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THE PALL MALL GAZETTE

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Price One Penny.

ENTERTAINMENTS.

FANCY DRESS BALLS. GOVERNMENT GARDENS. NEXT GRAND FANCY DRESS BALL TO-NIGHT (SHROVE TUESDAY) at 11 p.m. Six Special and eight other valuable prizes will be given for the best fancy costumes. A Handicome Souvenir will be given to each lady present. Dan Godfrey's Grand Orchestra. Telephone 2888 Gerrard, and 7033 Central. Fee-office 10 to 10.

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

THE recent General Election in Germany seems destined to differ very considerably from most contests of that kind, whether in Germany or elsewhere. As a rule, when an appeal to the country is in prospect, and so long as it is actually in progress, the public excitement is intense, every candidate in every constituency is a centre of feverish interest; Press and public snap at him like trout at a mayfly; his manners, his morals, his methods, and all about him are discussed and dissected with ferocious minuteness. But, when once the poll is declared and the fray is over, the ephemerals have had their day; the vanquished are heard of no more; the victors simply become units in the parliamentary parties to which they severally belong, and Buffs and Blues mutually forget each other's behaviour (they call it misbehaviour) during the elections, knowing full well that all is done now, and that there is no good in crying over spilt milk. In short, the point is to win—si passis, recte, si non, quocumque modo—but having won (or lost) there is nothing more to be said or done. This occasion, however, is an exception to the general rule. The revelations made by a Bavarian clerical journal have established, beyond all reasonable doubt, the fact that the German Government actually employed—and paid—the German Navy League to act as its electioneering agent, all over the country, for the furtherance of the cause of the KAISER and his Chancellor. Furthermore, that the action of the League was directed, mainly, not against the Socialists, but against the Centre. Your German being by nature obedient to authority, the patriotic General KEIM, on behalf of the League, was not slow to remember that it was against the Centre, rather than against the Socialists, that the Chancellor had dissolved the Reichstag; and he determined to do all that a zealous official should to better the instruction of the Government. There seems to be every reason to believe that he did his level best, and that, if the Centre more than held its own, the result was certainly not due to any lack of opposition on the part of the Navy League. Whether the sinews of war were actually supplied out of the public funds seems doubtful: Prince BLOW denies that, while admitting that money was subscribed "from private quarters." We will leave it at that. Anyhow, there is a pretty hubbub, and the Chancellor's prospects of regaining the allegiance of the Centre—the party which has so long helped him to govern—appear to have receded into a somewhat remote and foggy futurity. And, on the whole, the interest of the General Election is almost as acute now that it is over as when it was in full swing.

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the official disavowals have ever deceived any human being, either in the Fatherland or elsewhere, who did not wish to be deceived. But, unfortunately, there are only too many people in this country who desire nothing better than to accept any statement made by the German Government for Gospel truth, waxing righteously wrathful if an impertinent scepticism ventures to question the absolute sincerity of the official utterance. This time, however, the evidence is too strong; there is no getting away from the conclusion that the charge of complicity between the League and the Government is substantially justified by the facts. Nor, we imagine, does even the soundest of sleepers under the hypnotism of Teutonic influence deny that the German Navy League is a powerful organization, and as dangerous as it is powerful. The League numbers, we believe, more than a million members; it is under the patronage of the Emperor's brother, Prince HENRY of Prussia; its practical activity is ubiquitous and prodigious, extending from the world of the higher officialdom right down to the elementary school-room. So much for its power—a power which may profitably be contrasted with that of the Navy League in our own country! And what of its aims? Well, as to that, it is enough, surely, to point to the fact that "the Admiral of the Atlantic" (soi-disant) has allowed his own sailor brother to become its patron. We hope (as, indeed, we believe) that we should merely be preaching to the converted if we told the readers of this journal that the object of the German Navy League is to foster the growth of a German Navy strong enough to try conclusions with the British. But hitherto it has been possible for those who see eye to eye with the Potsdam party in the British Cabinet to deny that the League enjoys the official recognition of the German Government. Happily that is no longer possible now; and for the final dissipation of all doubt on that subject we tender our most hearty thanks to our esteemed contemporary, the "Bayrischer Kurier."

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

LAST SESSION'S REMARKABLE CHANGES. BY MICHAEL MACDONAGH. In the first Session of the new Liberal Parliament several noteworthy innovations upon Constitutional usage and long-established customs took place. The rules which govern order and etiquette in the House of Commons are both written and unwritten. The written laws, or "Standing Orders," as they are officially termed, are fixed, and can be altered or abrogated only by special resolution of the House. But the practices affecting etiquette being mainly unwritten, and therefore embodied in no substantive record, some of them are falling gradually into abeyance, or have been forgotten altogether. So imperceptible almost is this slow waning of ancient usages in the House of Commons, that in several instances the period they were last observed cannot be exactly fixed. For example, it was the general custom during most of the eighteenth century for members to wear Court dress, lace ruffles, and swords. In time only Ministers appeared in the House in this costume, with their stars and ribbons. But the most diligent search in official records, and in biographies and diaries of Parliamentarians of the eighteenth century, has failed to fix the exact period when this revolution in the dress of the representatives of the nation was completed, and this picturesque feature of Parliamentary life finally disappeared. But the beginning of the end of the old practice of members of the House of Commons wearing their hats in the Chamber will be

MILITARY NOTES.

Two new rifles have been brought to my notice last week. One is patented as the "Essex-Barratt Magazine Repeater." This rifle can be fired five times in two and a half seconds without being taken from the shoulder, which is more rapid than anything that has been adopted up to date by our own or any other Government. If aim was taken between the shots—as, of course, it would have to be, so as to ensure accuracy—no doubt the two and a half seconds limit would be increased. It is a bolt action weapon. The work is done by two sliding guides, which draw back the bolt. The inventor informed me that these guides could be easily renewed if damaged. The sighting is up to 2,600 yards. The trigger action is simple to a degree, being composed of two pieces only. It may fitly be described as a lead pump. The other weapon is of the automatic pattern, and called the "Hallé," after its inventor. Last year at Bisleigh Sergeant-Major J. Wallingford, of the School of Musketry, Hythe, armed with one of these implements of destruction was pitted singly against squads composed of two men, each armed with our present Lee-Enfield pattern rifles. The results of the competition, which took place on July 20, ended in a tie between the sergeant-major and two other squads for first place. All three scored 23 sergeant-major and two other squads for first place. All three scored 23 points each in the time limit of 12 seconds in all. This proves conclusively that one "Hallé" is as good as two of our present pattern at short range. The magazine holds six cartridges when full, but magazines to contain fifteen can be made. The loading is from underneath, and the empties are ejected to the right. The working is done by recoil, the bolt travelling 3.7 inches each time. The barrel is of the Mäuser pattern, with a bore of 7 mm. It is 27.8 inches long, which makes the rifle heavier than our present M.L.E. short pattern by 14 lbs. The inventor claims that four of these are equal, for all intents and purposes, to one Maxim gun. Six shots a second can be actually got off, and 40 hits per minute have been recorded at one of its trials. The muzzle velocity is 2,300 feet per second. It is sighted up to 2,000 yards only, but of course a dial sight could be added for longer distances.

What either of these weapons would do when subjected to a bonâ-fide sand test I cannot say, nor is the test which has been gone through in this country of any use whatever. Rifles are put into a box with all their mechanism closed. The box is then shaken about, the rifles taken out, the sand carefully brushed off, and the breeches opened. Result nil. If we are to thoroughly gauge the true value of these inventions and those of others that may be in the market, the Government should arrange to carry free from port to port in one of our troopships boxes of fifty of each pattern to Abassieh or somewhere else in Egypt, so as to have them fired in a khamsheen wind. We could then really be certain which weapon would be worth paying for. I do not suggest that we require a new weapon for the service throughout, but there is not the slightest doubt that the day is not far off when we will see a squad of each company of infantry armed with either automatic rifles or a machine-gun. The latter costs about £250, and weighs, with out its carriage, 60 lb. If four of the "Hallé" are equal to one of these, similar results could be obtained at a very reduced price. The matter is well worthy of consideration. On November 23 last the Russians had 896 machine guns formed into 112 companies of eight guns each. This organization has since been cancelled. They are to be formed into companies for the future and attached to infantry units. Why should not we do the same, substituting automatic rifles for machine guns? The following, taken from the "Journal des Débats," may not be uninteresting. A volunteer—not a conscript—entered one of the French Hussar regiments lately. He, however, disliked riding, and refused to mount. He was transferred first to another Hussar regiment in the north and then to a third in the south, but no one could induce the man to get on a horse's back. Eventually he refused to comply with the order when in front of the Conseil de Guerre itself. He was awarded three months' imprisonment for flagrant disobedience of orders, but under the loi de suris was at once released. He then informed the authorities that this was his friends—not himself—who wished him to be in the cavalry. Eventually he was relegated to the infantry. The "Journal" adds, "Why did not the authorities commence where they ended? Why, indeed? The colour of our tape is pale pink compared with this one of vermilion hue. To-day at three o'clock Sir George White unveils a tablet to the memory of the late Field-Marshal Sir Henry Norman at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. Miles.

For continuation of Entertainment see Page 6.