him in Tolstoy's "The Kingdom of God Is Within You," and then pursued the subject in the admirable "Life of Garrison" by his Children, one of the most fascinating of books. And now Tolstoy is doing the same service for Henry George. And I think that Tolstoy is pretty nearly right, too, when he says that the teachings of George have fallen into great neglect. Compare for a moment the Single Tax progress with that of socialism and you will see what he means. In England they are only beginning to talk of taxing land-values at all—not of taking the whole unearned increment, mind you, but of taking a small fraction of it, such as we have always collected in America. We Single-Taxers who see our few journals and hear our few speakers are apt to have the idea that we are cutting a pretty large figure in the great world. But it is a mistake, and most people know nothing of us or our movement. It is hardly worth while to conceal the fact. The prospects for the Single Tax seemed far brighter twenty years ago when Henry George was a candidate for Mayor of New York than they ever have since. When it triumphs, it will probably be after some great economic deadlock (like the great coal-strike, only much greater), when our leaders will be the only people with a simple and practicable plan of action. Such a crisis may occur first in Russia, and the autocracy of Nicholas is easier to handle than the autocracy of Roosevelt. Hence let us hope that Tolstoy may be able to bring the advisers of Nicholas over to his views, and let us welcome him as a powerful ally in the work of arousing the rest of the world to the fundamental importance of the land question in comparison with all other industrial questions whatever.

Rhinebeck, N. Y.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE IRISH LAND QUESTION.

(*For the Review.*)

By THOMAS SCANLON.

It is difficult to write about Irish affairs from the standpoint of pure political economy, seeing that in that country the working of economic laws is so much obscured by artificial influences. Parliament is always doing something with Ireland, or with Irish land, to be more literal, and in addition the people themselves are always doing something of a nature to disturb the equilibrium of economic forces. Between agitation and legislation there is little chance for the normal operation of supply and demand. If legislative activity led to happiness, Ireland ought to be the most happy part of the British Empire; every session of Parliament is largely an Irish session and every year there is a fresh agitation to remedy something which previous legislation has left undone. Unfortunately this tendency to "pitch into" the government, and to regard it as being at the bottom of all Irish miseries, has reached limits which no friend of progress can contemplate with satisfaction; the important part which individual initiative and enlightened social co-operation can effect in moulding a nation's character is undervalued. Mr. Horace Plunket in his recent book on "Ireland in the New Century" lays great stress on this national

defect. He and his friends are doing their part to awaken the people to a sense of their responsibilities in this matter, and their efforts have already met with encouraging success, although, speaking generally, it must be said that they have not received much support from the "machine" politicians.

But while Mr. Plunket and his friends are on the right track in spurring the people into a sense of industrial self-reliance, it is, in the main, true that the responsibility for Irish miseries has in the past rested, and in spite of many recent concessions, still largely rests on the British Parliament. For at the root of these miseries is the vicious land system —now in process of being got rid of by the payment of "a brigand's ransom," to quote the words of a well-known British Single-Taxer—and at the back of this system is the British Parliament, without which it could not last a day. The landlords were "the British garrison." The people felt that their exactions were unjust, but, however they might try to throw off the burden, the government always supported their proteges with bayonets, and threw upon the shoulders of the people, as an additional burden, the expense of maintaining this unnatural state of things. It is not too much to say that the bulk of Irish crime is and always has been of an agrarian character; that is to say, it has its origin in disputes about land—disputes which would not exist at all if men's equal rights to the soil were guaranteed by statute. The cost of maintaining the police force in Ireland is about $7,500,000, or about three times what it costs in Scotland; a country where non-agrarian crime is much greater than in Ireland. The abnormal cost of the Irish police is explained by the fact that they were necessary to collect the landlord's rents from an impoverished people and to keep in position a land system condemned by national public opinion. Other countries, it is true, are afflicted with landlordism. England and Scotland have it, but it is of a much milder type than that of Ireland. The landlords in the two former countries are, to a considerable extent, capitalists, spending large sums of money on their estates, in draining and fencing, as well as in building and repairing the farmers' houses, barns, stables, etc. In Ireland the landlords, with few exceptions, were rent-squeezers and nothing else. They did not even, as a rule, condescend to live in the country they robbed, but stayed away in London or Paris and employed agents to do the squeezing for them on a commission contract. They made few or no improvements on their estates, but they, too, often confiscated those made by the tenants in the shape of a rise of rent. Hence the stoutest apologist of landlordism had to admit that the Irish landlord was no credit to his species. John Stuart Mill many years ago, in the name of the science of which he was then regarded as the chief exponent, declared, in his "Principles of Political Economy" that landlordism as it existed in Ireland was indefensible. How the system continued to grow in public disfavor and detestation until it is now in the last stages of existence is a rather complicated story. Those who wish to follow it at length will find it graphically and eloquently told by one who took the leading part in the destruction of landlordism in Michael Davitt's "Fall of Feudalism in Ireland," published two years ago.

The year 1870 may be said to mark the first intervention of the State in the direction of mitigating the arbitrary power of the Irish landlords. Mr. Gladstone's Act of that year interfered with the landlord's "right to do what he liked with his own," to the extent of recognizing the principle that the tenant, too, had some rights in the soil. It protected the latter against arbitrary disturbance, so long as he paid his rent, and recognized

his claim to the value of his improvements. It did not, however, take away from the landlord the power to fix an outrageous rent, or to evict for non-payment of that rent. The Act of 1881 remedied this. It called into being, for the first time in history, a legal tribunal which undertook to decide what was a fair rent between landlord and tenant. The rents so decided upon were to remain fixed for 15 years, after which they could be again revised. The prices of farm produce were to be the main guiding principle in fixing rents. When this court went to work it soon knocked off a slice of the landlord's income, estimated at about 20 per cent. on an average; and on the second occasion of its employment it knocked off something like 20 or 25 per cent. more. And while the landlord's charges on the land were thus legally curtailed to 55 or 60 per cent. of what they used to be, the landlords were chagrined by the novel spectacle of seeing, in many cases, the tenants dispose of their interest in their holdings at a higher price than they themselves could get for their interest. The changed spirit of the times was thus brought home to them in a forceful manner, and they shouted "confiscation," but it was no use. Parliament was committed to the principle of rent-revision, and it could not repudiate the work of the tribunal it had created. Of course the plain truth of the matter was that the large slices struck off the landlord's rents did not mean so much value left in the tenant's hands; it only meant so much value that was non-existent; the farms had simply failed to produce it, for, as I have said above, the prices of agricultural produce was the basis upon which the court values gave their decisions, and these prices had gone down sweepingly. Indeed, it is doubtful whether, taking the whole period from 1881 to the present time, the reductions in rent, great as they are, have kept pace with the decline in the price of produce.

The idea of buying out the landlords also received practical recognition, in a limited way, in the Act of 1870. If a tenant could find one-third of the purchase-money of his farm, he could, under that Act, borrow from the State the other two-thirds, and thus become the absolute owner of his farm subject to repayment of the installments. In course of time two-thirds was felt to be too small a proportion, and it was increased to three-fourths in 1881, making it more workable. But a still greater impetus was given to the peasant-proprietary movement by Lord Ashbourne's Act of 1885, under which the State provided all the purchase money for the tenant, he repaying the amount with interest, by installments extending 49 years. However, the frequent intermeddling of the legislature with the relations of landlord and tenant created a state of uncertainty in which bargains were slowly made, each side speculating upon what the legislature would do next; meanwhile there was much agitation and little agricultural improvements, the situation was intolerable; finality was the one thing wanted, and it was plain that this finality had to be sought in the extension of the plans for the abolition of dual ownership.

Out of these circumstances arose the Act of 1903, often referred to as "the King's Act." It is purely voluntary in its operation, but it holds out baits to both sides to induce them to come to terms. The tenant is offered the freehold of his farm on payment, for a term of 66 years, of a sum considerably less than he is now paying as rent, while the landlord is offered, besides the capital value in hard cash, of his interest as agreed to by the tenant, a State gratuity of 12 per cent. upon the purchase-money; an extraordinary instance of legislative generosity with the tax-payers' money. Indeed, it is no wonder that the landlord class regard the Act as "a distinct remedy for past statutory injustice."

The plan of the bill was this: A price was to be agreed upon by landlord and tenant at which the land was to be sold. This price was to be sanctioned by the government, who had to see that the land was worth it, for it was to be mortgaged to them for that amount. The landlords were to receive this sum from the government in hard cash, the government raising the money from the public by the issue of land stock, the interest and principal of which were to be paid off by the tenant in 66 years as above noted. The provision to pay the landlords in hard cash and not in land stock, which was subject to depreciation, is another illustration of the government's tenderness towards those precious members of society. It was to enable them to pay off the ruinous debts they had contracted and to enable them to make advantageous arrangements for the investment of the balance of their money. But this provision necessarily set limits to the progress of land purchase, for the government could not undertake to raise by loan an indefinite sum of money at an increasing rate of interest to be available to meet any given condition of the land market. Five million pounds sterling per year was the amount which, it was estimated, would be required for the purposes of the Act for the first three years, but in this matter it would appear that the government reckoned without their host.

The success of the Act—if the mutual disposition to take advantage of it be a criterion of success—has been phenomenal. The tenants in their eagerness to taste the sweets of ownership are going forward in bodies and binding themselves to pay for their farms, in many cases as much as 25 years' purchase on their judicial rents. If to this we add the amount of the government bonus, the landlord would thus receive 29 years' purchase for the land. It is unfortunately true that the Irishman places a value on his farm which has often little relation to its agricultural capabilities. He regards it as an object of sentimental attachment, like a relic or a picture, and though the rent which he pays for it often comes from America or England or Scotland, instead of being derived from the sale of its produce, it is still the same farm to him; the home of his ancestors and the centre of his early associations. Anyhow the sale of land has within the past 18 months proceeded by leaps and bounds, and has in fact entirely outstripped the financial arrangements made by government for carrying it through. The stipulated £5,000,000 has been many times exceeded in the volume of sales now agreed upon and awaiting completion in the land courts. There is something like a purchase fund famine in Ireland just now. Many landlords who have sold their estates on paper cannot get their money; the land court treasury being empty. However, while this article is being written, news has come to hand that fresh loans will be issued by government, additional money raised to remedy the deadlock that has arisen. Assuming that the sales now agreed upon are carried out, about one-third of the tenanted land of Ireland will have changed hands. At this rate the whole of the land will have been transferred to the tenant's possession in half a dozen years from now. But much may happen in Irish politics between now and then.

What will be the position of the respective parties after the land has changed hands? The landlords will have become capitalists, investing their money in commercial securities, though doubtless most of them will still live in Ireland on their unsold homes. It may be that in their new situation they will acquire habits of thrift and industry, which their previous training and caste prejudices never allowed them to do and may invest some of their capital in developing the resources of the country they

had so long blighted. But this is only a conjecture not to be too readily entertained.

And what of the tenants? They will be bound, for two generations, to pay the annual installments of principal and interest to government. The grandsons of existing tenants will find themselves in complete possession of the farms. But so far as one can judge there will be nothing to prevent large farms from buying out the small ones, thus tending to the reformation of large estates and to the growth of a new type of landlordism. Furthermore, the Irish tenants who are now buying out the holdings with such avidity are saddling themselves with the risk of future depreciation in the price of products; a very real risk. And they are also saddling themselves with the risk of future taxation of land values. "What I want to know is this," said a shrewd northern tenant quoted recently by a writer in the *Fortnightly Review*. "We sign and then we are landlords ourselves, and we have to pay installments to the government. Now suppose we've paid for 20 years and then the government puts a heavy tax on land, where are we?" That honest farmer was under no delusion as to the possibility of shifting such a tax.

The effect of the Act is, speaking in an economic sense, to give landlordism a firmer footing than ever, for the more frequently land has passed through the market the more sacred it becomes as an article of property in the eyes of most people, and the more unjust it will seem to them to tax a commodity which has been so often purchased and repurchased with "honestly-earned wealth." The tenants have been caught in the trap set for them by the government with the connivance of its friends, the landlords. They have agreed to shoulder for all time the responsibility for a bad system which they did not create, but of which they were the victims, and they have allowed (or at all events are allowing) the really guilty parties to retire from the scene with all the booty they can carry. And when all is said and done it cannot be argued that a system of peasant-ownership is likely to put the land to its highest productive use. Aside from the question of the sale of land to occupying tenants, the Act also undertook to deal with the question of finding farms for evicted tenants and breaking up the big grazing farms which exist in many parts of the country and which, by reason of their wholesale displacement of tillage, and the substitution of cattle for human beings, are objects of general public odium to the people around. In these respects the Act may be said to have broken down; very little has been done to bring about a settlement. Meanwhile the "graziers" are frequently boycotted, and a state of things similar to what existed in 1881 and 1882, but on a smaller scale, exists in some localities.

But a movement has lately arisen in Ireland from which considerable good may be expected, as it deals with a subject hardly less important than the settlement of the farmer's grievance, by the movement for the better housing of the working classes in Irish towns. There was formed little more than two years ago the "Town Tenants' Association," and judging from the report of its recent annual meeting, it is proceeding upon correct economic lines, and if it is maintained on those lines it is calculated to be of great educational value to the Irish people in working out their industrial emancipation. Mr. Michael Davitt and Mr. John Ferguson (Glasgow), names which stand for true principles of land reform, have lent the movement their support. The former in a letter sympathizing with its objects, declared that the taxation of land values was the only means whereby the tenement evils which disgrace such towns as Dublin,

Cork and Limerick could be removed. The latter also gave sound and pertinent advice. He said:

"You will touch the bottom principle when you make a separate valuation of house and land, and appropriate the increased value of the land which arises by city and town improvements made at the expense of the whole community, to repay to the whole community its expenditure, and thus whilst your city expenditure may, and will, increase every year, the rate upon each ratepayer will grow less year by year until your improving towns may all become, as over 500 have become in Germany, "rate free."

Under such competent guidance the new movement ought to do great good. The tenant-farmers as a body have, up to the present, given it no support. Indeed, it may be said to tread on their corns, for they hold, in many cases, the land on the outskirts of towns which is wanted for improvements, and they are likely to want their pound of flesh as much as did the original landlord whom they are supplanting. But beyond a doubt the liberation of land for town improvements is one of the sorest economic needs of Ireland. The tumble-down dwellings, wretched hovels and absence of anything that deserves the name of sanitation are unfortunately too characteristic of most Irish towns.

While so much is being done to make life in Ireland more tolerable for its inhabitants, it is unfortunately too true that emigration goes on even more strongly than before. The population, as vital statisticians have pointed out, now consists largely of children and old people; there is a conspicuous lack of the matured, adult element; the element that is wanted to do the constructive work of a nation and to keep it from falling back in the international race. The children as they grow up begin to turn their faces across the seas where so many of their kindred already are, and it may be that they draw a too roseate picture of the career that awaits them there, and have not sufficiently weighed the alternative advantages of remaining at home and taking their share in the development of their country. It may be that, after all, emigration is not so much a necessity as a habit. The view that grazing farms exist because there are no men left to till them may be as correct as the view that the grazing farms have destroyed the tillers' occupation. Indeed, in the harvesting season in many districts there is a genuine scarcity of farm help. There is potential wealth in Ireland if improved arrangements were made for producing it. Take agriculture alone for example. Although this is the main industry, it is persued in a very primitive and wasteful fashion, the advantages of co-operation, which have wrought such a wholesome change in Denmark and elsewhere, have not been availed of in this distracted land. Political and religious differences loom so largely in men's eyes as to prevent their coming together for this general economic advantage. "Are you a Protestant or a Catholic?" is the first question usually asked by employers when engaging labor. Mr. Plunkett in his able and entertaining book relates how, when his schemes for the popularization of improved plans for making butter were being brought before the people in the south of Ireland, a Rathkeale nationalist vehemently insisted that not a pound of butter would be made in Rathkeale except upon approved "nationalist principles." These stupid sentimental prejudices are declining no doubt, but they are powerful enough still to keep apart those social elements which would make for a fuller industrial life.

If Ireland is ever to become prosperous her people must cease to think of the Battle of the Boyne and the Treaty of Limerick, the char-

acter of Henry the Eighth and Queen Bess; they must agree to differ as to what sort of a place heaven is and what denominations of Christians are excluded from it, and recognize that in this practical world at all events both orthodox believers and heretics may blend their enterprise, capital and labor for worldly purposes without endangering their spiritual interests. Prosperity in any country must depend upon freedom to use the land and a disposition to use it. The recent Act gives the Irish people the former in a qualified sense at least; the latter element the people must supply themselves. The Irishman is not afraid of hard work nor is he deficient in intellectual qualities, as no American reader needs to be told, but in thrift, perseverance and general level-headedness he is hardly the equal of the Scotchman or Englishman. But it would be strange if, having lived for centuries under a land system whereby he had nothing to gain from his own industry, he did not suffer from defects of character. The measure of local self-government which Ireland now enjoys may be expected to deepen Irishmen's sense of responsibility and a national Parliament in College Green would doubtless do more in that direction. But while there is agitation there cannot be prosperity. Agitation stops the investment of capital and compels labor to work at the line of least advantage. It operates like a war upon a nation's credit, making it impossible to borrow money for public enterprises except at a high rate of interest. It will be a happy day for Ireland when she can afford to dismiss her agitators and settle down to the task which Dr. Johnson declared to be one of the most innocent ones in which a man can be employed—that of making money.

THE COMMUNITY OF HUMAN INTERESTS.

(For the Review.)

By L. H. BERENS.

"No less comprehensive idea than that of the community of human interests can be made the basis of civilization."—William Clarke in *Contemporary Review*, January, 1899.

The profound truth of the above words will be readily admitted by those whose political thought is illumined and directed by what is known as the Single Tax philosophy. Yet if they glance at the facts of existing social life they are forced to admit that the community of human interests, if it really exist, is to-day abundantly hidden from the ken of the superficial observer, of the much-talked-of "man in the street." Mutual struggle, not mutual aid; conflict, not community; bitter strife, not harmonious co-operation, seems the predominant factor in the civilization of to-day, in the halting, stunted, incomplete civilization, the burden of which falls so crushingly on those least able to bear it. Within each separate community one sees signs of a continuous, degrading, brutal and apparently permanent struggle between the masses of mankind for a mere existence—a struggle not between man and nature, but between man and man; each man's hand uplifted against his neighbor; each seemingly isolated and unrelated, fighting his own individual battle, or, at best, that of his own class, caste, nation or race.

The established politics of the various nations, as revealed in their