

OLD TRICKS.

Conjuring as It Was Practiced in the Seventeenth Century.

Conjurors in ancient times were not very respectable members of society—when successful they enjoyed the reputation of having sold their souls to the Evil One, and when of inferior ability they gained notoriety by being either drowned or burned. The medieval magicians as well as the Egyptian magicians and the Chaldean sages were only a strange mixture of chemist, conjurer and charlatan; and, as these gentlemen were in the habit of using their supposed occult powers to their own advantage, they were naturally unpopular. The feats of jugglery were for the mystification and not the amusement of the public, and for centuries conjuring had it only a black side.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, in the earliest years of the restoration, a number of tricks were published in one of those facetious books which seem to have occupied the press to a great extent at this time, but which, owing to their popularity, have for the most part perished. The chief recommendation to the greater number of these tricks is that no apparatus beyond the utensils of everyday life is necessary; also, it is suggested to the performer that he can make some small profit out of his entertainment by prevailing on his audience to bet with him on the result of the trick. "To set a horse's or an ass's head upon a man's head and shoulders" seems impossible out of the land of Faery, but we are informed that by boiling the head out off from a living animal "the flesh boy'd may run into yore," and then by mingling the hair beaten into powder with this oil, and anointing the heads of the standers-by, "they shall seem to have horses' or asses' heads"—costly experiment and scarce if successful. But, besides this, one can "make people seem headless," and this without bloodshed and by the following simple recipe: "Break arsenic very fine, and boyle it with sulphur in a cover'd pot, and kindle it with a new candle, and the standers-by will seem to be headless." Doubtless strong imagination is necessary for success.

Some of the tricks are such as would nowadays cause the performer to be disliked, to put it mildly; for instance, "have a nut filled with ink, and give this unto another and bid him crack it and see what he can find in that," which being done "will cause much laughter." To keep a tapster from frothing his pots" must have been an amusement to the wags of the period, and for this "provide in readiness the skin of a red herring, and when the tapster is absent do but rub a little on the inside of his pots, and he will not be able to froth them, do what he can, in a good while after." "To counterfeit a diamond with a white saphir" is a most useful accomplishment, but the fraud is likely in these days to be discovered, and is more a chemical experiment than a trick. Several tricks are recommended which have animals as their subject, and are for the most part brutal to our modern ideas; perhaps the least objectionable is "to seem to kill a horse and cure him again," which may be thus accomplished: "Take the seed of henbane, and give it the horse in his provender, and it will cast him into such a sleep that he will seem dead; if you will recover him again, rub his nostrils with vinegar, and he will seem to be revived." The "seem to be revived" sounds rather ominous, and it is to be noted that the correct quantity of henbane is not mentioned, so that it might be best to try this experiment on some one else's horse. "To make a shoal of goslings draw a timber logge" sounds interesting, but unfortunately the directions are vague. "To make a shoal of goslings or a gaggle of geese to seem to draw a timber logge is done by the verie means that is us'd when a cat draws a fool through a pond, but handled somewhat further off from the beholders."—London Standard.

Her Guess.

He—For a week I have not slept an hour at a time. I have tossed upon my bed night after night, only to arise weary and depressed in the morning. I cannot eat. I come and go and am weighed down with an all-prevading thought. It is with me in my waking hours. It is with me in my dreams.

She—Ah, it is too bad. I'm sorry for you."

He—Marie, have you not guessed what it is that troubles me?

She—Yes. You're afraid there may be another call for men and that you'll have to go and fight.

An hour afterward he was still walking around in a circle and wondering whether she really meant it or not.—Chicago Daily News.

She Assisted Him.

"Ah," sighed the poet, "I shall be satisfied if I can produce but one line that will make the world better."

"Say," said the poet's wife, "just come back here and try your hand at strapping this clothesline, will you?"—Richmond Times.

STUDY OF CHILDREN'S IDEALS.

A Wonderful Improvement Has Occurred in Our Educational System.

A great Herbartian wave sweeping across the schools during the last few years has carried away much of the lifeless mechanical drill which characterized the old education. In its place has been left the vitalizing influence of the study of humanity. Believing that the contemplation of the world's greatest thought and noblest deeds must result in arousing kindred enthusiasms, literature and history have been introduced to our youngest children. We have given this teaching a sufficient time to prove its efficacy. Is it giving our children lofty ideas? Is it exalting goodness, wisdom, strength, truth, patriotism? Is it endowing generous desires to perform noble deeds?

As a working basis for the solution of these problems, papers were collected from 1,440 school children in answer to the following questions:

"What person of whom you have ever heard or read would you most like to resemble? Why?"

Being written as a regular composition exercise, these answers with one exception show every evidence of sincerity. Out of the total number only seven children failed to return a ready response, and their hesitation due to a premature development of fatalism. "Nobody," writes a boy of 13, "because it will do me no good to want to resemble anyone."

A girl of 12 reaches the same conclusion from a feminine reliance upon authority. "I would not like to envy the people. Because they say it is not right. They say that God made you to be so."—Estelle M. Darrah, in Popular Science Monthly.

AN AFRICAN PRISON.

The Inmates Move It Bodily to the Bar and Have Their Drinks.

Among some amusing anecdotes of his life in South Africa, Robert Gantry, the author, tells the following: "One warm day I discarded my waistcoat and was off with my sketch-book and camera in search of copy, when a man stopped me and said: 'Hallo, Gantry, how are you?' He was a perfect stranger, so I said: 'How did you know my name was Gantry?' 'Well,' he replied, 'you have Gantry written on your shirt, and as you look like a gentleman I don't suppose you would wear anyone else's.' As he left smiling I had a dim consciousness that I had been pelted with a chestnut." On another occasion, while watching the corrugated iron prison at Johannesburg, he found after awhile that the prison had moved. Being naturally somewhat surprised, he awaited the denouement, and discovered that the prisoners inside were lifting it, and moving it towards a whisky bar a little way off. When they got near enough they had their drinks through the little window, and then moved the prison back again to the former spot. When the governor heard of it he said: "Not a bad idea! I can make those fellows mend the roads now," which they do, the portion under repair being also under the roof of the prison.—Los Angeles Herald.

EXORCISING A DEMON.

Most Recent Instance of This Survival of Medievalism.

Perhaps the most recent instance of this survival of medievalism in one of the chief centers of modern civilization and scientific culture occurred on March 15, 1897, at Munich, Bavaria, when a Catholic priest of St. Benedict's church solemnly went through the ceremony of exorcising a demon that haunted a house at No. 24 Park street in that city. It seems that the evil spirit had disturbed the pious inmates of the dwelling by groaning, sighing and making such a racket generally that it was impossible for them to sleep, and was seen one night by a child passing through the room in the guise of an old woman dressed in black, evidently a survivor of the race of ugly and ill-starred hags who have played such a melancholy part in the tragic annals of witchcraft. On receiving this information the parish priest and his acolytes went at once to the house with aspergils and censers to expel the infernal intruder by the supernatural power inherent in holy water and consecrated incense. The event caused considerable sensation in the Bavarian capital and excited mingled feelings of indignation and disgust in the minds of even many good Catholics.—Prof. E. P. Evans, in Popular Science Monthly.

Monks That Are Workers.

Most of the monks of King William's Town, Cape Colony, are tradesmen, and do their own carpentering, bricklaying, blacksmithing, etc., besides teaching school. All the buildings they occupy were erected by themselves.

His Shady Character.

Phillips—What's the matter with that fellow from Colorado—isn't he all right?

Quipps—I don't know. Somebody said he left Pike's Peak under a cloud.—Town Topics.

BREVITIES OF FUN.

In the Prison.—Warden—"A reporter wants to see you. What shall I say?" Convict—"Tell him I am not at home."—Fliegende Blatter.

Rural Trepidation.—"Does Aunt Rebecca take any interest in the war?" "Yes; she says she hopes the guns won't be near enough to disturb her setting hens."—Chicago Record.

Professor—"How would you punctuate this sentence? Miss Blake, a pretty girl of 18, walked down Regent street." Student—"I should make a dash after Miss Blake."—St. Paul.

Signs of Greatness.—"We think our little Dick is going to be a great genius." "Why?" "Often, when we start him off to school, he sits down on a carbuncle in the next square and totally forgets to go."—Cincinnatus Commercial Tribune.

Another Patriot.—"I understand that Bindle is going to apply for a pension." "Upon what grounds, I would like to know? He never fought for his country." "No, but he came over on the Paris and his nervous system was upset."—Chicago News.

Auxious Old Lady—"I say, my good man, is this boat going up or down?" Surly Deckhand—"Well, she's a leaky old tub, num," so I shouldn't wonder if she was goin' down; then, again, her bilges ain't none too good, so she might go up!"—Answers.

His Hands Full.—Elder—"Hello, young man, why haven't you gone to the front, like the rest of 'em?" Younger (hesitatingly)—"Well, my wife is staying with us now, and—" Elder—"Pardon, my boy. You'll have your fill of fighting, I see."—Illustrated American.

At reception in Washington ex-Secretary William M. Evarts was once drawn into a discussion between two ladies. "Mr. Evarts," said one, "do you not think I am right in saying that woman is always the best judge of another woman's character?" "Madam," replied Mr. Evarts, "she is not only the best judge, but also the best executioner."—San Francisco Argonaut.

OTTO OF BAVARIA.

Pathetic Story of the Insane Monarch and His First Love.

The following remarkable story is related about the unhappy King Otto of Bavaria. This last week he ate almost nothing for some days, although his appetite is usually unusually good. He sobbed, wailed and screamed uninterruptedly for hours, and even became at times dangerous. One morning, however, his physician and a keeper cautiously pushed aside the heavy brocade curtain which divides their bedroom from that of the poor monarch, and found him with tears running down his cheeks, gazing into a little silver case which they had often seen in a drawer, the key to which King Otto wore on a fine steel chain round his neck.

As soon as the king perceived that he was watched he turned round and smiled so happily and naturally that the doctor, surprised, stepped nearer.

Wearing the same joyful expression the king cried out to him: "Countess L— has passed a better night. She is now out of danger." He then carefully locked up the little silver box, which contained nothing but a few dried strawberries, and spent a very quiet day. He also enjoyed his dinner again.

This is the other part of the story. In 1867 there was a merry picnic in a wood. Among the guests was the lovely 17-year-old Countess L—, with whom the young prince fell madly in love at first sight. He sat next to her at lunch, paid her the greatest attention, and then disappeared with her into the wood. As the young people did not return, and it was getting late, the mother of the countess became anxious, and sent menservants out in all directions. The culprits were found with their hats full of strawberries, which they were merrily eating. The next moment they were separated forever.

Prince Otto went with the king to Munich, and the youthful countess was sent to the convent of Misericorde, where she has remained up to this day. During the few days throughout which the king had shown such unfavorable symptoms, the girl whom he had loved in his youth was really lying dangerously ill in her cell. Somehow or other—how is not stated—the incurably insane monarch had become aware of the fact.—Berlin Correspondent.

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Similar Treatment.

"Mrs. Shadyside loves her husband and her bicycle equally well," remarks Miss Murray Hill to Miss Beechwood.

"What do you mean?" "She treats them just alike."

"How so?" "She blows them both up."—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

Undue Familiarity.

"What made the butler scowl at you so, Chumpley?" "I mistook him for a guest and he resented it."—Detroit Free Press.

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