



WITH THE WITS



THE NEXT BEST.

She hasn't got a motor car
To tear o'er hill and dale;
And yet she's not unhappy, for
She's got a motor veil.



'RAIL' COOKING.

Traveller, in American dining-car, fast express: 'Waiter, these eggs are too soft.' Waiter: 'S'prised to heah dat, sah.' Traveller: 'They were not in the water long enough.' Waiter: 'Well, sah, I'll put 'em back an' let 'em boil another mile.'



PRISON REPARTEE.

There were two prisoners in jail. One was in for stealing a cow. The other was in for stealing a watch.

Exercising in the courtyard one morning, the first prisoner said tauntingly to the other: 'What time is it?'

'Milking time,' was the retort.



A KEY TO SLANG.

Philologists like to study slang. They can account for many slang phrases that seem idiotic. Thus:

'To give the cold shoulder'—It was the custom in mediaeval France, when a guest had outstayed his welcome, to serve him a cold shoulder of mutton instead of the usual hot meat. The man always took this hint.

'He's a brick'—A visitor to Sparta found the capital without walls, and asked the king what he would do, in case of invasion, in his wall-less town. 'Sparta has 50,000 soldiers,' the king answered, 'and each man is a brick.'

'Catching a Tartar'—During the war between Russia and Tartary, a private soldier shouted 'Captain, I have caught a Tartar.' 'Well, bring him in,' the captain rejoined. 'He won't let me,' the soldier called despairingly, as his prisoner dragged him into the Tartar lines.

'To eat humble pie'—In the middle age, after a deer had been slaughtered, the master of the house and his family ate the choice cuts, while the feet, neck and head were made into a pie. This humble pie was served to the servants and retainers.



INFURIATING.

Scottish folk are proverbially canny and prudent in money matters, and the following shows that the younger generation is no exception to the rule.

A teacher in a lowland school was taking mental arithmetic with a class of boys. She asked one urchin:

'How much would your mother give you to buy four pounds of tea at one and six a pound?'

'We ne'er get sae much at once as that, mum.'

'Never mind that. Four pounds at one and six?'

'But we canna afford the one and six, mum, We always hae the one and twa.'

'Answer the question. What would she give you to pay for four pounds of tea at—'

'Nawthin', mum.'

'What do you mean by "nothing"?'

'She'd na' gie' me ony bawbees. She'd tell me tae ask the mon tae pit it doon.'

'Oh, dear! Oh, dear! But supposing she did?'

With a pitying smile came the reply: 'A can see ye ne'er met ma mither, mum.'—Philadelphia 'Public Ledger.'



Limited Scope

He: "Suffrage or no suffrage, woman's chief duty after all, is to make fools of us men."
She: "I quite agree. But you've no idea how tiresome it is when Nature has forestalled us."
—Black and White.

MACHINE'S LIMITATIONS.

'Madam,' said the young man who had called at the back door on May day, 'I have the pleasure of introducing to you our new automatic house-cleaning machine—a simple little thing which does the whole work of house-cleaning, leaving to you merely the general supervision.'

'Does it all, eh?' demanded the woman of the house. 'Will it wash the outside of the upstairs windows?'

'Why, no, madam, but'—

'Will it take down, wash, stretch to dry, iron and hang up the parlor curtains?'

'Well, of course—this machine'—

'Will it gild the chandeliers, paint the kitchen, make my daughter help with the dishes, persuade my husband to be contented with cold dinners, get out the screens and patch them up?'

'Oh, madam, this machine'—

'Will it take down the parlor stove and set up the refrigerator, wash the winter bedding and put it away, lay down the furs with moth balls, paper the hall bedroom, wash down the paper in the bathroom, wash, fold, starch and iron and put away the family clothes, darn, sew on buttons, wash dishes, set three meals a day and pacify the household.'

'No, madam, you have misunderstood the limitations of this machine.'

'Limitations?' demanded the woman of the house. 'I guess it has limitations. It will be a long time yet before any man will get up a machine that will do all a woman has to do in housecleaning time.'

She took a fresh mouthful of tacks and went back to the dining room carpet and the agent faded sadly away.



THE CHILDISH MIND.

Here is a collection of what are called 'Howlers,' quaint answers given by children to questions put to them in examination papers. This latest assortment of samples appears in 'Past and Present,' which is described as 'a journal for scholars (old and young) of Friends' schools,' and the answers quoted have been given by children in those schools:

'Rameses II. is generally known as the Pharaoh of the Compression; because he

made the children of Israel into bricks without straw.'

Let us turn to the history paper, which also has its gems—as, for instance:

'The Temple of Zeus is built of columns that bulge out. This is called the Ironic style.'

'The Spartans had two kings to check one another.'

But, after all, some of the simplest answers are the best. A lad who, when asked, 'If you stand facing the north, what have you on your left hand?' replied, with quiet confidence, 'Fingers'; and the other boy, who, when asked to state whose bones the children of Israel took with them when they left Egypt, answered, 'Their own.' There is finality about such answers.

There is also nothing that can be added to this:

Q. What happens when sulphur is heated?
A. It gets warm.

If you were to roll all the leading scientists of the day into one, they could not call in question the accuracy of that simple statement. It ends the matter completely.

The boy who wrote the following ought to become a practical politician when he grows up:

'The easiest way to cross a range of mountains is go round them.'

It is possible, however, that some temperance advocates will frown at the suggestion contained in this:

'The potato is not only used for feeding peasants, but goes to more important things, such as whiskey.'

Another lad appears to be more sound on the temperance question, for, having been invited to give his views on tramps, he wrote the following little essay:

'Tramps. Some people threaten to call the police or turn the garden hose on them. But all these precautions are of very little avail, as at every street corner, public house or roadside, the tramp is always to be found; and until Chinese labor is abolished and a great many of the public houses removed there will always be the same bountiful supply.'

Here is another specimen of the complete and final answer which leaves no room for further argument or trouble:

Q. Why did Moses not enter the Promised Land?

A. Because he was dead.

In regard to mathematics, there are some good things said, though I have not come across anything better than my favorite specimen, in which a boy remarked: 'Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to anything else.' But these are by no means without merit;

'A circle is a line of no depth running round and round a dot forever.'

'An axiom is something equal to something else, as a part is equal to a hole.'

'A theorem is something you have to prove which is absurd.'

'A problem is something that we've proved, and then we've got to find out what it's about.'

'A problem is a figure which you do things with, which are absurd, and then prove it.'

'When holes are added to whole, the remainder is holes.'

In a history paper occurs the following sentence:

'Edward the then king of England died to confuse matters.'

There is a suggestion here of the diplomatist who, when he heard that his rival was dying, remarked, moodily, 'I wonder what he's doing that for?'



POVERTY A VIRTUE.

The Doctor maintained that poverty was a virtue. A wag responded that, that was literally making a virtue of necessity.