

WHEN ROBERT'S CHANCE CAME

Little Robert, aged four, presented his mother with a large-sized shock the other day. It was a case of sowing a mild little breeze and reaping a full-grown whirlwind.

Robert is Mrs. B.'s first, and has always had a large front seat in her affections. Even when Mrs. B. attended parties she remembered Robert, and would slip a bit of candy into her handkerchief to carry home to him.

Not that Robert did not have as much candy of his own as was good for him—and more, too—but he took an awed delight in anything which came from a party. So his mother always produced some souvenir of her modest social dissipation with which to satisfy Robert.

A few weeks ago Robert himself went to a party—his very first. A maid brought him home and left him, together with a large paper bag, in the eager arms of his welcoming mother. The first rapture of description had scarcely begun when Mrs. B. became conscious of the bulky bag.

'Why, Robert, what's this?'

'It's for you. I brought it to you from the party.'

With some misgivings Mrs. B. opened the bag. It contained a large orange, nuts, candy, grapes, cakes—in fact, a very respectable assortment of refreshments suitable to the juvenile taste.

Robert had supposed it was quite the usual thing to take little consoling items to the uninvited members of one's family, and he had taken a generous delight in securing a truly noble collection for his mother.

That lady faced the double problem of explaining the situation to Robert's hostess and of presenting to Robert a clear reason why what was sauce for the goose, so to speak, was a totally different thing for the gander. The explanation, which simmered down, of course, to a question of size or quantity, was far from being clear to Robert, who is low in his mind and thinks he doesn't care for society after all.

A GREAT SMOKER

An American told the following recently:—'I lunched with Sir Thomas Lipton at the Ghezireh Palace in Cairo just before he set out for his tea plantation in Ceylon, where the ex-Empress Eugenie was to visit him. When the coffee came on I opened my case and offered Sir Thomas a beautiful aromatic cigarette, fresh from the factory down the street. "No, thank you," said he; "I am, with one possible exception, the biggest smoker in the world, but I never smoke cigarettes." "What do you smoke?" said I. "Bacon," he answered.'

ODDS AND ENDS

Tommy: 'Pa, what is the difference between a philanthropist and a philosopher?'

Father: 'A philanthropist is a man who gives away other people's money, and a philosopher is a man who bears with resignation the pain which his neighbor suffers from the toothache.'

'We obtain wool from sheep. The wool is made into cloth, and with the cloth they make clothes. Now, Edmund, what is your overcoat made of?'

'Of an old one of father's, sir!'

Dr. Thompson, the late Master of Trinity, once received a request from the principal of one of the ladies' colleges at Cambridge for the loan of the Trinity Fellows' gardens for a garden party, to which members of the University would be invited. Dr. Thompson replied, 'Madam, our gardens are intended for horticulture, not for husbandry.'

FAMILY FUN

A Bottled Button.—Place a button, attached by a thread to a cork securely sealed at the top, in a clear glass bottle, and see if you can sever the thread, so that the button falls to the bottom, without uncorking or breaking the bottle. Here is how it is done:—Take a lens and focus the rays of the sun, which pass through the glass without heating it, and burn the thread.

Is Water Porous?—Our belief that two portions of matter cannot occupy the same space at the same time is almost shaken by the following experiment:—If we introduce slowly some fine powdered sugar into a tumblerful of water a considerable quantity may be dissolved in the water without increasing its bulk. It is thought that the atoms of water are so disposed as to receive the sugar between them, as a scuttle filled with coal might accommodate a quantity of sand.

All Sorts

The more sunshine there is in some men's lives the less hay they make.

It takes a Persian rug weaver about twenty days to weave a square foot.

A man's chances of sudden death are eight times as great as a woman's.

It is possible to read by the light emitted by half a dozen Jamaican fireflies.

Some of the largest ocean steamers can be converted into armed cruisers in thirty hours.

The road to ruin is always kept in good order, and those who travel on it pay the expense.

Someone remarks that there is no one on earth so depressing as the thorough-going optimist.

Europe loses 960,000 natives every year by emigration, while only 200,000 return in the same period.

At the age of thirty, the female brain begins to lose weight, but that of the male not until the age of forty.

Five miles and a half is the height of the loftiest mountain peak in the world, while the greatest known depth of the ocean is six miles.

Our customs and habits are like the ruts in the roads; the wheels of life settle into them, and we jog along through the mire because it is too much trouble to get out of them.

'Your wife used to sing and play a great deal. I have not heard her lately.'

'Since we have had children she has had no time.'

'Ah, children are such a blessing!'

'So he praised my singing, did he?'

'Yes; he said it was heavenly.'

'Did he really say that?'

'Well, not exactly; but he probably meant that. He said it was unearthly.'

'Pa, is an abyss a sleepy hollow?'

'No, child. Whatever put such an idea into your head?'

'Well, pa, whenever you hear of or read about an abyss, it is always yawning.'

Harry was walking with another boy, when he was joined by a friend, a year or so older and inclined to manners.

'Introduce me, Harry,' the newcomer whispered pompously.

Harry twisted, reddened, and at last turned to his companion with: 'Jim, have you ever seen Gilbert Spencer?'

'No,' the other boy answered.

'Well,' Harry blurted out, reddening still more, and jerking one thumb over his shoulder toward the newcomer, 'that's him!'

The United States Government are planning a gigantic extension of the internal waterways systems, to cost £100,000,000, during the next ten years, to be followed by an annual vote of £10,000,000 for an indefinite period. The scheme is considered necessary because the demands for transportation are increasing more quickly than the railways. The Government propose to link up the East and the Middle West by a circular waterway route 5000 miles long, tapping a district with an area of 1,300,000 square miles.

One feature of the present situation in China to which attention is given is the hoarded wealth lying unproductive in the Palace, and amounting to millions sterling. The bullion entrusted during the foreign military occupation of Peking in 1900-1901, first to the protection of the American General Chaffet, and afterwards to the English General, Sir A. Gaselee, was estimated approximately at £9,000,000. Whatever was the amount of the hoard, it has since considerably increased. Under a more enlightened Regency there is hope that this treasure may become reproductive.

It is questionable (says the *Wide World Magazine*) if any animal on earth could duplicate the swallowing feat that is to be seen daily (or as often as a tourist comes along) at the Cawston Ostrich Farm in South Pasadena, California. Oranges are one of their great dainties—the big 'navel' oranges of California, measuring upwards of 3½ in diameter. One old patriarch named 'Emperor William' will catch the oranges one after another, full 10ft above the ground, until an even dozen may be seen at the time slowly bumping down along the expanse of neck, to be finally lost in the ruffle of feathers where neck and body join.