

the artist is to be congratulated on an exceedingly clever and original piece of work, and one which holds promise of almost anything in the future. The little face, so full of life and mischief, is most admirably treated; the eyes are full of latent devilry of all sorts, and the whole sketch—for it is little more—is so full of latent force and possibilities that one can come back to it again and again with fresh delight. In fine, there are few pictures in the exhibition which seem to me more deserving of praise and purchase. The artist shows a second little head, but save that her (or his) name is opposite to it in the catalogue, it would not be recognised as from the same clever hand. It is careless, and by no means successful.

'The Gloom of an Alpine Gorge' is a fine and very effective water colour by W. M. Hodgkins, of Dunedin. The boldness of the painting is well suited to the rugged splendour of the Alpine scenery, and the effect of the vast masses of bare rock standing through the snows of the Alpine monarchs is distinctly fine. Another picture, 'A Southland Sunset,' by the same artist, is fine in colour, but does not attract so much as the Alpine gorge.

WATER COLOURS.

Mr Barraud's 'Farm Lands at Kaikoura' gives a good idea of the broad meadow lands of that district, with the 'everlasting hills' in the background.

Mr Ball's 'Bird-nesting' is a nice little water colour, but has been hung rather high. His 'Kaimatara Gorge' is a great improvement on previous work, and gives hopes that this artist will develop into a water colour painter of a high order. The subject is well chosen and agreeably treated. The painting is careful, and the colouring far better than usual with Mr Ball, whose fault is still a tendency to crudeness in this direction.

Mr Wright has several very beautiful water-colours, 'Clearing after Rain,' where some vapoury clouds drift over foliage-clad hills, and 'Winter' being my especial favourites. The latter is a delightful little bit of colour, and seems to me the most desirable water colour exhibited.

Mr Payton's 'Idlers' is, of course, conscientious, but is not equal in beauty to former works by the artist in this medium.

Mr Perrett's pastels are soft and delicate, and there are many little pictures by other artists to which complimentary reference might be made did space permit. 'Moonlight on Auckland Harbour,' by R. Reid, deserves a word of encouragement. Miss Joel has three paintings 'Our Father which art in Heaven' is the most ambitious of these. It is possessed of merit, but the attitude and expression are inclined to be affected rather than devotional.

The exhibits of wood-carving were few in number, but worthy of attention.

TO ABOLISH FOOT-BINDING.

A REMARKABLE movement in China, which promises to have widespread results, is the anti-foot binding agitation, recently started by a prominent member of the Chinese literati in Suifu, a great city of Szechuan. The leader of this movement is Chon, a literary graduate and a scholar of means and influence. His home is a leading city in the richest province of China. While district examinations were being held there recently every one was amazed at the appearance of large posters on all the dead walls containing an appeal to all educated Chinese to abandon the torture of their young daughters by foot-binding. The proclamation was signed by Chon and a half-dozen other prominent graduates and officials.

The proclamation was written in the regulation Chinese manner. He describes the tortures which young Chinese girls of the better class are forced to endure, and the misery and tears that are their portion for months and years. Even the worst convicts, he says, are never called upon to endure what a foolish custom imposes upon the tender frame of young girls, who are beloved by their fathers. He calls attention to the helplessness of such crippled women, and to their terrible fate when husbands and fathers are unable to defend or remove them from peril. He closes by exhorting all educated Chinese to use their influence in abolishing a custom that is barbarous and opposed to the welfare of the nation. What makes the appeal more significant is that Chon appeals to all classes, for in the western part of Szechuan and in the neighbouring provinces the binding of the feet of female children is universal. Even the women who work in the fields have crippled feet and are forced to follow the harvesters on their hands and knees. In fact, the average length of the female foot in all the western part of this province is only three inches, yet no woman can expect to get a husband who does not comply with the custom, and have her feet deformed. It will be a striking tribute to the effect of missionary work in China should this abolition of foot binding spread throughout the empire.

FOR the excellent snapshots of the unveiling of the Ballance memorial, which appeared in our issue of last week, we are indebted to Mr William C. Chatfield, of 'Hurstons,' Island Bay, Wellington. From time to time Mr Chatfield has courteously sent us copies of his excellent photos, and the reproductions have never failed to give great satisfaction to our readers.



AT a debate on smoking among the members of the British Association many speakers denounced and others advocated the practice. Professor Huxley said: 'For forty years of my life tobacco has been a deadly poison to me. (Loud cheers from the anti-tobaccoists.) In my youth, as a medical student, I tried to smoke. In vain. At every fresh attempt my insidious foe stretched me prostrate on the floor. (Repeated cheers.) I entered the navy; again I tried to smoke and again met with defeat. I hated tobacco. I could almost have lent my support to any institution that had for its object the putting of tobacco-smokers to death. (Vociferous applause.) A few years ago I was in Brittany with some friends. We went to an inn. They began to smoke. They looked very happy, and outside it was very wet and dismal. I thought I would try a cigar. (Murmurs.) I did so. (Great expectations.) I smoked that cigar—it was delicious. (Groans.) From that moment I was a changed man, and I now feel that smoking in moderation is a comfortable and laudable practice and is productive of good. (Dismissal and confusion of the anti-tobaccoists. Roars of laughter from the smokers.) There is no more harm in a pipe than there is in a cup of tea. You may poison yourself by drinking too much green tea and kill yourself by eating too many beefsteaks. For my own part I consider that tobacco, in moderation is a sweetener and equalizer of the temper.' (Total rout of the anti-tobaccoists and complete triumph of the smokers.)

Recent experiments have disclosed the fact that olive-green is the best colour for war vessels, all purposes considered. White is most readily distinguished of any of the colours by a search-light at night. In the daytime, however, a drab-painted ship is with difficulty seen on the horizon. It harmonises most naturally with the sky, while the olive-green harmonises with the water. Olive-green is as invisible as grey in the daytime, and much more so at night. This colour was first employed by the royal ships of the Brazilian Navy in 1894, and it is understood to be the colour which our own Navy would adopt in time of war.

The average rapidity of the pulse of an adult male is about 70 beats per minute. These beats are more frequent in children and women. However, it would not necessarily be an abnormal sign to find in some particular individuals the habitual movement of the heart to be from 60 to 75 or from 75 to 80 per minute. As a rule the heart's action is slower and more powerful in strong, muscular organizations and more rapid and feeble in those of slighter form. Presuming that the blood was thrown out of the heart at each pulsation in the proportion of 69 strokes per minute and at the assumed force of 9 feet, the mileage of the blood through the body might be taken at 207 yards per minute, 7 miles per hour, 168 miles per day, 61,320 miles per year or 5,150,880 miles in a lifetime of 84 years. The number of beats of the heart in the same long life would reach the grand total of 2,869,776,000.

The English language of to-day is quite different in many respects from the English spoken only 100 years ago. On the other hand, the Dutch spoken by the Boers of South Africa does not differ greatly from the same language spoken 200 years ago, the Boers during that time having had very little intercourse with the mother country, and so their language remains almost fixed.

French scientists and explorers have been discussing the question of the reforestation of the Sahara, and some of them entertain very hopeful views. M. Laguean thinks that the whole atmospheric conditions of the desert can be changed, and universal cultivation made possible, others not so sanguine, despair of the more arid plateaus but state confidently that in the depressed portions trees, such as the tamarisk, acacia, eucalyptus and poplar can be grown with success. The poplar proves to be the tree of all others most capable of resisting the influence of the desert. Under the shelter of the trees all kinds of vegetables and fruits can be grown.

Alfred F. Calvert, one of London's West Australian millionaires, was reputed to be worth £500,000 in cash a year ago. At that time a British and French syndicate offered him £1,000,000 for his gold mine holdings. The offer was refused, and a course of reckless extravagance was entered upon. Lately Mr Calvert has sold for £70,000 the properties that he refused £1,000,000 for a year ago.

Men and Women.

IT is an old theory that a man and his wife grow like each other after a number of years, and that when they are in perfect sympathy and in close accord their mental likeness is transferred to the lines of their faces. Seldom has a more extraordinary case come to notice than in the faces of President McKinley and his invalid wife. Often in other cases the resemblance is of that fleeting, intangible sort which belongs to the soul rather than to actual flesh, but in Mrs McKinley's case the cold and calculating camera can catch the wonderful similarity. But, after all, this phenomenon is not inexplicable. It is easily accounted for when one knows the life of complete sympathy and understanding which the two have led. Since their marriage in 1871 they have scarcely ever been separated. Never once, when private or political business has compelled him to leave her, has he neglected to send her three telegrams a day—one at early morning, another at the dinner hour, and another to say good-night—so that her first and last thoughts of the day should be the knowledge that, in the busy scenes of life, he did not forget her. Little wonder that their lives being cast in the same mould their features should partake of the same character.

An undertaking that should commend itself favourably to the notice of ladies has recently been started in London. The founders of the Maison Desirée have for their main object the provision of regular employment during the slack season for well conducted and steady workgirls, the irregularity of whose engagements at the West-end dressmaking establishments expose them to the risks and hardships of many weeks of enforced idleness in the course of each year. The first branch of the undertaking has been opened at 35, Church-street, Kensington, and others will speedily be opened at Harlesden, in North London, and in Edinburgh. In Kensington alone over forty girls are kept steadily at work, the result being a rapidly accumulating stock, which is being offered to purchasers at extraordinarily low prices. Well-cut costumes, for morning and afternoon wear, and gowns for evening wear, of the best material and in the latest styles, are being sold at standard prices ranging from one and a-half to three guineas, which prices, considering the workmanship and the material used, are unusually low.

The Emperor and Empress of Germany have decided to give a costume ball to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late Emperor William I. All the dresses and uniforms are to be exact representations of those worn at the Prussian court in the year 1797. The Emperor will appear as his great grandfather, King Frederick William III., while the Empress will be dressed like the famous Queen Louise. The old Emperor William always declared that the present Empress was extremely like his mother, Queen Louise, and Her Majesty has been painted and photographed in imitation of the paintings of that Queen.

Miss Winnifred Emery (Mrs Cyril Maude) tells an interviewer that, notwithstanding the eight performances a week at present, and all the busy details of her theatrical life, she does all her own housekeeping, managing the maids and all her social affairs just the same as if she had no great art to fill her thoughts and encroach upon her time.

An eye specialist says it is within the experience of every ophthalmologist that the wearing of veils is productive of weak eyesight, headaches, and sometimes vertigo and nausea. Not only are these effects produced by the eye-strain consequent upon the increased efforts made by one or both eyes to see through or around an obstruction, but the irregular figuring on the veil itself is in some instances an annoyance to the wearer.

A Berlin newspaper says that six queens use tobacco. The list embraces the Empress of Austria, whose practice of smoking thirty cigarettes a day has become a standing newspaper paragraph; the Dowager Empress of Russia, Carmen Sylva, the Roumanian Queen, the Queen Regent of Spain, Queen Amelia of Portugal, and Queen Margherita of Italy.

The theatrical craze has broken out again very severely in England. Everywhere one goes private theatricals are the order of the day. Good hopes may be entertained, too, that this revival of an old craze may not be as fleeting as some fashionable fancies have been of recent years, for the reason that those who have entered into it have apparently done so *con amore*, and not by any means for the mere sake of notoriety. What is more, it is a curious fact that amateur actors and actresses appear to be especially talented nowadays, so that private theatricals are robbed of many of their former terrors. Whether or not this sudden revelation of histrionic talent in high places will lead to further recruiting for the stage proper among younger sons and pretty daughters of distinguished families remains to be seen.