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have experience both in civil and military services. They number several hundreds. Now within the limits of the Polish army there is work only for a quarter of them. The greater number, who are longing to keep their cause within their own particular sphere, are forced to remain almost completely idle. The policy of their military medical authorities seems curiously inconsistent. For example, some weeks ago—probably at the request of the British medical authorities—they issued a call for volunteers to serve in British medical institutions, and particularly in the bombed areas, the Navy and the Merchant Service, thus admitting that there are vacancies in these spheres. Nearly half of the Polish doctors immediately responded to this appeal. They got no word that anything was being done about transferring them. After making repeated inquiries they were told unofficially that the matter was closed, as there were no vacancies for allied doctors. At the same time there are well-founded rumours that the Polish medical authorities gave out that there were no volunteers for these jobs.

It would seem vital that the facts be disclosed. Surely someone competent should investigate and either prove or disprove these rumours, stating openly what obstacles there are in the way of the profitable use of these young, qualified and energetic doctors who want to do their best for the cause of the democracies.

A POLISH DOCTOR.

FAMILY CORN

SIR,—Might not the problem of poultry-feed be solved—at any rate, partially—by the encouragement of corn-growing on a quite small scale? Many years ago an account was published by a Lancashire clergyman of a successful experiment with corn-growing on family-allotments, whereby a considerable number of his flock kept themselves in bread for the year.

As I have myself proved—verifying a statement by a scientist—a small quantity of seed-corn, carefully hand-sown, at intervals of about 6 inches, in garden-ground, gives a very large proportionate yield, and if the plan were generally followed, it would surely have a definite effect on the nation's supplies. School-gardens, too, might produce a considerable amount, and it would, incidentally, help to revive in children their father's enthusiasm for corn-growing—whether the grain found most expedient were barley or rye, wheat or oats.—

Yours faithfully,
Clanfield House, Abingdon.

C. AUGUSTA EBERTON.

READINESS FOR RAIDS

SIR,—Mr. Herbert Morrison warns us to prepare ourselves for the toughest winter any of us have ever faced. But he steadfastly refuses to release the dynamic of democratic regional initiative, which alone can enable us to make effective preparations for the emergency he has in mind. In the provinces we are hamstrung by the folly and futility of over-centralisation—Whitehall bureaucracy run mad. If Mr. Morrison would instruct his regional officers to call regular meetings, in convenient areas, of the elected representatives of the great municipalities and the surrounding counties, it would be comparatively easy to devise effective plans for guaranteeing reasonable safety and adequate food, fuel and emergency-accommodation for the needs of our people: we could then face Herr Hitler's worst with equanimity. Will nothing ever teach Whitehall to foster and encourage local initiative and intelligence? We have in the provinces first-class technical advisers in our employment. But the showers of orders and counter-orders they receive from the Ministries in London are making them completely cynical and undermining their sense of responsibility.

Bristol.

R. ST. JOHN READ.

RUSSIA AND FINLAND

SIR,—In *The Spectator* of August 1st the action of Finland in breaking off diplomatic relations with Britain is discussed. Although the comment is on the whole fair, there is one point which needs further elucidation and discussion. The paragraph says that Finland cannot expect much British sympathy in the face of possible Russian claims when Germany has been finally defeated. It is difficult to understand what this really implies. Does it mean Russian claims to keep the territory ceded at the end of the Russo-Finnish War, or does it mean Russian claims for more of Finland? In my opinion, neither claim is justified. When Mr. Eden announced the recent Russo-Polish agreement in the House of Commons he said that the British Government did not recognise any territorial changes made during the war, unless they took part with the free will and good consent of the parties concerned. The Russo-Finnish peace-treaty of 1940 was made under duress. Finland was overpowered by superior military strength after an heroic fight. Therefore, according to the official policy of the British Government, Finland should regain her lost territories, regardless of her present policy. As far as Russian claims for more of Finland are concerned, I think that it would be indefensible to allow them. It must not be forgotten that Russia, before she was invaded, was hostile to this country and our cause. She was supplying Germany with oil and wheat. Her agents were fomenting strikes in defence-industries in the United States, and the Communist Party in Britain, under orders from Moscow, were doing all they could to weaken the war-effort by spreading defeatism and disaffection. We are Allies of Russia now because our concern is to

defeat Germany, and whoever fights Hitler is our friend. But that does not mean to say that we should allow Russia to collar the territory of a small democratic State simply as a reward for being our ally. That is why I do not agree with the paragraph under discussion.

—Yours faithfully,

RICHARD FELLIVEN.

Rampydenne, Burwash, Sussex.

"PRO AND CON LORD WOOLTON"

SIR,—Mr. Lehmann repeats the stale argument, "you cannot blame the Ministry if new potatoes were three weeks later than usual." One does and can blame the Ministry for not knowing that new potatoes would be late. Every market-gardener, every allotment-holder knew, and knew in May. Then why did not the Ministry meet the shortage in June by releasing some of those 40,000 tons of old potatoes they boasted of having in reserve instead of keeping some districts without any potatoes at all, new or old? That is the question tired and exasperated women are still asking. Can Mr. Lehmann answer it? We are so utterly weary of hearing that Ministries are "surprised" by facts known to almost every man in the street and woman in the home.

SUSAN M. SMEE.

56 Woodstock Road, Bedford Park, W. 4.

A RATIONING INJUSTICE

SIR,—You are a great upholder of fair play and justice for all, and I should much like to hear your opinion on a curious case that has arisen in my own experience as regards coupons for clothes. One of my staff, a young girl just beginning to earn good wages, bought a ready-made costume in our local town on May 5th for £3 1s. 7d. She could not afford to pay the whole sum at once, so she paid £2 1s. 7d. As soon as convenient, after receiving her wages on June 1st, she went into the town again (a distance of four miles) to fetch her costume and pay the outstanding £1. This was on June 5th. She was promptly mulcted of eighteen coupons. I took the matter up with the shop, who stood their ground. So unfair did I consider it that I then reported the case to the Board of Trade. To my amazement, they upheld the shop's contention.

Now, I have an "account" with various London shops. A garment from one of these was sent to me on "appro" near the end of May. I did not like it and returned it after June 1st, when rationing started, saying if it could be exchanged for something else without surrendering coupons I would like to exchange it. My size was not in stock, but today, July 31st, I have received the garment I wanted. I think that is perfectly fair and reasonable, but what about the other case? The girl is really penalised because she is not in a position to open an account with a shop. Her costume must have been made months before June 1st and she had bought it and paid two-thirds of the price twenty-six days before rationing commenced. I can see no sense and no justice in it.—Yours faithfully,

E. OAKLEY.

"TALK ABOUT THE LAND"

SIR,—Mr. Massingham, like all other authors, naturally wants reviewer and public to think as well of his book as he does himself. Unfortunately, it happens to be the job of reviewers to point out not only where books are good, but where also, if necessary, they are not so good. I have already said that *England and the Farmer* is "excellent as far as it goes." The whole point of my review is that it does not go far enough. Does it occur to Mr. Massingham, for instance, that many of his contributors have already stated their cases more fully elsewhere? Lord Lympington in *Famine in England*, Sir Albert Howard in *The Manufacture of Humus by the Indore Process and The Restoration and Maintenance of Fertility*, Professor Sir George Stapledon in *The Case for Land Improvement and Reclamation* and other pamphlets (enthusiastically recommended by me in *The Spectator*), Mr. C. Henry Warren in *Corn Country* (also recommended by me in *The Spectator*) have already dealt very substantially with the same subjects as in the chapters in *England and the Farmer*. Mr. Gardiner, some months ago, even published his own chapter in the form of a pamphlet. I might have said, therefore, that much in Mr. Massingham's book is not new; I did not do so because it is clear to me that much of what is said in it cannot be said too often or too forcibly. Nor can one say everything in a short review. I might have said, for instance, that Mr. Rolf Gardiner's "most original set of ideas" seems to come rather from the east than the west of the Rhine, and that much of his chapter, being largely an attack on a certain West Country rural experiment, which Mr. Gardiner has not the courage to name, is in bad taste. I might have said that Mr. Massingham's introduction is rather pompously written and full of clichés. I might even have said, though I did not, that the book was anti-conservative. What I did say was that I was tired of the farming community accusing the very political class it so often helps to put into power. I might have said, though I did not, that the book recommends a return to the conditions of 1830. What I did say was I was tired of the sentimentalism which urges us to model on the past when one remembers "the magnificent wages and conditions of employment that have been a fairly consistent characteristic of English agriculture for at least the last hundred and fifty years"—which happens to take us back beyond 1790.

There are authors who, when their books fail to excite a hundred per cent. admiration, immediately accuse reviewers of innuendoes, ambiguity, distortion, unfairness and general lack of conscientiousness and care. Mr. Massingham is one. It may therefore interest him to know that in the process of reviewing *England and the Farmer* I made reference to the following works: *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Hammond's *The Village Labourer*, Lord Northbourne's *Look to the Land*, Jocelyn Dunlop's *The Farm Labourer*, Rider Haggard's *Rural England*, Seebohm's *The Evolution of the English Farm*, Rogers' *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, and through them references to half a dozen other works of a similar kind. It would be uncharitable to say that this was more than Mr. Massingham deserved. I mention it merely to remind him that authors, in their fondness for their offspring, should also cultivate objectivity. Mr. Massingham, who is older than I, should know by now that disagreement, as well as being good medicine, is sometimes the greatest compliment of all.—Yours, &c.,

H. E. BATES.

The Granary, Little Chart, Ashford, Kent.

HISTORIES OF THE UNITED STATES

SIR,—“Janus” refers to the Board of Education's circular about teaching the history of the United States, and it is to be hoped that books that are more than dry lists of dates and the names of Presidents and battles will be recommended. A new cheap edition of Cecil Chesterton's *History of the United States*, first published twenty-two years ago, would be admirable for schools, supplemented by the more detailed book by Professor Edward Channing, *The United States of America, 1765-1865*. But best of all would be the book that was put into my hands by an American friend when I was returning to England after my first visit to the United States. “It will help to explain our non-stop enthusiasm,” he said. It did; moreover it was the best and most vivid history of a country that I have ever read. It was called *The Epic of America*; the author was James Truslow Adams. I should like to see it in the hands of every school-teacher; best of all I should like to see it as a Penguin sixpenny.—Yours, &c.,

3 *The Mall, East Sheen, S.W. 14.*

JOHN GLOAG.

[A new edition of Cecil Chesterton's book, edited by Prof. D. W. Brogan, is published in the Everyman Library.—Ed., *The Spectator*.]

NAZI INFLUENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

SIR,—In your issue of February 28th you refer to the possibility of Basutoland and Swaziland being transferred from Imperial control to the Union of South Africa. If such transfer is ever effected, a proviso must be inserted in the cession “that in the event of the Union becoming a Republic or breaking away from the British Commonwealth the said territories must revert to the Imperial Government.” This will not only ensure that the native population will be freed from any persecution from a Dutch Republic—but will also maintain the right of way into the Union for the Crown.

You may think that the chances of a Republican form of government are very remote, but actually the Republican Party have every chance of getting a majority at the next general election. If they do you can imagine what their policy will be. It is difficult for you to fathom the depth of anti-British feeling that has been worked up in this country. The idea is to eliminate entirely anything British and if possible to assist the Nazis. Of course, a civil war would be inevitable, because the English section and a percentage of the Dutch who are loyal would never agree to a change.

I am not an alarmist, but can speak with the experience of over sixty years as an

OLD COLONIST.

Kimberley, South Africa.

DEFENCE AGAINST NIGHT BOMBING

SIR,—According to official announcements, waves of German night-bombers have approached Moscow, but only a few machines have been able to penetrate the defences of that city. It is obvious, therefore, that the Russians must have some effective system of defence of which we are lacking. The Prime Minister has warned the country that we may expect intensified aerial attacks in the near future. I suggest that in view of the fact that Russia is now our Ally it should be possible for our authorities to learn the extraordinary effective system possessed by the Russians and so mitigate further suffering and loss in our vulnerable cities.—I remain, yours truly, W. B. CURELL.

Pudners, Poughill, Bude, Cornwall.

THE ETHICS OF BOMBING

SIR,—The German bombing of such cities as Warsaw, Rotterdam, London and Coventry was rightly execrated in this country as foul and barbarous. They then had air-superiority. Now that we are getting air-priority and even local superiority the Prime Minister tells us that we are systematically, scientifically and methodically bombing German cities on a large scale. Is not our bombing foul and barbarous also or do foulness and barbarity become decent when employed on the right side?—Yours, &c.,

T. H. IBELIN.

Astley, Dormans Park, Nr. East Grinstead.

[The difference between bombing “systematically, scientifically, and methodically” and bombing indiscriminately perhaps constitutes the answer.—Ed., *The Spectator*.]

COUNTRY LIFE

Rural Workers

How many kinds of rural workers are there? A country railwayman recently pointed out to me the inconsistency of allowing extra cheese only to agricultural workers. This man spent all day in the country, working his section of track, seven or eight miles from home; cheese was a food he needed and missed. This led me to make a rough list of rural workers who are not agricultural workers and whose packed midday meal may often be eaten far from home. How little Government officials sometimes know about country conditions is shown in the assumption that the agricultural worker rarely gets home to a midday meal. In actual fact he is often very near to home all day: home being a cottage on the farm. The following types of worker could all claim to be rural workers, and could all, no doubt, produce a very good case for an extra allowance of cheese: railwaymen, quarry-workers, lorry-drivers, postmen, flax-workers (night and day shifts), telephone-engineers, bus-drivers, blacksmiths, coalmen, chauffeurs, carpenters, garage-mechanics, bricklayers, brickmakers, bakers, butchers, paper-workers; and probably many more. From this it appears obvious that the rural worker becomes harder and harder to classify, for all these types, with the possible exception of quarry-workers, also belong to the town.

Scabious

On roadsides, on the edges of cornfields, in corn and along field-tracks everywhere, there is now in bloom perhaps the loveliest of late summer flowers. Pale mauve scabious are thick in blonde grass and honey-brown corn. The distinguished round heads, neat and soft as the bronzy-scarlet pin-cushions of wild roses, look cool and dignified. There is a gentle tickling scent from them as you stoop down and touch the cream-flecked heads that vary a little in colour, from very pale mauve through flushed lilac to strong half-purple, and on hot afternoons there is always a sleepy rise of brown butterflies and occasional blues as they flitter up from the flowers and hover and settle again, drowsily closing wings that seem to look at you with a steady dark brown eye. This, devil's-bit scabious, is a scabious. Sheep's-bit scabious, much dwarfier, is not. It is of the campanula family and unrelated to devil's-bit, which is of the teazels. They look much alike, but the sheep's-bit never has the grace and distinction of devil's-bit, so much of the charm of which comes from its height, so that it stands well up into the burnt blonde summer grasses, thrown into relief by the neutral cloud of fading stalks.

Drying Beans

“You will do a service to many housewives,” says a correspondent, “if you publish that fresh scarlet runner-beans can be kept indefinitely if they are sliced as for the usual cooking procedure, but instead are spread in masses in flat tins and put to dry in the sunshine.” This is an interesting change from the salting method—in which, unfortunately, most of the food value of the beans is lost in the washing process in winter. These dried beans can be stored in tins, and “soaked overnight and boiled with plain salt and water will retain all the fresh fragrance and flavour of the newly gathered crop.” This correspondent agrees with me that the bean-salt sandwich is often a loathsome mess and never, unhappily, tastes of beans. Another declares it to be old-fashioned anyway, and sends an excellent method of preserving them by a sterilising process in the modern airtight bottles. This is, unfortunately, too long and detailed to give here, and I think the suggestion of another correspondent—that more people should visit their local food-centre and arrange for local demonstrations of sterilising and preserving—is excellent. Preserving vegetables by sterilisation, a process needing considerable care, is obviously better taught by demonstration.

In the Garden

It will shortly be time to sow autumn onions and spring cabbage. Autumn-sown onions, which make large bulbs in the following summer and are generally more free from disease than spring-sown, unfortunately will not keep long. There is, however, a variety among the autumn section—which the countryman always calls “triplos”—that will keep. This is Brown Spanish. It should be in any catalogue, and there are probably improved varieties of it. White Lisbon is also an excellent onion for autumn sowing, and will pull well in spring: pure white, mild, nice to look at. Of spring cabbage it is better to make two sowings. But don't hurry either. Sow the second a fortnight after the first. I said something last week about growing more fruit. Now I see that the current issue of *The Countryman* has a symposium on *How Can We Grow More Fruit?* by nine experts, one of whom, Mr. Raymond Bush, is accused of being “rather rude about research-stations.” Nevertheless, East Malling appears to have an invaluable report on frost-damage, which ought to be worth getting, and I should advise anyone who thinks of planting fruit-trees in any quantity to take at least a small dose of expert advice. A table of the compatible varieties of pears, for example, would help to save many barren years.

H. E. BATES.