

first hour of dawn Phoenix the younger, a son of Heraclitus of Macedon, handed one letter-packet to Aminos. He gave the post-fee to Phanias.'

So the papyrus goes on. In each case the exact hour of the transfer of the letters is noted, together with details of other letters picked up by the postillion on his route. There is mention of a letter to Throgenes, 'president of the office of elephant hunting,' of another to Zoilos, the director of the imperial revenue office in Hermopolis; to Dionysus, the traffic manager in Arsinoe, etc., etc. The official document is on the back of the papyrus, the front having apparently been used for the calculations of a landed proprietor or his bailiff, but the space which the bailiff left is also employed for postal notices, a curious illustration of the necessity, even in the Government service, for saving every bit of the valuable paper. The document was only discovered a few years ago, and, owing to the high value placed upon it, is protected from the sunlight by a green curtain.

WHO WAS LYING THERE

Richard Harding Davis had an amusing experience while on a recent visit to England. While motoring through the country his party stopped to see an old church. The native guide was showing the party through, explaining all the points of interest after his own style.

'In the far corner of this 'ere church,' he said, 'lies William the Conqueror; be'ind the organ, where yer can't see, are tombs of Guy Fawkes, Robin 'Ood, and Cardinal Wolsey. Now, sir,' he asked, addressing Mr. Davis, 'does that there guide book as I sees you 'ave in your 'and tell yer who's lyin' 'ere?'

'No,' replied Mr. Davis, candidly; 'the book says nothing of it, but I can guess.'

BUSINESS METHODS

Teacher: 'Remember, Johnny, there are acted lies as well as spoken lies. Now, I will illustrate: What business is your father in?'

Johnny: 'Pa's the milkman.'

Teacher: 'Well, if you father should put water in his milk without telling his customers about it, that would be as much of a sin as any other kind of lying.'

Tommy: 'That's what ma says, but pa says shut up—women don't know nothin' about business.'

WHEN FATHER WAS A BOY

If father is sixty years old, ask him to recall for you what he knew as a boy of ten. Let him impersonate Clio, not holding a roll of papyrus, but a roll of moving picture films showing what he has learned in the last fifty years. Did he tell you how he used the tinder box and whale oil instead of electric light when he read that old geography up in the attic, on the maps of which was left blank a great space extending westward between the Missouri River and the Sierras (says the *New York Sun*). Ask him what he knew about Africa, where last winter he ate Chicago canned turkey a thousand miles up the Nile.

He may tell you that France was an empire fifty years ago, Germany a collection of kingdoms and duchies, Japan just admitting foreigners. And New Zealand, what about it in his old, dusty geography, smirched with ink that was blotted with sand? Did Clio know that while she was to push the hands once around the clock, counting minutes as years, New Zealand, a couple of lonely islands where man grubbed out a living, was to set the pace in labor pensions, woman suffrage, and insurance of the aged? And China and Argentina, look at them, too.

Ask father if he knew about turbine engines and engines with internal combustion, such as he has on the touring car. Ask Clio if she doesn't think that the long-distance telephone and the wireless make the Pyramids look small when it comes to seven wonders.

FAMILY FUN

TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS.

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

To Balance a Wine Glass on a Card.—The performer steps forward with a playing card and a tumbler. He holds the card upright and places the tumbler on its upper edge, where he balances it for some time. The card is a prepared one. A flap of thin cardboard—half of another playing card will be found most suitable—is gummed to the back of the card which the conjuror intends to use. This flap must fold flat against the back of the card. When opened out it will be at right angles to the card. Any article, such as a tumbler or even larger vessel may now be balanced upon it.

Biting a Button off a Person's Coat.—The conjuror walks over to a gentleman in the company and calls attention to the manner in which his buttons are sewn on his coat. 'You will pardon me,' says the performer, bending down and biting a button off, showing the bunch of threads and then dropping the button from the mouth. This new trick will create roars of laughter. To perform it you must provide yourself with a set of black buttons of the kind usually worn, also a few pieces of different cloths each having a number of black threads like a small brush, sewn in the centre. Select a coat with a similar cloth to a piece you have in your possession, walk over to your victim, place the piece of cloth over one of his coat buttons, and as you stoop to bite put your own button in your mouth. Show the threads broken, holding your fingers over the edges of the cloth, drop the button from your mouth and show it to the company. To restore the button on his coat, palm the piece of cloth and the button.

The Ring and Stick.—This trick is one of the most mysterious tricks ever invented. The effect is as follows: A handkerchief and a walking stick are shown by the performer. He borrows a ring from a gentleman in the audience. He then invites two members of the company upon the platform. One holds the stick firmly with one hand at each end. The conjuror places the ring underneath the handkerchief and asks the second gentleman to hold it over the stick. At the performer's command he is to let the handkerchief with the ring fall over the stick. Immediately this is done, the performer pulls the handkerchief away when the ring is found to be spinning upon the stick. The secret, like the secret of most good tricks, is very simple. The performer provides himself in the first place with a brass ring about the size of a wedding ring—he may use a real wedding ring if he chooses. This ring he attaches by means of a piece of cotton about six inches long to the centre of the handkerchief. When placing the borrowed ring under the handkerchief he catches hold of the ring thus attached and asks the assistant to feel it through the cambric. The borrowed ring is carried away in the performer's hand. He then takes the stick and whilst talking to the gentlemen on the stage he contrives to pass the borrowed ring over one end. This will be found quite easy of accomplishment after a few practices. The conjuror asks the assistant to hold the stick and still keeps his hand over the ring which he has now worked to the middle of the stick. The second assistant is now asked to hold the handkerchief containing the ring over the stick, and when it is well over the performer removes his hand from over the ring. When the assistant drops the handkerchief it invariably remains on the stick. The performer has now only to give it a sharp pull and the borrowed ring will be set spinning upon the stick, thus terminating a really first-class trick.

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