

what he styles the nation. After going a little way together they part company, with the usual amenities on the Land Leaguers' side. We are likely to hear a good deal more of agrarianism; but of nationalization of the land we shall probably not hear much more. It will drop before long into the grave of Rag Money. Sympathy and respect are due to the author of any plan for the improvement of the human lot, and especially to the author of any plan for the improvement of the lot of poverty, however impracticable his views may be, provided that he is animated by a spirit of genuine benevolence, and proposes nothing contrary to justice. Mr. George is animated towards a large and perfectly innocent section of the community by a spirit of insolent malignity and he glories in trampling justice under foot. His proposal is at once to strip of their possessions all whose property happens to be in land, and he exultingly announces that they are not to receive any compensation. They may have reclaimed the land with the sweat of their own brow; they may have purchased it yesterday of the very government by which they are to be robbed of it; this makes no difference to the mind of a theorist who revels in his vision of high-handed iniquity. Radical journalists in England now denounce Mr. George's principles as those of a pickpocket, though some of them would perhaps find it difficult, after their own support of the Land League, to meet him on the ground of principle. The practical answer to him from the first has been that if he and his train of philosophic filibusters attempt to plunder the landowning part of the community, the land-owning part of the community will fight for their property, and there will be a civil war, the result of which can hardly be doubtful, as the farmers will be all on one side. When Stuart tyrants robbed the subject, the subject drew the sword; and are people to allow themselves tamely to be robbed by a tyrant majority, supposing that a majority in favour of agrarian confiscation can be found? The prerogative of voters, like that of kings, is limited by justice, which it is the object of all government, royal or elective, to uphold; and if it is exerted in open defiance of justice, it will, like that of kings, provoke resistance. Another practical answer is that the simultaneous dispossession of all the owners and tillers of the soil would certainly be followed by a great decrease of production and consequently by dearth of bread. That a scheme which would take away all the land from its present proprietors and cultivators to make the politicians, under the fine name of the State, the universal landlords, should have obtained such vogue, is no doubt a serious fact. There are, unhappily, suffering classes, especially in old and overpeopled countries; and it is most natural that by these any nostrum should be welcomed which promises at once to change their lot. It is more than ever natural since religious faith has undergone eclipse and from many breasts the hope of compensation in a future life has fled. These facts society must look in the face. Yet it would probably be found that the sale of Mr. George's book, large as it has been, is nothing compared with the sale of patent medicines, which, promising universal health, are the undertaker's best friends.

At one of Mr. George's meetings, the chair was taken by Mr. Henry Labouchere. Mr. Labouchere himself presented to the world expressly as his Christmas offering of peace and good will, a political, social, and fiscal programme such as a French Jacobin would not disdain. The guillotine was not there; but, the guillotine is hardly ever in the programme; it comes when the Jacobin finds himself in possession of despotic power, (the liberty at which he aims) and sees or suspects anywhere a lack of absolute submission to his divine will. Mr. Labouchere proposes, among other things, that every tenant of a house shall be empowered to compel his landlord to sell him the freehold at its actual value, without any reference to the possibility of a rise. In other words all those who invest their money in houses, if the speculation fails are to bear the loss; if it proves good, they are to be robbed of their prospective profit for the benefit of the sitting tenant or the State. Do not the authors of such proposals see that there would soon be an end of letting or building houses, and that the habitations of the people instead of becoming better would become worse? It is constantly assumed by Socialists that Capital will wait like a cow to be milked by the confiscator morning and night; but Capital will either perish or take flight; investment and commercial enterprise will cease; employment will cease with them; and nothing will then be left to the Socialists but to turn their engines of confiscation against each other. The singular part of Mr. Labouchere's appearance as a Jacobin is that, all the while, his journal is filling its leading columns week after week with gossip about the doings of the Court and the aristocracy, exactly like that which we read and venerate in the *Court Journal*. Nor is this merely because such intelligence is demanded by the social market; for the editor never loses an opportunity of showing, by corrections of rival purveyors,

his personal superiority in acquaintance with the fashionable world. He is, also, constantly heard of as a companion of Royalty; and of this, too, the reflection appears on his page. In nine men out of ten, the social feelings are stronger than the political; and it may be shrewdly surmised that the Mr. Labouchere of the Jacobin programme is an adaptation to the taste of the Radical shoemakers of Northampton. But nobody who has read the history of revolutions can doubt what, when the guillotine was once set going, the fate of such revolutionists would be. Orleans *Egalité* is their type and their warning. Perhaps, however, in the present case both faces are masks, and both characters a harlequinade.

ANOTHER singular figure among the English Radicals is Mr. Joseph Cowen, whose words in favour of the retention of the House of Lords have been cited by Canadian Conservatives as those of a Daniel come to judgment. Mr. Joseph Cowen is perhaps as near a counterpart as nature could produce of Mr. Roebuck; of Mr. Roebuck, that is, in his tameless prime, for at the last, under the skilful manipulation of Lord Beaconsfield, who discovered that vanity was the real root of his character, *Tear 'em*, as he used to be called, subsided into a domestic animal. Violence and waywardness as well as a great gift of speech are the badges of Mr. Joseph Cowen, as they were those of his prototype. The special object of his hatred is moderate Liberalism; violent Toryism, or anything violent, Turkish despotism for instance, he finds comparatively congenial. But those who quote him as a Daniel come to judgment in honour of the House of Lords, vastly mistake his drift. He has been described by not unfriendly critics as "a born conspirator against all governments," and he was just as hostile to Gambetta as he is to Gladstone. Regarding government as a power of evil, what he desires is that it should be weak. The House of Lords, unreformed, he argues, is weakness itself; it can no longer make a serious stand against any popular agitation, but if it were reformed, as moderate Liberals propose, or turned into a Senate, it would be a real Conservative power and an effective check upon mob rule; let us therefore keep it as it is and we shall have mob rule under its name. His sentiments, reversed, are the faith of genuine Liberalism, which regarding government, when placed on the right footing, not as a power of evil, but as a power of good, wishes it to be popular, but wishes it to be strong.

"A VISIT to Philistia," which appears in the *Fortnightly*, is a terrific unburdening of the irate soul of Sir Lepel Griffin, K.G.S.I., who has been visiting the United States, and has returned from that odious democracy in a state of very high displeasure. Sir Lepel deliberates whether it is expedient to say unpleasant things to the Americans; he decides that it is, particularly as the Republic, according to him, is not politically quiet and inoffensive, but aggressive and "dynamic," in proof of which he quotes from the *New York World* some wild talk about the progress of Socialism and the doom which is impending over all existing governments and all the wealthy classes in the Old World. He never was more mistaken in his life than he is in fancying that the American people are revolutionary propagandists. They have had a rebellion of their own; nor does anybody believe less than the writers and proprietors of the *World* in the fustian which they publish in compliment to their Irish subscribers. However, having settled the preliminary question, the Knight proceeds to dance on all the cherished institutions, habits, and sentiments of the Americans, including, as an extract in another column shows, the pride which they take in the beauty of their women. He is likely to have a pleasant quarter of an hour with some of the Americans in London whom he describes as pork-packers who have come over to finish an education which has not been begun. To the pork-packers and Philistines generally it may be some comfort to see that hardly any part of the planet meets the approbation of the K.G.S.I.; he speaks of the English with almost as superb a disgust as of the Americans; and if our common sense did not over-rule our notions of grammar, we might fancy that he extended the epithet "disagreeable" even to himself. But evidently he is treated as being apart. He promises a paper on the political institutions of America; it is likely to be a valuable contribution to political science. On the judicial institutions he has already pronounced. "Of the judiciary," he tells us, "a considerable proportion, elected by the same processes as give municipal government to the cities, is notoriously inefficient and corrupt, and the criminal classes who are personally most interested in the verdicts of the courts, select the judges to preside in them." This he says by way of answer to the praise bestowed on the American courts by the Lord Chief Justice of England. The election of judges by the popular vote is a very bad thing; Canada is most happy in her exemption from it; Massachusetts has never adopted it; it was the work of the Democratic