

Next day, Smith's bill came in for uniform, cap, belt, and accoutrements, and the belt-plate of the corps in silver, amounting in all to £7 10s. Mrs. R., to whom I had not spoken since the quarrel of the previous night, the remainder of which she had passed in the nursery with the children, placed the envelope in my hands, not knowing what it enclosed.

"Behold, madam!" I said, in a tone of severe displeasure, "at what cost I have ministered to your absurd fancies!" Then ensued another tornado, from which I fled for refuge to the "Royal Oak," where I obtained a copy of the Rules of the Bungay Volunteer Rifle Corps, just published, for circulation amongst its members, by which I saw it announced, for the first time, that every member of the corps would be required to pay annually the sum of 10s. 6d. for the privilege of belonging to that patriotic body.

"And not only that," said Robbins, the landlord, and a fellow-rifleman, "it seems an order has come for our equipment in undress, at our own expense, for summer out-door service, consisting of blouse, leggings, and other things, and for military great-coats for winter campaigning. I'll not spend any more of *my* money."

"Now," said I to Mrs. Raisins, when I got home, "let us talk this matter over, my dear, calmly and dispassionately. When I attended the public meeting at the Town Hall, I was assured I should be at no greater expense than four pounds. I shouldn't much have cared, to have pleased you, to have gone as far as five or six; but after I have been enrolled some time, I find I am required to find a silver badge to wear on my cross belt, which has cost two guineas, and in regard to which the subordinate members of the corps, I believe, were never consulted; at least, I never was. I learn, also, that we are to be subjected to further expenses for additional articles of clothing, and to the annual charge of half a guinea. For these expenses I have the privilege of being allowed to learn a variety of military movements and positions, in order to qualify myself to be a defender of my country, should occasion require such service at the hands of our citizens, which occasion I trust and believe will not arrive in my life-time, and this at hours which trespass upon the time most required to be devoted to my business. I should not, however, complain of simple inconvenience; I would be willing to sacrifice something of time, study, and labour, by way of example, in furthering a movement which I dare say is calculated to effect some good, if only in the way of prompting young men to healthful exercises, and evoking a universal feeling of national independence and security. But I cannot forgive the bad faith of those who have the control and direction of such movements; and still less, I imagine, will respectable tradesmen like myself brook the supercilious insolence of young men, who think themselves privileged to be rude and offensive to persons in my station, because they hold a royal commission. I shall certainly not incur these additional expenses, and shall therefore forward to the commanding officer my notice of withdrawal; after which I shall discontinue my

visits to the 'Royal Oak,' and shall relapse once more into the sober citizen and domesticated *pater familias*."

I have acted up to my resolution. I have exchanged my uniform and military trappings for a sober suit of broadcloth for myself and a couple of tunics for my little boys; but I have not yet lost the sound of Sergeant Pennewissle's voice of command, and Mrs. Raisins is beginning to recover from her disappointment at my retirement from the Bungay corps of Rifle Volunteers.

THE GIGANTIC SALAMANDER OF JAPAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CURIOSITIES OF NATURAL HISTORY."

WE Londoners are indeed fortunate as regards seeing living specimens of rare and curious animals from all parts of the world, and for this privilege we may thank the Zoological Society and their energetic secretary, Mr. Selater, whose senses seem to perceive from afar off the whereabouts of any curious beast; he hovers, hawk-like, over the victim, and rarely fails to pounce upon it and secure it for the Regent's Park Gardens. Within the last few weeks there has arrived a living specimen of a creature never before seen alive in this country. Everybody has heard or read about that wonderful country, Japan. Among the basaltic ranges of mountains in that country there are lakes and pools of stagnant water. Should the traveller happen to be gazing into one of these pools, he might (if fortune favoured him) observe crawling lazily along the bottom, or else coming up to the surface to get a gulp of air, an enormous monster—not a fish nor yet an eel, for neither of these animals have four legs—but a veritable Salamander. In our own favoured country we have in many stagnant pools and ditches, little reptilians known by the name of water-lizards, newts, efts or effets, or salamanders; these little harmless animals are not above three or four inches long; but their relation in Japan, which is a true water salamander, or monstrous newt, becomes relatively to them a giant. The specimen now in the gardens is about thirty inches long, and thick in proportion.

Some two years ago, when Captain Taylor, who commands a merchant ship, was walking round the market of the town of Nagasaki, in Japan, he saw this specimen exposed for sale, as they are curiosities and rare creatures even in their own native country. He bought it, and made a sort of pet of it: it has been in his ship nearly two years. He fed it with eels and fish, and when these could not be procured, with flesh and the intestines of animals and birds. It is at the present moment surrounded with a host of small fish and eels, which swim about him quite unconscious of the piscivorous monster with whom they are in such close proximity. I don't wonder at their familiarity; for how could Thames fish ever possibly dream of the existence and the murderous propensities of this great Japanese monster?

A new tank is in process of construction for the special abode of this new creature; at present he is in the reptile house (in the first apart-

ment on the right), and keeps up in the darkest corner that he can find. His natural habits are doubtless to creep away under the big rocks and stones of his volcanic-formed pond, high up in the Japanese mountains. When, however, it is possible to get a near view of him, he will be seen to be about thirty inches long, and thick in proportion; his colour is dark chocolate, interspersed with black spots, giving a sort of piebald appearance. His skin feels cold and slimy; his head is exceedingly hideous; it is more like that of the most ugly toad that can be found, flattened out by pressure till it is about three inches broad; the top of the head, and a portion of the back, is covered with numerous wart-like excrescences: these are seen also in a small degree in the common English newt; but in this new animal each wart is developed to the size of a common turnip seed. The mouth, when open, has a wide gape: when shut, it has somewhat the shape of a coal-heaver's shovel. The eyes are placed on the fore part of the head: they are very minute, and may be well compared to the glass heads which are sometimes put on the tops of pins. It has four toes on the fore feet, and five on the hind, which latter are webbed. There are no nails on the toes, as we find in common frogs and water-newts.

The first specimens that were ever brought to Europe were a male and female, which the traveller, Von Siebold, like Captain Taylor, procured in Japan: the female was eaten by the male during the voyage to Holland. This wife-devouring monster is still alive at Leyden, and in excellent health, which is more than he deserves. Conscience, however, seems to smite him occasionally, for he frequently changes or casts his skin, which, I believe, he devours also. It is now nearly twenty years ago since this animal was condemned to solitary confinement for his crimes, by Siebold, and he has grown enormously, being now nearly a yard in length. The best description of this animal is in the "Fauna Japonica," by Schlegel, who calls it *Salamandra maxima*. About a century ago, a physician, who was learned in his day, discovered in the tertiary strata of Oeningen some curious and remarkable bones. Not knowing what they were, he thought he would make a mystery of them; and he therefore called them the skeleton of "a man, an evidence of the deluge," or *Homo diluvii testis*. This skeleton bore its new honours for some time, and many came to wonder and admire; but its owner had not calculated upon the existence of one Baron Cuvier, who, by the magic wand of comparative anatomy, had been enabled to recall to life and rejoin the dislocated bones of animals both small and great, which had lived centuries before the creation of our comparatively pigmy species. Cuvier went to see this "fossil antediluvian man;" he was not satisfied with a superficial inspection, but had the bones chiselled out of their hard matrix. He thereby proved that the bones were not the bones of a man at all, and that they had nothing whatever to do with the deluge, (properly so called.) To what creature, then, did they belong? The laws of comparative anatomy are three times more stringent than those of the Medes and Persians. A man's bone will always be a man's bone, from the first of

our species down to one's own; and a lizard's bone will always be a lizard's bone, whether that lizard lived in the times of Chaos, or in the ponds on Hampstead Heath. Cuvier, therefore, chiselled and scraped away at the block of stone till he exhumed from its stone bed, not a man's skeleton, but that of a gigantic salamander. As the monstrous fossil mastodons and mammoths, extinct long ago, are represented by the elephants, etc., of the present day, so does this great fossil reptile of Oeningen again rise in life before our eyes, when we contemplate this gigantic salamander of Japan, lazily crawling along the bottom of his tank in the Regent's Park Gardens.

A BACKWOODS PREACHER.

THE first Sunday after our arrival we attended the Methodist Church. It was a bright June morning; the place, the people, were all strange, and we felt the keen pang of loneliness more, on that first day in our Father's house, than at any other time. While sadly brooding over the dear old home far away, and thinking of the contrast between it and this unfamiliar place, our attention was arrested by a strange apparition striding up the aisle. All seemed whispering to their neighbours, "There he goes," and all eyes were riveted upon a man of medium height, thick-set, with enormous bone and muscle; and although his iron-gray hair and wrinkled brow told of the advance of years, his step was still vigorous and firm; his face was bronzed by exposure to the weather. He carried a white Quaker hat in his hand, and his upper garment was a furniture calico dressing gown, without wadding. The truant breeze seemed to seize his garment by its skirt, and, lifting it to a level with his arm-pits, disclosed to the gazing congregation a full view of the copperas-coloured pantaloons and shirt of the divine—for he was a divine, and one worth a day's journey to see and hear.

He had been then a backwoods preacher for nearly forty years, ranging the country from the Lakes to the Gulf, and from the Alleghanies to the Mississippi. He was inured to every form of hardship, and had looked calmly at peril of every kind—the tomahawk of the Indian, the spring of the panther, the hug of the bear, the sweep of the tornado, the rush of swollen torrents, and the fearful chasm of the earthquake. He had lain in the cane-brake, and made his bed upon the snow of the prairie and on the oozy soil of the swamp, and had wandered hunger-bitten amid the solitude of mountains. He had been in jeopardy among robbers, and in danger from desperadoes, who had sworn to take his life. He had preached in the cabin of the slave, and in the mansion of the master; to the Indians, and to the men of the border. He had taken his life in his hand, and ridden in the path of whizzing bullets, that he might proclaim peace. He had stood on the outskirts of civilization, and welcomed the first comers to the woods and prairies. At the command of Him who said, "Go into all the world," he had roamed through the wilderness; as a disciple of the man who said, "The world is my