

HOW MEN DIFFER FROM ANIMALS.

The chief difference between man and the lower animals lies in man's capacity for sinning. Obviously he has no monopoly of the virtues. A dog may be faithful, an elephant may be kind and true, a cat is said to love home and fireside; the parental instincts of the penguin would put nine-tenths of the leaders of our best society to shame. It is not by possessing such attributes that animals become "almost human." It would be fairer to our furred and feathered friends to say that the man who possesses these traits in fine degree is almost animal. There is a horse of vaudeville fame that reckons simple sums in addition, and answers a wide variety of questions, if my memory serves me; I will even allow him to write his own first name with his hoof in the sand. The show-bills call him "human" yet we feel no sense of kinship as we watch the performance, even though we should grant him all the ratiocination his exhibitors claim. We simply say, "What a wonderfully clever horse!" bestow a word of praise upon his trainer, and that is the whole story. I have seen a dog perform agile tricks with prompt obedience and obvious enjoyment, and to me he was still a dog. But when some canine friend hides on his wash-day; when he steals the cat's milk and pretends he did not; when he slinks in at a door with every expression of eye and limb crying "peccavi," ah, then I say to myself, "There is something human about that dog." —Burgess Johnson in *Harper's Magazine* for January.

EXPLAINING THE TELEGRAPH.

As a general rule, the telegraph no longer arouses the wonder and awe that it did in our grandfathers. In remote countries, however, there are still people who have never heard of it, and who are unable to understand it. *Das Echo* tells of the perplexity that the telegraph caused in a small village of Bosnia.

The government had installed a telegraph line from Prijedor to Bahatsch.

"What is the meaning of this wire?" asked the astonished inhabitants of a village through which the line happened to pass.

"It is a telegraph," said the headman of the

village, who had been in consultation with the officials. "One can send a message along this wire, straight from here to Stamboul."

The villagers were incredulous. "That is impossible. How can a message run along a wire?"

The headman thought awhile; then he hit upon the proper explanation. "Imagine," he said, "a dog that is terribly long, and whose tail is stretched like the wire on these poles; imagine that his tail is so long that he reaches from here to Stamboul. Now, suppose we pinched his tail here. Wouldn't he howl in Stamboul?"

The villagers understood.—*Youth's Companion*.

CURRENT EVENTS.

The magnificent parliament buildings at Ottawa, considered the finest Gothic structure in America, and rivaling in beauty any other parliament houses in the world, were destroyed by fire on the night of February 3. The fire spread rapidly, and several persons lost their lives, while many others had a narrow escape.

Canada produces about three-quarters of the nickel used in the world. It has been sent out of the country for refining; but probably some means will be found of keeping this industry at home.

The reports of government engineers are very unfavourable to the completion of the Hudson Bay Railway, and the work may be abandoned. The greatest engineering difficulties are in connection with the character of the shores, which offer no secure foundation for harbour works.

Recent explorations in Hudson Bay have shown that the Belcher Islands are much larger than was supposed, the largest island being over a hundred miles long, and the length of the entire chain many hundreds of miles.

The railway between South Africa and Southwest Africa, rapidly constructed by General Botha last year for military purposes, will be of great importance in times of peace. It is three hundred miles in length, extending from Prieska, on the Orange River, to Kalkfontein, and saves many hundred miles between points in South Africa and those in Southwest Africa, as compared with the old route by rail to Cape Town and thence by sea. Through trains are now running from South African points to Walfisch Bay.

Much of the material used in commercial fertilizers has hitherto come from Germany. A Canadian inventor has found a process of obtaining potash from ordinary feldspar, which promises to be of great importance; and valuable deposits of phosphates have been discovered in the Rocky Mountains, south of the Canadian boundary. Other sources of both potash and phosphates will be eagerly sought, so that we may be independent of the German supply.

Huerta, former dictator of Mexico, died last month in Texas, where he was in prison on a charge of attempting to violate the neutrality laws of the United States.