

LENGTH OF PARLIAMENTS

THE LONGEST AND SOME OF THE SHORTEST.

Eight Men, Lord George Hamilton Was Member of Parliament for Two Hours.

The shortest Parliament on record is that which on September 10, 1890, deposed Richard II. The very act of deposition dissolved the Parliament, and six days later Henry called together without the formality of an election all the old members, says the London Globe. He gravely styled it a new Parliament. The fourth Parliament of Charles I. sat only for three weeks, and this after the country had been without the blessings of representative government for eleven years. But his fifth Parliament atoned for the brevity of the previous one. It sat off and on for nineteen years; "a Parliament which many, before that time, thought would never have had a beginning, and afterwards would never have an end." Opinion, as we know, differed as to the character of this renowned long Parliament. Macaulay declared it to be entitled to our "gratitude and reverence," while Corbett described it as the

"SCOURGE OF THE NATION."

One of the shortest lived of administrations was the "Ministry of all the Talents," which only lasted thirteen months. It was on February 5, 1806, that Greville formed his Cabinet, which had to include Charles James Fox. King George III. is reported to have said to that unworldly Minister: "Mr. Fox, I like you, but I should have thought you would have been a little more of a statesman; but I have no desire to look back upon old grievances, and you may rest assured that I shall never remind you of them. Fox died in the following autumn. When the King demanded an assurance that the Premier would initiate no measures for the relief of the Catholics, Greville resigned. This action prompted Sheridan to remark: "I have known many men knock their heads against a wall, but I never before heard of a man collecting bricks and building a wall for the express purpose of knocking out his own brains against it."

The shortest period that a member of Parliament has represented a constituency is two hours. This remarkable record being achieved by the Right Hon. Lord George Hamilton. Having been re-elected for the Ealing division of Middlesex on his having been appointed Secretary of State for India in 1895, the Parliament to which he had been elected was dissolved.

WITHIN TWO HOURS

of his election. Sir Matthew White Ridley, who had been appointed the new Home Secretary, ran him very close, for he was elected in the old Parliament and again to the new Parliament for the Blackpool division of Lancashire in the same week, in both cases unopposed. Mr. O. T. Ritchie was returned on July 5 unopposed for Croydon, his reelection having been necessitated by his appointment to the post of President of the Board of Trade. Parliament was dissolved on July 5, so that Mr. Ritchie only represented his constituency for a whole week-end.

The shortest lived "party" that ever obtained a footing in Parliament was the Tichborne claimant's counsel, Dr. Kenesly, who was elected for Stoke-on-Trent in February, 1876, solely on the Tichborne issue, polling 6,110 votes to the Liberal candidate's 4,168, and the Conservative's 3,901. He lost no time in carrying out his mandate, moving on April 23 for the re-opening of the case before a royal commission. But in spite of all his eloquence he and Mr. Whalley of Peterborough, as tellers for the motion, would have no one to count if Major O'Gorman had not himself taken pity on them, and the noon were 435.

THE LONG PARLIAMENT

made a point of meeting on Christmas Day itself. On the Christmas Day of 1647 a resolution was adopted deciding "that power be given to the Committee of Privileges Ministers to put in due execution the Ordinances for Abolishing the Observation of Holy Days," and on that of 1648 the House read for the first time "A Bill for the Abolishing and Taking Away of Festival Days commonly called Holy Days." On the Christmas Day of 1648 the Commons passed a resolution ordering for the same afternoon a meeting of the committee appointed "to consider how to proceed in a way of justice against the King and other capital offenders." At the only Christmas Day division of which there is any record over two hundred members took part a very large number considering the troublous times and the small size of the House. But after the Commons had been "cleared out" by the army in the autumn of 1653 they never again met on Christmas Day. Though in recent years there has been no instance of

a Christmas Day or Boxing Day sitting, on two occasions the members of the House of Commons have sat on Christmas Eve. The first was in 1852 and the other in 1888. The 1852 instance is the only one during the last hundred years on which members of Parliament have only been allowed a three days holiday at Christmas.

STORIES OF PARIS COURTS.

Barristers and Sleepy Judges—Arguments in Murder Cases.

The centenary of the Paris Bar, recently celebrated at the Palais de Justice, has recalled numerous anecdotes which are going the rounds on the humors of the law courts, writes the Paris correspondent of the London Standard. Among others it is told how a well-known lawyer, M. Alem Rousseau, was pleading a rather tiresome case and noticing that the Judges were paying no attention to him, said: "As the President is falling asleep I suspend my speech." But the Judge had just woken up and cried: "And I suspend you from practising for six months." Nothing daunted, the lawyer retorted: "Well, I suspend myself for ever and ever," and gathering up his brief and cap he left the court and never appeared again.

A Paris barrister, M. Clery, however, was more vigorous. Seeing that the president and the assessors were all asleep, he stopped and dealing a tremendous blow on the desk in front of him that woke everybody up with a start, he cried: "Yesterday at this same hour I was saying—" and the whole bench rubbed their eyes and asked each other if they had really slept through twenty-four hours. The same counsel was pleading at Versailles on a cold day and remarked that the Judges were all turning more and more around toward a stove that gave out a welcome heat. The tribunal behind which I have the honor of speaking," brought them all "right about face" at once.

On another occasion the Judge asked him to cut his speech short, as the Court had made up its mind. Assuming the air of a childlike native, M. Clery retorted: "Me right, you good Judges, him innocent," and sat down.

Though not intended humorously, the celebrated criminal advocate Maître Henri Robert made a hit the other day when defending the matricide Wache de Roo. He produced an act of renunciation signed by the prisoner of all benefit from the will of the mother he had murdered and added to the jury: "So, if but very few of them had any idea who the hero was or when his burial took place. He was in the British army in America before the end of the Revolution, he fought against the Irish in 1798, and he was killed fighting Napoleon in Spain at

THE BATTLE OF CORUNNA. January 16, 1809. So it was on a January night that his friends went through that weird ceremony and "left him alone in his glory." A little more than 300 years ago, on January 21, 1707, the Great Mogul died, the last of the Moguls of India. To-day his name is only a proverb, for people still say "as rich as the Great Mogul," but during his lifetime the tales that were told of his thrones crusted with precious stones, his treasure chambers full of gold and diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, were not only wonderful but true. The French jeweller Tavernier saw and handled some of these jewels and it is supposed that the Great Mogul diamond was split and recut and that part of it is now the Kohinoor of the British crown jewels. The Great Mogul ate from golden dishes and drank from a cup of carved rock crystal, and one of his thrones was completely covered with diamonds. All through January in 1769 there was a great frost in England, and it is said that the ice on the Thames was

WHITE FOR MOURNING.

Various Colors Are Worn in Different Countries.

Intending to symbolize the gloom of night, "when all men sleep," black is the color of mourning all over Europe. In Persia, pale brown materials are worn for mourning—the color of withered leaves. Both sorrow and hope are expressed to the South Sea Islanders in black-and-white stripes, while in Ethiopia the mourning color is greyish-brown, which represents "the earth to which all men shall return."

Purple and violet have been the mourning colors for cardinals and kings of France, and white is worn to express grief in China. Henry VIII. wore white after the death of Anne Boleyn, and fifty years ago it was the custom in some counties of England to wear white hats at the funeral of young people. Mary Queen of Scots wore white in mourning for her husband.

In Syria and Armenia sky-blue is worn at the death of a relative, and is intended to express the belief that the deceased has gone to heaven. In Egypt and Burmah yellow is worn, to symbolize the sere and yellow leaf.

The less people know about you the more friends you will have.

HAPPENED IN JANUARY

MANY STRANGE THINGS HAVE TAKEN PLACE.

Events of the First Month of the Year That Have Changed Course of History.

When Juan Diaz de Sois, cruising down along the coast of South America, discovered a new port on January 1, 1513, it was the height of a tropic summer, and he named the port Rio Janeiro in honor of the day.

It was on January 19, 1534, that Vasco Nunez de Balboa came back to the little town of Darien after he had discovered the Pacific Ocean.

On January 26, 1788, the first company of English settlers sailed through summer seas to Australia. January has been rather an eventful month for England in several different ways. It was on January 18, 1436, that Henry VII. married the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV., and so ended the Wars of the Roses by joining the houses of York and Lancaster. It was on a January day that Henry VIII. married the beautiful Anne Boleyn. He died on January 28, 1547. Twelve years later, on January 15, 1559, his daughter Elizabeth was crowned Queen.

Less than a hundred years after Elizabeth came to the throne, England was to see for the first time in the history of the world

A KING BEHEADED

by his own subjects, for it was on January 30, 1649, that Charles Stuart lost his life.

For hundreds of years this day was kept by fasting and mourning by Royalists all over the world. It has been said that revolutions always begin in summer, but by an odd freak of destiny both the kings who have been victims of revolutions met their fate in January, for Louis XIV. of France was guillotined on the twenty-first day of January, 1793.

In January, 1788, the last Charles Stuart, Prince Charlie, who had landed in Scotland more than forty years before to fight gallantly to win back the throne of Great Britain, died exiled and almost forgotten, an old man, in Rome.

In the days when speaking pieces were part of the Friday afternoon programme in every school many a boy began solemnly to recite "The Burial of Sir John Moore," but very few of them had any idea who the hero was or when his burial took place. He was in the British army in America before the end of the Revolution, he fought against the Irish in 1798, and he was killed fighting Napoleon in Spain at

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FIVE FEET THICK.

On January 27, 1800, a great storm swept over part of England and blew down what was known as King John's Castle at Old Ford, near Bow.

The union of Great Britain and Ireland took place on January 7, 1801.

January has the credit of still another event which has changed the world's history. Gold was discovered in California January 14, 1848. And the first telegraph was established January 6, 1844, and the first penny post and postage stamps in the world came into being in England January 10, 1840.

CRIME IN LONDON.

London is a larger city than New York, yet in the past twelve months only 19 murders were committed in London to 185 in New York. Such an enormous discrepancy is hard to explain. New York has a larger and more varied foreign population in proportion to its size, yet London has a large foreign contingent. Possibly the explanation may be in the fact that English justice is quicker and surer than ours, and also that the spirit of regard for law is stronger in London than in New York.—Rochester Times.

THEIR MAJESTIES' BOOKS

CHAT WITH WINDSOR CASTLE'S LATE LIBRARIAN.

The Favorite Books of British Monarchs—Present King Likes Thomas Hardy.

At seventy-five most of life's campaigners have retired from the field of active service. Content to rest upon such laurels as they have won, they slip quietly from the world into retirement, and live among the memories of the past, says London Answers.

Sir Richard Holmes, for thirty-five years librarian at Windsor Castle, may be said to be living among his memories now more than any other man in England; but he is by no means content to rest upon his laurels. Since his retirement ten years ago, he has written the only official life of Queen Victoria, while now he is editing with undragging zeal the official "Edward VII.; His Life and Times."

THE 120,000 BOOK-KEEPER

"To be librarian at Windsor Castle," declared Sir Richard, "is no light task. There are 120,000 books to be looked after; but toward the end of my term I knew almost the whole library by heart. They used, I am told, to call me the 'Inquire within on everything of Windsor Castle'; and I remember how astounded Queen Victoria used often to be when she would endeavor to trace some noteworthy passage to its source, and I would give her the reference, and sometimes the very page of the book in which it was to be found.

"Queen Victoria was always very conservative. She would never have anything altered unless absolutely necessary; the reason being that she did not like anything to be moved upon which Prince Albert had looked! His own collection of books was kept unadded to—almost untouched—at Buckingham Palace; and if one day, by some miraculous happening, he had come back to life, and walked into the room, he would have found everything exactly as he saw it last."

"When King Edward came to the throne he made many changes for the better. A large portion of Prince Albert's collection was transferred to Sandringham, and the magnificent Royal collection of miniatures was taken away from the library at Windsor, and placed where the King's guests might see them more conveniently. You see, the Windsor library is part of a mile from the Royal apartments, and his Majesty had to walk over all the way when he wanted to review his miniature or consult a book."

A READER OF FACES.

King Edward was not, upon the whole, a great reader of books, I found; but he was a keen reader of faces, and had one of the most retentive memories I have ever known. I recall one evening when Professor Vambury, the authority on Eastern Europe and Central Asia, was visiting at the Castle. For two hours we three sat together into the night and discussed the intricate problems of that region—or, rather, they discussed; I listened. And as I listened I marvelled more and more at his Majesty's wonderful grip of every aspect of the question.

"The last time I saw King Edward was at Frogmore, in January last, on the occasion of the anniversary memorial service for Queen Victoria. He singled me out and shook hands with me, and asked after me with the kindly interest that always characterized him."

"I often used to get out books for King George when he was quite a child. There is a reader, if you like! Now, one of his favorite authors is Thomas Hardy; in his younger days it was all naval books. I used to give him paintings, and let him color pictures, and, under my supervision, he turned out some remarkable green horses, pink cows, and yellow elephants. He was always very biddable and obedient, though full of fun, and I am proud to think that the high estimate of him I formed when he was a boy has been so abundantly fulfilled."

COTTON IN AFRICA.

About 15 years ago American upland cottonseed was imported into Uganda, where it was found to suit the soil and climate better than any other. The production rapidly grew, but in a few years the industry fell into disorder, owing to competition, and to prevent its ruin the colonial government obtained the consent of the native chiefs to a system of supervision, which seems to have worked well. Immense improvement and extension of the business are now predicted. At present hardly any other cotton-plant than the American upland can be found in Uganda, but it is anticipated that a hybrid, still more valuable, will eventually be developed there.

MEETING WITH ROYALTY

SOVEREIGNS THAT HAVE COME UNSOUGHT.

Amusing Incidents Which Have Happened While Visiting Windsor Castle.

The great French historian, Monsieur Guizot, gives in one of his reminiscences an amusing account of an incident which happened to him when visiting Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. Failing to find his bed-room, he, at last, in desperation, turned the handle of a door, only to discover the Queen having her hair brushed preparatory to retiring for the night!

Curiously enough, the famous sea painter, Mr. J. H. Miller, who numbered among his patrons most of the Royal family, and who was especially a persona grata with the late King Edward, once had a similar adventure.

Mr. Miller went to Windsor Castle to settle the details of a picture he was to paint for King Edward, and, his business concluded, somehow found himself left alone to find his way out of the maze of the rooms and corridors. Before long he felt himself absolutely at sea as to the way of exit. He wandered on, seeking a means of egress, and at last came to a door which looked promising. So he opened it wide, and found himself right face to face with

A SHORT, ELDERLY LADY,

who was being assisted into a long cloak.

In an instant Mr. Miller recognized her Majesty Queen Victoria! And so overcome was he that he turned and fled precipitately, even leaving the door wide open in his frantic haste.

Some years ago the present writer was visiting the private rooms of the Castle with a friend, who is a permanent official there. He was shown what was then the Empress Frederick's sitting room.

A door led from this room into the Empress's bed-room, and the guide gently opened the intervening door, the visitor advanced. But just as softly a hand inside pushed the door quietly to again, whilst a smiling face we knew only too well, was just visible as the Royal owner said, "Not at home!"

It was when the late King Edward and Queen Alexandra—as Prince and Princess of Wales—were visiting Temple Newsam, outside Leeds, not long after their marriage, that a tradesman, who supplied the Temple regularly with certain goods, mentioned on his morning visit that he would like to look round the Royal apartments, IF IT COULD BE MANAGED.

And his friend the butler said it might be contrived, as their Royal Highnesses had gone out with their hostess.

They went along the picture-gallery, and then the attendant stopped suddenly. The visitor saw a young fellow, with the jolliest manner imaginable, coming towards them, a smile on his face, as he whistled, "My pretty Jane." And he nodded laughingly at the two other occupants of the gallery as he passed.

"Who's that?" asked the visitor. "Good heavens!" ejaculated the servant. "Why, it's the Prince himself. He hasn't gone out after all!"

"That the Prince?" exclaimed the tradesman in delight. "Then he's just the finest young fellow I've ever met, and God bless him!"

A ROYAL COLLECTION.

Queen Alexandra has carefully preserved all the letters of condolence her Majesty received on the death of the King, and these are now numbered among her most treasured possessions. The letters have been divided into categories, those from royalties and intimate friends, and those from thousands of the late King's subjects not only in England, but in all parts of the Empire, many of them being quite poor people, and from little children. The letters have been carefully bound in plain, dark red calf, with a small crown on the cover. Queen Alexandra specially prizes those letters of sympathy which came from poor people, and though it was obviously impossible for her Majesty to reply to them all, during the first few months she wrote to several of those correspondents, thanking them for their kind sympathy.

Willie—"Father, a man is a bachelor until he gets married, isn't he?" Father—"Yes, my son." Willie—"And what does he call himself afterwards?" Father—"I wouldn't like to tell you, my son."

She—I don't see why you should hesitate to marry on \$3,000 a year. Papa says my gowns never cost more than that." He—But, my dear, we must have something to eat. She (petulantly)—Isn't that just like a man? Always thinking of his stomach.

ARSENIC ENOUGH BUT SURE

DEADLY POISON BRINGS DEATH TO THE USER.

Women Who Use It for Complexion—First Braces, Then Kills.

"You no doubt have observed the lily-white complexion of some women. These women are sacrificing years of their lives for that beautiful skin by the use of arsenic," said D. V. Duvall, a chemist of Manchester, England, recently. It is a well-known fact that thousands of women in all countries of the world use that poison in small quantities to bleach their skin. It is an effective means of whitening and clearing the complexion, but the complexion given by its use has no permanency unless the absorption of the drug be continued.

ACCUMULATIVE POISON.

"Arsenic, as science has long told us, is an accumulative poison. When one takes it up by prescription for the rebuilding of an appetite or for the bleaching of the skin he does not feel any ill effects for several years. The effect of the drug is bracing and makes a person feel like eating. It also aids the digestion. The average user of the poison takes it in such small quantities that he does not realize how much of it will accumulate in his system in the course of four or five years.

"Being an accumulative poison it often takes that length of time to see the results of the drug. Then the user may complain of not being able to control his fingers or toes. Subsequently he loses control of his hands and arms. Arsenic poisoning is the result.

PARALYSIS EPIDEMIC.

"Two years ago the present writer was visiting the private rooms of the Castle with a friend, who is a permanent official there. He was shown what was then the Empress Frederick's sitting room. A door led from this room into the Empress's bed-room, and the guide gently opened the intervening door, the visitor advanced. But just as softly a hand inside pushed the door quietly to again, whilst a smiling face we knew only too well, was just visible as the Royal owner said, 'Not at home!'

WONDERFUL ROYAL TOYS.

Little Czarowitch and Emperor of China Exchange Presents.

The little Crown Prince of Russia recently sent to Pu Yi, the baby sovereign of China, a toy railroad that is perfect in every detail. Little engines carry beautifully fitted express, accommodation and freight trains over three-quarters of a mile of toy track. Miniature stations, block signals, switches, everything that goes to make up a complete modern railway, are included in the little Czar's Christmas gift.

The toy cost the Russian Government \$25,000. In return for it, says the Christian Herald, the baby Pu Yi sent to the Czarowitch a trained dwarf elephant and a collection of curious Chinese playthings, among which queer little manikins, no bigger than the ordinary tin soldier, dance queer dances and act out Chinese fairy tales. Miniature jeweled ivory men-of-war sail about on a little glass sea that by some ingenious arrangement reflects shore lines and clouds, sky and trees, for all the world like a real harbor.

Apocryph of these wonders there is in the possession of the Czar a very remarkable watch. It was made by a Polish mechanic named Jules Curron. The Czar had heard some wonderful tales about the inventive ability of this man, and wishing personally to test his skill, he sent him a parcel containing a few copper nails, some wood chip-pings, a piece of broken glass, an old cracked china cup, some wire and a few crumpled board pegs. Accompanying this was a command to make them into a timepiece.

Within a remarkably short time the Czar received them back in the shape of a watch. The case was made of china and the works of the other odds and ends. So pleased and astonished was the Czar that he sent for the man and conferred several distinctions upon him.

MAXIMS ON MEN.

The average man never admits it. Patience is a great virtue in men—other men.

A man worships his brains—especially if he hasn't any.

It is frequently difficult to corner a man who isn't square.

By the art of cheerfulness men conceal their real feelings.

Many a man catches on who doesn't know how to let go.

Men who do not make the most of themselves will not amount to much.

The man who quickly finds his limitations is the man who doesn't hunt for them.