

which sanction such proceedings, whether such laws are in force in Ireland or elsewhere. We have also the right, if we are of the opinion that England commits an injustice towards her subjects in sanctioning and maintaining such land-laws, of expressing disapproval of them. To say that it is none of our business is merely begging the question: it is our business to denounce an injustice. England herself has assumed this power over weaker nations, and maintained it and enforced it with the bayonet. Some Political Economists assert (see definition given *ante*) that the increase of wealth and its distribution are the objects of political economy. This is surely a narrow view to take of the subject, and it appears to me that the welfare and condition of mankind are more important than the acquisition and distribution of wealth. Of course wealth is to be considered as a means for bettering man—there are other means—and the welfare of man may perhaps be improved by the acquisition of wealth. By regarding wealth as the primary object of political economy, the fallacy of regarding the landlords' incomes as a criterion of utility, instead of the condition of the tenant and labourer, has arisen. The disparity of condition between different classes has given rise to great discontent, and will necessarily yet lead to great trouble. It may be years before the question will assume formidable proportions on this continent—if it ever does. It seems that in Europe the trouble is caused by monopolies of wealth and land (France, perhaps, forms an exception). Refer to one instance of land-monopoly and power in England: "The Government taxes the population and lends the money to the landlords to drain the soil. The landlords are to pay a certain interest and quit-capital, which discharges the debt in twenty-two years. This percentage the farmer finds to be less than the profit likely to accrue from the improvement of the land, and he agrees to pay it to the landlord. The consequence is that the country has been taxed for the purpose of presenting the landlords with the clear amount of improvement at the end of twenty-two years."

Further, let us say that no land-laws are in force, and that no one man claims a thousand acres for his *amusement* (such as game preserves, parks), and that fifty families require the land for their *support*, there can be no question but that the families would have the only right to the land. Persons are in the habit of saying that the rights of property must not be interfered with. Very well;—but what are the rights of property? To answer as shortly as possible, the rights of property are only to be looked upon as rights in so far as they are *equitable* to others and do not interfere with the rights of others. For instance, a law that ensures to one person a property to the actual detriment of others is not equitable and if enforced is unjust; so that until *law* is infallible, it will be subject to *reason*.

The preceding lines have been written on account of the animus exhibited by certain journals toward the Irish Land League: they have raised a cry of sedition, disloyalty, etc., and have called upon the people not to have anything to do with Parnell and his Land League. With Parnell we may not have anything to do, except perhaps to look upon him as a fearless exponent of the evils of the land-system. No one can approve of nor sustain him in the vilification of Her Majesty: he may be nothing but a ranter and a demagogue, but that has nothing whatever to do with the rights of the tenant-farmer. Of course the first efforts will be directed towards relieving the starvation, and very properly, but this relief will only be of a temporary nature: the evil will be just as likely to occur in future years. Money will be sent, and is being sent from foreign parts, and it appears to me that when appeals have been made by British officials for help, subscribers are justified, if their opinion is such, in denouncing the pernicious land-system.

It has been said that there is something ludicrous in the idea of tenants proposing to purchase land of which they are unable to pay the rent. I would merely say, in reply, that there is something more than ludicrous in the idea of the people paying the drainage-tax for the benefit of the landlords (see *ante*), and that the purchase of the land can be affected by government and the government repaid by the tenants at a certain interest and quit-capital, which will, in a great many cases, be much less than the present rental. At present, as the evidence shows us, the rents and taxes absorb every result apart from the tenant's living, even in prosperous years, for the landlord naturally exacts as high a rent as possible, so that the tenant is unable to provide against misfortune. Again, it is said that the law of supply and demand regulates the rental, but unfortunately it does not in this case, as the poor tenant in Ireland is obliged to take the land at the landlord's valuation, the land being in the hands of comparatively few persons. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, to use a common simile, and as the Irishman is passionately devoted to his country, therefore the only conclusion to be arrived at, when so many have emigrated from their native land, is, that there is something radically wrong.

In conclusion, I would say "that it is not man's office to originate laws. Providence has made the laws, and given man an intellect to *discover* and *apply* them: as well may man make laws in physical sciences, or in theology as in political economy. It is true he may make laws and enforce them, but what he *never* can do is, to make the operation of those laws beneficial to the world. This is beyond his power; and though the laws may be for the pecuniary advantage of the privileged classes of a country, they are necessarily followed

by a concomitant series of evils, which bear on the masses of the population." The Latin proverb. "Qualis rex, qualis grex," meaning "like king, like people," will perhaps apply in the case of Ireland substituting, or rather understanding, "government" "for" "King."

Hiram B. Stephens.

MONTREAL SOCIETY.

MRS. SHODDY'S PARTY.—(Concluded.)

A young lady is declaring in a shrill voice that "she can't play a thing without her music." Mrs. Shoddy informs us that this is Miss Bangs, and that she is a beautiful player." Her beauty is not very evident, but she soon proves that her piano playing does not belie her name. She *bangs* unmercifully, sometimes striking wrong notes or chords with a vigour that makes us shudder. These mistakes she afterwards explains by declaring that "the pianah is so much lower in tone to hers! It must be at least four or five notes," she exclaims (of course she means tones, and the Shoddys do not know the absurdity of the assertion). "You keep it low for your singing, I suppose," she adds, addressing young Shoddy, but Alfred evidently does not like to admit that there can be anything low connected with his singing, and Mr. Shoddy, senior, seems greatly annoyed to hear that anything in his house is not high-toned. However, Miss Bangs is a musical authority, and no one dares to contradict her. Miss Startup now plays a prelude, and Alfred sings to us of the charms of "*Bony Heloise*." Mrs. Goodstyle whispers: "He must mean Miss Startup; she is rather bony, isn't she?" and Alfred continues to descant in dull-set tones of the *boniness* of Eloise, until smiles become audible, and we are all glad when the song ends. Meanwhile Mrs. Shoddy has been spirited away by the boy in buttons with many mysterious beckonings and pantomimic signs. "I hope she has gone to get us something to eat," whispers Mrs. Goodstyle. "Or to drink," echoes Euphrosyne; "I would give anything for a cup of tea or coffee. Did you get any?" "Why, no; there is none to be had," replies Mrs. Goodstyle, "and I am afraid we won't get anything till supper is ready; but we must listen." Miss Startup is now rending the air with an Italian bravura. "Haw-haw, haw-haw, h-a-w. Haw-haw, haw-haw, h-a-a-w,"—higher: "Haw-haw, haw-haw, haw-h-a-a-a-w,"—a little above the top of Miss Startup's voice; and so on till she ends in a terrific shriek, while a vulgar young man near by remarks, *sotto voce*, "She'll bust! she'll bust, sure." Mr. Shoddy has just been telling us that he does not like "them Hi-talian songs," but when Miss Startup rises from the piano declaring that it is very high-toned—indeed, fully two or three tones higher than hers—Mr. Shoddy is restored to good humour, and tells us that Miss Startup is considered "the finest hamatoor in Montreal." He then goes off to compliment the young lady on her singing, and we occupy ourselves in discussing the astonishing deduction that there must be an octave difference between the tone of Miss Bangs' and that of Miss Startup's piano. "I wish some one would ask me to dance," sighs Euphrosyne. "I don't know anyone, and they don't introduce at all, it seems." "Ah, those people always go to extremes," replies Mrs. Goodstyle. "Not long ago Mrs. Shoddy would have introduced us to every soul in the room; now she knows that this is not customary, and thinks that therefore all introductions are vulgar." "And she invites us here to sit and talk to our husbands," exclaims Phrosie, indignantly. "And I am sure we get enough talking to at home," I add, sadly. "But here comes Mr. Goodstyle, at last. He will dance the next set with you, Phrosie, and if Mrs. Goodstyle will honour me and guide me through." "My dancing days are nearly over," sighed Mrs. Goodstyle, "but if you cannot find a better partner——" "It would be impossible," I replied, in my most gallant manner. Mr. Goodstyle, who has been at a dinner of the Political Economy Club, now joins us, and, although I am sure he would much rather discuss the speeches with me, politely professes great pleasure in the prospect of dancing with Phrosie; but perhaps he will enjoy it, for Phrosie is a pretty partner, and Goodstyle always had an eye to beauty. His own wife, though verging on the forties, is still a handsome and charming woman, and he adores her, so can afford to admire other men's wives without coveting them. I always think that when a man has once known a pure affection, even for a dead *love*, he is in little danger of ever indulging in an impure passion. Truly, "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." I am recalled from my moralizing by hearing Mrs. Goodstyle ask: "Will these young people never be done waltzing? It really is not nice for girls to dance so long and so often with the same partners. Their mothers can't be here, surely." "My dear, their mothers are not society people," replied Mr. Goodstyle. "They may be rich now, but they have drudged and economized through their early years till all spirit and ambition are ground out of them. Some of the fathers are here. Men who are out in the world soon learn the importance of their wealth, and estimate themselves accordingly; and too often, I fear, they are inclined to despise the good women who have helped them out of poverty." "Yes, and the children despise them, too," said Mrs. Goodstyle. "This is what makes some parties so odd and unsatisfactory—they are almost made up of young people with no one to guide or control them. In England no nice girl would go out with a chaperon." "A