

"Whilst the monk, Bulloch, was pronouncing these words a big penguin with a fair skin and red hair went down into the valley carrying a trunk of a tree upon his shoulder. He went up to a little penguin who was watering his vegetables in the heat of the sun and shouted to him:

"Your field is mine!"

And having delivered himself of this stout utterance he brought down his club on the head of the little penguin, who fell dead upon the field that his own hands had tilled.

At this sight the holy Maël shuddered through his whole body and poured forth a flood of tears.

And in a voice stifled by horror and fear he addressed this prayer to heaven:

O Lord, my God, O thou who didst receive young Abel's sacrifices, thou who didst curse Cain, avenge, O Lord, this innocent penguin sacrificed upon his own field and make the murderer feel the weight of thy arm. Is there a more odious crime, is there a graver offence against thy justice, O Lord, than this murder and this robbery?"

"Take care, father," said Bulloch gently, "that what you call murder and robbery may not really be war and conquest, those sacred foundations of empires, those sources of all human virtues and all human greatness. Reflect, above all, that in blaming the big penguin you are attacking property in its origin and in its source. I shall have no trouble in showing you how. To till the land is one thing, to possess it is another, and these two things must not be confused; as regards ownership the right of the first occupier is uncertain and badly founded. The right of conquest, on the other hand, rests on more

solid foundations. It is the only right that receives respect since it is the only one that makes itself respected. The sole and proud origin of property is force. It is born and preserved by force. In that it is august and yields only to a greater force. This is why it is correct to say that he who possesses is noble. And that big red man, when he knocked down a labourer to get possession of his field, founded at that moment a very noble house upon this earth. I congratulate him upon it."

Having thus spoken, Bulloch approached the big penguin, who was leaning upon his club as he stood in the blood-stained furrow:

"Lord Greatauk, dreaded Prince," said he, bowing to the ground, "I come to pay you the homage due to the founder of legitimate power and hereditary wealth. The skull of the vile penguin you have overthrown will, buried in your field, attest for ever the sacred rights of your posterity over this soil that you have ennobled. Blessed be your sons and your sons' sons! They shall be Greatauks, Dukes of Skull, and they shall rule over this island of Alca."

Then, raising his voice and turning towards the holy Maël:

"Bless Greatauk, father, for all power comes from God."

Maël remained silent and motionless, with his eyes raised towards heaven; he felt a painful uncertainty in judging the monk Bulloch's doctrine. It was, however, the doctrine destined to prevail in epochs of advanced civilisation. Bulloch can be considered as the creator of civil law in Penguinia.

"LAND-VALUE REFORM" — By J. Dundas White

DR. DUNDAS WHITE'S new work* adds worthily to the contribution he has made, in his many writings, to the literature of the land values movement. Legal scholar and experienced Parliamentarian (Member for Dumbartonshire, 1906-10, and for Tradeston, Glasgow, 1911-18) he has enlightened the subject in numerous books and pamphlets expository of the fundamental principle and giving guidance on many of its associated problems.

The keynote of the new work is that "the lands of a country, with their natural advantages, should be treated as the common inheritance of its people . . . where lands are in private possession those who hold them should pay the people fair rents for them based in each case on the present value of the land, with its natural advantages, apart from any improvements that have been made on it; and improvements and industry should be freed from taxation as far as the circumstances of the time allow." The first Chapter gives a lucid exposition of the principles on which this reform is founded and of the benefits that would follow its adoption. The other two Chapters relate to its application in this country, the second giving a general view of the suggestions for legislation contained in the third, which is followed by notes on some kindred points.

This little book has appeared at an opportune time. Dr. White serves the cause of land-value reform in a unique manner. His treatment of the subject is always comprehensive, but it is rarely tedious. It is no idle claim to use the words "theory and practice" in the text; for

it is a mark of all his work that, however short his discussion he has the gift of combining what is fundamental with what is concerned with minute legal details of application.

Many years ago Sir Frederick Pollock wrote a book on *The Land Laws*. In his introductory remarks he gives a depressing and almost despairing impression of their complexity and of the manner in which they confused and baffled lawyers. "The whole subject is such a mystery to laymen that, though they may know something is amiss, they cannot tell where the remedy should begin and do not know what to ask for. Among lawyers a considerable number are hostile to change and a greater number indifferent. Those who make the shoe do not feel it pinch and those who feel it pinch do not know how shoes are made."

Dr. White is not in any of these classes. He is aware of where the shoes pinch and knows how to make shoes that will not pinch. A prominent feature of this his latest work is his admirable attempt to make language serve the cause of land-value reform most effectively and happily. The use of "land-rent" instead of "tax," to denote the character of the payment made by a holder of land to the government is a help to clear thinking. From his brief and pithy exposition of the deep principles which underlie this reform, through every subsection of his well-framed Bill, through every Note which explains a working detail, there runs the same steady thought.

A study of this short statement, so complete and yet so full of suggestion, will cure anyone of serious mind of indifference to a supreme problem.

* *Land-Value Reform in Theory and Practice*. Land & Liberty Press, Ltd. Price, 2s. net. By post, 2s. 3d.