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NOTES ON NEWS.

MR. JOHN BRIGHT is very anxious to extinguish all chances of open war between England and America. To many people it seems strange that he is not equally anxious to put an end to the war which has been so long going on between England and Ireland; or rather that the only way in which he would allow it to be done would be by crushing Ireland into sullen subjection to her slavery. This is strange to many, but not to Socialists, who understand that Mr. Bright's Internationalism is, and always has been, a very one-sided matter, as one-sided as his love of peace. The Internationalism of bourgeois interests is what he is enthusiastic for, and in that cause he would try to join all the nations in the world, ignoring the fact that each nation is composed of two other nations, the nation of the poor and the nation of the rich; and the peace that he would have between these two nations is just that which he would have England give to Ireland—the peace which the master is always willing to give to his submissive slave. Mr. John Bright is a thoroughly consistent person.

The miserable optimistic twaddle of Mr. Gladstone's Jubilee speech (what, another of them?), which would have disgraced a Sunday-school teacher, is sickening enough to read for those even who have thought of the condition of the workers without the knowledge that it is caused just as much and as little by "the infliction of the Providence of God" as the corn-laws; even when they don't know that the "follies of men" which produced the window-tax or the corn-laws, are just as much responsible for the "unemployed" of our present winters (of our summers, too, if well to-do people only knew it); even to such people there seems little occasion for an optimistic hymn.

Not much of a triumph for fifty years of reform are the results of all the progress told of to his henchmen by this Conservative gentleman who has been too busy with politics to follow the struggle between capital and labour which has been going on all the time. The time remembered and contrasted with our times by the model contented old workman that he spoke of, was of the darkest days which the workmen of this country have ever known; the country had just passed through a frightful war; the robber class had begun to use the new and terrible instruments of robbery, which had recently been invented, with the utmost recklessness, and without the checks which the governing classes were terrified into applying to them afterwards; and as a consequence of the unchecked competition which Mr. Gladstone regards as "providential" and opposes to "the follies of man," the whole working-class was miserable, starving, and rebellious.

Such a state of things could not last; it must either have come to a break-up or some improvement, and the improvement came through the conquering of the world-market by Great Britain, which produced such a prodigious amount of wealth for the country in general, that even the workers profited by it and became "contented"; since the contrast between their present and the immediate past was really considerable, and their past misery so great, that they felt the same kind of happiness which the tortured man does when he is allowed some little rest. Breathing-time was thus gained for the two combatants, Capital and Labour, and the proprietary classes on their side began to see the necessity of palliation if the game were to last, and hence all those reforms of which Mr. Gladstone boasts.

But these reforms were not the cause of the "prosperity" of the last forty years, but the prosperity was the cause of the legislation. The governing classes were frightened at first, careless afterwards since they were so rich. Like the pirates in Defoe, who had fought like devils when they were poor, they did not care to show fight when they had such a glorious cargo aboard.

Thus we came to the period of the advance of wealth "by leaps and bounds," which made Mr. Gladstone so joyous a little time ago; and the question one would think even for a politician to study is not so much whence we have come, as where we are now, and whither we are going. Would not the story of the last seven years furnish Mr. Gladstone with some thoughts on that point? It needs no man risen from the dead, and no half-dead old man to teach him something if he will contrast his "leaps and bounds" year with this present Jubilee year and its blessings.

At any rate, very little consideration will teach him that the nation (of the rich) came out unscathed from the disorder of the first years of the great machine-industry revolution, because of the expansion of its profitable trade, which was then so huge that most people could see no end to it. They can now both see and feel the end to it. That ally to the exploitation of labour by the capitalists is dead. Prosperity can indeed be regained, and go on once more by leaps and bounds; but only on terms which Mr. Gladstone has not even thought of, viz., that the workers should employ themselves, or in other words, form a new society in which monopoly would be not a crime but an impossibility.

What does Mr. Gladstone, and the middle classes which he leads, think of the "propriety" which forces people to accept the position of tramcar drivers and conductors, or servants in their yards under such conditions of slavery, and such insulting and degrading regulations that one would think that nobody but those in the very last stage of destitution would accept such an occupation? And yet we are told that free citizens of our free and improved country crowd into it, partly because it is a respectable occupation! Still more respectable, and as complete in slavery and insult, is the position of assistant in the establishment of the Universal Provider; and for this position it is necessary to share the blessings of education, and, in fact, to belong in some sense to that triumphant middle class which has improved the world into its present condition. Isn't it worth while for that class itself to look about it, and notice that it too is making a new proletariat out of itself, which at its worst degradation is worse than the fringe of labour deduced from the artisan and labouring class.

W. M.

The "Incorporated Society of Mean Men," of which Mark Twain once wrote, has apparently taken up its abode in England. Mr. Halley Stewart, M.P., speaking recently in Hunts, was reported to have said he had seen at one time 415 boys, girls, and women passing the night in Trafalgar-square without even a sack to hide their nakedness. This statement having become known in his own division, an empty common sack was subscribed for by some of his constituents, and forwarded by Parcels Post to the House of Commons. On the reverse side of the address was a printed extract from the speech in question by Mr. Stewart, and on the address side was the following: "A penny subscription sack from some of his constituents to hide the nakedness of Trafalgar-square"

The small-souled, sneaking curs who can find "fun" in deriding the poverty and distress of the unhappy waifs whom no roof may cover but the sky, are indescribable from lack of language that will convey their despicable character. They are of the type that, well fed and cared for, gloat over the misery of others for amusement and take delight in torture; who trip up blind cripples and broil cats alive.

"Why are ninety-nine out of a hundred people to be annoyed and inconvenienced in order that the infinitesimal residuum may lie snug in the pride of exclusiveness and to the glory of feudality?"

The above question closes a leading article in the *Daily Telegraph* of Aug. 31. It is only asked about the gates and barriers that close certain London streets. Of course we can answer it, push it further, and answer it again; but we advise our "esteemed contemporary" not to do so if it would retain the circulation it boasts of. Truth-speaking is perilous. A successful "organ of public opinion" gets on by suppressing half the truth and diluting the other, with an imaginative embellishment to finish off with.

We are confident that our advice will be taken!

In the *Pall Mall* of the 2nd inst. was recorded one of the most awful cases of utter misery it has ever been my lot to read of. The sickening details were enough, one would fancy, to shake the most thoughtless from their apathy. On the same day were recorded brilliant receptions and the "heavy bags" of wealthy sportsmen. Yet, with the two extremes of our miserable "society" thus given saliently before their eyes, there are men who placidly ignore the evil, and speak of the "mad restlessness" of those who seek a remedy.

Can it be marvelled at, then, if haply some of them, so speaking, be writ down dishonest or heartless? From the recreant Iconoclast to the hereditary image-keeper there is not one who may not be honest