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NOTES ON NEWS.

The defeat of the Government over the police-managing clauses was not a great matter in itself, as it might have been if the whole bill was anything else but a sham; neither is it by itself of much moment in the game of Ins and Outs: but taken with other matters it becomes a sign that the pendulum is swinging again towards the Gladstonian section of the Whigs.

Those gentlemen have a special opportunity now afforded them by the confirmation of the ferocious sentence on Mr. Dillon. They have been raising a great outcry on the illegality of this sentence. That would be a matter of importance if law were what it professes to be, a protection to peaceable citizens against violence and wrong-doing; but since it is in fact nothing but a machine for the support of the privilege of successful persons, the legality or illegality of an act of the executive is by itself not worth considering, since an executive which cannot find law enough to put down any act of rebellion is not worth its salt. If the force at its command is overwhelming, its acts will in any case be legal; if there is a general feeling that its acts are illegal, that means that its power is wavering. Mr. Dillon is in prison because he is an enemy of the Government, and, whether he is conscious of it or not, of the "rights of property." Harrison is in prison for exactly the same reason. It has always been the custom for persons in authority to suppress their enemies when they dared: but when their enemies are the friends of society, it is in the long run bad for the suppressors.

However, if the Gladstonian Whigs feel this affair so sorely, what are they going to do? They have done what the *Daily News* calls "a very wise and very bold thing"; to wit, moved a vote of censure on the Government, which they knew beforehand they could not carry. This may be wise; though its wisdom is obscure to a simple person. As to its boldness, the said simple person wonders where that is hidden; its consequences do not seem of a nature to make even a new-born hare tremble.

A bolder course than that is conceivable and can be stated, though even this does not threaten the life, the limb, or even the next day's dinner of the champions engaging in it. If ever there was a case for abstention, here is one. Let the whole Gladstonian and Irish party walk out of the House after the due overwhelming majority has been recorded for the Government, and not come back again till at least the Coercion Act was repealed; leaving the Government and its friends to do the best they could without an opposition to help them in playing the game. If the Gladstonians are not bold enough for this, at least the Irish members might strike such a stroke; if they dared or could do so it probably would be enough, and Irish coercion would be laid aside, till a Liberal government found it useful, if indeed it were ever possible after such an act.

But it goes without saying that nothing of the sort will be tried. The Irish party are bound hand and foot to the great Liberal ditto, like the living to the dead in the old story. And as for the Liberals, they are only too conscious of their reason for existence as a party. Their business is to keep the game going steadily, and not to do anything to interrupt, far less put an end to it. Abstention would look like favouring revolution; it would have to be explained to the constituencies, and it could not be explained away; and explaining away is the great "art and craft" of success in the game of Ins and Outs, of official success. Such a success as attaining to the end you profess (to your constituents) by the shortest road, being a thing by no means desired by the Liberal side of the game at any rate.

Meantime Mr. Dillon is in prison, and his strictly political friends don't seem in a hurry to get him out of it. It is a comfort to think that he himself must have known this all along and understanding his allies, has gone into the trap with his eyes open, knowing well that his imprisonment would further the cause he is striving for. All honour to him for that.

The proclamations of the Kaiser William II. to the Army and Navy and to the Prussian People may be considered by some as mere pieces of conventional official fustian; but they mean more than this both in what they say and what they refrain from saying; thoughtful persons scarcely need to read between their lines. Reaction of the coarsest kind is what they announce. It is possible that this will be less injurious to the cause of the people than the steady respectable bourgeois dead weight of inaction which would have been what the late Kaiser would have tried for, probably unsuccessfully as against the more open reactionists.

The proposal of the Rifle-shooting Association—or whatever it calls itself—to destroy Richmond Park for the benefit of its annual pic-nic, fair, and prize shooting match, would be a piece of impudence almost incredible if one did not remember the lazy and thoughtless stupidity of the public. There is any amount of space on the sandy wastes south of London—*e.g.*, about Woking—of no use for any other purpose, since nothing will grow on these places and they are too hideous to be "spoilt" by anything short of iron-puddling. They would seem to be providentially ordained for the requirements of modern sham-soldiering; and yet there are persons seriously taking into consideration the proposed ruin of one of the few solacements of our beastly muck-heap of a London! Really, the horrors of war are on us already.

Note that our friend the *Star* has the fatuity to favour this cruel injury to the democracy. I fear the reason why is clear—to wit, that it is a chance of attack against the Duke of Cambridge, and royalty through him, too good to be thrown away. "*Is* it worth the wear and tear?" There are so many occasions for the display of this kind of revolutionary fervour, that surely we need not cut the nose off our face to spite the face and *make* an occasion. See how foolish party spirit makes us! Surely we can despise the preposterous old martinet without destroying what in a fashion is our own, without handing it over to a private company to make money of.

Mr. Balfour gave an explanation the other day (probably untrue) of the circumstances of the imprisonment of Shane O'Donnell, imprisoned for refusing to give evidence against his fellow resisters to tyranny, and who was said to have fainted on the way between jail and court. In the course of this explanation, Mr. Balfour said that he could scarcely be called an old man as he was only 64. Pray, is Shane O'Donnell a working man? I ask this, since I have seen field-labourers in England who were old men at 50 and very old men at 64—if they managed to live so long as that.

The Sweating Commission has been receiving evidence of a different character to some that it had received before. Mr. Lionel B. Alexander has tendered it what the press calls "rebutting evidence." But his evidence was in the main a defence of the Jewish workmen against the attacks of Mr. Arnold White, and a calling attention to the fact that the last link in the chain of sweating, the poor sweater, is not the criminal in the case, but the *employer* of the said sweater, who is himself sweated to the bone. As to his defence of sweating, it amounted to little more than his perception of the necessity for it in some form or other as long as competition under privilege exists. Cheapness at any cost he sees is necessary to our system of manufacture, and he does not see his way to limit it—nor will the Commission.

The position has often been stated, but one may be allowed to state it again. Wage-slaves like other slaves can only consume slave wares; but our wage-slaves are so numerous that the production and sale of slave-wares is an important branch of commerce, and any check to it would lead to a great number of the poorest labourers being unemployed; for none but those who are driven down by competition to the lowest point can be used for producing wares cheap enough for this shameful market, and these *must* take any wages that will keep them alive.

Moreover since this mass of cheap labour necessary for the produc-

tion of slave-wares is offered in the market, and there is still an excess of it, it is used for the production of articles of comfort and luxury consumed by the richer classes, who thus add to the income derived from their profit on slave-wares by getting the wares they need at a price below the average.

It is an old, old story; the poor always punished for poverty. Those that have shall receive more abundantly, and those that have not it shall be taken from them even that which they have. Can a royal commission alter this? If so, how? Yet it will be altered, and probably Mr. Arnold White will not like either the alteration or the method of it.

Mr. Blundell Maple's "evidence" was a curious business. If the report of it may be trusted, he bullied the commissioners and threatened all his enemies in a way that only a very rich man dares to do. He also (like a good business man) did not miss the opportunity of puffing his firm gloriously; and painted his own portrait, so to say, as the true friend of the working-classes—even to the extent of working his sewing-machines by a gas-engine for *their* exclusive benefit; and increasing his turn-over by thousands of pounds for the same disinterested purpose.

But even if Mr. Maple were an angel of light, and had absolutely *no* other aim in doing business than the welfare of his employés, he could by no possibility succeed in that aim. His gas-engine would benefit him and not the luckless sempstresses thrown out of work by it. He must use his enormous army of employés for producing wares at a cheaper rate than his competitors, or else his huge business, of which he gave such glowing account before my lords, would land him in bankruptcy and put an end to his career of usefulness. As long as he is engaged in making profits out of other men's labour, he is simply a helpless unit of a class, whose enemy is the class which it employs, and which employed class is engaged on its part in working *for* and fighting *against* the employing class.

The announcement of Court mourning consequent on the death of Kaiser No. 2 drew from the morning papers a regret for the state of business among the shopkeepers of London, and a further regret that it was absolutely necessary to make this worse by a period of Court mourning, which it was thought would certainly be the case. And indeed it seems that business is bad enough and that it is *not* the most advisable time for a person to die who must be mourned for publicly. I was told, for instance, by a person who knew the fact, that at a large optician's shop in London, conducted with all the usual pomp of manager, partners, and the rest of it, the whole take for one day a week ago was eighteen pence!

But here is a curious piece of folly, or rather two pieces, or indeed masses of folly: in the first place that the "employment," *i.e.*, the livelihood of a huge number of deft, ingenious and industrious men, depends on the whim of certain idlers, and their empty inclination (scarcely to be called a desire) for such and such frivolities and luxuries; and in the second that when it is loudly declared by the rich that their luxuries and frivolities are a blessing to the poor, they nevertheless are quite prepared to interrupt the flow of such blessing by any little piece of official superstition connected with the Court; the very existence for which humbug and centre of corruption is often defended on the grounds that it is good for trade. Those that think so should try to get royal personages who are immortal—or as some would prefer, carve them out of lime-tree wood and paint and gild them duly. Such articles have been known to last for centuries. W. M.

STRIKING SUPERSEDED.

The late strike of the Leeds Jewish tailors, which to outsiders seemed a defeat, is destined to be a complete success. What could not be gained by means of a strike has been accomplished through the medium of a co-operative workshop, and the action of a dozen men, in finding out how to work *without* the middleman, has done more to terrify the employers than all that the whole body of workmen had previously accomplished.

The middlemen, through the loss of the Whitsuntide trade, must have lost, as a body, several thousand pounds. They were prepared to lose this, however, rather than forego their opposition to the demands of the men, and as a consequence the hands were driven by necessity back into the workshops on the old terms. Smarting under the defeat, the idea of a co-operative workshop (which had previously been discussed) was revived, and a shop taken, tables, machines, etc., purchased, and every preparation made for at once commencing operations. At this stage it was suddenly discovered that the employing middlemen were violently in love with the workpeople. With the help of a party of four, who, unauthorised by the men, took upon themselves the responsibility of going as a deputation to the masters, a meeting was arranged for to take place at the Gower Street Board School, where the masters were willing to concede the points at issue, on one condition—that the co-operative undertaking should be abandoned. What was more, they (the employers) were desirous of joining the men's trade society, "working hand and hand with them," and helping it both by money and personal help. Somehow this glorious, and, by the way, startling idea, was not snapped up by the men as readily as was expected, and precautions were taken to go to the masters' meeting in a body. It was expected that Kemmelhor would not be admitted, and it was arranged that if this were so, the society's banner should be turned round as a signal for the men to proceed no further. This was what happened. Kemmelhor was stopped by the police, and the men followed the banner to a piece of waste land called by the euphonius name of the "midden," where a platform was arranged, and speeches delivered by Maguire, Kemmelhor, Paylor, Hill, and Cohen. The middlemen sweaters, deprived of the presence of the "hands" they wanted to love so well, held a meeting composed of a sprinkling of *slipper-makers*, drawn thither by curiosity, and the previously mentioned four. The composition of this party of four is a rather peculiar one. Two of them—Korn and Balsam—proved themselves scabs during the strike, another of them—Lewis Rosenberg—is a nondescript, and the fourth—Sweeny—is a *shoemaker*, who previous to this was always credited with more sense. No resolutions were passed—as there wasn't audience to pass a good-sized resolution—and then some of the middlemen who had walked down to the meeting to benefit—be it borne in mind—the men, actually went home in cabs, fearful lest any workmen—who couldn't see these things as masters see them—should punch their benefactors' heads. Such is the perversion of a "sweater's" intellect! The "four" have had a bad time of it since, one or two having to be escorted to and from work by the police, to the music of a hissing crowd.

The right nail has been struck on the head, I believe, in this co-operative idea, and if, as there is every reason to believe, we can make a success of this, there will be no resting until every sweater is driven back to his original avocation of tinkering, glazing, organ-grinding, etc. The shop is one of the brightest and cleanest in the town, and there is no fear of a visit from the factory inspector. Work is being obtained plentifully, and we hope this week to see it thoroughly busy. In only one direction has there been a drawback. Singer and Co. would not let us have machines without some very stringent restrictions, and the idea is freely entertained that the employers brought pressure to bear upon them. We hope our London comrades will notice this, especially the tailoring portion of them. Machines were eventually got elsewhere, and Singers dispensed with.

I hope ere long to be able to chronicle the opening of another workshop. T. W. P.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

ITALY.

Modena.—The Court of Appeal at Modena has confirmed the condemnation of several men who took part in a strike at Finale Emilia two years ago, and they are now, after all this time, sentenced to several months' imprisonment! This is a specimen of the "law's delay," with a vengeance!

Livorno.—The *Messaggero* has it seems, relative to the elections of Livorno, called upon the Socialists not to vote for Amilcare Cipriani, as their votes are necessary to ensure the election of the Democratic candidate as against the two Moderates. We seem to have heard of these sorts of appeals to Socialists in England, and not very long since. If Socialists *are* to meddle with politics at all, they have surely a right to vote for their own chosen candidate without exciting the wrath of Liberal or Radical prints for not supporting any one the latter choose to put up. These querulous complaints are ludicrously unreasonable.

Rimini.—In a recent sitting of the Municipal Council here, eight of the councillors voted against the proposed sum to be expended by the town on the expected visit of the King and Queen to Romagna. The Democratic and Socialist part of the town express their lively indignation at such waste of money in times of distress like the present.

Odescalchi, honourable member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, declared himself to be a Socialist the other day during a sitting, but was not, said he, one of those who wish to "transform Society by means of dynamite, but of those who wished the State to put forth a helping hand to all co-operative societies." This is a touching confession of faith from the honourable member's lips, condensing in a few sentences a wonderful ignorance of the doings and aspirations of true Socialists, and an equally wonderful belief in the power for good innate both in "The State" and in Co-operative Societies

A considerable number of working-men's and mechanic's societies and associations have issued an abstentionist manifesto, addressed to the "electors of Rome," in which they express their determination to abstain from voting at the present elections, and their views on the uselessness of the administrative vote as at present constituted. M. M.

Carlo Cafiero will in a short time leave the asylum of Imola, cured, with the exception of a slight melancholy. He was one of the foremost Italian Communist-Anarchists, and the endless prosecutions and imprisonments ruined him for a while. He took part in the revolt of Benevent, when in 1877 he and a small band went to several villages and initiated the revolt of the peasants against their exploiters, tax-collectors, etc. The rough climate and other unfavourable conditions forced them to surrender, and after more than a year they were acquitted by the jury. When in 1882 the franchise was given to larger numbers of workers and they commenced the farce of returning Socialists to parliament in that country too, thus spoiling the hitherto revolutionary movement, Cafiero misled by others, and certainly already mentally disturbed, pronounced himself in favour of this policy. If he now is able to again enter the ranks, he will see what became of his former friends Costa, Brousse, etc., very types of renegades,

On July 1st, "*Spartacus*, organ of the white slaves," Anarchist, will make its first appearrnce at Genoa.

FRANCE.

On June 20 the first number of a new daily Socialist paper *L'Homme Libre* (the free man) was published at Paris, edited by Edouard Vaillant, of the Blanquist school of Socialists. Three daily papers are now competing, viz., the old *Cri du Peuple*, which has deserted the workers' cause and gone over