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 rabid partisans as a disgrace even to the party upon whose present day. The part of the daily press which happens to be on the Irish side has stigmatized 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 Oranmore tells the peer.

What it has liked to do is to rake 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 wholly painful in the nature of things. No person who thinks about the matter could suppose that the satire, close, and formal Mr. Parnell had written the letters in question; neither could any person take in all that the party was more or less sympathetic to 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 impressiveness 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 have made 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 good a cry as is needed, or can be got to carry on the coercionist battle, and doublets will serve its purpose.

If you 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 rebellion, practically disclaiming sympathy with or 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 great national needs are being met in other parts of the world, and we can in Africa; other nations having their special ways. The sensational paragraphs lately published about the treatment of the Mahdi's prisoners, are doubtless an indication of that preparation of the world's mind which we are so used to. Again, in the House of Lords, Lord Hardowry 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 and chattel-slavery; it is worth while putting down up here, because 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 2½£ a week, the cost 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 Fergus O'Conor 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 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 case had come up, because it was calculated to emphasize 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 his expression of the truth; feeling probably that the consequences of that terrible growing hatred between the rich and poor, which they could scarcely deny would be long in coming, and their 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? 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. 368.)

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 Frossart.

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 Sluys, we find van Artevelde using his influence to get the Prince of Wales acknowledged as "Lord and Hertour of Flanders;" but the Councils of the towns hanging back on the ground that "there should in such an enterprise be found to them as willingly to dishevy their natural lord and his issue to enberty a stranger." But we can easily imagine that though glad enough of Edward's help against France, the may have been a certain amount of jealousy towards 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
JOHAN LYN ENROSSE LYTTE BALTAFER, AT KLIPENES BALTAFER, AND THEIR FIRST JOB IS TO MAKE AN END OF THE DIGGING OF THE NEW CANAL NEAR BRUGES AND TO LEAVE "LEFT THEIR WORK AND WENT BACK AGAIN TO BRUGES, AND WERE NEVER SO HARDLY TO DIG THERE AGAIN"; BUT THE WHITE HATS AND THEIR CAPTAIN BEGAN TO PERFORM THEIR DUTY AS A FIELD-MANAGER OR WORKMASTER.

The next scene is the arrest by the Earl's Bailiff of a mariner at Ecloo, a town half way between Ghent and Bruges, and within the jurisdiction of Ghent. The townsman claim their burgges back from the Bailiff, who is as high-handed as if he were Sir Charles Warren in person, and answers, "What needst thou these words for a mariner? . . . I have pullassence to arrest, but I have no power to deliver."

The Ghentmen now send an embassy to the Earl (who is lying at his manor of Male near Bruges) to claim their burgges. The Earl promises to have him released, and also to maintain their liberties,—a strange promise, but doubtless disavowed by the Earl at the present, ye know and have seen but late how the White Hats hath better kept your franchises than either red or black hats have done, and is sure by his leisurely and safe state of war. Hence the White Hats be laid down by the ordinance that the Earl would have, I will not give for all your franchises after, not three pence."

In short, the answer John Lyon makes is to set to work to organise his White Hats, and stand up against the Earl.

Then the Earl retorts by sending his said Bailiff, Roger Dauterne, with his banner and 200 men to Ghent to arrest John Lyon and five of his friends. John Lyon, however, having gathered 400 White Hats, throws down and tears the Earl's banner, and slays the bailiff in a very orderly and peaceable manner: "they touched no man there but the Bailey; and when the Earl's men saw the Bailey dead, and the bannermen all to turn their manner of life, and to receive the Earl's laws laid down by the ordinance that the Earl would have, I will not give for all your franchises after, not three pence."

Then the rich and notable merchants, very much scorched, send off to the Earl twelve men to crave for peace. But meantime John Lyon, who was at the Council where this embassy was arranged, musters the White Hats and those of the crafts who were on his side, outside Ghent in a plain called Andrehem, close beside which was a castle of the Earl's, newly built, and doubtless meant as a garrison to oversee these rebels. At this review John Lyon had a thousand men, gathered 400 White Hats, throws down and tears the Earl's banner, and slays the bailiff in a very orderly and peaceable manner: "they touched no man there but the Bailey; and when the Earl's men saw the Bailey dead, and the bannermen all to turn their manner of life, and to receive the Earl's laws laid down by the ordinance that the Earl would have, I will not give for all your franchises after, not three pence."

The news reaches the Earl while the embassy of rich men are craving peace of him; and as he was particularly fond of this house, one wonders that he respected the safe conduct he had given. One can imagine the Earl's mind to have been put to the test by the very personal nature of the charge brought against the Earl, and the fact that John Lyon, clearly a very able and resourceful man, immediately marches on Bruges with nine or ten thousand men, and gets in without any actual fighting, the "rich man" being cowed by the aspect of the lesser crafts; and the Brugesmen enter into alliance with Ghent. Courtray has already come in, and Ypres is thought to be friendly; so that Flanders seems won from the Earl.

But just at this crisis John Lyon dies at Damme, the port of Bruges; but there is no need for the King to disband his forces, for the Earl of Men of Burges, is likely enough. The Ghentmen, however, are nothing daunted, but go on engaging themselves for war. They chose for captains John Fruniaux, John Ball, Rulf of Harselles, and Peter de Dauterne, who were the last a very clever and wiry captain and leader, who led all the leaders of Ghent and died in England.

The Ghentmen march on Thurout and Ypres, where, through the meagre crafts of the towns, it is impossible to lay any very strong claim of the opposition of the Earl's garrisons; and now being masters of the greater part of Flanders, the rebels besiege Oudenaarde. To give you the measure of the strength of these communities of crafts, I must tell you that at this siege they mustered a hundred thousand strong.

The Earl finds after all that he is not strong enough to resist this invasion, and before seen to make terms by taking the oath of allegiance to the Duke of Burgundy. This peace may be said to end the second act of the story.

WILLIAM MORRIS

(The text has been translated by Henry St. of Froissart. The two between them make a sad mess of the names of languages they do not understand.)