

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

THE overcurious are not overwise.
 The lousy have no time for tears.
 The villain's censure is extorted praise.
 Many a man has made a goose of himself with a single quill.
 God never keeps a willing man waiting long for an opportunity.
 Temptations are a file which rub off much of the rust of our self-confidence.
 Some men tire themselves almost to death looking for an easy place.
 It is easier to forgive enemies we have worsted than enemies who have worsted us.
 No mean man has a right to wish he had never been born. Let other people do that for him.
 Of four things every man has more than he knows—of sins, of debts, of years, and of foes.
 He is happy whose circumstances suit his temper; but he is more excellent who can suit his temper to any circumstances.
 There is no more universal characteristic of human nature (says Russell Lowell) than the instinct of men to apologise to themselves for themselves, and to justify personal failings by generalising them into universal laws.

BOUND TO HAVE SOME FUN.

A maiden who wore a blue togue
 Enjoyed any kind of a joke;
 She was tickled enough
 And exclaimed, 'That's the stouph.'
 And other like sentiments spoke.

NOVEL MODE OF HATCHING EGGS.—'Ducks,' as the pouteres occasionally say, are 'cheap to-day'—indeed, they are cheap every day—in the markets of Tamsui, in the Island of Formosa; and one reason why they are cheap is that the country people have devised a remarkably simple and inexpensive process of artificial hatching. A long, low shed is built of wattles and mud, with a thick thatched roof. Along the inside walls are arranged rough troughs, filled with grain and roasted paddy-husk, on which the eggs are placed as fast as they are laid. In summer no particular precautions are taken; but in winter the eggs are covered over with quilted coverlets. The grain, which is sprinkled over with a little warm water, sets up fermentation, and that, with the help of the warm paddy-husk, which is continually being changed, hatches the eggs in about 30 days. By this simple means the Formosan poultry-dealer is enabled to sell young ducklings at about 1d each.

STRANGE DWELLING-PLACES.—Birds occasionally show a peculiar taste in seeking a place for nest building. In a book entitled 'Glimpses of Animal Life' we are told of a water wagtail which built her nest in a noisy brass foundry, and of a wren which chose her habitation in the body of a dead hawk, nailed to a barn. The following are other instances of bird rearing.—At Hesse Darmstadt, about 30 years ago, a black redstart built her nest on the collision spring of a railway carriage which had remained for some time out of use. Five eggs were deposited, and the station-master for a long time refrained from using the carriage. At length, however, it could be no longer dispensed with, and was attached to a train and sent away. Four days and three nights elapsed before its return, and during all this time it was in motion. When it arrived at its own station, however, the young birds had not only been hatched, but were in a lively condition. It was evident that at least one of the parent birds must have travelled with the nest and provided food for their young.

THE EASIEST DEATH.—Professor Helm, of Zurich, says that the man who falls from a tremendous height has the most enjoyable time imaginable—till he stops. If he could fall for ever it would be better than Paradise. He suffers no pain, he is not frozen with terror, as is commonly supposed, yet he is perfectly aware of what is happening. Time seems to pass very slowly as he goes down, and he thinks of many subjects. There are pleasant sounds in his ears—probably caused by the whizzing of the air as he goes by. He knows perfectly well that there will presently be a tremendous thud and a violent pause, but he regards the prospect with absolute composure, and rather looks at it from an outside standpoint, as if it were someone else who was going to come down with that thud, and he was going to stand by and see the fun. When the stoppage does come he knows nothing about it. It is a beautiful death—to die by rushing down from a great height. The patient seems to be a comet or a meteor flying althwart the blue sky, and then he sinks into oblivion, as if he had fallen into a sea of chloroform and roses; and, if the fall is long enough, he never knows anything more, and nothing worries him again to all eternity.

A CHINESE EXECUTION.—A correspondent writes under date Nanking, December 3, 1892: 'Yesterday I was returning to my home from the city when I saw an immense crowd of people, and presently I saw the chair of the magistrate and his retinue hurrying away, after a gun had been fired. It was an execution. The criminal was led along the street with chains on his legs, and his hands tied behind his back, and escorted by soldiers. When he arrived at a spot where two large streets cross he knelt down, a man held his queue, and the executioner with one blow severed his head from the body on the signal of a gun being fired. The headman was dressed in red. Immediately the head fell the great crowd of people clapped their hands, not in loud applause, however, but in their superstition to drive away the *sha shi* (the deadly influences, or the spirits of death). Then the magistrate and his retinue hurried away, almost on the run, to the temple of the city god, Chan-hwang, to burn incense, so letting the god know that justice had been done, and to prevent evil influences. From the city god's temple they then went to the Magistrate's Yamen and the officials at in the Hall of Justice, with the whole yamen assembled when all cried out 'Ho! Ho!' to drive away any remaining evil spirits, lest death or calamity should come on any of them. As I crossed the street I saw the great pool of blood, and a crowd surrounded the head and body. The criminal was a man who had committed adultery and murdered the husband of his guilty paramour.

ART AND ARTISTS

PROBABLY no composer is a greater favorite with the majority of lovers of light music than Sir Arthur Sullivan, whose masterpiece, 'The Gondoliers,' is to be played through New Zealand by the Juveniles, whose season has commenced with such signal success in Auckland. Sir Arthur's health has long given his friends grave anxiety, and now though out of danger, and even hard at work, he is far from robust. In our picture he looks as strong a subject as a Life Insurance officer could desire, but Sir Arthur has not been taken since his last ill-



SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN.

ness, and our engraving is taken from a photograph taken in his prime. It was an unfortunate misunderstanding which caused the celebrated pair to break a partnership which delighted the world. It scarcely seems natural to hear of an opera by Sullivan with the libretto by any other man than Gilbert, and we sigh when we think of Gilbert's exquisite wit being wedded to other music than that of Sullivan. The pair have, we were told some time back, 'made it up,' but as yet there are no signs of an opera from their hands. In the words of a once much-sung comic song we would say—'let it be soon.'

The juveniles now touring New Zealand are really exceedingly clever. They act with infinitely more verve and abandon than their elders, and never attempt liberties with the public as some favourites of burlesque and comic opera are apt to do on occasions. If it be true that to laugh is to grow fat, then verily the inhabitants of the capitals who patronise the Liliputians in 'Aladdin' will wax exceedingly obese.

In the course of a recent lecture to the Playgoers' Club on 'The Dramas and the Emotions,' Mr J. T. Grein made a remarkable statement and expressed an interesting opinion respecting the marriages of actors with actresses. The statement was that in England there was an exceptional number of early and unhappy marriages in the theatrical profession, and the opinion that this was caused by young actors and actresses having for nights in succession to play love scenes together. Some well known actors and actresses having been asked their opinion, we give that of the Savoy favourite, Miss Jessie Bond, who thinks the circumstance alluded to by Mr Grein tells rather against than in favour of the theory he propounded. 'It is not within my knowledge,' she says, 'that more unhappy marriages occur in the ranks of the theatrical than in any other profession, or that meeting on the stage is to a greater extent responsible for marriage in haste and repentance at leisure than meeting elsewhere.

'I am rather disposed to think that actors and actresses see so much of each other's failings that, coupled with a knowledge of the precarious nature of all theatrical incomes, they, as a rule, exercise greater caution than the majority of people.' In qualification of this, however, Miss Bond thinks it necessary to add: 'I am thinking only of the professional actor and actress to whom the stage is a business, and not of those who adopt it as an amusement, or a means of temporary freedom from parental restraint.'

In this view of the matter the heroine of comic opera is supported by the hero of the melodrama. Mr Warner is of opinion that 'in most cases of love-making on the stage it is looked upon as purely a matter of business. Doubtless there are exceptional cases, but the marriage of actors and actresses are mostly happy. I take Mr and Mrs Kendal, playing lovers, and having a long life of married happiness, Mr and Mrs Edward Compton, Mr and Mrs Pateman, Mr and Mrs Macklin, Mr and Mrs Thorne and his much lamented wife, Mr and Mrs F. Terry, Mr and Mrs Edward Terry. I don't know whether the last named pair played lovers on the stage in early life, but they have played them for many years off the stage. And I could mention many similar cases of married happiness on the stage.'

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

MANUFACTURED GRINDSTONES.

SCIENCE comes to the front in the manufacture of grindstones. The best now made are composed of a mixture of pulverized quartz, powdered flint, powdered emery and rubber. They outwear by many years any natural stone.

THE COLOUR OF CARROTS.

Where does the red colour come from? The roots of the wild carrot are, so far as we know (says the *Gardener's Chronicle*) not red, and we have lately examined several roots of the maritime variety, *Daucus maritima*, and they are not red. Still there is a tendency in the plant to produce a red colour, as occasionally the central flower of the umbel is of a deep purple colour, while all around are whitish. Why? The carrot has been known from the earliest times, and its origin from either of the two forms above mentioned is only a matter of assumption. There are other species from which it might have descended.

AN EXTRAORDINARY GAUGE.

An extraordinary electric railway, so far as the gauge is concerned, is projected between Brighton and Rottingdean. A Bill for powers to construct is to be introduced into Parliament next session. This railway, which will be nearly four miles in length, will commence at Paston Place, Brighton, and proceed along the beach and foreshore between high and low water mark at a distance of about 100 yards from the cliff to Rottingdean. From the termination of the railway a jetty is proposed to be constructed for a distance of 200 feet into the sea. The railway will be constructed on the extraordinary 'gauge' of 24 feet.

MR EDISON'S NEWEST PHONOGRAPH.

Mr Edison states that he expects soon to so perfect his phonograph that it will be able to deal with sounds inaudible by the human ear. Once captured by his improved phonograph, these sounds will be returned to the listener intensified to a degree to make them easily audible. It is interesting to know that Professor Bell's latest device of importance, the 'waterphone,' for locating leaks in water-pipes, was suggested to him by observing a plumber's apprentice endeavouring to find a leak by means of a small steel rod which he held in his mouth and touched against the pipe.

TYPES OF FINGERS.

Herr Otto Moretus, in a recent article on 'The Art of Reading Character in the Hand,' that is, to discover the chief characteristics of a person by the shape and general appearance of the hand, says that there are three types of fingers, and that these are of the highest importance in character-reading, because, in conjunction with the palm, they give the key to the whole character of an individual. These types he describes as 'Fat fingers,' broader at the ends than at the knuckles; angular, knobby fingers, with the extremities of the same breadth as the knuckles, and conical fingers, with tapering tips. The first of these types shows that the individual is more inclined to the useful and practical than to the ideal; has a strong sense for the material, for physical strength, for industrial occupation, for the practice of the scientific, and, generally, a decided aversion to philosophy, poetry and metaphysics. Knobby fingers signify a preference for philosophy, the sciences, and logic. Men with such fingers, like the exact, the positive in science and life; they are inventive, and happy in turning their knowledge to account; therefore they have business talent, but seldom know any higher or more poetical flight. Men with conical, tapering fingers, are artistically gifted, and easily carried away; they strive for social independence, and incline to the ideal in art and life.

A COURTING AND FIGHTING CRAB.

In his report, as surgeon naturalist of the Marine Survey of India, Dr. A. Alcock records some interesting observations on the little estuarine crab *Gelasinus*. The most obvious structural peculiarity of *Gelasinus* is the enormous development of one of the *chelae* or jaws in the male only, the *chela* in the female being minute. In the colder months, at any rate, the males far outnumber the females. In a fully adult male the length of the large *chela* is two and a half times the greatest length, and one and a half times the greatest breadth of the animal's body, and 40 per cent of the entire weight of the animal, and is coloured a beautiful cherry-red fading to a rose pink, the rest of the animal being of a dingy greenish brown colour. Dr. Alcock has been able to observe that, whatever other functions the great *chela* may serve, it also, in the species under consideration, is (1) a club used in the contests of rival males, and (2) a signal to charm and allure the females. This last function is particularly apparent. As one walks across the mud one first becomes aware of the presence of these crabs by noticing that the surface of the mud is everywhere alive with twinkling objects of a brilliant pearly-pink colour. Carefully watched, these prove to be the enormous *chela* of a crowd of males of *Gelasinus* waving in the air, each little crab standing at the mouth of its burrow and ceaselessly brandishing its big claw. On closer observation, among every ten or so males a small clawless female can be seen feeding in apparent unconcern. If the female should approach the burrow of a male, the latter displays the greatest excitement, raising itself on its hindmost legs, dancing and stamping and frantically waving its beautifully coloured big claw. From prolonged watching, Dr. Alcock feels convinced that the waving of the claw by the male is a signal of consent to the female, and he thinks no one can doubt that the claw of the male has become conspicuous and beautiful in order to attract and charm the female. The second function as a fighting weapon, becomes apparent when in the general tournament one of the rival males approaches too close to another. The great claw is then used as a club, the little creatures making savage back-handed sweeps at each other.