

REVIEWS

FAMINE IN ENGLAND. By Viscount Lymington. (H. F. & G. Witherby; 7s. 6d.)

Here is a well reasoned book, well documented. It shows that in England to-day, our optimism is foolish, unless there is to be a radical change in our economic order. There are none of the stock arguments of that over facile reformism that urges the use of such palliatives as shorter hours of work, and a greater number of social services.

Perhaps the reason why our political parties do not come into violent collision is because they are incapable of debating or even defining fundamentals; certainly, the reason why Viscount Lymington's book is revolutionary is because he does attempt to examine modern industrial England in the light of definite principles, and he does show how these principles are to be applied to facts.

There are passages that state principles with the same startling simplicity as a great scholastic would have done; "Exchangers are less important than producers, and among producers it is those who till the soil upon whom civilisation is based, more than upon those who mine or manufacture . . . the standards of the speculator, and mass manufacturer have taken the place of the standard of the husbandman."

Briefly stated, the main policy outlined in this book is one of national self-sufficiency, and the author very ably answers the objections of those who argue in favour of exporting manufactured goods, and then importing cheap food. In time of war, we could not count on adequate supplies of cheap food from abroad. We were hard pressed during the last war, when the soil possessed capital in a fertility, that was the result of the fifteen preceding years of sound farming. Since then, the land, when it has not been allowed to become an almost irrecoverable waste, has only been exploited for rapid gains. Food ships need the protection of convoys, and how can we be sure of these, when most of our ships are dependent on imported oil as fuel?

Underlying the argument of this book there is an abstract theory of the State, in so far as it is an economic unit, and that theory is the one to be found in the Angelic Doctor's *De Regimine Principum* (Book 2, Chapter 3). The City must be such that it can sustain the life of its citizens. Rational agriculture alone can ensure this, and so the good of the State, in matters economic, springs from the soil enriched by husbandry, not from trade or commerce, which are secondary, and therefore must not be allowed to dominate in the life of the nation.

It should not be supposed that *Famine in England* is abstract in its style of argument; quite the contrary, the above principles

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emerge from the common sense examination of such practical matters as shipping, imported food, tillage, soil erosion, and the danger of a mass production attitude to farming.

The author is a practical farmer, and there is an echo of Cobbett in all that he says.

P. TOWNS.

SPAIN OF THE SPANIARDS. By Bernard Wall. (Sheed & Ward; 5s.)

SPAIN'S ORDEAL. By Robert Sencourt. (Longmans; 10s. 6d.)

Whatever views or doubts may be entertained regarding the responsibilities for the Spanish war, the Spain of Franco is now an established fact, and one which promises to be a very important factor in the future history of Europe. We must endeavour to understand it, and the beliefs and ideals which motivate it, with good will and without prejudice. These two books should, each in its own very different way, enable us materially to do so.

Mr. Wall's is a very engaging sketch—all too brief—of a tour behind and among the Nationalist lines. We are made conscious on every page that Mr. Wall knows and loves Spain, and really understands her people—qualities all too rare among recent writers on the subject. He makes no effort to disguise his attachment or to pretend to a detached moral judgment on the things he saw and heard. It may be objected that Mr. Wall makes an idyll of the whole beautiful business, and there would be some justice in the comment. But it would be pointless, for the idyll he depicts so skilfully is precisely the idyll that inspires all that is best on the Nationalist side, and it is just that that we need to try to understand. He enables us to see things through Spanish eyes.

The issues of the struggle are a very simple matter for Mr. Wall: "It is the struggle between the historical and traditionally religious idea of man and the anti-traditional, futuristic idea of man." A host of argument might be brought up which would tempt us to question so facile an interpretation, and perhaps even the suppositions that lie behind it; but Mr. Wall could not have written so clear and direct a narrative had his view of events been less unsophisticated. If he is naive, his naiveté is that of a vast mass of the Spanish people.

While Mr. Wall writes as though himself a Spaniard of the Spaniards, Mr. Sencourt writes rather with the polite detachment of the *Times*-reading English gentleman. His work is, in its own way, all the more effective for that, and should aid considerably in