

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

OLIVER CROMWELL'S HEAD.—A correspondent draws our attention to a strong corroboration of the main incidents of the story lately told in these columns respecting the head of the Lord Protector Cromwell, to be found in the "Fifty Years' Recollections, Literary and Personal," of the late Mr Cyrus Redding, and resting on the authority of Horace Smith, one of the authors of "Rejected Addresses," &c. Redding writes under date about 1821 or 1822:—"Horace Smith was acquainted with a medical gentleman who had in his possession the head of Oliver Cromwell, and in order to gratify my curiosity he gave me a note (of introduction) to him. There accompanied the head a memorandum relating to its history. It had been torn from the tomb with the heads of Ireton and Bradshaw after the accession of Charles II., under a feeling of impotent vengeance. All three were fixed over the entrance of Westminster-hall, the other bones of those three distinguished men being interred at Tyburn, under the gibbet—an act well befitting the Stuart character. During a stormy night," he adds, "the head in the centre, that of Cromwell, fell to the ground. The sentry on guard beneath having a natural respect for an heroic soldier, no matter of what party, took up the head and placed it under his cloak until he went off duty. He then carried it to the Russells, who were the nearest relations of Cromwell's family, and disposed of it to them. It belonged to a lady, a descendant of the Cromwells, who did not not like to keep it in her house. There was a written minute extant along with it. The disappearance of the head (off Westminster hall) is mentioned in some of the publications of the time. It had been carefully embalmed, as Cromwell's body is known to have been two years before its disinterment. The nostrils were filled with a substance like cotton. The brain had been extracted by dividing the scalp. The membranes within were perfect, but dried up and looked like parchment. The decapitation had evidently been performed after death, as the flesh over the vertebrae of the neck plainly showed. It was hacked, and the severance had evidently been done by a hand not used to the work, for there were several other cuts besides that which actually separated the bone. The beard, of a chestnut color, seemed to have grown since death. An ashen pole, pointed with iron, had received the head clumsily impaled upon its point, which came out an inch or so above the crown, rusty and time-worn. The wood of the staff and the skin itself had been perforated by the common wood-worm. I wrote to Horace Smith that I had seen the head, and deemed it genuine. Smith replied, 'I am gratified you were pleased with Cromwell's head, as I was when I saw it, being fully persuaded of its identity.' It remains then on record that two persons, both men of the world and of large experience, and yet so different from each other in character as Horace Smith and Cyrus Redding, were satisfied with the evidence brought before them to prove its being genuine nearly fifty years ago.—'London Times,' January 23.

THE CANARY BIRD.—The canary bird is a universal favorite in our households. Its pleasant song and kindly ways endear it to us. Before any knowledge can be given of its diseases certain rules must be observed, and I give them. 1st. Do not keep the bird in a newly-painted cage or room. 2nd. Do not hang the bird over a stove or grate containing a fire. 3rd. Do not let drafts blow upon your bird, or your room be over 80 degs. Fahrenheit. 4th. Do not wash the bottom of the cage, but scrape it with a knife. This will remove all dirt without chilling the bird. 5th. Do not keep males and females in separate cages during the breeding season. (This is a common error of many.) When you have been feeding your bird on egg and bread, and food of like character, its abdomen becomes distended, its feathers fall out, the veins swell, the bird is languid, and will not sing. Withdraw all such food and give a little lettuce and canary seed alone, and put a rusty nail in its drinking water. Birds confined to a seed diet are troubled with costiveness. Give them a small piece of bread soaked in milk, or a blade of cabbage will remedy this evil. Your bird may be subject to epilepsy, and lie upon its back and pull its feathers out. Put your bird in a bath of cold water two or three times and put it back in the cage. The water will probably cure it. Sometimes the bird has the asthma and wheezes or makes a cracking noise when breathing. Give it a piece of bread which has been soaked in water and squeezed out, and then boiled in milk (a kind of pap), also a piece of lettuce or cabbage. Diarrhoea is known by excessive discharges accompanied by pain. The bird does not sing, and it becomes morose. Give it bread in boiled milk, and put a rusty nail in its drinking water; change the water twice a week. Sometimes birds will not sing after molting. The bird forgets the notes, and upon being hung near a singer will start again. Mites infest the cage, the head and body of the bird; in fact the whole surface of both may be alive with them. Take one ounce of corrosive sublimate, dissolve it in alcohol, and paint the cage.

A STRANGE AFFAIR.—The Minister of Justice has just received a report of a very sad affair, which is likely to create some sensation. Thirty years ago a young girl named Maria Guernie was found poisoned in her bed. She had been betrothed a short time before to a young man with whom her sister Madeline was said to be desperately in love. The poor girl was at once arrested, tried, and finally condemned to death, which she suffered calmly and valiantly, without uttering a word of complaint and justification. Everybody felt the deepest sympathy for the poor old father of the two girls, who was giving signs of the most violent grief. He had come into possession of some money which the girls had inherited from their mother, but his grief did not seem to be lessened thereby. A fortnight ago the old man died, and before his death confessed to his parish priest, the Rev. Abbe Barreau, that he was himself the murderer of his eldest daughter. He had, moreover, allowed suspicion to rest on the younger in order to inherit the money of both. The poor victim had died innocent without uttering a word in her defence, because she knew who was the murderer, and rather chose to die than denounce him to justice.

THE PANIER.—This lately revived article of female costume flourished in the time of Louis XV., and consisted of a petticoat made of basket work. They were even made of wood with bars of iron, and were first introduced from Spain by Anna of Austria, mother of Louis XIII. For nearly a century they disappeared, and it was not until the time of Louis XV. that they once more became the mode. Barbier, in his interesting diary, published more than a century ago in Paris, tells us that "the Cardinal de Fleury has had his legs much cut by the paniers of a certain lady with whom he was recently returning from a religious service. You know that these great paniers are so monstrous, that two persons cannot well occupy the same chair on account of their size. His eminence insisted upon returning home in the carriage of Madam —, and, as he is a stout man, he somehow or other broke her panier, and the wooden bars wounded his legs so much that he had to be carried out of the chair, with the blood trickling down his calves. The lady, laughed fit to kill herself at this spectacle, and it has made all Paris roar." Further on he says:—"These paniers are so big, that when the queen is seated in her reception room with mesdames the sisters of the king on either side of her, their petticoats hide her Majesty so completely that the king has issued an order to the effect that there shall always be two vacant chairs on either side of her Majesty."

IRISH LACE.—It is in beautiful, delicate needlework, and in the making of lace of different kinds, says a writer in the 'Argosy,' that the Irish Sisters excel. There are several houses in the South each of which is famous for some special kind of manufacture. Persons who are learned in such matters can tell instantly, on looking at a piece of work, at what convent it was done. The crochet made under the superintendence of the Youghal nuns is exquisite, and so fine that it has, in many cases, been mistaken for other kinds of lace. I have heard of a lady who purchased a quantity of what she believed to be old Roman point, in Italy, at great expense. On bringing it home she took it to her dress-maker in Dublin, and gave it to her as trimming for a dress, with many cautions against waste, and with repeated orders not to cut it unnecessarily. The woman smiled when she heard the discolored work called antique point. She got a magnifying glass, and showed her customer that she had in reality bought Irish crochet lace; which had been dipped in some yellowing fluid, in order to give it an appearance of great age. The clever expert was, moreover, able to tell from what part of the country it had originally been procured. Some ladies are very fond of purchasing sleeves and collars of this beautiful work, to wear at the table d'hôte when travelling on the Continent, as it does not require what is technically termed doing up; when soiled, simple washing and drying will restore it to its pristine daintiness. Besides this, it is quite uninjured by any amount of pressing or crumpling.

A NOVELTY IN RELIGIOUS CHARITY.—What is called the German Catholic Casino has just been opened in Detroit. The membership numbers nearly one hundred. The object is to provide a place for recreation and literary improvement for all. Nearly every attraction that may be found at other places of amusement have been or are to be provided. The movers of the project were actuated solely by a desire to keep their people from the saloons and other places of pernicious example. Like casinos in Europe and in some cities in the United States, are reported to have accomplished this result. There is a large hall, well lighted and easy accessible. At one end is a good-sized stage, filled with scenery, &c., intended for dramatical and musical entertainments. A dramatic company has been organized. The entertainments will be varied by dramatic readings, lectures, &c. There is, too, a large library. A billiard table and a pigeon-hole table are at the north side of the hall, and the remainder of the floor is occupied by about 20 tables, large and small, upon which all games of cards, chess, backgammon, draughts, lotto, dominoes, &c., will be played, but for no stake. Cigars, beer, and Rhine wine may be obtained at the refreshment stand, but no strong liquors. "Treating" is prohibited. No one, it is believed, will drink to excess by himself. Known inebriates are not admitted. A committee examines into the character and habits of all applicants, reports, and voting on the black-ball system then decides the question. It is a joint-stock concern.

The 'Brooklyn Times' of January 19th says:—"At St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Mott Haven, New York, on Friday last, funeral services were held over the remains of a lady whose initial only we give. She was the wife of a United States official who is well-known in New York city, where he holds a prominent office. Mrs. L. was 36 years of age and the mother of five children. She was married at the age of sixteen, and her eldest child is a son about twenty years of age. She was passionately fond of dancing, and expressed the hope that when she died it might be in a ball-room. During the illness which preceded her death she said she had no desire to live if ill-health prevented her from attending balls and parties and from indulging in her favorite amusement. She left instructions as to how her body should be prepared for burial, and her wishes were fully complied with. She desired to be laid in her coffin in full ball costume. She actually selected the dress to be used, and directed how her hair should be arranged. The services of a hair-dresser were procured for the purpose, who first curled the hair by doing it up in papers, and completed the head toilette by adding the false tresses which deceased had worn in her lifetime, and then sprinkling the hair with silver powder. In the centre and on each side of the forehead roses were placed. The body was robed in a cream-coloured silk, cut in the style and having the full trimmings worn in ball-rooms. The head was turned partly to one side to present a side view of the face, which was coloured and powdered to give it a life-like appearance, and as though she were in full health. In one hand was a bouquet and in the other a lace handkerchief. The feet were encased in white satin slippers, and flowers in profusion were laid over the remains. In fact, the corpse looked like a sleeping lady dressed for some extraordinary social gathering. Probably so strange a spectacle was never before witnessed at a funeral.