

EMPEROR OF KOREA HAS ABDICATED.

Memorable Scene Occurred at the Palace in Seoul.

Seoul, July 19.—Briefly the Emperor or in the Imperial rescript of abdication, expresses his regret that during the forty-four years of his reign, national calamities have followed in rapid succession, and the people's distress has become so aggravated that he deemed it now time to transfer the crown to the heir-apparent, in conformity with ancestral usages.

It is reported that the most dramatic scene occurred at the Palace last night when the ministers, headed by Premier Yi Wang Yong, appeared before his majesty and made the cabinet's final representation. His Majesty was in a high state of excitement, but the premier, in the most humble, but firm tone, dwelt at length upon want of precaution and prudence of the Emperor's policies hitherto, especially in diplomatic affairs whereby he was endangering the safety of the nation. The premier enumerated the facts of his Majesty's duplicities, which culminated in the despatch of a deputation to The Hague Peace Conference, and forcibly reasoned the

unsuitableness of the Emperor's disavowal of his relation with The Hague affair.

Unable to success fully combat the logic of the premier's representation, the Emperor sought a last refuge in the council of elder statesmen, doubtless anticipating their sympathies.

The council immediately convened. Four elders quickly responded, and appeared before his Majesty at one o'clock Friday morning. The Emperor's disappointment and surprise was boundless when they unanimously agreed with the ministers' advice. His Majesty's mind was finally made up, and he consented to the draft for an Imperial rescript announcing his abdication, which was placed before him for his signature. The Emperor's condition was indescribable. Greatly agitated and perturbed, he signed the document, and the seal was affixed amid impressive silence. A suppressed sigh from the Emperor was the only sound which broke the death-like stillness that reigned throughout the memorable scene.

SHORTHAND.

The Quality That Appears to Be Lacking in All Systems.

The fatality of all systems of shorthand is that what seems easy to the eye of fatal plenty may be terribly difficult to the cold gaze of a stranger. Of the innumerable systems of shorthand that were the vogue a century ago how many survive today? asks a London writer. Fame and fortune still await the man or woman who can invent a system that will appeal to the reader as effectively as to the original writer. Perhaps if we were to rediscover the lost shorthand writing of the ancient Romans we might find ourselves on the road toward a solution of the problem.

For the Romans were on affectionate terms with shorthand. Did not Suetonius, speaking of Caligula, express surprise that an emperor of so many promising parts should nevertheless be an ignoramus in shorthand, and did not Titus Vespasianus pride himself on his facility in the use of stenography both for business and amusement? So fond was he of the sport that he delighted to gather his amanuenses around him in order that they should tilt against each other in the stenographic field. It may be that but for the rediscovery of the art in England toward the end of the sixteenth century the curious-Peeps would not have been moved to write his diary.

VENEZUELA.

Beauty of the Country and the Impression It Leaves.

The beauty of the country is the first and the most lasting impression. To catch glimpses at every turn in the valleys of cloudy peaks, or when on the mountain side to see through the limpid air valley after valley between the protecting hills, to breathe this pure air, to know that summer is almost perpetual—he is only half a man who does not for a moment forget the needs of civilization in the intoxication of primitive nature. The loveliness of Venezuela is something different from that of the Andean ranges farther west and south. It is more tropical, and the mountains do not rise to the height in which the senses are stifled by grandeur, nor is there found so near the equator that ruggedness of gloom of solemnity which is one feature of the Rockies. It is a beauty of more human type, which can be enjoyed most when we know that man has his abode there. The Andes, the Alps or the Rockies are bold and austere. They need no life. Life is not meant for them. But such contrasts and changes as are constantly presented to the eye in these softened landscapes are more exquisite when man is pottering about on the surface trying to imagine that he is of some real importance on the earth.

MARVELS OF WORKMANSHIP.

The Violins That Were Made by the Famous Old Masters.

The old masters used such care in the selection of the woods for their instruments that, having found a piece of wood of proper fiber and vibrational powers, they treasured every fragment, no matter how small, and rather than waste even a particle of such a strip they frequently constructed the backs and bellies of patches so delicately put together that the seams are only discoverable by microscope, so perfect is the cabinetwork. It was ever the aim of the old masters to "marry" the back of hard sycamore, which produces the quick vibrations, and the belly of soft wood, producing the slower sound waves, in such a manner as to give the mellow but reedy timbre of the perfect instrument. Anatomically a violin made by an old master is a miracle of construction. It can be taken to pieces, patched, put together, repaired indefinitely and is almost indestructible. Repairing has been the means of exposing many clever forgeries. The inside of a violin made by Stradivari, Guarnerius or other old masters is as perfectly finished inside as outside, and the clumsy interior work of a forgery betrays an imitation at once.

The Dynamo.
A dynamo cannot explode. It can't even break apart the way a grindstone does occasionally.

Zero.

By the centigrade thermometer zero, or 0 degree, represents the freezing point of water and 100 degrees the boiling point. By our Fahrenheit scale the freezing point of water is 32 degrees, and zero, or 0 degree, is the temperature of a mixture of snow or ice and salt, which was the greatest cold known to Mr. Fahrenheit. When we speak of degrees of frost we mean the number of degrees below water's freezing point. But sometimes the thermometer falls below 0 degree, and then it is a case of degrees below zero, which is 450 degrees below Fahrenheit zero and 273 degrees below centigrade zero. Below that it is supposed that there is no greater cold. We have already gone to within 10 degrees C. of this absolute zero, and there is a competition to be the first there, like the race for the north pole.—Pearson's.

Halley's Approaching Comet.

The astronomers are bestirring themselves in preparation for the return of one of the most famous of all comets, that which bears the name of Halley. It is the greatest comet known to have been seen at more than one return, its average period being about seventy-five years. It was last seen in 1835 and will, according to most recent calculations, be visible again early in 1910. The object of the astronomers at present is to predict the moment of its perihelion passage with the utmost possible accuracy. Dr. Holetschek of Vienna thinks it will be visible with telescopes as early as January, 1910, and that by March everybody may see it with the naked eye. Later in the year it is likely to make a startling display several hours before sunrise in the northern quarter of the sky.—Youth's Companion.

Popular Approval of Theft.

The idea of private property has never been fully accepted by the masses of the people, and never had their cordial approval as an institution. The most popular songs and ballads of our nation in all ages, it may be noted, have been those which described sympathetically attacks on private property, from the Robin Hood cycle to the broadsheets in which Turpin and Sheppard were made heroes.

Even nowadays the literature that really touches the people, the literature that the educated classes seldom so much as see exposed for sale, the literature that is sold in the small "general" shop in the back street, and costs fewer pennies than the novel we know costs shillings, still very largely deals with the romantic exploits of the robber. He is never a villain; he is noble and generous to a fault; but he is convinced of the impropriety of persons having too much money.—London News.

How He Entered Public Life.

The story of how Mr. Deakin, Prime Minister of Australia, came to enter public life is not generally known. In 1879 he was on the staff of the Melbourne Age. The editors of West Bourke sent a deputation to the proprietor of the Age, asking him to become their candidate. He declined, but mentioned that he had a very brilliant young man upon his staff whom he could recommend, and called Mr. Deakin, who accepted, and was elected. It was subsequently found that a complete poll had not been made at one small place, and Mr. Deakin, after taking his seat and moving the address in reply, resigned, challenged his opponent to another struggle, and was defeated by a narrow margin.

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Sandy's Narrow Escape.

"An' hoo's the guid wife, Sandy?" said one farmer to another as they met in the market place and exchanged snuffboxes.

"Did ye no hear that she's dead an' buried?" said Sandy solemnly.

"Dear me!" exclaimed his friend sympathetically. "Surely it must have been very sudden?"

"Aye, it was sudden," returned Sandy. "Ye see, when she turned ill we had na time to send for the doctor, sae I gied her a bit pouther I had lying in my drawer for a year or twa an' that I had got frae the doctor mysel', but hadna ta'en. What the pouther was, I dinna vera weel ken, but she died soon after. It's a sair loss to me, I can assure ye, but it's something to be thankful' for I dinna tak' the pouther mysel'."

The Chairman's Break.

Senator Moses E. Clapp of Minnesota made a speech at Erin Corners, in his state, says the Saturday Evening Post.

His audience was very unfriendly. They howled at the gigantic Clapp, laughed at him, threw things at him and made it most uncomfortable.

Finally Clapp stopped and looked at the chairman. "Don't mind them, Moss," said the chairman. "Go right ahead. They're nothing but loafers and rowdies. None of the decent people would come."

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Late and Early Easters.

The earliest date on which Easter can fall is March 22. The moon must then be full on March 21, and that date must be Saturday. Such a combination of circumstances is extremely rare. Easter Sunday has fallen as early as March 22 in 1093, in 1761 and in 1817, and it will fall on March 22 again in 1990, 2076 and 2144. The latest date on which Easter can fall is April 25. That happened in 1686, in 1734 and in 1886. It will happen again in 1943.

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