

Around the Tea Table.

John's Objections Sustained.

"Look ye, man, why haven't you cleaned and polished my boots?" asked Dean Swift of his eccentric servant, John, at an inn where they had just passed the night.

"What's the use of polishing such things?" asked John, as he held up the boots, discolored and grimy.

"Very true," said the dean, and without further protest he put them on. Then he went to the office and gave orders that John should have no breakfast. He partook of his own, and directed the hostler to saddle the horses and lead them to the door.

"Mercy!" cried John, when he found the dean ready to start, "I haven't had any breakfast yet."

"Oh," replied Swift, "I can't see the use of your breakfasting; you would soon be hungry again."

John could think of no answer to such an unexpected application of his own sophistry, so he maintained a stoical silence.

They mounted and rode on, the dean in advance reading his prayer-book, and the servant following at a respectful distance.

"Hark ye, my man," said the stranger whom they met, after he had observed the two closely, "you and your master seem to be an uncommonly sober pair; may I ask who you are and where you are going?"

"We are as near saints as we can be," replied John, solemnly, "and we are going to heaven, I hope. My master's praying and I'm doing the fasting."—*Success.*

He Understood.

Many are the complaints made by customers over the abruptness of clerks, but the New York *World* prints a story to show that the shopkeeper is sometimes almost too willing for the would-be customer to explain his wants.

"I want some kind of a door-spring, one that won't get out of order," said a customer.

"A door-spring?" answered the hardware man.

"Yes, and one that won't require the strength of an elephant to open."

"Hem!"

"And it must be strong enough to bring the door all the way to, and not leave it swinging open a couple of inches."

"I see."

"And when the door closes I don't want it to shut like a catapult, with a jar that shakes the house from its foundations."

"Yes. You want one that will bring the door all the way to, and yet do it gently."

"That's the idea. But I don't want any complicated arrangement, that requires a skilled mechanic to attend to."

"No; of course not. You want something simple, yet strong and effective."

"That's the talk! Something that can be put on or taken off easily; something that will do its work quietly, yet thoroughly, and won't be eternally getting out of order."

"I see. I know exactly what you want, sir, just exactly."

"Well, show me one."

"We don't keep door-springs."

A TENNESSEAN tells this story of a darkey freight hand on a Southern railway. He had been placed in charge of a mule whose destination was marked on a tag attached by twine to the mule's leg. Before the animal had been persuaded to enter a car, he managed to reach the tag; and, before Sambo could interpose, the darkey had it well chewed up. The old man looked at the local freight agent, and asked in perturbation, "What I goin' to wid dat mewl? He done et up de place where he's goin'."

A Riddle Solved.

Not long ago a gentleman of Cleveland received a letter from his lawyer. He could not read a word of it, but thought that perhaps his wife, who had once or twice before deciphered bad handwriting for him, could do so, and took it home with him. His wife had no better luck than he. "Why don't you take it over to Jimmerson, the druggist?" she said. "They say he can read anything."

His wife referred to an important law matter, and was anxious about it. So he put on his hat and overcoat and went over to the drug-store.

"Can you make this out?" he said.

The druggist took it and glanced it over. He took it to the nearest gas-jet and looked it over again. After a long scrutiny, he marched to the back of the store and disappeared behind a partition. The gentleman thought that very likely he had gone to get a magnifying-glass. He was gone a little while, and then came back with the letter in one hand and a good-sized bottle in the other.

"There you are," said the druggist.

"What's this?" inquired the gentleman.

"Why, your tonic."

"Who said anything about tonic?"

"Why, you handed me the prescription."

"Prescription?"

"Yes, here it is."

"What?" roared the other. "Did you think that was a prescription? It's a letter from my lawyer about a suit!"

He went out chuckling with delight. The Cleveland paper does not tell, however—as it certainly should have told—whether or not he paid for the tonic.—*Cleveland Pain-dealer.*

"THAT'S IT!" exclaimed the old lady at the concert, as the singers came out in response to an encore. "Make 'em do it over again until they get the thing right."

EUROPEAN.—Why is it that so many of you Americans come over here to see this country before you have seen your own? American.—Well, the truth is we want to look over the continent thoroughly and find out whether we like it or not. If it suits us we may decide to take it.

The lecturer on health had finished his discourse, and invited his auditors to ask any question they chose concerning points that might seem to need clearing up, when a lean, skinny man rose up and asked, "Professor, what do you do when you can't sleep at night?" "I usually stay awake," replied the lecturer, "although, of course, everybody should feel at liberty to do otherwise if he chooses. Are there any other questions?"

FIRST Successful Business Man. "I had only a common-school education, but I found it sufficient. You, I believe, were a college graduate?"

SECOND Successful Business Man. "Yes; graduated with high honors, too."

FIRST S. B. M. "Now, tell me truly. Did you ever find any practical use by what you learned at college?"

SECOND S. B. M. "Um—yes. One night when burglars got into my house, I scared them off with a college yell."

A CLEVERMAN taking occasional duty for a frier in a country church was greatly scandalized on observing the old verger, who had been collecting the offertory, quietly abstract half-a-crown before presenting the plate at the altar-rails. After service he called the old man into the vestry and told him, with emotion, that his crime had been discovered. The clerk looked puzzled. Then a sudden light dawned on him. "Wha, sir, yer doocant get that owl 'awf-cran o' mine, do yer? Wha, ah've 'led-off' with he this last fifteen year!"

Facts and Fancies.

It is estimated that about 2,000,000 bicycles have been made in Europe and America.

PROFANITY is forbidden by both the army and the navy regulations of the United States.

In the Bank of England sixty folio volumes or ledgers are filled daily with writing in keeping the accounts.

A POUND includes 2,185,000 seeds of blue grass, 1,421,040 of timothy, 863,000 of white clover, 152,000 of red clover, and 243,000 of alfalfa.

The whistle of a locomotive can be heard 3,800 yards, the noise of a train 3,300 yards, the report of a musket and the bark of a dog 1,800 yards, the roll of a drum 1,600 yards, a dinner-bell two miles.

GUMMA-PERCHA from the leaves of the caoutchouc tree is now being used by French makers of submarine cables. It has all the advantages of the product from incision into the tree, while being less expensive and more durable.

In the days of Henry VIII. of England post-offices were unknown, and letters were carried by Government messengers, who were subject to hanging if they delayed upon the road. Truly, in those days the letter carriers, at least, must have realized that "delays are dangerous!"

The express engines of most railway lines cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Their working career depends very much upon the road they have to travel. Steep gradients play sad havoc with them, and will shorten their lives by two or three years. The speed of engines is regulated by time-tables, but there is such a thing as making up lost time. This depends on the driver. If he is of a cautious and steady turn of mind, he will act up to the time-table, and be late rather than travel beyond the authorized speed.

The catalogue of the British Museum will be finished before the end of the year 1900. It will then consist of about six hundred quarto volumes, containing an average of two hundred and fifty columns each. Its complete at present, with the exception of the entries referring to England, France, Germany, Great Britain, liturgies, and a portion of the Bible. From first to last it will have been in progress for about nineteen years, during which time accessions have been pouring in at the rate of some forty thousand a year.

It is the popular belief that the flight of birds is much swifter than that of insects, but a number of naturalists who have been making a study of the matter think that such is not the case. A common house fly, for example, is not very rapid in its flight, but its wings make 800 beats a second, and send it through the air twenty-five feet, under ordinary circumstances, in that space of time. When the insect is alarmed, however, it has been found that it increases its rate of speed to over 150 feet per second. If it could continue such rapid flight for a mile in a straight line it would cover that distance in exactly thirty-three seconds.

LIVINGSTONE said it was amusing to listen to the exclamations of surprise from the native Africans on seeing their faces in a mirror for the first time. They would beseech him to allow them to see themselves in this wonderful glass. "Why," said one woman, "my ears are as big as pumpkin leaves." "I have no chin at all," said another. "I would have been pretty but for these high cheek bones." "So how my head shoots up in the middle," and so on their remarks continued in a way we can well imagine. Livingstone would sometimes pretend to be asleep for the sake of listening to the funny speeches, while the looking glass entertainment was going on.