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### NOTES ON NEWS.

No one will wonder that the second reading of the new flogging bill has passed the House of Commons with a large majority. It was a matter of course that the present house would not lose an opportunity of showing how reactionary it is. But after all this was not, and was not likely to be, a matter of party; the Quaker Pease being as hearty in voting for it as any of the older kind of oppressor of the people. The vote was essentially the vote of the unthinking middle classes, and the debate was thoroughly in accordance with it.

It would be mere waste of time to take in hand the various forms which the ferocity and folly of these Philistines of Philistines took; but one may say that there were two lines taken up by the defenders of the measure. No. 1 was the effectiveness of brutality as a deterrent of brutality, and No. 2 was the exaltation of the moral duty of making the enemy whom you have caught pay for the enemy whom you cannot catch. On the one hand rank cowardice, on the other stupid revenge are the motives of such legislation.

With such cowards and ruffians as the reactionists of the House of Commons it would be loss of time to argue; and it would, of course, be no less a waste of time to prove to Socialists that while the gigantic wrong of class robbery supported by violence is overshadowing us like the deadly upas-tree, individual theft of any kind cannot excite much moral indignation in us; but since this paper will, it is hoped, fall into the hands of open-minded persons who have not yet learned what Socialism is, we may as well point out first that severity of punishment does not deter persons from committing offences which they are forced into by their surrounding circumstances; and next, that if it did, it might be possible to buy this benefit too dear; and that the price which these severe moralists and benefactors of their kind are prepared to pay for a diminished list of violent burglaries, is the degradation of the whole public.

Furthermore, these wisecracks might if they had read a little history (but fancy an M.P. reading history!) have noted that however pleasant revenge may be, it is an expensive pleasure, and that cowards should not meddle with it. And it is not easy to believe that the shopkeepers who want to add new tortures to our criminal law would venture on doing so if they really understood the necessary consequences of driving violent and brutal men (men made violent and brutal) to despair, and that what their precious bill will do will not be to deter the "criminal class" from burglary, but to egg them on to murder. It will probably, if it becomes law, prove the death-warrant of many a quiet householder, who might otherwise have gone on sanding the sugar and calling to prayers for many years.

But really it is a sickening job arguing about a set of cowardly and hypocritical pirates who have got just one idea into their heads on the subject of theft, which is that they alone amongst all the world should be allowed to rob with violence and then escape the consequences of robbery by violence.

W. M.

For far too long those who "go down to the sea in ships" were helpless, unorganised, and dumb under oppression. Even England, "mistress of the waters," left her sons to perish by sea, as she left them by land, wholly unheeded so long as their deaths were due to the profit-making greed of her capitalists. And they themselves seemed well-nigh content it should be so. But they have begun to move like the rest of the workers everywhere, and they have now a tremendous union, and an organ of their own. That they may meet with the success they deserve, and not be content for long merely with the objects they set forth in the platform to be found in another column, but go on to form the Navy of Labour which shall complement the Army of Labour that is growing so rapidly, is our earnest wish.

The rabid philanthropist makes himself a nuisance everywhere, as

indeed he seeks to do, counting it to himself for righteousness that he makes religion, temperance, or anything else, stink in the nostrils of the ordinary man, however admirable the things may be in themselves. The other day at the County Council there came up a question whether the licence of a certain public-house should be preserved or no. There were only a few—seventeen, as the division showed—in favour of its preservation; it was quite obvious from the very beginning of the debate how the vote was going. But Mr. F. N. Charrington could not let the opportunity pass for a speech of the most approved Chadband-Stiggins type, with a raw-head-and-bloody-bones addition of iron bars and broken skulls, etc.

Now, nobody familiar with the working class, or any other class in this country, can deny that the lessening of drunkenness is a most desirable end; and in these days of adulteration it would be quite as well in most cases to drop drinking altogether. But just when one has admitted so much, and perhaps begun to feel a little inclined oneself to do a little in the direction of discouraging the drinking habits of the people, along comes the Chadband or the Charrington with a scream of contempt for anything but his own doctrines.

"Think of your soul's welfare, and never mind your wages. Be sober and miserable and obedient, and everything your masters tell you, and you'll go to heaven. The more you suffer here, the happier you will be above. Be sober and save, and become yourself a capitalist. Don't ask for justice; all that's due to you is charity. Crawl and crouch and pray and snivel and whine, the more you abase yourself before your betters here, the higher you will be exalted hereafter."

A man is often measured by the company he keeps, and so is a principle. So when Temperance comes, as it nearly always does, mixed up with such doctrines, and also comes armed with a bludgeon with which to batter down anybody not actively on its side, what is one to do! To allow, even for a moment, that temperance or total abstinence, or anything of that kind, is a radical cure for all social ills, is impossible for a Socialist. If you do not swallow that pill, however, and swear by water, you are damned as a drunkard, and held up to opprobrium as a preacher of excess.

All that one can do is to keep one's temper as well as may be, and explain the true position of affairs; that so long as the wage-system lasts, so long will wages tend to a minimum marked by the amount required for bare subsistence; that so long as wages remain at this minimum, squalor, disease, and misery must be the lot of the working folk; and that so long as they are squalid, sick, and wretched, they will be drunken and degraded.

S.

### OKLAHOMA AND VIENNA.

It is now an axiom in evolution that "the life history of the individual is an epitome of the life history of the race," of course conditioned and varied to some extent by immediate environment. The ontogeny and phylogeny of sociology is as much a certainty as in any other branch of evolution, but it is seldom that the student has so good an opportunity of observing and proving this truth in evolution as the newspapers have furnished in their reports of the rush in Oklahoma and the tram-slaves' strike in Vienna. The same papers gave reports of John Morley's plain talk to his labour constituents, and in the simple fact of reporting the first two events gave John the lie. With sturdy John, as with all the so-called philosophical Radicals, "thrift" and "self-help" are the sole saviours of Labour. Events in Oklahoma show how small a chance bare Labour ever has to get ahead of Capital and Privilege.

The treatment accorded to the native peoples of America by the whites has been precisely the same as that dealt to the natives of Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and, in short, to the natives of any land where once a few whites have been allowed a footing. The record of United States officialism in dealing with the Indian is one long