

'Why, no, my boy. Surely you wouldn't want to see cruel men baiting the bull? You wouldn't like to see poor horses gored to death?'

'No,' said Ronald, with the thoughtfulness of eight years, 'I shouldn't like to see the horses hurt, but,' he added, after some reflection, 'I shouldn't mind seeing those men gored, though.'

HIS FIRST COMMAND

A man-of-war was lying off Gibraltar, and permission was given to the men to go ashore for the day. The sailors amused themselves in various ways, among others by riding about on donkeys; and their want of experience in this line caused much merriment. An officer, observing one of the men sitting very far back on the animal, instead of in the usual position called out:

'I say, Jack, get up more amidships!'

With an injured air he replied: 'Well, sir, this is the first craft that ever I commanded in my life and it's hard indeed if I can't ride on the quarter-deck if I like.'

A GOOD REASON

It was a red-letter day at one of our large schools, and the boys were under examination in 'optics.' The point under illustration was that, strictly and scientifically speaking, we see not objects, but their images depicted on the retina. The doctor, to make the matter plainer, said to the wag of the class:—

'Jackson, did you ever actually see your father?'

Bill promptly replied: 'No sir.'

'Please explain why you never saw your own father.'

'Because,' replied Bill, very gravely, 'he died before I was born, sir.'

PLEASANT FOR THE AGENT

A persistent insurance agent had long been pester-ing a certain engine driver to take out a policy on his life. Meeting with little success, he called at the works where the man was employed and endeavoured to work on his fears.

'Now, look there,' said the agent, pointing to a couple of huge boilers close at hand. 'If they were to explode where would you be?'

'There's no knowin',' was the reply. 'I might be anywhere at the time—safe in bed for choice!'

'Yes, yes,' said the agent; 'but that isn't what I mean. If they were to blow up now—at this identical moment—'

'Well, in that case,' replied the other, quietly, 'I reckon me an' thee ud finish our little argyment up in the clouds.'

Then the agent gave it up.

BRIEF BUT NEAT

During the journey of a Royal train from Balmoral to Windsor the ordinary passenger traffic was very much disorganised, and express trains were suddenly 'drawn up,' to the no small annoyance of commercial men and others, who could truly say that with them 'time was money.' An express train between Perth and Aberdeen was a great sufferer in this respect, and a certain commercial traveller was quite boisterous in his denunciation of the frequent stops. At last, when he had tired his fellow-passengers with his grumbling, he flopped down the window and shouted: 'Guard! I say, guard!'

'Yes, sir?' answered the official addressed, approaching the compartment.

'Oh, guard, this is simply disgusting! Why all these stops? What's up, man; what's up?' said the commercial, in bantering tones.

The guard's reply was brief, neat, and certainly to the point, for he simply answered:

'The signal.'

The 'commercial's' window was closed with a bang.

FAMILY FUN

An Amusing Cotton Trick.—All are aware of the irresistible impulse to remove a piece of white cotton or 'fluff' that may have settled on a friend's black coat. Trading upon this little human weakness, you may have a little joke at someone's expense by secreting in an inner pocket a reel of white cotton. The end of this is threaded upon a needle, and carried outside the coat. A piece of cotton about two inches long is left hanging down. Someone is sure to notice it sooner or later, and he will try to take it off for you, but the amusement begins when he commences to pull out yard upon yard of cotton.

A Disappearing Glass.—This is a very mysterious trick. It must be performed neatly though, or the effect is lost. The performer says he will cause a penny to disappear in a very mysterious manner. He borrows a penny, places it on his table, and covers it with an inverted glass. Over this he places a newspaper. This is pressed well down over the glass. Next he takes up both glass and paper together 'to show that the penny is still there.' Now he asks a lady to strike the glass as hard as she can with a hammer, which the conjuror hands to her. Everyone expects to hear the sound of breaking glass, but instead the hammer only flattens out the paper, the glass having disappeared. This is proved by removing the paper. The performer apologises for having vanished the glass instead of the penny. The explanation is as follows:—The performer presses the newspaper, which should be fairly stiff, well down over the glass, thus making a mould. Now he takes a chair, and placing it behind the table, with the company of course in front, sits down. Lifting up the glass and paper to show that the coin is still there, the performer drops the glass on to his lap. From this position it is allowed to slide to the floor. The paper mould is then placed again over the coin and the trick is done.

A Neat Little Catch.—If the conversation should turn to figures, you may say 'That reminds me of a friend who had a perplexing little account sent to him by his ironmonger. This was how it read.' You take from your pocket a sheet of paper and write as follows:—

	s.	d.
6 Zinc pails	18	0
2 Wooden do	6	0
	12	0

Being an honest man he sent the account back, and pointed out that the amount of the second item had been deducted from, instead of added to the first amount. The ironmonger, however, returned the account, saying that it was quite in order. You ask the company how he made this out, and when they have 'given up' you explain that as 2 pails 'wouldn't do' (wooden do) they were returned.

A Match Box Trick.—Take one of Bryant and May's wooden match boxes, and after emptying it show it to the members of your company, allowing them to examine it as closely as they choose. For this purpose you separate the box from the slide. Now slide the box into the cover, and give it to someone to hold. After some incantation on the part of the performer, the box is opened by the person holding it and is found to contain a penny. An expert conjuror could easily 'palm' the penny and drop it in whilst shutting the box, but the trick can be done quite easily without the knowledge of palming. When you expose the empty box in two parts, have a penny in the top of the slide part of the box. This is held naturally in the left hand, with the fingers over the penny. Now slip the box right into the slide, and out the other side sufficiently far for the penny to drop from the top of the box. Now close the latter, and pass it round.

Education is the most important of interests, because it is the path to the highest power, the worthiest ideals, the truest freedom. Without it man seldom can reach the best possibilities that are his.

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