

## WHO OWNS THE GOOD EARTH?

MEXICO is spoken of as a beggar nation sitting on a pot of gold largely because of the concentration of land in the hands of a few families. Abject misery for millions of peons has been the result.

In Denmark it has been the policy of the Government to distribute land as equitably as possible, in accordance with the principle that "very few should have more than they need and fewer still should have less than they need." As a result of this policy Denmark has become a country of prosperous small landholders, one of the richest agricultural nations of the world.

Denmark has about the same soil and climate as East Prussia, yet the latter is rather sparsely populated by poor peasants because the land is concentrated in the hands of a few powerful Junker families. These marked differences in development between Denmark and East Prussia are due rather to the different systems of land tenure rather than to differences in soil, climate or race of people.

Large landholdings are an important factor in the Mediterranean region. Sometimes they are of feudal origin; others have resulted from the encroachment of great landlords upon either small individual or large communal holdings; still others are huge grants awarded to some successful military leader.

In Algeria, after the French conquest, huge concessions were made to companies and to individuals, particularly during the Second Empire. Great landholdings, or "latifundios," are quite wide-spread in Spain, while in Sicily 1,400 estates comprise 30 per cent. of the total area of the island.

Great holdings are prevalent in Italy, both in the Po Plain, where intensive agriculture obtains, and in the extensively farmed regions of southern Italy. Even in South France large estates are becoming general, taking up from 35 per cent. of the cultivated land in the eastern Pyrenees to 50 per cent. in l'Aude.

Unfortunately, great landholders are not, as a rule, convinced that *noblesse oblige*. Their estates are simply farmed extensively under the supervision of a resident manager, and, the owners being assured of ample income without risk and without effort, they make no attempt to increase production and thereby raise the standard of living of the miserable peasant. This has been true from one end of the Mediterranean to the other.

It is easy to blame the climate or the "Latin temperament" for the growth of brigandage, the vendetta or the maffia, depending on the region, instead of unemployment, very low wages and the consequent miserable living conditions for which bad harvests and the greediness of users have been largely responsible.

Spain's three greatest landowners, the Dukes of Medina, Peñoranda and Alba, control more than 420,000 acres, and the next five largest holders control more than 145,000 acres. Thus the eight largest landowners control more than 465,000 acres of the best farm lands in Spain.

Twelve hundred families own more than 40 per cent. of all the agricultural land in the country,

and another 20 per cent. is owned by 75,000 families.

The great estates require few workers and then only at certain seasons. A limited range of crops gives rise to great seasonal fluctuation in employment. High wage rates may exist for the rush season, but the wage in no wise suffices to carry over a family to the next peak season.

An added exasperation is that the seasonal demand may require importation of labour from far provinces, which gives rise to the anomaly that, in an area noted for rural unemployment, migrant labour must be called in. The three crops of Andalusia—cereals, olives and vines—give some spread of labour; but in Castile wheat and barley are the only crops, and even these vary enormously in yield according to the variations of rainfall. The plight of the rural labourer is pitiable in the extreme.

The English geographer, Mr. Dobby, in an article on "Agrarian Problems in Spain" in the *Geographical Review*, gives the following graphic picture of the distress of the labourers and the attitude of the landowners:

"I recall an incident during a visit to an experimental pig farm

in an out-of-the-way part of Andalusia. From the darkness at one end of the building came a red glow. I went along and found a labourer's family crouched on the floor round a twig fire with smoke so thick that breathing was difficult. The malodorous squalor contrasted with the carefully washed pig pens that I had been seeing. To my query an old woman mumbled: 'Yes, we live here. Worse than the pigs.' At which the own-

er beside me exclaimed indignant-ly: 'You have a roof over your head. What more do you want?' "

The consequences of the great landed estates have been: depopulation of the country-side, inefficient methods of farming, very low average wages, high rents, scarcity of live-stock and a generally precarious economic situation.—*Dr. Raymond E. Crist, condensed from The Scientific Monthly.*

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## MOUTH ATTITUDES

DISCERNING women pay much attention to the *attitude* of the mouth. The muscles of the face—particularly around the mouth—portray individuality, revealing a pampered child, a happy young woman in love or, perhaps, a petulant person. Remember that you can control the muscles of the mouth.

Here are a few Don'ts: Don't pout. Don't pucker up your lips. Don't move them unnecessarily, nor talk out of the side of your mouth. Don't bite your lips, for this gets them out of shape and makes them peel. And don't let them get chapped.

To help smooth out little wrinkles about the mouth, massage the lines upward from the lower corners of the mouth to the nostrils, rubbing your massage cream in with the tips of your fingers. Then start from the centre of the chin and work along the jawbone up to the ears.

When they are too thin, pursing the lips to whistle is helpful. Then to deepen the important cleft from the nose to the lipline—press the edges of the cleft together with your thumb and first finger. Hold them so for a few minutes; repeat frequently. This is particularly effective with young lips.—*Martha Leavitt, in This Week.*