

the same Japan boxes on the counter of the same shop. The explanation is simple. The boxes, which contain the unbanked securities and cash of merchants and brokers, are locked up for the night in the silversmith's strong room, built in an excavation of sand-rock far below the surface of the street, and upon which falls, when closed up for the night, a considerable flow of water. The merchants and brokers pay a rent for the use of this secure depository; and, acting no doubt upon this idea, a Mr. Streeter, an extensive jeweller, intends to give the wealthy possessors of costly jewels the opportunity of using his 'Chatwood safe,' with its hydro-pneumatic envelope and patent water-level gauge. This safe stands on the floor of his shop, and is open to day-light. It rests upon a foundation of many details, and of sufficient solidity to sustain more than ten times sixty tons, the weight of the safe itself, which is encased in concrete, embedded in which is a water-chamber connected with an apparatus and air-tubes to give timely warning of sinister assaults. Besides this security, the safe is burglar-proof, engineer-proof, gunpowder-proof, chemical-proof, miner-proof, and expert or dexterity-proof. It cannot be fused, melted, wedged, or bored, nor can the lock of the door, which weighs six tons, be picked or tampered with by the most skilled manipulator without bringing down upon himself a detector. The key consists of four parts, each in the possession of different persons, so that danger is averted in that direction; while, supposing the whole key to be lost, the wards of the lock admit of no fewer than two thousand variations, and a new key could be made that would render the old one perfectly useless. Granting, however, the possibility of a successful breaking into the safe, it would require sixty hours to accomplish the feat; and, as before stated, the first blow, nay, the merest scratch, of the operator would at once be shown by the index of a patent water-gauge level. The inventor is relieved of a good deal of anxiety in the protection the safe affords for his own valuable stock, and already many wealthy clients have secured space in it for the safe keeping of their jewels and title deeds."

ARABIAN HUMOUR.

One of the many special correspondents, speaking of the presence of the Turcos in Paris, says:—"These Turcos, if only there were not so many of them, would be capital fun. The Arab or the Khabyl is not a humorous person, excepting in the dirty bosom of his family, or amongst people with whom he thinks there is no need to care about dignity. But these newcomers from the desert, though not in the bosom of the family, are easily amusing, and consequently so. This morning, on the Place de la Concorde, a merry Turco stood looking on at the exercises of a company of National Guards, who were not very bright in their drill. He watched them with gravity and interest for some time. They went through the manual exercise, and prepared to march. The merry Turco took advantage of the opportunity; putting a stick between his legs, he cocked his tarboosh, and pranced along the line with that peculiar hop and step which is supposed by our infant population to represent a horse's canter. There were thousands looking on. The officer, a snifling sort of gentleman, turned very red. "March," he cried. The line advanced, so did the Turco, who galloped up and down in front of the poor Guards, without a smile. Now he stood on one flank, and now dashed at full speed to the other, eyeing the movement with the critical glance which distinguishes an ancient martinet. The people roared with laughter; the officers grew redder, and, perhaps, muttered mild oaths between their teeth; the honest privates did not know which way to look. "Remove that man!" cried the commandant. "Halt!" They halted, but they did not remove the merry Turco, who cantered to the middle of the line, and frowningly scrutinized the equipment and bearing of the men. There was a little fat fellow there who got desperately uncomfortable under this gaze. He glanced down at his boots to see they were all right, then along his belt; he tried to twist round and examine his knapsack. "Remove that man!" roared the officer. No one stirred in the ranks, but the audience shouted and held their sides. What would have happened I don't know, but a friend of the Turco's came out from the crowd and led him away, prancing all the time, and throwing back over his shoulder that severe general-on-review look which had so disconcerted the little fat private. In the evening, only an hour or two since, I saw another Turco causing a disturbance. He had apparently bought some object, and paid insufficiently for it. The shopkeeper was raving his grievances to a circle of *hancurs*, and the tall, lithe Arab stood in front, with the calmest smile possible upon his tawny face. Two Gardes de Paris came up. The shopkeeper insisted that the thief, as he called him, should be arrested. The crowd increased, but no one took measures to do justice. The Turco, I should say, was armed with a sword-bayonet, and towered by a head above the group. He listened with an amiable air until, tired of the joke apparently, he suddenly swung off with rude *insouciance* and lounged away, always wearing the same pleasant smile; and no one attempted to pursue except the little shopkeeper, who swooped round and round him like a sea-gull, but soon gave up the useless chase. I mention these two little stories as instances, amongst a thousand, of the way our Turcos behave, and the way they are treated. If the Arabs do not shortly show, by acts, the most utter contempt for their masters I shall be surprised, and the Parisians will have no one but themselves to blame for the necessity of a cruel lesson to these children of the desert."

NAPOLEON'S PRIVATE FORTUNE.—The London *Times* says:—"Unless we are misinformed, the Emperor Napoleon, who has been the Chief of the French State for nearly twenty-two years, and its almost absolute master for nearly eighteen, retains no private property but a small cottage which came to him from his mother. Call it rashness, call it overweening confidence, or call it a generous recklessness, it is proved by the event that he did not devote his reign to the accumulation of money. Whatever he has received from France he has spent in the country, in accordance with the social system which was established with the Empire. That system was, no doubt, extravagant in the extreme. No contemporary Sovereign has held such a court. The Czar, who owns vast domains as his private property, besides ignoring the limitations of a civil list in dealing with the public treasury, could not maintain such splendour. The Sultan may squander his millions, but his oriental magnificence has been more shabbiness by the side of Paris. What our own court is, we all see, and, as we know its cost, we may, when we compare it with that of the French Emperor, form some judgment of his expenses. Napoleon

III. will leave his German place of captivity at the end of the war almost as poor a man as he was when he entered France in 1848. The Empress has, indeed, her jewels, gifts at her marriage and on her fête days; but these are her private property, the State jewels being now in the hands of the French Government at Tours. She has, besides, an hereditary property in Spain, and the Prince Imperial has a house which has been bequeathed to him near Trieste. This, we believe, is all that remains to the family which lately were supreme in France.

ON THE RHINE.—A correspondent of the London *Times* writes:—"I was greatly struck with the resemblance between this pleasant land of the Grand Duchy of Baden and the conquered province of Alsace, through which I journeyed a few days ago. The similarity in all material characteristics was most remarkable. On both sides of the Rhine the villages are very numerous, and the houses are built on the same model. The inhabitants not only speak German, but they also speak dialects which have many points in common. There is this difference between the costumes of the peasants, that whereas in Alsace the women wear scarlet petticoats, dark-coloured bodices, and small hats, in Baden they wear white bodices, large straw hats, and blue petticoats. The males of Baden, however, show as much fondness for red as the Alsatian females. The well-to-do peasant arrays himself in a scarlet waistcoat. The inhabitants of these two tracts of country differ as to the beverages with which they quench their thirst or gratify their tastes. In these Baden villages the peasant who has a few coppers to spare indulges in a pint of wine. The Alsatian calls for a pint of beer. The wine is said to be wholesome; it is certainly very acid. The beer is very thick, but is not strong. The peasants of both sides of the Rhine are notable for their sobriety and industry. So long as peasants do not drink to excess and are ready to work hard, the character and quality of their favourite beverage are secondary considerations, provided that the liquor is genuine and its cost small. Now the common wine of Baden and the beer of Alsace are alike unadulterated and cheap."

THE HEAD-QUARTERS OF TYPOGRAPHY.—A correspondent of *Notes and Queries* draws attention to the fact that the battlefield of the present campaign attained early celebrity as the head-quarters of typography. Metz was one of the first towns which practised the art of printing, and the ancient works which came from its press are very numerous. Strasburg is asserted to have been for some years the home of John Gutenberg, although no dated book is extant of an earlier year than 1471. Toul is to be noted as the place at which one of the first attempts at stereotyping was made. The Sedan editions compete with the Elzevirs in the estimation of book collectors, and are beautiful examples of minute typography. Kehl was the ultimate resting-place of Baskerville's type, with which M. Beaumarchais printed an edition of Voltaire's works on blue paper for King Frederick of Prussia, "who laboured under weakness of the eyes." At Rheims and Verdun printing was carried on at an early date, and the latter place has a special interest as having been the place where the English prisoners who were detained by Napoleon I. printed, with his permission, an edition of the English Book of Common Prayer. There seems to be some little doubt whether we derived our sedan chairs directly from the place of that name; for Evelyn asserts that they were brought from Italy by Sir Sanders Duncombe, and the word may perhaps be related to the Italian *sedente*. This point is as knotty as that connected with the kindred word coach, on which volumes have been written, supporting the rival claims of Kottsee, a Hungarian town, and the French *cocher*.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

LIFE OF A SIAMESE KING.

The King, as well as most of the principal members of his household, rose at five in the morning, and immediately partook of a slight repast, served by the ladies who had been in waiting through the night; after which, attended by them and his sisters and elder children, he descended and took his station on a long strip of matting, laid from one of the gates through all the avenues to another. On His Majesty's left were ranged, first, his children in the order of rank; then the princesses, his sisters; and lastly his concubines, his maids of honour, and their slaves. Before each was placed a large silver tray containing offerings of boiled rice, fruits, cakes, and the *seri* leaf; some even had cigars. A little after five the Patoon Dhamrina ("Gate of Merit," called by the populace "Patoon Boon") was thrown open, and the Amazons of the guard drawn up on either side. Then the priests entered, always by that gate—one hundred and ninety-nine of them, escorted on the right and left by men armed with swords and clubs—and as they entered they chanted: "Take thy meat, but think it dust! Eat but to live, and but to know thyself, and what thou art below! And say withal unto thy heart, 'tis earth I eat, that to the earth I may new life impart." Then the chief priest, who led the procession, advanced with downcast eyes and lowly mien, and very simply presented his bowl (slung from his neck by a cord, and until that moment quite hidden under the folds of his yellow robe) to the members of the royal household, who offered their fruits or cakes, or their spoons full of rice or sweetmeats. In like manner did all his brethren. If, by any chance, one before whom a tray was placed was not ready and waiting with an offering, no priest stopped, but all continued to advance slowly, taking only what was freely offered, without thanks or even a look of acknowledgement, until the end of the royal train was reached, when the procession retired, chanting as before, by the gate called Duin, or, in the Court language, Prithi, "Gate of Earth." After this, the King and all his company repaired to his private temple, Watt Sasmas Manda-thung, so called because it was dedicated by His Majesty to the memory of his mother. It is an edifice of unique and charming beauty, decorated throughout by artists from Japan, who have represented on the walls, in designs as diverse and ingenious as they are costly, the numerous metempsychoses of Buddha. Here His Majesty ascended alone the steps of the altar, rang a bell to announce the hour of devotion, lighted the consecrated tapers, and offered the white lotus and the roses. Then he spent an hour in prayer, and in reading texts from the Phrajana Paramita and the Phra-ti-Mok-sha. This service over, he retired for another nap, attended by a fresh detail of women—those who had waited the night before being dismissed, not to be recalled for a month, or at least a fortnight, save as a peculiar mark of preference or favour to some one who had the good

fortune to please or amuse him: but most of that party voluntarily waited upon him every afternoon. At two o'clock he rose again, and, with the aid of his women, bathed and anointed his person. Then he descended to a breakfast-chamber, where he was served with the most substantial meal of the day. Here he chatted with his favourites among the wives and concubines, and caressed his children, taking them in his arms, embracing them, plying them with puzzling or funny questions, and making droll faces at the babies; the more agreeable the mother, the dearer the child. The love of children was the constant and hearty virtue of this forlorn despot. They appealed to him by their beauty and their trustfulness; they refreshed him with the bold innocence of their ways, so frolicsome, graceful and quaint. From this delusive scene of domestic condescension and kindness, he passed to his hall of audience to consider official matters. Twice a week at sunset he appeared at one of the gates of the palace, to hear the complaints and petitions of the poorest of his subjects, who at no other time or place could reach his ear. It was most pitiful to see the helpless, awe-stricken wretches, prostrate and abject as toads, many too terrified to present the precious petition after all. At nine he retired to his private apartments, whence issued immediately peculiar domestic bulletins, in which were named the women whose presence he particularly desired, in addition to those whose turn it was to "wait" that night. And twice a week he held a secret council or court, at mid-night. Of the proceedings of those dark and terrifying sittings I can, of course, give no exact account. I permit myself to speak only of those things which were but too plain to one who lived for six years in or near the palace.—*The English Governess at the Siamese Court*.

A THEORY.

A curious story comes across the plains, which, if true, is calculated to upset some of the favourite theories of the geologists. Professor Agassiz declares that the New World, and Professor Winchell adds, that, with the exception of part of Canada, the Western is the oldest part of the Continent—so old in fact that it is nearly worn out, and hence is reduced to a desert. Now what will the learned Professors say to this little scrap of scientific fiction from the Los Angeles *News*? It says that on the great Yuma desert, forty miles north of San Bernardino, and thirty miles west of Los Palamos, was formerly a shallow salt lake, which has recently disappeared, revealing the wreck of a large vessel imbedded in the sand. There can be no mistake about it. Nearly one third of the forward part of the ship or barque is plainly visible. The stump of the bow-sprit remains, and portions of the timbers are perfect. No inscriptions, log-book, valise, or other article has been found by which the strange craft can be identified; and the question is, how came she there? It is forty miles from the nearest road, and, so far as is known, nobody but Indians have ever passed that way. They never could have built a ship; and if they had, they could not have floated it upon that shallow lake. It is hardly rational to suppose anybody would attempt the passage of the plains in such a vehicle; and the more the editor thinks about it, the more he don't know. In the light of geology, we see but one possible solution to the question. It is the scow of some reckless Canadian who started to hunt for gold in California, and was shipwrecked on the way. It probably happened about the time the Rocky Mountain first came above water, and interfered with overland navigation.—*Detroit Post*.

AN EXTENSIVE APPETITE.

The following is said to have appeared in *Nature*, which announcement will allow our readers to make as many puns on the subject as they may think fit. It is concerning a French soldier. His first exploit was to eat a basket of apples, at a friend's expense. On various occasions he swallowed a series of corks and other indigestible materials, which produced such violent colic, that he was obliged to attend the Hotel Dieu, and, whilst being examined, almost managed to swallow the watch-chain and seals of the surgeon in attendance, M. Giraud. Dessault, on the occasion of one of the attacks of colic, tried to frighten him out of his gross habits, by declaring that it would be necessary to open his stomach, and arranged the instruments. He ran away and relieved himself by copious draughts of warm water. Soon after, he found that his appetite had really increased to an excessive amount, probably owing to the continued irritation produced by these absurd tricks. At 17 years of age, when only weighing 100 lbs., he could eat 24 pounds of beef in as many hours. He now entered the army, and, being recognized by the Surgeon-Major, M. Courville, of the 9th Regiment of Hussars, he was detained for curiosity. From the day of his admission he was ordered quadruple rations, with pickings and waste meat; but often slipped into the dispensary to finish off a poultice or two. One day he was observed to seize a large cat; and, after sucking its blood, left in a very short time only cleanly picked bones, the hair being rejected in the course of about half an hour, like other carnivora. He was fond of serpents and eels, swallowing them whole. On another occasion he consumed, in a few minutes, a repast spread out for fifteen German work-people, of milk, etc., after which he was blown out like a balloon. In presence of some officers, he swallowed, at one sitting, thirty pounds of livers and lights. His insatiable appetite was, for once in his life, made useful by his being selected to convey a correspondence between General Beaumarchais and a French Colonel, which was inserted in a box and swallowed; but he was caught and soundly thrashed. He fell under suspicion of having eaten a child fourteen months old. It is stated that he was of mild and gentle manners and aspect. After death, his stomach was found in a very diseased condition.

THE FRENCH SOLDIERS IN BELGIUM.

After the battles of the 30th and 31st of August, which preceded the battle of Sedan, thousands of French soldiers took flight into Belgium. On crossing the frontier they laid down their arms and were conducted by Belgian troops detailed for the purpose into the various large towns of the interior. Everywhere they were well received by the inhabitants, who did everything in their power to make the fugitives comfortable. Our illustration shows the manner in which they were received at Namur. The women brought out refreshments which were gladly accepted by the hungry Frenchmen.