

## WITH THE WITS

### THE RUSE.

Things were going badly with the street jeweller. The crowd wouldn't bite, and it looked very much as though the evening would be a failure from his point of view.

Suddenly an idea for reviving the enthusiasm of his audience struck the peddler. Drawing a sovereign from his pocket he said:

"I will give this sovereign to the first person who guesses the date of it."

At once guesses came from every part of the crowd, until practically every date within the last hundred years had been mentioned.

"Well," said the man, "I don't know who guessed right. Who was it guessed 1895?"

"I did!" roared every man, woman, and child in the crowd.

"Then you are all wrong," said the vendor, pocketing the sovereign. "The date is 1902."

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### DUTY.

He was an immaculate servant. To watch him serve a salad was to watch an artist at work. To hear his subdued accents was a lesson in the art of voice-production. He never slipped, he never smiled, and his mutton-chop whiskers marked him as one of the old and faithful stock. But one evening, to the surprise of his master, he showed unaccountable signs of nervousness. When the chicken came on, he confused it with the pheasant. He served everything in the wrong order, made blunder after blunder, and put a final touch to his shame by upsetting the salt over the only superstitious member of the party. Then, at last, when the ladies had retired to the drawing-room, he touched his master on the shoulder. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said in a respectful undertone, "but could you manage to spare me now? My house is on fire."

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### ART AND NATURE.

Accompanied by a big retriever dog, which was muzzled, a lady entered a photographer's studio. "I want you to photograph my dog, if you please," she said sweetly. "Certainly!" replied the photographer. "I know you take such trouble over animals that I thought I would come to you," the lady went on. "You are very good, madam," said the photographer. "Of course you don't want him to be taken with his muzzle on?" "No," returned the lady; "that is just where the difficulty comes in. You see, he was bitten yesterday by another dog, and, although I don't think there's the slightest danger, I thought I would like to have him photographed, poor fellow, in case symptoms of hydrophobia should set in and he has to be killed! None of us have dared to take his muzzle off yet, but we thought that as you were so used to animals you would not mind!"

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### CAUTION.

"I'm afraid my profession is not in very good repute," said a lawyer to his wife on his return from his vacation. His wife asked him why he thought so. "You may remember," he continued, "that I wrote a lot about old Joe Smith and how much I liked him?" "Yes," said the wife. "Well, I thought the old chap returned the compliment, but his friendliness was tempered with caution, as I found out. It happened that I was able to straighten out a legal tangle that he had got involved in, and when he asked for his bill I was very glad to say that, out of friendship, I wouldn't charge him anything. He seemed greatly pleased, and thanked me cordially. Then he said, 'Would you mind giving me a receipt?'"

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### MODERN BRAVERY.

The talk in the club had been of cool deeds on the battlefield, when the member who rarely spoke broke in on our conversation. "The coolest bit of nerve I ever saw," he drawled, "was when I was motoring in the Midlands with the Honorable Jimmy. It had been raining, and as we turned the corner of the village street we skidded badly, then shot forward. Crashing into the little post office, we smashed the front of the shop clean through and knocked down the village postman. It was then that the Hon. Jimmy showed what he was made of. He jumped out of the car, and, advancing to the terrified girl behind the counter, said in his blindest voice, 'Two ha'penny stamps, please, Miss.'"

### "NIOBE, AHoy!"

The naval class was under signal instruction, and to some of the boys in blue the instructor's voice seemed very far away indeed. "A ship in distress," he was saying, through the room spaces, "has several methods by means of which she can make known her condition to other vessels or shore stations. Name one, Binks!" "The international code signal N.C.," replied Binks, waking up just in time. "Right," said the instructor. "Jenks, name another." Jenks started out of a dream. "Eh?" he ejaculated. "What would you do if you were in distress?" repeated the signal instructor. "Why," mumbled Jenks, "pawm me watch!"

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### OTHERS HAVE DONE IT ALSO.

Wife—"I have made ten pounds this afternoon." Husband—"How?" "You paid only twenty pounds for that old piano, didn't you?" "Yes." "Well, I have sold it for thirty." "Gracious me! What are you going to do with the money?" "There isn't any money." "Eh?" "I sold it to a dealer. He gives me a new piano for forty pounds, and allows me thirty for the old one. If you'd stay at home and let me go to your office and attend to your business, you'd soon be rich. Just think! Ten pounds a day is something over three thousand a year."

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### WITHOUT GUILF.

An old lawyer, defending a young client, instructed the latter to weep every time he struck the desk with his hand, hoping thus to influence the court in the young man's favor. Unfortunately, however, counsel forgetfully brought down his hand at the wrong moment, and the accused broke into a paroxysm of sobbing. "What is the matter with you?" inquired the judge. "Nothing," was the reply, "only he told me to cry as often as he struck the table." But the astute lawyer was equal to the occasion. "Gentlemen," he said, turning to the jury, "let me ask if you can reconcile the idea of crime in conjunction with such candor and simplicity?"

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### THE DOMESTIC PROBLEM.

"I am going to leave you, mum." The dreaded words, spoken with a firmness that struck terror to the heart of Mrs. Newly, were uttered by Mrs. Hashup, the cook. "Leave me. Surely, Mrs. Hashup, you cannot mean it?" "I do, mum. I must leave you." "But surely I have been a good mistress to you." "You have, mum. I'm sorry, indeed, that I must go." "Are you dissatisfied?" "No, mum." "Then what have I done?" "You haven't done anything, mum, but the National Union of Cooks have ordered me to leave you. It's your husband, mum. Last week he got shaved at a non-union barber's!"

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### AN EYE TO BUSINESS.

An actor, who had travelled expressly from town to appear at a charity concert in his native village, recited "The Village Blacksmith." "Oncower!" cried the excited audience—"Oncower!" The actor was about to go on the platform again when a burly rustic, very much out of breath, tapped him on the arm. "I've just come round from the front," whispered the man excitedly. "I want 'e to do me a flavor." "Well, what is it?" queried the actor impatiently, as the renewed cries of "Oncower!" fell on his ears. "It's this," whispered the intruder. "I appen to be the jossor you've been talking about, and I want you to put in a verse this time saying as how I lets out bicycles!"

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### THE FORCE OF HABIT.

It was the early era in the development of the petrol-driven vehicle that produced the story of the visitor being shown round the lunatic asylum by the medical superintendent, when the latter, on entering a spacious dormitory, where one looked down long vistas of endless beds, observed: "This is the motor-maniacs' ward." "Ah, fortunately, I see, it is not at present occupied," murmured the visitor. "Oh, yes it is—we're full up in this ward." "But I—I—er—don't see any of the patients." "'Course you don't," returned the superintendent promptly, "they're all under the beds tinkering the springs of the mattresses."

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(242)

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