

first and simplest way in which this pursuit broadens the mind. Many a mother has pored over the atlas with her son to see how China looked on the map. And why? Just because the lad had a Chinese stamp. He is not studying—oh, no. He is playing stamps. But there is fixed indelibly in his mind how China appears on the map.

From the geographical to the historical interest is but a step. The portraits of the rulers, the surcharges with their various meanings, the pictures of places and products shown upon the stamps—all help to swell the fund of general knowledge which is being absorbed, not through study, but through play. The knowledge of coins, of the relative values of the shilling, the dollar, the gulden, franc, lire, mark, the boy will acquire because it will help him to know his stamps. The study broadens as the boy's collection grows. He learns to observe the slight variations in shades, in water-marks, in sizes of perforations, to detect differences in designs and printing. This gradually growing habit of observation, this keenness to note dissimilarities, is a valuable asset to the future professional or business man. And this is acquired in the play of stamp-collecting. It is true that this pursuit of philately (as the study of postage stamps is called) is an excellent memory trainer, and it is not strange that intelligent men pursue the pastime with keen pleasure.

SMART BUTLER.

A lady had issued invitations for a party of twelve, and, on the morning of the appointed day, when conferring with the footman, she discovered that one of the twelve silver shells in which scalloped oysters were to be served had been misplaced. Rigid search for the missing article having proved unavailing, the lady decided that, sooner than give up that particular course, she would simply decline oysters when they were landed her, and so the eleven shells would be sufficient.

It happened that, when the oysters were served at dinner, the hostess was engaged in a very animated conversation with one or two of her neighbors, and forgetting her determination, took one of the shells of oysters and set it before herself.

If the servant's heart fell in consternation at this, he gave no external sign of it, but, speaking in tones distinct though low, said, respectfully:

'Excuse me, madam, but you said I was to remind you that the doctor forbade your eating oysters.'

STRANGE BUT TRUE.

Miss Marjorie: 'And how is your son James getting on, Mr. Giles?'

Giles (whose son has gone to London 'in service'): 'Well, to tell ye the truth, Miss Marji, Oi'm very troubled about 'im. Oi 'ad a latter last week, an' 'e says that 'e's livin' in a buildin' with 'undreds of people in it, an' it's three or four 'ouses one on top o' t'other. 'E says there's a railway carriage without an ingin' that goes up the middle o' th' buildin' an' th' lights is all in bottles an' you turns 'em on with a tap without usin' a loocifer, an'—'

Miss Marjorie: 'But why are you troubled about James?'

Giles: 'Aye, Oi fear 'e must 'a took to drink, miss!'

PAINTER AND PAWNBROKER.

Mr. Frank Brangwvn, A.R.A., who recently received such a notable gift at the hands of the French Ministry of Fine Arts, in the shape of a beautiful Sevres vase, once had an amusing experience when he was less affluent than to-day. During a financial crisis he sought to effect a loan of £10 on the security of one of his own pictures. The pawnbroker offered ten shillings—to the artist's indignation.

'Why, the frame alone is worth more than that,' he protested—to be met with the crushing reply:

'I know it is, and it is on the frame that I am lending the money.'

A YOUNG UNIONIST.

The manager of an engineering works was watching an apprentice who was swinging the hammer in a leisurely way a few days ago.

'Look here, my boy,' he said, going up to the youth and taking the hammer from him, 'when I see a man that takes his hammer by the end of the handle and strikes a proper blow like that, I give that man 32s a week, but a man who takes it in the middle like this, only gets 25s a week, and is dismissed whenever we get slack. See?'

Hoping he had sufficiently well driven home his point, he surveyed the lad, more in sorrow than in anger. But the latter requested an extension of the lesson.

'Please, sir,' said he, 'where ought I to hold it for my 4s a week?'

LEFT THE DISTRICT.

Two wealthy Americans had rented a shooting in the Highlands at war rates, and, full of anticipation, arrived on the scene with their guns, etc.

The first day there they walked into the village, where they got into conversation with an ancient Highlander.

'Is the sport good about here?' asked one of the visitors.

'Aye, nae sae bad,' replied the bewhiskered native, cautiously.

'Er—are there any deer in the neighborhood?' asked the other American, eagerly.

'Weel,' replied the Highlander, still more cautiously, 'there wis yin, a year or two back, but the gintry wis aye shooting at the pur beastie, an' Aw theenk it left the district.'

NOT OF MUCH IMPORTANCE.

I never think of Lord Alverstone without recalling that delightful story told of his early life, when he was a member of the choir of St. Mary Abbot, Kensington. Like everything else he did (says a contributor to an exchange), he was indefatigable in his duties as a chorister. One day an American lady attended service at St. Mary Abbot, and asked the verger which of the choristers was the famous lawyer.

'Well, mum,' replied that dignitary, 'that's the vicar, and them's the curates, and I'm the verger; but as for the choir—so long as they does their dooty we don't inquire into their hantecedents.'

HIS CHOICE.

School Teacher: 'If you had you choice, Willie, would you rather be as wise as Solomon, as great as Julius Caesar, as rich as Croesus, as eloquent as Demosthenes, as tall as Goliath, or as good as the prophet Elijah?'

Willie: 'I'd rather be a drummer in a brass band!'

TO SUIT ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

'Here you are, sir!' cried the hawker, extending a bouquet. 'Buy some beautiful flowers for your sweetheart?'

'Nothing doing,' responded the young man. 'I haven't got a sweetheart.'

'I see!' was the prompt rejoinder of the hawker. 'Buy some flowers for your wife?'

'Wrong again! I am not married.'

'Well, then, gov'nor,' exclaimed the resourceful hawker, 'buy the lot to celebrate your luck!'

LADIES!

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