

**THE LITTLE LONDONER, A CONCISE ACCOUNT  
OF THE LIFE AND WAYS OF THE ENGLISH WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LONDON. SUPPLYING  
THE MEANS OF ACQUIRING AN ADEQUATE  
COMMAND OF THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN  
ALL DEPARTMENTS OF DAILY LIFE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649005499

The little Londoner, a concise account of the life and ways of the English with special reference to London. Supplying the means of acquiring an adequate command of the spoken language in all departments of daily life by R. Kron

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Cover @ 2017

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BY  
R. KRON, PH. D.

SIXTEENTH EDITION.



FREIBURG IM DREISGAU,  
J. BIELEFELDS VERLAG.

1921.

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## PREFACE.

This little book is a parallel volume to my *Petit Parisien*. I have called it *The Little Londoner* for two reasons; firstly, because it treats of almost every aspect of London daily life, London being generally recognised as the leading English city to which the foreigner usually goes first, and where he makes his longest stay; secondly, because the book is written in such English as the educated Londoner of the present day uses in his ordinary unconstrained conversation; London speech is spreading among the educated classes throughout the country, and many authorities do not hesitate to regard it as the standard.

In composing *The Little Londoner*, I have mainly drawn upon my personal experience gained during a continuous stay in England extending over two years and a half, and on numerous later occasions when my holidays were spent there. I have, of course, also made occasional use of the recognised standard works on England and the English, and of valuable information furnished by English friends. I am particularly indebted to two English gentlemen, of whom one, Mr. C. Darling, M. A. (Lond.), is a native of the North, while the other, Mr. Walter Rippmann, M. A. (Cantab. & Lond.), is a born Londoner. Each has revised my MS. independently, both as regards form and matter. It may therefore be taken that the language is thoroughly idiomatic.

Chapter XXVI, which deals with the language, contains an alphabetical list of the most common colloquial and slang expressions with explanations in good English, and is largely based on my own observation. I have added a brief enumeration of the chicer peculiarities of cockney speech. The chapter is intended to enable the foreigner to distinguish what is good from what ought *not* to be imitated in the conversation of the native. Those who have little experience are too much inclined to make an indiscriminate use of slang, without considering whether it may not be regarded as a sign of offensive familiarity by the person addressed.

The words and phrases given in *brackets* serve to explain the text or to extend the vocabulary by the sug-

gestion of synonyms; in some cases, these brackets supplement the text by a word or phrase which may just as well be left out. Besides this, *foot-notes* tend to interpret in plain English all words that are likely to be unfamiliar to the average reader or not perfectly clear from the context.

As regards pronunciation, helps are given by indicating the syllabic stress in such polysyllabic words and groups as are liable to be accented wrongly: the *stressed syllable* is marked by an *elevated dot placed close behind its vowel*. Thus in the word "syllabic" the stress is on the *a*. In shortenings, such as *a. m.*, *p. m.*, *e. g.*, only these letters are, as a rule, pronounced, and then have their usual English value.

*The Little Londoner* will be found suitable as a reader and as the starting-point for conversational practice in the upper forms of secondary schools and similar places of education, including military colleges. In all such institutions attention is now paid to the acquisition of a good command of the spoken language for all the ordinary purposes of daily life. The book will also be of use to private students.

A systematic scheme of questions and answers has been prepared for those who may require a guide to conversational exercises in order to derive genuine advantage from the subject-matter contained in the book. These *Hints for Conversation based on the text of The Little Londoner* may be obtained from the publisher, J. Bielefelds Verlag, Freiburg im Breisgau.

To German readers in particular, my English-German *Verdeutschungs-Wörterbuch* will also be of use.

All corrections and suggestions that may occur to any reader as likely to improve this little book, will be thankfully acknowledged.

This new edition has been thoroughly revised, and, as far as possible, brought up to date with the kind assistance of two competent Englishmen residing in London.

WIESBADEN, December 1920.

R. KRON.



## I. Calls<sup>1</sup>.

"An Englishman's house is his castle", says the proverb. No one, not even a policeman, is under ordinary circumstances entitled<sup>2</sup> to pass (or cross) the threshold<sup>3</sup> of an English private house. Thus a well-bred<sup>4</sup> Englishman would consider it a bold<sup>5</sup> intrusion<sup>6</sup> on<sup>6</sup> his privacy<sup>7</sup> if a stranger<sup>8</sup> were to call upon him without an invitation or a letter of introduction.

Persons who are provided with a letter of introduction must, at their first call, leave that letter along with their card and address. It may be advisable<sup>9</sup> not to go in on that day, but wait until the lady or gentleman to whom the letter is addressed sends an invitation. One (or A single) introduction from an English friend is worth more than a<sup>10</sup> score<sup>10</sup> of introductions from foreigners<sup>11</sup> in high positions.

Sunday is not the proper day for making formal calls; week-days should always be chosen for that purpose. The usual (or customary, proper) time for calling is between 4 and 6 *p. m.*<sup>12</sup> (i. e.<sup>13</sup> *post*

<sup>1</sup> visits. <sup>2</sup> allowed. <sup>3</sup> door-step, door-stone, entrance. <sup>4</sup> cultivated. <sup>5</sup> rude, impudent. <sup>6</sup> interfering or meddling with. <sup>7</sup> private affairs. <sup>8</sup> unknown person. <sup>9</sup> prudent, best. <sup>10</sup> about twenty, any number. <sup>11</sup> non-Englishmen. <sup>12</sup> *p. m.* is to be read: *pee emm.* <sup>13</sup> *i. e.* (the Latin *id est*) is read: *that is (to say).*

*meridiem*, in the afternoon). No call should be made at any other time, unless on a very intimate (or close) friend. Strange<sup>14</sup> to say, these calls, although made in the afternoon, are termed<sup>15</sup> (or styled) "morning calls". They are, it is true, made before dinner, the time for which is usually between six and eight (o'clock). Morning calls are made in morning dress, i. e. a dark frock-coat (double-breasted and with long tails), or a single-breasted cut-away coat with tails, and fancy-coloured trousers and gloves. A well-brushed silk hat (or top-hat) is now no longer the fashionable head dress. A gentleman should take his hat and stick, but not the umbrella, into the room, and keep them in his hands until he is invited to put them down. The right-hand glove must be removed.

When I intend (or wish) to go and see a friend, or any one that has asked me to pay him a visit (or to call upon him, to look him up), I go to his house and ring the (visitors') bell; or, as is more commonly done in England, I give several (at least 4 or 5) raps<sup>16</sup> with the knocker, a kind of iron or brass<sup>17</sup> hammer, such as are (to be) seen on most English front-doors. A servant (a footman<sup>18</sup> or a maid) will come and open the door. In speaking to him (or her, as the case may be), I need not take off my hat. When in doubt about the right address, I ask him (or her): *Does*

<sup>14</sup> astonishing. <sup>15</sup> called. <sup>16</sup> knocks, blows. <sup>17</sup> yellow metal. <sup>18</sup> man servant.

Mr. —<sup>19</sup> *live here?*, or *Is this where Mr. — lives?* In case (that) I get a reply<sup>20</sup> in the affirmative, I proceed to say: *Can I see him (or Mr. —)?*, or *Is he in?*, or *Is he at home* (i. e. at liberty to see me)? Should Mr. — not be in, or should he be engaged (or very busy) at the time, the servant will tell me so, and perhaps ask me to call again at a certain hour. If Mr. — is at home, the servant will ask: *What name, (if you) please?*, or *What name shall I say?*, whereupon I reply: *Mr. Baker* [or *Doctor Draper*, if I hold (or have) this degree]. I do not send my card up unless I have come to see him on business. Before announcing me to his master, the servant will request<sup>21</sup> me to step (or walk) in, and will show me into the drawing-room<sup>22</sup>. Here I await (or wait for) Mr.—'s arrival.

In the event<sup>23</sup> of my not knowing Mr.— personally, I bow<sup>24</sup> when he enters the room, and say: *Mr.—?* (in a questioning voice), or again: *Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr.—?* Mr.— will then answer: *That (or Yes, that) is my name; will you take a seat, please?* and probably continue: *What can I do for you?* I may perhaps say in reply, *I hope I am not trespassing<sup>25</sup> on<sup>26</sup> your time.* He will assure me, *O(h,) certainly not.* I then proceed<sup>27</sup> to tell him the object of my visit, or what has brought me there, or what I have (got) to say.

<sup>19</sup> Mr. — is read: *Mister Dash, Mr. Blank, or Mr. So-and-So.* <sup>20</sup> answer. <sup>21</sup> ask. <sup>22</sup> reception-room. <sup>23</sup> case. <sup>24</sup> incline my head. <sup>25</sup> using wrongly, abusing. <sup>26</sup> go on.