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NOTES ON NEWS.

THE Royal Grants! We shall be expected to have a word or two to say about them. I hope what follows will not be considered too irreverent either towards the sovereignty of the sovereign or the sovereignty of the people; but it cannot be helped; it is impossible to treat the matter wholly seriously, though there is food for serious reflection in it. Let us put before our readers various views on the subject.

No. 1. The gracious Monarch of this land, the Empress of this beneficent Empire of Great Britain (on which the sun never sets), is pleased to inform her loyal and loving subjects that, owing to circumstances over which she has no control, she has grandchildren (who cannot *work* but are *not* ashamed to beg) who require pensioning, and that she is well aware how pleased all her l. and l. subjects will be to hear of this opportunity of showing their love and loyalty, and of expressing their sense of gratitude for the privilege which they enjoy of being so kindly allowed to live (if they can) under the shadow of the glory of the said empire. All this notwithstanding the fact that there are certain apes and demons in human form living amongst us, who have a dim idea that to pay a great deal for nothing at all is not their ideal of doing business in an ordinary way.

That is the official view of the matter, held as an article of faith by the greater part of the flunkey and ignorant middle-class population, and that part of the working classes who would be middle-class if they could. It is not meant to state facts: it is an article of faith, like the Athanasian Creed.

No. 2. England is practically a democratic republic, and as good a country as need be for an active and well-to-do middle-class man to live in: but there are anomalies in it which are troublesome to the logic of a commonsense man. Amongst these is a survival from the feudalism of the Middle Ages in the form of a sovereign who is usually of no great harm and never of much use. But even we commercial progressive people think it worth while to keep this sham going as a sort of symbol that we don't want to go too fast: still, having this gilt figure-head, as business men we don't want to pay too much for it, and of course we will take every opportunity of curbing its extravagancies.

That is the ordinary Radical view, and considers itself very superior and knowing. It is after all only a translation of No. 1 into a language understood of the people, and still leaves room for other views.

No. 3, for instance. "Well, what's the use of all this talk? Of course the old lady tries to get as much as she can from us and to do as little as possible for it; and since she is queen, she can easily best us: so we had better stump up, and say no more about it."

That is the ordinary commonsense working-man's view of it, looking at it from the outside. It is not very far from the fact as times go. But there is still room for the Socialist point of view: call it

No. 4. We are governed by a bureaucracy—*i.e.*, a government of professional officials governing in their own interests as representatives of the proprietary classes. This Bureaucracy thinks it necessary to have a head ornamental official and to call it king or queen, though it has nothing whatever to do with the old feudal king, who had definite duties to perform. The present demand for more money is not made to the people in any form, but to the Bureaucracy, by its head official. That Bureaucracy, knowing well that its safety depends on its being as reactionary as possible, replies, "More money? certainly: only don't overdo it," and then proceeds to work the oracle by the usual parliamentary means; and the whole business of semi-opposition, and downright opposition, is all a solemn farce. The bureaucracy does not object. Let anyone else object if he pleases; he can't do anything.

After, all, working-men needn't lament the vote too much: if the Queen were not to have the money, they wouldn't. It will go just where it would have gone in any case—to the association for wasting

the labour of the workers—*i.e.*, the privileged classes. Cast your eyes over the list of the rubbish offered to our gilt gibbie-stick of royalty on this very occasion, and reflect on the toil and skill of ingenious and laborious men which has been cast away into the gutter in producing things that nobody wants, and how that toil and skill might have been employed in producing what everybody wants, and you will think that our head official with the sham mediæval cloak cast about it, is but a very natural expression of the great fraud and folly of our age.

Here is a sham Society, a real band of robbers, that steals and steals from all men who do anything, till it makes life hard and miserable for the great majority of men, and yet it can do no better for itself than waste its stolen resources in ugly and ridiculous toys, that those who are cumbered with them can do nothing with but bury or forget. For such a Society the crowned toy is good enough, and I can only wish it had to pay for it really instead of seemingly.

Yet, mind you, for the serious Radicals who voted against this natural and necessary insult to the community on principle and not for cheese-paring reasons, we cannot help feeling sympathy. But, poor souls, what are they to do if they have tacked themselves on to the skirts of such leaders as they are bound to put up with? All amateurs of oratory agree that Mr. Gladstone has at last made a speech worthy of his best period. What has he spent that rhetoric upon? Home Rule? Freedom of speech? Surely at least the independence and dignity of the House of Commons? Not at all, it was made in favour of the grant to save the Queen's pocket. What is to be said after that?

Also will any one explain why the Irish members voted for the Government on Mr. Labouchere's amendment? Is that part of the whitewashing into respectability of Mr. Parnell? or is it part of some Parliamentary tactics, a dodge that "almost no feller" can understand?

In any case the Irish members ought to consider whether the support of the "thoroughly respectable" is worth more to them than that of the democratic working men who have honestly taken up the cause of the poor of Ireland without any thought of their own self-interest.

As to Mr. Chamberlain, what need be said but that if one's enemy likes to roll himself in filth, it is not our business to warn him that he will stink afterwards?
W. M.

It seems that British capital is taking to itself wings, and is emigrating to the furthest corners of the earth. A telegram appeared in the *Daily News* last Saturday from New York, stating that "the agents of some English capitalists have been attempting several immense general retail shops in this city. . . These shops are somewhat like Whiteley's, they occupy immense buildings, and sell almost every kind of article.

We learn also from the same telegram that English capital now controls some of the largest breweries, has complete control of the salt industry, partial control of certain iron and steel mills, and is largely interested in tobacco factories, sugar refineries, flour mills, and cattle ranches. We are also informed that British capital has been endeavouring to buy Delmonico's celebrated restaurant. What is the meaning of this?

It is possible that some people may exclaim that it is the effect of the propaganda of the wicked Socialists which is driving all the capital out of the country. But this will hardly serve, we have not yet had a general strike on the eight hour's question, nor have there been pitched battles in the streets between workmen and the police. So, on the whole, I should imagine that capital is more secure in this country than in America. Well, what is the reason then of its emigration?

It probably springs from the fact that capital generally goes where it can get the most out of the people, where there are fresh fields for exploitation. In England at the present time, to use the language of the stock-jobbers, there is a great lack of remunerative investments.