

REVIEWS.

be, a full, clear, and comprehensive account of the several changes in the law, and the causes which from time to time produced and made necessary the changes.

The relation of landlord and tenant has, in all civilized countries, been a subject of much nicety, and much difficulty; and, in no country have the changes been so slow as in Ireland. While in England great and permanent changes were made in obedience to the demands of progressive civilization, Ireland was comparatively inert. Any system which fails to give the tenant a certain interest in the soil which he cultivates is a barbarous system. The only way to secure the energy, stimulate the industry, and secure the goodwill of the tenant, is to give him a secure tenure of his land, or a sure hope of payment for his improvements when his tenure ceases. Some effort has been made in this direction in the north of Ireland, by means of what is there known as Tenant Right. But this right has not the positive obligation of law, resting rather on the good nature of the landlord than any actual right of the tenant against the landlord. Besides, it is not uniform; in some counties, while it is equal to twenty years' purchase, in others it is not more than five.

The sales of estates by the Encumbered Estate Commissions, though it has been of great benefit in many ways, has not improved the condition of Irish tenants as a class. Some few tenants have themselves become owners of the land. But, in many cases the new landlords have purchased for profit, and in a hard commercial spirit refuse to do more than compelled by positive law, and where not restrained by law do not scruple to take possession of improvements made by tenants without payment or compensation of any kind. It may be said, why not leave parties to make their own contracts, and why not allow these matters of detail to be regulated by contract? But the land tenure in Ireland is a question too complicated to be disposed of in the brief space we can now devote to it. The landlords as a class are rich and powerful, the tenants poor and weak. Many of the landlords are absentees, and care little for the land except for the revenue which it yields. Most of the tenants love the land, and hate to pay rent, looking upon landlords as their natural enemies, living in the past, and holding fast the traditions of the cruel injustice of a by-gone age.

Mr. Finlason, by shewing what the law of England is as to tenures, shows, what in his opinion the law of Ireland ought to be. It is not, however, to be forgotten, that there is more than mere tenure involved in "the Irish land question." The bulk of the land in Ireland is not only in the hands of a few persons as in England, but, while the majority of the landholders in Ireland are Protestants, the majority of the tenants are Roman Catholics, and there is an antagonism of creed more bitter than any antagonism of race, and worse still, the Roman Catholic tenants in many parts look upon their Protestant landlords as the descendants of conquerors and oppressors. The traditional feeling of hatred that in some parts of Ireland is found to exist, makes the land question one of peculiar difficulty. Statesmen for more than half a century have endeavoured to supply a remedy, but no efficient remedy has yet been discovered, and perhaps time alone can remedy the evil. But this is no reason why attempts should not be made to lessen the discontent by removing as much as possible some of the causes of it. One cause no doubt is the uncertainty of tenure, and this operates almost as injuriously upon the landlords as the tenants. While the tenants prosper the landlords prosper. While the tenant suffers the land suffers, and through impoverished land the landlord suffers. Land well farmed is worth more rent than land ill farmed, and a tenant who farms well is better able to pay his rent than a tenant who is unable to farm well, or unwilling because discouraged, knowing, that he is simply by his labour improving the property of another without benefitting himself.

It is to be hoped that the present government may do something for the relief of Ireland on the land question. The perusal of the work before us by any statesman, will give him a better idea of what is needed than any work of the kind that we have seen. The author in his introduction, shews the differences between the tenure of land in England and in Ireland, and the causes of the differences. His first chapter is devoted to a general history of tenure in England, and especially of inheritable tenure. His second chapter, is the history of leasehold tenure in England. His third chapter is the history of the yearly tenancy in England; and his fourth and last chapter, which is the most extensive in the