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NOTES ON NEWS.

THE success of the bakers' strike is producing the usual crop of advice from the capitalistic press. They are told, for instance, that now would be the time to form a union between the masters and men, a kind of court of conciliation between the two bodies whose interests are opposed to each other by the very nature of the arrangement between masters and men. Fancy a court of conciliation between a Roman landowner, of the time of the great revolt of the slaves, and the unskilled labourers of *his* factory-farm! And then remember that the modern employee and the above-said landowner are essentially in the same position, except that the ancient slave-owner had to *buy* his slave while the modern one has his slave gratis.

Meanwhile, our baker friends no doubt think that they are lucky, and that ten hours is a short days work. I do not; neither will they in a year's time. Besides, of one thing they may be sure, that their masters are even now engaged in considering how and in what form they shall take back the advantages (real ones this time, I admit) which have been gained by the men. As for them, their attitude must be a fighting one, until their fighting has abolished masters and they set themselves to work like men, and are no longer set to work like machines.

Baron Huddlestone's zeal for his employers, the governing classes, has probably not done them much good; he has a little overdone it, and made it somewhat clearer than it was before that the impartiality of the law, when it is a question of freedom *versus* respectability, is a transparent fiction. If that pretence were to be maintained, would not a judge, even as a matter of decency, be *expected* to give his charge on some such principles as these?—"I am a Tory, a reactionist, and as such I look on Mrs. Besant's views with the greatest horror; if the jury are to be left free in their verdict, and both sides have fair play, I must all the more not express my personal and party views; so I will just tell them what the law is and not say a word more."

That is what the baron *might have been* expected to say if the governing classes (largely manned by lawyers) cared to keep up even the pretence of fairness in the law courts. But, as it is, no one expected him to do anything but what he did do, that is act as an advocate for the defence. Clearly, therefore, no one expects the law courts to be fair in cases *where any public interest is involved.* And other cases—what business have they to be tried at all at the expense of the public? Our whole system of civil and criminal law is as regards the upper classes, whose instrument it is, a mere muddle of incongruities, and as regards the workers a mere instrument of oppression. And the fact is that the upper classes put up with those preposterous incongruities, *because* in spite of their absurdity they do not injure the system much *as* an instrument for the oppression of the poor, which is its primary purpose.

Imperial Federation is on its dunghill again, but not crowing very loud in the person of Lord Rosebery, who, though he began with some Jingo sentences of the usual type and ended with conventional rubbish about the Anglo-Saxon race and the Amphictyonic Council, employed the greater part of his time in pointing out with some skill that Imperial Federation is impossible, and that it is a mere party cry to catch votes.

In case any of our readers should be caught by the sound of the word "Federation," I must remind them that this "Imperial Federation" means in the first place, a Jingo competitive scheme for doing as much injury as possible to all peoples and countries outside the British Empire; and in the second place, a plot for setting schemes a-foot for bolstering up the tottering capitalist *régime* by finding new markets for it; that is to say, new commercial fields for the exercise of the "sword of cheapness." It is, in short, one of the dams which the middle-classes are building against the rising flood of Socialism. Happily, it is a dam built of paper and big words.

Mr. Goschen on the stump at Cardiff said some rather smart things about the Liberal party, and amongst others, in answer to cheers for Gladstone, wished that in the new Liberal Government the G. O. M. could have the real ordering of affairs, quoting (naturally with approbation) G. O. M.'s servility about the Royal Grants, and then going on to say that Gladstone would be controlled by Parnell, and his lieutenants by various politicians supposed to be progressive. This is amusing, but couldn't Goschen have carried it further and told us who were to control the controllers? I am afraid that the said controllers, Parnell, Tim Healy, Labouchere, and the rest, are at once too stupid and too political (*i.e.*, false) to allow the people and common sense to control them. They will just stand with staring eyes and gasping mouth, not knowing what to do—but to stick to office.

For the rest, Mr. Goschen was somewhat too optimistic. "The system of limited liability and a wider diffusion of wealth had made working-men capitalists in a small way, and given them not only profits on their wages [what *does* that mean?] but on the capital they invested. Did not this result prove [?!!] the fact that capital was not antagonistic to labour, but was really the accumulated earnings of labour? Capital was no longer regarded as a kind of vampire, for workmen had a large share in the increased prosperity of the country, and they were entitled to it."

Mr. Goschen must have a strong belief in the gullibility of working-men to deliver himself before them of such a mass of lies and twaddle. But he appears to have been justified by the ignorance of the Cardiff workmen, who hooted him for his political views and cheered him for his economics (?). But really, I repeat, he is too optimistic. Things have got a little further than that, thanks to the Socialist propaganda: working-men who are "capitalists" know that their "small way" is a very small way; that their wages are even in times of "prosperity" none too large to be eaten, worn, and paid to the rent-collector. They are at this moment showing all over the country that capital *is* antagonistic to labour by *forcing* capitalists to pay them more.

It is true that some of them know that "capital is the accumulated earnings of labour"; but more still know that they are robbed of their earnings, and the number of these is increasing every day, and more and more workmen are becoming alive to the fact that (individualist) capital is a kind of vampire—and the worst kind—and that in spite of the large share they have in the "prosperity" of the country, they have no share in *its land*, but must swelter in slums summer and winter, enjoying no beauty or pleasure of the "land they live in," with leave when they come out of their slums to "move on" on the highway and nothing else, under penalties of fine and imprisonment.

"At present," says this trickster, this battener on other men's labour, "things are prosperous, and prosperity does not give rise to violent political changes." Letting alone the baseness of the cowardice which thus hugs itself on the supposed sloth and apathy of the oppressed, we might ask this person how long this prosperity will last, and what kind of changes the next depression following on inflation will give rise to? Let us meanwhile go on steadily with our propaganda, in the hope that not *all* men are curs who will be "contented" with a little more dogs' wages than they have been having of late; that not *all* men are so stupid as to be humbugged by politicians of the Goschen type.

W. M.

Those who are fond of talking about the glorious benefits of English rule in India, and its absolute fairness and justice, may very usefully spend an hour or two in trying to reconcile their pet ideas with the facts that are set out with calmness and moderation in a pamphlet issued by Mr. Wm. Digby, and which may be got by writing to his address (Coromandel, Elm Road, Beckenham, Kent). Everybody has heard of the "Crawford scandal"; of the system of corruption, bribery, and blackmailing that had obtained in Indian high officialdom for many years past. But who that have heard of the case know that the evil would never have come to light had it not been for the Mamlatdars, or native magistrates, whom Crawford had been plundering, and