

SCOTTISH NOTES.

THE labour vote did not make much of a show at the recent (and first) County Council election in Scotland. Every one of the labour candidates was defeated—some of them very badly indeed. It is satisfactory, however, to note that those who were most advanced or Socialistic in their utterances fared rather better than the mere trades-union apostles. Small, of the Lanarkshire Miners, who is an avowed Socialist, ran his landlord opponent very close; and Keir Hardie, who has also the bad fame of being a Socialist (of the Parliamentary school), was well up in the list.

The crofter candidates in the Highlands were very successful, however. In Sutherlandshire the Duke's factors and agents were all defeated, and crofters returned.

The Free Church is being shaken to its base by the heretical utterances of two professors—Dr. Marcus Dods of Edinburgh and Dr. Bruce of Glasgow. As at least one-half of the ministers and laymen of the Church have little or no belief in the Bible or the "standards of the Church" (i.e., the Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism), the orthodox party will have some difficulty in bringing the culprit professors to a sense of the error of their ways.

I used to consider myself a pagan, but since I have read Dr. Dods' definition of Christian belief I consider myself a tolerably good Christian; indeed, quite up to the mark at least of standing at the church door on Sundays and watching that none of the members of the congregation takes shillings out of the offertory plate instead of putting halfpennies into it.

One has not, however, much sympathy with professors or any other folk who accept salaries to preach or teach doctrines which they do not believe. Of course the world's all wrong; and while workers have to slave and employers oppress, and while all sorts of men have in some degree or other to lie, cheat and injure their neighbours for a livelihood, we must not be uncharitable in our judgments upon professors or preachers, especially if in other matters they are "straight," and are endeavouring to the best of their powers to do away with the conditions that make hypocrisy and all other social crimes necessary. But Dr. Dods is not of this stamp. He wallows about in his hypocrisy as a swine wallows in its filth, and he is mightily indignant when some people venture to suggest that he is not perfectly pure and undefiled. Worse than that, he is a traducer of the poor, and a bearer of false witness against the unemployed. As a patron of the Charity Organisation Society, he has on several occasions publicly assailed the hapless victims of our industrial despotism as loafers and knaves, and warned the well-to-do plunderers of our cities and towns against yielding to the temptation of sheltering them from the winter's cold or allaying the pangs of their hunger.

Had the Professor confined his misdeeds to mildly extracting money from the churches under false pretences, he might have continued his time-honoured occupation without protest from me—the more the churches are swindled the merrier am I; but since he has set himself up as an apologist of the priggishness of the rich who rob the poor and kick them afterwards, I fervently trust he may lose his comfortable crib and have to do a month or two's penal servitude tramping the country in search of manual employment at fifteen bob a-week—the experience would modify his conceit a bit.

Professors as a rule are just about as much loafers as need be, and divinity professors are the most lazy and least amiable loafers of the lot; and a divinity professor who goes out of his way to denounce tramps and beggars is much in need of a sound lesson in good manners and Christian sociology lumped into one.

Sir William Arrol, the Forth Bridge contractor, whatever ability he may possess as a practical engineer and as an architect of his own fortune, does not appear to hold views one whit above the selfish mediocrity of his class upon the labour question. In a speech which he gave at Ayr, on being presented with the freedom of the burgh, he warned working-men against demanding high wages lest they make it impossible for employers to compete successfully for contracts. He affirmed that he himself had refused contracts amounting to over a million and a quarter pounds because of his uncertainty as to the probable rise in the wages of labour.

I do not say that this statement is untrue; but I do say that Sir William Arrol, despite his hypothetical loss of contracts to the value of a million and a quarter, has on hand about as much work as he can possibly undertake, and that during the last year he has increased his works at Bridgeton to the utmost extent of the available space.

Sir William complained that certain working-men could actually commence work on Thursday mornings and lift £5 and £6 on Saturdays. Presumably he referred to certain classes of riveters and steel-workers. It may be true that in some instances that may be done; but is it not grossly unfair to refer to such exceptional cases as typical of the privileged position of workmen generally? I venture to assert that Sir William has more men in his employment working for 15s. or less per week than for £5 or £6 per week, not to speak of

£5 or £6 for two and a-half days. The great mass of his labourers receive 17s. per week, and his skilled workmen from 22s. to 30s. per week. His firm is notorious for its system of supplanting skilled with unskilled labour.

Sir William told his hearers that thirty years ago he had sought employment as a working blacksmith in the town of Ayr without success. We are informed, however, that he has now an estate at Ayr worth some £20,000 or more. Sir William's wages must have been a deal more than £5 or £6 per week in the interval to have enabled him to accumulate even that portion of his present fortune! How much of that sum he honestly wrought for, and how much of it was gained by filching the labour of others, might be approximately guessed by learning what he considers a fair wage for a working blacksmith to-day.

J. BRUCE GLASIER.

THE GREAT COAL STRIKE.

THE great coal strike is ominous of coming changes, and cannot be looked on as even a great strike might have been a few years ago. The demands of the miners are so moderate, and so uncomplicated with any difficulties as to method of employment and the like, and moreover, the business facts on which the strike is based are so clear and so much in favour of the men, that it was expected in many quarters that the masters would give in at once, and in ordinary times they would have done so. The fact that they are preparing for an obstinate resistance shows that they are not so much thinking of the present strike as of their general position in face of the awakening of Labour. The red spectre of Revolution looms threateningly in the distance before them, and instinctively they are prepared to fight.

Let us look at it from the same point of view, and understand that it is a battle, not a mere business dispute. If the miners got well together, and if they are supported by the sympathy of their brother workers, even those who will suffer by the strike, they will now for the first time understand their power, and a weapon for the hand of revolution will be fashioned, which will be irresistible; which can only be resisted by the brute-force in the hands of the upper classes—i.e., the army and police. This instrument, the striking-power of the coal miners backed by the assent of their fellow workers, being once ready, there will be nothing between us and revolution but a knowledge on the part of the workers of what to claim, which can be nothing short of an abolition of the monopoly of the resources of nature—i.e., the land and all that is on it, which is used for the reproduction of wealth.

This, and not a pitiful rise in wages, is what in the long run lies before the strike of the coal miners: let us hope that the events of this strike will show them how necessary it is for them to make this claim, how feasible to get what they demand.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

GERMANY.

When on the 24th of February the Boulangists met in the Salle Cognet at Paris, they decided to send a congratulatory address to Bebel on the result of the German elections. Before even the address was gone, Léo Frankel, formerly Minister of Public Works under the Commune, published Bebel's reply, which ran as follows:

"Dresden, Plauen, March 2nd, 1890.

"My dear Frankel,—I have not yet received the announced address of the Boulangists. Probably they have thought the matter over again. If, however, they took a fancy to their idea and would carry it out, I am quite prepared to ignore their factum, as I will have nothing at all to do with them.—Yours ever faithfully,

"A. BEBEL."

At Lückenwalde, near Berlin, the general association of female workers has been closed by the police, and besides, the whole committee, consisting of Marie Tinius, Johnne, Weiss, Fallner, Anna Schultz, and Jölke, will be prosecuted for having made an energetic propaganda on behalf of the Socialist candidates to the Reichstag. The trial will begin on April 10th.

DENMARK.

The revolutionary Socialists of Denmark have just issued a manifesto to all kindred associations of Europe and America, setting forth the reasons why they have come to the constitution of a new revolutionary Socialist party in their country. They also tell us that it has been resolved to transform as soon as possible their weekly organ *Arbejderen* (The Worker) into a daily paper, and therefore ask the moral and material support of all their friends abroad, especially of all the Scandinavians.

ITALY.

Comrade Amilcare Cipriani has left Paris *en route* for Forlì, where he is going to face the new prosecution got up against him by the Italian government. He is to be tried for exciting to revolt, whatever that may be.

HOLLAND.

Comrade L. Schotting, who has been prosecuted by the Dutch government for having written a pamphlet on "Military Conscription," denouncing the various atrocities of that system, has now at last been acquitted by the superior tribunal of the Hague.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

A new monthly review is to be published at Reichenberg on April 1st, under the title of "Zeitschwingen" (Time Wings). Comrade Joseph Versneck is the editor of the new Socialist organ, whose offices are situated at Reichenberg, Ladegasse, No. 23.

NOTICE.—Next week there will be an article and an allegorical sketch dealing with Mr. Stanley's "heroic efforts in the cause of civilisation."