

1946

## The Cross & the Plough, V. 13, No. 2, 1946

Catholic Land Federation of England and Wales

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# The Cross & the Plough



The Organ of the Catholic Land Movement  
of England and Wales

QUARTERLY

TWOPENCE.

CHRISTMAS

1946

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Vol. 13.

No. 2



# The Cross and The Plough

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## THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

### NEMESIS

Eighteen months ago we predicted in our issue of Saints Peter & Paul, 1945, that the ridiculous Government scheme for training ex-Service men and women for agriculture would fail. We are happy to announce that a Government statement, to a Press conference on 21st August, admits its failure.

It was unscrupulous, because you cannot at once mechanise and need more men.

It was ridiculous, because climbing up the farming ladder is an exercise for monkeys and not for men.

Men want homes, independence and small mixed farms of their own. And England wants the most food per acre. We still await the inevitable scheme to foster these good things.

### AND NEMESIS

The strong commercial, collegiate and officially-fostered schemes for the mechanisation of British agriculture are having their due end.

Our young men, in agriculture as well as in mining, are declining to embark on a hopeless career. The situation was saved—precariously—by the use of German prisoners, whose impending return to Germany will deprive commercial farmers and County Committees of their services. The Unions, characteristically, are declining to allow our Polish friends to take their place.

The end of the road is in sight. Even if we mechanise up to the eyebrows, we shall still need men and women to do the work, and college-sponsored farming ladders are no substitute for sanity and maximum food.

### STATE-AIDED DITTO

We warn the Minister of Agriculture, not for the first time, that the addiction of his

Department to out-worn shibboleths has long passed the point of danger. Three recent examples of this may be given.

In the Departmental Weekly News Service of 21st October (No. 372), occur the words: "*It is well-known that human beings can be affected with bovine tuberculosis.*" This is a plain lie. In the classic debate in Parliament on the introduction of the pasteurising ramp, it was claimed by the opposition, without effective reply, that there was no such case on record. The least the Ministry should do, in these circumstances, is to give the evidence—not to beg the question.

In its News Service on 7th October (No. 370), the Ministry advocates using commercial "starters" instead of milk, on unfortunate calves. It goes on, in a delightful phrase—"when a calf gives full co-operation. . . ." Really, Mr. Williams, really.

Finally, the recent announcement that regional Advisory Boards (*Advisory is good*) are to be set up for the whole country. This involves more officials, who may be assumed to be, on the whole, incapable of farming. The number is estimated in various papers as between 1,200 and 1,500. This is not the national or social need. It is one more example of the undue influence imposed by agricultural institutes to find easy jobs for their trainees, who are otherwise unemployable.

### IN THEIR COURSES

The stars in their courses have enabled the Government to extend bread rationing, which has been several times on the point of failing. It is thought by the general public that on account of bad weather, this year's harvest will be no more than 60% of normal. The Ministry knows better. Its Press Notice (M.A.F. 1742) of 10th October, when yields

for this year were substantially known, gives the following:—

	FORECAST OF 1946 YIELD CWT. PER ACRE	10 YEARS' AVERAGE 1936-1945 CWT. PER ACRE	1945 YIELD CWT. PER ACRE
Wheat	17.7	18.5	19.0
Barley	15.8	17.1	19.0
Oats	14.7	16.4	17.6
Rye	14.0	13.7	14.7
Beans	12.5	15.2	15.6
Peas	11.4	14.1	13.6

That is, taking averages, the 1946 crop was 90% of the ten years' average, and 84% of the exceptional year of 1945.

### RAMPS

The extremely sudden and severe cut in household milk occurred at a moment when feed and yield were still ample. The only possible explanation is that it was decided suddenly to save exchange credits on the import of butter and cheese by diverting British milk to the factories which purport to turn out these comestibles. As we have said, both are unfit for human consumption as so turned out.

The curious delay in arranging for the import of Eire and Danish butter and cheese may reasonably be assumed to be due to the same cause. The Ministry of Food was reluctant to be confronted with the challenge of those superior products, and had probably put pressure on both countries to reduce their butter and cheese to the tasteless condition of our own output.

### GREEN WHISKERS

A writer in the *Daily Telegraph* of 17th October explains that grain got with the combine harvester really needs drying and cleaning:

*"Apart from its moisture content, grain combine harvested contains a considerable amount of foreign matter such as weed seeds, green leaves and insect life. It is desirable, therefore, that cleaning as well as drying machinery should be available."*

So we use inappropriate methods, and when they show disadvantage we must spend yet more money on correctives. We apologise for quoting Lewis Carroll again, but it is important to realise that most industrial development is of this quality.

"But I was thinking of a plan  
To dye one's whiskers green:  
And always use so large a fan  
That they could not be seen."

### MASS PRODUCTION OF CATS

We draw special attention to two sets of figures. The Agricultural Returns of 4th June for England and Wales show the following:—

	1939	1944	1945	1946
Fowls	52,912,000	28,821,000	33,810,000	36,430,000

The similar figures issued officially by the Government of Northern Ireland show:

	1939	1945	1946
Fowls	9,295,444	16,050,286	18,326,415

That is, the English total was little over 50% of 1939 in 1944, and in 1946 less than 70% of that standard. In Northern Ireland the 1945 total was 75% more than the 1939 total, and this year was nearly 100% greater.

We do not mind Ulster showing this remarkable increase, but in view of the ruthless cuts over here we should like an adequate explanation.

### ONE CAT BY HAND

Canon Cardijn, no doubt inadvertently, has been blowing the gaff. He told a meeting here in September that Pope Pius XII said to Cardinal Saliege last February: "Does a Cardinal tell me, 50 years after *Rerum Novarum*, that the people know nothing of the Church's Social Doctrine?"

What a tale we could unfold in England, if we were not more constrained by the fear of giving scandal than are other quarters!

### A CORRECTION

In spite of great care with the proofs, we regret to report a slip in the figures of Mr. Broadbent's important article, *A Sceptic Enquires*, in our Michaelmas issue.

Readers will wish to correct as follows:

On page 9, the second column of the first table should read:

TOTAL PRODUCE
100
83.6
81.5
103.1

*We wish all our readers the spiritual joys of the Holy Season. They will get nothing else.*



## RYE OR WHEAT

To the Editor of *The Cross and The Plough*

Sir—Mr. Kenrick's article on this subject certainly merits further consideration, where he suggests that in the hard struggle to live off the land, rye or millet may be preferable to wheat. It is a question of fact, and the Ministry of Agriculture Growmore pamphlet No. 4 on rye considers that on poor light soils such as sand or gravel it is unrivalled. Moreover, it is harvested earlier and stands frost better. Finally, it can withstand an acid soil, a pH value of 5 being suitable against 7 for wheat. But on good soil, or land after improvement and liming, there seems little advantage, and the good farmer or smallholder will not be long in improving his holding.

A comparison of crop yields may be useful, as follows:—

	YIELD IN CWT. PER ACRE	
	RYE	WHEAT
England and Wales, 11 year average, 1935-45	13.5	18.5
United States, year 1939	6.4	7.7
Maximum Yield obtained on special fields...	27.2	70.2
Ultimate Potential Yield, calculated from the nitrogen ratio .....	99.0	91.8

As rye would not be grown on the best land, the comparison is not quite true for equal conditions.

Even on the maximum potential yield, however, there is little advantage in the total weight of rye over wheat. It is, further, not so palatable and is apt to give rise to digestive troubles with one brought up on wheaten bread. The Ministry also warns against too large a proportion of rye fed to livestock.

On the whole, therefore, there seems little advantage in leaving the historic bread grain except in special cases. I would thank Mr. Kenrick for bringing up a very interesting point, as some sacrifice may often be necessary in a return to the land. In this case it does not seem necessary.

Yours sincerely,

ELSMERE HARRIS.

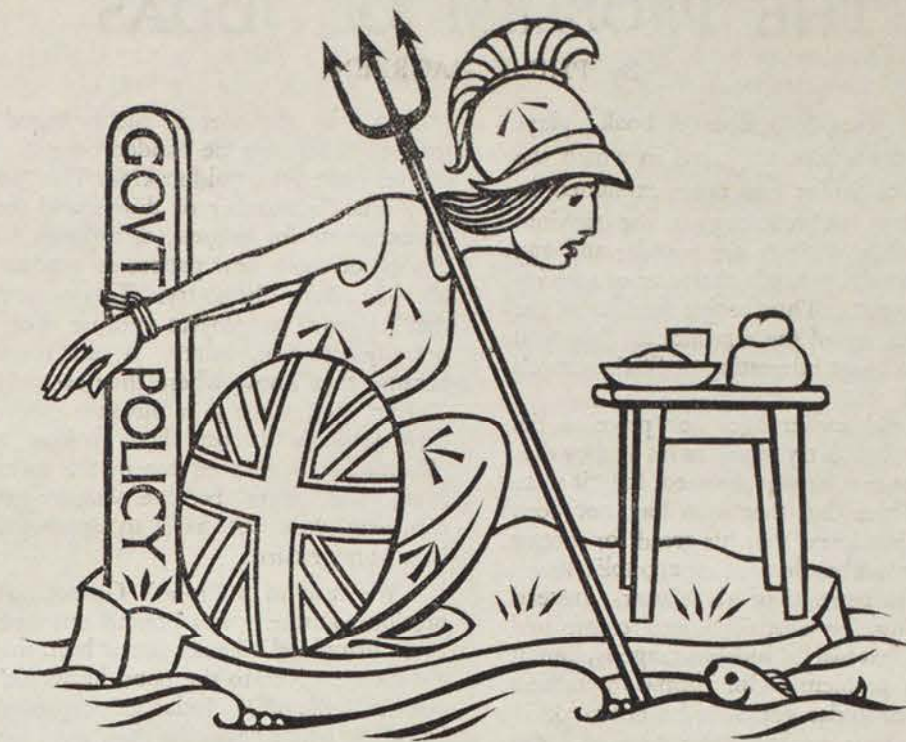
6 Greenfield Crescent,  
Edgbaston, Birmingham 15.  
24th August, 1946

From *Agriculture*, the Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture, September 1946 (p. 238), Agricultural Extension Work in the United States, Professor J. A. Scott-Watson, C.B.E., M.C., M.A., LL.D.

"By 1862 a considerable body of traditional farming knowledge had been built up in New England and the other eastern States. Moreover, it was known that the scientific work of Liebig, and the findings of Lawes and Gilbert at Rothamsted, applied pretty well under the soil and climatic conditions of the eastern seaboard. The new Land Grant Colleges of the eastern States had thus something to teach, and it was not long before they began to make important contributions to farming progress. By contrast, there was no background of practical experience in the Middle-West, which was then only in the process of being opened up. Further, existing scientific knowledge seemed to have little to contribute—in particular, artificial fertilizers did not answer on the extraordinary fertile soil of the tall-grass prairie. The early teachers in the western colleges thus found themselves rather at a loss. A course of academic science with a smattering of New England practice, which was the best they could offer, did little to equip a student for a career in agriculture. It soon became evident that the native resourcefulness of the pioneer farmers was producing far more in the way of results than the science of the professors. *Gradually it became clear that a way of farming for a new country could not be worked out from first principles* and that, therefore, 'the condition and progress of American agriculture required national aid for investigation and experimentation'."

(Apart from some words in italics, we refrain from comment on the reflections of this expert.—Editor).

*He believed what they said, but his belief was tempered by a conviction, born of long experience, that experts are invariably wrong.*—G. A. Birmingham, in "Magilligan Strand."



Obviously, this country cannot feed itself

## OUT OF THE BAG

MR. Morrison has been speaking. In case our readers cannot identify him immediately, we should like to explain that he is the one who recently had a holiday in Ireland, with assured communications. A little earlier he lost two hundred thousand pounds (or was it tons?) in Washington, trying to teach the Americans Rummy.

Well, anyway, he made a speech to the Institute of Public Administration on 17th October. His address was, he said, on the Government plans for the period "when, with the present acute shortage over, the general demand for goods and services declines."

This is pretty good. It is a point we have been talking about for nearly eighteen months. That it should be grasped in so short a time is, as we say, pretty good.\*

\* See, e.g. *The Post-War Begins* in our issue of Saints Peter & Paul, 1945.

The Government will avoid the *Mass Unemployment*—the expression is his—by "a long list of projects—roads, railways, afforestation schemes, ports, airfields, industrial plants, national parks, public buildings and so forth."

How very significant it is—that he omits any mention of the production of food.

Somebody ought really to tell him that you can't eat any of these projects, and that to eat is positively the elementary need, unemployment or no unemployment.

Nothing could exemplify better the tacit conviction of the Government that food will continue to come from fairyland, and he ought really to ask somebody—not the Ministry of Agriculture, which does not know—to explain the substantial difference between maximum agricultural output per man employed, and maximum output per acre tilled. We assure him that we are going to want this difference very soon.



# THE PROBLEM OF JUDAS

By PHILIP HAGREEN

IN recent years, a number of books, plays and poems have appeared in which the behaviour of Judas has been explained in various ways. Psychology is the fashion. Problems of psychology are popular and any mystery about a person's character or motives arouses interest. Thus people find Judas the most interesting of the Apostles, as they find Hamlet the most interesting of Shakespeare's heroes.

Why did earlier ages not perceive the problem? Let us try to see Judas as they did. They knew that he was damned, for "it were better for him that that man had not been born." They knew that his greed for money led him to embezzlement of apostolic funds and then to betrayal of his Master. Instead of repenting, he despaired and committed suicide. That was a hideous tragedy, but it was not a problem. Our simple forefathers thought that Judas got what he deserved.

Now if we transpose the story of Judas into the industrial era and retell it in our own language, we see at once the problem which has fascinated so many modern writers. Let us take the few facts known about Judas and consider them in order.

First, his desire for money. The old word for that was "coveitise," which meant breaking the tenth commandment. Avarice, holding too tightly to our possessions, was considered a sin; but "coveitise," the desire to add to our wealth by absorbing that of our neighbour, was considered worse. So completely have we changed all this that the very word "coveitise" has gone from our dictionaries. "Cupiditas" is still found in the Latin, but the English for it is now the profit motive, business enterprise, commercial expansion, capturing markets, salesmanship or some such expression.

As to the methods by which Judas obtained money. He was the steward or procurator of the apostolic group and he helped himself from the funds. Now, of course, the recognised practice is that the "buyer" of a firm gets a commission or "rake-off" on each deal, but he commonly takes this from the seller. He places an order or contract and the transaction includes an expression of

gratitude on the part of the favoured contractor. This may be handed over in notes, but very often it is paid in kind. The "buyer" may order a number of things and there is an extra one for himself, or a dozen sample bottles, or some new gadget or product that his wife might like to try. This system suits the "buyer's" employers because they need not pay him a big salary. It suits the sellers because they know where they are with the "buyer" and there is a pleasant tone about their dealings. It costs them nothing, as the commission is allowed for in the estimates. It suits the "buyer" because what he gains in this way does not have to appear in his income-tax return.

We read in St. John's Gospel how the precious ointment was poured out and how Judas grumbled because, had it been sold and the money given to the poor, he would have got his "rake-off." Judas was reprovved and St. Mark tells us how he then went straight off to the Chief Priests and fixed up with them. If we think of this in modern terms, Judas' behaviour seems very natural. Imagine the steward or buyer who finds that a transaction has passed over his head and who is only snubbed when he remonstrates. The obvious thing is to "cash out" and offer his special knowledge to the rival firm.

Thus far, the behaviour of Judas is in conformity with modern business practice. It is in accordance with law. Not perhaps with the natural law that forbids injustice. Nor with the revealed law which forbids "coveitise." But in accordance with the economic law which has superseded these. Some might have felt scruples about availing themselves of this new law if its effect were merely permissive. But we are taught that economic law "compels" this or that line of action. If it is objected that the economic law had not been discovered in the first century, we can only say that Judas was a man in advance of his age. He acted in a way that we should say was prudent, and the use of that word shows how we have developed. Prudence used to mean the choice of virtuous actions. Now it means safety first and an eye to the main chance. It used to be considered pru-

dent to lend to the needy. Now it is prudent to lend only where the security is good.

In the eyes of our ancestors, it was to Judas' discredit that his traffic involved a selling into bondage, a handing-over to the enemy. This is foreign to our way of thinking, for all progress for the last century has involved reduction to slave-status. The yeomen, the fishermen, the craftsmen and small traders are gone and their descendants are part of the machinery—or part of the scrap-heap. These proletarians no longer have the status of men, as their forefathers understood it. They are man-power available for industry. The son of man has been delivered into the hands of sinners. They have bound him and lead him away captive. We have accepted this system. We invest in it and we buy its products, so we do not blame Judas on this score.

Mechanisation not only involves slavery but also the killing of the innocent. Motor cars cause the death and maiming of many thousands each year. Every user of a car and every investor in the motor industry shares in the responsibility for this slaughter and torture. Yet we each say with Pilate:—"I am innocent of the blood of this just person" and never with Judas: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood."

The story of Judas shows that he had something besides business capacity. There was a risk that the affair might not go through as the Chief Priests planned. The Master might escape, as he had done before, or the populace might rise and rescue him. He might become King of the Jews after all. Well, the kiss secured Judas in either event. It was the sign of identification that he had promised, and, if the plot failed, it was proof of his loyalty. He had followed his Master to the Mount of Olives, even though it meant coming out later after his errands, and he had boldly shown himself to be a loving disciple even in face of the enemy. Is there a modern word for this type of ability? Yes, it is diplomacy.

Judas had carried out his contract faithfully and received his payment. He had shown that combination of commercial and diplomatic talent which raises men to Cabinet rank and makes our statesmen what they are. Then, suddenly, he lost his nerve. He had what we call a breakdown, with depression

and suicidal tendency. The Evangelists are unsympathetic, but, for us, the tragedy lies in the absence of an understanding psychiatrist in whom Judas could have confided. He might have been shown that his depression was the effect of some early frustration—perhaps due to his mother's having smacked him for biting his nails.

Thus the problem of Judas is a perplexing one and invites the speculation of psychologists and moralists. His recorded acts are the every-day affairs in which we find no matter for confession. For what, then, was he damned? There must have been some sin of which we are not told. Was there some form of pride, some wilful blindness, some deep spiritual smugness of which we know nothing?

From Bishop Challoner's *Meditations for every day in the year* (Jan. 16th):—

*And whence proceeds all this dismal scene of evils, but from the want of consideration. 'With desolation is all the earth made desolate,' saith the prophet, 'because there is none that considereth in his heart' (Jerem. xii, ii).*

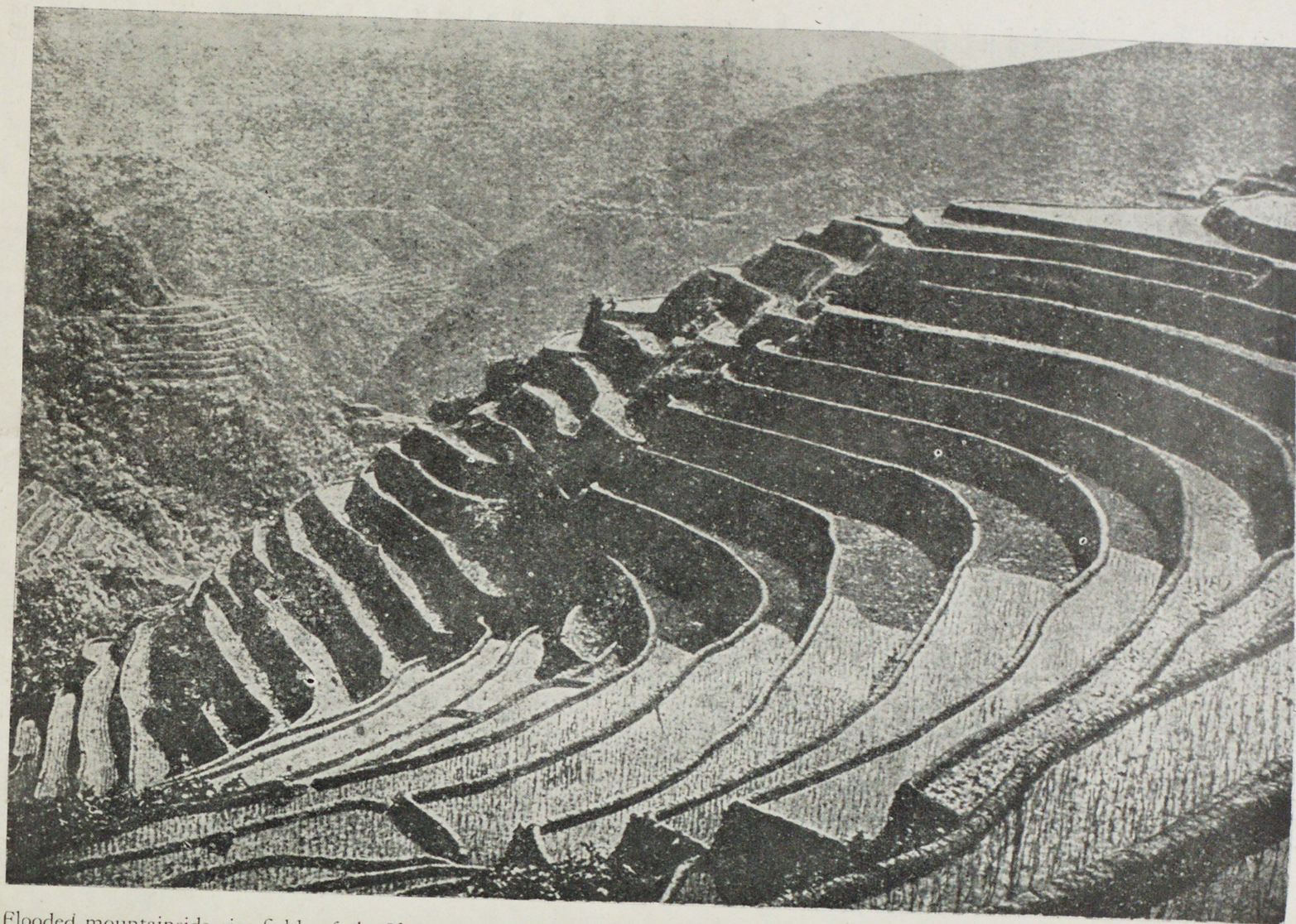
*... And do all Christians believe these truths? They must believe them, or they are no Christians. But how, then, is it possible that they should live as the generality do? ... O! 'tis for want of consideration. 'Tis because they don't think ... The great difference between the good and bad Christian is, that the one thinks well on the truths he believes, and by that means lets them seek deep into his soul, and take root there, so that they bring forth in him the fruits of all virtues; whereas the other does not think, and therefore is little or nothing affected with the truths of the gospel; ... O that men would but think! What a reformation should we see in the world. O 'tis thinking is the true way to heaven; and not thinking, the high road to hell!*

## THE FARMING LADDER

A hard-working lad on a ladder  
Used words that got badder and badder.  
He said, these *degrees*  
Are not oak, but a wheeze  
To give me a pain in the bladder.

—H.R.





Flooded mountainside rice fields of the Ifugaos, Philippine Islands—a monument to be classed with any of the great works of man anywhere. The owners of gullied American lands call these people savages (From *Asia*, the American Asiatic Association)

## THE WORK BEFORE US

ON the facing page we reproduce, with an explanation, an illustration of the work of another civilisation. It could be reproduced from examples in many parts of the globe, notably from Java, Peru and elsewhere.

The point for us English is this. The past is full of argument about the limit of food-production in this country. We can be sure only that we are nowhere near that limit. It has been demonstrated that by the mere partial conversion of grass to arable we can increase our food production from one-third to two-thirds. There is a further indefinite field for expansion by encouraging small mixed farming, which is known to be more productive per acre and more permanent than our present mechanised methods. The full scope of this must remain uncertain until experiment replaces guessing.

In addition we have the use of those areas, vast in total, which are individually too small to be bothered with by our present mandarins.

Finally, we have not yet started upon those methods which would increase our actual cultivated acreage. Notably we have made no attempt to learn terrace cultivation for our hillsides, or to reclaim such areas as the Wash, which would add a county to England. Until all those expedients have been invoked, no man can say and be believed that the people of England cannot be fed from the production of our own land. We warn all readers again that much greater domestic food production is going to be the greatest need of these islands.

Will our rulers be warned in time? Will they abandon the shibboleths that purport to be modern and concentrate on those methods which will at the same time produce most food and confer on the most people of these islands a happy and dignified way of life?

There are said to be two thousand million of us on the surface of the earth. Probably every one of us is apt to think that the most urgent of all necessities is that his will should everywhere prevail regardless of reason. Each one of us wants to shape the world to his

own pattern. Each one demands the right to rule all the others. Each of us is in revolt against everyone else. *Hinc illae lacrimae.* Hence we are disappointed, frustrated, depressed, and in despair. How would it be if to each one of us there were assigned a tiny portion of the world which we could shape each to his own heart's desire, and if we were to forswear all lust and ambition to rule, direct, and govern others? Too idealistic? Very well, look at our picture. Here hundreds (perhaps thousands) of people have agreed not to thwart each other but to help each other to produce a work which all men must regard as a marvel. This is not a Pharaoh building a pyramid, or an Augustus a city of marble, or a Constantine founding a new Rome, but a number of poor innocent savages doing something which makes Pharaoh, Augustus, and Constantine look like men who have taken leave of their senses. The thorough-paced farmer is not as a rule enamoured of mountain scenery. He likes to see the surface of the earth "doing its stuff" and producing food. Can he find any fault with this picture? Let the engineer look at it. Can he beat it? Do these savages know anything about the laws of gravity or hydrodynamics? Let the artist look at it. Does he find these mountain sides disfigured, or do the curves of these dykes offend the aesthetic eye as do the works which civilised people put on their mountain sides? No man can look at this picture without feeling ashamed of the so-called civilisation which we have built up. And yet there are people in the west who want to go out east to teach the east how to farm. Shall we teach these people or shall we ask them to teach us? If we wished to do something of this kind in our country, the first thing we would do would be to go around looking for a dozen millionaires to "finance" it. How do savages "finance" such things?

*Our best thanks are due to the proprietors of Asia, New York, for their kind permission to reproduce this illustration. The wording of the title is not ours. It is that of World Food Resources by J. Russell Smith, and is all the more striking on that account.*



# A CATHOLIC ATTITUDE TO SOCIAL REFORM AND WORLD AFFAIRS

By K. L. KENRICK

THERE is a general impression abroad, which I believe has found its way into a formal Government report, that Catholics are indifferent to social reform, and that they have no characteristic contribution to make to the solution of its problems. Like many modern pontifications, this statement is an intimate blend of truth and falsehood.

It is true that Catholics are far less concerned with this material world than are other people. To them "other-worldliness" is not a vice but a virtue. Their eyes are fixed on eternity, and not on things past, present, or future. To Catholics this world is hardly more than an ugly dream, or a puff of smoke which gets into their eyes and half-blinds them and into their throats and half-chokes them, but which will soon pass away. They cannot understand the intense preoccupation of the non-Catholic world with "the foundation of a new era," and with the "building of a new world."

A few years ago Dean Inge said of "The Imitation of Christ" that it was an excellent book in its day but was quite inapplicable to the conditions of the twentieth century, because in these days every man was expected to play his part in "the social regeneration of the world," and there was no provision in that book for such a task. The Catholic reads such a statement with the utmost amazement. He knows that there is nothing in the twentieth century, more than there was in the thirteenth or fourteenth, to prevent any man, Catholic or non-Catholic, from following the advice of "the Imitation," turning his back on "the strange and wicked doings of men," and withdrawing into the depths of his own heart. The world may call him by some ill-sounding names, but the casual reproaches of the world can have no validity because they have no legal right, no physical power, and no moral authority behind them. Besides, he can keep the secret of his life locked up in his own bosom; he need not reveal it to the world at all.

Shortly after the armistice of 1945, some eminent moralists gave broadcast addresses on the gravity of the world-situation. These addresses all followed the same pattern. First of all there was an eloquent and perfectly truthful description of the chaotic and perilous condition of world-affairs. Then came the following extraordinary statement: "In the middle ages men could turn their backs on all this and retire into the cloister; but we cannot do that to-day." Why not? Who or what forbids us? Of course we can do it to-day, just as easily to-day as when monasteries and convents abounded in all lands. We can make a cloister of our own hearts, as did St. Catherine of Siena, and as do many to-day, Catholics and non-Catholics. There is no law, moral or otherwise, to compel me to read the newspapers, or to listen to the news, or even to ask my friends what is the latest world-foley. I can be oblivious to all this and live as though peace, justice, and harmony everywhere prevailed and there was no cloud on the horizon. "Look upon yourself as a traveller and stranger upon earth to whom the business of the world is of no concern. Keep your heart detached from earth and lifted up to heaven, for here you have no lasting home." Who can forbid me to follow that precept? Men may call me a crank, or a fanatic, or an individualist, or even an isolationist, but only my physical weakness can put my peace of mind at the mercy of other men's tongues. In point of fact, there are any number of people in the world who follow this advice who are not Catholics at all, who do not know that it is good Catholic advice, and who have probably never heard of "the Imitation." The whole human race has neither the power nor the authority to prevent me from embracing, if I so choose, the purest intellectual and moral egotism as my philosophy of life, as so many do. No power on earth can impose on me the obligation to be distressed at the misery of my fellow-men. If I were not a

Catholic, I should be at perfect liberty to say to them all, "You are phantoms; you are figments of my imagination; why should I distress myself at the misery of a phantom or a figment?" If I cultivate my own garden, and grow in it enough food to feed myself and no more, and if my neighbours who call me a crank come to me hungry and begging for food, I am in perfect order to say to them "Go away and do as I have done." It is an old idea, and is as timely to-day as it was the day on which the fable was first told.

Assiduous efforts are being made to-day to teach us all that the well-being of every individual depends on social and international legislation and organisation. We are all assumed to be enthusiastically absorbed, to the point of fanaticism, in securing the communal welfare to the complete disregard of the individual soul. We are inaugurating a new era, building a new world, establishing the foundations of a new order, etc.

Even Catholics are sometimes infected by this idea. It all sounds so beautifully plausible and Christian. But carried to its logical conclusion it is a fatal idea, fatal to the spiritual welfare of each one of us, and fatal to the material welfare of us all. If we are going to say that this material world of the twentieth century is the only world there is or is ever likely to be, and if we are going to put every individual in it under the control of one supreme organisation, and to forbid any person or group to contract out, then, to use a slang expression, we are for it. If we are going to put the necessities of life of everyone at the mercy of one tremulous piece of human administration (and this is the universal trend of all political propaganda—left and right) it will sound tame to say that we are asking for trouble. If we tie the whole human race into one huge bundle, it will be infinitely easier for one casual villain to destroy it by an atom bomb or a dose of poison than if we scatter it all over the earth in a million independent groups. In a world so inextricably interdependent, it will be right for us to listen breathlessly for fresh news of every bit of chaos that breaks out at home or in some remote corner of the globe. If we hear of men going on strike or throwing bombs at each other ten thousand miles away, we shall be right to go about moaning and groaning and wringing our hands and saying

to each other, "Isn't it terrible? What is the world coming to?" This is where the Catholic idea comes in and saves us. This world is not the only world; it is not even the real world; it is only a phantom which will soon fade away. Catholics may therefore quite legitimately keep their heads even in the midst of threatened disaster. As human beings we have a choice—we can either go all frantic or we can remain calm. As Catholics we choose to remain calm, because our home is in the real world and not in this wretched vale of tears.

Mr. J. B. Priestley, in a panegyric on H. G. Wells, said "We hover at the cross-roads, leading either to a real world civilisation or to the extinction of our species." This has been said in a thousand different ways by a thousand different people, and I do not know of anything less worth saying. It gets us nowhere, and I do not believe there is a particle of truth in it. What he calls a real world civilisation is the very thing that is going to bring about the extinction of our species. It is as if one man were to say to another, "You can either die by my hand or you can shoot yourself with this gun." We cannot have the blessings of science without its curses, because exactly the same line of research leads to both. Socrates said long ago that the man who can cure is the man who can kill. Science is one as theology is one. As you cannot accept the odd-numbered articles of the creed and reject the even-numbered, so you cannot accept the blessings of science and reject its curses. We have already heard one scientist express the wish that the atom-bomb had never been discovered. We may yet hear other scientists express the wish that scientists had never discovered many other things, and that the glorious powers of the human had been expended in some other direction more profitable to the temporal welfare of our bodies and the eternal welfare of our souls.

Be all this as it may, I refuse, as a Catholic, to be drawn into Priestley's maelstrom of suffocating terror. "A real world civilisation" makes not the slightest appeal to me, nor does "the possible extinction of our species" frighten me in the least. To allow myself to be deluded by either of these two phrases would be an intrusion upon the sovereignty and dominion of the Creator and



Disposer of all. I am not speaking lightly when I say that the ultimate destiny of humanity and of civilisation is His concern entirely and not mine at all. The task He has assigned to me is something far other and far humbler than that. I do not believe that He asks me to feel one single anxious pang or to lose one single minute's sleep over the future of the race or of civilisation. Grief and distress at the sin, folly, and blindness of men, yes, He does ask me for that, and is pleased with me if I give it; but worry, anxiety, fear, gloom, depression, panic, and despair—I emphatically deny that He asks me for these, or is pleased with me if I allow myself to indulge in them. The mind that is correctly adjusted to reality can see this world as something which has come, been, and gone. Such a mind remains composed through all vicissitudes. The mind that curls itself up into an agony because it sees nothing beyond the prospect of a critical and desperate future for humanity is out of touch with reality, and is racked afresh with every headline. I honour my friends by putting confidence in their capacity and good faith. How can we be said to glorify God if we refuse to trust His own creatures to His own wisdom and justice?

People say that they cannot help worrying. Would anyone say that worry is as much beyond the control of the will as is the growth of a cancer? But that is not wholly the point. Many otherwise irreproachable people regard worry as a duty, which it is not. They think that anxiety is an obligation and a virtue, which it is not. They go even further. If God gives a man the grace to be happy and cheerful when his world is tumbling about his ears, they accuse him of being unfeeling and inhuman. Will that proposition stand examination? Who would call Mark Tapley unfeeling and inhuman? Is not the truth far more likely to be the exact opposite?

We are now in a position to define the difference between the Catholic and non-Catholic attitude to social reform and world-affairs. The non-Catholic worldling says, "We must do something (although what this will be we have not the glimmering of an idea) about the atom-bomb or it will get us." The Catholic says, "We must obey the will of God whether the atom-bomb gets us or

not." The non-Catholic says, "We must do something or other or we shall be involved in a third world-war." The Catholic says, "We must do the will of God whether we are involved in a third world-war or not." There is nothing I or any of my readers can do about the atom-bomb or the third world-war, therefore these things need not occupy my attention; but there is very much I can do about obeying the will of God, and that is what should absorb the whole of my mind.

As far as social reform is concerned, the will of God is expressed quite definitely in the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But this love is something very different from natural affection or sentimentality or humanitarianism. It is far far away from the love a man has for his wife or children or his friends, or even the love a mother has for her son, a love which the Church has consecrated as being the highest and noblest of all human loves. There is the story of the hermit who went into the desert for twenty years and when he came back he was given a packet of letters which had arrived for him from his family. They had been accumulating during the whole of the period he had been away. On being given them, he tore them up and threw the fragments unread into the waters of the Nile. To the non-Catholic this is a revolting story, but not to the Catholic, because it teaches him how infinitely superior is the love of one's neighbour as enjoined by divine command to the merely natural affections. The act of this hermit was the highest possible expression of the supernatural love of a man for his own flesh and blood. The love which I am enjoined to have for my neighbour is of this kind. I have to work this out in practical detail in my everyday life, and as far as social reform is concerned this is how I do it. I give my neighbour exactly the same respect as I give myself; for myself I claim freedom from all control by any other person whatever except in virtue of properly constituted authority. This sets me free to do the will of God alone. I therefore grant my neighbour the same freedom as I claim for myself, no more and no less. This means that I make no attempt whatever to impose upon him my own personal will. I will argue with him till the crack of doom to get him to see the will of God as I see it, but I will not

coax nor cajole nor try to force nor terrify him into doing anything except of his own free will. If he comes to me to-day, waves his hand over the whole wretched world and asks me, "What am I to do about all this?" I will say, "Reverse the whole process; it must be all wrong because it has forgotten God." If he says, "I cannot put the clock back," then I say, "Very well, you have made

## FULL CYCLE

IN October, the Conservative Party at Blackpool, led by Mr. Churchill—and by Lord Woolton, late of Lewis's Ltd.—declared for the freedom which is ensured by the ownership of property. It did so for the first time. In its days of "power" it was content to be dragged at the cart-tail of Big Business. It took a capital part in smashing the practical work of the Catholic Land Movement, and for that matter contrived, by forcing unsound policies, to discredit any form of Land Settlement.

It was not alone in this attitude. In 1925, Mr. Lloyd George, who had great intelligence, sponsored a volume embodying a scheme of extensive land settlement. It was entitled *The Land and the Nation*. The main scheme, in the draft, was to be called *Cultivating ownership*! The Big Noises and Best People of the Liberal Party were greatly scandalised by this extension of ownership to so many low fellows. They insisted on the word's removal, and the book finally appeared with *cultivating tenure* as its aim.

By the year 1938, the Liberal Party had seen the Red Light, and came out as the sponsor of *ownership for all*.

Not unnaturally, nobody took any notice except ourselves, who contributed what were, no doubt, ineffectual good wishes.

Now, God forbid that we should do anything to quench the smoking flax. The Conservative and Liberal parties were not alone in their efforts to smash, ignore and jeer at Distributism. They were copied by most Catholics. And they were approved by those aloof Secret Rulers who brood over all parties and who insist on policies which are not always those that are avowed. But it is right that we should insist that during the effective period, diffused ownership was pressed only by the small Distributist Group, and by no one else.

your bed; you must lie on it; I have now done my duty to you. And now dismiss me and allow me to meditate on the Four Last Things. All I now want is Mass, the Sacraments, and my "Imitation." This world slowly vanishes from my sight, I am alone with my God. Him only need I fear; Him only can I love. He alone is my present terror; may He be my eternal bliss."

It is now quite clear to every intelligence that Distributism is the only real philosophy which will save our dear country from the impending industrial crash. To Distributists it has been clear for many years. If the Conservative and Liberal parties, and all Catholics, now agree that it is so, this is all to the good. It is, however, in strict accord with Christian morals that all those forces which spent the interval between the wars in trying to smash the very notion of ownership for all, should now begin by a public confiteor and by a real repentance. The work of the Distributist League has all to be done again. So be it. But let us have honour where honour is due, and a due deference to the experience of the few who kept that honour in the dark years.

## THE ROYAL MERCHANT NAVY

The sea, and seamen, are connected with this paper only by implication. But we should like to ask a question.

In 1940 and 1941, when people were feeling sentimental about the way ships were being torpedoed while bringing our food from the ends of the world, the papers began talking about *The Royal Merchant Navy*.

We remember being all in favour of this, for it would have prevented, after the war, another Ellerman leaving eighteen million pounds ground from the blood and sweat of merchant officers and men. And it would have prevented another Lord What's-His-Name making a lot of money, and ruining a lot of poor folk, while amalgamating two famous companies.

But quite suddenly the papers stopped talking about the Royal Merchant Navy, and the subject has not been revived. Who gave the order to stop, and why?



# ORDER OF BATTLE: XXVIII

## THE DOOMSDAY BOOK

IN the late summer of the present year, the Ministry of Agriculture published the *National Farm Survey of England and Wales* (H.M. Stationery Office, 2/-). It is a summary and analysis of an investigation made under the auspices of County Agricultural Committees during the war. The ultimate purpose of its compilation does not concern us here. The incidence of land nationalisation would be much facilitated by its various plans.

The compilers themselves use the term *Doomsday Book* (e.g., p.2). As such, it should be a purely factual analysis. In point of fact, a great deal of personal judgment and tendentious analysis enters into it. We are glad to report that, on the whole, it had a poor press.

The first two of the stated objects will be of some interest:

- (i) To form a *permanent* and comprehensive record of the conditions on the farms of England and Wales—the compilation of a modern *Doomsday Book*;
- (ii) To provide a body of data which would be useful as a basis for *post-war administration* and planning and the formation of a post-war policy; (p.2).

The italics are ours. It is of interest that the war controls were intended from the beginning of the war to be permanent. The roots of this policy go far into the past. The deliberate neglect of agriculture, and the official wrecking of sound policies of land settlement, were a useful preliminary to this process. The conditions of preparation, it must be remembered, are admittedly defective, and include not only quantitative but qualitative matter. This latter is attributed pleasantly to the necessity for using inexperienced recorders to visit farms, and to interrogate and assess the farmers (para. 8, p.4). No useful reprint is given of the precise instructions to these field workers, or, for that matter, of the basis of the whole enterprise.

In this connection we may mention the highly improper use of a private society to analyse and compile the results of an official survey (para. 13, p.6).

It will be agreed that in such an official survey, the final summaries should have been based either on all the holdings reported on, or on a flat percentage taken at random. Instead of this, varying percentages were used, and it is of very great interest that this percentage increased with the size of the holding. The table, as given on page 5 of the survey, is as follows. We add from page 13 the actual numbers of farms reported on. (It will be noted that the survey is confined to holdings of 5 acres and over).

SIZE OF HOLDING ACRES	SAMPLING FRACTION %	NO. OF HOLDINGS	PERCENTAGE ACCORDING TO COL. III
5-24.9	5	101,400	35
25-99.9	10	111,400	38
100-299.9	25	65,200	22.5
300-699.9	50	11,200	4
700 and over	100	1,400	.5

The fourth column gives the correct sampling percentage according to number, and this should have been used of any given proportion, if a true sample of the total had been necessary. Actually, every one of the holdings over 700 acres was analysed, and the proportion varied from every other one of the 300/700 acre type down to one in twenty of the 25 acres type. Readers must form their own opinion on the reason for this. It need not be that published. One is certainly that a use was to be made of the largest type which was not to be made of the smallest.

A long discussion (not without embarrassment) is made on the vexed question of grading holdings and holders A, B and C. It does not entirely conceal the cloven hoof. For example, it says on p. 52: "good management must also include the efficient compliance with a County War Agricultural Executive Committee's directions. . ." That is, subservient farmers were clearly the best.

But on p. 53 is an even more illuminating phrase. "Manures," it appears, "include farmyard manure." The effrontery of this takes away the breath. What any self-respecting farmer treats as his manurial stand-by (to say no more) is *included*. No wonder the Survey goes on to say: "It follows, therefore, that a less than adequate use of manures and a fair or bad condition of

land was seldom consistent with an "A" grading. . ." (p. 53).

It is a fair deduction from this to say that serious notice was taken of the holder's use or disuse of commercial artificial manure, and there is substantial independent evidence that such use has been pressed or forced on farmers by County officials. Many a man, probably, has lost or been threatened with the loss of his holding, because somebody was getting a rake-off from certain sales.

Rent per size of holding is also mentioned. This, as is well-known, is much higher for the smallest holdings than for the largest, and decreases as we go up the scale of size. To some extent, of course, this is due to the higher proportion of house to land in the smaller holdings, but this is not a complete explanation, as the Survey agrees. The Survey discusses four reasons, none of which has any relation to the higher agricultural output of the smaller holding—that is not what the survey is for. It would have been quite simple, in view of the elaboration of the survey, to have added items for gross and net output, at least in terms of money. Whether the point was ever discussed, we are not told. Certainly it was not carried out by the Government.

Unluckily for them, however, the National Farmers' Union has compiled such figures (N.F.U. Information Service, September, 1946, pp. 8-9). The figures are from 4,303 farms.

SIZE OF HOLDING (ACRES)	RENT PER ACRE:			
	GENERAL PASTURE	INTERMED.	ARABLE	
5-25	52/-	49/-	57/-	60/-
25-100	32/-	32/-	33/-	36/-
100-300	25/-	26/-	24/-	25/-
300-700	21/-	23/-	20/-	22/-
700 & over	19/-	21/-	16/-	21/-

(Survey: Table II, p. 29)

The N.F.U. figures are arranged differently, and are shown by a different division of types and sizes. They are, however, comparable. The year 1944-5 applies.

	AVERAGE NET PROFIT (£) PER ACRE:			
	50 AND UNDER	51-150	151-300	300 OVER
Mainly Arable	11.3	5.0	3.5	2.9
Arable & Mixed	4.5	3.4	3.1	2.4
Mainly Dairying	4.6	3.8	2.3	2.6
Dairying & Mixed	4.7	2.9	2.8	2.2
Mainly Livestock	2.0	2.7	1.5	1.4
Livestock & Mixed	2.8	2.7	2.2	2.0

It will be seen, therefore, that *production per acre*, which is the chief national as well as the chief social need, is with one exception

greatest from the smallest holding. It will also be seen that the profit drops consistently with the size, and that the lowest return *per acre* is from the largest farms.\*

The Government's own survey, therefore, as amplified by a significant omission, shows conclusively both the bias of the Committees and the direction in which greatest production per acre is to be found. That direction is not that of large, wasteful and mechanised agriculture, such as the County Committees naturally foster. Naturally, because that only admits of large proportions of officials dashing about in cars to see that other people are doing their work.

We may conclude this analysis by giving some figures which are not without interest. Trevelyan, in *English Social History* (p. 277) gives the following estimates (they can be no more), from Gregory King's *Tables of 1688*:

40,000 Freeholders of the Better sort.  
120,000 Freeholders of the Lesser sort.  
150,000 Farmers.

And Trevelyan also gives (op. cit. p. 536) the following official figures of 1851, which we may compare with those from p. 13 of the present Survey:

	SIZE OF HOLDINGS, ACRES:				
	5-25	25-100	100-300	300-700	700 & OVER
1945	101,400	111,400	65,200	11,200	1,400
1851	5-49	50-99	100-299	300-499	500 & OVER
	90,000	44,600	64,200	11,600	5,071

These figures, which are not quite conclusive as they stand, are not without encouragement. The number of holdings has increased notably since 1851, and the number of the smaller types is much greater. The number of freeholders and farmers has, however, decreased from 310,000 in 1688 to 215,470 in 1851 and 277,000 now. The 1688 figures undoubtedly include holdings below five acres, excluded in the later ones, and 277,000 includes some 10,000 farmers who duplicate or more some of the present 290,600 holdings.

The direction of policy, on national as well as on social grounds, should without doubt be to intensify the working of the Small Holdings Act of 1908, rather than to increase the large holdings which, by the great god

\* A similar result in terms of "Net Output per £100 Wages" is shown by figures given in the N.F.U. Information Service for November (p. 225).



of figures, are already old-fashioned and discredited.

A final point of interest may be mentioned. The total acreage covered by the details of 1851 is 24,659,300. The acreage covered by the present survey is 24,200,000.

Both figures exclude holdings below five acres, common land, rough grazings, etc.; also excluded is the large area submerged by the sprawling urban aggregations, and, of course, the large area at present monopolised by airfields.

We may conclude that, in spite of all propaganda to the contrary, the agricultural acreage of this country is extensible.

The close approximation of the total figures is surprising and significant, when we remember that 1851 was very near the time

(1864) when the land of this country fed 24,000,000 people, besides an indefinite but very large number of horses, and probably much greater numbers of all kinds of farm livestock. It is clear that we could feed adequately, without enlargement of our methods, a lot more than half our present population. Our problem now is (1) to intensify our production per acre, (2) to add by methods indicated on another page to our present acreage.

It is material to note here that whereas (for example) Arthur Young says that in the eighteenth century there were 960,000 sheep on the South Downs, in 1938 the number of sheep on the South Downs had fallen to 1,000. This is one of many examples of a highly artificial reduction in our domestic asset of food and clothing.

## THE "TABLET" AND DISTRIBUTISM

In its issue of 2nd November, *The Tablet* said editorially—

"... some of the most devoted proponents of Distributist doctrine have only been willing to recognise as property that which is agricultural."

The Editor challenged this facile and convenient saving of face in the following letter. Up to the time of our going to press, it has not been published. We need make no further comment.

8th November, 1946.

Dear Sir,

### DISTRIBUTISM

It is very gratifying that you are now, if belatedly, giving solid support to Distributism.

You do a good deal less than justice to that small but gallant movement which alone kept the idea alive between the wars.

I mean the curiously persistent notion that we had no contribution to make to urban problems, but only to those of the land. It is not the case that we ignored other than agricultural problems. Our history, to anyone who really knows it, demonstrates that quite clearly.

We emphasised the land, not because that is the *only* thing to be done, but because that is the *first* thing to be done.

Until you have the principle of balance you cannot start. After all, we were an alarmingly small body, and we did what we could. That we did not do everything is much more the fault of Indifferentists than of Distributists. We Catholics are now experiencing, for example, the effect of the denunciation of the Catholic Land Movement; this, if not an indispensable, would at any rate be a highly convenient starting point for the effective Catholic defence of the family.

Yours faithfully,

H. ROBBINS.

*The National Farmers' Union (45 Bedford Square, W.C.1) asks us to announce two pamphlets—The Building of Privately-owned Cottages, and Acquisition of Land.*

*Printing of both is restricted, but copies are available in any case at N.F.U. County Headquarters.*

*Both contain a great deal of useful information on the basis of the present law.*

### TRIOLET

They were tried and ACQUITTED,  
Said U.S.S.R.  
The judge is half-witted:  
(They're tried and ACQUITTED).  
No such waste is permitted  
In lands where WE are.  
No one's tried and ACQUITTED  
Said U.S.S.R.

—H.R.