



The following account of a farm in southern Italy was written by a New Zealand officer on active service and published in the "New Statesman and Nation."

WE HAD not been more than half an hour in our billets at the Masseria San Cataldo when the boys had begun to refer to "the peons" and "the hacienda." The farmhouse is, in fact, rather like the Mexican manors one sees on the films: a big flat-roofed building with square towers at the ends. It has a wide arcaded porch on the ground floor and an open terrace above it. The living quarters are all on the upper floor. The rooms to the right of the terrace are the master's quarters, uninhabited since his last visit four years ago. We found them sparsely furnished; the silver, the linen, and the bulk of the other furniture, all of it first-class stuff, were locked away in a room to which the *amministratore* held the key. Bathroom and lavatory were up to date and clean. The electric light was working. Behind the terrace is a set of rooms, about eight of them, where the *fattore* had been living till we evicted him, and on the left of it are two long store-rooms filled with wheat, carrots, and shrivelling tomatoes. Down below, the right hand rooms are offices; on the left are store-rooms with oil-presses and more heaps of grain; between the two wings is the chapel, complete with pink and blue

statues of the Madonna and the Sacred Heart. A prosperous and godly house.

At each end of the farmhouse and separated from it by an unpaved yard 50 ft. wide is a row of three or four low cottages. The yard usually has several young, half-naked children playing about, and through a cottage door one occasionally catches a glimpse of a drably dressed woman washing clothes or sweeping. In these cottages live the people who do the routine work of the farm. It happened that the first of the workmen to whom I spoke was the foreman, the *guardino*. Although I saw him every day for a month, I never learned his surname. I called him Giovanni, at his request; the Italians called him Giuan. A tall, straight man of sixty, with his hat always square upon his head, and dressed in cottony near-tweeds with collar and tie, Giovanni had fought in the last war at Caporetto and in the Balkans and had been some time with the occupation troops in Bulgaria. So he knew his Army ranks and always hailed me with a "Buongiorno, Signor Capitano," raising his hat 6 in. above his head. We became good friends. I was able to help him in certain small troubles of his, preventing the troops from trampling the vegetables, allowing