

NORTHERN NOTES.

At all our out-door Socialist meetings here, police in uniform and in plain clothes, form no inconsiderable portion of our audiences. They seem to be deeply interested in our doctrine, and with a commendable desire to fix our teaching accurately in their minds, they are not above taking notes of the more salient points of our discourses.

If Socialists in this country cherish the delusion that they will receive any merciful consideration at the hands of the bourgeoisie when they become demonstrative, it is not the fault of the *Glasgow Herald*. This advertisement-medium discussing a few days ago the American labour riots, made the following pronouncement: "They [the Socialists] have constituted themselves the pests of society all over the world and all the world will make common cause in completely annihilating them. One may tolerate the presence of a reptile which is merely obnoxious, but the moment it becomes mischievous we crush it."

Heroic visions of platoons of police and regiments of soldiers dashing down by-lanes upon obscure meeting-places must have inflamed the mind of the writer when with "set teeth" and "flashing eye" he penned the above threatening sentences. Let not our comrades, however, be in too great a hurry to adopt the advice of the brave and sagacious Goschen, who, when John Morley suggested the possibility of the dynamitards invading our shores again, should the Government Irish Bill be rejected, nobly replied that such threats had no terror for politicians such as him—if it came to the worst, they could make their wills, appoint their trustees, and do their duty. "All the world" has endeavoured to crush many movements of much lower vitality and much less bulk than modern Socialism, and has signally failed. Indeed, "all the world" has invariably come off the worse from such encounters; and it is next to quite certain, that, if it attempts to crush and annihilate Socialism "all the world" will not long survive to lament the indiscretion of the performance. There are certain "obnoxious reptiles" which themselves possess rather a dangerous crushing capacity, and which sensible men prefer wisely to let alone.

The re-election of Mr. Pearce as Tory member for Govan has excited much disgust amongst Democrats here. Mr. Pearce is the principal partner in the Fairfield Shipbuilding Company, Govan, world-known by its late name of "John Elder and Co." He employs when busy over 4000 men; at present, however, his "slips" are almost empty. It is notorious that he got into the last Parliament on his promises that if returned, he would secure contracts and bring abundant work to the district. This he not only failed to do, but immediately after his election he discharged the greater portion of the hands he had taken on during his candidature. At the late election the promise of work was again one of the chief inducements held out to the electors to vote for him—and he was again returned.

Radicals are naturally highly incensed at what they term the "wholesale bribery" of the affair, and designate his supporters as "Esau" and "political hirelings." For myself, I must confess that when I learnt the result of the poll, the stereotyped d with the long dash was on my lips. On reflection, however, I do not feel inclined to blame the Govan artisans much. After all, there is too much political Calvinism amongst the workers in Scotland. Absolute faith in Liberal Governments is esteemed an essential part of every workman's political creed. He is expected to vote for Liberals, though how Liberals are going to do him any good he has not the remotest idea. The benefits of Liberal administration are to him as purely a matter of faith as the doctrines in the confession of faith or the shorter catechism.

It is, therefore, perhaps not an ill-omen that there are to be found workmen still heretical enough to vote for bread-and-butter rather than a political myth. Their belief in Mr. Pearce's ability to procure them work, and therefore some measure of food and comfort, may be sadly misplaced it is true; but none the less the disposition to recognise that the obtaining of food and comfort is the first duty of man, is surely more rational than perpetually sacrificing the interests of themselves and their families on the altar of a political superstition. If workmen could be brought to regard politics less, and their personal comfort and happiness more, the principles of Socialism would make greater headway.

Could we believe that Mr. Goschen was defeated in Edinburgh upon his merits as a politician, his rejection might afford us a ray of hope that the people were at last becoming sick of the gospel of gold and paternal government. There is, however, too much reason to believe that the arch-apostle of money-mongering and the rights of property lost his seat not because the people repudiated his notions or his "record," but because he had opposed, and had therefore been renounced, by their oracle Mr. Gladstone.

Amongst the mysteries of our civilisation, one is—where do the unemployed betake themselves in the summer? The unemployed have for the time ceased to clamour at our city's gates for food or work, and their motley demonstrations have ceased. Have they withdrawn themselves into some mysterious holes and dens, to come forth again in the winter and assail our ears with their complaints? Trade is no better now than it was three months ago; and so far from taking on hands, masters are still diminishing their employes in almost every branch of

industry. Where, then, are the vast masses of unemployed which we know must exist—unless they have died out? They give hardly any outward token of their being in our midst. If they were birds or beasts, ornithologists and zoologists would eagerly discuss the question at their meetings, but being merely human beings, nobody apparently has any interest in their "habits" and still less in their "preservation."

The ways of the capitalist press are past finding out. The *Glasgow Evening Citizen* periodically expatiates on the "extreme folly" of Socialist theories, and always with a plaintive reference to our comrade Morris as "the idle singer of an empty day," "a dreamer of dreams," etc. Whenever a Socialist disturbance takes place in France, Belgium, America, or London—or when Lord Wemyss makes a Quixotic onslaught on the "Socialistic" propensities of Liberal governments—the *Citizen* must lug in our friend Morris somehow. Occasionally when he lectures in London or Manchester it gives a three-inch report of his lecture as an excuse for an eighteen-inch leader grossly misrepresenting his teaching. But when Morris comes to Glasgow—to the *Citizen's* own door, as it were—it virtuously refuses to report a line of what he says, or notice his presence in any form. Morris gave three lectures in Glasgow the week before last, but the *Citizen* never mentioned the fact to its readers. Strangely enough, however, he had no sooner gone back to London than it favoured us with a paragraph report of his lecture there on the "Aims of Art." Luckily the pressure of election matter saved us another eighteen-inch Cassandra shriek against a doctrine it does not understand, and which it takes jealous care its readers shall know as little about as possible.

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REVIEW.

CASHIEL BYRON'S PROFESSION. By George Bernard Shaw. Modern Press, 13 Paternoster Row.

A MERE novel bearing on the face of it no controversial opinion, might not seem a suitable subject for review in these columns, but even apart from the author's well-known views and his power as a Socialist lecturer, a Socialist will find much in 'Cashiel Byron's Profession' to interest him as a Socialist. Everything that Mr. Shaw writes must bear with it an indictment against our sham society, and it would be harder to find more incisive criticism of its follies than in this book. Perhaps, to a reader not a Socialist, and therefore not in the secret, it would seem to be nothing more serious than a fantastic piece written on pessimistic lines, as all clever modern novels are, and with no further aim in it; but anyone must be forced to admit that it fulfils the first function of a novel by amusing the reader. As in all literary works of art, one is bound to accept its special atmosphere, which doubtless at first might rather confuse the ordinary reader, since the plot which one has to accept as possible consists of the development of the love at first sight of a very rich and refined young lady for a prize-fighter. The said heroine is not very much alive, is rather the embodiment of the author's view of life than a real personage; but the hero is most carefully studied and very successful, and every one of the minor characters is highly finished and natural. Indeed, Mr. Shaw gives very good penn'orths in the matter of invention of incident, and is almost reckless in the care which he bestows on his scenes, as witness the sparring-match before the "African King" in the Agricultural Hall, or the burst of confused excitement on studious solitude after Byron's great fight with Paradise. Mr. Shaw sees his scenes clearly and accurately; indeed more after the manner of a painter than a dramatic writer. This is a quality which is much rarer than is generally supposed in these days of word-painting. It is probably a defect which naturally goes with it that the scenes are, as far as their artistic effect goes, isolated and lacking in the power that accumulation gives: the whole story rather leaves off than comes to an end, also. However, this is a defect which it shares with all novels of this generation that have any pretence to naturalism. As Mr. Shaw is quite successful in establishing his claim to keen observation and vivid representation, one must not quarrel with him for not attaining to what is mostly beyond the aim of a modern novel, but which both Scott and Dickens now and then touched—the unity and completeness of a great drama. Whatever is attempted in 'Cashiel Byron' is done conscientiously and artistically.

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LITERARY NOTICES.

The *American Celt* is one of the best of Irish-American papers, and also takes an advanced stand upon labour matters.

The *People's Friend*, of Madras, is a large eight-page weekly, devoted to the social and political education of the people. It contains very sensible articles, and should exercise a good influence upon the vast population it addresses.

The National Executive Committee of the Socialistic Labor Party in America have published a series of educational pamphlets, some in German and others in English. One of the latest is "Socialism and Anarchism," by Dr. Douai. They announce for publication in October Frederick Engel's "The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844."

La Citoyenne (Women's Suffrage Journal, Paris) commits the error, common among the advocates of Women's Suffrage, of standing apart and discoursing on the one question with a certain bitterness, ignoring the fact that the woman question is only a part—quite inseparable—of the great whole; that the "worn-out, rotten thing, the State," will have to be indeed re-formed altogether before partial wrongs can be righted. Men and women must work hand-in-hand for the Freeing of Labour, or the movement will never