NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

Mr. John Bright fairly tries out one's attempts to understand how a once vigorous and combative man can fall so far behind in the times he lives in, and his friends ought to put pen, ink, and paper out of his way. It is absurd to argue with a man who has fallen into the habit of attack on the classic poets, since Milton had not the least sympathy for anything that was not classical; but except as showing Mr. Bright's inaccessibility to facts, and the narrow and conventional turn of his mind, that is of no great importance, since it is only a question of a slight alteration in the education dealt out to the middle-classes at modern Oxford; and whatever alteration is made in that education, it can for the better only be done by a cramming more than a cramming mass of middle-class persons to fit them for their competition for places in the hangman group of the well-to-do; a commercial education in the full sense of the word.

But his letter on depressed trade and high wages! Traders' unionism and Protection are still the enemies to him; and a fall in wages is the hope which he holds out to the British workman as a remedy for depression of trade! Nor does he seem to have considered how far the fall of wages is to go, nor how much the "concessions" of the Notting-ham workmen may influence the livelihood of their brethren elsewhere; he says nothing but a signing imitation of manufacturer's contempt against the world and "employing" labour as long as it is convenient for them to do so, and no remedy for the workmen, but always making it convenient for themselves, and at the cost of any amount of suffering to themselves—the Quaker's peace!

Mr. Bright is not likely to read these lines, nor would he heed them if he did; but for the benefit of any of our readers who may have some lingering confidence, not in Mr. Bright, but in the middle-class democracy of which he was once a demi-god, one may say this, that when the British traders' unions understand the necessity of traders' unionism being international, they will find some better remedy for depression of trade than that the wealth-producers should quietly starve for the benefit of non-producers.

Lady John Manners has been discoursing on the benefits derivable from hard work. Well, Socialists are in agreement with her ladyship, if she accept the proviso that the work be for the worker's own benefit and not for the profit of an expeditor. It is worth consideration, in passing, that members of the class which owns and controls all things, when preaching the gospel of toil to a proletarian audience, forget that it is they themselves as a class that keep a large number of their bearers from carrying out their proscriptions.

To "give employment" is a function supposed to be fulfilled by capitalists and "upper ranks" fall generally. Shall it not be counted to them rather that they give unemployment? For, were all hands set to fill all mouths and cover all backs, and having done this to rest and amuse themselves, where would room be for lack of labour or of leisure, and where would the modern logic, over-production, come in?

What binds the doing it but class-control of all the material resources of the community? The competition of the workers to labour for an employer and cease when he is satisfied?

The loads of rubbish that are being thrown upon the market just now by enterprising providers of Christmas cards, and books, and gifts and so on, are apt illustrations of the waste of labour, want of taste, and contentedness with machine-work of the worst kind, that are induced by commercialism.

At the same time the reckless disregard of effective demand, the uncursurpable competition in price and size and "novelty," never in real merit, and the ever increasing exploitation of the labour employed, are equally as marked as the artistic degradation; and naturally so, for they cause it.

Now that the Government, in prosecuting Mr. Dillon, proclaiming meetings, etc., has proven how definitely it sides with the landlords in the Irish rent-war, it is well to note the successive stages through which the affair has recently passed, and how in this as in all revolutionary movements the fears and prejudices of the possessing class fight on the side of the advance.

When Mr. Gladstone's bill for buying out the landlords was before the nation, a most hideous outcry was raised by all the crowd of exploiters and their parasites. Nothing was too bad to be said of the man who unconsciously worked as the landlords' friend and sought to prevent Mr. Bright's bridge over the 48. The landlords would not be "robbed" by having their power to plunder exchanged for a set sum of hard cash.

Again came forth a friend to aid them, did they but know it, in the person of Mr. Parnell, who did at least attempt to give them a fixed rent, to be settled by appeal to regularly constituted "legal authority." Of course did the employers crow a compromise favourable indeed compared to any they would now be accorded.

Terror-stricken before the looming form of the Social Revolution, the Reaction cast about for an expedient to check oppression, and will not awake to its error till it is too late for retreat. Thus does even the Reaction itself help toward narrowing and accentuating the issue, and helping to defeat well-meaning but futile efforts at compromise, force on the folk to simple unfaltering expropriation.

The Nationals are going the right way to work with the law-and-order ruffians. Instead of treating the police seriously, they seek in all ways to make them ridiculous. At the Sligo meetings the speakers and people played at hide and seek with the authorities, appearing and disappearing, and making the Constabulary chase them up and down the hill and the bank. The "proclaimers" meeting regarded as several, at which jury-packing was vehemently denounced, despite the Government. A strong blow has been struck in this way. As United Ireland says: "A government may survive being dishonoured; a government that is both defiled and derided is done for."

H. HALLIDAY SPARLING.

SOCIALISM IN BRADFORD.

Socialism is progressing very slowly here. How is this? Are the people not intelligent enough? One would not think so, since they have a free library with branches in each district, though I learned that the books most desired are novels, and a bookseller the other day said to me in confidence that publications of any degree of thought do not take, but there was a good sale of "Something to Read," and similar trash. A bad sign this. But, after all, it would be rather unfair to judge the intelligence of a whole working population by the tests of a comparatively few. And it is not the hard-working man or woman that hunts our libraries for lying novels and sea-adventure stories. This idle "recreation of the mind" is left to more or less foremen and hallown lads and ladies of the ignorant.

When a man has toiled thirteen hours at "night-work" without even half-an-hour's rest for a meal, he has little desire for reading, not to speak of studying; his worn-out body demands rest, and his "recreation" consists in a pint of beer and a pipe of tobacco. The married woman that goes to the mill, and has to leave her little one with an old neighbour who nurses it for a few pence, will find plenty of work to do after her day's toil, but she will find no time for books of any description.

The indifference towards anything outside their daily toil is greatest here amongst this class of workers; if they have any opinion at all upon matters political and social it is derived from the local press, which manufactures and sells "public opinion" to anybody who pays for it. Those people are not within our reach yet. To press and spread our principles we must go to those who already show a keener interest in public questions, or who hold liberal views upon social questions, however near-sighted their actions may be. Here we find our opponents, here our sympathisers, but at present more of the former than of the latter, which has its cause in mere technical matters.

Our success would be far greater were it not for the scarcity of means at our disposal to push our propaganda amongst the more ignorant portion of the working classes. There is a host of speakers, men that are not only able enough but also sufficiently independent to appear in public on our behalf. The fear of loss of employment keeps many an intelligent fellow from joining our ranks or advocating our independent opinions, on social questions especially. Where your em-