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NOTES ON NEWS.

Our lesson, and a very valuable one, the authorities have been giving us by the recent contest. They have, so to say, preached us a practical sermon on the value of the vague something called "moral force." This time surely the "moral force" was on our side, and it was natural that many should have thought that the affair of Dock Street would be repeated, and that the Government, glad enough to harry and bludgeon a small band of poor unemployed voters men here and there, would draw back when the Radical clubs entered the arena. We, on this occasion, they did not draw back, and many people are astonished at it. But they must remember that it was convenient for the then Government to draw back at Dock Street, while it was inconvenient for the present Government to draw back at "Victoria." It is only "moral force" that can push Governments who have in their hands physical force.

The Government with their big majority in Parliament felt perfectly safe against any mere talk, even though Mr. Gladstone himself and the United (i) Liberal Party were the talkers; therefore they thought that the opportunity was good for striking a blow which should encourage their friends and cow their enemies, and so far from drawing back they have been acting as an "agent provocateur," and would have been only too glad if they could have had an opportunity for shooting as well as bludgeoning the people. They believe themselves safe behind their bludgeons and bayonets against any "moral force" that can be brought against them; and so they are until the "moral force" armed against them means a corresponding amount of physical force, until agitation is turned into demonstration, timidity into despair, and organisation grows out of necessity.

Meanwhile, there is nothing to discourage Socialists in all this; we have known our present physical weakness all along; and the action of the Government has at least shown us that the classes are afraid of something that are beginning to forecast the inevitable trouble which day or night, while slavery is breathing; that forecast will almost certainly as it grows lead us into a period of persecution, and that again to a general knowledge among the workers of what their aim is, all the threat of physical force (or let us say at once of force) which that knowledge will imply, will either make the oppressors waver, lose counsel and conduct, and so at last give way; or the oppression will become so unbearable that it will force the revolution to break all bounds and sweep it away.

A writer in the Daily News is sorely grieved at Sir C. Warren being called a "traitor," about his official, in a word have they to say and sets forth at length his amiable and humanitarian qualities. Surely this is either a day too late or too early. The ignorant Arabs who were slaughtered because their tribesmen slew the bicker Palmer may be forgotten, and at any rate they can tell no tales; but love about our kind-hearted friend on the 13th and the 29th of November, 1867! Really Sir C. Warren's love for humanity took a strange form on those days; and he yet forgot all that so clearly that we do not also remember that package of wage-slavery is breathing; that forecast will almost certainly as it grows lead us into a period of persecution, and that again to a general knowledge among the workers of what their aim is, all the threat of physical force (or let us say at once of force) which that knowledge will imply, will either make the oppressors waver, lose counsel and conduct, and so at last give way; or the oppression will become so unbearable that it will force the revolution to break all bounds and sweep it away.

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The police, as we know too well, are, to put it mildly, very much irritated against the streets, whether they are unemployed, or processions, or what-not short of respectability. Naturally irritated, say some people, since they have been hustled about from pillar to post, overworked, kept without their meals (except when fed by the shopkeepers and the Prince of Wales). Well, you see, since they are "naturally irritated," they can be depended upon. I was talking about these matters to the son of an old charlady the other day, and he said that in the '60s when the soldiers were kept at extra drill for some time before the Kensington Green meeting, the sequence were "naturally irritated" against the people. There are more ways than one of killing a cat.

The Liberal leaders are in a terrible fright of being involved in a contest against law and order. Harcourt, Morley, and others have been speaking about the official, and a word have they to say about the state of things in London. The Tories are not so reticent: they are naturally crowing over the victory of force over reason. The clever cartoon in Punch, which is really the Illustrated Times in a political sense, puts the point to Mr. Gladstone in an unanswerable way. Only be won't answer it, or indeed think of the matter as long as he thinks it can be safely disregarded from the political or vote-catching point of view.

The "unemployed" agitation has got as far as setting the setting on foot of a census of them; which to my mind does not seem very far; but if they themselves want it done, as it appears they do, all one can do is to hope that something, however little, for their benefit will come of it. But how shall a census be made of men (and women and children) working for the wretchedest of wages! The wages now being offered to men on the ship canal works, now beginning in Lancashire are 4/6d. an hour, and I hear that thousands of men are eager to accept the "reward of labour." There is employment for you! I want to know also if a man who is an artisan, a carpenter, cabinet-maker, weaver, or what not, is set to do navvy's work, whether he can properly be said to be "employed"? Once again, it means but one thing—out-door relief. This is what the Captains of Industry and their governing committees, parliament and the rest of it, have to offer to the people they lead. That is their way of organising industry.

It is curious to see the eagerness with which well-to-do people accept any scheme short of the one obvious remedy for dealing with the "socialist" business. You would think, to see the high spirits of some of them over this census business, that the men were by now not only numbered but also set to well-paid remunerative labour. Again the "beggar colonies" scheme, here called politely "human colonies," has been recently put on with a kind of greeted popularity in quarters. Mr. Herbert Mills set the ball a-rolling with his scheme, which was to be an imitation of the Dutch beggar colonies; and then there was an account of a similar scheme in work at Berlin, whereby people by dint of working eleven hours a-day and a strong dose of church to boot, all under strict discipline, were to earn a splendid livelihood of 6/6d. per diem. That such schemes of slavery can be received as "palitatives," that they are not received with universal horror and disgust, shows how unserious our condition is, and what a tremendous upheaval it will take to amend it.

The Liberty and Property Defence League cannot be congratulated on the result of the "big name" they got to lecture for them. Mr. Froude, almost of course, showed complete ignorance of Socialism and its aims, and quite of course of reaction, and in short his address was a queer performance for a man with a reputation. And yet he gave his friends a hint or two worth their remembrance, when he told them, e.g., that the rich had in a great measure the burden of preserving property, and that in all probability they would as a consequence temporarily lose their property. Some of their faces must have fallen at this temporary prospect. What Mr. Froude really meant was that liberty and private property are incompatible,—who shall say him nay?

W. M.

A great lady and seigneur of the ancien régime were speaking about what was likely to happen to a certain old rake, lately of their acquaintance, but whose life and debaucheries had been cut short with very little notice. "Is it to be regretted," said he, "that his Highness was not more careful in securing the good offices of the Church." "No doubt," said she; "but depend upon it, sir, God will think he is the victim of that consideration." Kindly people flatter themselves that such notions belong to a time that has passed away; they will, then, be shocked to hear that at the great Tory gathering at Oxford on November 23rd, Monseigneur Salis was said, when once in a way he spoke the truth, "One of my Ministry is worth all the eighty-six Irish M.P.'s." These are but brutal ways of stating what to the speakers is the truth. But they are shocking more for the underlying truth on which all such ideas are based, than for the mode of putting them forth. It is not true that one man is worth more than another, but it is true that the whole of our society is arranged on the assumption that one set of men, selected by the merest chance, is better than the rest. The ideas expressed in the "claims of capital," or the "rights of property," and similar ones, all assume that men who happen to be chained to certain material surroundings are more worthy than if they were free from such encumbrances. Those who hold such ideas do not hesitate any more than the great lady of the ancien régime to take God into partnership when they quote "Dieu et mon droit" against others.

C. J. F.