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Here and There

The Same Old Song.

There's a bit of consolation
The unlucky fellow has,
Who loses all his money on a horse.
It was all because he followed
Some one else's bad advice.
Which was not the thing he should have
done, of course;
But he never fails to tell you,
With a reassuring smile,
That had he followed his own judgment
He'd have won a handsome pile.

Quite Right.

The young man had been invited to attend a church social, and when he arrived he found that it was a "Conundrum Party," and that each person was expected to propound at least one conundrum of his own devising.

When his turn came he asked to be excused until later in the evening, saying that he must have time to think up a good one. So he was passed over until the very last, when the master of ceremonies asked him if he were ready.

"I am," he said. "Why is this conundrum like the first meal you eat on your first trip across Cook Straits?"

And when everybody said they would give it up, he said that was the answer.

Monotonous Top Hat.

"The deadly gloom and monotony of men's dress—one of the scandals of the age—is traceable to class inequality and the scramble for wealth," said Mr Henry Holiday, the well-known artist, in a lecture on "The Influence of Social Conditions on Dress," to the members of the "05" Club in London.

"There was a time when sumptuary laws regulated the dress of the different classes," he continued, "but free Britain did not tolerate this, and there are now no longer any sharp distinctions between the dress of the different grades of society."

"John Stuart Mill declared that it was the chief aim of people to get out of one rank of society into the class above it, and it follows, therefore, that each class endeavours to dress like the one above it."

"The aristocrat wears a top hat, a black tubular coat and light stove-pipe trousers. The wealthy merchant or banker is compelled to dress exactly the same. To introduce the smallest mark of individuality, or to indicate by one's dress one's calling in life, would be to lose caste. There is a ridiculous understanding in society that a gentleman is a man who does not earn his own living, and it is, therefore, incumbent on every one 'in society' to wear a dress which looks as though its owner could not do any work in it."

"In the same way the larger trader copies the merchant, and the smaller tradesman apes the man above him, and so on right down the scale, until even the working man turns out on Sundays in the top hat, black coat, and stove-pipe trousers. If there were no classes no one would be afraid of losing caste, and consequently every one would consult his own comfort and convenience in dress. We can hope for no radical change in our dress until we have altered our social system. So long as the greed for profit continues, so long will our dress be vulgar."

Quite Irish.

A Philadelphia dealer in pet stock has an aquarium of trained goldfish. These fish, when the man holds a small wand of redwood an inch above the surface of the water, leap over the wand in graceful dives. Indescribably pretty, like miniature porpoises of gold, they look as they vault over the red wand. A little silver bell swings above the tank and a silken cord descends into the water. The fish, when hungry, take the cord in their mouths and ring the bell. They will feed from the man's hand. If he holds morsels of food just out of the water, they will leap up and snatch the food from his fingers. It took him nearly a year to train them.

The Ink They Used.

Half-a-dozen commercial travellers were one evening gathered at a certain country inn. Each one in turn was endeavouring to outshine his neighbours as regards the extent of the enterprise he represented.

"Why," said one, concluding a description of his firm, compared with which all the co-operative stores combined were but coffee-stalls—"why in my business they spend three hundred pounds a year in ink, merely to back the orders in the counting-house."

"Oh, indeed," said the man that dealt in silk. "That's a mere nothing to what my firm spends in ink. Only last year it saved a matter of three thousand pounds in the expenses of the counting-house, merely by omitting to cross the 't's and dot the 'i's'."

A New Species.

An English Church vicar, who had been given a charge in a very rural part of England, one day met one of the natives, a bluff old gamekeeper, who was returning from a day's shooting. By way of starting a conversation the good vicar asked him if there were many Episcopalianians in the district.

"Well, parson," answered the keeper, "my brother John says he shot one yesterday, but, speaking between ourselves, I think it was just a weasel."

A Broad Hint.

"Last week," said Jones to some friends at the club the other night, "an old friend of mine who had been ten years away came into the office just as I was leaving. We had been friends at school, so I asked him to come home with me to dinner. There was no time to warn my wife, so I explained that he would have to take pot-luck."

"Well, he came and we sat down to dinner. I rather pride myself on my claret, and my guest appreciated it as only a man who has been away from home for years can appreciate good wine; between us we soon finished the bottle, and I asked him if I should open another, making sure he would say yes. To my surprise, he said he really wanted no more, and the more I pressed him the firmer his refusal became; and the firmer his refusal became the more I pressed him. But it was no good, and when dinner was over, he hurried off almost at once."

"Rather surprised, I joined my wife in the drawing-room."

"I can't think why you kept pressing Mr. Blank to have another bottle of wine, when all the time I was kicking your foot under the table to make you understand we hadn't another bottle in the house."

"Now, I don't mind telling you," concluded Jones, "though I didn't tell my wife—that it was not my foot that she was kicking!"

Music as a Stimulant.

Only those perhaps who have to work hard with their hands realise how stimulating is the effect of music upon their powers, and how much more speedily and adroitly manual labour is accomplished under such conditions. This idea of music and work combined has been acted upon by many English employers, who find a little outlay on melody in the midst of their workers to be an excellent innovation. A large musical box is used at one large factory, a gramophone on a vast scale at another, while yet another establishment has a superintendent whose duty it is to play and sing to the various work girls committed to her charge. For nowadays the "hand" in a London factory does not work under the grinding conditions at one time so sadly prevalent; she has her clubs, her musical evenings, her little social dances, and nights upon which she gets thorough and practical instruction with regard to the making of her own frocks and hats. All these things have the most refining influence, and music not the least potent of them all.

An Editorial Correction.

A certain provincial paper once published an appreciation of a retired general who had taken up his residence in the neighbourhood.

On the day following the particular issue, the editor was surprised to receive a copy of his paper, together with an indignantly worded letter from the afore-mentioned general.

"To refer to me, sir," the letter began, "as 'the hero of a hundred fights and a battle-scarred veteran,' is an insult such as I have never experienced in the whole of my thirty years' service."

The editor sighed, and glanced at the copy enclosed. Too true! There, underlined in blood red, was the very phrase to which the general had referred. So, snatching up a pen, the editor resigned himself to a letter of apology, in which such terms as "an unfortunate printer's error" stood out conspicuously, and concluded by promising an apology and correction in the next issue.

Thus appeased, the general awaited the appearance of the corrected edition. It came that evening, and the hero "of a hundred fights" read these lines:

"We much regret to announce that a most unfortunate error crept into our 'Appreciation of General Sir Hubert L.—' In it we referred to the gallant officer as 'the hero of a hundred fights and a battle-scarred veteran.' We feel quite sure that all our readers must have realised that such an allusion was far indeed from our thoughts. Of course, the passage should have read, 'General Sir Hubert L.— is the hero of a hundred fights and a battle-scarred veteran.'"

A double special correction in the same journal pointed out that the "r" was superfluous in the word "fights," and, of course, should have been placed instead in the word "scarred."

Lighthouses.

The first lighthouse ever erected for the benefit of mariners is believed to be that built by the famous architect Sostratus, by command of Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt. It was built near Alexandria, on an island called Pharos, and there was expended upon it about eight hundred talents, or over £200,000.

Ptolemy has been much commended by some ancient writers for his liberality in allowing the architect to inscribe his name instead of his own. The inscription reads: "Sostratus, son of Bexiphanes, to the protecting deities, for the use of seafaring people." This tower was deemed one of the seven wonders of the world and was thought of sufficient grandeur to immortalize the builder.

It appears from Lucian, however, that Ptolemy does not deserve any praise for disinterestedness on this score, or Sostratus any great praise for his honesty, as it is stated that the latter, to engross in after times the glory of the structure, caused the inscription with his own name to be carved in the marble, which he afterward covered with lines and thereon put the King's name. In process of time the line decayed, and the inscription on the marble alone remained.

A Neat Reply.

Here is an anecdote once related by Herbert Spencer—who, by the way, was rather heavy in hand when he undertook to play story teller. Apropos of Huxley's humour he described a dinner of distinguished authors:—

Over their cigarettes they fell to discussing their various methods of commencing to write.

One said he wrote and wrote, tore up, then wrote again, and so on.

George Lewes, who was present, looked surprised, and then cried out:

"Oh, I'm not like that. I commence to write at once, directly the pen is in my hand. In fact, boil at a low temperature."

"Indeed," cut in Mr Huxley, "that is very interesting, for, as you know, to boil at a low temperature implies a vacuum in the upper region."

Lewes himself was the first to lead the shout of laughter which of course greeted this clever repartee.

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