NOTES ON NEWS.

The alliance of the Tories with the Pope would seem to be a serious political event instead of a piece of meaningless tomfoolery as a reasonable man would expect. It has even been said that Mr. Parnell was going to advise backing down on the Plan of Campaign and boycotting; for in his speech at the Eighty Club he simply threw the responsibility on the Catholic members, with a prudent reserve as to the Plan of Campaign not being necessary to Irish agitation; he also somewhat deprecates the Plan as having to coercion. This all looks somewhat like hedging; as if he thinks surrender may be necessary. But surrender won't do. Whatever may be said of the Plan, the boycott is a necessary weapon to a people who cannot fight and will not yield.

And all this fuss about an old man representing a superstition all but extinct; in fact extinct everywhere except in Ireland. The once respectable Pope of Rome has now become a don, and the excommunication of his opinions as important as those of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford; or indeed the head beadle of that reverent presence, the old gentleman with the gown and the round hat that used to be called the head gold-stick in my young days. Yet at least this sham of what was once a real power, dried up and effete as it is, is good enough to be used as a policeman by the reactionary party. With this desperately stupid resource to use, An innocent onlooker would say: My friend, as to the pure all things are pure, so to the shabby all things are shabby.

Anyhow this bugbear of a gold-stick has to be faced by the Irish people, and surely the sooner the better: a revolution led by an ecclesiastic is, in the first place, composed of the parish priests, many of whom are thoroughly good fellows individually, "is to us suspect.

Meanwhile the reaction is harping vigorously on the other string, and Mr. O'Brien is in for another three months. Of course whatever frame there may be in Mr. Balfour's conscience, he hopes to pit this quality in himself against the same quality in the Irish; and apart from his advantage that he has nothing to suffer in playing the game, he has the advantage in the stupid carelessness of the British nation which whether or not it be an original national quality, has been so much fostered by the commercial life which we have brought to such a perfection of degradation and cowardice.

For these impositions for political offences are now becoming so common that though they once shocked public opinion somewhat, they are beginning to wear it out, and people who are not put in prison, think Balfour, will soon cease to notice them, and then will begin their "deterrent effect" on the offenders. Certainly he is justified in having such hopes. It is the custom of the British to be much impressed, and perhaps genuinely so with some disgraceful outcomes of the system which enslaves us, and to make a great outcry about it for a little time, and then, the disgrace all the time going on, and even getting worse, to drop it all, as if there had been no disgrace, and no outcry. Balfour is probably right to count on this cowardice which has become so characteristic of us.

Besides why should we not get used to a few people being punished by prison-torture for their political opinions when we are quite used to a great many people having the same punishment administered to them for the crime of poverty?

Nay, can we say the same punishment? Our political offenders whether they have worn the prison dress or protested against wearing it, whether they have performed or protested against the "menial labour" which by the way they condemn nice-looking girls to perform for them every day, when they come out of prison return to "reformed" homes and the applause of at least a wide circle of "respectable" people.

The punishment of poverty is far different from that: tendencies harmless or even good in themselves perverted, inevitable degradation forced, many a weak good-natured, or self-indulgent, or hot-tempered person not worse than the average taken altogether; criminal habits forced on him, and then prison, and confirmation of the criminal habits and further degradation, and the man who might have been harmless or even useful has but one use now, and that a terrible one. He is "an enemy of society." This is the punishment of poverty, and yet we are so used to it, that we think we are living in a state of profound peace in England? Pools that we are!

Or indeed to many thousands, what is the earth on which we live, so full of beauty and such infinite resources for pleasure and well-doing as a place where the police should have at their disposal the power to destroy the lives of people, and to make them objects of dread for future generations? One of the most interesting parts of the book [which?] is on police power. Large builders, though forbidden in their contracts, practised sweating by subletting at a mere fraction of the contract price. In the making of match-boxes £2 per gross was paid until the Salvation Army came into competition [the Army denies this] and reduced the price to 2½d. And now the making of the boxes was sublet for 1½d. per gross, the workers finding their own paste. A recent instance of this is the work done by both home and school, who at home from 6s. could earn from 4s. 6d. to 5s. per week. Early marriages arose from the two sexes herding together in the same rooms [What does that arise from?], from men marrying in order to be as near as possible to their wives' earnings, and from men and women thinking [poor souls!] their united wages would be better, though poor, than single wages.

Mr. Adamson then discussed as to whether clergymen are bound to marry people before the age of twenty-one, as though "marriage" were necessary to breeding, and then gets on to the "foreigner" question. He agreed with other witnesses that the immigration of paupers had an appreciable effect, and that the foreigners were at least as moral, and more sober than the English [what a curious comparison!]; but they have incorporated the stupid carelessness of the British nation which whether or not it be an original national quality, has been so much fostered by the commercial life which we have brought to such a perfection of degradation and cowardice.

"The Rev. W. Adamson, Vicar of Old Ford, stated [before the Commission of the House of Lords] that his parish had a population of 11,066, and contained no middle-class. He said that the sweating-system had always existed, but had become aggravated from the results of combined action, competition and early marriage and rent. He gave [which?] as a reason for over-population. Large builders, though forbidden in their contracts, practised sweating by subletting at a mere fraction of the contract price. In the making of match-boxes 2½d. per gross was paid until the Salvation Army came into competition [the Army denies this] and reduced the price to 2½d. And now the making of the boxes was sublet for 1½d. per gross, the workers finding their own paste. A recent instance of this is the work done by both home and school, who at home from 6s. could earn from 4s. 6d. to 5s. per week. Early marriages arose from the two sexes herding together in the same rooms [What does that arise from?], from men marrying in order to be as near as possible to their wives' earnings, and from men and women thinking [poor souls!] their united wages would be better, though poor, than single wages."

More sweating details: sail-mants made for 7½d., sold (with the ship as it was) 1s. to 1½d. In 6d. to 1½d.; asked if there were not some of the best class, thought they were the same mantles as were sold at £3. "He disapproved of the present system of education, because it fitted boys to be clerks; 200 of them would apply for a boy's clerkship, and some would offer to take it for nothing in the hope of getting eventually a few shillings a week. [Yes, even education, the good thing we are all crying out for, is turned into a curse, when robbery is the foundation of society.] Girls learned only the theory and not the practice of domestic work, and therefore went into factories or were compelled [note the word] to lead an immoral life. [Yes, people forgetting the stroke has seen and the convulsions, to my certain knowledge they are doing, in the country as well as in the towns: this is "civilization"—i.e., a recession to an inferior kind of savagery.]

"As an instance of extreme poverty, he gave the case of a person who sold 6 fibre bags for 6d., and out of that spent 3d. for new material, 1d. for coal, 1½d. for bread, 1½d. for milk, ½d. for tea, to make a meal for four persons—" and so on, and so on. [Remember, this is why Mr. O'Brien's rations will be so scanty; the prison must try not to compete in attractions with the workshop.]

"He admitted [that] the middlenoon saved the principal a great deal of trouble, because the latter might not wish to have a number of poor persons about his premises. Teaching boys and girls to work for their own living might check the competition of unskilled labour [how! in the name of wonder!], but would have no great effect so long as over-population [i.e., unregulated slave-breeding] existed. In this utilitarian plan [of thievish and murderous] age, the swine wished to get his work done as cheaply as possible, and did not care whether it was done by horse, ass, or man."

Now for the remedies: "He would impose a poll-tax on foreigners, and would inflict a penalty on men marrying before twenty-one and girls before eighteen years of age!"
The Commonweal
May 12, 1888

This is certainly a wonderful result to come out of all the somewhat gentleman’s experience, if he has not been misrepresented by the newspaper reporter, which after all is very possible; in which case the general journalistic conscience must bear the burden. In any case there were more than W. M. and have, over it, and can now see nothing to be done but try to regulate the slave-breeding, and if we possibly can, reducing the number of the slave to the limit of profit to us. We have got used to it, and the more it looks as if we could be living in the plantations as we can bear them pretty well. But patience! something will take place as a result of which will be hard to bear, if we do not find that the "Aryan archaic exercise, such as this one-year's residence in the university of French citizens: is inalienable and imprescriptible. No individual, no fraction of the people, can assume.

FRANCE IN 1848-1888.

When, in 1848, the Republic was proclaimed, the people thought that all was accomplished that was necessary to their salvation. They thought of the great changes that took place during the revolution at the close of the century, and they expected changes equally great to follow the proclamation of the Republic of 1848. But during the fifty years, great economical changes had taken place, and a powerful financial aristocracy had taken the place of the old religious and commercial clergy, too, had regained their influence in the rural districts, while the mass of the rural population had become peasant proprietors. In 1848 the people of the towns had to deal with new conditions and with every day's close of the century.

The proclamation of the Republic in 1848 found the revolutionary forces in an immense minority, and the reaction began from the day the Republic was proclaimed. The Provisional Government inaugurated on the 24th of February was a reactionist government. It became known that the small trading classes were represented by two and the labour party by two. The agitation that led to the revolution was organized by the small trading classes against the great capitalists and the stock exchange, and their demand was for parliamentary reform; but one of the first decrees adopted by the Provisional Government was to pay the fund-holders of the public debt their dividends six months in advance; this put an end to the absorption of the small saving from the Continent looked to France to aid them in their struggles for freedom; but Lamartine, as minister of foreign affairs, issued his famous (or infamous) dispatch of the 5th of February. The government was, in the first instance, to be put down in the revolution, and set them and the workers by the ears. The workshops were closed and the June insurrection followed. The reaction was now strengthened; the people of the Republic only a sham, its existence only a question of time. Henceforth the task of the reaction was an easy one, to repress the revolutionary spirit at home and discredit the Republic abroad.

With the addition of the measures against the liberty of the press and the freedom of association. Nor is it necessary to refer to the brutal suppression of the Roman Republic and the re-establishment—by force of arms of the papal troops and the French, which of all the revolutions in the relations of France and Italy. But let us come to the year 1850.

On the 10th and 28th of March that year a number of elections to the National and to local chambers were returned by voting three for Paris. These three were returned by very large majorities, the numbers voting for them being—for De Flotte, 126,092; Vidal, 126,408; and for H. Carnot, 131,757. A large number of the small trading classes, which always opposed the revolution, had the Nationalists knew no bounds. It was not the Republic that was in danger, but the very foundations of society. The press demanded the revision of the Constitution, and the only protection of universal suffrage was condemned as "savage barbarians." The Patrie, a Government evening paper, declared, "We are surrounded by canibals. If-day remain in their lair they must be extirpated." They came on, and the author of the "Patrie" expressed the opinion of the most extreme class, "I say it is necessary to undertake against Socialism which is devouring us a Roman expedition at home." War was made by France against the Roman Republic, and they were only in the same situation by Socialism at home. There only remains for us war—war carried on energetically and by every means. With the "Electoral Reform Bill" was introduced, for which urgency was voted on May 21, by 462 to 227. The Bill soon became law. The number of electors on the register was 2,968,449. It was proposed to restrict the vote to those who could prove a three-years' residence, which would disfranchise the great bulk of the workers in the towns.

To those who paid personal taxes to the amount of twelve francs per annum, numbering 6,009,420. That clause would disfranchise over 3,200,000 electors. There were other objectives. The effect of the measure was to disfranchise close on two-thirds of the electors. Every deputy who voted for that Bill was guilty of treason—treason against the Constitution, and treason against the people. The very word "opposition" was denounced. "The word of the revolutionaries who reside in their French citizens: is inalienable and imprescriptible. No individual, no fraction of the people, can assume.

The treason of the Assembly, supported by the bloodthirsty Order-mongers of every country, prepared the way for the treason of Louis Napoleon. That Assembly is a dictator; there is no liberty of the people; it had declared war against the interests of the proletariat; and its authority rested on usurpation. It had disavowed the very name of the Republic abroad, and its words inspired no confidence. And when Napoleon swept it away, it was only by the hand of a bloodthirsty usurper what it ought to have received at the hands of the people. Of the reign of that red-handed scoundrel it is not necessary to dwell. Suffice it to say, that in 1861 the taxation of France was 65,000,000; 1862, over 85,000,000. 1861 the debt was rather over 250,000,000; in 1869, 257,000,000. The cost of the war of 1870 to France was another 560,000,000, which brought the debt in 1871 to over 900,000,000. "Savage barbarians." Article 6 of the Constitution says: "The Republic is the expression of the will of the people; all its policies and acts are the will of the people; all its policies and acts are the will of the people. Nor have things improved since then. In 1882 the taxation was over 142,000,000, and the debt is still over 900,000,000.

And look at France today. She is still the victim of the gods of finance. The vultures are hooting round her at every pore. After three revolutions and numberless insurrections, with parliamentary action for four generations, the financial aristocracy are still in possession of the government. Everywhere the Assembly is held up by the government, everywhere the Assembly inspire confidence. Everywhere the reactionaries and the reactionists again demand the revision of the Constitution. And another would-be dictator is in the field, boldly demanding the ex- The present Government may rally around it the revolutionary forces to some extent. True, it may attempt to ameliorate the condition of the proletarians. But not as we desired. The royalists and the reactionists once more fear the spread of revolutionary ideas; they once more fear the spread of Socialism; and they again mean war, against the people, against the principle of eternal justice. And they will grasp the hand of any pretended friend of the people, who are crushed to any usurper, who will guarantee them in the safety the continued plunder of the people.

As to the proposed revision of the Constitution, what will it be when it comes? Will it be more favourable to the usurper or be more democratic? That is the question. The royalists and the reactionists, and the friends of Boulanger all demand the revision. The revolutionary parties also want the revision. The present Constitution gives far more power to the reaction than to the revolutionaries. All classes, except the Opportunists, want the revision. The revision, therefore, is sure to come; the question is, What will come next? As for the great Boulanger, he wants to be all things to all men. He is the great mystery man of the present day; but above all he is a mili-

Here we have over four million six hundred thousand interested in upholding the present system. What can free her from the rule of the traitors; what can liberate her from the grasp of the usurpers; what can raise her to the state of an independent people? The revolution alone can do this. But the revolution alone can mean war to the death against every form of treason, against usurpation in all its shapes; war against usury through all the revolutions which have passed on this earth. And let us hope that the people of the social sphere as equal to the task imposed upon them.

J. Sketchley.

Over 3000 emigrants left Queenstown last week for America, a number exceeding those of any week this or last year.