Turriff:
THE DEVERON PRESS
1916-2016
www.thedeveronpress.scot

Can Britain Feed Herself?

A year ago I asked, in the title of this pamphlet, 'Can Britain Regain the Foreign Markets?' and stated at some length how and why it was impossible (as well as undesirable) that she should. It is now (April, 1925) admitted by an orthodox economist like Professor Hewins, one of the soothsayers of the capitalist class, that the slump in British industry is not a world condition, but a national condition only. He points out that, in 21 other countries with which comparison is possible, trade is booming and unemployment at a minimum, while in Britain the number of unemployed on the official live register at 16th March was 1,219,200, and there are actually in all 2,757,190 persons at present supported in one way or another by the State, not with wages for work done, but with unemployed benefit or Poor Law relief. While cotton yarn in 1924 was only 77 per cent. of the 1913 figures, piece goods only 63 per cent., and 'iron, steel, worsted yarns, machinery, silk, coal, and produce all showed disconcerting declines,' the export trade of the 21 greater foreign countries was 12 per cent. higher than in 1913. 'Since the decline in the comparative position of our industries extends now over more than a generation,' says Professor Hewins, 'it points to permanent causes which can be removed only by drastic action taken by the Government of Great Britain in close association with the Dominions.'

This is our old friend the Zollverein. Professor Hewins is a Protectionist. He omits to mention that there are unemployed in the Dominions too; that Ottawa's 40,000 during the winter of 1923-24 was simply typical. This cuts the foundation from under his theory and his remedy alike, the theory being that we need imperial preference as an aid to imperial trade, and the remedy being Protection within the Zollverein.

The collapse of capitalism from its own inherent defect - profit-making - is so obvious that one must deny either ability or else sincerity to those who cannot see it. It is a condition of capitalism that there should be profits from investments and that part of these profits should be invested again; but the possibility of indefinite investment has obvious limits in a limited world. The profiteering class is at its wits' end to find safe or even speciously plausible investment for its surplus capital. Mr. Keynes last year pointed out that in 1923 'we invested abroad about two-thirds of what passed through the investment markets and probably between a half and a

third of our total savings.' British investors, in the regular way of finance, have advanced to the Government, local authorities, and public enterprises of Brazil about £250,000,000. This, says Mr. Keynes, 'yields at present a precarious 4 per cent. (2½ per cent, allowing for the fall in money values), and we get that with no approach to certainty.'

Apart altogether from war loans, we have lent £672,000,000 to Colonial Governments; India has absorbed £260,000,000; and, although foreign investments are now unpopular on 'Change, it is reported by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer that over £60,000,000 of British money have been invested abroad within the past year!

This means that £60,000,000 have not only been withdrawn from circulation in Britain - that is, from the purchase of commodities or services in the home market - but have been sent abroad to improve the equipment of foreign producers, to enable them to do without our products, and even to compete with us in the world's markets.

Can a system last which is based upon starving home consumption, crippling home production, and at the same time increasing foreign production? If 'the hire of the labourer kept back by fraud' were spent in the country in which it was made - upon motor-cars, diamonds, old masters, palaces of porphyry and jasper - the luxury trades might absorb more and more of the unemployed, and capitalistic civilization might stagger along somehow. But as it is, the greed that takes the bread out of the worker's mouth shows itself not only in taking, but also in keeping; and not only in keeping, but in investing, so that the taker, having fleeced the home producer and consumer of all that he can shear, now turns his attention to the foreign producer and consumer as well.

There is a Lancashire saying, 'From clogs to clogs,' meaning that the first of a family of capitalists has in his time worn clogs and that a third generation will see all the gatherings of the family dispersed, and the grandson back to clogs again. This may once in a while happen in the gambles and fortuities of speculative business; but it must be exceptional. If it were a law it would mean that all capitalistic accumulations went back into the common wealth, the three generations, or the last of the three, having spent their money on themselves and their dependents. There is, however, a biological principle called 'breeding true,' which means that money-getting and money-keeping parents will beget their like. The Rothschilds and Barings and Rockefellers show no present tendency towards going on the dole. There is a steadily growing class who have inherited wealth from a succession of money-getting, comparatively frugal ancestors, and who will leave it to money-keeping descendants, if external circumstances do not prevent them.

To the capitalistic process, which is all vain addition by the producers, but which is subtraction, multiplication, and compound usury by the investors, where in Nature shall we find an analogy? The bees are robbed of their honey at the end of the season,

the barndoor hen is robbed of her eggs and the cow of her milk every day. But the honey and the eggs are eaten and the milk is consumed daily, while the bees, the fowls, and the kine have the houseroom and the provender fitted to their requirements and the continuance of the stock unimpaired. They have not the sense to resent the way in which they are exploited by egg-stealing, milking, honey-appropriating man. Their milk, eggs, and honey are used, and not saved to be invested and re-invested, world without end. It is true that some milk is used to feed calves, and some eggs are 'set' to produce chickens. But the calves and the chickens will in due season be killed and eaten, whereas it is the function of capital, as the market is rigged, not to be consumed, but actually to grow the more the more it is 'used.' I quote the word 'used,' for money is not really used, except in the very limited sense that the small amount of money which exists in the shape of bullion is sometimes used for 'tossing,' or if it is melted down it may be used for scarf-pins, watch-cases, and tooth-filling, All that we need from money is the sight of it. From trouser-pocket and purse it passes to till, safe, and bank-vault, and in all the process it serves, in itself, no use whatever. It is a mere symbol of labour done, and the hateful mockery of it is that the labour is not done by those who possess most of the symbol, but by those who possess least of it. In this respect money most resembles eggs, which are eaten by any creature rather than the silly fowl that lays them.

They speak of the goose that lays the golden egg. And it is a goose. It is Labour that lays the golden egg, and it is the idle investor who appropriates it. Even before the war 70 per cent. of the business of the country was done by limited companies, and it is the essence of these companies that the people who take the profits from them lend no help whatever in the actual conduct of the business. The old-fashioned idea of the capitalist as a captain of industry has thus disappeared from modern capitalism. The modern capitalist is the widow, the old maid, the professional man, the commercial traveller, anybody who has money which he or she can plant with a stockbroker to be invested. They need not know anything of the business from which their dividends are drawn. They live by the passive function of soulless ownership.

Such a system happily cannot last. That it is nearing an end, even on the confession of its supporting spokesmen, is good news. It is falling by the vices inherent in the system. Capitalism is a system of continuous subtraction from the common wealth, and of investment of the fleecings abroad. The more such a system succeeds the sooner it will fail. The bane provides its own antidote, and the more bane the more antidote. The chain of circumstance is (1) that the more profit you make the more you impoverish the people who would buy the goods you have to sell, (2) the more profit you make the less is the purchasing power of the home consumer, (3) the more profit you make the more you need to increase your investments abroad, (4) the more you increase your investments abroad the more you cut yourself out of the market there, since you enable your customer to do without you now and to become your competitor in due course, and (5) when the world is fully exploited there will be no room for further investments, and you will have no use for profits even if any profits were forthcoming.

I can see no faulty link in that chain of reasoning. The only questions are: How long will the process last? and Can we afford to let events run their course, with all their inhuman results, without trying to save humanity from the social quagmires through which the illusion of Capitalism will drag it?

The alternative system is to produce for consumption and use instead of for export and profit, exchanging, indeed, your natural products for the different natural products of other countries, but in the main producing for a home market, and cultivating your land to the highest possible degree.

Recently I met a young Tory candidate, now a Tory member of Parliament, who admitted that if he believed Britain could feed her present population he would join the Labour Party. This is an example of the attitude of many who cling to the individualistic position against all logic, good taste, and good feeling. In what follows I have shown, not merely what can be done, but what *has already been done*. The body of evidence should be sufficient, not only to dissipate all fears as to our ability to live on our land by our own labour, but to persuade us that *faro de se* (supplying ourselves) represents a state of national economy infinitely preferable to that which prevails. The truth not only tells best, but the right course usually proves in the end to be the most pleasant and in every way satisfactory course.

Faro de se.

From a wealth of similar facts, let us take Tsarist Russia as illustrating the expansion and the tendency to *faro de se* (supplying oneself).

RUSSIA AND POLAND,

Year.	Number of Factories.	Workpeople Employed.	Value of Output.
1861 —	14,060 —	—	£36,000,000
1881 —	35,160 —	—	131,000,000
1894 —	–	1,555,000 —	180,000,000
1910 _	16,983 —	2,253,790 —	494,600,000

This was the normal rate of expansion, pre-war, in a country which, in spite of all, remained primarily and essentially agricultural. With a population put in 1910 at 165,000,000, obviously there was an unlimited market for what the Russian great industry could produce.

The same sort of expansion was going on in Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Australia, even Brazil and Mexico, and of course in America.

The *Times* of August 27, 1912, reported that in 1912 there were in Brazil 161 cotton mills, with 1,500,000 spindles and 50,000 looms, employing over 100,000 operatives. In 1870 Brazil had had only nine mills, with a total of 385 spindles.

At Vera Cruz, in Mexico, in 1887, there were 40,200 spindles, and the looms produced 287,000 pieces of cotton cloth. But by 1910 the number of power looms had grown to 25,000, there were 145 cotton mills, with 703,000 spindles, and the operatives employed numbered 32,000, and produced 13,936,300 pieces of cotton goods and 554,000 cwts. of yarn from home-grown cotton.

India.

But the most striking growth of *faro de se* has taken place in India, always reckoned a sure market for British cottons. She used to buy very nearly one-third of her aggregate import of cotton goods from Britain - 22 million pounds' worth out of a total of 75 millions during the years 1880 to 1890. From 1904 to 1907, however, the British proportion of Indian imports fell to less than a fourth - 21 millions out of a total of £110,440,000. In 1860 the Indian mills consumed only 23,000,000 lbs. of raw cotton; but by 1877 the quantity was nearly quadrupled, and by 1887-8 it trebled again, to 283 million lbs. The number of mills grew from 40 in 1887 to 147 in 1895, and the number of spindles from 886,100 to 3,844,300. By 1909-10 there were 237 cotton mills, with 6,136,000 spindles, 80,000 looms, and 231,850 workpeople.

The export of cotton twist from India more than doubled in the years 1882-87, and by 1910-11 the value of the cloth and yarn *exported* from India had reached £7,943,700.

The tale is even more impressive as to the development in jute. In 1882 there were in India 5,633 looms and 95,937 spindles. In thirteen years the figures had doubled, and by 1909-10 there were 60 jute mills, with 31,420 looms, 645,700 spindles, and 204,000 workpeople. The exports of jute stuffs from India rose from a million and a-half in 1884-5 to 112 millions in 1910-11.

Why should all this development not go on in other industries? It *is* going on. Nothing can prevent the countries which grow the raw material and have the machinery and the skill at their own doors from supplying more and more of their own wants. I could fill this pamphlet with figures showing the growth of *faro de se* in all the staple industries. And for an old country like Britain to neglect *faro de se* is to commit *felo de se*.

Undesirable.

It is not as if it were desirable that we should remain the workshop of the world. Smoke, chemical fumes, the blasted landscape, the blighted population, the shortened lives, the prevalence of disease - are all accompaniments of capitalistic

industrialism for export and profit. The millmaster of old lived among his people, spent some of his money among them, and he and his took part in their public and social life. The new capitalist is the absentee shareholder who lives as far away as possible from the mill chimney, the glare of the blast furnaces, the sight of the pithead machinery, or any actual contact with the grimy scenes where, and the grimy folk by whom, his dividends are made.

The smoke smear of industrial areas trails forty miles from the place where the coal is wasted that produces it. Humanity, the graces of life, the clean wholesomeness of Nature are wilted in the industrial hell man's hands have made.

Production for use primarily instead of for profit primarily would mean the complete redemption of Industrialism from being the blighting thing for which we know it now, and have always known it. They are no friends of mankind who would preserve the evil thing. It is going anyhow, will will we nil we.

The Future of Britain.

The future of Britain lies in the development of the home market along the lines of a more intensive agriculture; horticulture, arboriculture, and fisheries, for our own needs primarily, with the home demand for the products of the textile, metallurgical, building, and all subsidiary crafts immensely stimulated and extended as a result of the vastly increased purchasing power of the general body of the nation, together with the husbanded labour-force of a population at present wasted upon chaotic distributive agencies. Germany has once again shown us the way. Deprived of her richest coal and ore bearing territory, she has nevertheless been able, not only to carry on, but to pay reparations alike in money, raw material, and manufactured goods, and to make her industrial magnates rich beyond the power of all rational spending. This she had done during six and a-half years, surrounded by enemies, harassed by invasion with all its burdens, harassed by internal violence and political turmoil, and having her currency cruelly depreciated in all her dealings with the outside world.

All this she has done, and borne, by turning her soil to proper account and by manufacturing chiefly for a stimulated home market.

As a country of easy distances, with an extensive seaboard, many harbours and navigable rivers, with the acquired skill and accumulated wealth of her people, Britain will probably retain less or more of a world trade. But from being a people neglecting agriculture, importing our food, and depending largely upon foreign markets for the disposal of the goods manufactured in our staple industries, we shall be driven by force of circumstances to cultivate our wasteful meadows and to plant our derelict wastes. Land that is not cultivated goes sour, and reverts back to bog once more. The empty spaces of so-called 'deer forests' - forests without trees - could support a considerable population of foresters, and the trees would be a valuable crop.

Can Britain Feed Herself?

If we cannot regain our foreign markets and should not try to do so, can Britain feed herself, and is it worth her while to try to do it?

Many will hasten to assure us that for one thing, she cannot.

Well, I do not know anyone who has made a world-wide study of agriculture and horticulture to anything approaching the extent that the late Peter Kropotkin did; and here are his conclusions, based upon a wealth of evidence which has been before the public since 1888, when I first read his articles, 'The Coming Reign of Plenty,' in The Nineteenth Century. These articles form the nine long chapters of 'Fields, Factories, and Workshops,' which has been a book - now classic - before the public since 1900, and has had amplifications bringing it up to 1912 and confirming the earlier facts and arguments. Here are some of his conclusions:-

(1) If the soil of the United Kingdom were cultivated only as it was 45 years ago, 24,000,000, instead of 17,000,000, could live on home-grown food; and this culture, while giving occupation to an additional 750,000 men, would give nearly 3,000,000 wealthy home customers to the British manufactures.

(2) If the cultivable area of the United Kingdom were cultivated as the soil is cultivated on the average in Belgium, the United Kingdom would have food for at least 37,000,000 inhabitants; and it might export agricultural produce without ceasing to manufacture so as freely to supply all the needs of a wealthy population. And finally -

(3) If the population of this country came to be doubled, all that would be required for producing the food for 90,000,000 inhabitants would be to cultivate the soil as it is cultivated in the best farms of this country, in Lombardy and Flanders, and to utilise some meadows which at present lie almost unproductive, in the same way as the neighbourhoods of the big cities of France are utilised for market-gardening.

All these are not fancy dreams, but mere realities; nothing but the modest conclusions from what we see round about us, without any allusion to the agriculture of the future.

The bases of these claims are to be found in a wealth of facts and statistics, vastly interesting in themselves as reflecting a varied industrial and social life, and not less interesting and cheering on the human side as showing how the plain sense and inherited lore of the actual working cultivator will secure progressively good results when the business of agriculture and horticulture is taken seriously and hopefully. For our present purpose, however, these details of accomplished results are mainly significant because of their social and economic value. They indicate beyond the faintest shadow of a doubt that the land of Britain is capable of supporting the people of Britain, even if they grew in numbers at a more rapid rate than is at all probable. The prospect of fertile fields, of blossoming orchards, of richly bearing market

gardens, of the waste places afforested, with a population scattered over the land and living in more direct contact with it, the great cities not only ceasing to grow, but actually falling off - is not this a picture of the future of Britain vastly more attractive than the present aspect of the land?

Agricultural Vignettes.

I give a few vignettes (every story tells a picture) for their suggestiveness.

The average crop of potatoes in Britain is six tons to the acre. But in Kincardineshire crops of 14 tons are common. In Minnesota crops of 31 tons to the acre have long since been secured. But in Germany the crop is 40 tons.

Why scratch 10 acres to produce what, with good cultivation, can be grown on one?

We waste too much land on meadows; but even in the growing of meadow hay there is scratching and there is good cultivation. In England hay averages 1½ tons to the acre; Flanders produces 2½; France (by irrigation) produces 8 to 16 tons. But on Scots soil, at Craigentinny, Sir John Lawes produced 56 tons of green fodder – ryegrass - to the acre, the crop taking its full development in one instead of in four years.

In Germany crops of 75 to 110 tons of beetroot per acre are reported as being common, and this also is a cattle food. At Whitby Mr, Champion, helped by sewage, grew 150,000 to 200,000 lbs. of beetroot to the acre. This meant the food of two or three cattle, whereas in open-field grazing two or three acres are required to keep one horned beast. They lie upon it, foul it, and trample it.

During a given period the population of France increased 40 per cent.; but the wheat crop during the same period increased sixfold. At Tomblaine 82 bushels were in one year grown on the twentieth part of an acre, a patch 47 feet square.

After that it will seem an anti-climax to say that £400 worth of pears were harvested from an orchard of five acres at Baltet; but pears are a pretty crop, and an orchard is more interesting than a cornfield, except during the few weeks of harvest.

Dense Populations.

Belgium produces two-thirds of the food of its dense population (600 to the square mile), besides *exporting* foodstuffs to the value of 48s. per head, of population. And the land is naturally infertile. The population of Britain is only 389 to the square mile.

But Jersey, which has also a naturally infertile soil, with a sunless autumn, maintains 1300 persons to the square mile, and exports the immense quantities of produce of which all the world knows less or more.

While the rural population of Britain is steadily and rapidly decreasing, the agricultural population of Denmark as steadily grows. The standard of comfort is relatively high. The people are much better educated than ours. They work very intelligently, but not so hard as we do. The summer is short, the winter severe, and the soil on the average not nearly so good as ours. But the people are intelligent and hopeful; their education does not make them turn from manual work, as education does in Britain; incidentally their whole outlook upon life is shown by the fact that they vote Socialist, and have a Socialist-Radical Government in power as I write.

The Last Golden Age.

All this of itself would be enough to dispose of the theory that an agricultural civilization means a lower civilization. There was plenty of evidence of the fallacy of that even before Denmark proved it. Historians refer to our fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as representing the Golden Age of English labour. If that can fairly be said of the Middle Ages in Britain, which had none of the great wealth-getting appliances of modern times, surely it must be much more true that we could have still better times now, with the command we have over the forces and elements of Nature.

Here is a list of prices current in Merrie England five hundred years ago:

Wheat, per quarter	. . .	. . . 4s. to 5/4	; now 59s.
Malt	. . .	. . . 3/4 to 5s.	
Barley	. . .	. . . 3/2 to 410	; now 48s to 50s.
Oats	. . .	. . . 1/10 to 2/4	; now 30s. to 31s.
Oxen and Bulls	. . .	. . . 12s. to 16s.	; now £27 to £59
Calves	. . .	. . . 1/4 to 2/8	; now £10
Sheep	. . .	. . . 1/2 to 1/4	; now 67/6
Lambs	. . .	. . . 4d. to 8d.	; now 31s. to 55s.
Capons	. . .	. . . 3d.	; now 3s. to 4s.
Chickens	. . .	. . . ½d. to 1d.	; now 2s. to 3s.
Ducks	. . .	. . . 1½d. to 2d.	; now 2s. to 3s.
Geese	. . .	. . . 2½d. to 5d.	; now 6s.
Pigs (sucking)	. . .	. . . 2½d. to 5d.	; now 12s. to 21/6
Rabbits	. . .	. . . 2d.	; now 1s. to 1/6
Pigeons	. . .	. . . 3 a penny	; now 6d. to 1s,

Fresh Congers	. . .	. . . 4d.	; now 15s. to 25s. per stone
Cheese	. . .	. . . ½d. per lb.	; now 1/4 to 1/1 0
Honey	. . .	. . . 3d. a quart	; now 2s. a lb.
Eggs	. . .	. . . 25 a penny	; now 2s. a dozen

At the period to which these figures relate wages in England were 6d. a-day to 10d. in harvest time. A day's wage would thus buy 150 eggs - 12½ dozen. Taking 2s. as a medium present-day price, the normal day's wage of a fifteenth century workman, as measured in eggs, would equal in purchasing power 25s. of our money. The civilization which gave that standard of remuneration was mainly agricultural; but it was free of most of the hundred and one stupendous and increasing wastages of modern life.

Agriculture is still the largest industry even in Britain, employing 12.66 per cent. of the population, as against 11.39 in commerce, 8.2 in transport, 5.0 in mines and quarries, 7.89 in metals and machinery, 6.77 in building and construction, 6.92 in textile fabrics, and 7.23 in dress. So that, nation of shopkeepers though we are, and workshop of the world as we have been, agriculture is not only our oldest industry, but, as said, it is still our largest. The percentage, however, must be largely increased - by preference at the expense of 'commerce' and 'textile fabrics,' with a large draft from the class returned as 'of no occupation.'

The How of the Change Over.

How is the transformation to be brought about that will increase the population living upon and by the land?

There never was such a chance as now. Landlords' incomes are reduced by taxation till the actual moiety they receive is put at 2/6 in the £. Not that rents have fallen; they keep rising, owing to the competition of farmers for more land. These say they are farming at a loss, but they contradict their own representations by seeking to add to their responsibilities. When a man is losing by his business he does not make extensions, or offer higher prices. The market prices of grain and cattle do not point to losses. Grain is about double pre-war prices, and cattle are quoted 'very dear'; yet wages are scandalously low.

The immediate steps to help the transformation would be (1) a return to Control, (2) the fixing of a minimum wage for the agricultural labourer, (3) the fixing of a controlled price for produce, (4) insistence upon a steadily rising standard of cultivation, with penalties for falling short of it, (5) compulsory co-operation in buying and selling, and (6) the nationalization of the railways so as to put an end to the penalising of home-grown produce by saddling it with unfair freight charges, the British consigner paying four times as much as the foreign user of the railways. To make the foreign produce pay its passage would go far to keep it out altogether, and

this would be fair and natural protection as distinguished from the artificial and cumbrous protection of tariffs.

If control was good in war-time it would be good in peace, especially with the double end in view of fostering agriculture and hastening the end of the system of private property in land. We are at war still - with poverty, homelessness, ignorance, the selfishness due to greed and fear. Farmers have been exhorted to co-operate; but they are consumed with a fierce individualism which seems to render voluntary co-operation impossible. The results of this refusal to co-operate are notorious. The Linlithgow Commission's Report reveals a state of chaos in buying and selling which rural residents themselves realised long since, though none of the *three* sets of politicians is doing anything about it, except that the I.L.P. Agriculture Committee has issued a pamphlet which brings some of the salient facts within a handy compass. Sir Charles Fielding's experience as Director-General of Food Production leads him to put the difference between the farmer's selling price and the consumer's buying price at £175,000,000 a-year on the three items of Bread (£52,000,000), Meat (£78,000,000), and Milk (£45,000,000).

A Mental Change Needed.

The great drawback to the evolution of society along the right lines is that events are shaped, or are allowed to drift, by urban dwellers, who cling to the idea that their mode of life is the only way. When agricultural questions come on in Parliament the benches are empty, the Labour benches especially so.

But the system of production for export cannot last. To set the Continent on its feet will only hasten the end. The shrewdest man in political life realises this. Mr. Lloyd George has never lost an opportunity of emphasising the fundamental importance of agriculture. Speaking at a concert at Llanystumdwy, he said: 'The safety of the country depends on making rural life more attractive. We have to get back to the old life of rural England, rural Wales, and rural Scotland.'

There is not another front-rank politician who takes that view, and the ex-Premier has never lost sight of it. The best years that agriculture has seen in this country were the years 1917-18, and they were secured under his auspices by Control, by getting land back into cultivation, and by keeping the crafts busy in the small centres that cater for the actual cultivators. This, and not foreign trade, and foreign loans, and foreign wars, represents the basis of national prosperity, safety, physical and social health.

This does not mean a rural Britain of slow-moving, slow-thinking, slow-speaking chawbacons or brose-wallopers, living in whited sepulchres of verminous cottages or sleeping in lofts under the bare slates and sometimes leaky tiles. It does not mean an empty and dull countryside in which the only amusements are drinking, fighting, and midnight raking.

The rural Britain of the ideal realised will be comparatively thickly peopled, no house out of hail of another, the doctor, general shop, post office, lecture-hall, and reading and recreation rooms being close at hand, having the population and wealth on the ground to justify these conveniences.

No Reason for City and Country.

City and country are both wrong as forms of life. The burg grew around the castle for safety, and might be surrounded by a wall for the same reason. Numbers attracted numbers, traders and craftsmen found it of advantage to be near each other for convenience of interchanged service, and the clustered booths formed a shopping centre to the country folk. With distance now annihilated by telephones, motor cars, and the message boy's push-bike, people may live in open, tree-studded surroundings, every yard of ground being turned to account for tillage, buildings, and broad, well-kept thoroughfares.

I write during a time of heavy rains and sodden crops. (The first edition of this pamphlet appeared in the autumn of 1924.) But a few days of sun and warmth had greatly improved the prospects, and, looking then at the fields red-ripe for the reaper, one could not but feel that the chief reason why they were not being dealt with in those few days of fine weather was the scarcity of labour in the countryside. When a short spell of fine weather intervenes in a wet season the whole population ought to turn out and attack the fields with scythes, hooks, reapers; binding, twisting bands ('raips'), and stooking and raking; the field-work being taken as a holiday vastly more interesting and useful than any mere game or 'exercise.' At present all the demand is for scythemen, the grain being so 'laid' that the reaper-and-binder cannot cope with it. And the young men cannot wield the scythe. They can play games, but to swing a scythe - no. The young men of these rural parts have, it would seem, never even tried, and have no wish to attempt it. Thus is capitalism punished for its own greedy destruction of the skill of the craftsman. It introduces machinery; the machinery dispenses with the need for skill; and then the machine breaks down, and great is the collapse that follows. As regards mowing, however, the accomplishment is not difficult to learn, and if we had the folk on the ground, they would not all be too proud to master a merely useful accomplishment, and a laid harvest need have no terrors. As it is, the young people are mostly in the towns drawing the dole, and all sorts of useful jobs have nobody to do them. Building of houses is only one of the many things that are retarded because capitalism and its necessary accompaniment trade unionism, with the herding of men in cities, obstruct and delay the work.

The community will learn erelong to be master in its own house. A population scattered abroad over the country, and freed of mob and mass hatreds and enthusiasms alike, will take pleasure in its greatly simplified work, and will be humanised by its peaceful, beautiful surroundings, and the neighbourliness born of knowing its neighbours.

Capitalism digs its own grave by its expansion abroad, its consolidation at home, and the ruthlessness of its methods. Its heart, like Pharaoh's is hardened so that it can neither let the workman live nor live itself without expansion and consolidation. The more rapid the expansion the sooner most it reach the limit inevitable in all things in a limited world. The consolidation does but prepare the way for national and even international ownership. The ruthlessness which led the capitalist to attack the successful State railways of the Continent will teach the custodians of the public interest to be equally ruthless; to be as resolute for the proved good of the community as the Levers and Stinneses and Thyssens are for their own selfish aggrandisement. International Capitalism, drunk with its power, has gone mad. The madness marks its zenith.

The true Golden Age of Humanity, of the common man, who is wiser, more kindly, more socially useful than was ever any ghoulish Napoleon of finance or of empire, this Golden Age lies, not in the past, but in the future. Its outward features will be, not the piled-up city of skyscrapers, not the sunless and soulless city of Yankee nightmare, but

the little house on the hill,

The orchard and woodland beauty,

And the happy fields we till.

Then all mine and all thine shall be ours,

Nor shall any lack a share

Of the joy and the gain of living

In the days when the world grows fair.