

HE HAD DONE HIS BEST

The point of the following story from the New York *Tribune* is not too fine for everyday economists to perceive. It carries a lesson which ought to interest purchasers as well as manufacturers:

A merchant who had a big trade in alбата (alloy) spoons decided that he ought to get them from the manufacturer at a lower price. The manufacturer, on the other hand, said that he could not make any reduction unless he put more lead into the composition.

'All right; use more lead,' replied the merchant.

Before long he wanted a second reduction. The manufacturer made the same reply, and was again told to use more lead.

After a while the merchant wanted the spoons at a still cheaper price, but the manufacturer wrote that he could not possibly submit to a further cut.

'Put in more lead,' wrote the merchant.

'Can't,' answered the manufacturer. 'The last lot I sent you were all lead.'

SHE HAD AN ADVANTAGE

A distinguished actress was one day having her hair dressed by a young woman at her home. The actress was very tired and quiet, but a chance remark from the dresser made her open her eyes and sit up.

'I should have went on the stage,' said the young woman complacently.

'But,' returned the actress, 'look at me—think how I have had to work and study to gain what success I have, and win such fame as is now mine!'

'Oh, yes,' replied the young woman calmly; 'but then I have talent.'

A DISCIPLE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

The great detective climbed through the kitchen window, followed by his faithful ally.

'Ah,' he exclaimed, surveying the surroundings, 'I find that his wife is away!'

'And how long has she been away?' asked his ally.

'Exactly thirty days.'

'And how on earth are you able to tell that?'

'My dear fellow, by the unwashed dishes and cups and saucers. There are ninety of each in all, which shows that he has used three a day for thirty days, and left them for her to wash when she comes home—same as we all do. Simplest thing in the world, my dear fellow—simplest thing in the world!'

AN ESSAY ON BABIES

Here is an essay on babies by an English board school-boy:—'Babys are of two sects, male and female, and are also very fat. When very young they do not have much hair. They are always asleep only when crying. Women and girls go silly over babys, and kiss them all over and say silly things. That's why girls have dolls when they haven't any little brothers. Everybody 'as to be a baby first. That's all I know about babys.'

TAKING NO CHANCES

Jerome K. Jerome, the well known humorist, while crossing the Atlantic, was leaning over the rail one morning when the information fiend tapped him on the shoulder. 'Sir,' he said, with a wave of the hand, 'do you know that if the earth were flattened out, the sea would be miles deep all over the world?' Mr. Jerome looked impressed. 'Well,' he replied with the vestige of a smile, 'if you catch anyone flattening out the earth, shoot him on the spot. I can't swim.'

FAMILY FUN

Jet of Water in a Vacuum.—Fill an empty bottle about three-quarters full of water. The cork must be pierced with a bit of sound straw or hollow grass, or a few inches of glass piping of small diameter. In any case this tube must descend near the bottom of the bottle. Hermetically seal the cork with varnish or sealing wax. Now cover your flask with a large pickle bottle upside down, which must first be warmed over a lamp or candle flame. In order to prevent the air from getting in it must be placed on a few sheets of wet blotting-paper, smoothly laid on a plate. Press the pickle bottle firmly down on the blotting-paper so as to exclude all air. Now in a minute or two, the contraction of the inner air from the cooling of the bottle will cause a jet of water to issue from the medicine bottle—an automatic fountain—and, if the directions have been strictly adhered to, you will perceive it break into a thousand drops of liquid crystals.

All Sorts

Visitor (to little girl): 'And were you born in India?' 'I was.' 'What part?' 'All of me, of course.'

In the civilised countries of the world 60 per cent. of persons over ten years of age have to work for a living.

'We need brains in this business, young man.'

'You needn't tell me that, sir. Your business shows it.'

Edmund Thiery, the French economist, figures that the maintenance of Europe's armed peace footing in the last twenty-five years cost £6,000,000,000, which excluded from productive industry 195,000 officers and 3,800,000 men.

'Oh, how lovely of you to bring me these beautiful roses! How sweet they are, and how fresh! I do believe there is a little dew on them yet!' 'W-well, yes, there is; but I'll pay it to-morrow.'

Mother: 'Why did yo strike my child for naething?'

Teacher: 'I struck him because he wouldn't tell me where the river Thames was. He only stood and looked at me.'

Mother: 'He wad be dumfounded at yer ignorance, likely.'

Tarsus, the ancient city in Asia Minor, where the Apostle Paul was born, is now illuminated by electricity. The power is taken from the Cydnus river. There are now in Tarsus 450 electric street lights and about 600 incandescent lights for private use.

'You are the greatest inventor in the world,' exclaimed a newspaper man to Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone.

'Oh, no, my friend, I'm not,' said Professor Bell. 'I've never been a reporter.'

Surveyor (for new line): 'We want to run a railway through your cowhouse, farmer.' Farmer: 'A railway through my cowhouse? Not likely! Do 'e think Oi'm going to get out of my bed and open the door every toime a train comes along at night!'

Visitor (consoling to Tommy, who has upset a bottle of ink on the new carpet): 'Tut, my boy, there is no use crying over spilt milk.'

Tommy: 'Course not. Any duffer knows that. All you've got to do is call in the cat, and she'd lick it up. But this don't happen to be milk, an' mamma will do the licking.'

'I don't know whether to accept this testimonial or not,' mused the hair-restorer man. 'What's the matter with it?' demanded the advertising manager. 'Well,' explained the boss, 'the man writes: "I used to have three bald spots on the top of my head, but since using one bottle of your hair-restorer I have only one."'

A countryman in a restaurant ordered roast lamb, and the waiter bawled to the cook: 'One lamb!' 'Goodness, mister!' cried the countryman, 'I can't eat no hull lamb. Gimme some fried oysters instead.' 'One fried oyster!' bawled the waiter. 'Well, Methuselah's ghost! Mister, one fried oyster ain't going to be enough. Gimme a dozen of 'em. Hang these city eatin' places!'

The strange thing about rats is that they are perfectly harmless so long as you have a number of them. You can take from a cage a number of rats one by one without any fear, but when you get to the last one look out for squalls. The last one always fights, and it takes an expert to tackle him.

Birds get up early in the morning, and they retire early, or they could not do it. The blackbird is the last to go to bed. The robin is awake and singing at half-past two. Fifteen minutes later the thrush begins; and one after another the feathered troubadours start in, until at four all are at it. At five-thirty it is time for breakfast.

The history of fungi is full of interest. Ergot, the invaluable medicine, is a fungus that grows on rye. Fungi are found in all sorts of extraordinary places—in the nests of white ants, on the roots of old bamboos. They are put to many and varied uses. Some are used as tinder, to make chest protectors, dyes, green wood stain, or as an ingredient in snuff. Two curious foreign fungi may be noted—the 'little man's bread' of the Neilgherries, which grows at a height of 5000ft. It is a subterranean fungus like the truffle, and of as great use as a nutritious food. Another fungus, which, according to some, is not a fungus, is the 'Luckahoe' of the United States. It consists almost entirely of pectic acid, and is used for making jelly. Penicillium, the 'vinegar plant,' is used in some parts of France to make vinegar.

If we are commonplace and indifferent, we will find other people so. Mind finds its level, just as water does. A really original and sympathetic person will find others interesting and agreeable. To complain of those we meet is really to proclaim ourselves dull.