

LARGEST CONCERT HALL

WHERE 12,000 PEOPLE CAN LISTEN TO SINGERS.

Royal Albert Hall, London, is the Largest Concert Hall in the World.

Besides being the grandest saloon in Europe, the Royal Albert Hall rightly lays claim to be the largest concert-hall in the world. The building was commenced in 1867, took fourteen years to complete, and cost exactly \$1,000,000.

The hall can afford accommodation for between 10,000 and 11,000, but on the occasion of Sims Reeve's farewell concert 12,200 persons found accommodation under the huge glass roof. This number included 5,200 who were allowed to walk about the grand promenade near the roof. This number has since been declared to be the danger limit, and not more than 3,000 are now permitted on the promenade.

SEATS FOR 999 YEARS.

The Albert Hall was erected from part of the profits of the famous 1851 Exhibition, the rest of the money being raised by subscription. It was arranged that every subscriber of \$500 should be entitled to a private seat, which belongs to the subscriber until the lease of 999 years is completed. For \$1,000 they had the right to a pair of seats; \$2,500, five stalls or a box of five seats; and for \$5,000, a grand-tier box holding ten. The late Queen Victoria subscribed \$10,000, and had two grand-tier boxes which were converted into one. This is now the Royal box. The King, when Prince of Wales, also bought a grand-tier box, which is now the private property of the Prince of Wales.

\$2,500 FOR A BOX.

There are about 1,300 of these private seats, and the owners can do just what they like with them—use them, lend them to their friends, or sell them—but they are liable, however, to an annual seat rate not exceeding \$10 for upkeep. The owners can only be excluded at private meetings where the public are not admitted by payment.

These seats are not regarded as an investment, although they are frequently in the market for sale. The stalls may realize anything from \$175 to \$250 each. The late Duke of Edinburgh's box on the grand tier fetched \$2,250.

ENGAGING THE HALL.

The charge for engaging the Royal Albert Hall for a concert, afternoon or evening, is \$375, inclusive of all expenses such as lighting, attendants, sale of tickets, police, and a staff of fifty gentlemen who act as honorary stewards. These stewards are business gentlemen, and include barristers, solicitors, stockbrokers, bankers, etc., who do the work simply for the love of the thing. The sum mentioned, however, does not include the use of the freehold seats mentioned previously. If every seat is required for a private meeting the rent would be \$750.

The big organ is known as the second largest in the world. It has five manuals and 10,500 pipes, some 40 feet long and 2 feet in diameter, and some of the size only of a straw. It also has four keyboards and 120 stops. It is blown by wind supplied by two engines of 14 h.p. each. The hall and offices are heated by steam, and there are over twenty-four miles of hot-water pipes in the building.

LIGHTING THE ALBERT HALL.

At night this huge building is lighted by electricity and gas. Eight arc lamps of 1,500 candle-power capacity and one monster electricier in the centre of the dome, about 130 feet above the floor, giving forth a light equivalent to 6,000 candles, light up the centre of the hall, another 600 electric lights being required to light the boxes. In case the electricity should fail, the interior can be illuminated by 3,650 gas burners and another 500 in the corridors and extra rooms. Under the core of the roof are a large number of chandeliers with 3,100 gas-burners, which have to be ignited by means of electric sparks. This alone requires two miles of wire, while another twenty miles are required for the electric lighting.

Besides the principal hall there are a number of smaller ones situated in various parts of the building, including a large number of "crush rooms," and a fully-equipped theatre with 250 stalls. The crush rooms are frequently used for small exhibitions, and can be hired from \$25 upwards.

PUBLIC PERFECTLY SAFE.

There is very little danger of fire at the Albert Hall, but should such a disaster occur every facility has been arranged to cope with it. Two firemen are on the staff, the whole of which form an amateur fire brigade, being regularly trained by a permanent fire superintendent; and twenty-six hydrants could pour a huge volume of water on the scene of the conflagration in a few minutes, and as there are twenty-

six exits an audience of 10,000 can pass into the street inside four minutes. Besides which it is estimated that the entire audience could be accommodated in the corridors, staircases, and entrances.—London Tit-Bits.

WHAT IS A "DREADNOUGHT?"

Has Made All Other War Vessels Obsolete.

The vessel which has given her name to the modern type of heavily-armed battleship was launched in 1906, and all other types were at once regarded as, in a sense, obsolete. Compared with the ships of the King Edward class, she carries ten 12-inch quick-firing guns, as against four of the same calibre and four 9.2-inch. Eight of these can be brought to bear on a hostile vessel in one broadside, and six ahead or astern. She is thus able to pour such a constant stream of armour-piercing shells upon an opponent as would probably sink or disable her in a very few minutes. Moreover, her guns have an effective range of over twelve miles.

The Dreadnought is fitted with turbine engines, giving her a speed of 21 knots, the King Edward class steaming 18½ knots. The four cruiser-battleships of the Invincible class, however, have a speed of 25 knots; and it will be remembered that last August the Indomitable, with the Prince of Wales on board, actually equalled the record of the Mauretania by steaming from land to land (Belisle to the Fastnets) in sixty-seven hours, an average of 25.13 knots per hour! The newer Dreadnoughts are to have a speed of 22 knots.

The displacement of the largest vessel of this class, the Foudroyant (now building), is 20,000 tons, as against the Dreadnought's 17,900 and the King Edward VII's 16,500.

As the advent of these monster battleships has rendered earlier types obsolete, so the "mystery" ship Invincible and her sisters have consigned armored cruisers of earlier date, such as the Minotaur (which was only built three years ago), to a metaphorical scrap-heap! Ships of the Invincible class would probably, in time of war, be employed as "cruiser-battleships," for their speed would enable them to head off the enemy's vessels and compel them to offer fight, whilst their weight of metal (eight 12-inch guns) would account for anything but a Dreadnought.

It is at least a question whether, in the humid air of the North Sea, guns would often be effective at a twelve-mile range. At nine miles the so-called "second-class" battleships of the King Edward type would be able to use their 9.2 and 6-inch guns, and possibly they would demonstrate to the world that they were very far from obsolete. In foggy weather, too, the mightiest battleship might be sunk or put out of action by a tiny torpedo-boat or submarine, whilst the deadliness of the floating mine was abundantly proved in Port Arthur waters within everybody's memory.

It is certainly hard for those who witnessed the Diamond Jubilee Review to realize that nearly every vessel of that mighty fleet has already passed the "scrap-heap." Indeed, but twenty-one battleships of a date prior to 1897 now remain on the active list.

A SWEDISH VIEW OF ENGLAND

A Writer Says Some Sharp Things About the Country.

It is always interesting to observe how the habits of a nation impress writers from abroad. A sharp-tongued correspondent of a Swedish paper, the Svenska Dagbladet, thus comments on some of the peculiarities of English life and manners. Those who know England better will not take the comments too seriously, and will see something to commend in some of the things which the writer condemns—notably in the fresh air in the railway-carriages.

English cleanliness is much spoken of. The Englishman must have a great deal of water to wash with. A quantity must be splashed all over the room, and in particular there must be a great pool near the wash-stand. When an Englishman washes his face, in seventy-eight cases out of a hundred he simply takes the water in his hands and blows it all over the floor.

Englishmen are mad over fresh air. The expression may seem ironical to those who know how in London one does not so much breathe the air as swallow it. Tramway car windows stand open the whole year round, and there is no country like England for the prosperity of dealers in cough and cold medicines.

Hygiene may appear to be perfect in London, but they still say that much remains to be done. Spitting is not allowed in the parks, at least not near the seat. I have found that one of the cheapest and best places for spitting is the British Museum, where it costs only ten dollars. On the Great Eastern Railway it does not cost more the first time, but afterward the price is twenty-five dollars a time, in direct opposition to the usual business principles of discount.

A ROMANCE OF ROYALTY

STORY OF MARRIAGE OF KING ALFONSO'S COUSIN.

King Aided Prince of Bourbon-Orleans to Wed Princess Beatrice of Saxe-Cobourg.

The details surrounding the romantic marriage of Prince Alfonso of Bourbon-Orleans to Princess Beatrice of Saxe-Cobourg which cost him his position as a Prince of the Royal house of Spain and his career in the Spanish army, have become known.

They reveal the fact that King Alfonso, instead of refusing his consent to the marriage, as was reported by Madrid despatches to have been the case, favored and actually advised the Prince to marry her secretly, gave him a leave of absence for that purpose, and personally intervened by telegraph with the Bamberg ecclesiastical authorities, in whose diocese the marriage took place, to procure a dispensation for it.

STORY OF THE COURTSHIP.

This story was obtained from the Prince's own lips by his friends a few days ago in Munich, where the couple are spending their honeymoon.

Prince Alfonso and Princess Beatrice first met on the occasion of King Alfonso's marriage to Princess Ena of Battenberg in 1906. The Prince fell desperately in love with the Princess, and proposed marriage, but Beatrice refused him.

Both the Queen and the Queen-mother, knowing of the Prince's infatuation, espoused his cause and sought to induce Beatrice to relent. The Princess, however, declared that she never would change her religion, but finally when she said she had no objection to rearing her children as Catholics the Queen-mother replied: "Then there is not the slightest difficulty to the union. I always said that if I had had a second son he should have married a Protestant."

She added that she herself had Protestant ancestors. Later at La Grangaz King Alfonso formally asked the hand of Princess Beatrice for his cousin, and when Beatrice on that occasion raised the

QUESTION OF RELIGION

his Majesty said: "I give you my word of honor there will not be the slightest difficulty."

The Prince then again proposed, and was accepted.

Premier Maura said the marriage of an Infante of Spain to a Protestant could not take place on account of the difficulty it would cause the Government.

Princess Beatrice, because of her friendship for Queen Victoria, said she would give up the Prince, who asserted that he intended to marry the Princess regardless of consequences.

King Alfonso declared that even if the constitution prevented him giving official consent to the marriage without the approval of his Ministers, he, as Alfonso of Bourbon, would do everything in his power for the couple.

ANCIENT SITE OF MADRID.

Arid Now, it Once Abounded in Forests and Gardens.

Travellers find it hard to believe that Madrid ever abounded with water. The modern town stands on so bleak and arid an eminence, its surroundings, save in early spring, are so parched and dusty and the water peddler's cry of "Agua! Agua!" is so insistent and ubiquitous one fancies Madrid must have been thirsty from the beginning.

Yet its ancient coat of arms was a large flint half immersed in water, with steel hatches striking it on either side, the ascending sparks forming a sort of canopy around it. Appended was the motto:

I was built on water.
My walls are of fire.
Such is my emblazonment.

This device was emblematic only of the city in its early days before Charles V. had started it on its headlong career of greatness merely because he credited its climate with having cured him of a fever. He it was who first conceived the project of elevating it to the rank of capital. It was left, however, to his son, Philip II., to promulgate the decree declaring the town to be *unica Corte*.

At that time Madrid was a small town embowered in gardens and woods and meadows and with springs and wells lavishly supplied by nature. The Manzanares, now a melancholy, meagre stream, was of a measurable depth. But with the apportioning of her territory into palaces and lodging houses for the royal hangers-on and the cutting down of the trees to swell the royal treasury the inevitable followed. The sun of well nigh 400 summers has burned and scorched the site of the old town and its bestripped suburbs and dried up the natural moisture. At present the climate of Madrid is nearly the most trying in all Europe.

A CANADIAN'S TRIUMPH

WORK OF SIR PERCY GIROUARD IN NIGERIA.

The Former Governor of the Colony Was Banqueted in London.

A farewell dinner was given recently at the Gaiety restaurant, London, by Northern Nigerian officials to Sir Percy Girouard on his relinquishing the government of Northern Nigeria to take up his appointment as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the East Africa Protectorate. Mr. E. A. Speed, Chief Justice of Northern Nigeria, presided.

The chairman, in proposing the health of Sir Percy Girouard, said that the occasion marked the severance of a connection between the Governor and himself of the most pleasant and satisfactory description. When he took up the office of Governor Sir Percy was no stranger to hard work or high official position, but it was not an easy task for anyone to follow a man of the ability and strenuous character of Sir Frederick Lugard. In the construction of the Bano-Kano Railway Sir Percy Girouard cut himself loose from all traditions and entered upon

AN ENTIRELY NEW SYSTEM.

with the result that they saw to-day. The construction of that railway was one of his titles to fame as Governor. Another was the question of the settlement of the land tenure. By studying the native law on the subject he had formulated a system of land tenure which, while it preserved to the great hereditary chiefs their ancient seigniorial rights, established in beneficial ownership the tillers of the soil, and had, in addition, provided a source of revenue for the Protectorate which in the fulness of time would enable the Government to dispense with tax.

Sir Percy Girouard, who was cordially received, paid a tribute to the work done by Sir Frederick Lugard and General Morland, and after some remarks on the Bano-Kano Railway, said he did not think they would have carried out to successfully their first year's work if it had not been for the assistance given by the Elder Dempster Company and Sir Alfred Jones. With regard to the land tenure in Northern Nigeria, it had been based primarily on old native laws and customs and with a desire to accord fair treatment to those commercial undertakings which desired to develop the country on reasonable lines. He was hopeful that this policy would meet with the approval of the home authorities. If it did, he felt sure they would see great benefits from it. It was merely a change from

A COMMUNAL SYSTEM

of tenure, such as was prevalent in most parts of Africa, to a national system of tenure which provided for the due expansion of the people and did not allow for the personal greed of any one. He was hopeful that under such a system revenue would grow in Northern Nigeria to such an extent as would allow of the practical exclusion of all other forms of taxation. It had never been the object of himself or of his predecessor, Sir Frederick Lugard, to obtain revenues which were not legitimately due both to the native Governments and to the Central Government by the peoples whose rights and interests they felt themselves bound to look after. (Cheers.) They regarded themselves, whether Governors, Administrators, or Residents, as trustees for the natives, and he believed that that ideal had been faithfully carried out. There was need of patience in dealing with the natives. If they attempted to frog-march those people over bridges of centuries in a few short years we should lose, he would not call it the loyalty, for that was not a word which was applicable to the case, but the affection which we ought certainly to gain.

TELL TIME IN NIGHT.

Persons awakening in the night are invariably curious about the time, and the newest hotel convenience has for its object the gratification of this universal desire. A small telephone receiver is placed at the head of the bed and if desired may be placed under the pillow, a connection being maintained with a master clock in the office of the hotel. Placing this instrument to the ear and touching a button results in setting into operation a set of bells which chimes the hour, the quarter hour and the minutes past the quarter.

IN THE DISTANCE.

Insurance Agent—"Pardon me, madam, but what is your age?"
Miss Antique—"I have seen twenty-three summers."
Insurance Agent—"Yes, of course, but how many times did you see them?"

WAS HOT BED OF PIRACY

HONG KONG, CEDED BY CHINA TO GREAT BRITAIN.

Metropolis of 350,000 Inhabitants Once Infested by Thousands of Pirates.

Previous to 1841, when it was ceded by China to Great Britain, Hong Kong was but sparsely populated, and, aside from the shelter its spacious harbor afforded shipping, and the pure, fresh water its limpid streams supplied to merchantmen, it was of little importance. Since British occupation, however, it has grown to be one of the busiest sea ports in the world. It is the most easterly station of the British Empire on the voyage round the world, and is the point of union of the great mail steamers of England, France, and Germany from Europe and the east with the splendid vessel that takes up the journey at this point and carry the traveller in equally magnificent steamers to the Sandwich Islands, Canada and the United States.

350,000 POPULATION.

The city of Victoria—popularly known as Hong Kong, being used interchangeably with the name of the island—is a modern metropolis of 350,000 inhabitants. It is built on a semi-circular narrow plain, skirting the end of the harbor, with houses scattered over the steep incline behind extending to a very peak, a height of over two thousand feet. From the harbor the city presents a picturesque scene, reminding one of Gibraltar, with its solidly built houses and bold rock-like background. At night especially is this view most attractive, for with the myriad multi-colored lights of the sparkling wavelets and extending in lesser numbers up the slope of the peak till those at the crest blend with the stars of the sky, the heavens seem to have fallen to earth and spilled the brilliancy of the vaulted dome with one scintillating splash into the placid waters of the sea.

ONCE HOTBED OF PIRACY.

For centuries Hong Kong was the hotbed of piracy. Thousands of pirates infested this and the nearby islands and preyed upon the trading vessels as they plied between Canton, the principal port of Southern China, and the other ports of the world. It became necessary for merchantmen sailing these waters to carry a heavy armament, and battles with the pirates here grew to be a frequent occurrence. Nor were these engagements mere child's play, for often the waters ran red with blood and scores of lives were sacrificed. One such battle is recorded in which twelve hundred pirates were slain. Even to-day piratical depredations are occasionally reported from the inland rivers, and as late as 1896 a steamer to Canton was attacked, the captain and mate shot, the passengers locked up, and the ship looted. Fortunately the engineer was not injured, and he, with the aid of the passengers, managed to bring the steamer into port. Some of these pirates were afterward apprehended and beheaded, but the war against piracy in and around Hong Kong has been a long and hard one.

BREADLESS FOLK.

In Some Parts of the World Bread is Seldom Seen.

Baked loaves of bread are practically unknown in many parts of south Austria and Italy as well as the agricultural districts of Roumania, says the Bakers' Weekly. In the villages of the Obersteiermark, not very many miles from Vienna, bread is seldom seen, the staple food of the people being sturz, a kind of porridge made from ground beech nuts, which is taken at breakfast with fresh or curdled milk, at dinner with broth or fried in lard, and with milk again at supper. This sturz is also known as heiden, and takes the place of bread not only in Steiermark but in Carinthia and in many parts of the Tyrol.

In the north of Italy the peasantry live chiefly on polenta, a porridge made of boiled maize. The polenta, however, is not allowed to granulate like Scotch porridge, or like the Austrian sturz, but is boiled into a solid pudding, which is cut and portioned out with a string. It is eaten cold as often as it is hot, and is in every sense the Italian peasant's daily bread. The modern Rumanians are held by many scholars to be descended from a Roman colony, in other words to be the cousins of the Italians, and curiously enough a variation of the polenta called mamaliga is the national dish of Rumania.

The mamaliga is like the polenta in that it is made of boiled maize, but it is unlike the latter in one important respect, as the grains are not allowed to settle into a solid mass but are kept distinct, after the fashion of oatmeal porridge.

WHY IS IT?

That those who knew what should have been done do not make the fact known until after we have made our mistakes!

That the wealthy decay wealth, saying they have not had a happy day since they ceased to be poor, and yet keep right on collecting money in sales!

That office-holders lament because they are unable to live within their salaries, and rush around warning their friends to keep out of politics, and then spend a small fortune seeking re-election!

That women kiss each other in public and talk about each other in private!

That those who enjoy reading what newspapers have to say about others, and who complain because all of the facts, as they know them, are not given, register large and strenuous kicks when their own names are mentioned!

That the other fellow, according to our personal version of the encounter, always gets the worst of it!

That so many convincing clues secured by detective departments fail to result in arrests!

That seekers after public office place much emphasis on the fact that they desire to become the servants of the people and to do their bidding, and then, after being elected, intimate that if their constituents do not like their ways of doing things they may go and jump into the lake!

That no matter how successfully a man may have conducted a business, his successor can always discover where he made a lot of serious mistakes!

That the givers of advice never take their own medicine!

That the man who is loudest in his condemnation of those who butt in is usually one of the first to tell us how we ought to run our business!

That our friends advise us to do a lot of things they would not do if they were in our place!

That the reformer who is loudest in his condemnation of the business in which we are engaged does not hesitate to apply to us for a donation if he needs one!

That we will cheerfully give \$10 to some earthquake or other relief fund, and then ask the friend, who is in hard luck, if he takes us for a national bank and refuses his request for the loan of a dollar!

That to-day we throw our hats into the air and cheer lustily for the hero of the hour, only to forget that he is on earth to-morrow!

That in public we argue that every man should be paid all that he is worth, while in private we scheme to get all that we can for as little as possible!

That we place great emphasis on the fact that we are a free and independent people, and yet permit the bosses to do most of our political thinking for us!

That we are never satisfied!

Why is it?

THE SAVAGE MIND.

Foreign Missionary Tells of Natives Love of Gaudiness.

Miss F. Klieckmann, assistant literary superintendent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, is necessarily in close touch with missionary work all over the world, especially in connection with the dissemination of the Scriptures, and has many opportunities of observing the strange mental attitude of natives.

"Some of the curiosities of the savage mind," she writes, "are shown very strikingly in connection with the distribution of the Bible. In many parts of the world the natives are considerably affected by the appearance of anything that is given or sold to them. Certain vivid colors appear to possess for them peculiar fascination. I believe that traders who seek to do business among natives frequently wrap the goods they have to sell in paper of a particular color most appreciated by the natives of the district.

"This love of vivid colors is particularly strong in India, and the Gospels which we send out for sale in the bazaars are protected by findings of brightly colored paper. Each Gospel has its particular color, and these are selected according to the length of the Gospel. The native of India likes to get as much as possible for his money. He will buy a bulky Gospel merely for its bulk, independent of what color it is bound in; but in order to make him purchase the shorter gospels these have to be bound in which ever of the bright, crude colors are known to take his fancy most. Very large quantities of brightly colored binding papers—green, red, yellow and blue—are sent out from time to time to various depots in India. Quite recently, for instance, so tons of it were dispatched in a single week to one depot in Calcutta."

"Truth is mighty," said the moralizer. "Yes," rejoined the demoralizer, "it is mighty scarce."