Land of the Midnight Sun.

Iceland and Its People-New and Interesting Facts About a Famous Country-When the Sun Is Above the Horizon at Midnight-Peculiar Customs of the Inhabitants-Their Intellectual Energy.

communication with other lands and the long interval between mail steamers. Iceland is more completely cut off from the world than any other portion of the civilized globe, though in direct line it is only 800 miles north of Scotland, Bordering on the Arctic circle and possessing a name suggesting a frigid atmosphere, a natural conclusion would be that it is wrapped in perpetnal winter and surrounded by icebergs and glaciers. On the contrary, the climate closely resembles that of England, and sometimes the winters are almost devoid of ice and snow. The Gulf Stream, after warming into life the British Isles, sweeps to the northwest, retaining a sufficient quantity of heat to overcome the natural temperature of the east Arctic currents. June, July, and August are the summer months, when the sun shines with as much strength as during June in the

central part of the United States. The Icelanders divide the year into the light and dark seasons. It is a strange sensation to a foreigner who goes to the far north between the months of March and August to find that he is beyond the region of night. To one accustomed to wait for retiring until shut in by the darkness, the continuous light soon becomes wearisome. With the sun above the horizon and a singularly rare atmosphere. an evening walk may be unconsciously continued until midnight, and an interesting book may cause one to forget the hours for sleep until the maid enters the room with the morning coffee. After a few days of this activity, nature begins to assert her claims, and instead of the sun dial, the watch is intrusted with nocturnal registration. A nap in the middle of the day may be restful and pleasant, but regularly to retire in broad daylight seems unnatural. During June and a part of July

THE SUN DOES NOT SET. though for a few hours about midnight it is visible only from the mountain tops, while in the valleys is seen all the glory of a regular sunset, and no Italian sky can boast of greater splendor. At times the colors are intensified, as if each would claim by contrast the richest beauty; then by hands invisible, the scene is shifted, until all is enveloped in a calmer loveliness, betokening the rest and harmony of an unseen world

Iceland, like many another country, was originally settled by those who fled from an oppression in their native

Nominally, Iceland is still a dependency of Denmark, but possesses most of the liberties of a free people. Their Althing meets every alternate year, and comprises two houses, an upper and a lower chamber, the former numbering 12, and the latter 24 members. The members serve for a period of six years, one-third of the number being elected every two years. Of the number in the Upper Chamber, six are of the king's appointment from among the Icelanders, the other six are elected by the Althing. All the members of the Lower Chamber are elected directly by the people, and be it said to the credit of the nation that the best men

of the country are sent to the Althing. The Governor its always an Icelander, appointed by the King for life upon the recommendation of the Althing. A shrewd politician, when asked whether the people would not prefer this appointment to changing hands more frequently, remarked that they were always careful to recommend a man of advanced years, so that no one held the office very long.

The Althing possesses the power to frame all the laws of the land. A bill can be introduced in either House and must pass both Houses by a majority of votes in order to become law. Should a measure involve the alteration or nullification of a fundamental principle of the constitution, then it must be sent to Copenhagen for the signature of the king. His refusing to sign it prevents it from becoming law. It rests with the Governor to sign all bills pentaining to civic laws, schools, and churches, doctors and sanitary matters, municipalities, paupers, roads and postal matters, farming, fishing, commerce, and shipping and local industries, domains, taxes, duties, and moneys collected, and all judicial matters excepting those involving an appeal to the Supreme Court, which must referred to Copenhagen. For 50 years the people have been pleading, working, and

FIGHTING FOR ABSOLUTE HOME RULE.

While the constitution restored to them in 1874 allowed them more liberties than are enjoyed by the king's subjects in his own country, yet the principle involved in the fact that this fine remnant of the old Norseman should be held subject to a nation that is in many respects inferior to themselves is sorely galling to the doughty Ice-

From the beginning Iceland's greatest glory has been the universal education of her people. Of the entire present population of 78,000, there is not an individual among them (except idiots, of whom there are less than time 100 in the country) over 16 years of age, but can read and write, and have some knowledge of arithmetic, history, and geography, and, in addition, generally knows some English and Danish. The education is carried on in the homes. There are but few elementary schools, as nine-tenths of the people are too widely scattered to admit of collecting the children into regular schools.

In some districts there is an itinerant teacher to each parish, who boards around," remaining with one family for a fortnight or a month, and then moving on to the next. Frequently several families arrange to have their children move with the teacher, and take turns in housing the little flock. The work of the teacher, however, lies principally in outlining and defining a course of study. The real work of instruction is performed by the parents during the long winter evenings. Then the family surrounds the center table, a large kerosene lamp suspended from the ceiling and great chunks of burning peat ablaze upon the thearth, rendering the room comfortable and attractive. The books are got out and several members of the family assume the duty of teachers. Meanwhile the women knit and spin, the men read, and the old folks, as they sit with their feet to the fire, hold the Mttle children on their knees and weave yarns that greatly delight the imagination of the wee folks. All children are regularly examined by the pastor of the parish. Every child must possess an elementary education faithful service of these animals.

The Icelanders are of the Lut efore being confirmed, at about the

Owing to the lack of telegraphic | age of 14, and as confirmation carries with it certain important civil rights, the observance of this ceremony is

rigidly practiced. There are a number of high schools throughout the country, two ladies' seminaries, and what is known as the Latin School, at Reykjavik, where the young men are given a five years' course in philosophy and the lan-guages, preparatory to entering the university at Copenhagen. These schools all receive money appropriated by the Government. Colonized as Iceland was, by peo-

ple who were acquainted with whatever of refinement and learning the age they lived in was capable of supplying, it is not surprising that we should find its inhabitants, from the very infancy of the republic, endowed with an amount of intellectual energy hardly to be expected in so secluded a community Perhaps it has been this very seclusion which stimulated into almost miraculous exuberance the mental powers already innate in the people. Undistracted during several successive centuries by bloody wars and sail more bloody political convulsions, which for too long a period rendered the sword of the warrior so much more important than the pen of the scholar, the Icelandic settlers, devoting the long leisures of their winters to intellectual occupations, became themselves a native literature. Almost all the ancient Scandinavian manuscripts are Icelandic; the negotiations between the courts of the north were conducted by Icelandic diplomatists; the earliest topographical survey with which we are acquainted was Icelandic; the cosmogony of the Odin religion and its dootrinal traditions and rituals were reduced to a system by Icelandic archaelogists, and the first historical composition ever written by any European in the vernacular was the product of Icelandic genius. It is to Icelandic chronicles that we are indebted for the preservation of two of the most re-markable facts in the history of the world, namely, the colonization of Greenland by Europeans in the tenth century and the discovery of America by the Icelanders at the commence-

THE STORY IS RATHER CURIOUS and intensely interesting, but too lengthy for these columns. Suffice it to that in the month of February, there arrived at Reykjavik, in a bark belonging to the port of Bristol, long-visaged, gray-eyed Genoese mariner who took an amazing interest in hunting up whatever was known on the subject. Whether Columbus, for it was no less a personage than he, learned anything to confirm him in his noble resolutions in uncertain, but there is still extant a historical manuscript written 100 years before Columbus' voyage, which contains a minute account of a certain person named Lief, who, while sailing to Greenland, was driven out of his course, until he found himself by an extensive and unknown coast, which increased in beauty and fertility as he descended south. From the description given of the scenery, products, and in habitants, from the mildness of th of the weather, and from the length of the day on Dec. 21, he may have descended as far south as Massachusetts. After Lief's return successive expeditons were made to the same country. That the Icelanders have received so little credit for these discoveries is one of the injustices of history, and is accounted for solely on the ground of their failing to reveal to other nations the knowledge in their possession, while Columbus hastened to spread the glad

ment of the eleventh.

news to all the world. During the 550 years that Iceland was in bondage to Norway and Denmark the energies of her people became so benumbed as to cause them almost to lose their former mental vigor. But with the restoration of her constitution in 1874 dawned.

A NEW ERA. The people took heart of hope, and the old Icelandic genius was in a measure revived. Since then many works of merit have been produced, and the best writings of other nations have been translated into the native tongue, including Shakespeare, Byron,

Milton and Pope. Eight general newspapers are published, besides a number of religious papers and one temperance paper. Of magazines there are three, namely, Mimarit, published by the Icelandic Literary Society; Andvari, published by the National Patriotic Society, and Eimreidin, published in the interests of natural progress.

The industries of the people are chiefly confined to fishing and farming. Six million pounds of codfish, 7,000 pounds of eiderdown, about 5,000 head of ponics, and nearly one-half million sheep make up the annual exports. Very little of the land is cultivated. Successive years of frost and rain have washed out furrows so deep that great humps stand out on the surface, which from a distance look like heaps of hay. From these the farmers literally shave, with short scythes, enough grass to feed their sheep and ponies during the winter months. Potatoes and a few other vegetables are raised, but the summer seasons are rarely long enough ripen grain. All breadstuffs are imported. At one time Iceland abounded with good timber, but at the present

TREES ARE ALMOST A CURIOSITY A few mountain ash trees are found in the north and east, but the tallest tree in the country is scarcely 30 feet high. In many districts there is a low growth of birch saplings, which, if protected from the sheep, would doubt-

les attain to a mature growth. The houses are generally built of timber brought from Norway or of the turf, which extends its roots into the ground from eighteen to twenty inches, and is so closely woven as to resemble In the latter case the gathick felt bles are likely to be of wood. farmhouses are peculiar in that there are a number of small dwellings, one built against the other, with the gables all pointing in the same direc-These are connected on the in-

side by a common passage way. Until ten years ago there were no bridges nor regularly made roads. Now there are a number of b ges. built according to the latest devices of engineering, and many miles of excellent roads. The pony's back furnishes the only means of transportation; there are but one or two wagons in the country. These little creatures go from one end of the country to the other, sometimes bearing loads almost as large as themselves. They are remarkaby tame and possess almost human intelligence. Next to kith and kin the Icelander loves his pony, and many are the tales related about the

vestiges of the old Roman religion, such as the surplice, altars, candles, pictures and crucifixes, they are stanch Protestants and are the most loyal, innocent, pure-minded people in the world. Crime, theft, debauchery and cruelty are almost wholly unknown among them. It is safe for any woman to ride unattended through the entire country, the lack of well-defined roads being the only barrier.

In the manner of their lives there is something of

THE PATRIARCHAL SIMPLICITY. that reminds one of the Old World princes, of whom it has been said that "they were upright and perfect, eschewing evil, and in their hearts was no guile." The language is singularly The language is singularly sweet and caressing, and is the only pure remnant left of the old Norse tongue as spoken throughout all Scandinavia a thousand years ago. The people are scarcely second to the Russians in linguistic ability, many of them speaking five and seven different languages.

To the botanist and geologist Iceland presents a pecularly rich field. The flora is plentiful and varied. The mountains have many curious shapes and forms; the outburst of volcanic energy having occurred in closest contact with the realm of ice, bears evidence of frost and fire having grappled in strenest conflict. In some cases the nucleus in the basaltic mass alone remains and looks like monuments or cairns, and it is difficult to believe they are natural. Zeolites, embedded in reddish clay, bits of agate and fragments of chalcedony, are a fews of the treasures found strewn in the paths leading to the fjords.

Nothing can be more delightful than horse-back trip of eight hundred or thousand miles through Iceland. The traveler sees thousands of mountains covered with eternal snow, outrivalling the Alps in grandeur; great geysers and innumerable hot wells; waterfalls, one of which—the Gullfoss—is second only to Niagara in size and beauty; crystal streams and dashing rivers, lava beds of fantastic figures, covered with moss that glistens in the sun like hoar frost; and as a crowning glory the atmosphere is so brilliant that objects 80 miles distant appear close at hand. The effects of light and shadow are the purest I have ever seen, and the contrast of color is truly astonishing. One square foot of a mountain juts out in a blaze of gold against the flank of another, dyed of the darkest purple while up against the azure sky beyond rise peaks of glistening snow and ice If within the domain of nature such another region is to be found it must be in the heart of those solitudes which science is unveiling to us amid the untrodden fastnesses of the lunar mountains.—Ruth Shaffner in the Chautauquan.

Candid Criticism.

A group of men were telling afterdinner stories over their cigars. They had dined, and were in high spirits. The talk soon became broad and tainted. One man sat in silence in the background.

"What are you brooding over?" asked one of the company, turning to him suddenly in a pause of the conversation. "You look as though you were collecting heads for a sermon."

"I was wondering what your mothers, wives and sisters would say if they were compelled to listen to all this foul talk." There was loud laughter over what

the talkers contemptuously termed Miss Nancy squeamishness" of their companion. The moralist was pronounced too good to live in a wicked world, and so many jokes were cracked at his expense that he took his hat and walked away.

It had required moral courage to place himself publicly on the side of decency, and apparenly his act had been without effect. But it soon became evident that it had not been in vain. When two of the company, later in the evening, tried to rival each other in broad stories, there was another protest from one who had been listening gravely. He had joined the sneers at "Miss Nancy" a few hours before.

"Really," said the second moralist, "these last stories are too bad! I refuse to listen any longer. Each of us is the worse for being here. We may not be religious men, but we must admit that there is something in the spiritual nature of a man that is the best part of him, and that foul talk of this sort degrades and defiles that immortal something. Not one of us can go out of this room without feeling that he has done himself injustice by violating his spiritual instincts." This moral was also enforced by the

criticism of a candid friend upon the second novel of a writer whose first work had revealed evil tendencies: "You are going from bad to worse. The evil in the first, book was latent, but in the second it is unconcealed flagrant and offensive. You had to write the first one before you could lower yourself to the level of the sec-

ond, with its offenses against morality and decency.' That is what young men seldom take into account—the degrading effects of bad work and foul talk upon their own characters. They write equivocal and vicious books, and repeat stories which would bring blushes to the faces of their mothers; and day by day they are

"That was my first picture," said a French painter to a friend at a public

deteriorating.

gallery "Yes," was the response; "you had to paint it before you could be so indif-ferent to the moral side of art as to paint your second one, and you have been going down ever since. Your pictures have made you rich, but each new one leaves you poorer in spirit, and enables you to go lower the next

We owe it to ourselves and to God to make the best of the lives He has given us, and it can never be an impertinence to rebuke with courage and firmness evil tendencies in art, literature and conversation which corrupt the mind and degrade character.-Youth's Companion.

WHAT HE THOUGHT O'T.

A Scotch minister, preaching from the text, "Look not upon wine when it is red in the cup," eloquently enlarged upon the evil effects of drinking upon the head, heart, and purse. As the congregation was moving homewards, two old cronies, given to indulging in something more than a wee drap, talked over the sermon. Did you hear yon, Johnnie?" quoth

oid I hear't? Wha didna hear't?" said Johnnie. "I ne'er winked an e'e."
"A weel, an' what thought ye o't?" "Adeed, Davie, I think he has been a lad in his day, or he couldna ta'

ken'd so weel aboot it. He's been a

sly hand, the minister."

A jasper vase, presented by the Czar of Russia to the city of Paris, has just arrived at Havre. It is made of the most perfect block of jasper ever known, is eight feet high, with the Russian arms on one side, and The Icelanders are of the Lutheran | those of the city of Paris on the other; faith, and though still retaining a few the handles are female heads

Missing Links

Gossip From Every Land Summarized for Busy Readers.

a half ago he told of the great deposits of coal he saw on the west coast of Newfoundland, and was laughed at. The Newfoundlanders have now hunted up the deposits he spoke of and have found them.

IT WOULD seem that the tale of the Castine's punch bowl has crossed the Atlantic. When the Russian gunboat Grozinshtchy put into Brest recently, all difficulties were avoided by her officers presenting a handsome tea service to the French cruiser Coetlogon, and receiving in return a Sevres statuette.

PRINCE CHRISTIAN VICTOR of Holstein-Schleswig, who has gone to Ashantee, is the first of Queen Victoria's grandchildren to see active ser-The Duke of Connaught served in the Egyptian campaign, and is the only one of the Queen's many descendants who had been engaged in real

RUSSIA is said to be trying to buy the island of Pulo Way, off the northwest end of Sumatra, from the Dutch for a coaling station for her Pacific It would be dangerously near the entrance to the Straits of Malacca, and would thus threaten British commerce between India and China and Australia.

AUSTRIA'S new Ministry has sent a circular to all public prosecutors reminding them that the freedom of the press is guaranteed by the constitution, and warning them that the illegal practice of confiscating newspapers, on the ground that they incite to hatred and contempt, will no longer be

GEORGE EBERS, the Egyptologist, has discovered that many of the queer medical recipes found in old English and German books came from the ancient Egyptians. They were not known to the Greeks, but were spread from Salerno, the great medical school of the middle ages, to which they must have come through Coptic and Arabic translations

DIPHTHERIA of the skin, a very rare disease, has been cured by the use of anti-toxin in a little 2 1-2-yearold Berlin girl recently. She had been badly scalded with boiling water, and, as the skin was healed, was kissed hv her mother on the wounded spot. The mother had diphtheria, and thus communicated it to the baby's skin; the threat was not affected.

TWO Akka girls from Central Africa were brought to Europe some years ago by Dr. Stuhlmann to be civilized. They were sent back, and recently a German lady who came across them found that they had reverted to their savage state. She could attract them to her for a short time only by bribing them, though they remembered the things they had seen in Europe.

CARDINAL BONAPARTE'S death leaves only seven cardinal; of Paus IX.'s creation in the Sacred College. Three are cardinal bishops, Monaco le Valletta, Oreglia di Santo Stefano, Parocchi; three cardinal priests, Von Hohenlohe, Ledochowski, and Di Canossa, while Cardinal Mertel is a cardinal deacon. Urban VIII. is the only pope so far who survived all the men who elected him.

FIVE systems of law are in use in Germany; 18,000,000 people live under the Prussian code, 2,500,000 under the Saxon, 7,500,000 under the French code civil, 14,000,000 under the German commercial code, the modernized form of Roman law, and 500,000 under Scandinavian law. It is proposed to substitute a new code, the draft of which was completed this year, for all the older laws.

A VERY marked change has come over the Prince of Wales of late. Naturally calm and unimpressionable, he has grown nervous, restless and discontented. He looks older than his years would warrant, and his eyes have around them lines which tell of sleepless nights and uncomfortable thoughts. It is said that the physicians have ordered him to curtail the amount of tobacco in which he has been in the habit of indulging.

THREE statues are about to be erected to famous Bretons in Brittany. At Pioermel, know for its "pardon," it is Dr. Guerin, who introduced the transfusion of blood into modern practice, who will be honored; at Lesneven it is Gen. Le Flo, Thier's Minister of War, and at Dinan the Cometable Duguesclin, whose memory Coquelin and Deroulede have revived, is to be represented on horseback. The money for a monument to Renan at Treguler has not been raised.

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN had a most unpleasant experience when he went to Berlin recently to superintend the production of "Ivanhoe." One leading journal asked, "What is this foreigner doing among us?" and, as though that were not despicable enough, a storm was raised because, first, the heroine of "Ivanhoe" is Jewess, and second, on the ground that Sir Arthur was himself a Jew, whose ancestors were named, not Sullivan, but Solomon.

VERESTCHAGIN paints his remarkable pictures with his right hand. This statement is worth making, because: A leopard once bit the thumb of that hand, and the thumb had to be ampu tated; a rifle ball once struck the middle finger of that hand while the artist was studying a battlefield-during a battle-and the finger has been useless ever since, and the small bones of that hand were once shattered by a fall on the Russian steppes, making it stiff ever since. By the last-named accident the right arm was also frac-

BISMARCK'S statue for the Rudelsberg, representing him in student costume, is now ready. While the sculptor was modeling the figure recently, the Iron Chancellor said to him: "All artists have painted my portrait without the lower lip; that is wrong. My lower lip is very pronounced; not too much, for that would indicate obstinacy, and I was never obstinate when I found views that were harrow than my own. But a well-developed lower lip signifles constancy." When the model was finished he marked the letters v. B. on the clay himself.

IF A man loves a girl enough to yearn after her for 62 years it is right and proper that he should marry her. This Christian Shultz did. Back in

CAPT. JAMES COOK had wonder- | she was 18 years old her parents came fully good eyes. Nearly a century and to Amrica, and brought Martha with them. From that time until month Shukz and Miss Cowan knew nothing of each other's whereabouts. Then Shultz came to this country, and learned from friends that his sweetheart of years ago was living in Ohio. He found her in McGuffy, and they were married on Tuesday. The bride is 80 years old and the bridegroom two years her senior.

THE campaign in Chitral showed England that, in spite of its carrying power, the new Lee-Metford magazine rifle was not effetive in checking the onset of an attacking force, as the wounds inflicted by the projectiles in many cases did not disable the men even temporarily. The battalion sent to Ashantee, though trained to use the Lee-Mitford gun, has been equipped with the Martini-Henry rifie, which is now believed to be better at short range, and will have to learn how to use it as though it were a new weapon. Another innovation is borrowed from the French Madagascar expedition. Instead of sending out one or more of the regular battalions of the army, a small composite battalion has been formed, made up of small detachments of volunteers or of drafted men from several regiments. Another lesson has been learned from Madagascar, as no fewer than 22 doctors has accompanied the small force.

Scotch Humor.

Ian Maclaren was maintaining the other day at Glasgow that Scottlish humor is esentially grim. Notwithstanding Dr. Macleod's protestation to the contrary, there is much to be adduced in support of the contention. It was doubtless this that Goldsmith was thinking of when he wrote:

For thy sake I admit That a Scot may have humor, I'd almost said wit";

the Scottish variety being so different to the livelier English that in Goldsmith's day there was no little difficulty in recognizing it. In these days, however, they are quicker to see it in England than in Scotland; but it would not be easy even for Sydney Smith's austerely unappreciative Scot to resist the grim fun of many of the bits in Mr. Watson's book. Take, for instance, the anecdote of Jamie Soutar:

It is generally agreed that Jamie's most felicitous stroke was his guileless response to the humiliating invitation of a lay preacher who had secured the use of the Free Kirk, and held a meeting under Milton's aus-Dices.

"Now, my dear friends," said the good man, a half-pay Indian colonel, with a suspicion of sunstroke, "all who wish to go to heaven, stand up," and Drumtochty rose in a solid mass, except Lachlan Campbell, who considered the preacher ignorant of the very elements of doctrine, and Jamie making a study of Milton with great enjoyment.

Much cheered by this earnest effort, the colonel then asked any Drumtochty man (or woman) who wished to go elsewhere to declare himself after the same fashion.

No one moved for the space of 30 seconds, and the preacher was about to fall back on general exhortation when Jamie rose in his place and stood with great composure. "You surely did not understand what

I said, my aged friend." Jamie indicated that he had thoroughly grasped the colonel's meaning. "Do you really mean that you are ready—to—go—where I mentioned? "I'm no anxious for sic a road," said Jamie blandly, "but cudna bear tae see ye stannin' alane, an' you a stranger in the parish," and Drumtochty, which had been taken unawares, and was always repenting a weak concession, went home satisfied.

A Weird Ceremony.

A hundred years or so ago a public executioner or headsman was a pitiable creature indeed. Shunned by his kind, he led a solitary life; no man would speak to him, or even brush against him in passing. A little girl in old Dusseldorf, known as Red Sefchen, from her long, red locks, once told the poet Heine of a strange scene she had witnessed. She came of a long race of executioners, and lived with her grandfather, a famous headsman, in a lonely wood. When she was about 8 years old, on one fine autumn day an unusually large party of guests arrived at the farmhouse.

There were more than a dozen of them, almost all very old men, with gray or bald heads; and under their red cloaks they had their long swords and their finest clothes.

They were the oldest executioners from all the more distant parts, and had not met for a long time. There was a great shaking of hands, but very little speech, and that often in language of unintelligible signs.

When night fell the master turned his servants out-of-doors, and sent the old women off on some pretext, But he let little Red Sefchen stay in the house, and bade her scour the great silver goblet with its sea-gods and their dolphins and conch-shells, and put it on the stone table outside the front door; then he told her to go at once to bed.

Red Sefchen dutifully cleaned the Neptune cup, and set it on the table by the flasks of wine, but she did not go to bed. She was so curious that she hid behind a bush, where could not hear much, but could see all that happened.

The strangers, with her grandfather at their head, came solemnly, two and two, and sat down on the wooden blocks round the stone table; and the pine torches cast a sinister light on their stern faces.

For a long time they sat in silence or only muttering, as if in prayer. Then her grandfather filled the goblet with wine, and each drank and passed it to his neighbor; and after each draught they shook hands heartily. Then her grandfather made

speech, apparently on some sad topic for the big drops fell from his eyes, and the other old men wept bitterly; and it was dreadful to see these old men, who looked as hard and weatherbeaten as the stone faces round a church door, with tears running from their stony faces, and sobbing like children. The little listener's heart was ready to burst with pity.

At last all rose from their seats and cast off their red mantles. Each took 1830 Shultz loved Martha Cowan, who his long sword under his arm, and two was a school-mate in Germany. When hy two they walked to a tree, under her throat, where she is so big!

which a spade lay ready, and with it one of them quickly dug a deep grave.
Then Sefchen's grandfather drew near; but he had not put aside his cloak like the others, and from beneath it he drew a package, long and narrow, wrapped in a sheet. This he laid with great care in the grave, and hastily covered it.

Poor Sefchen's hair rose in horror at this secret burdal. She ran to her chamber and hid beneath the bedclothes, and at last fell asleep. The next morning, all seemed dream, but the freshly-dug earth be-neath the tree showed her that it was real. But she told no one of the night's doings, and as years went on it began to fade from her memory.

When her grandfather died, five years after, she ventured to open her heart to her aunt, who seemed neither surprised nor shocked. She told the child that the buried object was her grandfather's old sword of justice, with which he had beheaded a hundred poor sinners; and that it was the custom for a headsman, when he had per-formed a hundred executions with one sword, to use it no longer, for it had acquired a soul through its long years of service, and must finally be laid to rest in a grave, like a human being. And thus was this strange scene explained .- Youths' Companion,

ko kissing There.

Happy Japs Who Indulge in No Osculatory Demonstrations.

At the present rate of writing from and about Japan, we shall soon be quite familiar with the scenes and customs of the island empire. Facts are frequently repeated, but often in such new guise as to justify reproduction. Mr. A. B. de Guerville, writing for the December Muncey's, after very daintly picturing the beauty of the daughters of Japan, goes on to tell us of the people and customs of that country as follows:

"In no other country of the world will you see such happy people as in Japan. No where do people know so well how to enjoy life. Even among the lowest of the laboring classes a satisfaction seems to reign, and it is with constant smiles that they toil and sweat. This everlasting happiness is natural to their race. It has its cause in the fact that their needs are small and that they know how to be satisfied with little; and for its effect one finds them to be the best-disposed and the best-natured people in the world. Fighting, quarrenter, swearing, are unknown to them, and I am sure that never in all Japan was such a thing heard of as a woman making 'scenes or having an attack of nerves, or becoming hysterical because her dress would not fit, or slapping a child because the little one did not know what it had not been taught.

"Cleanliness is one of the first factors in Japanese civilization. The poorest citizen bathes every day, even twice a day. There are over 800 public baths in the city of Tokyo, and it is estimated that over 300,000 persons patronize them daily at a cost of one sen three rins per head-about half a cent. A reduction of three rins is made for children. In addition to this every private house has its own batth room. In the villages where there are neither bathing establishments nor private bath-rooms, the people take their tubs out of doors and bathe before their houses; for cleanliness is more esteemed there than our artificial Western prudery. Indeed it is not so long ago that Japanese ladies used to receive callers while in their bath—en tout bien tout honneur.

"In a Japanese family the same bath does for all the members, and as man is considered the nobler sex, the men bathe first, in the order of their age and dignity, the ladies afterward, then the younger children; and all this without changing the water. Lastly the servants use the bath, unless they be sent to a public bath-house "The Japanese passion for bathing

leads all classes to make extensive use of the numerous hot mineral springs about the country. Sometimes they carry their enjoyment of this natural luxury to an almost incredible extreme. At Kawanaka, a tiny spa, the bathers often stay in the water for a month, placing stones on the laps to prevent them from floating in their sleep. The caretaker of the establishment, a hale and hearty old man of 70, stays in the bath during the entire winter. To be sure, the water in this particular place is one or two degrees below blood-heat."

There may be some who have yet to learn that there is no kissing in Japan. A young man never kisses his sweetheant, a wife never kisses her husband, a mother never kisses her children. We ourselves remember asking a Japanese lady once why her people never kissed. Her reply an essay written by a young Jap in an English school at Yokohama, as foilows:

"The wind of occidental civilization swept all over the country, and their customs were introduced days after days, and most of the Japanese young men are indulging in their manners. When they meet together they shake hands. They begin their speaking with 'Good morning.' They put roses on their bosom as if the presents of their bosom as if the presents of young ladies. That is right. I don't say it is wrong or foolish. You had better do so. But there is one thing that is awful dangerous—that is hiss, as it is called in English.
"What is kiss? Kiss is a salute by

touching the lips together, and use when express a strong sympathy. Now let me tell you the reason of it. First, it is physically dangerous. Toothache, consumption of the lungs, and other diseases transfer by certain means to other persons. The kiss is the best interposition among certain means of transferring certain diseases. Take a lady who has disease in her lungs, for instance, and kiss her, her disease may transfer to me, and I may become a sick man. This is the first disadvant-Secondly, it does not seem fair age. to Japanese eyes. When I see people kiss I feel disagreeable, and therefore all Japanese feel disagreeable I am sure in such reasons, I dare say, it is quite bad to introduce that custom

in our country."

Speaking of Japanese girls in foreign attire reminds Mr. De Guerville of the criticism of an American woman, who said they had "no shape." Upon this

"Truly the Japanese know nothing about corsets, but it may be pertinent to ask, what do we mean by 'shape'? Is it to be three and a half inches through the waist and three and a half feet across the shoulders? What some call 'shape' others would call deformity.

"A Japanese girl in a restaurant, looking at a foreign lady, the possessor of a very fine figure, who was enjoying a tremendously heavy lunch, asked, 'Where does she keep her stomach?' No one was able to answer. 'Very strange,' added the pretty mousme. She must keep it just under