

# Things That Are Not as Easy to Do as They Seem.

**C**AN you carry four bricks half a mile? Of course you can, but wait a minute. There are conditions to this proposition. The bricks are to be carried two in each hand, grasped between the thumb and fingers, the fingers pointing downward and the hands held at the side. Simple enough, isn't it? Pick up four bricks in this manner and it still seems easy. It is easy enough to hold two bricks in each hand in the manner described, easy enough to carry them for, say, a block. But when it comes to carrying them half a mile the proposition is apt to look different. If you can do it you are an exception, yet everybody will think that the feat is easy.

This is only one of the many "catch" tricks that prove stumbling blocks in the way of the person who thinks that "everything is possible." Often the easier a feat appears the harder it is to perform.

Some of the little tricks that have been found to be well nigh impossible of accomplishment are so ridiculously easy on the face of them that when it is ascertained that they are difficult there is always some one in a company who promptly voices his skepticism and loudly proclaims his ability to do the trick. When they are told to go ahead and do the same their antics are apt to furnish much amusement for those assembled.

## Try to Stand Still for an Hour.

For instance, there is the feat of standing perfectly still for an hour. Draw a circle on a floor and try to stand in it, just stand there, motionless, for sixty minutes. Ten minutes is enough to convince the average man that this is not work for him, and he is ready to quit; yet there have been plenty of wagers made on this subject.

So far as is known just one of any consequence has ever been won. A phlegmatic German tailor in New York wagered his employer that he could stand within a two foot circle, without moving his legs, for twelve hours. He was allowed to talk and move his arms, and he won the bet. But he was as near to being a nervous wreck as any man of his type can well be.

But this a monotonous manner of trick. There are others simpler and more productive of amusement to the looker-on than the trick of standing motionless. There is the trick of trying to smoke a cigar through from beginning to end without taking the weed from the lips. The cigar is to be smoked in regular, consecutive puffs, down to a stub of an inch and a quarter.

Try this on some inveterate smoker. Probably he will laugh you to scorn. He thinks that he smokes all his cigars right through. Provide him with a good cigar and let him start. If he can get the cigar down shorter than two inches he is doing well. It seems ridiculous, but try it. The expression on a man's face after he has puffed regularly for ten or fifteen minutes is one that is worth going far to see. There is a hint of pained surprise in it that is remarkable.

## Candle Lighting Under Difficulties.

Here is another little feat that is funny to the onlookers. Lay a flat bottle on its side on the floor and invite any one

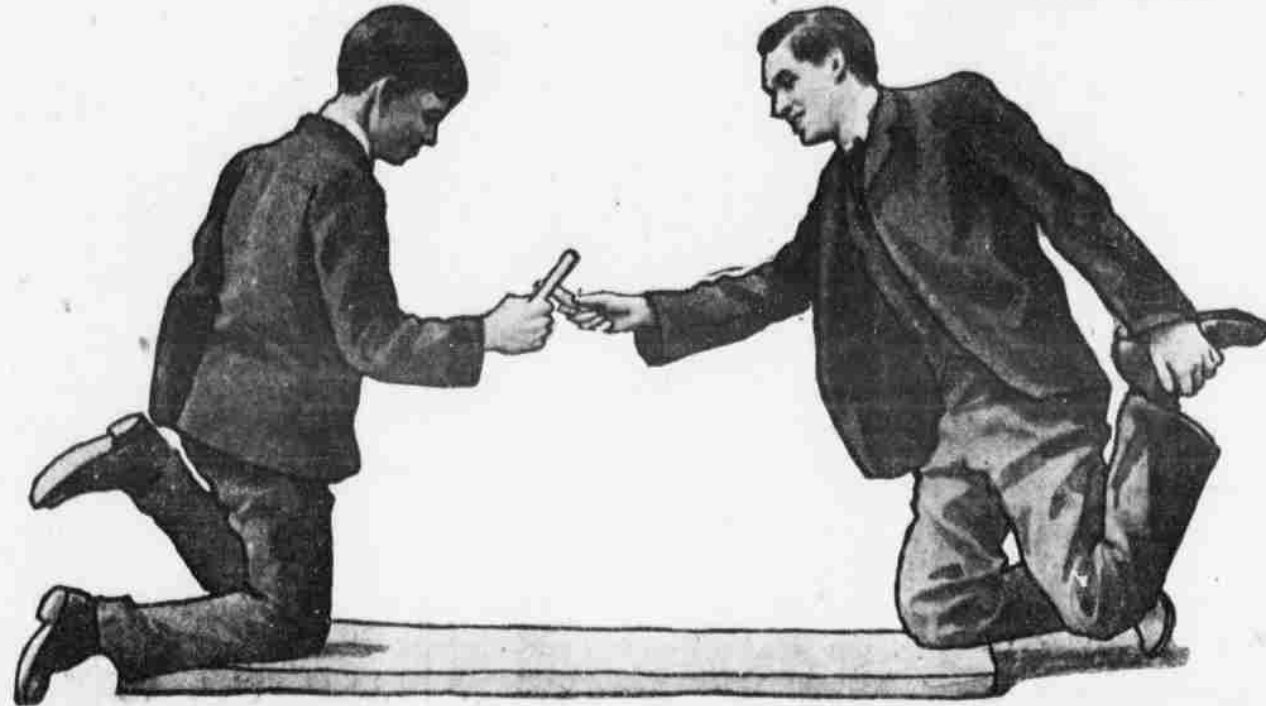
to sit on it, legs crossed, one heel resting on the floor, and attempt to light one candle with another. It is a good plan to wear one's oldest and most worn clothes when accomplishing, or trying to accomplish, this trick. When one sits down with arms widely outstretched the way to the performance of the trick opens up apparently easy, but when the hands are brought together, in front, there is apt to be a roll on to the floor for the performer. No living person to whom this trick has been proposed has been known to affect anything but scorn for it and to loudly avow that any one can do it. It can be done, but the novice is sure to furnish some amusement to his spectators before his object is accomplished.

There is another candle lighting trick, much more elaborate than the one just mentioned, and much more productive of enjoyment. It requires two men and two candles—



Lighting one candle by another whilst sitting on a bottle like this is a very difficult task.

one lighted—to play this game. The men kneel on one knee facing each other, each with a candle in his left hand, and each holding up the right leg in the right hand. Without touching each other they must advance their left hands and light the unlighted candle from the flame of the other. Man was never meant to be a kneeling animal, and least of all was his center of balance arranged with a view to remaining upright on one knee. Hence the difficulty of this feat.



Whilst this feat will be found equally hard to accomplish.

Another balancing trick (which is less of a trick than a test of strength) is to lean forward to the floor, supported only by one arm, the other held on the back, and pick up a handkerchief with the mouth without falling. The difficulty here is in maintaining the balance at the same time supporting the body with one arm.

But the prize of these simpler balancing tricks is conducted thus: Stand on one leg, bend forward and pick up with the mouth a paper folded so that its top stands a foot from the floor. The right hand should grasp the right ankle, the left the right ear. It can be done, but it is safe to bet that the man who has not had plenty of practice at it will never do it.

The great necessity to be provided for the proper performance of a beginner at this trick is a thick, soft mat or rug to be placed about a foot in front of the paper. This relieves the inevitable fall of any painfulness and lends gaiety and zest to the entire performance.

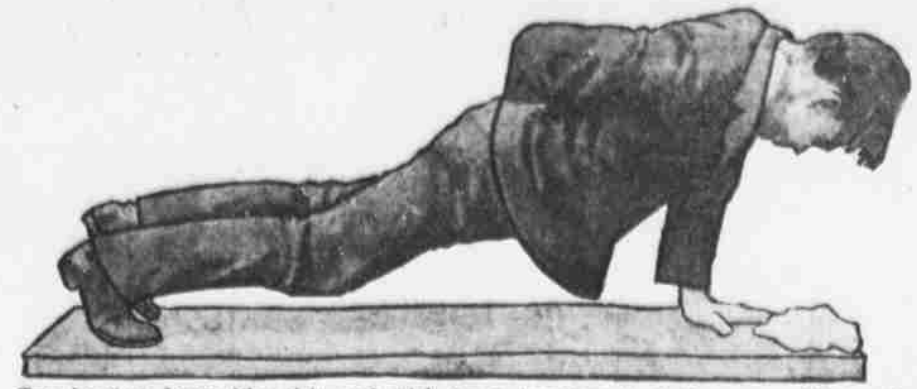
As before hinted at, the humor of all these tricks is best appreciated by the spectators.

Perhaps the prize beauty of all funny catch tricks is the pin and chair difficulty. The pin is fastened squarely in the back of the chair seat and the feet are to sit in the chair, twist around, and extract the pin with the teeth without touching the feet to the floor. Also one should not fall off the chair or to the floor in a lump, but most people who try the trick do.

The way to do the trick is to sit sideways in the chair. Then swing the body around the back, grasping the top with one hand and the lower end of one leg with the other. In this



To pick up a paper with the mouth by leaning over is a very difficult feat.



Try leaning down like this and pick up a handkerchief, if you would test the strength of your arm.

way a purchase is obtained on the chair which prevents it from upsetting, and the acrobat can extract the pin at his leisure. Then to perform the trick properly it is only necessary to resume the position in the chair seat.

The joyous manner in which persons to whom this trick is new swing around and pull the pin, then swing blithely back—and land on their backs on the floor—is something more than delightful. It should be easy enough to go back where one has once gone before, but the pesky chair has a way of tipping up and upsetting just as the trick is about to be completed that is startling. This little feat is best attempted for the first few times in private, especially if the beginner is at all sensitive to laughter.

## Quail as a Diet.

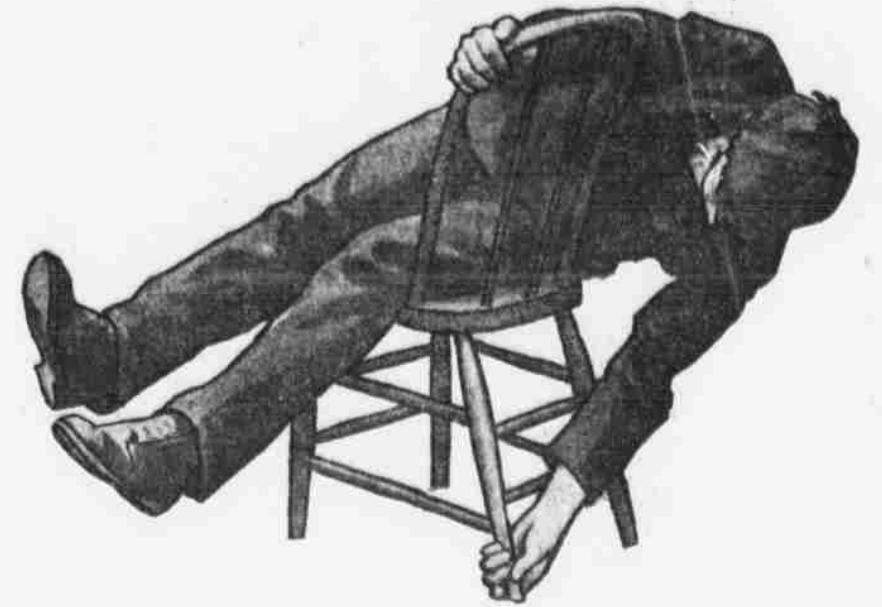
Once in awhile papers chronicle instances where men have wagered to eat twenty quails in twenty consecutive days. Now, a quail is hardly a full meal for a hungry man, and most people to whom such a wager is proposed are apt to look upon it as "easy money." If a man has a weakness for quail on toast the feat is doubly attractive.

Twenty quails in twenty days, of course. How easy! A few men have been known to accomplish this dietary trick, but eight days is about all that it takes to make the average person tired of quail as a steady diet. The men who have successfully filled their part of such a contract admit that the odor and taste of quail will follow them to their graves, and quail is strictly tabooed on their bill of fare.

## Dropping Water Becomes Torture.

There is one trick the conditions of which no man up to date has fulfilled. If you wish to win notoriety as a pioneer in this line do the following: Let a gallon of water be dropped on any one spot on your body, drop by drop. The back of the hand is the favored spot for people who have sought to do this, but it does not take long to convince one that this trick is not a mild nor an easy one.

There are 61,444 drops in a gallon of water. Dripping at the rate of one a second it would take seventeen hours for the water to trickle out. It is not impossible to expose one spot to the water for this period, but it is the little drops that do the work.



Not easy to extract a pin from the back of a chair when bending over like this.



No one has yet accomplished the water trick.



ABYSSINIAN AUTOGRAPH.

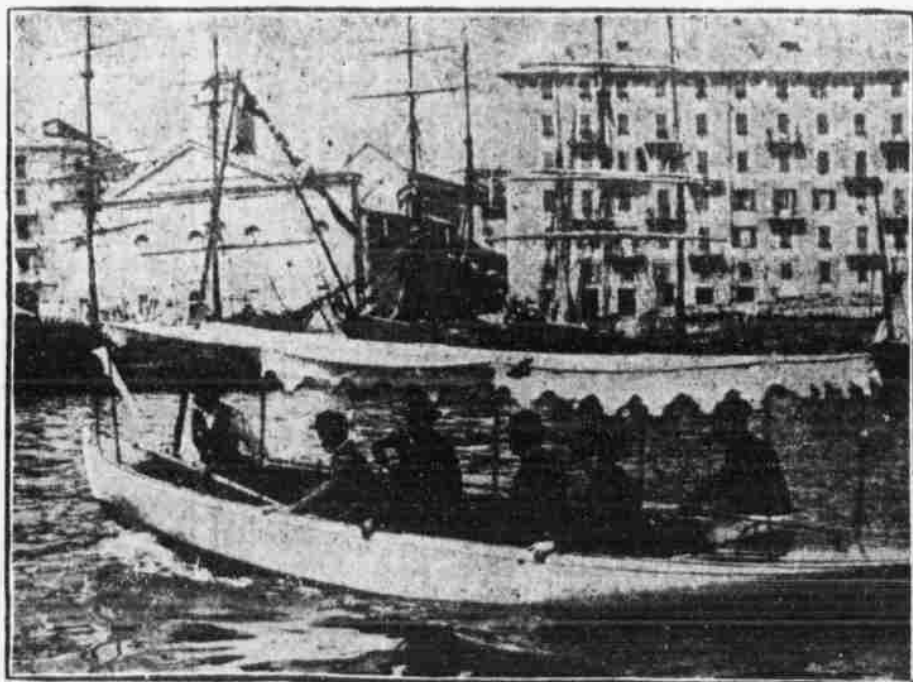
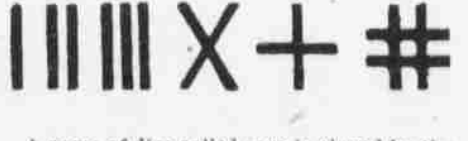
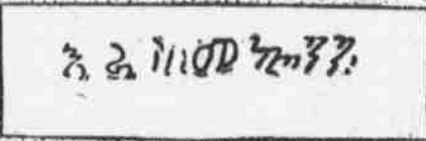
NEGRITO DICE.

TO DISPLACE THE GONDOLAS OF VENICE.

IRISH ALPHABET.

PUZZLE LOCK OF 1594.

TO GET INTO A HANSON.



American electric launches are being used on the canals of Venice. Though not so picturesque as the gondolas, they are swifter.



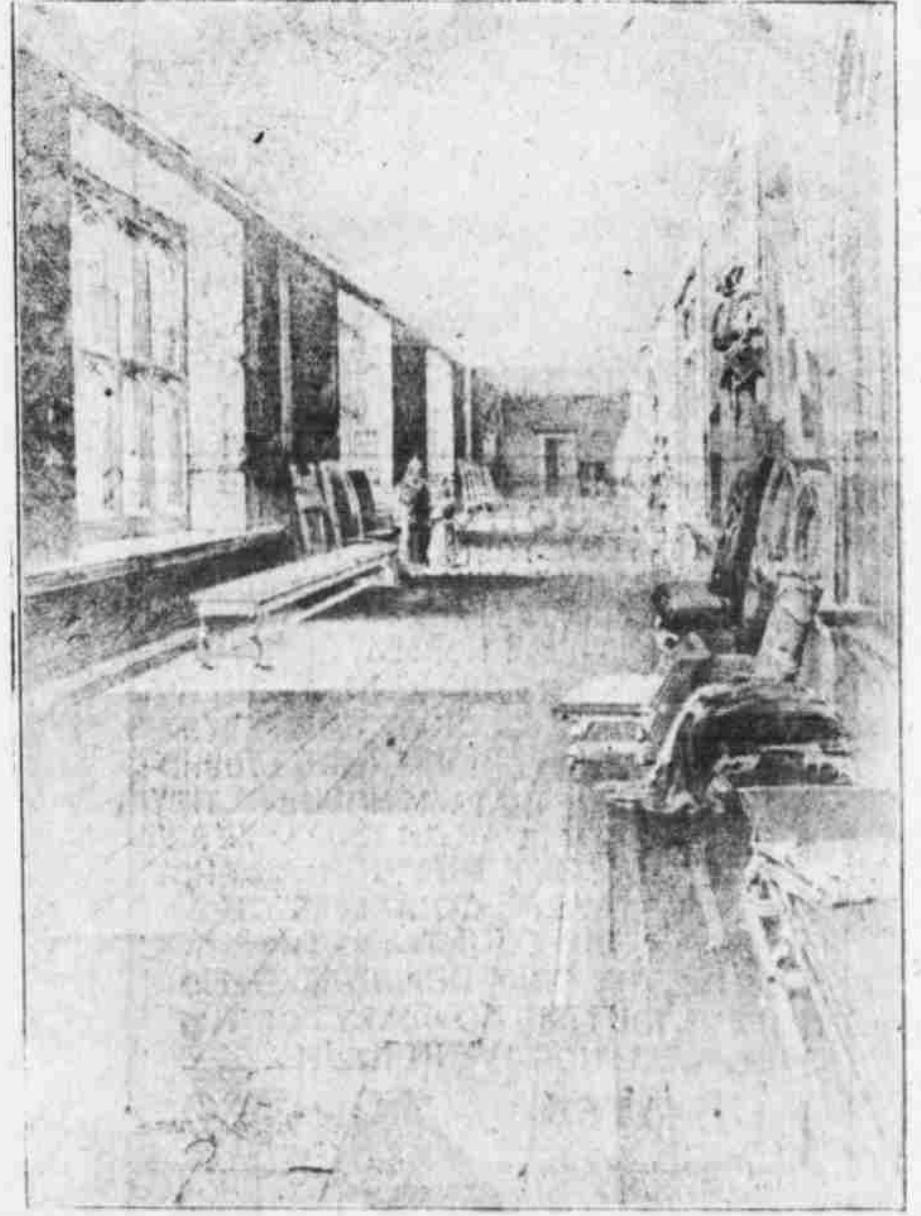
The Irish language has only eighteen letters. Sometimes each letter is written separately and not joined together. The chief difficulty in learning Irish is that there are innumerable abbreviations for words and phrases. The Irish language is nonphonetic, the words rarely being a key to the correct pronunciation.



This interesting relic opens only to a certain word spelled vertically in the rings, each of which contains the alphabet. The lock hung for many years on a barn door near Worthing, England.



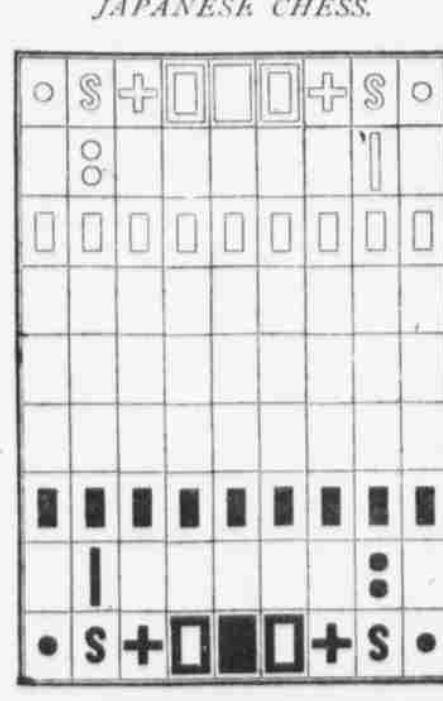
Whoever gets into a hansom first should sit on the side near the pavement. By doing this the person that follows will be able to step across his companion quite easily and take the vacant seat.



This gallery has always been closed to the public, but will shortly be thrown open. The door seen on the right (between the coats of mail) leads to the chapel which runs parallel to the gallery, and through it Henry VIII. had to pass on his way to his private pew. Two versions of the ghost story are given. One of them states that Catherine Howard (beheaded 1542), whose apartments were entered by the door in the corner on the opposite wall, once came along the passage just as Henry was entering the chapel. He managed to get in before her, slammed the door behind him, and she fell fainting outside. She still pursues him as a shadow in the gallery. The other story tells that Mrs. Penn, nurse to Edward VI., is often seen spinning in the gallery. She lived in the apartments reached by the door seen in the center of the picture.



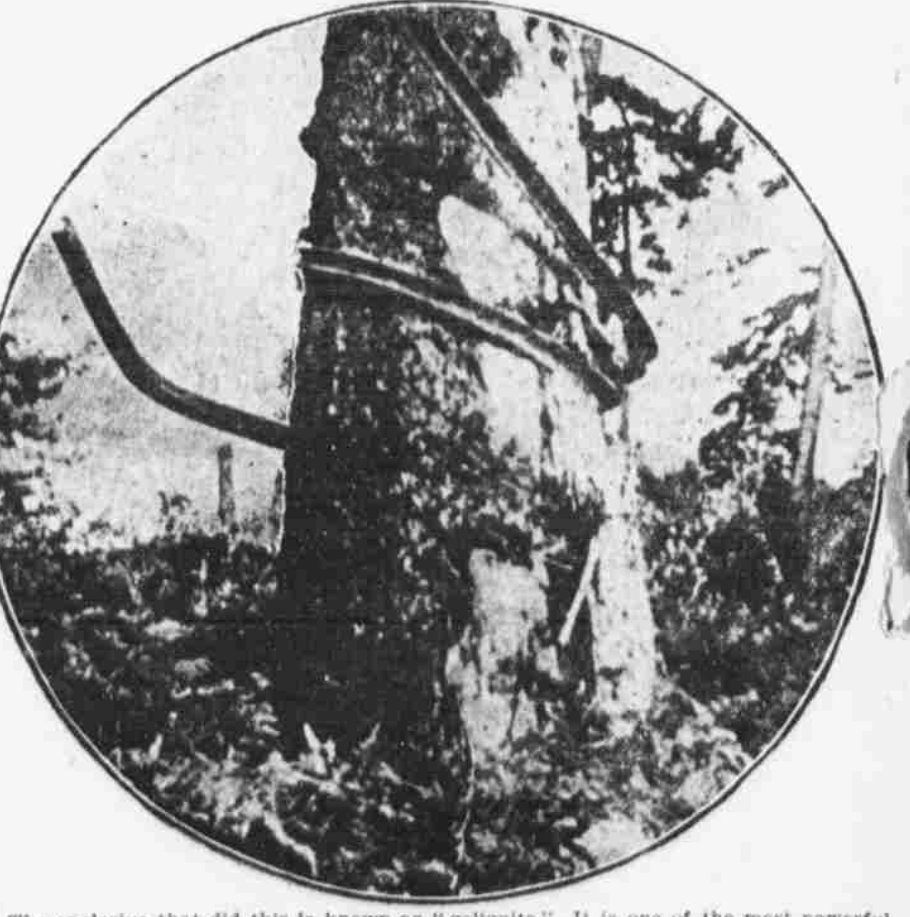
Golf is greatly indulged in by the naval officers and European residents in China. In consequence the Chinese boys have grasped some idea of the game, and they are frequently to be seen amusing themselves with an old stick converted into a club and a real golf ball which some golfer has lost.



Japanese chess is complicated. The board is nine square instead of eight square, and each player has twenty pieces, of eight kinds, placed in three rows. Each kind of piece has its own peculiar move, and if you take your opponent's man you add it to your forces. The pieces are flat, like checkers, with designs on both sides, and when they reach the "king row" they are turned over and take higher ranks and powers, which are not the same for all pieces.



The latest motoring costume for dogs consists of a coat and hood, regulation goggles, ten, absorbent nitrate, sodium carbonate, and wood pulp, so tightly was the rail wrapped about the tree that it cut deeply into the green wood of the trunk and caused big splinters to start out on all sides.



The explosive that did this is known as "gelignite." It is one of the most powerful of the various preparations from gun cotton, composed of blasting gelatine, collodion cotton, absorbent nitrate, sodium carbonate, and wood pulp, so tightly was the rail wrapped about the tree that it cut deeply into the green wood of the trunk and caused big splinters to start out on all sides.