NOTES ON NEWS.

There is plenty of talk at present on the revival of trade which will bring back "prosperity" and make the trade men, as usual, the envy of the rest of the world, not only because of the rich harvest of money which the trade men are sowing in the fields of finance, but also because of the fact that the trade men are actually making a profit on their goods. The trade men are thus in a position to lend money at interest, and thus to make a profit on the money which they lend. In this way, the trade men are able to accumulate wealth, and thus to become the dominant class in society.

"Concerning food products, it is satisfactory to find in Beboehm's corn-trade list the remark that a return of firmness is expected in the trade, accompanied by some improvement in the prices." (Note: "improvement" means rise in price; good luck to the seller, ill-luck to the buyer.) In the wheat market there has been some improvement in the prices, based in part on a reduced estimate of the wheat crop, partly on the formation of syndicates for the rise in the market in Europe and America, and partly on Mr. Miller's "rigging." In other words, it appears that short crops in Brazil, Java, and elsewhere have so raised the price as to check consumption, and a further rise is due. In the tea the competition of Indian growths has prevented the more distant rise in prices which might have ensued upon the poor quality of the China leaf during the season. In tobacco the crop in the United States promises to be a fraction of the average, and prices have distinctly risen."

"Short crops and high prices" are still the same. There is nothing new in this. But new are the results of the people's reaction to the situation. The people are not satisfied with the high prices. They demand that the wealthy should be taxed to alleviate the distress of the poor. They demand that the government should intervene to prevent the exploitation of the people by the wealthy. They demand that the government should provide for the welfare of the people. They demand that the government should provide for the future of the people. They demand that the government should provide for the education of the people. They demand that the government should provide for the health of the people. They demand that the government should provide for the safety of the people. They demand that the government should provide for the prosperity of the people.

"How often the blessings of the common people are digested in our ears as a reason for the workers accepting their slavery quietly! But now it seems that we are to rejoice in the rise in prices. May a man ask which of the two is the blessing, since both are scarcely to be had?"

If Mr. Froude had not lately been taking up the cudgels against Socialism we might have looked upon him as a possible convert, judging from the account of his dispositions against the commercial system and its principles. He has lately written: "If I should be asked whether I believe in Socialism or in the Social system of England as it now exists, I should answer, as a Christian, that I do not believe in Socialism, but I do believe in the Social system of England as it now exists."

Yet it is somewhat doubtful to my mind whether the paternal government, the decease of Mr. Froude, and the hierarchial authority founded on status which was the fall development of feudal society, I rather suspect his hobby to be a thorough good rattle bureaucracy of the "superior persons," not yet realised in history, and now for the impossible of realisation. Much as we suffer under the present shabby tyranny of the Party of Contract, we must admit that it is something that it has destroyed the holiness of the superior person, and forces him, if he is to be something, simply to exercise his talents in maintaining the party."

The whole power of the British Empire. The sooner of philistinism and the vulgar middle-classes has to throw in his lot with the thing he loathes and a defender of sweating, or his refinement will find no great market for it.

We can bear the tyranny of contract the better because, unlike Mr. Froude, we know that it is not going to lead to a mere exaggeration of all its stupidities in the minister, but a contradiction of the system that produces them. It will lead us rather to a condition of life the very struggle for which will be fertile of the heroisms which Mr. Froude regrets, and which when realised will give every opportunity to the "superior person" for exercising the talents he may really possess, while it denies him opportunity for the practice of the tendency to imbibe dotting which not uncommonly goes with his better qualities.

Lord Salisbury on the stump again! He has been playing the reformed politician to Mr. Gladstone, but in part his speech at Liverpool has a look of definite anti-Socialism worth noting. He begins by pointing out to the present signs of "prosperity," and makes this remarkable admission: "In this country and in Ireland what we really need to solve the difficulties—to undo and end the many insurmountable (l) troubles—is one touch of the magic wand of prosperity." In other words, that statesmanship has nothing to do with those things which make for the prosperity of the people. We need not dispute with Lord Salisbury that statesmen are useless.

Another point on which we can agree with his lordship is that "Our principles with respect to property are not the same as when this depression commenced." That is, of course, true enough; nor can it be denied that if the new wave of "prosperity" should reach far enough; if the dogs do get any of it. We cannot, good while it lasts, but in the nature of things it cannot last long; suppose the most sanguine expectations of the traders realised, what does that mean? Disgust the preparation for a deeper depression on a wider scale than the last.

When a wave of prosperity comes on, is firmly seated on the content of the great mass of the middle-class, and can afford to scoff at all the miseries that lie below it. We cannot, good while it lasts, but in the nature of things it cannot last long; suppose the most sanguine expectations of the traders realised, what does that mean? Disgust the preparation for a deeper depression on a wider scale than the last. But the working-class who have made the capital and machinery which enables them to work, and has then to pay for leave to use it to a man who cannot use it, but who—has got it? His lordship's boldness can only be explained by his thinking he was speaking to fools—as he was.

Nothing can excuse, however, his dastardliness and snobbishness in leading cheers and laughter, from the despisable nobles who formed his audience, directed against the persons he has put in prison. There are degrees in baseness, but surely the superlative degree is jeering at prisoners, at men whom you have made helpless by your brute force."

Lord Salisbury finished by hints at the necessity of compounding in order to sustain the alliance with the Conservatives Whigs; and by promising not to go out of office for a small defect—in fact, not till he was force to. In brief, the meaning of his speech was a check at the Tory good-luck of a revival in trade coming to help the sick job; and of the bad luck of the English man, who has made the capital and machinery which enables him to work, and has then to pay for leave to use it to a man who cannot use it, but who—has got it? His lordship's boldness can only be explained by his thinking he was speaking to fools—as he was.