

and even throw clods at the heads of these poor animals, not so much because they were working badly as because he was bored to death at the solitary work. The same man—foreman on a biggish farm—was as brisk and cheery as possible in the hayfield with plenty of company, often of both sexes. A ploughing match is a gala day, largely because there are comrades in competition and others looking on, with whom chaff and talk can be exchanged.

Peasant husbandry does nothing to introduce this atmosphere of sociability and emulation in work, and this is only one of its drawbacks. Unnecessary fences, duplicated farm buildings, duplicated implements of every kind would be the order of the day under a system of small farms. Even if the small farmers co-operated to the fullest extent, field work is largely a matter of times and seasons and weather, and all the small holders of the parish could not have the reaper-and-binder on one day, nor the steam mill in one week. Co-operation does wonders in Denmark; but all nations are not equally co-operant in spirit, and even in Denmark there are doubtless small holders who under the pinch of poverty have to sell corn or cattle in a bad market just to get the money; and this, not to the advantage of the public, but merely to the profit of some merchant or butcher who can tempt the poor man with ready money. There will, no doubt, be a place for small cultivators for some time yet; but the large council farm, carried on with the best implements, buildings, cattle, skill, plenty of labour, and a short working day, represents the agriculture of the future and the only agriculture in which the rights of the public will be safeguarded.

Taxation is no substitute for public responsibility and efficiency in administration. If the day of the small struggling farmer, like the day of the small struggling shopkeeper, has not passed, the sooner it passes the better. But the Georgite Individualists do not recognise this. They are all for the multiplication of small vested interests. The Government is so far proceeding on similar lines, not by taxation indeed, but by the creation of a class of over-industrious and hopelessly narrow-minded peasants who are undone by "the magic of ownership." How that magic works in transforming men into absolute serfs of the soil may be seen in Shaw's portrait of Matthew Haffigan in "John Bull's Other Island." Matthew has secured under the Land Purchase Act a miserable tract of land on which he has worked himself crooked in body and crabbed in mind—an opponent of all change or improvement and an intensely disagreeable man generally. The small holdings legislation of the present Government does not make