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AMUSING JOKES.

Some That Have Been Played on Members of Scientific Societies.

Nothing is so funny—the joker—as the development of a practical joke or hoax, and the most learned are sometimes fooled in this way, to their great discomfiture. An amusing hoax was perpetrated on the learned members of the Dumfries Antiquarian society of London, when an alleged Greek charm, said to have been taken from the dead body of a Bedouin, was presented for their inspection and admiration. It was said to have been an heirloom in the Bedouin's family for many centuries and consisted of a scrap of skin on which was transcribed a mysterious legend. It was circulated among the members of the august body of the Antiquarian society until it fell into the hands of Dr. Semple, who, amid much amusement, deciphered the hieroglyphics as "Old Bob Ridley, O," the refrain of an old song.

One of the best of these jokes was practiced with considerable success by an eighteenth century wit, who professed to have unearthed an ancient memorial slab on which this epitaph was just decipherable:

BENE A. TH. TH. IBSST.
ONERE POS ET.
H. CLAUDI, COR TER TRIP
E. SELLETO, F. IMP.
IN. OT. ONAR, DO.
TH. H. S. C.
ON. SOR. T. J. A. N. E.

In vain did archaeologists and linguists rack their brains to find a solution of this cryptic inscription, which its discoverer "humbly dedicated to the penetrating geniuses of Oxford, Cambridge, Eton and the learned Society of Antiquaries," and it was only when it had driven the cleverest men in England almost out of their wits that the following rendering was suggested by the boxer: "Beneath this stone reposeth Claud Coster, tripe seller, of Impington, as doth his consort Jane."

That, too, was a clever, if rather heartless, joke which Stevens, the Shakespeare scholar, played on Gough, known to posterity as the author of "Sepulchral Monuments." Gough had criticized a drawing by Stevens rather mercilessly, and the latter forthwith planned a revenge which should hold up antiquity to ridicule. Procuring a flat piece of stone, he scratched on it, in Anglo-Saxon characters, the inscription, "Here Hardebut drank a winehorn dry, stared about him and died," and had it exposed in a shop which Gough was in the habit of visiting.

A few days later Gough called at the shop, saw the slab, which he was told, had been found in Kensington lane on the supposed site of Hardebut's palace, and, overjoyed at his good fortune, carried it off in triumph as a discovery of rare antiquarian value. He showed it with pride to his fellow members of the Society of Antiquaries, a paper was written on it, a learned discussion followed and the inscription was published in the Gentleman's Magazine. Stevens' triumph was complete when he took the public into his secret and laughed with them, but what his victim's feelings and language were it would not have been possible to express in print.

Something over fifty years ago the ingenuity of antiquarians was tested by a legend faintly traced on a time worn slab of stone which, so its discoverer said, had been unearthed during some excavations in Cumberland. This was the inscription:

TIL ISI. SAHAR. DNU. TOC. RA
C. K.

But what language was it and what could it mean? The accepted opinion was that the legend referred in some way to Hardebut or Hardebut, but beyond that speculation? even was dumb, until the wicked joker had the effrontery to confess that he himself had chiseled the inscription, of which the true translation was: "This is a hard nut to crack." And so it was—London Answers.

Jenious of Imaginary Ills.

"Talk of a woman's jealousy of her husband," said a physician of long experience in New York. "It is nothing compared to her jealousy of another woman's chronic ailments. Half the doctors would starve if it were not for the prevalence of illnesses that are purely imaginary. Of course, it does not do for us to tell a woman who has firmly made up her mind that she is ill that she is not ill. In nine cases out of ten she would lose her temper and consult another doctor. Among certain women invalidism gives them a distinction which is gratifying to their self love. They may literally be said to 'enjoy poor health.' They look for the doctor's visit to them or their call at his office as the most exciting event of the day. If they know him well enough, they implore him to waive professional etiquette and tell them about ailments of other women who consult him. Women of this description—and they are legion—have a craving for martyrdom, which doctoring an imaginary illness seems to satisfy."—New York Times.

How He Saved Him.

Hewitt—That fellow saved me from bankruptcy. Jewitt—How was that? Hewitt—He married the extravagant girl I was engaged to.

Strange Reward For Life Savers.

"I have seen a good many drowning accidents," said an old sea captain, "and I have seen a good many queer rewards. Once a young man rescued a young widow's little son from the sea. The widow, in her gratitude, asked for the young man's photograph. He sent it to her, and two months later he received a magnificent painting, by Smith, that showed the scene of the rescue accurately, with the little boy and him, both perfect likenesses, struggling like mad in the water.

"A farmer, one of the Pinkertons told me, came from the west to meet a gold brick man. As the farmer and the swindler crossed on the ferry the swindler fell overboard, and the farmer rescued him. He was so grateful that he gave the farmer a brick of solid silver.

"I saved a pretty girl from drowning in my youth," the captain ended. "She gave me a present that weighed 130 pounds. She gave me herself, and I've still got her. She may not be in as good condition now as she was then, but in my eyes somehow she is as sweet and pretty as she ever was."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Koran and Bible.

Concerning the alleged resemblance between Christianity and Mohammedanism Rev. Napier Malcolm, in "Five Years in a Persian Town," says: "There are really not many resemblances to note. An officer of Indian troops replied to a Mussulman's suggestion that there were resemblances between the two religions, 'There is hardly a single practical point where Mussulmans and Christians are not entirely at issue,' whereupon the Mussulman said: 'Sahib, you have read your Bible and have also read the Koran. I always make that remark to Christians. I made it to a padre the other day, and they almost always say: 'Very true. Mohammedanism has a great deal in common with Christianity.' Well, sahib, when they say that, I know that they have not read the Koran and that they have not read their Bibles.'"

From Jail to the Bench.

Francis Pemberton (1625-97) was imprisoned in the Fleet for debts contracted during a period of youthful extravagance. While in jail he applied himself to the study of law and came to be regarded as a kind of legal oracle by his fellow prisoners, who nicknamed him Counselor. With the fees they gave him for legal advice he bought books to continue his studies. He then prevailed upon his creditors to grant his release from prison that he might the sooner earn money to pay off his debts. Called to the bar in 1654, after a brilliant career in the palace court at Westminster and subsequently in the house of lords, he became a puisne judge. He was knighted in 1675 and ultimately, on the dismissal of Scroggs, was made lord chief justice in 1681.

The Oldest Paper Books.

What is believed by antiquaries to be the oldest paper book in existence is the "Red Book of Lynn," an ancient register belonging to the corporation of King's Lynn, England. This volume is known as the "Red Book" from its original binding having been of that color. The first entry is a transcript of the will of Peter de Thorndon, burgess of Lynn, dated 1309. The latest entry is dated in the fifteenth year of King Richard II. Fifty years ago the book was repaired and rebound, and the leaves, which age had reduced to a loose, fibrous substance, were carefully resized as an aid to preservation.

Turn About.

An Irish doctor was asked to attend a patient on Tory Island, off the Irish mainland. The doctor said that he was willing to go, but that the fee would be £2 (\$10), payable in advance. The Tory islander paid the money and ferried the doctor over from the mainland himself. The physician finished his duties and wished to start back. The only way to get back was to be rowed back by the same man who had carried him over. The doctor asked what the charge was. "Two pounds," said the Tory island man, "payable in advance." It was paid.

The Pursuit of Man.

Directly or indirectly we are all interested in the pursuit of the desirable male, for whom every function is really arranged whatever be the ostensible reason. When one sees on all sides how eligible men are run after, fawned upon, flattered, cajoled and humbugged, can the truth of it be denied?—Ladies' Field.

An Unfair Hit.

Mrs. Wickwire—If woman were given the credit she deserves, I don't think man would be quite so prominent in the world's history. Mr. Wickwire—I expect you are right. If she could get all the credit she wanted, he'd be in the poorhouse.

Like Father, Like Son.

Mr. Gotrox—When I was your age, sir, I didn't have a dollar. Cholly Gotrox—Well, dad, when I am your age I probably won't have a dollar.—Puck.

That virtue which requires to be ever guarded is scarcely worth the sentinel.—Goldsmith.

THE HOTEL CHILD.

Dangers That Beset the Luckless Offspring of Restless Parents.

It is not the material aids to existence which are the bane of the hotel child; it is the mental and spiritual attitude accompanying this life which is to be deprecated. It destroys a democratic spirit through emphasizing the difference between the servant and the served, it exaggerates the power of money, fosters a spirit of dependence and unfits the pampered individual for any other kind of life, and, worst of all, in a child so brought up there can be no understanding or love of home. There may be some future for the child who knows nothing of art, some function for the one to whom literature makes no appeal and who is not sensitive to music, but there is no place in the state for the man who has neither initiative, self reliance, patriotism nor love of home. He is a social menace, a disease. The community is better off without this satellite of the manager, parasite of the bell boy and source of supply for the waiter.

If there is one child in our community who is superfluous it is the hotel child. As places for temporary occupation by homeless and childless adults hotels are to be tolerated, but as residences for children they are without the possibility of excuse.—Miss Martha S. Benseley in Everybody's Magazine.

FIVE MINUTES.

Under Some Circumstances It Seems a Very Long Time.

In a murder trial before a western court the prisoner was able to account for the whole of his time except five minutes on the evening when the crime was committed. His counsel argued that it was impossible for him to have killed the man under the circumstances in so brief a period, and on that plea largely based his defense, the other testimony being strongly against his client.

When the prosecuting attorney replied, he said: "How long a time really is five minutes? Let us see. Will his honor command absolute silence in the courtroom for that space?"

The judge graciously complied. There was a clock on the wall. Every eye in the courtroom was fixed upon it as the pendulum ticked off the seconds. There was a breathless silence.

We all know how time which is waited for creeps and halts and at last does not seem to move at all.

The keen witted counsel waited until the tired audience gave a sigh of relief at the close of the period, and then asked quietly:

"Could he not have struck one fatal blow in all that time?"

The prisoner was found guilty, and, as it was proved afterward, justly.

THE DOG'S COAT.

Brush It, but Do Not Wash It, if You Want It Perfect.

In the Country Calendar Reginald F. Mahew writes: "Even careful feeding will not give a dog's coat that glow which is such a sure sign of health if he is continually washed with soap and water. Owners who allow their dogs to live in the house are forever washing the wretched animal and forever scrubbing the more will his coat leave its trail and the deodor and duller will it look. The health and growth of a dog's coat depend entirely on a natural oil from the skin. As often as the dog is washed so often is the oil washed out and so much more is the destruction of the coat. If a dog were brushed every day for five or ten minutes against as well as with the grain his coat would not only have a luster, but would cease to distribute itself all over the place except for a very short time once or twice a year. Besides this, brushing has a stimulating effect on the whole system, helps the blood circulation; by this the digestion, and so the general health."

MacMahon's Epigrams.

When Marshal MacMahon in the Crimean campaign took the Malakoff by storm and wrote his celebrated dispatch, "J'y suis, j'y reste" ("Here I am; here I stay"), these words made him famous all over the world. Yet his friends said that the worthy soldier had written them in the most matter of fact manner, with no thought of phrase making. The most surprised person over the success of this epigram was MacMahon himself.

Ancient Jewelry.

The jewelry found in an excavation near one of the pyramids of old Memphis, Egypt, exhibits about as much skill in working gold and precious stones as now exists, although the articles found were made 4,000 years ago. The figures cut on an amethyst and carnelian are described as exquisite and anatomically correct. The gold is skillfully worked, and precious stones are set into it so as to give the effect of enameling.

Quite Apparent.

She—You know, Judge, our characters are different, and I don't want to be in his way.—He—Yes, your honor, she is peculiar, and I don't want to interfere.—Judge—I understand. You ask for a divorce out of pure love.—Megendorfer Blatter.

Disappointed.

Newed—Alas, I am a disappointed man. My wife cannot sing. Oldwed—Can't sing? Why, man, that ought to be a cause for rejoicing. You are to be congratulated. Newed—Yes; but the trouble is she thinks she can.

Light and Sound.

Light travels so vastly much faster than sound that there is no comparison between their velocities. The velocity of light is about 190,000 miles a second. At this speed light will travel about eight times around the earth in a second, and light starting from the sun will traverse the 93,000,000 miles of space intervening between the sun and the earth in eight minutes. So it is seen light flashes from one part of the earth to another, even the most remote, instantaneously, or practically so. Sound travels worse than a snail's pace as compared with light, going only about 1,100 feet in a second, or about a mile in five seconds, or twelve miles in a minute. These facts are noticed, though not always understood, by any one who sees a gun fired only a few hundred yards away. The flash and the puff of smoke are seen instantaneously; the report of the gun always comes perceptibly later, the time intervening being greater or less, according to the distance.

Catching the Early Spider.

One must be an early riser if he would photograph a spider's web, for the delicate fabric must be taken when the dew is yet on it, so that the outlines will be in sharp relief. The best success is obtained when the webs are on pine trees, and spiders seem to favor these trees because of the shelter they afford. Look on the least exposed side of the tree for your web, for instinct teaches the little creatures to make their homes where the strong winds do not strike. In taking the picture the lens should be brought very near the web, in order to make the threads as large as possible. I have photographed a spider's web with a 4 by 5 camera and with a 6 1/2 by 8 1/2 instrument, having equally good success in each case. It is well to have a rubber focusing cloth and to keep it over the camera all the time, for the person who hunts spiders' webs early in the morning must be prepared for dampness.—Suburban Life.

The Term "Greenhorn."

The term "greenhorn" originated in this way: The pioneers of the west were much given to hunting deer. It was a fact known to early settlers that when the horn of a fawn began to grow there was a ring of green hair around the spot. It was considered a disgraceful thing for a hunter to kill a fawn, a cruel act, and the killing time was regulated by the growth of the horn. There was a sort of unwritten law that no one should kill a male fawn before its horn could be seen. A person who was so unthoughtful as to kill a deer under the proper age was called a "greenhorn." He was so named because the young horn of the deer and the hair around it were still green. The use of the appellation gradually spread until it was applied to all raw or inexperienced youths or persons easily imposed upon.

Pepps and the Cook Maid.

There was a servant problem in the seventeenth century, but it was solved in a rough and ready fashion. Pepps records on April 12, 1667, that he came home, "saw my door and hatch open, left so by Luce, our cook maid, which so vexed me that I did give her a kick in our entry and offered a blow at her."

Two days afterward (Lord's day) Pepps writes this: "Took out my wife and the two Mercers and two of our maids, Barker and Jane, and over the water to the Jamaica house, where I never was before, and there the girls did run for wagers over the bowling green, and there with much pleasure spent little, and so home." Luce was not there, but the other maids were treated as members of the family.

Small Coins.

The natives of the Malay peninsula have in use the very smallest current coin in the world. It is a sort of wafer made from the resinous juice of a tree and is worth about one ten-thousandth of a penny. The smallest metal coin in circulation at the present day is the Portuguese three reis piece, worth twelve one-hundredths of a penny. The smallest coin circulating officially in any part of the British empire is the five millesima piece of Gibraltar, worth about half a farthing.

Saved His Own Name.

After a recent bank holiday in London one of the police courts the next morning had among its "drunk and disorderly" prisoners a man who said he was William Shakespeare. "Is that your real name," asked the judge, "or just your nom de guerre?" "Well, your honor," replied the prisoner, "it is true that I was not christened William Shakespeare, but, you see, I hated to bring dishonor and disgrace upon a respected name."

How She Guessed.

Landlady—That new boarder is either married or a widower. Daughter—Why, mamma, he says he is a bachelor. Landlady—Don't you believe it. When he opens his pocketbook to pay his bill he always turns his back to me.

YOUTH IS CONTAGIOUS.

And Young Wives, It Is Calmed, Rejuvenate Old Husbands.

"Strange statistics," said an insurance agent, "are collected in my business.

"I have found that the more times a man marries the younger in comparison with himself he wants his wife to be. For instance, his first wife on the average is four years younger than he. His second is ten. His third is twenty or thirty.

"What do these statistics prove? Do they prove that as a man gains in years and experience he finds that it is best, for many reasons, to be almost as old as his wife's father, or do they only prove that as men approach old age they are more foolish than they were in youth?

"Old X, aged seventy, with a third wife of twenty-three, said on this head the other day:

"You can't marry a girl too young. The younger she is the longer she'll keep her health and strength and beauty. Furthermore, the older you are the more respect she'll have for you. She'll reverence you and obey you as she would her own father or grandfather."

"Young wives rejuvenate old husbands," the insurance agent ended. "They make these old fellows dress younger, talk younger, act younger and feel younger. Youth is contagious. A young wife is believed to prolong an old husband's life. If a man of seventy insured in my company should marry a girl of twenty, I'd consider him a better risk by 8 per cent than he had been before."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

A CAUTIOUS ELEPHANT.

The Sagacity Displayed by the Animal When Near Quicksand.

One elephant which an officer of the Royal artillery lent to assist in extricating some camels which were being engulfed in the quicksands showed an amount of sagacity which was positively marvellous. It was with the utmost difficulty that we could get him to go near enough to attach a drag rope to one camel I wanted to rescue. In spite of our being about fifty yards from the bank of the river, he evinced the greatest anxiety, while his movements were made with extreme caution.

Despite coaxing, persuasive remonstrance and at last a shower of heavy blows dealt upon his head by the exasperated mahout, this elephant stubbornly refused to go where he was wanted, but with his trunk shoved out in front of him kept feeling his way with his ponderous feet, placing them before him slowly, deliberately and methodically, treading all the while with the velvet softness of a cat and taking only one step at a time. Then suddenly he would break out into a suppressed kind of shriek and retreat backward in great haste.

When the animal had nearly completed a circuit of the ground with the same caution and deliberation, he advanced to within ten yards of the poor camel, but not another inch would he move, though several men were walking between him and the camel without any signs of the ground giving way.—"The Camel," Major A. G. Leonard.

A Daily Mystery.

A man whose income is \$50 a day lurching alone in a fifteen cent restaurant and a clerk whose income is \$50 a month lurching with a young woman in a restaurant where the cash register doesn't ring up anything under \$1. Which is cause and which is effect? Does the fifty-dollar-a-day man lurch thus cheaply that he may be reminded of troubles on earth, or does the fifty-dollar-a-month man dine thus expensively because he wants to forget? Or is the one a fifty-dollar-a-day man because he is careful and the other a fifty-dollar-a-month man because he is a spendthrift?—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Sensitiveness of Plants.

Darwin gave it as his opinion that some plants can see, and an Indian botanist relates some curious incidents which tend to verify the belief. Observing one morning that the tendrils of a convolvulus on his veranda had decidedly leaned over toward his leg as he lay in an attitude of repose, he tried a series of experiments with a long pole, placing it in such a position that the leaves would have to turn away from the light in order to reach it. In every case he found that the tendrils set themselves visibly toward the pole and in a few hours had twined themselves closely around it.

Animals and Flesh Eating.

Arguing against the eating of meat, an English writer remarks: "Almost any animal can be made to eat flesh. The kangaroo has canine teeth. Horses, oxen and sheep may be taught to eat flesh. Norwegian cows have been known to eat flesh. Goldsmith saw a sheep eat flesh. A convict sheep is now in London. Spallanzani has shown that a pigeon may be made to live on flesh and an eagle on bread."

Nothing Left but the Bark.

"He belongs to one of our oldest families, but he is a consumptive. He coughs dreadfully.

"Yes, he says all he ever got from the family tree was the bark."