

LVII.

A LAST WORD—THE CAUSE OF IRELAND'S TROUBLES.

Because I have had the privilege of being Irish correspondent for the *Montreal Witness* for a time, I think it right to explain to you the change which travelling through my native country has produced in my sentiments and the convictions forced upon me.

Brought up in the North of Ireland in a purely Hiberno-Scotch neighborhood, I drank in with my native air all the ideas which reign in that part of Ireland. The people with whom I came in contact were Conservatives of the strongest type; from my youth up, therefore, I had the cause of Ireland's poverty and misery as an article of belief. I never dreamed that the tenure of land had anything to do with it. Landlords were lords and leaders, benefactors and protectors to their tenants in my imagination.

I changed my opinion while in Ireland, and now I believe that the land tenure is the main cause of Ireland's miseries.

English history is pretty much a history of struggles against monopolies of one kind and another. There is no monopoly, it seems to me, which bears such evil fruit as the monopoly of all the land of a country in the hands of a few. It is bad for the country, bad for the people, and bad for the landlords, whether the monopolists are honorable companies, a landed aristocracy, or an ecclesiastical corporation. God's law, which is the law of our faith, shows plainly how the Great Lawgiver regards the monopoly of land by the care which He took to have a direct interest in the land of Canaan by personal inheritance for every Jew. To guard against the might of greed, to prevent the poor of the land, touched by misfortune or snared by debt, from sinking into farm laborers or serfs of the soil he instituted the year of jubilee when every man returned to his inheritance.