

'On tiptoe?' asked the scholar.
'Yes,' answered the teacher, 'so as not to wake the audience.'

THE FAMILY BEVERAGE

A little while ago, in a Lancashire town not far from Manchester, a clergyman was being entertained over the week-end by one of the well-to-do but plain men of the place. As soon as the guest was settled by the fireside on the Saturday evening, his host (says the *Manchester Guardian*) asked him, 'Are you a teetotaller?'

'Well, no-o, not exactly,' was the reply.

The master of the house received the statement with evident relief. 'Ah'm reight glad to hear it,' he said; 'we'n had that sort stayin' with us afore. Now, if ye'd been one o' them teetotallers, yo'd 'a' been wantin' soda-water and lemonade and lime-juice, and ginger-ale, and nobody knows what all. But as yo' a'nt a teetotaller yo'll be satisfied wi' plain watter, like the rest on us.'

SAVING THE COIN

Here is how little Willie made a mistake in his eagerness to save money for his mother. Having a letter that she wished posted, mother gave Willie a penny, telling him to buy a stamp at the stationer's and place the envelope in the post box on the corner. It was an hour later when Willie returned.

'Did you post my letter, Willie?' was mother's first question.

'Yes, mother,' was the proud response of Willie.

'And here's yer penny.'

'A penny,' cried mother wonderingly. 'How in the world did you post it without money?'

'That's an easy one,' smiled Willie. 'I sneaked it in the box when nobody was lookin'.'

NEW TO THE GAME

It was the first sale over which the smart young auctioneer had presided, and in response to his really eloquent pleading the bids for the horse he was selling slowly rose.

'Eleven guineas and a half!' he said scornfully. 'What? Only eleven and a-half guineas for this magnificent cob? Gentlemen, gentlemen, aren't you to be tempted?'

'Well, I don't mind giving you twelve pounds, mister,' said the little man who chewed a straw.

'Thank you! Going at twelve pounds—going at twelve—gone!'

The hammer fell, after which the smart young auctioneer was at a loss to account for the laugh which arose, and it really took some time to convince him that he had been taken down—eighteenpence.

QUITE A MISTAKE

A gentleman given to habits of extravagance found himself in the Bankruptcy Court, and was severely questioned by the presiding official.

'At what precise date did you first find yourself in trouble?' asked the judge.

'I beg your pardon, I do not understand,' replied the gentleman, with a puzzled air.

'The question is a simple one,' sharply. 'Please answer it. At what precise time did your troubles begin?'

With an air of the utmost perplexity, the gentleman gazed round the court until his wandering eyes fell upon the anxious countenances of his creditors, when, with a genial wave of his hand in their direction, he said pleasantly:

'Oh, you must mean these gentlemen's troubles. I can't say I've ever had any myself.'

And on thinking the matter over, the judge agreed with the bankrupt's opinion.

FAMILY FUN

TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS.

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

A Ball Trick.—This trick should be performed rather quickly so that the effect is produced before the audience are aware of what it is to be. The conjuror shows a ping-pong ball, and throws it from one hand to the other. Presently, after holding it in the closed right hand, the conjuror opens his hand slowly and holds his left hand about two feet away from it. Suddenly the ball floats in the air from the right to the left hand, and the conjuror then throws it out to the audience for examination. At the same time in response to the inevitable request, 'let us have a look at your hands,' he steps out amongst the company and allows his hands to be examined. The whole secret consists in the careful manipulation of a loop of thread, which of course is invisible at a distance of a few feet. The conjuror has this loop thrown over the second finger of the right hand and dropped down his sleeve. In passing the ball backwards and forwards from the right to the left hand the conjuror contrives to get the second finger of the left hand in the loop and carry it out. The ball thus runs along the extended loop. In the act of throwing the ball to the audience the conjuror snaps the thread and allows it to fall unnoticed to the floor.

An Experiment in Thought-reading.—The conjuror hands a pack of cards to a member of the audience, requesting him to select a card, and show it to the other members of the company. In order that he may not get a glimpse of it himself the performer turns his back for a few moments. When he is told that everyone has seen the card, he again faces round and offers the pack to the chooser in order that the chosen card may be replaced. The pack is given into the chooser's hands and he is asked to shuffle it well. The performer now takes the pack and lays a few of the cards upon the table. At the same time he looks at the audience and pretends to be reading their thoughts. He then spreads out the rest of the pack—face upwards—and suddenly exclaims, 'I have it you were thinking of the (say) queen of diamonds!' The secret is a subtle one and is well hidden. The performer must have two packs. The backs of these cards will of course require to be the same color. One pack he spreads out upon a table under a window, where the sun's rays will turn the cards slightly yellow. This being done, he compares the faces of these cards with the faces of the pack which has not been exposed. If the difference in color is marked all is ready for the trick. Before presenting the experiment, the conjuror places the discolored pack in his waistcoat pocket. The unprepared pack is given to the audience to choose a card from. The performer takes back this pack whilst the audience are looking at the card chosen. He then turns his back, and it is the work of a moment to exchange this pack for the discolored one. With this in his hand, he now faces the company and has the chosen card returned. When the pack has been shuffled, he takes it up and, spreading the cards out, is easily able to distinguish the chosen card. The effect is all that could be desired.

A Trick with an Apple.—This trick invariably meets with much applause. The conjuror informs the audience that he is able to cut an apple in half without cutting the skin. The company will look for a catch in his words, but the performer proceeds to carry out his boast. He takes a needle in which is threaded some strong cotton. The needle he passes round the apple under the skin. This is best done by putting the needle in again at the point from which it emerged, and so passing on until the thread lies right round the apple under the skin. When you again reach the point at which you started, take both ends of the thread in your hands and draw it to you. By this means the apple will be cut in twain. In the same manner you may divide an apple into many parts. After doing the trick, hand the apple to members of the company to peel, when it will fall to pieces.

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