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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

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 aghast at the miserable cheese-parings 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 the industrial machine, the worker, 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 buttering 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 kind 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 with such untiring zeal at it till they at last got 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 Drainage Bills, in plain terms 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 they ought to have done on more important occasions. Mr. Conybeare having been snuffed out 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. Conybeare, 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. Conybeare has taken to his bed in consequence.

Neither, to say the truth, is the country likely to be much the poorer in any way 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 foundation of law. Besides, let us look at it 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 or not at all: if, then, they are the stronger, can they 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 our magistrates and judges were to make them bear the consequences of that responsibility, "a policeman's life would not be a happy one" indeed. And where would Law-'n'-Order get its policemen then? The necessary 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 dynamite plots from Chicago, with their contradictions and vaguenesses, and criminals turned informers, and the rest of it, have every appearance of news got up to serve some temporary purpose: 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 must 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 scope of vision to civilised 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 life for dying capitalism 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 markets would certainly give to competitive commerce would not go 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 grown conscious of its necessities for new markets, is there anything which can prevent it from becoming the new nourishment for capitalism?

And that leads us to the practical moral of the question; that it is not our business merely to wait on circumstance; 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 always, and inevitable at last, and that capitalism in spite of all its present power is merely a noxious 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 commend our comrade Bax's subject, and its consequences to the consideration of all our readers.

W. M.

Absolutely the latest way of getting a cheap tour round the world. The *Pall Mall* 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." "Yaas," 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, acting 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 ducky Colonists, they shall have a bran new roving Royal Commission to gratify them, to invite their opinions and gammon 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 humbugging Federationists 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 as epitaph, "And sank never to rise again."

It having been decided by the wise judges of this land that there is no Act specially authorising the use of Trafalgar Square, and that therefore to use it is unlawful, a person by the name of Stuart, who happens to be an M.P., has hastened to bring in a bill to duly authorise Free Speech and use. As there is no Act which specially authorises 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 specially made and provided, Mr. ———, M.P., has given notice that he will on April 1st move for permission to specially allow Mrs. Caudle to deliver certain lectures under special provocation, provided the Home Secretary and the Secretary for the War Department, and I Charles Warren, have been duly notified in order to take measures to prevent any breach of the peace. As there is no Act which specially permits a chap to kiss his Sunday best girl, Colonel Hughes Hallett and Lord Hartington have introduced a Bill which shall permit such action under stringent regulations 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 proposes 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 Guelph-ap-Brown family. Just fancy making a summer picnic home for the million of Windsor Castle; a convalescent home 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
Naked truth grows more and more
Uncontrolled."

T. S.

THE REVOLT OF GHENT.

Continued from p. 227.

UNDER the sore discouragement caused by these defeats, the rich men began to murmur and look towards submission as the only end. Peter du Bois was their only leader left, and I suppose, judging from Froissart's story, that he was not a man of much initiative as we say now-a-days; anyhow, he looked round for support in the present straits, and says Froissart: "He remembered him of a man the which was not greatly taken heed of in the town of Ghent; he was a wise man, but his wisdom was not known, nor was he not taken heed of till the same day." This was Phillip, the son of the great James van Artevelde.

Froissart 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 du Bois in an evening came to this Philip, who was abiding in his mother's house, and lived honestly on their rents; and Peter du Bois began to reason with him, and began to open the matter, wherefore he was come to him, and said thus: 'Philip, if ye will take 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, 'ye shall have the 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 remembrance of you; for every man saith, that syth his 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 man's state, and naturally desired to be advanced, honoured, and to have more than he had, answered and said, 'Peter du Bois, ye offer 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 counsel.' Then Peter answered and said, 'How say you? Can 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 must the Flemings be governed; a man must set no more by the life of men, nor have no more pity thereof, than of the lives of swallows or larks, the which be taken in season to eat.' 'By my faith,' said Philip, 'all this can I do right well.' 'That is well said,' quoth Peter, '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 municipality, and he is made captain. "There he 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 discouragement 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 Zealand make them 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 Liegeois gave him flat denial, but his kinsman, Duke Aubert of Brabant, did his best to aid him; "though," says Froissart, "they of Holland would not leave to aid them for any comhandment that Duke Aubert might make." However, the supplies were much shortened, and Ghent began to be pinched by famine. Herewith, the malcontent rich men managed to get a parley with the outsiders. "In the same season the sage men and wise counsellors of Haynault of Brabant and of Liege set a day of council to be holden at Harlebeke beside Courtray; and they of Ghent sent thither a twelve of the most notablest men of the town; and there they showed how generally the most part of the town, except such ribaudes and unthrifty people who desired nothing save evil and noise, all the other gladly they said would have rest and peace whatsoever came thereof . . . and the matters were there so well debated, that upon certain articles of peace the Ghentois returned to their town. And all such of Ghent as desired rest and peace drew to the houses of two rich men of Ghent who had been at this treaty; the one called Sir Guisebert Grutte and the other Sir Simon Bette, demanding of them tidings; and they discovered the matter too soon to some of their friends, saying, 'Good neighbours, we shall have so good peace, and it please God that such as loveth peace and rest shall have it, and some of them that be evil disposed in the town of Ghent to be corrected and punished.'

This was a regular plot you see: but says Froissart, "If there be he that doth, there is he who talketh;" and Peter du Bois got hold of news of this plot before it was quite ripe. The next morning the traitors attended at the council of the "mayor and aldermen and rich men of the town" to give their report, which was, in short, that the Earl would make peace on the condition of the surrender of two hundred men named by him. "And he is so free and so noble that it is no doubt but that he will have mercy on them."

What kind of a grin lit up the face of Peter du Bois at these last words we may well imagine. Says Froissart, "With those words Peter du Bois stepped forth and said, 'Guisebert Grutte, how durst you 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 Ghent were turned upside down than 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. Ye have chosen 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 Bois drew out his dagger and came to Guisebert Grutte and struck him in the belly, and so he fell down dead. And Philip van Artevelde drew out his dagger, and he strake Simon Bette and slew him in likewise; and then they cried, 'Treason! Treason!' And they that were slain had of their men above and beneath, for they were men of great lineage and the richest men of the town; but they gat themselves out of the town to save themselves, and there was no more but these two slain."

Thus the plot of the respectables was nipped in the bud; but the famine in Ghent went from bad to worse. The blockade now being fairly established, and the skirmishing turned into mere garrison-holding. The Earl laid waste the countries that still victualled Ghent, and things seemed drawing to an end. "It was great pity to see and to hear the poor people, both men, women, and children; yea, such as were right notable fell into this danger."

Philip van Artevelde "caused the garners of the Abbays 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 collecting victuals; everywhere meeting with goodwill, especially from the Liegeois, and so came back to Ghent after a piteous journey with some 600 waggon 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 Tournay, attended by delegates from the towns of Brabant and Haynault, and twelve men from Ghent with Van Artevelde at their head. The Duke of Brabant also sent his council there, and it seems clear that the intention of the go-betweens 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 the only terms he would take were surrender at discretion. 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 take them, but that if they would, he would not stand in the way.

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 us 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.