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NOTES ON NEWS.

THE *Star* has been warlike of late, in view of the opening of Parliament, and has been urging on its leaders the duty of fighting hard so as to bring on a dissolution. The *Star* hints not obscurely at organised obstruction under the leadership of Mr. Gladstone. But Radicals may set their minds at rest, they will have no such excitement as this. Mr. Gladstone is no rebel, but a decent respectable party parliamentary leader; and to do him justice he has never pretended to be anything else. The gilded idol has not pretended to be alive itself, it has been its worshippers only who have seen life in the inert mass. Don't call the poor thing names if it won't get up and put out the fire—or, call it names if you like; but it will be all the same, it won't move.

If the Radicals who sympathise with Home Rule want to do anything at this juncture, they must not wait for their leaders but must do it for themselves. The time is not yet past when they might make the stroke (recommended in these columns before) of withdrawing from the House of Commons in a mass, and allowing the Tories and Whigs to govern them under protest. But, unfortunately, the Radicals are so wedded to a wretched little war of outposts, that they now scarcely perceive that there is a main battle. To exhaust your energies in attacking mere accidental effects of the evil, and wear out the patience of your adherents in winning victories that lead nowhere, and suffering defeats in which there is no dignity; these are the Radical tactics in England, and it is ten thousand pities that Socialists can be found to imitate them.

Under the name of "Australian Working-class Vagaries," the *Daily News* lately has had an article which may be worth a word or two. The writer rates the Australian workmen soundly for their folly in striking, when they already have such enormous wages. Of course, he assumes that he knows their business better than they know it themselves, and very naturally assumes that their business is to keep trade humming for the benefit of the capitalists. Of course he does not tell us what the purchasing power of the high Australian wages is, how much food and clothes and amusement (if any of the latter) they will buy; and we should like to have some information from our friend the *Australian Radical* on this head.

But even granted that the workmen in Australia are well supplied with necessaries comparatively with their British brethren, does not this wise-acre understand that workmen who are thrust into such a beastly corner of the earth, must be paid extra for living there, away from any chance of participation in the intellectual pleasures of the Old World, and that they will only be got to go there on those terms, unless, indeed, they are shipped off by obvious violent means?

This latter plan seems to be in the writer's mind. He says: "The moral of the story is this, the supreme task of governments is the adjustment of the labour-markets. It is sheer folly to allow enterprise to slacken, and commercial ruin to spread, because men here or there make unreasonable demands. If the patient and frugal Chinaman is refused work that needs be done, then a much larger proportion of the 350,000 annual increase of the population of the United Kingdom must be emigrated to these shores."

"Must"? Mr. Emigration Agent; and how, pray? On the whole, I think you will have to give up the idea of a press-gang for the purpose. And you need not grumble at that; there is plenty of compulsion at work to procure you land-thieves in Australia the "plenty of honest and moderately inexpensive labour" for which you say there is but one cry. Screw down the wages at home till people are rather past the verge of starvation and the streets are thronged with the unemployed; strengthen the chain of police and soldiery round them, so as to safeguard yourselves from anything more dangerous than an occasional unorganised bread-riot, which is always more serviceable to the masters than the slaves; and for aught I can see you will have for a little time "moderately inexpensive labour" to enable you to go on living on other people's toil.

But here comes a hitch for you; and therein I see another moral to your tale which has escaped your eye. When you have deported your British starvelings to Queensland and other colonies, and they begin to be a little less starved, and have leisure and spirits to consider their position, you will find that they are not such fools as you thought. They will begin to say: Well, we are better off than we were; why should we not be as well off as we can be? Here are the recourses of nature, and here we are, the workmen; what else do we want to produce all the wealth we need? Why should we pay the greater part of all that we produce to people who do nothing but work hard at keeping up their position of being our masters? Dimly when we were worse off we knew *That the wit of man can devise no scheme by which the poor can become less poor without the rich becoming less rich.* And now that we are better off we see it clearer still, and we also see that we now have a chance of acting on our insight.

In short, "the moral of the tale is this"; and it is a very encouraging one if the "tale" is true: This is the moral, that the Australian workmen, having before their eyes all that wealth, actual and potential, refused to be bribed by somewhat higher wages than they would have at home into acquiescence with their position of inferiority to the useless classes! The *Daily News'* Emigration Agent, on the contrary, clearly and very naturally looks upon the workmen in the colonies and at home as so much marketable goods and nothing else. What he is really aiming at is to transport the whole of the evils of our civilized life in England in the lump to our colonies, in order that by means of it he may make those evils more lasting in the old world. All honour to the workmen who consciously or instinctively resist such a vile scheme.

W. M.

The directors of the Civil Service Stores are said to be in a dilemma which will "excite the generous sympathy of shopkeepers all over the kingdom." They have just made up their accounts for the last half-year, and find they have taken a trifle less than £500,000 sterling. Out of this results the very moderate profit of £10,000. But according to the articles of their association the company cannot divide more than 5 per cent., and so small is the capital that 5 per cent. absorbs only £5,000. There is something like £3,000 carried over from the preceding half-year, and thus the directors have £8,000 more than they can distribute among the shareholders. Of course it will never enter their heads to apportion it among the employes from whose labour it came!

Here, according to the *Pall Mall*, is Sir George Trevelyan's version of the Liberal programme as put before the party by its trusted leaders:

1. The assimilation of the taxation on real and personal property.
2. A sound registration system which will give men the votes which Parliament intended them to have.
3. Religious equality.
4. Abolition of the privilege of the plural vote.
5. The reform of the House of Lords.
6. The rating of ground rents.
7. The entrusting the local representatives of the people with the charge of the police.
8. The regulation of the liquor traffic.
9. The redress of Ireland's long-standing grievances.

So much for the "Liberal" side of it. The *Star* gives the "London Radical Programme," saying that "the London Liberal members, with the view of carrying into effect the Radical programme for London, have given notice of the following bills relating to the metropolis, which they will bring in during the present session of Parliament:—

1. A bill for the better housing of the working-classes.
2. For the better incidence of rates.
3. For the better registration of voters.
4. For the equalisation of the poor-rates.
5. For giving to the County Council of London the control of the police.
6. For the regulation of meetings in Trafalgar Square.
7. For enabling the County Council of London to deal with the water supply.
8. For enabling the County Council to establish markets and to acquire existing market rights.

These bills apply exclusively to the metropolis. Besides these, bills for the enfranchisement of leaseholds, for registration, for the extension