

The unfortunate King of Holland has at last become violently insane. His ravings are chiefly directed against the Emperor William, which is perhaps less unreasonable than might at first sight appear. To many observers it seems that the "manifest destiny" of Holland is to be absorbed eventually in the German Empire. If Germany is looking toward such a consummation, then there is far-sighted wisdom and systematic purpose in the colonization policy that she is now pursuing, and in her present friendliness towards Great Britain, the only power that could thwart her schemes for a Colonial Empire. When she is thoroughly rooted in Africa, and has acquired the splendid Colonial possessions of the Dutch, she will be in a position to be much less careful as to whether she pleases England or not. She perhaps looks forward to a time when she will be able to divert the stream of her sturdy emigrants from the prairies of the western states to colonies of her own, where they may find at least equal advantages. Germany's colonizing schemes are to be taken much more seriously, we imagine, than those of France.

We have been accustomed to consider an egg as an egg, whatever its size; but now that large eggs, as was mentioned in THE CRITIC of two weeks ago, are in demand for the English market, certain breeds now in highest favor amongst us are likely to fall into comparative dispute. The Leghorns, White and Brown, are perhaps our most popular breed, and they are certainly great layers. But they are small, and their eggs are small. There is some talk of exchanging them for the old Black Spanish, but these fowls, though they lay good numbers of very large eggs, are tender, subject to disease, and poor as table fowl. The best possible substitute for the Leghorns, if a non-sitting breed is required, will be found in the Houdans, which are hardy, early to mature, and almost as prolific as the Leghorns; while their eggs are very nearly as remarkable for size as those of the Black Spanish, going well over 2½ lbs. to the score. As a table fowl the Houdans are unsurpassed. Where a sitting breed is preferred, the Plymouth Rocks and Wyandottes will be found the best "all-round" fowl, with a possible rival in the new and improved Black Javas. For general purposes the Brahmas and Cochins will be found most profitable if crossed with some compact non-sitting breed, like the Leghorns. It cannot be too persistently asserted that poultry give most satisfactory returns if kept in small flocks. The hen seems to demand individual attention; she objects to over-centralization, so to speak.

Dyspepsia is now said to be the fashionable complaint among the society ladies, and all because the Princess Maud of Wales has been unfortunate enough to have it. The article from which we glean this information does not say that they are English ladies who are thus aping the ills of royalty, but on the contrary from the context we judge that it is in New York that the fad has made its appearance. As America is the home of dyspepsia this is not surprising in any case. We should be exceedingly sorry to think that our English sisters, who have always exulted in their good health, and whose splendid constitutions have often been the subject of comment, would have so little sense as to pretend to be ill, and if on the other hand the disease was really prevalent, it would be equally regrettable. It is bad enough to have our cousins across the line afflicted in this manner. At a very exclusive physical culture club on one of the side streets off Fifth Avenue, New York, 99 per cent. of the fashionable athletic ladies are said to be suffering from indigestion, and one of the doctors when asked for the cause replied: "Tight dresses and laziness." There is much truth in this. Not that tight lacing is practised any more than formerly, but the whole dress is tight from collar to wrists and especially about the waist. This enforces idleness, and disease results. The physical culture will do something towards changing this state of affairs, but the true remedy lies in sensible, comfortable clothing and plenty of exercise both in and out of doors.

It is strange that in the matter of almost yearly-recurring famine Newfoundland bears much the same relation to us as Ireland does to Great Britain. The tales of want are brought to us from Newfoundland nearly every winter, or rather spring—for it is often spring-time before the news arrives,—and the disasters are so great, and the difficulty of sending help so hard to overcome, together with the fact of our knowing very little about the people, that the adage, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind," fits the case pretty well, and not much is done for the relief of the sufferers. The *Toronto Empire's* lady correspondent, "Faith Fenton," who visited the Island last summer, gave a graphic description of the destitution which prevails at times. She travelled entirely round the Island, and thus had an opportunity of visiting almost all of the outports. At one place where she landed for a few hours to talk to the women they told her some of the last winter's horrors, when starvation was an actual fact, and the sufferings of the people were terrible. The women began to cry during this recital, and the result was, that when the boatmen called for "Faith Fenton" he found her also in tears over the sorrows of the Newfoundlanders. She asked them why they did not move away to Canada, or some place where a living would be more easily made than there; but they seemed to have as great an affection for their barren rocks as the Irish have for the desolate parts of the green isle, and could not be made to see the benefit of emigration. The fisheries are all they have to depend upon, and when they fail hunger stares them in the face, for the scant soil gives little or no return for any attempt at cultivation. That the fisheries of Newfoundland should belong entirely to the Newfoundland people few will dispute, but the French have a strong hold, and unless Britain sees fit to buy them off with an attractive bit of territory in Africa, or pay them roundly in cash for their rights, it is probable that they will continue their grip on the country.

The other day we noticed in a contemporary that a valuable horse had been injured seriously in attempting to leap over a barbed-wire fence. It is time the Province abolished this barbed-wire nuisance. This is a case in which the example of Ontario might well be followed. The barbs are of no use whatever. They do not warn the animal from attempting to jump the fence. They act only when the attempt has been made, and this action is brutal. They are not a prevention, but a punishment, which is by no means what they were intended for. In one case only, so far as we know, have they served a useful purpose. They have secured something like order on the plains of the Argentine Republic, which, before their introduction, was scourged by mounted bands of robbers and rebels. These enterprising gentry have found their occupation ruined, now that the great prairies, once so well adapted to their forays, are intruded in every direction by these barbed and impassable barriers. Let us leave the barbed wire to the Argentines.

Mr. Balfour, Chief Secretary for Ireland, has been making a tour in the distressed districts of the west of Ireland, and it appears likely that good results will come of it. The Chief Secretary's heart has evidently been touched with pity for the people, and he has been so sympathetic that he has everywhere been received with civility, and in some places with demonstrations of welcome. At Achill he promised to furnish a bridge between two points on the Island, and to defray the expenses out of his own pocket, and he gave Father Flood, of the Christian Brothers' School at Kylemore, £5 to treat the boys. He did many other acts of consideration and kindness, which cannot fail to be appreciated by the easily moved, warm-hearted people of the west coast. Mr. Balfour has pushed forward the arrangements for the construction of railways, the building of which will furnish employment for a host of laborers. Besides those living in the districts through which the roads will be built, men coming from a distance can, if they desire, have part of their wages remitted free of charge to their families. The railways ought to be of more lasting benefit to Ireland than merely to give employment in a time of famine. By the aid of the railways and the development of the deep sea fisheries the awful poverty of the land should be somewhat relieved. Mr. Balfour was evidently unprepared for the misery that he saw at every turn, but that he felt it keenly is evidenced by his immediate exhibition of sympathy and kindness, which was warmly received. The Irish people, even when reduced to great want, resent anything in the shape of relief thrown to them with as little consideration as one would throw a bone to a hungry dog, but they warm at once to sympathetic assistance when it is offered them. Mr. Balfour seems to have struck the right key; and if a spirit of greater harmony can be infused into Parliament in dealing with Irish matters, it will be a blessing to Great Britain.

The revival of the Irish fisheries, which will probably result from the building of railways and good highways in Ireland, will do much towards helping the people to independence. By the construction of these works the backward districts will be relieved from the stagnation which comes from isolation from the centres of business enterprise, and will be enabled to market whatever they may have to sell. The Irish fisheries were very profitable before the famine of 1847 occurred. At that time more than 113,000 men and boys were engaged in the coast fisheries, making use of nearly 20,000 vessels and boats of all kinds; but the famine so rapidly decreased the number that in the following year, 1848, not more than 80,000 men and boys were employed, though the number of boats remained at about the same figure. The decline continued from year to year, until in ten years, (1858) there were but 56,500 fishermen and 11,823 fishing craft of all kinds, where before the famine there had been nearly twice that number engaged in the industry. And the decline did not stop there. The fishing boats numbered only 9,000 in 1870. Appeals were made for assistance—not gifts, but loans—from both the Nationalists and the Inspectors of Fisheries. A Royal Commission were appointed in 1866 to investigate the condition of the deep sea fisheries of the United Kingdom, which reported that the decline of the industry in Ireland was due to the disastrous results of the famine year and the lack of opportune assistance when the people had no means to supply themselves with fishing gear. Had a helping hand been extended to the Irish people at that time it would have been the salvation of the unfortunate remnant of the comparatively large fishing population of 1846. From lack of proper appliances in the first place, and of ready means of reaching markets in the second, there has at times been terrible waste of the products of the Irish fisheries, which yield abundantly. The fish has been perforce used for manure for the fields at the very time when the people have been crying out for bread. Some improvement has been made in the state of the industry all over the United Kingdom since the report of the last Commission, but Ireland has not received its due share of attention. Of the twenty-two fishing districts in Ireland, many are still sore distressed, and in some cases the industry is almost extinct. Many times has the need of assistance been urged in Parliament, both for railways and loans of money to the fishermen, but the demands were fruitless; but now that the Chief Secretary has seen with his own eyes, and come into contact with the destitution and enforced idleness of the people, it is probable that the cry to "come over into Macedonia and help us," will be answered. The parish priest at Westport and Father O'Connor, both of whom appear to be men of sound common sense, made timely suggestions as to the fisheries and railways, but warned Mr. Balfour of the inutility of initiating works which would be of no permanent benefit, rightly judging that mere relief works are demoralizing, as all injudicious so-called charity must be. But the building of railways and the revival of the fisheries ought not to partake of this nature; on the contrary they are the surest means of stimulating trade and industry in any country. As a result of the Irish tour the Government has given \$12,000 for deepening the harbor of Ballina, for which an appropriation has been desired for some time.