

Peter laughed, but he said: 'If Finland be Swedish soil now, it shall be Russian soil before long!' And he made good his words.

A pleasanter anecdote relates how Balakireff once interceded for the life of a reckless relative who had offended the Tsar, and was under sentence of execution. As soon as the jester showed himself at court Peter, foreseeing a petition for mercy, roared out angrily:

'It's no use your coming here! I swear that I will not grant what you are going to ask!'

Quick as a flash Balakireff dropped to his knees and cried entreatingly:

'Peter Alexeivitch, I beseech you, put that scamp of a cousin of mine to death!'

All present broke into laughter, in which the Tsar, so neatly trapped by his own declaration, presently joined, and the scampish cousin kept his head upon his shoulders.

### THE TONGUE

One of the ancients was once asked: What is the tongue? All that is best and all that is worst, he replied. The tongue is the noblest faculty man possesses; through its means he holds communion with his fellow-creatures, and maintains with them all those relations, which are both a necessity and the charm of life. It is by means of the tongue, that key of the mind and heart, that the soul reveals its thoughts and feelings and gives forth those tones so full of melody, power, and sweetness, that radiate around her and make her a centre of attraction for other minds. But, alas! the tongue is also the most active instrument for propagating sin and falsehood. It is a channel for some through which all the foulness of the heart pours itself forth; the interpreter through whom all earthly passions speak—such as pride, hate, wounded jealousy, revenge, and impurity; or it is the quivering leaf perpetually agitated by the breath of a changeable, inconstant, and vain-glorious wind.

### JUMBLLED WORDS

Here are some sentences that it is fun to try to repeat quickly:

She sells seashells by the sea-shore.  
Seven selfish shellfish shoved some shrimp sideways.  
Prudently peel prime potatoes.  
Royal rulers rarely really read riddles.  
Faint flames frequently feed fierce fires.  
Truly rural.

### ODDS AND ENDS

Freddy: 'Ma, carpets are curious things, aren't they?' His mother: 'Why?' Freddy: 'Cos they are bought by the yard and worn by the feet.'

Customer: 'Look here, waiter, I found a button in my salad.' Waiter: 'Yes, sir; that's part of the dressing.'

'Pa, what's a philosopher?' 'A poor man who is trying to make other people believe he doesn't want to be rich.'

The children were having an object-lesson on 'The Heron.' The master called attention to its small tail, saying: 'The bird has no tail to speak of.'

The next day he asked the children to write an essay on the bird, and one little girl concluded her essay by saying: 'The heron has a tail, but it must not be talked of!'

### FAMILY FUN

Why should a sparrow be offended if you were to call him a pheasant? Because he would not like to be made game of.

Which is the more obedient, the church bells or the organ? The bells, because they will sound when they are tolled, but the organ says, 'I'll be blown first.'

What is the difference between a tight boot and an oak tree? One makes acorns and the other makes corns ache.

When is a schoolboy like a postage stamp? When he is licked and put in the corner to make him stick to his letters.

What is the difference between a farmer and a seamstress? One gathers what he sows, the other sews what she gathers.

What is it that is brought to table, always cut, but never eaten? A pack of cards.

## All Sorts

Some people are doing nothing to-day, but they hope to move a mountain to-morrow.

If a reputation be of pure metal it bears rough handling; if of tinsel it will tarnish easily.

A hurricane is a wind that blows at 77 miles an hour or more. Such a wind exerts a pressure of nearly 15 pounds to the square foot.

The carbon of the food mixed with the oxygen of the air furnishes fuel for the body which evolves the heat in exactly the same way that a fire or candle does.

A leafless tree stands little chance of living. Trees denuded of their leaves by caterpillars and other mischievous things are deprived of their stomachs and lungs at once.

Mr. Sophy—'Look here! This horse you sold me runs on the pavement every time he sees a motor-car.'

Horse-dealer—'Well, you don't expect a £5 horse to run up a telegraph pole or climb a tree, do you?'

The annual crop of chamois skins in Switzerland does not exceed 6000, not more than enough to supply the United States for one day. What is usually sold as chamois is really an oil tanned sheep or lamb-skin lining.

Brown—'What is the most afflicted part of the house?'

Jones—'I give it up. What is it?'

Brown—'Why, the window. It is full of pains (panes), and who has not seen many a window blind? (window-blind).'

A fleet of vessels is engaged from January to August each year in the capture of sharks near Iceland. Only the livers are sought. That of each yields five gallons of oil, which has medicinal virtues resembling those of cod liver oil.

His mother-in-law had been with them for three long weeks.

'To-morrow,' said his wife, 'will be mamma's birthday. I wish I could think of something appropriate to give her.'

'Why not give her a railway-ticket home?' suggested the husband.

Sir Edward Elgar, the great Catholic composer, has predicted the end of the piano, to the great joy of those who live in flats and in rows of houses with thin partitions, and to the consternation of the innumerable army of piano teachers, piano makers, and piano touters. Speaking at Birmingham in connection with the formation of a new musical society as part of the University establishment there, Sir Edward remarked that 'some day, he had no doubt, pianos would be looked upon as curiosities, for mechanical players were being multiplied in such vast numbers that the human piano-player would disappear.'

Dr. Lefebvre, of the University of Louvain, and Dr. Allevi, of Italy, have just published some terrible truths about the progress of alcoholism in the Continent of Europe. France especially has a very disturbing record. In 1851, with a population of nearly thirty-six millions, it consumed 620,000 hectolitres (a hectolitre is a hundred litres, and a litre is something less than a quart); to-day, with a population of thirty-nine millions, it consumes ten times that quantity. In Germany the married working man spends between 14 and 20 per cent. of his wages on beer and spirituous drinks.

According to a Consular report, as much care is taken in the training of canaries in the Hartz Mountains, in Germany, as in the case of a prima donna. The young birds, learning by imitation for the most part, sometimes acquire bad singing methods, and much time is devoted to breaking them of their evil habits. The art of the breeder lies in his being able to discover the slumbering talent in the bird at an early age and developing it to its highest point of perfection in its particular line. Some birds show an especial talent for trilling, while others are remarkable for the beauty and variety of their song. They are divided into classes and kept in separate rooms, those having harsh and sharp voices being placed in covered cages, where, instead of singing themselves, they are forced to listen to other good singers, through which their faults are often overcome. The annual trade in these canaries is worth about £48,000.