

It was a woman, beautiful, well born, and patriotic, who suggested to Barras, the people's champion, the leader of the Convention, that the young officer, Napoleon Bonaparte, was the one man who might yet save France.

By Barras the Corsican was summoned and taken into the great hall of the Convention.

'So France has come to this,' whispered one grey-beard to another, 'that her life and her fate lie in the hands of a youth of 25 (and, indeed, he looked younger), only 5ft 2in in stature, with hair combed low on his brow like a woman—Alas!'

'I am perfectly aware of the difficulties in my path; but I am accustomed to succeed,' said the young Corsican, speaking in a loud, clear voice; 'but one thing I insist upon—it is I am not to be embarrassed by orders; I must have supreme command.'

And bowing low to the people's representatives, the little pale man, but 5ft 2in in height, with mild, brown eyes, left the hall, and the Convention, with closed doors, discussed his proposition.

Barras followed him for a last word, and while they spoke, a little girl came up to them with a basket filled with fragrant violets. The little man's eyes softened.

'They always remind me, somehow, of home,' he murmured apologetically, as he gave the seller a sou and took a tiny bunch.

A thought struck Barras. He bought a bouquet for the woman he loved. Then, turning to Napoleon, he said:

'Go to the house of Madame . . . , and remain there until ten. If I succeed for you, as she says I shall, she will send you a violet.'

It was six o'clock when the young officer was admitted to the house, and as he paced the great empty saloon he heard the clock strike seven, then half-past, then eight. At last the time piece in the hall struck nine, and as its chimes ceased a servant entered the room with a perfumed envelope. Napoleon opened it, and lo! it contained only a violet. A flower which changed the map of Europe!

And this is why those of every land and clime, whose hearts are thrilled by the romance of war and the story of the youth who, unaided, reached the zenith of earthly power, love the flower he loved best—the purple violet of Corsica.

SLEEP PREFERRED.

Mrs. Randall had just finished instructing her new girl, who came to her from an intelligence office. Her general appearance pleased the mistress greatly, and she felt sure that at last she had succeeded in finding a prize.

'And, Lizzie, do you have to be called in the morning?' she asked as an afterthought.

'I don't have to be, mum,' replied the new assistant hopefully, 'unless you just happens to need me.'

CONDENSED MEASURE.

'Do you call this a pint?' asked a sharp servant of the milkman, whom she suspected of giving short measure.

'Yes,' replied the man.

'Well it won't do,' said the girl. 'When we want condensed milk, we'll buy it at the grocer's!'

NOT FOR THE PROFESSIONAL.

One of the latest cricket stories is that of a village club who, having let their ground to a local fete committee for a certain day, wrote to the opponents who were to have visited them on that date, asking if the match could be played away instead of at home.

A reply contained consent to the proposed change,

with a concluding sentence: 'You will probably be able to give us a quid pro quo.'

Secretary No. 1 at once writes back: 'Thanks for the arrangement. As you are obliging us, I enclose the sovereign you want for your pro., but think you chaps ought to pay him yourselves in future matches!'

FAMILY FUN

TRICKS, ILLUSIONS, AND INDOOR AMUSEMENTS.

(Special to the N.Z. TABLET by MAHATMA.)

Magical Counting.—The only requisites for this simple trick are two confederates and three walking sticks. One of the confederates goes out of the room while the other asks the company to choose a number not higher than 999. When the number has been chosen the performer, after a lot of hard thinking, proceeds to arrange the sticks on the floor in such a manner that his friend will recognise the number on his return. The explanation is this: The lowest stick represents units, the middle stick tens, and the top one hundreds. Let us suppose that the number 672 has been chosen. The sticks are arranged so that the lowest points to two o'clock, the middle one to seven o'clock, and the top one to six o'clock of a imaginary clock-dial, the twelve o'clock of which must always be nearest the fireplace. Ten, eleven, and twelve o'clock must, for obvious reasons, stand for 0.

A Word Game.—This is not quite so easy as it would appear at first sight. Paper and pencil are given to each member of the company. The performer then reads out the following letters telling the company to write them down one after another without stops or spaces:—

'GDLDPRTFRRTHDXNFRDDNS.'

The guests are to make a sentence out of these letters by putting in wherever and as often as they wish one vowel and one vowel only. This missing vowel, which they are not told till they have tried properly, is 'o,' and when placed in its right position the sentence reads thus: 'Good old port for orthodox Oxford dons.'

Balancing a Bottle. This is a very difficult feat but one well worth trying. Obtain a large bottle (empty) and balance it on the back of the head. Then from an upright position get down on hands and knees and with the mouth pick up a cork already placed on the floor. Having done this get up to the original standing position, remove the bottle from the head and the cork from the mouth, and—acknowledge the applause.

Blowing Out the Candle.—A lighted candle is placed on the mantelpiece, so that it is about on a level with the head of the average player. One of the company, standing three or four yards away from the candle, is blindfolded and, having been turned round three times so that he will lose his bearings, is told to go and blow the candle out. Of course he must not be able to see through the bandage. The careful way he will step towards the spot where he thinks the candle is situate and the wild efforts he makes to blow out the flame, which is often some distance away; will cause no end of amusement. Each of the company in turn should be made to go through the performance.

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