

THE ATTACK ON THE PRESS.

(The Nation, August 19.)

SINCE the date of Judge Keogh's famous, or infamous, judgment in the Galway election petition case, no freak of any one of her Majesty's Irish judges has produced so great a sensation as the astounding act perpetrated by Mr. Justice Lawson in the Commission Court on Wednesday morning. Even with all that is known of the mind and temper of Mr. Justice Lawson, the public were for some moments scarcely able to believe the news that, because of some comments which appeared in the columns of the *Freeman's Journal* on the exclusion of Catholic jurors from the jurybox in certain recent cases, the proprietor of that paper, Mr. E. D. Gray, M.P., High Sheriff of Dublin, had been sentenced by his lordship to three months' imprisonment and a fine of £500, in addition to which trails to the amount of £10,000 were to be required from him, on pain of his detention in prison for another term of three months. The surprise occasioned to the public by this outrageous sentence was further heightened when it became known that the judge had refused to Mr. Gray time or opportunity for a legal defence, and that in reply to an application from Mr. Gray for a little time to arrange some urgent private affairs his lordship cynically informed him that he would have time enough to attend to these matters in prison!

Everyone can see the plain meaning and intent of his high-handed action on the part of Mr. Justice Lawson. His desire is to deter the Irish Press from offering any sort of comment or criticism on the manner in which the Crown lawyers shall please to constitute the special juries by whom a large number of persons are to be tried on grave charges under the new Coercion Act. His dictum amounts to this, that no exception shall be taken to the action of those officials, and no remonstrance shall be offered, no matter how partial and unfair their conduct may appear to be, so long as the Commission is sitting. When the Commission shall have closed its labours—that is to say, after the cases of the prisoners shall have been disposed of one way or another; after some men shall perhaps have been hanged and others sent for long terms to penal servitude—then, indeed, but not till then, may some remarks be offered by Irish newspapers on the composition of the juries, subject to the ordinary penalties of the law for any transgressions of the bounds of legality in their observations. Every Irishman who knows anything of the past history of his country will know what to think of the position thus taken up by Mr. Justice Lawson. For many a long year it has been found essential in the public interest to watch narrowly the conduct of the Crown in the empanelling of Irish juries, and to let in as much light as possible upon the practices to which they were accustomed to have recourse. It is all very well for the Crown lawyers to affect a feeling of indignation at the bare mention of the trick of jury-packing; it is all very well for them to pretend that the game is one which Dublin Castle "does not understand." But who, we should wish to know, is going to believe that for all the complaints that have been made and the agitation that has arisen from time to time on this subject there never was the slightest foundation? The Crown lawyers tell us, indeed, that they never ask any man who is called as a juror what is his religion. That is true enough; they have no need to put the question, for they take good care to inform themselves on the point beforehand. They tell us they do not regard the profession of the Catholic faith as a disqualification. Granted; we admit that a juror's religious convictions are nothing to them if he will only give them the sort of convictions they want to get from him. A Catholic whose inclination is to take the official view of things and do as he is asked by those who act for the Government will be preferred by them any day to a Protestant whose ideas tend in the direction of popular rights and public liberty. But we need not dwell upon these points; the case is one which needs no elucidation or explanation. Everyone knows what the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, and Judge Lawson have sought to effect by their recent action towards the High Sheriff of Dublin, and we cannot think that the knowledge will tend to create confidence in the administration of justice in Ireland. The Irish people would prefer light to darkness in these matters; they would desire that the liberty of fair and reasonable comment on the constitution of juries under the new Coercion Act should be allowed to the Irish Press rather than that an attempt should be made to arise and gag them. And beyond doubt they will regard the journalist who has just been condemned to undergo a long imprisonment and pay a monstrous pecuniary mulct for doing what they and we conceive to be no more than his duty as a man who is suffering in the cause of right and justice, and who, by reason of the very acts for which he has been so grossly punished, will receive from the whole Irish race the high testimony conveyed in the ancient formula that he has "deserved well of his country."

The *Freeman* says:—A sensational incident occurred at Luc-sur-Mer recently, in which Mr. Patrick Egan, the able treasurer of the Land League, played a prominent and brave part. About eleven o'clock in the day two ladies were bathing close to the shore. The tide was nearly full, and as the place looks directly out on the English Channel the waves rolled in roughly with a brisk breeze. One of the ladies lost her footing, and in her struggles was quickly carried into deep water. The other lady, in trying to save her companion, was also carried beyond her depth. Their cries attracted the attention of Mr. Egan and a French gentleman who happened to be passing at the moment. Recognising the critical position of the ladies, both gentlemen courageously sprang to their rescue. Only waiting to divest themselves of their coats, Mr. Egan and his friend plunged into the water, and after great difficulty succeeded in bringing the ladies, who were in a most exhausted state, to shore. The usual restoratives were applied, but one of the ladies died in three hours after her immersion. The other, however, we are glad to say, recovered. We can readily believe that the heroic conduct of our countryman and his companion has been the subject of the highest encomiums among the people of the French watering-place.

HOW WAGES ARE SPENT.

AT Southampton on Monday, in the section of Economic Science of the British Association, the chief business was the reading and discussion of the report read by Professor Leone Levi, of the committee appointed for the purpose of continuing the inquiry into and completing the report upon the appropriation of wages and other sources of income.

The report necessarily had direct reference to the amount spent on necessities and the amount spent on luxuries. It divided society into the working classes and the middle and higher classes. The articles it named as luxuries included fruit, beer, spirits, wine, silk, silver-plate, jewellery, tobacco, theatres, and amusements. On personal expenditure in the way of necessities the working class are represented as spending £338,000,000, and on luxuries £85,600,000, or 80 per cent. on necessities and 20 per cent. on luxuries; while the middle and higher classes are represented as spending £390,000,000 on necessities, and £64,400,000 on luxuries, or 86½ and 13½ per cent. respectively. The report continues: "The working class appear thus to devote a larger proportion of their incomes to luxuries than the middle and higher class, a fact all the more to be regretted, since the working class are thereby left with so much less available for the necessities of life. Luxuries may be indulged in after the necessities of life are fully provided for and a proportional surplus for saving has been secured. They should not be indulged in at the expense of the necessities of life or before a proportional surplus for saving has been secured. Thus classified, we have an average gross or personal expenditure of 28s per week for each working man's family, and of 73s a week for each of the middle and higher class families, and an average net or national expenditure of 23s per week for each workingman's family, and 55s for each middle and higher class family. The income of the working classes was 436 millions; their expenditure was 423 millions, leaving a surplus of 13 millions; while the income of the middle and higher classes was 564 millions, and their expenditure 454 millions, leaving a surplus of 110 millions. The general results of the inquiry are not discouraging. It is gratifying to know that the great bulk of the income of the people is productively expended, and that, though much is devoted to luxury and a goodly portion is wasted, still a handsome annual surplus remains for reproduction, which goes to swell the capital of the nation. The committee have limited their observations to the appropriation of wages and other income. They might have illustrated the question with the employment of the human forces and with the appropriation of time, the most valuable of human property. Idle habits and an unnecessary number of holidays likewise restrict the productive power of the nation, and rob it of much of its resources. England labours much and she expends liberally. It is the duty of the nation to use aright its hard-won gains, so that it may minister to the comfort and affluence of the people." (Cheers.)

Professor H. S. Foxwell disputed some of the principles on which the report was based, and held that amusements were essential to the well-being of the community. Adam Smith went so far against all his instincts as to recommend State-aided amusements. He further held that necessities should not be viewed as supporting industry, but many of the things which were viewed as luxuries should be looked upon as the rewards of and the incentives to industry. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Hurst said he had dined with a city company, and the dinner, which cost about two guineas a head, was a very good one, and he enjoyed it very much. (Laughter.) About 150 persons enjoyed luxuries, and about another 150 persons obtained the necessities of life from the employment they received in connection with the dinner.

Mr. A. E. Macnigh said the City of London Corporation had large Irish estates—they were bad landlords; they did not give reductions of rent, yet they spent seventy thousand a year on dinners. Could there be a more culpable spending of money? Could there be anything more scandalous? (Cheers.)

Sir Rawson Rawson said that the fact of the middle and higher class families costing two and a half times the amount of a workingman's family was to him an unexpected result. Equally unexpected was the circumstance that the taxation of the working classes was 16-1d per year, and of the middle and higher classes, £16 16s 10d—a sovereign for every shilling. Again, it was a remarkable result that the surplus of the working classes was only 3 per cent., and of the other classes 20 per cent. It was encouraging to note that while the increase from 1840 to 1870 in the use of beer and spirits was 75 per cent., the increase in the use of raw sugar, tea, and cocoa was 272 per cent. (Cheers.)

Mrs. Langtry, the actress, who sails for New York on the 30th October, has been interviewed by a representative of the *New York Herald*. She gave the following as her reasons for adopting the stage as a profession:—Mr. Langtry at the time of my marriage owned property in Ireland worth about £3,000 a year, but which is now not worth more than £300. Ah! I did promise to tell you what led me to go upon the stage professionally. Fashionable life in London, added to my husband's heavy expenditures and decreasing income from his Irish property, had reduced our means so much that retrenchment became necessary. Mr. Langtry went on a trip to America, and I went back to my Jersey home. On his return we went back to London, and lived in a little furnished house. Mr. Langtry, however, had no idea of economising. He had never known what it is to deny himself or me anything he thought we ought to have. Ah! I see you have guessed the result. I have lived among my friends until Mr. Miles and several of my warm admirers suggested the stage. I jumped at the idea, then grew alarmed, but finally determined to adopt the profession. Mr. Langtry agreed, but he said he would not touch any money I might earn, as he had enough for his own needs in the £200 or £300 a year remaining to him.