

GOUT

Readers of this paper should know that to effectually cure Gout the great thing to do is to eliminate the urates from the system, which are the cause of the malady, and nothing does this so effectually as Bishop's Citrate of Lithia, which is strongly recommended by the "Lancet," and "British Medical Journal." Supplied by all Chemists in two sizes.

CURED.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE LATEST POLAR EXPEDITION.

WHAT wonderful tales are those that reach us from over the Pacific of a real Tom Tiddler's ground on the edge of the Arctic circle. Our poor New Zealand mines sink into insignificance when compared with the mines of British Columbia if only fifty per cent. of what is told of these latter be true. No wonder if the hearts of our miners and prospectors yearn eastward to a country where the golden harvest appears to be so much more abundant than here, and our old men dream dreams and our young men see visions of fortunes that are to be had for the picking up. And where are the ladies who could stifle the envious feelings in their bosoms as they read of the good wife who, while waiting for her husband to come up the shaft in one of the auriferous districts of that happy land, picked up £10 worth of nuggets? A marvellous country, indeed, but certainly were it not for the gold, anything but a desirable region to live in. Of course we are all aware that that one advantage will, in the eyes of the enormous majority of the sons of men, outweigh all possible disadvantages, and that thousands will flock to the frigid zone and contentedly freeze there sustained by the mere hope of the wealth they may accumulate. The prospect of having to thaw the precious metal out of the frozen ground is not to me a very pleasant one to contemplate, and suggests the query how weak humanity is to stand such a trial of cold. But I suppose that most people would count that a small matter so long as the gold was to be had. We are differently constituted, and while many may prefer to seek wealth in the latitude of Greenland, I for one choose much rather to enjoy life in a climate that is always gentle and kindly. Everyone to his taste. Let those who will to Alaska or the North Pole go there by all means, but I shall abide where I am, and I flatter myself I am philosophic enough not to regret it, even should my friends who leave return from British Columbia with shiploads of gold. But will they? We shall see.

BENJAMIN'S DREAM.

MR BEN TILLETT purposes going back to the Old Country—that is, if certain Trades and Labour Councils in the Colony cannot prevail on him to alter his intention, which up to the present they have not succeeded in doing. I am sorry to say that our magnificent climate has not done much to improve Mr Tillet's health, and I am afraid that he has not found here that acceptance for his doctrine which he perhaps looked for, and which was undoubtedly of more moment to him than health itself. So there is apparently no reason for him to remain with us beyond the hope that if he continues preaching our eyes may at last be opened to see the light and to embrace it. We all know that it is the remnant that saveth a nation, and it is not impossible that Providence has committed our salvation into the hands of the remnant, which is anxious for Mr Tillet to tarry awhile with us. That our visitor is very much disappointed with us, indeed, is only too plain from the remarks he has indulged in. He came here expecting to find a most advanced community hungering and thirsting after socialistic doctrines of the most highly spiced kind. He knew that we had passed

some very advanced legislation, and doubtless thought to himself that we were only wanting suggestions to pass laws of the most extreme type. Here seemed the very country for Mr Tillet. In the old land he complained that the workers were so stupid and slow. In England they would not hearken unto the voice of the agitator counselling this and that. And on the continent of Europe it was worse still. One ran the risk of being thrown into prison there. At the other side of the world it was altogether different. There the enlightened people would welcome a reformer with open hands, and follow his advice whatever it might be and wherever it might lead. New Zealand loomed pleasantly in Mr Tillet's imagination as just the very place for a man with revolutionary ideas of social reform who yearns to put them in practice. There was no telling what such a man might become in such a country, and very probably our friend pictured himself rising with meteoric swiftness and brightness to place and power in the council halls of this colony. Once established in power he would hasten to inaugurate that new era when all the wrongs of the labourer would be righted, and the capitalist be cast into outer darkness to wall and gnash his teeth unheeded. Alas! Mr Tillet came unto his own as he supposed, and his own received not his doctrine. He failed to inspire them with enthusiasm for his methods, the men whom he had all along fancied were only waiting for a leader. They were quietly critical of his remarks—not at all the correct mental attitude for apostles, and he did not find himself hoisted into celebrity in a day. Disillusion! disenchantment! Mr Tillet left his more than a mind to give us up as a bad job, and he would do so if it were not for the remnant that is pressing him to stay. But whether he goes or stays he has taken care to put on record the disappointment we have been to him. In a recent lecture—I understand a farewell one—he told his hearers that he did not see that the people of New Zealand had much to boast of. They were just as big fools as the people in England. The difference between them and the Home workers was only one of degree. Such language applied to us, the most enlightened people on the planet, is, of course, simply ludicrous, and not worth noticing. It is merely as a proof of the wonderful change that has come over Mr Tillet's mind that I record it. Mr Tillet as much as tells us that we are frauds and humbugs, not a bit better than his friends the dockers, nay, not so satisfactory as them by a great deal, for they did listen to his words and we have not.

THAT AWFUL COUNTRY—NEW ZEALAND.

EVEN the most wide-awake and circumspect journals are sometimes 'had.' I believe it is on record that *The Thunder* itself was bamboozled on one occasion by a clever contributor, and of course lesser lights in the journalistic firmament, even in these days when the school master is abroad, frequently fall victims to the arts of the hoaxer. Seldom, however, has a journal given itself away so completely as that canny paper, the Edinburgh *Weekly Scotsman*, did in a recent issue. The affair is of particular interest to us, seeing that the hoaxer hailed from Auckland, and the instrument of his joke was New Zealand itself. With a laudable desire to acquaint the good folks at Home with the life of the colonies, the *Weekly Scotsman* has a column headed 'Our Brothers Abroad,' which is open to contributions from all parts of the Empire. The idea is a capital one if you could be sure of your contributors telling the truth. But if you cannot vouch for their veracity, it is evident that the information they supply is worse than useless, being misleading. I sincerely trust that the writers to that column are neither liars nor jokers, and that the letter from New Zealand describing this country, which lies before me, is the exception that proves the rule. I shall mention no names, but let the flippant resident of Auckland who made so bold as to hoax, or try to hoax, the hoary Scotsman blush with shame as he reads again the words he wrote in April last. In an epistle of some length, which he unhesitatingly declares has been dictated by a wish to give the people at Home some idea of the social life of the Colony, he gives a picture of New Zealand. Ye gods, such a picture! His descriptions of picnicking, fishing, shooting, etc., in the vicinity of Auckland will pass, though there even the hand of the artistic decorator is occasionally visible. But towards the fifth paragraph the devil enters into his soul, and he deliberately sets himself to spin a tale. Thenceforth he leaves the realm of actuality and floats about in the ocean of fiction. To all appearances our scribe got wearied of recounting the pleasures of the piscatorial art in the Waitemata and the charm of yachting in the Hauraki Gulf. He probably felt when reading over what he had written that he had hardly put sufficient excitement into his letter. There was nothing in it after all to excite the wonder of the readers of the *Scotsman*, and to impress them with the adventures to be found in this distant land. Something had to be done, and our fellow-colonist was equal to the occasion. Taking up

his pen and (I can imagine) putting his tongue in his cheek, he wrote: 'About five hundred miles north of Auckland on the prairies there are still a large number of cannibals, there being always a strong guard on duty in town to protect the settlers. In the Taranaki district is the one hundred mile bush, which abounds in wild and ferocious animals of every description, and it is quite a common occurrence for people to be killed and eaten by them. Further north it is not quite so bad, as the uncivilised natives have killed and eaten most of them. In the Canterbury district, on the plains, they have a large number of wild horses, very large, and mostly of a beautiful grey colour. They are quite untameable. Sometimes you come across large herds of buffalo, which make very good eating. We have also some very fine native birds. The tui, or parson bird, is about the size of a half-grown ostrich, and has a large bunch of white feathers at its throat. The flax tree is another remarkable production of Nature, standing about fifty feet high. No person can stay long in the vicinity of this tree, as it emits a deadly perfume which has killed several natives. The settlers here never go about without being well armed, usually carrying a brace of revolvers and a rifle.'

WHAT new ideas of the geographical area of the flora and the fauna of these islands may not be disseminated among the simple Scottish youth by these wonderful descriptions! One marvels how the Scotsman was ever so careless—for surely they must have known better—as to insert such nonsense without so much as a line of comment. Where was Mr Cooper, the genial editor who lately visited New Zealand, when the paper went to press? It has been suggested that the writer himself of that remarkable letter may have been some innocent new chum from Caledonia who had fallen among the wily jokers of the Auckland Yacht Club and listened not wisely but too well to their yarns. But I rather think that that was not the case. It was the writer and no other that was the joker, and he should think shame of himself. Just fancy what numbers of most desirable immigrants he may have frightened away from New Zealand by his inconvenient jesting.

THE LITERARY SERVANT GIRL.

FOR the last fifty years, and perhaps for a decade or two of centuries previously, mistresses have been constantly exclaiming to one another 'What are servant girls coming to nowadays!' What they are coming to in the past I do not know, nor do I know if ever they got to it—the short and simple annals of domestic service do not find their way into print so that he who runs may read—but I am sure their goal would not appear very revolutionary in the eyes of mistresses in the days that now are when the Rights of servant girls are beginning to be spelled with even a larger R than the Rights of Women, and to overshadow in many ways those older and more comprehensive Rights. As a sample of what the servant girl of to-day has actually come to, let us take a case recently tried at the Shoreditch (London) County Court, where a certain Miss Ada Wilton, quondam domestic servant in the employment of a certain Mrs Stallbrass, sued her ex-mistress for one month's wages in lieu of one month's notice. Reading the evidence of both sides in Court one sees clearly that all the trouble was caused by the crass conservatism of the mistress, apparently a low, grovelling soul, to whom the Fine Arts were a dead letter, and who retained almost obsolete notions in regard to the use and duties of a domestic servant. It distresses one to think of what the poor girl in her employment must have suffered from the utter lack of sympathetic intellectual affinity in her mistress. The ignorant mistress, whose mind evidently could not soar above a wish to satisfy the mere animal needs of herself and family, took her servant sorely to task because, forsooth, the latter, engaged in the composition of a novelette, entitled 'The Vengeance of the Viscount,' had not found time to cook the children's dinner. I ask myself are we really living in the very last years of the nineteenth century when an act of such shameful discouragement of literary endeavour can be perpetrated? Then again it appears that the mistress had on one occasion brutally objected to her literary servant's having written down some ideas that had suddenly occurred to her, because the writing down of those ideas had incidentally involved the spilling of a bottle of ink upon the breakfast table cloth. To think that out of a paltry consideration for her table-cloth this foolish woman would have preferred to let her servant's ideas perish as soon as they were born! But the full depravity of the mistress' nature is only made clear by further revelations. It appears that the literary servant had, like her sister novelist, Ouida, a desire to preserve her mother-tongue in its pristine purity, and that the mistress was constantly in the habit of maltreating the English language, besides being otherwise not on speaking terms with the letter A. The servant's fastidious ear being thus outraged, she naturally interposed in the interests of her language and