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NOTES ON NEWS.

MR. MATTHEWS, in giving a well-deserved tribute to Sir Charles Warren for acting up to the heart's desire of a Coercionist, denied that the police had lost their popularity with the great mass of the people. That may well be, as it is not easy to lose that which one has never had; but we may safely assert in Mr. Matthews' teeth that there are many thousands of people who used to think nothing about the police, or looked on them as a necessary useful machine, who now look upon them with active detestation. Many a worthy citizen has had his love for law-'n'-order shaken by the "admirable courage" of Sir Charles Warren; indeed, that is the definite gain that we have got from Trafalgar Square.

The Government have driven the *Times* Protection Bill (as the *Daily News* happily calls it) through in the lump, and have thereby shown us once more, if we needed another example, how tremendously powerful the rich men who govern society are, and in what a false position those men put themselves who attack some of the consequences of this tyranny, while they are not prepared to attack the tyranny itself. This wretched Bill provides a council of three to report on the hopes and necessities of the Irish, which everybody already knows all about, with the intention of swaying public opinion to the stark reactionist side again. Of course, the three will look at any evidence which is brought before them from the purely conventional point of view. It can only be hoped that the result of the humbug will be to push the Irish Question on a stage further by exasperating both sides a little more, and making the country feel more than it now does the idiotic dead-lock which greed and jingoism have got us into.

☞ I must say that our comrade Bax's appeal to us to consider the Question of Africa is very timely. Here we have now the Pope taking the matter up, and urging the exploiters on to their task, and a Cardinal preaching on the subject to a most respectable audience anent it; an audience who were naturally, whatever their religious differences might be, most lovingly unanimous on this point. One paper says that this task of civilising Africa is well worthy of Modern Christianity. Surely that is undeniable. Tom Turnpenny never had a better job offered to him; 20 per cent. and the Gospel (or a thousand per cent. for what I know) are tempting indeed. To save your soul and your business at one stroke is certainly making the best of two worlds.

☞ It is true that some simple people might say: Why are the English philanthropists and the Italian pietists so anxious about the interior of Africa, when the interior of London is so handy to them? Would it not be easier to deal with wage-slavery at home than chattel-slavery abroad? Would not a resolute attempt to get rid of that do away with far more misery than the abolition of the slave-trade in Africa? Is it not pretty certain that the extinction of wage-slavery would render all forms of slavery unprofitable, and therefore cut them up by the roots?

☞ Well, these are simple questions! The philanthropists, Italian and English, Catholic and Protestant, are anxious about the African chattel-slavery just because they are anxious about the English and Italian wage-slavery—that is, they are anxious that it should continue without much friction, and allow them to go on living (as an Arab slave-dealer does) on other people's misery. It is true some of them who are able with a mighty effort to bring their minds to bear upon the condition of the Interior of London, and who are not more ill-natured than other people, are shocked at the consequences of wage-slavery. But then nature will not allow us to grieve too much over other people's misery (not even the best of us) if we cannot remedy it; and since these capitalist-philanthropists are forced to see that the only remedy involves the loss of their position of idle superiority, there is to them no remedy, and they soon cease to grieve or to think of the unhappiness of London.

☞ Flatly it is much easier to deal with the African slavery than with that of London; always so long as you are prepared to make wage-slavery and its misery take the place of chattel-slavery and its misery

in Africa, as it has done in Europe, and in the process to destroy whatever compensatory pleasure exists in the ruder form of servitude. The Cardinal drew a moving picture of the sufferings of the human merchandize in transit, and we have got that well into our minds now. But how can we who live comfortably ever get into our minds the multitudinous suffering, the forms of which are too numerous to reckon up, of the millions at home whom our philanthropists cannot deliver from their slavery? Or how many new forms of suffering, of which we at home should hear nothing, would not the importation of wage-slavery into barbarous countries create?

☞ To put this matter in the fairest way possible—the present rulers of society are bound by their position to seek for new markets in order to work off the stock of wares which they go on producing by means of partly unpaid labour; they *must* do this whatever fresh suffering the process entails on the barbarous population they civilise, or the civilised population which they degrade far below barbarism. In the barbarism which they destroy they can only supplant one form of slavery by another; and in the civilisation which they uphold they are powerless to stem the flood of misery. In all this there is one element of good, that their necessities are leading gradually but swiftly to the extinction of the system which has produced all the misery and incapacity.

Mr. Balfour has further endeared himself to his countrymen and the world at large, by laughing in his seat in Parliament when he was questioned about a poor man who went mad in Limerick jail. No objugatory words could add to the disgrace which the mere statement of this fact involves. This person afterwards said that Kennedy was treated with "great kindness." Pray, was that *before* he went mad or *afterwards*? We Socialists know pretty well what the "kindness" of English prisons is, and the public have lately heard something of the "kindness" of Irish ones. So the question is worth asking.

Mr. Wilberforce Bryant, in addressing the shareholders of his very prosperous and no doubt highly philanthropic concern, has really gone beyond the license which good-natured people are apt to allow to persons driven into a corner. As to his figures and explanations we know that every statement made can be figured and explained away, while the fact of dreary life-long torment, falsely called work, and something more than *semi*-starvation still remains, since indeed, as our comrade *Freedom* remarks, averages don't fill people's bellies. Let all that pass until Mr. Bryant chooses to explain why the 15 per cent. dividend lately declared does not go to the workers whose labour has earned it. And again, Mr. Bryant's coarse abuse of Mrs. Besant and Herbert Burrows is not difficult to bear, and no doubt our comrades look upon it as a certificate of honour, as showing that they at least have done something.

But the accusation which Mr. Bryant made against the Trades' Council, of admitting that the girls had nothing to complain of while at the same time they were supporting the strike, was a serious one; as, if it had been true, they must have been stigmatised as acting with treachery towards the workers who had trusted them, to say nothing about their humbugging the general public. Happily, in her letter to the *Pall Mall* of August 3rd, Mrs. Besant disposes of this falsehood, and Mr. Bryant must finally be set down as a kind of champion of shabbiness, really a prize animal of his kind. Meantime, there are the match-girls, and many thousands like them, not to be disposed of so easily as Mr. Bryant! How long will it last? Can anything to come be quite as bad as our present "Society"? W. M.

Hopwood, Q.C., Recorder, in charging the grand jury at the Liverpool Quarter Sessions, entered into a long defence of his lenient sentences, which have been the subject of considerable comment. "Long sentences were cruel to the prisoner and injurious to the community. The theory that long sentences would afford time for reflection, education, and reform had not worked successfully. They only made the criminal classes more violent and cruel and a source of large and unnecessary expense to the taxpayers."