

The Week.

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It seems to us that the majority at the Board of Trade meeting the other day made a mistake in refusing to adjourn the discussion of Commercial Union. It is not a vote for or against that is wanted, so much as a free and exhaustive discussion of the whole subject by men capable of forming a correct judgment. The general public look to such a body as the Board of Trade for guidance in forming their opinion on these questions; and it is a disappointment to see a discussion cut short when only one side has been heard, and a decision rendered by feeling rather than reason. We are not in favour of Commercial Union, as our readers know: we believe that several insuperable obstacles to its adoption exist, and that many serious objections may be urged against it. Nevertheless, we should like to hear every word that can be said in its favour. Such arguments are the very best means of rectifying and fortifying one's own belief, if that is true; and if not true, one were better without it. In common fairness, opportunity for the fullest discussion is due to the advocates of Commercial Union, whose argument cannot at all events be disposed of by a vote: the result of attempting that will be that the discussion will go on informally and unsatisfactorily till the Board of Trade again takes it up, and finally disposes of it, by squarely facing every point at issue in a manner it does not seem inclined to do now.

We cannot affect to feel much regret at the mobbing of Mr. O'Brien. Ruffianly conduct is always to be deplored; but the agitator himself set the example of ruffianly conduct to his assailants when he proclaimed his intention to hunt the Governor-General from one end of Canada to the other. He would not have done that in the way he himself was hunted about the streets of Toronto; but was this method less manly than the wilful lies and slanders that he, knowing them to be so, proposed to use? Mr. O'Brien is one of those men that can feel no insult less material than a knock-down blow, and we cannot regret that he has received one. We do not for a moment excuse his assailants; but, while condemning the instrument, we cannot but regard the punishment as well-deserved. And, moreover, it will serve the useful purpose, we think, to exhibit the real feeling of the great mass of our people about this Irish agitation as nothing else can. Mr. O'Brien was allowed to lecture quietly in Montreal; the people in general simply ignored him, leaving him in the hands of the Irish; not a single man of any prominence attended his meetings, or in any way countenanced his errand; the Press, with the exception of a rabid Irish organ, condemned it; and yet, because his attempted mischief-making was thus tolerated—and toleration, not approval, was the utmost accorded him—he had the effrontery to telegraph to his friends here that "Quebec is solid." Similarly, Ontario would have been reported as "solid" too, if the Loyalist meeting in Queen's Park had not been held. Now, it is of the utmost importance that the true feeling in Canada about this agitation business should be known in England; and that is the great service that will have been done by the Loyalist meeting, whose meaning, though clear enough to people here, might not be so abroad without this rough "send-off" by way of emphasis that Mr. O'Brien received. In the ridiculous story the agitator is since telling about the country as to the attack on him "organised by Lord Lansdowne's friends, almost under Lord Lansdowne's window," we have a specimen of the intolerable lies that would have filled out his account of his reception in Toronto, if this had not been accompanied by some unmistakable counter-demonstration. But the brickbats that flew about his head dissipated his last chance of making out Ontario as well as Quebec to be "solid" for him. It is deplorable, on abstract principles, that Mr. O'Brien was so molested; even the worst malefactor ought to be safe in our streets from mob law; but yet, men cannot help being swayed by feeling, which manifestly has run very strong against this cowardly and immoral enterprise. The assailants of Mr. O'Brien, however, were not the people of Toronto; it is absurd to charge against all the inhabitants of a city of a hundred and twenty thousand the fault of a few dozen disorderly men who, for a few minutes, got beyond the control of the few police that happened to be on the spot. And when a man is every day of his life breaking the law, he cannot be surprised if, now and then, a stone or two of the wall he is engaged trying

to pull down should fall on his own head. Mr. O'Brien passes his life in inciting mobs to disobey the law; how can he complain when he catches a whiff of the whirlwind he is trying to raise?

At Kingston, also, Mr. O'Brien has received rough treatment; which is regrettable, but not surprising. If he persists in flinging himself among us, as a firebrand among inflammable tow, the natural consequences must ensue—it looks, indeed, as if he were designedly courting these consequences. Unquestionably his errand to Canada was to raise a disturbance: he knew enough of Kingston when he arrived there to dub it the "Derry of Canada;" and it is hardly likely that when he started from Ireland he was so ignorant of Canadian opinion as to suppose that we were all Parnellites. He must have intended to set our people by the ears. His errand, no doubt, is a sequel to the revolutionary propaganda begun by Mr. Gladstone, when, himself having surrendered to the Irish Jacobins, he went on to set class against class, nationality against nationality, in order to carry his unhappy Home Rule proposals. With those proposals he drove a wedge into the fabric of the Empire wherever the English, Scotch, and Irish dwell together; and now by his countenance he sanctions the widening of the rift wherever possible by any means the Parnellites choose to employ. Mr. O'Brien is a delegate from Messrs. Gladstone and Parnell, invited here by our legislative demagogues to disturb the peace of Canada. His errand was avowedly to raise the country against the Governor-General; and unless he is a very simple man he must have foreseen that his design would be opposed, and perhaps violently opposed, by every one with the least sense of fair-play and decency. Why did not the Government, anticipating this, save Canada from being turned into a battle-ground of Irish factions? Why should loyal Canadians be offended by the slanderous talk of this mercenary agitator? The only evil that now afflicts Ireland is caused by such agitators as he; it is too bad that the dissension it is their trade to sow and foster in Ireland should be transplanted to Canada. The right of free speech among respectable citizens must be kept sacred; but we need not allow the "victims" of Kingston Gaol or St. Vincent de Paul to go about the country preaching robbery, treason, and murder.

THE counsel for the plaintiff in *Brenon vs. Ridgeway* (the "Black Pamphlet Case," in which a London jury awarded a past Fenian £500 damages against a London publisher), in addressing the jury, asked them "not to give any one an excuse for shrinking from a public investigation, but to show the world that an Irishman when wronged could appeal to a British jury, and plead not in vain." The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, with heavy damages; yet Mr. Parnell shrinks from the ordeal, and allows judgment against him to go by default.

A LETTER in *The Times* gives a very clear exposition of the meaning of American "sympathy" for the Irish cause, an exposition which, with some change of circumstance, is equally applicable to the "sympathy" of our own Local Legislatures and Parliament. The writer, remarking on the announced intention of Governor Hill, of New York, to preside over a meeting called "to protest in that State of the American Union, against the passage by the British Parliament of a bill for reinforcing law and order in one of the constituent parts of the United Kingdom," asks, not what business Governor Hill has to do this, for nobody knows better than Governor Hill that he has no business to do it; but, Why does Governor Hill do this thing he has no business to do? The answer is because, "should the Democratic National Convention of next year decide not to renominate Cleveland for the Presidency, it is quite 'on the cards' that Governor Hill may be selected as the Democratic candidate for the Presidency in 1888, just as Governor Cleveland was in 1884, in order to carry New York. That New York State cannot be carried by any Democratic candidate in 1888 without the Irish vote in the two great cities of New York and Brooklyn is just as certain as that without the electoral vote of New York no Democratic candidate can be made President. It was the defection of the Irish vote in those cities which brought Governor Cleveland in 1884 within an ace of defeat, Governor Cleveland's course as Governor having convinced the Irish leaders that he is at heart hostile to the Irish interests on grounds both of race and of religion. Governor Hill will either be the Democratic candidate for the Presidency next year, or he will be held responsible by his party for the loss of the election if the electoral vote of New York goes against the Democratic candidate." These, says the correspondent of *The Times*, are the facts. In the light of these facts Mr. Gladstone or Judæus Apella may believe that Governor Hill presides over Irish meetings to show his disapproval of British Legislation about British affairs. But no grown man in America does him the injustice to suppose this; and no grown