THE GREAT WAR

Lessons and its Warnings

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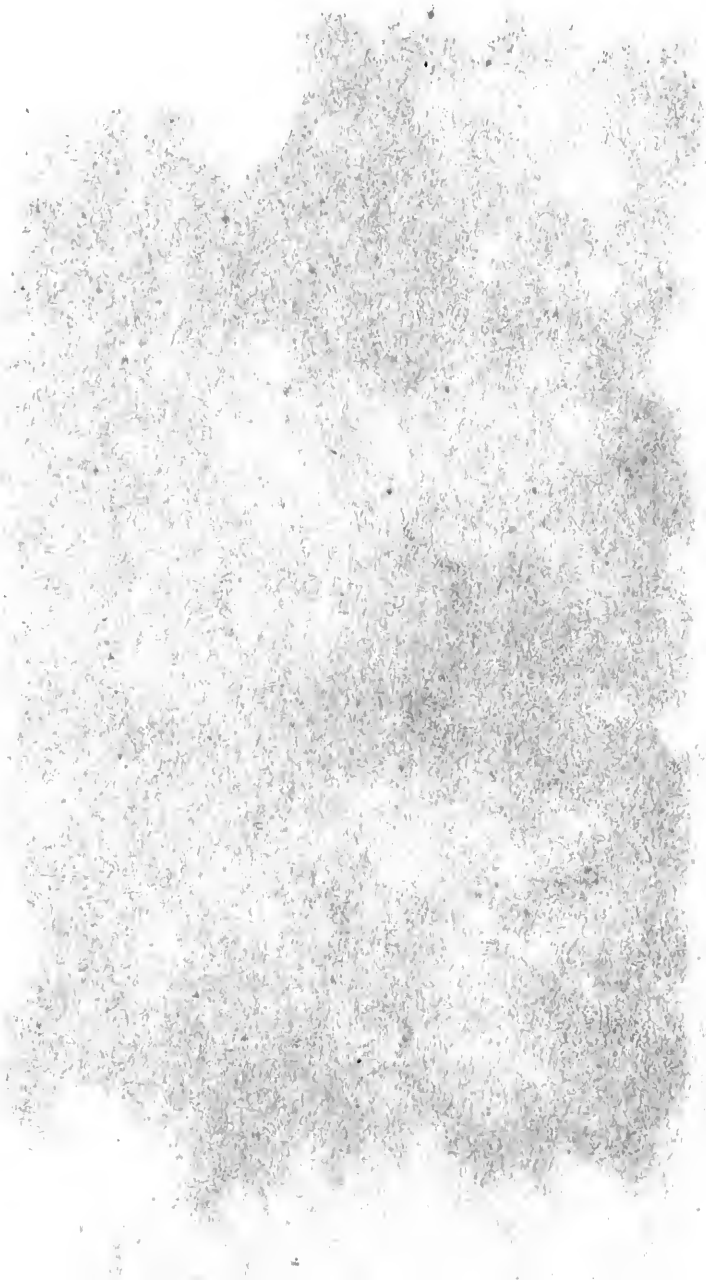
BY THE RIGHT HON.
JOSEPH COLLINGS, J.P., M.P.



THE GREAT WAR

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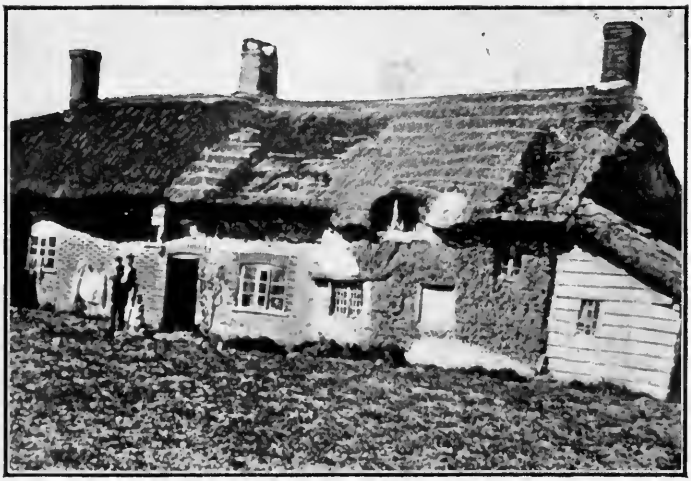
THIS BOOK IS A LOVING TRIBUTE PAID TO THE MEMORY OF A NOBLE PEASANT WOMAN BY THE YOUNGEST AND LAST SURVIVOR OF HER ELEVEN CHILDREN



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HIS FAMILY COTTAGE, LITTLEHAM-CUM-EXMOUTH

THE GREAT WAR

ITS LESSONS AND ITS WARNINGS

BY THE

RIGHT HON. JESSE COLLINGS, J.P., M.P.

Author of "Land Reform"; "The Colonization of Rural Britain";
President of the Rural League; and Life Member of the
Société des Agriculteurs de France.

"*When clouds are seen, wise men put on their cloaks.*"

SHAKESPEARE.

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WITH FEELINGS OF HOPE

THE AUTHOR INSCRIBES THIS WORK

TO A BRITISH STATESMAN

WHO HAS NOT YET APPEARED—

A STATESMAN WHO,

IN THE SPIRIT OF STEIN AND HARDENBERG,

AND WITH THEIR

COURAGE, WISDOM AND PATRIOTIC FORESIGHT,

WILL SECURE

SUCH LEGISLATION AS WILL REALIZE

THE UNTOLD RICHES WHICH RESIDE UNDEVELOPED

IN THE SOIL OF HIS COUNTRY

THE GREAT WAR

ITS LESSONS AND ITS WARNINGS

THE object of this little book is the same as that of the previous publications by the same author. It seeks to awaken the minds of the people to the importance of Agriculture, and to show that that great industry is the only safe basis on which the economy of the nation can rest. It is a difficult task, because during the past two generations or more they have been educated and nurtured on the idea that trade and commerce were the corner-stones of national wealth and prosperity. Agriculture has been a neglected quantity. No serious thought has been bestowed on it by the general public; and successive Governments, during these generations, have treated it as of small account.

The events of the Great War now raging give us many serious warnings, which it would be unwise and may be fatal to leave unheeded.

The most serious is that relating to our food supply. We have escaped disaster in that respect, not by any prevision on our own part, but by the blunders of the enemy.

Of the many blunders the Germans have made, the one most vital to themselves is that they allowed their fleet to be bottled up before the war began. After the war broke out it was too late to rectify it, as the vessels could not leave their ports, being held up by the British fleet.

We were bidden by a naval authority to "sleep quietly in our beds," with the assurance that our fleet would in time of war completely protect our food-laden ships. This, however, is a delusion, as shown by the British admirals who have spoken on the question, and whose opinions should carry the greatest weight.

At a meeting held at the Royal United Service Institution, Sir Nowell Salmon, Admiral of the Fleet, said: "We may hope to a certain extent, but not at the beginning of a war, the trade routes may be kept free; at the commencement of a war I have no doubt they would be very much interfered with." He went on to quote the opinion of the Secretary

of Lloyd's to the following effect: "No form of insurance was practical except keeping up a strong navy and army; and also, as a second line of defence, a reserve of wheat."

Admiral Harding Close said on the same subject: "We spend 31 millions a year on the Navy. You might as well chuck that money into the sea for all the good it will do; for what is the use of going to sea and winning battles of Trafalgar if we leave a starving population behind? . . . It is no use your boasting that we have a powerful navy, and that, therefore, having command of the sea, our food supply is safe. You cannot get a naval officer to say so. We never had command of the sea, so far as the protection of our merchant ships is concerned. If there was a period in the history of this country when we might say we had command of the sea, surely it was after the battle of Trafalgar, when there was not an enemy left on the sea: yet after that battle hundreds of our merchant ships were captured, and it will be so again. We cannot protect our merchant ships; the thing is impossible. But I believe this also, that a blockade of our ports is impossible. The true blockade will be the impossibility of our

ten thousand slow merchant ships obtaining any insurance and being laid up as useless, as the United States merchant ships were laid up when the *Alabama* was about. This will prevent the weekly arrival of the four hundred merchant ships which bring us our food, and cause panic on the corn-market, the enemy having made food contraband of war."

The Germans are endeavouring to repair their great blunder of keeping their fleet inactive before the war by attacking our vessels with submarines. Although the operations of their submarines, carried on with the usual "frightfulness" and accompanied by wilful murder, have been to a certain degree successful, they have not yet had any effect on the issue of the war.

According to a statement of the Admiralty dated April 14th, 1915, there were for the week ending April 7th, 1234 arrivals and sailings of oversea ships to and from the ports of the United Kingdom. During the week 5 British ships (with a gross tonnage of 7904 tons) out of the 1234 named were sunk or captured by submarines.

Since the declaration of the submarine "blockade" on February 18th, 1915, up to April 9th,

1915, the total number of sailings to and from the ports of the United Kingdom was 10,194. Of this number only 37 British merchant vessels and 6 British fishing ships were destroyed, and of these only 33 were sunk by submarines. The remainder were sunk by mines. From these figures it will be seen that the German submarine "blockade" has been a decided failure.[1]

On the other hand, the action of the few German cruisers at large has been of quite a different character.

The experiences of the present, like that of the great American war (in the case of the *Alabama* and the *Kearsage*), prove the elusive career of the enemy's ships when once on the high seas. It is true that they are captured at last, but in the meantime they do their

[1] Since the above date the German submarines have continued their exploits, chiefly in sinking fishing-boats and other smaller craft. Their one notable act was in the case of the *Lusitania*—an unarmed passenger liner. She was torpedoed without warning on May 7th, 1915, off the coast of Ireland, 25 miles from Queenstown. She had some 2000 souls on board, the majority of whom were Americans. The loss of life was heavy, no less than 1100 men, women and children perishing with the vessel. Even this, however, has no influence on the war. It is not recognized warfare, but is deliberate, cold-blooded murder.

destructive work. The seven German raiders, the *Emden*, *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, *Karlsruhe*, *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*, *Königsberg*, *Dresden* and *Leipsic*, before they could be caught destroyed about 70 British ships, including some liners, besides doing other damage. It is reported that the operations of the *Emden* alone put a stop for a time to all the trade between Calcutta and Europe.

The value (with their cargoes) of the ships destroyed by the seven German raiders was about 7 millions sterling. Of the above, the *Kronprinz Wilhelm* sank 13 ships of the value of £1,165,000. The *Emden* destroyed 17 of the value of £2,211,000. The *Karlsruhe* sank 17 valued at £1,662,000, and the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* destroyed 11, representing £885,000. Though 7 millions sterling is a large sum, it is no doubt small in proportion to the total value of all the British ships afloat.[1]

According to German official statistics, Germany at the outbreak of war had 43 small cruisers, including the seven vessels just referred

[1] For further particulars see "The Times," April 13th, 1915, Lloyd's "Official List," and Lloyd's "Register of Shipping."

to. These were swift, light vessels varying from 23 to 28 knots, with a tonnage of from 3400 tons to about 5000 tons. (The *Karlsruhe*, for example, had a tonnage of 4820 tons and a speed of 28 knots.)

If, before the declaration of war, the Germans had let loose these cruisers to range the high seas and hover about the trade routes, and had made provision for keeping them there,[1] they would have dealt this country a fatal blow by interrupting, if not absolutely stopping, our food supplies. Seeing that we rely for four-fifths of our bread-stuffs on oversea sources, a very short interruption would have been sufficient for the purpose, especially as our supplies are of a hand-to-mouth character. We have never, for instance, more than a six or seven weeks' stock of corn on hand. It would be impossible under these cir-

[1] It is remarkable how effectively the Germans managed for months to supply the seven raiders with the necessary supplies of coal, food, etc. Their supply ships seemed to be almost always at the appointed place at the right time, and their means of receiving and conveying information were equally remarkable. Their submarines are also effectively supplied with oil to enable them to keep the sea—by what means has not yet been discovered—probably through the treachery of spies and other persons in our midst.

cumstances to insure our grain-laden ships, except at prohibitive rates ; and, in a few weeks, panic would ensue, and the cost of food would rise to famine prices.

We have been saved from this catastrophe, not so much by prevision on our own part as by the blunders of the enemy. The nation, however, is in such a position with regard to its food supply as should alarm every thinking person : and later on in these pages a remedy will be urged for this perilous state of things.

AFTER-WAR EMPLOYMENT

THERE is a serious problem involved in the question of employment after the war is ended. There are some hundreds of thousands of men now at the front, and more are continually going.[1] Of course it is fervently hoped the majority will return. The question, however, arises, "What will become of them?" Out of common gratitude for the services they have rendered, the nation must consider their position, and as far as possible provide for their future.

We may be sure that this great war will affect our social and political institutions. In many respects things will be entirely changed. A new page in our social history will be turned over. New ideas, new aspirations, new forces will be at work, which it behoves the nation seriously to anticipate and deal with, lest they should

[1] On June 15th, 1915, the Prime Minister stated that "the number of men authorized by Parliament for army and navy is 3¼ millions."

become unmanageable. It will be difficult, if not impossible to find employment for such a large number of ex-service men who will be with us at the end of the war, except on work in connection with the land. *There will be no other adequate outlet.*

The returned soldiers will have been accustomed to pick and spade work, digging trenches, etc., and generally to an outdoor life. The influence of these conditions, and the excitement of military life generally, will disincline most of the men to return to their former occupations, even if such occupations were open to them, which is doubtful. This disinclination will apply specially to those who were engaged in sedentary occupations. The shopman will not be inclined to return to the counter, nor the clerk to the desk.

The writer has held conversations with a considerable number of returned wounded soldiers—shopmen, clerks, tradesmen and others. In no case has he found them willing to return to their former work. All of them, however, seemed much taken with the idea of working on the land with the alluring prospect of possessing a part of it—as a stake in the country for which

they had fought. As one of them said, "We should be digging our own trenches." Settling down "as you were" and carrying on "business as usual" will be impossible. A fresh field will be opened up for land nationalizers and other agitators. Vain, unpatriotic, dishonourable quibblers, who if not actually or avowedly pro-German are of great service to Germany, will come to the front with their mischievous counsels. Trade will be dislocated, the present rate of high wages will be reduced, and the self-seeking section of the trade unions, and those who have shirked their duty during the war, tempted by opportunity, will be in evidence. Many interests will be attacked severely, and there will be great trouble in many unforeseen ways.

The only way to counteract the disruptive action of these new forces is by securing the steadying effect of a largely-increased rural population. *Such increased rural population would be an effective and healthy balance wheel to regulate the action of the social machine.* The present is an opportune time for providing it.

There is profitable employment for some millions of persons in cultivating the uncultivated

soil and in reclaiming the waste lands of this country. In accomplishing this result the soldiers who return would, for the most part, find congenial employment—one which would give them the outdoor life to which they had been accustomed, and for which their experience with the spade, their improved physique, and their discipline will have made them specially fit. Of course, inducements would have to be held out to them, which are questions for the Government of the day. Grants (on easy terms) both of land so reclaimed and cultivated, and sufficient capital to work it, would be highly attractive to those disbanded soldiers, who would thus become a great addition to the security of the nation. From an economic point of view, moreover, the undertaking would be a sound one. The first outlay, in fact, would be recouped to a tenfold extent; and besides this—what is most important—our denuded countrysides would be repeopled, thereby adding to the strength and security of the nation.[1] Suggestions are made

[1] In the days of the Republic of Rome before Latifundia prevailed, the Roman soldier when his military career was over had a farm provided for him in some part of Italy to enable him to make a living and spend his days in productive work.

that nothing should be done till the war is ended ; but that would be too late. A policy of this kind cannot be suddenly improvised. It should be entered upon at once, so that it might be ready when the emergency arises.

The land is a vast factory in which Nature, the great workman, labours with ceaseless energy both day and night.

Agriculture is the art and science of cultivating the land. Land with labour working it is the sole source of wealth. Everything we handle, wear, eat or touch comes from the land. Factories and workshops are only places where the produce of the land is manipulated to make it fit for human wants. If the produce of the land fails or lessens, all industries fail and lessen with it. Gold, silver and diamond mines as sources of wealth are insignificant compared with the inexhaustible riches that can be extracted from the land.

In agricultural countries a vast and dangerous proletariat such as we have is not to be found. That evil omen "The Deserted Village" does not exist. The comforts of life are more equally diffused. Vast wealth possessed by a few persons, while the mass of the people are steeped in want and destitution, are conditions of society unknown in countries where agriculture is the chief occupation.

BRITISH AGRICULTURE

THE British Land System is an obsolete one. No such system exists in any other country in Europe, except, perhaps, in East Prussia. It is costly, wasteful and unproductive, and the present war reveals its defects as compared with the occupying ownership system adopted in other countries.

PRICE OF LAND

Perhaps there is no surer gauge of the productivity of the soil of a country than the price of the agricultural land in that country.

Mr. Seebohm Rowntree, in his valuable work "Land and Labour: Lessons from Belgium," states that after making exhaustive enquiries into the position of 2251 occupying owners of 130,000 acres of land in Belgium, he finds the average price of land in that country is £60 an acre, as against £25 an acre, the estimated

average cost of land in our country. From similar enquiries with regard to rented land, he found that the average rent in Belgium was 36s. an acre as against 20s. an acre, the latter being the estimated average rent of land in England.

In his visits to European countries the present writer has made special enquiries on this point, and has invariably found that the price of land there was at least double and even treble the price of land in England.

PRODUCE OF THE SOIL

The produce of the soil in England is correspondingly low, in many cases, being about one-half of that of Continental countries. It might almost be taken as an axiom that low prices and low rents of land are coupled with a low scale of production. The so-called "good landlord" is largely responsible for this—by his readiness to lower rents or to postpone payment of rents, instead of insisting on an improved production of the soil. The "good landlord," low cultivation and low rents are conditions not infrequently found together in this country.

The apologists for our present system continually state that the land in England produces

more wheat per acre than the land in any other country. This is a misleading statement. On the Continent the occupying owner grows wheat on poor land that is not used for that purpose in England.[1]

DIFFERENCE IN PRODUCTION

The following table shows the number of live stock per square mile of territory in different countries :

HORSES.	CATTLE.	SHEEP.
Denmark .. 32	Belgium 156	Gt. Britain ...285
Belgium ... 21	Denmark ...121	France 85
Germany .. 20	Germany ... 92	Denmark 58
Gt. Britain . 18	Gt. Britain .. 80	Germany 38
France 15	France 69	Belgium (1895) 21

It will be seen that Belgium stands first in cattle. Belgium too has more goats than sheep, whereas the number of goats in Great Britain is insignificant. Besides this Belgium, in proportion to its area, keeps more pigs than any other European country, having 101 per square

[1] It answers his purpose to do so even though the yield is smaller ; but of course it lessens the general average of the wheat production of his country.

mile, whilst Great Britain has only 32 per square mile.[1]

To further illustrate this question of production, see the following four tables. They are extracted from a pamphlet entitled "England's Food," written by Mr. C. W. Fielding, of Inglefield Manor, Billinghurst. The statistics are founded on official reports; they are excellently arranged, and are most valuable for comparative purposes.

The difference in these rates of production is not to be attributed to soil and climate, for in these respects the United Kingdom is more suitable for all-round cultivation than are any of the countries referred to. The difference is accounted for solely by the Land Systems adopted.

In this country yearly tenancies and large farms are the rule. On the Continent smaller holdings and cultivating ownerships prevail. M. de Laveleye, the eminent Belgian economist, states: "In Belgium there are lands so sterile that it is the small cultivator alone who can

[1] For additional particulars, see "Land and Labour Lessons from Belgium," by B. Seebohm Rowntree (Macmillan), 1911.

TABLE I

	United Kingdom.	Germany.	France.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total acreage under cultivation	48,000,000	86,000,000	67,000,000
Acreage under the plough	20,000,000	65,000,000	47,000,000
Percentage of cultivated surface in grass	60 per cent	20 per cent	30 per cent
Acres growing Bread grain	1,790,000	20,000,000	19,500,000
Percentage of total cultivated area growing Bread grain	3 per cent	25 per cent	30 per cent
	Quarters.	*Quarters.*	*Quarters.*
Total quarters of Bread grain produced	7,000,000	73,000,000	47,000,000
Production of Bread grain per head of population	90 lbs.	485 lbs.	500 lbs.
Head of cattle	11,000,000	20,000,000	14,000,000
Population	45,000,000	65,000,000	40,000,000
Population engaged in agriculture	1,350,000	10,000,000	8,000,000
Percentage of population engaged in agriculture	3 per cent	17 per cent	20 per cent

TABLE II

Increase or decrease of wheat production during 30 years past.

GERMANY.	FRANCE.	GREAT BRITAIN.
25 per cent increase.	7 per cent increase.	30 per cent decrease.

TABLE III

Increase in the number of cattle in 40 years.

Germany ..... from 15 millions to 20 millions.
France ..... from 11 millions to 14 millions.
United Kingdom ..... from 10 millions to 11 millions.

TABLE IV

Increase or decrease in the number of pigs and sheep.

Germany has increased her stock of pigs from 7 millions to 22 millions.
France „ „ „ „ 5 millions to 7 millions.
The United Kingdom remains practically the same as 40 years ago, viz. about 4 millions.
In 40 years the number of sheep in Germany has fallen from 25 millions to 6 millions.
In the United Kingdom during the same period the number has remained stationary at about 28 millions.
Germany, so far as pigs and sheep are concerned, has acted on the principle that whereas a sheep will produce one or a couple of young only once a year, a pig will produce a considerably greater number, supply more food, and yield more profit.

fertilize the waste and perform prodigies which nothing but the love of the land could enable him to accomplish. . . . All over the Continent of Europe is more live stock kept, more produce and income yielded by small farmers than larger estates."

As to cultivating (i.e. occupying) ownerships, it is not necessary to refer to the hackneyed phrase as to the "Magic of ownership turning sand into gold," etc., as any man with common intelligence must know, if he does not acknowledge, that the sense of ownership whether of field or farm, wife or child, discloses all the best energies in a man to do his very best for that which is his own. The feeling is not acquired, but is inbred in human nature. As Lord Lansdowne states: "I believe it to be inherent in human nature to prefer a complete ownership of anything, to a divided and partial ownership. Give a child a toy which it especially likes: its first question is, 'Is it my very own?' and the child is father to the man."[1]

A tenant is in a completely different position from the owner who tills his own land. The

[1] Speech at the annual meeting of the Rural League, July 24th, 1912.

interests of landlord and tenant are from the nature of things opposed to one another. However good his landlord, the tenant has not the same freedom, independence, or, it may be added, the same social status as the yeoman who is his own landlord.

Our Continental neighbours rely mainly on smaller farms and intensive cultivation, all based on "ownership" (which is the true secret of their success), instead of on large farms and the tenancy system (of which they know little or nothing) prevalent in our country.

Mr. Christopher Turnor in his valuable book[1] refers to the immense loss of food and money caused by our system of cultivation, and he contrasts the system with that of Continental countries. He shows that in Denmark with an area of above 7 million acres of poorer land than that of this country, the Danish farmer raises food-stuffs to the value of £6 an acre.

In Belgium the value of food-stuffs grown on holdings—mostly small—is on an average no less than £20 an acre.

In France the total production of food-stuffs

[1] "Land Problems and National Welfare" (John Lane).

is 500 millions sterling, the average yield per acre being just over £5 9s.

In Germany the total production of food-stuffs is 417 millions sterling, equal to an average of £5 5s. an acre.[1] In Germany too, as already indicated in the foregoing Table I, there are some 20 million acres used for growing human food (rye and wheat); whilst over 15¼ million acres are employed in growing barley and oats, making a total of 35¼ millions of acres devoted to cereals—exclusive, be it remembered, of beans and peas. In proportion to its area and population, France occupies a similarly favourable position.

[1] The stories told about shortness of food in Germany are to be discredited. Thanks to its land system Germany is practically a self-feeding country; at any rate there is no absolute want or even scarcity.

"The Home Market is first in order and paramount in importance."

HENRY CLAY.

HOME MARKET

POLITICIANS are continually preaching about the importance of the Home Market, but very few of them realize what it means, and none of them make any practical suggestion for securing it. The expenditure of the money receipts for the produce of the soil of our country constitutes the Home Market. The following Tables show the value of the principal articles of food imported in the year 1913:—

GRAIN AND FLOUR	£
Wheat	43,849,173
Barley	8,077,100
Oats	5,671,957
Wheat meal and flour	6,347,771
Shredded wheat	30,901
Barley meal and flour	478
Oatmeal	248,143
Groats	13,626
Rolled oats (including Quaker oats)	345,992
Peas and beans	1,574,924
Lentils	76,926
	66,236,991

MEAT

	£
Animals (living) for food (oxen and bulls, cows, calves, sheep and lambs)	305,063
Beef, fresh and refrigerated	16,070,833
,, salted	111,070
Mutton, fresh and refrigerated	10,907,992
Pork	1,368,360
Pork, salted (other than bacon and hams)	297,135
Rabbits (dead), fresh and refrigerated	781,376
Unenumerated	1,429,997
,, salted	138,409
Preserved otherwise than by salting (including tinned and canned)	3,707,054
Bacon	17,428,881
Hams	3,068,251
Poultry and game	1,111,990
	56,726,411

DAIRY PRODUCE

	£
Butter	24,083,658
Margarine	3,917,701
Cheese	7,035,039
Margarine cheese	10
Milk, fresh	2,011
,, condensed, not sweetened	89,984
,, powder, not sweetened	86,857
,, preserved, other kinds	34,673
Cream	40,454
Eggs	9,590,602
	44,880,989

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

		£
Fruit :		
Apples	raw . .	2,230,370
Cherries	,, . .	123,230
Currants	,, . .	147,407
Gooseberries	,, . .	6,700
Pears	,, . .	650,084
Plums	,, . .	437,306
Strawberries	,, . .	25,645
Apricots and peaches	,, . .	30,813
Grapes	,, . .	740,543
Unenumerated	,, . .	325,101
Preserved	,, . .	319,566
Vegetables :		
Onions	raw . .	1,035,053
Potatoes	,, . .	2,589,038
Tomatoes	,, . .	1,348,682
Unenumerated	,, . .	519,340
Dried	,, . .	11,824
Preserved by canning	,, . .	501,225
		11,041,927

SUMMARY

	£
Grain and flour	66,236,991
Meat	56,726,411
Dairy produce	44,880,989
Fruit and vegetables . . .	11,041,927
	£178,886,318

There is not the remotest doubt that if the land of this country were properly utilized, every pennyworth of these immense food imports could be produced at home.

Besides the articles enumerated in the preceding Tables, there are others which could and would be produced by Peasant Proprietors. There is a good market for English tomatoes, which we import to the value of £1,348,682. The English tomatoes, being plucked fresh from the vine, are, as regards nutrition, juice and flavour, far superior to the foreign grown, which, in order to bear the transit, are gathered in an unripe condition. The same remarks apply to all foreign vegetables with which our markets are flooded. Again, there is the industry of bee-keeping, which if developed would produce a large portion, at least, of the honey—a valuable food—which we import annually to the value of above £50,000 from countries where the system of small occupying ownerships prevails.

There is another large industry that could be developed in this country, under a system of peasant proprietary, but which cannot be secured so well by any other system, namely, that of goat-keeping. The goat has been called the

"cottager's cow." It costs little to buy and it is inexpensive to keep. A goat will, on an average, yield about two quarts of milk a day for some months after kidding. The milk is very valuable and sells at high prices, especially for the use of children and invalids. The small peasant proprietors in Continental countries, almost without exception, keep herds of goats. Belgium has more goats than sheep. A Society of ladies in England has been formed to encourage goat-keeping. The members of this Society would do an immense amount of good if they could have colonies of peasant proprietors to instruct and train in the interesting work of goat-keeping.

Again, there is the growing of sugar beet, for which our climate and soil are most suitable. The total value of sugar, raw and refined (excluding cane sugar), imported annually into the United Kingdom from Continental countries is not far short of 20 millions sterling.[1]

Under the tenancy system, the average English

[1] For particulars of sugar-beet growing in England, the profit realized by it, the labour required for its cultivation, the value of its by-products for fodder, etc., see "Colonization of Rural Britain," Chapter XXII.

farmers have become demoralized, and have developed into a self-satisfied class. Under that system they have no incentive to make the land produce to its full capacity. They pay very low rents, live in comfortable houses, and attend the dinners in market towns, where too often they have no business to transact—to say nothing of the much too great partiality of many of them for hunting and other sports, instead of attending to their proper business. They prefer grazing and dairying to farming, as they employ the least amount of labour and give the least trouble. They may or may not be aware that far more milk is producible from cows fed from the produce of arable land than from cows fed on grass (to say nothing of the employment of far more labour), but if they are aware of it they do not act up to their knowledge, and landlords allow the system to continue.

Pig-keeping, too, is neglected, there being only about 4 million pigs kept in the United Kingdom, as against 22 millions in Germany. At the same time, we import bacon, hams and pork to the value of above 22 millions sterling. The Danes, who are the great competitors of the English farmers, in the matter of pigs are

successful in their competition, because they own the land they occupy, and use the methods which ownership alone can supply.

The sole remedy for all this and the main method by which the Home Market can be supplied by British cultivators, is to apply the incentive of occupying ownership to the British farmer. The "Purchase of Land" Bill now before Parliament provides a means to this end. It enacts that as large estates are broken up and sold, the tenant farmers on such estates should be enabled by the aid of the State to become their own landlords; the whole of the purchase money being advanced by the State at the lowest possible interest, and repayable by annual instalments. In addition to the interest an annual sum of 10s. per cent is to be paid, which would recoup the whole of the purchase money in some sixty-eight years; when all payments would cease. The purchaser, however, becomes to all intents and purposes the real owner the moment the agreement is signed. We have already applied the system to Ireland with successful and astounding results; and there is no fair or logical reason for the State to refuse any longer to apply it in Great Britain.

"Extreme remedies are required for extreme Evils."

Volumes have been written pointing out the dangerous position this country is in with regard to food supply in time of war; but no practical remedies have been suggested. Those who consider the remedies suggested in these pages to be extravagant and too costly, may be fairly asked, Have they any alternative or alternatives?

REMEDIES

FARMING AND FARMERS

In this country are to be found some of the finest farmers in Europe. They are, however, in a small minority, probably not more than one-tenth of the whole number. Mr. Christopher Turnor calls them "Star" farmers. He adds, "the *star* farmer has an injurious effect on the agricultural industry. In the first place he is cited as a typical British agriculturist, whereas he is not typical but exceptional. It is the average farmer, not the exceptional one, who sets the standard of agriculture."

These "Star" farmers are practically all of them members of the various agricultural associations in the country. They and other societies criticize the Bills in Parliament which deal with agriculture; but they do so with small effect. The reason is, that they pride themselves on being non-political, and hence become practically mere debating societies. Valuable discussions on agricultural subjects are carried on —generally by a few and the same persons, who speak on almost all occasions.

The writer, during his thirty-five years' experience in the House of Commons, has been continually struck with the small consideration given to agriculture by successive Governments. The reason is, that being created on Party lines, Governments pay little or no attention to non-political bodies.[1]

As an instance, nearly every agricultural association has passed resolutions, some of them

[1] Agricultural associations on the Continent, with which the writer is fairly well acquainted, are actively political. They interview and write to candidates for Parliament as to their views on agricultural matters, and their votes depend on whether or no the replies are satisfactory.

two or three times over, in favour of the "Purchase of Land" Bill. These resolutions, however, have not had the least practical effect, for the reason that they are not backed up by political pressure. The old proverb "the child that does not cry gets no food," exactly illustrates the farmers' position. If the agricultural societies were to consolidate and back up their proposals by political action, regardless of Party considerations, a different and satisfactory state of things would speedily be brought about.

THE AVERAGE FARMER

The average farmer cultivates his farm in a most indifferent manner. Through want of capital or want of knowledge, or both, his land does not yield one-half of what it is capable of producing.

As one example of his carelessness and ignorance, anyone passing along our country roads may see heaps of manure on the wayside exposed to wind and rain. The liquid manure, the most valuable part of it, may be seen running to waste down the hedge troughs and often flooding the roads. The Continental farmer would look with horror at this waste of what he regards

as his chief means for fertilizing the land. Those who have visited farms abroad, will have seen the care with which the cultivating owner collects the liquid manure into tanks and, often diluting it with water, spreads it over his ground to enrich the crops.

The Board of Agriculture issue periodically most valuable and instructive leaflets on farming, but it is a question if the average farmer reads any of them.

The average farmer, moreover, keeps few or no accounts and therefore does not realize his financial position. He expects too large a return for the capital invested in his farm. A man who farms 200 acres, assuming that he has the requisite capital of £2000 (which he rarely has) and reckoning the handsome rate of interest on the £2000 at $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, has just £250 a year or about £5 a week on which to live. Against this, he should charge himself with house rent, with the value of the produce consumed on the farm, with insurances, living, clothing, education of his children and other expenses connected with housekeeping. After providing for all these expenses, there is evidently no margin to enable him to don the "black

coat " to attend market dinners, and incur other needless expenses. To succeed he must copy the practice of the Continental occupying proprietor of the same size farm, and work every day on the land himself. The secret of the success of small farming is work. Many larger farmers follow this course and succeed, but the great majority do not, and fail, and ascribe their failure to the land and bad times.[1]

[1] Regarding the larger farmer, the writer has recently paid his annual visit to a yeoman friend, who owns and cultivates about 300 acres of land. He keeps 7 horses for regular work on the farm, and has at the present time 20 mares and colts for the purpose of breeding and sale. He has 50 milking cows and about 50 bullocks and heifers. He and his wife are up at 5 o'clock in the morning to begin work. He works with his men, whom he pays well and treats well, and consequently he has the pick of the neighbourhood. As regards dress, during working time he can scarcely be distinguished from the men whom he employs. His house is well furnished and has all the signs of refinement in the form of books, paintings, music, etc. It is an ideal life, and to the writer's knowledge this yeoman is fast saving money. This example is quoted to show how a farmer can prosper by dint of work on his own land.

DILAPIDATED HUSBANDRY

There is another, and a large, class of men who scarcely till the land at all. Every agriculturist knows of their existence. They farm as "lodgers"; taking all they can out of the land and putting little or nothing into it. The landlord is obliged to be content with small rent, because to turn the tenant out would necessitate a large sum to be expended in bringing the exhausted farm into heart again; and many landlords cannot afford to do this.[1]

The remedy in these cases is for the Government to take over the farms at a price based on their depreciated condition, to bring them into good condition again, and to sell them on

[1] A few years ago the writer visited a farmer of the type in question. He complained of the soil, the seasons, and the crops. The writer pointed out that his fields were matted with couch and other noxious weeds, that the hedgerows extended for yards over the land, and that the hedge troughs were never cleaned out, etc. He further asked this man to look at a neighbouring farm of the same soil, which was producing at least forty bushels of wheat per acre. "Yes," he replied, "but that farm is owned and tilled by a butcher, who can afford to manure and feed his land; I drop the seed into the soil and take what comes."

easy terms to cultivating owners, who would be certain to do justice to them.

When we have a Government, as it is hoped we shall have some day, who are alive to the vital importance of agriculture, a special department of its Board of Agriculture will be appointed with inspectors to visit such dilapidated farms, and to insist on the landlords putting them into good condition, and failing their doing this to compel them to sell the land at a valuation price.

TILLAGE *versus* GRASS

THE following Tables are based on the statistics of the Board of Agriculture (Cd. 7325, 1914) :—

ENGLAND AND WALES

	Acres.
Total surface excluding water, but including mountain and heath land[1]	37,138,765
Total area under crops and grass	27,129,382

Dissecting these figures in order to give particulars of the uses to which the 27,129,382 acres are put, the following results appear :—

	Acres.	Acres.
Grass for hay	5,069,692	
Grass not for hay	11,001,457	
		16,071,149

CEREALS (including)

	Acres.	
Wheat	1,701,588	
Barley	1,558,856	
Oats	1,974,700	
Rye	51,506	
Beans	268,279	
Peas	164,044	
		5,718,973

[1] The area returned as mountain and heath land in England and Wales was 3,781,565 acres.

	Acres.
Other crops, including potatoes, turnips, cabbages, mangolds, vetches, lucerne, hops, small fruit, clover, grasses under rotation, etc.	5,339,260
Total	27,129,382

The above figures are for England and Wales only. If we take the whole of the United Kingdom the latest statistics (1914), as regards grass, are still more striking, e.g. :—

	Acres.
The total surface of the United Kingdom, excluding water, is	76,642,731
Total area cultivated in crops or grass is	46,743,816

Of this area there are :—

	Acres.
In grass for hay	6,489,885
In grass not for hay	20,859,765
Cultivated in wheat, there are only	1,905,933

The most striking feature in these statistics is the preponderance of grass land. During the early "seventies" of last century, agriculture was fairly prosperous. It began to suffer by a period of bad harvests which culminated in the disastrous year of 1879. The bad times for agriculture then began, and led to the laying down of arable land to grass, a process which has been continued, almost without intermission,

to the present time. The area of arable land declined in a corresponding degree.

With the dawn of the present century agricultural prosperity again set in. Since the year 1900 farmers have been doing fairly well, yet still the process of laying down land to grass has continued unchecked. This grass is generally described as "permanent pasture"; but it is poor stuff, much of it almost worthless for feeding purposes. Seeding down land to grass costs at least from 50s. to 60s. an acre; but most of the 12 million acres referred to have not been seeded, but allowed to "tumble down" into grass.

Very little permanent pasture is seen in Belgium, Denmark and other Continental countries; and yet, as we have shown, there is more live stock per square mile produced there than in England. The Continental farmer cannot afford to feed his stock with grass. He finds it too expensive and wasteful. He relies on arable land for feeding purposes, while the English farmer relies largely on grass. The difference between the two methods causes an immense reduction in our food supply, and an enormous money loss to the nation.

The Hon. Edward Strutt is a practical farmer, and one of the small number of farmers who keep strict accounts. In his address at the Surveyors' Institution, on November 11th, 1912, he gave the results of the working of two farms which he cultivates, representing 2000 acres. He shows that in six years, 1906–11, an average annual net profit was made of £3 17s. an acre on wheat, £2 7s. 9d. on barley and £3 0s. 1d. on oats. The average yearly net profit on the arable land of the two farms during the six years named was £2 14s. 9d. per acre; while the average yearly profit on the grass land was only 6s. 6d. an acre. If this can be done with wheat under 30s. a quarter, how much easier would it be to do when the price is nearer 60s. a quarter, with no prospect of it being lower but every probability of its being higher for several years to come? There is not the remotest doubt that were we to adopt the Continental land system, cultivate our uncultivated soil, and reclaim our waste lands as suggested later on, we could raise all the food necessary for man and beast in this country.

With a country naturally far more productive than that of Denmark, Germany or France, it

is melancholy to compare our present position with theirs, or with what it might be under a proper system of cultivation.

RANCHING

Large farmers are laying down land to grass, rather than pay an increase of wages, though they can well afford to do so.

Farmers of the old school are slow to adopt new ideas, and probably they are hoping that the end of the war will see the old scale of wages restored. That scale and former state of affairs will not come. Most of the able-bodied men have gone to the War, and by mixing with other men have learnt to compare their position as agricultural labourers with the position of workmen in other industries. They are finding that by comparison they are the worst paid, work longer hours, and have fewer enjoyments than any other class of workers. When they come back it will be found that their experiences have made them different men, and that they will not return to the old routine and the old rate of pay.

A "ranching" farmer holding—we cannot say *farming*—600 acres can run his farm with

about four, or even less, labourers to look after the stock. By this method he can manage to get about 9s. or 10s. an acre profit for himself. *Any land system which allows "ranching" of this kind stands self-condemned.*

The people of this country when they understand the matter will not tolerate for long the spectacle of men who are monopolizing large tracts of land which they do not attempt to farm, but who are pursuing a ruinous course both as regards the production of food and the support of the population. It is probable that, at the end of the war, this subject will be dealt with, perhaps in a manner not pleasant to those concerned. Landlords are largely to blame in this matter. If they were to charge their tenants economic rents—which in England they very rarely do—they would go far to put an end to "ranching."

In most cases tenants are not allowed to break up grass land without their landlord's consent. In like manner they should be forbidden to lay down arable land to grass, without their landlord's consent. Landlords themselves should remember that the possession of land is not absolute but conditional; the chief condition

being that the soil should yield to its utmost capacity food for man and beast.

DEPOPULATION

"*The greatest crop the land can bear is a crop of men*" (Lord Lansdowne).

By the course suggested by the writer, the pressing problem of re-peopling the rural districts would be largely solved. According to the census of 1851, the population of England and Wales, living under rural and urban conditions, were about equally divided—some 50 per cent being rural and some 50 per cent urban. According to the census of 1911, however, the proportion was as follows :—

28,162,936 or 78·1 per cent of the population were urban.
7,907,556 or only 21·9 per cent of the population were rural.

FARM WORKERS

According to the same census (1911, Vol. 10, page 51) the number of farm workers was still further reduced; being only 762,947 for the whole of England and Wales. Their ages were as follow :—

Ages of Male Farm Workers.

10 and under 13	544
13	8,614
14	23,276
15 and under 20	147,106
20 „ 25	108,418
25 „ 35	148,081
35 „ 45	111,843
45 „ 55	97,071
55 „ 65	67,991
65 „ 75	41,568
75 and upwards	8,435
	762,947

WOMAN LABOUR

In order to provide more labour it is suggested that women should be encouraged to do farm work and so earn wages. Since the days when agricultural gangs of women were, as a common custom, hired, as wage earners, to work in the fields, the legislation in this country has wisely been opposed to this form of female labour. It was held to lead to deterioration of character and to the neglect of family life. No doubt women are eminently fitted—more fitted than men—for certain branches of agricultural work.[1] Working for wages in the fields, how-

[1] For illustrations of this, and for full descriptions and pictures of schools and colleges for the practical training of

ever, is not a desirable occupation for women; and it will be found that, as a rule, they will not return to it, especially as they can so easily get employment in the towns.[1] Here again the principle of ownerships comes in to solve this difficult labour problem. The objection to field work for women does not apply to wives and families of peasant proprietors. On the Continent it is seen almost universally that the family, as regards labour, is the main help of the men-folk, who cultivate their own land. The wife can attend to her household duties, and can occupy her spare time by working on the holding

women in agricultural work, see "Colonization of Rural Britain," pages 229 onwards.

[1] The writer's mother, when a young woman, worked in the fields, as was the custom in those days. Some years ago he had speech with an old farmer at Broadhembury, Devon, who told him, "Your grandfather, who was the finest all-round labourer in the parish, worked for me till he was above eighty years of age, and when he was past regular work he came on butter-making days to turn the churn. I paid him eight shillings a week, and his three daughters (one of them the writer's mother) sixpence a day each, with an allowance of cider." These wages, together with the small earnings of the sons, made the total income of the family a fairly good one. One of the sons was apprenticed to a blacksmith, another to a cartwright, and the third enlisted as a soldier.

which is close at hand. The children also are of the greatest service in the same way. The very young children can do something useful, weeding, planting, collecting, carrying, etc.[1]

Looking at these facts, it cannot be disputed that ownerships can alone solve, not only the labour question, but that of the deficient production of the land of this country.

[1] The writer at the age of ten used to feed the pigs and poultry, he could hoe and dig potatoes, plant seeds and do other useful farm work. At thirteen he could handle the flail and drive a cart. He has recently visited a small holding, which might be cited as a typical example of how the labour question is solved. The occupier cultivates between thirty and forty acres of land. He keeps two horses, several head of stock, twelve pigs and a large number of poultry. Except for occasional help, such as at harvest time, the whole work of the little farm is done by himself and his family. He was doing well before the war, but since the war began he admits that "times have been exceedingly good."

RECLAMATION OF WASTE LANDS

CONTINENTAL countries have always given great attention to land reclamation. They regard every acre of reclaimed land added to their territories as an addition to their national wealth. A few, and only a few, examples may be given of the success of land reclamation, wherever it has been carried out. In England the great operation in this direction was carried out by former Dukes of Bedford, who, by a lavish expenditure, reclaimed the great "Bedford Level," comprising 300,000 acres of fenland. This land was almost valueless at the time. It consisted mainly of bog and morass. It was, however, rich in alluvial deposits, and when reclaimed by drainage became one of the richest and most productive areas for corn-growing in Europe. It is difficult to estimate the enormous yearly income which this land reclamation has secured for the nation.[1]

[1] The whole surface of the Fens is lower than the sea. A few years ago the writer was visiting a farmer friend on

The first Earl of Leicester, a great practical agriculturist, also reclaimed large tracts of hitherto worthless land, near Holkham, Norfolk, and turned them into rich corn-growing areas.

FRANCE

On the channel coast of Normandy in the Bays of Mount St. Michel and Des Veys, 9500 acres of land were reclaimed from the sea. In 1896 the writer visited this great undertaking, and by the courtesy of the managers of the work was enabled to examine the plans, estimates, cost and other particulars of it. As fast as the land was reclaimed it was divided into small farms and holdings, which were either let or sold to buyers or tenants who put them immediately under cultivation. The holdings that were sold realized on an average £48 an acre, and those that were rented were let at an average rent of £2 16s. an acre. In 1905 the writer received further particulars from the

the Thorney estate, and found that the farmer's doorstep was 9 feet below the sea level. For particulars of this great undertaking, see "Land Reform," Appendix I. See also "The Story of a Great Agricultural Estate," by the Duke of Bedford (Murray).

managers, from which it appeared that the undertaking had been completed and was so prosperous that it had been decided to raise the selling price of the land that remained to £60 an acre. This rise in price seemed to be warranted by the extraordinary productiveness of soil when used for market gardening.[1]

HOLLAND

"Better land drained than land lost"
(Dutch proverb).

Holland, perhaps, stands first among the countries which have added to their territories by land reclamation. Hundreds of thousands of acres of fertile land have been reclaimed from the sea and inland lakes. Mr. H. M. Jenkins, one of the commissioners of the Royal Agricultural Commission, in his report, December 31st, 1879, gives 9 million acres as the total area of Holland. He describes the draining of the Lake of Haarlem, and the small lakes adjoining, by which 45,000 acres of land were reclaimed.

[1] For further particulars, estimates, methods of reclamation, cultivation, etc., see "Land Reform," Appendix I. Mr. Jenkins evidently refers to North Holland.

This reclaimed land was formed into a new Province and divided into farms of from 50 to 150 acres each. Soon after reclamation, Mr. Jenkins states, the land contained a population of 15,000 persons. In each 100 acres there were on an average 16 horned cattle, 24 sheep, 4 pigs and 7 horses, besides poultry of all kinds. The total cost of the undertaking was £1,150,000. The then (1879) value of the reclaimed land was estimated at £3,083,333. In addition, it was calculated that the rates and taxes in the new district amounted to £13,500 a year.

ZUIDERZEE

In 1892 the Dutch Government appointed a Royal Commission to consider the question of draining and enclosing the Zuiderzee. The Commission reported that the Zuiderzee ought to be enclosed and that the undertaking, being one for the national good, should be undertaken by the Government. They produced an elaborate scheme at an estimated cost of $15\frac{3}{4}$ millions sterling. The Commission summed up their report by stating that the "carrying out of the scheme would greatly increase the means

of subsistence of the people, and add to the importance of the country."

No practical step has hitherto been taken to carry out the recommendation of the Commission. The present Dutch Government, however, have announced their intention to introduce a Bill into Parliament immediately to carry out this gigantic undertaking. The undertaking involves the formation of a new Province of Holland by the reclamation of 815 square miles of the Zuiderzee, and the conversion of the remainder into an inland lake. This fresh-water lake will supply the surrounding districts with fresh water at all times, and will raise the value of hundreds of thousands of hectares (a hectare is equivalent to $2\frac{1}{2}$ English acres) of land in those districts. The estimated cost of the work is, as stated, £15,750,000 exclusive of interest, and the time required for its completion is thirty-three years. In seventeen years, portions of these holdings will be fit for habitation and cultivation. They will gradually be offered for sale in small lots. It is intended that the conditions of sale shall be such as to enable the purchasers to become freeholders in forty-five years. Model villages with 125 acres of land adjoining will be

built by the State, and purchasers will receive advances in order to enable them to buy implements, etc. It is estimated that at least 40,000 persons, including labourers, will be required to cultivate the reclaimed land. To these must be added some 50,000 tradesmen, handicraftsmen, etc., who will be wanted. Altogether, including the families of the above, it is estimated no less than 250,000 persons will find ample means of subsistence in the new Zuiderzee Province.

One object of the State in carrying out this work is to divert the tide of foreign emigration into the new Province. The success of previous schemes of reclamation, such as drainage of the Haarlem Lake, encourages the Dutch in the hope that this undertaking will be equally successful. In addition to the advantages named above, there will be the enormous amount payable by the cultivators of the new Province in the form of rates and taxes.[1]

[1] The information given above is taken mainly from a book on the Zuiderzee project published by E. J. Brill, publisher at Leiden. The book itself is written in Dutch, but a summary of its contents is rendered in English. For a good part of the information, however, the writer is indebted to Dr. J. J. L. Van Ryn, the Netherlands Agricultural Commissioner for Great Britain and Ireland.

GREAT BRITAIN

If a Royal Commission were appointed to enquire into the subject, it would be found that there were some millions of acres of reclaimable land in this country. The evidence given before the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion[1] dealt with this question and showed that large areas of land, estuaries, tidal rivers, etc., could be profitably reclaimed.

It was shown in the Report (page 47) that at Sunk Island 7000 acres had been reclaimed and was producing an annual revenue of £10,000. Mr. T. B. Grubb (page 129), a resident farmer in the parish of Fingringhoe, stated that there were 600 acres in that parish capable of reclamation on a remunerative basis. He had calculated that these 600 acres could be reclaimed at a cost of £2500 and when reclaimed would be worth at least £5000.

Many other instances of a similar kind were given in evidence. On the southern side of the River Dee, about 3400 acres of marsh land had been reclaimed. The rent of the land after

[1] Royal Commission on Coast Erosion (Report Cd. 5708, 1911).

reclamation was from 13s. to 45s. an acre; and the freehold value as tested by actual sales was from £21 to £46 an acre. On the River Ribble about 300 acres of land had been reclaimed. It was rich soil and readily let at £3 10s. an acre rental. One of the Commissioners, Mr. Nicholson, claimed that the work was a national one, because, he said, "land is the nation's greatest asset—it is the source of the nation's wealth—it is the foundation of the nation's greatness." These are truthful words and sum up the contention in favour of adding all the land possible to the nation's territory.

The Commissioners in their Report, after hearing all the evidence given before them, recommended that "The Board of Agriculture should be charged with the duty of scheduling and obtaining detailed reports upon lands in the United Kingdom, capable of profitable reclamation."

A Departmental Committee has been recently appointed to consider the question of the "Employment of Belgian Refugees." A volume containing the evidence given before the committee has already been published (Cd. 1779, 1915). The evidence completely confirms the

views on reclamation expressed in the foregoing pages, and should be read by all who have doubts on the subject of reclamation. One witness, Mr. R. L. Robinson (Question 1145 and following), states that there are 20,000 acres in the eastern counties, and 40,000 acres in Dorset and Hampshire well fitted for reclamation. Mr. E. S. Cheney, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Agriculture, than whom there is probably no higher authority, in his evidence before the committee states that "there is no doubt that there are considerable areas in this country which are capable of being reclaimed from their present condition and put to profitable uses." Among other examples he mentions a Welsh bog near Aberystwyth of 18,000 acres, and states, "I see no reason whatever why that should not be reclaimed on the Fen system." Here we have about twenty-eight square miles of worthless bog, which, according to the best authority, could be turned into fertile land, yielding annually great wealth to the nation.[1]

In his evidence given before the Select Com-

[1] Besides the wealth accruing to the nation generally, there are the local rates and taxes for which the reclaimed land would be liable. The total county rate for the county of Cardiganshire for the present year is 2s. 8d. in the £.

mittee on "Inclosure and Regulation of Commons," Mr. E. P. Leach, of the Board of Agriculture, states that of the 2 million acres of unenclosed land in England and Wales 800,000 acres, or an area nearly equal to that of the county of Kent, could be brought into profitable cultivation.[1]

SCOTLAND

Perhaps the most remarkable report of all is that of the Royal Commission appointed in 1892 to examine and to report on the question of the waste lands of the "Islands and Highlands of Scotland."

The report of the Commission was a splendid one, both as to form and matter. No less than 1,782,785 acres were scheduled as suitable for "new holdings," for "extension of existing holdings," or for "moderate-sized farms."[2]

Putting the rateable value of the reclaimed land at the low rate of £1 an acre, the annual amount receivable for the relief of the county rate would be £2400.

[1] Report of the Select Committee on "Inclosure and Regulation of Commons," Cd. 512 and 83.

[2] For report and evidence, see Cd. 7681, Cd. 7668, 1895. This Commission was one of the strongest ever appointed for any purpose. The members were all experts. The powers conferred on them, and their three years' exhaustive

PEAT LAND AND HEATH LAND

In his presidential address to the Agricultural Section of the British Association, Mr. A. D. Hall, F.R.S.,[1] advocated the reclamation of the peaty and sandy areas of waste land in England. That land of these kinds could be cultivated with success was proved, he said, by the fact that everywhere prosperous farms may be seen bordering the wastes, possessing soils that are essentially identical with those of the wastes.[2]

enquiries in all localities, entitled their findings and recommendations to the highest consideration. For detailed particulars of the evidence taken by the Commission and for the conclusions they arrived at, see "Colonization of Rural Britain," Chapter XVII.

[1] Mr. Hall succeeded Sir John B. Lawes at Rothamsted, and is acknowledged to be one of the greatest authorities on agricultural subjects.

[2] This view is confirmed by the operations in connection with the Convict Prison on Dartmoor, where 875 acres of waste have been taken from the moor and, by convict labour, have been turned into fertile land. The writer has visited the prison on several occasions and has seen the profitable character of the farming carried on. The sales of sheep, cattle, pigs, horses and ponies and wool realized above £1500 in one year. This is exclusive of milk, of which more than 41,000 gallons were produced in a single year.

Mr. Hall fully describes the methods of reclamation. He estimates the cost of the bare heath at from £5 to £7 an acre, the cost of the reclaiming at from £5 to £6 an acre, and adds that the reclaimed land after a few years' cultivation would sell at from £20 to £30 an acre. He speaks of increased taxes and local rates payable by the new agricultural community, and concludes by saying that "the reclamation of such heath land is a long-sighted policy and a sound commercial venture."

PUBLIC LANDS

The Royal Commission on the "Depression of Agriculture" reported that in their opinion the management of land by public bodies is "inefficient, cumbrous and expensive." This is borne out by a report of the Crown Lands Commission (No. 53, 1907, page 3), in which the very heavy expenses of the Commissioners are recorded.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners control about 314,000 acres of land, which are let to tenants at various rents. The expenses of management would be saved and the land would be far more

productive if the occupiers were owners instead of tenants.[1]

[1] The average rent of the agricultural land (excluding woodlands) let by the Commissioners is £1 an acre. From this must be deducted the outlay on the farms and the management expenses. This low rent means low production. The present writer knows a farm (about 200 acres) in the Midland Counties let by the Commissioners at a rent of about 16s. an acre. The land—which is good—is in a foul condition, overrun with docks, thistles, twitch, and other rubbish, producing probably not one-fifth of what it is capable of producing under intensive tillage. The farmer employs one man and a lad, with two other people during hay-making time. The Commissioners in this case seem to be satisfied with receiving the rent without enquiring into the state of the land. At a time when a committee is sitting to consider the question of an increase of wheat supply, it seems a mockery to allow such a state of things as this to exist. The annual consumption of wheat in the United Kingdom is 6 bushels per head of the population. If 100 acres of the farm in question were properly cultivated in wheat it would supply (at 32 bushels an acre) about 550 persons with wheat for the whole of one year.

INTENSIVE CULTIVATION

THE Belgians are the most intensive cultivators in Europe. It was shown by competent witnesses before "the Belgian Refugees Committee" that "the Belgians have methods which we do not possess, in their cultivation of small holdings, market gardens, etc.—methods which could profitably be introduced here."

To carry out this suggestion it is satisfactory to note that a society has been formed called the "Belgian Organization Society." The committee of the Society is composed of most influential members, with Sir Richard Paget as their chairman. The proposals of the committee, among others, are to employ the agricultural refugees "in reclaiming the waste and cleaning foul lands, so as to prepare them for intensive cultivation." The Belgian Government have given to the committee of the Society the services of a number of their official experts in market gardening, the rearing of poultry, etc. These

experts will teach the British smallholders the Belgian methods of intensive cultivation, so that they may be able to carry on the work when the Belgians have gone home.

The Belgians can grow as many as five successive crops a year under glass. The plant required is of a very simple kind, consisting, in the main, of sheets of glass in rough wooden frames, all of it made by the peasants themselves. The Belgian process of improving the soil will be specially taught. The Belgians have been compelled to make the improvement of the land a special study, and by so doing the peasants have turned what was originally waste and barren ground into fertile market gardens.

Every day there is a considerable number of our wounded soldiers returning from the front. Though partially disabled most of these men would be able and willing to work on the land and learn from the Belgian agricultural refugees their methods of preparing and cultivating the soil. It would be wise, therefore, if the Government, acting through the Board of Agriculture, would, without a moment's delay, provide land for the purpose. It is due to our wounded heroes that this provision should be made for them.

THE TRADESMAN AND THE MANUFACTURER

The creation of colonies of peasant proprietors would give abundant employment to our workshops and factories by the demand for agricultural implements and the other articles necessary to till the land; while the subsidiary trades, such as those of the blacksmith, wheelwright, harness-maker, shoeing smith, would be revived, and our decayed country places restored to life and prosperity. All classes of tradesmen and shop-keepers would benefit in a corresponding degree.

Co-operation in buying and selling would immediately be adopted by these peasant proprietors, when thus grouped together. Co-operation is difficult and is rarely found among yearly tenants, but it invariably follows the establishment of ownerships. In the matter of co-operation in all its phases Denmark stands in the front rank amongst the nations of Europe; but co-operation was practically unknown in that country until by the legislation of last century its land system was changed from tenancies to ownerships.

COLONIZATION AND VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

UNDER the second part of the "Purchase of Land" Bill, provision is made for the establishment of colonies of peasant proprietors on the grass and reclaimed lands referred to herein, which lands would thus be restored to the use of the nation.

The establishment of such colonies would meet the difficulty of providing for our returned soldiers, and would repeople our country sides. Women cultivators would be included, so that in time a new generation of strong healthy children would be raised, thereby adding to the strength and security of the nation.

A striking example of the success of farm colonies is seen at Catshill, near Bromsgrove. The Worcester County Council purchased (under the Small Holdings Act of 1892) the Woodrow farm of 146 acres. The Council sold it in small lots to purchasers at the rate of £40 an acre. The

purchase money was to be repaid in forty years by annual instalments equal to 4 per cent on the purchase money, which sum included a sinking fund, to recoup the Council for their outlay. This farm was previously occupied by one farmer, who employed a couple of penniless labourers and who failed and was sold up. The land was poor when bought, but now under intensive cultivation it is very rich. The price, £40 an acre, was very high, and the holdings were too small. In spite of these drawbacks there is to be seen at the present time thirty-two families—peasant proprietors—on the estate, who for the past twenty years have existed there in a prosperous condition. Each man who requires it has a cottage homestead provided for him by the County Council, on slightly higher terms than those charged for the land, the period of repayment, however, being the same. Since the establishment of this colony there has been no able-bodied pauper in the parish.[1]

[1] For particulars, plans of the division of the land, elevation of cottages, etc., see "Land Reform," Chapter XV.

ECONOMY AND WASTE

In Parliament and in the Press the practice of economy is strongly urged on private persons and on the public generally.

The Prime Minister in his speech in Parliament on June 29th said "Waste, whether by the private person or by the community, is a national danger." This is a remarkable statement by the Prime Minister of a country where in one important direction universal waste prevails. The waste through the non-cultivation of the soil is almost incalculable. Some idea of its extent might be formed by noticing the low price of land which is caused by its low production. On this head an instructive little pamphlet entitled the "Land Question" was written by a member of a firm of land agents.[1] The pamphlet gives particulars of hundreds of thousands of acres of land sold by the firm in thirty-seven

[1] Sir Howard Frank of the firm of Knight, Frank and Rutley.

counties. In Cambridgeshire and Cheshire the average price was £49 an acre, but the average price in all other counties was exceedingly low In Dorsetshire it was £14 an acre, in Cornwall £18, Essex £17, Warwickshire £26, Norfolk £15, Suffolk £18, Bedfordshire £18, Wiltshire £22, Yorkshire £21, Wales £19, etc.

For the past sixty years commercialism has ruled the economy of the nation and agriculture has been treated as of no account. There is not the least need for neglecting industrialism in all its branches. In Germany, France, Holland and other Continental countries we see commerce and manufacture flourishing side by side with agriculture. Germany has advanced far more rapidly in these directions than has England.

America is a great manufacturing and commercial country, but the wealth accruing from her manufactures and commerce is insignificant compared with the wealth derived from her agriculture. In the official American "Agricultural Year Book" there appears the following under the heading of "Agriculture as a Source of National Wealth":

"Thus it has happened the farms of the nation have been that sustaining power upon which a basic depen-

dence must be placed in all stresses by a people endeavouring to maintain economic self-sufficiency. . . . An occupation that has produced such an unthinkable value as one aggregating 5,000 million dollars (about 1000 millions sterling) within a year may be better measured by some comparisons. All of the gold mines of the entire world have not produced, since Columbus discovered America, a greater wealth of gold than the farmers of this country have produced in wealth in two years. This year's product is over six times the amount of capital stock of all national banks . . . it is two and a half times the gross earnings from the operation of the railways ; and it is three and a half times the value of all minerals produced in the country, including coal, iron ore, gold, silver and quarried stone."

All these foreign countries, while not neglecting other industries, protect agriculture as the sheet-anchor of national prosperity. They are careful to found their national economy on the rock of agriculture, while we, alone among nations, found it on the sandy soil of commercialism.

Anyone who travels by road through this country with his eyes open must notice the long stretches of grass land by the waysides and at the corners where roads meet, all of which could be cultivated.

An eminent writer states:

"In England as much land in every parish is lying useless in wastes, wayside commons, neglected patches and other uncultivated spots as would keep all the poor in the parish." (Laing's "Observations on the Social State of the European People.")

This could not be seen in Continental countries where, as already stated, almost every yard of land is put to some use.

The time has come for the people of this country to be aroused from their apathy with regard to agriculture, in which apathy they have been nurtured for so many years, and for them to be taught the paramount value and importance of the land. *They should be educated in this respect up to a point whence they would look upon a piece of waste land with the same feeling as they would look on a piece of good food thrown into the dust-bin.*

If any reader of these pages should happen to be travelling by rail through the country, he would, if he chose, see that for mile after mile there is nothing but grass, the wheat fields being few and far between. *He should realize that this means national waste.* Every 1000 acres of grass land he passes (a very small area), if cultivated,

would yield £3000 or £4000 yearly to the national income more than they do at present. Every 1000 acres so treated would give employment to at least 5000 men with their families, besides horses. The supposed traveller, on thinking over these facts, would probably realize the enormous price we pay for our adherence to an obsolete land system, which has been discarded by every country in Europe except our own. After all, the creation of occupying ownerships would only be a return to a system which prevailed in this country in olden times, when the people enjoyed a rude abundance ; when poverty in the sense of destitution was unknown; and when legal pauperism did not exist.

ERRATUM.

On page 70, line 3, for "1,000 acres" read "100,000 acres." Where land is reasonably well farmed the result would be even more advantageous than this. For example, at Catshill (as shown on pages 64-65) on 146 acres there are 32 families. On such basis 100,000 acres would give employment to over 21,000 families; whilst a considerably larger number would be employed if market gardening on "intensive" lines were adopted. Apart from these increases of actual cultivators, there would also be a whole army, so to speak, of people engaged in work connected directly with agriculture; such as that of carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, implement makers, saddlers, millers, artificial manure and feeding stuffs manufacturers, builders, etc.

SHORTAGE

THE present is a particularly opportune time to bring more land into cultivation. It is obvious that there will be a substantial diminution in the quantity of food of all sorts, produced on the Continent next year, and consequently we shall not receive anything like our usual supplies from that source.

From the latest official information, we find that the value of certain foods annually received in this country from Russia, France, Belgium, Germany and Austria-Hungary was as follows :—

	£
Wheat	4,076,051
Wheat meal and flour	477,045
Meat	688,430
Poultry	628,898
Butter	5,228,415
Cheese	58,281
Eggs	4,916,764
Fruit (raw)	1,083,668
Vegetables (raw)	810,486
	17,968,038

It is obvious that these countries, with the possible exception of Russia, will, both this and next year, be unable to produce more food than is sufficient for the ordinary needs of their own population, while if the war is much further prolonged, in order to save themselves from semi-starvation, they will have (again excepting Russia) to import food instead of export it.

In France the area sown in grain is already considerably reduced. An official statement has just been published giving the results of an enquiry into the agricultural situation in that country on May 1st, 1915, and comparing it with that on May 1st, 1914. That statement shows that the area sown with wheat in the whole of France, including the invaded territories, is over 14,000,000 acres, or about 2,000,000 acres less than in 1914; rye, about 2,500,000 acres, compared with nearly 3,000,000 acres; barley, about 1,700,000 acres, compared with over 1,800,000 acres; and oats, nearly 8,500,000 acres, compared with about 10,000,000 acres.

Much of the year's harvest in Belgium, Northern France, Russian Poland and Galicia has been destroyed. Existing stocks of food, whe ever they could be obtained, have been

confiscated by the Germans for the use of their troops, and the land in these countries has been laid bare. Moreover, vast numbers of the rural populations of Belgium, France, Germany and Russia are engaged in the war; whilst most of the agricultural horses suitable for military purposes have been requisitioned by the respective Governments.

Under the Continental system, the wives and families of the occupying owners perform much of the work on the land, and during the war will do most of it; but it is impossible for them to do all the work usually done by horses and men.

As to Russia, her agricultural resources are greater than those of any other European country, but even in her case the immense number of the rural population who have joined the army will result in a great decrease in the quantity of food produced in that country, and will leave little or none for export. It is true that more food may be imported from our British possessions and other oversea countries, but it would be folly to rely on this assumption. In any case it must be borne in mind that the Continental demand would greatly affect the prices paid for these commodities in Great

Britain, and that the shortage in question will not be a temporary one but will probably continue for several years.

Prices will certainly rule very high. The British farmer, however, under our system has no control over prices. Prices are set for him by the oversea producer and by the speculator.

All these are conclusive arguments in favour of the reform of our system of land cultivation as advocated in these pages. A great responsibility is thrown on the Government for providing against this shortage. With wheat about 60s. a quarter and almost a certainty of its becoming higher, the time is most opportune to make a beginning. No reliance can be placed on the tenant farmer to supply deficiencies. The responsibility lies with the Government alone.

A meeting of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture took place in July last, when the question of an increased area devoted to wheat-growing was discussed.[1]

The discussion from a patriotic point of view was depressing. The speakers appeared not to be seized with the hideous realities of the present

[1] For a full report see "Journal of Associated Chambers of Agriculture," July, 1915.

war, or with the life and death struggle in which we are engaged. There was no recognition of the extreme urgency of the case and of the peril of delay. The debate centred around a demand that the Government should make it worth the farmer's while to grow wheat by guaranteeing a minimum for future prices (50s. a quarter was named).

By giving the guarantee asked for, no doubt more wheat would be grown, but the process would be slow and the result altogether inadequate.

In the present emergency there is no other effective way but for the Government to take the matter in hand themselves. This subject will be treated more fully later on.[1]

Lord Selborne, the new Minister of Agriculture, is a man who in former positions has shown himself possessed of capacity and foresight. It will require great courage on his part to break

[1] The patriotic class of farmers are responding to the appeals made to them in a very satisfactory manner. Since 1913 they have increased the area under wheat by half a million acres. In some parts of the country, however, the process of laying agricultural land to grass is going on. In a recent visit to the West of England the present writer noticed with disgust a large arable field of some 25 acres being so laid down.

with the old routine and traditions of his Department and to deal with the difficult problem before him in no half-hearted way.

The late Mr. J. Harris-Gastrell, when Secretary to the British Embassy at Berlin, wrote an official report on the system of Land Tenure in Prussia. The report was a masterly one. After referring in high terms to the courage and foresight of Stein and Hardenberg in promoting the legislation on which the present German system is founded, he concludes by saying that any British statesmen who would follow in their steps "would deserve well of their country. Their names would be handed down to posterity with a yet greater renown and a yet greater national gratitude, if that be possible, than the renown and gratitude with which the names of Stein and Hardenberg are honoured in Germany, the Great Kingdom of Prussia."

In 1903 a Royal Commission was appointed by the then Government to enquire into the question of "Food Supply in the Time of War." The Commission, after fifty sittings and after examining ninety-three witnesses, reported in 1905. The report was a poor and colourless one. The main recommendation of the Commission

was a scheme of national indemnity for the owners of grain vessels captured or sunk by the enemy. The Commissioners stated that "our main reliance for a supply of food in war time must be on our Navy and mercantile marine."[1]

Every enquiry, however, and every discussion of the subject prove conclusively that there is only one adequate solution of the question of food supply in the time of war, and that is to produce our food at home; and under the new land system advocated in these pages this could easily be done.

CONSUMPTION OF WHEAT

The total consumption of wheat in the United Kingdom is as follows:—

	Quarters.
Produced at home	7,000,000
Imported (including flour, expressed in its equivalent weight in grain)	29,000,000
Total	36,000,000

[1] The events of the present war show that the recommendations of the Commission, if they had been carried out, would be quite useless to solve the problem.

For particulars of the arguments and findings of the Commission, see "Colonization of Rural Britain," Chapter XXIII.

For proofs of the futility of any scheme of storing wheat in National Granaries, see "Land Reform," Chapter XIX.

Our home production is grown on an area a little less than 2 million acres. If we were to add 7 million acres to our present wheat-growing area—making, say, a total of 9 million acres—we could produce all the bread-stuff required to feed the people of the United Kingdom, as the 9 million of acres at 32 bushels an acre would yield exactly the 36 million quarters named above. This 9 million of acres, considering the end in view, is not a large proportion of the 47 million acres of cultivable land in the United Kingdom. The additional acres, besides yielding enough bread for the nation, would provide at home straw and offals, such as bran, pollard, sharps, middlings, etc., for stock feeding, instead of importing them from abroad.[1]

[1] We imported in 1913 bran and pollard to the value of £71,660, and sharps and middlings to the value of £91,501, and "unenumerated offals" to the value of £74,002.

FINANCIAL

Those who look at everything through golden spectacles, and who value everything by its weight in gold, will eagerly ask "Will these schemes pay?"

The building of Dreadnoughts does not pay in their sense of the phrase, but Dreadnoughts are necessary for the defence of the realm, and "Defence is of more importance than opulence" (Adam Smith). The land reform herein suggested is as necessary for defence as the strongest navy, and the money spent to carry it out should be treated as a war expenditure or war insurance.

Other critics will assert that most of the grass land in question is not fit for cultivation, and that it will not pay to cultivate. Let these critics take with them a few Belgian agricultural refugees and examine the worst of the land, and their doubts would soon be removed by men who have been accustomed to turn desert land into fruitful market gardens.

Another class of objectors will and do ask why

agriculture should be singled out for State aid any more than other industries. The answer is a simple one. Aid given to a grocer, for instance, does not create trade, it only enables him to compete with other grocers and to take part of their trade. With regard to agriculture, however, the case is different. State aid to develop it creates entirely new trade for this country by supplying the market—of a fabulous value—which lies at our doors and which is now exploited by the foreigner. This involves competition with no one except with the oversea producers. The present writer's contentions equally apply to many private efforts. The "Lord Roberts' Memorial Fund" for disabled soldiers, for example, amounts at the time of writing to above £50,000. It is understood that the Committee in charge of the Fund propose to erect factories or workshops for the employment of the soldiers. On reflection it is to be hoped that the Committee will see that it would be a waste of money to adopt a policy of this kind, and would dissipate the Fund in their charge. A boot factory, for instance, established in this way would create no fresh demand for boots. It could only succeed by taking trade from factories already existing.

The miserable competitive system, with its under-cutting to secure trade, would be increased. To adopt this course would be to waste the money of the subscribers to the Fund. One direction in which the money would be well and usefully spent is in the establishment of a model farm or farms where returned wounded soldiers might be taught by Belgian agricultural refugees the methods of intensive cultivation, which they so well understand. In their spare time the cultivators and their families could also engage in one or other of the many home industries which in former times added so much to their earnings and to their comfort. Home employment of this character, being purely supplementary, does not come into the same category as the competitive labour of the factory. In fact the land reforms advocated, taken as a whole, would be of such a productive character as eventually to pay the whole expenses of the war. It was out of savings of the French peasants mainly that the heavy mulct imposed by the Germans after the Franco-German war was paid.

Any estimate of the amount of money that could be got out of the wasted land of our

country must, of course, be very crude and fairly open to criticism. Some approximate figures, however, may be given for critics to deal with. Taking Mr. A. D. Hall's estimate on page 59 the cost of reclaiming heath land and peat land, and the profit accruing from such reclamation per 1000 acres would be as follows:—

	£
Cost of 1000 acres of bare heath at £6 an acre .	6,000
Cost of reclaiming the same at £5 10s. an acre .	5,500
	11,500
Sale of 1000 acres to occupying owners of this reclaimed land at £25 an acre	25,000
This shows a profit[1] to the State of[2] . . .	13,500

[1] A yeoman farmer friend told the writer that he had a stretch of 15 acres of moorland at the edge of his holding which was all covered with furze. He reclaimed it at a cost of 30s. an acre. He then cropped it with potatoes, followed by other crops, and it is now among the most profitable parts of his farm. The actual work of the reclamation was done by old soldiers returned from the Boer war. The writer's yeoman friend added that he did not enter on the work for the sake of adding to his farm, but solely to relieve the distress which followed the conclusion of the Boer war—a distress which follows every war—the present one included.

[2] It is evident that Mr. Hall, in the above calculations, does not include cottages and buildings. These, however, where wanted, can be provided by loans from the Govern-

Referring to the 12 million acres of poor and unproductive—much of it useless—grass land in England and Wales, the cost of 1000 acres of this, and of dividing and adapting it for the purpose of small ownerships may be estimated approximately as follows :—

	£
(1) 1000 acres of grass land at £15 an acre . .	15,000
(2) Adapting it for 50 small holdings (including buildings) from 3 to 50 acres (say) 30s. an acre	1,500
(3) 50 cottages at £200 each	10,000
(4) Contingencies	400
(5) Advances to the small owners to begin cultivation, say £100 each	5,000
Total outlay of the State for 1000 *acres* . . .	31,900

As to the first item in the foregoing estimate, £15 an acre is a high price for grass land now let at an average rent of about 9s. an acre. If the land taken has a mixed cultivation a higher price would be paid for the arable portion of it, as the expense of adapting it would be saved. With regard to the second item, the existing hedges would be utilized in dividing the land. As to the third, if, as is probable, there are cottages already existing on the land, the number

ment—loans, with interest and sinking fund, repayable by the purchasers by annual instalments.

of new cottages required would be lessened; whilst as to the last item (£5000), this would be in addition to the pensions to which most of the ex-service men would be entitled.

The receipts by the State for the expenditure above-mentioned would be in the shape of payments by the small purchasers for the 1000 acres adapted and ready for cultivation at, say, £40 an acre (including cottages); these payments coming to £40,000.

There is thus a profit to the State of £8100 on the 1000 acres. Besides this profit to the State there would be an enormous increase in the yearly revenue of the community through increased production—an increase amounting to about £4000 a year per 1000 acres of the grass land restored to cultivation.

The annual payments by the purchasers in respect of the monies advanced on their account would be:—

	£
(1) Interest on £40,000 at 4½ per cent . . .	1800
(2) Sinking fund, at 4s. 9d. per cent, to redeem the advance or loan in 68 years	95
	£1895

or equal to about 38s. an acre for land prepared

for cultivation and furnished with cottages. After the 68 years all payments would cease, but the purchaser would be an absolute owner as soon as the agreement was signed—subject of course to the payment of the annual instalments.

If only 10 *millions of the* 12 *millions of acres of poor grass in England and Wales were treated in the same way, the profit to the State would amount to the enormous figure of* £81,000,000! This is quite independent of the vast increase in the yearly revenue from the land through its increased productiveness—a yearly increase of at least 40 millions sterling. No doubt the "ranching" farmer will ask, "How am I to feed my stock if the grass land is taken away?" The reply is, by cultivating the land instead of largely wasting it in grass; arable land being more suitable and profitable for feeding purposes than grass land.

NATIONAL WEALTH AND INCOME

The writer does not under-estimate the difficulty of raising the large sum of money required to carry out the scheme of land reform suggested. In the opinion of many whose views are worthy

of consideration, it will be impossible to do so. We have already[1] added to the National Debt about 900 millions sterling, and are now spending for war purposes about 3 millions sterling per day. There is, therefore, on the face of it good grounds for the opinion that further sums could not be raised for land purposes. The writer disclaims any right to speak as a financial expert, but it seems to him that on examination of the resources of the country the financial difficulty could be met, especially as the money would only be wanted in instalments as the land operations progressed.

The following remarks are interesting and instructive, and were published by the "Economist" on February 20th, 1909 :—

"The amount of British capital invested abroad is £3,050,000,000. This amount invested abroad is estimated to represent about 20 per cent of the total capital of the United Kingdom. It follows, therefore, that £15,000,000,000 may be taken as the total capital of the Kingdom."

Mr. Lloyd George, in a statement made on May 21st, 1909, apparently adopted the figures given in the "Economist."

[1] June, 1915.

In a Paper read before the Royal Statistical Society on March 16th, 1915, by Mr. Edgar Cramond, a well-known financial authority, it was stated that the wealth of the United Kingdom was £16,500,000,000, and the national yearly income £2,140,000,000.

These statistics are confirmed by other great financial authorities. Sir Francis Mowatt, for example, who was Financial Secretary to the Treasury in 1909, estimated the annual income of the nation at £2,000,000,000, increasing steadily by between 200 and 300 millions a year.

Mr. G. Flux, in his Introduction to the "British Census of Production," estimates the National Income at the same amount.

The imagination cannot grasp the meaning of these statistics; but they represent in figures the vast resources of the United Kingdom. If the statistics are accepted even as approximately correct, it is evident that the resources of the country are sufficient for land purposes as well as for war purposes. The difference between the two expenditures is that while war expenditure is unproductive and for the most part is lost to the country, that on the land is reproductive in the highest degree; land being an asset of the

nation of incalculable value and at present largely untouched.

On June 9th, 1915, there appeared in "The Times" an important letter signed "Banker" which throws great light on the financial question. After referring to the need for national and personal economy and to the increased earnings of the wage-earner, he urges the financial authorities of the country to encourage the small investor.

"The class," he says, "which is so greatly enriched by the war is mainly the artisan and the better-paid working class. It is indeed madness for them not to save in this period of exceptional prosperity against the certain day of shrinkage in the future. The State is in need of their savings and will pay them a good interest. Their money is safe. They are only called upon to invest in what is still the finest security in the world. What is greatly needed then is to encourage and facilitate the investment of small savings in the War Loan. It is good for the State and good for the investor.[1] To the last German War Loan the number of subscribers was stated to be only just short of 2,000,000. It would be surprising if subscribers at the present time (June 9th) to our War Loan numbered 30,000.

[1] This has been done in a very satisfactory manner under the Government Scheme announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 21st June last.

"Unfortunately the idea of investment in Government securities, or in fact investment at all, is foreign to our working classes; but they are in a receptive mood, and every effort should be made to convince them of the very cogent reasons for thrift."[1]

Referring to increasing our paper currency, and after stating that in all other belligerent countries specie payments are suspended, "Banker" in his letter states:—

"Excessive increase in such currency is a very attractive means open to a Government for meeting its internal indebtedness. The note circulation of Germany, Austria, France and Russia has increased since the outbreak of the war by hundreds of millions sterling. Our note issue is 40 or 50 millions sterling."

In urging the necessity for economy, both public and private, "Banker" goes on to say:—

"We are brought then to the paramount necessity to our country of economy, such economy as is being

[1] "Banker" and others should remember that upon the Continent habits of thrift are the outcome of the peasant proprietary system. The peasants are prosperous and invest their savings in Government securities. The peasants of France and Germany who own and cultivate the land are the largest holders of Government stocks. As stated by an eminent French statesman, they are "the financial stay of our nation."

practised by the German people. We import nearly £300,000,000 a year of food, and about the same amount of raw material."

He adds:

"*We should import only absolute necessities, and produce everything in this country that we possibly can.*"[1]

Looking at the question all round, we may fairly come to the conclusion that if a Government were convinced of the necessity of the land operations referred to, it would be found that the money difficulty would not be an insuperable one.

There is one member of the Cabinet, the Minister of Munitions, eminently qualified to carry

[1] In previous pages the present writer has dealt only with imports of food, but the case for home production is much stronger if raw materials are included. The following figures give the value of some of the raw materials we annually import from abroad, the larger portion of which could be readily produced at home if the land were made the most of: Hops £1,674,000, Flax and Tow £4,612,000, Hides and Skins of all sorts £5,540,000, Sugar, raw and refined (after deducting Cane Sugar) £19,120,000, Tallow £3,207,628. In short, if we reckon the value of all the produce of the soil we import, and which this country is fitted to produce, the amount would be above 300 millions sterling per annum.

out the work if it were entrusted to him. He has courage, is not afraid of responsibility, is forceful in action, and would be strong enough to deal with officials who may assure him that "It can't be done." That he understands the nature of the work, and is in sympathy with it, is shown by a speech in which he made the following remarks :—

"Any man who has crossed and re-crossed the country from north to south and from east to west, must be perplexed that there was so much waste and wilderness possible in such a little island. . . . Every acre of land brought into a higher state of cultivation means more labour of a healthy and productive character. It means abundant food, cheaper and better food for the people."

The question is a pressing one, and as all measures of reform are effective only in proportion to their timeliness, steps should be immediately taken to make provision for the lean years which will certainly follow the conclusion of the war. If the Government were to announce their intention to pass immediately the necessary measures through Parliament, to devote, say, only one million sterling as a beginning of the work under discussion, they would receive enthusiastic support throughout the country. The

people, indeed, would welcome any steps taken by Parliament to make provision for the returned soldiers. They would regard them as a means of discharging the debt of gratitude they owe them for their services to the community. That gratitude is strong and universal. It is shown in many affectionate ways. Whilst watching some wounded soldiers a sympathizing lady said to the writer: "Dear fellows; I wish I could mother them all." This observation no doubt is a sentimental one; but sentiment is a controlling factor in human affairs, and should be taken into account by our law-makers in any legislative action they might take.

A correspondent of a neutral country, in summing up his impressions derived from a visit to Germany, says in a letter published in "The Times" of June 10th, 1915:—

"The contrasts between Germany and England are striking and instructive. One such is afforded by a comparison of the wide and fertile lands of England where grass is grown, and broad parks stretch for miles in wonderful summer beauty, with the sandy soil of Brandenburg, where one travels, mile upon mile, through well-cultivated fields, covered with green wheat and rye, and where old folks and children plant every spare foot of ground with potatoes. This is an object-lesson

in waste and economy, in the absence and presence of control of national energy and in the subordination of everything to the needs of the war."

This is a striking comment on the difference as regards food production, resulting from the two systems of cultivation—that of England and of Germany. It illustrates in a homely way the advantages which would accrue from the reforms in the system and methods of cultivation advocated in the foregoing pages.

Whatever steps are taken should be taken without delay, so as to be prepared for the situation at the end of the war. The " wait and see " policy would be highly injurious if not disastrous, just as it has been injurious in matters immediately connected with the conduct of the war.

CONCLUSION

The war has brought out the finest qualities of the national character, and it will leave England a more serious and thoughtful nation. Great trials and common dangers serve to knit a people more closely together. All classes of men from the castle to the cottage, from the peer to the peasant, have nobly rallied to the defence of the nation in its hour of need.[1] The display of riches and luxury has to a great extent ceased, and, for the time at least, the simplicity of the old English life has been largely restored. England is fast becoming a land of mourning—mourning for our

[1] This refers only to the best and most patriotic of these classes. There remains the great army of "shirkers" who can be dealt with only by compulsion. With this subject the Government seem to be playing fast and loose and are far behind public opinion with regard to it. The war, however, is likely to be a prolonged one, and it will become more and more apparent that it is an unjust and a wicked policy to sacrifice the cream of the manhood of the nation and leave the "slackers" undealt with.

best and bravest. Wives mourning for their husbands, children for their fathers, parents for their sons—too often their only sons.

The legacy of sadness and bereavement which the war will leave to almost every family will unite all classes by the ties of a common sympathy. The women of the nation are acting nobly in the present crisis. Large numbers of them have given up pleasures and occupations in order to become nurses or helpers of nurses for our wounded soldiers. Those whose health and strength are not sufficient for active work are doing all they can for the common cause. In short, it may be said that the members of every household in the kingdom have their hearts full of warm sympathy and their hands busy with useful and necessary work. There are signs that the people generally are waking up and recognizing the nature of the colossal struggle in which we are engaged. Mr. Bonar Law truly said: "As a nation we are being tested, and we shall stand the test."

The children of future generations will be told the inspiring tale of the splendid deeds of their forbears, and the national character will be strengthened thereby.

We are lost in admiration at the willing sacrifices the Colonies are making for the cause of the Empire and for love of the Mother Country.

After the war is over it is to be hoped that the dream of the great Colonial Secretary whom unhappily we have lately lost will be realized, and that we shall see the grand spectacle of an Imperial Assembly in London in which the Representatives of the daughter States will sit side by side with those of the Mother Country, taking their share of the responsibilities and their part in directing the destinies of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. Such an Empire based on Freedom and Justice would be the great guarantee against the loathsome doctrine of Kaiserism wherever it might be found, and a most hopeful instrument for securing peace and goodwill among nations.

There are, however, after-war dangers looming ahead. One of the chief dangers is that of a patched-up peace. In that case the German monarchy, maddened with venomous hatred of England, would renew the war with this country at the earliest possible time ; at a time when we may be less favourably situated than we are

now with regard to allies. In this war, Germany would not a second time commit the blunder of keeping her cruisers in harbour, but would send a host of them out on the high seas to hover about our trade routes. The rulers of that country know our one vulnerable point, and they would sacrifice any number of ships and men in order to strike a fatal blow at us by the interruption of our food supplies. Every week's interruption would make food dearer and scarcer, and if it could be kept up for eight weeks there would scarcely be a loaf of bread in these islands. This is presuming that our home supplies of food remain as they are now. The danger is that this will be the case, as at present there are no signs that the apathy with regard to agriculture will not continue.

A patched-up peace would mean that all the terrible sacrifices that the Empire has made would have been made in vain. We cannot destroy the German people; but there can be no lasting peace in Europe until the great assassin at Potsdam and his Junker brood of murderers, who have all openly renounced every tie of humanity, honour, and morality, are wiped out root and

branch, and the Hohenzollern dynasty becomes a thing of the past.

Another great problem, however, connected with the war and with our national stability is the question of the food supply. Already in many cases prices have nearly doubled, but the real pinch will be felt in the next two years. Lord Selborne in June last in the House of Lords stated that "the principal function of the Board of Agriculture was to consider the question of the food supply for this country next year." He evidently sees the evil; and the recognition of an evil is the first step to remedy it.

Accordingly, in June last Lord Selborne appointed a Departmental Committee to deal with the question. The "Reference" to it, which is rather weak, is as follows:—

"To consider and report what steps should be taken for the sole purpose of maintaining and, if possible, increasing the present production of food in England and Wales on the assumption that the war may be prolonged beyond the harvest of 1916."

There is a touch of irony in the words "maintaining and if possible increasing the present production," seeing that of the 47 millions of acres in the kingdom now put to some use,

more than 27 millions of acres are laid down to grass, while less than 2 millions are cultivated in wheat!

It is to be hoped that the Departmental Committee will not recommend mere palliatives instead of proposing a scheme which will meet the difficulty, not only for next year but for years to come. It may be thought that the question of bonuses for the moment need not be considered owing to the present price of wheat making it profitable to grow the cereal; but the State may probably offer a bonus for every acre of wheat grown beyond the present acreage, or a bonus per quarter beyond the existing supply and when wheat falls below a certain price per quarter. This would no doubt be an inducement to break up poor grass lands, but the bonus would have to be continued for some years. Under our present land system, however, the question of bonuses is a serious one. A bonus given to a man who tills his own farm goes directly to the benefit of the land, but a bonus given to a tenant is liable to be intercepted —wholly or in part—by means of an increase of rent. This is a real contingency and it is difficult to know how to deal with it. The present writer

does not expect that the Government will be influenced by his views. He would, however, express his opinion that these measures—bonuses, guarantee of minimum prices to farmers, etc.—are mere experiments and palliatives, and will fail to meet the needs of the present crisis. These measures would add immensely—but in an artificial manner—to the prosperity of farming, and it is almost certain that landlords, agents, and trustees will claim a share of the advantages. It is only natural that they should do so. The adoption of the measures named would involve an immense cost to the nation, it would waste time, which is a vital factor in the situation, and it would be ineffective to secure the end in view.

The Government, however, in this matter, as we have said, must not rely on the farmer but on themselves, and take a robust view of the needs of the nation and treat the question as of the same importance as that of the supply of munitions.

An effective method would be for them to proceed at once to cultivate some millions of acres of the waste and derelict lands which exist. To this end every form of labour should

be made available—men incapable of military service, Belgian refugees, women, returned soldiers (wounded but not disabled), tramps, casuals and German prisoners.[1]

The schools, too, should be emptied of all boys of twelve years old and upwards, and of as many teachers as can be spared. These boys would, by contact with real life and by practical work in the fields, get a far better education than they are now getting in the schools. This form of labour is no doubt of a motley and an emergency kind, and there are difficulties connected with it; but the difficulties could be overcome. The first requisite is to have a competent Belgian or English agriculturist as a director in each colony of workers. These directors are not difficult to find, and with a few able assistants they would soon bring the colonies into order and usefulness. The housing difficulty could

[1] It is estimated that at the beginning of June last there were about 211,000 Belgian refugees—men, women, and children—in the country. The number of peasants among them may be comparatively small, but Belgian workmen, almost to a man, had some interest in the soil of their country and are familiar with the Belgian methods of cultivation.

be met by putting the workers under canvas, etc.[1]

There is not time to prepare much land for the coming autumn or spring sowings, but with an effort it might be fully prepared for the autumn and spring sowings of 1916–17, when the pinch will be mostly felt.

No doubt a certain class of political economists will gape at the great expense involved in the proposed operations; but political economy must learn to square itself with pressing human needs. In the words of Sir Horace Plunkett, "What is now wanted is a courageous policy which faces expenditure boldly in order to secure a maximum of produce."

In some quarters emigration has been suggested for the disposal of our returned soldiers. It is difficult to say what politicians will not do to avoid responsibility; but it would be regarded by the public generally as a national disgrace if

[1] The Government have already made a precedent in this direction by establishing "National Munition Factories" in different parts of the country. They belong to the Government, and are controlled by them. Up to August 18th of this year 535 establishments had been declared "Controlled Establishments" under the "Munitions of War" Act 1915.

the sole reward for our gallant soldiers was, to be banished from the country for which they had fought so bravely, especially as there is ample room for their profitable employment on the land at home. Such a policy of emigration would be ruinous to the country both from an economic and a social point of view. In a discussion on the question "Soldiers as Settlers," Mr. Bonar Law said, "he did not think any one would look with pleasure at the prospect of a very large number of the very best of our population suddenly leaving the country."

After all, it is to Mother Earth that we must look, now and always, for our salvation. One main object of this book is to awaken the minds of all classes to the vital importance of agriculture—an importance that cannot be exaggerated because exaggeration is impossible. Carlyle did not exaggerate when he wrote:

"Land is the mother of us all, nourishes, shelters, gladdens, lovingly enriches us all. In how many ways, from our first wakening to our last sleep on her blessed mother-bosom, does she as with blessed mother's arms enfold us all."

Our forefathers, in olden times, regarded the cultivation of the soil as a religious rite:—

"As the ploughman took his plough, he still chanted the prayer—'Earth, Earth, Earth, Mother Earth, grant thee the Almighty One, grant thee the Lord, acres waxing and sprouts wantoning and the broad crop of barley and the white wheat crop, and all crops of earth.' So as he drove the first furrow, he sang again—'Hail, Mother Earth, thou feeder of folk, be thou, growing by goodness of God, filled with fodder the folk to feed.'"

APPENDIX I

A FRENCH AGRICULTURIST'S OPINION

A LATE friend[1] of the writer's who was a practical agriculturist and had an intimate knowledge of both the French and English systems of land cultivation and tenure, held a conversation with a French agriculturist on the respective merits of the English system of tenancies and the French system of ownerships. He put the arguments of the Frenchman into writing and sent a copy to the present writer. These arguments were as follow :—

"We maintain our growth of wheat at about 16 million acres, while you have decreased your growth to under 2 million. By growing 16 million acres of wheat, we also produce 16 million acres of straw, and the growth of straw governs our style of farming. We keep three times the number of cows that you do in Great Britain, because we have sufficient straw to winter our stock in

[1] Mr. W. J. Harris, of Halwill Manor, North Devon. He cut up a considerable area of his estate into small holdings. He arranged with those tenants, who wished it, to become owners on easy terms. These small holdings were most successful, and in a few years they were the cause of a large increase in the population of his parish.

comfort. Notwithstanding your large acreage under grass, we produce much more milk and butter than you do, and are able to sell them more cheaply. We regard the cow as the machine for turning straw into manure. It is the knowledge that we protect our agriculturist that causes us to maintain our system of farming. Your industrial classes eat very few vegetables and dairy produce, while nearly every family in France is amply supplied with them at such moderate prices as more than makes up for any extra cost—if there be any—in bread. Our system enables us to keep a population of about 5 million families on the land, who number nearly half the population. These people are living far more happy and independent lives than any similar class in your country. They produce their own food and live far more cheaply in most ways than an equal number of English. . . . If we were blockaded by land and sea we should have nothing to fear for our food supply. What would your position be if a combination of maritime Powers cut off your food supplies? Before three months had passed you would be obliged to capitulate. You might then discover that your investments were not really true national wealth. The contrast between our defensive system and yours is only too evident. Even if we did not prefer our own economic system for other reasons, we should adopt it for such reasons as these, etc."

APPENDIX II

A NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Lord Milner, after expressing a hope that we may see the formation of a National Party in the interests of Agriculture, said :—

"But if a National Party is out of the question, there is nevertheless urgent need for a National Policy, by which I mean a body of political doctrine having some basis of principle, some *inner unity*, which will take account of all the great needs of our national life, internal and external, and propound an orderly and coherent plan for dealing with them as a whole.

"If such a National Policy is destined to see the light of day, it is certain that it will assign a foremost place in its programme to the fostering of Agriculture. Alike by its economic, its social and its moral effect, the neglect of Agriculture, the loss of a 'land tradition' has exercised a depressing influence on our national life and is, to a great extent, responsible for the confusion of thought and waste of effort, the lack of clear and simple ideals which clog the efforts of social reformers. We have got to get back to the old conception of the paramount importance of production and productive capacity—no merely material ideal, though it lies at

the root of material prosperity, but the key to the maintenance of a healthy, vigorous and moral race. But of all forms of productive capacity there is none more vital, indispensable, and steadying than the application of human industry to the cultivation of the soil. And if there is one point at which order is beginning to emerge from the present confusion of our social and political aims, it is precisely with regard to the fundamental necessity of making a better use of the greatest of all our natural resources. . . . That the land of these islands is under-cultivated, and that one of the chief causes of its being under-cultivated is that it is under-peopled—these two propositions at least are common to agricultural reformers of every school. The recognition of these two facts and the conviction of their immense importance have been slow in persuading a nation so preponderantly absorbed in urban pursuits and interests. But they are gaining ground every day, and bid fair to shatter the self-complacency with which we have been in the habit of regarding our lop-sided economic development.

"This new attitude of the public mind is calculated to ensure a fair hearing to those who are anxious to urge the needs and claims of agriculture. Hitherto they have often found themselves preaching to deaf ears; but now they can count on a large measure of sympathetic attention, etc."

APPENDIX III

PEASANT PROPRIETORS

"A peasant proprietary increases the number of those who have something to lose and nothing to gain by revolution, encourages habits of thrift and industry, gives the owner of land, however small the plot, a stake in the country, and a vested interest which guarantees his discharge of the duties of a citizen." (Rowland E. Prothero, M.P., "English Farming, Past and Present.")

"The small owner is generally, of all improvers, the most intelligent, the most industrious and the most successful" ("Wealth of Nations," Book III, Chap. IV).

APPENDIX IV

AGRICULTURAL LEAFLETS

In a previous page reference was made to the very valuable leaflets on all agricultural subjects, issued by the Board of Agriculture. Bound volumes of these leaflets, Nos. 1 to 100 and 101 to 200, can be had from the office of the Board of Agriculture, Whitehall Place, London S.W., at 6d. net each volume post free. Leaflets Nos. 2, 3 and 11, 13 and 83 deal with poultry and garden plots, with poultry feeding, poultry houses, appliances for small holders and cottagers, marketing of poultry and eggs, preservation of eggs, etc.

Honey is described as a valuable article of food, and its production is an inexpensive and a remunerative village industry. Bee-keeping is dealt with in leaflets 128 and 141 in "Advice to Beginners in Bee-keeping," and "Preparation of Honey for Market." Full instructions for pig-keeping for cottagers and small holders are given in leaflet No. 10. Other leaflets contain instruction to market gardeners and private persons on pruning and the general treatment of fruit trees, on storage, bottling and preservation of fruit. Advice is also given on the choice of seeds, of manures and other fertilizers. The keeping of goats is specially recom-

mended as being a very remunerative occupation, and instruction is given as to their breeding, housing, feeding, etc. Rabbit breeding is shown to be a means of increasing the food supply, and a special leaflet is issued on this subject entitled "Utility Rabbit Breeding for Cottagers and Small Holders."

The writer ventures to give these particulars in the hope of inducing those who have a little spare time, to engage in some of these small industries. They require but a very small capital, are very profitable, and would add greatly to the domestic larder.

APPENDIX V

INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES

For British beef the present excess of prices over those prevailing immediately before the war averages about 40 per cent. For British mutton it is somewhat less. The percentage advance in the prices of imported beef and mutton has been greater than that for the home-grown meat throughout the period. For the better cuts of imported meat the advance since the war began is over 40 per cent, and for the inferior cuts over 60 per cent. At the end of July the average excess price of bacon over that of a year earlier was 18 per cent. The retail price of fish has advanced 60 per cent as compared with a year ago.

On the 1st June, 1915, flour prices were nearly 60 per cent and bread prices over 45 per cent above those of July, 1914. Tea (including duty) stands at 30 per cent above the level of a year ago.

Granulated sugar fluctuated considerably during the early weeks of the war. At the beginning of December the excess was 68 per cent and has remained close to that figure ever since.

The present average price of milk is 11 per cent above the level of July, 1914. The average price of butter is 19 per cent in excess of the price a year earlier,

and that of cheese on the 1st July was one-third higher than on the same date in 1914.

The following summary Table shows the general effect for the twelve months of all the changes referred to above :—

Article.	Percentage increase since July, 1914.	
	Large towns.	Small towns and villages.
Beef, British—		
Ribs.	38	37
Thin flank	50	42
Beef, Chilled or Frozen—		
Ribs.	50	44
Thin flank	70	60
Mutton, British—		
Legs.	29	30
Breast	49	35
Mutton, Frozen—		
Legs.	45	39
Breast	66	58
Bacon (streaky)	20	15
Fish	77	51
Flour (households)	42	48
Bread	40	37
Tea	31	29
Sugar (granulated)	70	65
Milk	12	10
Butter—		
Fresh	18	20
Salt	18	21
Cheese	28	30
Margarine	5	4
Eggs (fresh)	28	24
Potatoes	24	25
All above articles (weighted net percentage increase)	36	33

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