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NOTES ON NEWS.

THE news from the Soudan is somewhat portentous, if, as seems pretty certain, Stanley as well as Emin Bey is in the hands of the Madhi. It is in any case satisfactory that Stanley's expedition has fallen through; it gives us breathing-space, at any rate. Also as a matter of course the Soudanese are in a better position, for the present, for their possession of these important hostages. But on the other hand the danger of these "pioneers of civilisation" (once called pirates) will be worked by the market-mongers and Christianity-shovers for all that it is worth, and the difficulties in the way of having a small half-responsibility expedition in the Soudan will tend to push us into a big affair in which we shall be fully responsible, and in which it would be almost too good to hope for serious defeat.

Mr. Page Hopps' "Radicals' Creed," as printed in the *Pall Mall*, is as lamentable a piece of feebleness as a well-meaning person ever produced: the opening sentence of it convicts him at once of incapacity of understanding the whole social question. Says he: "It is always foolish and wicked to set class against class, but the time has come for a resolute forward movement in favour of the toilers of our streets and fields." Indeed the time *has* come, and long ago; nor for such a movement has the time ever failed. But pray, how can "a resolute forward movement" on behalf of the toilers take place without its finding itself at once face to face with a class which says, "Thus far and no further; we have won our position by a long struggle and have overthrown our masters; but now *we* are the masters. Your resolute forward movement must stop, unless it can go forward over us."

Will Radicals of Mr. Page Hopps' kind *never* learn that whatever is done to raise the condition of the "poor" *must* be done at the expense of the rich; since the latter are only rich because the poor make them so by allowing themselves to be compelled into poverty? To waste their labour for the rich, and to be paid for their wasted labour with leave to live to waste their labour, this is what they are compelled to do. This is a fact, and there is no evading it. Let the "Radical" read his Adam Smith, and see it stated there in plain terms before the days when the modern social revolution was thought of and when there was no danger in stating it.

Who or what sets class against class? The whole evolution of society. That is, the existence of the classes. That is indeed a foolish and wicked thing, and since we now see that we can make an end of it, let us make an end of it at once. Here is a wall which hinders us from the use of a fair garden: there is the hindrance, and it is caused by the wall; which is there, whether we shut our eyes to it or not. Nor shall we be any more inside the garden because we turn round and dig in a few potatoes outside it, and pretend there is no wall between us and the garden, and that we don't want to get in if we could. Moral—down with the wall! even if it is necessary to say plainly that it exists. More of the Radicals' Creed another time.

Mr. Arthur Arnold takes the trouble to attack Mr. George, over whom he, as a defender of capitalism, could win an easy victory, if he had taken the trouble to understand what the land monopoly really signifies, and how impossible it is to separate it from monopoly of the other means of production; but such a victory would not be a victory for the champion of "free land," but for the Socialist. Mr. Arnold tells us pretty plainly what his aim is when he says: "Here, alas! the monopoly of the land is neither great nor wide nor deep; it is only narrow; I trust we shall make it great and wide and deep." Just so; Mr. Arnold's aim, like that of many others whose instinct rather than their reason drives them to seek it, is the perpetuation of inequality—*i.e.*, the misery of the many, by means of the widening of the basis of robbery. He thinks (or feels), and rightly, that the more people you can get interested in the maintenance of oppression, the safer that oppression will be from the attacks of the disinherited. Plunder by all means, but don't let the few keep the plunder to themselves: if many share the plunder they will form a stout body of men who will be as firm in their opinion that "the abolition of the monopoly is impossible" as the slave-owners of Aristotle's time were as to *their* monopoly.

Says Mr. Arnold, something or other "would be cruelly unjust to the working-classes, and would impoverish them by enhancing the value of foreign investments." How a labouring man on 15s. a-week can be impoverished by a rise in prices in foreign investments, is surely beyond the ken of anybody but a very wise financier—or a very great fool.

Mr. Arnold makes a curious quotation from J. S. Mill: "'The monopoly of land,' says Mr. Mill, in words which no accurate thinker can repudiate, 'is a natural monopoly . . . which cannot be prevented from existing.'" Well, I cannot, I fear, claim to be an accurate thinker, but I am in the habit of weighing the value of language, and I should say that a man who would use such a phrase as "natural monopoly" might presently talk about "dry water" without astonishing us much. To such a man I should deny the title of an "accurate thinker," were he Mr. Mill, or the Pope, or even Mr. Bradlaugh.

In plain words a monopoly can be maintained as long as the monopolists have fraud and force enough to hoodwink the most of men and bully the rest; failing that sufficiency of fraud and force, it is scattered to the winds.

But will Mr. Arnold, or any other Free Land Leaguer, tell us *why* the abolition of the monopoly of land (or say the means of production generally) is impossible? He might as well say that it is impossible for a man to touch his toe with his hand. It is impossible as long as his hand is tied behind his back.

Mr. Morley has been making what is conventionally called a "great" speech in Clerkenwell. To judge by the reports and their many columns, it was at least a big speech; but there was in it little or nothing to note. Leasehold enfranchisement was the chief part of the song; and it is to be hoped that even advanced Radicals are not blind enough to see it as, what Mr. Morley half hinted he considered it, a step to the abolition of the land-monopoly. A measure to increase the number of landlords is about all that its supporters can claim it to be. But, as a matter of fact, it means merely aggrandising the capitalist, big or little, at the expense of the land-owner; and it is only meant to stop people's mouths, a make-believe of energy on the part of the "Great Liberal Party."

Mr. Morley put before Liberals an ideal quoted from Shakespeare: "I earn that I eat: I get that I wear: owe no man hate: envy no man's happiness; glad of other men's good." Very pretty sentiments, but to whom are they addressed? To the workers? Well they certainly earn what they eat and get that they wear, but also what other people eat and wear. To the possessing classes? well, when they can say that with truth it will be a changed world indeed. For they would be both naked and hungry if they only ate and wore what they earned; and if they were glad of other people's good, how about the Soudan, and Imperial Federation, and the whole disgusting war of the market, and oppression of that great tyranny the British Empire?

The *Star* has been doing a little bit of canonisation of Mr. Brunner as the worker's friend, which under all the circumstances it was bound to do, for where would the *Star* have been without Mr. Brunner, or rather without Mr. Brunner's money? But Mr. Brunner is a Gladstonian, so the *Evening News*, which is no doubt quite prepared to canonise a Tory or Unionist employer of labour, has taken the part of the Devil's Advocate, and has taken pains to show that Mr. Brunner is just about as good as might be expected from his position, *i.e.*, a man belonging to a class which compel other men to keep them gratis against their will, and competing (*i.e.*, fighting) with other members of his class for the biggest share he can get of this plunder. The motto of the *Star* is, "a Gladstonian can do no wrong even if he is one of our owners," and the *Evening News* has done some service to us (unwittingly) by attacking this "eternal truth" or infernal lie. Let the *Star* do as much for the *Evening News* another time, and so do honour to an ancient proverb.

W. M.

In reference to what I have said about the new President of the United States and his descent from the great regicide, a genealogical friend sends me the following:—

"It seems that the new unco' guid President (who never so much as