Humorous Department.

BULLS AND BLUNDERS.

The Irish have achieved a great celebrity in the matter of bulls and blunders. By the uninitiated these are terms which are constantly confounded; but when they are looked into, it will be seen there is the greatest difference between them. Blundering arises from stupidity, and the stupid are a race who are found all over the world; but the bull—a peculiarity that belongs exclusively to Ireland—is always connected with thought, and originates in the imaginative power of its people. It is not at all a dull absurdity which no one can comprehend—it is always comprehensible even when it is most confused. It proceeds not from want, but the superabundance of ideas, which crowd on each other so fast in an Irishman's pericanium that they get jammed together, so to speak, in the doorway of his speech, and only tumble out in their ordinary disorder.

Confusion may, indeed, be called a notional characteristic. It pervades all Irish history. If the stream of the latter in early days has its gleams of bright tranquility, sorely troubled does it become as it descends the steps of time, till, as it flows on in the latter ages, it encounters obstructions, political and religious, which give it turmoil and perplexity that we cannot survey without deploring. As with the affairs of unhappy Ireland, so has it ever been with the peasantry. Public and social disorders have communicated a jar to the brains of Pat; and, if he can be accused now and then of being a little erratic in his sayings and doings, he can at least console himself by pointing to a long historical authority. He may say:

"Arrah! now, why wouldn't I be confused? Wasn't all of us confused, and from the airliest times, and isn't a man to be consistent? Would you have him turn his coat when scarcely a rag of it is left him?"

A good example of a bull may be cited in the case of two Irishmen who, fancying that they knew each other, crossed the street to shake hands. On discovering their error, "I beg your pardon!" cried the one. "Oh, don't mention it," said the other. "It's a mutual mistake; you see I thought it was you, and you thought it was me, and, after all, it was neither of us!"

A good pendant to this is told of two friends who met, and referred to the illness of a third:

"Poor Michael Hogan! Faith, I'm afraid he's going to die."

"And why would he die?"

"Oh, he's got so thin! You're thin enough, and I'm thin; but by my sowl, Michael Hogan is thinner than both of us put together!"

A bull is sometime produced by the false use of a word, as in the case of an Irish watchman giving evidence at a police office:

"What is this man's offence?"

"He was disorderly, your worship, in the strates, last night."

"And did you give him warning before you took him into custody?"

"I did, your worship; I said to him, 'Disparse!'"

Again, a bull may be occasioned by a confusion of identities, as when it was said of an ugly man that he was handsome when an infant, but he was unluckily changed at nurse; or as it was shown in the fervor of a girl who, desiring her lover's miniature, and he fearing it might lead to discovery: "Oh, it needn't," she exclaimed; "I'll tell the painter not to make it like you!"

And again, a bull may be owing to a limited amount of knowledge, as in the case of an old woman going to the chandler's for a farthing candle, and being told it was raised to a half-penny on account of the Russian war: "Bad luck to them!" she exclaimed; "and do they fight by candle light?"

Apart, however, from all these, the ordinary sayings of the Irish have an imaginative quality which is just as characteristic, and not at all confusing. As, for instance, when they say of a man who is irretrievably ruined: "Saltpetre wouldn't save him, and that is a strong pickle;" or when they would advise another to avoid arrest: "Be off while your shoes are good;" or, as they delicately say of an elderly lady whose number of years they forbear to mention, "A kitten of her age wouldn't play with a cork."

And apart from all these, again, is the gennine humor of the Irish, which has nothing of the bull in it whatever, but, on the contrary, the clearest notions, and very often the shrewdest sense. We will only cite a couple of instances, which will not be the less welcome if they happen to have been heard before:

A gentleman seeing an Irishman staggering home from a fair, observed to him:

"Ah, Darby, I'm afraid you'll find the road you're going is rather a longer one than you think."

"Sure, your honor," he replied, "it's not the length of the road I care about; its the breadth of it is destroyin' me."

And again, in the bog of Aughrim, in the last century, plenty of gun-barrels used to be found as a memento of its great battle, and there was a blacksmith who dug them up, in order to make use of their material. On one occasion one of them explodee in his furnace, when he exclai ned:

"Bad luck to your love of murther! isn't the battle of Aughrim out of you yet?"

☞ "If I was to stand on my head," said young Softleight, "I suppose the blood would all rush to my head, wouldn't it?" "Of course it would," replied Miss Cutting. "Then," continued the young man, "why doesn't it rush to my feet when I stand upon them?" "Really, I don't know," she replied, with a peculiar smile, "unless it is because your feet are not empty."

The Story Teller.

WAYS OF RATTLESNAKES.

Common Errors Regarding Their Fighting Abilities.

New York Sun.

"Nobody was ever bitten by a rattlesnake, and nobody ever will be," said a man who has studied them. And the reason is the best that could possibly be. A rattlesnake can't bite. It isn't likely that any creature that lives and is provided with teeth and jaws has less power of biting. The snake's jaws are not hinged. They are attached to each other by an elastic cartilage. Thus the snake has no leverage whatever in closing one jaw against the other, and if it attempted to inflict injury by biting, it couldn't so much as pierce the skin. The fangs of a rattlesnake are driven into the flesh by a stroke not a bite, as is well shown by the fact that punctures are made only by the armament of the upper jaw. The lower jaw has nothing to do with the act. A man striking a boat hook into a log is an exact representation of the manner in which the rattlesnake bites. So when any one tells you about some one else being bitten by a rattlesnake, bet him it isn't so. You'll win. It is an impossibility for a rattlesnake to bite.

"But, although the rattlesnake can't bite, if you're fooling around in a country where he is spending the summer, you want to keep your eye peeled. And there is one particular thing you don't want to forget. It is a common and widespread fallacy that a rattlesnake is entirely harmless so long as he is uncoiled. I believed that once, and found out by a startling personal experience that it wasn't so. It is true that when a rattlesnake is stretched at full length, with the muscles extended to the utmost, he could not strike an inch forward, but from that position he can strike backward his full length, and with lightning-like velocity. One day I dropped a big stone on the head of a big rattler that lay in this position, crushing the head, the stone lying partly on the head. After gazing for sometime at the quivering reptile, so suddenly taken from life, I stooped down to remove his rattles. I had no sooner touched his tail than his mutilated head flew back, and almost grazing my cheek, struck the sleeve of my coat just below the shoulder, where both fangs were buried, pulling out of the jaw and remaining in the sleeve as the snake fell back to the ground. They had not missed my cheek more than a hair's breadth. With precaution I have made that test of a rattlesnake's capacity of striking in that way many times since then, and the snake always struck. The instinct is so strong in this reptile that I have known a rattler, two hours after its head was severed from its body, to strike back fiercely with its bleeding stump the instant its tail was touched.

"There is at least one case on record where this belief that a rattlesnake couldn't strike until it was in coil resulted fatally. The man was working in his garden, when he discovered a rattlesnake lying with only its rattles and two or three inches of its tail projecting from under the bottom rail of the fence on the side next to him, the rest of the snake being on the other side. The man, being unable to give the snake a blow that would kill it while it was in that position, thought he would seize its rattles and pull it quickly into full view and kill it with his hoe. He crept up and seized the rattles, but had no sooner touched them than the rattlesnake doubled back over the rail and sank its fangs in the hand that held its tail. The man killed the snake and hurried to the house, where he died in a short time.

"But the typical position of the rattlesnake when intent on deadly assault is the coil. This is not always a symmetrical spiral but the body is massed in more or less regular folds, literally an animate set spring. From this position the rattler can spring from one-half to two-thirds of his length. Before the stroke the mouth is opened wide, the fangs falling down from their sockets in the upper jaw and standing firmly in their position. The head is thrust forward, the half coils below it being straightened out to lengthen the neck and to give power to the strike. There is no preliminary motion. The stab is made with abrupt swiftness that defies escape of the victim. There is but one strike. The snake passes back into its coil again with the same swiftness that it threw itself out. As the fangs enter the flesh the venom is injected. If the thing struck at is beyond the rattler's reach, the snake has the power of squirting its venom in jets, which it can do for a distance of four feet or more. Dr. Weir Mitchell had a narrow escape once. An immense diamond-back rattler he had in his collection threw a teaspoonful of its venom in the doctor's face from a distance of four feet. It struck him on the forehead. If it had fallen an inch lower it would have entered his eyes, certainly blinding him and perhaps killing him.

"Sometimes a rattlesnake loses its fangs in the flesh of the object it strikes, but that does only temporary damage to the deadly armory. There are plenty of incipient fangs lying in the jaw, only waiting for a chance like that to come forward and be in line for business. They grow very fast, and in the course of two or three days a rattlesnake that has lost its fangs is re-fitted with a bran-new pair. That is a good thing to remember, for it is the popular belief that a rattler is made harmless by extracting its venom fangs. The only way to render one of these reptiles harmless, besides killing it, is to apply red hot iron to the cavities left by the fangs. This will destroy all the vitality of these dangerous parts and new fangs will not come in.

"The rattlesnake never pursues his prey; he waits. He will not go out of his way to attack anything. He will invariably keep on his course if not cornered or teased. You may step within four inches of a rattlesnake and will not be disturbed by it if you keep right on your way. If you stop, the snake at once will take it for a challenge and hit you only too quick. It is said, as if by authority, that the rattlesnake never sounds his rattle until he has coiled. If that is so, rattlesnakes I have seen must have been freaks, for they have rattled when lying at full length and even when moving, as well as in their coils. The rattler, when traveling, will cross lakes and streams, and he swims with his head and his rattles well above the water. The force with which a rattlesnake can strike is such that I once teased one into striking at a piece of belting at least a quarter of an inch thick, and he sent his fangs clear through it.

"I don't know whether rattlesnakes have the power of scent or not, but from what I have heard, and especially from what I have seen, it would seem to me that they not only have that power, but have it in a most remarkable degree. One summer in northern Pennsylvania I killed a fine specimen of a rattler, and carried it on a stick for two miles to the place where I was stopping. A native of that locality on seeing the snake, said:

"'That's a she rattler and you folks around here want to watch out. Her mate will be along looking for her tomorrow or next day, sure!'

"I skinned the snake and took the carcass to the hog pen and gave it to the hogs and thought no more about it. Next morning I heard a loud scream from one of the women of the family, and she came running into the house declaring that she had seen a big rattlesnake on the front stoop.

"'First time,' she said, 'that a live rattlesnake has been around the house in 25 years.'

"I hurried on, but could see nothing of the snake. It occurred to me then what the native had said about the mate of the dead snake following her. I walked toward the hog pen and there I discovered a rattlesnake moving to and fro on the ground in front of the sty, and acting as if it were looking for a place to get in. I watched the manœuvres of the snake for a few minutes and then killed it, and the native at once declared that it was the mate of the one I had killed the day before. The front stoop where this snake had just made its appearance at the house, was the first place I had stopped with the dead snake and gone from there to the hog pen.

"I perhaps, in spite of the circumstantial evidence against it, would never have believed that this snake was anything else but one that had come casually to the premises, if a similar incident hadn't occurred a couple of days later. A man, who was working in haying on the place lived 4 miles distant and went home Saturday night to spend Sunday. On his way back Sunday afternoon he killed a rattlesnake in the road and brought it in. It happened to be a female, and warning was given that a lookout better be kept for her mate. As a matter of curiosity I took the dead snake from where it had been laid in the road near the house and took it to an old vacant house in the field half a mile down the road from the place where I was stopping. I left the snake there, and next day went back to the old house to see if any snake would follow it there, keeping watch along the road. Along in the middle of the forenoon I saw a big snake coming down the road and I got into a clump of bushes. The snake came into the field. It was a rattler, and it made straight for the house. I followed it. It went in at door. The dead snake lay on the floor. The live one went up to it and around it several times, and then lay still, as if thinking the matter over. I watched the snake for ten minutes and he never moved. Then I stepped inside the door. Like a flash the snake threw himself into a coil and faced me, glaring fiercely, and making his rattles sing. I didn't like his looks and shot him with my revolver. I no longer had any doubt that the snake of the week before was the mate to the one I had killed, and was satisfied that this one was the mate of the hired man's victim. But how had they followed the trails of their dead wives? That's what has always puzzled me.

A DISINFECTED SHAVE.

There was a time, as every student knows, when the barber was a professional man. The modern surgeon is only his lineal descendant; but unfortunately in the race for worldly honors the surgeon has left him far behind. Hypnotic eloquence does not always sway society, and the barber remains a mechanic. In Paris, he has even become a ward of the police and an appendage to the Hygienic council.

By way of guarding against the diseases liable to be spread by the exercise of his trade, that council has recently ordained that the barber's metal implements shall be plunged, directly after use, into boiling, soapy water, and that they shall be kept, when not in use, in a receptacle heated to a germ-destroying temperature, or in one containing a sterilizing solution.

Before and after use, his brushes must be dipped in boiling water. "Blowers" (pulverisateurs a sec) must be substituted for his powder-puffs, and metal combs must take the place of his ivory, bone or celluloid combs. Finally, the barber must wash his hands before passing from one customer to the next; and after he has cut any one's hair he must scrupulously sand the floor, preparatory to gathering and burning the hair.

Happily, though the new rule may keep the barber dancing between the washbowl and the stove, it fails to hamper one important tool of his trade. The barber's tongue is not to be boiled, washed, heated, disinfected or sanded. Therefore he is using it to argue that, if the authorities direct his doings, they should also look after the butcher and baker and candlestick-maker—every honest tradesman who is liable to endanger the public while serving the public, and who does not add to the charm of the service the beauty of his voice.

THE LUBRICATION TEST.—Very few of the millions of people who carry watches realize to what a wonderful extent lubrication is developed and what an extraordinary number of turns the balance wheel makes with one oiling. A Chestnut street watchmaker, whose knowledge of these wonderful pieces of mechanism is not exceeded by any man in this city, has made up an interesting table of comparisons to show the perfection of lubrication in a watch.

A watch will run on one oiling from a year to a year and a half. Every minute the balance wheel turns on its axis 450 times and 27,000 times in an hour. Accepting a year as the time the ordinary watch will run with one oiling, he finds that if the driver of a locomotive was as well oiled as a balance wheel of a watch it ought to run 60 miles an hour day and night for 648 days, or well on to two years, with one oiling. In that time it would traverse a distance equal to nearly 40 times the circumference of the earth.

In view of the fact that in reality few locomotives will run one day with one oiling, he maintains that the watchmaker has developed his art to a far greater degree than the locomotive builder has yet been able to reach.

POPULAR EDUCATION.—Mrs. Henrietta Russell, who writes so sensibly on education, says that some of the current notions in regard to it are strikingly like those of Aunt Charlotte, an old Negro woman of Alabama.

Whenever a subject was under discussion in the family, Charlotte would be sure to state her own superior method of proceeding in such matters, and no doubt ever assailed her that possibly she might not be right.

On one occasion her mistress was talking about sending some of the children to school, and Charlotte, as usual, put in her oar.

"Law, missis," said she, "what mek you pay money for to sen' de chile to school? I got one smart boy named Jonas, but I l'arns him myse'f."

"But, Aunt Charlotte," said the lady, "how cah you teach your child when you don't know one letter from another?"

"How I teach him? I jis mek him tek de book an' set down on de flo', an' den I say, 'Jonas, you tek yo' eye fum dat boo,k much less leggo him, an' I skins you aliue!'"

CAROLINA & NORTHWESTERN R'Y.

G. W. F. HARPER, President.

CENTRAL TIME STANDARD.

GOING NORTH.	No 10.	No 60.
Leave Chester	6 20 a m	8 30 a m
Leave Lowrysville	6 43 a m	9 05 a m
Leave McConnellsville	6 58 a m	9 39 a m
Leave Guthriesville	7 05 a m	9 56 a m
Leave Yorkville	7 23 a m	10 50 a m
Leave Clover	7 53 a m	11 33 a m
Leave Gastonia	8 25 a m	1 20 p m
Leave Lincolnton	9 20 a m	2 46 p m
Leave Newton	10 05 a m	4 20 p m
Leave Hickory	10 50 a m	6 15 p m
Arrive Lenoir	11 55 a m	8 00 p m
GOING SOUTH.	No. 9.	No 61.
Leave Lenoir	3 10 p m	6 00 a m
Leave Hickory	4 15 p m	7 50 a m
Leave Newton	5 10 p m	9 00 a m
Leave Lincolnton	5 56 p m	10 30 a m
Leave Gastonia	6 57 p m	1 00 p m
Leave Clover	7 42 p m	2 02 p m
Leave Yorkville	8 11 p m	3 10 p m
Leave Guthriesville	8 34 p m	3 40 p m
Leave McConnellsville	8 43 p m	3 55 p m
Leave Lowrysville	9 05 p m	4 25 p m
Arrive Chester	9 30 p m	5 10 p m

Trains Nos. 9 and 10 are first class, and run daily except Sunday. Trains Nos. 60 and 61 carry passengers and also run daily except Sunday. There is good connection at Chester with the G. C. & N. and the C. C. & A., also L & C. R. R.; at Gastonia with the A. & C. A. L.; at Lincolnton with C. C.; and at Hickory and Newton with W. N. C.

G. F. HARPER, Acting G. P. A., Lenoir N. C.