

'I wonder how much longer we're going to be kept waiting here? I want to get along.'

'Get along!' said the man. 'I wondered why you pulled up here. Why, you're on a cab rank!'

FOOLING THE CENSOR

During the South African war letters sent home by the soldiers had to pass through the hands of a censor. A certain private had sent four or five letters home, portions of which had been obliterated by the censor. He decided to 'get even' with that official, so at the foot of his next letter he wrote—'Please look under the stamp.'

At the censor's office the letter was opened and read as usual. The officer in charge spent some time in steaming the stamp from the envelope, but his feelings can be better imagined than described when he read these words—

'Was it hard to get off?'

WHAT'S IN A NAME

A hungry diner in a restaurant ordered a chicken pie. When it was brought he raised the paste and sat looking at the contents intently for a while. Then he called the waiter.

'Look here, sir,' he said. 'What did I order?'

'Chicken pie, sir.'

'And what have you brought me?'

'Chicken pie, sir.'

'Chicken pie!' the customer exclaimed. 'Chicken pie! Why, there's not a piece of chicken in it, and never was.'

'That's right, sir. There ain't no chicken in it.'

'Then why do you call it chicken pie? I never heard of such a thing.'

'That's all right. There don't have to be chicken in a chicken 'pie. There ain't no dog in a dog biscuit, is there? And there ain't a college in college puddin' as I knows of.'

PERFECTLY ACCURATE

The following is a good story relating to the late Earl of Shaftesbury. It is said that the Earl once called a meeting in connection with certain work, and only two people turned up—himself and a very fat reporter. After waiting, and no one else coming, the Earl said he would dictate his intended speech. The reporter took out his notebook, and the Earl began:

'At a large and respectable meeting held—'

'But that's not quite correct,' objected the reporter, as he swept his hand round the empty hall.

'Come, come,' said his lordship, 'are you not large, and am I not respectable?'

SILENT MAN

The late Mr. Pierpont Morgan was always a silent man, and he would sometimes champion the silent with a story.

'Old John Bates, an upholsterer,' so the story began, 'was renowned for his silence. People who had been his customers for a generation had, many of them, never heard a word from him except "Good morning. Five dollars. Thank you. Good day." Old John, in fact, cultivated silence as a genius cultivates his art.

'A patron one day said to John:

"What's the best kind of mattress?"

"Hair," was the reply.

'The patron, some twenty years later, had occasion to buy another mattress, and again he asked:

"What's the best kind, John?"

"Cotton."

"Cotton!" the patron cried. "Why, you told me twenty years ago that hair was the best!"

'The old man gave a quaint sigh.

"Talking has always been my ruin," he said.'

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FAMILY FUN

TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS.

(Special to the *N.Z. Tablet* by MAHATMA.)

The Prisoner Released.—Place a sixpence in the bottom of a glass tumbler, and over it put a half-crown. The puzzle is to remove the small coin from beneath the larger one without touching either of the coins or upsetting the glass. To do this you must blow with considerable force down one side of the glass upon the edge of the half-crown. The sixpence will be expelled by the force of the air, and will fall upon the upper surface of the half-crown or upon the table. A little practice will render the accomplishment of this feat very easy.

To Make the Pack Open at a Selected Card.—Many a wonderful trick is performed through the medium of a piece of thread. The following is one of them. One end of a hair is attached by means of a piece of wax or soap to the end of the table, the other end to the conjuror's wand. A card is freely chosen, and while the same is being noted the performer places one half of the pack on the table, casually moving the wand so as to carry hair across it. The performer now asks the person who chose the card to place his card face down upon those on the table. He then replaces the balance of the pack upon this card and squares all together. He then makes a few passes with the wand, which he finally raises gently with the result that the upper half of the pack is pulled aside, exposing the chosen card.

A Simple Card Trick.—Offer the pack to a member of the audience in order that a card may be drawn and noted. Take the pack and hold it behind your back. Then turn your back to the person who has chosen the card, and ask him to place his card on top of the pack. Pretend to shuffle the cards well. Really all you do is to turn the chosen card with its back to the rest of the cards and still keep it at the top. Then hold up the cards with their faces towards the spectators and ask the chooser of the card if the bottom one is his. While doing this you inspect the card which is at the bottom of the pack and facing you. The assistant replies that the card you show him is not his. You then place the pack behind your back again and turn the bottom card, which you have seen, in the proper direction. You may then allow the assistant to shuffle the pack because you now know the name of the chosen card. You may then take the pack back and run through it, finally producing the chosen card.

A New Stretched Handkerchief.—The performer takes a handkerchief by two corners, twists it ropewise between his hands, tugging at it the while, when it suddenly dawns on the spectators that it grows gradually longer. He continues to twist and pull hard, and the handkerchief continues to get longer until it is of quite inordinate length. In conclusion it is opened out and found to be in perfect condition. The explanation is as follows: The handkerchief is folded in half, two corners being held between the thumb and first and second fingers of each hand, the forefinger separating the corners in each case. It is now twisted ropewise, and while continuing so to twist it the thumb and forefinger of one hand and the first and second fingers of the other hand pull on their respective (really diagonal) corners, the two opposite corners being released. The result is that the handkerchief is pulled out diagonally, but in such a deceptive way that it appears to be stretched beyond doubt. The old-fashioned way of performing this trick was as follows:—Holding the handkerchief by two corners diagonally opposed to each other, the performer twisted it ropewise as in the above method, when it was seen to grow gradually longer. The secret in this case consisted in securing a portion of slack in each hand at the outset and, while seeming to pull so hard, to gradually let out the slack. The deception was aided by allowing the actual corners of the handkerchief to protrude slightly from either hand during the trick.

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