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NOTES ON NEWS.

THE Government have withdrawn their Compensation clauses—if anybody except the teetotalers cares about that, unless it is from the point of view of "legitimate party warfare," as it is called, and which is so contemptible that one wonders how people can be found who can pretend to look upon it seriously. Not unlikely that they put the clauses in so that the public might have something to ask for and have granted to them if by any chance the clauses could not be carried without any bother. But they have managed the whole affair ill enough to rejoice the electioneering gentlemen on the other side. A plague on both their houses!

A great Liberal-Radical meeting at St. James's Hall, and the utmost enthusiasm displayed against coercion—in Ireland. Mr. Morley as eloquent as such a man can be, but having the effrontery to say if such and such things had been done in London, it would have been in a blaze: and just the same things were done in London—but where's the blaze? Is it possible that Mr. Morley hasn't heard of all this? of course not. The man passes as a "sincere" man; but no doubt he has long ago learned the lesson that a politician must only air his sincerity when it is convenient for practical purposes.

Lord Wolseley in fanning the somewhat cold ashes of the invasion-scare which is to put a job or two in the way of naval and military gentlemen and their friends, said one or two curious things. It was a matter of course that he would like a conscription if he could get it, so as to raise a really formidable army; and in order to make such a proceeding seem somewhat more useful to the ordinary civil mind, he dwelt on the physical advantages drilling would confer on the undersized and stunted town population. All very well, my lord, but perhaps a little feeding from the cradle upwards would be of some use in the same direction, and a little better housing, and some more leisure: in short, to have a citizen-soldier you must have a citizen. But the army which Lord Wolseley would like to raise would be used chiefly for preventing the greater part of the population becoming citizens, for enforcing them to remain slaves—i.e., persons to be used by "the country" and not allowed to use it.

Luckily he won't get much of an army after all. The innate dishonesty of "the shopkeeping nation" will compel them to have everything connected with the army and navy done at the greatest possible expense with the result of the least possible efficiency. That is too old a condition to be broken with before the pinch comes, and when it does come—well, let us hope that it will turn us into something better than a shopkeeping nation! After all, the terrified public (who do not care a twopenny damn for the whole business out of the newspapers) may be reassured. The reactionary military powers wouldn't ruin bourgeois England if they could; since they well understand that she is the greatest champion of reaction; all the more useful because of her cant over "liberty" as over other matters. W. M.

The Sweating Committee goes on its aimless way, and there are by no means lacking other people besides Socialists, to suggest that it is and was meant to be a farce with an ordained conclusion of whitewash and fireworks. It is, of course, the most natural thing in the world for such a Committee, though it makes outsiders blaspheme, to allow the getting-round of inconvenient facts and such practices to be as shamelessly carried on as they are.

For instance, there seems no hope of any settlement of the Maple problem. On the one hand it is declared that the Maple firm is angelically pure, with a halo of generosity around their head; on the other, we know that Mr. Maple was allowed to intimidate a witness before the committee by his presence, and there are dark stories about. Can the committee not secure itself against such things? Can it not find if they be true? Or does it neither wish to guard nor know?

Their mode of doing business, however, being under the public eye,

cannot be so cynically brutal as that, say, of the Irish "administration." In that happy country the other day a "private inquiry" was held in the house of a local landowner by a magisterial and landlord ring, which sent witnesses to prison for refusing to answer inquisitorial questions, and otherwise behaved as a gang of unscrupulous ruffians might be expected to do when they had their enemies in their power, and law-'n'-order at their back.

The Parliamentary Committee on the Army and Navy, although sitting in London, is made-up delightfully near to the Dublin Castle pattern. It is formed to sit upon the War Office and its ways of working, and has (therefore) among its members three ex-War Ministers and a subordinate War Office official.

Wolf try wolf is a good arrangement for the wolves, though the sheep are like to fare ill enough under it. How long the people will be content to play sheep is for them to settle.

The way in which "our good friends, the police," get up sham plots and prove their sagacity in "finding" them afterwards, would be ludicrous altogether but for a touch of the tragic now and then. With seven or eight undiscovered murderers and a large number of assorted wrong-doers going around among us, under the very noses of the moral-miracles, we are compelled to smile as we read of the Clan-na-gael dynamite plots, and the thorough knowledge the police have of the would-be executants. Suppose you catch the others, Messieurs the Omniscient, before you talk so loudly of your cleverness?

You are very proud just now of the capture of Jackson, who for weeks baffled and eluded you; but it was his own folly which thrust him into the trap, no thanks to your acuteness. Perhaps you will explain your failure in his case before asking us to believe in your success with the Clan-na-gael?

How many "plots" have you discovered that you did not first make? How many "infernal machines" have you and your Continental *confrères* not made, planned, and "found"? And while you have been doing this kind of work how many swindlers, thieves, and murderers have not slipped through your fingers? Known liars, and proved incompetents, unable to do the most ordinary part of your business, you yet expect to be credited with superhuman powers!

Perhaps the "British public," many-headed ass that it is, may believe in you; but to all sensible people you are a by-word and a scorn. Surely the decent-minded among you, and there are many such, must be beginning to feel this, and to be disgusted with the dirty work you have to do?

Hardly has the Pope responded to the cry of the Irish landlord with a plea for the high morality of rent-paying by compulsion, when he is to be asked for what in a lower rank of life would be called a legalisation of incest. As it is the brother of a king and the daughter of a prince, and the union is to produce an heir to a throne, it would be impolite to use such a word, and the whole thing is again in accordance with the higher morality reserved (by Divine Grace) for the great ones of the earth. S.

THE EUROPEAN POWERS AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

To isolate France is to-day the great task of the League of Peace. Her isolation will soon be an accomplished fact, and the great conflagration draws near. It may burst forth during the present year, or it may be deferred till 1889. Before the close of the coming struggle it may be that more than one despotism will disappear. The despotisms of Germany, of Austria, of Italy, and most of the minor States depend on the fidelity of their armed legions. Though their