

**£400 per Acre in Sheffield.**—The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* of March 7th reports an address given by Mr. F. E. P. Edwards, the City Architect, to the Crookesmoor Women Citizens' Association. He showed by the aid of plans what was going to be done in regard to housing on three estates—Wincobank, Norwood Hall and Walkley Hall. These estates had been obtained at a cost of from £230 to £400 per acre.

Is this another case of "going farther afield" in the vain endeavour to acquire cheap land? The Women Citizens' Association might have been told that within the municipal boundaries there are 9,944 acres of land rated as agricultural land. That land pays on the average only 4s. 8d. every year in rates.

A. W. M.

(This is the third of a series of articles on "House Famine and Land Prices." Previous articles appeared in our February and March issues.)

## THE FATE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES

Dr. Gisbert Kapp, of Birmingham University, writing to the *Daily News* of March 1st, comments on an article in that paper by Mr. C. F. G. Masterman on, "The Fate of the Middle Classes." He does not consider that Mr. Masterman touched the root of the question. Dr. Kapp says:—

"Everyone agrees that there should be a fair division of wealth between the capitalist and the worker, whether manual or intellectual, but before wealth can be divided it must be produced, and the remedy for low wages is the more abundant production of wealth."

"Now the source of all wealth is drawn from Mother Earth, and it seems to me a self-evident proposition that if you permit less than 1 per cent. of the population absolutely to control the earth, the other 99 per cent. must produce wealth only by permission of the small minority and on terms dictated by that minority. Higher wages, better travelling facilities, better built houses, better schools, and a higher standard of education and all those comforts which you very justly point out as beyond the reach of the middle class, must still remain beyond their reach as long as the land remains the property of the 1 per cent., whilst all the rest, whether professional men or handicraftsmen, are only permitted to work and produce wealth by permission of the land monopolist. To break down the land monopoly, therefore, seems to me the real remedy for our social evil."

## CORRESPONDENCE

### A Landowner's Refusal

To the Editor of LAND VALUES.

SIR,

I give you the following particulars, which I guarantee true and correct. In December, 1918, I wrote to the landowner to sell me a few acres of land adjoining my house at Cropston, which I understand is let at 20s. per acre.

The agent asked me what I thought of £90 per acre. I told him £60 was about the amount I was willing to pay, and which sum was too much.

I eventually offered in writing to pay £70 per acre for six acres, or £60 per acre for 10 acres.

On Christmas Eve morn the agent saw me on the road and told me the "Deal was off."

If they want my son to fight for and be murdered for "his country," the deal is accepted.

But if my son wants a bit of his country to till, the deal is off.

Could anything be more shameful?

Yours faithfully,

ALFRED ELSON.

Springfield, Cropston, Leicestershire.

## THE LOT OF THE POLISH LAND WORKER

Mr. Rothay Reynolds wires from Warsaw, March 21st, to the *Daily News* (March 24th):—

About 15,000 agricultural labourers are on strike in the country round Lublin, and their numbers are likely to increase, since it is possible that the movement will spread to other parts of the country.

The strike is neither surprising nor regrettable. It is the cause which is deplorable. It has been caused by the inability of the farm hands to live on the pittance paid by the landowners, and by their determination to tolerate no longer the miserable conditions of life imposed upon them by their employers.

Before the war labourers were paid a yearly wage of 30 roubles (£3) in the Lublin district. Under pressure the late Government of Mr. Moraczewski raised it to 300 marks, equal at the present time to less than £6. The labourer receives from the landowner a home, consisting of one room, which the family may have to share with another family, a certain quantity of corn and fuel, and a plot of ground for the growing of potatoes.

A peasant in the district of Lovza, where conditions are worse than in Lublin, told me: "Before the war we could manage because then a pair of boots for a man cost four roubles and for a woman two roubles. This man and his family shared a room with two other families, and each of the three contains five children. 'The labourer in our parts is now getting 100 marks. How can he live when boots cost 500?'"

He mentioned that the landowner pastured a cow; that the fuel to warm the home consisted of fallen branches and brushwood, which the children collected in the forest. "We eat meat on Easter Day, not always at Christmas."

Labourers in the Lublin district state that the majority of the landowners are not paying the rate of wages imposed by the Moraczewsky Government. The strikers demand 600 marks yearly, a larger supply of corn, a larger plot of potatoes, and, above all, the abolition of the custom requiring each labourer to provide an assistant, whom the labourer is usually obliged to pay more than the amount allowed for this purpose by the landowner.

I have in my possession the demands of Lomza farmhands, given me by the labourer already mentioned. It is one of the most touching documents I have ever read, a cry from the tillers of the earth not only for better material conditions of life, but for enlightenment and for the things of the spirit.

Besides asking 600 marks yearly, these labourers demand that the landowner shall provide a school for their children when one does not exist, ask for two days' holiday every quarter to arrange their private affairs, and stipulate that no work shall be required of them on Sundays or festivals of the Church except the work of feeding horses, "in order that we may attend our religious duties." It is, indeed, a document which, to employ the phrase of Balzac, is *parfumé de prières champêtres*.

The landowners declare that it is impossible to meet the labourers' demands and at the same time make a profit. In reply to which the labourers say: "Very well. Hand us over the farms; we are prepared to work them and give you good rent." A remedy will be applied. For there is a democratic Parliament at Warsaw.

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