

SIR JOHN SOANE'S WHIM.

The Practical Joke a Celebrated Man Played on Posterity.

One of the most famous of post-mortem jokes was perpetrated by the donor of the celebrated Soane museum of pictures and other valuable objects...

MISSING WORDS.

Annoying Gaps in English Language That Cause Inconveniences.

The English language may fairly claim to be the most prolific in the world. Not content with its native riches, it possesses in a special degree the faculty of assimilating everything useful from other tongues, ancient and modern.

But, curiously enough, there are deficiencies in English not to be found in far less copious languages. While in many cases we have half a dozen words expressing the same or practically the same thing, there are, on the other hand, certain ideas that have no appropriate words to express them.

Curious gaps occur here and there in our language if we look into it. The word "show" expresses the idea of making to see, but there is no word for making to hear—a phonograph, for example. "I took the phonograph to my friend and—" What? "Got him to listen to it" would probably be the elegant finish to the sentence.

On the other hand, "audience" means those who hear and applies very well to those present in a lecture hall or concert room. But what of those who see a cricket match, for instance? "Spectators" is the nearest word, but it does not correspond exactly to "audience."

MERRY MEALTIMES.

The Table No Place For Fault Finding. Nonsense and Strife.

Has it ever been your lot to sit at a table with a group of young folks who ate the meal in silence or, with a few constrained remarks, looked askance at the head of the family before venturing on any remark?

This is not only the case where there are young children, who require a reprimand occasionally for carelessness, but I am speaking of those homes where the girls and boys are well into their teens. Wrong is that parent, either father or mother, who chooses the hour when all are assembled round the table to mention some half forgotten grievance or to find some fault.

If any trivial thing has been done wrong or any duty omitted wait until dinner or tea is over before you scold, blame or reprimand. Let the food which God gives us for the purpose of nourishing and sustaining our bodies have the opportunity of accomplishing that end, which cannot be the case if every mouthful is swallowed with either a sarcastic word or an uncomplimentary remark.

To a man endowed with qualities of refinement and consideration of others and honor—which are the attributes of a gentleman—burglary or other theft is impossible. The pride of such a man, his regard for his own opinion of himself, would prevent his sneaking into another man's house and taking his plate or his wife's jewelry.

Such a character in fiction the "gentleman burglar" could be made plausible and picturesque, for when we get into the realm of fancy there is an implied contract that the reader shall accept the author's premises and not bother about possibilities.

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Why don't you call upon the girl who were flirting with all last night? his friend inquired. "She has a first class reputation for making eyes."

Prayer of the Convert.

A south sea islander at the close of a religious meeting offered the following prayer: "O God, we are about to go to our respective homes. Let not the words we have heard be like the fine clothes we wear—soon to be taken off and folded up in a box till another Sabbath comes around. Rather, let thy truth be like the tattoo on our bodies—ineffaceable till death."

The Temperature.

"Why do you watch the thermometer on the wall so closely?" queried the invalid.

"Because," replied the untrained nurse, "the doctor said if the temperature got any higher I was to give you another dose of quinine."

THE GENTLEMAN BURGLAR.

He Can Exist Only in Fiction, Never in Real Life.

Whenever a thief who is dressed otherwise than in rags falls into the police net there are chrouched the adventures of a "gentleman burglar."

Such a being is, of course, impossible. He is a literary creation, like the "Invisible Man," the Frankenstein monster, Kipling's Mowgli and the rest of the crew of prodigies that dwell within book covers.

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She Got the Wool.

"A young American girl, on her first trip to Italy, entered a shop in search of black darning wool," says a writer in Harper's Bazar. "She spoke no Italian, the clerk spoke no English. She pantomimed darning a hole and pointed to her stocking. The clerk brought white darning cotton. She showed that her stocking was black, and black darning cotton was produced. But she wanted wool. A long pause, then 'Ba-a!' bleated the American girl. She got the wool."

A Natural Mistake.

"I was just telling our friend here, Molly, that it was storming on the day of our marriage."

"Surely not, Hiram! The weather was perfectly lovely!"

She Knew Her Dad.

Smithers—Do you know any one who has a horse to sell?

"Yes, papa, I heard you say to the minister that I had great imagination."

ASKING QUESTIONS.

The Art of Interrogation Should Be Devoid of Impertinence.

"Do not ask questions" is the worst piece of social advice which age can give to youth. A man who never asks questions is the dullest fellow in the world. He had better ask too many than too few. We can defend ourselves against curiosity, but no armor avails against indifference. We must resign ourselves to be bored to death.

What is the secret of the art of interrogation? Putting aside quick sympathies, which lie at the root of every social art, we believe the most essential quality for those who would excel in it is directness. The art of asking questions so as to learn, instruct, please and influence is not the art of beating about the bush. The questions which offend and silence are the questions which suggest some ulterior motive. It is a found on scheme which makes men angry. Anything of the nature of a trap keeps us on our guard. If we once fall into one we resolve it shall be the last time. Suspicion kills confidence. Interrogative hints are utterly useless. The average man does not desire to be questioned. He hates to be startled, crossed, interfered with, reproached, wearied or betrayed. He hates the questions which are not asked with a simple intention.

There are questions which are asked not because the asker wants to know, but because he intends to tell. Others, while ostensibly directed to find out a man's opinion, are really intended to reflect upon his character. Some men inquire as to their neighbors' projects in order to put difficulties in their way. Strings of meaningless questions are poured out by those who desire to prevent an interest in some subject which they neither know nor care anything about.

We believe the conclusion of the matter to be this: The art of interrogation is a serious branch of the social art. Well-asked questions are the essence of agreeable intercourse, but the interrogative mood will not justify an impertinence, an interference, a verbal assault—nor, for the matter of that, a bore.—London Spectator.

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NATIVE PLATINUM.

The "Noble" Metals Extracted From This Peculiar Substance.

On the slopes of the Ural mountains and in Brazil, California, Australia, Canada and many other countries a peculiar substance known as native platinum is found. This is an alloy of the metals platinum, palladium, iridium, osmium, rhodium and ruthenium, together with a little gold and iron. All of these except the last mentioned are the "noble" metals. They do not tarnish in the air and are not soluble in any single acid. The most plentiful metal occurring in native platinum is that from which it takes its name. This metal is of a grayish color and with one exception is the heaviest substance known. Its fusing point is extremely high, and this property, together with its freedom from tarnishing, causes it to be largely used for the manufacture of crucibles and other vessels required by scientists to stand a very high temperature. It is also sometimes used as a substitute for gold in photography, and when deposited in a thin film on the interior of the tubes of telescopes it forms a dead black surface, which prevents the light from being reflected by the polished sides.

Palladium is of a lustrous white color. It is the most easily fused of the metals found in platinum ore, and can even be volatilized. A curious quality which this metal possesses is that when heated to redness it is porous to hydrogen gas, allowing it to pass through somewhat in the same manner that blotting paper permits the passage of water. The silvery white color of palladium and its freedom from tarnishing render it useful for making scales and division marks on scientific instruments. A mixture of this metal with mercury is sometimes used for filling teeth. Osmium is a metal which possesses two remarkable properties—it is the most refractory of the metals, resisting fusion at the most intense heat, and it is also the heaviest substance known, being twenty-two and a half times heavier than water. Together with iridium, it occurs principally in a peculiar variety of native platinum called osmiridium. This mineral differs from ordinary platinum ore in that it contains a larger proportion of osmium and iridium than platinum. Osmiridium is found in small particles, varying in weight from one-sixth to one-third of a grain. These particles are extremely hard and are used for pointing non-wearing pens.

Metallic iridium possesses a white steel-like appearance. The knife edges of delicate balances and other bearings which require extreme hardness are often made of it. An alloy of 10 per cent iridium and 90 per cent platinum has been found to be very little affected in volume by changes of temperature and is the substance of which the international meter kept in Paris is made. Rhodium and ruthenium are metals of little practical use. The former occurs in platinum ore to the extent of 5 to 6 per cent. The latter is found only in osmiridium and averages about 5 per cent of that mineral. The metal which ranks next to platinum in price is osmium, which occurs in hydrous and some other rare minerals. Uranium is remarkable for its high atomic weight, the heaviest known.—Chambers' Journal.

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COLLAR AND CRAVAT.

Ways in Which They Affect the Appearance of the Wearer.

Men who do not want to look any fatter in the face than they can help have an easy means of accomplishing their purpose. Not all of them are aware of the effect that may be created by the form of a collar or cravat.

"The stout man who wants to look as thin as he can," said a haberdasher's clerk, "ought to wear a tie of the kind known as a four-in-hand. Preferably it should be dark in color and drawn tight. That carries down the line of the face and lengthens it to a degree that tends to make the face look thinner."

"Another aid to making a man look thin is in the height of his collars. Stout men who want to look thin should wear high collars and closed ones. Any collar that opens in front makes one look stouter under nearly every circumstance. Such collars are becoming to the thin man.

"The fat man should avoid the kind of tie that has a horizontal effect. This will add pounds to his appearance—in his face, at least."

"On the contrary, this cross effect will make the thin man look stout. The broad scarfs have little effect on a man's looks one way or the other. When he wears them it is the collar that makes the difference.

"He should therefore see that he wears a high one that does not open if he wants to look as thin as possible, whereas if he wants to seem stouter an open collar will produce that effect for him."

English Smugglers.

Smuggling was carried on with great boldness in England a century ago. When Samuel Pellew was appointed collector of customs at Falmouth early last century he found corruption the chief characteristic of the service. One day he surprised a party of his own men attempting to smuggle in a cargo of wine in broad daylight. Pellew, who was a conscientious man, so worried the smugglers that they threatened his life repeatedly and posted bills offering a reward for his assassination. One smuggler, who kept a public house, erected a battery of guns to defend his illicit goods, and when a sloop of war exhibited what he considered a too inquisitive spirit actually fired on her. The vessel's guns were too low to reply with effect, but her crew landed in boats, attacked the house in the rear and leveled it to the ground.

The Difference in Two Words.

Did it ever occur to you to think of the difference in significance of the two words "seems" and "appears"? We say "it seems to be true" or "it appears to be true." Are those expressions identical, or if there be a difference, what is it?

There is a difference, and it consists chiefly in the strength of the expression. If we read a story and say, "That story seems to be true," we mean that it has the semblance of truth and we infer that it is true. If we say, "That story appears to be true," we mean that the statements made in it or the incidents related go to show its truth.

In other words, "appears" refers to the actual presentation of something to our view; "seems" refers to an inference of our mind as to the probability of a thing being true.

First Type Cast in America.

It was a good man, Christopher Sower, who made the first punches and matrices and cast the first type in America. The anvil he made them on is still preserved. They were for a German Bible which he published.

"The price of our newly finished Bible, in plain binding, with a clasp, will be 18 shillings," he said, "but to the poor and needy we have no price. John the Baptist sent the message to Christ, 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?' and Jesus sent back word, 'The poor have the gospel preached to them.'"

Sower's German Bible was printed in 1743 and was the first Bible published in America in any European language.

Thoroughly "Done Up."

"Have you done up my shirt yet?" asked the patron of the laundry. "It is just out of the ironing room," answered the clerk, "and we will have it done up for you now, so that you may take it along with you."

"All right. I hope it has had better luck than the last one I had done up here."

"Better luck?"

"Yes. You did it up so completely in the ironing room that it wasn't worth doing up in the bundle."—Judge.

Good For His Business.

"If there's one thing I hate," declared the passenger who had trouble with the conductor, "it's to be contradicted."

"Well," replied the man who shared his seat, "I like to have people talk back to me."

"You do?"

"Yes. I'm an auctioneer."—Philadelphia Ledger.

MODESTY OF THE GREAT.

Gladstone and Darwin Felt Themselves "Ordinary Persons."

In "Studies in Contemporary Biography," by James Bryce, there occur two stories which caused some of the critics to express astonishment at the "modesty of the great." The stories are these:

"Meeting Mr. Gladstone in the lobby and seeing his face saddened by the troubles in Ireland, Mr. Bryce tried to divert his thoughts by mentioning a recent discovery—to wit, that Dante had been saved from want in his last years by a lectureship at Ravenna. Mr. Gladstone's face lit up at once, and he said, 'How strange it is to think that these great souls, whose works are a beacon light to all the generations that have come after them, should have had cares and anxieties to vex them in their daily life just like the rest of us common mortals!'"

"The words reminded me," adds the author, "that a few days before I had heard Mr. Darwin, in dwelling upon the pleasure a visit paid by Mr. Gladstone had given him, say, 'And he talked just as if he had been an ordinary person like one of ourselves.' The two men were alike unconscious of their greatness."

It is only the little who think themselves great. They are like those who do not know much and therefore imagine that there is not much to know. The great do not think themselves so, just as the learned are overwhelmed by their ignorance.

Snake in a Street Car.

The snakes with which I have generally associated have mostly been the little chaps, such as the lively two foot garter snake that I had in a Kansas City street car one day. I had picked him up in the suburbs of the city, and before taking the car back to the business section of the town I buttoned him in the inside pocket of my coat. Now, anybody who has ridden over the streets of Kansas City knows that in places it seems as though the cars were climbing up the roof of a barn. When I got on the car it was full, and so I had to grab a strap in order to stand up. Presently a seat became vacant beside me and I sat down. As I did so I glanced up and there was my poor little snake hanging to the strap I had just left. Various other people noticed him at the same time, and the ensuing exhibition would have enabled any person in the car to secure a job as a circus acrobat at a handsome salary. After they had escaped I put the snake back in my pocket. The conductor was a hero and stuck to his post, but he put me off the car and kept my nickel.—W. S. Dunbar in Outlook.

No Room For Him.

Several relics of exceptional value and of unusual interest to archaeologists were discovered in a small town near Nuremberg, and as soon as the news reached him the director of the Nuremberg Historical museum went to the village and introduced himself to the mayor, saying:

"I am in charge of the museum at Nuremberg, and I'd like to—"

"You're too late, my good sir," interrupted the mayor. "We've already got here several merry go rounds, a bearded woman, a theatrical company composed of apes, a troupe of trained dogs and a band of Hungarian musicians, so you can readily see that we've got no room for your museum."

And with these words he nodded to the director and went away.

Nature and Deformity.

Nature is very particular to conceal her deformities, and all that is worthless or ungraceful generally drops off from a tree unless it be an injury to the trunk. From such effects the tree never recovers. Go into the forests and how often we see deformed trees, some bent and twisted, some parted till the original trunk becomes like two, each crossing and recrossing the other. This was done by depression or injury to the tree in its young and tender years. Nature has no power to right a broken law either in the animal or the vegetable organism. Punishment follows, and deformity results.

Childish Amusement in Boston.

"Are you playing horse?" asked the benevolent gentleman who takes an interest in children.

"Certainly not," answered the little Boston boy. "We are amusing ourselves by the assumption that Brother Waldo is an ichthyosaurus and that I am a prehistoric man in pursuit of him."—Washington Star.

One of Them.

"I am sorry to hear your unfortunate nephew has been closed out by the sheriff," said the friend of the family. "Have you any idea what his liabilities are?"

"Yes. I've an idee he's liable to call on me for help about the first thing he finks," responded Uncle Silas.—Chicago Tribune.

An Equine Puzzle Solved.

"Papa," said small Emmer, "I know why some pistols are called horse pistols."

"Well, my boy, why are they so called?" asked his father.

"Because they kick," replied the little philosopher.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The Cure that Cures Coughs, Colds, Grippe, Whooping Cough, Asthma, Bronchitis and Incipient Consumption is OTTO'S CURE. Cures throat and lung diseases. Sold by all druggists. 25c & 50c.

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD. BUFFALO & ALLEGHENY VALLEY DIVISION. Low Grade Division.

In effect May 24, 1903. (Eastern Standard Time.)