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NOTES ON NEWS.

The bourgeois press is very busy in making the least of the demonstrations of the unemployed in London and in telling us that the crowds who assemble to show themselves in the streets are composed largely of persons who would not work if they could. Now it may at once be admitted that there are such men among them, although the crowd is mostly composed of men only too anxious to work. But who makes these loafers loaf? That is the question. Everybody knows that when a manual worker has been long out of work he gets "soft." The terrible discouragement of having to look for work day after day with very slight prospect of finding it takes the heart out of him; and in time he loses all capacity of seeking for work, and is then the loafer whom false society has made, and whom she punishes for existing.

Also, trite as the observation is growing, one must really say that it ill befits a "society" that rewards some people so munificently for doing nothing, to insult and oppress the *poor* people who won't work to earn the semi-starvation wages which it offers them. Let us admit that it is a crime to live without producing, and accept the consequences that flow from that admission, to wit, that a society that will not allow men to work though they want to is the very essence of this criminality, and is of no good except to rebel against.

The police-onslaughts of Friday the 14th inst., and the following days, is of evil augury for the coming winter. They are to be, it seems, as ever, not the servants of the public, engaged in guarding peaceful citizens against accident, but the servants of a peevish and easily frightened minority, and the masters of all the rest of us whose arbitrary bidding we are to do under penalty of suffering immediate corporal violence, which as G. B. Shaw said at South Place, we may seek a remedy for *after* we have suffered it. Really if this is to go on we might as well live in Moscow—or Chicago. We might as well be Russian peasants—or American citizens.

The accompanying extract from the Chicago *Morning News*, shows how right the speakers were at the South Place meeting in their view that the prisoners were condemned not for their deeds but for their opinions:

"The address of A. R. Parsons, the condemned Anarchist, to 'the American people' is by no means unworthy of perusal. For the most part, it is quite as argumentative and dispassionate in tone as could be reasonably expected from a man who stands in the shadow of the gallows. We doubt not it will evoke sympathy from very many who are incapable of coping with the adroit reasoning of the author. Beyond the line covered by this special pleading, however, there remains the great, stubborn fact that Parsons cast his fortunes with the enemies of law and order; that the whole drift of his life during the two years which preceded the Haymarket horror was in the direction of anarchy; that his teachings, if they meant anything at all, were provocative of riot and murder. Such at least was the judgment of a jury of his peers. Such also was the judgment of the highest court of appeals. The law which Parsons sought to overthrow is rightly regarded as the great bulwark protecting the rights of the citizen. With scrupulous regard for his every equity the verdict has been made up. Nothing is likely now to alter his fate."

♣ A friend told me this morning that speaking to some American acquaintances on this subject they answered his expostulations by saying something like this: "Ah, but you forget that Most has published a most atrocious book against society." This is exactly the spirit of the Chicago trial. One man has written a book, so seven others are to be hanged for it. The American bourgeoisie are well known to be an inventive set of people; but surely this "short method of dealing with political opponents" is the cutest of all their inventions. Mr. Balfour had best learn from such passed masters in the art of suppression of free speech.

W. M.

At the Taghmon (county of Wexford) police-court on Friday twenty persons were prosecuted under the Crimes Act for using intimidating language. Sixteen were dismissed for want of sufficient evidence, but four—two young men, a lad of fourteen, and a girl named Lawlor—were convicted. The young men and the boy were sentenced to a fortnight's imprisonment with hard labour. The chairman said the girl should find bail for her future good behaviour, as they "did not like to cast a stigma on her character by sending her to prison." She replied that it was "no disgrace to go to gaol for Ireland," and refused to give bail.

Disgrace! She has placed her name on record as an example of

pluck and self-sacrifice, and one cannot wonder that her counsel called her "the best little girl in Ireland, and a credit to her country."

"The further anticipated failures on the Stock Exchange have come, and amid circumstances which very much disturbed the markets. One defaulter, liabilities over £60,000, is said to have absconded, having misappropriated moneys and securities. An old member of Lloyd's was forced to stop payment, with unpaid differences amounting to £60,000. These, and other two small failures in the House as well as one outside, led to forced sales and to the demoralisation of the markets."

All which simply refers to the "division of the spoil," and affects the workers only as showing them how much of what *they* have produced is played with by these gamblers. *Every penny of it is unpaid labour.*

From Sydney, New South Wales, we have received copies of the *Morning Herald*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Echo*, giving accounts of the foundation of the Socialist League there by former members of our own organisation. This is cheering news, more especially as the organisation starts with fair chances of success.

Only the last-named paper notices the League editorially, and that does so with mingled sneering and abuse. Well, our comrades are, no doubt, fully prepared for that kind of thing and will persevere in the great work they have undertaken.

Is not the insanity or worse of our present society shown up strongly in the tremendous fuss that has been made over whether a certain speech was or was not made by the Grand Duke Nicolas of Russia?

This man is no orator able to sway multitudes by his fervid speaking, or great thinker whose utterance upon a subject will change the thought of thousands. No! but he is a despot and the son of a despot, able to wield a gigantic force against whom he will and to waste millions of lives to sate his lust of conquest.

Mr. Courtney, M.P., said last week that the police at Mitchelstown "may have acted indiscreetly"! Mr. Speaker Peel's tuition has evidently borne fruit, and we may now expect to hear bludgeoning a cripple called a "gentle remonstrance," and dainty phrases found for every governmental villainy.

S.

POLICE LAW IN ENGLAND.

POLICE rule in England is extending, the power of the police is rapidly increasing. The police of London, like the police of Ireland, is an Imperial institution under Imperial control. The Royal Irish Constabulary are not under the control of the people of Ireland, and the Metropolitan police are independent of the people of the Metropolis. And even where the police are under the direction and control of the local authorities, the power of the police is growing, and their increasing influence is everywhere felt. At times we hear a great deal about Socialism being un-English and of Continental growth, but the Government are undoubtedly introducing Continental ideas as regards the supremacy of the police.

The police everywhere claim to be over and above the people; their supremacy is becoming a recognised fact. They are everywhere organised as a semi-military force, they are a kind of omnipresent body, not so much for the detection of crime as to overawe the people. They are organised and drilled as a semi-military force, and the higher officials belong to the military class; their training and their military appearance does not make them a terror to the well-known thief, and to a great extent disqualifies them from dealing with ordinary crime. Every street urchin knows the policeman's step.

"The Police and the People," "the Police and the Public," are now very familiar phrases. Their absolute supremacy in Ireland has long been recognized by both Liberals and Conservatives, and many people thought that while their supremacy was confined to Ireland there was not much to grumble at. But why should Great Britain escape? We hear a great deal about Ireland having the same institutions as England, if so, why not England have the same institutions as Ire-