

## MR. HENRY GEORGE ON THE LAND QUESTION.

MR. HENRY GEORGE, was has returned to London from his tour in Scotland, paid a visit to the office of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and gave his impressions of the position of the land movement. He reported that his tour in Scotland had been a splendid success, and that the Scottish Land Restoration League "meant business."

The report of the interview then proceeds:—"You think the people won't stand what you call 'plunder'?" That is all you people here in London know about it! Mr. Wallace wrote to me after the St. James's Hall meeting, and said that I was doing more harm by my doctrine of confiscation than all the good I had done by work for nationalisation; and he asserted that if the issue had been clearly put to the St. James's Hall meeting of nationalisation with confiscation, or nationalisation with compensation, the majority would have been in favour of compensation. As Mr Wallace made this assertion, I made it a point of putting the question plump and clear at all my subsequent meetings—are you for confiscation or compensation?—and I found almost to a man for confiscation. Don't you make any mistake; the public is ripe for plunder.' Of course," said Mr George, with a merry twinkle in his blue eye, "there are some methods of compensation that I don't very much object to. For instance, it was proposed in one meeting to compensate the landlords by giving them acre for acre of all the land they had possessed, but in this way they would give up their land at home, and the State would give them a similar area in Australia or in Canada. Then Miss Helen Taylor made an admirable suggestion at a meeting near Birmingham. She was lecturing on behalf of the Land Nationalisation Society, which believes in compensation. "Compensate," said Miss Taylor, "compensate the landlords by all means; that must be regarded as a fixed principle. The question then arises as to where the funds are to come from. The answer is simple. Let the landlords restore the whole of the land tax, with compound interest, that has been due by them to the State since the days of Charles the Second, and when they have made restitution of this money we shall be able to compensate them for all the land which it can be shown they have bought and paid for with money earned by the sweat of their brow."

"You talk about plunder!" said Mr. George, rising and pacing the room—"wherever I went I heard of plunder. Plunder the most shameful, most foul, kept up year after year, and generation after generation, by the landlords. Plunder! Plunder of tenants; plunder of municipalities; plunder of men of business; plunder in all directions. There was not a place that I visited that could not give me instances by the dozen of the most scandalous spoliation on the part of the landlords. They are stealing commons at this moment; stealing them wholesale without regard to the rights of the people. I hardly visited a town, I repeat, which could not point to common lands that had been filched from the people by the universal thief." "And yet we do not propose," continued Mr. George, with an air virtuous magnanimity, "we do not propose to demand restitution from these plunderers. We are content if they simply give back that which is not their own, and restore to the nation its natural inheritance."

"You talk of the Ten Commandments! I am all for the Ten Commandments," said Mr. George. "Restoration is the fulfilment of the Ten Commandments. It is the stopping of the universal breach of the eighth commandment on the part of the landlords. But of course I am not so sanguine as to hope that we will be able to gain popular rights all at once. All that we can hope to do is to make a beginning, and that I am glad to believe has already been made. I have sowed the good seed far and wide through the length and breadth of the land, and it will spring up and bring forth fruit, in some cases twenty, in some thirty, and some a hundredfold."

"Mr. Frederic Harrison, I see, has been lecturing in reply to me; but how such a clever man as he could ever take up with such preposterous notions I never can imagine. He seems to have a kind of idea that the land cannot get on without landlords; and that if there were no landlords the land would go out of cultivation. A most extraordinary idea, which need hardly be noticed. The Duke of Argyll, I hear, is going to reply to me. I wish he would. He has the reputation in Scotland of being the hardest landlord in the country. The Irish boycotted me almost everywhere. The word was passed round that I had to be given the cold shoulder; but the leaven is working in Ireland too. Mr. Michael Davitt has, I am told, written an article in the new magazine which puts his position plainly. They have got the money, but we have got the ideas; and the ideas will tell in the long run."

It was explained to Mr. George in a few words that Lord Salisbury intended to reject the bill owing to the absence of great public and violent pressure in its favour. "That's it, is it?" said Mr. George. "Well, he is likely to have it; and more than he likes before he has done. Wherever I go about the country, in the towns or the rural villages, I find that the people have set their minds upon this bill. They expect it; they are calculating confidently upon it, and what it is going to bring them; and if they don't get it, there will be a row, that's all! Pressure, he wants, does he? Violent pressure! When that becomes thoroughly known you will not need to take much pains to evoke a demonstration which will teach the Lords a thing or two. This social movement helps the franchise agitation. The people are beginning to see what they can get by the vote, and they mean to have it. Of course, on the other hand, it may intensify the opposition of those who think they have everything to lose; but no one can doubt how the fight will end. The Lords may oppose the bill and throw it out, but they will make that kind of mistake once too often. Then, sir, we shall see changes greater than perhaps their lordships expect."

[ADVT.]—Kidney complaint, one of the most common and yet most neglected diseases of this country, can be readily cured by the use of Hop Bitters. See,

## IRISH EXILES IN CANADA.

A COPY of the *Toronto Globe* of March the 10th has just reached us (*Nation*, April 5). It contains the following harrowing account of the terrible state of misery in which the Irish emigrants are steeped. The report as we reprint it should certainly make Irishmen and Irishwomen pause before they blindly leave their native land for a foreign country:—

It is now several months since the attention of the people of Toronto was directed to the miserable condition of the Irish immigrants on Conway-street and in the neighbourhood. The outburst of indignant astonishment which for a time agitated the public mind, has given place somewhat to other and happier matters. But the state of the immigrants remains much as before; their condition has been improved in no material point. Abject poverty and squalid misery are still supreme amongst them. Their wretched existences are prolonged from day to day on the charity issuing from the soup-kitchen which has been established in their midst. Daily at 12 o'clock the soup-kitchen is surrounded and invaded by a mass of men, women, and children, the rags which serve as their clothing waving with the wind, and their gaunt cheeks and hollow eyes telling only too truly of their famished condition. They receive the loaf or half-loaf of bread which is to lessen the pang of hunger of three or four persons for twenty-four hours, and disperse to their wretched homes. There is, in most cases, no pretence of making a meal of it. The bread is broken into hunches, distributed to the members of the family, and eaten as keen hunger will alone impel a human being to eat. The external and internal appearances of the homes of these unfortunate people accord only too aptly with what has been previously stated. The doors and windows are in the last state of dilapidation—the former generally hang loosely upon one hinge, as though already anxious to become kindling wood; the latter consist of a combination of rags, paper, and glass, all begrimed with dirt, and admitting into the houses a dim, uncertain light, which prevents the full extent of the internal wretchedness being at first seen. Within are generally living two or three families, numbering from twelve to twenty men, women, and children, each house having five or six rooms. Some rooms are literally without a stick of furniture, and dirty, ragged children, careless or ignorant of their deplorable plight, play about on the unsweped, dirty floor. Other families revel in the luxury of a chair, and, perhaps, a table. But everywhere actual poverty is rendered more miserable by the utter lack of order and cleanliness which marks the inmates of the house no less than the houses themselves. The husbands and fathers of the families thus huddled together in misery all profess themselves as being willing to work if they could get anything to do, but make the profession with an air of utter hopelessness and despondency. In hardly one instance is the head of the family engaged in any regular employment. The earnings of one day's work through the week, the soup-kitchen, the House of Industry, and private charity, have supported father, mother, and children all through the winter. But if one would see the normal expression of the faces of these men undergo a change, let him inquire into the reasons which induced their immigration into Canada. In an instant hopelessness and despondency give place to anger and resentment. Curses bitter and deep rise to their lips, and threats are made of the vengeance which, should they ever get an opportunity, they will visit upon those who, by false representation and fair promises, induced them to come to the country. It would seem that great imposition was practised upon these people. They came chiefly from Galway county, in Ireland. Here they were poor indeed, but many removes from their present wretched condition; one of them remarked, "I was earning nearly £1, and my oldest boy four shillings every week, and we could live better on that in Ireland than 12 dollars or 14 dollars a week here." This man has a mother, a wife, and seven children dependent upon him, and himself dependent, in turn, upon charity for a crust of bread. He continued—"The agent promised us free living for twelve months after we arrived here, and said we should all have good situations or free lands provided us during that time. Ooh! but I would like to have him here, bad luck to him!" Some of the immigrants were, upon their own confessions, inmates of Irish workhouses, where their misery was less, and their dependence upon charity not greater, than now, after having been nearly a year in the country, which was held out to them as affording such a magnificent certainty of prosperity. Resentment against the misrepresenting emigration agents in Ireland is the ruling passion in their minds, and almost the only vestige of civilised humanity that remains to them.

Heartrending stories continue to reach us from Canada of the terrible hardships which the Irish emigrants have still to endure in Toronto. The *Toronto Globe* of the 10th inst., which is to hand this week, has a pitiable tale to tell of the condition of the Irish people who were induced to leave their own country to settle in Canada. Although several months have elapsed (says the *Globe*), since public attention was directed to these poor creatures, nothing has been done as yet to alleviate their sufferings. Their condition has not been improved in one material point. Their wretched existences, we are told, are prolonged from day to day on the charity which issues from a soup-kitchen. The picture of misery drawn by the writer is a fearful one. "Daily at twelve o'clock," he says, "the soup-kitchen is surrounded and invaded by a mass of men, women, and children, the rags which serve as their clothing waving with the wind, and their gaunt cheeks and hollow eyes telling only too truly of their famished condition." The miserable hovels in which the poor creatures are living, are in the last stage of dilapidation, some rooms being literally without a scrap of furniture. The husbands and fathers of families profess themselves as being willing to work, but no work is to be had. The Trades and Labour Council of Toronto has held an important meeting and adopted a report in which the system which encourages immigration to Canada under the present depressing outlook is denounced as "simply infamous." —*Nation*, March 29.