

WELLINGTON ROUNDAABOUT

By "Thid"

The Case For Both Sides

CONTRARY to what you may have thought from my remarks last week, there are some good landladies. I have not met them in Wellington. I have no personal experience of them. I have heard of them in much the same way as one hears of good things in Germany, or Russia. They are remote from reality, nothing but dreams for those of us who have not met them in the flesh.

Undoubtedly it must be difficult to be a good landlady. We bachelors, I know, must often be trying. Wherever we go we like to take our litter with us, and leave it about the place, homely-like. We keep irregular hours. We are moody. In the morning we may be too sour. In the evening we may be too sweet. The best of landladies will never quite know where she stands with us, and to be kept in the dark like that must be annoying.

We are a Bad Lot

We have all sorts of habits which must be irksome. We leave the door open when it should be shut. We fail to wipe our feet. We stand on the newly-scrubbed step. We involve ourselves with the new paint. We stick to the varnish,

and the new white enamel on the bath comes off on our seats. When we should be out we are in the way. When we should be in, we are out. We fall over things. We grumble at what is lacking and damn with faint praise whatever is done for us. When our razors cut the towel it is always a new towel. We splash too much water on the bathroom floor. We forget to pull the plug. We are generally a bad lot.

On thing balanced against another, we should not, in any city but Wellington, have any tenable case against The Landlady. In the best of circumstances she must be a genius before we will say she is a good landlady. In Wellington, we should not call her good unless she were, in all things, no less than angelic.

For here she revenges the rest of her tribe upon the carcass of the enemy where he is most vulnerable. Ordinarily she has good weapons. She can nag. She can be motherly when the bachelor wishes to be left alone. She can leave him alone when a little sentiment might be acceptable. She can cut out the green peas and bring her dog into the parlour. She can neglect him when he needs looking after, or embarrass him when he needs solitude. She is fairly well armed anywhere.

A Commanding Position

In Wellington she need use none of these devices. She does, of course, but he can quickly make it square out of the resources of his own armament. It is her complete command of the local situation, as a whole, apart from in the details, that keeps him in submission in the Capital. He is strong in numbers, but the City has weakened his spirit. He is cowed. He is helpless.

The Public Service Commissioner brings him here by the thousand. He comes from the rolling green hills of the north and the golden plains of the south. When he arrives he has had some experience of living congenially. Someone has washed and darned his clothes for him and fed him round the clock. He has slept in fresh air and woken to a view of a morning.

Once in Wellington he is dropped into his pigeonhole, forgotten by the high officers of State responsible for his presence here, and sucked, unattended and unnoticed, into the whirlpool of trouble The Landlady prepares for him.

Rents in Wellington

For as much as would rent him a whole house elsewhere, he is offered in Wellington a third of a small room. For as much as would rent him elsewhere a mansion, he can get in Wellington a flat. And a flat, in Wellington, let it be stated for the benefit of those who have never lived here, is a slightly larger room which only imagination can divide into bedroom, kitchen, living room, and bathroom. If he asks for a flat, meaning a flat, he is asked for a rental which anywhere else would hire him half a hotel, or keep him in tobacco

for half a year. If he wants a house, he is shown the railway station and the delights of living in the country are extolled for him. Unless he wishes to pay as much for his house as would give him a castle in the rest of New Zealand, he accepts what anyone outside Wellington would call a hut, or a bach, or a hovel, and travels to and from it as best he may.

If he wants to scale his expenditure down to something like an ordinary perspective, he is offered a kennel in some filthy hole, with noise and low manners all about him, and a smell of centuries of food discarded in whatever may pretend to be a backyard.

Mice, Rats and Mosquitoes

For one pound a week, for instance, he may delight in such unusual amenities as mice, and rats, and mosquitoes, with a dirt-streaked dreary wall to gaze upon, and drunken sounds all round to keep away loneliness. He may feast his eyes on such sluts and slatterns as he has never seen before, and improve his human sympathies by conversation in a language more rich, and ripe, and wondrous strange than anything he has heard before or will, he hopes, ever hear again.

You may by now be sick of this complaining. I don't care. I'm going to harp on it. I'm going to nag and worry.

If any fellow bachelor likes to send his name (with a stamped, addressed envelope, etc.) I will send him a paper on How to Fight the Menace of The Landlady, and a certificate entitling him to membership of the Society for Suppressed Boarders.

This is indeed a very evil thing that has come among us.

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S. O. S.

Broadcast Messages

If you are trying to find a missing person or a missing motor car, you can make an appeal free of charge over the air from the National Stations. Requests for such appeals can only be granted, however, if they reach the station manager through the correct channels, and if the circumstances are considered to warrant broadcasting action.

In the case of missing persons the request should be made to the Police Department, hospital authority or medical practitioner, who, if satisfied with the urgency of the request, will ask the Station manager to make the appeal. Appeals are made in the following two cases where:

1. The whereabouts of the person sought are unknown, and the circumstances warrant the broadcast.
2. The whereabouts are known but no other means of immediate communication such as telephone or telegraph are available.

Appeals for information regarding missing motor cars are made only at the request of the Police Authorities or the Automobile Association, and persons desiring broadcast announcements should deal with one of these two authorities.