

Thank you D. J. Nicoll!

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NOTES ON NEWS.

THE press has of course busied itself over Mr. Gladstone's speech, and various meanings favourable to this or that hope in the present crisis have been drawn from it, with more or less ingenuity; which ingenuity, to say the truth, has not been less wasted than that which enables people to write the Lord's prayer on a threepenny piece. Any one of the guests at the dinner might have said, like Tennyson's Northern Farmer, "I thought he'd said what ought to have said, and I comed awa." Mr. Gladstone had to say something, and make some show of seeing through a grindstone, and giving those not gifted as himself the advantage of his vision. It was a matter of course that he should accomplish this feat with his usual skill in such exercises.

What his speech really amounted to was party defiance to the Tories; civility to the wavering Unionist Liberals; and a statement that he was in favour of Home Rule, and was prepared to make some concessions. Since all this had to be said, let those of us who have read his speech be glad that we have not got to do so again, and forget it.

Speaking, after all, will not change the position of affairs, which quite simply is this. The feeling for Home Rule is spreading among the English democracy; everybody is noting that; therefore the Unionist Liberals are in terror for their seats, and in terror at the prospect of eating their bold words. The Tories, who vaguely hoped that they wouldn't have to bring in a Coercion Bill, find they have got to do so, and know that it will undo them; and all English political parties are shuffling about from one foot to the other in an anguish of doubt, because they know that the land question must be dealt with by one party after the other, each of whom will make a helpless mess of it.

Needless to dwell long on the fact that all this is accompanied by rather more than the usual amount of conventional twaddle and lies to conceal the fact that the mighty British Empire and its glorious Constitution is being pushed against its will into what, considering its circumstances, are revolutionary measures.

The new Irish Secretary is beginning about as well as possible for the Nationalist cause. The arrest of Father Keller will answer its purpose as far as the Irish are concerned. The setting the seal of Peterloo on the police murder at Youghal by open approval of it, the threats of violence and "thorough"—all this will help to bind the English democracy to the Irish cause. Certainly Mr. Balfour is turning out the very man that the Parnellites would have picked out if they had had to choose.

W. M. O'Connell

In contravention of the Corporation byelaws, a man at Newcastle sent two children into the streets to sell matches. He was prosecuted, the magistrates thought the byelaws invalid, but "stated a case." The case was heard the other day in the Queen's Bench and the byelaws were declared invalid.

Whereupon our Individualist contemporary, *Jus*, raises a shout of delight, and says that the judge "is entitled to the love and gratitude of all little boys and girls."

Anything which tends towards freedom—of exploitation!—is hailed by Individualists as a boon. But the unhappy victims of such freedom? Who looks after their liberty?

About the end of last month, Tantia Bheel, the celebrated robber-chief of Central India, was reported to be on the war-path, and to be plundering right and left. This is a crude uncivilised way of acquiring the product of other men's labour, and the Government is therefore anxiously seeking him out in order to duly impress upon him the folly of his behaviour.

He could so much the more profitably employ his "superior ability" in business, and amass ill-gotten wealth "by way of trade"!

Yet Socialists may be pardoned for hesitating ere they write down Tantia Bheel beside the exploiting Bourgeois. There is at least some manliness left, even amid brutal violence, in the man who takes and gives hard blows, and stakes his life upon the game.

But in the Bourgeois who, entrenched behind his money-bags, from the misery and helplessness of others makes wealth flow to him, his coward skin quite safe the while, we are constrained to recognise the abstracted dehumanised power of capital alone.

The one depends upon a clear head and strong arm. The other upon the class-monopoly of the means of life—a monstrosity begotten of ignorance and greed.

H. H. Spaulding

More talk about extension of the punishment of flogging. The benevolent cleric Horsley indeed expressly included this in his *Pall-Mallian* scheme of improved prison discipline. Thus can the brutal instinct, even in parsonic minds, "abide so fierce and fell." That the advocates of organised torture can proclaim their views without a blush at the end of the nineteenth century is interesting to the Socialist. But in spite of our antipathy to judicial torture as part of a system, we admit that there are cases where it might be useful. For instance there are certain administrators of the law, chairmen of Quarter Sessions, and at least one ex-Home-Secretary upon whom twenty-five lashes with the "cat" might have a "deterrent" effect. There are some natures you can only appeal to through their skins. We promise these gentlemen that should the revolutionary tribunal of the future commune of London decree them some such punishment, we will not interfere with any of the sentimental arguments they so much deprecate.

E. B. Bax

SOCIALISM IN DENMARK IN 1886.

SOCIALISM was rather long in finding its way into Denmark, notwithstanding the close connexion between this country and Germany. It was not until 1871 that a real Socialistic movement arose, but it looked so trifling that at first it was rather disregarded, the red spectre might easily be exorcised. But the scattered seed came to a fine growth, new seed was disseminated, and the bourgeoisie became aware that its most dangerous enemy had been acclimatised in Denmark. A little newspaper, *Socialisten*, began to issue, and worked well to rouse the working men. As in all other countries, the International was outlawed in Denmark also, but instead of being suppressed Socialism by this even got a new lift.

On the 10th of May, 1874, the first number of the *Social Demokraten* appeared. The paper was a little daily, with but few subscribers. It soon got wind, however, and, notwithstanding the attacks of our adversaries, it succeeded in riding out the storm and clearing the most dangerous rocks and cliffs, so that on the 26th of July, 1885, it could issue a jubilee number with a map, showing the extension of Socialism in Denmark. In 1874, the paper had 3,300 subscribers; 26th of July, 1885, 20,000; now it has about 22,000 subscribers, and its size is augmented three-fold.

It was of the greatest importance for the working-men party to get political influence, and particularly to bring forth their demands in Parliament, and at last in 1884 it succeeded in getting two of the leaders, Holm and Hørdum, elected as members of the Folkething, and the honour thereof is due to Copenhagen.

The political situation here in Denmark:—Ministers governing in spite of Parliament through provisional laws and royal resolutions; the press of the opposition fettered in all ways; and a free word incurring the danger of strong punishments; has made it impossible to obtain anything for the working-men by way of legislation.

In respect of the economical situation the year 1886 began as it ended, with want of employment, and this want surpassed all former like experiences in extent, and made hunger a daily guest of thousands of our comrades. The summer brought a little better situation, but the want of employment did not cease completely, and when the rougher season returned misery seized her victims to a much larger extent even than in the beginning of the year. At least 12,000 men and women in Copenhagen are completely unemployed.

Of course both the political and the economical situation has in the past year had influence on the actions of the Social Democracy. The first thing that our party did in 1886 was to spread a summons for assistance to the unemployed, but out of this private assistance the party has tried to get help by way of politics.

At the end of 1885 the Folkething had voted a bill giving the unemployed direct assistance from the public exchequer, and a great many meetings about the country had declared their agreement with