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NOTEs ON NEWS.
The dam above what was once Johnstown in Pennsylvania turns out
to have been the crowning triumph of what we call in England jury-bui-
lding—i.e., building not for the use of the public but for the profit of
the speculator. The crowd of unfortunate people who were lost in
that stupendous tragedy have in fact been sacrificed to the demon
of profit-mongering to which hundreds and thousands of the disinherit-
ced classes are sacrificed every day, whether the kind of sacrifice be the
actual death caused by poison, or the living death of hopeless poverty.

To the demon of profit they were sacrificed, and also to the demon
of waste: for it seems that that huge mass of water, held temporarily
in check by its jury-built dam, was in fact a pleasure lake, the property
of a fishing-club; so that this gigantic threat of sudden death to
thousands was simply one to publish our lecture-lists: after which
the idle class wrung by force from the workers, and which they cannot
use but can only waste.

I do not wonder at the anger of the survivors from this artificial
deluge, this subsidised terror, against the owners or holders of the
pleasure-lake; but if they understand
the enforced labour of the workers amongst these angry men, their
anger is illogical; because they themselves are doing the same kind
of thing (unconsciously maybe) every day. Let Reaxt speak to it:

"For them alone did settle
A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:
Half ignorant, they turned an easy wheel
That sent sharp rocks to work at punch and pole."

On the other hand, those of the disinflicted classes who have shown
their anger are abundantly justified in being angry; but if they under-
stood their position better, their anger would madden them all, for
they would know that the profit and pleasure of the masters of slaves
does not prevent more spasmatic accidents only of death and misery,
but is and must be the constant and necessary cause of continuous
death and misery.

Will you say, "How do I know that there was a slave class in and
about Johnstown?" If I did not know it otherwise, I should be sure of
it by the token that after the catastrophe there were people found
so miserable and brutalised that they used the occasion to rob the
dead bodies—and were shot for doing it by others (doubtless maddened
by the terror that surrounded the place) who did not, and we will say
could not, render the words of a great teacher, "Let him who is
without sin amongst you lift up the first stone against her." (O
shooters of the robbers of the rich dead, is it not a worse crime to
rob the living poor, and that not now and again, but constantly, systema-
tically, and legally?)

The "large employers of labour in the printing trade," who have
just lately published a circular to prove that they are the true friends
of labour, "protest too much." We don't need to be told that they will
do what they think best to bring them in a profit; but surely workmen
don't need to be told that this must mean their paying the lowest
wages they can safely pay. We shall have more on this subject.

Advanced Radicals boycotting Socialists is a sight which would
please Tories more than any other party. Regards please note of
this, as was not noted here to the disgust of the devoted M.P.'s who intro-
duce these wicked bills, or of the unhappy fools who think them wrong,
and not opposing, it is a matter that calls for our pity rather than for our
anger. It is a dispiriting spectacle, this of the old watch-dog of pop-
perty scratching so insensibly to keep down the flies. Poor beast.
He is terrified, but they will never cause his death (indeed, it wouldn't
suit them to do so); nor, again, will he ever be clear of them, till his
miserable life is summarily cut short by the triumph of Socialism.

The L.P.D.L. has issued another circular, soliciting "your opposition
to the following bills," etc. Considering the helplessness of the busi-
ness, no matter from the gentry and "laid-back masses," the Socialists
must take note also, since you seem to be beginning that game. The
Dispatch has not the same terror of us as other Radical papers have,
but publishes our places and times of meeting regularly.

A poor little boy was run over and killed the other day in getting
out of the way of a tram-car. The driver of the said car was arrested
and brought before Mr. De Rantum. But the evidence that the man
was not in the least responsible was so clear, that the magistrate re-
marked that "no doubt what had been done by the police was in
accordance with police regulations, but why the person before him
should be taken into custody he was utterly at a loss to understand."
The reason, I think, is rather clearer to us; it is in accordance with
court regulations to bugger and bully poor men on every possible
case, and even on what would seem to ordinary persons "impossible
occasions.

W. M.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has been again
throwing off some feverish yammerings—prognostics of death—respect-
ing the non-church-going members. The Rev. Donald McLeod has emphasised the fact "that this, like other countries, was passing through what he might call a cold wave of religious indifferent-
ness arising from various causes, but certainly affecting the religious
interests of the people to a very great extent. But the existence of the cold wave referred to is beyond dispute, but the new
birth which it forbids is what really alarms the learned professional
practitioners in our churches, presbyteries, and assemblies. Its cold
characteristics are guarantees of the coming cyclone which will sweep
away the sham sentimentalists who, while preaching of honesty, hol-
ness, and love, suffer from the sum of social wealth more than they
render an equivalent for, and whose honesty of purpose is as the in-
verse ratio of "the cold wave of religious indifference."

The Rev. Dr. D. McLeod confesses that "Bible women, missionaries,
and students are not the persons to deal with working-men. These
working-men need good strong teaching." The necessities and minor-
iesses of the workers have too long been the playthings of pious
pretenders and moneyed sensation-seekers, who have other objects in
view, as the fruits of their "labours," than those actually professed;
and because these working-men refuse such staff as the pious pre-

derers provide, it is not for the evil-doer to shut their eyes and open
their mouths and take the strong teaching of the church. What does the church propose to do, or what can it do, to secure for
those workers the full results of their work? If the "strong

teaching" of the church can reach those who steal from "these work-

ing men" now, so as to make them steal no more, then it will be able
to deal with working-men.

But it is clearly evident the church does not intend to reach those
who steal from "these working-men," and the burdens which the
court sanctions to be laid on the backs of the latter by the former,
as by the design and will of God, are such that "these working-men"
are physically unable to look towards heaven. It is in the nature
of man to stand erect, and nature must have its way. It is the know-
ledge of this fact that has aroused the bats of the church, for they
know when the workers throw off the burdens that deform them, the
church, as it now is, will be in the lot. Until the church renders an
equivalent to the workers for what it takes from them, the church
will be in danger.

G. MC.

Some of the flea-bites of bills are certainly large of their kind, and
must be sufficiently terrifying to the wretched dog. But that is no
reason why the flea should shriek, as some of these have lately done,
for Socialists to come and help them. We desire to kill the dog, and
neither can share the feast with his Liberal and Radical parasites, nor
can look on as our allies. Their bites only touch the skin, and we,
who have decided and he shall die, must find some more effectual means
of killing him; which, indirectly, will be bad for the flea as well.