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NOTES ON NEWS.

There is, as everybody can see who wastes his time reading the capitalist papers, a great ponder going on about our bargain with Germany, as to what we, each of the two countries, consider our property. Just so, two highwaymen armed and masked (we are the most barefaced about the masks) are finding the phrase "trade" lock-sourdly on each other for a while, and then see the necessity of coming to some sort of agreement as to their action; and having come to the agreement each regrets that he has not bested his brother robber a little more; and each has friends to twit him with his folly, and enemies to inform the world in which he moves that he is a dunderhead and a dastard.

I think I have heard, or seen it written, that nations were got together and grown in order to afford mutual protection to their members. If it was a long time ago, and perhaps the way to find the phrase "trade" by lock-sourdly on each other for a while, and then see the necessity of coming to some sort of agreement as to their action; and having come to the agreement each regrets that he has not bested his brother robber a little more; and each has friends to twit him with his folly, and enemies to inform the world in which he moves that he is a dunderhead and a dastard.

Then also, we must have Stanley's opinion of the said bargain, and, indeed, wait with trembling anxiety till he has pronounced before we go for the Salisbury government neck or nothing. The sense of relief shown by the Daily News, for instance, when it finds that that great and sympathetic soul, and not actually constipated, the transaction, is delicious to witness. Stanley has spoken and we can be happy.

Well, well! we have had several "uncrowned kings" in my time, and Stanley, it seems, is the last of them, and may be said almost to have usurpt down to the English Channel. Gone from his throne with not the least idea that his filibustering majesty keeps up the traditions of kingship pretty well. The African massacres and the hanging of unwilling "servants of civilized nations" are quite in the spirit of the trade in the trade. And surely the adoration of this last "uncrowned one" shows us pretty well what would be the fate reserved for persons home inconvenient to the commercial aristocracy, if only the latter dared. Black men in Africa were not killed because they were black, but because they were weak.

We do so far good: but what reward does Mr. Gladstone propose for these treasures that he praises so much? Well, chiefly that they shall be allowed to magnify that noblest of virtues, thrift. That is, that they, by compulsion (for that is what it comes to) shall half-starve themselves and their families in order to get a very small account at a savings-bank, so that they may pay half-starvation in order to keep those who are doing the saving, in short, these admirable public servants, as Mr. Gladstone, surely not without warrant, considers them, are to be kindly allowed to pay the poor-rate which the shareholders would otherwise have to pay.

Please to observe, meantime, that thrift is the art of thriving. If that be so, I cannot call the saving railway men thrify, for they are but poor professors of the "art of thriving." They might be so much more thrifty that they could compel the shareholders, who contribute no loan to the business of carrying passengers and goods, to hand over to them their ill-gotten gains, wrong out of the labour of these poor useful men. That would be thriving. Their present thrift, which Mr. Gladstone prays so, is not thriving, but starving; and no one starves except a usurer or a slave.

Mr. Gladstone talks about the eloquence of figures. A hundred and ten hours a week, at fifteen shillings a week, it seems, the wages paid to the "cleaners." Is there no eloquence in those figures then? To think that half the United Kingdom should bow down before this uncrowned king, and for what? What shall we do? What is the use of eloquence? It is meaningless. Perhaps he was once a man: what he really is now is an official, whose public life is simply a constant conventional masquerade of facts. To take a clerk in the most arid office, Carlyle calls him an unaccommodious hypocrite. I do not know that the description can be bettered. W. M.

Our Jingo press does not exactly know whether to be grieved or pleased concerning the recent division of African territory between England and Germany. It is doubtful whether we have got the best part of the swag or not. But why does it not take the word of its Stanley, who is in the know? "Half a loaf," they say added to the glorious British empire! O Joodah! It takes the great explorer's breath away. He is "electrified." He is so pleased to find that there is a greater sounder in this world than himself—our worthy Premier, who negotiated the "treaty." Stanley, the piratical mis