

detractors make him out to be, it would seem that the majority of landlords would be only too anxious to turn their property into ready cash when the opportunity offered. But they have not shown any great anxiety to do so, and so we may reasonably conclude that so long as they can extract excessive rents with the aid of police and military, it is much more profitable than investing their money in Government stock.

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In introducing the Bill Mr. WYNDHAM paid a great compliment to the farmers who had purchased their holdings within the past few years. He showed what excellent payers they were, and how the State in its transactions with 30,000 purchasers under the Acts of 1891 and 1896 had not suffered any loss. In a word, it would be impossible to find in any other part of the world such a record for punctuality as had been made by these men. He said:—'Land purchase has this merit—that the State has incurred no loss by it, and is, I believe, exposed to no risk. Let me make that good. Taking the Acts of 1891 and 1896; under those Acts more than 30,000 purchasers were paying annually £171,214 to the State. I have no case of bad debts to offer. Then let me take unpunctuality. In Ireland, we know that previous to purchase, people took a view of arrears which I may properly describe as liberal. Under these two Acts, out of 30,000 purchasers, there are in all, in Ireland, only 69 men six months late, only 12 who are a year late, and, in all Ireland, only one man out of 30,000 who is 18 months late with his payments. It comes to this, that we are £463 in arrears in £171,000, or a matter of 5s 5d in every £100.'

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The provisions of the Bill being somewhat complicated, and as it seemed to be a step in the right direction, the Irish members reserved their criticism until they had fully mastered its details. Mr. T. W. RUSSELL and his friends in the North were the first to discover a very serious flaw in the measure. The price to be paid for the land is to be fixed by the Estate Commissioners, against whose decision there is no appeal. Now if the tenants consider the price exorbitant and refuse to purchase, preferring to remain as payers of rent they are then debarred from having their rents fixed by the land courts. In a word, the tenant will lose all the benefit of the best feature of Mr. GLADSTONE'S land legislation of 1881. Mr. WYNDHAM'S intentions may be very good, but it is evident that the landlord element in the Cabinet has forced his hand in inserting a clause which, if allowed to pass unchallenged, would be a retrograde step. Should the Government persevere with the Bill there is sure to be a sharp debate on the retention of this clause, and as the Chief Secretary has said that unless the Bill as a whole is passed he will drop it, its fate is doubtful, for Mr. RUSSELL has given notice of the following motion on the second reading:—'While acknowledging the inducements contained in Part 1 of the Bill under which the owners of impoverished estates would be enabled to sell their interest therein, and thus aid the abolition of dual ownership in land, the House regrets and deplores those provisions in Part 3 which practically destroy the rent-fixing clauses of the Act of 1881, and declines to proceed further with the Bill while those provisions form part of the Government policy.' This notice has been drawn up with the full concurrence of Mr. REDMOND, whose party will support it. The Liberal Opposition have also intimated their intention of strongly opposing any attempt to nullify the best feature of the land legislation which they helped to pass. Should Mr. WYNDHAM, therefore, persist in retaining the obnoxious clause he will either have to carry the Bill through the Commons with the aid of the landlords or drop it altogether. If the Government are really in earnest in their endeavors to remove even some of the causes of Irish discontent and agrarian troubles they should be prepared to modify their measure in the direction indicated by those most interested. Otherwise it will be regarded by the majority of the Irish people as a one-sided measure framed in the interests of the landlords, but of no practical value to the one class in Ireland who are in real and urgent need of help.

At this season everybody is liable to Coughs and Colds. Avoid all danger by taking TUSSICURA.—*.*

Wanted Known.—That for acute Bronchitis or Pneumonia, TUSSICURA is an immediate and permanent remedy.—*.*

Notes

The Drought in Australia.

The unexampled drought in Australia still continues, and over an area larger than that of Europe the spectre of famine stalks unrestrained. The accounts which come to hand show that the loss of stock is something appalling. And it is nothing short of heart-rending to even attempt to compute the extent of animal suffering that has prevailed. In some parts of the continent it may be possible by schemes of irrigation to forestall similar calamities in the future, but over a very large extent of it such schemes are impracticable. There are no rivers of any consequence to feed irrigation canals, and the conservation of water in a flat country is to a great extent impossible. It may be possible to lock the Murrumbidgee and the Darling, and to divert surplus water from the Murray to the Mallee country, but in northern New South Wales and Queensland such methods are unavailable. In some parts of the country the underground streams may be tapped by means of artesian wells, but the benefit gained so far has been merely local. It is not, therefore, permissible to point the moral usually drawn in such cases, for no reasonable means of water conservation can be provided for such a contingency as a drought over several successive seasons. And unhappily the prospect is not inviting. Even if rain were to come speedily it would not stimulate growth, as this is the cold season, when growth is suspended. And though this more directly affects the owners of large pastoral properties, where grazing alone is depended upon, the dearth will injure the whole continent to the extent that it reduces the field of labor and enhances the prices of food. Happily the drought is free from the human tragedy which takes place when a similar calamity falls upon a densely-populated country. This, it seems, is the only mitigating aspect of the present drought. It should also tend to cause New Zealanders to value the natural advantages of the emerald Colony in which they live, and cause them to point out to their friends in the land from which multitudes are still tearing themselves with bursting hearts, that a country which possesses no mountains cannot have any rivers, and in the absence of rainfall must be subject to droughts. We have some indications even in New Zealand, but want of water is not one of them.

Military Rewards.

In the first flush of exultation after the conclusion of a successful war, or after a signal victory, it has been a national custom to bestow rich, and often extravagant, rewards upon those who were instrumental in their accomplishment. In the most ancient times triumphant generals were rewarded by the State, both by honors and more substantial tokens of national gratitude, and the custom is not likely to fall into desuetude, for it is a creditable feature in human nature that after success it seeks for someone to thank, just as in the converse case it looks about for one on whom to lay the blame. Lord (now Viscount) Kitchener is the most recent recipient of national honor of the kind indicated, his reward consisting of a monetary grant of £50,000 and the title of Viscount. The pecuniary honor has been compared with that awarded to Lord Roberts after the termination of his active career in the field. Parliament then voted the hero of Afghanistan £100,000, and as the solid results of Kitchener's success in South Africa appear likely to be far greater and more immediately tangible, an explanation has been considered necessary. It has been found in the fact that Lord Kitchener is yet only a young man (he is 52) and may yet have an opportunity of serving the nation in a distinguished capacity, while the grant to Lord Roberts was considered to be practically a retiring gratuity, and the reward not of a single act, but of a series of eminent services. From Lord Kitchener's point of view, however, this reasoning must seem fallacious. The magnitude of a reward should be measured not by the circumstances of the recipient, but by the value of the services rendered. Applying a commercial standard the acquisition of the South African States is of more value to Britain than the settlement of Afghanistan, brilliant though the actions were that effected it. The Transvaal and Orange Free State have been acquired at a monetary cost of something between a shilling and two shillings per acre in money, and with the comparatively insignificant loss of 21,000 lives. The conquest has therefore been very cheap, and if it were possible or seemly to apply the commercial test still more closely, the payment to Kitchener for services rendered must be regarded as insufficient.

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The comparison between the two grants seems to have been made in an exculpatory fashion by the Government in moving the grant to Lord Kitchener. This at once makes it permissible to discuss its value. To give Lord Kitchener half the sum given to Roberts because the former is a young man is curiously illogical. Surely a young man could enjoy the larger amount better than an old one! If it were a mere question of maintenance the reason might