FURS. FURS. FURS.

Revillon Freres, Inc., maintain houses and branches in operation in Paris (77-81 Rue de Rivoli), London, New York, Chicago, Montreal, Quebec, Edmonton, Prince Albert, Leipzig, Bucharest, Moscow, Nijny Novgorod, Bokhara, Irbit, Khabarovsk and Shanghai.

Revillon

Founded 1723.

Furs and Fur Garments

We offer the remainder of our Imported Model Garments, Collars, Muffs and Neck Pieces of Russian and Hudson Bay Sable, Silver Fox, Broadtail, Mink, Ermine and Chinchilla at

One-Half The Price of Importation

In addition to the above we offer our entire manufactured stock of Coats, Wraps, Collarettes, Neck Scarfs and Muffs—All made in our own shops under our personal supervision in the very latest styles and the most thorough workmanship—amounting in value to over ONE MILLION DOLLARS—

At Decided Reductions

West Thirty-Fourth Street, Near Fifth Ave., New York

DRY GOODS. DRY GOODS. DRY GOODS.

RESTAURANT EIGHTH FLOOR

Simpson Crawford Co.

SIXTH AV., 19TH TO 20TH STREET, NEW YORK.

News for Holiday Shoppers

THERE are only twenty shopping days before Christmas—you can't realize that, can you? Don't put off your buying until the last moment. Our holiday stocks are now complete and at their best, emphasizing the wisdom of shopping early. You not only avoid the crowds incident to the holiday rush which comes just before Christmas, but you can select your gifts from a large and complete stock that must naturally become depleted as the crowds increase. We're offering exceptional money-saving inducements for early shoppers.

Our Toy Department is a veritable Wonderland. The little children enjoy it. A right royal welcome will await them all.

Our Book Store contains especially designed and illustrated books for gifts—endearing remembrances that grow in value as the years go by.

Out-of-town shoppers are invited to make this store their downtown headquarters. Rest rooms and writing rooms are at your service.

Royal Wilton Rugs About 1/3 Off

FOURTH FLOOR.

REMARKABLE in the fullest sense of the word, because it gives you these celebrated Rugs at about manufacturer's cost. You know it is seldom this or any other house can sell Royal Wiltons at a cut price, so this is indeed a rare bargain treat. Of course, we haven't a great quantity at this price, but every one we secured will go on sale.

6 x 9 Royal Wilton Rugs at $18.91 | 8.3 x 10.6 Royal Wilton Rugs at $27.25

9 x 12 Royal Wilton Rugs at $29.75

Body Brussels Rugs at Manufacturer's Cost. These rugs are so well known and their reliability and price so well established that we do not need to say anything about them—merely quote the sale price. That tells the bargain story so forcibly that we'll sell all we have in a single day.

9 x 12 Body Brussels Rugs, $22.50 | 9 x 15 Body Brussels Rugs, $30.50

8.3 x 10.6 Body Brussels Rugs, $21.25 | 10.6 x 12 Body Brussels Rugs, $30.50

Just a Word about these Rugs—Some of them have a slight imperfection—but it's so small that you can't discover it unless it's pointed out.

Cut Glass at Half

FIFTH FLOOR.

SUCH unprecedented value right on the eve of holiday buying doesn't seem possible, does it? Well, it's out of the ordinary, and we don't mind owning up that it's the first time in the history of this house, or the trade, for that matter, that we've ever sold cut glass for half before the Holidays—generally comes in January.

This loss is not ours. It's shouldered entirely by the maker—conditions made it imperative that he put a price on his surplus stock that would insure quick selling—we were the fortunate purchasers. That's the whole story.

500 Regular $5.00 Cut Glass Bowls, $2.75. Rich cut glass 8 inch Fruit or Salad Bowls, in assorted shapes and beautiful cuttings; included are values up to $5, at..... $2.75

Rich high grade Cut Glass Comports—9 inches high; buzz star and rosette design, with notched stem, at..... $2.95

A large assortment of high grade Cut Glass Sugar and Cream Sets in many assorted shapes, sizes and cuttings; values up to $5.75; per pair..... $2.75

Rich cut glass Nut or Fruit Bowls; 7 inches in diameter; cut in several new, pretty designs, special at..... $1.75

Theo. Haviland China, 100 pc. Dinner Sets; beautifully decorated in dainty, delicate floral designs; coin gold on handles and knobs; soup tureen composition, at..... $22.50

High Grade Austrian China, 56 pc. Tea Sets; beautifully decorated in a pink rose spray design; at..... $6.25

MARBLE BUSTS—A variety of subjects, 18 to 20 inches high, with lace hat effect; special at..... $10

400 DAY CLOCKS—Finished in lacquered brass; guaranteed movement; run an entire year with one winding; glass dome case; special at..... $12.50

DRY GOODS. DRY GOODS.

NO CONNECTION WITH ANY OTHER STORE.

SIEGEL COOPER Co.

SIXTH AVE., 18TH & 19TH STS. J. B. GREENHUT, PRES. NEW YORK.

Double the Usual Number of "S. & H." Green Trading Stamps Before 12 o'Clock. Single Stamps After 12 o'Clock.

Reductions on Oriental Rugs

THE sizes are those in demand. Everybody knows that, for attractiveness, artistic designs and durability, Oriental rugs are recognized as leaders. Our exceptional facilities enable us to offer these rugs at prices lower than those paid by most retailers.

The collection we offer to-morrow underprice is an unusually fine one, including tasteful and desirable colors and combinations—and offering a saving in the price of every rug.

Gorevan Rugs.

High-class Persian weaves, in designs and coloring not found in cheaper Oriental grades, suitable for dining room, library or living rooms.

Regular Price.	Size.	Sale Price.	Regular Price.	Size.	Sale Price.
$235.00	12.3x9.9.	$195.00	$250.00	13.5x9.8.	$220.00
195.00	14.0x9.4.	167.50	250.00	12.10x10.4.	220.00
250.00	13.0x9.5.	220.00	235.00	12.8x10.3.	195.00
275.00	13.9x10.2.	230.00	165.00	11.6x9.7.	137.50

India Rugs.

Excellent values in high-grade Rugs in a rich variety of colorings and designs.

Regular Price.	Size.	Sale Price.	Regular Price.	Size.	Sale Price.
$150.00	11.6x8.11.	$120.00	$87.50	10.3x6.0.	$75.00
195.00	12.4x9.2.	150.00	125.00	11.1x8.3.	107.50
125.00	10.0x8.7.	110.00	98.50	10.4x7.3.	87.50
87.50	11.2x6.0.	78.00	110.00	12.1x9.2.	94.00
195.00	12.0x9.0.	150.00	195.00	12.3x9.1.	150.00
			125.00	11.1x8.0.	105.00

(Siegel Cooper Store, Fifth Floor, Front.)

$16 Morris Chairs at $12.50

A Very Acceptable Christmas Gift.

MADE of golden oak or in imitation mahogany finish; with broad, heavy arms, claw feet, separate cushion seats and upholstered back. Covers are made of velour, and you may choose from various desirable colors. If you buy it to-morrow you can save $3.50 on its usual price.

All furniture purchased now will be held, when requested, for delivery at Christmas.

(Siegel Cooper Store, Fifth Floor.)

Ask for "S. & H." Green Trading Stamps—We Give Them.

WORK WANTED. Male.

ACCOUNTANT.—Expert (degree); opens, closes, audits balances books; accounts prepared for executors, trustees, and books kept for same. P. O. Box 59, Madison Sq.

AUTOMOBILE REPAIRMAN.—First class; competent to take charge of private garage; references. Machinist, 445 50th st., Brooklyn.

BOOKKEEPER.—Young man as bookkeeper or assistant; accurate and reliable; best of references. Address Brower, 296 Grand st., Brooklyn, care Sedlak.

BARBER.—First class, with first class hotel experience, German, middle aged, wishes to take charge of barber shop; city or Bronx. Schaefer, 49 East 131st st.

BOY, 18, in office; can write good hand and has good reference. Charles Schlossman, 208 East 34th st.

BOY, 18, experienced, in wholesale house or electrical business. William Bader, 187 East 104th st.

BOY, 17, with fair education, residing with parents, in wholesale house. Charles Garfinkle, 15 West 137th st.

BOY, 17, wishes to learn electrician's trade. Smith, 237 East 94th st.

CARPENTER.—American; 31 years old; steady and temperate; all round mechanic; best references. Carpenter, 453 Pleasant ave., near 123d st.

WORK WANTED. Male.

CARPENTER and CABINETMAKER, 22, with complete tools; good French polisher and painter; also weather strip worker. Louis, 606 East 13th st.

CARPENTER.—By an Englishman, 23; three years in country; all around mechanic; in factory, shop or building; strictly temperate. Williams, 113 Ridgewood ave., Brooklyn.

CARPENTER.—By young man, 25; first class mechanic; good all around, with tools; lifetime experience in business; best references; wages moderate. Medico, 335 West 17th st.

CARPENTER'S HELPER.—By young man. Carminetti, 20 Union st., Brooklyn.

CHAUFFEUR.—English, 24; factory experience; does own repairs; best reference from last employer; moderate salary; city or country. A. W. Wilson, 107 West 51st st.

CLERK, SALESMAN or COLLECTOR.—By young man, 24; best reference. J. F. Mooney, 328 West 17th st.

CHAUFFEUR.—Strictly sober; city or country; experienced running and repairing foreign and domestic cars; first class reference. W. Gannon, 307 West 54th st.

CHAUFFEUR, 25; strictly temperate; expert mechanic; can operate American and foreign cars; unquestionable references from automobile factory and parties. Casler, 60 Taylor st., Brooklyn.

WORK WANTED. Male.

CHAUFFEUR on gasolene engines for boat, automobile or stationary work; best references. Otto Rumpf, Pugsley ave., Westchester, N. Y.

COMPOSITOR and feeder, jobber and proofreader, by colored man; steady, experienced; will work at anything; willing and obliging. Ernest, 242 West 62d st.

CONFECTIONER.—First class; pan work, cream, jelly, marshmallows, etc.; reference. Corrado, care Banker, 183 Bleecker st.

COLORED Southern boy wants indoor work in private family. C. B. Murtz, care Long, 211 West 69th st.

DIE MAKER.—Thoroughly experienced as helper; speaks little English. Nissotis, 200 Lexington ave.

DRAFTSMAN, with over twelve years' experience, desires employment of any kind. H. Richter, 237 St. Ann's ave., The Bronx.

DRIVER (24); married; on bakery or milk route; have A1 reference; 9 years' experience. Considine, 697 Park Place, Bklyn.

DRIVER, etc.—By young man, 21; or at anything; handy with tools; salary, $11. William Tietjen, 350 Bleecker st., Brooklyn.

DRIVER (22); married; on route wagon; reference; $100 security. Waldman, care Liebman, 200 Orchard st.

ELECTRICIAN, as helper; good reference. Charles Magnone, Box 18, 331 and 333 East 34th st.

WORK WANTED. Male.

ELECTRICIANS.—Two first class electricians, moving picture operators, make repairs any machine; six years' experience; one or both; references. Operator, 152 West 14th st.

ELECTRICIAN. — Construction work, switchboard or dynamo tender; in hotel, factory or office buildings. Harry C. Leibman, 1005 Bloomfield st., Hoboken, N. J.

ENGINEER.—Licensed; machinist; competent, sober and reliable; steady position in factory or office building; no firing. Address A. N., jr., 110 South Railroad ave., Mount Vernon, N. Y.

ENGINEER.—Extended experience in refrigeration, steam and electrical driven plants and appurtenances; temperate; married; aged 35. Address J. G. Sheridan, 129 Franklin ave., Brooklyn.

WORK WANTED. Male.

FEEDER and EMBOSSER wishes steady place on upright or sheet straightening. Harold Mcloughney, 92 Bulls Ferry Road, Weehawken, N. J.

FIREMAN.—German; experienced with machinery. A. Fisk, 8 Atlantic ave., Brooklyn.

FURNACE MAN would like to take charge of three or more furnaces. Thomas Murphy, 777 2d ave.

FOREMAN.—Experienced; good reference. Giavalas, 170 West End ave.

GREEK, expert machinist, in machine shop or manufacturing machinist; wages moderate. Papaninos, 849 West 25th st.

IN SHOOTING GALLERY or GUN STORE.—By man, 40; 20 years' experience. James Payne, Sparkill, N. Y.

WORK WANTED. Male.

JEWELLER.—Honest, ambitious German-American, 22, single, wishes general jobbing or 2d salesman; acquainted in Eastern Unit. States; wages $15 to $20. 94 Bremen st., Newark, N. J.

LUNCHMAN.—First class; good on salads, oysters; steady place. Louis Severin, 1052 3d ave.

LAW STUDENT, New York University, desires employment to occupy him all day Sunday; accurate, reliable, willing; references. S., Box 27, Tribune Office.

MACHINIST.—Tool die maker; first class, all around accurate mechanic; metal patterns, core boxes, mechanical drawings, experimental work; 21 years' experience. Henry Rebel, 201 St. Nicholas ave., Bklyn.

WORK WANTED. Male.

MAN, 25, wishes good, steady position, at anything; good steady worker; sober; not afraid of work. H. Scheu, 110 Maple st., Weehawken, N. J.

LIGHT WORK (permanent), by married man; American, trustworthy, reliable; city or country; please state wages. Chas. Roulston, 231 West 13th st.

MARRIED man, 36, wishes position at anything where honesty, good character and good will are required. Joseph Rovagna, 611 Hill st., West Hoboken, N. J.

MARRIED MAN, 35, experienced millwright, machinist, office work or position of trust, with executive ability, wants engagement. Wiltse, 365 Lafayette ave., Brooklyn.

WORK WANTED. Male.

MESSENGER in club, hotel, banking house; native; middle aged; speaks French and German fluently; seven years' references. Stegner, 184 West Broadway.

OFFICE ASSISTANT, 10 years' experience in lumber business; quick at figures; understands bookkeeping; has first class references. William Schmidt, 521 6th st.

OFFICE BOY.—Has knowledge of bookkeeping and typewriting; reference. Michael Tormey, 231 Kingsland ave., Brooklyn.

OFFICE WORK.—By boy, 16; public school graduate. Allen, 2194 3d ave.

PORTER, &c.—Young man as porter, janitor or useful man. Smith Dixon, 437 West 52d st.

CALLING OUT THE DYNAMITE SQUAD

OLD TIMES RECALLED BY RECENT ORDER.

How Sappers and Miners Used to Work—Not Needed in Modern City Conditions.

All was peaceful in the firehouses in New York one Sunday morning at 11:30 o'clock. The men were in the bunk rooms reading the newspapers, talking over the coming election, wondering if they would get their pay and doing odds and ends to kill time.

"5—5—5—267—2," struck the gongs.

The men dropped everything and slid down to the apparatus floor and made ready to fight a blaze. Then they counted the taps again: "5—5—5—267—2."

"What in the name of"— queried one.

"What kind of a call is that, anyway? I never heard it before!" exclaimed another.

Men looked at officers and officers looked at men, and both sets looked a bit foolish. Not a man really knew what was expected of him in response to "5—5—5—267—2." The call fell on ears that knew it not.

"I'll call up headquarters," said one, who rushed to the telephone.

"I have been with this department twenty years," said another, "and I never heard that call before."

"It seems to me," said a gray-haired man, "way back, about the time of the big Chicago fire there was such a call—'Jim' get the assignment book."

The horses arched their necks and strained at the reins, while the men hunted in the assignment book among the special calls for "5—5—5—267—2."

"Here it is, page 211, 'The Sappers and Miners' Corps,'" exclaimed one.

"Well, I'm blowed! I may be a sapper, but I'm no miner," said another. "Do they expect us to fight a fire down a coal chute? There are no mines in New York."

"Assistant foremen in the 1st, 2d, 3d and 4th battalions report at Bowery and Great Jones streets," was read from the book.

"How does the sappers and miners' squad dress? Does it carry miner's lamps?" was asked.

READY FOR SERIOUS TROUBLE.

"Hustle out, it's the dynamite squad; there's serious trouble ahead," said the foreman.

Some of the officers got into their rubber boots, turnouts and fire hats and went with such speed they had no breath left to report to the chief with. Others sauntered up in dress uniforms as if the sappers and miners' corps call were to a lodge picnic.

"Where's the fire?" asked one.

"There is no fire. This is simply a test to see if you know the call for the dynamite squad," was the reply.

"Well," said one of the "buffs" (the amateur firemen who make fire runs their chief hobby) "that is the worst 'lemon' alarm we ever answered."

After they returned to their firehouses the firemen talked the call over.

"The sappers and miners' corps has been a dead letter for thirty years," said an old timer. "Few firemen would know a stick of dynamite if they saw it. Each year an appropriation of $2,000 is asked for to pay an instructor in dynamiting, but the Board of Estimate and Apportionment has always cut it out. To-day's run was only useful in showing how long it takes to collect the assistant foremen at one spot."

"I was a member of the first sappers' and miners' corps in New York," said a fireman. "This corps, or dynamite squad, was formed right after the Boston and Chicago fires—about 1871-'72. I remember the United States government was getting ready to blow up Hell Gate and there was a big expert here to look after the job. The city got this expert—a Frenchman, named Striedinger—to teach the sappers' and miners' corps how to use explosives.

THE PROFESSOR'S LESSONS.

"I'll never forget the professor and his lessons. He talked to us firemen about explosive powders, gases, dynamites, nitro-glycerine and other blowing-up things. To make us experts like himself, he gave practical experiments, and that was where the fun came in. One day in the old Fire Hall, in Mercer street, the professor laid just a speck of nitro-glycerine on a steel template. He then hit it with a hammer, and there was a 'boom!' We heard yells and saw a scared lot of clerks running into the street from the room below. The plastering of the ceiling had come down on their heads when the hammer struck the nitro-glycerine, and caused a panic.

"I believe that professor could blow up anything. Why, he would take a big wooden cracker box, put an Argand burner in it and stick a bellows through a hole in the side of the box. He would light the gas and throw in a handful of any powdered stuff—coal dust, flour, buckwheat—anything he happened to fancy. When the class was ready he would work the bellows and the top of the box would fly up with a jerk.

"To show us what force this explosion had, he would ask one of the firemen to stand on the cover of the box. The man always up and ready to do this was a daredevil, 'Plug' Jacobus. All the older members of the department remember 'Plug'—afraid of nothing that lived or didn't live and up to all the tricks in the calendar. He loved to stand on the lid and go up with it. One day the professor used buckwheat, and whether he used too much or it was a stronger explosive I don't know. We was all a-watchin' 'Plug' standin' there on the lid doing a 'Jim Crow,' when all at once—boom!—out he flew right into the middle of the class, his heels making a dent for keeps in a fireman's face. I never eat a buckwheat cake without thinking of the time 'Plug' tried to hold down the lid and took a flyer.

BLOWING UP A BUILDING.

"The professor had a house built on Ward's Island to show us how to blow up buildings. The first day our lesson was on blowing off the roof. A political contractor had built the shack and when the professor blew off the roof it blew the entire house into smithereens, and several of the sappers and miners' squad wore their faces in cotton batting for a while, as the splinters struck home. We did not try any more roof-blowing. Another experiment he made was on the ruins of Hale's piano factory, at 34th street and Tenth avenue. The walls and chimneys were still standing and the professor showed us how to raze them by dynamite. The walls came down with a bang, but some thousands of dollars' worth of neighboring windows blew out. That stopped such experiments.

"When there was a meeting of the Association of Fire Chiefs in New York, the professor had us all out to show how to blow up a hundred-foot chimney left standing after a fire in Faber's pencil factor. He put cartridges at the bottom of the chimney, covered them with sandbags and used a blasting machine to set off the explosion. Up went Mr. Chimney in the air, and we all hurrahed. Then I'm blest if it didn't settle back right on the very same base it was on before. The professor used a double dose of dynamite the second time and made a sure-enough wreck of the chimney. Once he took us under the East River at Flood Rock, and showed us the cartridges in place ready to blow up Hell Gate. That was the only place where 'Plug' did not want to hold down the explosion. I think the name scared him.

"It was great to see the professor make a clean hole, one that looked as if it had been drilled, through a brick wall. He would take a dynamite cartridge about the size of a cigar, hang it on two nails fastened in the wall and touched it off. The hole would be there, but the rest of the wall would be uninjured."

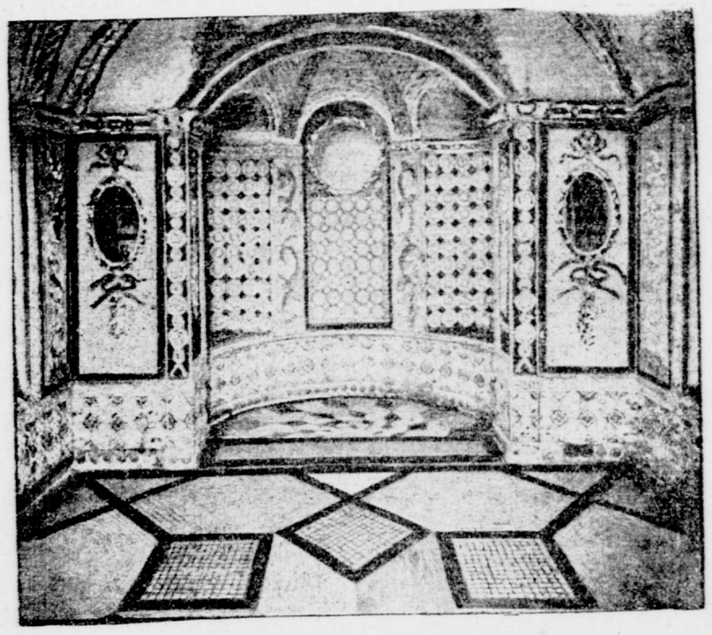
USELESS RELIC OF THE PAST.

Such is the story of the old dynamite squad, known as the sappers and miners' corps. The old boys would have known the 5—5—5—267—2 call which so puzzled the boys of to-day that Sunday morning. Fire experts now consider the dynamite squad useless at modern fires. Chief Croker himself was quoted at the time of the San Francisco fire as not believing in its usefulness. Blowing up buildings to stop the progress of a fire may be of advantage with low or frame buildings, but in big cities it is impracticable, he thinks. At Baltimore, men trying to keep the fire out of buildings were driven out by the dynamiting of surrounding buildings. At San Francisco the dynamiting did more injury to skyscrapers than the fire itself, and in some cases, it damaged buildings that the fire would not have touched.

In New York City, according to fire experts, the conditions for dynamiting are especially unfavorable. The presence of the electric wires, gas and water pipes, the size of the buildings and the great number of steel skeleton buildings count against the use of explosives.

To blow up these building would start other fires and by the time the explosive was in place the fire would overtake the dynamite squad. It takes considerable time to arrange an explosion. It is easy to blow up an ordinary brick building which is supported by the brick walls. If the bearing walls are knocked down, the building will collapse. With a steel skeleton building it is a different matter. The dynamite breaks through the floors, but does not break the columns and girders. This was proved at Baltimore and San Francisco, where not a single steel skeleton building was successfully blown up with dynamite.

The city charter gives the Mayor authority to order the blowing up of buildings in order to stop a fire and the Fire Commissioner also has this authority. The Commissioner is empowered to appoint an officer skilled in explosives, who shall have charge of the sappers and miners' corps, and the rules and regulations of the Fire Department call for a deputy chief to be in charge of the corps. As the corps has always been considered a dead letter by the present generation of firemen, no one has been appointed to the command.



GROTTO, WITH FLOOR OF HORSES' TEETH.

The grotto was made by the late Duchess of Richmond and Gordon and her daughter, and took seven years to complete. The mosaic floor is composed of horses' teeth, all of which were collected on the estate. The remainder of the decoration is in shells. —The Sketch.

ROUSED HIM.

The boy was sinking fast. His eyes were closed and all attempts to rouse him were ineffectual. The physician had watched by the bedside for half an hour without success, and finally announced that the only hope of saving his life was to rouse him from his stupor.

"Cannot some of you induce him to make some exertion?" he asked. "We can do nothing unless we can make him do something for himself."

Then the boy's mother went to the bedside and pleaded with him to rouse himself for her sake but there was not even a motion of the muscles of the face to show that he heard. She told him how much she would do for him and what nice times they would have when he got well, but he did not stir.

Then the sick boy's little brother crept to the bedside and said, softly:

"Eddie, the folks who lived in that big house up the avenue, with the lot of windows and the greenhouse, have moved, and the place is empty."

The eyes slowly opened and the little brother went on exultingly:

"All the boys is going there Monday to shy some stones through the windows."

"Who gets first crack at 'em?" asked the sick boy, feebly.

"You do," replied the little brother. "The boys gives you first show 'cause you can throw straighter than any of 'em."

"Jupiter! I'll make the people as owns that house think there's been an earthquake," exclaimed the invalid boy, trying to sit up in bed. "My! won't we have fun, though!"

"He'll live!" cried the doctor, joyfully, and the little brother was taken out and feasted on pie and tarts until he was nigh unto bursting.—Tit-Bits.

OTTO'S AUTO.

'Tis passing strange how fashions change in things
that men admire;
Our muse that sang the tireless steed now sings
the steedless tire.
Friend Otto got an auto, so as not to seem antique,
But the thing was autocratic just as much as
automatic,
And that auto wouldn't auto as it ought to, so to
speak.

He sought an auto operator who should make it
work;
A circus man at first he tried, and then he tried
a Turk.
For he knew the circus man drove fifty horses
with success,
"And if a man be shifty," reasoned he, "to manage fifty,
'Tis manifest that he's the man to manage one
horse-less!

"The Turk, p'r'aps," pondered Otto, "being born
an Otteman,
Ought to awe this awkward auto on the Oriental
plan."
'Twas all in vain. So off he went to Alabama,
merely
That he might say, "I'm Otto of Mobile, and my
motto—
'A Mobile Otto's sure to tame an automobile,
clearly.'"

There Otto wrought to auto on that auto as he
ought to;
But the auto sought to auto as Otto never
thought to.
And Otto fought the auto, and the auto it fought
Otto,
Till the naughty auto got too hot to "aut" or to
be taught to;
And while the air was fraught with Otto's oaths
(not voce sotto),
The auto shot to heaven with a haughty sort of
snort, oh!
Where Otto steers his auto now, an austere
aeronaute —Tit-Bits.

LIMITING GIVING OF WEDDING PRESENTS.

INDISCRIMINATE BESTOWAL NOW FROWNED UPON.

Invitations Which Say Presents Are Not Desirable—What Has Led to Change of Custom.

By M. W. Mount.

The indiscriminate giving of wedding presents appears to be doomed.

To a city like New York more than any other addicted to the promiscuous sending of costly bridal gifts to persons often not even known by sight, there is something startling about a wedding invitation which warns its recipient that gifts will not be received, but when a number of such bits of pasteboard drifted into all the social corners of greater New York there went up a universal sigh of relief. Universal, that is, if one may except those newly wedded people who have looked forward to the enjoyable excitement of opening innumerable boxes in delightful uncertainty as to whether their contents would disclose a piece of cut glass, a gold enamelled jewelled cabinet box, another set of spoons, the tenth ravrile vase or the fifteenth clock.

These are the persons who if they did not inscribe upon their wedding invitations "Do not come without a gift," implied it. Too well they know that persons in doubt whether they should or should not send gifts will in future be likely to err on the side of the new idea and not send them. One of last year's brides received from a wealthy but almost unknown acquaintance a box of superb roses on her wedding day. The flowers cost more than a stereotyped gift would have done, but this is a method that some people are employing now to show their disapproval of the habit of sending gifts indiscriminately, while conforming to the custom in a manner which could not give offence.

Many have felt that the burden of gift buying has grown beyond all reasonable proportions and has even become a serious vexation to those who feel compelled personally to select the gifts and cannot give the necessary time without adding to business cares and often involving business losses.

DIFFICULTY OF CHOICE.

Men especially are somewhat helpless when confronted by the continual necessity of purchasing presents for those about to marry. Officials in a certain corporation have solved this difficulty by depending upon a woman employe to make their purchases for them. Her judgment in the matter of selection is so good that her office work is seriously interfered with by the demands made upon her time in this respect.

Men who have no one to shop for them in whose taste and judgment they can place any dependence are wont to order gifts by telephone or mail. This is so generally done, and the articles which can be so ordered belong to such a limited class that herein lies an explanation of forty clocks received by one couple recently, and the quantities of duplicate articles belonging to this class of wedding presents which are sent to every bride.

Besides the tax upon time, patience and purse imposed by the practice of indiscriminate giving, many families have grown to dislike being placed under obligations to persons with whom they did not have, and did not wish to have, more than a slight acquaintance. Men could hardly ignore at clubs, in business transactions and elsewhere others who had presented members of their families with costly gifts.

Then, too, many a young man at the outset of his married life found himself handicapped by the necessity of extending a hospitality which he could not afford or of making reciprocal presents to those who had so honored him upon the occasion of his marriage.

Verbal and engraved notices not to send gifts to brides are serving as an entering wedge to break up this habit, which many think has become an actual nuisance.

Hitherto such has been the unwritten law on this subject that many guests felt they could not present themselves at a home wedding ceremony or reception unless they had first guaranteed a welcome by sending the expected present.

LISTS OF GUESTS ENLARGED.

Another thing which has caused the custom to be looked upon with disfavor is the change which has gradually taken place in the class and number of guests invited to a wedding. Formerly relatives, friends and more or less intimate acquaintances composed the lists of guests. Later it became the rule to extend the courtesy of an invitation to those likely to become of future social service to the bride or of business benefit to the bridegroom, as well as to persons slightly known by the bride's family and to whom it was desired to show an attention which would not necessarily imply a wish for closer acquaintance.

This extension of wedding courtesies soon made marriage ceremonials a burden in many ways. Room had to be provided in churches and houses for many hundreds of persons; the issuing of invitations became a serious vexation, for it proved difficult not to offend some by an omission regarded by them as a slight, however unintentional it might have been. To escape this and the other exactions of a modern wedding, many a so-called "secret marriage" and "elopement" have taken place—amicably arranged in family council beforehand.

The reception of duplicate presents of course makes it easier to bestow some of the duplicates upon others embarking upon a "double life," but two recent couples have been in a quandary as to which of a score or more chafing dishes to keep, which to exchange and which to pass on to some other young couple. The same problem, in even more magnified form, was presented to them together with a supply of clocks sufficient to stock a fair sized shop.

Silversmiths are accustomed to exchange duplicate wedding presents for other articles more desirable, and there is usually no difficulty whatever in the transaction except when gifts are carried to houses whose names conspicuously appear on the boxes which contain them, and the mortified bride learns that only the box has been furnished by that establishment, and the contents purchased from a much less fashionable and expensive firm.

One might say it serves people right to be mortified in the act of bartering away a gift, but what are young householders to do with some twenty dozen spoons and no forks? Or where—in a New York apartment house—may room be found for half a score cut glass punch bowls? Spoons always suggest themselves as appropriate presents for young couples, and the festive punch bowl invariably follows in troops, as it were. Few remember other as useful objects, although this season's weddings, while prolific of silver, have been less so in cut glass and especially opulent in the matter of chafing dishes.

USEFUL GIFTS POPULAR.

One prominent silversmith is authority for the statement that it has become the custom to give useful rather than purely ornamental gifts, which is the first intimation from such a source that the giving of bridal presents is being confined to those relatives and close friends who may properly contribute such things.

The habit of exhibiting gifts with the cards of the givers conspicuously attached has practically ceased. It gave rise to much heartburning and often real humiliation at such a comparison of the values of friendly offerings that people felt more than ever obliged to increase the costliness of these in order that they might the better stand this test of public appraisal. The wounding of old friends and estrangement of new ones by placing their inexpensive gifts beside those of more opulent acquaintances at last caused families to omit the cards of donors at such exhibitions and, more recently, to admit only intimate friends and relatives to look at the bridal gifts, which in many cases are not shown at all.