

Duke of Buccleuch, owning miles and miles of land on which no common Scotsman had a right to put his foot save by the Duke of Buccleuch's permission. These landowners refused not only to allow these Free Churchmen to have ground upon which to erect a church, but they would not let them stand on their land and worship God. You who have read "The Cruise of the Betsy" know that it is the story of a clergyman who was obliged to make his home in a boat on the wild sea, because he was not allowed to have land

enough to live on. In many places the people had to take the Sacrament with the tide coming to their knees—many a man lost his life worshipping on the roads, in the rain and snow. They were not permitted to go on Mr. Landlord's land and worship God, and had to take to the roads. The Duke of Buccleuch stood out for seven years, compelling people to worship on the roads, until finally, relenting a little, he allowed them to do so in a gravel pit; whereupon they passed a resolution of thanks to his Grace.

Not Land, but Its Income and Value

But that is not what I wanted to tell you. The thing that struck me was this significant fact: as soon as the disruption occurred the Free Church, composed of a great many able men, at once sent a deputation to the landlords to ask permission for Scotsmen to worship God in Scotland and in their own way. This deputation set out for London—they had to go to London, England, to get permission for Scotsmen to worship God in Scotland and in their own native home!

But that is not the most absurd thing. In one place, when they were refused land upon which to stand and worship God, the late landowner had died and his estate was in the hands of the trustees, and the answer of the trustees was that, so far as they were concerned, they would exceedingly like to allow them to have a place to put up a church to worship, but they could not conscientiously do it, because they knew that such a course would be very displeasing to the late Mr. Monaltie! Now, this dead man had gone to heaven, let us hope; at any rate he had gone away from this world, but, lest it might displease him, men yet living could not worship God. Is it possible for absurdity to go any further?

You may say that those Scottish people are a very absurd people, but they are not a whit more so than we are: I read only a little while ago of some Long Island fishermen who had been paying a rent for the privilege of fishing there, a certain part of the catch. They paid it because they believed that James II., a dead man centuries ago, a man who never put his foot in America, a king who was kicked off the English throne, had said they had to pay it, and they got up a committee, went to the county town and searched the records. They could not find anything in the records to show that James II. had ever ordered that they should give any of their fish to anybody, and

so they refused to pay any longer. But if they had found that James II. had really said they should, they would have gone on paying. Can anything be more absurd?

There is a square in New York—Stuyvesant Square—it is locked up at six o'clock every evening, even on long summer evenings. Why is it locked up? Why are the children not allowed to play there? Why, because old Mr. Stuyvesant, dead and gone I don't know how many years ago, so willed it. Now, can anything be more absurd? Yet that is not any more absurd than our land titles. From whom do they come? Dead man after dead man. Suppose you get on the cars here going to Council Bluffs or Chicago. You find a passenger with his baggage strewn over the seats. You say, "Will you give me a seat, if you please, sir?" He replies, "No; I bought this seat." "Bought this seat? From whom did you buy it?" "I bought it from the man who got out at the last station." That is the way we manage this earth of ours.

Is it not a self-evident truth, as Thomas Jefferson said, that "the land belongs in usufruct to the living," and that they who have died have left it, and have no power to say how it shall be disposed of? Title to land! Where can a man get any title which makes the earth his property?

There is a sacred right to property—sacred because ordained by the laws of nature, that is to say, by the law of God, and necessary to social order and civilization. That is the right of property in things produced by labor; it rests on the right of a man to himself. That which a man produces, that is his against all the world, to give or to keep, to lend, to sell or to bequeath; but how can he get such a right to land when it was here before he came? Individual claims to land rest only on appropriation. I read in a recent number of the "Nine-

teenth Century," possibly some of you have read it, an article by an ex-Prime Minister of Australia, in which there was a little story that attracted my attention. It was of a man named Galahard, who, in the early days, got up to the top of a high hill in one of the finest parts of Western Australia. He got up there, looked all round, and made his proclamation: "All the land that is in sight from the top of this hill I claim for myself: and all the land that is out of sight I claim for my son John."

That story is of universal application. Land titles everywhere come from just such appropriation. Now, under certain circumstances, appropriation can give a right. You invite a company of gentlemen to dinner, and you say to them, "Be seated, gentlemen," and I get into this chair. Well, that seat, for the time being, is mine by the right of appropriation. It would be very ungentlemanly, it would be very wrong, for any of the other guests to come up and say, "Get out of that chair, I want to sit there!" But that right of possession, which is good so far as the chair is concerned for the time, does not give me a right to appropriate all there is on the table before me. Grant that a man has a right to appropriate such natural elements as he can use, has he any right to appropriate more than he can use? Has a guest, in such a case as I have supposed, a right to appropriate more than he needs, and make other people stand up? That is what is done.

Why, look all over the country—look at this town or any other town. If men took only what they wanted to use we should all have enough; but they take what they do not want to use at all. Here are a lot of Englishmen coming over here and getting titles to our land in vast tracts; what do they want with our land? They do not want it at all; it is not the land they want; they have no use for American land. What they want is the income that they know they can in a little while get from it. Where does that income come from? It comes from labor, from the labor of American citizens. What we are selling to these people is our children, not land.

Poverty? Can there be any doubt of its cause? Go into the old countries—go into western Ireland, into the Highlands of Scotland; there are purely primitive communities. There you will find people as poor as poor can be—living year after year on oatmeal or on potatoes, and often going hungry. I could tell you many a pathetic story. Speaking to a Scottish physician who was telling me how this diet was inducing among these people a disease similar to that which from the same cause

is ravaging Italy (the Pellagra), I said to him: "There is plenty of fish; why don't they catch fish? There is plenty of game. I know the laws are against it, but cannot they take it on the sly?" "That," he said, "never enters their heads. Why, if a man was even suspected of having a taste for trout or grouse he would have to leave at once." There is no difficulty in discovering what makes those people poor. They have no right to anything that nature gives them. All they can make above a living they must pay to the landlord. They not only have to pay for the land that they use, but they have to pay for the seaweed that comes ashore and for the turf they dig from the bogs. They dare not improve, for any improvements they make are made an excuse for putting up the rent. These people who work hard, live in hovels, and the landlords, who do not work at all—oh! they live in luxury in London or Paris. If they have hunting boxes there, why, they are magnificent castles as compared with the hovels in which the men live who do the work. Is there any question as to the cause of the poverty there?

Now, go into the cities, and what do you see? Why, you see even a lower depth of poverty; ay, if I would point out the worst evils of land monopoly I would not take you to Connemara; I would not take you to Skye or Kintyre—I would take you to Dublin, Glasgow or London. There is something worse than physical deprivation, something worse than starvation; and that is degradation of the mind, the death of the soul. That is what you will find in those cities.

Now, what is the cause of that? Why, it is plainly to be seen; the people driven off the land in the country are driven into the slums of the cities. For every man that is driven off the land, the demand for the produce of the workmen of the city is lessened; and the man himself, with his wife and children, is forced among those workmen to compete upon any terms for a bare living and force wages down. Get work he must or starve—get work he must, or do that which those people, so long as they maintain their manly feelings, dread more than death, go to the almshouse. That is the reason, here as in Great Britain, that the cities are overcrowded. Open the land that is locked up, that is held by dogs-in-the-manger, who will not use it themselves and will not allow anybody else to use it, and you would see no more of tramps and hear no more of overproduction.

The utter absurdity of this thing of private property in land! I defy anyone to show me

any good from it, look where you please. Go out to the new lands, where my attention was first called to it, or go to the heart of the capital of the world—London. Everywhere, when your eyes are once opened, you will see its inequality and you will see its absurdity. You do not have to go farther than Burlington. You have here a most beautiful site for a city, but the city itself, as compared with what it might be, is a miserable straggling town. A gentleman showed me today a big hole alongside one of your streets. The place has been filled up all around it, and this hole is left. It is neither pretty nor useful. Why does that hole stay there? Well, it stays there because somebody claims it as his private property. There is a man, this gentleman told me, who wished to grade another lot, and wanted somewhere to put the dirt he took off it, and he offered to buy this hole so that he might fill it up. Now,

it would have been a good thing for Burlington to have it filled up, a good thing for you all—your town would look better, and you yourselves would be in no danger of tumbling into it some dark night. Why, my friend pointed out to me another similar hole in which water had collected, and told me that two children had been drowned there. And he likewise told me that a drunken man some years ago had fallen into such a hole, and had brought a suit against the city which cost you taxpayers some \$11,000. Clearly it is to the interests of you all to have that particular hole I am talking of filled up. The man who wanted to fill it up offered the hole-owner \$300. But the hole-owner refused the offer, and declares he will hold out until he can get \$1,000; and, in the meanwhile, that unsightly and dangerous hole must remain. That is but an illustration of private property in land.

“No Tax and a Pension for Everybody”

You may see the same thing all over this country. See how injuriously in the agricultural districts this thing of private property in land effects the roads and the distances between the people. A man does not take what land he wants, what he can use; but he takes all he can get, and the consequence is that his next neighbor has to go further along, people are separated from each other further than they ought to be, to the increased difficulty of production, to the loss of neighborhood and companionship. They have more roads to maintain than they can decently maintain; they must do more work to get the same results, and life is in every way harder and drearier.

When you come to the cities, it is just the other way. In the country the people are too much scattered; in the great cities they are too crowded. Go to a city like New York, and there they are jammed together like sardines in a box, living family upon family, one above the other. It is an utterly unnatural and unwholesome life. How can you have anything like a home in a tenement of two or three rooms? How can children be brought up healthily with no place to play? Two or three weeks ago I read of a New York judge who fined two little boys five dollars for playing hop-scotch on the street—where else could they play? Private property in land had robbed them of all place to play. Even a temperance man, who had investigated the subject, said that in his opinion the gin palaces of London were a positive good in this, that they en-

abled the people whose abodes were dark and squalid rooms to see a little brightness, and thus prevent them from going wholly mad.

What is the reason for this overcrowding of cities? There is no natural reason. Take New York, one-half of its area is not built upon. Why, then, must people crowd together as they do there? Simply because of private ownership of land. There is plenty of room to build houses, and plenty of people who want to build houses, but before anybody can build a house a blackmail price must be paid to some dog-in-the-manger. It costs, in many cases, more to get vacant ground upon which to build a house than it does to build the house. And then what happens to the man who pays this blackmail and builds a house? Down comes the tax-gatherer and fines him for building the house.

It is so all over the United States—the men who improve, the men who turn the prairie into farms, and the desert into gardens, the men who beautify your cities, are taxed and fined for having done these things. Now, nothing is clearer than that the people of New York want more houses; and I think that even here in Burlington you could get along with more houses. Why, then, should you fine a man that builds one? Look all over this country—the bulk of the taxation rests upon the improver; the man who puts up a building or establishes a factory, or cultivates a farm, he is taxed for it; and not merely taxed for it, but I think, in nine cases out of ten, the land