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NOTES ON NEWS.

The great case between O'Donnell and the Times has come to an end, with all its "startling revelations," its sensational disclosures, and the like on the posters of the daily press. Of course it was a political affair, and is to be judged accordingly; and it must be judged by all honest people who are not rapt partisans as a disgrace even to the party for whose sake it is being fought. The present day. The part of the daily press which happens to be on the Irish side has stigmatised emphatically enough the tactics of the counsel for the Government, and perhaps to us the most interesting side of the event is the example it gives us of the enormous power of a private corporation in governing us so long as it is on the reactionary side. The Times is rich enough and long-established enough to do what it likes, and no dog may bark if Sir Oswin O'Sullivan is silent.

What it has liked to do is to make up the whole of its charges against the Irish Parliamentary party in aid of the apparently waning popularity of the coercionists. The English Home Rule press professes to think that the attack has been unsuccessful; and of course it could not be without a certain amount of publicity. No person who thinks about the matter could suppose that the statute, close, and formal Mr. Parnell had written the letters in question; neither could any person take the view of a party which was more or less in sympathy with the acts of war which preceded their alliance with the Gladstonites. But that doesn't much matter; the war-path which Parnellism and crime is on, is the vote-catching road, and vote-catchers are not dealing with thoughtful intelligence, but with impressionismo to cries.

The coercionists have got their opportunity for a cry, and they will use it. All they have got to do is to treat every accusation they make against the Irish party as a fact that cannot be disputed, to ignore the defence of the accused, and to keep on pointing out that Mr. Parnell refuses to clear himself in a court of justice—that is, to attack the Times, the representative of the great power of modern society, to which all that is reactionary will immediately rally, and which is inexpugnable as long as our class society hangs together. All this forms quite as a good a cry as is needed, or can be got to carry on the coercionist battle, and doubtless will serve its purpose.

If you do doubt it, listen to the talk of business people, both principals and clerks coming home by the underground railway; and you must admit that the coercionists have pulled themselves together to meet the consequences of their recent defeats, and that this time they have struck a stroke.

But whatever damage has thus been done to the Irish party, it must not be forgotten that they have drawn it on their own heads by their eagerness to repudiate everything but constitutional means towards their revolution. That is the line they have gone on; they have claimed the support of the English people on the grounds of that republication, practically declaring sympathy with enthusiasm of rebels, without which they would not have been able to obtain a hearing at all, and which could not be repressed because it was forbidden "constitutional" means of expressing itself, and which will have to express itself again when the present constitutional gentlemen have made their Parliamentary revolution; unless, which is by no means likely, they cast aside all reaction and give opportunity for every Irishman to be truly free by destroying all monopoly of land and capital. And if they do that they will at once find themselves enemies of the constitution and rebels once more.

We have got another Zulu war on hand, which seems most likely to lead to another Boer war; this is only one of the indications of the way in which the new needs are being met in South Africa; other nations having their special ways. The sensational paragraphs lately published about the treatment of the Mahori prisoners, are doubtless an indication of that preparation of the mind which we are so used to. Again, in the House of Lords, Lord Harrowby was very anxious about the growth of the slave-trade in Zanzibar, as interfering with "British Commerce and British Missionary Enterprise" (sweet and holy couple). We know that two of a trade are apt not to agree; that is especially true of wage-slavery v. chattel-slavery; it is worth while putting down up here, in Africa if the result will be the strengthening the former in England.

Coleman, who has been in prison for assaulting a policeman on Bloody Sunday, and White, a dock labourer, "and miserably poor," says Mr. Bradlaugh, who brought the case forward, were to be further punished for the crime of poverty by being imprisoned for not paying 210 lns., the costs of the trial which they were so rash as to undertake against the police for assaulting them; and a similar punishment was to be meted out to Feargus O'Connor for a similar crime. Mr. Bradlaugh pointed out that these costs were exceptionally high, whereas in his own experience the Treasury costs were low. Probably this apparently wanton injustice is meant in kindness to the class of the poor if not to the individuals, in order to teach them once for all that they had better not indulge in the useless luxury of law, especially when a charge of offending against Law-n-Order has been trumped up against them.

And after all Mr. Matthews has turned tail; the three men in question have appeared in the police-court in answer to the summons, there was no one to support it and therefore the case had to be dismissed; which it must be said would certainly not have been the case if Mr. Bradlaugh had not tackled Mr. Matthews.

Meanwhile, it does seem at first sight another instance of the way in which the Great Shabbiness of the rich robbing the poor dominates every incident of our society; it struck our friend Cunningham Graham that way. "He repeated that it gave him personally the greatest possible satisfaction that this second case had come up, because it was calculated to emphasise that growing hatred between the rich and the poor, without which no true reform was possible." "It would, he hoped, serve to show that our British justice, like our Christianity and our morality, was a gigantic fraud."

His audience, since they were educated men and "gentlemen," naturally laughed at this expression of his; but feeling probably that the consequences of that terrible growing hatred between rich and poor, which they could scarcely deny would be long in coming, and whose useless lives would have come to an end before the crisis came; and not caring for any consequences not personal to themselves of the antagonism of classes which is the foundation of the society amongst which they—stank.

Yet did they ever hear of the Welsh triad of the Three Laughters of the Fool 1 It is worth quoting: "The fool laughs at that which is bad, at that which is good, and that which he cannot understand." All this the gentlemen of the House of Commons have often done; there remains to them the other laughter—on the wrong side of the mouth. May we all live to see that! W. M.

THE REVOLT OF GHENT.

(Continued from p. 130.)

HAVING thus very briefly told you as to the political and social condition of the great Flemish towns, I must now get to my story, as given us by Froissart.

I have mentioned the English alliance with James van Artevelde, which took place at the very beginning of the war with France; this went on till at the siege of Tournay by Edward III. James van Artevelde sent sixty thousand men to help that king; and in the year 1346, Edward III., lying at Shrewsbury, we find van Artevelde using his influence to get the Prince of Wales acknowledged as "Lord and Hertouyr" of Flanders; but the Councils of the towns hanging back on the ground that there should be no such princely title as "Lord and Hertouyr" to disinherit their natural lord and his issue to energe another. But we can easily imagine that though glad enough of Edward's help against France, they may have been the more anxious to find some one else to such a powerful King as the lord of England then was.

Anyhow, the negotiation came to a tragic end with the death of James van Artevelde himself. He was slain in a tumult at Ghent as a