

he wishes it or not, he works, too, for the increased enjoyments and prosperity of others. No man consumes all that his labor produces, and the benefit of the superfluous products of his labor, if not enjoyed by himself, is sure to be enjoyed by some one to whom he has transferred it. If a bootmaker does not himself wear all the boots he produces, somebody else is sure to wear them for him. It is, therefore, highly in the interest of the community, as well as of individuals, to encourage the production, the multiplication and accumulation of objects of wealth; and, therefore, to stimulate the activity and energy of the labor necessary for their production the laws of all nations, as well as the law of nature, have regarded as sacred and inviolable the right of property which a man enjoys in what he produces.

Necessity of Labor Proves the Common Right to Land.

Although the earth, even in its present deteriorated state, is a splendid inheritance provided by the liberality of God for the maintenance of man, it is, nevertheless, an inheritance which places him under the necessity of patient, laborious toil in its cultivation and improvement, to extract from it the means necessary for his subsistence.

The human race cannot live on the earth if they refuse to submit to the inevitable law of labor. No man can fairly emancipate himself from that universal decree which has made it a necessity for every one "to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow." Now, the land of every country is to the people of that country or nation what the earth is to the whole human race—that is to say, the land of every country is the gift of its Creator to the people of that country; it is the patrimony and inheritance bequeathed to them by their common Father, out of which they can by continuous labor and toil provide themselves with everything they require for their maintenance and support, for their material comfort and enjoyment. God was perfectly free in the act by which He created us; but, having created us, He bound himself by that act to provide us with the means necessary for our subsistence. The land is the only means of this kind now known to us.

The Land of Every Country the Common Property of its People.

The land, therefore, of every country is the common property of the people of that country, because its real owner, the Creator who made it, has transferred it as a voluntary gift to them. "*Terram autem dedit filiis hominum.*" Now, as every individual in that country is a creature and child of God, and as all His creatures are equal in His sight, any settlement of the land of a country that would exclude the humblest man in that country from his share of the common inheritance would be not only an

injustice and a wrong to that man, but, moreover, would be an impious resistance to the benevolent intentions of his Creator.

Individuals May Rightfully Collect Rent for Improvements in Land, but to Permit Them to Collect Rent for Land Itself a Wanton Injustice.

The tracts of country known in England as the Bedford Level, and in Flanders as the Pays des waes, were, not so very long ago, as sterile, as barren, and even more useless than the bogs of our own country at this moment. By an enormous expenditure, however, of capital and labor they have been drained, reclaimed and fertilized, till they have at last become among the most productive lands in Europe. That productiveness is entirely the result of human labor and industry, for nature did hardly anything for these lands. If the question, then, was asked: Who has a right to charge or demand a rent for the use of the soil of these lands for agricultural or industrial uses? the answer undoubtedly would be, the person who by his labor and capital had created all their productiveness, who had imparted to them all the value they possess. In charging, therefore, a rent for the use of what he has produced, he is only demanding a most just and equitable return for his capital—a fair and honest remuneration for his labor. His right to demand this could not possibly be disputed.

Now, the artificial productiveness of these tracts of country hardly equals, and certainly does not surpass, the natural fertility of large districts of rich, luxuriant, arable and pasture lands in the county Meath, in this diocese. If it were asked then who has a right to charge a rent for the use of the soil of these highly favored districts in Meath for agricultural or industrial purposes, the answer should be that if human industry or labor had imparted to these lands a real and substantial amount of artificial productiveness, by the cultivation and permanent improvement of the soil, then the person who created that productiveness had a perfect right to demand a rent for the use of it. But who, it may be further asked, has a right to demand a rent for the natural fertility of these lands "which no man made," and which, in fact, is not the result of human industry and labor at all? The answer here, also, should be, he who had produced it. But who produced it? God. If God, then, demanded a rent for the use of these lands, He would undoubtedly be entitled to it. But God does not sell His gifts or charge a rent for the use of anything he has produced. He does not sell; but He gives, or bestows, and in bestowing His gifts He shows no respect of persons. If, then, all God's creatures are in a condition of perfect equality relatively to this gift of the land, no one can have an exceptional right to claim more than a fair share of what was intended equally for all, and what is,