

Our Competition Page.

SOME MORE ANECDOTES.



An overstocked London hatter was on the point of reluctantly dismissing some "hands" when a sharp-witted friend came to his rescue. By his advice, a handbill was prepared announcing the cheapness of the hatter's wares, headed, "Who's your 'Atter?" and throughout its contents the goods were invariably mentioned as "Ats," "Youths 'Ats," "Beaver 'Ats," "Ladies' 'Ats," etc. The result perfectly justified the inventor's anticipations. Men shouted with laughter at the ludicrous effect of what they considered ignorance on the part of the writer. Carrying them about they merrily showed them to their friends. Gentlemen, perfect strangers, came to the shop, bought "ats" and expostulated gravely with the "atter" upon the solecism. Young fellows purchased "ats" for the fun of the thing, begged for handbills, and had jocular conversations with the "atter." The shop became known, and the proprietor a flourishing tradesman, who frequently smiled as he heard the street boys calling out the now established phrase. Until recently the pronunciation of the once popular inquiry in London was that of the original handbill—"Who's your Atter?"

Lord Berrington had received a letter one morning from a friend of his asking him if he would act as godfather to his child, which was to be christened at St. Mary's Church on Sunday morning. Instead of answering the letter he thought as he was passing through Berkeley Square that morning he would call at the house of Mr Thompson, his friend. After leaving a message that he would be at the christening on Sunday he said to the man-servant, "Is it a little girl?" to which the indignant butler replied, "No, my Lord; it's a little hare" (heir).

Dr Von Stephan, the German Postmaster-General, recently took train from Konigsberg, to enjoy a few days' deer-stalking. Arrived at Dirschau, a town near his destination, he stepped into the station telegraph office to send news of his safety to his wife in Berlin. The official recognised his chief at once, and with all obsequiousness began to write down his message. Suddenly the Morse instrument, used for service telegrams only, began to work, and very shortly his Excellency pricked up his ears, for he distinguished the particular clicks that represent his own name. A glance at the clerk's face, now deathly pale, induced him to inquire further into the purport of this State telegram, and, when the clicking had ceased, he took up the paper ribbon and read as follows:—"Look out for squalls. Stephan is somewhere on the line. He will be poking his nose everywhere." The Postmaster-General smiled sardonically, and then went to the transmitter and flashed back this reply:—"Too late! He has already poked his nose in here.—Stephan."

Mr Fields, the Boston publisher, had a wonderful memory, and his knowledge of English literature was so great that when a friend wished to know where a particular passage was to be found in an English author, he would go direct to the famous bibliography. A would-be wit, thinking to quiz him before a company at dinner, informed his friends that he had just written some lines which he intended to submit to him as Southey's, and to inquire in which of his works they occurred. After the guests were seated he began: "Friend Fields, I have been troubled a good deal of late in searching out in Southey's poems his well-known lines running thus—"Can you tell me when he wrote them, and where they are to be found?" I do not remember to have met with them before," replied the publisher, and there were only two periods in Southey's life when such lines could possibly have been written by him.—"When were those?" asked the questioner. "Somewhere," said Field, "about that early period of his existence when he was cutting his first teeth, or near the close of his life when his brain had softened."

There was once a farmer who had twenty pigs in a sty, and he told his Irish servant to go out and count them, and see if they were all right. He came back and told his master that he had counted nineteen, and that the other little one ran about so much that he could not count him "at all, at all."

In a dancing saloon one night a sailor was asked by a messmate to explain to him in a few words and as quickly as possible the third figure of a quadrille. His description was as follows: "You first of all leave ahead," said he, "and pass your adversary's yard-arms; then in a jiffy regain your berth on the other tack in the same kind of order; slip along sharp and take your station with your partner in line; back and fill, and then fall on your keel and bring up with your craft. She then manoeuvres ahead off alongside of you; then make sail in company with her until nearly astern of the other line; make a stern board; cast her off to shift for herself; regain your place out of the melee in the best manner you can, and let go your anchor."

Tom Sheridan went out shooting one day, and, hating to go home with an empty bag, and seeing some ducks in a pond and a farmer close by, he said: "I'll give you a seven-shilling piece if you let me have a shot with each barrel of my gun at those ducks, and I'm to have what I kill." "Right," said the man, "hand it over." The payment was made, and Tom let fly with one barrel and then with the other, and such quacking and splashing and screaming and fluttering had never been seen in that place before. Tom, delighted at his success, picked up first a drake, and then fished out a diving duck or two, and so on, until he numbered eight head of game (domestic), with which his bag was nobly distended. "Those were right good shots, sir," said the farmer. "Yes," said Tom, "eight ducks were more than you bargained for, old fellow—worth rather more, I suspect, than seven shillings." "Why, yes," said the man, scratching his head, "I think they be; but what do I care for that—they are none of mine."

Sandy McNab, on the eve of his marriage, called on the parson for advice. Having briefly sketched his matrimonial intentions, he earnestly asked the abrupt question: "Meenister, when ance I'm married, can I be unmarried?" "No, Sandy, when the knot is once tied it cannot be untied, so consider well what you are about to do." A week after this Sandy again visited the parson, presenting a dejected and woe begone appearance. He explained that he was now a married man, and with abrupt impetuosity said: "Meenister, I want you to un-marry me." "No, Sandy, I cannot do that. You remember what I told you when I last saw you?" "Ah; but you'll hae to un-marry me; she's worse than the deil." "How do you make that out?" "Ye ken it says in Scripture, that if ye resist Satan he will flee from you; but if you resist her, she flees at you."

An old man was breaking stones one day on Leeming Lane, Yorkshire, when a gentleman came riding along. "Bother these stones! Take them out on my way," he said. "When can ah tek 'em to yer honour?" "I don't care where; take them to Hades, if you like." "Doesn't thou think, sir," said the old man, "that ah'd better tak 'em to heaven? They'll be less 't' thee honour's way."

Charles Dickens once received an invitation to a "Walter Scott" party, each guest being expected to appear in the characters of one or the other of Scott's heroes. On the eventful night, however, Dickens appeared in simple evening dress. The host asked him which of Scott's characters he represented. "Why, sir, replied Dickens, "I am a character you will find in everyone of Scott's novels. I am the 'gentle reader.'"

Some time ago a lady who was very stingy, was having her house painted. When she paid the men they found that no extra money had been given for a drink. They all noticed this, and agreed to get the money or drink somehow. When at work next day one of the men remarked that her pictures looked very dirty, and if she would get them a quart of brandy they would clean them for her. The next day the brandy was given to them. The artful men divided it among themselves, and drank heartily. Then they washed the pictures with soap and water. When the pictures were returned the old lady said: "They look just like new, and they did not cost anything to clean, as I used the same brandy to wash my poor husband's feet just before he died."

"Now," said a schoolmaster, as he displayed a bright five shilling piece between the tips of his finger and thumb, "the first boy or girl that puts a riddle to me which I cannot answer will receive this as a gift."

"Any more?" he asked, as soon as silence was restored, and no one had claimed the coin.

"Yes, sir," sang out a little fellow from the farther end of the school. "Why am I like the Prince of Wales?"

"The Prince of Wales?" said the master, thoughtfully. "The Prince of Wales?" he repeated to himself.

"Really, Johnny, I see no resemblance in you; I'll give it up."

"Because," cried the lad, joyfully, "I'm waiting for the crown."

In a rural district in the north of Scotland, when some children were going to school they found on the road a boiled lobster which some tourists had dropped from their lunch basket. Anxious to know what such a strange animal could be they resolved to take it with them and show it to the schoolmaster, as he was locally known to be the wisest man in the world and knew everything. After examining it for some time the schoolmaster said, "Well, bairns, I have seen nearly all the wonderful beasts of creation, excepting a turtle dove and an elephant, and this must be either the one or the other of them."

Dean Smith once said to Lord H—, whom he cordially hated, that he was not fit to carry "wash" to the pigs. This being reported to Lord H— he

went to the dean. "I understand, sir, that you have said that I am not fit to carry wash to the pigs. I insist on retraction and apology." My dear sir," replied the dean, "not only will I retract and apologise, but I will do more. I assure you I consider you in every way fit to carry wash to the pigs."

One of the poets of the First Empire, Nepomucene Lemerrier, wrote a tragedy, the hero of which was Christopher Columbus. He had in it violated the unities, which Frenchmen for years considered an inviolable law of tragedy. When Lemerrier's piece was played the students hissed it with great vehemence. Napoleon admired him, and when he heard that the tragedy had been hissed he ordered it to be played again. It was again hissed. He became furious. He ordered it to be played a third time, and went to the theatre accompanied by a regiment of soldiers. The first and second acts were heard in silence. It was during the third that the hisses had formerly been most vigorous. When the curtain rose on the third act, Napoleon leaned over his box and looked at the students to see if they would dare to oppose his known will in his presence. What should he see but the whole audience, from pit to the last tier, wearing nightcaps and pretending to be fast asleep. The sight was so odd that Napoleon could not help laughing and he gave up attempting to support the tragedy.

An Irishman stopped at a country hotel one night, and on retiring to rest found the bed very lumpy. As the result he passed a restless night. On the following morning he asked the landlady, "Phawt sort of a bed she called that on which he had just slept?" "Oh," says the landlady, "That's a feather bed." "Oh, well, begorra!" says Pat, "ye forgot to take the fowls out of them."

The page boy had told a lie. His Lordship the Bishop calls the unfortunate youth to his presence. Tall and pompous he thus addresses him: "My boy, who it is that sees all we do and hears all that we say, and before whom even I am but as a crushed worm?" With trembling voice and an awed glance at the lady's picture, the boy answers: "The missus."

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