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Notes.

Owing to press of space upon our columns this week we have been compelled to hold over our usual Irish letter and serial until the next issue.

THE *Montreal Gazette*, in a recent article on the failure of the potato in Ireland points out, what is undeniably the fact, that the failure of the crop is nature's revenge. The land has been planted over and over again with the same crop till there was no food in the ground by which the tubers could be assured of nourishment and health.

Efforts, the *Gazette* adds, were made to induce the peasantry to cultivate other crops as well—to adopt the system of crop rotation. In some instances, the advice proved fruitful, but in general the people soon fell back into their old hand-to-mouth ways. Indian corn as a substitute for the potato was very unpopular in Ireland. A sort of instinct seemed to warn them that alone it was still less fitted than the potato to sustain life. It is well known that the terrible and long mysterious *pellagra*, which has proved such a scourge in many Italian districts was simply due to the exclusive use of Indian corn. Fairly nutritive when taken along with other foods, its exclusive use occasioned practical starvation and the wasting away which was so long deemed as inexplicable as it was incurable. We join with the *Gazette* in the hope that the unwelcome recurrence of the potato rot will be accepted as an opportunity not only for immediate relief in various shapes, but for that permanent relief in the form of improved methods of cropping that is so urgently needed. The introduction of scientific agriculture in Ireland would be a great blessing, but it would require more than mere formal or perfunctory counsel. A few model farms, on a small scale, adapted to the needs of the different districts would be, one would think, an experiment worth making, for the sight of thriving fields of various grains and vegetables would be a stimulus to exertion, where mere advice would be fruitless. This we believe is the opinion too of Mr. Michael Davitt, whose views regarding the

means to be employed for the betterment of the Irish peasant people, are seldom visionary or unpractical.

Mr. DAVITT believes that the remedy for the evils which arise periodically from the fatal dependence of the peasantry upon so precarious an article of diet as the potato is in the allotment to the people of the use of more land. Larger holdings will insure the cultivation of a variety of vegetables and farinaceous food which the humid climate of Ireland would favour; and in such variety will be found the antidote for these repeated blights. In addition to more land for tillage, which will enable the people to extend their crops, there must be grazing land, he explains, added to each holding; and he points to Switzerland, a country at once free from the evils of pauperism and the private possession of excessive wealth, as the proof of how communal grazing lands are made to supplement the earnings of small cultivators. A similar dual system of tillage and grazing must be introduced, he holds, in the western seaboard counties of Ireland, or nothing else, save emigration, can be suggested as a remedy. And if emigration is not to be permitted to dispose of the remains of the Celtic population, the alternative remedy, which is one of reason and common-sense, must be forced upon the Legislature by the whole influence of Ireland.

Mr. STEAD, in an introductory chapter on the Propaganda in his recently published work, "The Pope and the New Era," pays a glowing tribute to the Blessed Virgin. He says: "The most sacred place, where life is most centred, is the plain and unpretending college of the Propaganda, in the Piazza di Spagna. Baedeker dismisses it in six lines and a half, and nine-tenths of the tourists never notice its existence. But it is from that dingy building, now half concealed by scaffoldings, and chiefly noticed as standing in the shadow of the column from the summit of which Mary, standing in the crescent moon and with the stars of heaven around her head, looks down upon the square, that the great heart beats whose pulsations are felt to the uttermost ends of the world."

WARRANTS for the arrest of Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien have been issued, but up to Thursday evening no definite information had reached London of the specific utterances on which the warrants for their arrest were based, neither had the Government given out any official explanation which would throw light upon the sudden and unexpected resort to a vigorous Irish policy. It is commonly supposed that the ostensible grounds for O'Brien's arrest are to be found in a very plain speech he made last Sunday to an assemblage of peasants in Schull in County Cork. He dwelt upon the failure of the potato crop and spoke of the gloomy outlook for widespread distress which Ireland must face this winter.