

### A Policy to Sweep the Country.

Speaking at Sale on May 19th in support of Mr. Kay-Shuttleworth, Mr. Masterman, M.P., said:—"They could have made the Insurance Act non-contributory, and could have put the contribution which they were now asking the working people to pay for their own benefit upon the rich. They could have taxed the ground landlords or have taxed big estates, and they would have swept the whole country." Very likely they would have swept the country, but that would not have been due to the making of the Insurance Act non-contributory; it would have been due to the advocacy of a tax on ground values.

If the Liberal Party have the courage they can still sweep the country on the taxation of land values, but we hope it will not be for the purpose of raising additional revenue, but in order to remit some of the present excessive taxation. It may be magnificent to collect such enormous revenues, but it is not good business. The millions which are being spent on Old Age Pensions, Insurance, Poor Relief, and similar things are the most striking proof possible of the economic weakness of this country. To have to spend millions in providing for needs that every self-respecting man will provide for if he can is the surest proof of an unsound social system, and the spending of these millions does nothing at all to touch the root cause of the weakness; on the contrary it tends to perpetuate it. It is time that the Liberal Party grasped the fact that the reason why the taxation of land values will sweep the country is because it will raise the revenue of the nation in a just fashion, and much more because it will open out to the people the freedom and opportunity to provide for their needs without State aid. No man likes to be dependent on his neighbour or on the State, and he will always seek to free himself from that dependence.

### "The Right of Every Girl."

We noticed in PUBLIC OPINION (May 16th) a striking collocation of two paragraphs. One, by Mr. John Gulland, was on the crowds of men and women, boys and girls who crowd into the central streets of our large towns at night, especially Sunday nights. "The aimless drift of these throngs," he says, "is one of the greatest tragedies of our large cities."

The other was from the New York correspondent of the DAILY CHRONICLE, who writes: "'The Right of Every Girl to be Courted under Decent Conditions' was one of the subjects discussed by the Recreation Congress in session at Richmond, Virginia. 'Courting' came up for discussion in connection with the demand for more open spaces and parks, where, in addition to providing recreation grounds for children, young couples could do their courting 'in God's pure air and under the blue sky,' as one speaker put it."

Surely this second paragraph is the right and just comment on the first. For young men and women whose homes can barely provide them with room to sleep, and who cannot escape to "God's fresh air" and the open sky, what is there left but this stupid promenade in the cold, grey streets? Lack of room in the home and lack of open spaces outside is here rapidly creating another social problem, the origin of which many social reformers will probably ignore.

This "tragedy" of our large cities has been noted by others and commented upon in the press. But, like other similar street tragedies, time but reveals its insis-

tence and emphasises the utter uselessness of moral and religious agencies, so called, to deal effectively with social problems. A measure of economic justice must be tried. If we would elevate taste and improve morals, we must open up opportunities to a fuller and more wholesome life all round.

### Emigration.

"Five thousand people," says PUBLIC OPINION (May 16th), "have sailed from Bristol to Canada since the beginning of the year."

"Two hundred emigrants a week have been leaving Devonshire for months past, to the alarm of the farmers. And the total is said to be 18,000 for the past 18 months."

"Last week one Allan Liner took 1,000 passengers to Canada from Liverpool; while another Allan Liner took 400 direct from Plymouth to Canada."

"The same tale is told if you go north, and the weekly sailings to Canada from the Clyde are on the biggest scale."

"The supreme problem obviously is to make the United Kingdom as desirable a place in which to live as Canada and Australia appear to be in the dreams of the emigrant."

On May 8th, Mr. Harcourt stated in answer to a question in the House of Commons that in 1905 out of 139,000 emigrants 77,000 went to foreign countries; and that in 1912 out of 268,000 emigrants 48,000 went to foreign countries.

All this raises very interesting questions. Why are so many people emigrating? Why is the number of emigrants increasing? And why are they going more and more to British Colonies?

To the first two questions an easy answer presents itself. The possibility of making a living in this country, the opportunity of making use of its natural resources, does not seem to increase; indeed, when one considers the increase which has been taking place in land values, it seems to have diminished. In the newer countries, on the other hand, land monopoly has hardly reached the same point of oppressiveness as here, except perhaps in the United States. This brings us to the third question. We are inclined to believe that the reason why emigration is flowing more and more to the Colonies is that there they have tried to some extent to check land monopoly by the application of taxes on land values, though they have not been applied in such a manner and degree as to completely check it. The United States is still a very empty country, with great untapped natural resources, and the fact that it has been longer settled than Canada ought to make it more attractive, yet 100,000 people are emigrating from the States to Western Canada every year. We can see only one reason for this—the fact that in Western Canada they are rapidly untaxing improvements and endeavouring to concentrate all their taxes on the value of land.

### The Newmarket Result.

The Liberal candidate at Newmarket has been beaten, and badly beaten—the majority being larger than any since the election of 1900. We print elsewhere the view of a gentleman who took part in the contest, and agree with his analysis of the situation (p. 46). No doubt personal considerations had an influence with some voters, and no doubt the racing interests in one part of the constituency caused a few voters to take a perverted and narrow view of the contest, but these things are not sufficient to explain the enormous turnover of votes.