

MASTER THIEVES.

The Bhattees Aim to Attain Perfection in the Art of Stealing.

The Bhattees are an East Indian tribe that devote their whole attention to attaining perfection in the art of stealing. From their earliest years their youth are trained to endure the greatest fatigue with comparative ease.

Among other accomplishments which the young Bhattee must acquire by constant practice, the following are indispensable:

He must learn to bleat like a sheep, bark like a dog, crow like a cock, bray like an ass and imitate the movements of all kinds of animals. He must be able to crawl along the ground, run like a goat or a dog or stand on his head with his legs extended wide so as to appear in the dusk like the stump of a tree.

In connection with this last mentioned acquirement a story is told of a cavalry sentinel who while standing on duty on one occasion heard something move about the head ropes of his horse. On looking round he saw what he supposed to be a large dog, which ran between his legs and nearly upset him. He suspected, however, that some rogues were on foot, and the better to detect it he placed himself behind what appeared to be the stump of a tree, at no great distance from the spot on which he had been previously standing.

He then hung his helmet on the supposed stump, and, bent on the most attentive scrutiny, he placed his head between the two limbs of the tree, so as, unperceived, to command a direct view of the quarter from which the noise had at first proceeded.

This, however, was too much for the thief (for such in reality was this would be tree stump), who, unable any longer to restrain his laughter and finding his situation somewhat critical, suddenly performed a somersault, upset the astonished soldier, made off with his helmet and was seen no more.—London Telegraph.

The Almanach de Gotha.

There were two editions of the Almanach de Gotha published for the year, 1808, and the first of these—which was suppressed by order of Napoleon—is now worth considerably more than its weight in gold. The suppression took place because the editor had included a number of German princes deposed by the French emperor in the section devoted to reigning sovereigns. From that year until 1814 the proofs had to be submitted to the French authorities before publication. The revised edition of 1808 contains a curious collection of portraits. Napoleon figures on the frontispiece. The subjects of the other portraits are Murat, Nelson and Pitt. Concerning the last two the editor writes, "Time and death have extinguished the feelings of enmity they once inspired."

Where He Was Going.

It is related of Commodore Decatur that after he had tamed the Barbary powers, whose energies had been reawakened while the war of 1812 kept our navy busy, he set out in his flagship, the Guerriere, to make his way across the Mediterranean unattended and suddenly found himself in the midst of one of the corsair fleets which had remained in a neutral port during hostilities. The situation looked rather squally. The corsair admiral hailed, "What sheep is that?" "The United States ship Guerriere, Commodore Decatur," was the reply. "Where you going?" was the next question. "Where I please," thundered Decatur through the speaking trumpet, and the Guerriere proceeded unmolested.

Telling the Truth.

An amusing incident happened some time ago in one of the Paris courts of justice. A vain, haughty woman was called as a witness, when the magistrate inquired her age. "Twenty-five last August," was the lady's prompt reply. The next witness was a young man, who at once acknowledged that he was twenty-seven years of age. "Are you related to the last witness?" queried the magistrate. "Yes; I am her son," he replied. "Ah!" mused the magistrate. "Your mother must have married very young."

Willie's Impromptu Verse.

Nathaniel P. Willis, the writer, was usually the life of the company he happened to be in. His repartee at Mrs. Gates' dinner in Washington is famous. Mrs. Gates wrote on a card to a niece at the other end of the table, "Don't flirt so with Nat Willis." She herself was talking vivaciously to a Mr. Campbell. Willis wrote the niece's reply, "Dear aunt, don't attempt my young feelings to trammel nor strain at a Nat while you swallow a Campbell."

ALL IN THE FAMILY.

Jonathan Said So, and His Wife Finally Agreed With Him.

One day in spring, when Jonathan Higgs was ready to drive into town, his wife gave him \$35 that she had been saving for months from her butter and egg money.

"Go to the furniture store," she said, "and get the new parlor carpet. They know me the one, for I had them lay it away for me a month ago."

All day Mrs. Higgs went about her work singing. But when Jonathan came there was no roll of carpet. Instead, hitched to the back of the wagon, was a new cultivator.

"I found just the cultivator I needed," he explained glibly. "I didn't think I could afford to get it until you gave me that \$35."

"But my carpet?" His wife's eyes were wet, and her lip trembling.

"Oh, the old one'll do!" he said. "What's the use of spending money for a carpet? It ain't good to eat, and it don't make you any money. Now that cultivator will make me a hundred bushels more corn."

"But it was my money." Tears at her disappointment and her husband's injustice could not be kept back any longer.

"Oh, pahaw," said Jonathan lightly, "it's all in the family!"

The old carpet was full of holes, so Mrs. Higgs tore it up and left the floor bare all summer. But Jonathan did not mind. The crops were good, and one day in the fall Mrs. Higgs and one of the girls went to town to buy supplies.

The farmer wrote a check for \$160 and gave it to his wife.

"Maria," he said, "get this cashed at the bank; then go to the hardware store, pay them \$100 and tell them to send out that gasoline engine they were showing me. It is too hard work for me and the boys to pump water for all the stock this winter. And stop at the clothing store and tell Mr. Jones to send me that suit I tried on. And you can pay that account at the grocery store too."

It was dark when Mrs. Higgs and Mary drove up that evening, and when Jonathan went out he was astonished to see a new buggy trailing behind the wagon. And there were other things that gave him a further shock.

"Maria," he asked sharply, "did you order that engine?"

"No."

"Did you get my suit?"

"No."

"No," she handed the lines to one of the boys. "Nor I didn't pay the grocery account," she said coolly. "You can't eat a suit nor a gasoline engine nor a receipted bill, and they don't make you any money. I got a new buggy to save wear on the wagon, a new parlor carpet that will save coal by keeping the floor warmer, and a new range that'll cook food right. And I got a new churn and a lot of kitchen things to help me and the girls do the work—they will keep us from wearing out and save funeral expenses."

"But it was my money," gasped the amazed Jonathan.

"Oh, yes," said Maria lightly, "but it's all in the family. Take hold here, and you and the boys get these things unloaded."

There was something so resolute in her tone that he took hold and held his tongue.—Youth's Companion.

Blunt Dr. Dougal.

Dr. Dougal of Keith, who was made an honorary member of the Aberdeen society in 1795, had a reputation for bluntness. A talkative woman went to him one day and said to him, "Doctor, what is the matter with my tongue?" "Just needin' a rest," he replied shortly. On another day a patient went to him and complained, "I have a deal to suffer with my eyes, doctor," whereupon he answered, "Better suffer with them than without."

The Usual Inquiry.

Mr. Fitznutt—Train ran down Smiley and his wife in their machine today.

Mrs. Fitznutt—Dreadful! Were they on the track?

Mr. Fitznutt—No, the train saw them going up a hill, and it left the track, followed them a couple of miles and then smashed them up. After that it climbed an evergreen tree and picked a bird's nest.—Exchange.

Stick to the Styles.

"How savagely that cow looks at me!" said the city girl to the farmer. "It's your red parasol, ma'am."

"Indeed! I knew it was a little out of date, but I didn't suppose a country cow would notice it."—Browning's Magazine.

A Paternal Tip.

"Mr. Pater, I love your daughter. Do you object to my paying her attention?"

"No, but I warn you you'll find it a lot easier than paying her bills."—Boston Transcript.

THINKING ALOUD.

A Ruse Which Roused Lord Dudley and Formed a Friendship.

One of the earls of Dudley, who was addicted to the practice of thinking aloud, found himself in a very awkward predicament on a certain occasion. He was to spend the evening at the house of a friend and ordered his carriage early, as he had a long drive back to his own home.

When the hour arrived the carriage was not forthcoming. Seeing that Lord Dudley was considerably annoyed by the delay, one of the guests, whose way homeward lay past his lordship's house, politely offered him a seat in his carriage. The gentleman was almost a stranger to Lord Dudley, but the offer was accepted.

The drive did not prove a very sociable one. Lord Dudley took his seat and immediately relapsed into silence, his thoughts apparently engrossed by some unpleasant subject. Presently he began to speak in a low but distinctly audible tone of voice, and his companion, to his astonishment, heard him say:

"I'm very sorry I accepted his offer. I don't know the man. It was civil certainly, but the worst I suppose I must ask him to dinner."

Silence followed this bit of audible thinking. His lordship was unaware that he had betrayed his thoughts and was probably still meditating upon the same unpleasant subject when the voice of his companion broke the stillness.

Apparently this stranger was afflicted with the same malady from which his lordship suffered, for he exactly imitated Lord Dudley's tone as he said:

"Perhaps he'll think I did it to make his acquaintance. Why, I would have done the same to any farmer on his estate. I hope he won't ask me to dinner, for I shan't accept his invitation."

Lord Dudley's abstraction was all gone. He listened to the other's words, immediately comprehending the joke against himself, and frankly offered his hand to his companion, making many apologies for his involuntary rudeness.

The stranger proved magnanimous, and from that night the two became fast friends.

Our Elastic Globes.

To the layman nothing may seem more rigid than the crust of the earth, but men of science tell us that it bends and buckles appreciably under the pull of the heavenly bodies. Careful observation has also shown that the shores on opposite sides of a tidal basin approach each other at high tide. The weight of water in the Irish sea, for example, is so much greater at that time that the bed sinks a trifle and in consequence pulls the Irish and English coasts nearer together. Thus the buildings of Liverpool and Dublin may be fancied as bowing to one another across the channel, the deflection from the perpendicular being about an inch for every sixteen miles. It has also been shown that ordinary valleys widen under the heat of the sun and contract again at night.—Exchange.

The Biter Bit.

An old Lowlander had been persistently asked by his son, who was doing very well in London, to pay him a visit. Having at length decided to comply, he spent a fortnight in the metropolis and duly returned north to tell the tale. A pompous person invited him to his house soon after the old man's return, with a view to having some amusement at the latter's expense. "And what was it that most impressed you in the great city?" asked the pompous gentleman. "Weel, sir," quoth the old fellow, "the thing abune a' that impressed me maist was my ain insignificance. 'Deed, sir, I was strongly advise ye to gang—it wad dae ye a vast deal o' guid, sir!'—Dundee Advertiser.

Giving Him a Shock.

"Miss Dubbins—Marietta"—stammered Wimbleton nervously, "er—wow—will yuh—you mumm—marry me?"

"Don't you ever ask me a question like that again, Reginald Wimbleton," replied the girl proudly. "Bub—but whuh—why, Mumm—Marietta?" stuttered Wimbleton. "I lul—lul—love you dud—devotedly and!"

"Because," the fair girl answered firmly, "because it will not be necessary for you to subject yourself to the nervous strain. I will."—Harper's.

Diplomacy.

"Mr. Badgerton is here, sir," said the chief clerk. "Shall I show him in?"

"No," replied the great organizer, "let him wait in the anteroom for about three-quarters of an hour. He has a big proposition, but I am anxious to keep him from getting the idea that I consider it worth while."—Chicago Record-Herald.

FLOATING ISLANDS.

One Remarkable Raft That Formed in the Mississippi River.

Floating gardens—some natural and some artificial—have flourished in many parts of the world from early times. They are particularly advantageous in regions exposed to floods, where a garden planted on terra firma would be ruined by these occurrences, while the floating garden is undisturbed by the rise of the waters. The famous floating gardens of Kashmir are a case in point.

The lake of Xochimilco, near the City of Mexico, is nearly covered with floating gardens, called chinampas, on which are raised vegetables and flowers for the city markets. They are formed of floating masses of water plants, covered with soil and secured by poplar stakes. The latter take root and surround the islands with living hedges.

Among the largest of natural floating islands are those formed by tangled masses of trees and brushwood carried down by great rivers. On the Mississippi and its tributaries these islands are known as "rafts." One of the most remarkable of these rafts began forming in the Atchafalaya, one of the lower arms of the Mississippi, in 1778, and gradually increased until by 1816 it had extended to 10 miles in length, over 600 feet in width, and 8 feet in depth. Although it rose and fell with the water it was solid enough to support the growth of trees, some of which were sixty feet in height. This vast obstruction was finally removed by the state of Louisiana at great expense. The work began in 1835 and lasted four years. In more recent times a great raft in the Red river completely blocked the channel for forty-five miles until it was removed by the national government.

Where a mat of vegetation borders the seashore the action of waves sometimes breaks off large islands. This was probably the origin of a remarkable floating island which was first seen in the Atlantic ocean, about 400 miles east of the New Jersey coast, in July, 1892. Its area was about 9,000 square feet, and it bore trees thirty feet in height. When again seen in the following September it had traveled over 1,000 miles.—Scientific American.

Dumas No Spendthrift.

"The elder Dumas visited his son near Dieppe and greeted him with the words, 'My boy, I have come to lay my bones in your house.' A bed was prepared for him at once, and he lay down for the last time. A little later he turned to his son and said: 'Alexander, look and see how much money there is in my waistcoat.'"

"There was only 20 francs, and on being told the amount the elder man said: 'Look you, my boy; everybody says I am a spendthrift, and even you yourself are the author of a play based on my extravagance. Now you can see how untrue it is.'"

"You know by my memoirs that I came to Paris with only a twenty franc piece in my pocket, and you can see for yourself that it is still there."—Reminiscences of Maurice Dreyfus.

Romances of Old Mosques.

The great Begova mosque in Serajevo is the largest mosque in Europe, after those of Constantinople and Selim's mosque in Adrianople. In its courtyard stands an old stone, across the top of which there is a groove precisely the length of a Turkish ell. Tradition says that a pasha placed it there to checkmate the local merchants' habitual use of false measures in defiance of the express commandment of the Koran. But another of Serajevo's hundred mosques has a much better legend. Before this may be seen the tombs of the seven holy dervishes who were beheaded 200 years ago for a great theft.

After the decapitation each body tucked its head under its arm and walked into the mosque. So those dervishes are worshipped as saints to this day.

Clever Woman.

"There is no use trying to deny it," said one man to another. "Blimey is badly married. I hate to say it, but it's so."

"How do you know?"

"By a talk I have just had with him."

"Does he complain?"

"No. That's the pathetic part of it. He was telling me how good natured and clever his wife is because this morning she showed him how to fasten his trousers with a hairpin."—London Tit-Bits.

Fair Haired People.

Fair haired people are said to be less numerous than formerly. The ancient Hebrews were a fair haired race; now they are, with few exceptions, dark. So it is in a lesser degree with the Irish, among whom 150 years ago, it is stated, a dark haired person was almost unknown.

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