

Pat tried again, but with no better success, although he almost burst his lungs and exploded the transmitter, for again came Father O'Hara's voice explaining that he could not understand.

Pat, losing his patience and with his mouth still at the transmitter, muttered in a low tone:

'Och, may the devil take ye fer an ould fool!'

But poor Pat dropped the receiver in dismay when his reverence's voice came calmly, but emphatically, through the 'phone: 'I hear you perfectly now, Patrick.'

ODDS AND ENDS

'Can your mother look at your hands and tell your fortune?' 'No; whenever she looks at my hands she tells me to go and wash 'em.'

In Spain, Portugal, and Italy cork grows in abundance. Some of the trees are from one hundred to one hundred and fifty years old. When about fifteen years old they commence to yield cork-bark, and are then stripped for five years. 'Incisions are made round the trees; the bark is stripped, boiled, and pressed; then it is dried, cut, trimmed, and tied in bales for export.

A little boy of four years of age, on noticing for the first time a lock of grey hair on his father's head, asked: 'Papa, why are some of your hairs grey?' Thinking to drive home a moral lesson, the father answered: 'Papa has a new grey hair every time his little boy is naughty.' The child seemed lost in thought, but after a pause said gravely: 'Then grandpa must have had awfully naughty boys.'

A North Island schoolmaster received the following note from one of his brightest pupils, a girl about twelve years old: 'Dear Sir,—Sorry I cannot be present this afternoon. Circumstances relating to the birth of a sister do not permit.'

FAMILY FUN.

A word of five letters I am:

Come, puzzle me out, if you can.

My first and my last are alike, I declare;

My second and fourth are also a pair;

Read backwards and forwards, I'm always the same;

Behead and curtail me, then I'm a name.

The rest I shall leave to my carpenter friends,
Who oft take my whole to accomplish their ends.

Answer—Level.

The Dancing Egg.—Send for some eggs, and take care to place among them one which has been emptied of its contents, and to which is fastened a long hair, at the other end of which is tied a crooked pin. Borrow a small stick from one of the spectators, and as you go behind your table contrive to hook the bent pin into your coat, passing it over the stick. Then place the egg on an inverted hat, and ask for some music, but directly it begins to sound, a slight and imperceptible depression or elevation of the stick will cause the egg to twist and roll about upon it as if it had life. You must be careful to turn gently now and then, so as apparently to vary the distance of the egg from the body.

What is the superlative of temper? Tempest.

What nation does a criminal dread? Condemnation.

What is there you cannot take with a kodak? A hint.

What animals, when beheaded, become very cold? Mice.

What is the waste of time? The middle of an hour-glass.

What animals are generally brought to a funeral? Black kids.

What is it which works when it plays and plays when it works? A fountain.

Of what trade are all the Presidents of the United States? Cabinet makers.

Two ducks before a duck and two ducks behind a duck and a duck in the middle. How many ducks in all? Three.

What is the difference between an oak tree and a tight boot? One makes acorns, and the other makes corns-ache.

Why does a cat look first on one side and then on the other when she comes into a room? Because she can't look both ways at once.

All Sorts

Canterbury Farmer: 'Hi, boy! You can't catch fish here without a permit.'

Boy: 'Well, I'm getting on well enough with a worm!'

The most remarkable railway in the world is the Oroya, in Peru. It runs from Callao to the goldfields of Cerro de Pasco. From Callao it ascends the narrow valley of the Rimac, rising nearly 5000 feet in the first 50 miles. Thence it goes through the intricate gorges of the Sierras till it tunnels the Andes at an altitude of 15,645 feet, the highest point in the world where a piston rod is moved by steam. The wonder is increased by remembering that this elevation is reached in 78 miles.

Why do we always shake hands with the right hand? Because, in the days when people were not as peaceable as they now are, every man carried a sword or dagger to defend himself. This sword was worn on his left side, where the right hand could quickly grasp it for use in time of peril. When a man wished to show that he was friendly, he extended his right hand, which would be clasped by the other's right hand, if he, too, meant peace. Thus each would be sure that the other would not draw his sword.

During the rebellion which occurred in Ireland in 1798, or it may be in 1803, Kilkenny was garrisoned by a troop of Hessian soldiers, who amused themselves in barracks by tying two cats together by their tails and throwing them across a clothes line to fight. The officer, hearing of the cruel practice, resolved to stop it. As he entered the room one of the troopers, seizing a sword, cut the tails in two as the animals hung across the line. The two cats escaped minus their tails through the open window, and when the officer inquired the meaning of the two bleeding tails being left in the room he was coolly told that two cats had been fighting and had devoured each other, all but the tails; hence the saying, 'Like the Kilkenny cats.'

Among the Arabs there is a curious legend to account for the ostrich's residence in the desert. 'On a certain day appointed,' so the story runs, 'all created beings met together to decide upon their respective order and precedence. All went smoothly until the ostrich, pleading its inability to fly, disowned the birds and claimed to take rank with the mammals. These, however, would have nothing to say to a creature clothed not with fur but with feathers, while the birds, when the ostrich went dejectedly back, repudiated it as a traitor to its race. But the ostrich was equal to the occasion, and declared that being neither mammal nor bird it must be an angel. At this all the other animals indignantly rushed upon the ostrich and drove it before them into the desert, where it has lived in solitude ever since, with no one to contradict it.

'What do you mean, sir,' said an infuriated man in the crowd at the Christchurch Cattle Show, 'by sticking your umbrella in my eye?'

'Oh, no,' replied the cheerful offender, 'you're mistaken, I assure you.'

'Mistaken!' he roared. 'Do you mean to say that I don't know when my eye is hurt? Why, hang it, sir, I saw you do it. How the dickens can I be mistaken?'

'I assure you that you are, nevertheless,' was the easy rejoinder. 'You may know when your eye is hurt, but you don't know my umbrella. This is one I borrowed.'

When a year old the plumage of the ostrich is usually large and fine enough to begin plucking, which is one of the most difficult and dangerous operations of ostrich-culture. A few of them are driven into a small corral, when one by one they are pushed into an angular enclosure, and a long, narrow bag placed over the head, with a hole at the end to breathe through. The one man holds the bird, while the operator skillfully clips and pulls at the feathers that are ripe. Blinded the bird becomes very tame, but care is exercised by the men to avoid the kicks that necessarily are included by the creature in this performance. When a feather root is hurt, injury is done that can never be remedied, for when a socket is pulled out, a feather can never grow again. The short feathers are pulled out without any apparent pain to the creature, as they are ripe and would fall off in the course of nature if not extracted by the skilled operator. The heavy wing-feathers are cut off with heavy scissors, the stumps being left in the skin. These stumps are ripe for extraction about three months after a plucking takes place.