

This—to a Canadian—bewildering dread of, and distaste for, any change of location was no doubt originally the natural outcome of the absence of roads and of barriers in the way of traffic and transportation, and was also partly attributable to the ancient manorial system, by which the labourer was born to his holding, having to pay head money to his lord for licence to remove in search of trade or hire; but it must certainly have been much intensified, and still more deeply impressed on the rustic character by the events of the closing years of Edward the Third and the reign of the Second Richard.

After the Black Death had swept away, it is estimated, half the population of the country, and rural labour had grown so scarce and valuable that men were for the first time tempted to move about and offer their services in the highest market, statute after statute was hastily enacted by a bewildered and frightened government to check this alarming migratory tendency, forbidding the labourer to leave his parish, and even providing that he should be imprisoned, whipped, and branded in the face as a penalty. It is impossible to believe that such drastic repression of initiative, lasting throughout a generation, could pass without leaving a permanent and indelible influence on the class affected by it.

A great deal has been written at various times as to the influence of geographical position on character, and in the case of England the mere detail of its being an island has been cited to account for any or all of the national peculiarities, at the writer's fancy. I believe, however, that an entirely unwarranted importance is wont to be attached to this fact.

Naturally, isolation of any kind, political, geographical, or linguistic, whether caused by living on an island, speaking an unintelligible tongue, or an addiction to peculiar religious practices, will have a certain influence on national character; but it will be merely an intensitive one. It will deepen and make more permanent the racial features, not originate new ones; and almost inevitably it will, through its interruption of the natural traffic with neighbouring communities, tend to