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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

THE Home Rule question is much where it was last week; the beginning of an outrageously dull debate in which the slain are slaughtered over and over again, has only shown what was obvious before, that Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain can no longer row in the same boat, and that Mr. Chamberlain in spite of all his fervid would-be Socialistic sentiment of last year, is quite as ready as other politicians to sacrifice the welfare of a people to his career of leadership.

The Bill, say politicians, will certainly be thrown out: in which case it is probable that a Tory Government will pass a Home Rule measure stronger than the present one, though perhaps with one or two pieces of sham precaution added. Meantime one noteworthy feature of the present hocus-pocus is the extreme eagerness of so many of the Radical members to label themselves Whigs, from Mr. Chamberlain downwards, even in the teeth of the fact that the Radical party outside Parliament is mostly Gladstonian. This is accounted for on the face of things by their conscious hope (not without foundation) of their being able to humbug their constituents; but there is a deeper cause than that for the enthusiasm of their ratting, the resistless march of events towards the formation of the Great Moderate Party. These quasi-Radicals fear their constituents much, but they fear the advance of revolution more, and they fear the advance of revolution more, and they are but acting naturally and after their kind.

The official disclaimer made for Lord Wolseley in Parliament was a sufficiently farcical incident in the great farce of the hypothetical Orange Rebellion. Nobody doubts that Lord Wolseley and the other barrack-room fools have been bragging in the usual swash-buckler style as to what they would do if only the circumstances were to hand: they again are but "doing after kind." But it is a little remarkable that the whole Tory press from the sober *Standard* to the romantic *St. James's Gazette*, have taken the matter so seriously, and with one consent have joined to egg on the Orangemen—if that were needed so long as the rebellion is only hypothetical. Has the result of the Socialist trial encouraged our Law-and-Order contemporaries? Anyhow, again we are shown how obvious it really is to all men's minds that physical force is the basis of our Society.

The Bourgeois, both directly through their Governments, and by their joint-stock associations artificially supported by the said Governments, are prepared to act steadily by open force more than ever. Bismarck in Berlin forbids all public meetings; while from Chicago comes this piece of news, showing that the triumphant capitalists are going to make their most out of the present situation and their recent police victory: "The Wholesale Clothing Association in this city has resolved upon a lock out against their employes; by this step twenty-seven thousand hands will be thrown out of employment."

The American capitalist is certainly a bold, even a reckless man, and deserves to succeed in a "survival of the fittest" world. But even brutality may be carried too far, and we hereby tender our thanks to the Chicago sweaters, who, if the above piece of news is true, are determined to show the American non-Socialist workers that their cause is one with the revolutionists, whom they are now denouncing under the influence of very natural fear inspired by the White Terror. A few more such brutal attacks on the lives of the workers as this of the Wholesale Clothing Association, and the whole mass of workers in America will see the hopelessness of incomplete and isolated attacks on monopoly by means of strikes and boycotts, and will be forced to set themselves to the one necessary work, the abolition of the classes of privilege.

In this age of fads there is a curious fad labelled by its supporters "Imperial Federation." Now, as we Socialists have learned to suspect all qualifications, even the most simple of us will be likely to smell out the "Imperial" qualification of that good thing Federation. Yet a word or two on the subject may not be untimely in these days of enthusiasm over the huge Commercial Puff at Kensington, besung by Court poets and dry-nursed by the boundless ignorance of Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen.

The point is that while the aim of Federation is the extinction of national rivalries, that of Imperial Federation is their artificial support. Imperial Federation means the bolstering up of the decaying supremacy of England in the world-market with the help of a worthless sentiment called patriotism; which, however, has done rather successful work as regards the leaders in this movement themselves, who can see nothing but through its mist. *E.g.*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* has been compelled by it to join the Hartington-Chamberlain Whigs, and is prepared to dragoon Ireland if she fails to see the beauty of neglecting her own business of making her people happy by allowing them the use of their own land, for the sake of nursing the trade in English shoddy wares all over the world.

The attempt, however, like that of other artificial revivals now current, is not very dangerous, because it is artificial. In point of fact that humbugging phantom, "the marvellous energy of the Anglo-Saxon race," covers at least the average amount of incompetence and laziness common to commercial mankind. The material of which "England" is composed, is doubtless good, since it includes contributions from so many races assimilated at so many periods; but it is not miraculous, nor capable, most happily, of forming a great predominant Empire.

In fact, the matter of the English markets is becoming serious enough to shake our "patriotic" hypocrisy; and some frank admissions of the truth are oozing out. The *Times*, *e.g.*, publishes, and the romantic *St. James's Gazette* reprints what amounts to an attack on our traders for their insolent stupidity, which is not quite the same thing as their stupid insolence, and does not serve their turn quite as well as that has done when war-ships and bayonets accompanied it. The text which this gentleman preaches upon, with a vigour which really inspires confidence, is as follows: "The universal complaint against them, from Auckland to Montreal, from Tokio to Smyrna, is that they are impervious to new ideas, and they act on the principle that it is the business of their customers to adapt themselves to their manufactures."

Yes, and it is the business of our Imperial Federation wise-men to force "our customers to adapt themselves to our manufactures;" and, in fact, we always play that game, Federation or no Federation, when we find it safe to do so.

Well, the *Daily News* also follows suit in a leader on the Consular reports: "Manufacturers are not so quick as they once were in adapting their products to the wants or prejudices of their customers." The truth will out. How long ago was it since the whole bourgeois Press was busily denying the depression in trade? Says the *Daily News* in its leader: "The first thing which strikes every reader of the Reports for the year 1885, is the universality of the depression from which trade and agriculture are suffering." This time last year I caught the following sentence in one bourgeois paper (I admit that it was the *Spectator*): "It is yet to be shown that there is any depression of trade."

Good news all this, good news! The obvious obstacle to the spread of Socialism is the commercial prosperity of England. That is now past praying for. Yet, if the centre of commerce only shifted, it would not help us much. That will not happen, England will not crush other countries as she hoped, as the insane fanatics of Imperial Federation still hope, but she will not be utterly crushed either. There will be no centre; the field will be left free for limitless cut-throat competition between the nations, which will lead the Depression of Trade out at the *other end*—Revolution.

Good people of Britain! when in times to come you are become modest about yourselves, and neighbourly to all the world (which *may* take place according to the proverb: "*Only the unexpected happens*"), when in those times some flattering visitor praises you, as guests in their kindness are wont to do, and extols the "famous men and fathers that begat you," for their cleverness and enterprise past all other people, will not truth compel you to exclaim: "Sir, and dear guest, you are somewhat mistaken; it was not we who were so clever, *but our coals!*"

WILLIAM MORRIS.