

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

A CORNISHMAN'S JOURNEY.—The deepest mine in Cornwall is Dolcoath, now about 360 fathoms, or 720 yards from the surface. One man has been working in the mine for forty years. During all that time he has lived five miles from the mine. So that he has walked ten miles a day, in addition to his labor; and a calculation which has just been made, shows that this man has during his forty years walked 120,000 miles, which is equal to five times round the world, and half the distance to the moon.

A FELINE FEAT.—THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Whilst Mr Gathorne Hardy was speaking against the Public Worship Regulation Bill, an amusing incident occurred. A grey cat entered the House, either by the Opposition gangway, or the Clerk's table. When it was seen it was leisurely proceeding across the floor; but at a shout Grimalkin became frightened out of its wits, and instead of rushing back the way it came, it dashed across the shoulders of hon. members sitting upon the front Ministerial benches, and jumped over a succession of heads, until it vanished by a side door. No one listened to Mr Hardy any more, and facetious members, of course, endeavored to improve the occasion. The cat, it was said, knew that in the person of Sir W. Harcourt and Mr Hardy himself there were "rats" about, and had thus been attracted to the House. Others said that there were so many trimmers in the House, that they naturally wanted to see which way "the cat jumped," and Grimalkin had come in to gratify so reasonable a wish.

OLD TAPESTRY.—Some of the finest tapestry hangings in the world are now to be seen at the Kensington Museum. They formerly belonged to the Duke of Lerma, Prime Minister of Philip III. of Spain, and, though anterior in date to Gobelin tapestry, are in admirable preservation. The designs were drawn by Luca Giordano, and the hangings have been lent to the directors of South Kensington Museum by the Count de Galve, brother to the Duke of Berwick and Alba, in whose family they have been for the last 200 years. Few things in the museum are better worth visiting than these magnificent specimens of high art.

"HIS MARK."—In ancient times, the mark of the cross was not invariably a proof of ignorance; for among the Saxons the mark of the cross, as an attestation of the good faith of the person signing, was required to be attached to the signature of those who could write. In those times if a man could write, or even read, his knowledge was considered proof presumptive that he was in holy orders. The clericus, or clerk, was synonymous with penman; and the luty, or people who were not clerks, did not feel any urgent necessity for the use of letters. The ancient use of the cross was therefore universal, alike by those who could and could not write; it was, indeed the symbol of an oath, from its sacred associations, as well as the mark generally adopted. Hence the origin of the expression, "God save the mark," as a form of ejaculation approaching the character of an oath.

SPEAKING OUT.—During the debate on the Licensing Bill, Lord Salisbury gave the Lordship's a little bit of his mind:—"He wanted to know, for instance, why the masters, who drank champagne inside, were not restricted as well as the footman who drank beer outside; and why, if the lower classes got power, they should not dictate Peers' habits of life, as Peers now dictate theirs? For his part he did not see why the Lords did not dictate how much the poor people should eat. They had just as much right." These are dreadfully democratic sentiments in a Marquis of Salisbury.

THE ORIGIN OF EAR-RINGS.—According to Mahomedans, Abraham began the practice of wearing ear-rings. In one of Sarah's jealous fits respecting Hagar, she declared that she would not rest until she had dipped her hands in Hagar's blood. In order to quiet Sarah, and enable her to redeem her promise without further upsetting her household, Abraham pierced Hagar's ears, and drew rings through them. From that time ear-rings became the fashion.

AN AMERICAN PICTURE-BUYER.—An American artist tells this story of a fellow-countryman who interviewed him in one of the Italian galleries:—"American. 'Oh, I am so glad. Let me ask you some questions. I have been buying some pictures. Can you tell me whether or not I have been cheated? They are about so large,' holding his hands in various positions to indicate the various sizes, 'and cost so much,' naming the price of each. 'Do you think I paid too much?' The artist, being unwilling to disturb his equanimity, replied that it depended a good deal on circumstances, but he thought it most likely he had not paid more than was right. 'One more question, Mister,' he exclaimed anxiously, as the artist was about to resume work. 'Certainly, sir.' 'Do you think (leaning over him, and speaking in a lower tone), 'do you really think, Mister, that these *Eye tallians* put good materials in their pictures?'"

A MONSTER GUN.—This monster piece of ordnance (says the 'Empire' of July 28) will, when finished, be greater than twice the size of the largest gun in existence, and its destructive powers at fighting range equally proportionate. With a 16in projectile, weighing 1650lb and a maximum charge of 300lb of powder, it will pierce the best iron plates, 20in thick, at 500 yards, 16in plates at 5300 yards, and will pitch a 16in shell into a ship or fortress at a distance of 10,300 yards. The steel block forming the inner tube was the largest ever cast, weighing 12 tons; whilst the trunnion piece, about 18 tons, was the largest piece ever produced at the arsenal. The actual cost of this fearful engine of war will, we learn, not fall far short of £3500.

A LIVING AUTOMATON.—Calignani says:—"A curious patient is just now an inmate of Dr. Mesnier's ward at the Hôpital St. Antoine. His profession was that of a singer at the Cafés Chantants. During the war of 1870-71, he was hit over the left ear by a musket bullet, which carried off bare the brain of the left side. This led to a temporary paralysis of the members on the opposite side, as is always the case; but he was eventually cured of this, while the tremendous wound on the skull began to heal, so that after a time he could resume his professional duties at the cafés to the satisfaction of the public. Suddenly, however, he was seized with nervous symptoms, lasting from 24 to 28 hours, and of such an extraordinary nature that it was con-

sidered safe to take him to the hospital. His malady is easier to illustrate by examples than to define. When he is in his fit he has no sensitiveness of his own, and will bear physical pain without being aware of it; but his will may be influenced by contact with exterior objects. Set him on his feet, and as soon as they touch the ground, they awaken in him the desire of walking; he then marches straight on quite steadily, with fixed eyes, without saying a word, or knowing what is going on about him. If he meets with an obstacle in his way he will touch it, and try to make out by feeling what it is, and then attempt to get out of its way. If several persons join hands and form a ring around him, he will try to find an opening by repeatedly crossing over from one side to the other, and this without betraying the slightest consciousness or impatience. Put a pen into his hand; this will instantly awaken in him a desire of writing; he will fumble about for ink and paper, and if these be placed before him, he will write a very sensible letter; but when the fit is over, he will recollect nothing at all about it. Give him some cigarette paper, he will instantly take out his tobacco bag, roll a cigarette very cleverly, and light it with a match from his own box. Put them out one after another, he will try success. But ignite a match yourself, and give it to him, he will not use it, and let it burn between his fingers. Fill his tobacco-bag with anything, no matter what—shavings, cotton, lint, hay, &c., he will roll his cigarette just the same, light and smoke it without perceiving the hoax. But, better still, put a pair of gloves into his hand and he will put them on at once; thus, reminding him of his profession, will make him look for his music. A roll of paper is then given to him, upon which he assumes the attitude of a singer before the public, and warbles some piece of his repertory. If you place yourself before him he will feel about on your person, and meeting with your watch, he will transfer it from your pocket to his own; but, on the other hand, will allow you, without any resistance or impatience whatever, to take it back again.

SOME SAN FRANCISCO STATISTICS.—The following figures will illustrate some of the peculiarities of the American people, their love of travel, and fondness for hotel life. San Francisco contains 65 hotels, 520 lodging houses, and 380 board and lodging houses. There are 4½ miles of street car lines (double track). These lines are owned by 8 companies, running 175 cars. During 1873 they carried 24,284,357 passengers, earning 1,100,000 dols., and employing 700 men and 1500 horses. The plant of these lines is estimated at 20,000,400 dols. San Francisco has ten savings' banks, with 51,807 depositors, owning 47,500,000 dols. For city loans these institutions charge from 8 to 9 per cent.; on country loans 10 to 11 per cent. Depositors receive an average of ten per cent., although some of the savings' banks pay as high as 1 per cent. per month. There are 19 commercial banks, with an aggregate total of 20,000,000 dols. The total banking capital of the State is about 110,000,000 dols., or £22,000,000. The railways connected with San Francisco employ about 1500 men, whose wages aggregate one million and a quarter dollars per annum.

SOCIAL FALLACIES.

BESIDES others, we commit the still greater errors of plunging into ice-water every morning, then scrub all the skin off with a horse-hair brush or a coarse board towel; sit down to breakfast of oatmeal sawdust; dine off a tablespoonful of wheat and two berries, and make a supper on catnip tea, then be put through a Russian bath of five hundred degrees; sleep under an open window when the thermometer is at zero; wear long hair; dress the women in pantaloons; make all our property over to them; then sit down in the kitchen corner and nurse the baby, and when it is asleep, help to wash up the tea-things, and go to bed at nine o'clock to be "out of the way." What will become of us men? Surely we have fallen on evil times. A better and truer mode of life is to have plenty of everything that is good to eat and drink, which imparts nourishment and strength, and as much of it as you want. The idea of getting up from the table hungry is unnatural, and absurd, and hurtful—quite as much so as getting up in the morning before your sleep is out, on the mischievous principle that "early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." Early rising, in civilized society, always tends to shorten life. Early rising of itself never did anybody any good. Many a farmer's boy has been made an invalid for life by being made to get up at daylight before his sleep was out. Many a young girl has been stunted in body and mind and constitution by being made to get up before the system has had its full rest. All who are growing, all who work hard, and all weakly persons should not get up until they feel as if they would be more comfortable to get up than to remain in bed; that is the only true measure of sufficiency of rest and sleep. Any one who gets up in the morning feeling as if he "would give anything in the world" to remain in bed a while longer, does violence to his own nature, and will always suffer from it—not immediately, it may be, but certainly in latter years, by the cumulative ill effects of the most unwise practice. In any given case, the person who gets up in the morning before he is fully rested, will lack just that much of the energy requisite for the day's pursuit.

As a people, we do not get enough sleep, we do not get enough rest, we will not take time for these things, hence our nervousness, our instability, our hasty temper, and the premature giving out of the stamina of life. Half of us are old at three score, the very time a man ought to be in his mental, moral, and physical prime. Half of our wives, especially in the farming districts, die long before their time because they do not get rest and sleep proportioned to their labor. Nine times out of ten, it would be better for all parties if the farmer should get up and light the fires and prepare breakfast for his wife, she coming directly from her toilet to the breakfast table, because it almost always happens that she has to remain up to set things right long after the husband has gone to bed. This is a monstrously cruel imposition on wives and mothers.—'Hall's Journal of Health.'

Amongst the seamen and petty officers of the Channel Fleet there are 250 total abstainers.