

amidst the tears of a whole audience. The appeal is irresistible. Poor little woman! Poor thing! Poor Frou-Frou!

Compassion and terror combined for Phèdre; unmingled sympathy or pity for Frou-Frou. But what should be claimed for Adrienne Lecouvreur gloriously interpreted by Sarah Bernhardt! I should say deep veneration, the highest admiration, and the deepest commiseration. I saw Rachael in this character more than thirty years ago. I do not know whether my susceptibilities were keener or blunter when I was a young man than they are now; but thirty years since I used to see a play almost every night in my life, and of late years I have not been inside a theatre, on an average, once in three months. Still I have a tolerably good memory, and can remember all the intonations and the gestures of Rachael Felix in Andromaque, in Phèdre, in Camille, and especially in Adrienne Lecouvreur. I have even heard her sing, or rather recite, in a weird monotone the words of "La Marseillaise." I liked her best when she was awful, majestic, passionate, terrible. No drapery become her so well as the stola and the pepulum. Her arms should always have been bare, so grand did they look, uplifted in vehement expostulation, in fierce denunciation, in agonized despair. But feelings of soft and tender sorrow she (in myself at least) rarely excited. Hers was not pre-eminently the gift (as it was that of Coleridge's Geneviève) to make those who loved her grieve.

But Sarah Bernhardt in Adrienne makes you grieve, and withal rage in indignation at the cruel wrongs to which she is subjected. The people surrounding Frou-Frou are mainly very contemptible. Her father is a worthless libertine, who too late atones for the evil example which he has set his daughter, by making an *amende* undeniably pathetic, but as undeniably "stagey." A more despicable personage than her lover it would be difficult to conceive; and her husband, albeit gallant and honourable, is as weak as water. "Adrienne Lecouvreur" is, on the other hand, a very strong drama; and the characters brought in contact with the heroine are vivid, and admirably contrasted. The pathos of the *bonhomme* Michonnet, the theatrical *régisseur*, is not forced; Maurice de Saxe may be dissipated, but he is not a heartless and dishonourable profligate; the Abbé de Chazenuil is certainly Machiavellian, but he is not mean; and Adrienne's implacable rival, the Princesse de Bouillon, is about as wicked as she can well be, but she is not despicable. With the exception of good old Michonnet and the amorous yet noble-minded Maurice de Saxe, you simply hate all these people, powdered, starred, buttoned, hooped, and silk-stocked, conspiring and intriguing against the illustrious artist, the true and loving woman. She stands there, like a lighthouse, lashed by the fierce waves of calumny and treachery. The fabric is as frail as the first Eldystone; it goes down at last with a crash, and disappears in the deep for ever; but the fall is splendid and the catastrophe sublime.

I confess that I admire Madame Sarah Bernhardt in Adrienne Lecouvreur. It seems to me that she throws into it every one of the host of rare and noble qualities with which she is endowed—tenderness, alternately childishly cajoling, fascinating, passionate, pleading, and submissive. When she is roused to anger she is for a moment terrible as a pythoness on her tripod; but fury soon subsides, and the affectionate, single-minded, docile creature—the very woman—once more predominates. Her unmerited sufferings, her immeasurable love for a dissolute but wholly bad man, her heroic self-sacrifice, her almost angelic resignation, her combat with death, her final submission to the inevitable—all these, with voice, and eye, and pose, and mien, and with a thousand delicate touches, she expresses in a manner and with an eloquence not attainable by any other living actress. From first to last, the skill of the accomplished artist is thoroughly felt, though wisely kept latent. But all this artistic skill only subserves and ministers to the evolution of the artist's greater possession—that of a thoroughly heartfelt, sympathetic and womanly nature.

THE LAND QUESTION.

What is the "land question," which seems just now to lie at the root of every serious home-trouble and to form the staple topic of conversation? It cannot be said to lie in a nutshell, for it has outgrown all reasonable proportions by sending out branches and tendrils in every direction; but the central germ of discord and difficulty is recognisable in its simplicity still. The innermost and underlying facts are these. From the time when the first wandering tribe settled on a particular spot, and the first settler encroached, or threatened to encroach, on his neighbour's territory, land has been held by force—first, the force of arms openly displayed or used, or the force of law, which is, as it were, arms on paper. The leader of Israel parcolled out the promised land among the people, and it was theirs to till and plant and sow. They could not destroy it or take it away, but might use it and appropriate its fruit for their sustenance. It was also so far theirs, or soon became so, as to be treated as property and sold out of the family. If a man coveted his neighbour's vineyard, and was not a king to procure the death of the present holder, he had to buy it of him. The natural order of events was for the land to pass as property from father to son. The traffic that rose up sprang from the poverty

or covetousness of the people. This is the essence of the question, and has been so ever since the world was populated. Possession without disturbance creates a right, which is of value in direct proportion to the length of time it has been maintained. There is not only reasonable presumption that the representative of a family which has held a particular plot of land during a long period, perhaps stretching back beyond the date of any deed or register extant, is the true proprietor—so far as any man can be a proprietor of what is longer-lived than himself, and in which therefore he can have only a life-interest—but there is also an assumption that a settlement of long persistence creates an inalienable right. This will appear on a little reflection.

Now it is at first sight startling to find that the disputes and discussions of to-day are all about the old question, just as they might have been thousands of years ago. The question has, as we said at the outset, grown complicated, but it is the same in principle; and the complications which have arisen are, in fact, nothing more than the graftings of questions arising out of personal and family and class "interests" on the old stock difficulties. Thus in Ireland the peasantry are trying to assert what they suppose to be their rights as the settlers on land originally allotted to their families, and as the servants or descendants of lords of the soil long since forgotten. They take their stand on the doctrine that whoever gave them the privilege of living upon and using the soil created an inalienable right for them, and that, however, the first lords of the land may have lost, or sold, or been deprived of their property, it must have been charged with their interest in it and subject to their tenancy when it passed into other hands. It is nothing to the advocate of this view of the matter that, while on the one hand, it makes the tenant a serf to be transferred with the soil, it is assumed to give him a right of use and possession more permanent than that of the "landlord" himself. Stripped of all the technical and political jargon of controversy, this is the Irish "land question"—Is the tenant or settler on the land to be held to have an indefeasible right of possession?

In a country where leases and documentary bonds have been little used, because the people were too ignorant to understand their value, everything now turns upon "custom," and the custom—that is the value set upon the tenants' right—has been different in the several provinces. In some districts where the conqueror's foot has been planted on the land distributed within comparatively recent time, the custom is clearly formulated. If a tenant is displaced, he must have a certain notice and compensation on a fixed scale. In those parts of the island in which no modern settlement has been made, the whole question rests on tradition, and it is difficult to find precedents to determine the case. The Irish Land Act of recent date recognizes the right of the tenant to be compensated for disturbance. It therefore recognizes the right he claims; and, inasmuch as this right to the tenant at least, appears to be one wholly independent of the payment of rent, he is not prepared to accept the law in its full working. His ancestors did not pay rent; they did service. He is quite prepared to do the same service, which chiefly consisted in breaking the heads of the dependants of any neighbouring landlord with whom his own chief or lord chose to quarrel; but he will not pay rent. In old times the service rendered by the tenantry to their lords was a valuable set-off for the privilege of living upon a little plot of bog-land and feeding on its scanty produce. A repressive religious system has kept the Irish people back. Unlike the peasantry of Scotland and Wales, they have been left behind; and now this intellectually-stunted race occupies the anomalous position of being only able to render a tribute for their land which is of no present value, and of being wholly unable to wrest a livelihood out of the land to which they cling. We are not Protestant in the sense of being opposed to Roman Catholicism as an ecclesiastical system; but, as a social system, as a paralyzing, enervating, repressing system, antagonistic to the growth and prosperity as to the energy and freedom of a nation, we must, in the name of common sense and truthfulness, denounce the grip of the Papal system on Ireland, on the people of a country which, but for the burden of its own Church, would have been happy, contented, and free.

In England the people are under the direction of short-sighted agitators and pretended political economists who seem to be ignorant of the first principles of the science of which they prate—clamouring for the destruction of the very system that the Irish people are striving to uphold, or rather to renew. The English want to get rid of the entail which keeps land in a family and makes it pass from father to son by ancestral right, oblivious of the fact that, if the land of England could be brought to the hammer to-morrow, it would be bought back in large parcels by the moneyed classes and left by will to their sons. The laws of England are only really burdensome or embarrassing as they may complicate the process of cutting off an entail, and of transferring land, like other property, by sale. We have practically shaken off the last vestige of the serf system in England; and no man claims or desires any other right in land than he would have in other property—namely, the right which money gives him. As we have admitted, there are difficulties in cutting off the entail of an estate which sometimes press heavily on an oldest son or his

creditors. He cannot sell his property, because it has been so left in the family that it must go down from father to son. In cases where the inheritance has been hedged about by some long-sighted testator so that the life-holder in the succession cannot mortgage it for more than a fixed proportion of its rent-value, and subject to the charge left upon it, the spendthrift, or the son of a spendthrift, feels the inconvenience of being crippled. The same thing happens in Ireland; but there, while the inheritor is perhaps driving cattle in the Colonies, or starving in England, the settlers on the estate, the tenants who pay no rent, but are ever ready to fight, insist on what they are pleased to call their rights, let the landlord fare as he may!

There is not more difference in the land laws of the two countries—England and Ireland—than is occasioned by the different conditions of the two peoples. If the Irish peasantry were on a level in point of freedom with the English peasantry, they would be even more prosperous than the agricultural classes of England, because they are keener witted and can, when they will, do better work. Clear away the ecclesiastical system of Ireland, let the people free from the blinding and crippling effects of superstition and priestcraft, and they will rise to a higher position than the wisest and most sanguine of their "emancipators" as yet expect. The Roman ecclesiastical system—we carefully distinguish this from the religion of the ancient Church—has blighted and still blights the peasantry, as it misleads and impoverishes the nobility of every land over which it broods. The following statement, which was submitted to the Lords and Commons indirectly more than ten years ago, is still true, and may be taken as a summary of the question at issue. The land question is distinctly social in its nature and scope, and must be settled on social principles. It is a question apart by itself, and can in no way affect the abstract conditions or rights of property. What a man can take away is his own, and he may cast it into the sea. What he cannot destroy is only his in a limited sense. It is his for his lifetime and to pass on or give away when he dies; but, inasmuch as it forms a constituent part of the territory which belongs to the nation that never dies, the nation has a right which, though in no sense antagonistic to the right of the individual, is superior to and to some extent may override it. For example, this national right would come into play if the owners of land in an important district of the empire were to bind themselves together by a resolution to eject the population or to enforce such conditions of land-tenure as would reduce the mass of the people to the level of serfs. It could not be tolerated that a minority, however strong their claims, should depopulate the country. The individual must not exercise his right to the deprivation of the rights of the nation with which he is incorporated. Property in land cannot therefore, in the nature of things, be so absolute as property in movables. It is a necessity of the constitutional system that the right of property should be assured to landowners; and it is a necessity of the same supreme law that the right of equitable usufruct should be secured for their tenants. Moreover, the owner who offers his land for hire comes into the market as a trader, and the same social authority which protects his interest and gives legality to his commercial lien on the chattels of a tenant in default of rent has a clear right to require that he shall conform to the usages of the market and treat on fair terms. On purely economic grounds landlords cannot, because it would not be for their interest, refuse to let their lands, if they let them at all, upon conditions which will enable their tenants to utilize to the full the resources of their holdings and to improve them. On the other hand, the tenant can acquire no right of property in the land by his tenure, for the very obvious reason that if he could there would be no incentive for him to seek to become a proprietor.

It is important to bear in mind that economically Ireland is considerably in the rear of the other provinces of the empire. The causes, partly natural and in part artificial, which have retarded her development are not german to the business of redressing her grievances, and could only be imported into the problem with the effect of embarrassing its solution. Nevertheless the fact that Ireland is behind the age must needs be recognized, because it imposes special conditions on every attempt to legislate for her benefit. Another circumstance to which due importance must be given is the historical fact, momentous in itself and acquiring additional influence from the extraordinary power of tradition in Ireland, that the legal right of the landlords is of more recent date than the assumed right of those who now occupy the place of tenants. "Tenant-right" is a misnomer employed in a spirit of mistaken modesty, and leading to much misconception. What the advocates of "tenant-right" mean is to assert on behalf of tenants, as the first or oldest occupants of the soil, a claim to part proprietorship, the theory being that the settlement of James conferred a gift of right to rent and lordship, but not to actual property in the land. Another argument, urged with considerable ingenuity and some force, is that the tenant creates a right to something like part proprietorship when he reclaims by cultivation any waste land within his holding. These several points must be allowed to have weight in the consideration. They should have weight so far as to influence the tone and terms in which the right of the landlord is enforced in limitation of the "tenant-right" of the Irish land-holder. Even assuming

the theory to be correct which asserts that the settlement of James gave only a right to rental and lordship without that proprietorship which implies a power to dispossess the tenants of an estate, it is a fact that only a very small proportion of the present tenants of land in Ireland claim possession on the ground of legitimate succession or title by bequest from the time of James; and those who do are tenants of the old Irish families whose claims as landlords have nothing to do with the special grants made by the English King, but were only confirmed on the then existing conditions of their rights as ascertained by commission. Practically therefore the plea of previous and indefeasible sub-proprietorship put forth in support of tenant-right is incapable of argument. The allegation of a right on the part of a tenant to land which he has reclaimed, on the ground that what a man makes is his own, does not apply to the Irish tenant, because the whole of the land of Ireland, cultivated or waste, is comprised within the manorial boundaries, and the reclamer is in the position of a tenant finding minerals beneath the surface of the soil he rents—he can only work them under a royalty; or else he has trespassed beyond the limits of his own holding and is encroaching on other parts of the manor, in which case he can have no right at all. These are elements in the special system of land-tenure in Ireland, and give it those distinctive features which make it a matter apart from, and in many essential particulars totally unlike, all other land systems. Nevertheless we must take things very much as we find them, and the problem will have to be solved on common sense principles.

Looking at the matter from the landlord's point of view, two important circumstances help to determine the course which appears most conducive to his interest—the size of the holdings into which his estate is to be subdivided and the kind of farming to which it is to be subjected. Every owner of land must look to its improvement. He knows that, to keep pace with the age and to insure being as wealthy proportionally twenty years hence as he is now, he must take such measures as are likely to secure a progressive increase in the value of his property. In these circumstances it is perfectly obvious that he will not willingly let his land out in small parcels and long leases to tenants who have not the capital necessary to effect improvements. This is the practical difficulty with which those who seek to redress the grievances of the Irish farmer have to contend. It would be simply an act of injustice to require that the landlord should vest his property in hands where it would not increase in value, upon conditions which must place it beyond the power of recall. We hear a great deal about compensation for "improvements." As a matter of fact, no landlord objects to pay for *bona-fide* improvements. The difficulty is to insure improvement for the property upon any terms in Ireland. There will be no embarrassment about leases when this evil is remedied.

In England, Scotland, and even Wales, farmers are a professional class of agriculturists, and no one resorts to the business of farming for a livelihood who is not in a position to carry it out successfully. In Ireland a man takes a farm not because he has any qualification for the business of agriculture, but because he must live somewhere and do something, and it is pleasant to squat on the land and easy to live by keeping pigs and growing potatoes. It is too much to ask the owners of the soil in Ireland to give leases to the tenants of this class who are agitating to obtain them. Such a course would be simply a surrender of the rights of property; and the landlord compelled to make the sacrifice might at once sit down and calculate with the certainty of despair how long it would be before his property must be left hopelessly behind in the race of wealth, and himself and family be reduced to beggary. The value of the land in Ireland has been depreciated to its present minimum by reason of the small holdings in the possession of tenants who have neither the capital nor the wit to improve them. It is quite unnecessary to make a law which shall perpetuate this state of matters. We are told that, if the present tenants of land had leases, they would improve and develop into a class of professional farmers whom it would be a pleasure and advantage to have for tenants. Is this possible? The solution of the "land question" in Ireland cannot be effected by a law prescribing the substitution of leaseholding for annual tenancy under the present system. Any scheme for the satisfactory adjustment of the difficulty must include provisions for the improvement first of the tenants and then of the land. It is a popular fallacy that the Irish are born farmers and that we must legislate for them in that capacity.

A COMIC incident occurred at the first performance of *Charlotte Corlay*. Barbaroux was tracing the portrait of Marat:

Il m'a dit de sang froid, tout comme il le ferait,
Que l'unique moyen de calmer vos tempêtes,
C'est d'abattre deux cent soixante mille têtes!

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