

The Auction Rooms

By W. E. Hill

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Leo, the general utility boy, prettifying up lot number 666.



The find. Mr. Goldie is doubtful, but thinks it may be a Goya, while Mr. Higgins is pretty certain it's an Inness. The auctioneer will finally sell it as a Velasquez. Later the proud possessor will find the signature of Althea P. Maginnis in one corner.



The auctioneer's little joke. Late afternoon of a sales day, showing Auctioneer Adolf Gruber and Helper Pete Doolin about to offer a Queen Anne pewter gravy boat to the highest bidder. "Folks," comments Mr. Gruber, "for all we know this is the identical boat Queen Annie drunk her gravy from." (Right below Mr. Gruber is Miss Cutbill, who hasn't missed a Tuesday sales day in years, looking for a hallmark. Miss Cutbill is a great hallmark enthusiast.)



Meet Mrs. Lillian Porterhouse, about to bid thirty-five cents on a Satsuma tea set. A very careful bidder is Mrs. Porterhouse, and she seldom bids against herself, except at times of great emotional stress, when a Romney portrait or a ruby glass Buddha is up.



Mabel is getting up courage to ask the auctioneer to take back the occasional chair she bought last sales day. Mabel thought it was pure Chippendale, but an interior decorator friend said it wasn't even pure Swiss Renaissance, because the ball and claw foot weren't authentic.



The decorators. Miss Lydia Kneehigh and Miss Alys Dole, being in the interior decorating line, are frequently seen at the auction rooms. Today Miss Kneehigh is out gunning for a pair of George the Third mouse eradicators (with the original brasses, of course) at the urgent request of a client in Lima, Ohio. Miss Dole is about to bid on a plush umbrella stand for a client who has suddenly gone late Victorian. Both the girls are saying terrible things about stores which give no discount to decorators.



The dealer. Harvey is going to buy a pair of silver Paul Revere pepper boxes for five dollars. Tomorrow he will sell them to a client for two hundred and fifty.



"Don't let the auctioneer see you looking at it, Howard, or he'll run the price right up!"



Charley had never been to an auction room before. Gracie asked him to stop by at the Elite Auction Rooms and pick up a little chair for the maid's room in the apartment—if things were really going cheap. Well, Charley lost his head and bid wildly—nay, even recklessly—on things that were being offered in lots, and had a swell time. . . . Now, the reaction having set in, Charley is wondering how to break the news to Gracie.