

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.

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CURED.

endant of these same pioneers in Otago—these Pilgrim Fathers of New Zealand. The city likewise that counts them as its founders has just cause for pride, for whatever blot may stain its subsequent history the opening pages at least are free from the touch even of vulgar commercialism. As all great enterprises should open, the foundation of Otago was inaugurated in a spirit of devoutness.

ASTRIDE THE WORLD'S FENCE.

MR W. S. GILBERT, of comic opera fame, with a generosity that is not supposed to be characteristic of him, or indeed of playwrights or authors generally, has actually been giving away plots free gratis, and for nothing. His practised eye, so quick to perceive latent humorous possibilities where the optics of ordinary mortals saw none, has discovered in roaming round the world an ideal venue for a good comic opera. No, it is not New Zealand, dear reader, with its advanced legislation, though that has still to be exploited by the author in search of subjects. It is in Fiji, and just at that particular spot where the line of longitude 180 degrees rests dry-shod, as it were, on its long sea voyage from the North to the South pole. If you have a map at hand you can locate the place and, in view of what I am going to tell you, you had better do it at once. If you have not forgotten all your geography you must be aware that all along that line, which is really the division fence between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, the days of the week belonging to the one are always at logger-heads with the days of the week belonging to the other. It seems to be a sort of boundary dispute that has been going on since the dawn of creation. All this the primers have told you in more precise language than I can command; and you are also aware that to avoid the confusion the skippers in crossing the fence arrange for two Sundays or two Mondays or two Tuesdays or two any other days—it all depends on what day you may happen to strike the fence. If you get there on Saturday night you awake next morning, not on Sunday, as you would in any other part of the world, but on Saturday No. 2. The reason is explained and you understand, or what is much more likely, you don't, but take the skipper's word and forget all about it. But did you ever think what it would mean to be permanently settled at the boundary fence; to have two Mondays or two Tuesdays or two Sundays merely by taking a step to the westward or Eastward? Fancy having a house with the front steps leading into Sunday and the back door opening slap on to Saturday; or being able, as Mr Gilbert suggests, to dance a hornpipe on one leg while with the other you moved at a sober gait consonant with the most puritanic observance of the Sabbath. The author of the Mikado sees only matter for comic opera in such a situation. Naturally he cannot take it seriously; that has never been his metier. But I should like to know why it should not be taken seriously. What is to hinder any of us taking up our abode on the great fence? It is a locality that would suit every temperament. Those who are religiously minded could have two Sundays in one week with the least trouble imaginable, while those sad dogs who find the sacred day heavy on their hands could very easily dodge it altogether without in any way laying themselves open to censure. You see, you could always spend your Saturday on one side of the fence, and at midnight cross over to the other, when you would be in Saturday morning. Then, after you had gone picnicking on that side you would cross back again and find yourself in Monday morning. From what I know of human nature I think choice lots on that boundary line will soon be at a premium when the world comes to understand the advantages of the situation. For there is very little land that occupies that unique position. What a mine of wealth it will be for a syndicate. It would pay to reclaim a strip right along that favoured line.

A WOMEN'S BANK.

THE Intest feminine aspiration seems to be for a women's bank—that is, a bank managed by women for their own sex. In the eyes of ladies the common male bank, if we may call it so, has certain insuper-

able objections which makes the other a necessity of the times. It is a relief to know that these objections in no way reflect on the ability or honesty of man. The ladies would admit at once that the stern sex know well how to manage a financial institution, and are not more likely to be guilty of fraud than themselves. They are quite willing to entrust the safe custody of their capital to the existing banks, but what they hate and detest is having to run the gauntlet of a score or so of male eyes when they enter the temple of Mammon and to transact business with men only. In their ordinary shopping they are accustomed to be served by their own sex chiefly, and when it is a man who executes their orders the transaction usually deals with matters with which they have a certain familiarity that puts them on the same standing as the vendor, if not actually above him. For instance, a lady has the advantage over a man in discussing certain esoteric articles of feminine attire. But when a woman goes into a bank the atmosphere of the place seems overpoweringly masculine. Other business places managed by men solely may have the same effect, but in a much less degree, for somehow or other the gentlemen in these establishments always appear of a more approachable order of creation than the cashiers and clerks who consciously or unconsciously take the colour of their surroundings and shine with the reflected light of the institution they serve. In a bank I believe you see man in his most arrogant, self-satisfied phase. Totally oblivious of the fact that it is your money which has contributed to place and keep him there, he regards you with a superior air when you go to cash your cheque. I scarcely wonder that ladies have an antipathy to these financial palaces. Then again there is something bewildering at first in the simple operation of cashing a cheque if you are not accustomed to it. The unfortunate female who finds herself standing for the first time in her life in the centre of a palatial building with that mysterious ribbon of paper in her hand, and without the remotest idea of what trying formalities she may have to go through before it is converted into sovereigns, is indeed an object of pity. The Christian martyr in the arena was scarcely placed in a more trying position. In vain she looks for guidance to the mysterious brass plates variously inscribed with 'A to G' and 'H to Z,' 'Cheques marked,' 'Bills receivable,' etc.; equally useless is it to expect mercy from those insolent eyes that regard her unmoved. There she stands, afraid to venture forward a step or to ask a question, for there is a Rhadamanthine aspect about all things there that a false word or a false step means ruin and disgrace irremediable. She almost wishes for the time she were the beggar in the street, who is spared the trial of cashing a cheque. And when at last after making half a dozen mistakes, and being treated worse than a criminal, she flees from the place feeling like one, her self-respect hurt, her pride crushed, and her whole personality, as it were, broken on the wheel, is it a marvel that she cries, 'Give me a women's bank!' No doubt she will get it some day, too. The gentle sex will not be insulted with impunity nowadays, and if our existing financial institutions do not meet their requirements there are not wanting enterprising ladies here and elsewhere to start a feminine bank where man may never enter. Directors and managers of our banks should see to this thing. What is to hinder them having a ladies' room in the bank on the lines of some of the Continental banking-houses?

WANTED A BATTLE HYMN.

THE singing of the National Anthem or the singing of any anthem on the eve of a battle is not a characteristically British method of getting ready for action. Hence most people were no doubt a little surprised to read in a cable from the Nile Valley the other day that on the eve of what promised to be a sharp tussle with the Derivishes the British troops sang 'God Save the Queen' and then marched forward to meet the foe. Now, if it had been the German army or the French army that did this thing it would not have struck anyone as out of place, and in the old days when our Henrys or our Edwards led their troops over the vast fields of France, or later in the Civil war, it was not considered derogatory to the dignity of an English soldier

to either say his prayers or sing a battle hymn before he joined the fray. Of course, if you like to go further back you will find the singing and the fighting more closely connected than ever. Why is it then that the battle song has died out in our army, or even that it should be getting rarer, as I believe it is, in the Continental legions? The explanation that we are becoming less musical will not suffice, for the reverse is the case. There is a growing appreciation of the divine art, though it is not always in the very class forms among the very latest from which Tommy Atkins is and has been recruited. One almost begins to fear that the fault lies in our modern war methods and war machines, which are turning Tommy himself into nothing more than a methodical machine, and knocking all the personality and human instinct out of him. Here surely is a danger that has to be guarded against. If you make a machine of Tommy you cannot expect him to be moved except as a machine is. It will be in vain that you appeal to his patriotism, to his pride, to all that complex bundle of sentiments and feelings and associations which constitutes the man in him, if you go on from year to year taking little trouble to cultivate that part of him. What is it that makes one regiment so much more dependable, so much more invincible, than another, if it is not its capacity over the other to respond to the personal appeal, to be moved by association, by sentiment? The limbs of one may be as sturdy as the other, and their muskets are the same, but there is all the difference between them when the fate of the day may be hanging by a thread. I believe in song of any kind for making men feel together and act together, and I should like if in the army therewere always ready a good stirring battle chorus. 'God Save the Queen' is good in its way, but I think Mr Kipling, for instance, could give us something better. His Jubilee Hymn and that martial chant beginning 'The Earth is Full on Anger' are both magnificent, but something he might give us more suited to Tommy's ways of looking at things.

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.

VERY seldom, I am sure, has the Auckland oyster appealed in vain to any properly regulated palate and through the palate to the heart. The whole family have such a winsome way with them, whether you meet them in their naked simplicity on the rocks of the Hauraki Gulf or embellished—needlessly, I think—for the dinner table, that I think no one will turn a deaf ear to the plaint they are at present making. For the last three years they have been permitted to be undisturbed in their beds. This was absolutely necessary, for the spoiler in the shape of the oyster boy had spread ruin and desolation among them, and they were threatened with extinction. Thus were they saved, and now, with their three years' rest, the colonies have bred and mustered till they again cover the face of the shore. Their present flourishing condition invites our attention, so the Government have decreed that the beds shall be open on the first of April, which news the northern city hails with joy, for the inhabitants thereof, who may be said to have been accustomed to oysters from their cradles, have of late been cruelly deprived of what in a sense is their natural food. Others are rejoicing also, namely, the exporters of the precious bivalves—the inhuman monsters who would expatriate the simple shellfish and sell them to the stranger in Sydney. It was owing to the wholesale spoliation of the Hauraki beds by the agents of these men that the whole species was nearly wiped off the face of the shore three years ago, and the Government were compelled to put a stop to the depredations. But now when the oyster beds are reopened there is every reason to expect a repetition of the very same thing. Arrangements have been made for sending large quantities of the poor natives to New South Wales, and we may be certain that as before the spoilers will not act with any leniency or mercy, but will pounce down on whole families down to the undeveloped babes who are quite useless for food, tumble the lot of them into their capacious sacks. The consequence must be the ruination of the beds, the destruction of an industry that gives employment to many

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE JUBILEE OF OTAGO.

LAST week Otago celebrated its Jubilee and it was a big affair. What one cannot help admiring about the Scotch is the admirable thoroughness with which they do everything they set their hands or feet or heads to do, whether it is taking a precipitous mountain fortress, as in India the other day, or merely dancing the Highland Fling. The good people of Otago have thrown their whole souls so into this demonstration in honour of the fiftieth birthday of the settlement that they have altogether forgotten the present and are living again in the past. Dunedin, as some ill-tempered person said to me the other day, is positively musty with the ancient things that were resurrected on this auspicious occasion. What with old identities, old reminiscences, old names, old sayings, old jokes, the poor Sassenach visiting the place would have been at a loss to take it all in had there not been a liberal accompaniment of old whisky. You may smile at the perfrivolum ingenious Scotorum that makes itself manifest so far from Caledonia and under circumstances like this, but I know of no other part of this colony or of any colony that has better reason to be proud of itself when it takes its retrospect from its Jubilee Mount, than has Dunedin to-day. No city in the whole Southern Hemisphere had a more unsullied birth. Regal Sydney and innocent-looking Hobart may well blush to think of how they were begotten, and the rest of us, from Melbourne to Auckland, owe their origin to nothing higher than the commercial instinct and love of adventure. But Dunedin came of devout parentage. Her founders believed the clergyman as necessary to the success of the infant settlement as the surveyor, and the Bible a better book to carry in the emigrant's kit than the ready-reckoner. The setting out from the Old Country and the arrival here of the pioneers was invested with a religious aspect, for which one can find no parallel unless he goes back to the days when the Mayflower sailed from Plymouth. These first emigrants, chosen much more on account of their moral worth than for mere strength of limb, or wealth of gear, seemed to have regarded themselves as a sort of later Pilgrim Fathers, and although they may not have been altogether free from sectarian narrowness they gave to the enterprise of colonisation a character that no other colonising enterprise can claim. Their methods may have appeared somewhat antiquated to the majority of people fifty years ago; and in these modern days when we lay the foundation of our colonies by means of chartered companies and Maxim guns they would be still more out of date. Be that as it may, it surely proves that we have improved on matters. I would count it an honour if I could claim to be a des-