

A Man Without Imagination.

Mr. H. Rider Haggard is a man with imagination—in fiction. In the practical affairs of life he is without imagination, but is just a dull, impervious, and ordinary British mind, which we say without intending any disrespect to things indigenous to the isles. Perhaps what is the matter with Mr. Haggard is not so much lack of imagination as lack of humor. But of that the reader shall judge.

Mr. Haggard is out with an article the title of which is "Back To the Land." We have heard that title before—the late Bishop Nulty, of Meath, Ireland, has used it as the caption of his famous pamphlet. It was the recapitulation of the causes—or rather *the* cause—of the impoverishment of the Irish tenantry. Mr. Haggard, on the other hand, tells of the sad impoverishment of the landlords who cannot help their tenants—a story far more pitiable. The author of "She" can hardly restrain his tears as he recites the sad tale of landlords whose tenantry are so poor that they cannot advance rent enough to maintain their landlords, and whose wages are so high that the landlords are "robbed" in two ways—in low rents and high wages. The case is so desperate that we shall let Mr. Haggard tell it—he does it with true feeling that is honorable to his heart:

"Mr. Blake, a well-known and much-respected farmer, land agent, and county councillor in the Amesbury district, told me that in many places there are practically no houses in which young folk can settle down and marry, while of such as exist those which fall into disrepair are often not rebuilt because it does not pay to do so. Sometimes also the cottages are two miles away from the homestead, and nowadays men and women refuse to live isolated upon the downs.

"As a remedy Mr. Blake suggests that money should be advanced to the landowners at a nominal rate of interest, repayable over long terms of years by means of a sinking fund, to enable them to erect suitable cottage accommodation. But, as I pointed out to him, to expect the State to come to the rescue of the land or any class that has to do with it is somewhat Utopian."

Mr. Haggard held out no false hopes to Mr. Blake; it is unlikely, indeed, that the State will come to his rescue, though Mr. Blake's plea is ingenuous. But let Mr. Blake tell of what he calls the "black cloud." The humor of this is so delicious that one almost hesitates to believe that it is unconscious:

"But if the rent question is ruining the landlord, almost equally destructive to the farmer is that of labor. 'The labor difficulty is the blackest cloud of the lot,' said Mr. Blake. 'Unless something unforeseen occurs, farming must come to an end for lack of labor,' said Mr. Rollence, of the well-known firm of Waters and Rollence. He added that on the day of our interview a farmer who milked thirty cows had told him that his cowman was leaving, and, as he could get no one else, he could see nothing for it but to try and do the milking himself."

It will certainly be a woful day for England when the "farmers" who milk cows are compelled to do the milking. Mr. Blake's grief is real, not assumed. He is a "farmer" who knows if he cannot get men to do his milking he will be forced to become another kind of "farmer"—*i. e.*, a farmer who farms. But a sadder case is that of another of whom Mr. Blake tells:

"Especially does the Wiltshire laborer object to Sunday work. We were told of a farmer with a large herd of cows who is obliged to bring his three sons home every Saturday from their school in a distant town in order that they may milk on Sunday."

Mr. Blake told Mr. Haggard that this dislike for Sunday labor does not spring from religious prejudice, but from a love of recreation. And he concludes with the sad reflection, "If this state of affairs goes on it may make farming impossible."

Nevertheless Mr. Haggard says he was favorably impressed with the Wiltshire laborers. He speaks of them as "specimens," as if he were talking of Alderney cows.

What is the matter with Rider Haggard? Is he a man without imagination, or a man without humor? We know what the irreverent would call him, but he is not really a chucklehead; "She" and "King Solomon's Mines" are clever books.

(Expressly for the Review.)

How Germany Moves.

IS THE EMPEROR A SINGLE TAXER?

By A. Pohlman.

The "Bund Deutscher Bodenreformer" has taken a somewhat different development than the similar organizations in the New World and England. Though based on the principles of Henry George, the German League does not advocate single tax pure and simple, nor does it follow the source of the English Land Nationalization Society. Recognizing that, especially in a country like ours, with ancient, deeply rooted customs, no theory, however perfect, can be carried out in its purity, and that to make headway against the innumerable prejudices and interests opposing any change, we believe the proper course to follow is to show the way of putting our principles into practice on all economic questions turning up in course of time and absorbing the public interest.

Thus, when some scandalous grants were made in our African colonies, the bund raised its voice and soon had public opinion on its side, so much so that the Colonial Secretary, who made these grants, had to retire.

The bund took up the protection of the workmen in the building trades who suffer from fictitious mortgage entries, closely connected with the land question, and it tried to show the suffering farmers that, instead of clamoring for protective duties, they ought to turn their attention to the mortgages which weigh them down, and to the artificially increased valuation of their estates.

When the Prussian Government came forward with its great canal scheme, it was unable to overcome the opposition of the Diet. The bund showed that by taxing the unearned increment created by the construction of the canal, and likewise of the adjoining road and iron mines, the canal might be turned from a doubtful financial undertaking to a very successful one.

Wherever committees are appointed to investigate the fearful calamity of overcrowding in our large cities, the bund steps in to show that there can be no other solution than a thorough reform of the laws regulating the possession of land, and when it is in this way brought home to the people they begin to understand what our principles mean.

A splendid opportunity for propagating our ideas arose when two large Prussian Mortgage Banks stopped payment. Some time back these kind of banks had asked the government permission to grant loans and issue mortgage bonds on building sites, instead of house property only as before, and then our bund raised its voice and pointed out that a new stimulus would be given to the already flourishing speculation in ground values, and that a collapse was sure to follow. This permission was granted by both houses of the Prussian Diet. Our interference was ridiculed by the whole financial press, but only a few years elapsed to prove the correctness of our arguments.

The recent coal crisis, too, offered a splendid field for agitation, showing how the whole country was taxed by a small ring of mine owners. It was wonderful to see how quickly people grasped the idea that these mines ought by right to be the property of the nation, or contribute at least a proper share from their enormous profits to the public exchequer.