

cess of space which could be made available the first season, the demand for lots became. . .

At first the committee considered small scattered gardens in various sections of the city, and a canvass was made and permission secured for the use of much such property, but the International Harvester Company's generous offer of twenty or more acres in one tract made it seem wise and best to concentrate our first year's work on a single piece of land, and the "Harvester Garden" became our initial effort.

This land is located on Marshall boulevard, in a really ideal spot for such a purpose. Off to the south the clay banks of the drainage canal form a fine barrier for possible marauders; the great McCormick works are to the east; the beautiful grounds of the House of Correction are just opposite, while on the northern boundary we have the Chicago river which at this point is clear and attractive. Marshall boulevard, always gay with automobiles and carriages, forms an angle here and bounds the gardens on two sides.

The land has been divided into eighth-acre lots, 150 feet by 36. Between the lots there is a path two feet wide, and between the sections, A, B, C, and D, there is an eight foot roadway. Another year we hope to have several more sections on this tract, but this season, four, with twenty-five lots in each, seemed all that the committee could successfully manage. This furnishes land for 100 families and every inch of space is now occupied. Lots which were taken and given up for any cause, were eagerly seized by waiting families, and already many of the workers have spoken for their lots for another season. Most of the farmers have been sent by the various settlements and charity organizations, but the immediate neighborhood furnishes some, and the tuberculosis institute has several of its charges successfully working. A large number of applicants are friends of those who already have secured land for this year, and it seems quite plain to the management that the difficulty in the immediate future will be, not in securing farmers, but in finding suitable places for them to carry on their work. . . .

The bungalow, which is to be built by the Outdoor Art League, will be a welcome addition to the garden, and the roomy porches on three sides will give shelter to many tired mothers and sleeping babies. The bungalow will occupy the southwest corner of the tract, and will contain two large rest rooms, tool closet and lavatories. Adjoining the bungalow on the east side, the United Charities will establish a playground for the children and nearby will be the model garden of the superintendent.

An abundant water supply protects the gardeners against possible drought, and provision is being made for helping hands for those whose strength may fail on occasion. The wise leadership of our superintendent, backed by the enthusi-

asm of the committee, we feel sure, will hold in line the few stragglers who, unaccustomed to systematic effort, might, if left alone, fall by the wayside, and so the very small per cent of chance of failure is minimized to practically nothing.

Next year we hope to give results that will show our effort is worth while. At present we can only state our purpose, which cannot be done in better words than to quote from the Philadelphia Vacant Lot Association: "Not to give charity, but to open an opportunity for those in need, to help themselves by their own work."

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MR. FELS'S ENGLISH "BACK TO THE LAND" EXPERIMENT.

From an Interview With Joseph Fels, Written by Llewellyn Horbury for the Christian Commonwealth of June 9.

Let Mr. Fels tell the story.

"Opportunity is what the small man wants, and if there is one thing the land-owning employer is determined he shall not have, it is opportunity. Now it was to provide this opportunity that, something under three years ago, I bought Mayland,* which was then an abandoned farm of about 600 acres, which had employed three men and two boys. Today there are about three hundred souls dependent directly or indirectly upon the industry carried on there.

"Part of the land is divided into twenty-one small holdings of five to six acres, half of each being planted to fruit and the balance set aside for market garden produce, poultry, pigs, and intensive culture under glass and frames. French gardening is carried on to a large extent with the cultivation of large quantities of early vegetables and salads for the watering-places, of which the nearest is Southend, about fourteen miles distant, with a permanent population of about 60,000, and an equally large summer population in addition. This place forms a very active market for our produce, vegetables, and fruits. Then we have a large experimental garden for the benefit of the small holders, where we find out what new fruits and vegetables can with profit be introduced into the district. Here the intensive cultivation is not extreme, but is more intensive than that of ordinary market gardens. Also there are hot-houses in which are grown ordinary dish fruits under glass."

"How do you distribute the produce of your small holders?" I asked.

*The "Fels Small Holdings and French Gardens" are situated at Mayland, in Essex county, England.—Editors of The Public.

†Intensive cultivation is that by which, through the assiduous application of labor and fertilization, the soil is made to yield the greatest results, both in the size and quality of the crops, and in the number of crops harvested successively in the year.—Editors of The Public.

"Co-operation! We have two specially built vans driven round to every house in the district, a salesman with each van. The proceeds are pooled, each man being credited with the value of the produce he has contributed. The small holders have formed themselves into a co-operative society for buying seeds, manures, tools, etc.; the co-operative shop also houses the local postal telegraph office.

"Moreover, we look after the recreative side of their life. There is a playground for the sports and pastimes of the villagers. For the children there is a good school, and we are introducing a novelty in the form of an open-air school, which will, when complete, be perhaps the first of its kind in the country for healthy children. It will be used nine months out of the twelve. Adjoining the schools are the baths and the school gardens, for," added Mr. Fels, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "we believe in catching the farmer young."

"What other attractions have you at Mayland?"

"We have started the cultivation of fish. Having a dyke a third of a mile in length, with a reservoir at each end, for draining off the surface water from the land, we have stocked it with domestic fish, such as roach, bream, tench, etc., which we expect will soon supply dishes for our small holders' dinner tables. The present idea is to charge the villagers six-pence per day for the privilege of fishing, it being forbidden to take fish under six inches long."

"Do you employ many laborers, and what provision do you make for them?"

"The balance of the 630 acres, which is not used for small holdings, is run as a farm, under the superintendence of a competent man. As I said before, this was an abandoned farm when we took it, employing only three men and two boys. Now it provides regular employment for from twenty-five to thirty men, and there are fifteen farm laborers' cottages, each with its bit of ground for a kitchen garden."

Surely this is a triumphant demonstration of the wisdom of a scientific "Back to the Land" policy, and those of us who know anything of the land hunger which is gnawing at the vitals of village life cannot help wishing for a thousand Joseph Felses to re-colonize rural Britain on the lines of the Mayland scheme. Turning from the general to the particular, I asked, "What, in your opinion, is the present position of small holdings under the Act?"

"I do not think that any considerable number of the thousands of men applying for small holdings will be accommodated. The present Small Holdings Act is something of a farce, and worthless for any other purpose than that of helping the landlords to put up the price of their land. The county councils, who are supposed to have power under the Act to acquire land

for farm laborers and others desiring small holdings, are usually composed of large farmers and landowners, and really do not want to do anything to increase the number of small holdings, and thus decrease the chances of the employers to get cheap labor. A man who gets no more by working for others than he can earn for himself will probably prefer to work for himself. To keep down wages there must be a margin of unemployment, and no one is more alive to this fact than the employing landowner."

"Then what is the remedy, Mr. Fels?"

"I see no other remedy than the complete cure of the whole evil. This could be effected by the taxation of land values, whether in town or country, which must have the effect of bringing large tracts of land into use and being broken up into small holdings for the use of the common people."

"Will the present Budget help this?"

"To a limited extent. It does not go far enough. The fact that there is to be a valuation of land and the very small tax which the Budget provides will only scare the most timid landlords to let loose. Still, we are glad to get the relief given by this Budget Bill; it is undoubtedly the thin end of the wedge, which will cleave a larger opening as it is driven home by the hand of time and experience."

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THE YOUNG MOTHER.

For The Public.

It is afternoon and the deep French windows of my sitting room are swung wide open to admit the warm air, laden with the fragrance of the pears and the lilacs blooming in the quaint little foreign garden. Across the high stone wall floats intermittently the sound of voices, chief among them Blanche's singing to her baby.

I recognize the sound well for I hear it often, and have known the mother now for well on to a year. That was months before the baby came, and she was happy then also, always happy and good-natured at her work, never too busy or too tired to do the additional thing that some one wanted done. We used to speak of it often, and say, "What a treasure she is! If one could always get a maid like Blanche, so capable and so willing."

Since her baby's birth, though much more fully occupied, she is still happy with that calm, quiet joy from the infinite well of deep content accessible only to mothers.

Yesterday as I returned from a tramp with a friend through the pine woods to the ocean, we met Blanche and the baby. We stopped to inquire, of course, and the baby was duly admired, because he had grown, and because he smiled at us. Then the mother tucked him up again in his perambulator and went quietly on her way, and one of us remarked to the other, "Did you ever see a woman