

Notes on the Agriculture of Northern France.

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Any Canadian farmer-soldier who trained in England will be fairly well acquainted with the agricultural aspect of the southeastern counties where the depots, hospitals and convalescent camps used to be, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, East Hants, as well as that spot for leave between seasons, Cornwall, with its pleasant climate. If he followed the fortunes of "The Corps" on the other side of the English Channel, took his share of hospital, rest-camp, training behind the lines, lorry "joy-rides," French leave, and tactical movements up and down the front, he will know something of the agricultural aspect of Brittany, Normandy, Picardy, Flanders, and possibly Champagne. Several or all, of these provinces of Northern France have been familiar country to a number of young Canadian farmers during the war. Climate, soils, and, apart from the immediate effects of war, basic agricultural conditions generally are fairly comparable to the south of England. The vineclad slopes of Champagne are not the cultured counterpart of the Kentish hoplands, but Kent, Sussex, or Cornwall reproduce themselves to a certain extent in the departments nearer the sea.

The south of England small-holder is much talked about on paper, but less in evidence on the land. On arable land, truck-gardening, with his pigs and his pony, or on a few acres of meadow, with his chickens, a cow, and maybe a donkey, he

shows up conspicuously in a setting of large holdings. Compared with their neighbours across the Channel, small-holders are not a characteristic of English rural economy. It is a country that features ancestral estates, large holdings, that require the ancient feudal land tenure to account for their origin, and a system of landlordism, at the root of many social and economic troubles of the present moment, requiring a people who have been most conservative and stable to apologise for its existence.

Small-holdings are cited as the leading feature of French rural economy, encouraged by their laws of inheritance, determination and being determined by the course of French agriculture.

The writer was billeted one night last October in the home of the manager of a large pottery factory in a village west of Valenciennes. Inquiry as to the passenger service in the district that would warrant the rural electric car service which had existed elicited some interesting information of the numerous city and town factory workers and local miners who had rural homes on small holdings. Some statistics came out during the evening's discussion, and the writer finds the following in his notebook. The excellence of the evening hospitality is our only apology for a slight mathematical discrepancy in the approximations.

Just previous to the war France estimated her land-holdings of all