LABOR CO-PARTNERSHIP.

Harper Brothers have recently published a volume of 350 pages entitled "Labor Copartnership" by Mr. Henry D· Lloyd. This book, from all we have read about it, should, in the opinion of THE CONSERVATIVE, be in all the public libraries of this country. It should be generally read. The public library of Nebraska City shall not long be without so practically philanthropic a volume. Reviewing Mr. Lloyd's book recently The Nation says:

"Few persons in this country are acquainted with the term 'Labor Copartnership.' This system constitutes the latest outgrowth of cooperation in Great Britain. What is commonly understood by cooperation is the cooperative store, where the cooperators furnish the capital for the store and receive dividends in proportion to their purchases. Labor copartnership is an evolution of the cooperative store. It is production on the partnership principle. It is not confined to any particular industry. It embraces farming and butter-making, as well as weaving, printing, house-painting, hosiery, silk-making, shoe-making, gas-making and other manufactures. There are now in Great Britain 152 societies of this description, having a paid-up capital of more than one million pounds, and an aggregate annual profit of £112,991, after paying all expenses, including the usual rate of wages in their respective trades. Some of these are managed wholly by the workingmen concerned. Others, like the South Metropolitan Gas Company of London, are conducted on the capitalistic plan, but the shareholding is so arranged that a large part of the profits go to the coal-stokers and other men who perform the manual labor. There are almost as many different varieties of labor partnerships as there are different occupations, and the distinguishing feature of the whole is that they are all on a paying basis although they did not all get there at the first attempt. The chief significance of the movement is that, so far as it has progressed, it has realized all that socialism ever promised to the working classes, and has done so without any social disturbance, without encroaching upon any other person's rights, and without asking any special favors from the government.

"Nearly all of these enterprises have begun in a fortuitous, unpremeditated way. A few men have contributed a few shillings or pounds that they had saved as capital and applied it to some kind of work, and, having confidence in each other, and being mutually faithful and industrious, their business has grown. They have taken on new hands as required, each new one becoming a partner as well as an employee, and so they have gone on adding to the common plant by diligence, honesty, intelligence, and thrift. For example, the 'Equity,' which is a cooperative boot and shoe factory in Leicester, began in 1887 in a little, insignificant shop in a back street of that city. It now has a building so large that the hall in the top story which is devoted to the social and educational purposes of its members, will seat 250 people, and there are besides a library, a reading room, and a piano. This society owns the building and the land on which it is situated. 'There has never been a strike,' says Mr. Lloyd, and why should workmen strike when there is nobody to be injured but themselves? As a general rule, the labor copartnerships do not favor high wages. Cheapness of production and low prices in the market are the ends they aim at. They think that labor gets its surest and best reward by the abundance of goods placed within its reach, differing in this respect from the silver men in the United States, who consider high prices the best thing for the poor.

"One of the most remarkable institutions described by Mr. Lloyd is the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, which owes its success chiefly to the labors and genius of Mr. Horace Plunkett, M. P. Mr. Plunkett first addressed himself to the task of establishing cooperative creameries among Irish farmers—that is, creameries owned and operated by themselves. The task was not an easy one. The farmers had no faith in it, but Mr. Plunkett persevered. His idea was that a saving could be affected by making all the butter of a dozen farms in one place and by one set of rules, that the highest scientific skill could thus be brought to the farmers' aid and the greatest savings of the raw material effected, and that these savings might be and ought to be realized by the farmer himself. By the end of 1893 he had thirty cooperative creameries going, and it was found that the cows yielded an increased profit of 10 to 35 per cent. Not a penny of capital had been contributed by anybody but the farmers themselves. This was only the beginning, however. The creameries joined together to form a society for disposing of their products, and another for buying their seeds and manures, thus saving an additional profit.

"The success of this society has been very great, and it has contributed more than anything else to the pacification of the country and the subsidence of Irish unrest. The subordinate societies, which in 1893 numbered 30, have grown to 131. There are 8,750 shareholders. Their output for 1896 was $1,417,290. Perhaps the most surprising result of all is found in one part of Ireland, where the farmers by co-operation in the first year were able to save in the cost of their material more than the total rent paid by all the members of the association. The total profit and saving to these farmers arising from the co-operative creameries and the co-operative purchases since the experiment began in 1889, has been $2,156,765. And it all grows out of the initiative and intelligence of one man, who took for his keynote the saying that "the Irish farmers must work out their own salvation." What a contrast is this with the fuming and vaporing of Carl Marx, and his endeavors to set class against class by talking about the exploitation of labor by capital. Along comes a man named Plunkett, without writing any books or having any theories except the precious one of self-reliance, and puts $2,000,000 into the pockets of Irish peasants and contentment into their hearts in the course of ten years, without doing any harm to any other living creature.

"Perhaps the most interesting chapter in Mr. Lloyd's book is his story of the gradual engrafting of workmen-ownership upon the South Metropolitan Gas Company of London, which has a capital of $35,000,000 and annual earnings of $3,300,000. This company has 3,000 men in its employ. It shares its profits with them, and has during the present year admitted two workingmen to its board of directors. This great work has been built up and conducted on the plan of labor partnership by Mr. Thomas Livesey and his son, Mr. George Livesey. It was never more flourishing than it is today. The history of the company is as interesting as a novel—far more so than Mr. Bellamy's 'Looking Backward'—because every word of it is true and can be verified by any onlooker who will take the trouble, as Mr. Lloyd did, to go and see for himself. We do not look for the millennium very soon, but we do think that it is more likely to come by the road followed by Mr. Plunkett, the Liveseys, and the men who are working along the same line with them than by any other now visible."

"Alphonse Daudet in Private Life" is the title of a very interesting article in the November Pall Mall Magazine, by J. F. Raffaelli, a life long friend of the famous novelist. M. Raffaelli, who is an eminent French painter, himself illustrates the article, which includes a few selections from one of Daudet's private note books, in which he recorded everything that came into his mind concerning the character and intelligence of the personages who were to figure in a projected work. M. Raffaelli asserts that Daudet's nature was essentially childlike, and that in consequence of this feature of Daudet's character, the books in which he best shows his original qualities are those where we find the best and the most of this childlike attribute of imaginative story telling, namely in the three "Tartarins." "Tartarin," writes M. Raffaelli, "is Daudet himself"; "he is our Southerner large and good hearted, a great dispenser of justice, a great dreamer, whole-souled and blessed with a joyful imagination." M. Raffaelli says that Daudet, curiously enough, never liked to hear any one speak of the "Tartarins" with special admiration, and that he preferred "Sapho" to all his other novels.