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## The Cross & the Plough, V. 14, No. 2, 1947

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.

SAINTS PETER  
and PAUL 1947

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# The Cross and The Plough

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## THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

### A CORRECTION

On page 5, column 2, of *The Pope to the Farmers in our Lady-day issue*, Virgil was printed wrongly as Virgin. We apologise for this gross error, which some of our readers may wish to correct in their copy.—Editor.

### JUSTICE, MY LORD THE KING

We have travelled very far since the days when any citizen could call personally on the King, and claim Justice.

We are heartily glad to see that Sir Waldron Smithers, M.P., is trying to secure the signatures of enough members to debate the need for a Royal Commission to go thoroughly into the question of why some hundreds of farmers and small-holders, who were cast violently out of their holdings from 1939 onwards, are still awaiting reinstatement and/or justice.

By the time these notes appear, the matter may have been decided. The case is of altogether crucial importance, not only to freedom and justice, but to what remains of prestige in the parties most closely concerned.

### ORDERS, MY LORDS THE DICTATORS

It should be understood quite clearly that what is at stake is the very Rule of Law. Not only were these unfortunate men and women thrown out by arbitrary—and frequently incompetent—decree, the Minister and his officials have resolutely declined any impartial hearing of their cases, and recourse to the Royal Courts of Justice is expressly ruled out, even if these poor folk had the necessary means.

This has been done in our name, and we are paying all the villains concerned. If rule by political parties were a reality, the Labour Party would have been only too glad to

reverse a decision of the Conservative Party. But nothing of that kind happens.

We are paying the Officials, the Ministers and the Members—in that order of importance—to leave wrong unrighted, and justice barred. All our readers should approach their Members on this vital point.

### WIND-UP

Crowded out of the last issue there was some evidence of wind-up, and even of repentance, in Government circles.

On 18th March was published a White Paper (CMD 7072). It is entitled "*Post-War Contribution of British Agriculture to the Saving of Foreign Exchange*."

The details need not concern us, for its figures are not based on any such modification of farming as would result in any net increase of production per acre.

Two points, however, may be emphasised. The White Paper is based avowedly on "A study made in the winter of 1944-5 at the request of the Ministers of Agriculture and Food" (p. 3). It was in possession of the Government, therefore, before it decided on the ruthless destruction of livestock of which we are now reaping the benefit. This makes the wanton toying with a primary asset even more noticeable than appeared at first. Apart from this, the delay and hesitation before publication are very disedifying.

There is nothing in the White Paper which shows realisation that net reproduction rate is as valid for livestock as for human beings. It is extremely strange (or perhaps not strange) that the *London School of Economics* should have overlooked this point.

It remains to be seen whether the Government develops the admissions now made, in view of the impending increase of unemployment.

### NINETEEN NOTCHES

The White Paper, mysteriously and curiously, is concerned chiefly with an estimated increase in 1950-1 of "over 50 per cent. in liquid milk consumption."

They should worry about liquid milk consumption, considering the sort of muck sold by the Combines as colourable imitations of that product, and the sort of muck on sale similarly as butter and cheese.

### AND WEDGES OF CHEESE

Doctor Edith Summerskill has been very sharp in Parliament about putting cheese fit to eat on the market again. She will not hear of Stilton, Double Gloucester, or even decent Cheshire, being available again, although no more milk is required to make them. Presumably her Department agrees. But there is a curious lapse of logic here. If Dr. Edith Summerskill (being a doctor) were concerned that everybody in England should have a chance to eat cheese fit to eat (like those named) we could understand it as being in the English tradition. As the poet Whittier said many years ago:

"Sweetening worn Labour's bitter cup:

And, plucking not the highest down,

Lifting the lowest up."

But Dr. Summerskill is intent on butressing Big Business, which is entirely responsible, by obliging us all to consume cheese which is quite unfit to eat.

Small people made eatable cheese—Big Firms make the unlatherable soap to which we are now conditioned. Dr. Summerskill agrees.

### SEED

There has been a notable shortage of seed potatoes following on the frost. Probably this is due to the Labour Government again favouring big men against small.

We recommend all our readers to make a point of saving their own seed of all kinds. We gave directions for this in our issue of Lady-day, 1939. If there is a sufficient demand we will reprint the article at Michaelmas.

### THE DEVIL REBUKES SIN

In our last issue, we asked pointed questions about how the County Committees are encouraging (or carrying out themselves) potato monoculture. Possibly by accident, the Ministry of Agriculture Weekly News Service for 21st April (No. 396) had the following virtuous message:—

"The best method of preventing land from becoming substantially infested with potato root eelworm is to follow a proper rotation and avoid growing potatoes on the same land year after year. One crop in every four years is the maximum that is safe. Clean land should be kept clean. Eelworms cyst may be carried in soil from infested land, on boots, implements, and so on, on soil attached to transplants—broccoli for instance—on the seed tubers themselves, or in soil at the bottom of sacks. On a small scale, in gardens and allotments, tubers should be washed before planting so as to remove any adhering soil. No method of destroying eelworms in the soil that is both effective and economically practicable has yet been discovered. Work on the problem is, however, continuing."

Comment is unnecessary.

### FASHION VERSUS FACT

Of all the urban minds which now form our official opinion, probably the most urban is that of Mr. George Bernard Shaw. That fact did not prevent his starting a correspondence in *The Times*, in March and April, on how we ought to farm.

Everything that happens in Russia, as we know, is automatically correct, and Mr. Shaw has no hesitation in recommending farming units of 20,000 acres. He was answered (the italics are ours) by Sir John Russell, who is in all essential respects on the same side of the fence.

Probably neither gentleman is aware that the most food per acre is produced by small farms; nor that the most food per acre is our great need. Fashion dominates facts until we get the crash.

The ruined buildings left standing here and there to speak to future generations about the "Great War" will lose their significance, degenerating from historic monuments into mere eyesores. The ploughman, the everlasting ploughman, whose industry survives all monuments of peace and war, and the rise and fall of all empires, will unearth with his ploughshare the skull of some poor unknown hero, and press steadily forward with his eye fixed steadily on the long sharp line of his last ridge.—H. Van Straelen, S.V.D., in "*A Missionary in the War-Net*."

## THE TREASON OF SOME CLERKS

OUR attention has been drawn to an article in *Priests' Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Young Christian Workers). Characteristically, the issue is undated, but internal evidence suggests that it was printed in March or April, 1947. The article in question is *The Workers' Apostolate*, by John Fitzsimons.

We take the author to be Father John Fitzsimons. We must begin by congratulating him on one point. In the Lady-day, 1938, issue of this Quarterly we drew attention, in *Vicarious Sacrifice*, to the apparent danger of the Young Christian Workers' indoctrination with the heresy of an immolationist attitude towards the evils of Industrialism. This attitude is explicitly rejected by Fr. Fitzsimons. He says (p. 8): "They are not counselled to be passive in and to their environment." Canon Cardijn and Miss Dorothy Day of U.S.A. will be very interested.

The article as a whole has two capital effects. Its tone is to discredit Distributism and its exponents; its wording is such as to avoid that condemnation which must follow any unqualified endorsement of Industrialism.

In a short article we can deal only with capital points, ignoring the mischievous and anti-papal trend of the article, so far as the average reader is concerned.

The author opens by saying: "It has been unfortunate that in the period between the two wars a number of most influential Catholics writing in English, such as Belloc and Chesterton and Gill, have been concerned to propagate a particular view of society and social reform which may generically be called Distributism. In fact, it was doubly unfortunate."

No other names are mentioned, and it is not suggested that these writers were concerned to apply Catholic Social Teaching. They were (it appears) paradoxical, sincere and erudite. It is not suggested that they wrote—and wrote unanswerably—of Catholic Social Teaching.

What is perhaps more important is that "their disciples . . . even committed themselves to such cries of despair as that 'the city is the occasion of sin'."

The primary exponents of Distributism (clerical and lay) are much more numerous than would be gathered from this statement. Nor could it possibly be gathered that a very great theologian indeed, Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P., S.T.M., was the originator of the idea quoted; not, to our knowledge, in those words. Perhaps the most formal statement of this theological truth was in Fr. McNabb's article in *The Cross and The Plough* for Michaelmas, 1936, when he said:

"I realised that from the average person you can never expect more than average virtue, and that now the town (and it was no-one's fault) made it impossible for the average person even to have the average family . . . your modern town is the proximate occasion of unnatural anti-social sin."

Does Fr. Fitzsimons dissent? If not, no doubt he will modify his statement. He may even, since he is doubtless familiar with the article, proceed in justice to mention this very great theologian's discussion of how Moses and his followers did not stay in the pagan conditions of Egypt, but *fled to the fields*. Did this very great theologian act as a disciple of Chesterton and Gill, or did they and the unnamed rest of us learn from his statements on Theology? Let us proceed.

As against these and other great names not mentioned by Fr. Fitzsimons, he throws in casually the names "Haessle, Simon, Borne and Henry." Does the balance even tremble? Our reading is fairly extensive, but we never heard of any of them. We are not impressed.

It is true that all Distributist writers emphasise the land and the crafts. That they went no further is definitely untrue. Land and crafts were emphasised because they afford—

- 1.—The most striking examples of the possession of productive property, which the Church says is a *Natural Right*.
  - 2.—Meeting the primary need of England, which is notably over-urbanised, as all national leaders are now reminding us.
- Does Fr. Fitzsimons dissent?



He says (p. 7): "using our modern methods of production, when they have been approved by the workers themselves. . . ." Really? Both phrases beg the question and beg it badly. The modernity or antiquity of a method is irrelevant for Catholics. Either it is right or wrong in Catholic doctrine. That is the only test. And by the workers themselves? Does not Fr. Fitzsimons, as a priest, lay down the body of relevant principle? In the matter of chastity, for instance, does Fr. Fitzsimons leave *modern methods to be approved by the workers themselves*? Or does he?

We recommend him to stop inventing our doctrines and to start analysing the facts, in the light of permanent doctrine, as we have done. Then we may perhaps believe

that "The Young Christian Workers are out to judge their environment in the light of Christian principles" (p. 8) and not in the light of what is modern.

"Misunderstanding," says Fr. Fitzsimons, "is at the root of much that has been written recently" (p. 8). To that misunderstanding the article under present notice has remarkably contributed.

The author proceeds (p. 4): "The definition of work to which most writers would agree is that it is a human activity which involves the manipulation or the modification of matter in order to satisfy a human need."

In a Catholic priest this is plainly disgraceful. His definition excludes (and apparently excludes deliberately) that the work

must be compatible with the nature of man—that it must be creative, as befits one made in the image of God—that it must correspond with the teaching on human acts, which his order has disgracefully neglected—and that it must be compatible with the possession of productive property, which is the very cornerstone of Catholic social teaching.

In a short article it is not possible to deal with all the points thrown off by Fr. Fitzsimons. He begs the question nearly everywhere, as where he insinuates that co-ownership is a remedy for machine production (which it is not).

He had better try again. If he will state the present position in terms of permanent principle (so as not to approve Industrialism because it is new), we Distributists may be able to indicate where we agree or dissent, and misunderstanding, so deplorable to him, may be removed.

In the meantime, he should not invent statements and put them into our mouths. He might, on the other hand, draw the attention of his members to the following papal statements. Few of them will have seen these statements, and fewer still will have seen the Papal address to the Farmers, which was printed in our last issue.

If Fr. Fitzsimons wishes, we are prepared to offer the hospitality of our columns for a statement of comparable length on these points.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ALLOCUTION OF H.H. POPE PIUS XII ON 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1944:

The social and economic policy of the future, the controlling power of the State, of local bodies, of professional institutions, cannot permanently secure their ends, perfect a genuine productivity of social life, and normal returns on national economy, except by thus fixing and safeguarding the vital functions of private property in its personal and social values. When the distribution of property is an obstacle to this end it is not necessarily nor always an outcome of the extension of private inheritance—the State may, in the public interest, intervene by regulating its use or, even, if it cannot equit-

ably meet the situation in any other way, by decreeing the expropriation of property, giving a suitable indemnity.

For the same purpose, small and medium holdings in agriculture, in the arts and trades, in commerce and industry, should be guaranteed and promoted.

Co-operative unions should ensure for them the advantages of big business. Where big business even to-day shows itself more productive there should be given the possibility of tempering the labour contract with a contract of co-ownership. And it should not be said that technical progress is opposed to such a scheme and that in its irresistible currents, it carries all activities forward towards gigantic businesses and organisations before which a social system, founded on the private property of individuals, must inevitably collapse.

No, technical progress does not determine economic life as a destined and necessary factor; it has, indeed, too often yielded timidly to the demands of the rapacious, selfish plans calculated to accumulate capital indefinitely.

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.

EXTRACTS FROM THE HOLY FATHER'S ALLOCUTION TO THE CARDINALS OF 2ND JUNE, 1947:

"It is certainly not God who is failing to keep his promise as the fears of the selfish and pleasure-loving seem to insinuate, but the misunderstanding, the harshness and illwill of others, makes the burden of life well nigh intolerable for the heroes of conjugal duty.

"It is only true heroism, sustained by the grace of God, that is capable of keeping in the hearts of young married people the desire and joy of having a large family. What humiliation for the world to have fallen so low into a social condition so opposed to nature."

## INTELLIGENCE IN PUBLIC LIFE

PRESCINDING from the question of what is right and what is wrong, we may observe an alarming lack of intelligence in public statement. From one point of view, intelligence is as necessary as rectitude in what has been described officially as our extremely serious position.

This lack of intelligence in speaker and hearer alike has become more acute in the last generation. How many people reflect, for instance, that the Education Act, now being pressed so enthusiastically by the Labour Government, was introduced and passed under a Conservative Minister—Mr. R. A. Butler? The Conservative Party itself, entirely without a policy, has been adopting more and more the Communist outlook on national affairs. Until its recent half-hearted attempt to adopt Distributism, it had no policy at all of its own.

Forty years ago, intelligent people could discuss nationalisation. No intelligent person has discussed it for many years. But that has not prevented the Labour Party from doing and thinking nothing else in the past two years.

Nothing in our desperate situation is of more desperate urgency than that houses should be built—by anybody or everybody, but built and lived in. Yet a Mr. R. Coppock, General Secretary of the Building Trade Operatives, is so unintelligent as to criticise the large number of small builders, and to say: "The job we are doing is not a little man's job." But the job is not being done at all, and Mr. Coppock has so unintelligent a view of it that he wants organisation more than houses.

And Mr. Tomlinson, Minister of Works, has had the effrontery to say that a man (e.g.) repairing his own house without paid labour, would be required henceforth to procure a licence beforehand. It is not generally realised that unless a man has special technical qualifications, he will not be allowed to build his own house. The local surveyor, in spite of the shoddy professional stuff he does pass, will see to that.

We are credibly informed that the rebuilding of bombed dwelling-houses in victorious England compares very unfavourably indeed with rebuilding in defeated Germany.

In England, houses rarely belong to the occupiers, who would not be allowed to rebuild if they did.

And it is too often forgotten that the so-called Beveridge Scheme was actually drawn up by a group of a dozen civil servants, who were withdrawn hurriedly at the last moment because the Government wanted it to appear as a private scheme. We have seen it urged seriously on civil servants that they should support the Beveridge Scheme because it had been drawn up by their colleagues. Unintelligence could go no further. (There is, by the way, a mysterious delay in building up the large staff for national insurance. Can it be that the Government realises at last that the expense of it will finally prevent our exports from rising from their present 75% (by volume) above 1938, to the 150% (by volume) insisted upon by *The Economist*?).

We could go on quoting examples. They have one trait in common. Publicists and hearers are in tacit agreement not to mention certain plain facts, but to take them for granted. That worked so long as the world took everything we made and repaid in food. Now that that world is dead, and that our position is officially extremely serious, it is time for plain talk and intelligent action. Shall we get it? If not, the present terrible silence is culpable as well as unintelligent. Too many people are involved with the skeleton of Industrialism. They will be caught in its proximate fall. Are we to fall with them?

"He also wants to drive a tunnel—between East and West—to make the British Empire more Indian\*; to effect what he calls the orientation of England and I call the ruin of Christendom. And I am wondering just now whether the clear intellect and courageous will of a madman will be strong enough to burst and drive that tunnel, as everything seems to show at this moment that it will. Or whether there be indeed enough life and growth in your England to leave it at least as this is left, buried in English forests and wasted by an English sea."—G. K. Chesterton in *The Flying Inn*.

\* Nowadays we should use a different name

# THE HUMAN OUTLOOK

By K. L. KENRICK

OF the galaxy of talent assembled by the B.B.C. to tell us all about Atomic Energy, the only speaker who had anything to say which had not already been said a thousand times was Bertrand Russell. These were his words, quoted from *The Listener* for March 13th—

*An atomic war might end quickly in the victory of one side. In that case the strongest power among the victors would acquire world supremacy. I shall return to this possibility in a moment; meanwhile there is another which is worse. If the war is prolonged, and if, as is possible, radioactive sprays kill all forms of life throughout considerable areas while bacteriological warfare spreads pestilence, there may be a complete destruction of modern industrial technique, a catastrophic loss of population, and a reversion to small-scale local agriculture without commerce in the regions which have had the good fortune to escape the poisoning of their soil. This sort of disintegration happened when the Roman Empire fell, and may happen again. But the resulting simplified small communities would only be safe and stable so long as there was no revival of science and scientific technique. Any revival would bring with it the danger of a renewed misuse of human ingenuity with a recurrence of large-scale suffering and death. The unfettered pursuit of knowledge would have been proved dangerous and only in ignorance could security be sought.*

*Ever since Greek times and more especially during the last four hundred years men have sought to understand the world in which they find themselves, and to discover the laws governing natural processes. We have now reached a point where our success in this endeavour, combined with the absence of any correlative moral progress, has brought us within sight of complete breakdown. Are we to conclude that men cannot be trusted with knowledge? Are man's impulses and desires so base that only ignorance can preserve him? Shall we discourage science, close down the institutions in which it is pursued, and burn the books in which its discoveries are*

*recorded? Such a course would be repugnant not only to our lust for power but also to our sense of human destiny. To live and die like brutes, without thought, without reflection on the universe, without any attempt to unravel its secrets, is treachery to our capacities and renunciation of what is best in humanity. Whatever difficulties or dangers may be involved, we cannot forego the pursuit of knowledge or yield abjectly to imprisonment by fear.*

The reader will observe that the operative phrases in the latter part of this passage are "moral progress," "base impulses and desires," "human destiny" and "what is best in humanity." These phrases deserve the most careful scrutiny. Are they carefully chosen to have the minimum of content with the maximum of impressiveness? For this is one of the secrets of modern propaganda. We are meant to be overawed without being informed.

It is clear that such phrases have no connection whatever with the material world revealed to us by physical science, even if we extend the term to include the most modern discoveries of psychology. Even the most up-to-date psychological theories can make no claim whatever to decide what is base and what is best in human character. Nor can they tell us what changes are progressive and what are not. Nor can they throw any light whatever on human destiny.

A Communist critic, true to his own materialistic theories, would have to say of all these phrases that they are the relics of religious superstition, and that they are therefore "instruments of that bourgeois reaction whose aim is to defend exploitation by stupefying the proletariat," or that they are "dangerous bourgeois delusions calculated to mitigate the ferocity of the class-war." As a pure materialist he would have to proceed to explain that man is a mere brute, and is therefore incapable of "moral progress." His impulses and desires can no more be called "base" than can those of monkey, rat, or maggot. He can have no destiny worthy of the name, and it is no more rational to speak of what is best in humanity than of what is best in monkeydom or maggotry. When a mater-

ialist uses such phrases he is really, without knowing it, annihilating his own philosophy and putting religion back on her throne. Unless Bertrand Russell is prepared to concede an immaterial world and an immortal soul, he must yield completely to materialist and communist criticism and give up all reference to "human destiny," "moral progress," "base impulses and desires," and "what is best in humanity."

The importance of these phrases is that they constitute the sole reply Russell gives to the suggestion to restrain scientific research. There are other replies which he does not give, and which are not open to any materialist objection. One is that it would be physically impossible to stay the course of scientific curiosity. Another is that if we sacrifice the military use of atomic energy we must be prepared to sacrifice its industrial and economic uses. Why does not Russell give these? It must be because he does not think them worth mention. We have therefore three possible objections to the proposal to put a forcible limit to scientific research. Two of them are not worth mentioning, and the third is disposed of by purely materialist considerations.

What is the Catholic attitude to the pursuit of knowledge and scientific research? A Catholic writer might use Russell's phrases, but to him they would not be, as they are to Russell, a species of black magic, or a cruel and fanatical superstition, or a demon from some Scandinavian mythology thirsting for the blood of the whole human race; they would be definite theological principles from which practical deductions could be made with mathematical precision. Sherwood Taylor, who has done as much as anyone alive for the teaching of science in this country, says that "the Church is bound to consider the study of Nature to be wholly good in itself, though there may be times when this study is excessive or directed to a wrong end." Is the pursuit of truth at all costs a moral obligation from which nothing can absolve us? If it is, is it the only moral obligation in the whole of human life, or are there others of equal validity? If there are, what are they? Do they ever contradict each other, or do they form one harmonious whole? Let us have a list of them. They look perilously like the Ten Commandments, or the chapter-headings of a text-book of Moral Theology.

On the other hand, if there is no such thing as moral obligation, what is the origin of this mysterious power which impels us to seek truth at whatever cost? Is it merely the same thing as makes the monkey inquisitive and mischievous? If so, it would be no great crime to switch it off. Or is it something mystical, and if so, is it the only bit of mysticism in the Universe? Surely it would be infinitely more interesting and infinitely more important to know just what it is that commands us to investigate the structure of the atom than to know the structure of the atom itself. Surely the greatest of all mysteries is why we insist on knowing the uncomfortable truth about everything instead of being content with comfortable ignorance. Ah! but there lurks theology!

The other alternative which Bertrand Russell offers us is "a complete destruction of industrial technique, a catastrophic loss of population, and a reversion to small-scale local agriculture without commerce." Of these items, a "catastrophic loss of population," so stated, is neither here nor there. But in the rest of the programme there is nothing to terrify or horrify Catholic sociology. On the contrary, a picture of the joys and sorrows of human life under such conditions would be infinitely more edifying than the picture with which we are confronted to-day.

## SADISM UP-TO-DATE

On 14th June, Sir Stafford Cripps protested that only political sadists would prolong deliberately the shortage of foodstuffs and goods.

This is very interesting indeed. Some shortages are inevitable (in the present false philosophy) and some are evitable.

But to whichever class a shortage belongs, our readers should understand well the principle behind it.

This is to educate, encourage or compel—in any case, to accustom—the people of this country to think that everything comes by favour of the Government.

By it and with it and through it—if we may say so without blasphemy—but in any case not by the direct effort of the citizens. This is so entirely contrary to the right order insisted on by sound teaching that we hope the citizens will resist the education, even where they cannot resist the process.

Otherwise sadism—we thank Sir Stafford for that word—will be replaced soon by something even worse. It has been called totalitarianism, and whether Tom or Dick or Harry is guilty of it does not matter (if we may be forgiven the blasphemy) a tinker's cuss.

# THE AGRICULTURAL VILLAGE

By H. ROBBINS

(The following article was written in 1944, to be part of a symposium which, no doubt on account of the paper shortage, has not appeared)

YOU are, probably, the normal sort of human being in whom an idea evokes an image. Being this normal sort of person, if you think of England—not the England of which most of us have cause to be ashamed—but the England you are overworking, or fighting, or dying to preserve and recreate: then the image which will arise first in your mind is almost certainly the image of an English village.

For the village is the very genius of England, and this is not rhetoric but sober truth. It stands for England not only in the mind of the villager, but in the mind of the fighting industrial townsman as he longs for home: even the Cockney has this concept. For no one familiar with *working* London can be unaware of the exciting paradox that by very reaction from its hugeness London has taken on many of the attributes of a congeries of villages. (This by the way.)

The village is not planned, but it follows always a plan emerging from the ultimate reality it serves. Its houses are partly from the full flood of the tradition—these are mostly past their best—and partly from an age which was invariably deplorable in its building. It is the considerable achievement of the village to have digested all but the worst of these. It has a few larger dwellings on its outskirts, which will be a proof that even the Tudor and Stuart millionaires could not achieve ugliness. Its inn has a temperature well above that of the brewery company which has tried to impose its frigid urban efficiency. Its village hall is probably the village eyesore—proof of a living spirit which lacked its ancient means. Its church is certainly the loveliest thing in it. (I apologise to my unknown colleague for mentioning the Church. It is a comfort to reflect that writing his own article he is probably unable to refrain from mentioning the land.) But the Church. It is probably the key to our problem, and has evoked the same image a hundred times, that what is broad-based upon the living earth must point to heaven if it is to keep its soul.

No architect designed this village. No architect has ever equalled the achievement of its humble builders. For the village is an effect and not a cause. It is organic and functional—living and having its being in the life of the land.

This must be our explanation of survival and our key to the future. The village, battered, starved and abused, has survived because it is essential to the only thing stronger than industrialism. Nothing in the Scott Report was so admirable as its appreciation and insistence that the English landscape, including the English village, is a consequence of the work of the English on the land, and that it cannot be preserved or recreated if that work suffers radical change.

Many testimonies converge. Mr. Peter Drucker, that strong thinker, has written recently *The Future of Industrial Man*. Significantly, it is chiefly about the past of non-industrial man. He lays down the undoubted truth that the modern strains and disintegration arise from the fact that "Western society is still fundamentally pre-industrial in its social beliefs and values"—whereas "decisive power is derived from no one but the managers themselves, controlled by nobody and responsible to no one."

Pre-industrial beliefs and values created the village. It follows that they must survive and flourish for the village to survive and flourish.

We arrive at this starting point for the future, only to realise with a shock that most of our Planners are trying to revive the villages by giving them as many urban (and worse, suburban) values as possible. One would have thought that the achievements of industrialism, at all events for the village, would have been a warning rather than an example. For if, as we must assume, the function of the village is to make villagers happy, the standards of happiness achieved in industrial towns by industrial means are—to use a remarkable understatement—at least irrelevant.

Our Planners, however, have ordered the attendant goblins to provide "a bumper of the same, for Mr. Grub."

Let us keep to the point. An English village is the result, not the cause, of a way of life and a habit of mind. If we want such villages, we must revive that way and habit.

It was the chief mark of the men who built the villages that they were yeomen owning, or at least controlling effectively, land in small units with a high degree of self-sufficiency. If we are to restore anything like what we understand by a village, farms must tend to become not larger but smaller, not specialised but mixed, not mechanised but rich in animal husbandry.

It does not matter whether you like this prospect or not. If you want villages you must have this basis for them. Only so will you revive the rich local life—the blacksmith, wheelwright, saddler and carpenter as well as the farmer—all contributing their characteristic quota to the community soul which produced this supreme thing.

Now, free and prosperous men on and about the land will certainly improve the villages. Free and prosperous men always cherish the good estate of their women-folk and children.

But it does not follow that they will want to do it in a way characteristic (and no doubt necessary) in large towns. They will certainly want good water, for example. But it is by no means certain that they will want it piped from a dozen miles away, and perhaps not piped at all. Wells are congenial to the rural condition. All we have forgotten is that they need, not only sinking, but cleaning. Here is another rural craft which flourished once and has gone with the rural decay. Nor do I think it certain that a free village would choose to be lighted by an electric supply whose pylons affront the day.

They might even decide that Hollywood and Elstree films have no appeal for them. And they might decide that many special pleasures depend on the building of a village hall comparable in loveliness and dignity to the village church.

In the Middle Ages, of course, the nave of the church was thought suitable for many village functions which would shock us in such a site today. Well and good. They will in that case tear down the hideous wooden

hut which was all their poverty afforded, and erect a seemly place, probably next to the Inn.

I do not know. No one can be sure until we have the free men in their little holdings. All I am insisting on here is that we are starting at the wrong end if we begin by reconstructing villages as much on the lines of the nearest large town as possible.

We are back to origins.

Let us begin with the first things. Let us not, as a wise old friend said to me recently, in our anxiety remove the physical stress from life, replace it with a psychological stress which will complete the ruin, among other ruins, of the English village.

Two practical dangers clamour for remedy.

The great town has damned itself. It is proposed to disperse industry into the countryside. I express no opinion on the propriety of that course so far as small towns are concerned. That is not my function here. But unless industry can be decentralised to a point where it could take on again, and take happily, the quality of craftsmanship, it would be a disaster to extend industry to the village. It simply will not fit into that social unit as we know and value it. Not only would it affront the countrymen who through a century of inconceivable economic oppression and cultural hardships, have kept the villages alive. It would complete the destruction of the village spirit.

The other danger is complementary. The huge mechanised farms which are being advocated in many furtive quarters would destroy irrevocably that rich and diverse life of the village which depends for its validity on the intimate interplay of many strong characters formed by strong crafts. The best we could expect under such a system would be a succession of rural Bournvilles; and the most sympathetic member of the Cadbury family would hardly claim that Bournville was recognisable as a village.

At worst, we might be faced with the squalor of the huge monocultural estates of the Southern United States, or an arable wilderness hideous with the gyrotiller by day and abandoned with the time siren for the nearest town by night. (It is, of course, quite untrue that mechanised agriculture produces more food per acre. The contrary is true. Small units produce more per acre. The large produce less with fewer men.)

We can have any sort of government we deserve. We cannot have any type of economic layout we desire, for the material order is conditioned by the natural asset. We have forgotten two things of decisive importance. Industrialised methods have so eroded and exhausted the soils of the world that the period of easy food from the ends of the earth has gone for ever.

And industrialism has invaded so wantonly the world's stocks of irreplaceable raw materials that the period of imposed retrenchment is well in sight.

Add to these two enormous facts that Mr. Walter Elliot reminded us recently in *The Times*, we must be prepared for Africa, Asia and Russia to go industrial on the scale of sixty per cent of their populations.

It follows that the future of England is on the land. It follows that the accumulated soil fertility which we owe to the prudence of our ancestors is now England's capital asset. It follows that we must remember peasantries have always been conservators of soil fertility; and *latifundia*, everywhere and always, exhaustive of it.

And it follows that if we wish our Commonwealth indeed to last for a thousand years, we also must clear our minds of cant. We must see things stark, scrap the prejudices and fashions of a lifetime, and bring into being that race of small English farmers which alone can act in conformity with the conditions imposed upon us. If we do this, we shall achieve our finest hour. Certainly we shall bequeath intact to the future the good England seen from the Village Green.

### FRASNE IN JURA

(October 16th, 1946)

White hoarfrost all around us lay  
In Jura with the opening day,  
And when to lonely Frasne we came  
From out her timber belfry frame  
Her deep-toned bell bade all and some  
Unto the Sacrifice to come  
And with the morrow mass to hallow  
Their work by bench or forge or fallow.

A flying glimpse that ne'er will fail  
From memory, lonely Frasne I hail  
And hear her tiny steeple ring  
Across the world that Christ is King.

—H. E. G. ROPE.

### PAPER AGAINST GOLD

WILLIAM Cobbett exposed in this conclusive volume the machinations of the Bank of England, and the whole fallacy of the National Debt and the Sinking Fund. In the nature of the case, he could not foresee that the extent and duration of Industrialism would delay (but not invalidate) the results of the system. That apocalypse has been left to us, over a century later, when the world is cracking under the weight of the monstrous thing.

We urge our readers to study this exposure in full. We give here a quotation showing not only its admirable clearness, but its refutation of the need for special knowledge.

"In the writing of this work, the greatest pains were taken to make my statements and my arguments, not only as clear and as strong, but also, as familiar as possible, and, by these means, to render a subject, which has always been considered as intricate and abstruse, so simple as to be understood by every reader of common capacity; and, in this object, I hope I have succeeded, because I have had the satisfaction to witness numerous instances, where persons, who would generally be denominated illiterate, have, by the reading of this work, become completely masters of the whole subject.

The truth is, however, that the pride of those, who call themselves *learned men*, leads them to misjudge greatly as to the capacity of those, whom they call the illiterate, or *unlearned*. To arrange words into sentences in a grammatical manner, to arrive at correct results by the operations of figures, require a knowledge of *rules*, which knowledge must be acquired by art; but the capacity of receiving plain *facts* and of *reasoning* upon those facts has its natural place in every sound mind; and, perhaps, the mind the most likely speedily to receive and deeply to imbibe a fair impression is precisely that mind which has never been pre-occupied by the impressions of art or of school-education. And, if there be men to hold the doctrine, that the people in general *ought not* to understand any thing of these matters, such men can proceed upon no principle other than this, that popular ignorance is the best security for public plunderers and oppressors."

## ORDER OF BATTLE: XXX

### BOTH YOUR HOUSES

*"The time has come, the Walrus said,  
To talk of many things . . ."*

To be definite, the time has come to talk of the events of the last thirty years or more, which have led directly to the present disastrous prospects of the whole industrial world.

We do this, it is well to emphasise, not merely to say *I told you so*, but because, if all men of good will combine together, there is still just time to retrieve the position.

This discussion (to begin with government) is not an attack on the Labour Government. The Liberal and Conservative Governments of the past are equally responsible. A full analysis is impossible here, but the high spots may be indicated.

The only alternative (the only possible alternative) to the present mess is that based on widely diffused property. It is of great interest that the propaganda of the Conservative Party last October has been abandoned entirely by the recent official Industrial Charter. The October propaganda, doubtless on the intelligent pressure of Mr. Ralph Assheton, concentrated for the first time on diffused private property. But Conservatism has been run for a generation (as has Liberalism) by Big Business. It is very remarkable that in spite of the dominance of Big Business Communism during that period, many people such as small property owners, land-owners, and the bulk of the clergy, persisted in supporting and voting for a "conservative" system destructive of all they held dear. Death duties did not dissuade the land-owners, hostility to small property did not dissuade the small owners, work on Good Friday (introduced solely by capitalists for money reasons) did not dissuade the religious. It was Conservatism, as dominated by Big Business, which smashed Distributism and the Land Movement. It was Conservatism, as so dominated, which imposed the intolerable and very recent and vivid pains of unemployment and the means test. Against these operations Distributism fought, and fought almost alone.

But Conservatism, like the Bourbons, has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. It has abandoned its belated support of small property and has returned to the Dominance of Big Business.

So recently as 9th June, 1947, *The Daily Telegraph* carried a special article on the woes of capitalist Roumania by Mr. L. W. Joynson-Hicks, M.P.—a very Conservative name indeed. In its course he says of agriculture in that country: "The industry seems *doomed to revert* to small peasant production." The italics are ours: let us proceed.

Throughout this period of thirty years, as we have said already, the Labour Party was also working within the framework of Industrialism. The contempt for and opposition to small ownership shown directly by Big Business led directly to Communism. The opposition of Labour to Conservatism and Liberalism led directly to the same end.

Let us leave government, but, before we do so, let us illustrate the end of the road by two unanswerable quotations.

Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, said officially on 14th May, 1947:

"We shall survive in the markets of the world by quality rather than mass production. Never let us turn out a job that doesn't line up to the standard of our skill."

And Mr. Charles Davy, writing in *The Observer* on 1st June, 1947, has the following remarkable passage, under the heading "*Religion and Science*":

"The second point is mentioned by Dean Mathews, who quoted the opinion of Professor John Baillie that 'the problem of infusing the spirit of Christian neighbourhood into the life of industrial society may be insoluble.' In other words, modern society may provide an environment in which the Christian life of fellowship simply cannot be at all generally lived. If this is so—and the case can be strongly argued—Christian social reformers will have to go much further than any political party does. They may have to call for a radical move away from machine-values



and the worship of power and size towards a de-centralised social order and an altogether simpler style of life."

Both these are sign-posts marking the end of the road. They could be multiplied indefinitely, for most intelligent men now see the red light. But they will suffice. Let us turn from governments to ourselves.

For thirty years, a small group of men have been sweating blood and killing themselves in the effort to make their fellows see and support the truth. Actually the period is longer for some, but we may take thirty years ago as being roughly the date of the *New Witness League*, which was when a body, as distinct from individual writers and speakers, first emerged as the only logical alternative to the Communism of all the Parties.

In its essence, and demonstrably, it urged diffused private property as the only remedy to the destruction being inflicted on mankind and the world by the various forms of industrial Communism.

It was a small group, and a small group it remained. From the nature of its statements, it could reasonably have expected the approval and support of all men of good will, led by the Hierarchies, Catholic and Anglican; the clergy, Catholic, Anglican and Non-conformist; editors of any persuasion or none, and a significant majority of at least Catholic journalists.

We say Distributism could have expected this support for the only possible alternative. That support was denied. Our small body was ignored, jeered at or opposed by Hierarchies, clergy, journalists and laity alike.

Not for the first time in history, we Distributists spent ourselves trying to convince a wilfully blind and incredulous generation. Had all concerned made good use of that thirty years, the present scene might be very different, and there would be at least an outline of sanity on which to operate.

The incredulous must now make their own start, and make it at once. It is in that conviction alone that we speak now. We should be more or less than human if we did not say here that we are on the Gadarene

slope because, and only because, our warnings were not heeded. There is still time, but only just. We wait, and wait probably in vain, for any *Confiteor* from the incredulous, who must now see Distributism as the only possible alternative to Communism.

The tone of our Ladyday issue was said in one quarter to be too cocksure.

*Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf* is being sung very loudly at present. We may or may not be the Big Bad Wolf—we ourselves were a very small one—but this is our night to howl.

## RECESSIONAL

1897—1947

God of our fathers, they of old  
Knew they must grow and eat to live.  
We knew much better. We were told  
That all the earth was ours to give.  
We know earth wastes and life-streams clog,  
But we forgot, but we forgot.

God of our fathers, now that we  
Have wasted all Your royal gifts.  
We that have held the earth in fee  
Are watching how the grey sea lifts  
And brings no tribute on the dot.  
For we forgot, for we forgot.

We held too arrogant a theft.  
Low on our hearth-stone sinks the fire,  
And retribution sole is left  
To link us with New York and Tyre.  
Lord God of Hosts, we go to pot,  
For we forgot, for we forgot.

We thought we knew all sorts of ways  
For some of us to grab the wealth:  
Our teachers did not teach it pays  
To mind our pockets less than health.  
You always pay, but we did not,  
For we forgot, for we forgot.

Lord God of Hosts, we were deceived.  
Pain we accept—Your mercies last.  
Of all bright boodle we, bereaved,  
Hope only for the food You cast.  
Lord God of Hosts, teach us our debt,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget.

—H.R.

## THE EARTH'S GREEN CARPET

(by Louise E. Howard. Faber & Faber, 8/6 net)

LADY Howard, who has considerable agricultural qualifications of her own, has set out in this book to put into popular non-technical form the ideas inspiring the work of her distinguished husband. She has done that, and has done it on the clearest and most practical lines. Her chapter headings, all very adequately supported by the following text, show that they include such fertile and exciting phrases as *The Wheel of Life*, *The Agricultural Effort and its Reward*, *The Animal as our Farming Partner*, *Disease as Censor*.

A new mind, working on the great mass of material by the light of eternal principle, has set out the exordium, the statement and the proof in new terms which command our instant approval and applause.

But she has done much more than this. Moved (although she does not say so) by the anxieties of many of us who know how instant is our cultural peril, she has done what always should happen but rarely does. She has built up her practical argument (and how practical it is!). But she has then stood on that solid erection to give us her trumpet-call to the Christian virtue of Hope. It is a sermon on that virtue from which many professionals might learn. Virtue is not built on nothing, but on the sound foundation of Nature. She even gives us a text: "*Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.*"

Nature is greater than the worst efforts of ignorant or hostile men. When chemicals, the combines and the bureaucracies have done their puny worst, Nature will return. Why not? God created Nature. Certainly He did not create the combine and the bureaucracy.

"What at first sight we do not remember is the extraordinary stability behind this natural variety. It is almost impossible to deflect Nature; it is quite impossible to throw her finally out of gear" (p. 15).

She defines elsewhere: "In our survey we have made many references to Nature, to which we have assigned a position of unquestioned dominion in the world of physical phenomena, assuming by the expression 'Nature' an orderly system proceeding on laws which are neither capricious nor finally beyond our comprehension" (p. 187).

"This paradise [of modern plenty based on capital invasion] is a delusion, and a terrible modern conflict has arisen among us" (ibid).

But she concludes: "What is the future outlook? Contrary to the prevailing mood of pessimism, we may confidently answer that it is a good one. There are no past mistakes that cannot be repaired" (p. 189).

This does not mean, of course, that the lower reaches of London River, the Midland Plateau, the Middle West of U.S.A. or Canada will not be made unusable for many generations. The point is a general point.

*The Cross and The Plough* must make its act of contrition for a mood of pessimism, which reference to the eternal principles should have enabled it to avoid.

In thanking Lady Howard very warmly for this invaluable book, we must make one final point, which we think would also be hers. Victory is assured, but there is no such thing as Victory without Battle. When we have used the pitchfork to win it, Nature will return.

## NATURE

In what belongs to the deeper meanings of Nature and her mediation between us and God, the appearances of Nature are the truths of Nature, far deeper than any scientific discoveries in and concerning them. The show of things is that for which God cares most, for their show is the face of far deeper things than they. . . . It is through their show, not through their analysis, that we enter into their deepest truths. What they say to the childlike soul is the truest thing to be gathered of them. To know a primrose is a higher thing than to know all the botany of it—just as to know Christ is an infinitely higher thing than to know all the theology, all that is said about His person, or babbled about His work. The body of man does not exist for the sake of its hidden secrets; its hidden secrets exist for the sake of its outside—for the face and the form in which dwells revelation. Its outside is the deepest of it. So Nature as well exists primarily for her face, her look, her appeals to the heart and the imagination, her simple service to human need, and not for the secrets to be discovered in her and turned to man's further use.

By an infinite decomposition we should know nothing more of what a thing really is, for, the moment we decompose it, it ceases to be, and all its meaning is vanished.—From "The Voice of Job." From *George Macdonald Anthology*, compiled by C. S. Lewis.

## REVIEWS

*The Case for the Full Development of Agriculture*, by Jorian Jenks (Rural Reconstruction Association, 479 Park West, London, W.2. 1/6).

Mr. Jenks is well-known as a fully-equipped exponent of what is roughly the same case as ours. In this valuable booklet of 39 pages he sets out a remarkable parallel to our case, in greater detail than we have found possible to our space.

We recommend it cordially as conclusive proof of the wilful neglect of our land by successive industrial governments, and of the need for drastic increase in our domestic food production.

Not, we are sure, because Mr. Jenks does not agree with us, he does not discuss two points of capital importance. These are the necessity of a reversion to small mixed farming, and the personal freedom which ownership alone gives to the farmer. With these exceptions, readers will find here a lengthy and powerful statement of our own case.

\* \* \*

*The Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, 1946* (16 Bedford Square, W.C.1. 5/-)

This issue, as usual, is full of good things. Readers should beware of the pronounced tendency to assume the validity of current fashion such as inoculation and strains automatically resistant to disease. The importance of organic methods, such as the Indore System, rotation of crops, and small mixed farming, are mentioned hardly at all. With this warning in mind, farmers may derive much benefit from the authoritative articles. Without prejudice, we may mention *Crops and Plant Breeding* by G. D. H. Bell, Ph.D., and the piquant discussion on *University Education for the Farmer* by J. N. McLean and N. M. Comber.

*Artificial Insemination* is nowhere mentioned. This is of some significance in view of former issues. Our readers should understand that a great battle is taking place behind the scenes, as is proved by the astonishing proportions of the resignations from the numerous Committees set up for this ramp.

*A Breeders' Tabloid*, by Geo. M. Odium (Wilts Gazette, Devizes. 4/-).

Mr. Odium, as our readers will remember, was prominent recently in an important legal case. In this booklet, which our farming readers will peruse with great interest, he discusses with typical humour what we know, and what we do not know, about breeding.

He is insistent that book learning is not enough. The breeder must learn by experience and there is no royal university road. "If you can produce a breeder who does not confess many errors, then he should either be wearing a halo or classed with Ananias." A breath of fresh air on a subject filled too much with the stuffy air of the class-room.

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We have received from Mr. David Hennessy, Maryfarm, RR4, Easton, Penna., U.S.A., a valuable selection of pamphlets and leaflets bearing on various aspects of the Land Movement. Mr. Hennessy will present to any enquirer a free copy of each of the following, which need no further recommendation from us:—

Eric Gill: *Stations of the Cross*.

Vincent McNabb: *St. Francis Xavier on Profiteering*.

The Archbishop of Boston: *Living to Work*.

### FR. AUSTIN BARKER, O.P., S.T.M.

Many of our older readers will be sorry to learn of the sudden death of Fr. Austin on 8th February.

In the early days of the Distributist movement he was both prominent and active, and with Fr. Vincent McNabb he was a tower of strength to the foundation Distributists. It was a tragedy for the Land Movement that ill-health prevented his taking his due place there, but to the end of his days he was a convinced exponent of the full social teaching of the Church. The full written records which he was fond of making and keeping will be indispensable to the historian of the Distributist and Land Movements in due course. R.I.P.