

National League. But this no one who contemplates the ruin his misgovernment has bestrewn the earth with—the fruits of his war on the Nationalists of Egypt, the slaughter in the Soudan, the sacrifice of Gordon,—can regret; one must rather be pleased that as a matter of public justice so mischievous a career, crowned by such a disgraceful piece of political profligacy as his last, should not end in honour.

THE famous shell heaps at Damariscottis, Me., are to be ground up into hen food and fertilizers by a Boston company. The largest heap is 341 feet long by 126 feet wide, and is from 4 to 20 feet deep. The origin of these shell heaps has been a subject of much discussion among archæologists. The Peabody Museum is to have all the relics and curiosities that may be found in the heaps.

It has been found that the ear in women can perceive higher notes—that is, sounds with a greater number of vibrations per second—than the ear of men. The highest limit of human hearing is somewhere between forty-one and forty-two thousand vibrations per second. Few persons have equal sensibility to acute sounds in both ears, the right ear usually hearing a higher note than the left. The lowest continuous sounds have about sixteen vibrations per second.

CONSIDERING the professed innocence of Russia of any share in the kidnapping of Prince Alexander, it is somewhat surprising to find the Russian Press foaming at the mouth at Sir J. Fergusson's reference in the House of Commons to "the treachery and violence by which Prince Alexander's reign was interrupted." One of the papers proposes that an official explanation of the remark be demanded through the Russian Embassy at St. James's; to which demand a very good answer, we suppose, would not be far to seek.

MR. GLADSTONE seems to have retorted on that part of the United Kingdom that turned him out of office, by turning it out of Britain. In expressing to a correspondent the "high gratification" with which he would receive two addresses from 10,000 persons in Australia, he refers to the addresses of these colonists as "a new proof of the wise and liberal sentiments towards the people of Ireland, and the true interests of the British Empire, by your (his correspondent's) fellow citizens in the colonies, as well as by the whole British race." So the majority that presumptuously rejected his plans and turned him out of office were incapable of perceiving the true interests of the British Empire, and are not even of the British race?

DURING an interesting discussion on colour-blindness at the meeting of the British Association, Dr. Michael Foster mentioned a curious fact: that smoking, if persisted in for a long time, and particularly if the smoker confined himself to a single kind of tobacco, produced "colour-blindness in the central field of the red." "We all of us were more or less colour-blind in the outside of the pupil; but these people who were called colour-blind really had, as it were, a patch cut out in the middle of their retina, where they were colour-blind. They could not see red, or they could not see green; they called green yellow, and so on; and there was the further stage when they had no sense of colour at all." We suppose the practical inference to be that inveterate smokers are sure to injure their sense of colour, but that they will injure it less if they avoid habituating themselves to using one kind of tobacco—that is, if they frequently change the kind.

THIS agreeable incident is related by a French writer on the Tonkin campaign, and well illustrates the loose way in which the French conducted their proceedings:—"It was to this very commander that I believe the following incident happened, which was the subject of general conversation whenever the operations against the pirates were discussed. He had taken some score of these gentlemen, and after having ordered them to be hung at the yard-arm, had gone down to his cabin. The officer entrusted with the task pushed it on as rapidly as possible. So when, hearing one of the Anamese crying out in the most energetic manner, *Ego sum interpretus*, the sailor, not well posted in his Latin, only hastened the *dénouement*, without paying the least attention to the unfortunate man's exclamations. An hour afterward the commander, coming on the bridge, called for his interpreter, and on lifting his eyes, saw him swinging overhead.

IRISH ideas of *meum et tuum*, as applied to the land, seem to be spreading. Seil Island is off the Argyshire coast, within easy visiting distance of Ireland. The island rose as a man and gave chase, with a running accom-

paniment of stones and other missiles, to some officers of the law who had dared to eject a farmer merely because he would neither pay any rent—though admittedly able to do so—nor make way for another tenant. This is his hard case. His lease expired two years ago, and its renewal was offered him at the old terms. There was a loss here to the landlord, who had a better offer from another farmer. The sitting tenant, however, said he would pay no rent till the Crofter Commission did something for him; and then the farm was leased to the other man at an increased rental. He could not get into it, however, for the farmer in possession refused to budge, and, with the encouragement of his friends, has kept the farm for two years at nothing a year. The other day they managed to turn him out, and then they ran for their lives.

It is said that the late Empress of Russia bequeathed 2,000,000 roubles to Prince Alexander of Bulgaria, her favourite nephew, from whom the Czar, her son, is withholding it, paying him only the interest. This story, says the *St. James's Gazette*, bears some resemblance to a curious incident in the Court chronicle of the last century. As Horace Walpole tells the story, George I. had made two successive wills in favour of the Prince of Wales, and destroyed them both; afterwards he executed a third, supposed to have been of an entirely opposite character, which he entrusted to the keeping of Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury. On the King's death the Primate tendered the will to the new Sovereign, when, to the mild surprise those present, his Majesty put the document in his pocket and walked out of the room. Nor did he ever vouchsafe to enlighten any of his subjects as to its contents. Walpole, however, had heard that another copy of the will—understood to convey large sums to the Duchess of Kendal and to Lady Walsingham—had been deposited with the Duke of Brunswick, who received a subsidy about that time. Lord Chesterfield, who had married the Walsingham, is said to have talked of proceedings in Chancery; but to have been ultimately induced to accept £20,000 in settlement of his claims.

Now that the oyster season has commenced in a practical and edible sense, says the *St. James's Gazette*, it is very satisfactory to have a good report of "this familiar mollusk" from no less an authority than Sir William Dawson, President of the British Association. It has, he says, been equally successful in overcoming all its enemies, from the flat-toothed "selachians of the Carboniferous" to the oyster-dredger of the present day. Perhaps the reference to the flat-toothed tribe is a little ambiguous to ordinary mortals; but every admirer of oysters can understand the dangers of the dredger. In spite of all temptations (and no doubt it is very much to its credit), the oyster has, says the *savant*, continued to be an oyster. True, it has varied considerably, and there are some grounds for thinking that at one time or other it may have assumed the temporary disguise "of a Gryphœa or an Exogyra." Nevertheless it is an oyster; and, we may safely add, long may it remain so. Careful of his friends, Sir William Dawson expresses himself as extremely anxious that biologists should addict themselves to the oyster; but the recommendation may be safely extended to every one who has ever eaten a good oyster and liked it. In these matters it is often difficult to distinguish between the gastronomic and the scientific use of an oyster. The majority prefer the former.

WRITING of the Charleston earthquake, the New York *Tribune* says: In regard to some of these factors [in the problem of the cause of earthquakes] it is strange to find men of science still putting forward hypotheses which the latest researches discredit; as, for instance, the hypothesis of a liquid nucleus to the earth. It has been demonstrated that a globe having a liquid nucleus and a comparatively thin crust would not possess the rigidity necessary to resist tidal action. It has also been shown that the phenomena of precession and nutation could not be what they are if the globe were as elastic and plastic as a liquid interior would make it. In confirmation of these views it has been still further demonstrated that in fact the earth possesses a rigidity equal to that of steel; and such rigidity is incompatible with the central fire hypothesis. There remain the theory of a solid nucleus and a fluid zone interposed between it and the crust; and the theory, which Sir William Thomson has maintained very ably, of a solid globe. As to the thickness of the earth's crust the most various ideas are held, but perhaps the greatest weight of opinion to-day favours a thickness of from 800 to 1,000 miles. If that be accepted, the explanation of seismic action by any movement of the interior fluid fire must be abandoned. The theory employed to account for volcanic disturbances, namely that bodies of water find their way into subterranean recesses and are converted into vapour by intense heat, may explain some earthquakes, though obviously not generally applicable.