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Editorial Notes.

A series of reviews on the work of agricultural stations and experimental farms in and outside India will form a special feature of this journal in future and the current number begins with Madras farms. We trust this aspect of agricultural journalism will interest our readers. We request them to help us with their well-considered criticisms and contributions under this head.

During the last twenty years, hundreds of co-operative societies have sprung into existence. Capital which was dubbed very shy before, has freely flowed. Yet the mass of the people in the countryside has hardly moved. The Legislature and Government have not been unmindful. Acts like the Punjab Land Alienation Act, the Deccan Agricultural Relief Act, the Bengal Tenancy Act, the Agricultural Loans Act, the Land Improvement Act which were passed, have given some

relief and been amended from time to time. The result however has been from the villagers' point of view, the replacement, perhaps in a more subtle form, of one kind of oppression by another. The toiling peasant feels that his lot ever remains the same, the intentions of the Legislature notwithstanding. The root causes of the evils remain untouched. Only certain palliatives are suggested and they fail of their purpose because the methods are unsuited and unsuitable. The uncanny cultivator continues to be the toy of ill-informed politicians, subtle lawyers, helpless judges, angry administrators, the pouncing trader and the hasty doctor. The town and the noisy men therein still claim disproportionately greater attention. The unlettered yet cultured and humble villager is left in the cold.

Eminent Indians like Dadabhai Nowrojee, and R. C. Dutt, have with excellent intentions, erred we believe in raising wrong issues. It is not the land-tax that is oppressive. It is not the Permanent Settlement that will prove a panacea for all the present ills. The oft-quoted prosperity of Bengal is beside the point and is simply illusory. It is said that Nero was fiddling while Rome was burning. The accumulation of large landed properties or unused or ill-usable wealth in the hands of a small irresponsible and unfeeling section of the population does not add to the vitality of the nation nor conduce to its well-being or progress. Parasitism, whether in the plant or the animal kingdom, saps the vitals of the helpless host which remains a weakling and eventually dies. A very vigorous, selfreliant and independent peasantry which was the dream of Sir Thomas Munro, must be built up anew. Greater

attention ought to be paid to rural problems and rural welfare. Questions touching the unobtrusive and nervous villager must be freely, frankly and constantly discussed with him and *with him alone* and not with a self-constituted proxy or an interested middleman.

Statements like "the increasing absorption of gold shows the increasing prosperity of a country" "indebtedness grows with prosperity" are to be taken at their face value. The histories of England and America prove the incorrectness of such views. Superfluous hands must be weaned from the pursuit of agriculture or their dependance on it and their attention, diverted into channels, openings for which must be free and regulated by the individual's capacity for advancement.

An idle brain contrives to do mischief and brings ruin on the possessor and his kinsfolk. To keep the countryside busy, village industries must be encouraged and industrial and landbanks brought into effective operation so that a thriving village population may engage itself on honourable and health-giving pursuits and be free from the baneful effects and undetectable machinations of an outwardly polished, and devitalised urban society.

A central organization known as the Bureau of Mycology has been established in Kew, England for the encouragement and co-ordination of work throughout the Empire on the diseases of plants caused by fungi in relation to agriculture. The Committee of Management consists of some of the foremost biologists in Britain with Viscount Harcourt as their chairman.

Empire
Mycology.

Dr. E. J. Butler, late Imperial Mycologist, Pusa is Director. The Bureau will work broadly on the lines of the existing Imperial Bureau of Entomology at South Kensington. It will be a central agency for the accumulation and distribution of information and for the identification of specimens sent in from all parts of the Empire.

The Mysore Agricultural Calendar for 1921 has been published. It contains very useful articles of a practical nature written by specialists who know the subject. The ground covered is wide and almost all subjects in which the ryot is interested have been ably dealt with. The language is simple and the aim is amply fulfilled. The treatment leaves nothing to be desired and the booklet contains matter which can form food for reflection not only for Mysoreans but also gentlemen engaged in farming in other parts of the country. Monthly notes are a special feature of the publication which adds to its usefulness. Each copy is priced one anna and should be found in every rural home.

Comparative study of the Mulberry silk industry in the different parts of the world.

K. ACHYYA, SERICULTURAL EXPERT.

The Mulberry silk Industry which is the queen of the textile industries and which is an important key industry may be divided into six distinct economic organisations each independent of the other and yet forming a peculiar combination of its own. These are (1) cultivation of mulberry (2) rearing of silk worms—an art

A paper read at M. A. S. Union Conference on 22-12-1920.