

Negotiations however, for this end were necessary with the Russian Government, and they were accordingly taken in hand and ably carried through by the British ambassador at St. Petersburg, whose report on the matter has recently been laid before Parliament. In consequence of the arrangements thus made and the concessions granted, Captain Wiggins was enabled to carry out his long contemplated design, and, last year, he ascended the river Yenisei, in a steamer named the Phoenix, and laden with a cargo of English goods which were gladly received, as indeed the whole expedition was with enthusiasm, by the Governor and people of Yeneseisk a town situated some two thousand miles from the mouth of the river. Nor can we have much difficulty in understanding the feelings at such an arrival of a community, which had hitherto been lost in the depths of a vast desert, and hardly acquainted with the existence of an outer world, except, perhaps, through some of those melancholy bands of Russian exiles—whose fate has from time immemorial been so much commiserated by people of humane minds. But the prospect thus opened of trade between England and Siberia is very attractive, and holds out great promise of many kinds. Siberia is a land of unbounded wealth and capable of almost infinite development. Its fertility is boundless, and its minerals rich and abundant. One of the most famous of noble European houses, indeed, already owes to it their place as nobles and millionaires, that, namely, of Demidoff, which originated with a blacksmith of the country, whose deftness in his trade gained the favour of Peter the Great, and thus obtained for him mining concessions of which he knew how to make due profit. The difficulty of the question, however, seems to be, as to whether a country like Russia, which is so jealous of foreign commerce, and so anxious to secure fresh markets, and open up new trading centres for herself, will consent to see this great opportunity monopolised or shared in very largely by England. The districts thus opened comprise not only the whole of Siberia, but possibly a great portion of Northern China as well, and the importance of the matter can be hardly over-rated. At any rate it gives Russia a power, if she chooses to make use of it, of influencing commercial interests in England in her favour, and thus making any tendency towards a disagreement with her unpopular—and a matter to be avoided even at a considerable sacrifice.

WE find we were tolerably correct last week in our "THE SHOUTING remarks as to the imprudence of the German Emperor's going about the world "shouting," as the *Pall Mall Gazette* calls it, and without the guidance of an experienced statesman. The utmost apprehension, it seems, exists in Europe as to what may come of the Emperor's conduct. And no good had so far come of it, for the visit to Russia, of which so much was spoken, resulted in nothing, and it is even most probable that no subjects of importance were mentioned either by Czar or Emperor. Prince Bismarck, moreover, had been strongly opposed to the visit, as he was also to that now paid to Rome, and his displeasure is hardly likely to be lessened by the honour conferred there by the Emperor on Signor Crispi, who had deserved the Chancellor's disapprobation, and just been snubbed by him in consequence. Prince Bismarck they say, however, has many causes for displeasure, and things at Berlin are going sadly against his desires. The retirement of Count Moltke, for example, which took place at the wish of the German Emperor to make way for the promotion of Count Waldersee has caused him great annoyance. In Italy, we are told, they were afraid of the indiscretion of the Emperor, and we do not know that much has taken place there to remove their fears. His Majesty's advice to the Pope, if the report be true, certainly nullified the concession made by him in going from the railway station straight to the Vatican, as it had been previously arranged, and only afterwards proceeding on his visit to King Humbert at the Quirinal. The Emperor's meaning, we have already said, we cannot understand. But the possibility that he means to conciliate the revolution seems a little strengthened by the fact that the German Socialists have recently won a pronounced victory in an election. At all events, his undertakings, whether they have any meaning or no meaning, whether they proceed, as it is also suggested, merely from a vain longing to exhibit himself and his grandeur, or from some other unwise, though better intentioned motive, have nothing very reassuring in them, and even as contrasted with the worst days of the old Emperor's reign, seem to illustrate the saying—Better to sup with the devil you know than to sup with the devil you don't know. The younger Emperor with his younger counsellors, will hardly bring about an improvement in the state of European affairs.

A GALLANT REFUSAL. PADDY from Cork has proved himself to be the brat of a boy. He knows how to stick to his principles wherever he may be, and neither fear nor flattery can detach him from them. The Cork Barrack-street Band, employed to play at the Irish Exhibition in London, were asked the other day to favour the fashionable company present with the National Anthem. Their reply, to the general consternation of all concerned, was a point-blank refusal. Here is their

reason why, as given to a reporter of the *Pall Mall Gazette* :—" Why? Do you not know that every emissary of the Castle uses your National Anthem to insult the Irish people? Do you not know that British soldiers have been ordered to march through the streets of an Irish town on a Sunday morning singing it? No opportunity is ever missed of using it to annoy Irishmen. Our refusal was not meant as an insult to the Queen or to the English people; it was simply a protest against Balfourism in Ireland." And your belief is that all fair-minded men will acknowledge the justice of the plea. In any case Paddy from Cork has proved himself no poltroon, and deserves the due recognition of his spirited behaviour.

MR. GLADSTONE in a speech made by him the other day at Wrexham, reiterated his statement as to the treatment of political prisoners by King Bomba of Naples. He explained that the prisoners who were chained—one of them being linked to a felon, were men who had been convicted of high treason and whose respite, from execution the Government looked upon as an act of mercy. A political prisoner not so convicted, he said, occupied a separate apartment and did not wear the prison dress. It was with the treatment given to this prisoner, and which was usual in such cases, that the speaker had contrasted that obtaining under Mr. Balfour's rule. The chairman of the meeting afterwards confirmed what Mr. Gladstone had stated. He himself, he said, had constantly seen King Bomba's political prisoners in the year 1852, as they took their exercise, and they were neither compelled to associate with felons nor to wear the prison dress. We may add that they also seem to have been better treated with regard to their exercise than the Irish prisoners, who are confined to close and dismal courts, shut out from all communication with the outer world. Mr. Gladstone's contrast, therefore, remains true, and English prisons in Ireland deserve a worse reputation than that which was earned thirty or forty years ago, to the horror of all Europe, by Neapolitan dungeons.

IRELAND, the know-nothings tell us, if once NO SUCH THING, stripped of its present population would be taken up by English and Scotch agriculturists, who would make a garden of the desert, and a smiling millionaire of every distressed landlord. But what are the facts of the case? Ireland, as she becomes deprived, rapidly and more rapidly still, of her population, loses the productive powers of her soil and grows barren. Mr Labouchere in *Truth*, tells us of the conclusions of a certain English farmer as follows :—" Why, sir," said one British agriculturist, " if I were chloroformed and kidnapped, and taken over to Ireland, and led blindfold across ten yards of Irish grass, I could tell it was Irish. It is not grass at all; it is wire. It scrapes against your boots like wire. It contains no nutritive property." The conclusions of all intelligent visitors to the country, says *Truth*, are of a similar kind, and their opinion is that even Home Rule can afford no remedy. Mr. Labouchere himself, however, finds the contradiction of this gloomy sentence, in the mouldering remains of the vast promise of better things given by that short period at the close of the last century when the country enjoyed independence, and expresses his belief that Home Rule, in some 20 years, would effect all that was needful. But is it likely that even with Home Rule, English and Scotch farmers would risk the trial, expending their own capital, for the landlords could not put their holdings into proper order, with such doubtful results. And without Home Rule, the one hope, to avoid which the people had been expelled, who would be so mad as to make the venture? No. For the the Irish people themselves, inspired by the strong love of their native land, and willing to make many sacrifices to restore her to life and prosperity, the task is set, and no others either can or will accomplish it. Meantime, nature itself continues to cry out against the desolation that prevails. Last year 82,923 people, the cream, the youth, and vigour of the population, left the country, and this year's returns give 86,239 acres of land as fallen out of cultivation. This year the emigration has been greatly in excess, and, no doubt, the consequent sterility will be in proportion. The depopulation of Ireland, then, does not mean the establishment of happy English and Scotch settlements. It means desolation and ruin, and the just judgment of God on the destroyers.

A young man of Reading, Pa., became insane from "reading too many books on religion and the tariff."

The statistics of suicides in France, which have just been published, show the same alarming prevalence of self-destruction. The total for the past twelve months is 7,572, one-fifth of these being in and around Paris. It is remarkable that poverty has only caused 483 suicides in all France, and this figure includes a morbid fear of impending misery without actual privation; 1,975 cases may be traced to mental aberration, and 1,228 to physical suffering. Among the moral causes, domestic trouble stands first, and alcoholism next. There are 200 cases of disappointed love, and only 27 from jealousy, dislike of military service giving 25. The suicidal month of the year is July, and it is worth noting that suicides have increased since the establishment of the *fete* on the 14th.