

civilized tribes. But there are not a few among his readers and admirers to whom the fallacies and absurdities of his economical reasonings are matters of small concern. The philosophy they neither understand nor care to understand; the rapine they understand well. The Duke of Argyll, in common with the rest of his order, is open to attack as a representative of primogeniture and entail. But these do not prevail on our side of the Atlantic; and though on our side of the Atlantic there are still technical obstacles to the free acquisition of land, they are likely soon to be removed by the exertions of the Land Transfer Reform Association, and with them the last solid ground for complaint will disappear. Land will then have been nationalized in the only feasible sense of the term.

THE doleful aphorism is always ringing in our ears that the rich are growing richer and the poor are growing poorer. The tendency of our civilization is evil; the time is economically out of joint, and it can be set right—such is the practical inference whispered by the philosophic and loudly proclaimed by the unphilosophic communist—only through revolution and confiscation. Revolution and confiscation have been tried in France with a vengeance, yet the same complaints of social injustice are uttered there, perhaps even in a shriller strain than in other countries. In England, to the social state of which the aphorism has been specially applied, its truth has been challenged, statistical investigations into the distribution of wealth, past and present, have been instituted, and the result seems to be full of comfort. It appears that though there are some overgrown fortunes, the proportion of the national wealth in the possession of the class designated as very rich has decreased; that the amount held by the middle class has immensely increased, and that the aggregate wealth of the labouring class has immensely increased also. The last and most welcome conclusion is strongly confirmed by the returns of deposits in the savings banks. When population multiplies, the number of those who from various causes—misfortune, infirmity, vice, or the inevitable vicissitudes of the labour market—are reduced to want, must multiply also; but there is no reason to believe, there is every reason to disbelieve, that the proportion of those in want to those who are well-off is greater, or that their condition is worse than it was in former days. The beggar in Homer is just as squalid and miserable as the tramp of modern times, and it will hardly be contended that slavery, which was formerly the lot of the labouring class generally, was superior to the condition even of the lowest and worst paid grade of mechanics now. The contrast between wealth and poverty in our generation is often shocking, but is it more shocking than it was in the Rome of Crassus and Apicius, with their host of slaves, or in the Middle Ages, when a great feudal lord was master of a score of manors and an army of retainers, while the serf was not master even of his own labour? It may be doubted whether a Vanderbilt or a Jay Gould towers in opulence more above the humblest son of American industry than did the Fuggers and the Medici above the artisans of Augsburg and Florence. The latter part of the Middle Ages has been held up by some Utopians of the past as a period at which the lot of labour was better than it is now. Yet that epoch was marked at its close by the most fearful of servile and social insurrections: in France, by the Jacquerie; in England, by the risings of Wat Tyler and Jack Cade; in Germany, by the Peasants' War. The lamentations of Piers' "Plowman" are not less bitter than those of the labour journals of the present day. London is always pitched upon as the hideous example of social extremes, and true it is that nothing can be more saddening than a comparison of the fashionable with the low quarters of that Babylon. But it must be borne in mind that London contains four millions of people, and that to its own poor is added the perennial influx of misery from without. Whole quarters are full of pauperism from Ireland, and it is said that there has been a recent immigration of no less than thirty thousand Polish Jews. It is preposterous to ascribe the wretched state of these people to the normal tendencies of English civilization. Between the extremes of Belgravia and Whitechapel lie whole quarters and vast suburbs inhabited by prosperous and well-fed industry of different kinds and grades. That science and invention, by augmenting production, and what is hardly of less importance, facilitating distribution, have placed within the reach of the humblest comforts once unattainable by kings, is a commonplace of rhetoric; and science and invention are distinct from manual labour and essential parts of this decried civilization. Ten times as many guests have seats provided for them at the table of life as had seats provided for them some centuries ago, though some, unhappily, are still poorly fed. For those who cannot find seats at the board in their native land, instead of the famine which swept off the surplus population of a horde, the steamship now waits to convey them swiftly and easily to a new land of hope and plenty. When a country becomes crowded some

advantages and enjoyments must be lost, while others, both social and economical, are gained: we cannot have at once abundance of room and abundance of company; but the pressure on the means of subsistence and the consequent necessity of migration are practically as great in the primeval hunting-ground as in any hive of modern industry. From perfect justice, as from perfection of any kind, our communities are widely removed; the social organism is far from the ideal as the human frame; and the optimism of economists, it must be allowed, is sometimes rather exasperating to those who suffer. But the question is whether the tendency of our social progress is, as the pessimist asserts, towards injustice; and the facts seem to tell us that it is not, but on the contrary towards justice. The small returns with which capital is now obliged to be content, and of which a great English journal was complaining the other day as a dismal feature of the economical situation, show, on the contrary, that wealth is being rapidly accumulated, that all grades of society, but especially the labouring classes, are reaping the benefit of its accumulation, and that capital, the rapacious tyranny of which is the constant theme of communistic denunciation, is in reality receiving no unfair share of the profits. In one respect only the lot of the poor man has become more unhappy: education, by sharpening his perceptions and cultivating his sensibilities, has taught him to feel more keenly the inequalities of life and the contrast between his own condition and that of the rich, while it has also enlarged the range and quickened the importunity of his desires. The sting thus added to poverty is not the less real because it touches not the stomach but the heart; and it happens to come at a time when scepticism has banished from many minds the belief in an ordering and compensating Providence. On the other hand, the honour paid to labour has increased, the social relations between rich and poor have improved, wealth has a greatly enhanced sense of its responsibilities, charity grows more munificent, philanthropy more energetic, nor is much left of that insolent and contemptuous indifference to suffering which is depicted by the moralists and satirists of former days. Many a Dives may, no doubt, still be found, but hardly a Dives who will feast serenely with a Lazarus at his gate.

OCCASIONS are every day presenting themselves for teaching congregations, if they tender the interest of the church, to be considerate and forbearing towards their pastors. When the source of disagreement and trouble is a fundamental difference of opinion, it is difficult to suggest any remedy but that of peaceful separation; and fundamental differences of opinion do in these days arise: they arise in the Church of England between members of the High and Low Church parties, and they arise in all the churches, more or less, from the disturbed state of the theological world and the conflict between ritualism and orthodoxy. But fully as often the real source is mere weariness of the preacher. To a literary man the wonder is that sermons are so good as they are; he knows that he would himself soon be exhausted if he were set to write two discourses a week upon a limited range of topics. But a congregation, blissfully ignorant of the limitations of brain secretion, and the difficulties of composition, expects the pulpit to be an over-flowing fountain of fresh thought and striking language, and this for a very moderate salary. The less people care for doctrine the more they crave for oratory; the less value they set on the matter of the message the more exacting they are as to the manner of its delivery; and as scepticism, avowed or unavowed, eats its way, people care less for the doctrine and set less value on the message. They demand in fact that the glow of faith and piety, which is extinct in their own breasts, shall be rekindled every Sunday from the single breast of the pastor. This is a new difficulty added to the preacher's burden by the circumstances of a sceptical age. Already it had become hard enough for him to maintain his influence over an audience the intellectual level of which was infinitely higher and its temper far more critical than were those of the mass of the laity a century or half a century ago. To sustain attention it becomes necessary to practice histrionic acts, to which even such a preacher as Wilberforce at last largely resorted. Methodism contrives at least to secure variety in the pulpit by its rotation of ministers, though at the expense of pastoral relations as well as of the minister's domestic life. But in the Church of England the style of the preacher who, when first he mounts his pulpit, is a paragon, soon begins to pall; his congregation becomes first critical and then restless; faults are found in his general ministrations; at last, perhaps, discontent draws to a head, and after a year or two of bitterness for the pastor the connection, formed with the most sanguine expectations, comes to a sad end. So it will be if reliance continues to be placed mainly on the sermons, unless a constant variety of preachers can be provided. So it would be in the case of lecturers and professors, however gifted, if they had to address themselves, year