

conservative and constructive, he is peculiarly adapted to this later phase of the work and will surely contribute many suggestions to those earnestly endeavoring to bring about advancement in the processes of civilization.

### BOOK REVIEWS.

#### ANOTHER NOVEL FOR LAND REFORM.

Mr. Richard Whiteing, author of that sterling novel, "No. 5 John Street," has given us a new work of fiction, characterized by the same keen observation of social wrongs and the same finished literary skill.\* In "No. 5 John Street" he laid bare the cancer that is eating the heart out of our social order. In that book he showed the extremes of London life; in this, his later work, the extremes that meet on the landed estate of a great English nobleman, the unearned luxury, the pampered weakness, against the penury and fruitless lives of the English peasantry. Not in this generation has there been a writer who has pictured in such vivid colors the inevitable degradation that awaits the worker divorced from his ownership in the soil. Many are the passages that might be quoted, but with a few only we shall have to be content:

"His history was that of many an English laborer of his day. He was one of the earth-men of our railway age, and he had left his lasting mark on the planet with pick and shovel. He had read nothing—for the best of all reasons—thought nothing, hoped nothing, but had just dug, fed and slept."

The ownership of land is the ownership of those who dwell upon it. In describing the Duke's estate, Richard Whiteing says: "It had all the main essentials of wealth—mines and flourishing cities, harbors and ports, endless acres of plow land and pasture, all the Duke's, with a great density of population which was *his no less in effective ownership.*"

The book derives its title from the yellow-covered wagon which conveys the agitator for land reform from place to place. From this van he holds forth. But this is only incidental to the story, though it runs through the whole of it, appearing and reappearing with its promises, warnings and injunctions, much like the Fates in the Greek tragedies.

As a story, its fabric is slight enough. There is no plot to speak of, but one will not lay it down. The author is a literary artist, and he has not made his moral too obtrusive, as less experienced writers might. He has wedded his lesson to his story. We do not feel that he has written his story merely to show that he has a lesson; but the story,

itself, the great social wrong, and the way out—the way of freedom, not the way of the socialist—are, all together, the core and the heart of it.

We quote once more:

"There is but one check to the Duke's serene satisfaction in things as they go, namely the odious self-satisfaction of one of his neighbours—Mr. Kisbye, of the Grange.

"It is true enough that you may walk for miles at Allonby without touching any land but the Duke's. Yet you must choose your path with care. There is one way of going wrong, if only one.

"Years ago, in a fatal moment when the agent happened to be looking the other way, Mr. Kisbye snapped up a bit of property that impaired the rounded integrity of the ducal domain.

"It cut right into the estate, and spoiled the amenity of it. The intruder got it by an extravagant bid to a needy owner at a time when his Grace's solicitors were opening their parallels in the usual impious way that assumes the eternal duration of the world. He wanted a country settlement, and here it was within a stone's throw of one of the greatest estates in England. So he sneaked it by purchase, much as the Duke's forefathers might have sneaked it in another way. His Grace offered to pay handsomely for his mistake through the solicitors, but Mr. Kisbye smiled derisively at every bid, and stuck as close as a horsefly with a lodgment.

"It was a speck of property—no more, of course, but it was enough to make the other less than perfect. It established this 'bounder' from town—this nondescript without a pedigree and without any means of getting a living that could be known and traced—as a country gentleman, as farmer, and even as landlord in his small way. Worst of all, it established him as a dispenser of hospitality, and brought down into the country at stated times the most fearful persons of his set."

J. D. M.

#### A WONDERFULLY CLEVER SATIRE.

No more clever satire than this account of John Wryland's "Journey to Thibet, of his Founding a Kingdom on the Island of Palti, and his War Against the Ne-ar-Bians," has appeared in many a long day.\* The style of the work is admirably suited to its purpose. It recalls the English of Cobbett or Defoe, and its humor is delightful. One in closing the book regrets that the author finished his task so soon. Satire as it is, the writer finds legal and historic precedents for almost every absurd thing that he does; and this fact is indicated in foot-notes, with the naive reminder, "This was the law in Eng-

\*The Yellow Van, by Richard Whiteing, 12 mo., pp. Price, \$1.50. The Century Co., N. Y.

\*The Travels of John Wryland, 12 mo., 236 pp. The Equitable Publishing Co., Allentown, Pa.