NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

Lords, generals, barons, justices, doctors, aldermen all, gathered to dine, capitalist-fashin, in celebration of the Cab Drivers Benevolent Association. Grand and inspiriting news for the cab-drivers. No less than thirty-eight aged or infirm cabmen, some, possibly aged and infirm, receive annuities of a whole £20 a year, payable (with wise foresight of the habitual recklessness of the working-classes) by monthly instalments. Some of the thirty-eight have driven cabs for more than fifty years. Quite one-third of the thirty-eight are rheumatic from bad weather, and another one-third disabled by accidents.

Pleasing, in these days of want of thrift among the "lower classes," to find this magnificent institution, producing such magnificent results, is partly self-supporting. Much of the fund for giving the thirty-eight their huge annuities, has been squeezed out of the meagre earnings of the cab-drivers themselves. But, as the newspapers feelingly put it, the too small to allow of annuities without the generous (sic) support of a benevolent (sic) public.

The workers and would-be if they could workers of Whitechapel and Mile-end and, had this week quite irresistable temptations to holiday-making. No that every one of worn-out life and limb and of mind sick of overwork, homsick for a little rest and peace not that every other-day one, in the summer, of warmth and sunshine, making the city air more than. These were, as usual. But added to these and making temptation quite irresistible, was the presence of royalty. So those who were out of work came forth and made quite a respectable crowd from Aldgate eastward, whilst behind this fringe of destitute idlers, within the hard-pressed houses and the multitudinous dense side-streets their desolate brother and sisters toiled on as usual. These were making first the equivalent of their own means of subsistence, then that of means of subsistence of the crowd cheering mechanically or as mechanically silent in the streets, then all that surplus-value which makes alike possible royal pageants and destitute crowds, within and without.

Soldiers, capitalists, and priests were all present. Prayers and hymns were said and sung. And then the Beaumont Trustees, addressing the Prince, told him and so much of the world in general as shown to listen how the People’s Palace is in very truth the People’s Palace. It is no gift of Mr. Barber Beaumont, or of the Draper’s Company, or of the Duke of Westminster, or of the Earl of Rosebery. The £75,000 have, every penny, been produced by the people, and the interest on this that is to keep the palace going, after it has built the palace, will come, every penny, out of the unpaid labour of the working-classes. Verily, it is the People’s Palace. They build it, they pay for the building of it, they will maintain it, and some stray few of them will have their sodden lives touched a little, here and there, by its influence.

Even the Prince of Wales calls the East End “this important district of the metropolis.” But its full importance he probably does not quite grasp. Yet many a man and woman there could tell him, had he ears to hear, that the real importance of that land of labour and of suffering is in this. It is the type of all places where production is going on, and where the workers are exploited for the maintenance of the privileged. It is also the type of all places where this tremendous truth is slowly dawning on men’s minds. And from it, and hundreds like it, will come forth the irresistible voice of Labour, chanting at last its own, bidding him and such as he

"Come down, be done with, cease, give o'er, Hide thyself, strive not, be no more."

One Sir George Bowen has been lucubrating at Oxford on behalf of the colonists. "The England’s trade—the bulwark of England’s greatness, of course—fell off with the foreign nations, it increased with the colonies, her own children." Doubtless. And then sets in with the colonies, as with foreign nations, the era of competition, and the weakness go to the wall as inevitably when both combatants speak English as when they use different tongues. Sir George Bowen was at Oxford, and the atmosphere of the place might have reminded him of certain classical cases of the relation between parents and offspring, very apt when England and her colonies are in the relation of a parent and her children, and Satan devised his or they would have devoured him.

The same noble "Sir" could only feel that "if he had been an Irishman he should have looked upon it as a most degrading thing to have a course suggested that would have seved him from the history and association of the grandest empire that ever existed.” If Sir George had been an Irishman (thank the powers, he is not), he would have longed for such a severance, as a slave longs for the breaking of the chain that binds him to the chariot-wheels of a brutal conqueror.

A LETTER FROM SCOTLAND.

On Tuesday 22nd I found myself at Arbroath, a pleasant stone-built town of some 20,000 inhabitants on the German Ocean, the original of “Fairport” in Scott’s “Antiquary,” the remains of a magnificent church and abbey dominating the homely houses. The industry practised there is sail-cloth making, and it is in a very dismal condition at present. There was much suffering there in the past winter. In a walk that I took with my host (a Free Kirk minister and a Socialist), we got into conversation with a field-labourer who was resting from his job of harrowing at a field’s end. I should premise, for the benefit of our English readers, that Scottish field-labourers are hired by the half-year, and receive their “meal-and-milk,” lodging in a “boothy”—or a not too luxurious pig-stye—and a sum of money. This friend, who was a brisk and intelligent young man, told us that wages were low, and that he was now getting £29 for the half-year, instead of £32 as he used to receive. He also told us, perhaps unnecessarily, that he could not save out of this splendid salary. I was told afterwards that wages had fallen back to what they were ten years ago, at which time they had risen suddenly. A foreman, our friend told us, was now getting £28 per annum, which used to be the wages of a full private labourer.

In the evening I lectured to an audience of upwards of 600 very attentive persons, mostly of the working-class. They cheered me heartily, and took the points well. There was a goodly attendance on the platform of the committee who had organised the meeting, and who were chiefly co-operators. Questions being asked for, I only got one, from the irrepressible temperance champion, who was received with some laughter. In fact, the meeting was rather hurried up at the end, as there was no gas and the light began to fade into the midsummer twilight, which is all the darkness of those northern regions at this time of the year. A fair amount of literature was sold.

On the 23rd I lectured at Edinburgh, in the Oddfellows’ Hall, for the committee which is the leg-end of the Industrial Union Conference of last year. We expected but a poor attendance, as there were several meetings of parliamentary candidates going on in the city; but after all it turned out well, the attendance being better than at any previous lecture. Again the audience seemed sympathetic—nay, enthusiastic. I asked for questions in writing,ตรading the meandering speech which usually accompanies spoken questions. I got quite a pack of cards of them; and the answers were well received. A clergyman was in the chair, another (our friend Mr. Glassie, who made a Socialist speech) moved the vote of thanks, and a third seconded it. The whole genteel audience looked some hours ago, but suited me, interlarded with button compliments. Once for all, I must ask our comrades to forgive me for receiving votes of thanks, on the ground that I could not help it. The sale of literature was good. I had a short but pleasant interview with the members of the Branch afterwards.
They seemed rather depressed; lack speakers, and so find it difficult to make much way; but are getting a few new members, in spite of the slowness of their propaganda. I have heard that a branch of the Social Democratic Federation started, apparently with good prospects, early this year or last (I forget which), had quite disappeared after a few weeks' existence. One comrade said that in talking to fellow-workers they would agree with everything that he said in favour of Socialism, but could not be brought further than this passive adherence. On the other hand our comrades are making most commendable efforts to win converts. The reason is, one supposes, that they are a branch of a strong and obvious organisation. I should add, the comrades of the Society, who have a good claim to be regarded as the outstanding people at all events in appearance, are starting a kind of progressive debating society, appealing to trades' unionists and co-operatives to join it, which our small and down and others may support. The 24th I gave the same lecture at Glasgow. A wet evening, meetings of candidates throughout the town, and again apprehensions of a fiendish plot against our good audience, perhaps rather more, than at Edinburgh; a somewhat overwhelming amount of questions, the answers to which were very well received. A sprinkling of Ruskinianism here and there, somewhat inclined, I fancy, to take exception to the roughness of the opinions; indeed, the mover of that (terrible) vote of thanks said as much, and was somewhat cheered.

I may here remark that it seems to me that the Scotch are much given to "lion-lusting," and that therefore it is necessary for a Social- ist who wants to get at the facts to discount a certain amount of the enthusiasm with which he is received, if he happens to have any reputa- tion in certain quarters. Still enough remains to show that there were many in the audience who really agreed. At Glasgow there was a good sprinkling also of Land Restorers; but, these, I think, are beginning to see out of the narrow close in which Henry George has hedged them.

The 25th I lectured at Dundee, and had much such an audience as at Glasgow, only that they lacked the instruction that our Branch has, with its connection to the local body of the Fellowship in the town and therefore seem so ready to take up the points. Trade is very slack at Dundee; the jute business nearly gone, Indian competition having destroyed it. I was told that there are few places where it was necessary to lay off hands, in consequence of the classes being more felt than it is at Dundee. I much regretted that I could not stop there and get to know some of the workers. Our com- rades here (Glasgow) ought to make a push to get up a branch at Dundee.

I meet the Branch to-day, and in the evening lecture again. To- morrow I lecture at Broughton, a suburb of Glasgow. But I send this off for the current number, and will give an account of whatever else happens next week.

WILLIAM MORRIS
Glasgow, June 27.

WHIGS, DEMOCRATS, AND SOCIALISTS.

[Bread at the Conference called by the Fabian Society, at South Place Institute, June 21st, 1886. (Concluded from p. 105.)]

But again, it may be said, some of the Democrats go further than this; they take up actual pieces of Socialism, and are more than in- clined to support them. Nationalisation will be considered a fair- or cumulative taxation on incomes, or doing away with, inheritance, or new factory laws, or the restriction by law of the day's labour—one of those things. It may be that sometimes the Democrats have attained an absolute salvation in one of these planks of the platform. All this I admit, and once again say it is a hopeful sign, and yet once again I say there is a snare in it—a snare lying lurking in the grass. Those who think that they can deal with our present system in this piece- meal way very much under-rate the strength of the tremendous organisation under which we live, which appoints to each of us his place, and if we do not choose to fit it down under till we do. Nothing but a tremendous force can deal with this force; it will not suffer itself to be dismembered, not to lose anything which really is its essence whatever it is. It can be truly more than a mere thing which considers of importance it will pull the roof of the world down upon its head. For indeed, I grant these semi-Socialists I do not mean that there is any hope for their tempering piecemeal with our Society; if by chance they can excite people into seriously, however blindly, claiming one or other of these things in question, and could be successful in Parliament with driving it through, they would certainly throw some great weight in the world, but I do not think would not end but either with the full triumph of Socialism or its ex- tinction for the present; it would be impossible to limit the aim of the struggle; nor can we think that it is possible to bring two things which it would except, that it could not be a matter of compromise. But suppose the Democratic party peaceably successful on this new basis of semi-State Socialism, what will it do? How will it attempt to balance the two classes which are opposed to each other, a mere ignorance of this amongst which has led through so many centuries to where we are now, and then after a period of disappointment and disaster the man who for their sake—and a revolution made and another immediately necessary on its morrow?

Yet, indeed, it will not come to this; for whatever may be the aims of the Democrats, they will not succeed in getting themselves into a position from whence they could make the attempt to realise them. I have said there are Tories and yet no real Tory party, so also it seems true that there are supposed radicals or Socialists, but they are used by the leaders of the Parliamentary factions, and also kept at a distance by them from any real power. If they by hook or by crook are managed to get into Parliament, they would find out their differences very speedily under the influence of party rule; in point of fact the Democrats are not a party because they have no principles other than the old Whig Radicalism on which they are built. Differing as many of those who gravitate towards Socialism; a quasi-Democ- ratic Parliamentary party, therefore, would probably be merely a recruiting ground, a nursery for the left wing of the Whig party, or of any disputes, the principles of which, however, would be vague and floating, and it would be but a powerless group after all.

The future of the Constitutional Parliament, therefore, it seems to me, is a perpetual Whig rum, which will yield to pressure when more political reforms are attempted to be got out of it, but will be quite conceivable for the legislature to be said, fair play for the money is to say so far as it may be conscious of the attack, for I grant that it may be betrayed into passing semi State-Socialistic measures, which will do amount of good, that they will help to entangle the Whig in difficulties, and suffering of which the people will not understand the causes distinctly, but their instinct will tell them truly that it is brought about by govern- ment, and that, too, the only kind of government which they can do so long as the Constitutional Parliament lasts.

Now, if you think I have exaggerated the power of the Whigs, that is of little, dear, unimpressible resistance to the taking of the last few weeks. Here has been a measure of pacification proposed; at the least and worst an attempt to enter upon a pacification of a weary and miserable quaker manufacture.

The British people are now feeling the difference between the classes more felt than it is at Dundee. I much regretted that I could not stop there and get to know some of the workers. Our com- rades here (Glasgow) ought to make a push to get up a branch at Dundee.

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