

The Economic Revolution

GRANVILLE REVISITED

I had been sent up the line with the Granville Board's heartiest wishes for "the best of luck," in time to cop another perfect Blighty one in the great spring smash-up, when the Canadians broke into Lille, and Fritz fell back to the Meuse.

It was the first of July when I stepped out of the train from Taplow on to the platform of the Ramsgate Town Station. I was about to climb into the familiar Red Cross car, when the driver intercepted me: "It's only cripples we take in the car; arm cases have to walk; we're on petrol rations now."

"This is certainly knocking the "Oy!" out of joy-riding," I said to myself, as I hitched up my sling, and fell in with the party of walking patients for the march up Victoria Road hill.

The next morning I found myself standing—not in blues, but in kiaki overalls—before the S.M. at Chatham House. I was wondering what chances were of getting back to my old job of sorting out gym tickets.

But what's this I'm listening to? "You've got one good arm, I see. We'll attach you to the chicken ranch at Townley Castle. Here, corporal, take this man over to Sergeant Fowler."

"But," I protested, "I don't know anything about looking after hens. I have been used to office work."

"It's no use objecting. Every new patient here has to work on food production."

I was too dazed to remonstrate further and followed the corporal out of the office. As we emerged into the open I noticed for the first time that the marquee colony had disappeared from the cricket field. A range of huts ran around the edge, but all the rest of the field, was crossed with ranges of potato hills which several patients were hoeing. As we passed the old greenhouse I observed that instead of flowering plants and potted seeds behind the glass, there were cases of tomatoes and cucumbers ripening almost perceptibly.

"I suppose the football field is one big crop of waving wheat now," I remarked to the corporal.

"Well, they wanted to plough it up and put it into corn, but Crp. Ducros raised such a holler that they finally agreed to leave two-thirds of the field for the "Nuts" to continue wimming championships on. But as you see," and he pointed over the fence, "all the rest of the field beyond the side lines and goal posts is used for pasture. We've got about twenty cows grazing there—supply all our own milk now. At the far end there, next to the Church wall, there is a piggery, and they say that sometimes the people in St. George's can't hear their organ for the squealing. Fellows in clink have to feed the pigs and clean out the pens and cow stables."