WATCHMEN.

OLD customs are gradually disappearing. We have seen the last of many practices and offices which were regarded as permanent by our ancestors. Only a few weeks back the last of the watchmen disappeared from the Temple, having cried the hour for the last time, when the old guardian of the City gave place to the new police. When this steady, regular, and efficient force was introduced by the late Sir Robert Peel, and in derision christened "Peelers" by the vulgar, the Temple kept up its practice of watchmen—the lawyers strictly maintaining their independence; and for long years after the practice of crying the hour had ceased in all our London streets, it still woke up the echoes of the Temple. Within the precincts of the law the old watchmen lingered; but even they—the only remaining specimens of the old City guardian—have disappeared at last, and the Police Commissioners reign without a rival.

The watchmen, with their huge overcoats and dim lanterns, crying in a broken voice—for they were most of them old—the hour of night, belong to the past,—to a state of society very different from the present. Then there was little security in the streets after dark, and when night set in the streets were dark indeed, for the best of oil lamps gave but little light, and gas was yet unknown; then the streets were badly paved, the footpath little better than the road, the road in winter or in rainy weather a Stygian quagmire; then thieves of all kinds were ready for their work of plunder, and plied a profitable trade—highway robberies were daringly committed, and ruffianly assaults took place; then insolences and outrages, cowardly and unprovoked, were offered by the "fast" men of the time; and to break the head of a "Charley," or watchman, to turn the box of a watch (with the watchman in it) against a blank wall, and leave the peace officer in hopeless captivity; to compel a watchman to surrender his coat, staff, and lantern to some tipsy rake fond of masquerading; to make any sort of practical joke on the only guardians which the City knew, was regarded as fine sport—almost equalling that of the Mohocks, Dancing-masters, and Tumblers of the days of George II.

The ancient guardians of the night, such as those who formerly watched (or dozed) over our safety, are still seen in some of the old German cities. There they cry the hour generally with some quaint rhyme, moral, or religious, or domestic in its nature. The same practice prevailed, or did prevail until a very recent period, in Poland, and our engraving is taken from a sketch made by an artist of two such watchmen in a Polish town. These watchmen go on duty in couples; each man armed with a short staff, one carrying a lantern, the other a rattle. The men represented in the illustration are sturdy fellows, far better able to take care of themselves and other people than our old Charleys; but the whole force nothing like so well organised as our police, or the police of Paris. They keep up the old German practice of chanting—or repeating, with a nasal twang, such words as

Ey Panowie gospodavze
Tonj dzieconta na zegavze
etc. etc.

Which may be rendered thus—from Polish poetry into English prose: "Oh, yes! householders take notice, it is now ten o'clock; see that all your fires are extinguished—not intrusting this precaution to your servants, but looking after it yourselves; so may Heaven keep you all from fire, and give you a good night."

Varying the advice, but seldom satisfied with simply stating that it was past one, two, three, or whatever might be the hour, the Polish guardians of the night keep their rounds till daybreak. It is a singular custom, contrasting very unfavourably, for all practical purposes, with an efficient police force day and night in our streets.

POLISH WATCHMEN ON THEIR ROUNDS.

EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE.

THE shipwreck of which we recently gave an illustration, must have excited a melancholy interest in many of our readers, and a description in the present number of one of the most gigantic precautionary measures against such disasters as shipwrecks, cannot be unwelcome. We allude to the Eddystone Lighthouse. The strength of this tower cannot be appreciated until we consider the situation in which it has, for nearly a century, braved the anger of the stormy deep.

The Eddystone rocks, on which the lighthouse is erected, are a little within the line between the Start and Lizard points; and as they lie nearly in the direction of vessels coasting up and down the Channel, before the establishment of lighthouses, they often occasioned fatal shipwrecks. It must also be remembered, that they lie exposed to the swells of the Bay of Biscay and of the Atlantic Ocean, from all south-western points of the compass; and all the heavy seas from the south-west come uncontrolled upon the Eddystone rocks, and break on them with the utmost fury. The force and height of these seas are aggravated by the circumstance of the rocks stretching across the Channel in a north and south direction, and by their lying in a sloping manner towards the south-west, and even at low water this *striving* of the rocks, as it is technically called, does not cease, but goes on progressively. Even in calm weather the sea breaks frightfully upon the Eddystone rocks; and a circumstance that still further increases the difficulty of working on them is, that of there being a sudden drop of the surface of the rock, forming a step of about five feet high, so that even in moderate weather, when the seas come swelling to this part, they meet a sudden check, and frequently fly to the height of thirty or forty feet.

To erect a beacon, or "light of all nations," on such a spot as this seems at first impossible; but what will not man project, and Englishmen execute?

The first lighthouse actually reared on these rocks was built in 1696, by Mr. Winstanly, of Essex; and so satisfied did he feel of the stability of the structure, that he expressed a wish to be in it during the greatest storm that ever blew under the face of the heavens.

Mr. Winstanly was but too amply gratified in his wish, for while he was there with his workmen and light-keepers, that dreadful storm began, which raged most violently on the 26th of November, 1703, in the night; and of all the accounts with which history furnishes us, we have none that has exceeded this in England, none which was more injurious or extensive in its devastation. The next morning, November 27th, when the violence of the storm was so much abated that it could be seen whether the lighthouse had suffered by it, nothing appeared standing; but, upon a nearer inspection, some of the large irons by which the work was fixed upon the rock still remained; but none of the people, nor any of the materials of the building, were ever found afterwards.

In 1709 another Eddystone Lighthouse was built of wood. The architect was a Mr. John Rudyerd, a silk-mercer, on Ludgate-hill. This edifice was burnt to the ground after braving the storms of forty-six years.

It was reserved for that admirable engineer, Mr. Smeaton, to raise a structure that should be at once a wonder of the world and a safeguard to navigators. Turning his thoughts to the shape best calculated to a building so critically situated, he determined to procure, if possible, an enlargement of the base without increasing the size of the waist—or that part of the building which is between the top of the rock and the top of the solid work. Like all great artists, Mr. Smeaton took counsel of Nature, and a large oak tree was his model for the lighthouse. On this interesting subject we give our readers the architect's own words:—"Let us," says he, "consider its particular figure. Connected with its roots, which lie hid below ground, it rises from the surface with a large swelling base, which at the height of one diameter is generally reduced by an elegant curve, concave to the eye, to a diameter less by at least one-third, and sometimes to half its original base. From thence, its taper diminishing more slowly, its sides by degrees come into a perpendicular, and for some height form a cylinder. After that, a preparation of more circumference becomes necessary, for the strong insertion and establishment of the principal boughs, which produces a swelling of its diameter. Now we can hardly doubt, but that every section of the tree is nearly of an equal strength in proportion to what it has to resist; and were we to lop off its principal boughs, and expose it in that state to a rapid current of water, we should find it as capable of resisting the action of the heavier fluid, when divested of the great part of its clothing, as it was that of the lighter, when all its spreading ornaments were exposed to the fury of the wind; and hence we may derive an idea of what the proper shape of a column of the greatest stability ought to be, to resist the action of external violence, when the quantity of matter is given of which it is to be composed."

Mr. Smeaton began the work on the 2nd of April, 1757, and finished it on August 4th, 1759. The rock, which slopes towards the south-west, is cut into horizontal steps, into which are dovetailed, and united by a strong cement, Portland stone and granite. The whole, to the height of thirty-five feet from the foundation, is a solid mass of stone, ingrafted into each other, and united by every means of additional strength.

The Eddystone Lighthouse is an edifice in which science and philanthropy at once rejoice. Like a good Christian, it offers assistance to friend and foe. Its light does not

"Burn to bewilder, and dazzle to blind,"

but shines forth in the darkness of the storm, to direct the wanderer on the deep to resume the path of safety.

This wonderful edifice is now in its hundredth year.

COMMON SENSE.—If a person swallow poison deliberately or by chance, instead of breaking out into multitudinous or incoherent exclamations, dispatch some one for the doctor. Meanwhile, run to the kitchen, get half a glass of water in anything that is handy, put into it a teaspoonful of salt and as much ground mustard, stir it an instant, catch a firm hold of the person's nose, the mouth will soon fly open, then down with the mixture, and in a second or two up will come the poison. This course will answer better, in a larger number of cases, than any other. If, by this time, the physician has not arrived, make the patient swallow the white of an egg, followed by a cup of strong coffee, because these appliances nullify a larger number of poisons than any other accessible articles, as antidotes for any poison that may remain in the stomach.

Oddities.

CRAZY CROW.

THAT exaggerated eccentricity of manner, which may be said to constitute a man "an oddity," is either less frequent than it once was in this country, or else our modern chroniclers pass by unnoticed the instances which occur. In searching the records of social life in past times, we find numerous examples of persons who obtained a certain notoriety in their day, in consequence of a singularity of manner or habits, natural or assumed. In the case of "Crazy Crow," whose authentic portrait appears above, it is probable that the peculiarities of demeanour, due originally to a weak intellect, were encouraged by the attention they excited, and the poor fellow no doubt owed the situation which he held for some years to these eccentricities, which were not without their attraction for an unthinking audience. "Crazy Crow" was employed in the orchestra of one of the Dublin theatres, during the reign of George II. It is stated that, at the commencement of each night's performance, he was accustomed to enter the orchestra loaded with musical instruments, in the manner indicated in the engraving, and that the strange ferocity of his aspect and manners caused much amusement to the frequenters of the theatre.

A CURIOUS AFFAIR.—The most singular spit in the world is that of the Count de Castel Maria, one of the most opulent lords of Treviso. This spit turns 130 roasts at once, and plays 24 tunes; and whatever it plays corresponds to a certain degree of cooking, which is perfectly understood by the cook. Thus, a leg of mutton, *à l'Anglaise*, will be excellent at the twelfth air; a fowl, *à la Flamande*, will be juicy at the eighteenth air, and so on.

A COUNTRY POSTMASTER writes: "Among other queer addresses which are written upon letter envelopes that come under my distribution in the post-office, I find the following, which strikes me as being particularly satirical and ill-tempered:—

"'Post Masters if you have a desire to oping my letters opin them and then please to cloase them up and send them on to Mr. henry H——, ——, —— Go with speed.'"

IN Georgia, on the installation of a new governor, it is the practice of the Speaker of the House of Representatives to go to the door of the hall, and there, in a loud voice, announce the fact. Some years since Mr. Bartin Lumpkin came to the executive chair. On the conclusion of the inaugural ceremonies the Speaker proceeded to the door, but becoming a little nervous his tongue slipped, and he cried out, "Oyez, oyez, oyez! Lartin Governor is now the Bumpkin of Georgia!" It is proper to add that, notwithstanding this discouraging announcement, Mr. L.'s administration proved highly satisfactory to the people.

CHAIRING A KING.

The warlike tribes of Germany elected their kings, but they always chose one of the royal blood for their sovereign. Indeed, the principles of hereditary and elective monarchy, which now appear so utterly irreconcileable, were so far from seeming entirely inconsistent to our Saxon ancestors, that they insisted on being both united in the person of their monarch, and some traces of this apparent anomaly may be found in the present ceremonials of coronation. When the Germans had chosen a king, they prepared a *pavis*, or very large shield, on which they seated the new monarch; and elevating the pavis on the shoulders of the principal officers, carried their king in triumphal procession three times round the army. On these occasions the Germans used to manifest their spirit of rude independence by playing practical jokes on their sovereign, such as shaking the pavis, and attempting to unseat him. Such barbarous sport had nearly proved fatal to Gunwald, King of Burgundy: he was thrown from the shield, as he was borne round the army a third time, and was so severely bruised that it was feared he would have expired on the spot. This custom was introduced into England by the Saxons, and it is still preserved in the chairing of successful candidates after elections. Even the spirit of practical jesting was preserved down to the beginning of the present century: within the memory of persons still alive, it was considered rather hazardous to encounter the perils of a popular chairing at Yarmouth or at Norwich.

Facts and Scraps.

THE LENGTH OF DAYS.—At Berlin and London, the longest day has sixteen and a half hours. At Stockholm and Upsal, the longest day has eighteen and a half hours. At Hamburg, Dantzig, and Stettin, the longest day has seventeen hours, and the shortest seven. At St. Petersburg and Tobolsk, the longest has nineteen and the shortest five hours. At Tornea, in Finland, the longest day has twenty-one hours and a half, and the shortest two and a half. At Wanderbus, in Norway, the day lasts from the 21st of May to the 22nd of July, without interruption; and at Spitsbergen, the longest day is three and a half months.

GOLD COIN was first introduced into England by Edward III., in six-shilling pieces, almost as large as a modern sovereign. Nobles followed, at six shillings and eight pence (hence the lawyer's fee). Afterwards there were half and quarter nobles. Edward IV. coined angels, with a figure of "Michael and the Dragon." Henry VIII. coined sovereigns and half-sovereigns of the modern value. Guineas were of the same size, but being made of superior gold to sovereigns, guineas passed for twenty-one shillings; and in 1798 for thirty shillings.

COMBUSTION OF A WAX CANDLE.—Moralists have compared the life of a man to a "brief candle," but Dr. Ure has investigated this comparison with scientific minuteness. Thus—wax contains 81.75 parts of carbon in every hundred parts, and the combustion of those one hundred parts produces thirty-six parts of carbonic acid; consequently a wax candle will generate per hour about 375 grains of carbonic acid, or 800 cubic inches of gas. Now an average sized man develops and exhales from the lungs 1,632 cubic inches of gas per hour; thus the combustion of two ordinary wax lights deteriorates the air to about the same extent as the breathing of one man.

INVISIBLE INK.—The most curious of all kinds of invisible inks is that from cobalt. It is a very singular phenomenon, that the characters or figures traced out with this ink may be made to disappear and re-appear at pleasure. This property is peculiar to ink obtained from cobalt, for all the other kinds are at first invisible until some substance has been applied to make them appear; but when once they have appeared they remain. To prepare this ink, take zaffre and dissolve it in nitro-muriatic acid till the acid extracts from it the metallic part of the cobalt, which communicates to the zaffre its blue colour; then dilute the solution, which is very acrid, with common water. If you write with this liquor on paper, the characters will be invisible; but when exposed to a sufficient degree of heat, they will become green. When the paper has cooled they will disappear. Observe, if the paper be too much heated, they will disappear.

NOTHING LOST.—Horse-shoe nails, picked up by the grubbers about the streets, and the scraps of steel from needle factories, are eagerly bought up by the Birmingham gunmakers, as the best of all materials for the barrels of muskets and rifles. Steel pen waste is bought back by the Sheffield steel makers at ten pounds per ton; Birmingham brass filings fetch half the value of new brass; and steel filings are valuable to chemists and apothecaries. Jewellers' and gold-beaters' sweepings are rated at a very high value; the sweepings of the benches and floors are always preserved for sale; the clothing and aprons have a sufficient number of