Notes on News.

Mr. Dillon in his speech before the National League in Dublin, said all that he was likely to say, and no doubt said it well enough. He upheld the Plan of Campaign; stoutly; as he well might, because at present, now the alliance between Parnellites and Gladstonians is so close, the Plan is the one distinctively Irish piece of strategy, and if it were gone, more party politics would bury the whole Irish business under the usual mountain of procrastination and trickery.

On the other hand, Mr. Dillon deprecated "impatience"; that is to say, in his position—very different to that of Mr. Davitt—he could not say anything that could be construed by stupid people into the beginning of a quarrel with the Liberal allies. This is the policy which Mr. Dillon pledged to, and of course he cannot get out of it, unless the Gladstonians formally abandon the cause, which probably they cannot do. When the fulness of time comes the electoral pendulum will swing the other way; Gladstone will be in, and Parnell will be out.

But the "impatience" of Davitt has another purpose than merely quickening the pace of the worn-out Liberal post-horse on the road to party victory. It is a warning to the Liberals not to be too liberal of compromise when their day of office comes. Of course what they will want to do is to grant the Irish the semblance of their claims without the reality, if they can thereby stop the mouth of the British democracy even though the Irish democracy is not satisfied. This is the reason why all Irishmen who are not precluded from it by official position should be steadily "impatient."

Those of our friends who are inclined to be "impatient," in another sense, are quite answering Davitt's Irish Question, which bears with it so much that is indifferent or hostile to Socialism, should consider one remark made by Mr. Dillon in his speech which I believe to be made quite honestly and with a clear heart. He said that all the old enmity which was once one of the master feelings of the heart had disappeared before the present action of the English democracy. So hollow, so easily got rid of, are these monstrous national antipathies which foolish people believe to be so deeply rooted. If the Home Rule agitation does nothing else than destroy one branch of this deadly upas-tree of sham patriotism it will have been worth all the trouble.

Moralists are trying to find out causes for the horrors which have lately shocked the sensibilities of "cultured" society. Lord William Compton sees, as all people who have ever thought for a moment on the subject must see, that the condition of life in the East end slums is quite enough to account for such brutality, which is a necessary consequence of it. But what causes the condition of life in Whitechapel? After all, it is plain: the exclusion culture of those whose sensibilities are so shocked by the brutality, the responsibility for which their greed and cowardice evades. These sensitive, moral, cultivated people are prepared to do anything (by the hands of others) which will sustain the inequality which is the foundation of modern society and which they glory in; and when the dark side of this glorious inequality is thrust on their notice, they are shocked and read moving articles in the newspapers—and go on eating, drinking, and making merry, and hoping it will last for ever, Whitechapel murders and all.

Have they considered a little event of which we have just heard news, which comes of this determination of theirs to be thieves as long as possible? Another glorious victory for the British army, and indeed a real good cheap one, with the killing all on one side: 400 Tibetans killed and wounded and half a dozen slits hurts on the side of culture. If the history of this slaughter had been given HomERICALLY—i.e., with abundance of realistic detail—it would have made a pretty good multiplication of a Whitechapel murder.

And was the reason for it any more excuse for this multiplied murder than the reason for the London horror? No. No worse cause would be found for a slaughter. It was perpetrated (and remember it is one among hundreds) in order to keep going that degradation of life which Lord William Compton so much deplores, which he would doubtless remedy if he knew how to without destroying our "society" and its sensibilities, which under those circumstances he cannot know how to remedy.

Apropos of these "little wars," or great murders, our friend the Star has a well-mean article which misses the point disastrously. After having attacked the commercial Jingo policy, it says: "Our profound conviction is that as a rule" (itals. ours, in honour of journalistic qualification) "warfare tends not to the advancement, but to the postponement of large commercial relations with another country. . . . Trade may be compared to a great natural force—silent, invisible, and irresistible, and there is no stop to it so often as the Manchester manner. In short, our contemporary, for the moment at least forgetting the blessings of civilisation, such as Vanderie evictions and London rent-grabbing from working-men, which it often laudably denounces, wants to purge the march of commerce of war and violence.

But unhappily it is itself war, and violence is of its essence, whether that violence takes the form of the "soldier with his gun or the sailor with his iron-clad," or the other form of the sword of cheapness and the spear of shoddy backed up by law—i.e., the policeman masking the soldier and sailor—is a mere incident of its ceaseless, remorseless war. For as the aim is, so must the means be; and what is the aim of Commerce? Answer: to substitute its peculiar form of slavery for whatever it happens to find on the ground which it is bent on conquering; and that form of slavery is a "Society" (or gang of robbers) governed by rich men, who shall make slaves of the producers of goods without the expense of buying the said slaves and without the responsibility of feeding them. Friend Star, the Sikim massacre is bad, and you do well to object to it (though you do that very mildly), but the cause of it is worse—nay the worst.

For the Salt Trust, the Pall Mall says: "The syndicate will for a time have a depressing effect upon the labour-market in the salt districts of Cheshire, as the low range of prices prevailing for the past five years is directly due to over-production. . . . Owing to intense competition, prices have fallen 50 per cent. during the past ten years. Great confidence is felt in the future of the trust in Cheshire, where the money has been largely subscribed."

I beg to propose a design for the seal or badge of this glorious modern gild, to wit: A Benefactor of Humanity with one hand in the pocket of a working-man, a salt operative, and the other in the pocket of the public typified by a respectable London Mechanic. It is indeed pleasing to see the B. H.'s so naive and outspoken as to the robbery which they are contemplating, and we Socialists should wish them all success. Morality has, unhappily, so far been made bearable by competition, but monopoly without competition will turn out to be altogether unbearable, and will help on the beginning of the end.

The vegetarians have tried to collect the London parsons to sing their praises, but the reverend gentlemen for the most part declined to be caught with chaff. Only thirty attended, presided over by Canon Farrar. I have heard a word to say against vegetarians who really practised on the grounds of its suit ing the health of the practitioner, or of a natural sentiment against "corse-eating" as a friend of ours has called it; but in most more or less laudable associations that are not Socialist there lurks a snake in the grass; and the reptile is not lacking in the verdant meadow of vegetarianism. Canon Farrar, e.g., not knowing, I suppose, what the devil to say, praised it because it would lead to simplicity of life, and because it would be a remedy for poverty.

Simplicity of life—good, most good, so long as it is voluntary; but surely there is enough involuntary simplicity of life, i.e., hard fare, already; and to live poorly is no remedy against poverty, but a necessity of it. And really, hasn't Canon Farrar had time amidst his arduous ecclesiastical duties to learn that if we whole capitalistic
society were to become vegetarian together, the "poor," i.e., the pro-
ducers, would be forced to live upon vegetarian-cag-mag, while the
rich, i.e., the proprietary class, lived upon vegetarian delicacies! "When
we come to the-abolition of the privilege of life, and to do what we think best. Meantime, I bid Canon Farrar
and the school of social reformers to which he belongs, not to evade the
real question: Why are we not a society of equals? W. M.

LABOUR'S TRIANGULAR PROBLEM:
OR, MEN VERSUS MACHINES.

(Continued from p. 304.)

The statement that numbers of men were being deprived of means of
living by increased machinery, used to be met by the statement
that they could find work at some other trade, and that there were so
many more engineers and machine makers wanted that all came out
level in the end. Leaving out of consideration the absurdity of the
nineteen agricultural labourers finding employment as reaping machine
makers, it must be patent that as the same process is going on in
every trade, the forced idleness must be increasing in every trade, even
in the trade which is the great agent of all this idleness, the engineers
and machine makers.

It is rather startling to find at what a rate this disestablishing of
disestablishers is going on, to find how very rapidly the engineer is
being hoisted on his own petard.

Mr. Sliefoo, President at the Trades' Union Congress, Sept. 4, 1888,
declared: "The Machinery question is not

"There is scarcely any branch of industry to which these mechanical inven-
tions have not been applied; and the effects have been intensified by the sub-
division of labour. In the case of the spinning frame, thirteen men who
nineteen men had been displaced out of every ten formerly required. Machinery
has displaced five men out of every six in the glass bottle trade; in the mean-
figures of agricultural implement 900 men now do the work which 4,000 or ten-
years ago required 2,145, thus displacing 1,545. In the production of machine
itself, the number of persons employed is reduced to one-fourth of what it
was fifty years ago. In paper-making alone, 50,000 men have been re-
placed by 2,000 people. As far as rough hand labour is concerned, we
have reduced the cost of production by one fortieth of what it was.
"There is no exception to this general rule. The man engaged in

No matter which way one looks there is no variation, not the slightest;
increased production to the capitalist, the machinery con-
troller; decreased consumption to the worker, the producer.
A striking instance of the kind was given at the recent
Remuneration Conference, 1883. Mr. J. G. Hutchinson made an
elaborate statement to prove the general improvement in the worker's
position; he was answered by Mr. James Atkin (Greenock Chamber
of Commerce):

"In weaving fifty years ago the workman drove the shuttle with the
hand, and produced from forty-five to fifty yards per week, for which he
was paid one or two shillings; now, with four men at each loom a day's
loom can produce sixty yards, and does not cost her employer 1 shilling per
yard for wages. 'The same argument holds good of ten working men.
The question is, How are these men employed now? In Ashtead's estab-
ishment, seeing a girl at work in a sewing machine, he asked the employer
how they did it. 'Why, she can do it in half the time. He paid her half as
much as men's labour. Then he asked, 'What would those twelve men be doing now?'
'Oh, they would be turning the machine. They had the engines of the
machines, and perhaps, as one new industry.' He asked, 'What new industry?'
But the employer could not point out any except photography; at last he said they would
produced a cloth that was not worth making. Shooting machines, and
in wards he was asked to visit the American Singer Sewing Machine Factory, near
Gloucester, which got 120 men to work, and then when compared works they came upon the very same kind of machines as the clothier had in his
establishment. Then he put the question to the manager, 'How long would it take to make one of these machines?' He said he could not tell, as no
man made a machine, they had a more expeditious way of doing it than that;
there would be upwards of thirty men employed in the making of one machine,
but he said 'if they were to make this particular kind of machine, they would
turn out one for every four and a half days work of each man in their employ-
ment.' Now, there was a machine that with a girl had done the work of twelve
men for nearly ten years, and the only that machine that was under the
impression was that they would employ another man to oversee it. While for
while four and a-half days of each of these men was sufficient to make another
machine. I asked if this were for any reason the case. He said it was,

It has been urged by the orthodox economists that although the
individual worker may have suffered from his enforced idleness, that
since competition resulted to the good of the public generally, com-
petition was the law of nature.

In some cases the reduction in the sale price of an article has been
reduced in proportion to the reduced sum paid for labour, but in hun-
dreds of instances which could be given, the whole of the amount
saved has for years been the sole profit of the monopolist machinery
controller.

When Charles Babbage issued his "Economy of Machinery and
Manufactures," great haste had been shown in devoting the power
of steam, its position then was not a circumference as compared
with to-day. For a book dated 1832, in many respects its tone in
dealing with the worker was in advance of the day; some hard knocks are
made at the machinery men, for having monopolized imprudently in
machinery and economy in manufacture; but, when dealing with the
"Effects of the Application of Machinery," the summarising-up is roughly,
which is the best—or rather, which is the least evil—sudden death or
new starvation.

"It is almost the invariable consequence of such improvements ultimately to
cause a greater demand for labour, and often the new labour requires a higher
price than the old. It's the law of the old and the new. Many of those who
have been driven out of the old employment are not always qualified for the new
one; and as machinery is constantly being improved, it becomes necessary to
want. One very important inquiry which this subject presents is the question:
Whether it is for the interest of the working-classes that any improved machinery
be introduced, or whether it would be better to pay the old labourer and
let the others be at once driven out of the trade by it; or whether it is more advantageous
for them to be gradually forced to quit the trade by the slow and successive advances
of the machine?"

The italics are Babbage's, and to me seem to suggest that Babbage
was rather trying to give the impression that there may be some

There may be some question as to which would be best or worse for
the worker—rapid starvation or slow—there is no manner of
doubt as to which has been the best for the exploiters. By the gradual
process it has been possible to introduce machinery to a degree of en-
durance of suffering, which by any conceivable stretch of imagination
could have come about by a sudden change. By slow degrees we have
become accustomed to an immense army of unemployed, which would
have been too much for society to everlasting small had it been formed or made
suddenly by one or two great machines, instead of an infinite number
of changes towards automatism.

Therefore, constantly, constantly growing, growing, growing,
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The COMMONWEAL
October 6, 1888.

A BRAVE PARSON!—Rev. F. Minton, vicar of Midlewich, Cheshire,
presiding at a meeting addressed by Mr. Brunner, M.P., said Liberals
had castigated in their past congregations, and the same month
was becoming more appalling among workmen. They had not yet
crushed out injustice to Ireland, but they had stirred the people.
"There was more unbelief gospel than the gospel of discontent. The world
was not meant for privileged parasites, and workmen should combine to
hasten the time when the land was for the landless.

How a Chinese Magistrate Settled a Dispute.—That modern Hamil-
stor-Raschid, the magistrate of the Mixed Court at Shanghai, had lately before him
a tremendous case concerning a dispute of a very
Finding that only one lawyer was engaged in the case, he said he had this gentle-
man haled before him and soundly whipped; then he invited the litigants
who had sued each other to a glass of tea, and with a kind of solemn
speech, or some sort of solemn edict on the benefits of harmony between relations read out, and
lectured the parties severely as obstinate blockheads.

How exceedingly gradual in some cases may be seen by this example: "The
patent for the invention of the electric telegraph was obtained by a
disciple of Morse, John E. Williams. The patent was purchased for about eight hundred inventions. The present carding machinery is a compound of over forty patents—(Paul Raper Jones, civil engineer: opinion on behalf of House of Lords, 1851; quoted in "Copyright and Patents for Inventions," R. A.
Macle, 1853, p. 235.)

Report quoted in "Copyright and Patents for Inventions," R. A.
Macle, 1853, p. 341.
Macle, 1854, p. 27.

1 Report, p. 72.