NOTES ON NEWS.

"They ordain the unjust to minister justice, and to injure to them that be just." Judges are, like policemen, the paid upholders of things as they are, eager to avenge any onslaught upon property or privilege. So that when Mr. Ernest Parke, editor of the London North Press, came before Mr. "Justice" Hawkins and was found "guilty" of libel ling a lord, everybody knew that his punishment was not going to be a light one. For it is to be remembered that Mr. Parke was sub-editor of the Star, and homed in that capacity at his the fear and hatred of the class whom their servant Hawkins was attacking. Whatever quarrel we may have had with the Star, or with Mr. Parke himself, for occasional unfairness to Socialism and Socialists, we can have nothing but praise for their part in forcing something more than mere politics upon public attention.

If Mr. Parke had been connected with any other paper than the Star—outside of declared Socialist journals—he would have been let off with a quarter of the penalty to which he has been condemned. This was the universal opinion among press-men when they heard the verdict. And that if he had been a Socialist writer the penalty had been doubled several times over I am equally confident. I do not yet know what his colleagues of the Star intend to do in the matter, but I hope that they are going to do something, and that they will allow the Radicals and Socialists of London to help them in doing it.

In the early days of the League, a then comrade raised a laugh upon one occasion by declaring that his mission in life was to smash the British Empire. He has since become an "extinct volcano," as a contributor to "a contemporary" signs himself, and has apparently neglected his mission for a long time past. But there are innumerable signs that although he is not likely to carry his threat of smashing the British Empire, the British Empire is fully capable of smashing itself, and further, that it will perform the desirable operation at no very distant date.

Despite the smooth prophecies of the Imperial Federationists, and the loud shouting of the Jingo mob, there can be no doubt in the mind of anybody who watches at all closely the course of Australian affairs that the birth of the Australian Republic is drawing very near; so near that men are counting the possibilities of repression, and preparing for a Star's Hill. As Chief Justice Lilley, of New South Wales, said the other day: "In truth, Australian Independence is in the air and in the hearts of men, and although no man can foretell the hour of its birth, its advent sooner or later is sure." It will be many a long year yet before Australia will satisfy a Socialist by its administration of public affairs; a republic with private property, it will be like France or the United States; but all the same, there will be few Socialists who will not rejoice when the—well! when the republican flag replaces the Union Jack.

Rather different will be the case of the South African Republic, which is also trembling on the verge of actuality; for, in that case the rebellion will be in defence of the right of "whacking their own nigger." Brutal as is the British treatment of all subject races, including their own working-classes, there is yet some restraint imposed by the English Government upon the cruelty of the Afrikaners towards the poor devils of natives whom they exploit. English or Dutch, Gentile or Jew, whatever the blood may be that runs in the exploiters' veins, it makes no perceptible difference in his attitude towards the "nigger." The white folk of South Africa are nearly as degraded in that respect as those of the Southern States of the Union are now, and would soon be as bad as those were before the war without any very great trouble.

After Australia and South Africa have departed— I don't know much about New Zealand—we may begin to expect the absorption of the West Indies by the United States. Canada, too, is not far off throwing in her lot with the States—and where will the Empire be then, poor thing! where will the Empire be then?

A Mr. Sidney J. Thomson wrote as follows to the Pall Mall Gazette the other day: "Some weeks ago you published an article on the Aerated Bread Company, and mentioned that the average wage of the workmen is 9s. a week, and that the company was protected by a small number of shares in the company, not at first belief this statement; but subsequent inquiries confirm its truth. It seems to me monstrous unjust that a company earning a dividend equal to 25 per cent. should be satisfied to pay its servants so poorly. It must never be forgotten that every shareholder is himself an employer, and as such is, to the extent of his holding, responsible for such wages. It is evident that he is not far from "finding salvation," and if he can only get his fellow shareholders to agree with him will have done some good in his day and generation.

Amid all the froth and splutter about Mr. Parnell as a co-representative, there has been only one utterance on the subject which was characterised by anything like sense; and that was the letter of our old friend and foe, Mr. Auberon Herbert, which appeared in the Pall Mall the other night, and which we reprint elsewhere. But then Mr. Herbert is honest and fearless, while all others who have written or spoken on the subject, being politicians, are also "formalities, out of fashion, and base flying," ready to embrace and maintain all that is, or shall be proposed, in hope of preferment.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. III.—THE GUEST HOUSE AND BREAKFAST THEREIN.

I lingered a little behind the others to have a stare at this house, which, as I have told you, stood on the site of my old dwelling. It was a long building with its gable ends turned away from the road, and long trellised windows coming rather low down in the wall that faced us. It was very handsomely built of red brick with a lead roof; and high up above the windows there ran a frieze of figure subjects in baked clay, very well executed, and designed with a force and directness which I had never noticed in modern work before. The subjects I recognised at once, and indeed was very particularly familiar with them.

However, all this I took in in a minute; for we were presently within doors, and standing in a hall with a floor of marble mosaic and an open timber roof. There were no windows on the side opposite to the river, but arches below leading into chambers, one of which showed a glimpse of a garden beyond, and above them a long space of wall gaily painted (in fresco, I thought) with similar subjects to those of the frieze outside: everything about the place was handsome and generally solid as to material; and though it was not very large (somewhat smaller than Croceby Hall perhaps), one felt in it that exhilarating sense of space and freedom which satisfactory architecture always gives to an unconscious man who is in the habit of using his eyes.

In this pleasant place, which of course I knew to be the hall of the Guest House, three young women were flitting to and fro. As they were the first of the sex I had seen on this eventful morning, I naturally looked at them very attentively, and found them at least as good as the gardens, the architecture, and the male men. As to their dress, which of course I took note of, I should say that they were decently veiled with drapery and not bunched up with millinery; that they were clothed like women, not upholtstered like arm-chairs, as most women of our time are. In short, their dress was somewhat between that of the ancient classical costume and the simpler forms of the fourteenth
century gardens, though it was clearly not an imitation of either: the trees, as they grew to another day or two, and back to the grass. As they grew to another day or two, and back to the grass, it was pleasant indeed to see them, they were so kind and happy-looking, in expression of face, so softly and well-knit of body, and thoughtfully healthy-looking and strong. All were at least comely, and one or two, with a sort of clearness that they had been freshly washed and the trees growing is only too good news;—only you know well.

At that point I suddenly remembered Dick's date, and stopped short rather confused. The eager weaver didn't notice my confusion, but I began to have a sort of vague suspicion that my friend had prepared to trample down all good manners in the pursuit of utilitarian knowledge. The fact is, I begin to think that you have so muddled your head with mathematics, and with grubbing into those idiotic old books about geometry and mechanics, that you are quite out of your depth, Mr. Smith. Really, it is about time for you to take some open-air work, so that you may clear away the cobwebs from your brain.

The weaver only laughed good-humouredly; and the girl went up to him and patted his cheek and said laughingly, "Poor fellow! he was born so."

As for me, I was a little puzzled, but I laughed also, partly for compensatory sake, and partly with pleasure at their unassuming Knighthood and good temper; and before Robert could make the excuse to me which he was getting ready, I said:

"But neighbours! (I had caught up that word), "I don't in the least think you are asking questions in your own interest, nor do I think you are putting me to any more trouble than you please; it is fun for me. I will tell you all about Epping Forest when I was a boy, if you please; and as to my age, I'm not a fine lady, you know, so why shouldn't I tell you? I'm hard on fifty-six."

Dick nodded kindly to me; but a shade of seriousness passed over the weaver's face, and he said—

"I hope you don't mind my asking, but would you tell me where your garden is?"

I was curious about such things for good reasons, literary reasons.

"Dick was clearly kicking him underneath the table; but he was not clearly under the table. He was something towards a roundness that suggested to me, I was just going to blurt out "Hammersmith," when I thought that the impertinence of all, of questions that would lead us into; so I took time to invent a lie with circumstance, guarded by a little bit to grow as large, but I have not seen the place now for many years, except once when we Leaguers went a-plundering to High Bred. I was very much shocked then to see how it was built-over and altered; and the other day we heard that the philanthropists were going to landscape.

"Hold hard, Bob! this questioning of guests don't go. Why, much learning is spoiling you. You remind me of the radical cobblers in the Guildhall, who, when one of them who had been away for a time, Smith had been wont to grow, but very little the produce of an old country garden. She hurried back thence into the buttery, and came back once more with a delicately made glass, into which she put the flowers and set in the midst of our table. One of the others, who had run off also, then came back with a big cabbage-leaf filled with strawberries, some of them barely ripe, and said as she set them on the table, "Well, now; I thought of that before I got up this morning; but, looking at the stranger here getting into your boat, Dick, put it out of my head; so that I was not before all the blackbirds: however, there are a few about as good as you will get them anywhere in Hammer- smith.

Robert puttered her on the head in a friendly manner; and we fell to on our breakfast, which was simple enough but most delicately cooked, and set on the table with much direness. The bread was particularly good, and the blackbirds were very kind to the one, and gave them darkly-coloured, sweet-tasting farmhouse loaf, which was most to my liking, to the thin pipe-stems of wheaten crust, such as I have eaten in Turin.

As when putting the first mouthful into my mouth, my eye caught a carved and gilded inscription on the paneling, behind what we should have called the High Table in an Oxford college hall, and a familiar name in it forced me to read it through. Thus it ran:

"Guests are neighbours, on the site of this Guest-hall once stood the lecture-room of the Hammermith Branch of the Socialist League. Drink a glass to the memory! May 1862."

"It is difficult to tell you how I felt as I read these words, and I suppose my face showed how much I had been moved, for both my friends looked curiously at me, and there was silence between us for a little while. Presently the weaver, who was so scrupulously, so mannered a man as the ferryman, said to me rather awkwardly:

"Well, I don't know what to call you: is there any indisclosure in asking you your name?"

"I think you might mind my asking, but would you tell me where your garden is?"

I was curious about such things for good reasons, literary reasons.

"Dick was clearly kicking him underneath the table; but he was not clearly under the table. He was something towards a roundness that suggested to me, I was just going to blurt out "Hammersmith," when I thought that the impertinence of all, of questions that would lead us into; so I took time to invent a lie with circumstance, guarded by a little bit to grow as large, but I have not seen the place now for many years, except once when we Leaguers went a-plundering to High Bred. I was very much shocked then to see how it was built-over and altered; and the other day we heard that the philanthropists were going to landscape.
The way nowadys. From what I have read of the nineteenth century (and I have read a good deal), it is clear to me that this is a kind of reversal for the stupidity of that day, which despised everybody who could use his hands. But Dick, old fellow, Xe good news! Don't overdo it!

"Come, now," said Dick, "am I likely to? Am I not the most toolsome of all? My difficulties have been so long as to make me feel I don't make me learn mathematics, or go into your new science of aesthetics, and let me do some practical aesthetics with my gold and silver, and I have the pick and the nice little hammer! But, hillo! here comes another questioner, and now your poor guest. I say, Bob, you must help me to defend him now."

"Here, Boffin," he cried out, after a pause; "here we are, if you must have it!"

William Morris.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

GERMANY.

The German Social-Democratic party has sustained a heavy loss in the person of comrade Johannes Wedde, who died suddenly last week at Libbeck. He was a clever poet, full according to the tables, of the works of the party, being signed by the nom de plume of "Silvanus." At the time of the suppression of the last edition of the "Bargeld," and when all the Socialists who actually were writing for this press were expelled from that town, it was Wedde who at once started the "Hamburger Bürgerzeitung." A little later "Silvanus" brought, however, the beautiful leaflet which he sent to the prison of Bremen, which is the most well-known of the comrades of Bremen.

Another misfortune has befallen the German Social-Democratic party: Ignaz Auer, formerly member of the Reichstag, has become insane, and it is said that there is but little hope for his recovery.

The strike of the miners in the lower Silesia district and Westphalia, which last struck in their thousands, have now put forth a demand for an increase of 50 per cent in their wages and for an eight hour day. This strike has thrown thousands of families off their living, and is the result of their suffering and despair.

The miners of the basin of Charleroi, after a hard four weeks' struggle, have won the victory over the coalowners: 39,000 workers of Jumet-Golsart, Gilly, Dampremy, Chatelle, Chatelet-Suigny, Soeur, Fleurus, Fontaine-l'Évêque, Marcinelle, Montaingout, Nivelles, Stavelot, Pont-à-Cloche, and many others, have compelled their greedy exploiters to reduce the work hours from eleven to ten, and to consent to an increase of their wages from 100 francs to the raise of the prices of coal during the year. The miners have been substantially supported by the Socialists of the "Voyage," Ghost, as well as all the branches of the Belgian Working-men's Party. The cause of the workers was certainly a good one. In order to prove it, we need only glance for a moment at the following figures: Sheer unbroken victory for the Belgians.

From January to December 1899, and then compare those with the subsequent increase of wages that has been realised by the workers from 1889 to 1899.

The average daily wages of the miners for 1889 and 1899 has been as follows (one franc equal 10d.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of City</th>
<th>Price of Shares</th>
<th>Name of City</th>
<th>Price of Shares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM.

[At midnight preceding the morning of his execution, Albert R. Patten's voice rang out clear and distinct, as he was led to the gallows. It was a hot night—\(34.73\)° F. The execution throughout the whole coal-basin is becoming very serious, and the strikers seem to be utterly disheartened at the recent compromises. Numerous secret meetings are being held, and it is said that the Ministers on the 19th decided to send gendarmes and cavalry to the various spots where the strike has been open after the last attempt. The outlook is altogether gloomy.]

On the other hand, the strike in the Liège coal district has now completely terminated, but it is asserted that if the miners of the Charleroi basin resort to general strike the situation of Liège will not be made any better.

At Antwerp, where the Socialist movement has made during the last two years a very considerable progress, the Sailors' Union, numbering nearly one thousand members, has made formal address to the Socialist party.

HOLLAND.

Our Anarchist comrades at Rotterdam publish a new organ for the defence of the workers' interests, under the title of "Arbeidersdoelen" (The Workers' Organs). The offices are at Havenstraat, 108, Rotterdam.

VICTOR DAVE.

BELGIUM.

The miners of the basin of Charleroi, after a hard four weeks' struggle, have won the victory over the coalowners: 39,000 workers of Jumet-Golsart, Gilly, Dampremy, Chatelle, Chatel-Suigny, Soeur, Fleurus, Fontaine-l'Évêque, Marcinelle, Montaingout, Nivelles, Stavelot, Pont-à-Cloche, and many others, have compelled their greedy exploiters to reduce the work hours from eleven to ten, and to consent to an increase of their wages from 100 francs to the raise of the prices of coal during the year. The miners have been substantially supported by the Socialists of the "Voyage," Ghost, as well as all the branches of the Belgian Working-men's Party. The cause of the workers was certainly a good one. In order to prove it, we need only glance for a moment at the following figures: Sheer unbroken victory for the Belgians.

From January to December 1899, and then compare those with the subsequent increase of wages that has been realised by the workers from 1889 to 1899.

The average daily wages of the miners for 1889 and 1899 has been as follows (one franc equal 10d.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of City</th>
<th>Price of Shares</th>
<th>Name of City</th>
<th>Price of Shares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have received the "Trade and Labour Advocate of Sydney (N.S.W.)," which, so far as we can tell from the numbers to hand, is a thoroughly sound labour paper on trade-union lines. It is well filled with information on trade-union matters, and gives a good deal of space to the meetings of the various trade organisations.

SOCIALISM IN LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE.—On Saturday January 11th a conference was held at the rooms of the Liverpool Socialist Society, to discuss the advisability of forming a union of the various Socialist bodies of Lancashire and Yorkshire, for the purpose of arranging for the interchange of public speakers, and generally to consider the best means of carrying on a more effective propaganda. Delegates were present from Sheffield, Salford, Blackburn, Rochdale, and Liverpool. Comrade Reeves (Liverpool) was elected chairman, and some discussion took place as to the proposition of action; after which comrade W. H. Chapman (Liverpool) proposed: "That in the opinion of the delegates interested in the various western counties Socialists, to be called 'The North-Western Counties Socialist Union,'" Comrade Sharples (Blackburn) seconded the resolution.

The conference then further resolved that comrade W. H. Chapman (Salford) and others of the assembled delegates, the following amendment was adopted: "We will not, for the present, consider any action which is detrimental to the interests of Socialists propaganda to facilitate the interchange of speakers between the different centres, at once proceed to draw up a list of possible speakers and make the best possible arrangements in effective to that decision." The amendment having been placed upon the.<ref>trobo</ref>