

NOTES ON NEWS.

THE Suakim business is growing, and England's hired slaughterers are lending a hand in getting rid of the Dervishes, of whose doings as much as possible has been made in order to give a fresh opportunity for pushing the fortunes of the market-mongers, and the persistent hammering at the story of this stupendous siege after the manner of the tremendous adventures of Major Geoghegan, appears likely to produce its fruits in some way or other. Only since the country is clearly not very anxious for any more "glory" in the Soudan, the gist of the plan now is to keep up Suakim as a running sore, and to push traders up the country so as to involve us in a tangle which shall end at last in a new expedition for the smashing of the Mahdi. The plan is not very new or ingenious, but it is likely to succeed.

Mr. Henry James, the American novelist, has been writing an ingenious paper on the impression made by London on his feelings; but as a matter of course, his view of the monstrosity is taken from the stand-point of the superior middle-class person, who looks upon the working-classes as an useful machine, and, having no experience of their life, has not imagination enough to realise the fact that the said machine is composed of millions of men, women, and children who are living in misery; that is to say, they are always undergoing torments, the fear of undergoing which would make many a "refined" person kill himself rather than submit to them. And to these torments they must get used, as the phrase goes; that is to say, hopeless suffering must be the element in which they live. It is this from which is born the "dreadful delight" on which clever but dull Mr. James expatiates so ingeniously. Does he ever ask himself what is likely to be the final price which his class, who have created this Hell, will have to pay for it?

I should like a view of London from a quite different kind of man from the clever historian of the deadliest corruption of society, the laureat of the flirts, sneaks, and empty fools of which that society is mostly composed, and into whose hearts (?) he can see so clearly. I should like the impressions of London given by one who had been under its sharp-toothed harrow.

But he should not be a man born and bred in the slums, nor even "used" to them, nor a man born poor anywhere, but someone who once lived in a pleasant place with hope beside him. From him I should like a true tale of the City of Dreadful Delight. If we could but have some new Defoe with the added bitterness bred of the tremendous growth of the burden of hideous tyranny to tell us such a tale! Or it may be rather that no words could tell it.

Besides, if it were attempted it would be brought into Court and judged by a jury of comfortable and respectable men, and a luxuriously-living judge, and be condemned as filthy literature, horribly indecent—in short, shocking, and its author would but add one fresh note to the song of suffering, which if it is good for nothing else, is good enough to tickle the ears of superior persons, more hypocritical and less naïve than the ogre in the Eastern story, who, when his captives awaiting the spit were lamenting and moaning, said: "Hark how sweetly my nightingales are singing!" W. M.

Some simple-minded worshipper of the cheap idols of the hour was evidently made uneasy by my note of a few weeks back about the Harrisons, and has written to the president-elect to know if it is really all a pious fraud for campaign purposes his pretending to be descended from Harrison, the regicide. As if a tricky politician ever acknowledges his little games!

The ancestors of the president-elect were in Virginia loudly proclaiming their sycophantish loyalty to the king at a time when Thomas Harrison, the regicide, was at school. As a matter of fact, such time-serving tools of "property" thieves as Ben Harrison know nothing about the man. If they did, they would scoff at him and applaud his murder, as they scoff at, and applaud the murder of, his apostles to-day, such as August Spies and Albert Parsons. They do not even know Thomas Harrison's name. It is generally given wrongly in so-called histories and dictionaries.

The last grand scene at Charing Cross on October 14, 1660, reminds us forcibly of the present time. The London mob, as usual with all mobs, was jeering the prophet and applauding the work of the dissolute rascals just installed at Whitehall. "How about the 'grand old cause' now?" yelled one smug rascal. "I go to seal it with my blood," calmly replied Harrison, and ascended the stairway.

So to-day our friend the editor of the *Star* strokes his "fair round belly with good capon lined," and cries, See what great and mighty prophets I and Mr. George and the rest of us are. How the mob cheer us and elect us to office! What a poor little affair the *Commonweal* is! *Nous verrons, says the Frenchman; nous verrons.*

If he looks at the poem in another column he will find:—

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside —

S.

WE SHALL BE FREE.

ERNEST JONES.

BASE oppressors, leave your slumbers
Listen to a nation's cry:
Hark, united countless numbers
Swell the peal of agony.
Lo, from Britain's sons and daughters,
In the depths of misery,
Like the sound of many waters,
Comes the voice, "We shall be free!"

Winds and waves the tidings carry;
Spirits, in your stormy car,
Winged with lightning, do not tarry,
Spread the news to lands afar.
Tell them, sound the thrilling story
Louder than the thunder, go,
That a people, ripe for glory,
Are determined to be free.

By our own, our children's charter,
By the fire within our veins,
By each truth-attesting martyr,
By their sighs, their groans, their pains,
By our right by nature given,
By our love of liberty,
We proclaim before high heaven
That we must, we shall, be free.

Tyrants, quail, the dawn is breaking,
Dawn of Freedom's glorious day;
Despots on their thrones are quaking,
Tyrants' bands are giving way.
Kingcraft, priestcraft, black oppression
Cannot bear our scrutiny;
We have learnt the startling lesson
That we must, we shall, be free!

REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR.

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 22, 1888.

16	Sun.	1687. Sir W. Petty died. 1689. Bill of Rights passed.
17	Mon.	1792. P. W. Duffin and T. Lloyd tried for seditious libel. 1830. Bolivar, liberator of Columbia, died. 1875. Violent Bread-riots in Montreal. 1881. Lewis H. Morgan died. 1883. O'Donnell, executioner of Carey, hung in Newgate.
18	Tues.	1773. Tea-riots at Boston. 1792. Paine found guilty of libel in 'Rights of Man.' 1817. W. Hone tried for publishing a parody on Wilkes' 'Catechism of a Ministerial Member.' 1876. Famous demonstration in the Kazan Place, St. Petersburg, where people were openly invited to strive for freedom and fatherland, brutally dispersed by the police. 1887. Funeral of Linnell.
19	Wed.	1817. W. Hone tried for publishing a seditious parody on the Litany. 1877. Riots at Montreal. 1879. Hanged at Odessa: V. Malinska, L. Maudsusi, J. J. Drobianky.
20	Thur.	1789. Richard Oastler born at Leeds. 1817. Trial of W. Hone for publishing a seditious parody of the Athanasian Creed.
21	Fri.	1795. Trial of James Weldon for high treason. 1830. Trial of Prince Polignac. 1883. Ten dynamitards sentenced at Glasgow.
22	Sat.	1620. Landing of the "Pilgrim Fathers." 1797. Trial of Peter Finerty for seditious libel. 1881. "Ghost of the Czar" seen in Kazan Cathedral. 1884. Sentences on Reinsdorf, etc., at Leipzig.

Simon Bolivar.—The great smasher of the Spanish empire in South America was an example of how quickly all men are liable to outlive their usefulness. Although it was but forty-seven years from his birth at Caracas in 1783 to his death on the Spanish Main in 1830, he had much better have died many years before for his own fame and for humanity. Imbued in his youth with personal experiences of the French Revolution, being educated in Paris, he was a daring apostle of liberty so long as the mere question of Spanish domination was concerned; but, abolishing this, he wished to introduce the "constitutional" slavery of the so-called "United States of America," where he and his fellow oligarchs could reign supreme, and practice tyranny and spout liberty simultaneously. But the climatic and racial characteristics of the South American continent were not favourable, and Bolivar was practically fleeing for his life to England, chosen home of all "constitutional" clap-trap, when he died.—L. W.

Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers.—On the 11th of December, 1621, or the 21st when accommodated to our present reckoning, the passengers on the good little ship "Mayflower" landed at what is now called Plymouth in New England, a waste to this day of swamp and rocks and barren woods. This was the actual foundation of those twin overgrown monsters of to-day, the British Empire and the United States of America. The previous settlements in the East Indies and Virginia were only traders' outposts, weak from their inherent formation. The Plymouth colony was the mother of the English communal settlements, self-contained, self-governing, and self-reliant, which to-day circle the globe, and which are, in all their lasting elements, united to-day in demolishing all semblance of centralised authority such as are at the bottom of all "unionist" and imperialist intrigues.—L. W.

It is no doubt a somewhat low ideal of human society which bases the respect paid to the rights of individuals or of classes, solely upon their ability to defend themselves when attacked or menaced; but in the present stage of civilisation, when combat seems to be the normal law of existence, it is simply suicidal for any class to trust to the benevolence and good feeling of its neighbours. A class or a nation which is not in a position to injure those who injure it, and that right speedily, is a class that will be trampled on.—*The Link.*