

difference between monopolizing the air, the sunlight, or the sea, and monopolizing the land as it is monopolized by some of these British Dukes. The Bolshevik is but the natural, indeed the inevitable, corollary of such doctrines as seem to find favour with the Duke of Northumberland. And it may be questioned if the Bolshevik is more inimical to the welfare and the future safety of the nation than are men of the Northumberland type. Each is an extremist in his own way, and each is a menace to the best interests of the country. The probability is that if there were fewer Dukes of Northumberland there would be fewer Bolsheviks and infinitely less of the class-hatred which has such a baneful influence on the welfare of the nation.

#### The Land Seizures in Italy.

In August, 1915, we gave an account of the Agro Romano, the great waste territory of half a million acres of land lying at the gates of Rome. According to recent reports it has been "invaded" by Italian peasants who are determined to claim their rights. The owners of the land say they may cultivate to their hearts' content, but the real issue of ownership will be settled when the time comes to gather the produce. "To whomsoever the soil at any time belongs, to him belongs the fruits of it." So say the owners. And what will the peasants answer? What movement is there among them to declare this neglected and monopolized land the common property of the people, and in doing so to stop the great robbery which has made unemployment and poverty where their might be abundance?

Here are conquests to be won and rights to be proclaimed, while Imperial avarice calls on the people to don uniforms and annex territory far from their homes. The description of the 500,000 acres surrounding Rome tells of a flat, barren, uninhabited land, the natural pastures of which are overrun with wild cattle, a vast expanse of thickets, bushes, marshes, bogs, and swamps; a few old dilapidated buildings, ancient ruins of abandoned farms and feudal castles, and occasionally lofty woods appear on the horizon. Everywhere a close, sultry, humid air, clouds of mosquitoes, solitude and silence, as if in a country of the dead. In the winter the country is covered with extensive pools of stagnant water; in summer it is a vast barren arid plain; and in autumn a constant source of malarial fever.

And yet this same land was once a great and splendid garden, the first home of the men who conquered the world, the source of the food-supplies and men-supplies of ancient Rome. During the Third Century of Rome, when the portion of land assigned to each Roman citizen was seven jugers (3.12 acres), this territory sufficed to give work and a comfortable living to over 140,000 families, the sinews and brains of the Imperial City. Not a foot was left untilled. It was the "Agro Romano" in the true sense of the term. May it not be so again?

#### Liberalism Means Land Purchase.

Opening a new park recently, which he had presented to Bolton, Lord Leverhulme spoke of the economy effected in the purchase of land, as opportunity offered, at its agricultural value as compared with compulsory purchase. He trusted that the people of Bolton would never limit nor restrict the hands of their representa-

tives in any future purchase of land to be used in this way. His Lordship did not refer to the still greater economy that would be effected in the acquisition of land for public purposes if all land were taxed and rated on its capital value.

In passing we recall a Sir William Lever (now Lord Leverhulme) as an outspoken advocate of the policy we urge, speaking at the Annfield and Brickfield Liberal Club, October 14th, 1912. Sir William said: "The effect of the existing rating system was to penalize the public-spirited citizen who developed his land, and to encourage the owner who allowed his land to be idle so that its value might be increased by the activities of the general community. With such an anomalous and unjust system, it was not surprising that the building trade was so fitful, for, in order to escape the added rates imposed on superior buildings, there was a disposition to withhold development and defer improvement as long as possible. If the rates of a town were put on the site value, undoubtedly the effect would be to stimulate the best use of land." Lord Leverhulme is a leading Liberal, if not a Liberal Leader! Apparently Liberalism means land purchase; formerly it meant, so the official slogan put it, taxation of land values.

#### "If I were Premier."

In the LIVERPOOL WEEKLY POST of August 23rd appeared an article by "Scrutator" under the heading: "If I were Premier." After dealing with the cutting down of expenditure "Scrutator" says he would tax all monopolies out of existence. He would not buy up mining royalties but tax them 20s. in the £, as he would also all other land values. He would raise the cry "Free land and free men," and would base his programme on the principle that everything should be in the direction of extending personal liberty—liberty to produce, which involves access to the land; liberty to trade, which involves the removal of man-made barriers; freedom from Militarism and freedom to do all short of encroaching on the equal rights of others or of injuring the safety of the State. "Scrutator" has evidently "seen the cat."

#### The Controlling Factor.

"Unless we are very much mistaken, economic conditions will for a long time to come be a controlling factor in politics."—COMMONSENSE, September 13th. We agree, and, unless we are very much mistaken, economic conditions have for a long time past been a controlling factor in politics and in a few other circles of human endeavour as well. We have in fact a sort of notion that all progress, material, moral and intellectual is controlled by the economic condition that makes a few the masters of the raw material of existence and condemns the rest of us to carry on as best we may in the circumstances.

#### Good-bye to Indemnities.

A correspondent discussing in THE TIMES to-day the Clearing House scheme for Anglo-German trade points out that "it was a condition that for every pound sterling of German goods bought, a pound sterling of British goods must be taken." This, no doubt, meets the views of the anti-dumpers, but what about the indemnity hunters? Translated into terms of