

BILL NYE'S HISTORY OF COMIC ENGLAND.

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CHAPTER V.

THE TROUBLOUS MIDDLE AGES; DEMONSTRATING A SHORT REIGN FOR THOSE WHO TRAVEL AT A ROYAL GAIT.



Edgar Crowned.

Edward the Elder had his father's ability as a ruler, but was not so great as a scholar or litterateur. He had not the unflinching devotion to study nor the earnest methods which made Alfred great. Alfred not only divided up his time into eight-hour shifts—one for rest, meals and recreation, one for the affairs of state, and one for study and devotion—but he invented the candle with a scale on it as a time-piece, and many a subject came to the throne at regular periods to set his candle by the royal lights.

Think of those days when the Sergeant-at-Arms of Congress could not turn back the clock in order to assist an appropriation at the close of the session, but when the light went out the session closed.

Athelstan succeeded his father, Edward the Presiding Elder, and resembled him a good deal by defeating the Welsh, Scots and Danes. In those days agriculture, trade and manufacturing were diversions during the Summer months; but the regular business of life was warfare with the Danes, Scots and Welsh.

These foes of England could live easily for years on oatmeal, sour milk and cod's heads, while the fighting clothes of a whole regiment would have been a scant wardrobe for the Greek Slave, and after two centuries of almost uninterrupted carnage their war debt was only a trifle over eight dollars.

Edmund, the brother of Ethelstan, at the age of eighteen succeeded his brother on the throne.

One evening, while a little hilarity was going on in the royal



The Way King Alfred Told Time.

apartments, Edmund noticed among the guests a robber named Leolf, who had not been invited. Probably he was a pickpocket; and as a royal robber hated anybody who dropped below grand larceny, the king ordered his retainers to put him out.

But the retainers shrank from the undertaking; therefore Edmund sprang from the throne like a tiger and buried his talons in the

robber's tresses. There was a mixture of feet, legs, teeth and feathers for a moment, and when peace was restored King Edmund had a watch-pocket full of blood, and the robber chieftain was wiping



Edgar Causes His Barge to Be Rowed by Eight Kings.

his stabber on one of the royal tides. Edred now succeeded the deceased Edmund, his brother, and with a heavy heart took up the eternal job of fighting the Danes. Edred set up a sort of provincial government over Northumberland, the refractory district, and sent a governor and garrison there to see that the Danes paid attention to what he said. St. Dunstan had considerable influence over Edred, and was promoted a great deal by the king, who died in the year 955.

He was succeeded by Edwy the Fair, who was opposed by another Ethel. Between the Ethels and the Welsh and Danes, there was little time left in England for golf or high tea, and Edwy's reign was short and full of trouble.

He had trouble with St. Dunstan, charging him with the embezzlement of church funds, and compelled him to leave the country. This was in retaliation for St. Dunstan's overbearing order to the king. One evening, when a banquet was given him in honor of his coronation, the king excused himself when the speeches got rather corky, and went into the sitting room to have a chat with his wife, Elgiva, of whom he was very fond, and her mother. St. Dunstan, who had still to make a speech

on Foreign Missions with a yard or so of statistics, insisted on Edwy's return. An open outbreak was the result. The church fell upon the king with a loud, annual report, and when the debris was cleared



Edmund Throwing Leolf Out.

in the year 959, and in what is now called the Middle Ages. Edgar was called the Pacific. He paid off the church debt, made Dunstan Archbishop of Canterbury, helped reform the Church, and, though but sixteen years of age when he removed all explosives from the throne and seated himself there, he showed that he had a massive scope, and his subjects looked forward to much anticipation. He sailed around the island every year to show the Danes how



death of the king at this early age has given to many historians the idea that he was a sad dog, and that he sat up late of nights and cut up like everything, but this may not be true. Death often takes the good, the true and the beautiful while young. However, Edgar's reign was a brilliant one for an Anglo-Saxon, and his coon-skin cap is said to have cost over a pound sterling.

prosperous he was, and made speeches which displayed his education. His coronation took place thirteen years after his accession to the throne, owing to the fact, as given out by some of the more modern historians, that the crown was at Mr. Isaac Isaacstein's all this time, whereas the throne, which was bought on the instalment plan, had been redeemed. Pictures of the crown worn by Edgar will convince the reader that its redemption was no slight task, while the mortgage on the throne was a mere bagatelle. A bright idea of Edgar's was to ride in a rowboat pulled by eight kings under the old regime. Personally, Edgar was reputed to be exceedingly

lingly licentious; but the historian wisely says these stories may have been the inventions of his enemies. Greatness is certain to make of itself a target for the mud of its own generation, and no one who rose above the level of his surroundings ever failed to receive the fragrant attentions of those who had not succeeded in rising. All history is fraught also with the bitterness and jealousy of the historian except this one. No bitterness can creep into this history.

Edgar, it is said, assassinated the husband of Elfrida in order that he might marry her. It is also said that he broke into a convent and carried off a nun; but doubtless if these stories were traced to their very foundations, politics would account for them both.

Edgar died at the age of thirty-two, and was succeeded by Edward, his son, in 975. The

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To Be Continued in Next Sunday's Journal.

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ROYAL TELEPHONES.

Queen Victoria Follows the Other Sovereigns and Adopts the American Invention.

Now that Queen Victoria has at length permitted the installation of the telephone at Windsor Castle, Osborne House, Balmoral and Buckingham Palace, there is not a sovereign in Europe who does not utilize this instrument for communicating royal and imperial wishes as well as commands to subjects and officials. Even the Pope, who has lately decided that while a confession may be heard over the telephone, the priest cannot use the wire for the purpose of granting absolution, has had a receiver installed in his private apartments by means of which he often communicates with the Propaganda File, which is situated on the other side of the Tiber and at a considerable distance from the Vatican. It is generally his valet, Cintra, who does the talking over the wire for him, but he occasionally speaks over it himself, and only the other day, when a Jesuit father was taken suddenly ill during a private audience, the Pope rushed to the little red lined booth and personally called up the Jesuit colleague.

King Leopold is enabled by means of the telephone to communicate with his Ministers at Brussels without leaving either his palace at Laeken or his marine residence at Ostend. When, a year ago, the Queen Regent of Spain was prostrated with the measles, and secluded at one end of the huge palace at Madrid, she was able to hold intercourse with her children, located

in a distant wing of the edifice, not only daily, but almost hourly, over the wire. Queen Victoria, however, is so ultra-conservative that it is most difficult to get her consent to any modern innovation, and it was only two years ago that she permitted the installation of electric light in the State apartments of Windsor. Previously electricity, as well as gas, had been uncompromisingly barred from her private apartments. Yet it is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of this placing the various residences of the Queen in telephonic communication with London, as far as the transaction of official business is concerned.

Until now, whenever the Queen was desirous of consulting one of her constitutional advisers upon any point or when any Cabinet Minister had some matter of urgency to impart to Her Majesty, the unfortunate dignitary had to travel all the way from Windsor to Balmoral—a twenty-four hours journey—or to Osborne, which entailed a sea trip across the stormy Solent, very often only for the sake of ten minutes' talk with the sovereign. Then, too, Lord Salisbury and even Mr. Chamberlain, both of them busy men, have had to spend a good deal of their time explaining matters to the Queen in writing, the library at Buckingham Palace containing many volumes of letters such as these written to the Queen by her various Ministers through her long reign of well-nigh sixty years. Henceforth the Queen will be in a position to be consulted by her Ministers at a moment's notice, which will greatly simplify matters.

In the same proportion that the Queen

is old-fashioned in her views, in her surroundings, in her manner and in her appearance, so is the Prince of Wales up to date. Marlborough House and Sandringham are fitted up with telephones and electric lights, in the most approved style. Should the Prince survive his mother, his advent to the throne is likely to be marked by all sorts of innovations, which will have the effect of simplifying the present intricate manner of conducting the business of State.

In this respect he resembles his nephew, Emperor William of Germany, whose predilection for the telephone is a source of disgust to the various Government officials at Berlin. There are instruments in his library and working room, as well as in a number of other of the imperial apartments, and he is all day long engaged in ringing up one Government official or another or else talking with his friends and courtiers over the wire. He seems to find the same pleasure in calling up the various Government departments over the telephone that he does in alarming the various garrisons at night time, being evidently under the impression that by so doing he keeps the officials strictly attentive to their duties, and convinced that if not the eye, at any rate the ear, of the Emperor is on them.

Although it may flatter the pride of the telephone people at Berlin to have the Emperor among the subscribers of the system, yet he gives them far more trouble than any other subscriber. For when he telephones to any of the Government departments, the operators at the central office under the strictest orders to abstain from listening to the conversation.

HOW ANIMALS WAGE WAR.

There is Shrewd Generalship in Their Battles, in Which Haphazard Methods Are Never Shown.

One of the most curious things about the animals of the tropics is the way that many of them band together and wage what are really scientific and well-planned out wars against their enemies. Of late, incontrovertible evidence has come to hand regarding the military tactics and the extraordinary shrewdness of these animals in battle, and that brutes can fight on well defined plans must now be believed.

An exceedingly interesting book from the pen of a German naturalist and traveler, Brehm, has recently appeared. He tells with great detail the warring in the Arab continent of the baboons and the Arab greyhounds. The greyhounds were of Brehm's party, and they were experienced dogs in fight, having vanquished hyenas and other beasts of prey. The baboons were on flat ground, crossing a valley, when, as Brehm tells it, the greyhounds rushed at them.

"Only the females took to flight," says the book. "The males, on the contrary, turned to face the dogs, growled, beat the ground with their hands, opened their mouths wide and showed their glittering teeth and looked at their adversaries as furiously and maliciously that the hounds, usually bold and battle-hardened, shrank back." With the judgment of war veterans the

herd made their way, covered by the rear guard, to the rocks, before the dogs had sufficiently recovered from their surprise to renew the attack. One tiny monkey was left behind, perched on a rock that was soon surrounded by the greyhounds. With an intrepidity that was remarkable an old baboon rushed down from the cliff, made his way over to the rock, and keeping the dogs in check by menacing gestures, plucked up the infant monkey and carried it to his comrades, who, watching the heroic act, were sounding their battle cry. These nations of baboons "trek" together and in their expeditions reproduce in miniature movements of troops. The tribes generally number from 250 to 300 individuals. On the march the warrior baboons go in front, the females and young ones in the rear. Not only are these marching lines perfectly preserved, but certain members of the tribe are "sold off" to scout upon the flanks and to keep guard while the rest are gathering food supplies.

When plunder is collected the females and the young carry it, going on ahead while the baboon warriors hold back the enemy. When they retreat, they retreat slowly and carefully, and with great order. Brehm tells how he was stung out of a pass in a very few minutes by the dog-faced baboons.

Another sort of warlike animals that do their fighting in perfect concert and as if by a prearranged plan are the Constant-nople street dogs. These dogs have divided up the city, actually, into certain districts, each of which is "owned" by a particular canine community. All the plunder, all the sheep,

refuse of that district belongs to the dogs who have made it their home, and they are prepared to resist the attack of any other band. If, however, times are hard and food becomes scarce in their territory, the dogs of the district get together and plan an incursion into a richer neighborhood, in which the rubbish heaps, as reported by scouts, seem to be promising. This is no fiction, it is actual fact. In one hand the dogs march into the territory they intend to invade. All the dogs of the region they enter into at once muster for resistance, and the fight goes on until one side or the other is victorious. Not infrequently a street or two is annexed by the invaders, supposing that they cannot carry the entire district.

It is only serious invasion which makes a battle royal. A single dog may pass through a district that he does not belong to, provided he does not put on airs, but lies down on his back and sticks up his feet whenever the rightful canine owners of the street come to expel him.

There are no other animals that fight in such a thoroughly organized manner as the baboons and street dogs, but frequent cases have been noticed where species of brutes act in their conflicts under the orders of officers. The wild horses of the llanos of South America are led by the master stallion when they are attacked by punas or when there is a battle pending with another troop. Then they form a ring with the mares and foals inside. The Indian wolves, when on sheep hunting expeditions, divide their forces, some of them keeping the dogs in check, while others attack the sheep.

TWO QUEER FARMS.

One is Devoted to Raising 'Possums and the Other to Rabbit Breeding.

Mr. H. I. Twigg, a young English farmer, has secured a large tract of land in Kentucky, near Richmond, and announces that he has established a 'possum farm. Were he a Yankee, it would be suspected that the announcement of the 'possum ranch was part of a scheme to colonize the adjacent district with colored people, possible buyers of small tracts of land. But Mr. Twigg is said to be quite sincere in his undertaking, having figured out that, as 'possum is considered such a delicacy as money in the scheme. He has under advice of an experienced old colored gunman, who has assured him that "the 'possum am a very dandy eater," planted on the ranch a large number of persimmon and haw trees, and hazelnut bushes.

He has started in with twenty 'possum in the warren, and, calculating upon the remarkable fecundity of the animals, expects by next Fall to be able to supply the Louisville demand at least.

A similar experiment is being made in the cultivation of rabbits in Sullivan County, this State. The difficulty is to secure food for the growth on a limited reservation, and ultimately the animals overrun the surrounding country and become a pest, as, for instance, the opossums of Long Island.