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NOTES ON NEWS.

At first sight the programme put forward by the Gladstonians at Manchester seems like an advance towards the Socialist-Radical position, and as if they were determined to avoid being dished by the Tories. However, the Radicals had better not halloo till they are out of the wood; for they must remember that there is a very wide distance between what a caucus meeting of the Outs will put forward as a promise, and what a party in office will attempt to carry.

Let the Radicals who think that they have a chance of being something more than the tail of the Liberal party, note the significant difference between the reception of such startling revolutionary novelties (?) as the giving of some real powers to the County Councils, the taxing of ground-rents, etc., and a bit of the regular old caucus programme, the Disestablishment of the Scotch and Welsh Churches. The assembled delegates had received the announcement of the former with decent signs of approbation, but they roared with delight at the announcement of the latter.

Now, certainly, we must all admit that it is a good thing that all churches should be disestablished; but to express such unbounded enthusiasm for a subject so stale, such a foregone conclusion, is ominous of the Gladstonian future, and shows that the Liberal party might almost as well be called the Nonconformist party, and that we may look forward after the tremendous birth-pangs of the political mountain to see a small Whig mouse (or rat rather) creep forth on to the surface of things, and the Radicals with their mongrel and impossible demi-semi-Socialist programme as hopelessly excluded from any Parliamentary political power as ever.

Whatever power the Radicals may have now, they have in virtue of their making some approach toward Socialism amongst a population which is beginning to have an inkling of Socialism; but that very power with the people makes them weak in Parliament, which is a mere drag on popular aspirations. And in any case they (the Radicals) only have any reason for existence as a party because the mass of the people is only *beginning* to turn towards Socialism. When the people understand the matter better, those Radicals of to-day, who are anything better than political tricksters, will have become Socialists, and the rest of them will be declared reactionists.

There never will nor can be again a Radical party in Parliament; that belongs to the days when Radicalism saw nothing ahead of itself in progress. It has now become quite conscious of some form of Socialism being its necessary development. It is accepting its transitional position, and is waiting for the transformation to take place. Such a body must necessarily be too nebulous to form a political party, for it is of the essence of a political party to consider its position as a final one; that is to say, that a political party is the outcome of opinions which have been superseded in the minds of all thoughtful persons by new developments of thought. It is no longer the growing fruit-tree, but the dead log; useful—for burning.

The Radicals, therefore, are to be congratulated for their powerlessness as a political party; it is a sign of life and growth in them. As for Mr. Gladstone's Manchester audiences, it is clear that they were, as aforesaid, Nonconformist Whigs; and they were engaged in devising the best form of giving the people stones for bread.

The strikes which are now taking place have a tendency which is noteworthy, and surely, amidst all shortcomings, encouraging. They are not merely strikes for a rise of wages, but show a desire for independence on the part of the men; strikes against blacklegs, or against the imposition of conditions under the guise of a gift. This, we may well hope, shows that the workers are gradually becoming conscious that their existence as workers means that they are engaged in a class

war. That whatever gains they make, whatever improvements in their condition they conquer, must be at the expense of the master-class.

They will be aided in this new acquirement of knowledge by the attitude of the middle class, which a month or two ago was so "sympathetic." For in the struggle against blackleg treachery and the dictation of conditions by the masters they need look for no "sympathy" from the master-class. Expressions of sorrow at their having made such a mistake as to take the step absolutely necessary to true combination they will get in plenty, if that is any good to them; but, for the rest, it will be the kind masters who are so generously offering to share profits with their men who will receive the "sympathy of the public."

A word about this profit-sharing. What is it but a feeding of the dog with his own tail? It means on the one hand a writing down in the account-books of wages as profits shared by the men; while on the other hand it gets more work out of the men than the obvious wage-paying for the same money paid, and is, of course, praised by its advocates for that very reason. For the rest, the men are quite right in seeing in it a dodge to break up their organisation; an instrument for detaching some of the men from furthering the interests of their class by deluding them into thinking that their interests are one with those of their masters, who, if only they had eyes to see, are visibly living on their labour. Whether the gas-stokers' strike fails or not, the mere fact that the men have gained this much of insight into the capitalist trickery is very encouraging.

A curmudgeon (name of no importance) is determined to put the pretty river Mole, or certain reaches of it, into his own pocket, and the public is naturally angry at the proceeding, to the extent of forming a society for the protection of the said river; but as their only means of "protection" seems to be going to law with its owner, it is certain that the Mole will remain pocketed till "when the revolution comes."

For my part, I sympathise heartily with the sorrow of those who have been locked out of the Mole; for I should like to live on a river three quarters of the year; and the Mole is an exceedingly pretty little meadow-stream. But on the other hand it is no bad thing that the middle class—even the lower at that—should have a reminder of their position in relation to the landowners. I must say to them, "You *would* have it so, my friends! *Now* perhaps you begin to understand the meaning of the 'sacred rights of property,' the right of using and *abusing* wealth, which is so dear to the souls of the Liberty and Property Defence League. Turn Socialists my friends, and one day you shall have the Mole again." W. M.

The *New York Herald* (the real one), writing the other day about a shooting case, says that we live in "a world in which hard cash wins the victory over poverty every time. Wealth can whistle all fear of being caught down the wind, for the law's delays are a purchasable commodity." But if it had been a Socialist or Anarchist who had said that in his paper, the *Herald* would have been calling for his head before now.

"When slaveholders and land monopolists in Brazil seek a nominal republic, the better to accomplish the ends of injustice, the old query is recalled—What's in a name?" This is the question which the *Boston Globe* asks; and those who have been abusing Cunninghame-Graham for his letter had better ponder awhile before they try to answer it.

An aristocratic mixture of matrimonial relations has brought out the fact that in England, while a man is strictly prohibited from marrying his deceased wife's sister, there is nothing to prevent his marrying his divorced wife's sister, even while the divorced wife is alive. The ways of law are wonderful, and its paths past finding out!
S.