

A RIFT has distinctly showed itself in the menacing organisation of the Knights of Labour. This was sure to come. The Trade Unions, which the larger association seeks practically to supersede and absorb, may make mistakes, and may have sometimes misused their powers; the sharp line which they draw between employers and employed is evil, and we devoutly hope will some day be effaced or softened; but they aim at objects in themselves reasonable, as well as feasible, and therefore the basis upon which they rest is sound. It is otherwise with an organisation which aims at marshalling all the wage-earners of the continent in a social and industrial war against the rest of the community. There is nothing to justify such warfare. The community has done no wrong, much less any intentional wrong, to the wage-earners, while incontrovertible evidence shows that the artisans are receiving in raised wages and extended command of comforts and luxuries their share of the increased wealth of the world. That the whole of the world's wealth is the produce of their manual labour, and belongs of right to them, so that they are warranted in uniting their forces for the spoliation of the rest of the community, is a fallacy which will not bear a moment's inspection. Nor is the sudden transformation of society in the interest of the wage-earners, of which the organisers of such combinations as the Knights of Labour dream, a feasible object; gradual progress is our law, and attempts to break it only lacerate the social frame, and give birth to widespread misery. The basis of such an organisation as the Knights of Labour therefore is not sound, and sooner or later that which is built on it must fall. Those who levy war, above all unjust war against society, find themselves, moreover, under the necessity of submitting to the commands of a general; and they thus impose upon themselves the yoke of an iron dictatorship, of which, finding that nothing substantial is gained by the struggle, they do not fail to become weary. Mr. Powderly, so far as we can see, has used his power with discretion and moderation: he has certainly shown both wisdom and right feeling in trying, however vainly, to keep his association clear of Anarchism and Dynamitism; but he is the general of an army which is held together neither by a cause nor by martial law, and he has scarcely taken the field against his imaginary foe when he finds mutiny breaking out in his own camp.

In the *North American Review* there is an article by Mr. George, which confirms our impression that, while he confidently asserts that all property had its origin in rapine, he has never studied the subject historically. "The road," he says, "by which private property in land was instituted among English-speaking people was, by the shaking off their rents on the part of the feudal tenants, and the resort to general taxation for the public revenues, originally obtained from land." The reference apparently is to the commutation in the reign of Charles II., of the feudal payments and burthens for an excise. Just exception has been taken to a bargain which relieved the holders of feudal estates at the expense of the community at large; but to call this the origin of private property in land among English-speaking people would be preposterous. The institution of private property in land, was, before that time, in full force among the English-speaking people of the American colonies, where feudal tenures had never existed. What does Mr. George suppose was meant by the Anglo-Saxon distinction between folkland and bookland, and what does he suppose bookland meant but private property? He admits, by the way, that "secure possession by the individual man is of course necessary to the use of land, since it is requisite to secure the right of property in improvements." What is private property but "secure possession by an individual"? If we are threatened with nothing more revolutionary than the substitution of secure possession by individuals for "private property," holders of real estate may sleep in peace. Some of Mr. George's disciples apparently are not aware that a leaseholder has "an undivided interest in land." Let them trespass on a leasehold estate, and the fact will be brought home to their minds.

We find in the same number of the *North American*, rather to our surprise, a very forcible article, by Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, on the fallacies and dangers of Socialism. In reply to Mr. Hyndman's truculent declaration that "force or fear of force is the only reasoning which can appeal to a dominant estate or ever induce them to surrender any portion of their property," Mr. Bradlaugh most truly says that a Socialist State, "if it could be realised by force at all it could only so be realised after a shocking and murderous civil war." That the property-holding classes would certainly fight in defence of their property, and that they would by no means certainly be beaten, are simple and important truths which seem never to have occurred to the minds of Socialists and Labour Reformers.

THE curious fact has been brought to light by a writer in the *Contemporary Review* that an exact counterpart of the Irish land agitation has been prevailing for centuries in Picardy. The *droit de marché* of Picardy is the tenant right of Ireland. "Its history," says the writer in words which exactly fit the Irish case, "is a history of legal rights invaded by violence, of terrorism maintained by crime, of law defied by secret coalitions, of justice baffled by the impossibility of procuring evidence." Even the despotic government of Louis XIV. seems to have put forth its full power against Picard Agrarianism in vain. The man who took the farm of an evicted occupier is called a *depointeur*, and becomes, just as in Ireland, an object of rustic vengeance. He is boycotted. Men in masks, or with blackened faces, sow tares in his wheat, break his implements, destroy his crops, mutilate his horses and cattle, burn his ricks, set fire to his buildings, fire shots into his house. Everybody refuses to work for him; his family are branded and excommunicated. No evidence is forthcoming, and no justice can be obtained. Agrarian crime even courts publicity. A shepherd who had taken another's place was shot in the street in broad daylight, as he was walking between two friends. A curé, who had taken his glebe into his own hands, was shot at the high altar before his congregation. A farmer, who had taken his neighbour's farm, was shot at church. A series of edicts, continued with progressive severity to the eve of the Revolution, proved totally ineffective. The tenant right in this case seems to have had its origin in an exceptional claim for reward on account of the labour expended in clearing, Picardy having in former times been covered with wood. The conflict has now nearly died out, but it has left its moral, which is, that agrarianism is quite independent of politics, and that the treatment of the two in the case of Ireland as though they were identical, or closely connected with each other, can only lead to confusion.

WE have received from England the first number of a journal entitled *Imperial Federation*, a sign that the Imperial Federationists are on the alert. Our gratitude is due to the Colonial Secretary for doing anything to bring this question to a head. In its nebulous state it is beginning to work serious mischief. A number of Englishmen are persuading themselves that they can afford to surrender the integrity of the United Kingdom, because they will only be making raw material for the ampler and grander unity of a Federated Empire. But Mr. Stanhope touches the subject, it must be owned, in a very timid and gingerly way. He does not venture to direct the attention of his delegates to either of the two critical topics, contribution to Imperial armaments and submission to an Imperial Tariff. The only matters to be treated at the conference are postal communications and Colonial defences. With regard to postal communications, no doubt, most gratifying enthusiasm will prevail. With regard to Colonial defences, the only result, we suspect, will be a flood of friendly talk. No Colony will be willing to incur expenditure. Assuredly Canada will refuse. Besides, how can Australia help to settle the disposition of batteries on the coast of Canada, or the arrangements of the Canadian militia?

ON the cover of *Imperial Federation* is set forth the list of all the Colonies; and we wonder that any reader of that list should fail at once to be struck with the absurdity of proposing a federation of Great Britain with Cyprus, Labuan, Natal, Heligoland, St. Helena, and Fiji. The Confederation must, of course, have a written constitution, strictly defining all rights, powers, and liabilities, otherwise there would be as many quarrels as there were calls upon any of its members for contributions or the performance of duties. To this constitution Great Britain and Heligoland must be alike subject. To interpret it, and hear appeals against its infringement, there must be a tribunal like the Supreme Court of the United States, to the authority of which all the members of the confederacy, Great Britain as well as Heligoland, must submit. Let the Imperial Federationists try their hands at drafting such a constitution and at devising such a tribunal. They will then, at all events, be brought face to face with the practical problems which they have undertaken to solve. Let them also consider how the constitution is in the first instance to be made. The free consent of all parties will of course be requisite; and this, apparently, can be obtained only by means of a Congress in which each is fairly represented. In such a Congress, if Heligoland or St. Helena has one representative, Canada ought to have a thousand, and Great Britain ought to have five or six thousand. That this project when brought down from the clouds, and put to the test of practical discussion, will collapse, we regard as certain, and our only fear is that its catastrophe may be followed by a revulsion of feeling which would impair that moral bond between the Mother Country and the Colonies which is incomparably more