

---

1944

## The Cross & the Plough, V. 11, N. 2, 1944

Catholic Land Federation of England and Wales

Follow this and additional works at: [https://collected.jcu.edu/the\\_cross\\_and\\_the\\_plough](https://collected.jcu.edu/the_cross_and_the_plough)

---

### Recommended Citation

Catholic Land Federation of England and Wales, "The Cross & the Plough, V. 11, N. 2, 1944" (1944). *The Cross and the Plough*. 18.

[https://collected.jcu.edu/the\\_cross\\_and\\_the\\_plough/18](https://collected.jcu.edu/the_cross_and_the_plough/18)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections Journals at Carroll Collected. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Cross and the Plough by an authorized administrator of Carroll Collected. For more information, please contact [mchercourt@jcu.edu](mailto:mchercourt@jcu.edu).



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

QUARTERLY

TWOPENCE

CHRISTMAS 1944

## CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS . . . . .   | 2  |
| THE MAMMON OF INIQUITY . . . . .  | 4  |
| CRUSADE TO PUSH TRADE: Two Interpretations,<br>by Philip Hagreen and H. Robbins | 5  |
| FULL EMPLOYMENT IN AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY .                                      | 6  |
| PASSAGES FROM RERUM NOVARUM:<br>Newly Translated by Walter Shewring             | 8  |
| GADARENE MOBILITY: by H. E. G. Rope . . . .                                     | 11 |
| SUBSIDIES TO INDUSTRIALISM: by H. R. Broadbent .                                | 12 |
| DECEMBER SIXTH: by G.P. . . . .   | 13 |
| THE MERRY PEASANT: by Helen Parry Eden . . .                                    | 13 |
| SCIENTIFIC CRITICISM: by Capt. H. S. D. Went . .                                | 14 |
| ORDER OF BATTLE, XX: The Eve of Armagedon . .                                   | 17 |
| PLOUGHMAN'S FOLLY . . . . .   | 19 |



# 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 a re-statement of the policy of the Catholic Land Federation, are enclosed with the first number of every new subscription. Extra copies may be obtained at twelve for one shilling, post free.

## THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

### IN TERRA PAX?

Whether peace will come with the cessation of warfare is still unknown. The indications are that there will be a choice between the making of real peace by means of a Post-War, and the making of a desert of servility, to be called peace by the Planners.

Hope is a capital Christian virtue, and we hope sincerely that our readers may enjoy real peace during the Holy Season and the coming year. This does not exclude keeping our powder dry.

### ICED DRIED MILK

At this suitable season of the year, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food stated in Parliament (on 16th November) that supplies of raw materials for the manufacture of ice cream were being released.

No one seems to have pointed out that this is the latest and worst timed item in an amusing series of efforts to dispose of the unsaleable dried milk which no citizen has willingly consumed. The ruthless cutting down of our normal milk supplies to enable this unpalatable muck to be made in enormous quantities is one of the great food scandals of the war.

### BIG BUSINESS ETHICS

It has been one of the major shocks of war to many people that great Government Departments have displayed a standard of ethics in advertising as low as that of Big Business. Compare with the last paragraph

the extensive and expensive advertising of *Doctor Carrot* by the Ministry of Food. The virtues of this dubious vegetable ceased to receive publicity immediately the enormous surplus produced by imprudent planning had been consumed by a trustful public.

### WHITED SEPULCHRES

These, we know on the highest authority, are full of dead men's bones. The same is sometimes true of Whited Papers on Social Insurance.

The dominant fact about it has hardly been mentioned. Certainly it has not been discussed at length.

When Compulsory Savings were urged, the Government shrank from them because of popular resentment. But the populace has accepted, almost without a murmur, Income Tax at 10/- in the Pound, with Post-War Credits; and that is exactly the same thing.

### LIVE MEN'S BONES

A trick exactly similar is being played in this case. All the money for Beveridge comes from the citizen, either directly in heavy personal contributions, or rather less directly by taxation and a lowered wage. The Government gives him some of it back in certain contingencies. For the privilege of having the Government do this, the citizen loses all control over his own money, and accepts controls and regimentation of unpleasant but drastic type.

And none of the experts blows the gaff. This is probably the greatest confidence trick in history.

### NON-RATTLING CHAINS

It was always clear that the Servile State, when it was attempted, would not be urged under its own name. But few of us thought of *National Insurance* as a smoke screen.

Probably the political genius who first suggested collecting Compulsory Savings as Income Tax should have the credit for the Servile State as well.

### BREAKERS AHEAD

The Ministry of Agriculture is developing a scheme for training returned members of the Armed Forces for the land. Allowances are to be paid and the scheme is to be administered by the County War Committees.

So far as our information goes, there will be no provision for independent settlement, but only for employment by the larger farmers.

We shall develop our own demands when the men and women begin to return. Nothing is to be gained by premature counter-attack.

### STERILISED BREAD AGAIN

Our readers are aware that what has passed for whole-meal bread during the war, is something less than a half-way house to that delectable food. It was something, however, to have the steel mill combines opposed even to this small extent.

Those important financial interests, whose operations are so greatly assisted by dead flour, have lost no time in announcing their intentions for the future.

Their effrontery in promising a *whiter loaf* (as who should say life, not death) is the measure of our task in ensuring once again in England real milling and real bread.

### THE NEXT DANGER

It has been clear for some years that the development of Plastics on the one hand, and the impending shortage of mineral oils on the other, would involve a fresh and even more serious phase of soil erosion.

*The British-American News Service*, an official publication emanating from Washington, reports in its issue for July (received in this country only in the middle of November) that maize cob and peanut shells are being used extensively for industrial purposes. This, of course, is relatively innocuous, but at the end of the same issue, the service quotes *The Dakota Farmer* as saying "Every grain of this wheat will be needed, for not only is it to be used to provide the daily bread of America and her Allies at war, but millions of bushels will be required for essential industrial uses." (Italics ours).

It is not generally known that Plastics are dominantly formed from organic substances, while motor spirit from vegetable products is the only known alternative to mineral oils. And no one outside Bedlam should expect Big Business to stop short at corn cob and peanut shells.

### TAILPIECE

*The National Catholic Rural Life Conference* of America has issued statistics of its summer activities in 1944. The total attendance at various functions is given as 28,470, from over 100 American Dioceses.

The meat of the statistics is a final paragraph "A few things we found out," which include "Less than 1 per cent. of the sisters or priests are sons or daughters of Catholic College graduates."

"No Catholic College or University in the United States offers a course in Agriculture."

Our own statistics, if we had any, would be even worse.



## THE MAMMON OF INIQUITY

WE have shown in our issue for Christmas, 1943, that *The Economist* is not controlled by Economics (which would be bad enough) but by Finance.

The issue of that weekly for 21st October last contained an Editorial entitled *The Shape of Agriculture*. We need not labour the main thesis of this article beyond saying that it took the usual shape of *The Economist's* Agricultural articles.

It has, however, three points of significance.

1.—It has the usual modern trick of purporting to prove its case by leaving out an essential part of the objections. *The Economist*, one gathers, has not heard of world erosion. This enables it to say: "It is highly doubtful whether British agriculture could ever compete in, say, grain crops with the great open spaces."

This sentence may be left in its Victorian distinction.

2.—The Manchester School, discredited everywhere else, still holds *The Economist's* mind.

"War and blockade temporarily remove the advantages of the international division of labour, which enables a country to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest."

This also may be left in its Victorian distinction. It is to the third point that special attention is directed here.

3.—"The general aim should be to produce an agricultural industry employing no more men than it did before the war (or even fewer) but providing each of them with a good living."

That is, promises and praises notwithstanding, Agriculture is to be *shrunk* back (to use its own pre-war word) into something less than its pre-war state. In particular, it is not to be a field on which we can solve our problem of finding a dignified livelihood for the fighting men.

But this is only half the story.

In its very next issue, that of 28th October last, *The Economist* carried another editorial with the mysterious title of PMH.

These letters mean Production Man-Hours, and have been brought back across the

Atlantic by Sir Frank Platt's Cotton Textile Mission, whose Report is discussed in the article.

It appears that the English Cotton Industry compares very badly in PMH with its American equivalent, and the comparison of numerous percentages leaves us with the impression that in America the output per PMH is about 400% of our own.

*The Economist* gives two explanations. In America there is more automatic machinery, and "the average age of the American labour force is much lower." So with the managers. It quotes the Report as adding "American Mill Managers, generally, are young and analytical, and progressive in their outlook."

*The Economist* proceeds to cite a formidable list of other English Industries which would be all the better for a Platt Mission.

One conclusion alone is possible. The controllers of Finance in England will not permit of more English families on the land. But neither will they permit any man past his youth to work in a named series of important industries.

Rarely can the nemesis of this hideous system have been proved so well from adjacent issues of the Holy Scripture of Finance. We are used to *either/or*. Henceforth, unless we bestir ourselves, it is to be *neither/nor*.

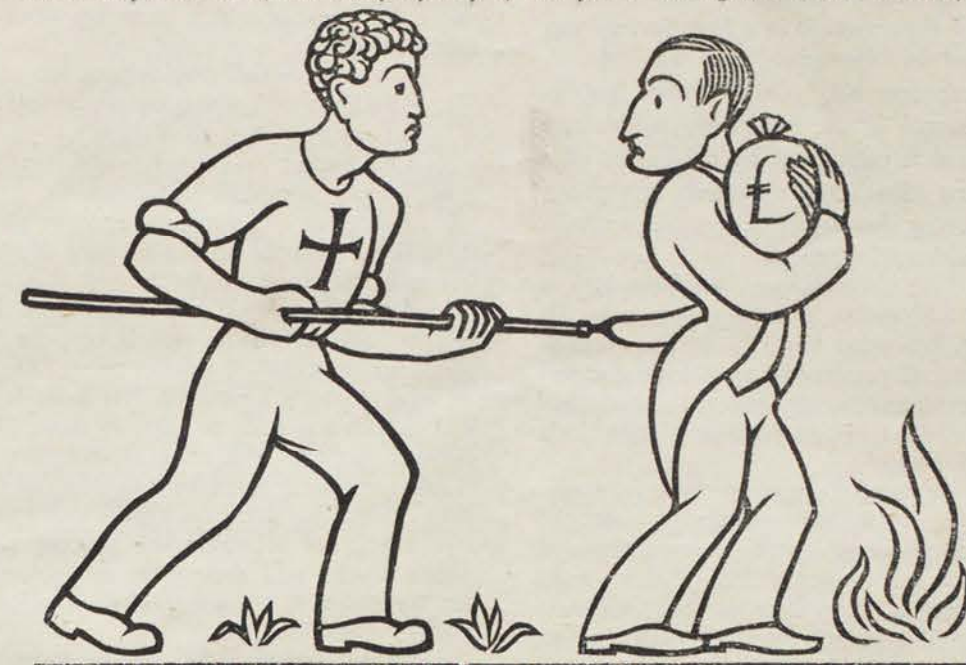
What does *The Economist* think, what do our Rulers think, and what do *we* think, is to happen to those millions of English folk, forbidden to turn to the land, and thrown out in early middle age from the still Satanic Mills?

What *is* England, if she is not the sum of those English folk?

FOOTNOTE.—It is of some interest that the article is referred to, and its principles adopted, by *The Waste Trade World* of 4th November. In that interesting publication, the Chairman of the *National Sack Merchants' and Reclaimers' Association* has an article with much support, and no criticism, of PMH. What is to become of the staff thus thrown on the waste trade world is not discussed.

## CRUSADE TO PUSH TRADE

(On October 8th last, the "Sunday Graphic" had these headlines—  
LORD WOOLTON'S APPEAL : CRUSADE TO PUSH TRADE  
Two interpretations of the dark mystery of this phrase are offered to our readers)



Godfrey—Raymond—hide your head :  
Shameful were the fights you led.  
Use a Business Man instead.

Crusade not for Holy Places :  
Pilgrims leave for Paynim maces,  
Let Finance get down to cases.

Charge with lifted fiery cross :

W  
O  
O  
L  
T  
O  
N  
I  
S  
T  
H  
E  
P  
E  
R  
F  
E  
C  
T  
B  
O  
S  
S

Watch the Paynim cut his loss!



# FULL EMPLOYMENT IN AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

SIR William Beveridge's important work *Full Employment in a Free Society* was published in November, and was immediately unprocurable. This situation has become normal in the publishing world, and suggests that publishers, by the device of a small first edition and a leisurely reprinting, are ensuring themselves full employment in a free (and waiting) society.

In these circumstances, we have had to rely on a Sixpenny Summary written by Sir William Beveridge himself. In the event of any material points emerging from the full volume, when that is made available, they will be discussed in a later issue of *The Cross and The Plough*.

As we pointed out in our issue for Lady-day, 1943, the hideous novelty of insecurity and unemployment is a direct consequence of capitalism and industrialism. That it should be removed is not in dispute. That it should be removed by compromising human freedom and dignity would be an outrage.

Father Vincent McNabb, a few weeks before his death, told the present Editor of a discussion he had had on this subject with an important supporter of the Beveridge proposals. He had said to this unfortunate person: "When society is injured, it needs first aid. But if you go on applying first aid, and neglecting the appropriate remedy, you reach a point where First Aid has itself become a disease. There are only two ultimate forms of society—the free and the un-free. The former is where the workman owns his means of production. The latter is where he is employed and directed by others. For this purpose it is irrelevant whether the employer is a capitalist or the State. Both involve reducing the citizen to the status of an employee. The remedy against unemployment and employment, which are the two faces of the same thing, is ownership; and Beveridge mentions ownership only to decry it."

Sir William, in the present work, accepts without question the industrial basis of society. This involves him in several insoluble

difficulties of which he appears uneasily aware, but none of which he makes any real attempt to attack.

We can have full employment if:

- 1.—The State makes massive productive investment as may be necessary.
- 2.—Our Export Trade revives and remains.
- 3.—Labour is mobile and directible.

1.—But, as we show on another page, there is no foothold on the slippery slope of technological unemployment, and this fact invalidates all Sir William's assumptions. He accepts fully, as will be seen below, the implications of technical development. He is, we understand, a Trustee of *The Economist*, and as such has a fourth share in controlling editorial policy. We must assume that he would not dissent from the statements of that policy which we quote on page four. Public works will not neutralise this process, since public works will themselves be subject in equal measure to technological elimination of labour.

On the contrary, the present Pope has said recently: "No. Technical progress does not determine economic life as a destined and necessary factor . . . Why should it not then yield also to the necessity of maintaining and ensuring private property for all—that cornerstone of social order? Even technical progress as a social factor should not prevail over the general good, but should rather be directed and subordinated to it." (Pronouncement of 1st September, 1944).

2.—*The Economist*, in tables published on 28th October, shows that in terms of volume (which avoids price complications) our exports in 1943 were only 29% of the exports of 1938. To make good the Beveridge stipulations, our exports must attain a volume of 150% of the 1938 figures. That is, they must multiply more than five-fold their present volume. This may, and probably will, happen for a few years while the world refits. What happens then? Shall we have installed the god of export merely to provide ourselves with another international friction on an unprecedented scale?

*The Economist*, in the same issue, has this serious warning: "The export figures which are summarised on page 578, reveal a desperate situation. It is difficult to arouse the country to a full sense of the danger it is in." That does not prevent *The Economist* from giving full, and indeed fulsome, support to the Beveridge proposals in its issue of 11th November.

3.—Sir William, in discussing the preservation of essential liberties, mentions *freedom in choice of occupation*. He makes no attempt to prove that his scheme permits of any such thing, and indeed is evasive on the point. His reference to Part V of his full report will doubtless repay scrutiny in due course.

Meantime, we recommend full attention to his words which follow: "The demand must be not only sufficient in total but must be directed with regard to the quality and the location of the labour that is available. The labour supply must be capable of following the changes of demand that are inseparable from technical advance." (Summary p. 11).

In all this, what is Sir William's attitude towards diffused productive ownership, in which alone lies remedy as distinct from penalty and palliation?

He states baldly in the Summary: "Private ownership of means of production is not an essential liberty in Britain." (p. 14). Doubtless he has in mind large ownership on the industrial scale. But he does not say so, and nowhere does he envisage any modification whatever of the essential evils of industrialism, or for that matter, of the mechanised farming which bars the road out of the urban aggregations. We are to be tied to the machine until it collapses beneath us.

In all the political scene, only one figure is mindful of property. Mr. Ralph Ascheton, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said in a recent Commons debate on the Beveridge proposals: "One is apt to hear, I know, suggestions that the Treasury should pay for this, and the Treasury should pay for that, but it is not always remembered that the Treasury means the Taxpayer." That this is no mere debating point is shown by the fact that Mr. Ascheton, in a speech on 7th June, 1943, had said: "Though under modern conditions the tendency seems to be in the direction of large-scale concerns, we must always ensure the

existence of a large number of small concerns—small firms, small businesses, small farms. . . . We do not wish to find that when we have won the victory over the Nazi theory of State despotism we are adopting for ourselves measures which will lead straight to the Servile State."

Mr. Ascheton has now become Chairman of the Conservative Party, and in his first speech as such, on 25th November, he urged the removal of Controls which offend liberty. Now whether he is a true Distributist, or only an exponent of that spurious variety which uses small ownership as a smoke-screen, time alone can show. We shall watch his future career with great interest.

But it appears that our Rulers have become acutely uneasy over the exclusive reliance on exports and international conditions which they cannot control. There is a new note of hope.

His Majesty the King, opening Parliament on 29th November, used these decisive words: [My Ministers] "Will try to create conditions . . . to maintain a high level of food production at home."

This means that the Government has been forced to realise that the exclusive reliance on a problematical increase in exports will not do. They have had to face the unwelcome necessity of maximum food production at home.

But it means more. If intended seriously, as we must believe, it means the end of Big Business Farming, because Big Business has farmed on other men's ploughed-in turf, prolonged by exclusively artificial manure. That is a process which it is a physical impossibility to continue. The twelve-foot bare headlands imposed by tractor farming will not help.

That is, any reasonable amount of sincerity in His Majesty's Ministers means reversion to small-scale mixed farming, because that provides the greatest output per acre, which is our need; because that alone provides manure for fertility; and that alone provides for maximum use of the land.

The Vested Interests will fight, and may fight long, to delay that recognition. It can, now, be no more than a delaying action. In principle our war is won. But as on the German frontiers, it will be a hard fight to give the Industrial Planners their quietus. Then England, loved and alone lovable, shall return to her own.



# PASSAGES FROM RERUM NOVARUM (1891)

NEWLY TRANSLATED by WALTER SHEWRING

*(Editorial Note.—The official translations of the great Social Encyclicals are notoriously inept and inaccurate. A new translation of important parts of Rerum Novarum is here offered by Mr. Walter Shewring. It will be followed by others in due course. We are fortunate to have this essential work from the pen of a scholar of his standing.—The Editor).*

... It is plain to us and to everyone that the majority of the poor, through no fault of their own, are in a condition of misery and wretchedness which calls for prompt and well-chosen remedy. The traditional workmen's guilds were abolished in the last century; no form of protection took their place; in its laws and institutions, the State disowned the ancestral faith; hence by degrees we have reached a time when working men, isolated and unprotected, have been delivered over to the brutality of employers and the unchecked greed of competition. To make bad things worse, rapacious usury, condemned by the Church time after time, is practised still by grasping and covetous men who have changed its guise but not its nature. Lastly, the giving of employment and the conduct of trade generally have passed so completely into the hands of a few that a small body of excessively rich men have laid on the teeming multitudes of the poor a yoke which for all intents and purposes is the yoke of slavery.

To cure such evils the Socialists, working upon the poor to move resentment against the rich, propose to abolish private property and to substitute for it common property, administered by the State or by municipal bodies. By thus transferring property from individuals to the community, they hope to right present wrongs and give a fair share of goods to every citizen. This ill-judged scheme, far from settling the controversy, penalises the workers themselves; it is also eminently unjust, since it means violence to legitimate owners, distortion of the true functions of the

State, and general confusion in all communities.

When a man takes up any kind of paid work, it is surely obvious that the prime cause of his working, and his own immediate aim, is the acquiring of some sort of property with the right to hold it as his own. If he lends another his strength and industry, he does so to win the needful means for livelihood and for living; hence he expressly intends to acquire a full and real right, not only to wages, but to their disposal at his discretion. Thus if he saves by frugal living and for greater security invests his savings in land, such land is obviously nothing but his wages under another form; and a workman's holding, thus purchased, should be as completely at his disposal as the original wages themselves. Now this, clearly, is just what constitutes ownership, whether of land or chattels. The Socialist endeavour to sink private property in common property is therefore an injury to every wage-earner's position, since by banishing his freedom in disposal it deprives him thereby of all hope and possibility of improving his resources and making his existence more comfortable.

But more serious than this is the open injustice of the proposed remedy. Every man has a natural right to private property, and this is a major difference between him and other animals. A beast is not self-governing; it is governed and directed by two main instincts, which keep its energies alert, give its powers their fitting development, and at once stimulate and determine its movements. The one is for self-preservation, the other for propagation of its kind; both objects can be perfectly well secured by means of things in immediate range; beyond these the beast cannot go, since its only springs of action are sense and the particular objects of sense. With man it is widely different. He possesses indeed the full perfection of animal nature and is granted an enjoyment of bodily things

which is at least no less than that of the other animals. But animal nature, however completely possessed, is far from exhausting the nature of man; on the contrary, animal nature stands far beneath human nature, whose servant it is designed to be. Our noblest and highest element—what makes man human and essentially different from the beasts—is the mind or reason. Man therefore, as the only animal endued with reason, needs not only goods for use (the whole animal race has that) but goods for stable and permanent possession; not only those which perish in use but those which survive usage.

This truth becomes clearer still if we view man's nature more fundamentally. Man, grasping with his intellect things beyond number, linking future with present, master of his own acts—man is self-counselling and self-governing under God's all-governing providence and the eternal law. Hence it is in his power to choose those things which he holds will serve him best, alike for the present and for the future. For him, then, it is not enough to possess the produce of the soil; since he sees in that produce the means to supply his future needs, he ought to possess the soil itself. His needs are ever-recurrent needs; satisfied to-day, they make new demands to-morrow. Nature then must inevitably have given to man some stable and permanent source of things whence he might expect to be perennially supplied. In one thing alone can he find that perennial supply—in the fertility of the soil.

In all this there is no call for the State to intervene. Man is prior to the State, and his natural right to sustain himself precedes the political community. Again, it is true that God gave the earth for the use and enjoyment of the entire race, but this is no bar to private property. We say that the earth was a common gift to mankind, not because any and every man was meant by God to have any and every part of it, but because God assigned no part of it to any particular man, and left it to man's own industry and to national customs to fix the limits of private property. Nor does private apportionment of the soil preclude its service of common needs. Those who are not owners of it provide their labour, and

it may truthfully be said that all human subsistence is grounded on work of one of two kinds; work given to a man's own land; work given to some other calling but paid for directly or indirectly by the bountiful produce of the soil.

Hence it follows again that private ownership is quite in accord with natural law. The necessities of life, the necessities for well-being, are provided by the land in all plenty, but not without human care and human co-operation. And when man turns his mental and bodily energies to procuring the goods of nature, he makes his own that portion of nature's field which has been tilled by himself and has had impressed upon it the personality of the man. It is eminently just, therefore, that he should possess that portion as his own, and this by a right which is inviolable . . . .

Religion (whose guardian and interpreter is the Church) is a prime force in reconciling the rich and the workers and drawing them together; this it does by reminding each side of its duties to the other and especially of the principles of justice. To the working man the Church says: "Execute frankly and fully all equitable agreements you have freely entered into; do your employer no injury in property or in person; if you have to defend your interests, do so without violence and without disorder; have no dealings with cunning and unscrupulous men who make great play of unbounded hopes and limitless promises; you may find regret too late and lose what you have." To the wealthy employer she says: "Your workmen are not your slaves; honour in each of them the natural dignity of the human person and its ennoblement by the seal of grace. Natural reason, like Christian philosophy, sees in the workman's calling an honourable means of livelihood deserving respect and not contempt. To treat men as chattels for profit, to regard them as so much thews and muscle, is alike revolting and inhuman. It is also your duty to bear in mind the religious and spiritual welfare of your men. You must allow them time for religious duties, see that they are not exposed to corrupting and sinful influences, and at no cost discourage their family life and frugal



habits. You must overwork no one, and employ no one on work unsuited to sex or age." Above all, employers are bound to give each his just due. Many considerations go to the determining of a fair wage; but in general the rich must remember that to exploit others' poverty, to grind the destitute and unfortunate for private profit, is a thing condemned by the laws of God and man. To defraud any man of his just wage is a crime that calls out to heaven for vengeance. *Behold, the hire of the labourers . . . cries out; you have kept it back by fraud; and their cry has entered the ears of the Lord of Hosts* (James 5: 4). Lastly, the rich must scrupulously refrain from retrenching the workmen's earnings by force, fraud, or usurious tricks—the more so because the poor are weak and unprotected, and their humble means are to be accounted specially sacred . . .

The favoured of this world are admonished that riches can neither banish sorrow nor avail one whit to eternal happiness—rather they are a hindrance to it (Matt. 19: 23-4); that the rich have cause to tremble at the threatenings of Jesus Christ—threatenings unwonted on his lips (Lk. 6: 24-5); that God's judgment hereafter will demand a strict account of them for the employment of their riches. On the use of money generally there is admirable and impressive teaching given by tradition—adumbrated by pagan philosophy but perfected by the Church and impressed by her not upon men's understandings only but also upon their lives. Its base is the distinction between rightful owning of money and rightful useage of it. As we have seen, private ownership is a natural right of man, and to exercise that right, especially in social relations, is not only lawful but absolutely necessary. *To hold private property is lawful for man and is necessary for the conduct of human life*<sup>1</sup>. But should it be asked how one's possessions are to be used, the Church replies without hesitation: *As for the use of material goods, a man should not treat them as his own but as common to all, that he may readily share them when others are in need. Hence the Apostle says: Bid the rich of the world . . . to give readily and to share with others*<sup>1</sup>. True, there are certain

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, S.T. II-II, 66, 2, c.

necessities for a man and his family; he is not bidden to trench on these to provide for others. There is also the decent maintenance of his position in life; this again he is not told to forego; *no one should live unbecomingly*<sup>1</sup>. But when need and decency have been satisfied, from what remains over it is our duty to give to the poor. *From that which remains, give alms* (Lk. 11: 41). This is a duty of Christian charity, not of justice (except in extreme cases); and charity is not a thing to be enforced at law. But the laws and judgments of men must give place to the law and judgment of Christ our Lord, who so earnestly bids us practise almsgiving (*It is more blessed to give than to receive*) and who when he comes to judge will count a good deed done or refused to the poor as done or refused to himself. *Inasmuch as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it unto me*. To sum up: If by God's gift a man has received blessings more largely—whether outward and material or inward and intellectual blessings—he has received them for use, for the perfecting of his own life and for the benefiting of others in the service of God's providence. *Let him who has a talent see that he hide it not; let him who has abundance watch that he be not slothful in mercy and liberality; let him who follows an art take good heed to share its use and benefits with his neighbour*<sup>2</sup>.

Those without fortune's goods are taught by the Church that in God's eyes poverty is not shameful and that there is no disgrace in earning one's bread with one's own hands. This is made plain by the example of Christ our Lord, who *being rich, became poor* for our salvation; who being God's Son and Very God, yet chose to seem and be thought a carpenter's son, and unashamedly worked as carpenter for a great part of his life. *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?* Contemplating his divine pattern, we have it brought home to us that a man's true worth and dignity are found in his life, that is, in virtue; that virtue is the common heritage of mankind, to be won alike by high and low, rich and poor; and that virtue and merit, in what man soever found, will alone be recompensed

<sup>1</sup> II-II, 32, 6, c.

<sup>2</sup> St. Gregory the Great, *Hom. in Ev.* 9, §7.

by eternal happiness. Indeed, God himself seems rather to favour the unfortunate; Jesus Christ calls the poor blessed; he most lovingly calls the labouring and sorrowful to himself, that he may refresh them; he embraces with special charity the lowly and the oppressed. Well may these reflections bring down the presumption of the rich and raise the spirits of the unfortunate—teach courtesy there and forbearance here, lessening the distance which pride would set between rich and poor and enabling both to join hands in friendship and in concord.

More; if Christian precepts prevail with them, friendship itself will give place to the union of brotherly love. They will feel and know that all men have one Father, God; that all journey to the same goal of blessedness—God himself, who alone can give men and angels perfect and absolute happiness; that each and all are redeemed through Christ and raised to the dignity of divine sonship, and hence are bound by the tie of brotherhood to each other and to Christ our Lord, *the first-born among many brethren*; that nature's bounty and the gifts of divine grace are offered to all mankind together, and that none but the unworthy is disinherited from the Kingdom of Heaven. *And if sons, heirs also; heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ* . . .

If a workman has sufficient wages to allow him comfortably to support himself with his wife and children, then, given good sense, he will be ready to practise thrift and take the natural measure of lessening his expenses and laying something by on which to establish a modest property. We have seen that the whole social question cannot properly be solved without laying down the principle that private ownership must be held sacred. Hence the law should favour such ownership and, as far as it can, should induce as many as possible of the people to prefer the status of owner. Great advantages would follow; in the first place, a more equitable distribution of property. Political change and unrest has parted society into two classes almost unbridgably divided. On the one side is the party of vast wealth and hence of vast power; having in its sole grasp the whole of trade and labour, it manipulates all sources of supply for its own profit and interests, and is a powerful

force in the government of the State. On the other side is the powerless and destitute multitude, embittered and ready for commotion. But if the people can be encouraged to set their energies and their hopes on winning a share in the land, the gulf between extreme wealth and extreme poverty will gradually disappear, and the two classes will be brought nearer one another. Again, there will be an increase in natural wealth. A man aware that the land he is working on is his own is a harder and readier worker; he learns to love the soil which his own hands have tilled and which for him and for his family is not a mere means to food but a source of some kind of wealth. It is evident how that spirit of ready working must increase the yield of the earth and the riches of the community . . .

## GADARENE MOBILITY

How often have we heard their shibboleth:  
"Ah, time will cure you of your dreams, and  
give  
That love of change whereby we truly live.  
Move with the times. To lag behind is death."

Lo, time has proved them false in every word.  
World-war, world-desolation have they  
wrought,  
The very earth made barren, while they  
sought  
In mindless numbers all mankind to herd.

They prate of life and murder the unborn,  
With vaunt of health, like Onan, they defy  
The All Holy One. They cheat, betray, and  
lie  
To win the smile of Mammon, and his scorn.

Their just reward this, and if we connive  
Ours also. Vainly will we aid implore  
Of Mammon when anon from shore to shore  
World-famine winnows who-so yet survive.

Turn back our steps, there is no other way,  
From prophets false to ageless verity.  
"Hate not laborious works, nor husbandry  
Ordained by the Most High," then, now and  
aye.

—H. E. G. ROPE.



# SUBSIDIES TO INDUSTRIALISM

By H. R. BROADBENT

SHOULD one blame Anne Boleyn for the Reformation? Should one blame leaking gutters or other such trivial causes for the erosion in the United States? There have always been Anne Boleyns. There will always be leaky gutters in the United States. The tale of the leaky gutter which led to the loss of forty acres in gully erosion was told not to show a balance of cost, gutter versus erosion, but to dramatize the condition of the soil which finally could be lost through apparently so slight a cause. There are over 100,000 acres in Stewart County, Georgia, affected by gullies 50 to 200 feet deep which no doubt had visible beginnings as trivial as the leaky gutter. But the trivial cause was the end of a chain of events and the other links were the continuous exhaustive crops and tillage which had destroyed the power of retention in the soil. It is not in the stemming of trivialities that the cure is to be found. That must lie in a change in the system of cultivations and cropping. The cost of the changes cannot be measured in gutter repairs but in the effects of a complete change in the agriculture.

The estimates, referred to by Mr. Fogarty, which were published in "Soils and Men," the 1938 year book of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, were dealt with in my own letter in your Michaelmas number. They suffer from the fault of being based on costs resulting from misuse of the land. It was also shown that any figure of wheat prices during the period in question were too variable to be used for any other purpose than to prove the futility of their use.

Industrialism has been unduly bolstered, bolstered beyond its due, by three factors—

1. Misuse of agricultural land.
2. Unconsidered use of minerals.
3. Injustice to men.

The first has been dealt with. It is agreed that there has been a subsidy from agriculture to industrialism. There is a difference of opinion on the degree<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See *Wheat Imports and Industrialism*, The Cross and The Plough, Christmas, 1943.

On the second I will only quote Professor Bowley, who, in his "Studies of National Income," states that, among those of other countries, in the official United Kingdom Reports "No allowance is made for the destruction of irreplaceable commodities; for instance the products of mines."

The first and second subsidies involve the destruction of material resources, the one capable of renewal, the second irreplaceable. The subsidies are material subsidies and as such are morally neutral. They are uninfluenced by the laws of justice and charity. The third factor introduces man and man is subject to those laws. Economists isolate the first two and tend to ignore the third. It is possible to found a science more easily on units limited to material things than to introduce into the calculations that disturbing creation, man with his wrongs and rights. But that is not to say that he, as a moral creation, can be ignored. In 1908 President Theodore Roosevelt, in calling a meeting of all the States and Territories of the United States, said that "The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem it will avail us little to solve all others." But in opening the Conference, when he confirmed that conservation "is the chief material problem which confronts us," he added "second only—and second always—to the great fundamental questions of morality."

Justice therefore is greater in order than the material factors. The industrial product was cheap, partly because of the misuse of material things and partly because of unjust conditions of work. Both these factors cheapened the product. If land is not neglected, is kept in good condition, the cost of the industrial product will rise. That has been agreed. If people in factories in the industrial system have been working under unjust conditions and justice is done to them, the cost of the industrial product will rise. The misuse of the land gave a subsidy to industrialism, and injustice to the industrial worker gave a sub-

sidy to industrialism. They are of a kind. Child labour, according to the Hammonds, was the foundation of the early factory system<sup>1</sup>. The ships from one of our ports, in the eleven years 1783—1793, carried over 300,000 slaves from Africa to the West Indies and sold them for over £15,000,000. Practically all the cotton from the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which made the rapid development of our machine production possible, was the produce of slave labour. The reports of the Royal Commissions on the industries of this country in the nineteenth century hold tales enough to prove the injustice which lay at the foundation of the growth of our industrial power. Mr. Fogarty would have it that these injustices, which unduly cheapened costs and bolstered industrialism, were a subsidy to agriculture.

<sup>1</sup> J. L. & B. Hammond, "The Town Labourer" p. 144.

## DECEMBER SIXTH

Saint Nicholas known as "Santa Claus"  
Please heed the prayer of a child, because  
Conditions are such that Christmas toys  
Are terribly scarce for girls and boys!

If you cannot spare a clockwork mouse  
Or even a war-time dollies' house,  
A kitten will do—a live one, please,  
That I can fondle and gently tease.

A little black cat with velvet paws,  
Or tabby, perhaps, dear Santa Claus;  
I don't much mind what colour the fur  
If when I stroke it the cat will purr.

Since you are the children's Saint, I know  
You're as real to-day as long ago,  
So, firm in my faith I do believe  
You'll visit us all on Christmas Eve.

—G.P.

"Freedom from want" you offer,  
But we know its just a plant;  
Because you rob our freedom,  
And Freedom is our want.

—P.H.

## THE MERRY PEASANT

"The little that is known about Russia's long-term policy towards Germany suggests that the Soviet Union is thinking of plans for the return of the Germans to the land as small-holders."—Manchester Guardian.

What rod have the Russians in pickle,  
One asks, for the Boche they have caught?  
Will he toil 'neath the hammer and sickle  
To repair all the ruin he wrought?  
No, his mills and his foundries shall moulder  
And his cities shall crumble to sand,  
While the Hun, as a simple small-holder,  
Shall dwell on the land.

The victors, all earmarked as "labour,"  
Shall win from their latest crusade  
New strife between neighbour and neighbour  
In the paramount interests of trade;  
But the Hun is clean out of the scrimmage,  
His sword to a ploughshare is bent,  
And he reaps his sleek rye-fields, the image  
Of rural content.

Our offspring is clearly expected—  
State-reared with a view to control—  
To fit itself in where directed  
As parts of a mechanised whole;  
While the Hunlet, sans superintendence  
On behalf of some cash-coining plan,  
On the acres that spell independence  
Leads the life of a man.

So the Soviet's efforts to sweeten  
The lot of the vanquished suggest  
That it's not a bad thing to be beaten,  
For the beaten may come off the best.  
He'll have beer, and quite possibly skittles,  
Instead of a place in the sun,  
And they're letting him grow his own  
victuals!  
I envy the Hun!

—HELEN PARRY EDEN.

A new world is being planned in detail,  
by men who accept the principles that dissolved the old one.—T. S. Gregory in *The Tablet*.



# SCIENTIFIC CRITICISM

By CAPT. H. S. D. WENT

IN the August, 1944, issue of *Agriculture* there appeared a review of Lady Eve Balfour's "The Living Soil." The review is careless, inaccurate and misleading and was, therefore, almost certainly written by an Agricultural Scientist and—since it is both patronising and pontifical in tone—its author is probably a Professor. For convenience we will call him "Professor X."

The review opens with this extremely odd sentence: "The theme of the book is what the author describes as the 'Humus v. Chemicals controversy', though it is only fair to state that the controversy exists only in the minds of the humus partizans." To whom is it fair to make such an obvious misstatement? That the Humus v. Chemicals controversy is enjoying a very lively existence is obvious to anyone who reads either the farming or the gardening Press; so presumably Professor X reads neither. There is, it is true, one sense it may be said that there is no such controversy. When a perfectly feasible theory is propounded and is supported over a space of years by an ever-increasing body of evidence drawn from all over the world, and the opponents of that theory are content to imitate the Japanese monkeys, keeping their eyes and ears resolutely closed and chanting loudly and monotonously "We see no evidence; we hear no evidence; there is no evidence!" then it may perhaps fairly be said that so one-sided an argument does not deserve the name of "controversy"—but I don't think that is what the Professor meant. He continues: "They deprecate the use of inorganic fertilizers on the grounds that food so produced lacks the qualities necessary for the maintenance of animal health." They do indeed—but they also claim that the continued use of chemical manures kills the earthworms and beneficent soil fungi, burns up existing soil fertility and does not replace it, reduces the resistance of plants to attack by disease and pests and lowers their reproductive powers—besides passing these weaknesses on to the unfortunate animals who eat them—and leads eventually to the death of the soil.

In Chapter 2 of "The Living Soil" Lady Eve quotes *The Medical Testament*, almost in full, and Professor X objects to this. He says: "In the context of the book the first impression which the reader receives is that a responsible medical body is using the fact of widespread malnutrition to advocate the exclusive use of organic manures for food production." He clearly implies that such an impression is false. In the first place, only a very perfunctory reading of the chapter could give such an impression; and, in the second place, such an impression, if given, would be perfectly true. The Cheshire Local Panel and Medical Committee runs an annual cottage garden competition in which compost must be used and chemical manures must not. It would be difficult to find a more practical way in which "to advocate the exclusive use of organic manures for food production." The Professor also objects to Lady Eve citing the health of the Hunzas, the people of the Faroes and of Tristan da Cunha and of the Chinese farmers as an argument against artificials, and he says that "most of these people are practically isolated" and that "there are many other factors in civilized life besides artificial manures that may be responsible for differences in health standards." Firstly, "most of these people" are the Chinese, who are not isolated. Secondly, Lady Eve herself drew attention to the isolation of the Hunzas, etc., and pointed out that as their isolation was broken down, so their health deteriorated. Thirdly, she attributed the excellent health of these peoples to the wholeness of the widely varying diets. And lastly, she did not attribute such deterioration in health as has occurred to artificial manures, but to "other factors in civilised life" such as white flour and other processed and tinned foods.

In his next paragraph, Professor X falls foul of Lady Eve for mentioning the soil erosion on the sugar-beet lands of Lincoln, Norfolk and Suffolk and for stating that this crop is nearly always grown with artificials. This is so notoriously true that he does not attempt to deny it, but tries to counter it by

saying "In point of fact, the worst eroding soils are the humus fen soils." I do not know what he means to convey by that. If he means that fen soils, originally rich in humus, have been ruined by a combination of chemicals and mono-culture, he is almost certainly right—but he is not helping his own case. If, on the other hand, he means that the worst erosion has occurred on soils where the humus content has been maintained by organic manuring and where chemicals have not been used; then he should give chapter and verse for such a remarkable occurrence.

The next paragraph is noteworthy, for in it the Professor scores what is, I believe, his solitary point against "The Living Soil." It is not a very large point and does not affect the argument in any way, but it should be noted. He is considering Lady Eve's discussion of Take-all disease in wheat and says: "It occurred in the author's illustration only on parts of a field that were liable to water-logging." (In point of fact she gives two illustrations, the other was a farm where wheat and barley were grown continuously with chemicals, no stock was kept and there was no water-logging). "So much," she says, "for the theory that the disease is air-borne." But the disease is *not* air-borne, either in theory or fact. The causative organism is a soil-borne fungus, *Ophobolus graminis*, which is favoured by such conditions as the author describes." So far, so good. So far as I know none of the NPK men has said that the disease is air-borne. Unfortunately he goes on to say: "There is no need to introduce a mycorrhizal red herring!" Now it is common ground that Take-all is likely to appear on ground which is suffering, or has recently suffered, from insufficient aeration. Professor X apparently regards this fact as an inscrutable decree of Providence, into the causes of which it would be impious to enquire. He would, no doubt, call upon the Chemical Industry to provide a suitable (and profitable) soil poison to counteract some of the effects of the disease, and there he leaves the matter. Sir Albert Howard and Lady Eve Balfour, having more curiosity, keep on asking "Why?" and suggest that the reason for lack of aeration causing Take-all may be that such a lack inhibits the development of

beneficial soil-fungi. Hence the "mycorrhizal red herring." I cannot help thinking that their attitude is more truly scientific than that of the Professor.

Having scored even one small point seems to have gone to our worthy Professor's head, for in the next paragraph he really lets himself go. It is worth reproducing in full: "These are only a few of the many examples of tendentious writing indicating that caution is needed in accepting the author's assertions at their face value. Nobody denies the vital role of humus in maintaining soil fertility, but to propound what is in effect a new theory of that role on negligible evidence, and to discard all that is known about the nature of humus that does not fit the theory, can have no scientific justification." So nobody denies the vital role of humus in maintaining soil fertility? It may be so, but as recently as the December, 1941, issue of *Agriculture* we find Professors Scott Watson and Salisbury agreeing that the most important property of humus is its capacity to absorb and hold both moisture and soluble manures—a property it shares with clay. And Professor Scott Watson also told us that in the case of "strong" lands it was therefore not necessary to worry about maintaining the humus content. Possibly Professor X looks upon Professors Scott Watson and Salisbury as nobodies, but he really shouldn't say so—in print at any rate—for they are batting on his side; in fact, they are two of the most prominent "Chemists' Assistants" in the country. I do not know how long a theory remains "new," but "An Agricultural Testament" was published about five years ago. Professor X does not seem to have heard of it, nor of Dr. Rayner's work at Wareham, and seems to be under the impression that the mycorrhizal association is a theory which Lady Eve Balfour has produced recently! What he had in mind when he spoke of discarding anything that is known about humus I cannot imagine. Again, it would have been a help if he had given chapter and verse.

After this paragraph the Professor continues: "Positive evidence of the author's opinion is confined to the experience of a few schools where health is reported to have improved following a change-over from inor-



ganically to organically manured food." A sentence of staggering falseness. If we ignore—as the Professor does—the mass of evidence regarding the health of plants given in Chapters IV and V and on the first thirteen pages of Chapter VI, and consider only the evidence regarding the health of animals and man, we have for animals: Sir Robert McCarrison's rats, which when given a basic ration plus stable manured wheat put on 114% in weight, and when given a basic ration plus chemically manured wheat put on only 89%; we have Mr. Rowlands and Miss Wilkinson's rats, fed on "B deficiency diet" plus dung manured grass seeds and on the same diet plus chemically manured grass seeds; we have Dr. Rowlands' rats, fed on cereals grown on cow dung, and on the same cereals from the same field grown on chemicals; we have the late Sir Bernard Greenwell's poultry, pigs, horses and dairy cattle, fed on compost-grown grain, and on grain bought in the open market and grown (in part at least) on artificials; we have the evidence of Dr. Sanderson Wells on the effect of chemically manured greens on rabbits; and last (but by no means least) we have Sir Albert Howard's cattle, fed on compost-grown food, rubbing noses with foot-and-mouth cases without any ill effects. Turning to the effects of compost-grown food on man, we have, in addition to the "few" (the actual number was two) schools mentioned by Professor X, Lady Eve's personal experience and the conclusive evidence of Dr. Scharff as to the extraordinarily beneficial effect of a compost-grown diet on the health of nearly 500 Tamil coolies and their wives, children and dependents. "Limited to a few schools"? Really, Professor!

So far the Professor has taken up more than two-thirds of his review in damning "The Living Soil" with great gusto. He admits that the author is honest but she "purports" to present the evidence which is "very slender" and even "negligible." She introduces "red herrings." Her writing is "tendentious." Her statements cannot be accepted "at their face value." She discards facts that do not fit "her" theory. In a sentence, her book is scientifically worthless. Imagine an intelligent, but over-worked, farmer devoting

some of his scanty leisure to reading this review of "The Living Soil" to discover if it will be worth his while to read the book. After getting two-thirds of the way through the review—if he gets so far—he will be bound to conclude that the author is a well meaning but credulous enthusiast who doesn't know what she is talking about, and that to read her book would be sheer waste of his valuable time. At this point it will be interesting to compare Professor X's opinion of "The Living Soil" (as expressed so far) with that of Professor Sir R. George Stapledon, who wrote (in *The New English Weekly*): "Lady Eve Balfour has admirably achieved the difficult task she set herself 'to write for both the specialist and the layman,' and my own hope is that the book will receive as much attention from the former as it will from the latter." It certainly won't be Professor X's fault if it receives any attention from either.

Having, as I have shown, damned the book for more than two-thirds of his space, the Professor now executes an amazing *volte face*. He says—in spite of the evidence being "very slender" and "negligible"—that "there remains a case for investigation," that it is a good thing that the Haughley Research Trust has been established for the purpose and that the experiment which Lady Eve is carrying out for the Trust "represents as good a start as could be made." Even when he "remains to bless" he doesn't get his facts right. He says: "The Trust is farming some 200 acres, half with organic and half with inorganic manures." If he had read the Appendix to Chapter VIII he would have seen that since 1941 the arable ground has been divided into three areas; 56 acres entirely organic, 46 acres chemicals and green manuring, and 54 acres both organic and chemical manures, as in ordinary farming practice.

He opens his concluding paragraph with an earnest plea for fragmentation. The study of health, he says, "is most practicable by integrating detailed individual work on specific pathological conditions." Lady Eve dealt very faithfully with fragmentation by quotations from Sir Robert McCarrison, Sir Albert Howard and Dr. Wrench, but the Pro-

fessor either doesn't know it, or doesn't think it worth mentioning. He ends by saying that if no disease appears among the animals on the chemical part of the farm, "the experiment will have failed." It will not; for the final stage will be to introduce infected animals among the stock and observe the degree to which the beasts are susceptible to infection. And what a light the word "failed" casts on the mentality of our "Chemists' Assistants." To a scientist, the object of an experiment is to discover a truth; the confirmation or disproof of a theory is merely a by-product. It would seem to the Professor the primary object of an experiment is to bolster up the experimenter's pet theory; if it does not do that, it fails.

It is clear from his review that Professor X has understood neither the purpose nor the plan of "The Living Soil"; he suppresses what is true and suggests what is false—in

one instance he even states it. The review is as a whole highly tendentious and thoroughly misleading. If, as we do, we credit Professor X with honesty of purpose, we are bound to conclude that he read the book while shaving one morning and that he wrote his review from memory some days or weeks later. In a word, it is worthless. Why then should I have taken so much trouble and wasted so much of your and my time over it? For two reasons. Firstly, because *Agriculture* is "The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture"; secondly, because, since the review is unsigned, it must be taken as being in line with editorial—and even ministerial—policy. That such miserable stuff should even appear to have any sort of *imprimatur* from a Minister of the Crown is deplorable and scandalous. One can only hope that it was passed for publication by the Office Boy in the absence of the Editor.

## ORDER OF BATTLE: XX

### THE EVE OF ARMAGEDON

THIS series of articles has now been appearing for five years. It began at Christmas, 1939, with two objects which were stated as follows:—

1. To indicate any emergency action which shows signs of being anti-social, because intended to survive the war.
2. To set out from time to time what appears to be the correct objective for the Post-War.

We stated that the emergency methods, made necessary for the war period by the sinful betrayal of the land and the people, would not be opposed unless they were intended to become permanent. We added: "But the converse is also true, and it is also treasonable to use the present crisis to impose for the future methods and structure which are hostile to the good life. There is grave reason to suppose that such influences are at work, as they were during the last war. . . . We have forgotten too easily what use was made of the absence of the fighting men.

*They went overseas to destroy the Prussian domination, and returning, found it throned anew in England."*

It would be easy to demonstrate that every one of the hideous abuses of right living for which we went to war has been introduced here, in fact or in prospect, by the Planners behind the backs and without the knowledge or consent of the men who have saved us. This is not to the present purpose, although it may be necessary later.

So far as diffused property and the land are concerned, the bureaucrats have been guilty of the high treason of trying to ensure the permanence of their destructive expedients.

Small productive owners have been absorbed by Big Business. In more than one case, to our personal knowledge, small independent men summoned to the Forces have had it suggested to them by Appeal Tribunals that they sell out to a Combine. Names of Combines have obligingly been supplied in some cases.



On the other hand, large commercial mechanised farmers have been enabled to add field to field, or rather, thousand acres to thousand acres. Undoubtedly they are being financed by those Banks which have played a capital part in the destruction of the land in America, Australia and elsewhere. They are now making possible the same process in England. County War Agricultural Committees, with a few honourable exceptions, have delighted to exhibit the utmost excesses of mechanisation and regimentation, and have driven their juggernauts over many a humble Naboth.

Our polity is assuming, in the strictest sense, a totalitarian quality. Our youth must be saved from the disintegration of Industrialism. The operative word is *must*.

We must have social security, and the scheme of social and servile insurance, good or ill, *must* be imposed on every citizen.

To recreate our export trade, we *must* be grouped in larger units of more complete mass-production. The small manufacturer and craftsman *must* disappear.

Mechanised farming, which offers for the first time a dividend for the commercial investor, *must* be extended. The independent peasant is to be evicted in favour of the smallest possible number of bus-drivers. On present regulations, any return to the land can and will be made intolerably difficult.

We said in 1939:

*"The forcing of unwilling citizens into the mould of financial urbanisation must go for ever. Citizens who hold the good life to include the land and the crafts must be allowed to achieve communities to that end."*

For this, obviously, is the crucial test of whether we have saved Freedom.

We regret to announce that there is no sign, on all the political horizon, of the totalitarian *must* being replaced by the distributist *may*.

In other words, we are in somewhat acute danger of losing the war, because a gauleiter by any other name would smell as sour.

Let us, on this eve of the Armageddon of Freedom, assess the forces.

The totalitarian hordes are mobilised, entrenched and in possession. Of the attributes of a successful army they lack but one. They have no guts. Otherwise (unless they are hypocrites into the bargain) they would be in the field against the Nazi tyranny—and notoriously the Planners have stayed at home. Many of them stayed at home last time, too.

On our side what have we? At the highest level (to use the current jargon) the supreme authority in the Catholic Church has lost no opportunity of emphasising, in season and out of season, that diffused private property, and land holdings, and the crafts, are the keystones of Freedom as of Catholic Social Teaching. He has, with increasing anger, repudiated and disavowed the principles of Industrialism, and has reminded us, with almost savage irony, that technical progress is no substitute for the exercise of natural rights.

At the end of the pronouncement of 1st September last, which included all these points, he envisaged *demonstration in practice* by his faithful sons and daughters.

At a lower (but not much lower) level, and at later date, we have pronouncements which do not so much as mention either diffused property or the land.

Few Catholics, nowadays, are national figures. None of them is on record in this sense. No Catholic periodical (except this modest organ) makes *systematic* use of the structure involved by diffused property.

In a more general national sense, Members of Parliament are proving themselves more timid than mice on major principles, although vocal where no such principle emerges.

The small groups of obscure layfolk are doing very well indeed, but their numbers are woefully small. Few are young enough to see the battle through.

*"Well, all I know is," answered the Devil with some heat, "that in this matter, as in most others, thank the Lord, I have on my side all the historians, and all the scientists, all the universities, all the . . ."*

*"And I," interrupted Saint Charles, waving his hand like a gentleman, "I have the Pope!"—H. Belloc, in The Path to Rome).*

We turn, as we have turned before, to the fighting men who will have a second and greater fight on their hands when they have done with Nazism abroad.

It is essential that the saviours of this generation, and the custodians of the next, make one resolve. It is not our right, here, to insist that the view we have advanced is a matter of *must*. We do not imitate planners.

## PLOUGHMAN'S FOLLY

IN our issue for Ladyday, 1944, we drew attention to a book, published as yet only in America, but commented on freely and favourably there and in the British Press. This was *Plowman's Folly*, by E. H. Faulkner (Grosset and Dunlap, New York).

By the kindness of a Canadian correspondent, we have now been able to peruse this work. It is only a question of time before it is published in England, and our readers may like to be forewarned of its thesis. It is extremely dangerous because of the obvious goodwill of its author, and of the amount of sound doctrine which is mixed with its gratuitous assumptions.

Mr. Faulkner appears to be of farming stock, but to have engaged in some sort of educational profession. In middle life he bought a house in his town, and discovered to his dismay that the garden consisted, to a depth of three or four feet, of heavy sub-soil clay dumped there from other building operations of the neighbourhood.

He was already convinced that organic manuring was the sole hope of American agriculture, and was gratifyingly contemptuous of chemical fertilisers. Accordingly he began with great pains to dig his garden, putting in plenty of vegetation at the spade's depth. It is not surprising that in view of the nature of the sterile sub-soil on which he was working, crops were negligible for some six years. He then dug part of his garden (1937) so that the accumulated vegetation was returned to the surface, and discovered that this thick mulch softened the clay below it to a point where, by separating the mulch in

It is our right to remind them that no expedient, or law, or ramp, carried out in their absence, is to be regarded as a case which is closed. They have the right to re-open all questions and all armouries. Theirs is the future they have ensured. They will not, this time, having destroyed the Prussian domination, leave it throned anew in England.

order to plant, he began to secure excellent crops of garden produce. Any gardener of experience could have told him of this effect of a mulch on refractory soil.

Mr. Faulkner, however, promptly formed the theory that all cultivation which inverted the soil was discredited by this experience, and that the correct method of cultivation, always and everywhere, should be to make a sort of surface mush of vegetable substance and soil, and plant in that. In 1938, he invited officials of the Soil Conservation Service to inspect his results, and was greatly disappointed that they did not adopt his theory in consequence. (Hard cases make bad law).

He then decided on further experiment on a field scale, and rented some land, of unstated acreage, at eight miles distance. The area does not appear to have reached farm size, and no livestock was kept. Part of the land had fallen out of cultivation, and the rest had been subject to prolonged monoculture. He used a form of disc harrow, and worked vegetation, including standing weeds, into the surface by this means, making a sort of surface mush on which he grew crops in 1939 and 1940 with success varying from poor to good. His main form of "trash" seems to have been rye from three to six feet in height. It is not clear whether he cut up and worked in the standing rye, or whether this was grown elsewhere and spread on the land. In either case he seems unaware that as six foot rye takes a season to grow, he automatically cut down his productive acreage by 50 per cent. His outlook is monocultural in the normal American tradition, in the sense that



rotation of crops, and livestock, had no place in it. On these two seasons of qualified result Mr. Faulkner has written his book, and claims both to have discredited the plough and to have indicated the salvation of farming everywhere. We warn readers that where Mr. Faulkner mentions yields per acre there is some reason to suppose that they are obtained by multiplication from a much smaller area. It would be unjust to say that parts of Mr. Faulkner's book are not important and suggestive, but it is outrageous for him to claim, on so brief and restricted an experiment, to have discredited the oldest art of civilised mankind. For everything he says discredits not only the plough but the spade.

Never was so much built upon so little by so few.

We must consider the remarkable effect of his book, not on its merits, but in the light of the American scene. Our readers are aware that by excessive monoculture and flouting of the rule of return, American land is largely in desperate case. The whole depth of top soil has been exhausted of organic content even when it is not gravely eroded. That is, it is in active process of becoming desert. Clearly a radical reform would involve working humus into the whole depth of top soil so that every part was re-fertilised, and this would take many years.

By farming on the top two inches, and by using the crop of one acre to furnish a second, American farmers can obtain, temporarily, crops on 50% of their land. In other words, Mr. Faulkner has allayed panic in the burning theatre by shouting that one emergency exit can be used. But the theatre will burn down all the same.

Mr. Faulkner is universal and downright in his judgments, and no reader will obtain a sense of limited validity from the trend of the book. But he does hedge briefly and obscurely, and one such passage follows:—

"I am not prepared to say that the mere disking of organic matter into the soil surface

is the complete remedy for all adverse soil conditions . . . My acquaintance with soils is not broad enough to justify a complete generalisation for all soils" (p. 86/7).

Space precludes extended discussion of other aspects of this book, but we may instance, as supporting the preceding paragraph, that the publishers' blurb<sup>1</sup> on the cover states that in Iowa, since the book was published, it is reported in *Time Magazine* of 23rd February, 1944, that Federal and State soil experts have been experimenting with the system there. Among the results it "reduced soil erosion, from 34 tons per acre to 10 tons" (presumably per annum).

This practice of acclaiming anything which delays nemesis without averting it is characteristic of present American mentality. A few years ago, an American named Peacock invented a machine which left eroded land in little boxes of soil. In each box water would collect, and corn would germinate on the surrounding ridges. Obviously this did not remedy erosion, but it enabled a few more crops to be reaped from exhausted land. A great deal of pleasurable excitement followed this invention.

According to *The Economist* of 4th December, 1943, the Petroleum Administrator of U.S.A., Mr. Ickes, said that the United States would be short of oil in another fourteen years. Some time later an expert of national repute (his name escapes us) said in *The Commonwealth* that the alarm over the statement that there was only thirteen years' supply of oil in the States was excessive. New processes enabling the gas also to be used would double the duration of the oil. The reader was left with the impression that with twenty-six years' oil everything in the garden was lovely.

These words are written not because we think ourselves in any way superior to the Americans, but because commercial interests in England will take advantage of any financial gain there may be in Mr. Faulkner's thesis. After them the deluge. It is only a question of dates.

<sup>1</sup> Cover blurb is normally submitted to and passed by the Author.