

there is a deep and strong American sentiment that would rejoice to see the British flag, as well as the Spanish flag, out of the West Indies. But we are not at all sure that Americans, as a whole, would look favorably on the acquisition of any more islands than we are now likely to find ourselves possessed of. There are large cane and beet sugar interests here, not to speak of tropical fruit interests in Florida and California, and tobacco interests in several States, that would be distinctly opposed to the incorporation of any West India island into the Union except Porto Rico; that island is prominent as a coffee producer, and we have no domestic coffee industry. It is not to be inferred from the cheerfulness with which we appropriate Porto Rico that we should as willingly take in islands producing sugar and tobacco. But that British colonies should ask for their independence in order to apply for admission to the American Union is certainly one of the most remarkable developments of a remarkable year."

Expansive mood! Deep and strong American sentiment!! Rejoice to see the British flag out of the West Indies!!! Well, we are glad to be assured by so eminent an authority as the New York *Commercial Bulletin* that, although this deep and strong American sentiment about the British flag exists, it is not quite a foregone conclusion that Americans would regard favourably an attempt to acquire Jamaica and other British possessions in the West Indies. This indulgence in big talk by an important New York paper is not a matter of deep concern to Great Britain or incidentally to Canada; but we suppose it is "one of the remarkable developments of a remarkable year." Surely our friends to the south can think of some points of difference between the power of Great Britain and that of Spain. Perhaps it is just as well that our neighbours do not "*look favourably on the acquisition of any islands*" belonging to John Bull, who happens to be a very old hand at the business in which they have just embarked. "*What we have, we'll hold.*"

Of course, the new and better sentiment, the "complete mutual understanding" between Great Britain and the United States, precludes all possibility of aught else in all this self-glorification than a mere pleasantry, a pardonable pride in recent achievement. But assuredly we, in turn, may not be blamed for thinking the reference to American sentiment about the British flag ill-timed and in bad form. Surely, the recent protestations of affection, the wild hurraing for Queen Victoria, and the free display of the flag that has braved for a thousand years the battle and the breeze, conflict with the present "deep and strong American sentiment," shown in this amusing demivolt of *The Bulletin*.

These are a few of the reflections which naturally suggest themselves to the mind of the cosmopolitan.

Distress and All persons and societies connected with **Starvation** peace and arbitration movements must **in Russia** rejoice at the pronouncement of the Czar of all the Russias in favour of a conference to discuss disarmament. Doubtless the suggestion will

receive "serious consideration." The proposal of the Czar leads the London *Times* to remark editorially:—

"The Czar's note breathes a spirit of generous, perhaps, indeed, almost Quixotic, humanity—a spirit familiar in the effusions of visionaries, but too seldom found in the utterances of great sovereigns and responsible statesmen."

If the prevalent distress in Russia is not exaggerated, a very ordinary spirit of humanity would be apt to account for the Czar's distaste for war. The daily papers of Tuesday last contained the following from St. Petersburg:—

"Owing to the failure of the harvests in seven districts of the Government of Kazan, and in the Provinces of Samara, Saratof, Simbirsk, Viatka and Perma, where the crops are almost worthless, and even the landed gentry are beginning to ask the Government for relief, the Government is adopting measures to relieve the sufferers. But the distress is becoming more acute every day. The peasants are denuding their cottages of the thatch in order to feed the stock. In spite of this, cattle and horses are dying in great numbers. The Government officials are very slow in getting the relief measures into effect, and the only relief thus far has been the granting of permission to the peasants to gather faggots in the woods for fuel, and collect dried leaves for fodder. The peasants are exhausted from lack of food, and unless the promised supplies are speedily sent, the suffering among the peasantry will be terrible."

TWO-PENNY DINNERS.

Sir Thomas Lipton's generous gift to the Alexandra Trust of £50,000 has forcibly called public attention to a new scheme of philanthropy, remarkable no less for its magnitude than for its novel character. The scheme is said to owe its origin to the Princess of Wales' observation of the extreme poverty prevailing in London during the Queen's Jubilee Celebration, when the wealth and poverty of London were brought into pretty sharp contrast. The sight of thousands in dire want of the barest necessities of life could not but appeal strongly to the warm heart of the Princess, and must appeal to all hearts possessed of human sympathies. The fact that great poverty exists in London could scarcely be a recent revelation to Her Royal Highness, or to millions of other people; but to the Princess, as to many others, the depth of the suffering of the London poor may well have been unsuspected.

Such poverty is to be found in all great centres of population, and especially where great wealth and luxury exist. How far the one may help to account for the other is too big a subject to be discussed within the limits of this article. To accuse the rich *en masse* of indifference to the sufferings of the poor, would be as unjust as to acquit them altogether of responsibility for the neglect of the duties of a brother's keeper. Immense sums of money are spent in London on charity, and still pestilence and famine, the offspring of poverty, stalk through the city's slums. The existence in wealthy England of poverty on such a gigantic scale, that wealthy and charitable