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The Daily News is very severe on the deputation sent on the 29th October to the Board of Works, for what it called their "Jack Cade" behaviour there; but may there not be another side to that story? I believe that the deputation were met with that circumlocution-office-off-handness which is a standing insult to the citizen, and which everybody having business with an official body is sure to receive, as by personal experience can declare, unless he is known as a "person of influence." If that were the case, it is wonderful that men on such serious business as the trying to get work in order to prevent them from starving, should show some resentment at this supercilious bad in manners, not home, and as such bad manners are habitual and a part of what we pay for. The representatives of a vast body of starving men don't to my mind need forgiveness if they use the manner which brought face to face with the brazen wall of official impudence and unreason, which even Dickens' immortal humour failed to shake by a hair's-breadth.

The police have been spinning if not one of the longest, yet at least one of the stupidest of galley yarns on record about Clan-na-Gael conspirators and jubiles, and lodgings and swell hotels, and the Lord knows what. A simple governmental inquiry only under instructions and for the purpose of discrediting the Home Rule agitation. Stupid as it is, it will no doubt be an effective weapon as far as goes, that is, it will frighten some timid voters who take everything for gospel which they see in an official report. But, really, was it worth the wear and tear?

W. M.

IS LUXURY GOOD FOR TRADE?

Under this heading there has been a brief passage-arms in the correspondence columns of the Daily News, of which Mr. Balfour, Knight, Alderman, of the one part, and Mr. Sidney Webb, Professor of Political Economy, of the other part. "A happy combination of defects, natural and acquired," renders the worthy Alderman a fitting exponent of the time-honoured fallacy he set forth:

"Money spent in entertainment goes into the pockets of the working classes. . . . I say further that for every pound spent in entertainment another pound is spent on luxuries; that at least, doubly can the sum thus distributed in wages; therefore he who spends encourages and promotes expenditure that is the enemy of the working classes.

In a second letter he disposed of his opponent's reply in an off-hand fashion with great satisfaction to himself, and still further established his claims to bourgeois orthodoxy by sacrificing those to sense. His book 'Capital' is worth re-reading in full (but with a few words italicised):

"Always putting aside alone, which, being contrary to the laws of God and man, cannot be maintained, can there be a doubt that the answer to this question (i.e., is luxury good for trade?) is, no. There is no necessity in order to find mankind in employment? Are not all things beyond the requirements of food, clothing, and shelter more or less luxuries? No doubt we could all live on plain food and drink water, and would perhaps be healthier and happier than we are now, but in that case what would become of the millions who earn their living in the production and preparation of what we call beer and wine? We could all be dined in honor, what would become of those millions who are employed in the manufacture of other dress-goods—silk, satin, brocade, and hundreds of other elegant articles? And we might also be reduced to an equality (the Socialists' idea) and live in comfortable houses quite sufficient to all needs, save and except the luxury of food and drink; and those great industries which produce the luxuries of which we make wine and beer? "We could all be dined in honor, what would become of those millions connected with the trade which flourishes by the creation of large premises and also the decoration and furnishing thereof? Can it be doubted that gold and silver plate, jewellery, curiosities, and so on of other things in every-day use and consumption, are luxuries! Yet no one in their senses would purpose to abolish them, so as would simply mean destroying the living of the best and most intelligent mechanics on the face of the earth. Nor I pursue the subject further! Simply it is evident that the non-consumption of luxuries would mean the destruction of nearly the whole trade and industry of the human race.

The man who puts forward such a plea might lay claim to exceptional courage, were it not too evident how a political economist born of ignorance, "the colossal ignorance which drives the political economist to despair," as Mr. Webb calls it. The last-named put the whole argument so far as concerns the present system, very clearly and cleverly:

"Sir Henry Knight is apparently unaware even of the existence of a great body of work on the subject, and of the unphilosophical and unphilosophic truth on the subject on which he undertakes to enlighten the 'ignorant working classes.' The whole into which he has been placed is explained in the first few pages of every textbook on economics; yet even when his attention is called to it, he does not think it worth while to consult the most elementary prony, but denounced an unknown correspondent as an 'agit-