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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES ON NEWS.

THE right of asylum is threatened in Switzerland; nay it seems pretty much as if it had come to an end, since Switzerland is so completely between the pincers of the great absolutist tyrannies. "Grief in your neighbours' garth is grief at your own door," says an old proverb of the North; so we may well look at home to see what is likely to happen here in case any spy-supported absolutist government finds it convenient to pick a quarrel with Great Britain. Truth to say, it seems improbable that there will be a recurrence of the indignation which the Bonapartist colonels stirred up here which cost the popular Palmerston his place. There is no doubt as to what the Tories and Liberals would say and do, judging by the reactionary *Standard* and shabby-respectable *Daily News*. Let us hope the *Star* really represents the opinions of the Radicals in this matter, and that they will remember their old traditions.

To make the world not only a prison, but an utterly hopeless prison, is the great ambition of these tyrants. After all, they are not likely to advance their ends by attacking what even political Radicals must think the very elements of liberty. They will find that the sweep of their net is too wide, and that their miraculous draught of fishes will make a hole in it.

A citizen complained of a nuisance, in the form of a stink, in a police-court the other day, and the whole subject was thought to be very funny, the magistrate (Mr. Plowden) leading off the laughter. We cannot tell from the report what the merits of this particular case might be; but we do know that a neighbourhood may be stunk out without a legal nuisance being established, which is indeed ridiculous enough, though not more ridiculous than most of our law. Perhaps the magistrate and his audience were laughing at English law in general. Or perhaps they thought it a preposterous joke that a well-to-do citizen should make a fuss about commerce annoying him with a mere stink when it murders so many poor people day by day. No doubt this is a joke, but I can't laugh at it. There is another explanation, which is that these laughers were such dullards that they had no conception that people might possibly restrain commerce so as to allow people to live decent lives. *That* also is no laughing matter.

W. M.

We don't care for commercial advertisements as a rule, but here is one that really merits some attention from us. We give it in full:

"THE UNEMPLOYED IN EAST LONDON.—At a time when much thought is being given to this matter, a practical suggestion may be of service. Last year more than £300,000 worth of foreign matches were purchased by inconsiderate consumers in this country, to the great injury of our own working people, so true is it that 'evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as want of heart.' If all consumers would purchase Bryant and May's matches, that firm would be enabled to pay £1,000 a-week more in wages."

One would have thought it would be no great hardship to our working people *not* to be employed by Bryant and May; and for our part we prefer the "evil wrought by the want of thought" than by the want of heart displayed by certain pious dividend-grabbing firms and their shareholders. Let us look at the great benefit bestowed upon the workers. If you spend £300,000 a-year upon Bryant and May, they will give their workers £52,000, and reckoning £48,000 for manufacturing expenses, the rest, £200,000 will go into the pockets of the dividend grabbers. All working people anxious to benefit Bryant and May's shareholders please buy their matches of that excellent firm. We will charge them nothing for this advertisement.

Last week appeared a short note in the *Commonweal* concerning the death of Arthur Meakin, poisoned while at work for his master at Nottingham with nitric acid gas.

Now it appears, according to an article and some correspondence that appeared in the *Daily News*, that an invention has been patented by a well-known inventor, M. Fleuss, by which all risk of such deaths could be guarded against. This invention, though admirable in every way, and not too expensive, has not found the slightest patronage

among the capitalist classes. There is no money to be made out of it. It would only save the insignificant lives of working-men, and that is not necessary. Should a workman be "carried off" by poisonous fumes, it is easy enough under the present beneficent system of commercial competition to find another to take his place. His death would only reduce the surplus population, and by lessening the number of the unemployed, who are likely in the near future to become dangerous, be a positive benefit to the "respectable classes."

These are your masters, workmen. These people with religion and humanity upon their lips, and the bitterest cruelty and hatred of their victims, the slaves of their splendour, in their hearts. They will not spend a single penny in an invention for saving human life, but let it be a machine for turning men in crowds upon the street, and desolating hundreds of homes by driving the wives of the workmen to prostitution and their children to beggary, while at the same time it fills the pockets of the employers with stolen wealth, then out come their guineas, and the capitalist rubs his hands gleefully at the prospect of riches which this invention will shower upon him.

Mr. John Morley surpassed himself in the House on Tuesday night. This "modern Radical," this philosophical prater of the worn-out cant of the Manchester school, did not alone trot out the dead doctrines of which he is truly a disciple, but took occasion to insult Cunninghame Graham in a phrase full of the sneering snobbery so common among the "educated" middle classes. Why, a plain rough workman from the forge or the mill could not be guilty of such a piece of sneaking insult as that conveyed in the phrase "professional philanthropist." Luckily the insult falls back upon the mean politician who used it. Who are "professional philanthropists" but Mr. Morley and the party of which he is a representative. The worst of it is, they never get beyond the "professional" part of the business, and the people are pretty sick of that, as Mr. Morley will soon find out.

They talk of the encouragement which the present society gives to the inventor. Here is an example, a notice issued by a railway company which has found its way into the pages of the *Railway Review*, from which I take it. I give it in full:

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway,
Engineer's Office, Manchester, June 4th, 1889.

Circular.

INVENTIONS BY OFFICERS AND SERVANTS OF THE COMPANY.

The directors have ordered that, in the event of patents being taken out by officers or servants of the company, the company is at liberty to use the inventions free of charge, unless the directors should, in any special case, decide otherwise.

Please sign and return to me the attached form, stating that you agree to these terms. WILLIAM HUNT, Chief Engineer.

Isn't this charming. Those who read 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' will remember that one of the most flagrant abuses of the old slave system arose from the fact, that any invention created by the ingenuity and intelligence of the slave was not his own property but that of his master. The directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway seem to be of an opinion that the slave system is still in full force. Perhaps they are not far wrong, especially in respect to their own line.

Slave-driving has always been common with railway companies, but it strikes the present writer as a perfect marvel of avaricious greed that a Lancashire mill-owner, who in the good old days worked little children to death to fill his pockets, might envy; to be not content by sweating a man for 14 or 16 hours a-day, but even to claim any invention that he might make during his "leisure."

Those people who believe in the moralisation of capitalists, might find a field for their exertions among the directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. They will have their work cut out for them.

D. N.