

## THE CUCUMBER IN THE BOTTLE

'When I was a little boy,' remarked an old gentleman, 'somebody gave me a cucumber in a bottle. The neck of the bottle was small and the cucumber so large that it wasn't possible for it to pass through, and I was greatly puzzled to know how it got there. But out in the garden one day I came upon a bottle slipped over a little green fellow that was still on the vine, and then I understood it all. The cucumber had grown in the bottle. I often see men with habits that I wonder any strong, sensible man could form, and then I think that likely they grew into them when they were young and cannot slip out of them now. They are the cucumber. Look out for the bottle, my boys.'

## MIXED METAPHORS

In a northern shire in New South Wales a councillor told his hearers that the grazing of cows in streets was a nuisance. 'We must,' he said, 'by setting our faces firmly against the practice, stamp it out.'

In eulogising a retiring Mayor, one alderman told a council that the 'Mayor has not only devoted to the services of the ratepayers every hour of the day, but all his spare time as well.'

One lady recently wrote to a council complaining of the dangers of an open waterhole in her locality, which had such steep sides that a person who fell in would be unable to get out unaided. She wrote: 'If a child was to get drowned in this pit nothing could be done to save it.'

At a meeting of the Ryde Council, one alderman drew attention to the state of a bridge, which he said had such holes in it that 'if a horse put his foot in the hole it would be all up a tree with him.'

## IT DIDN'T MATTER

'What are you doing, dear?' asked the little girl's mother, as she paused to look at some very strange marks the child was making on a piece of paper.

'I'm writing a letter to Lillie Smith,' was the answer.

'But, my dear,' laughed the mother, 'you don't know how to write.'

'Oh, that doesn't matter, mother! Lillie doesn't know how to read.'

## NOT CRIMINAL OFFENCES

Breaking into—society.  
Picking—your way.  
Coining—money.  
Killing—time.  
Murdering—a part.  
Cutting—capers.  
Striking—a balance.  
Forging—ahead.  
Burning—daylight.  
Getting drunk—with applause.  
Breaking—the record.  
Poaching—eggs.  
Trespassing—on our good nature.  
Shooting—the rapids.  
Cheating—the doctors.  
Taking—offence.  
Converting—the heathen.  
Beating—time.

## A SLOW TRAIN

It was a new railway in a back-block district of New South Wales, and the trains were slow—oh, very slow! On one occasion the driver of one of them found his progress still further retarded by cows which trespassed on the line, necessitating the stopping of the train while he drove them off. When this had happened for the third time in half an hour, a bored and weary passenger put his head out of the window and addressed the driver: 'Do you really mean to say,' he inquired gently, 'that we've caught up to that cow again!'

## FAMILY FUN

### TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS.

(Special to the *N.Z. Tablet* by MAHATMA.)

**A Great Coin Trick.**—A coin is borrowed from a spectator by the performer. Without glancing at it he throws it upon the table and calls out the date upon the coin. Upon examination this is found to be correct. Two coins are used. One is placed in the palm of the hand by the performer before commencing. When he receives the coin from a spectator he adroitly changes it for the palmed coin. With a little practice this will be found easy of accomplishment. It is this coin which he throws upon the table, and as he has had a good look at the date before beginning the experiment the rest of the trick is not difficult. It would be well to point out here a very important rule which the aspiring conjuror must always bear in mind. In brief it is this: Never inform your audience of the effect you intend to produce. In the above trick, for example, all the effect would be lost if the audience were informed that you intended to discover the date on the coin, for someone would be sure to want to have a look at it before you obtained possession of it.

**Mysterious Addition.**—This is another very mystifying trick. The performer takes a handful of coins or counters, and invites one of the spectators to do the same and to take a mental note of whether the number he holds is odd or even. The coins are then dropped into a hat. The conjuror takes up a second handful, and drops these also in with the others. He now tells the audience that if the number of coins dropped into the hat by the spectator is odd the number of coins which he adds will make the total number even, whereas if the number of coins already in the hat is even his addition will make it odd. The explanation depends upon an old arithmetical principle that if an odd number be added to an even number an odd total will result, while an odd number added to an odd number gives an even total. The performer then has only to remember to add an odd number of coins each time.

**A Card Trick.**—Take from a pack of cards the four aces, kings, queens, and knaves, and make four separate piles with them, each containing an ace, king, queen, and knave, in regular order. Place these sets face downwards on the table and put first set on top of second, second on top of third, and these twelve cards on top of the fourth. Let several members of the company cut the cards—single cuts only—at each cut placing at the bottom those cards removed from the top. Then deal the cards out again in four sets, one card for each set in sequence, and each of these sets will be found to contain four cards of a kind—i.e., four queens, four kings, four knaves, and four aces. If the sets are then taken up again in order and cut several times the cards will be found to be in the same order as at first.

**An Effective Rope Release.**—This illusion has a rather startling effect. The performer's wrists are tied together with a handkerchief, palm to palm with fingers outstretched. A piece of rope or binder twine is then passed round the handkerchief and between this and the performer's body, the two ends being held by one of the company. The hands must next be covered with a cloth and instructions given to the person holding the rope to pull hard. When this is done it will be found that, owing to the 'give' in the handkerchief, that part of the rope passing between the performer's wrists will be drawn sufficiently forward to allow him to work one hand under it. The rope will then be at the back of the hand, and a good tug will have the effect of freeing the performer. A handkerchief should be placed over the hands while the experiment is in progress in order to screen the *modus operandi*.

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