

The present writer has endeavoured to interest a Catholic public in two outstanding examples of the new statesmanship for several reasons. Others, Catholics might note, are taking a far greater part than they, in work which, by reason of Papal emphasis and the clamour of our own needs, should be urgently our own. For although the land of England matters more to the Christian than to anyone else, most of us are not only ignoring its appeal but helping to frustrate it.

It should not need Papal exhortations—though Papal exhortations have not been lacking—to point out that a family has a better chance, spiritually and materially, in the country than in the town; and that even if England continues to ruin her land in favour of her export trade, ‘there is a world elsewhere.’

Yet—how unlike the day when Cistercians colonized the wilderness!—Catholics are netted, even against their wishes, for the towns, by the fact that such jungle outposts of the Faith as exist in more avowedly savage countries, are very often lacking in the jungle that is England. It is a sorry sight to see poor Catholics tramp and cycle, Sunday after Sunday, to the nearest town; to a long Sung Mass in the middle of the morning or to Low Mass and Communion in the dark. Meanwhile the fire goes out, the animals are unfed, the dinner is uncooked, the beds are unmade; and to this they come back on their sole day for family life and recreation. One feels that a little of the consideration shown to visiting troops—the afternoon Mass, perhaps, on the Eve of the Feast?—might be shown to the weary Atlas who bears the whole world on his shoulders—the man who grows the food.

HELEN PARRY EDEN.

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YOUR VILLAGE AND MINE. By C. H. Gardiner. (Faber; 7s. 6d.)

This is an easy-going and conversational kind of book on the English countryside, covering in some detail the general activities, the social life and the present problems of modern villagers. The author hopes for a prosperous rural England which will keep the best traditions while adopting cheerfully a great measure of modernisation and ‘progress.’ His thought does not cut deep, and he seems to underestimate the danger of drowning the baby in the company’s bath water, but he shows a real respect for the countryman and approaches everything controversial with modesty and good humour. The reviewer, a ‘rural purist’ in Mr. Gardiner’s phrase, is debarred from more serious criticism by the sincerity and unpretentiousness of the book.

W.S.