

AGRICULTURE AND MODERN LIFE:

(Written for "The Listener" by PROFESSOR E. R. HUDSON, Director, Canterbury Agricultural College)

IN his recent work, *A Time for Greatness*, Herbert Agar states that we have come to regard civilisation as a by-product of the economic process. His statement is undoubtedly correct, and is a fair and reasonable criticism of our modern attitude towards life.

We have become entangled in the mesh of present-day technology and think we are developing culture. We limit new ventures to "sound-business" and "assured profits," and forget that living is no less important than making a living. We struggle for a "higher standard" of living and fail to realise that what we seek is a higher standard of contentment. We look for stimulus and excitement, and vainly imagine we are getting pleasure and satisfaction. We are too prone to use the yardstick of money as the sole unit for assessing values. What is the value of Magna Charta, of antiseptic surgery, of the satisfaction of work well done, of a garden to the garden lover, of a happy family, of friendship, of the Sabbath day of rest and of innumerable other

things which make life good? Such things are not produced in factories. Neither are they articles of trade, and they certainly do not appear in balance sheets or statements of profit and loss.

The Full Life

Just as our most pressing collective task is the winning of the war, so each one of us as an individual is confronted, first and foremost, with the ever-present problem of making a living. These matters demand priority, but unless we look beyond them, they become futile. It will not profit us to win the war and fail to rectify the conditions which brought it about. Likewise the earning of a living should be the first step towards a full and contented life.

I believe that such a life is more readily attained under country than under city conditions. It would appear that this is not the popular opinion, and there is no doubt that at the present time there is a widespread tendency to regard rural life as being unattractive. In championing country life, I have no wish to create the impression that it is everything it might be. That would be

far from the truth, and there is unlimited room for improvement. The same might be said of urban conditions: but taking both town and country as they are, and also as they might be, it is my firm opinion that the country offers the better prospects of a good, of the good life.

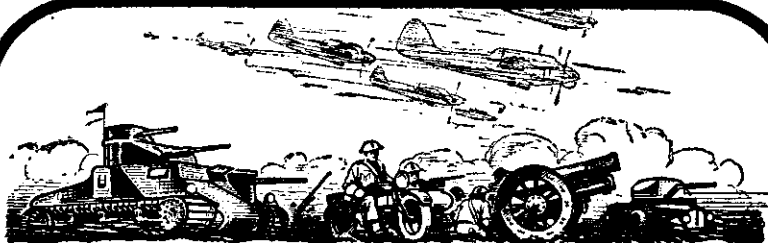
Man is one of the most adaptable of living organisms, and readily adjusts himself to changing conditions. But there are limits even to man's adaptability, and if the environment changes too rapidly, he can experience stresses and strains which may result in physical, mental and spiritual maladjustment. The past half-century has probably witnessed a greater change in our way of life than has any previous thousand years. The rate of change has exceeded our adaptive capacity and technological progress has outstripped the development of a social structure which would enable us to reap its full benefits. It would probably be to our ultimate benefit if we could halt the march of "progress" long enough to enable some necessary social adjustments to be made. An idle thought!



PROFESSOR E. R. HUDSON
"Far-reaching reforms are necessary"

Country life is still lived close to Nature, and therein lies its advantage. On the farm we are still surrounded with living things rather than with bricks and mortar, chromium plate, and

(continued on next page)



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