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NOTES ON NEWS.

THE Royal Duke and the policeman have escaped all possibility of fine or imprisonment for assaulting Mr. Simms. We know by experience that the policeman at least had nothing to fear from a magistrate, even if he had gone to much greater lengths than the collaring of an innocent citizen for the crime of being hustled by a member of the royal family. Yet it was, no doubt, an advantage to him to be in the company of an "August Personage."

Imagination *will* run away with one in picturing the fun that a person might have, who had a turn for a spree without disagreeable consequences, if he could only secure the co-operation at one and the same time of a member of the royal family and a member of the metropolitan police force. They might have adventures which would quite throw into the shade those of the famous trio—the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, Giaffar the Vizier, and Mesrour the executioner. Indeed, those worthies sometimes got into awkward corners in the course of their sprees; whereas the modern lot would only have to declare themselves in order to walk off with honour and dignity. We get on fast, don't we, in these days of absolute equality before the law?

It is difficult to treat such a matter seriously, and Mr. Simms has only been treated rudely, instead of being wounded first and sent to prison as a plaster for the wound, as many of our friends have been; and yet we cannot help feeling a sense of fresh degradation at such an exhibition of servility to a testy old martinet as the police-courts have given us, in the teeth of all the lying bluster about our freedom and our equality before the law. A Socialist indeed may say that it is not worth while considering such a trifling nuisance as a monarch and a royal family, when we have the real practical whip of capitalism flourished daily over our heads; but we must not forget that this gilded sham of a relic of feudalism, which was once powerful for good and evil, does now represent nothing but that very tyranny of the commercial master and slave-driver, and the executive power which keeps him in his place. It is a significant symbol of our false society that the Duke of Cambridge, the policeman, and the magistrate have been yokefellows in this shabby business.

A vice-consul in Serbia has been telling us that the very simple method of competition which consists of pirating trade-marks, has been damaging British trade in that country. Hats made of brown paper, knives that wouldn't cut, shirtings half made of starch which disappeared on the first washing, etc., have been sold as British goods. Well, well, Serbia is an out-of-the-way place, and possibly traditions of the excellence and honesty of British manufactures linger there, and so we may suppose that this legitimate means of competition, as John Bright would have considered it, may be effective there; but we who live in this great centre of civilisation would be inclined to think that the pirate had thrown away his industry; for in some branches at least it would be difficult to surpass British skill in adulteration; as, for example, in the weighting of cotton cloths with that useful creature, sulphate of barytes—not starch, my consular friend,—a glorious invention of England within the last few years; and there are many such-like inventions.

The correspondence between Mr. Henry George and our friend Cunninghame Graham in the *Star*, has settled down on the pros and cons concerning competition. Mr. George need hardly have told us that he is in favour of competition, indeed we know that he is prepared to hang people who are engaged in trying to abolish it. Cunninghame Graham, on the other hand, says that Socialists are trying to abolish it; and surely he is right in saying so. Competition will be impossible under genuine Socialism—or let us call it Communism, since all Socialists who know what their aim is know that they are aiming at that. Let us, however, see what we are to understand what we mean by the word competition, since I think the word is used vaguely very often.

Man must live in society of some kind: that society must be either a society of classes or of equals. Now, competition implies the struggle for thriving at other people's expense. In the class society this struggle must go on, and it is threefold: First there is the struggle between the classes, one of which is privileged, the other unprivileged. The privileged class strives to enhance its privilege, the unprivileged strives to reduce it; or in other words is driven by its inferior position to strive to destroy that privilege. Secondly, there is the competition for subsistence amongst the members of the unprivileged class, which is forced upon them by their dependent position. "Don't feed him, master, feed ME; I am the best man," is what each of them is forced to cry out and act on. Thirdly, there is the competition amongst the members of the privileged class each for his own share of privilege. This competition for privilege is what is usually meant by persons who use the word competition, and I must assert it is what Mr. George means when he uses it.

Change the picture, and let us look at a society of equality. How can competition exist in it? There will be no classes, privileged and unprivileged, to tug against one another. *That* war will be over. There will be no privilege for a robber class to squabble over the partition of. *That* war will be over. And lastly, as a blessed consequence, since freedom and mutual help will have taken the place of dependence on a master (*i.e.*, slavery), the hideous "competition" or war amongst the unprivileged will have come to an end.

In short, the issue on this matter is clear between Mr. George and the Socialists: he is championing the condition of ceaseless war which is inherent in the present form of society,—the society of the master who has slaves without paying for them; of the slave who is forced to *give himself* to a master instead of being sold to him by somebody else. This war and the society of which it is an essential part is abhorrent to Socialists. It is by no means inconsistent in Mr. George to champion this competition for privilege. But it would be a mistake to suppose that he is anything else than an enemy of Socialism.

Lord Dufferin is now the hero of the jingo *Pall Mall*, which has lately outdone itself in an article of magniloquent jingoism; and considering the many benefits which the capitalist class reap from that unlucky country, India, the milch-cow of tyrants for so many ages, it is not wonderful that he should feel himself bound to make the best of the British tyranny there, the latest and worst of all, because it is an economical tyranny. But a curious commentary on this blowing of the British trumpet, as to the beneficence of our rule there, was given me the other day by a friend (a Socialist) who has been many years in India, and who told me when he first went out he tried to get intimate with the natives, but had long ago been forced to give up the attempt. And he is by no means the first person who has told me the like. We are a hated garrison in India, and hold it by means of force and fraud for the advantage of the robber class in England. That is what the heroics of the *Pall Mall* must be reduced to. W. M.

LAND RATS AND WATER RATS.

THE other night as I took up my evening paper, it was with mingled feelings that I read of various mishaps met with by sundry river steamers through the scant number and incompetence of their rat crews. It was not displeasing to read of the damage incurred by the Company's property, incurred through their own insensate greed, grasping at undue profits on underpaid labour. Nor could any Socialist, at least, refrain from sympathising with the cursing of the rat crews and their rat captains by the men they supplanted, as well as by the frightened passengers. As for these last, the thought that they could not but right well know before they embarked how the Company had behaved to their "hands," modified what commiseration might otherwise have been felt for them. Indeed, some sterner souls might confess to a subdued glee as they read of black eyes and many bruises, that would serve as reminders to the patrons of rat-labour that there was a risk to be run in supporting their proteges.