Stead and King Leopold.

Mr. W. T. Stead counted among the most trying experiences of his life an interview he had with King Leopold of Belgium at the time when Gordon was shut up in Khartum. He went to Brussels and obtained a special interview with the king in order to propose that he should move on behalf of Gordon and claim the Sudan as his reward. Leopold answered that he would ont accept the Sudan if it were "offered to him on a silver salver," but Mr. Stead urged his point, and they debated the matter in strenuous fashion for over an hour.

"He was exceedingly angry," said Mr. Stead, "and raged and fumed in such a fashion that I felt more than once it would have given him great satisfaction to have drawn his sword and thrust it through the vitals of his English visitor. * * * It was a trying ordeal for me. I was glad to learn after that Leopold also felt the strain." Meeting M. de Laveleye (who had introduced Mr. Stead) some months afterward at Spa, the king referred to the interview. "Stead!" he exclaimed. "It was terrible. How that man made me swear!"—London Chronicle.

The Captain Had to Decide.

Etiquette on the great liners has its difficulties, to judge from the following letter: "The question of precedence makes a morgue of the first dinner on board, when a few foreign titles happen to let their cerulean blood boil over into the soup. On a recent voyage the commander was told by the chief steward that there were two Austrian ladies of title on board. One was an elderly baroness; the other was higher in rank, but quite young. Both were determined to sit on the right of the skipper. Driven to despair, he said, 'I will let the ladies settle the matter for themselves, and I won't go down till dinner is half over.' We had reached the cheese when the unhappy commander crept warily to his seat. Both ladies were still standing frigidly behind his empty chair. He had to do something, so he gave the younger warrior the seat of honor, while the vanquished baroness looked chain lightning at the enemy."—London Opinion.

Our Funny Bone.

The "funny" bone or "crazy" bone, as it is commonly called, is in reality no bone at all, but a nerve, and its peculiar name, of facetious origin, is a pun on the word "humerus," the cylindrical bone which runs from the shoulder to the elbow, the ulnar nerve passing around it. The nerve is here superficial and therefore comparatively unprotected, so that it may be easily compressed, and then a blow upon it causes a strange tingling sensation in the course of its distribution, which is felt as far away as the little finger. The humerus has been the occasion of humor in others, for Locker wittily writes in "An Old Muff," published about 1740:

He cannot be complete in aught
Who is not humorously prone.
A man without a merry thought
Can hardly have a funny bone.

What Susie Was.

The Mexican was showing his newly arrived New York guest to a room, and after the usual courtesies he paused on the threshold to say: "By the way, we always turn Susie loose for the night, and she will pass through your hall on the way to the top floor, where she catches rats. You'd better be careful and not step on her, as that is the only thing that makes her cross."

"It wouldn't be very serious if I did make a cat cross," was the laughing response. But the host shook his head. "I don't know much about cats," he said. "Our Susie is a boa constrictor. She's as gentle as a baby unless you step on her. Sometimes she takes a short cut through this room, so don't be surprised if you see her. Good night."—New York Press.

A Fair Opportunity.

Tasso, being told that he had a fair opportunity of taking advantage of a very bitter enemy, replied, "I wish not to plunder him, but there are things which I wish to take from him—not his honor or his life, but his malice and ill will."

Well spoken—a noble taking from an enemy, "his malice and ill will!" How is that done? Love is the potent weapon. "Heap coals of fire on his head."—Exchange.

Hardly Fair.

"Which is your favorite among the plays of Shakespeare, Mr. Henpeck?"

"The Taming of the Shrew.'"

"But do you think you ought to permit your personal feeling to get the better of your judgment in such a matter?"—Chicago Record-Herald.

Looking For Trouble.

A very young gentleman, after hearing some vigorous language from his sister, called up his grandmother on the telephone and warned her, "You better come down to our house and see about the words your son has been using."—Exchange.

Too Liberal.

Customer—Why doesn't that spinster, Miss Brown, deal at your store now?

Clerk—One of my clerks insulted her.

Customer—How? Draper—She overheard him telling some one that she was our oldest customer.—London Tit-Bits.

A Provider.

Wife—Can you give me a little more housekeeping money, my dear? Husband—Sorry, my love, but I haven't a cent left. I've been insuring against injury and theft.—Fliegende Blatter.

A joker is near akin to a buffoon. Neither of them is the least related to wit.—Chesterfield.

The Andromeda Nebula.

One of the most astonishing objects in the heavens is the great nebula in the constellation Andromeda, which is visible as a misty speck to the naked eye. It has long puzzled astronomers because, while its structure—a series of vast rings surrounding a central mass—suggests a gaseous constitution, its spectrum is continuous, resembling that of the sun. It has been suggested that it may be composed of stars constituting a universe external to ours. Studies of its parallax, however, indicate that it is nearer to us than some of the well known stars, such as Capella, and Gore, the English astronomer, points out that if the Andromeda nebula were assumed to be an external universe, having a diameter comparable with that of the Milky way, its mass would be forty million million million times the mass of the sun. This is regarded as incredible and so may be taken as an additional argument in favor of the view that this nebula is a member of our system.—Harper's.

Woes of the Prompter.

In the production of a play there is an important person who is never seen and should not be heard by the audience, and yet he may speak more lines than the principal actor. It is the prompter. Here is a description of a prompter's labors, written by one of the genus:

"I, as prompter, had been kept very busy throughout the piece. In addition to keeping the actors on their lines it was my duty to make all the outside noises. I had screamed 'Help!' I had shouted 'Kill him!' I had dropped planks to cover up deficient pistol reports. I had thundered, hailed, rained, sung like a woman, marched like an army and howled like an infuriated rabble inflated by drink. The last straw came when the hero, supposed to be pursued by hounds, sidled to the wings and hissed:

"'Bark, you fool, bark! Why don't you bark, you idiot?'"—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

Origin of the T Rail.

Robert Livingston Stevens sailed from New York to Liverpool before the advent of the ocean steamer. In those days the passage took two months, and Stevens passed many an hour, jackknife in one hand and a piece of wood in the other, brooding over a problem that had often worried him—how to run a railroad without stone stringers for tracks. He wanted to get an iron rail that would "hold" and would take the place of the thin strips fastened to the chair of the roadbed. Just before he reached England his whittling revealed to him the solution of his problem, and that solution took the form of a T rail with a broad base that could be applied direct to a solid wood support. That T rail is still in use on all the railways of the world.

The Echoes of Eagle's Nest.

The most wonderful echo in the known world is that heard from the Eagle's nest in the lake regions of Ireland. The rock known as Eagle's nest is the most prominent peak to be found among the heights that surround the Killarney lakes. Its apex is 1,250 feet above the surface of the water, and the extraordinary echo is heard to the best advantage from a spot 100 feet to the west from an opening called the Devil's mouth. At that point the effect of the re-echoed sounds is absolutely startling, the slightest whisper being repeated as often as 1,000 times. The rebound is always clear and distinct and appears to come from the crags, cliffs and peaks which surround the experimenter on all sides.

Animal Curiosity.

A cow will approach a new object fascinated, but with timorous suspicion, and a horse is even more timid, gazing at a distance for awhile, ready to flee in a moment. The monkey will snatch at everything that is new and deliberately examine it till, finding that he cannot eat it or mock mankind with it, he will drop it and let it pass from his shallow memory. There is a pathos in the slenderness of animal curiosity, it is so easily satisfied. The thought, if thought it be, usually ends with the first flush of surprise and the impression of safety.

Pretty Good Grounds.

Old Lawyer—Young man, it strikes me that you are very much attached to Miss Plainwell. Young Attorney—She owns 300 acres of land in Kansas. Old Lawyer—What has that got to do with the case? Young Attorney—Why, isn't that sufficient grounds for an attachment?—Chicago News.

A Nice Girl.

"I am visiting alma mater," wrote a girl to her chum.

"I have never met Alma," the chum wrote back, "but if she's a friend of yours she's a friend of mine. I'm sure she's an awfully nice girl."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

No, He Doesn't Drink.

"I'm sure that my husband doesn't drink," said the bride.

"That so?" asked the old timer.

"Yes, but he has one very peculiar habit. He's terribly fond of cloves."

Breakfast Food Literature.

Browne—There's lots of food for thought in this magazine story. Greene—Full of meat, eh? Browne—No. It's a serial.—Judge.

Not Even a One Center.

Ella—He sticks like a postage stamp, but he isn't worth a cent. Stella—Then he can't be like a postage stamp—New York Press.

A man's best friends are his ten fingers.—Robert Collyer.

Iceberg Journeys.

Icebergs from Greenland are carried down toward the middle of the Atlantic by the Labrador current. They travel right down the coast of Labrador, passing Newfoundland, until they reach the warm waters of the gulf stream, when they disappear, melting completely away. It is only the largest bergs that reach the middle of the Atlantic before they disappear. On one occasion a berg, 100 feet in height and nearly 200 feet in breadth, was found in latitude 38 degrees 40 minutes, or nearly in a line with southern Spain. Generally speaking, icebergs travel at the rate of three to five miles an hour. They are carried forward entirely by the strength of the current. The distance they cover is enormous. Thousands do not get farther than the coast of Labrador, where they become stranded. As they have come from the Greenland glaciers they have then covered at least 1,800 miles, while those that reach the warmer waters of the Atlantic make journeys of from 2,500 to 3,000 miles.—New York Sun.

Seashells.

A seashell, whether in one piece (univalve), as in periwinkles, or in two pieces (bivalve), as in mussels and cockles, is formed in much the same way. It consists of a colored outer horny layer, a middle layer of prismatic structure and an inner pearly coating of innumerable very thin plates, the edges of which break up white light into its constituents, so as to give rise to a beautiful play or iridescence. The body of a shellfish is invested in a soft flap of skin known as the "mantle." By the activity of this the shell is secreted, and a sticky fluid exudes from its surface and quickly hardens to form horny or calcareous matter. The salts of lime are chiefly in the form of carbonate, but there is also a percentage of phosphate. Only the edge of the mantle is able to manufacture the two outer layers of the shell, and repair of injuries is entirely carried out in nacre, or mother-of-pearl.

Simplest Way of All.

The following story is told of Colonel George W. Goethals, who at the time it took place was an instructor in engineering at West Point. One day, in a recitation, he gave out this question to a class of cadets:

"The post flagpole, sixty feet high, has fallen down. You are ordered by your commanding officer to put it up again. You have under your command a sergeant and ten privates of the engineer corps. How would you get the pole back into place?"

Each cadet, after long consideration and much figuring over derricks, blocks, tackle and so on, evolved a different method.

"No," said Goethals; "you are all wrong. You would simply say, 'Sergeant, put up that flagpole!'"—Saturday Evening Post.

The Sea of Space.

The mind cannot comprehend what is meant by the four little words in the expression "the sea of space." If the volume of "space" included within our solar system—which is perhaps but a single train of planets among hundreds of millions of a similar kind—were occupied by one single globe 5,000,000,000 miles in diameter it would be but as a feather in the marvelous spread of "vacancy" surrounding it. In fact, it has been calculated that in the space occupied by our solar system 2,700,000,000,000,000 globes of the size of our earth could revolve, each at a distance of 500,000 miles from the other, and the whole business would be nothing, for there is no wall to the treasure vault of heaven.—Exchange.

Went a Long Way Back.

What is a foreigner? It depends on the country. In the United States it is a newcomer who has not yet had time to catch his breath, unpack his kit and find a job. In India the case is different. An official at Malabar, south India, recently received a letter from a man whose status he was investigating and who said: "I am a native of India by birth, but I have claim to foreign origin and foreign blood. A colony of Syrians from Edessa settled in Malabar in A. D. 345. I belong to that sect, and as such I have reason to claim foreign origin and foreign blood."

The Helvetian Ladies.

The most celebrated warlike women among the ancients, apart from the fabled amazons, were the Helvetian ladies. Caesar praises highly their military achievements. In more than one instance the legions of Rome turned their backs on the fair ones of Switzerland. During the crusades women often performed the most romantic and chivalrous deeds, dying cheerfully by the sides of their lovers and husbands.

Provocation.

Talkative and Abusive Old Lady (complaining of a recently bought parrot)—And when I talk to that parrot he says some dreadful swear words. Dealer—I don't blame 'im, ma-am. The poor bird is only 'uman.—Everybody's Weekly.

Her Preference.

"The bridegroom is a pleasant man—he has that certain something"—

"I'd rather have a man with something certain."—Satire.

To Sympathetic Ears.

Mary—How contemptible of you to tell my age! Alice—Don't worry. The girl I told it to is even older.—Harper's Bazar.

Much Safer, as a Rule.

She—Don't you think it is easier to coax a woman than to drive her? He—Can't say, but I think it's a great deal safer.

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