

A soldier leaving barracks is stopped by the corporal of the guard: "You cannot go out without leave." "I have the verbal permission of the captain." "Show me that verbal permission."

"There's no coal, mum," said Bridget, "and the fires are out." "No coal!" "Why didn't you tell me before?" "I couldn't tell you there was no coal when there was coal!" answered Bridget.

A young society belle of Winchester told one of her gentlemen callers a few evenings since that her health had greatly improved since taking Delsarte. He wisely asked "Do you take it internally or rub it on."

"I want to ask one more question," said little Frank, as he was being put to bed. "Well," acquiesced the tired mama. "When holes come in stockings, what becomes of the piece of stocking that was there before the hole came?"

Traveller (to native)—Can you tell me how far I am from Creamtown? Native—About 24,900 miles. Traveller—Impossible. Native—I mean if you keep on the way you're going. If you turn around and go back, it's only about a mile.

Teacher—What does the word celibacy mean? Class—The state or condition of being single. Teacher—Correct. Now if you wanted to express the opposite of celibacy or singleness, what word would you use? Bright Pupil—Pleurisy.

Teacher—Astronomy is a wonderful science, Harry. Men have learned through it not only how far off the stars are from the earth, but what they are made of. Harry—It seems to me a great deal more wonderful how they found out their names.

The Rev. Theodore Cuyler, of Brooklyn, makes the confession that he "never made any converts to the truth in an empty pew, and never delivered a sermon loud enough to awaken a parishioner who was dozing at home, or strolled off to some other church."

#### A FOUR-LEGGED BIRD OF GUIANA.

J. CARTER BEARD.....POPULAR SCIENCE NEWS.

Nothing in the realm of natural history in late years excels in interest the announcement of the discovery in British Guiana, of a bird with four legs. The crested hoatzin, "*opisthocomus cristatus*," the only survivor of a race of birds, several

of which are known as fossils, inhabits the most secluded parts of the forests of South America, and it is probable that it is owing to its retiring habits it has outlived its congeners as well as to the fact that feeding as it does upon wild arum leaves, its flesh acquires so offensive a smell and flavor as to have gained it the name of stink bird, and to render it entirely unfit for food. It is a large bird, almost as large as a pea-cock, in fact, but is very seldom seen. Oftener its loud wailing cry is heard.

The chief peculiarity of the hoatzin consists in the fact that when it is hatched it possesses four well-developed legs, the front pair being of a reptilian character. The young birds leave the nest and climb about like monkeys over the adjoining limbs and twigs, and act and look more like tree toads than birds. After hatching, the modification of the fore limbs begins, the claws of the digits falling off, and the whole of the claw-like hands becoming flattened, changes into wings. After this modification has taken place, feathers begin to grow, and in a short time not a vestige remains of its original character. As Professor F. A. Lucas, in an admirable monograph on "Spurs and Claws," in a bulletin of the Smithsonian Institute, says: "The adult birds not only have no claws upon their wings, but their thumbs, even, are so poorly developed that one would hardly suspect that in the nestlings we have the nearest approach to a quadruped found among existing birds."

Mr. J. J. Quelch, who studied them in British Guiana, tells us that soon after the hatching the well-developed claws on the polax and index being constantly in use for hooking and holding on to surrounding objects, the nestlings when quite small, are frequently found far away from any nest, climbing by the help of their clawed wings, after the parent birds during feeding time. One curious feature noticed with a nestling which had been upset in the river was its power of rapid swimming and diving, when pursued. As soon as the hand was placed on it, it dived rapidly in the dark water, in which it was impossible to see it and arose at distances more than a yard away. Owing to this power the little creature managed to evade all efforts to secure it, taking refuge eventually under the bushy growth when it was impossible to pursue it.