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## FREAKS OF NATURE.

### Two Queer Rock Formations on the Island of St. Helena.

There are at least two queer freaks of nature on the island of St. Helena— or, rather, four, for one of them is a group of three figures—known the world over as the "Devil's Nose" and "Lot and His Daughters." Any one who is able to study the island as it is and not run wild over the Napoleonic legends which have clustered about that "seabound rock" since the days when the "Little Corporal" was housed there in his living grave will find much that will repay for investigation, time and study.

The queerest of the natural formations are the oddities above alluded to. The first of these imitative forms is a rocky promontory which has been known by names which signify Old Nick's nasal projection since May 22, 1502, when Juan Castella and his men sighted the island just in time to see the devil disappear beneath the waves in the best harbor, leaving his nose as a reminder of what might happen should the venturesome Spaniard seek to take possession of his Satanic majesty's favorite haunts.

"Lot and His Daughters" are three conical rocks which can only be conjured into representing a man and two women by a strong play of the imagination. According to the views of some writers they are weather worn statues of colossal size, probably the work of some aborigines of the island. Their gigantic size, however, would seem to preclude this idea. When or by whom they were dubbed "Lot and His Daughters" no authority has ventured to say.

## CONJURING BIRDS.

Trick Sparrows of Hongkong and One of Their Feats.

The famous Chinese conjuring birds

are Java sparrows. At street corners in Hongkong sedate old Chinese may be seen putting the birds through their tricks for the benefit of strangers.

Each birdcage has a sliding door, and just outside this is a pack of little cardcases, each containing a picture and a small pot holding half a dozen grains of rice.

When the stranger, pursuant to the suggestion of the owner, hands over the necessary coin this is placed with the pack of cards at the cage door. Then the owner will undo the fastening of the door. The bird, eyeing the coin, then the cards, then the coin again, as if he thought his performance too cheaply valued, descends from his perch, opens the door with his beak, hops outside, draws a card from the pack and passes it to his master. He receives in reward one grain of rice.

The man takes the little picture from the case received from the bird and hands it to the stranger to inspect. He then returns it to the case, accompanied by the tiniest flat slip of bamboo, and shuffles the case up with the rest of the pack. The bird descends and selects a case, and the stranger opens it, to find the identical one containing the bamboo.

How can this be accounted for? The only possible way of explaining is that the bamboo slip is slightly scented.—Exchange.

### Rough on the Pianos.

Once in the company of President Diaz I spent a few nights in the Mexican earthquake zone as the guest of the governor of the state. As a measure of precaution the plaster ceilings of our sleeping rooms had been replaced with strips of matched boarding. "If a trembler should come in the night, senor," remarked my host as he was bidding me good night, "wait for nothing, but make straight for the patio. I think these boards will hold until you get from under cover." And

that evening, when I took the governor's wife out to dinner, she had remarked sadly: "We are so benighted here in the hot lands. It is impossible even to have music, for no sooner do I have my grand piano tuned than an earthquake comes along and tips it over."—E. Alexander Powell, F. R. G. S., in Everybody's.

### Origin of the Opera.

The opera, like nearly everything else interesting in the world of mind, had its origin in ancient Athens. The earliest librettos were by Sophocles and Aeschylus, such as the "Abamemnon" and "Antigone," a band of flutes and lyres constituting the orchestra, the dialogues being musically declaimed and the choruses sung to the best music of the time. Thus do we have the germ of all later developments in the line of opera.—Exchange.

### Enforcing the Rule.

The passenger with the huge square package persisted in riding on the rear platform of the car.

"What have you got there?" demanded the conductor.

"It's a painting of Mount Vesuvius—if you think you have to know," said the passenger.

"Well, you'll have to take it to the front platform," said the conductor. "No smoking is allowed back here."—Chicago Tribune.

### Exchange of Courtesies.

"Mornin', Riggs."

"Mornin', Griggs."

"I hope you're enjoying good health."

"You don't suppose I could enjoy poor health, do you?"

"You could if you were a new doctor in a strange community. Mornin'."

"Mornin'."—Chicago Tribune.

Responsibility walks hand in hand with capacity and power.—Timothy Titcomb.

### A Great Cannibal Feast.

Probably the biggest cannibal orgy on record is one of which Miss Beatrice Grimshaw tells in "The New Guinea." "In 1858 a shipload of Chinamen was being taken down to Australia. The vessel was wrecked upon a reef close to Rossel island, New Guinea. The officers escaped in boats, but were never afterward heard of. As for the Chinamen, numbering 326, the natives captured them and put them on a small barren island, where they had no food and no means of getting away. They kept their prisoners supplied with food from the mainland and every now and then carried away a few of them to eat until all but one old man had been devoured. This one succeeded eventually in getting away and told something of the story, which seems to have met with general disbelief. True it is, however, on the evidence of the sons of those who did the deed."

### Imprisonment For Debt.

About the middle of the last century the power of imprisoning a debtor for life was taken from the creditor, and it fills one with amazement to think that a system so ridiculous should have continued as long as it did. The three principal debtors' prisons in England were the King's Bench, the Marshalsea and the Borough Compter. In the year 1759 there were 20,000 prisoners for debt in Great Britain and Ireland. The futility of the system was quite as great as its barbarity. More than half the prisoners in some of the prisons were kept there solely because they could not pay the attorneys' costs. Many prisoners had their wives and children with them. There was no infirmary, no resident surgeon and no bath. Imagine a place in these days containing 1,300 persons and no bath and no infirmary! We have indeed "progressed."—Dundee Advertiser.