

EXPLODING A THEORY.

The Practical Method Adopted by a French Scientist.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the French Academy of Sciences offered to give a prize to the first person who would solve the following problem: If you take a vase full of water and put a stone or any similar body in it the water will flow over. If, however, you put into it a fish the volume of which is equal to that of the stone, it will not flow over. Explain this phenomenon.

Learned essays on the subject poured in from all quarters, but the problem was not satisfactorily solved in any of them, and consequently the prize was not awarded.

In the following year the same question was again propounded, and for five years answers continued to pour in to the academy. Then it suddenly occurred to one of the academicians that, after all, the problem might be incapable of solution, and he determined to make a test for himself.

Filling a vase with water, he put a stone into it and saw that the water flowed over. Then he took out the stone, filled the vase again with water and put into it a fish, the volume of which was the same as that of the stone, and saw, to his surprise, that the water again flowed over.

He told the academy of his discovery, and the result was that the offer of a prize was at once withdrawn.

LONDON CABBIES.

And the Lost and Found Department and Scotland Yard.

"That lost and found property department at Scotland Yard is one of the best things they have in London," said a woman who has spent much time in England. "Last summer I had experience with it.

"I fell into a sort of habit of losing things. First it was a valuable umbrella. I did not miss it until I got to my hotel after an after-theater supper. The next morning I made my husband go to the theater and the two of us where we had been the night before, but without result.

"Then an American friend suggested Scotland Yard. I went there, and there it was. It had been turned in by a cab driver.

"Twice afterward I lost that umbrella and got it back in the same fashion, each time leaving as a reward for the cab driver a per cent of the value of the umbrella, as required. Then one night I lost a fine pair of opera glasses, and I got them back.

"It is an excellent system the police over there have of encouraging honesty. A cab driver who finds anything in his vehicle is required to turn it in, and he knows that if the owner claims it he will be rewarded."—Exchange.

An Old Welsh Custom.

The kindling of bonfires on hills is the simplest of celebrations at any time. The Druids made four great fires at their festivals in February, May, August and November. Wales seems to have been a country especially tenacious of this custom. Each family used to make its own fire, and as it was dying out each member would throw a white stone into it, the stones being marked for future identification. Then all said their prayers and went to bed, and in the morning they tried to find all the stones again. If any stone was missing it betokened that the owner of it would die within a year. Some superstitions are pretty and picturesque and attractive. This was one of the many which were cruel as well as picturesque. It would take but a slight accident to cause a fright that might be actually dangerous to a superstitious person, and it would not be hard for an enemy of such a person to cause that fright by stealing his stone from the fire.

A Roman Dinner.

A Roman dinner at the house of a wealthy man consisted chiefly of three courses. All sorts of stimulants to the appetite were first served up, and eggs were indispensable to the first course. Among the various dishes we may instance the guinea hen, pheasant, nightingale and the thrush as birds most in repute. The Roman gourmands held peacocks in great estimation, especially their tongues. Macrobius states that they were first eaten by Hortensius, the orator, and acquired such repute that a single peacock was sold for 50 denarii, the denarius being equal to about eighteenpence halfpenny of English money.—Chambers' Journal.

Saved by His Wits.

The Duke of Wellington once met by accident an officer in a state of inebriety. "What would you do if you met one of your men in the condition in which I find you?" "Look here, sir," said the Iron Duke, "what would you do if you met one of your men in the condition in which I find you?" The officer drew himself up, gave the military salute and replied with great gravity, "I would not condescend to speak to the brute." His wit saved him his commission.

Appreciation.

"Father," said little Rollo, "was George Washington a greater man than Santa Claus?" "I won't say, my son, that he was greater, but he has proved much less expensive."—Washington Star.

Unanswered.

"Say, pop, may I ask you a question?" "Yes, Teddy. What is it?" "When a man's finished milkin' a cow, how does he turn off the milk?"

Our life is short, but to expand that span to vast eternity is virtue's work.—Shakespeare.

A WINNING TRICK.

He Lost All His Bets and Made Money by Doing So.

The captain of one rather old and slow steamer of years ago, finding that he would have to be a long time in China before he received a full cargo of tea and would have probably to return in ballast, began, to every one's astonishment, to say that, owing to the repairs that had been done to his engine, he hoped to make a racing passage back to England. Then, still more to the astonishment of the captain of the fast steamers and the world at large, he commenced to back himself to make the fastest passage home.

In such very considerable sums of money did he wager that people began to think there was something in it, and the merchants sent their tea almost entirely to his ship, arguing that as the captain lost £250 the repairs to his steamer's engine had probably put him in a position to bet almost on a certainty.

Of course the steamer, whose greatest speed was eight knots an hour, arrived in England weeks after the others, and the captain lost £250, but instead of having to lie in China waiting his chance of cargo coming in from the interior, a probable delay of weeks, he had cleared in a few days after his loss became known to the public with a full ship, thus recouping to his owners, who, of course, paid his betting losses, a considerable number of thousands of pounds profit.—Blackwood's Magazine.

A DANGEROUS TRAITOR.

The Result of Pechantre's Plot to Kill the King.

Probably no well meaning poet was ever more taken by surprise than was M. Pechantre, a gentle and mild mannered French dramatist of the seventeenth century, who was one day arrested for high treason as he was peacefully eating his dinner at a village inn.

The landlord of the inn where he was in the habit of dining discovered on a table a piece of paper on which were written some unintelligible phrases and below in a plain, bold hand, "Here I will kill the king."

The landlord consulted with the chief of police. Clearly this clue to a conspiracy ought to be followed up. The person who had left the paper had already been remarked for his absent air and gleaming eye. That man was Pechantre.

The chief of police instructed the landlord to send for him the next time the conspirator came to dinner.

When Pechantre was shown the evidence of his guilt he forgot the awful charge against him and exclaimed: "Well, I am glad to see that paper. I have looked everywhere for it. It is part of a tragedy I am writing. It is the climax of my best scene, where Nero is to be killed. It comes in here, let me read it to you." And he took a thick manuscript from his pocket.

"Monsieur, you may finish your dinner and your tragedy in peace," said the chief of police, and he beat a hasty retreat.

Honest Mistake.

The story is told of a little New England girl the workings of whose Puritan conscience involved her in difficulties on one occasion.

She was studying mental arithmetic at school and took no pleasure in it. One day she told her mother, with much depression of spirit, that she had "failed again in mental arithmetic," and on being asked what problem had proved her undoing she sorrowfully mentioned the request for the addition of "nine and four."

"And didn't you know the answer, dear?" asked her mother.

"Yes'm," said the little maid; "but, you know, we are to write the answers on our slates, and before I thought I made four marks and counted up, 'Ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen,' and then, of course, I knew that wasn't mental, so I wrote twelve for 'be answer to be fair.'"

The Cautious Kind.

Before the customer paid his bill the hotel stenographer tore several pages out of her notebook and handed them to him. "Only the notes of his letters," she said to the next customer. "He is one of the cautious kind. There are not many like him. About once in six months somebody comes along who keeps such a watchful eye on his correspondence that he won't even let a stenographer keep his notes. Of course it is nothing to us, and we always give them up when asked to. I don't know what the cautious folk do with them. Destroy them, maybe. Anyhow, there is no record of foolish utterances left in the stenographer's books."—New York Sun.

Little Worries.

In Chesterton's "Tremendous Trifles" is this: A friend of mine who was visiting a poor woman in bereavement and casting about for some phrase of consolation that should not be either insolent or weak said at last: "I think one can live through these great sorrows and even be the better. What wears one is the little worries." "That's quite right, mum," answered the old woman, with emphasis, "and I ought to know, seeing I've had ten of 'em."

Truth.

In troubled waters you can scarce see your face or see it very little till the water be quiet and stand still. So in troubled times you can see little truth. When times are quiet and settled, then truth appears.—Seiden.

Ridicule is the first and last argument of fools.—Simmons.

PERSONAL MAGNETISM.

A Great Asset in Business as Well as in Society.

There have been great advocates at the bar whose charming manner, like the presence in court of some of the world's famous beauties, would so sway the jury and the judge as to endanger and sometimes actually divert justice, says Orison Swift Marden in Success Magazine. A gracious, genial presence, a charming personality, a refined, fascinating manner, are welcome where mere wealth is denied and where mere wealth is turned away. They will make a better impression than the best education or the highest attainments. An attractive personality, even without great ability, often advances one when great talent and special training will not.

There is always a premium upon a charming presence. Every business man likes to be surrounded by people of pleasing personality and winning manners. They are regarded as splendid assets.

What is it that often enables one person to walk right into a position and achieve without difficulty that which another, with perhaps greater ability, struggles in vain to accomplish? Everywhere a magnetic personality wins its way.

Young men and young women are constantly being surprised by offers of excellent positions which come to them because of qualities and characteristics which perhaps they have never thought much about—a fine manner, courtesy, cheerfulness and kindly, obliging, helpful dispositions.

ABSURD COSTUMES.

Outcome of a Curious Wager Made in England in 1806.

A wager was made in 1806 in the castle yard, York, England, between Thomas Hodgson and Samuel Whitehead as to which should succeed in assuming the most singular character. Umpires were selected whose duty it was to decide upon the comparative absurdity of the costumes in which the two men were to appear. On the appointed day Hodgson came before the umpires decorated with banknotes of various values, his coat and vest being entirely covered with them. Besides these he had a row of five guinea pieces down his back, a netted purse of gold around his head and a placard on his back bearing the legend, "John Bull."

Whitehead came on the scene dressed like a woman on one side, one half of his face painted and a silk stocking and slipper on one foot and leg. The other half of his face was blackened so as to resemble a negro. On the corresponding side of his body he wore a gaudy long tailed linen coat, his leg on that side being laced in half a pair of leather breeches and a boot with a spur. He wore a wig of sky blue braided down his back and tied

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