

A Budget of Blunders.

We have all heard of Sir Boyle Robert's blunders. Dickens gives an account of some of those which, happily, are preserved. In one of his speeches he said:

"Sir, I would give up half—nay, the whole of the Constitution, to preserve the remainder."

This, however, was parliamentary.

Hearing that Admiral Howe was in quest of the French, he remarked, somewhat pleasantly, that the Admiral would "sweep the French fleet off the face of the earth."

By-and-bye came dangerous times of disaffection, and honest men's lives were insecure.—Sir Boyle writes from the country to a friend in the capital this discouraging view of his position:

"You may judge," he says, "of our state when I tell you that I write this with a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other."

On one occasion when the famous letters to *Public Advertiser* were attracting universal attention, Sir Boyle was heard to complain bitterly of the attacks of a certain anonymous writer called Junius. He it was who recounted that marvellous performance in gymnastics, when, in a turmoil of loyalty, he "stood prostrate at the feet of his sovereign." He it was who denounced in withering language the apostate politicians who "turned his back upon himself." He it was who introduced to public notice the ingenious yet particularly confused metaphor of the rat:

"Sir," he said, addressing the Speaker of the Irish House, "I smell a rat. I saw him floating in the air; but, mark me, I shall yet nip him in the bud."

There was the famous speech which confounded generations:

"I don't see, Mr. Speaker, why we should put ourselves out of the way to serve posterity.—What has ever posterity done for us?"

He was a little disconcerted by the burst of laughter that followed, and proceeded to explain his meaning:

"By posterity, sir, I do not mean our ancestors, but those who come immediately after them."

His invitation to the nobleman was hospitable and well meant, but equivocal:

"I hope my lord, if ever you come within a mile of my house, you'll stay there all night."

He it was who stood for the proper dimensions of the wine bottle, and proposed to Parliament that it should be made compulsory that every "pint bottle should contain a quart."

Very pleasant, and yet perfectly intelligible was his meaning—though unhappily it took the fatal bovine shape—in his rebuke to the shoemaker when getting shoes for his gouty limbs:

"I told you to make one larger than the other and instead of that you have made one smaller than the other—the opposite."

THE only practical joke in which R. Harris Bareham (better known by his *nom de guerre* of Thomas Ingoldsby) ever personally engaged was enacted when he was a boy at Canterbury, in company with a schoolfellow, D——, now a gallant major. He entered a Quaker meeting house, when, looking around at the grave assembly, the latter held up a penny tart, and said solemnly, "Whoever speaks first shall have this pie." "Go thy way, boy," said a drab-colored gentleman, rising, "go thy way, and—" "The pie's yours, sir!" exclaimed D——, placing it before the astonished speaker, and hastily effecting his escape.

Facts for the Curious.

According to Boerhave, the healthiest children are born in January, February and March.

Serpents usually shed their skins, which, remarkable as it may at first appear, extend over their eyes.

The natural small-pox usually carries off eight in every hundred attacked with it; but of three hundred vaccinated, only one dies.

Of one thousand infants fed by the mother's milk, not above three hundred die; but of the same number reared by wet nurses, five hundred die.

China, properly so-called, contains about three hundred and fifty millions of souls, and extends over twenty degrees of latitude and twenty of longitude, or four hundred square degrees.

The flea, locust and grasshopper jump two hundred times their own length; equal to a quarter of a mile for a man.

There are in a man five hundred and twenty-seven muscles, two hundred and fifty-seven of which are in pairs. Of these no less than one hundred are constantly used in the simple act of breathing.

The first code of written laws possessed by the Athenians was prepared by Draco, a man of stern and rigid character. These laws punished all crimes with death; and on account of their sanguinary character, are said to have been written in blood.

There are thirty-six thousand seeds in the capsula of a tobacco plant; and Ray, the celebrated botanist, counted in the head of a poppie thirty-five thousand seeds. It has been calculated by many naturalists that the elm-tree produces thirty-five thousand seeds.

If the feathery gills of a small perch could be unfolded and spread out, they would nearly cover a square yard. This will not appear so extraordinary when it is recollected that the nerve in a dog's nose is spread out in so thin a web, that it is computed to be equal to four square feet.

In the human skeleton there are two hundred and fifty-two separate bones. Hard-working people sometimes have an extra number, which are formed near the joints of the thumb, forefingers and toes. They are useful in increasing the power wherever they grow.

The aorta, or principal artery, of the whale, measures about a foot in diameter. The quantity of blood thrown into it at each pulsation has been estimated at from ten to fifteen gallons; the rush of this fluid is quite audible to the harpooners when about to strike the fish.

When rabbits, squirrels, and various other gnawing animals are fed on soft meats, their teeth often grow so long and crooked as to prevent them from taking food, and instances have occurred in which, to preserve life, it became necessary to break off or extract the teeth.

Dr. Darwin was of the opinion that if a deaf man dreamed of hearing, the internal parts, essential to the function were unimpaired. The same remark, says Dr. Smith, of Boston, is applicable to the blind. "I have invariably found that the incurably blind never dream of seeing or hearing."

A WHITE man not long since sued a black man in one of the courts, and while the trial was before the judge, the litigants came to an amicable settlement, and so the counsel stated to the court. "A verbal settlement will not answer," replied the judge; "it must be in writing." "Here is the agreement in black and white," responded counsel, pointing to the parties; "pray, what does your honor want more than this?"

A Just Rebuke.

The following shows the difference between a noble mind and that meanness of spirit which values a man merely for what he may possess of worldly goods or reputation:—

Edmund Kean, while playing at Exeter, in England, and at the height of his popularity, was invited to dine with some gentlemen at one of the principal hotels. He drove there in his carriage. The dinner was announced, the table was sumptuously decorated, and the landlord, all bows and submission, hoped that the gentlemen and their distinguished visitor found everything to their satisfaction.

Kean stared at him for some moments, and then said—

"Your name is —?"

"It is, Mr. Kean. I have had the honor of meeting you before."

"You kept some years ago a small tavern in the outskirts of this town?"

"I did, Mr. Kean. Fortune has been kind to both of us since then. I recollect you, sir, when you belonged to our theatre here."

"And I, sir," said Kean, jumping up, "recollect you. Many years ago, I came into your paltry tavern, after a long journey, with my suffering wife, and a sick child, all of us wet to the skin. I asked you for a morsel of refreshment. You answered me as if I was a dog, and refused to trust it out of your hands until you had received the trifle which was its value."

I left my family by your inhospitable fireside while I sought for lodgings. On my return you ordered me, like a brute, 'to take my wife and brat from your house,' and abused me for not spending for drink the money I had not for food. Fortune, as you say, has done something for us both since then; but you are still the same, I see—the same cringing, grasping, grinding, greedy money-hunter. I, sir, am still the same. I am now in my zenith—I was then at my nadir; but I am the same man—the same Kean whom you ordered away from your doors; and I have now the same hatred to oppression that I had then; and were it my last meal, I'd not eat or drink in a house belonging to so heartless a scoundrel!

"Gentlemen," said he, turning to his friends, "I beg pardon for this outbreak; but were I to dine under the roof of this time-serving, gold-loving brute, the first mouthful, I am sure would choke me."

Kean kept his word, and the party adjourned to another hotel.

AN AFFECTING INCIDENT.—We clip from an exchange the following affecting incident:—

Two officers, wounded in the battle of the 20th before Petersburg, were going home last Friday by the Erie route. When the train neared Oswego a well dressed lady, accompanied by a child and a gentleman, entered the car and took seats in front of them. As the officers talked over the recent engagements at Petersburg, informing each other of various acquaintances who had fallen, one remarked "there was Captain Warwick, of the 109th New York, as brave a fellow as ever lived; he was shot through the head and instantly killed." The lady immediately sprang from her seat, and throwing up her hands, exclaimed, "Oh! don't say that, he was my husband!" and then burst into an agony of tears. This was the first intelligence she had received of her husband's death. The child with her was his daughter, and the gentleman her brother. There were few dry eyes in the car during the rest of the journey to Elmira.