

ights, of which the court up to the last was the scene, among spectators of both sexes, struggling to be nearer to the witnesses who were almost all of them belonging to the debauched classes—all this justifies the severe sentence of the President, obliged twice loudly to call the public to a sense of shame. But even the judges themselves, even the members of the Bar, were they in all respects completely beyond reproach? The notions of morality are in these days of ours so turned upside down that we heard the Prosecutor as well as the President pass eulogies on a woman, the principal witness in the matter, who, after having tried to cheat justice in order to save the accused because of the scandalous ties that had for a long time attached her to him, finished by testifying to the truth. That was her strict duty, and this testimony *in extremis* did not wash away the ignominy of an existence which made of this woman and her former associate in debauchery a revolting couple. But little was wanting, nevertheless, to make them also exalt her morals, and her fidelity to the man whose kindness she was rewarding." It costs us something, adds the *Univers*, to make these remarks, but they were necessary to give its true character to the monstrous case that has just terminated. In its details it throws a sad light on the decay of public morality, and it is not the criminal only we must consider to perceive this—but also the society that such a spectacle condemns. "There is something rotten in the State of Denmark," said Hamlet. The Franzini case in laying bare the foundations of a society which prides itself on its elegance, shows that we in France are already far advanced in the reign of moral decomposition, not to say rottenness. It is the *jam fetid*. But where for this corpse is the hope of resurrection? From the President of the court, then, with false and awkward sentiment applauding a depraved woman, to the brutal public, delighting in the disgusting evidence, and from these to the ribald street-boys, who dipped their hands in the blood of the criminal when he had been executed, everyone connected with the matter is a testimony to us of what the reign of godlessness and a fine freethinking philosophy must needs produce—that is, when they outstep the limits of some naturally prudent and genial minds, who also owe more to Christian influences than they are inclined to believe, much less to own.

MR. MICHAEL DAVITT, in speaking, the other day, MR. DAVITT ON at a meeting of the Bray Branch of the National COERCION. League, hardly gave the Government much encouragement to hope for the success of their proclamation:—He professed himself jealous of Mr. O'Brien, who had this time been selected, in his stead, for the distinction of arrest and imprisonment; but, he said, it was still possible that he would not be totally neglected. He, however, predicted that if Mr. O'Brien were committed to the enjoyment of the plank bed for three or six months he would come out fifty times stronger, more powerful, and more dangerous to Dublin Castle and alien rule. It was the enemies of the League who had proclaimed it as a dangerous organisation that were afraid and not the members of the League or the people of Ireland. The duty of every honest Nationalist, continued Mr. Davitt, was to rally to the support of the League, and the effect of the attack made on it could only be to multiply its members and strengthen it fifty-fold. The speaker went on to say that while in the debate in Parliament every Member who opposed the Irish cause referred to boycotting and intimidation, not one of them mentioned the true crime that distinguished Ireland, namely that of eviction. Social atrocities such as this were never heard of in England, and it was, he said, for telling the people of Mitchelstown not to submit to it that William O'Brien was to be tried and probably sent to prison. The landlords, however, though their case was desperate, and they could expect no relief from the British taxpayer, and must base all their hopes on what an Irish legislature would do for them, would still continue to evict, thinking that by their thus creating a feeling of disgust in Ireland, everybody would get tired of the subject and they would be able to obtain a purchase scheme. Eviction, nevertheless, would carry its own punishment with it. Not a Jew in England would lend a penny to a landlord whose land was boycotted; not a bank would advance money to an evicting landlord, and though fifty Coercion Acts were passed, as Mr. Healy had said, they could not revive the land grabber. The people now know how to protect themselves against this the meanest and vilest of their enemies. Mr. Davitt concluded by answering for all those present that not one of them would allow the fear of the plank bed to make him refrain from telling the people to resist eviction, and by assuring his hearers that if the struggle were continued as perseveringly as it had hitherto been carried on, before two years had passed the victory would be won. Afterwards, in responding to a vote of thanks, he pointed out that there was not prison accommodation in Ireland for even five thousand people, and that if, therefore, two or three individuals from every parish in Ireland were to volunteer to go to prison there would be room for no more, and by all the rest meetings could be held with impunity. But even without any organisation, he said, land grabbing could be prevented, and the interest of the landlords brought down to its proper value because the people were now sufficiently instructed as to how they should act. Mr. Davitt made it as plain as possible, in fact, that coercion must fall flat, and

that nothing would suffice to prop up once more the system that has been undermined. It may be doubtful, indeed, as to whether even the machine guns to which appeal has been made, and which were certainly from the first among the firmest reliances of opposing extremists, could be of any use. They might, it is true, clear the ground, and do the work of eviction more thoroughly and rapidly; but it is by no means certain that the results for which they would prepare the way would prove more profitable than those which are now obtained. The machine guns, however, by the patience and prudence of the Irish people are made impossible—and without them, as Mr. Davitt has clearly shown, coercion is worthless and destined to complete failure.

THAT WICKED PARAGRAPH.

(By MAURICE F. EGAN in the *Ave Maria*.)

I.

THEY—the critics—say that the art of letter-writing has gone out of fashion, and that the speed of the mails and the cheapness of postage have forever blighted any hope of there being another Madame de Sevigne in these times. For myself, however, the hasty notes of our day particularly if they suggest any kind of a story, or show the workings of character, have an inexpressible charm. As I am sure I am not alone in this, I am unselfish enough to open a little packet of notes—enclosing a newspaper clipping among them—which came to me from both the writers, with the consent of the persons to whom they were written, of course. Of Mr. Redmond O'Connor and Miss Anna Arthur, I have nothing to say, except that they were the persons last alluded to.

II.

The paragraph inclosed in one of the letters of the packet reads this way. It is printed in leaded bourgeois. It was written because the editor-in-chief of a metropolitan daily journal suddenly dashed into the office of one of his staff to say:

"There's nothing going on. I've exhausted myself on the present appearance of the tariff question; but I need a couple of 'stickfuls' to 'fill out.' Can't you think of a paragraph or two?"

The member of the staff took his cigar from his mouth and thought and grinned.

"Pitch into the Pope!"

"That's played out, you know very well," answered the the editor-in-chief irritably. "It used to be different. I want 'copy. Hurry up!"

"Very well," the member of the staff said amiably; "I'll see to it."

And the editor-in-chief left the room sighing with relief. The member of the staff turned up his gaslight, picked up a pile of "exchanges" and looked for prey.

"Indian question," he murmured; "we have had enough of that New novel by James—Judkins has too much literary stuff in already, Lecture by Ingersoll—don't know whether the paper is for or against him just now. Tariff—oh, bother! Theatricals—enough of them too. Sermons in St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church: unity—unchangeable—infallible. Good gracious! what awful claims that priest makes! It would be pretty bad for us who are neither hot nor cold, who neither believe or disbelieve, if he should happen to be right. 'One Faith, one Lord, one Baptism.' He talks as if he knew—ah, here's poetry! 'Tower of David, Tower of Ivory, House of Gold.' Well it is queer that a fellow in the Protestant Church should be taught to believe in Christ, and yet told to hold an attitude of reserve and almost of dislike towards His Mother. It is queer—by George, I've been dreaming! It will not do. I must find two 'stickfuls' of something."

He turned over the papers and ran his eyes up and down long columns of print with the dexterity of long practice.

"What's this? 'Mr. James Vernon's failure in business struck the community like a thunder-clap. The closing up of his factory will leave over a hundred men without the means of subsistence. His inability to meet the demands of his creditors is attributed to careless management.'"

The member of the staff cut this out of the *Evening Cablegram* with speed and a new pair of scissors. "Not remarkable," he said, "but it will do, unless the chief brings me a hint from the telegraphic reports. Let me see. Roumania—bother Roumania!—Bismarck—well, he ought to die! French Republic—M. Ferry—always talking about 'revenge' on Germany, and taking it out of the priests, who can't fight. That's an idea, but the chief wouldn't like me to put that in; too ultramontane; some light sneer or something else would be better. But—confound it!—I can't find anything to sneer at tonight!"

Having come to this conclusion, he lighted his cigar again and wrote the paragraph.

"Another disastrous failure is announced. It is alleged that James Vernon, the only surviving member of the solid old firm of Vernon and Vernon, has allowed 'carelessness' to force him to close the factory of the firm. 'Carelessness' is a very light and frivolous way of putting a phase of our life which ought to be called criminal; for it is criminal to reduce workingmen to despair by taking the bread out of the mouths of their wives and children. If Mr. Vernon chose to rob his rich creditors, we have nothing to say against it. That is the affair of the law, and the rich can easily secure the law's assistance. But what of the poor? They may die in dumb despair in their close unhealthy rooms—die, yes, my lords and gentlemen, with James Vernon's carelessness written on their hearts—their withered and pulseless hearts. 'Carelessness' like this brought on the French Revolution. Public opinion should frown down—

"No, not 'frown down.' That's too weak," said the member of the staff, drawing his pencil through the phrase—