NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

Parliament having “dried up,” and a complete languor having followed itself, the existence of having a real House of Commons. For office, the bourgeois press was beginning to reconcile itself to a dull season in politics, when Lord Randolph Churchill broke the dulness by his speech at Dartford. That speech comes on people as something like a surprise, after the stale “How can we!” with which the Tories received Mr. Parnell’s measure (no doubt much to his satisfaction). But a little consideration will show them that Lord Randolph has not been a man to remain thoughtless, that he cannot have made such a very dangerous excursion into the territory of Tory Democracy. Some indeed, see him in the light of the butcher who has just put his knife into the Tory ox; but that is scarcely the way to look on his position, because that noble beast was dead before the stroke, and can barely be made a marketable carcass now.

On the other hand, it is perhaps a question whether he is not striking a stroke for the existence of having a real House of Commons. For the office, the bourgeois press was beginning to reconcile itself to a dull season in politics, when Lord Randolph Churchill broke the dulness by his speech at Dartford. That speech comes on people as something like a surprise, after the stale “How can we!” with which the Tories received Mr. Parnell’s measure (no doubt much to his satisfaction). But a little consideration will show them that Lord Randolph has not been a man to remain thoughtless, that he cannot have made such a very dangerous excursion into the territory of Tory Democracy. Some indeed, see him in the light of the butcher who has just put his knife into the Tory ox; but that is scarcely the way to look on his position, because that noble beast was dead before the stroke, and can barely be made a marketable carcass now.

Certainly this will scarcely be Toryism, but it will be very good Whiggery; and it is most important to us that the growing elements in the present Parliament come to realize that the Whigs will always have the rule and have the executive in their power till the day when the people are determined to help themselves.

Lord Randolph called on his hearers to be encouraged by the fact that the depression of trade was showing signs of yielding to better times. It may be true, as is commonly said, that we are on the eve of a temporary recovery, although the tokens of it are not very obvious. If it should take place there may be an appearance of retrogression in our propaganda, as it will make a portion of the working class in this country “contented” once more, who are now inclined to listen to our doctrine. But if that does happen it ought not to discourage us; there must be more general understanding of the grounds of Socialism before the waning night points towards the dawn of action, and it may be that quieter times will not be altogether unfavourable to revolution.

="The poor ye shall have always with you," while our present system lasts; and during the time of the recovery, which will certainly be short-lived enough, we may still make abundant progress amongst those whose no “recovery bill can reach, and to whom at all times we must address ourselves most directly.

Lord Randolph Churchill sang the Jingo song at Dartford about as small as it could be sung. In point of fact, he charged Lord Salisbury’s “The Austrian sentinel is on the ramparts" to “We hope to see the Austrian pew on the hot chestnuts.”

Mr. Norton, the Australian labour delegate, has pretty much knocked the bottom out of the emigration humbug. His letter to the Daily News of October 9, about the serious matter of Chinese labour in Australasia, must interest everybody who thinks of the labour question; but he does not quite seem to see the bearings of it. That American or Australian or English workmen should be shoudered out of the labour market by Chinese or any other workmen who can live cheaper than they can is the necessary outcome of the competitive system—of the system which aims at producing profits for the employer and not wages for the workman. Wages, in the present system, are the employer’s wages; the employer shall have his cheap labour, because he must, and because he can as long as the wages system lasts—that is, as long as the workmen must needs pay some one to “employ” them instead of employing themselves in making what they want and living happily. William Morris.

COMMERCIAL CANNIBALISM.

When Swift, in 1729, gave forth his ‘Modest Proposal’ to an astounded nation, neither he nor those to whom it was addressed were in the least likely to imagine that its re-publication, wellnigh two centuries afterwards, would find substantially the same state of affairs in existence. In spite of the inducement offered, that whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth would deserve as well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation,” was at the time the mandant satire of Swift nor the enthusiastic work of a myriad others have prevented two more miserable hundreds of years from having elapsed without appreciable progress in the happiness of the proletariat. Progress in some sort has been achieved; but if viewed relatively to the higher standard of living and the increase of productive power, it will be found that the mass of the people are as badly off as when, a grievous travesty of the orthodox economic principle, the sardonic and inelastic satire of Swift would maintain that the happy state of the surplus children of the labouring classes as food for those able to pay for it. I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for land lords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.”

We are so well accustomed to human bodies being articles of merchandise and pleasantries, that it is difficult for the average man, not a Socialist, to see that the whole of our present commercial system is based upon the buying and selling of men and women for the profit or pleasure of the purchaser as literally as though they were bought in open market to be actually eaten. The private ownership of land and all other means of production—the monopoly of the means of life—class-control of the material resources of the community—places the proletariat at the mercy of his masters, for they own all that is requisite