

has purchased the large estates of Lord Dillon, consisting of close on 100,000 acres of land in the counties of Mayo and Roscommon, and offered it—with some uninhabited grazing lands adjoining—to some 4000 small tenant farmers. The cost of the transaction is nearly a quarter of a million sterling. The small farmers will have the benefit of wider areas for cultivation and security from eviction, on payment of rates of interest which will be a mere fraction of their former rents. The purchase and redistribution of estates in the West of Ireland was one of the planks of the United Irish League. This organisation was founded last year. It has thus far abundantly justified its existence. We are probably not going wide of the mark in assuming that the incorporation of the purchase system by the United Irish League was an outcome of the study of the New Zealand land system by Mr. Michael Davitt—one of the founders of the League—during his visit to this Colony in 1895.

THAT PEACE CONFERENCE.

THE Disarmament Conference is floundering and bogging along at Amsterdam still. The net results of its sleepy deliberations will be to leave matters pretty much the same as it found them. At any rate there is to be no disarmament. Germany keeps on steadily arming its artillery with the new long-range, quick-firing guns. France is perspiring at the same task. Norway and Sweden are increasing the peace strength of their army. Uncle Sam has been told by General Lawton that it will require 100,000 men to convince the Filipinos of the advisability of accepting such 'civilisation' as he has provided for the Noble Red Man and the liberated Black Man. John Bull is adding warship to warship, and is just now getting into training to 'meet' Oom Paul away down in the Transvaal. Moreover, if recent report be true, John's Admiralty has offered a particularly stiff price to the son of a Portland grocer for a decidedly new thing in death-dealing weapons—nothing less than a noiseless electric gun, a seven pound model of which made toothpicks and horse-shoe nails of a target at ranges of a mile to five miles. The young electrician declined the Admiralty's offer. He is now at work on a hundred-weight model of the new weapon, which, it reports be true, promises, when it is fired in anger, to play redder havoc than Uncle Sam's dynamite guns did at El Caney. Professor Mommson is probably the most absent-minded man in the world at the present day. But he had his wits all about him when he described the Peace Conference as 'a printer's error in the history of Europe.' The only thing to do with a printer's error is to delete or rectify it.

NEARLY every fighting country has its own HERO-WORSHIP: way of honouring and rewarding its sundry kinds. quering heroes. In China they give him an extra button or two, or, at a pinch, the right to wear a peacock's feather in his cap, and he is as happy as a sand-boy. In ancient Rome the Senate accorded the victorious general a triumph—which simply meant a big procession and a crown of bay. They gave minor conquerors an ovation, which was a cheap edition of a triumph, with the soldiers and the trumpets and the senators and most of the fun pumped out of it. Sometimes they erected a triumphal arch to perpetuate the memory of a signal military achievement. The first Napoleon—who revived the eagle as a military rallying centre—revived also the triumphal arch. George IV. also assimilated the idea of the triumphal arch. It was a sort of architectural French fashion in his day. So he erected the Marble Arch—an imitation of the Arch of Constantine—at a cost of £80,000.

But the triumphal arch was an exotic in England. England's traditional method of rewarding her first-class fighting men was by conferring knighthoods or patents of nobility upon them. The knighthoods were cheap—a brief court ceremony. Patents of nobility cost little—merely a certain amount of engrossing on an uncertain amount of parchment. Drake, Hawkins, Nelson, Wellington, Wolseley, Kitchener, and Heaven knows how many others, were knighted or peered for their naval or military services. These honours were usually accompanied by more or less inadequate grants of golden shekels—for a man cannot, in the public eye, maintain the status of a hero, on a mere title or the bubble-empty fame of a great exploit. Did not even Tennyson, in the height of his reputation, declare that he would barter all his fame for £5000 a year? The other contents of the British (or Irish) conquering hero's kit are freedoms of cities, swords of honour, honorary degrees in sundry universities, much feeding and junketing and humdrum eloquence of the after-dinner kind—the whole winding up with the chance of a grave—perhaps a monument—in Westminster Abbey.

But in all the forms of hero-worship popular in England, the big dinner takes inconspicuous rank. Beaconsfield wrote in one of his novels that the science of political gastronomy has never been sufficiently studied. Perhaps not. But the Americans have apparently been exercising their brain-boxes over the

matter of military gastronomy. They have no peerage to offer their champion sailorman, Admiral Dewey. They have no Westminster Abbey or Pantheon waiting to enshrine his bones. But a select coterie of those who are Corinthian pillars in the temple of American Wealth have organised in his honour the biggest gastronomical folly of modern times. A mighty gorge is to be provided at a cost of one hundred dollars per plate. Two or three score of the 'leading millionaires' of the country have signified their intention of taking part in the mighty 'spread,' and so many wealthy men who are not classed as 'leading millionaires' are anxious to join the gilded throng that the banquet is expected to cost £100,000. Will the fighting Admiral lend himself to this affair? We hope that he will not. The valiant sailor would, perhaps, feel more at home dining off 'hard tack' and New Zealand frozen mutton at Manila, or off bread and cheese at a country inn, than feasting on turtle and venison and piles of whitebait and prize pineapples and show grapes and dry champagne in the midst of a social managerie of gilded nonentities for whom he probably never had much respect. We know how £100,000 could be spent to better advantage—for instance, in relieving some of the rankling misery of the poor in the slums of New York, or in compensating the relatives of the unarmed civilians who were shot down by American troops in and around Manila.

IN THE PHILIPPINES.

MEANTIME things are by no means gay with the American troops in the Philippines. The course of war, like the course of true love, seldom runs smoothly. The Filipinos are probably open to conviction as to the benefits of American rule and American civilisation; but it is apparently after the manner of the combative dame who—in answer to the remark: 'Madame, you are not open to conviction'—indignantly replied: 'What? Me not open to conviction! For shame, sir. I tell you, sir, I am open to conviction.' Then, after a pause: 'But show me the man that can convince me!' Now that would seem to be just the frame of mind of Aquinaldo and his dusky brown Tagalos. They take an intolerable deal of convincing. The American troops—the Ohios and the Pennsylvanias and the What-nots—have been for half a year hypodermically injecting Krag-Jorgensen arguments beneath the yellow skins of the Filipinos—unarmed civilians as well as armed 'rebels' so-called. Every mail brings news of crushing defeats of great hosts of Filipinos by mere handfuls of American troops—of mighty slaughter of yellow men and brown men, with only a few casualties on the side of Uncle Sam. There is nothing new in all this. This style of conquest is as old as the Pyramid of Cheops or the days of the first Tiglath-pileser. Why, only two thousand years ago did not Lucullus, with a paltry army of 10,000 men, slay, in stand-up fight, 100,000 foot and 55,000 horse of the Armenians? And did not this mighty carnage cost the conqueror just 5 men killed and 100 wounded? And did not the Chinese hero of the *Flowery Scroll*, with a few companies of his valiants, put to the sword, without the loss of a single life, just one million of the haughty Tartar foe? The victories of Lucullus and of Lao-lu and of General Lawton are merely samples of 'history as she is wrote' by various brands of war correspondents at various epochs of the earth's history.

Somehow, despite all their 'decisive victories,' the Americans seem to get 'no forrader' in the Philippines. Aquinaldo and his men are not yet convinced. An enormous percentage of the American troops are invalidated and unfit for duty. The volunteer regiments are clamouring to be returned to their ain firesides. A fresh reinforcement of 10,000 men—*alias* wisps of cannon-fodder and fever-food—are on their way to the Philippines. A New Zealand traveller has declared, after a long residence on the spot, that the Filipinos will fight like demons. And has not General Lawton written to his Government to say that it will take 100,000 men to conquer the islands, and that he is prepared to turn half of their population into dead meat in the process, if necessary? Altogether, Uncle Sam is beginning to feel the cares of empire weighing rather heavily on his mind. Despite much sky-rocketing in the Press, perhaps he finds it in his heart of hearts to admire the pluck and adaptive spirit of the Spaniard, who contrived to hold the Philippines for some three hundred years, who civilised, christianised, and educated the natives, made them the inalienable owners and tillers of their own lands, and so guarded them from external foes and internal strife, that within the past few generations the population has increased by over 400 per cent. Expansionists may rave cheap platitudes about the white man's burden, and the benefits of civilisation, but if the fate of the islanders under American rule would be that which has fallen to the Red Man or the Black Man in the United States, it would be better that the last Filipino should die fighting in his last trench rather than see the American system of 'civilising' people of colour at work in his native islands. Elisée Reclus has not, and never had, any fondness for the Catholic Church. But he wrote what he saw and knew when he said that, under Spanish rule, the Philippine islanders were 'the happiest people of the world and the