

ANOTHER BLIND LEADER OF THE BLIND.

General Booth.

"Much evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as by want of heart."

No one can accuse General Booth of "want of heart"; his sympathy, like his energy, is seemingly exhaustless. He has devoted his life to the individual salvation of his fellow-creatures according to the particular tenets of the Salvation Army, to which he is a reliable—we had almost written infallible—guide. This congenial work, however, evidently does not offer sufficient scope for his activities. He has recently been to South Africa, where, according to the numerous interviews he has graciously accorded since his return, he has visited almost every town of importance in British South Africa, and, besides addressing innumerable Salvation Army meetings, has interviewed all the pillars of society in the country, all the leading men in Church and State. Hence it is not surprising that many are now prepared to accept the veteran Salvationist, as he is apparently prepared to accept himself, not only as an infallible guide to spiritual salvation, but also as an infallible guide to the social salvation of the black and white races of both South Africa and Great Britain.

His views on this fundamentally important question are instructive, even though they may reveal the "want of thought" which, according to the late Poet Laureate, is as potent a factor for evil as "want of heart." "To save the white man" the first thing to do, according to General Booth, is "to civilise your native properly." And the first step in this direction, according to the veteran Salvationist, is "to separate him from his tribal conditions."

Though we do not doubt but that this advice will be appreciated and acted on by "the leading men of Church (or should we not rather say synagogue?) and State" in South Africa, whom the General has so recently interviewed, and who possibly themselves suggested it to him—yet we must confess that we are inclined to hesitate before ourselves accepting it as any reliable step towards either the spiritual, or moral, or material salvation of our black fellow-citizens. And we would very much like to know whether, before giving any such advice, General Booth has himself investigated the principle on which these tribal conditions are, consciously and unconsciously, based, and their direct effects on the material, economic, and social position of our black fellow-citizens.

Those who have done so have placed it on record that it is these very tribal conditions, from which General Booth would have us separate them by law or by force, that **alone** places the natives in a more free and independent position, when confronted by those who for their own purpose would exploit their labour-force, than is secured by our "civilised, non-tribal conditions" to the "poor whites" of either Great Britain or of South Africa. For it is these tribal conditions that at all times assures them of that free access to Mother Earth which is a primary condition of economic freedom, and which at all times gives them the choice between working for others or working for themselves. Deprived of such tribal conditions, their choice, as those of their "poor white" fellow-citizens in Great Britain and South Africa, would soon be restricted to working for others or starving. And, despite General Booth's dictum, we cannot see that this would tend to minimise, but rather to increase, "the natural selfishness of the heart" he, in his wisdom, boldly ventures to deplore in both the black and the white races. Nor can we see that it would lessen in them, if it really exists, any tendency, assumed without evidence by General Booth, "to live for nothing else than making a fortune." Surely this is a characteristic of those

living under "civilised" conditions rather than those living under "tribal conditions."

General Booth's analysis and remedy for the dire social ills afflicting the white races, that follow close on all attempts to establish our "civilised conditions" in any part of the world, is quite on a level with his analysis and remedy for the inferior civilisation of the black or native races. "It is a burning and cruel shame," he says, "that thousands should be starving in England when they might be living in health. . . ." And we quite agree with him. But to what does he attribute this strange phenomenon? To the niggardliness of Nature? To an Omnipotent Creator having failed to provide abundantly for all His children? Or to the ignorance and stupidity of civilised man, who has not yet learned, as have the black races whom in his arrogance he ventures to despise, how to secure to all access to the natural bounties and opportunities so lavishly placed within our reach? The General does not tell us. But, after referring to the fact that what depressed him most was "the prevalence of unemployment in South Africa," he still advocates emigration to its shores of the millions suffering from the same evil in this country.

Now we do not believe for one moment that the fact that the Army under his control, like every other Emigration Agency, makes a good thing out of its Emigration Department, consciously influences General Booth. We unhesitatingly accept his statement that "he has been appalled by the stories of suffering in our cities"; that "they have racked his mind, burdened his heart, distressed him by night and by day." But we would venture to remind him:—

First, that overpopulation has not been proved to be the cause of these sufferings; and seeing that the same sufferings exist in sparsely populated South Africa, cannot tacitly be accepted as the cause, or emigration as offering any remedy.

That emigration has never yet proved itself a remedy for the social ills against which it is avowedly directed. That an emigration which has reduced its population by about half, has not removed poverty or unemployment in Ireland.

That it has been proved beyond dispute that the unrestricted private ownership of land, of Nature, of Mother Earth—due to the abolition of similar tribal conditions as those he would destroy in South Africa—is the direct cause of both poverty and unemployment, of those sufferings which distress him so deeply.

That both experience and the commonest of common sense teach us that it is only by removing causes that we can hope to remove their effects. And that until we do so neither prayers, nor charity, nor even Salvation Armies, can avail us anything.

Hence, that if in his declining years he would make good use of the enormous influence he wields, he would do well to direct the thought of his followers to the cause of the evils they are banded together to combat. We have good reason to believe that his noble helpmate, Mrs. Booth, realised all this as clearly as we do, and was preparing boldly to avow her convictions, despite any subsequent loss of popularity or of financial support, when death removed her from our midst. If General Booth once directed his thoughts in the same direction, his utterances on social questions would be less misleading, and would merit more attention than they do at present. And he would at last do something to remove those ills which so deeply distress him, against which his whole life has been devoted, but against which all the self-sacrificing devotion of himself and his followers, until animated and directed by true thought, must necessarily remain fruitless and unavailing. We admire their devotion, their enthusiasm, their incessant energy; but this cannot blind us to the fact that it can do little or nothing to elevate or to benefit mankind. In

South Africa and in Great Britain it is our own man-made laws and institutions which are impoverishing, enslaving, pauperising, and deteriorating those to whom he has referred as "the poor whites." If we would help them, if we would promote their material, their moral, and their spiritual salvation, we must strike a blow at the causes, at the social and economic conditions which are determining their lives, shaping their character, and moulding them in accordance with their almost omnipotent power.

L. H. B.

LAND VALUES IN THE ANNUALS.

"HAZELL'S ANNUAL" FOR 1909 SUMMARISES THE ARGUMENTS.

The following passage is taken from a very full notice of our movement in this volume:—

"The principle underlying the movement for the Taxation of Land Values relates itself in a twofold manner to our present economic and industrial system. In the first place, its realisation in a legislative measure would relieve industry of the rates and taxes now levied on it; in the second place, it would open up to industrial forces and agencies, to capital and labour, opportunities for the production of wealth that are now closed against them. That is, the revenue derived by national and local authorities from a tax or rate based on the value of land would reduce, or cancel altogether, the taxes now raised from improvements and the fruits of industry; and, on the other hand, if unused, or imperfectly used, land were rated on its full value, there would be a strong inducement for the owners to extract as much as possible of that value from it.

"The first indispensable step for giving practical effect to this proposal is a separate valuation of land and improvements. A Bill to accomplish this with regard to Scotland is now before Parliament, having been passed by the House of Lords with one fatal amendment which limits its operation to local districts in which the measure may be adopted by a kind of local option. Such partial application of the principle would tend to nullify its good effects, to create inequalities, and thus to discredit it with the people at large. The Government is also pledged to introduce and pass a similar Bill for England and Wales, probably in the 1909 Session."

The Small Holdings Act was passed to meet the demand for land which was believed to exist among the rural population, and to place within the reach of men with a small or moderate amount of capital farms which will enable them to support themselves and their families, or allotments which will assist them to add to their incomes, and encourage them to remain on the land. The Act has now been in-operation for some time, but those immediately concerned in acquiring land find serious obstacles in the way. The cause of this is that there is nothing in the Act which may incline the landowners to make their land accessible to men of moderate means. According to reports which come from different counties there is a universal tendency for higher prices to be asked for the land. That is, the barriers which have kept men out of farms, the force which drives them out, high rents, have been further raised.

The same thing has been experienced in Ireland under the operation of the Irish Land Act of 1903. The price of land has gone up to such an extent that the payments are threatening to ruin the Irish ratepayers, who are bound by the terms of the Act to sustain any loss which may follow purchase. At present this loss amounts to 13 per cent. of the money raised.

The Taxation of Land Values is based on the opposite principle—that of making the landowner pay on the full value of his land, whether used or unused. This would enormously reduce the price and rent of land. At present the rating system is absolutely unequal and unjust. Under it the same piece of land might be rated thus: if idle, at nothing; if partly used, say, as a sheep farm, at 6d. per acre; if a small holding, at £1; if a market garden, at £8; if used for a house, at £10; if for a public school, £20; and if for city waterworks, at any price which the wealth of the city will encourage the landowner to ask.

From the "Daily Mail" Year Book, 1909.

The advocates of the Taxation of Land Values contend that the increased value of land due to the labour and expenditure of the whole community belongs to those whose efforts have made it—the community—and that some means should be devised to secure for the community that increased value. One method is to secure it by taxation, which involves in the first place the separate assessment of land and buildings where they exist together.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie, in his new book, "Problems of To-day," says: "Wealth is not all the result of manual labour, though the first small surplus was. The greatest growth of wealth from any one source in our times comes from the increased value of real estate upon which little or no labour is bestowed, the increase of population raising values."

Giving figures for the United States, Mr. Carnegie says that the value of real estate in that country increased from 39,544,544,333 dols. to 52,537,628,164 dols., an increase of 12,999,083,831 dols., which he points out is "£260,000,000 a year—over £700,000 a day."

Then he adds: "The obvious creator of this wealth is not the individual, but the community."

These principles are behind the *Scottish Valuation Bill*, which was introduced in 1907. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman defined its purpose thus:

"In providing for a separate valuation of the value of the land apart from buildings and improvements, we shall be preparing the way for a reform of the rating system in our urban areas which is urgently needed and properly desired, and we shall at the same time very much simplify the process of the public acquisition of land by getting a record of how much of their value is due to improvements and how much to the annual value of the land. It is an indispensable preliminary step. It will show us what the land values are, and where they are."

This Bill passed its Third Reading in the Commons on August 21st by 139 votes, but on August 26th the House of Lords rejected it by 87 votes. It was, however, passed through the Commons a second time in 1908 by 257 votes on its Third Reading. The Lords once more amended it, and it awaits the further consideration of the Commons.

The Lords' principal amendments made the adoption of the Bill by a local authority optional, and substituted "yearly value" for "capital land value" in the definition clause.

It is understood that a *Valuation Bill for England and Wales* is also to be introduced. In the Commons on May 12th, Mr. Asquith said that Mr. Burns would introduce "at an early date a Valuation Bill for England and Wales, with two objects—first of all to simplify and methodise and make, as far as possible, uniform the system of valuation throughout the length and breadth of England and Wales. The second object would be to provide for a separate valuation of sites and buildings. No valuation measure could be adequate to the necessities of the case which did not carry out both these principles." Mr. Asquith said that a new and complete reconstruction of our valuation and rating system was the necessary complement of the Housing and Town Planning Bill.

The advocates of the Taxation of Land Values look to such taxation to provide funds for the many problems of social reform which await treatment through lack of them. They believe that it will cheapen the price of land, and thus facilitate the provision of allotments and small holdings. Further, that it will have the effect of lowering rents generally.

THE labourer who receives his wages in money (coined or printed, it may be, before his labour commenced) really receives in return for the addition his labour has made to the general stock of wealth, a draft upon that general stock, which he may utilise in any particular form of wealth that will best satisfy his desires; and neither the money, which is but the draft, nor the particular form of wealth which he uses it to call for, represents advances of capital for his maintenance, but on the contrary represents the wealth, or a portion of the wealth, his labour has already added to the general stock.—*Progress and Poverty*.

THE phenomena of value are at bottom illustrations of one principle. The value of everything produced by labour, from a pound of chalk or a paper of pins to the elaborate structure and appurtenances of a first-class ocean steamer, is resolvable on analysis into an equivalent of the labour required to reproduce such a thing in form and place; while the value of things not produced by labour, but nevertheless susceptible of ownership, is, in the same way, resolvable into an equivalent of the labour which the ownership of such a thing enables the owner to obtain or save.—*Perplexed Philosopher*.