

the Moderator, assigning certain reasons for "dropping" his appeal. His letter was quite unnecessary, as everybody connected with the Synod knew perfectly well that he was afraid to prosecute his appeal, and that he would find some pretext or another for not proceeding with it. His communication, as we learn from the *Presbyterian Review*, was received with derisive laughter, after which he was permitted to withdraw his appeal. This chosen but most unsavoury vessel has probably gained wisdom in the school of experience during the last few months, and it is not likely that he will think fit to intrude himself or his affairs upon public notice again for many a day.

HENRY GEORGE'S DIFFICULTY.

THE great land reformer, or, to speak more correctly, the man who will be great when his land reform is effected, has been among us, and some of us have heard him. Not all of us. Not so many as should have listened, considering that many of us have not read his books, and that some have only a vague notion that he is a mild kind of Socialist—perhaps a communist in disguise—or only a very-much-diluted Nihilist. To speak plainly, all such persons are neglecting a plain duty they owe to society and themselves: the duty of informing themselves fairly on a public question before it becomes a party question. Having once entered the latter stage, every chance of calm consideration and fair discussion will be lost. In partisan literature the truth will be told, but unfortunately more than the truth—the amount of error and unessential verbiage spread over the gist and truth of a controverted idea being like the proportion of sack to head in that famous old tavern score of which all of us have heard. It is therefore our bounden duty to acquire a competent knowledge of the subject while it is yet debatable, for the time may soon come when all will be eager to talk, but when none will be willing to be convinced. The rapidity with which the Knights of Labour have spread their organization over Canada may assure us that if once the Land Nationalization question takes root in the United States it will quickly become a living question here. Mr. George has already been a candidate for the mayoralty of New York, and has polled a large vote. Nothing now keeps his theories in the background but their undeniable corollary that when all the taxes are paid by the land, protection must cease to exist and free trade will become universal. The workmen of America are strongly in favour of protection, and as long as they remain united neither capitalists nor farmers can carry a vote in favour of free trade. But protectionists assure us that before long the keenness of home competition, aided by the use of the best machinery and the most economical methods, will reduce American products to the price of importations from Europe. When that time arrives, workmen will vote to throw down the partition wall of custom houses that now hedges in the Atlantic coast, and ask for a chance to compete in the markets of the world. If Commercial Union should become an accomplished fact, Canada would be obliged to go with the States. If not, there is little doubt that our manufacturers would be strongly influenced by the example of our prosperous neighbours.

No one can tell how long or how short may be the time when American industry will be able to go alone, without the leading-strings of protection; and whenever that time arrives we may venture to predict that Henry George's theories will become a subject of serious discussion to the many who now ignore them. The vote of the manufacturing classes will by that time probably be stronger than that of the farmers and land-owners, and these classes will be selfishly inclined to consider so tempting a proposal as that of shifting all taxes, to the shoulders of the land-owners. The increase of mortgages upon land, too, is even now beginning to effect the transfer of land to the capitalist, and gradually alienating it from the tillers of the soil, who will therefore have less interest in resisting the change. Business men and manufacturers, too, will see a prospect of evading most of the taxes that now fall on them, for they will pay very little in comparison with the present scheme of taxation; first, because the land used by them is small in value compared to the capital otherwise invested; and second, because Henry George proposes to tax only the value of the land itself, and not the value of any houses or other improvements placed upon it. Even the farmer will find his cleared, fenced and improved land only rated at the value of equally fertile wild land in the same position, and at a valuation very much less than land in cities, which has a value derived from its position independent of any improvements made upon it. The agriculturist, then, might be induced to join the ranks of the land reformers on finding that his land taxes would be much lower than those of town land-owners, and thus Henry George, if he should live to see that time, would be left to fight the capitalist owner of land alone. The latter would be the only one personally interested, the selfish interests of all other classes being either antagonistic or nearly neutral, and his only friends would be those who object as a matter of principle to the sacrifice of vested interests. Protection, then, as we take it, is the only great barrier in the way of Henry George's scheme, and if that were once removed he would see a hope of ultimate victory. But it is quite probable that the present apostle of land reform may not live to see that barrier removed, and must leave his mantle for the shoulders of those who may fight the battle of the future with better hopes of success. Protection has taken firm root in Canada, though not yet ten years naturalized in our soil. The political battles of the future are likely to be fought only upon tariff details, and not on the broad principle of free trade. The Reform party already shows symptoms of common sense and adaptation to circumstances. Even if circumstances should change; if Canada should become self-supporting in staple manufactories, national jealousy and commercial selfishness would unite to keep up the barriers long after they had ceased to be useful as a protection to native industry. At present the outlook is not rosy for Mr. George's theories, and yet we repeat that a competent knowledge of them ought to be part of the intellectual stock-in-trade of every man—at any rate of every young man—who desires to be so well acquainted with the present aspects of thought on political and economic questions as to be prepared for what the future may bring forth.