

him to keep the keys of the store-rooms for which he was responsible, and such like. In return he gave me the use of odd items of furniture from the store-rooms and was generally co-operative.

It was from Giovanni that I got my first idea of the set-up on the farm. I supplemented what he told me by conversations with other workmen, with the *fattore* and with a neighbouring landowner, a retired General who had been driven by fear of bombing to leave his town house and reside for the time being on his land. The Masseria San Cataldo, I learned, is one of ten farms, seven in Apulia and three in Campania, the property of the Marquis de Arruaga, a nobleman who has kept with his Spanish name the coat-of-arms of his Spanish family, with the addition of four ravens to indicate the centuries that have passed since the founder of the younger branch landed in Italy with Gonsalvo de Cordoba. The Marquis is all but unknown to his peasants. When I asked one of them if the Master lived at the Masseria, he laughed: "The Marchese never comes here. He is an Englishman."



"Mountains are cultivated."

Another contradicted him: "No, he is a Piedmontese and lives in Rome." It was the ex-General who told me something about the Arruaga family. The present Marquis normally lives in Rome or in Paris, though the war has induced him to take up temporary

quarters in the provincial discomfort of Zurich. When the war is over and things in Italy have settled down "under some reasonable form of government," then the Marquis will return to his Roman palazzo.

But the comings and goings of the Marquis do not affect the lives of his peasants. The farm is administered under a hierarchy of which the pinnacle is outside the peon's range of view. Of the nine families living in the cottages beside the farmhouse, Giovanni is the chief man. He receives the same pay as the rest (at present 600 lire—30s.—a month), but while their monthly subsistence allowance is 25 kilos of grain and 1 litre of oil, Giovanni receives 8 kilos more grain as well as a daily litre of wine. For this wage he supervises the day-to-day work on the whole farm. He is answerable to the *fattore*, a dark, thick-set man with waxed moustache and natty borsalino who takes decisions on higher policy: the quantity of fertilizer necessary, the number of extra hands for the olive harvest, the price at which the calves will be sold. The *fattore* is a self-important man. He was servile enough to me when we were alone, but in the presence of the workmen he would try rather feebly to assert himself. Very much the middle-man is the *fattore*. He never does a hand's turn of manual work; his manner towards the peasants is arrogant; and his salary of about £300 a year permits him the luxury of a Fiat Balilla for which he used to cadge petrol from us.

Apart from the Masseria San Cataldo, the *fattore* manages two other of the Arruaga farms in the district. Above him is the *amministratore*, who handles the finances of all seven Apulian farms belonging to the Arruagas and who acts as steward generally to the absentee Marquis. The *amministratore* lives in Taranto, and though I never met him I gathered, from what the *fattore* told me, that he would be in the thousand-a-year class.

From data given me by Giovanni and the *fattore* I have tried to work out the income which this farm represents. I have calculated on the basis of pre-war prices and have translated lire