

of "stimulating interest in the celebration" he lifts the curtain. Baldi has in his possession the "identical chains with which Bobadilla loaded the wrists of Columbus when the latter was sent back a prisoner to Spain in the year 1500." In order to secure these relics Baldi made a long and expensive journey to Spain and America, and for twenty years he kept the matter a profound secret for "personal reasons." These chains ought to draw.

OUR American cousins have peculiar tastes in jewellery. Some time since rattlesnakes were voted quite *chic* or *v'lan*. Now quite a new idea has been invented by Mr. William E. Curtis, Secretary to the South American Commercial Committee. He had been exploring in Peru, and brought back with him a collection of petrified human eyes. These he handed over to the famous jewellers of New York, M.M. Tiffany & Co., to mount in gold and set as a *collier*. Only fancy a belle of the period with some dozen petrified eyes hung round her neck, staring stonily at her lover. The idea did not prove a success. Three workmen one after another became ill, all presenting symptoms of having been poisoned. Mr. Curtis said to the physician who was called in that he found the eyes in old Peruvian sepulchres belonging to the Incas, who were embalmed with strong poisons. So it remains doubtful whether this gruesome fashion will ever obtain with the Knickerbocker belles of New York.

APROPOS of the Prince of Wales's birthday just past—H. R. H. was forty-four years old on Monday—a queer custom was observed during his recent visit to Norway. The Prince is accustomed to have his health drunk with many strange observances, including "Highland honours," but certainly never in a quainter fashion than at the dinner of the Royal Swedish Yacht Club. This mode is called with "flying topsails." At a given signal every one present threw up his napkin into the air, and topsails, or their representatives, were really made to fly. This introduced in the British possessions would give a flavour of novelty to the repasts of yacht clubs from Cowes to Cork, from Kingstown to Newhaven, from Toronto to Sydney.

It begins to look as if Professor Huxley's working days were indeed over, as if that intensely busy brain had worn too fiercely its stout tenement, and rest were now compulsory for an indefinite period—perhaps a condition of prolonged life. He has been compelled to resign the presidency of the Royal Society, and will be succeeded by Prof. George Gabriel Stokes, the discoverer of the change in the refrangibility of light, who has been a secretary of the society for thirty years.

AN English contemporary has been instructing its readers in the sensations of hanging, as experienced by a member of a sort of "Suicide Club." The narrator tells us that he consented to the "experiment," presumably in the cause of science. When suddenly left dangling, he felt a violent pain in his neck; then he lost consciousness of this nether sphere, and was transported into a new world, more beautiful than anything imagined by the poets. He then began to swim in oil, easily and naturally. Afar off he noticed a glorious emerald isle, for which he made; the oily sea changing, chameleon-like, its hue—at one instant gold, then a vivid blood-red. As he approached the isle, there sprang out from the ground a number of people strangely transfigured, whose faces were known to him, and a magnificent chorus of human and bird voices burst forth. He closed his eyes in ecstasy, and floated on to his bourne, till suddenly opening them the Elysian dream was dispelled, the harmony ceased, and the faces that peered down on him were those of the Club. The pain in his neck was great. His friends had cut him down just in time; but, notwithstanding his glowing description of his ecstatic sensations, not one would follow his example: he looked so ghastly, they said. The experiment may have a consoling effect on subjects about to be operated, finally, on. It is said that the sensation of drowning is equally delightful.

"WHAT would the British Army be without Irish soldiers?" is constantly and triumphantly flourished in the faces of bloody Saxons who dare to hint that Ireland is not Paradise and that her sons are not saints. The recently-published Army returns will be instructive reading to all who hold these opinions. It seems that seventeen years ago the proportions per thousand men in the British Army were as follows:—English, 593; Irish, 308, and Scottish, 94. At that date, certainly, Ireland was very prominently represented in the forces; but the figures are very different now. On the first of January, this year, the proportions per thousand were:—English, 730; Irish, 178; and Scottish, 78. The numbers on this date were respectively:—English, 128,021; Irish, 31,133; and Scotch, 13,720; whereas in 1868 they were 106,810, 55,583 and 17,011. Have the Irish lost their old martial spirit in these degenerate days of Land Leagues and boycotting? or is the London *Globe* correct in assuming that the falling off in the numbers of the Irish is due to their ever-increasing hate of the "Saxon oppressor"? Whatever the explanation may be the matter is sufficiently striking to warrant something more than passing notice.

WITH English-speaking people religious revivals too often mean hysterical appeals from unreasoning enthusiasts, set to an accompaniment of brazen music, and, in some cases, emphasized by the pounding of big drums. Add to these peculiarities a tendency amongst the more vulgar to don some distinctive garb or uniform, and to offer up praise in the strains of "Old Bob Ridley," and the result is not one that commends itself to the sympathies of sober-minded worshippers. How much more admirable, says a writer in a London journal, is the method adopted by certain godly

Russians! These people, we are told, when determined on penitence, betake themselves to the solitude of their kitchens or back-gardens. They bear with them no manner of music, and their sole companion is a large and very savage dog. Arrived at the scene of his penance the solitary digs for himself a suitable grave, covers it in with a coffin lid, enters and takes possession. If he is very particular, and his "nest" is out-of-doors, he hedges it in with thick bushes. These and the ferocious dog keep the over-curious at a distance, while the hermit abandons himself to the pangs of hunger and the contemplation of the saints who come to visit him. Sometimes the devil makes a call instead; but it is all one to the solitary, so long as prying mortals are kept at bay. When he has had enough of it he emerges in an emaciated state, and wisely says as little as possible to his neighbours. We have, it is said, more sects amongst Englishmen than all the world besides. But there is still more room for the "Folk of the Godly Nest;" and the public would sincerely rejoice if some of our fanatics would set up their coffins amongst us and convert the noisiest of their competitors.

WE are assured by experts who have given attention to the matter that coffee has for some unknown reason of late years lost ground in public estimation. Some curious evidence on this point was given at a meeting of importers, buyers and brokers connected with the coffee trade to consider the advisability of alterations of the terms for the sale of coffee in London. In the course of the discussion which took place it was stated that since 1860 the consumption of tea had "gone ahead" with enormous strides, and the consumption of cocoa had also very largely increased, while that of coffee had diminished very much. The imports of coffee, which in 1861 were 69,000 tons, had fallen off to 41,000 in 1884. "This decrease in the popularity of coffee is all the more remarkable," says one, "inasmuch as since the growth of what is known as the temperance movement there has been an ever-growing demand for non-alcoholic drinks, some of which are, to put it mildly, of a most nauseous description. Coffee has, moreover, from a medical point of view, certain advantages over tea, as containing less of the astringent principle; and it not only produces on those who drink it an exhilarating and refreshing effect, but is also credited with the quality of diminishing the amount of wear and tear or waste of animal tissue which proceeds more or less at every moment. Probably the reason why it is not appreciated as fully as it deserves is because so few persons know how to prepare it properly for use; whereas tea can be made into a drink without any complicated apparatus and with comparatively little trouble."

THE whale is said to live 500 or 1,000 years (thereabouts); and he is a young crow that dies before he reaches his one-hundredth birthday. But how long do donkeys live? According to an English contemporary, an authenticated story comes from the Scotch Highlands to the effect that a donkey died the other day, the property of Mr. Ross, of Cromarty, in whose family it has been for 106 years. It can be traced back to the year 1779, when it passed into the hands of the then Ross of Cromarty; though what was its age at that time no one can say. Furthermore, its death was the cause of an accident; for it was "hale and hearty" when a kick from a horse ended its career. There seems no reason to doubt the story. We thus had, until the end of last week, a donkey among us that was born about the same time as Sir Walter Scott, and whose parents, if as long-lived as itself, may have been flourishing at the time of the plague.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications intended for the Editor must be addressed: EDITOR OF THE WEEK
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THE APPOINTMENT OF Q. C.'S.

To the Editor of The Week:

SIR,—In bygone days the obtaining of these two magic letters at the end of a barrister's name was the object of his highest ambition next to a seat on the Bench. What is the state of matters now? The fearful incubus of political partisanship which is sapping the foundations of our best interests in other matters has gradually found its way to the root of what was once the prize of professional eminence; and, whilst many of the more recent appointments are beyond question, no one with open eyes can fail to see that the political rag-tag and bob-tail are forging to the front. The principle is being gradually introduced that if a barrister thinks anything of what is now a questionable honour, he has only to become a prominent ward politician, or country school-house orator, with a not too decided disinclination to take part in the dirty work of a political campaign, and the tacit compact is made under which, without reference to standing at the bar, or professional ability, the traditional silk gown and red bag are bestowed on the neophyte, and his precedence on the very few occasions when his talents are called into requisition is forthwith guaranteed. The result is that at our Division and Magistrates' Courts it is very rarely that you cannot now rub shoulders with one of Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the law.

If the shades of the Macaulays, Hagermans, Blakes, Vankoughnets, Robinsons, Mosses and Harrisons of past days have cognizance of the recent appointments, how they must sympathize with the Blakes, Mowats, Mosses, McCarthys, Hagarty's, Wilsons, Armours and Merediths of the present day in their badly concealed disgust at the recent appointments.

Yours, etc.,

DIAGENES.

London, Nov. 2, 1885.