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BELIEVE IT . . . Not

THIS WEEK: *Beautiful Elmira! What is a Village? What is an "Abbey?" a "Priory?" Is There a Village in All America? Chesterton's View; Belloc's View; Two Important Announcements: Why Not Build Our Cities in the Country!*

By REV. OWEN B. McGUIRE, D. D.

For a year or two past I have been living in Elmira. It is a beautiful little city here in the Southern tier, surrounded by hills and divided into two equal parts by a meandering river. I live in a seven story house from the garden roof of which one gets a fine view of the town by day and of the stars by night. This sight of Elmira by day and in Summer always reminds me of a story I heard in Madrid from my friend, Concha Espina, the celebrated Catholic novelist and poet.

"One day," she said, " a group of us artists here in Madrid were discoursing about the advantages of country over city life, when one of the number suddenly exclaimed with Castilian emphasis: The conclusion is that we should build our cities in the country!" All laughed at the patent paradox.

His Sylvan Aspect

Concha had the year before come to the U. S. A. to deliver a course of lectures on her art at the Summer School for Spanish Language and Literature at Waterbury, N. H. (I think that is the name and place). There in New England, she said, she found in many cities and towns the reality which had seemed a humorous paradox at the artistic "verbena" in Madrid. And such, too, appears Elmira in the Summer when viewed from the roof of this seven story house. Except for a factory smokestack or a church steeple that juts up here and there above the trees, one seems to be looking out on a forest rather than on an industrial city.

And this reminds me of the living "Master of Paradox," Gilbert Keith Chesterton. His love for village and country life is well known. He thinks that the growth of the cities in industrial England at the expense of the rural and village life has been the ruin of "Merry England" as it was in Catholic times. He has visited this country on various occasions and given to the English public a racy account of the impressions he received here. The most notable of these he has put in a book entitled, "What I Saw in America." I hope he will some day give us a companion volume on "What I Didn't See in America." Of course, it would need to be a much larger volume, and it would also need a much longer visit and a much more thorough investigation of the places he did not see before he wrote that other book.

What reminds me of him now is that in that book he says, practically, that in the U. S. A. there are no villages. What, he asks are you to think of a country and a people who have not made even one village? Here one cannot but recall the advice of Aristotle that the treatment of any subject should begin with its definition. What does Mr. Chesterton mean by a village? Clearly he means that which they call a village in England. Well what is that? Enter one of these villages in England and what do you meet? One, two, three or four rows of houses very closely huddled together, bald as Socrates, without porches, "stoops" or balconies. In some places these might be called hovels rather than houses.

This is particularly true in the mining districts of Wales and Northern England. The "Commons" (the name is suggestive of what it was in better times) is there and is still called so, although it is now a misnomer rather than a name corresponding to the reality. It is usually walled around to keep out the vulgar public, the "commoners", with great, locked iron gates through the bars of which you will see the little children peeping at the nice things that are within but forbidden.

Name Puzzles

But are there no rich and no aristocratic dwellings? There will be, and several. You will come on one immediately. It has spacious grounds, extending back into the neighboring country, with woodlands and, perhaps, a little lake and a meandering river like the Chemung here in Elmira, but on a miniature scale. Where it passes the village it is also surrounded by a high wall, dented in one or two places by the inevitable iron gate. What is this you will ask a passer-by? Why Sir, are you a stranger in these parts and know not what has happened? That is "the Priory" or "the Abbey." If you are a Spaniard or Italian or Frenchman or German from the Catholic provinces, the name will puzzle you.

These and other such names have always in your mind been associated with Religious houses whose superiors were "Priors" or "Abbots." And if you look up your dictionary you may find that that is the "first meaning" (meaning No. 1 in Webster's unabridged. I have not at hand but I am willing to make that prophecy). That was, indeed, once a "Priory" or an "Abbey", in meaning No. 1. But in the loot and plunder of the 16th century it was given to some adventurer that had distinguished himself in the plunder. His descendants still occupy it, if they have not sold in hard times, and today they will have some title of nobility. They are, Dukes, Lords, or at least Squires, and they still date their letters under such headings as "The Priory" or "The Abbey." Once when it was a real Priory or Abbey you could walk in and have a good meal. No questions asked. If you were a stranger, or foreigner, you were asked to stay for the night; and in the morning your knapsack was filled before it was handed to you. But if you pass by that gate next Summer, don't ring that bell! If you are not an American millionaire with a daughter for marriage you won't be admitted. The Abbot was hanged, drawn and quartered, four centuries ago, and the actual owner is out fishing on the river, or "following the hounds" or maybe, sleeping off the revelry of last night. Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur cum illis.

But, you will say that is only one and you will ask: Are there no residences of the "middle class", well-to-do, lining the streets that run out from the ideal village. There are, but don't imagine they are similar to those on the streets of an American village or on the streets running out from them. To understand this difference you would need to know what is meant in England by "classes" or "sets" and how the class or set has an irresistible urge to ape the class immediately above it. This is a feature of English social life which is not found in any other country. I know of. I am not condemning it. I am merely stating the fact.

Nearest Thing

Shane Leslie, who loves his England and has made his home there although he boasts an Irish ancestry and estate" has written that the distinction of classes as found in England "would appear inhuman in the 'Latin' countries on the Continent." You will find these features of English social caste depicted in almost any English novel descriptive of English society in the 19th century, in Dickens, for instance; but more especially in Thackeray. There is a proverb in England that the nearest thing to being a lord is to know one personally. And so the nearest thing to living in an "Abbey" or Priory is to live in a house that looks like one or the other. And so, too, the residences you will find on the streets running out from an English town or village will be imitations on a smaller scale of the lord's or squire's home: stout walls enclosing it, iron gates and a name, not a number, to distinguish it from the houses that run in a row in the village. The Oaks. The Pines, etc.

Contrasts Dwellings

The point is that Mr. Chesterton could have found in New England or right here in New York State some of the most beautiful villages in the world but not anywhere in the United States villages of the English type. In these matters Hilaire Belloc knows America better than does G. K. Chesterton and his knowledge is understanding. To what he has seen here Belloc reacts with sympathy and admiration rather than adverse criticism. On his return to England from a visit to this country in 1923 he wrote a book to which he gave the title "The Contrast." In this book he contrasts America with Europe, and especially with England in its physical, social, political, religious and literary aspects. In all these aspects, he claims and claims to prove there is a "chasm" separating these two worlds. On the page where he treats of "the well-to-do man's idea of a home" we have this:

"As the European visitor goes out of one of the great American cities and enters their miles of suburbs where the wealthier men have built their houses, the startling thing to his eyes is to note that there is no division between one man's ground and another's—they all stand on one lawn. . . . wealth and opportunity in America connote the very opposite of what they do in Europe: facile communication, plenty of noise and metal and seclusion. With us wealth, and especially, wealth long possessed, is marked by an extreme of seclusion, a horror of noise, a carefully acquired distance from communication: repose, and (especially with the British gentry) what they call 'Froust' which some of them also call 'Fug'."

P. S. For the past week or two, great people, from the President downwards, have been making announcements. It seems to be the order of the day. In imitation of the English gentry, actual and would-be, to ape those above them, I thought of making some of my own.

First. On November 30 occurs the centennary of Mark Twain's birth. Elmira is preparing for the celebration. Mark was born in Missouri, but he lived for many years in Elmira, did some of his best literary work here, died and was buried here. There are some things in which Mark has a special interest for Catholics. Perhaps it will be worthwhile to recall them.

Second. I wrote a column on the Italo-Ethiopian question and solicited comment. From what I have received it would appear that I therein expressed the views of the great majority of readers. But there were some dissenters. Of these some seem to be in such a state of excitement that I deem it better to await for that to cool down before returning to the subject. It is clear that these critics know very little about Italy, the League of Nations, or the reasons why there is danger of war in Europe. Their ignorance of what is meant by "Ethiopia" is, of course, abysmal. I am, however, glad to find some people who disagree with me, and nothing makes a journal so interesting, or at least lively, as a discussion of divergent views. I presume the "Courier" does not wish to be a yes'm. So some day after Mark's centenary we can discuss the war and rumors of war.

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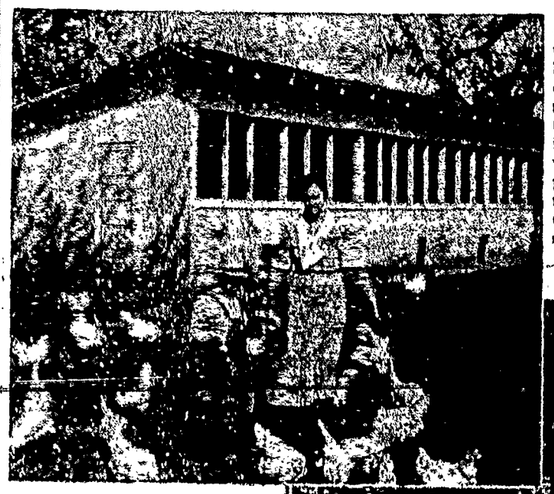
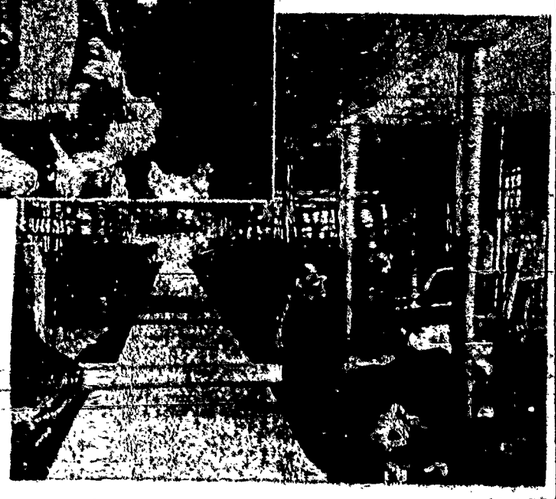
HOME IMPROVEMENTS — Farms



• Not every farm may have pretentious equipment for caring for livestock and the most modern machinery to make things easier, but modernization can be applied to the farm. It will result not only in increased profits but make the work lighter. In planning any improvements, consider well each move. Inexpensive improvements can be made by the farmer himself.



• Improvements in housing for the stock mean profit to the farmer. The snug, weatherproof poultry house pictured above will keep egg production at its height the year round. The well-equipped dairy barn proves its value in its effect on the quality of milk produced.

Repair of barns, out-buildings and the house itself are necessary for the winter. Paint and other weatherproofing devices are valuable, and thus increase the worth of the farm property.

EXPANSION OF NCCW WORK REPORT SHOWS

(Continued from Page One)

The Administrative Committee has sought, insofar as lies within its power, to foster the Catholic Youth Movement as such and as a part of true Catholic Action throughout the country; that it has co-operated in the Suburban Resettlement program of the Government; that it has brought to the attention of the Postmaster General evidence of the practice of certain publishers of advertising obscene publications through the mails, and that this evil is at least lessened; that, in accordance with the instructions of the General Meeting of Bishops last November, it has established at its headquarters a central office for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

"We have sought by our deliberations and our activities in every way in which we could, to be of service to the dioceses and to the Church, and to the country itself," Bishop Lillis stated.

Church in Geneva To Mark Centurv Of Service, Growth

(Continued from Page One)

he remembered at Solemn Mass Tuesday morning at 9 o'clock to be celebrated by the Rev. Francis W. Mason of Rochester.

Wednesday morning, Nov. 27, a solemn Mass will be attended by all children of the grammar school and high school. The Rev. John J. Healy will be celebrant.

The Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving will be appropriately celebrated on Thanksgiving day and will mark the close of the Centennial program.

The Lusk Studio of Rochester under the supervision of Herman J. Butler of Canandaigua, handled the redecorating work of the church. Lynch Brothers of Geneva furnished the floor covering, furniture and carpets. Benamin McShane of Geneva did the electrical work and Harold Hervieux of Geneva furnished the carpenter and masonry work.

Noted Photographer Says Art Principles Needed in Portraits

"Portraits with art principles embodied live for another day, just as the paintings of the Old Masters do," declares J. Ernest Mock, of the Mock Studio, portrait photography artist.

In Mr. Mock's opinion, the black and white photograph is rapidly declining in popularity as well as in artistic value, "owing to the cheap productions of the day."

A new brown tone print, named "Umbertone," produced by Mr. Mock after several years of experimentation has won honors in all exhibitions to which portraits in the new finish were sent. Among the exhibitions included were several in this country, Europe, Asia and Canada.

Portraits by Mr. Mock have been exhibited an presented awards in the Professional Photographer Salon of New York, Carnegie Salon, Pittsburgh, Chicago Salon, Mechanics Institute, American Annual of Photography, Czechoslovakia, London Salon, and Tokio.

Supper Held

Auburn—The parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi parish held a spaghetti supper, Wednesday evening from 6 to 9. It was a big success with over 700 tickets sold. All enjoyed the supper of spaghetti, chicken and mushrooms. The Rev. Adolph Gabbani, pastor, extends his appreciation to all the parishioners who helped make the affair a success and to all others who aided by attending and donating.

DO YOU KNOW THAT:

There are still many days left for canning and preserving? Many dollars can be saved by "doing up" jars of picalli, jams, jellies and preserves during this season of the year. You can have a copy of the popular pamphlet entitled "Jams, Jellies, Pickles and Relishes" by simply sending a three cent stamp with your request. The "Preserving and Canning" pamphlet gives in detail the directions for canning fruits and vegetables by the "Cold-Pack Method." This pamphlet is five cents (handling charges).

The large Molly Gavin Cookbook contains chapters on all phases of cooking, valuable cooking and marketing hints, table arrangements, cooks dictionary, etc. It may be had for one dollar postpaid. Address all requests to Molly Gavin, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C.

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OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS AND NRA

"The most striking difference, and it is a vital difference, between the occupational group arrangement and the NRA organizations is that the latter do not include adequate participation by labor . . . Until this fundamental change is made, the Pope's proposals will continue to be more radical than the provisions of the New Deal." The Catholic Teaching on Our Industrial System. (N.C.W.C., Washington, D. C.)

Social Justice Union's Membership 9,000,000 Father Coughlin Says

Detroit — (NC) — The National Union for Social Justice now has a total of 9,000,000 members, the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, its founder, declared in his regular Sunday afternoon address over a nation-wide radio hook-up. Sunday's address, Father Coughlin said, was in the nature of an accounting of his stewardship for the second year of the organization.

Father Coughlin accused the present Administration of straddling astride the two extremities of social order," with one foot in the "red mud of Soviet communism" and the other in the "cesspool of pagan plutocracy."

Pharmacy Adjoining Convent Believed To Be Oldest in Europe

Belgrade—(NC)—The pharmacy that is thought to be the oldest in Europe is the one adjoining the Franciscan Convent at Dubrovnik (Ragusa) in southern Jugoslavia. It dates from the founding of the monastery in 1318.

The convent, built on the western side of the ancient fortified city, has an interesting past which is intimately associated with the history of Bosnia and Dalmatia, where the Franciscan Order contributed so much to the intellectual as well as the religious development of the region.

ELECTED HEAD
Sr. Mildred Ann, O.S.F., the Rev. Bernard Maurer, of Louisville, Ky., was elected president of the St. Mildred Alumnae Association at the meeting of the association, just held here.

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A tall, gaunt figure arose and began quietly to speak. His short sentences were taken from notes he had hurriedly scribbled. However, his address was so sincere, he expressed so strongly what he believed America to be and to stand for, that it has become immortal.
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