

GOUT

Readers of this paper should know that the 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 POPE AND THE PREMIER.

COMMENTARY has been rife on the Premier's audience with the Pope, but I had thought everybody's interest in the subject was exhausted by this time. However, I have discovered that that is not the case. The other day a visitor invaded my sanctum. Backed by the swift and sure insight of a Sherlock Holmes, my first glance told me that he was of Scotch ancestry, and came—not directly, of course—from the north of Ireland; also that he was an Orangeman of the deepest hue. He came directly from a small country settlement not far from Auckland to ask me, in somewhat forcible language, what the Premier's interview with the Pope portended. At least, he said he came to ask me what it portended, but it turned out that he had really come to tell me what it portended. He told me—no, truly, I will not harrow my reader's feelings by placing before their eyes in all its entirety the lurid picture he placed before mine, but I think I may try to briefly indicate some of its features. To begin with, my visitor assured me that the interview of the Autocrat of New Zealand with the Autocrat of the Roman Catholic Church could point to nothing less than the forcible conversion of this colony to the Roman Catholic faith. Richard Seddon was not a man to be balked in his designs, and what he had made up his mind was to be would be—my visitor evidently placed Mr Seddon's will and the decrees of fate on one and the same platform. Then my visitor began to paint in lively colours—which smacked strongly of an undigested course of Fox's 'Book of Martyrs'—the necessary details of New Zealand's forcible conversion to the Roman Catholic Church. The details were terrible, and all the more terrible because of their confusion. Courts of Inquisition would be established in all the more prominent towns of the Colony. Manufactures of thumb-screws, racks, and boots—the two last not to be confounded with the ordinary and innocent articles bearing those names—would be merrily set a-going, and the flames of many new Smithfields would rise from all quarters of the land, bearing aloft to the sunny skies of New Zealand the cries of the faithful who chose rather to die than submit to the iniquitous tyranny of the bigoted priesthood which was crushing fair Zealandia beneath its iron heel. 'But these things will not be,' proceeded my visitor, with a heroic accent in his voice, 'until the valiant Orangemen of New Zealand have fought for their faith another battle of the Boyne, which, less happy in its issue than the first, does not give to them the victory.'

I GENTLY threw some cold water on my Orangeman's perfidious oration by begging him to bear in mind that religious persecution was a thing of the past, and that it seemed to me that Protestants had little reason to boast that, in the past, they had been less ready with the flames of persecution than their Roman Catholic contemporaries. Then I attempted to put his mind at ease by assuring him that no results of the kind he feared were likely to follow Mr Seddon's visit to the Vatican. 'But what was he doing there, anyway?' asked the Orangeman, suspiciously. I endeavoured to explain to him that Mr Seddon, no doubt, considered himself the Father of his country, and in that capacity had

sought the acquaintance of the Spiritual Father of a large number of his countrymen. This and more to the same effect I explained to him at length, but this man of one idea kept interrupting my lucid explanations in the manner of the bewildered old man in Molière's comedy, with his English version of 'Qu'allait il faire dans ostogalers?' In the end he told me bluntly that he wasn't born yesterday, but he rather suspected I was, for in last week's issue of the GRAPHIC had I not got it pictorially stated that Mr Seddon had refused to kiss the Pope's toe? 'He refuse to kiss the Pope's toe! Don't you believe it, sir. Since he had gone and got an audience with the Pope, it isn't to be supposed he'd higgler over a small matter like that. I'll bet he came prepared to slobber the whole foot if they wanted him to. He's a deep dog is Seddon, and he isn't the man to let a few kisses stand in the way if he's got his reasons for wanting to sell his country to the Pope of Rome.' Despairing of convincing this pig headed fellow by myself, I called in (through the telephone) the services of our very special reporter. He is a very special reporter indeed, and apparently has means of knowing more of the substance and particulars of any event taking place on any portion of the globe than even the persons concerned in the matter have themselves any knowledge of. I suspect his means of knowing has to do with clairvoyance, or second sight, or something equally uncanny, but still I take the news the reporter provides me.

Now I repeated to the Orangeman, standing by me at the telephone, the answers my questions evoked from this very special reporter of ours. 'Are you in possession of the full particulars of Mr Seddon's audience with the Pope?' The most accomplished liar could not have uttered a more unhesitating 'I am' than that which reached my ears through the telephone. 'Then kindly state them now, and as briefly as possible.' Back came his precise statement, as clear and distinct as a telephonic utterance can be—'The audience was less of Mr Seddon's seeking than the Pope's, who wished to honour in Mr Seddon that wonderful new country of remarkably enlightened inhabitants of which he is the Premier. Mr Seddon did, as a fact, sturdily refuse to kiss the toe which the Pope gracefully extended to him on his entrance, but the slight unpleasantness, which our Premier's praiseworthy contumacy might have given rise to, was happily avoided by the genial tact with which His Holiness quickly thrust the rejected toe into a jewelled slipper and extended a finger instead. The conversation between the two remarkable men ran in a light and pleasant fashion, chiefly upon the latest carnival in Rome, and such kindred subjects as the Rabbit Pest and the Woman's Franchise in New Zealand. Mr Seddon also entertained the Pope with particulars of the *menús* of the many banquets given to him in England. Religious topics were avoided with studied courtesy by both. But toward the end of the interview, His Holiness, who had not concealed the favourable impression Mr Seddon had made on him, turned the kindly and reverend refinement of his countenance on our Premier and whispered softly, 'Ah, that thou hadst been of the true Faith and in orders! Methinks a red robe would not have sat unbecomingly on that stalwart figure of thine; or even that this chair of St. Peter's might have found in thee a not unworthy occupant when I have passed away.' Mr Seddon, in a voice broken with emotion, replied to His Holiness, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Roman Catholic.' But even in that supreme moment the strong will so characteristic of our Premier asserted itself, and tearing himself from the too fascinating affability of the Pope's presence, he left the Vatican as staunch a Protestant as he had entered it.' 'Now,' said I, ringing off the telephone and turning to the Orangeman, 'could anything be more eminently satisfactory than that statement of our very special reporter's? Surely your suspicions respecting our Premier's audience with the Pope are forever set at rest?' My troublesome visitor answered me neither 'Yes' nor 'Nay.' His face, though looking a trifle bewildered, showed him to be as stubbornly unconvinced as ever, and he stalked out of my office muttering to himself his dogged query, 'What the dickens was Seddon doing there anyway?'

A GOOD FIELD FOR BURGLARS.

NEW ZEALAND used to be called the paradise of the working man. It was the capitalist who called it so, not the working man himself. The latter, like most of us since the days of Adam, failed to recognise when he was well off; and now that there are few capitalists in the land and most of us are working men, the phrase has rather fallen into disuse. There still remains a section of the community, however, to the members of which New Zealand is perhaps as near an approach to Paradise as mundane conditions will allow. I mean the policemen. The New Zealand policeman

gives the lie direct to the universally accepted dictum of comic opera that the life of the guardians of the peace is not a happy one. That may be the case with policemen in other lands, but not here, where the man who dons the uniform at once invests himself with dignity and importance in the eyes of his fellow men, and ensures for himself ease with honour. In this law-abiding land distinction in the service can be won at the very least risk of injury to one's self. There are no desperate and hardened criminals here—dangerous customers to handle at close quarters—and a soldierly bearing, even when allied with a rabbit's heart, will carry a man a long way on the paths of peace. No wonder that in these days, when the question, 'What shall we do with our boys?' vexes our households, *paterfamilias* should bethink himself of the nice genteel billet of constable as an opening for one of his olive branches. Nay, when business is depressed he may secretly covet the office for himself. I know that I have often envied the gentlemen in blue or white in the summer time. When I have been hurrying about my business there were they, delightfully placid and undisturbed, sauntering with an air of aristocratic leisure along the shady pavement, and casting a casual eye of supervision over the orderly passers-by. Nor did the fact that these carefully-gloved hands had occasionally to arrest a drunk or petty thief—though almost incredible—detract from the desirability of the office. Such little activities would come as welcome relaxations, nothing more. It might have been predicted, however, that such an idyllic condition of things could not last for ever, and already there are signs that the end of it is near. The thief and burglar, like the schoolmaster, is abroad in these days. These gentlemen are essentially cosmopolites, and call every country home where their prey is to be had. Was it possible that the existence of a place like New Zealand, with all its advantages in the burglarious eye, could remain a secret? Cracksmen, like other mortals, often require a change of air, and what better place could there be for such a purpose than this colony, where one has ample opportunities to do a little business just to keep one's hand in. We are not a wealthy community, and for any enterprising burglar to seriously think of settling down to his trade here would probably be a mistake, but as a place for an occasional tour, playing, say a week or a fortnight in each big town, and a day or two in the smaller centres, I know nothing that is likely to beat it. And if I mistake not Bill Sykes and his friends are beginning to understand this, and are seeking us out. Some recent sticking up cases in Auckland suggest the presence there of something more than mere local talent, and that suggestion is rather confirmed by the fact that the police have found no clue. They are scarcely likely to find any, I should say, having never had any particular training for the search. Some people I know are indignant with the police for not having laid the offenders by the heels long ago. But that is unfair. You must make allowances for the force. It has never had to cope with such cases before. The experience is altogether new to it. And you must not expect, either, that our guardians can suddenly become the ferocious and intrepid man-hunters that are needed to tackle the knights of the sand bag and the jemmy. You would not think of taking a policeman out of a pantomime and setting him down in a street row in Commercial Road, London, expect him to perform prodigies of valour and astuteness. No, no, for a long time yet to come orderly citizens must be contented to be sand bagged or garrotted in patience, according as the passing fancy or convenience of the itinerant footpad may suggest. And after all it is not perhaps the citizens who are to be pitied, but the policemen, whose idyllic existence has been so ruthlessly disturbed, and calls made on them which they never anticipated when they joined the force. If any men have a grievance they surely have.

AN ASSURED INCOME IN THE NEXT WORLD.

THAT very ancient Biblical saying, that we brought nothing into this world and can take nothing out of it, does not seem to be believed in by a well-known London assurance company. In a circular recently issued by them, they gravely make the following statement:—'An investment yielding 5 per cent. per annum, to begin at death or on attainment of a given age, and to continue for 20 years afterwards, with payment of the full sum assured at end of period.' It is difficult to know exactly what benefit the 5 per cent. per annum would be to a dead man. The circular does not say that this amount will be annually paid to the heirs of deceased, nor to anyone whom he may appoint to receive it, but it will 'begin at death,' and 'continue for 20 years afterwards, with payment of the full sum assured at end of period.' This clearly means that the money will be paid to the dead man if he prefers to receive it in the next world, or at a given age in this. Now suppose he elects to receive his 5 per cent. per annum after death, how is the assurance company going to manage about paying it? Will they take the cheque to the cemetery and lay it on the grave of the