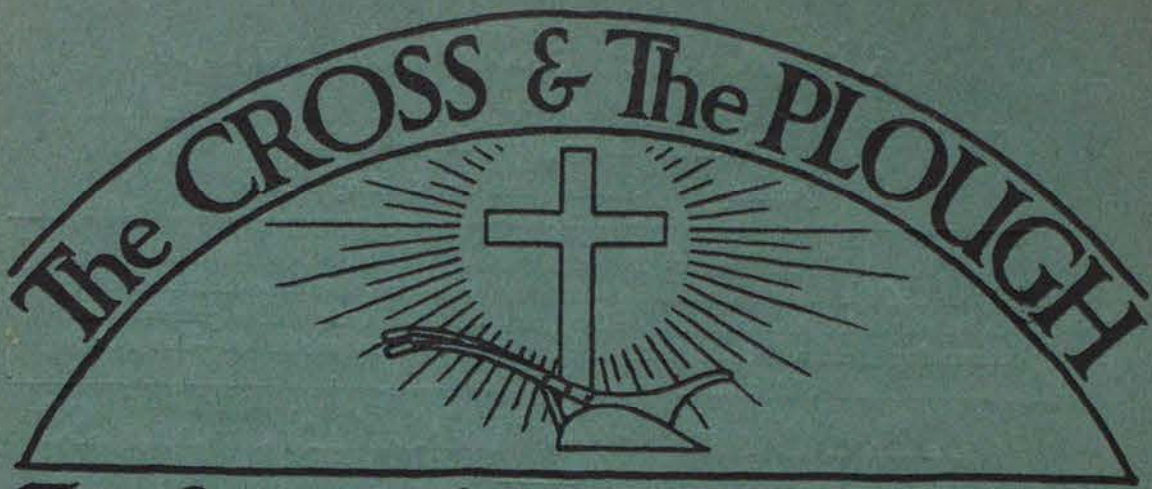
1943

The Cross & the Plough, V. 9, No. 3, 1943

Catholic Land Federation of England and Wales



The Organ of the Catholic Land Associations of England and Wales.

QUARTERLY. TWOPENCE LADYDAY 1943

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Vol. 9. No 3

The Cross and the Plough

Published by the Catholic Land Federation of England and Wales
at Weeford Cottage, Hill, Sutton Coldfield

Quarterly *Subscription: One Shilling a Year*

The Papal Statements on the Return to the Land, and the statement of policy by the Catholic Land Federation, which hitherto have dignified our covers, have had to be suspended on account of the paper shortage. A copy of a previous issue containing them will be supplied on request to any new subscriber.—THE EDITOR

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

THE CATCH IN IT

On another page we discuss the Beveridge Report and other evils.

It will be as well to state here, in isolation, the capital feature of that document.

It denies, as Capitalism has always denied, any possibility of acquiring productive resources to the ordinary citizen. All its expedients are bread and circuses. Your Capitalist is in this as enlightened as his Imperial predecessors. He is rather pleased than otherwise if all the well-behaved are well fed. But production is life. Once let this slip from his monopolist control and he is lost.

The *Birmingham Scheme* demonstrated (among other things) the fraud of orthodox finance. So does the Beveridge Report. But it is the Birmingham Scheme in hideous Looking-glass reverse, where you can have jam every other day. Jam yesterday and tomorrow, but never to-day.

LYING FOR MONEY?

Mr. Belloc, in one of his most delightful essays, discusses the possible motives of Aristotle for advancing an opinion which must not distract us now. As a final alternative, Mr. Belloc says that on this occasion Aristotle *was perhaps lying for money*.

The notion cannot be excluded altogether from the mind when one peruses the enthusiastic Press discussions and articles; when one notes the curious absence of any real mention of the drastic penal implications of the Beveridge Report.

The Economist is more honest. It discusses them at some length in connection with whether the alluring benefits will remove the incentive to work. It does so with complete safety, for only safe people (to our personal knowledge with only one exception) read *The Economist* at all. And that pontifical journal has made the discovery that if you say exactly what you mean, modern readers fail to get the point: for *their* notion of normal English is the London headline and the Hollywood caption.

Accordingly *The Economist* sums up its doubts in the words: THERE IS EVERY CASE FOR MAKING THE SANCTIONS PROPOSED AS POSITIVE AS POSSIBLE (5th Dec., p. 690).

We present to some historian of 2043 the exact executive words which opened the battle for the Servile State.

THE DEVIL OF IT

Which brings us to the point that not only in its denial of property and security has Industrialism sinned against the Holy Ghost. It has so degraded and emasculated human work that—according to what *The Economist* clearly means—only the fear of the sack will induce men to carry out the beastly industrial jobs at all. Industrialism has destroyed *Homo artifex*; no man within it now works because he is fulfilling his destiny as man the maker, or because he finds deep joy in it, or because his work is itself a prayer.

Beveridge seeks to exorcise the devils of insecurity, and behind them, defying any exorcism known to Mammon, are the arch-devils of slavery and mechanisation. This kind are driven out only by prayer and fasting: Prayer to the God Who made men free, and fasting from the whoredoms of Babylon.

THE BATTLE OF LITTLE MEN

At this moment of our supreme need, it is well to know who will lead us.

Chesterton is dead. Gill is dead. Belloc suffers the fatigue of his hundred campaigns. Another great leader whose perennial youth is witnessed in these pages is precluded by his order from taking arms.

Of those who should now be their successors, some are dead and some have gone after strange gods. But all over the country are little men who hate the evil thing and know it for what it is. This is their battle. We have a thousand enemies, without and within—but we have one Friend, Whose Vicar has sounded the charge. We cannot fail, for the same reason as we cannot lose the war, because in spite of our sins and unworthiness we stand for something which God will not allow to disappear from the earth.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir—I feel convinced that the future of agriculture is the Church's responsibility. Politicians and capitalists have in the past made such a grotesque muddle of God's great gift to man—a fertile soil—that, for the sake of the future generations, it must be a matter for the Church to attend to: to use its influence to re-establish agriculture on a Christian basis.

The Cross and The Plough is doing splendid work in this direction; it is, however, but a whisper in a great wilderness: a voice unheard above the clamour of the secular Press.

Is it not possible to increase the circulation of *The Cross and The Plough*? Could not this excellent publication be more widely read and discussed? I should like to suggest that it becomes a monthly publication, including practical articles on agriculture written from a Catholic angle.

One of the biggest evils we have to fight is the killing of soil fertility by the use of artificial fertilisers. This pernicious state of affairs is, apparently, encouraged by the Government for the exclusive benefit of the chemical combines, gas companies, etc. Agriculture in this country, it would seem, is but the victim of commerce and finance.

In giving lectures on "Compost versus Artificial Manures," I find the audiences most understanding and ready to accept, and proclaim, that "you can't beat Nature's way"; yet, as a writer of articles on soil, etc., I find it impossible to get any article accepted by an Editor of the commercial Press, if the article decries the use of artificial manures; the obvious reason being, I suppose, that it would offend its advertisers. This, to me, proves how the Truth is sacrificed upon the altar of commercial greed.

With all good wishes to *The Cross and The Plough*, and may its circulation increase. If I can do anything to forward its movement in Bucks, please let me know.

Yours faithfully,
CECIL D. BACHELOR.

Elmtrees,
Great Missenden.
18-10-42

This is a very pertinent and important question. With no wish to exaggerate our own importance, it does seem clear that a great increase in the circulation of "The Cross and The Plough" is a necessary prelude to action. All the Editor can do is to get out the paper, despatch it to subscribers, and draw attention to its existence wherever he can. All this he does. The extension of its influence must remain a task for our convinced subscribers, and there is solid reason for believing that the time is ripe. It is literally now or never. Will every subscriber secure half a dozen more? That is a practical first step towards a monthly—and towards the realisation of our hopes.—Editor.

FISH

In Oxford market as I walked
With a sub-conscious wish
To find some item cheap and small
That might be made the wherewithal
Of an exiguous dish,
I saw, upon a blackboard chalked,
"The Same Old Tale. No Fish."

Next day I found among the feats
Of common men and rare men
On which our Press sheds public light
(Such as belongs by glorious right
To Army, Fleet and Airmen)
"Fish Conference. Lord Woolton meets
The Independent Chairmen."

One pictures him as he explains
In ministerial tones,
How in a state of total war
Each gallant Fish Distributor
Should heed the nation's groans,
They talk of trawlers and of trains
Of marketing and zones.

Of fish: the how, the where, the why,
Of dory, cod or dab,
Salmon and turbot, sliced or whole,
Mullet and gurnet, plaice and sole,
The conger and the crab,
Whether displayed to mortal eye
Or hid beneath the slab.

Of fish that has forgot the foam,
Strange shapeless fish, that smells;
Of shapely fish with glittering scales
Bright eye-balls and elastic tails
Or fresh and pearly shells—
The former for the English home,
The latter for hotels.

Three hours they spoke. The papers deem
No haughty sense of distance
Severed the Expert from the Trade,
They saw each happy point he made
And put up no resistance—
Their views, he said, upon the scheme
Had been of great assistance.

Yet something warns me that when next
I harbour the vain wish
That drives me to an Oxford stall
To seek the modest wherewithal
Of an exiguous dish,
He will be there again—that vext
Fishmonger with his hapless text,
"The Same Old Tale. No Fish."

—HELEN PARRY EDEN

A RESOLUTION

Passed by the twentieth annual convention of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference of America, October, 1942. The attendance was 7,500.

Assembled in convention, the members of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference express their unswerving loyalty and profound gratitude to the Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, for the direction and guidance he has given us on a subject most dear to our hearts.

It is from him that we have received confirmation of our belief in the home on the land as the surest framework in which the Christian family can develop naturally and securely. From the land, he tells us, the family can derive not only a considerable part of its subsistence, but also the stability which makes it the vital and fruitful cell of society. So necessary to the welfare of society is the homestead on the land, that every effort must be made to free the family from the restraints in modern society, which make it impossible for the family even to dream of a homestead of its own.

Accordingly, following the teaching of our Holy Father, we wish to re-affirm our conviction that private property is so conformable to man's nature that to weaken or deny this right is to place grave obstacles in the way of Christian family life and full development of human personality. We therefore urge that every effort be made to assist families in obtaining and holding ownership of homes on the land.

ORDER OF BATTLE: XIV

THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS

THE shock of battle, murder and sudden death destroyed many of our illusions in England. And it destroyed that complacency which had left millions of our race to rot for a generation in unemployment and despair. It is quite possible that our rulers are sincere in their protestations that what they call insecurity, but Christians Oppression of the Poor, will not be allowed to return, and that the Kingdom of God on earth (according to the Gospel of Mammon) is just round the corner.

On that very account, it is forbidden to us lightly to reject the numerous Plans now on the agenda, put forward as they are by people and groups mostly in good faith. And it is also forbidden to forget the evil and its origin. As Mr. Charles Williams has said admirably in *The Changing World Series (No.1)* "I do not know in what particular way the Russians experienced insecurity, but I know very well in what way the English did. There expanded over them a sky of iron from which the faces of their rulers looked down, uttering such phrases as: 'there must always be a margin of unemployment,' 'the distressed areas,' 'social reform'."

And being Catholics, we should not fail to beseech God daily that those rulers, both dead and living, may be spared by His mercy the unending outer darkness they have deserved.

We are, then, compelled to examine our consciences at length in approaching the various schemes now before us. They are many and varied, not to say, with Mr. Weller, *extensive and peculiar*.

The Scott Report has already been discussed. There remain, as key positions in the Plans, the *Beveridge Report*, the *Uthwatt Report* and, of the better class of private effort, *"The Land and Life, prepared for the Rural Reconstruction Association by Montague Fordham."* *

It behoves us to examine our consciences. Consciences are examined by reference to the permanent standards of Almighty God.

* Geo. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 4/- net.

What we do now, as the result of this examination, may last for a thousand years. What we think would be nice is irrelevant. What exists now is irrelevant. The only test is what will enable man to become what he should become, and achieve what he should achieve. Never before, perhaps, was it possible to change the face of the world so quickly and so cleanly. Never before, perhaps, was speed so much of the essence of the contract: for we are not merely sick, we are dying: and a mistaken or malicious remedy means death.

The Beveridge Report is probably the greatest indictment of Capitalism and Industrialism ever written. Sir William is not conscious of this, and his conclusions are all the more devastating on that account. Capitalist Industrialism added a new evil to human ills. It added insecurity and the pauper. It also added the Millionaire and his lackey. These were novel and intolerable things in a world not strange to the intolerable.

After many generations of squalor and destitution, it became necessary (if society was to persist at all) to provide for the pauper—the new phenomenon of the human person without personal resources. We achieved the Poor Law, later sublimated under the titles of Public Assistance and Social Services.

As Industrialism developed, the pauper class spread upwards, and the Middle Classes, accustomed from time immemorial to security in all social respects, became liable to insecurity. The Works Manager was as subject to the sack as the artisan.

Nothing could throw a more blinding light on the nature of our problem than the hideous truth that a device for mitigating the impact of Industrialism on the poor should now be put forward by a Government spokesman as a remedy for us all. And nothing could demonstrate so conclusively the extent to which fear of the sack has corroded the national soul than the chorus of welcome on publication of the Report. We are all to be pauperised from the cradle to the grave—*Covered from Womb to Tomb*, as a journalist was not allowed to say.

But God help us, this is not a remedy, it is the whole fleece of the dog that has savaged us.

The remedy for insecurity (that is, oppression) is the security of diffused property. At least, that is the only remedy for *men*. The other is a remedy for slaves.

To demonstrate this, we must analyse briefly the nature of the evil.

In the golden age of England, when Christian principles had destroyed "the unpitying cruelty of the ancient civilisations," men—all men—and all families, had their secure place in a free community of free men and families. They had solved the age-old problem. They had a permanent sufficiency —and they had freedom.

When this society was attacked in the Rebellion of the Rich which ensured the success of the Reformation, the process followed was consistent and highly intelligent. We may indicate two of its key victories. The Statute of Frauds, followed by the Enclosures, made use of the absence of documentary deeds to dispossess the bulk of the English Freeholders. The Statutes against Forestalling and Regrating were repealed, thus increasing enormously the incidence of money in the lives of the humble, and putting decisive power into the hands of those who controlled and dealt in money.

On this field, swept clean of defences, Industrialism conquered without a serious battle.

Such were the Origins—such the Buttresses destroyed.

Now, when the Statute of Frauds is to reach its final form in the Uthwatt Report, and Forestalling and Regrating are to be taken over by the State, it is proposed to us that our salvation is not in a return to personal independence, but in Leviathan.

Leviathan has turned saint. Having expelled the lesser devils, he will make all things new. And he will do it by controlling and managing and planning all our lives from Womb to Tomb, and by making money subsidies the very basis of our existence.

This is not to save, it is to damn by making mortal sin habitual.

Let us consider sane living. The family is the primal and permanent unit. It is competent to manage all its primal affairs without the state, provided that the families of a community live within the framework and buttress of a Law designed to enable good men to live among bad. Such was the object of the Canon Law of Christendom. We are still trying to make tolerable the Roman Law which is designed to enable rich men to live among poor.

Restore the buttress, and men can be happy again in their own families and villages and land and towns.

Complete the hideous expedient of the Poor Law, and we shall have the Servile State in half a generation.

The Beveridge and Uthwatt Reports must be fought and destroyed. We need to build from origins and from the human person, not from the debris of a stinking industrial corpse.

At this critical juncture, Mr. Montague Fordham has thrown his considerable weight into the battle. His good will is not to be doubted, and he has travelled far in our direction since he began. *The Land and Life* has elements which we must support. He sees that the Land means life, and not merely a living. He sees that mechanisation means unemployment. He has discovered humus and the Indore process. He does not like *The Economist*.*

This is to have moved far since the days when his chief boast was to have begotten the Marketing Boards.

But there is a certain timidity even about his advance. He will not be bloody, bold and resolute. Possibly that is the fault of Lord Bledisloe, his introducer, whose contribution to the discussion is mentioned on another page. Like the Scott Committee, Mr. Fordham sees the light behind the twisted trees of the gloomy dark wood. He cannot muster the courage to fell the trees.

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* *Mr. Fordham, on page 24, makes one incidental statement which is of the utmost interest. Discussing the inter-war conflicts about agriculture, in which the Rural Reconstruction Association took a prominent part, he says that his Association never obtained leave from the B.B.C. to explain its views over the wireless. The case is not isolated. Who are the Secret Rulers who dominate so decisive a public utility, and impose silence on criticism, however moderate and informed?—Editor.*

There is space for only one example of this. He says on page 39 that "there is no general rule that either large or small holdings are the more likely to produce more food per acre." The evidence is against him. Even Sir Daniel Hall admitted that. But the terms of the proposition are incorrect. The real proposition, which is fully demonstrable, is that nowhere in history has the large farm led to anything but collapse and exhaustion, and nowhere in history (certain savages excluded) has peasant farming led to anything of the sort.

God, through His servant Nature, has taken a hand in our policies. The choice is not whether we shall survive by mechanised or by peasant farming. The choice is whether we shall return to peasant communities now, or after an interval when Big Business Farming has left a gravely eroded soil on which the survivors among its victims may begin again.

That is the choice. Whether, having reached the edge of the abyss, we are to turn back to safety, or whether we are to go over the edge, for the survivors to pick up the pieces and begin again, very exactly, at the bottom.

The method of the saner process is not in question. It is to be found in the *Birmingham Scheme* (or in some close approximation to it), which solves all the problems advanced by the Rural Reconstruction Association.

It solves unemployment. It solves the tyranny of the market and the high incidence of money. It solves the spiritual and social nomadism of our time. It solves the conflict between town and country. And in particular it solves the problem that no man is to be trusted with power.

The alternative is that after exhausting ourselves to destroy the Nazi and Fascist Ant States, we shall find ourselves within a generation indistinguishable from them.

Plans mean Planners, and Uthwatt Reports mean Uthwatts. Why not let Peter Gurney, Dan'l Whidden and Harry Hawke live their own lives in a world made safe for democracy by clearing our minds of the industrial cant?

. . . . . .

This obscure organ has no longer the dignity of being a voice crying in the wilderness. Mr. Fordham has happily reached the half-way-house to orthodoxy. There are many others even farther on the road. They are not as vociferous as the enemy, but the stars in their courses, and the tiny creatures of God who have discredited industrial monoculture, are fighting for them. Among them we mention with pleasure the honourable name of H. J. Massingham, who in a little brochure entitled *Home* (Design for Britain Series, No. 18: Dent 6d.), has said once more what we have come to expect from him.

"So far as history is concerned, the social catastrophes of the Roman latifundia and the nineteenth century Enclosures are plain for all to read. In his Study of History, Dr. Toynbee has demonstrated this beyond controversy. In agricultural science Jacks' and Whyte's *Rape of the Earth* has as clearly demonstrated these causes of soil-exhaustion. If we choose to fly in the faces of these witnesses, so be it: only the payment of Faust will follow. Civilisations always get their second chance; if they refuse to take it they must take the consequences."

Amen. We shall win, we or our grandchildren. Perhaps the two generations in between will have deserved the worst that Planners will do to them. But perhaps also, they always win who realise that there will be future ages.

For it is the supreme crime of Industrialism to have achieved a world living on its capital, where everybody says comfortably: *Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die.*

Pilot-officer Edward Doyle, R.A.F., was killed recently on the return from an operational flight.

He was trained for the land from 1933 to 1936 by the Midlands Catholic Land Association at West Fields Farm, Market Bosworth.

To an exceptional practical aptitude for farming, he added an unusual grasp of the land philosophy and a telling manner of expressing it. He had contributed a number of articles and letters to Catholic periodicals; he would almost certainly have been one of the leaders when the fighting men returned. It was not to be. May his gallant soul rest in peace.

The higher, the tighter

HORSE-SENSE

We are bound
To dig gold
Where it's found
From a birth-place
In the ground;
Take a long way
Round
To where
It is bound,
Gold's
Burial-ground.

And we must
First thrust
Wheat-germ
From flour-dust
So that we
Can thrust
Back again
What is just
For this mortal
Dust,
To our
National Crust.

And we may
Destroy
For a day
Of joy
When the bells
Will play
For our victory,
The very clay
Of Fertility.

But we might
Think twice
Before paying
This price.

—A. LINK

WHAT A LAND-WORKER WILL THINK OF THE BEVERIDGE REPORT

By FR. VINCENT McNABB, O.P., S.T.M.

I HAVE been asked to write what a land-worker will think about the Beveridge Report on Social Insurance.

(I) Two principles will guide the land-worker's thinking: first, land-work is not just necessary; it is primary. To ignore this principle is to be disqualified as a social thinker.

Secondly, the land-worker need never waste a moment of time or an ounce of material. Town-work is necessarily based on waste of time and of material. To ignore this principle is to be doubly disqualified as a social thinker; and especially as a social reconstructionist.

(II) As land-work is not just necessary but primary, a land-worker's judgment will be primary and therefore simple. Indeed, the words he uses in uttering judgment will be so simple as to appear platitudes.

Sir William Beveridge's Report, on the other hand, even when offering its readers the simplicity of a Summary, is so complicated as to be unintelligible except to an expert. Let the ordinary reader test his intelligence by trying to master the section entitled SUMMARY OF PLAN FOR SOCIAL SECURITY (pp. 9—11).

(III) The land-worker's first and primary criticism of this Report on Social Insurance is that it contains no vital reference to what is primary—the Land!

This may mean that, even in the mind of Sir William Beveridge, a Commonwealth organised on land as necessary and primary and on towns as neither primary nor absolutely necessary, would be a Commonwealth with no need for Social Insurance.

(IV) The Report begins somewhat tragically with the main fact or factor in all plans of Social Insurance. That tragic fact is Race Suicide. Sir William Beveridge views this only as an economic fact. But no doubt he would consider that it was primarily a moral fact (p. 8, par. 15).

But it is a moral fact with such economic consequences that whereas in 1901 22½ millions (under 65) had to keep 2⅛ millions over 65, in 1971 28¾ millions will have to keep 9½ millions (p. 91).

But this problem of Race Suicide is not a land problem. It is essentially an urban and an urbanised-country problem.

(V) The land-worker can see only a suicidal admission in the following words of the Report:—

> Determination of the minimum income required for subsistence, though simplified by the foregoing assumptions, remains a difficult problem on two grounds:
>
> (a) No reasoned forecast can now be made of the cost of living;
>
> (b) The cost of living is not the same for all families. The main difference is in respect of rents (p. 76, par. 94).

Sir William Beveridge does not seem to see that in disclaiming all "reasoned forecast" he is merely stressing the essential and unscientific ambiguity and therefore uncertainty of the TOKEN as contrasted with the THING.

Of course neither he nor any other economist can tell how many potatoes can be bought for 6d. in 1971; especially if they are bought abroad in a country giving only 15/- to our £1.

But he does know how many potatoes the average man needs in 1971.

In other words, the money-value of potatoes is a variable. But the life-giving value of potatoes is a constant.

Now the Town is the home of the Token; as the Land is the home and storehouse of Things.

Sir William Beveridge must surely know that Economic Science, like any other Science, should be based on the Constants and not on the Variables.

To confess, as he has humbly confessed at the outset of his Report, that "no reasoned forecast" can be made of the number of tokens needed to provide the Things needed

for Social Security is to aim at Security by means that are essentially insecure.

The land-worker has not this essential insecurity of the Token. His only insecurity (which the townsman shares) is his own work and God's weather.

(VI) The problem of Rent confirms all we have said about the primacy of the Land. The following facts are significant:—

> "The average of rents runs from 16/- a week in London to 7/6 in Scotland and to 4/7 in agricultural households" (p. 77, par. 199).

It is regrettable that the Report does not give us, what perhaps it could not give us, a comparison of the rent per cubic foot of room. In London there are those who are paying close upon 10/- for one room.

Almost more significant is the following passage:—

> "An allowance of 10/- a week for rent in 1938 would have been anything from 2/6 to 7/6 too much for more than two-thirds of the Scottish households . . . and 2/6 to 10/- and upwards too little for half the London households . . . and at least twice too much for more than half the agricultural households.
>
> With the present varieties of rent it is not possible to fix any uniform rate of insurance benefit as meeting subsistence requirements with any accuracy" (p. 79, par 202).

Again the land asserts its primacy.

But again Sir William Beveridge has negatived his proposals. As we said before, a Science must be based on Constants. No Science can be based on Variables. Yet the Report admits that rents (i.e., token values) are so variable that it is not possible to fix a subsistence rent.

The writer's own experience confirms this primacy of the Land in the matter of rent. He can recall when the rent of many labourers' cottages in Co. Down was 6d. a week. At a rent of 7% on building, this would mean that the building cost was less than £20.

In the Cotswolds as late as 1906 he remembers stone-built, stone-roofed cottages with a "lug" of garden for 2/6 a week. Capitalized, it meant less than £100 for building cost.

The present writer's personal conviction, often uttered and never refuted, is that our present Urban Industrial organisation *cannot* give an Economic Wage (still less an Economic Dole) which will pay an Economic Rent.

(VII) Again the present writer cannot expect his readers to see what he sees in the following words of the Report. Commenting on the undeniable fact of Race Suicide, the Report says:—

> "It" (will be) "necessary to seek means of postponing the age of retirement from work rather than of hastening it" (p. 8, par. 15).

The stability of a Commonwealth is tested by the position of the Family; and the position of the Family is tested by the position of the Grandparents. Our urbanised organisation is, as we have seen, essentially based on waste; not only of time and of material, but of wisdom. Only the Land can find for the wisdom and failing strength of Old Age, that is of essential value in the primary duty of giving mankind food for his mouth, clothes for his body, and a roof over his head.

NOTE

The dominant importance of the subjects which have monopolised Editorial comment in this issue must excuse the omission of many points of high current interest.

The Pasteurisation Ramp, and the co-operation of Government Departments and Combines in measures of milk control (as inefficient as they are unethical) must be watched carefully by our readers.

We shall contribute in due course to a general resentment which will ensure that none of these conspiracies shall survive the war.

On Pasteurisation, readers should make a point of reading a letter of great force and moment, in the *Catholic Herald* of 19th February, from the pen of Mgr. Canon Jackman.

This is not the only letter of force and moment made necessary by the curious editorial woolliness prevalent lately in that periodical.—Editor.

THE HEATHEN TOWNEE

By THE REV. J. M. LLOYD THOMAS

The peacefull'st cot the moon shall shine upon,
Lull'd by the thrush and waken'd by the lark. —*S. T. Coleridge*

THERE are nice townees. Jack Welldon was a nice townee. True to his name, he had done well for himself and thought of retiring.

But the heathen townee is peculiar. Jack had never been really happy at the office. Even long after the bombs had ceased to fall, there would come a sudden impulse to go native. The Romance of the Country-side would get him like religion. He called it the country-side much as the old Lord Salisbury called Scotland, Ireland and Wales the Celtic fringe. To-day he would have called them the grass verge.

We all speak now of the Green Belt, which, broadened and lengthened, will be found to have a gold buckle at the end of it after the town-planners have finished working on it behind the farmers' backs.

In the early spring-time when poets do mostly sing, memories of holidays, and especially of one incredible wonder when he first met Maggie and quickly married her, would raise a pale-blue mist between his moist shining eyes and the ledger. The ichor of the soil, that is to say, the yeasty fermentation of the autochthonous red loam of his primeval flesh would become a riotous liquor and a racing fire in his blood. It seemed as if some far away mysterious arboreal background made him restless to climb trees again. Anyhow, he must get away from Babylondon, beyond this desert of bricks, to settle down in some country oasis where the grass is soft and yielding, and the humus—he had read about that, and the effect of sulphate of ammonia—is deep and rich, and where leafy boughs are swaying. Was it in childhood or thousands and thousands of years earlier that he had swayed with them head down?

. . . . . .

Jack had received a public-school education. That was why he had been classified, thanks to the kindness of an influential and rich uncle, as a key-man in a reserved occupation. He had done the *Georgics* and had treasured the old word-for-word crib which as a third-form boy he used to stuff secretly into his desk slightly prised open with a ruler. Even now he sometimes read marked passages. "*Quippe,* indeed; *ubi,* where; *fas,* right; *versum,* inverted; *atque,* and; *nefas,* wrong"; and then he would carry on. "So many wars throughout the world; so many the masks of crime; the plough has not its merited honour." "The plough," he mused. The perverse pranks of word-association switched his mind off and he recalled how he had been disgracefully ploughed in divi mods. Then he recklessly plunged into the second book. "*O fortunatos nimium*—O, you happy, happy farmers, all too blessed if only you knew your luck. To you, far from the crashing of arms, the just earth, unbid, lavishes a ready subsistence from her"—ah, yes, there is the very word, *humo*—"from her nourishing breast," he said, forgetting the crib. He had played far too long with the idea. Like drink, like drugs even, it was getting a hold on him. Was it really just dope—day-dreaming, infantilism, recessivism, escape, all this Freudian stuff? He would prove his English phlegm and manhood. He had had the utmost difficulty in persuading Maggie, but she yielded at last after protesting in vain that it was all very silly at their time of life. The truth is he was tired before he re-tired. He had imagined, stimulated by a picture on a pre-war chocolate box, tied with satin ribbon, which was the first he had ever given Maggie, a nice little cottage, with a nice little kitchen garden at the back and a nice little flower garden at the front, all hollyhocks, red-hot pokers, lupins and delphiniums, a "profusion" he called it, he liked the word "profusion," a profusion, vivid and violent with clashing colours. He would have no nonsense of aesthetic arrangements. He wanted a cottage, a country cottage, not a pagoda in a municipal park. It would be what he could comfortably manage without break-back slavery, on self-subsistent principles. He would have time enough to read

books on trees and wild flowers and bird-watching—no more fire-watching. Some trifles he had naturally overlooked in the obscurity of that mist which blurred the double-entry columns.

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It was Maggie who began complaining and made the first rift in the lute. As Kipling feelingly remarks, "the female of the species is more deadly than the male." Yet Maggie was good at house-keeping and had been fortunate in getting a nice old washer-woman, none too strong, from a nearby village. But it wasn't always summer and it sometimes rained. So the "things"—how indecent they looked there!—had to be dried indoors before a roasting fire. They gave Jack a vapour bath as he read "The Story of my Heart" in his armchair pushed as far back as the small room would allow while the rain rattled on the window panes. There followed another stroke of luck. A starry-eyed little help, with a school-girl complexion, came into their lives. She was well over fourteen and glad to be trained by a genteel couple. She came in for half-a-day, lit the fire in the morning, did the dirty work and washed-up after lunch, when she went home to help her mother. She was given only pocket-money, of course, for she was being trained. Jack was not so lucky. He found that his gardening was a considerable tax on his time. He wouldn't have minded that had it been the success he had been led to expect by the wireless. He hadn't a green thumb. The seeds sprouted all right, but when the shoots appeared above ground and saw Jack they seemed to look at him steadily for a moment and then they curled back and wilted away. This interfered sadly with the continuity of his thoughts and became a trouble to his reflective temperament. He had dreamt of long evenings with fragrant logs on the fire and of reading Wordsworth to Maggie, whom he hoped would one day come to like "The Prelude." This leisure looked at last like being a gift of the gods, for he had found an ancient man with an old-age pension to dig and set the garden. Things might have gone on smoothly had not the washer-woman, who had chronic bronchitis, finally knocked up. There was no one else to be had for love or money, and the laundry wouldn't call. The bright little girl took a liking for the cinema, five miles away, and began to lip-stick. When reprimanded for being repeatedly late in the mornings and very sleepy, she decided she was now fully trained and hopped it without notice. Jack's ancient man, fair play to him, stuck it, and often did the "domestic chores" to the neglect of the garden. But when he received a supplementary pension he thought he could make do and retired to live the rural life on his own. Jack realised that he was losing his liberty to run up to town to have an occasional beano with his old pals from Surbiton, to whom he grew eloquent over the wonders of the country-life and the natural healthfulness of manual work. "See my hands"—and he would show them his blisters. He also missed a telephone. If only the grid system were near enough, Maggie could have had electricity installed. But the transformer was four miles away and there were no intervening houses. There was no water from the main, for there was no main within six miles. In the summer drought the pump gave out and water had to be fetched in buckets across four fields. He became, not like Jack at all, for he was a good-natured fellow, critical and suspicious of his neighbours. He had been missing his gardening tools one by one for some time. The neighbours, too, were not expansive and thought there must be something queer about living like that. The solitude was making Jack morbid, for he was neither a beast nor a god to be able to live alone, and Maggie had, in a tiff, gone home to her mother.

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When, many months later I met Jack, he and Maggie were living happily in Cheltenham, in permanent rooms at a boarding house run by a very competent clergyman's widow. Jack was sensible about his experiences and impenitent, though inclined to say he had given it all up to please Maggie. He had by this time worked out a considered and detailed theory showing clearly that the true solution of the social problem was not in any of these reports—Barlow, Scott, Uthwatt, Beveridge and the rest—but in self-subsistent family farming. 'Only, mind you," he always concluded, "it is rather like monasticism: you must have a call, a genuine vocation, for it."

A CASE AGAINST ARTIFICIALS

By CECIL D. BACHELOR

ONE hundred years ago Baron Liebig, on analysing the ashes of burnt vegetation, revealed that plants consisted of Nitrogen, Phosphates and Potash. From this discovery he deduced that all then that was necessary for the successful growth of vegetation was the incorporation of these elements, in chemical form, into the soil.

This theory very quickly became popular with the agricultural community, who proclaimed it a wonderful discovery; its application meant that with two or three bags of chemicals, soil fertility could be restored in, virtually speaking, a matter of hours. Gone were the days of laborious muck spreading: staffs could be reduced and costs lowered. The farmer was happy with this new-found salvation, and so was Commerce; for here, indeed, was a golden opportunity for them to sell their hitherto unmarketable, and unwanted, waste: basic slag from the smelting works: sulphate of ammonia from the gas works: and so on.

A great propaganda campaign was launched, those with more commercial interest than agricultural encouraging the use of artificials at every turn; the Government, sacrificing the soil to the gods of commerce and welcoming the new method of farming which could produce cheaper food, gave the doctrine of artificials their unreserved blessing, and through their agricultural research stations expounded its benefits and urged its use. The ball of soil destruction had been set rolling, and it has been gaining impetus ever since, with the disastrous results so apparent to-day.

Commercialism and soil do not mix: no "get rich quick" system of farming is ever sound, or in the long run practicable, because it is not Nature's way and no man can beat Nature. He may, for the time being, think he is forcing her to give up her treasures, but ultimately Nature presents the bill of costs which has to be paid by man either in the form of the loss of soil fertility, the nation's health, or both.

Digressing into another line of thought for a moment, let us consider our own bodies. Scientists know that the human body consists of so much lime, phosphates, etc., they also know what quantities of proteins, vitamins, etc., are necessary for us to consume to maintain these bodies of ours. Working, then, on Liebig's theory, could we not nourish ourselves by taking these proteins, vitamins, etc., in concentrated form? Is it necessary for us to eat large meals when we could obtain the same nourishment from one small chemical pill? The answer is obvious; even supposing this concentrated food did sustain us, it is extremely doubtful if we would be strong, active, or healthy because it is not Nature's ordained way for us to feed; she has given us digestive and other organs, wherewith to extract these proteins, vitamins, etc., from animal and vegetable matter, and unless these organs are used our bodies suffer in consequence.

The same conditions apply to vegetation and the soil; certain elements must be present to obtain the best results, and these elements cannot be supplied in an artificial manner.

The soil, as we know, is a mass of living bacteria, and these bacteria have to be fed. The diligent earthworm, who works so hard constantly aerating and tilling the soil, also requires food, likewise the fungous growth, mycorrhiza, which converts organic matter into plant food, and whose presence in the soil is so essential to vegetable life. Factory-made chemicals, far from feeding these elements, kill them, and kill them off without mercy. Dig over ground which has been treated with artificials for a number of years; how many earthworms are there to be found? What trace of mycelium is present? None! The earth is dead: all the living matter has been poisoned: what manner of vegetation can this dead soil be expected to produce? How can roots of plants obtain nourishment from a soil so denuded of its natural elements?

It is true that even on such soil, crops can be grown by artificial means, but what do these crops consist of? Are they not simply artificial matter? Factory-made chemicals! Surely the mature plant is nothing more than

synthetic vegetation, containing only such nourishment for man and beast as a factory-made cabbage would be expected to contain.

If chemicals are the sole necessity to vegetable life, why trouble to use the soil at all? Why not produce our corn, cabbage and carrots in the laboratory straight away?

One has only to consider the dust-bowls of America to appreciate the ravages of artificials; thousands of acres completely derelict in less than a hundred years! Compare this with the Orient, which has fed hundreds of millions of people for countless years. The Orient, excepting that small portion cultivated by commerce, follows Nature and relies upon her method for maintaining soil fertility.

The disastrous result of using artificials, apart from the loss of fertility, is well illustrated in the Ceylon tea-growing industry. Tea grown on Ceylon soil has a flavour peculiar to itself and unequalled by tea grown in any other country. By using chemical fertilisers, however, this tea is rapidly losing its fine flavour and is becoming on flat parity with that grown in other countries who fertilise their estates with similar artificials.

Commercial greed is the only reason for the use of artificials: the raping of the soil for the benefit of the few, to the detriment of the health of the present generation and the total loss of soil fertility for the generations to follow.

No artificial fertiliser can replace that all-important soil ingredient—Humus. The very life of the plant and soil depend upon it for healthy existence, but because humus is Nature's own patent and not Man's, it is despised.

Nature decrees that animals and vegetation live on the same organic substance—animal and vegetable matter; humus supplies this to the vegetable world. The excreta and dead bodies of animals, insects and birds, the decaying leaves and vegetation are mixed and oxidized by the action of the air, wind and rain: this compost is conveyed into the soil by worms, ants and other burrowing animals and insects, and by this process soil fertility has been maintained for countless generations. Man can do no better than copy this example.

Disciples of Liebig maintain that the shortage of organic matter and the labour required to make, and spread, compost is the argument against its use; this argument, however, is hardly convincing when we consider that prior to the present war we had, in this country alone, some two million unemployed and practically all our household and commercial vegetable and animal refuse was either burnt in the Municipal incinerators or consigned to the tip.

Unless drastic steps are taken, and taken quickly, to put humus back into the soil, the present-day extensive cropping and artificial programme will leave us in a very sorry state for many years to come.

A BALLADE OF INEVITABLE MECHANISATION

The Machine has come to stay.—Lord Bledisloe: the ninety-seventh and, let us hope, the last Modern Thinker to make this Interesting Discovery.

The Norseman came to Portland Bay
And took my niece with all his crew.
I did not arm me for the fray,
A noble viscount whom I knew
Said, "Let me press this fact on you—
Your strong dislikes of rape betray
The narrow, unprogressive view,
For Norsemen's raids have come to stay."

A slinking lawyer made me pay
Because I had no deeds to view.
He stole my land, and on a day
He took possession with his shrew.
I to my trusty viscount flew
Who said to me: "Why be a jay?
'Tis thus the grand old squiredom grew:
And squiredom, it has come to stay."

I struck him then. He sent Lord Hay
To ask me for my seconds. Few
Would help me in that dread mélée:
At all events, there was no queue.
We met at dawn, and stripped and drew.
I did not wish the man to slay:
I murmured, as I ran him through,
The Duello has come to stay.

ENVOI

My Lord, you make me sick. The Zoo
May take things as they come. But pray,
Learn from our fathers how Men do.
Nothing we hate has come to stay.

—H. Robbins

THE WORK OF JUSTICE SHALL BE PEACE

In view of their high importance, and of their relevance to the debates now current in England, we are reproducing as many passages as possible from The Allocution delivered on Christmas Eve, 1942, by Pope Pius XII.

After the fatal economy of the past decades, during which the lives of all citizens were subordinated to the stimulus of gain, there now succeeds another and no less fateful policy, which, while it considers everybody and everything with reference to the State, excludes all thought of ethics or religion. This is a fatal error. It is calculated to bring about incalculable consequences for social life, which is never nearer to losing its noblest prerogatives than when it thinks it can deny or forget with impunity the eternal Source of its own dignity, which is God.

That social life such as God wills it may attain its scope, it needs a juridical order to support it from without, to defend and protect it. The function of this juridical order is not to dominate but to serve, to help the development and increase of society's vitality in the rich multiplicity of its aims, leaving all the individual energies to their perfection in peaceful competition and defending them with appropriate and honest means against all that may militate against their full evolution. Such an order, that it may safeguard the equilibrium, the safety and the harmony of society, has also the power of coercion against those who only by this means can be held within the noble discipline of social life.

But in the just fulfilment of this right, an authority which is truly worthy of the name will always be painfully conscious of its responsibility in the sight of the Eternal Judge, before Whose Tribunal every wrong judgment, and especially every revolt against the order established by God, will receive without fail its sanction and its condemnation. The juridical order has besides the high and difficult task of ensuring harmonious relations both between individuals and between societies, and within these. This task will be achieved if legislators will abstain from following those perilous theories and practices so harmful to communities and to their spirit of union which derive their origin and promulgation from false postulates.

Among such postulates we must count the juridical positivism which attributes a deceptive majesty to the setting up of purely human laws and which deems the way open for an initial divorce of law from morality. There is, besides, the conception which claims for particular nations or races or classes the juridical instinct as the final imperative and the norm from which there is no appeal. Finally there are those theories which, different among themselves and deriving from opposite ideologies, agree in regarding the State, or a group which represents it, as an absolute and supreme entity, exempt from control and from criticism even when its theoretical and practical postulates result in, and offend by, the open denial of the essential factors of the human and Christian conscience.

Anyone who considers, with an open and penetrating mind, the vital connection between social order and a genuine juridical order, will realize at once the urgent need of a return to a norm which is both spiritual and ethical, serious and profound, vivified by the warmth of true humanity and illumined by the splendour of the Christian faith which bids us keep in the juridical order an outward reflection of the social order willed by God, a luminous product of the spirit of man which is in turn the image of the Spirit of God.

On this organic conception, which alone is vital, in which the noblest humanity and

the most genuine Christian spirit flourish in harmony, there is marked the scriptural thought expounded by the great Aquinas, "Opus Justitiæ Pax"—"The work of justice shall be peace": a thought which is as applicable to the internal as to the external aspect of social life. It admits of neither contrast nor alternative such as is expressed in the disjunction "love or right," but only the fruitful synthesis "love and right."

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Always moved by religious motives, the Church has condemned the various forms of Marxist Socialism, and she condemns them to-day, because it is her permanent right and duty to safeguard men from currents of thought and influences that jeopardise their eternal salvation. But the Church cannot ignore or overlook the fact that the worker, in his efforts to better his lot, is opposed by a machinery which is not only not in accordance with nature, but is at variance with God's plan and with the purpose He had in creating the goods of the earth.

In spite of the fact that the ways they followed were, and are, false and to be condemned, what man, and especially what priest or Christian, could remain deaf to the sighs that rise from the depths and call for justice and a spirit of brotherly collaboration in a world ruled by a just God? Such silence would be culpable and unjustifiable before God, and contrary to the inspired teaching of the apostle, who, while he inculcates the need of resolution in the fight against error, also knows that we must be full of sympathy for those who err, and open-minded in our understanding of their aspirations, hopes and motives.

When He blessed our first parents, God said: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." And to the first father of a family He said later: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON, THEN, REQUIRES NORMALLY, AS A NATURAL FOUNDATION OF LIFE, THE RIGHT TO THE USE OF THE GOODS OF THE EARTH. TO THIS RIGHT CORRESPONDS THE FUNDAMENTAL OBLIGATION TO GRANT PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY, IF POSSIBLE, TO ALL.

Positive legislation regulating private ownership may change, and more or less restrict its use. For if legislation is to play its part in the pacification of the community, it must prevent the worker, who is or will be the father of a family, from being condemned to an economic dependence and slavery which is irreconcilable with his rights as a person. WHETHER THIS SLAVERY ARISES FROM THE EXPLOITATION OF PRIVATE CAPITAL, OR FROM THE POWER OF THE STATE, THE RESULT IS THE SAME. Indeed, under the pressure of a State which dominates all and controls the whole field of public and private life, even going into the realms of ideals and beliefs and of conscience, this lack of liberty can have most serious consequences, as experience shows and proves.

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He who would have the Star of Peace to shine out and stand over society should cooperate for his part in giving back to the human person the dignity given to it by God from the very beginning. He should oppose the excessive herding of men as if they were a mass without a soul, by men exploiting their economic, social, political, intellectual and moral inconsistency, their dearth of firm principles and strong convictions, their surfeit of emotional excitement, and their fickleness. He should favour by every lawful means, in every sphere of life, social institutions in which a full personal responsibility is assured and guaranteed both in the earthly and eternal order of things.

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HE WHO WOULD HAVE THE STAR OF PEACE SHINE OUT AND STAND OVER SOCIETY SHOULD GIVE TO WORK THE PLACE ASSIGNED TO IT BY GOD FROM THE BEGINNING. As an indispensable means towards gaining over the world that mastery which God wishes for his glory, all work has an inherent dignity and at the same time a close connection with the perfection of the person. This is the noble dignity and privilege of work, which is not in any way cheapened by the fatigue and the burden which has to be borne, as the effect of original sin, in obedience and submission to the will of God.