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NOTES ON NEWS.

So the great battle has begun! Even the dock strike will pale into insignificance compared to that of the coal-miners, if only these latter will hold together, and show anything like the courage, self-sacrifice, and solidarity of the dockers. Their demand is a moderate one—5 per cent. advance now and 5 per cent. more in July. This a few mine-owners have granted, but the very large majority have absolutely refused; a good many have asked for arbitration, but for the most part there is a determination to fight the matter through and come to death-grips with organised labour. The fight began Wednesday last week in Nottingham, and it has been spreading over the country since as the notices expired, until there are over a quarter of a million workers out.

Coal experts, who are not colliery-owners, admit that the men are not only entitled, even as things go, to the rise, but that the owners can well afford to give it. However, the latter know that sooner or later they will be compelled to try a fall with the men if they would retain their power of exploitation, and as the present time is a good time they may as well force it on and have it over. A good time for them that is; and so, whatever be the misery or mischief they may inflict on the community, the mandate has been given and the fight begun.

As the *Pall Mall's* correspondent says:

"The coalowners feel that they must try their strength with the men, and that there cannot possibly be a better time than the present. The spring is coming on apace, and the demand for gas coals and house coals lessens every day. The Baltic does not open fully for six weeks. The demand for iron is not so brisk. Under these circumstances, the colliery-owners see that if they give way now, prices will immediately relapse. It must also be borne in mind that years have now elapsed since any serious strike took place, and that a new generation of young miners has arisen who do not know the privations and miseries which a strike entails, and these young miners are the energetic and bellicose and determined element. And the owners feel that if the fight does not come off now 20 per cent. may be demanded in September, and could not well be resisted then; whereas, if the fight is forced on now, and the men's funds are exhausted and their union weakened or broken up, they won't have the stomach for a further battle in the autumn."

However, the men say that in spite of the time of the year they can hold out, and it is quite certain that if they can do so and hang well together they must win. They have announced that they can go three weeks or more without strike pay, and if this be true, and their reserve funds be what they are said to be, there is no reason to fear the collapse of the strike for a couple of months to come. If it does break down before, or even then, it will be because they are not united. There are large districts which are standing aloof altogether, and there are other doubtful ones which may rat if the thing looks at all like going against them; so that the result is far from certain. Meanwhile, so long as the struggle does last, the miners should have the enthusiastic support of every workman in every trade, and should be helped and encouraged in every possible way.

One thing which they will have to face is, that in spite of Mr. Gladstone's expressed approval of the strike as a weapon, the governing classes as a whole are exasperated by the frequency and effect with which it has been used of late. As may be plainly seen in Liverpool just now, where an ostentatious display of military force is being made, they would only be too pleased to have a fairly good excuse for "quieting" discontent. A little blood-letting would cow the mob, they think; and they will go in for it, too, if they can only manage to work up a case for it, a case which would secure public opinion on their side, the "public opinion" they care about.

But if they do this, they could do nothing better for the progress of revolutionary ideas. To repeat Peterloo would be to bring out in a condensed and dramatic fashion the facts of the commercial system, to sear them into the popular soul as twenty years of our talking would

not do. Even with "Bloody Sunday" and a hundred other examples of class-hatred before their eyes, English workmen do not realise what sorry slaves they are. They are so used, in towns, anyhow, to being bullied and beaten by the police, that a little extra tyranny has no effect if only it is manifested in the familiar form. Let the bullet and the sabre supplant the baton, the red coat replace the blue, and the rattle of the musketry will roll from one end of the land to the other and the swish of the sword be heard in every wind that blows.

It would mean despair—and the politics of despair! One can but marvel at the insensate folly which would provoke of set purpose the spirit which spoke in the Chartist motto, "If you Peterloo us, we will Moscow you!" or that of the men who made the "Man with a Match-box" a byword of terror. You are not likely to pay much heed to what *Commonweal* says, Messieurs our masters! If you were, enemies though you be, one might ask you to reflect on the one-sided battle you would be waging, if once the masses of the people were really driven to despair. You might recall, with advantage, the fact that the have-not has nothing but his miserable life to lose; that there is a good many of him, so many, you can't kill all, and the more you kill the more embittered will be those that remain; that if he can do nothing else, every insignificant unit in the mass can manage to *destroy*—there is none too feeble for *that*. And everything is yours, and thus he can destroy nothing without injuring you; and then you are not, like him, lost in the immensity of the mob, you are set on high for a mark, and can be readily hit at.

Just call a halt, O sapient rulers! and keep your soldiers from firing on us; go on fooling us and don't try forcing us; or, you will find that even we English workmen, degraded as we are, down-trodden as we are, willing and cowardly slaves as we are, have still the capability of the proverbial worm for turning, and when we do so can make things so warm for you that you will be "sorry you spoke." S.

It seems that Bismark really has resigned, and yet the world hangs together and has not been dispersed into space. Exultation at the disappearance from active life of this most prosaic of all tyrants, this tyrant of a commercial age, is checked by the doubt as to whether it is not merely a theatrical stroke; as to whether he may not, after all, govern safely and irresponsibly under the veil of resignation. On the other hand, if circumstances have driven him to resign, it is once more a clear enough token of the advance which Socialism is making. Let us hope that it is so. W. M.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. IX. (continued).—CONCERNING LOVE.

THE old man grew quite serious again. Said he: "I do remember about that strange piece of baseless folly, the result, like all other follies of the period, of the hideous class tyranny which then obtained. What do we think of it now? you would say. My friend, that is a question easy to answer. How could it possibly be but that maternity should be highly honoured amongst us? Surely it is a matter of course that the natural and necessary pains which the mother must go through, form a bond of union between man and woman, an extra stimulus to love and affection between them, and that this is universally recognised. For the rest, remember that all the *artificial* burdens of motherhood are now done away with. A mother has no longer any mere sordid anxieties for the future of her children. They may indeed turn out better or worse; they may disappoint her highest hopes; such anxieties as these are a part of the mingled pleasure and pain which goes to make up the life of mankind. But at least she is spared the fear (it was most commonly the certainty) that artificial disabilities would make her children something less than men and women: she knows