it doesn't follow that it is better than the other fellow's.

EXPERT TESTIMONY.

A Case Where Two Infallibles Held Conflicting Opinions.

The fallibility of expert testimony, which under stress of clever cross-examination tends to the too decided statement, is amusingly revealed in "Science and the Criminal," a book by C. Alsworth Mitchell, the head of the inspection bureau of Scotland Yard.

Nethercliffe, who was the chief handwriting expert in the days when the witty Lord Brampton was at the bar, had such faith in his methods that finally he came to believe that he could not make a mistake.

In a case in which he was under cross-examination by Lord Brampton, then Mr. Hawkins, Nethercliffe had claimed that his system gave infallible results and had further stated that his son, Pyhom he had trained, made use of the same system.

"Then," said the wily advocate, "your son, working on your system, is as good as you are?" "Yes," replied the father, with some pride in his voice, "he is."

"That is to say, he, too, is infallible?" "Yes," again replied the witness. "Well, now, Mr. Nethercliffe, was there ever a case in which you and your son appeared on opposite sides?"

Nethercliffe tried to evade the question, which, he complained, was an unfair one, but on being pressed was forced to admit that on a certain occasion he had given evidence on one side and his son upon the other. Swift came the unanswerable retort: "How comes it, then, that two infallibles appeared on opposite sides?"

A FAIRLY BIG TREE.

The One McDougall Said Was Blown Down in Venezuela.

Wait McDougall, the caricaturist, was sitting in the Friars' club in New York one night discussing everything in particular when the subject of big trees came up, one of the party claiming that he saw the stump of a red cedar in California so large that 200 couples danced on it at the same time.

"I grant you they have some big trees in California," said McDougall, "but listen to this one. My uncle, who owns a very large ranch in Venezuela, went out one morning after a heavy windstorm and found that a huge cottonwood on the bank of the river had blown down, the branches of which were resting on the other side. He also discovered that 3,000 of his cattle were missing and on searching found the missing stock on the other side of the river. An investigation quickly followed, when they found to their surprise that the tree was hollow, which afforded a bridge across the river, through which the cattle strayed. After the men had succeeded in driving the stock back through the trunk of the tree it was found that thirty-six of the steers were missing. Another vigorous search was made, and where do you suppose we found them?" asked Wait.

"Heaven knows," said the red cedar man. "Where?" "They had strolled off in the hollow branches of the tree," said McDougall.—New York Telegraph.

The Swiss Congress.

The regular sessions of the Swiss congress begin in June and December and last only about a month. Extra sessions are very rare. As one member remarked, the idea is to have as much real legislation done among the people as possible, while the duty of the legislative bodies is officially to record public sentiment as expeditiously as possible. The proceedings of the Swiss legislature are extremely interesting to an American. Discussions take place either in French, German or Italian, according to the inclination of the legislator addressing the house, and a colloquy may embody all three languages. Formal readings are in French, but discussions are usually in German.—National Magazine.

The Call to Individuality.

No man thinks his own thought; no man uses his own eyes; no man stands upon his own feet; no man walks alone. We go in flocks; we lean on others; we follow the multitudes blindly; we bend our necks to the yoke of public opinion; we have no self-reliance. The only virtue we have is conformity. The demand of the age is for men and women of character who are self-poised, self-reliant, independent and self-assertive. Society follows customs and routine. The redemption of the race is in the originality of individuals.—Jacob Gould Schurman.

Her Proposal.

"Ah, George! Did you propose to Vivian?" "No. She made the proposal before I had a chance to say anything." "She did? What did she say?" "She proposed that I should leave the house immediately, and I accepted."—London Telegraph.

A Business Woman.

"His wife is a business woman, all right." "What makes you say that?" "She's installed a time clock in the hall, and he has to punch it when he goes out nights and when he gets back."—Detroit Free Press.

A Natural Result.

"When you were in Switzerland did your party climb the glacier you spoke of?" "No." "Why not?" "I rather think because they got cold feet."—Exchange.

Being alone when one's belief is firm is not being alone.—Auerbach.

Little drops of comfort, little grains of hope, fill the office seeker's fall of election days.

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