

SOME AMUSING EXPERIMENTS.

Here are a few experiments which have many times proved great sources of amusement on winter evenings at home. It seems a very easy trick to sweep a cent out of the hand with an ordinary whisk, but if done fairly it is really difficult. Open the hand naturally and place the cent on the palm, then ask some one to brush it out



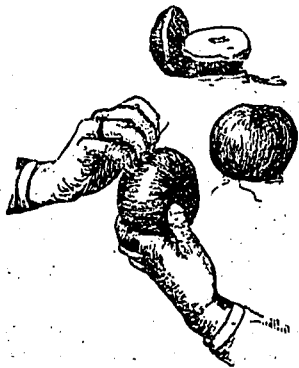
with a whisk-broom. After repeated efforts, it will probably be suspected that the cent is fastened in your hand in some way. In order to prove that it is not, let the sweeper place it in his own palm, and he will find it remains as immovable there as when he tried to sweep it from the hand of the other person. A few persons have flat palms. The cent may easily be swept off from such palms, but they are not common.

To pick up an apple with a spoon requires not a little patience to accomplish. Place a large, round apple, stem up, on a smooth floor; then try to take it up with a spoon. The very effort of trying to get the spoon under the apple starts it rolling, to the amusement of the onlookers. If done



quickly enough the apple can be taken up while in motion; but the proper way is to wait until it ceases to roll, and then carefully push the spoon far enough under the apple to get the centre of gravity over the spoon, when there is no difficulty in picking it up.

How many of you know how to cut an apple in half without breaking the skin? This is a capital trick and very difficult to guess. Thread a needle with strong thread. Insert the needle just under the skin of the apple, take a stitch, and carefully draw the needle and thread through to within six or seven inches of the end. Then insert the needle again, this time in the exact hole it was withdrawn from. Continue the stitches in this manner around the apple, withdrawing the needle the last time through the first hole made. The thread is entirely around the apple now, concealed by its skin. Take a firm



hold of each end of the thread and, holding both of the ends well together, to prevent tearing the skin, pull gently.

The thread cuts its way slowly through the apple until it is in two pieces, when the thread is withdrawn through the tiny hole made by the needle.

If this trick is done carefully enough,

the breaks in the skin will not be discernible on the closest inspection. Indeed, the only convincing proof that the apple has been cut in half, will be to pare a narrow strip of the skin where the needle and thread have travelled, when the apple will fall apart.

FANNIE'S BOUQUET.

BY PANSY.

She wandered about the house, looking very sober.

"I don't know what to do," she said, to every one who would listen to her. "Next week is exhibition at our school, and I am to speak if I get a piece, and there is to be a prize for the one who speaks the best, and I can't find anything to learn, and mamma can't help me, she is so busy making cakes and things." And the story always closed with a long sigh. Grandfather heard it, and thought about it a good deal. At last one day he said:

"What if grandfather finds you something to learn?"

"Oh, grandpa!" said Fannie, "will you? Why, grandpa, I didn't know you knew any book that had pieces in; I thought you only read big books like the Bible and such things."

"Wouldn't a piece out of the Bible do?" Fannie looked sober. "I'm afraid not, grandpa. They never have them out of the Bible; they have poetry, you know, and things about flowers and trees, and such."

"Flowers and trees! Why, there's many a pretty thing in the Bible about flowers and trees." But still Fanny shook her head.

"I'll tell you what it is," said grandpa, "I'll get a piece ready for you: I'll have it ready by to-morrow night, and I'll help you learn it, if you will speak it at the school just as I arrange it; and if you don't get the prize, I'll give you one myself."

"Well, I will," said Fanny, and she looked very happy. She was sure of a prize now.

The piece was learned, and recited to grandpa a great many times out in the arbor, he showing her how she ought to say it.

At last came the day for the exhibition. Fannie was dressed in white, and had a bouquet in her hand. Nearly all of the girls laughed at her queer bouquet. This is what it was made of:

Five great lilies, beautiful red and yellow and white; a piece of grape-vine, with the roots and earth clinging to it; a lovely bunch of grasses, just freshly gathered, with the sparkle like dew on them, and a bunch of faded and withered grasses, that had dried in the sun for a week; and right in the middle of them all was a large ear of corn in the husk, saved from last year's harvest.

She went upon the platform with this strange bouquet in her hand. Neither girls nor teacher could imagine what she did it for, but in a little while they knew. She laid her bouquet on the table, and commenced her piece:

"Lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. The vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heaven shall give her dew."

As she repeated that last verse, she held up her lovely grape-vine. With the other hand she took a withered branch that had been broken off, and the leaves were withered and wilted and dead, and she recited:

"A branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine. Jesus said: 'I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.'"

As she laid them on the table, she said: "Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

Next she took the branch that had roots clinging to it, and held it up, as she said: "This was planted in a good soil, by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine; the root of the righteous shall not be moved."

There were some tiny bunches of green grapes just starting in the branch, and she took hold of one of these as she said:

"Yea they have taken root, they grow: Yea they bring forth fruit; the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit."

And as she laid them down, she said: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life."

Next she took in one hand the great glowing rose, and in the other some waxen lilies of the valley. The real ones were all gone, but these were so real you could almost smell them. As she held them up for all to see, she said in a low sweet voice: "He is the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley."

Next she took her bunch of glowing lilies, and said: "And why take ye thought for raiment! Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

As she turned to pick out her grasses, she said, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass."

Then she held it up and said: "And the tender grass showeth itself. Thus saith the Lord that made thee, I will pour my blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass."

Then she laid it down, and took up the faded grass, and said: "The sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth. All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field."

In the other hand she took her little bunch of faded roses, and as she held them out, withered grass and faded flowers, she said: "The grass withereth, the flower faded."

And as she laid them down, she added: "As the flower of the grass, he shall pass away."

Next came the ear of corn. As she held it up, she recited: "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; the valleys also are covered over with corn. The earth bringeth forth fruit; first the blade, then the ear; after that, the full corn in the ear. Like as a stalk of corn cometh in his season, thou shalt come to thy grave. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain," and she held up the shrunken kernels of corn. "But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him."

Just here she drew back the spread that covered the little stand, and, lo! behind it there stood a little box, in which there waved some rich green stalks of corn. Grandpa had transplanted them with careful hands, and brought them here to teach their beautiful lesson of the resurrection.

Do you need to be told that Fannie earned two prizes? One given by the school, and one by the delighted grandfather. And yet her piece was "nothing in the world but a few Bible verses." That was what one of the big girls, who did not get a prize, said about it.

AUNT RACHEL'S CURE FOR INSOMNIA.

BY MRS. HELEN E. BROWN.

I was weary and worn after a sleepless night, and couldn't settle myself to work; so I put on my hat and wrap and ran across the way for a chat with Aunt Rachel. Aunt Rachel was one of those quiet beings whose very presence seemed to give one rest. Just to sit and look at her was often sufficient for me.

She made me welcome, seated me in her comfortable easy-chair, and then resumed her work. She was always busy.

I sat for a while enjoying the stillness and comfort, gazing with inward satisfaction upon the placid face before me, but saying nothing, which was so unusual for me that my aged friend looked suddenly up and inquired,

"What's the matter?"

"I don't feel very bright to-day, Aunt Rachel; I didn't sleep well last night."

"Why not?"

"I got thinking of Jamie and worrying about him, away out there in Dakota, and no mother or friend near by if he should be sick."

"That was wrong."

"What? The not sleeping, or the worrying?"

"Both."

"I don't know how either is to be helped," I said disconsolately. "Will you please tell me how?"

"In the first place, isn't God just as near Jamie in Dakota as he would be here?"

"I never thought of that. It seems as if God was here, but—"

"Not there? Another thought: Jamie is his child, and if he is folded under the divine wing, and you are too, you and Jamie can't be very far apart."

"I can't seem to realize the nearness."

"Trust, Emily, trust is what you need."

"But, Aunt Rachel, don't you ever lie awake nights thinking?"

"I don't mean to. I allow I might sometimes think and think all night; but if I took my cares and work and troubles to bed with me every night, I should have a sorry time of it. I leave them down stairs when I go up to my room. Our affairs stand still in the night. We can't help anything forward by worrying, rolling them over and over in our minds. So as they stand still, why shouldn't I leave them alone? I just commit them all to him who never slumbers nor sleeps, and pray, 'Dear Lord, thou wilt take care of everything. Give me a good night's sleep, and bring me to my work again in the morning fresh and strong.'"

"But, Aunt Rachel, don't you sometimes find yourself nervous and excited about something that has happened during the day, and unable to sleep?"

"I confess I do, but then I say my alphabet."

I laughed outright. "Well, it would take more than the alphabet to compose my nerves."

"My alphabet of promises, I mean. If that isn't enough, I say the alphabet of precepts, and, if I need more, of prayers."

"Please explain," I said, growing interested.

"I repeat the promises—I like them best—in alphabetical order."

"For instance."

"Well, for instance, A, 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be'; B, 'Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice'; C, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'; D, 'Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart.'"

"I enjoy hearing you rattle them off, Aunt Rachel; you have them all by heart, I see."

"I don't always have the same ones; these just came to my mind."

"How do you remember them? I suppose you have studied them up."

"Oh, no. I have new ones almost every night. I think the Holy Spirit brings them to remembrance, and they come so readily and with such power and sweetness that it seems sometimes as if the Lord spoke to me."

"And this puts you asleep?"

"Yes, they are so soothing that I often drop off before I get to L. I seldom go all through. But there are times when I need more, and then I say the precepts: 'Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace'; 'Be clothed with humility'; 'Casting all your care on him.' If I am still awake, I say the prayers: 'Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low'; 'Be merciful unto me, O God; for my soul trusteth in thee'; 'Create in me a clean heart'; 'Deliver us from evil.'"

I sat thinking for some time. I was interested in the new idea, and extremely amused at what seemed to me the simplicity of dear old Aunt Rachel. At length I laughed aloud, and when she looked up wonderingly I had to excuse myself.

"Pardon me, Aunt Rachel," I said, "but I was thinking how your remedy would work with our distinguished men who have had to leave their work and go to Europe because of insomnia."

"Well now, Emily, you needn't laugh, but I'd venture anything, if these great men had taken my remedy in time, that is, begun at the beginning, they wouldn't have come to this trouble. I warrant you, they've carried their sermons and meetings and papers and plans to bed with them, and that's what has done the mischief. These earthly cares are not fit bed-companions. If they had locked their work well up in their desks and their libraries at a suitable hour every night, and said to them, 'Now you rest here, while I go and