

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

WHY THE EARS SHOULD NOT BE BOXED.—The passage to the ears is closed by a thin membrane, especially adapted to be influenced by every impulse of the air, and nothing but the air to support it internally. If anyone designed to break or overstretch the membrane he could scarcely devise a more efficient means than to bring the hand suddenly and forcibly down upon the passage of the ear, thus driving the air violently before it, with no possibility for its escape but by the membrane giving way. Many children are made deaf by boxes on the ear in this way. There are better ways of punishment.

GIRDLING THE GLOBE.—During the last six years the increase of means of communication in various parts of the globe, has been as follows:—Lines of telegraph wire have been increased from 57,166 to 77,000 geographical miles, and a complete line now runs from San Francisco across the Continent of America and the Atlantic, through Europe and Siberia to the mouth of the Amur, on the eastern confines of Asia; while branch lines connect India, Japan, and Australia. The mileage of railways have increased during the same period from 24,500 to 37,300 miles; and a calculation has been arrived at that no fewer than 4,000,000 of people are daily conveyed by this species of locomotion.

REPORTING FORTY YEARS AGO.—With the aid of post horses, macadamised roads, shorthand, and steam printing, a wonderful feat—wonderful at that time of day—was performed by the 'Times' forty years ago (1834). A grand banquet was given to Earl Grey at Edinburgh by his Scotch admirers, and the 'Times' sent down reporters of their own to describe the proceedings. They left the room at twelve o'clock at night on Monday, the 15th, and at one o'clock in the afternoon of Friday that newspaper reached Edinburgh by mail with a full account of the proceedings. The reporters, it seems, posted up in thirty hours, so that they were in London on Wednesday morning at six o'clock. This was deemed so wonderful in 1834, that Lord Henry Cockburn deemed it worthy of special note.

THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD.—1. The Colossus at Rhodes, one hundred and twenty-one feet in height, built by Charles, A.D. 258, occupying twenty years in making. It stood across the harbor at Rhodes twenty-six years, and was then thrown down by an earthquake. It was then bought by a Jew from the Saracens who loaded nine-hundred camels with the brass. 2. The Pyramids of Egypt. The largest one engaged three hundred and sixty thousand workmen, was fifty years in building, and has now stood at least three thousand years. 3. The Aqueducts of Rome, constructed by Appian, the Censor. 4. Labyrinths of Palmetichus, on the banks of the Nile, containing within one enclosure one thousand houses and twelve royal palaces, all covered with marble and having only one entrance. The building was said to contain three thousand chambers and a hall built of marble, adorned with statues of the gods. 5. The Phares of Alexandria, a tower of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in the year 172, B.C. It was built as a lighthouse, and contained many magnificent galleries of marble—a large lantern at the top, the light of which was seen nearly one hundred miles off. Mirrors of enormous size were fixed round the galleries, reflecting everything on the sea. A common tower is now erected in the same place. 6. The walls of Babylon, built by the orders of Semiramis or Nebuchadnezzar, and finished in one year by two hundred thousand men. 7. The Temple of Diana at Ephesus, completed in the reign of Servius, the sixth king of Rome. It was four hundred and fifty feet long, two hundred broad, and was supported by one hundred and twenty-three marble pillars.

A NARROW ESCAPE.—One of the most remarkable escapes ever made was that of M. de Châteaubrun during the reign of Terror in Paris. He was sent to execution with 20 other prisoners, but after the fifteenth had fallen, the guillotine got out of order, and a workman sent for to repair it. The five remaining victims were left standing in front of the machine, with their hands tied behind them. A French crowd is very curious, and the people kept pressing forward to see the man arranging the guillotine. By degrees M. de Châteaubrun was shoved to the rear of his companions, and found himself in the front row of the spectators, then in the second, and finally well behind those who had come to see his head cut off. Before the man could get the guillotine in working order, night began to fall, and M. de Châteaubrun slipped away. When in the Champs Elysées he told a man that a wag had tied his hands, and then robbed him of his hat, and the simple individual set him free. A few days after he escaped from France, but his companions all perished.

INTERESTING ARMY STATISTICS.—According to a return which has been prepared the nationalities of the non-commissioned officers and men of the British army were as follows:—On the first of January, 1873—English, 674; Scotch, 85; Irish, 237; foreigners, five per 1000. On the 1st of January, 1868, they were—English, 593; Scotch, 94; Irish, 308; foreigners, five per 1000 men. The religious denominations are given as—January 1st, 1873, Church of England, including Dissenters, 681; Presbyterians, 96; Catholics, 230 per 1000. On the 1st January, 1861, they were—Church of England, 604; Presbyterians, 111; Catholics, 285 per 1000. On the 1st January, 1868, they were returned as—Church of England, 616; Presbyterians, 96; Catholics, 287 per 1000. In 1873 there were only 60 per 1000 who could neither read nor write, in comparison with 95 per 1000 in 1868, and 190 per 1000 in 1861. In 1868 there were 68 per 1000 returned as of superior education, as distinguished from those who can read and write well, whereas in 1873 there were 326 per 1000 in this category.

WHAT IT COSTS TO BOIL A FRIAR.—The following singular bill for hanging and boiling a friar is extracted from an old document:—"Account of the hanging and par-boiling of Friar Stone, at Canterbury, in 1530. Paid for half a ton of timber to make a pair of gallows for to hang friar Stone, 2s 6d; to a carpenter, for making the same gallows, 1s 4d; to a laborer that digged the hole, 3d; other expenses of setting up the same, and carriage of timber from stable gate to the dungeon, 1s; for a hurdle, 6s; for a load of wood and

for a horse to draw him to the dungeon, 5s 3d; paid to men that sat at the kettle and par-boiled him, 1s; to three men that carried him quarters to the gates and set them up, 1s; for halters to hang him and sandwich cord and for screws, 1s; for a woman that scummed the kettle, 2s; to him that did execution, 3s 8d; total 14s 8d."

THE GRENADEER GUARDS.—The 1st Regiment of British Household Guards known generally as the Grenadier Guards has a history of more than two centuries. It has been the nucleus of the army which has placed on its standards "Blenheim," and "Waterloo," and has been for many years the oldest body of the kind in the world. While in the changes of human things its noblest and most renowned antagonists, the Maison dui Roi, the Gardes Françaises, and, chief of all, the Old Guard of Napoleon have become mere traditions and shadows, it still flourishes in undecaying vigor, and links the glories of the present with the past.

SOMETHING LIKE A HAILSTORM.—The City of Milan was visited on the 13th of June by a most terrible hailstorm. The force and noise with which the hail came down, and the extraordinary size of the hailstones—some as large as hen's eggs—were such that it appeared as if some celestial edifice had been destroyed, and the ruins hurled down upon the earth. With such fury did it descend that the birds unable to find shelter, the trees affording little or no protection, fell dead in hundreds, and when the storm had passed the people picked basketfuls from pigeons downwards in size.

THE HUMAN STATUE.—The whole human figure should be six times the size of the feet. Whether the form be slender or plump the rule holds good; any deviation from it is a departure from the highest beauty of proportion. The Greeks made all their statues according to this rule. The face from the highest point of the forehead where the hair begins, to the chin is one tenth of the whole stature. The hand from the wrist to the middle finger, is the same. From the top of the chest to the highest part of the forehead is the seventh. If the face, from the roots of the hair to the chin, be divided into three equal parts, the first division determines the place where the eyebrows meet, and the second the place of the nostrils. The height from the feet to the top of the head is the distance from the extremity of the fingers when the arms are extended.

THE CHARACTERISTIC OF CATS.—The following are given as trustworthy "points" of the domestic favourite—the cat. Tortoiseshell cats are always docile, affectionate, tidy, and good mousers; they are also long lived. Grey cats are the quietest tempered. Black cats are the slowest. Maltse cats are not so cleanly in their habits as those of the other species. Large ears denote sagacity. A long tail is the sign of a hunter. Yellow eyes with very small pupils are not so desirable as greyish eyes half covered by the black pupils.

NATURE ON THE SIDE OF THE FEMALES.—Among the beings of a lower type, plant and animal, all the more recent observations indicate that Nature herself systematically favours the females—the mothers of the destined races. Nature's sturdiest buds and her best-fitted butterflies belong to this sex; her female spiders are large enough to eat up a score of her little males; Natural selection, whether the working out of intelligent design or otherwise would make this result inevitable. We might expect that the neuter bee could be nourished into the queen-mother. If required to judge *à priori*, we should decide, if there be no predetermination of the sex; since the one special fact in the feminine organism is the innate tendency to manufacture, and, which certain limits, to store up reserved force for the future needs of offspring.—'Popular Science.'

A CURIOUS COIN.—A copper piece affecting to be of ten centimes has got into circulation in France, of which a note may be fittingly made. It bears the head of Napoleon III. in a Prussian helmet. Around the neck is a dog's collar, upon it is inscribed—"Sedan." The circular legend is "Napoleon III. le misérable; 80,000 prisonniers." On the reverse side is an owl perched on a cannon, around "Vampire-Français, 2 Dec., 1851; Sept., 1870."

THE TIME O' DAY IN THE ARMY.—For years past it has been the practice to have a "watch club" in nearly every corps or regiment in the British army by means of which every member of the club became possessed in course of time of a watch or other article of jewellery on payment of a weekly subscription. The practice has now been discontinued by the authorities, and a general order has been received at Chatham Garrison prohibiting for the future the establishment of such clubs, as it is said they are a source of crime, from the fact that some of the treasurers, who were not sufficiently responsible persons, have appropriated to their own use the money which had been subscribed by the members. Until this order was received nearly every corps in garrison at Chatham had its watch club.

NOVEL IMMIGRANTS.—It is stated, says the 'Boston Journal,' that a party of army officers who have been engaged in mounting guns and otherwise putting the Gulf forts in serviceable condition, while sailing through Mississippi Sound, since the recent flood encountered a remarkable scene. For miles were seen logs, driftwood, and patches of turf and soil floating out into the Gulf, filled with live animals, who clung to their frail barques with the tenacity of shipwrecked mariners. Among the animals were seen rats, racoons, possums, rabbits, alligators, and moccasin snakes in uncounted numbers, all brought down from the swamps and marshes, perhaps from fifty to one hundred miles inland. The novel exhibition had a scientific interest, as it suggested the manner in which, during past geological periods, animals were transported from regions far inland to the mouths of estuaries, and their bones being entombed in soft mud, furnished the organic remains which are preserved for ages in the hardened strata. It was, doubtless, by similar means that the fossils now found in the solid limestones were engulfed and preserved; and also that animal life has been distributed over portions of the globe.

A woman named Betsy Letheron is now living at Tring who last birthday reached the extraordinary age of 111 years. During the harvest last year she cut several sheaves of wheat, and intends, if all is well, making her appearance this year upon the farm of Mr Mead, situated between Tring and Little Tring.