NOTES ON NEWS.

"My losses," said Universal Provider Whiteley referring to the fire at his establishment, "amount to £252,000;" and a few months back a poor carter was sentenced to imprisonment for taking a few articles of peaceful value — defence being that his wages, about 11s. per week, were too small to support himself and family. Does "my gross losses" include some unpaid labour!

It is a moot point whether it is fair of us to kill and eat our fellow-lodgers on this earth—sheep, pigs and oxen. Archdeacon Farrar likes meat, so does his family; but, says his Reverence, "grave social problems are before mankind for solution," and hence he attends a vegetarian feed and says in fact that the solution will be arrived at by the "poor" consuming raw and cooked vegetables; and the vegetarian establishment for whom he delivered this advertisement, proceeds to solve the social problem by selling tea and coffee at 5d. per cup, and draw attention to their "special rooms for ladies."

Such are the savours of society. There are places in London neither infested with Archdeacons nor troubled with grave social problems, where for the same sum a working man could get a breakfast or tea (four slices of bread and cup of tea or coffee) and be thanked for his custom.

Whilst old and infirm beings are working their aged limbs in pain to procure food, others driven to the workhouse torture, our humane "upper" classes are stricken with sorrow for the sufferings of aged and infirm horses. Mr. S. Sutherland Safford and Miss Linde have established a home for aged and sick equines and the supporters are highly influential people. It would be interesting to know how many human beings are being worked to death to keep these idlers and their horses. The chief result of their efforts as yet is seen in the depressed condition of the cats' meat trade and the ruined position of many vendors of pussey's meat, the supply of which is restricted owing to the society's interference with the law of supply and demand.

F. K.

The Midland strike has failed ignominiously, if appearances can be trusted. This was to have been expected from the first, inasmuch as there was little or no organisation, no mutual trust, and no safeguard against "rats." When the strike took place against a change, grasping and cynical as could well be conceived, there was a large number of men who did not come out. No efficient measures were taken to convince these of their error in acting treacherously to their comrades. A vigilance committee of strikers should have at once endeavoured strenuously to bring these "men" to a sense of their position.

Even now a little gentle expostulation might bring them to repentance!

All through the affair the men have shown a praiseworthy regard for the rights of property which forbid them to earn a reasonable livelihood; they did not use all the power they had to paralyse the whole Midland system. By their "self-retained demand" they have earned the Thanks of the Directors and the Admiration of Labouring Citizens.

TIME: a few months hence. SCENE: a driver's cottage. PERSONS: Driver of Fiat. Wife: "Well, I wish you fellows had had the pluck of them Yankee spooks! I'd do without the dinners you were in earnest and that you weren't the white-livered, whining curs you took you for; and then I shouldn't have to slave my life out to keep the kids clean, and take in washing besides to make ends meet!" Driver: "Oh, but then we should have broken the law!"

Over at Elton, co. Limerick, there has been little heed paid to the law this last week. By long and dire experience the Irish people have found that it does not pay to win landlords' praises and rent-collectors' compliments. An ounce of rent retained by a tenant is worth a ton of soft-sawder laid out by a landlord.

But how many of the English workers are not tickled to death when an exploiter compliments them on their "law-abiding" ways? Even those who have courage enough to equal the Limerick labourers, and face riot and bayonet armed with a pitchfork, would succumb forthwith to the sneer of Law and Order if it called them "law-abiding British Citizens."

Meanwhile it is easy to see how rapidly grows the power of Socialism in this country. Only last week Reynolds—a paper which, however disinterested it may be, dare not go "beyond its market"—came out with a displayed leader calling in plain terms for the communalisation of the means of production without compensation.

The Government are taking credit to themselves for their Allotment Bill; and Mr. Jesse Collings, ex-Radical and now coallionist, has been buttering them all over for this "popular" piece of legislation. Sir William Harcourt has nothing better to say about it than to call his political opponents with inconsistency, reminding them that when a similar measure was talked of before, its furtherers were called Socialists. "But now," says he, "it seems we are all Socialists." Really this is very poor stuff; it will not be the last time by a great many that the Government, Liberal or Tory, will bait their hook with similar pieces of "Socialistic" legislation. All one can hope is that those who are fishing for will learn to mark the bait off the hook without touching the latter, like wily old carp, if it is any use to them.

But as to this allotment scheme, J. S. Mill said all that was necessary when he said it was simply allowing the labourers to work to pay their own poor-rates. The bill is really in the interests of the employing farmers and the rack-renting landlords.

Mr. Bradlaugh, lecturing at the Fulham Liberal Association on "Natural Economy," is reported to have said that "working-men were quarrelling about a small percentage on wages while they allowed this monstrous war-expenditure to eat up the bread-and-cheese that should be in their cupboards." Yes, doubtless, the war expenditure is monstrous. Don't let workmen believe that supposing it were put an end to they would be any better off while labour's and its earnings is forbidden to any one who cannot find a capitalist who can employ him. If the war-expenditure were stopped it would be necessary to control some other means of wasting the working-man's money, like putting money into the capitalists' pocket; and meantime, until other means was found, trade would be the duffer for it.

Under the idiotic system which oppress us, all destruction of waste, all consumption of them, however consumed, is temporarily "good for trade," advantageous to the actual producer in the lump.

But, after all, it is impossible to get rid of war expenditure or of war as long as all Society is based on war, commercial war; it is the struggle for the market that arrays the battalions in the field; the necessities of the capitalist is what brings on war now-a-days.

As to "the working-man quarrelling over a small percentage of wages," if he did not do so, if he had not been doing so ever since the birth of commercialism, bread, or rather skillfully without the cheese would have been his roost most by this time. Commercial war compels the capitalist to cheapest production to the utmost, the method of cheapening is to reduce the amount of human labour to the utmost; the ensuring competition among the workmen for employment (for once they are slaves they cannot employ themselves) keeps down wages. Any combination among the workmen checks this tendency, and is good as far as it goes; but the partial combination of trades' unions and the like must develop into general combination, which will at last assuredly destroy the war of classes which is the foundation of our Society of waste, strife, and robbery—at last—might the workers see but it at once and set on foot that great combination before the pinch of utter misery which will come of the breakdown of our short-sighted system of commercial war, a war which Mr. Bradlaugh looks on with complacency, although, as aforesaid, it is the parent of the open war which he (very rightly) been denouncing.

The Daily News, commenting on the meeting of the S.D.P., which demanded the release of Poles, is really a trifle too absurd even for a caricature. print on a Monday morning. It admits the strong case of the Socialist, but says, alluding to the hanging of Endacott in effigy: "If they had asked for it in another way, the appeal must have commanded wide-spread attention."

In other words, according to the Daily News, the justice or injustice of the sentence on a citizen de-
W O O D E N L E G S.

We have had our Bank Holiday; the clerk is back to his bank or shop stool, the factory hand and seamstress to their machines, the housewife is set to her daily drudgery. They think, perhaps, of the advantages of the single day's festivity, of cheap trains and omnibuses to carry them into towns, or out of them, into such country as is left.

We are in a spinning-yard of a village near to the Canadian Blackwoods. There was sitting there a study-looking man with his back leaning against one end of a bench; he had a rough cloth lying across his knees, and all that I could see of his legs as they lay below the waist was the wooden leg, which was fastened by bands and ended in wooden stumps. I began to express sympathy for the calamity from which he had suffered.

"Calamity is a strong word," said he, "but I think this would be worth much more so." I admired the bravery with which he looked on his loss, and asked him how it had happened. "Why," said he, "I had been working all alone at clearing a piece out in the forest, and at sunset just as I was about to leave work, I stumbled on a stub of tree and over the roots of it, and I was unawares knocked me down and the trunk fell across one of my legs."

"How horrible!" said I. "Horrible is a strong word," said he, "I was a bare moment's grace had run straight into the tree-trunk."

"Brave, bold man," said I. "Bold is a strong word," said he, "it did not need much courage to get away from the log, and the axe."

I sat in amazement, but said nothing. "I got up," he continued, "and tried to walk, but found it awkward work with one short and one long leg. So I just put the long ones across a log, and my axe soon made it as short as the other."

It shows what an advantage it is always to have your axe by you." I grasped his hand and cried, "Heroic man! Serveda was nothing to you, he put one hand into the fire, but you smile at the sacrifice of both legs." He stared and said, "Well, captain, I don't know what you are at with your bold men, and the fellow who burnt his hand, but if chopping through a bit of stick is thought so much of in your country, there is some hard work left to do after victory, you have the advantage to have wooden legs for trees to fall across!"

"Ah!" said he, "they told me what an advantage it was to me that my legs and not my head were in the way of the cannon-ball at Gettysburg."

I don't think much of that, but I'd rather have my natural feet to stand on, and to help me out of the way of danger."

The advantages which we now enjoy seem to be of the wooden leg kind. The Sewer Railway, and the other staffy means of locomotion in and about London, are an advantage perhaps in so widespread a desert; but it would be better that our towns should only be so large that we might easily get from end to end of them on our own legs.

It is an advantage to have more and more advantageous locomotion. He can ease himself by means of the "free breakfast table" and of the free trade supply of margarine for butter. If, however, he had his own natural powers of mind to help him, instead of the artificial substitute of prejudice and custom, whereby he is caught under the heavy hand of the master, he would be still better off. His reason would tell him that free interchange between all peoples should be an integral part of the system of Romanised Feudal England, a system from which the nation obtained its very survival, its very existence; it was the foundation of all our national laws; and in time it was found by the statesmen of England, and consequently by the feudal lords of the constitution, that no less than the Romanised Feudal system was required for the present time. But the word, "Feudal," is a word of imaginary conceptions.

The Norman Conquest caused a certain kind of feudalism in existence in England; a feudalism which was developed from the customs of the tribal law (itself a Roman law). Administration under the Conquest, this country was slowly beginning to be mixed up with the system of the Continent of Europe, and that not only with the kindred nations of Scandinavia, but with the Romanised countries of the Continent of Europe, which had been conquered and Romanised. The Conquest did introduce a feudal system, whether it were the Frankish or Romanised Feudal system into the country; and it also connected it by strong bonds to the Romanised countries, but thereby laid the foundations of internal ties in England, and the kinship of the nation with the Norsemen or the Danes, and did not feel their conquests when they had become complete, and consequently mere immediate violence had disappeared from them; their feeling was more that they had accepted the Romanised feudal system as a Romanised, and as a Romanised feudal system, with the varied populations of the provinces which mere dynastical events had brought together into the dominion, the manor, the barony, of the English people. Thus did Normandy and Anjou, as the kings who ruled them gradually get pulled out of their Frankish possessions, England became conscious of her separate nationality, though still only in a fashion, as the manor of an English lord.

It is beyond the scope of this article to give a connected story, even of the slightest, of the course of events between the conquest of Duke William and the fully developed medieval period of the 14th century, which is the England that I have before my eyes now, a feudal system, and the variety of feudal systems which have been developed from the elements which had been stirring in Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire, and England shared in the general conditions of the situation through the Middle Ages, up to the 14th century, and with to a certain extent the lives of its people was different.

It is to this period, therefore, that I wish in the long run to call your attention, and I will only say so much about the earlier period as may be necessary for a modern reader to understand the conditions to which our history, what our earlier history, and in which they were found by the statesmen of labourers enacted by Edward III., and the Peasant's Rebellion in the time of his grandson and successor Richard II.

Undoubtedly, then, the Norman Conquest made a complete break in the continuity of the history of England. When the Londoners after the Battle of Styles accepted Duke William for their king, no doubt they thought of him as being much in the same position as the newly slain Harold had been; or at any rate such a king as Knut the Dane, who had also conquered England; and probably William himself thought no otherwise, but the event was quite different, for although Edward III. was not a feudal king, he was a brave, manly, masterful, and a great soldier in the modern sense of the word, but he had at his back his wealthy dukedoms of Normandy, which he had himself accumulated during the time of his predecessors, and as soon as Edward England lay before him, unorganised, yet stubbornly rebellious to him; its very organisational and want of a centre making it more difficult to deal with by merely running over it with an army levied for that purpose, and backed by a body of house-cars or guards, which would have been the method of a Scandinavian or native king in dealing with his rebellious subjects. Duke William's necessities and instincts led him to the formation of a very typical feudal system, a system which determined the future destiny of the country. What he did was to quarter upon England an army of feudal vassals drawn out from his obedient dukedoms, and to hand over to them the lordship of the land of England, as a feudal service in return for the military service which they had given him in the war against the English people.

Subsequently, it was under the rule of these foreign landlords that the people of England had to develop.

The development of the country as a Teutonic people was checked and turned aside by this event. Duke William brought, in fact, his Normandy into England, which was thereby changed from a Teutonic people (theod) with the old tribal customary law still in use among them, himself reduced to the position of an English feudal lord; and though in time she did grow into another England again, she missed for ever in her language, her literature, and her laws, the chance of developing into a great homogeneous Teutonic people insulated from foreign races. However, this step which Duke William was forced to take, further influenced the future of the country by creating the great order of baronage, and this in turn has had its influence in the making of much that of the struggle of the king with the baronage and the church. For William fixed the type of the successful English medieval king, of whom Henry II. and Edward I. were also notable examples. He was a Norman, with Norman manners and Norman habits, a mixture of Norman and English which resulted in the establishment of the English baronage. This is one of the most significant things in the history of the country. His baronage was his instrument, not of war against the English people, but of making a clearing in the dense thicket of ignorance and sectarian jealousies.

C. J. F.