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Poor Country Lads

THE Scots, we know, joke with difficulty. They are freckled, wear kilts, have red hair on their legs, go to church, keep the Sabbath and everything else they can lay their hands on.

To forget these things is to forget them, and they are far too shrewd to let us forget.

The Germans are too proud to pretend to joke. They expose jokes—and punish them. They are making the Poles pay for such an innocent diversion as eating Nazis for breakfast. Encouraging the Russians to punish the Finns for playing boggy-man in front of Leningrad. Sinking lightships for threatening battleships. Machine-gunning schoolboys for bringing down Heinkels. Torpedoing neutrals for taking their pigs to belligerent markets. Scuttling their own ships for crossing the shadow of passing cruisers.

But the most disgusting joke of the war to date was exposed by Berlin last week. The *Lokal Anzeiger* wept buckets of tears over it. Mr. Eden invited some "poor country lads" to Egypt. Why they were there they did not know, nor where he would lead them next. But Berlin knew. They were going to the steppes of Russia and the bogs of Bessarabia to make an Allied holiday.

Well, it is a long journey. Ten thousand miles from New Zealand and then another thousand on the heels of their enemies. No wonder the world was moved. No wonder Mr. Eden's grimace curdled Berlin's cafe-au-lait. Arrogance and conceit, and nothing to stop them. Poor country lads, and storm-troops giving way to them. If that is a joke, to Moscow with Kultur!

MAPS ARE HIS MEAT

The New Geography In New Zealand

FOR B. J. Garnier geography is not naming the rivers round the coast or knowing which is the highest mountain. It is partly these things, but it is much more the story of the mountain giving source to the river and the river giving life to the earth and the earth giving life to the peoples living upon it. His subject is not a text book. It is essentially a human study.

Just arrived in New Zealand, he is finding new and fascinating applications for his science wherever he goes. Behind him he left crowded Europe, where the problems, he suggests, are problems of correction. Here, where a small population lives richly in comparatively empty acres, he sees problems of construction, and is itching to be working at them.

Born In China

He was born in China, lived there eight years, and was educated in England to take honours in geography at Cambridge. He knew New Zealand's High Commissioner in London (Mr. Jordan), wrote to the Government here, was encouraged by all he heard about New Zealand, and arrived recently with his Spanish wife, whose photograph appears, with a story about her by Ann Slade, on our women's page in this issue.

Mr. Garnier finds it easy to describe his subject, in which New Zealand possesses only two or three specialists, by saying what it is not. It is not, he claims, politics, or history, or geology, or economics, or sociology. It is all these things, and before you can become a real geographer you have to be something of an expert in all of them.

He does not suggest, however, that the facts of physical geography are beneath the notice of the really super geographer. But the subject should go beyond them, and take count of what effect they had on living, and what Man did to them in his busy process of adjustment.

How People Live

In New Zealand, for instance, he had found that the Department of Agriculture's soil surveys were very well advanced. This was a part of geography, for the geographer had to know what lay in the soil, as well as what rivers and rains watered it, before he could know what sort of people it would support. So to the study of people was added the study of how they lived, with all the ramifications of agricultural and industrial life growing from the first source, the earth.

In New Zealand, this applied, he told *The Listener*, to such problems as the source of power—should it come from the abundant sources of water power, or would it be more economical from the equally abundant sources of coal for steam power?

Complexities entered into the question. Here we knew our possibilities and our limitations. But the limits were never fixed. Circumstances might alter

the whole social routine as they had altered the routine of England's social economy in the last 100 years.

Industrialism v. Agriculture

To illustrate this point Mr. Garnier pointed out that England had developed her great industries and her great overseas industrial trade while Europe was torn by the wars of last century. The development had come at the expense of agriculture.

England had made steel and sold it for cereals, bought bread with boots, changed cheap tin trays for butter. While she remained supreme as the manufacturer of the world's goods, and their carrier by sea, all was well. But when Europe began to find time to compete, when the industries of rich America tested the markets, England found that her economy must be altered.

Here the geographer came in. It was to him as the co-ordinating expert, that they must turn to be told how to adapt their usage of natural resources to the changing times.

Application to the new problems had been difficult in England. As with the weather man, the geographer liked to assemble all his information on a map. He called these maps land-utilisation maps. But in England no one had ever properly surveyed the land. There were ordinary maps, Atlas maps, but no maps showing the sort of information the geographers wanted—information about soil content, vegetation, density, rainfall, seepage, drainage, and the rest.

"New Zealand Far Ahead"

But New Zealand was lucky to be in a very different position.

"In this respect, New Zealand is far ahead. I believe your soil surveys are of a very high standard. It is easy to see how valuable they are in making certain that the land is being used to the best advantage."

Many people who really studied the economic position of Britain were amazed, he said, to find how unbalanced it was. Not nearly enough food was grown in the country.

But New Zealand was just starting. She could use the experience of other countries, some of it unfortunate, some of it happier, all of it useful. She could plan for the future.

We could develop into a very strong country with a very high standard of living. But on the way to this goal we must not miss any of the steps. We must plan, we must develop steadily and surely.

Now in Westport, Mr. Garnier will be finding himself where most of New Zealand's characteristics meet in a conglomeration of extremes. He will find much to study that for him will be new. And he is looking forward to it, so he tells *The Listener*.

At present the University Senate is still debating whether geography should be an honours subject. In the whole country there are very few men who are experts (although he says that a New Zealand text book, Dr. Cotton's *Geomorphology*, is highly respected at Cambridge). The field is just being opened up. He looks forward to the prospects with high optimism.



Spencer Digby, photograph

B. J. GARNIER

"... New Zealand can plan"