

"IT IS THE CAT."

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT INSPECT THE MERRY CAT-'O-NINE-TAILS.

From the London News, July 7.

On Saturday the members of Parliament who attended the day sitting of the House of Commons were engaged for some time in viewing the instruments used in the infliction of corporal punishment in the Army, Navy, and her Majesty's prisons. The "cats" exhibited by order of the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for War are four in number, and were exposed for inspection in an alcove adjoining the cloak-room. The alcove was guarded by two policemen, who had received strict orders to admit none to the exhibition except members of Parliament, and this prohibition was extended to members of the press who were not members of the House. Mr. Callan, M. P., in reply to whose question the exhibition was granted, was in frequent attendance, and explained to right honorable and honorable gentlemen, among whom were included occupants of the front benches on both sides of the House, the changes which, he alleged, had been made in the descriptions of the instruments since they had been inspected by him in the different Government offices. The most formidable weapon of the four on exhibition was undoubtedly the "marine cat," which bore a descriptive label in the following terms: "Sealed pattern cat-'o-nine-tails, approved by the First Lord of the Admiralty, 7th December, 1877, Signed, G. W. Rodney, Deputy Adjutant-General." The handle of the instrument is 19 inches in length, and from the end depends a very thick cord, which, at four inches distance from the handle, is divided into three separate cords, and these again are divided each into three tails, 14 inches in length. Each of these tails, which are of fine, hard whipcord, is knotted nine times, and therefore capable of inflicting 81 lacerations at each full stroke. The formidable character of the "marine cat" seemed to create great astonishment among the members who inspected it. The "navy cat" was the next object of interest. It was brought from her Majesty's ship the Duke of Wellington, and indorsed, "Navy cat, brought from the Duke of Wellington, 25th of June, 1879, her Majesty's Dock-yard, Portsmouth." This instrument is formed of a handle covered in green baize, of 21 inches in length, from which depend nine lashes of thick cord, each 37 inches in length. A label at one end of the handle was indorsed, "Never used." Another "navy cat," called the "approved cat," was also on view, and like the marine instrument its handle is 19 inches in length, with lashes nine in number, and each 28 inches long, and bore the inscription, "Cat approved for use on board her Majesty's ships for seamen and marines." The lashes of the two "navy cats" are about the thickness of an ordinary black lead pencil, and are made of tough cord. The only other "cat" exhibited was that used in her Majesty's prisons, and is composed of a black handle 19 inches in length, with nine lashes, each 37 inches in length, made of whipcord, and each bearing three hard knots, being thus capable of inflicting 27 lacerations at each full stroke, or only one-third of those inflicted by the "marine cat." The instruments were all minutely inspected by the members who visited the alcove.

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