

## WAIFS AND STRAYS.

**PHYSICAL BENEFIT OF LENT.**—Dr. J. J. Barry, of New Haven, Kentucky, has a lengthy and learned communication in the 'New York Herald,' to show that, even from a physical point of view, the observance of the Lenten abstinence is highly beneficial. He says:—"When I was attending lectures in 1855-6, in Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, one of the Faculty, Professor George McClellan, speaking of the efficacy of fasting and abstinence in some form of disease, used to mention to the class the case of a young Catholic Irishman, who was suffering from a severe and grave chronic disease, and who got completely cured of it by a strict observance of the fasts of two successive Lents. All physicians of any experience, or who are conversant with the records of their daily profession, know of innumerable instances of the same kind."

**CEREMONY AMONG SAVAGES.**—Disraeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature," has some curious remarks on the customs of different nations in their modes of salutation. The Philippine Islander, he says, in saluting a friend, takes hold of his hand or foot and rubs it on his own face. The Lapland salutation is even more peculiar; when they meet they rub their noses together. A traveller named Houtman tells us that to be polite in the islands situated in the Straits of the Sound, is a matter of considerable difficulty, and then he describes his own reception: "They raised my left foot, which they passed gently over my right leg, and from thence over my face." An Ethiopian takes the robe of another and ties it about his own waist, so that he leaves his friend half naked." "This custom," says Disraeli, "of undressing on these occasions takes other forms; sometimes men place themselves naked before the person whom they salute, to show humility, and that they are unworthy of appearing in their presence. This was practised before Sir Joseph Banks, when he received the visit of two people of Otaheite. The Japanese only take off a slipper; the people of Arracan their sandals in the street, and their stockings in the house." In personal civilities the Chinese surpass all nations, dealing in the most extravagant compliments and loving greetings in the market-place. If two people meet after a long separation, they both fall on their knees and bend the face to the earth, and this ceremony is repeated two or three times. Their expressions are as exaggerated as their gestures. If a Chinese is asked after his health, "Very well, thanks to your abundant felicity." If you render him a service, "My thanks shall be immortal." If you praise him, "How shall I dare persuade myself of what you say to me." The strangest part of the system is that these replies are prescribed by a regular academy of compliments. There are determined the number of bows, the genuflexions, and the gestures of the whole nation. The lower orders are as punctilious as the grandees, and ambassadors pass forty days in practice before they are allowed to appear at court.

**POWER OF THE WHALE.**—If the whale knew his own power, he could easily destroy all the machinery which the art of man could devise for catching him, and it would only be necessary for him to swim in a straight line in order to break the thickest rope, but instead, on being struck with the harpoon, he obeys a natural instinct, which, in this instance, betrays him to his death. Sir Humphrey Davy, in his "Salmonia," observes that the whale, not having an air bladder, can sink to the lowest depths of the ocean, and mistaking the harpoon for the sword of a swordfish or the teeth of a shark, he instantly descends, this being his manner of freeing himself from these enemies, who cannot bear the pressure of a deep ocean; and from ascending and descending in a small space, he thus puts himself in the power of the whaler. If we include the pressure of the atmosphere, a body at the depth of 100 feet would sustain 60 pounds on the square inch, while one at 4,000 feet, a depth by no means considerable, would be exposed to a pressure of 1,830 pounds. We need not, therefore, feel surprised that on a foundering of a ship at sea, though its timbers part, not a spar floats to the surface; for if the hull has sunk to a great depth, all that is porous is penetrated with water, or is greatly compressed. Scoresby states that when, by entangling the line of the harpoon, a boat was carried down with the whale, it required, after the boat was recovered, two boats to keep it at the surface. As soon as the whale dives after having been wounded, it draws out the line or the cord of the harpoon, which is coiled up in the boat, with very considerable velocity. In order, therefore, to prevent any accident from the violence of this motion, which might set the side of the boat on fire, one man is stationed with an axe to cut the rope asunder, if it should become entangled, while another furnished with a mop, is constantly cooling with water the channel through which it passes.

**WAR IN THE OCEAN.**—The storms that rage upon the service of the ocean are but types of the internecine war eternally going on below. The wildest desert of Asia or Africa, though haunts of the lion and tiger, are the abodes of peace compared with the fearful slaughter that ever prevails in the ocean. The single herring averages its fifty thousand eggs; these are the support of innumerable of the smaller inhabitants of the ocean, while the parent-herring feeds and fattens whole tribes of cod and whiting. The cod, fattened upon the multitudinous herring, produces its millions of young, to be eaten by the larger sturgeon. Size and strength are no salvation. Sucker and seal live on the soft-fleshed mollusk; the norwal, the dolphin, the cachelot, the sword-fish, prey upon the whale, and tear him to pieces while yet alive. Oceanic life is made up of devourers and devoured. War and slaughter are the normal condition of its inhabitants.—W. K. Hooper.

**WHY THE COUNTY KERRY IS SOMETIMES CALLED THE KINGDOM OF KERRY.**—Kerry is a county of large extent almost surrounded by the sea, and contains the best harbours of any county in the country. In the time of William III. it was "full of woods, full of people, full of cattle, and had great store of corn in the ground." When all Ireland was reduced this one county kept near ten

thousand men almost two years in action. It cost more men and money at that time to reduce Kerry than half Ireland; because the county was full of natural fastnesses, and contained plenty of provisions. The greatest advantage might be now made of its harbours, which are for all winds. No matter how the wind blows a ship can always find a port in Kerry. All shipping from America, the Mediterranean, the West Indies, Brazil and Hindostan must pass near Kerry before they reach England. If the county Kerry were in the possession of independent rulers sitting in Dublin they might destroy more English merchants than out of any other port of Europe. Hence it is called a kingdom.

**CHINESE DENTISTRY.**—Roaming in quest of novelty through that mine of marvels, a Chinese city, we were a witness the other day of a strange but not uncommon scene. We had halted in front of the stall of a street apothecary, surgeon, and general practitioner, and were turning over with our eyes his stock of simples, dragons'-teeth, tigers'-claws, and like drugs used as ingredients in the native pharmacopoeia, when along came a man, holding his hand up to his jaw, and apparently in great pain. He sat down by the doctor and explained to him that he was suffering with toothache, to get rid of which he would like to have his tooth removed. The doctor opened his patient's mouth, and inspected the aching tooth; then he took a small phial from his stock of medicines, and into the palm of his hand he shook a few scruples of a pink-coloured powder. He next licked his finger and dipped it into the powder, and inserting this into the man's mouth, rubbed it into the aching tooth and gum. He repeated this three or four times, and then concluded by turning the patient's head up side down; when, to the no small astonishment of many of the bystanders, among whom was apparently the man himself, the tooth dropped out and fell on the ground. The doctor then asked him if he had felt any pain, to which he replied that he had not, and the payment of a small fee brought the séance to a close. At our application, the tooth was picked up and very civilly handed to us by the owner himself, and was evidently fresh from a human jaw, though there had not been the slightest effusion of blood from the mouth. The thought had naturally suggested itself to us that the whole thing was a hoax, and that the patient was an accomplice; but, if so, the doctor was no novice at sleight of hand, and the expression of astonishment on the other man's face when he found his tooth gone was as perfect a specimen of histrionic emotion as it has ever been our lot to behold.

**THE CATHEDRAL AT SPIRES.**—The old Cathedral at Spire is the largest Church in Germany. It was built between the years 916 and 1097. Its length is 478 feet. Like the Cathedrals at Worms, Bonn and Mayence, it belongs to the family of doubled-apsed churches, magnificent products of the early architecture of the Middle Ages, which are rare in Europe and found mostly in the Rhine Valley. At Spire the two apses support cupolas, flanked each with a like number of towers. The interior presents a somewhat severe aspect. Prominent among the decorations are twelve square pillars, which separate the lofty nave from the two aisles. In the middle of the nave, upon the floor, are four stone crosses, which mark the spot where St. Bernard preached the Crusade in 1146. Under the nave of the King's Choir, in the imperial vault, lie what is left of nine Emperors. Under the eastern part of the Cathedral is a crypt supported by massive pillars, where are to be found baptismal fonts of the eighth and ninth centuries, and a tomb of Rudolph, of Hapsburg, with a crowned statue.

**A PERSIAN SCHOOL.**—A Persian school is a very funny affair. The room is generally open to the street. Looking in, one sees a lot of boys squatted on their heels on the floor round a Mollah, all rocking themselves to and fro, and all repeating aloud the tasks they have to commit to memory. The result is a little babel of sounds—a jumble, to those who understand the language, of verses from the Koran, drinking and love songs from Hafiz, and heroic lines from Firdousi. These are the books most studied; and a Persian's education is pretty well complete when he can quote freely from them and talk a little Arabic. Hafiz is the favourite poet, and he is quoted and recited by all classes, as was Tasso some years ago by the gondoliers of Venice.

**THE PARIS RAGPICKERS.**—The oldest of the ragpickers in Paris, Sylvain Barnabe, known as the *doyen de chiffonniers*, has just died at the Ile aux Singes, at the age of 78. He carried the wicker basket through the streets of the French capital, for over fifty years. In his youth he was one of the elegants of Toulouse, where he squandered a large fortune, and after being ruined he became clerk to an attorney. He lost this situation, and then came to Paris, where he followed his precarious avocation up to a few weeks before his death. He used to calculate that in his night wanderings in search of forgotten trifles he had traversed over 18,000 leagues, and had picked up during his life 20,000 kilogrammes of chiffons.

**ST. PETER'S AT ROME.**—The exterior illumination of St. Peter's Church is an electrifying spectacle on festive occasions. The cupola is twice metamorphosed, as it were, into a hemisphere of light. The earliest illumination at nightfall displays the building's architectural outline to great advantage. For this purpose are prepared 4,400 lamps of cylindrical form. The task of the lamp-lighters is apparently not without peril. It is alarming to witness them at work grasping ropes suspended high in the air, swinging to and fro, from freize to cornice, and from capital to pillar, to arrange their lanterns in symmetrical order. An hour later a thousand larger lamps are enkindled simultaneously. To accomplish the changes with all possible speed, at proper distances on the cupola, 360 men are suspended with ready lighted, though concealed, torches. At a third signal from the belfry, the cross on the apex of the dome suddenly glitters into flame; the rest of the enormous fabric then seems to ignite, and to burst forth into a splendid conflagration. The flood of vivid light soon spreads itself over surrounding objects. At a distance, not unlike a phenomenon, spangled with stars, the very dome seems to be agitated by a mysterious hand, and to hang suspended from the vast canopy of heaven.