NOTES ON NEWS.

The match-girls have gained a victory over the blameless firm of Bryant and May. When one sees how small the gains to the girls are, how small their demands were, one is struck agast at the likelihood of cheese-pairings by which great fortunes are made. Truly, it well becomes Messrs. Bryant and May to characterise one of the grievances of the girls as "trivial"! It is on these very trivialities, we repeat, that the splendour of the lives of these capitalists is built; and perhaps if such people ever trouble themselves to think, they may reflect on the curious fact that each "trivial" atom of the huge mass of wealth which they monopolise and waste has been a matter by no means trivial to the atom of flesh and blood maintained by him who has had to keep his whole soul on the stretch in order, if possible, to compass a very "trivial" addition to his income.

The daily press, of course, goes on battering Messrs. Bryant and May for their generosity and the like, although their letter to the Daily News of July 19th is sulky and ill-conditioned in tone, and contains the kinds of covert threats which employers are apt to use to those whom they employ; the "Well, have it your own way then, and see what will happen," which we so commonly hear; their innuendo against the "agitators," who first took up the case of the girls at their own risk, and worked any protest of legality must be aimed at in the last at the London Trades' Council to step in, is just worthy of the whole shabby affair.

In short, it quite sickens one to have to call such a result of hard work for the girls and of courage on the part of the girls themselves, a victory; and yet it is one, for after all Messrs. Bryant and May's letter is the utterance of people taking a beating badly.

A desperate storm in a tea-cup has been going on. Mr. Balfour brought in certain Bann Device Bills to plain that a job for the advantage of Irish landlords; the Irish members seeing that this was going to be carried, whatever they might do, walked out of the House, as the House ought to have done on more important occasions. Mr. Conyngham has been unmasked by the closure, wrote a letter to the Star reflecting on the fairness of the Speaker, and by so doing committed a Parliamentary crime, although the substance of the letter was obviously true. The next day the House enjoyed itself by fixing on this Parliamentary crime, and so gaining the pleasure of a personal attack on Mr. Conyngham, who was suspended for a month, or till the end of the Session, if that comes to an end before the month. We do not hear that Mr. Conyngham has taken to his bed in consequence.

Neither, to say the truth, is the country likely to be much the poorer for this "waste" of a night in personalities. If the House of Commons had not wasted it in this way they would have wasted it in another.

Mr. Vaughan made short work of the summonses against the police for assaulting Mr. Borgia in Trafalgar Square. None, I suppose, expected any other issue of the attempt to bring Warren's lambs to book by means of law: for indeed such acts of arbitrary and irrational violence are the very engines which employers are apt to use to those whom they employ, from the point of view of Law-'n-Order. The police are told to do a thing; keep Trafalgar Square clear of meetings, let us say. They must do it at once, not at all: if, then, they are the stronger, they can stop to argue about it! They would be beaten if they did. Very well, then, they must break the head of any citizen whose head is handy for breaking; and then take the responsibility afterwards. But if they were shown the way and made to come bear the consequent of that responsibility, "a policeman's life would not be a happy one" indeed. And where would Law-'n-Order get its policeman then? The deduction from all which is, that whatever a policeman does to a citizen with any pretext of legality must be supported by the whole power of the law—or at any rate is so supported. This is a very old story, and there is no help for it but getting rid of the law which makes the policeman, who in his turn makes the law.

The stories of dynamic plots from Chicago, with their contradic-
tions and vaguenesses, and criminals turned informers, and the rest of it, have every appearance of news got up to serve some temporary pur-
pose; we have had plenty of such "discoveries" of late. It used to be thought by honest middle-class people that such infamies were used only by absolutist governments. But it seems countries in possession of middle-class political freedom have to tar themselves with the same stick. Or after all may we not call the government of Illinois absolutist also? At least both it, and for that matter the government of England also, will be practically absolutist whenever their fears or necessities lead them into temptation.

We publish this week a paper by our comrade Bax on Africa, which is worth very serious consideration. Even those of us who are most sincere in their professions of internationalism are too apt to limit our country nice of the countries, forgetting that barbarous ones are at any rate of the kind of importance that the lamb is to the wolf. Several questions occur to us relative to this question of Africa as a possible source of new capital for the capitalists which we should like to see dealt with. E.g., whether the nourishment to be afforded to capitalism by the Dark Continent is as great as our comrade seems to think; whether the accelerated pace which the impulse of huge new markets would certainly give to competitive commerce would not far to neutralise the advantages to capitalism of "opening up" Africa—whether at least it would not make the break-up more complete when it came. Or again, if Africa is falling into the grasp of capitalism, the national consciousness of its necessities for new markets, is there anything which can prevent it from becoming the new nourishment for capital-

And that leads us to the practical moral of the question; that it is not our business merely to wait on circumstances; but to do our best to push forward the movement towards Socialism, which is at least as much part of the essence of the epoch as the necessities of capitalism are. Whatever is gained in convincing people that Socialism is right is useful and inevitable, last of all, but the real power of capitalism in spite of all its present power is merely a nascent obstruction between the world and happiness, will not be lost again, though it may be obscured for a time, even if a new period sets in of prosperity by leaps and bounds. We ask for our country to be a subject, and its consequences for the consideration of all our readers.

W. M.

Absolutely the latest way of getting a cheap tour round the world. The Daily Mail reports an interview with Sir Frederick Young, K.C.M.G., Vice-President of the Royal Colonial Institute, etc., etc. The main item is the cool proposal to send a Royal Commission to take evidence on the spot, of the leading politicians in all the great self-governing Colonies on the question of Imperial Federation. "The evidence thus taken would be afterwards presented to Parliament in the usual way," "Yass," and naturally treated in the usual way—severely let alone. "It could scarcely fail to gratify the Colonies themselves—that an important and distinguished body sitting under Her Majesty's Commission, should be sent out to them to invite their opinions, and to consult them, as it were, at their own doors." Oh, the dear little dicky Colonists, they shall have a bra new roving Royal Commission to gratify them, to invite their opinions and gnamn them to endure another few generations of Governor-Generals.

Perhaps a file of the Sydney Bulletin, Australian Radical, and Adelaide Commonwealth would do some of these hussling Federalists good; such a course of reading would assuredly undeceive them as to any hope of foisting many more highly paid aristocrats on to the shoulders of Colonial labour. But what a way for swells to get a holiday on the cheap!

The expense of such a Commission roving in Imperial style all over the world would be immense, and yet if only the selection could be made wide enough one could almost be glad to have to find a motto for such a job: "They left their country for their country's good," and epitaph, "And sank never to rise again."
It having been decided by the wise judges of this land that there is no Act actually authorising the use of Traflagar Square, and that therefore to use it unlawfully, a person by the name of Stuart, who happens to be an M.P., has hastened to bring in a bill to duly authorise this use. As the House of Commons has authorised such action, Mr. ——, M.P., has brought in a Bill which shall make it lawful "on giving three day's notice" for a man to wipe his own nose. As there is no Act specifically made and provided, Mr. ——, in his notice to be held, has declared that he will have to do so and that it is necessary in order to take measures to prevent any breach of the peace. As there is no Act which specifically authorises a chap to kiss his Sunday best girl, Colonel Hughes Hallett and Lord Hastings have introduced a Bill which shall nullify such notice that he will take all the houses of these new aroused palaces to good purpose, and may yet, "Bolt and bar the palace door; while the mass of men are poor. Nailed truth grows more and more Uncontrolled." T. S.

THE REVOLT OF GHENT.

(Continued from p. 217.)

Under the severe discouragement caused by these defeats, the rich men began to grow discontented towards their sovereign as the only means to make them prosperous. Peter of Brabant was their only leader left, and I suppose, judging from Froissart's story, that he was no man of much initiative as we say now-a-days; anyhow, he looked round for support in the present straits, and found a remembered man of the past who had not greatly taken heed of in the town of Ghent; he was a wise man, but his wisdom was not known, nor was he taken heed of till the same day. This was Philip, the son of the great James van Artevelde.

Artevelde gives us a little piece of drama, in which one sees and hears the rough sturdy captain coming to the man of ambition and genius, and drawing him into action: "... Then Peter of Brabant in an evening came to this Philip, who was sitting in his mother's house, and lived honestly on their rents; and Peter of Brabant began to reason with him, and began to open the matter, wherefore he came to him, and said that Phillip was a good heed to my words, and believe my counsel, I will make you the greatest man in all the country of Flanders. 'How can that be, sir?' said Philip. 'I shall show you,' said Peter. 'I shall have to be governing and ministration of all them in the town of Ghent, for we be now in great necessity to have a sovereign captain of good name, and of good renown, and so by this means your father, James van Artevelde, shall rise again in this town by the recommendation of you; for every man saith, that thy days, the country of Flanders hath not been so loved, honoured, nor feared, as it was while he lived, and I shall lightly set you in his stead, if ye list yourself; and when ye be in that authority, then ye shall govern yourself by my counsel, till ye have full understanding of every case, the which ye shall soon learn. Then this Philip, who was at mair's state, and naturally desired to be advanced, honoured, and to have more than he had answered and said, 'Peter of Brabant, give me a great thing, and I believe you; and if I were in the state that ye speak of, I swear to you by my faith that I should do nothing without your advice.' So the other answered and said, 'How say you? ye bear yourself high and be cruel among the commons, and specially in such things as we shall have to do; a man is worth nothing without he be feared, doubted, and some time renowned with cruelty. Thus much said Philip; and he answered, 'a man of men, nor have any more pity thereof, than of the lives of swallows or larks, the which be taken in season to eat.' By my faith,' said Philip, 'that is a well sai'd, and all men will say.' and I shall make you so, that ye shall be sovereign above all other.' And so therewith he took leave of him and departed.

The upshot is that Peter proposes him to the leaders and municipal people, and he is elected captain, and was taken up amongst them and brought into the market-place, and there they make assurance to him, both mayors, aldermen, and masters of every craft in Ghent.

Let us consider this the end of an act again, and draw up the curtain once more on the new leader facing defeat in the field, and discourage and treachery within the gates. The Earl laid siege to the town once more, but soon raised it again; nor could he fairly blockade the town, as Froissart explains to us, "so that Brabant, Holland, and Zeeland make no war." So the Earl put the screw on the towns and lords of those countries, and tried to force them to stop the supplies to Ghent. The Liegeins gave him flat denial, and told Duke of Brabant, and Duke of Limburg, and then him; "though," says Froissart, "they of Holland would not leave to aid them for any commandment that Duke Aubert might make." Hence the Act were much suppressed, and Ghent began to be pinchèd by famine. Herewith the inhabitants were about to get a parley with the outsiders. "In the same season the sage men and wise counsellors of Haymault of Brabant and of Liège set a day to-their assembly, which was on April 1 and 2, and they, and Ghent sent thither a twelve of the most notable men of the town; and there they shewed how generally the most part of the town, except such rubipes and unprofitable who desired nathing save evil and ruin, and the other gladly they consented. The other men, and ever came thereof. . . . and the matters were there so well debated, that upon certain articles of peace the Ghentois returned to their former state, and all and under certain conditions were set forth in a long schedule. Quite a number of similar Acts are being prepared to meet the crises. "They have rights who dare maintain them; we are traitors to our sires.""

"A Bill for the sale of all the property belonging to the Orleans and Bonaparte families will be introduced into the Chamber by M. Félix Pyat. It provides that the money derived from the sale shall be spent in the foundation of an asylum for the aged poor." Bravo, Pyat! Come over and do the same for the Gueulap-Brown family. Just fancy making a summer picnic home for the million of Windsor Castle and all his name at Osborne. We could use the whole of these now disused palaces to good purpose, and may yet, "... Bolt and bar the palace door; while the mass of men are poor. Nailed truth grows more and more Uncontrolled." T. S.

What kind of a grin lit up the face of Peter of Brabant at these last words we may well imagine. Says Froissart, "With those words Peter of Brabant stepped forth and said, 'Guisebert Grutte, how darest thou be so bold to make such agreement as to send two hundred of our men of Ghent into the town of our enemy in great rebuke and shame to all the town of Ghent; it were better to all Ghent were turnd upside down than that they of Ghent should have such reproach, as to make war and end it so shamefully. We that have heard you may well know that ye shall be none of the two hundred prisoners, nor also Simon Bette. For it chanced for yourself, now then we will choose for ourselves. On forth Philip van Artevelde, set hands on these false traitors that would betray and dishonour the town of Ghent!'' Therewith Peter du Brabant dressed out his dagger and set his hand upon the Ghent, and struck him in the belly, and so he fell down dead. And Philip van Artevelde draw out his dagger, and he strake Simon Bette and slew him in likewise; and then they cried, 'Treason! Treason!' And that they were slain high of their men above and beneath, for they were men of great lineage and the richest men of the town; but they got themselves out of the town to save themselves, and there was no more but those two slain."

Thus the plot of the respectable was rapped in the bud; but the famine in Ghent went from bad to worse. The blockade now being fairly established, and the skirmishing turned into more garrisoning and more sieging. The Earl laid siege to the town, and things seemed drawing to an end. "It was great pity to see and to hear the poor people, both men, women, and children; yes, such as were not able fell into this danger."

Philip van Artevelde "caused the garners of the Abbeys to be opened, and of rich men, and set a reasonable price on the corn, whereby the town was greatly comforted."

About Lent time, 12,000 men, apparently little organised, made a foraging expedition as far as the gates of Brussels, which were shut against them, but they were allowed to buy victuals there. They wandered from town to town, not offering to enter the gates, but living on the goodwill of the country and benevolently everywhere meeting with goodwill, especially from the Liegeois, and so came back to Ghent after a piteous journey with some 600 waggons loads of victuals, which was received with extravagant joy, small as the help was.

Now took place some goings and comings between the Ghentois and the Duchess of Brabant, who took it upon her to try to get peace from the Earl. A council was held at Ghent, and delegates from the towns of Brabant and Haymault, and twelve men from Ghent with Van Artevelde at their head. The Duke of Brabant also sent an engagment that all forsaken them no more, and Terms clear that the intention of the go-between was friendly to Ghent, while the Ghentmen, now reduced to the last extremity, were prepared to accept almost any terms; but the Earl refusing to meet the council, simply sent on a message announcing that, unless terms be understood, he will take Ghent. Froissart tells us that the friends of Ghent urged Philip van Artevelde to take even these terms, and that he answered that the people would not have it, and would have the town and themselves. And now imagine if you can the return of the envoys to the hopeless city, once sovereign and prosperous, and now encircled by its enemies and at its last gasp; or rather let us for a while let Froissart tell the story in his own words of the despair, the heroism, and the temporary triumph of Ghent. William Morris.

(To be continued.)

Poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue. It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.—Franklin.