

there was at least the promise of a lark. As far as he could make out, he did not supply a single correct answer to the long list of questions. Nevertheless, he came out first in the competition. It was a surprise even for a confident young lordling. Meeting one of the examiners at dinner a few days later, he ventured to ask how the thing came about. 'We at once saw you knew nothing,' was the reply. 'But your manner was so free from constraint under what to some people would have been peculiarly embarrassing circumstances that we said to each other, "That's the very man to make a diplomatist." So we gave you a start on your career.'

A CHICKEN IN FULL BLOOM

Little Mary went into the country on a visit to her grandmother. Walking in the garden, she chanced to spy a peacock, a bird she had never before seen. She ran quickly into the house and cried out:

'O grandma, come out and see! There's an old chicken in full bloom!'

A POOR PROVIDER

The daughter of the family had received a proposal of marriage and the momentous subject was being discussed at the breakfast table the next morning.

'Say, dad,' spoke up Freddie, 'I don't believe sister's feller will make a good husband.'

'What makes you think so, my boy?' asked his father, with a smile.

'Why,' returned Freddie, 'he's been coming here for over a year, and in all that time he's only given me eightpence.'

THE CADDIE'S SYMPATHY

There is a good story told of a golfer. He was playing, when he noticed the ragged condition of his caddie. Being touched by this, he gave the boy something to get some food with, and promised him a suit of old clothes. Later, hearing about a dependent mother, he despatched a load of coal and a round of beef. The lad was very grateful indeed for all this kindness, and, with his eyes brimming with tears, he tried to say something befitting the occasion.

'Please, sir——' he began, and then he halted.

'Oh, that's all right, my boy,' said the benefactor, cheerily. 'Say nothing. Be a good lad, that's all.'

Then the caddie could no longer restrain himself. The kindly thought which lay at the bottom of his heart broke through.

'Please, sir,' he cried, 'I'm sorry you're such a bad player!'

'COUNSELLOR THEREFORE'

Sergeant Kelly, a celebrity of the Irish bar, had a remarkable habit of drawing conclusions directly at variance with his premises, and was consequently nicknamed 'Counsellor Therefore.' In court on one occasion he thus addressed the jury:

'The case is so clear, gentlemen, that you cannot possibly misunderstand it, and I should pay your understandings a very poor compliment if I dwelt upon it for another minute. Therefore I shall at once proceed to explain it to you as minutely as possible.'

JUST ORDINARY HOOFS

Sir Charles Russell, when practising at the Bar, was a noted cross-examiner, and it was a shrewd witness who could circumvent him. On one occasion, at least, however, the laugh was on him by an innocently-intended answer. He was cross-examining a witness in regard to certain hoof-prints left by a horse on sandy soil.

'How large were the prints?' asked Sir Charles. 'Were they as large as my hand?' holding up his hand for the witness to see it.

'Oh, no,' replied the man in the box; 'they were just ordinary-sized hoofs, sir.'

FAMILY FUN

TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS.

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

A Tissue Paper Mystery.—A sheet of tissue paper is twisted like a cord and then handed to the strongest person in the company to tear. After being tried it is returned to the performer uninjured, with the remark that it cannot be done. Yet the conjuror tears it with ease. This is explained as follows: Secretly the performer damps his thumb and forefinger in a wine glass or tumbler of water which is standing by and then takes hold of the paper. The water on his finger, damping the centre of the paper where it is held, weakens it, and it is therefore easy to tear.

A Trick with a Piece of Paper.—I wonder if there is one among my readers who has not heard the story of the great mathematician, scientist, and engineer, who was once asked whether he could, if given a square thin sheet of metal, cut from the centre a smaller square, using only a round file. The wise man gave it up. Try the same question on your friends; they will consider it for a time, and, if they have never heard of the trick, they will do likewise. Demonstrate the feasibility of the thing by taking a sheet of paper, folding it evenly across, then across again, so that now it is folded in four. By cutting off the corner, which really forms the centre of the whole sheet, in the shape of an isosceles triangle, a square will be taken out.

Which Number Was Struck Out.—Ask a member of the company to write on a piece of paper a number of several figures, then to subtract from that number the sum of the digits, next from the number thus obtained to strike out any digit, and to rewrite the remaining digits in any order. On the new number being handed to the performer he will state correctly the figure struck out. Let us suppose the first number written down was 62 857, from which the sum of the digits (28) is subtracted, leaving as remainder 62,829. Strike out any figure, say 8, and the remaining figures are 6229, which may be written down in any order, as for instance 2692. By adding the digits together the performer finds that they come to 19. The figure struck out will be the difference between 19 and the next higher multiple of 9 which is 27; this difference is 8, therefore 8 was the figure struck out.

The Japanese Ball Trick.—The performer has a round wooden ball, with a hole running through the centre of it. A string is threaded through the ball, one end of which the operator holds in his right hand, the other in the left, the string being perpendicular and strained fairly tight. The natural result will be that the ball when allowed to fall from the top, will go straight to the bottom, and in fact when the string and ball are handed to an onlooker it always does so, but when the performer again holds the ends of the string the ball can be made to drop quickly or slowly, or to stop in the middle of its downward course, and move on again at the will of the performer. The secret is this, that, as well as the hole running straight through the centre of the ball, there is also another curved channel, the ends of which open into the straight channel. When the string and ball are handed to the spectator the string runs through the straight hole. When the operator handles it, in inserting the string he takes care to push it round the curved channel, but as the ends of this open into the ends of the straight channel the string appears to be running straight through the ball, just as when handed to the uninitiated members of the audience. When the string runs through the curved channel it is only a matter of tightening or loosening it to make the ball drop slowly or quickly, to stand still or go to the bottom.

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