

Mr. Fergus succeeds in finding a way to relieve gaol-warders of the duty of flogging prisoners, as he has conditionally given his promise to Dr. Fitchett to do, he will have done something in the service of humanity. Of the brutalising effects of the duty in question we find for example an illustration in a late number of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. An Eye-Witness, who gives a report of what he had seen in connection with the whipping of two children, sentenced in an English town to such punishment, thus describes the brutalising effect produced on the constables so employed:—"If the constable who administers the birch fails to draw blood, he is subjected to all the chaff and banter imaginable among his companions, and although the police constable can as a rule stand a good deal, a line must be drawn somewhere, and they are, according to my experience generally found inclined to draw it at chaff. "God, Jack, I did lay it on to that — kid that was to have the six strokes this morning. I fetched the blood out of him like —. The poor little — won't be able to sit down for a — month, I'll lay my life." I heard a black-guard of a constable remark to another constable, in a town a few miles from that in which the prison was situated, in which I witnessed the birchings, "But you have not got half a — muscle," rejoined his blackguardly companion, "I would have killed the young — if I had been on to him." "And," adds the writer, "these are the men who are told off to punish poor little defenceless mortals, who have made a trivial transgression of the laws of their country, and who are led to the whipping-form like lambs in her Majesty's name." As to the matter of whipping itself, we have nothing to say. What we would inquire into is the degree in which the occupation brutalises the men engaged in it. That they are brutalised and heavily brutalised is evident, and is it prudent to subject respectable men in our own prisons to a training that has most probably had a chief part in this? Dr. Fitchett has done well in raising the question in Parliament, and Mr. Fergus will do better still if he gives it due consideration.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT, speaking in the House of Commons on Sept. 12, quoted the *St James's Gazette* as suggesting that machine guns should be used against the Irish people:—"The most detestable and scandalous language has been used by the *Times*." Sir William went on, "for the express purpose of driving the Irish to revolt—language such as never before degraded the press of a free country. If the advice of the Unionist press had been followed, what, between machine guns, evictions and Tory landlords, soon very few Irish people would be left."—But it has always been plain that eventual slaughter was what the extreme members of the party looked to as the great desideratum. If, provoked by the prudence and calmness of the Irish people, in whose continuance the speaker expressed his confidence, they are now more furiously appealing to their chosen remedy, there is nothing to astonish us. And, if we may judge by what has occurred at Mitchelstown, prudence and calmness will prove no hindrance. Ireland depends for safety on the Tories' dread of the English masses.

THE predictions of M. Vambéry, the Cassandra of Central Asia, apparently draw nearer every day to their fulfilment. M. Vambéry foretold some months ago that Russia would bring about the escape of Ayub Khan from Persia with the intention of overturning the English alliance with Afghanistan. And now behold the Prince is at liberty, all the reports that spoke of his death or capture proving false—and is engaged in organising a rebellion against the Ameer. Russian newspapers, meantime, declare that their country will not actively side against England, but that she will not bind herself to abstain from profiting by the results that may befall. Never before was a Government with their eyes open and fully warned by competent authority so befooled as that of England has been in all the transactions alluded to. The only consolation is, perhaps, that they could not help themselves—and it would have been vain for them to struggle against fate.

WHILE dissatisfaction is growing among the English people, it seems sadly out of place that a parliamentary leader like Mr. Chamberlain should occupy himself, as he is at present, by fomenting division and discontent in Ireland. All the result of his work there can but be at the utmost the renewal of strife that has existed for ages and of which nothing but evil has ever come.

If it be true, as the cable reports, that the Pope has appointed a commission of Cardinals to arrange a *modus vivendi* with the Kingdom of Italy, the question of conciliation has taken a practical form even sooner than it was expected. We do not, however, attribute too much importance to such reports, and we should be very guarded in receiving as genuine any information given on the subject. We do not know whether the announcement that the Holy Father will preside personally at the opening of the Jubilee exhibition may be taken as a token of an expectation entertained by him of a freer method of life ere long than that to which he has so far during his pontificate been confined. But we think that, without presumption, it may possibly be so inter-

preted. The matter, however, rests entirely within the judgment of the Pope, who alone understands the position thoroughly, and the Catholic world will implicitly follow his decision.

THE coroner's jury have returned a verdict of wilful murder against the police inspector and five of the constables accountable for the death of the two men killed at Mitchelstown. This, however, by no means implies that the men will be duly punished for their crime. The manner in which the policemen who killed Hanlon at Troughal was dealt with is enough to assure us of this. And, indeed, we might also gather as much from the release of the soldiers recently sentenced to imprisonment for riot and violent conduct towards the people. But Ireland is in the hands of men, one of whose organs recommends that machine-guns may be incontinently employed for the maintenance of law and order—and what is the value of a life or two under such circumstances? The coroner's verdict is, perhaps, a sure recommendation to promotion, and it is certain to result in a refusal of the Government to prosecute, if carried so far.

A DOUBT has arisen as to whether the man executed for the murder of the late D'Arcy M'Gee was the man who actually committed the crime. It is stated that there are grounds to believe that the murderer is still living and at large. Whalen, who was executed, is said to have acted like anything rather than a guilty man, but to have given reason to suspect that he knew more than he chose to reveal.

ON Mr. O'Brien's arrest at Kingstown he was condemned to Cork gaol—but not before, it will be remembered, he had delivered a defiant and spirited speech to a public audience in Dublin—where he was accommodated with a cell nine feet long by four broad, and in every particular a "black hole." He was afterwards liberated on bail but the Government have given him a foretaste of what is in store for him, if they ever manage finally to lay their clutches on him. It is no sinecure to be an Irish patriot as things now are, but the men are made of the right stuff, and there will be no failure on their part. By the time Ireland obtains a parliament of her own she bids fair to see it led by a band of well-trying heroes. Mr. O'Brien, coming out of his narrow cell resolved, if needful, to return there. Mr. Dillon struggling alone with the police at Mitchelstown, these are the men whom their country may well be proud of and not Mucius Scævola himself could give to the enemy a finer example of what they have to contend against. There is the spirit of Ireland and it must needs prove indomitable.

A TRADES congress at which socialistic tendencies were shown followed up by largely attended and somewhat riotous meetings, of the unemployed in London, is a significant hint of trouble to come, that cannot safely be neglected. It is hardly a time to settle the matter by the contemptuous dismissal given by the aldermen at the Mansion House to a deputation from the great meeting held on Monday, in Trafalgar Square. The men already knew that the workhouse authorities, to whom these comfortable citizens referred them, were appointed for their relief, but the relief they would give was evidently not such as they chose to avail themselves of. The insult was reckless as it was harsh and cruel. It was but natural that the people should be incensed by it, and had they succeeded in their march on the city, the magnates who offended them might have had cause to regret their action. Effective for a time, however, as the resistance of the police may be, it can only help for the moment in repressing the results of a cause that requires wise and sufficient treatment. It is to be regretted that the men in whose hands the Government of England is at present, even if they had not otherwise managed to fill their hands beyond their grasp, are hardly calculated to deal with the difficulty.

THE open advocacy of socialistic principles by the workmen in England, and the riotous proceedings, and monster meetings of the unemployed in London, take an additional significance from the presence of men exceptionally qualified to lead in a popular disturbance. There is, for example, Victor Dave, of whom the *Pall Mall Gazette* gives sketch, and who is an anarchist of an undoubtedly dangerous nature. As depicted by the *Gazette*, we may take him for an unscrupulous adventurer, possessed of all the philosophic pretences and jargon, by which a mob of the present day, may be deceived and mastered, and capable of exciting them to any extremes of ruffianism that might suit his purpose. The people and their leaders with whom the Government may have to do in England bid fair truly to fulfil all the accusations that have been falsely brought against those in Ireland, to whose ruin the Government is fatuously devoting all its powers. Perhaps, after all, it may not be on some foreign battle field, but in the streets of the great English cities, that the cause of Ireland will be fought out. And, if so, Nemesis will be complete.