

# BLACKFRIARS

(With which is incorporated *The Catholic Review*.)

Literary Communications should be addressed to THE EDITOR OF BLACKFRIARS, OXFORD. Telephone 3607. The Editor cannot be responsible for the loss of MSS. submitted. No MSS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

Yearly subscriptions, Twelve Shillings, may be sent to THE PUBLISHER, BASIL BLACKWELL, 49 BROAD STREET, OXFORD; to whom communications in regard to Advertisements should also be addressed.

---

Vol. XIV, No. 156.

March, 1933

---

## NOTES ON THE MONTH

**MALTA.** After the report of the Royal Commission, more than a year ago, freedom of election and the Constitution were restored. Nevertheless, Letters Patent were promulgated last May banishing Italian, the language of Maltese civilization, from the elementary schools. This seems against the spirit, if not the letter, of the recommendations of the Commission. The Nationalists fought the election that followed on the straight issue that Italian should be restored. They were returned by a considerable majority, to form H.M. Government in Malta. A delegation, including Ministers of the Crown, which was then sent to the Imperial Government in London, to ask for the removal or modification of the ordinance, was treated with a lack of consideration little calculated to promote the unity of the Empire. Although its naval position complicates the situation, it must be remembered that Malta freely entered and remains solidly loyal to the Empire. But on a matter of their natural and domestic rights, the Maltese are not to be hectorred by London, or treated as if they were a subject race. BLACKFRIARS is happy to begin in this number an article on the subject by the Minister of Finance and Police in the Government of Malta.

**BLACK MISCHIEF.** A religious journal has the right to warn its readers against what it considers a bad book, and to do so in its own characteristic style. On these occasions, of

course, the criticism is frequently as revealing of the censor as it is of the book; for moral theologians observe that, in judging scandal, differences of personal character and of public convention must be taken into account. Still, the expression of genuine emotion is often of interest. But no person or group has the right to erect its mood into a cardinal principle, still less to question the loyal Catholicism of others who do not adopt it. On this last point only, an attack on a recent novel by *The Tablet* drew forth a moderate remonstrance from twelve distinguished Catholics. The editor was violently offended, and has expressed himself at length—scandal, disgrace, whitewashing wrongdoing, painful duty to rebuke, this is the line taken. Among the remonstrants were four priests, admired and respected by Catholics, who are now made to appear as public defenders of obscenity. At least they may be presumed to possess as accurate an appreciation of a moral question as the lay editor even of an ecclesiastical weekly and as genuine a zeal for morality. But they have been gravely compromised in the eyes of anyone who takes his *Tablet* seriously; and it seems clear that this is a case when its fulminations cannot be left entirely to the reader's sense of humour.

LIVELIHOOD AND LIFE. While the majority still laugh at the 'acre and a cow' solution to the industrial crisis and unemployment scandal, there are those among the more far-seeing industrialists who find themselves compelled to recognize that the land is the ultimate source of all true wealth and the proximate source of the necessities of life. Yet even these can discuss 'back to the land' only in terms of mechanized and State-controlled farms. Thus Mr. C. S. Orwin, writing in *The Listener*, sees mechanical engineering as the moulding force in the future of the countryside. 'Farming tends more and more to conform to industrial conditions. The future of production under such conditions lies in the increase of the output of each pair of hands by the mechanization of manual processes.' This attitude towards the revival of farm life is especially noteworthy in view of the growing Catholic Land Movement. Can we imagine that the future of this movement lies in the mechanization of manual processes? It is not that such an intelligent Catho-

lic organization rejects or despises machinery, but it will resolutely refuse to allow machinery to dominate farm-life as it has dominated most other modes of livelihood and life. Curiously enough, the same article expresses in precise words the fundamental justification of this attitude. 'Agriculture . . . stands out from most other industries in that it is a mode of life as well as a living, and although it has been proved that the small farmers of England work long hours to earn, often, nothing more than farm labourers safeguarded by the Agricultural Wages Act, yet there still will be a demand for land, by those who set the life higher than the living.'

**ABUSE OF MONEY.** Why should destitution be the consequence of plenty? A growing body of thoughtful opinion is agreeing with Lord Tavistock's diagnosis in *The Times*. 'The root cause of poverty in the midst of potential abundance is to be found in the fact that the existing financial system permits money to be treated as a commodity as well as a medium of exchange; makes no adequate provision for the relation of the supply of money to the maximum output of needed goods; does not permit of the financing of consumption direct, but only by means of bank loans for further production, which are added on to prices; and, in an age when science and machinery are destroying the need for human labour, makes no provision whereby the men displaced by the machine can continue to buy the output of the machine with money not taken from the pockets of the rest of the community.' Lord Tavistock and the group of writers associated with *The New Age* and *The New English Weekly* have at least an economic remedy for the present mess. The adjustment of human nature to the perfect Machine Age is a matter for philosophy and religion. Whether this be possible remains to be seen. But it offers the only escape from the present condition of general unemployment and misery, it is at least worth trying.

JACOBIN.