

PREFACE

THE EARTH'S GREEN carpet is the sole source of the food consumed by livestock and mankind. It also furnishes many of the raw materials needed by our factories. The consequence of abusing one of our greatest possessions is disease. This is the punishment meted out by Mother Earth for adopting methods of agriculture which are not in accordance with Nature's law of return. We can begin to reverse this adverse verdict and transform disease into health by the proper use of the green carpet—by the faithful return to the soil of all available vegetable, animal, and human wastes.

The purpose of this book is threefold: to emphasize the importance of solar energy and the vegetable kingdom in human affairs; to record my own observations and reflections, which have accumulated during some forty-five years, on the occurrence and prevention of disease; to establish the thesis that most of this disease can be traced to an impoverished soil, which then leads to imperfectly synthesized protein in the green leaf and finally to the breakdown of those protective arrangements which Nature has designed for us.

During the course of the campaign for the reform of agriculture, now in active progress all over the world, I have not hesitated to question the soundness of present-day agricultural teaching and research—due to failure to realize that the problems of the farm and garden are biological rather than chemical. It follows, therefore, that the foundations on which the artificial manure and poison spray industries are based are also unsound. As a result of this onslaught, what has been described as the war in the soil has broken out in many countries and continues to spread. The first of the

great battles now being fought began in South Africa some ten years ago and has ended in a clear-cut victory for organic farming. In New Zealand the struggle closely follows the course of the South African conflict. The contest in Great Britain and the United States of America has only now emerged from the initial phase of reconnaissance, in the course of which the manifold weaknesses of the fortress to be stormed have been discovered and laid bare.

I am indebted to some hundreds of correspondents all over the world for sending me reports of the observations, experiments, and results which have followed the faithful adoption of Nature's great law of return. Some of this information is embodied and acknowledged in the pages of this book. A great deal still remains to be summarized and reduced to order—a labour which I hope soon to begin. When it is completed, a vast mass of material will be available which will confirm and extend what is to be found in these pages. Meanwhile a portion of this evidence is being recorded by Dr. Lionel J. Picton, O.B.E., in the *News-Letter on Compost* issued three times a year by the County Palatine of Chester Local Medical and Panel Committees at Holmes Chapel, Cheshire. By this means the story begun in their Medical Testament of 1939 is being continued and the pioneers of organic farming and gardening are kept in touch with events.

The fourth chapter on "The Maintenance of Soil Fertility in Great Britain" is very largely based on the labours of a friend and former colleague, the late Mr. George Clarke, C.I.E., who, a few days before his untimely death in May 1944, sent me the results of his study of the various authorities on the Saxon Conquest, the evolution of the manor, the changes it underwent as the result of the Domesday Book, and the enthronement of the Feudal System till the decay of the open-field system and its replacement by enclosure.

The spectacular progress in organic farming and gardening which has taken place in South Africa and Rhodesia during the last few years owes much to the work of Captain Moubray, Mr. J. P. J. van Vuren, and Mr. G. C. Dymond, who have very generously placed their results at my disposal. Captain Moubray and Mr. van Vuren have contributed two valuable appendices, while Mr. Dymond's pioneering work on virus disease in the

cane and on composting at the Springfield Sugar Estate in Natal has been embodied in the text. For the details relating to the breakdown of the cacao industry in Trinidad and on the Gold Coast and for a number of other suggestions on African and West Indian agriculture I am indebted to Dr. H. Martin Leake, formerly Principal of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad.

I have been kept in constant touch with the progress of organic farming and gardening in the United States of America by Mr. J. I. Rodale of Emmaus, Pa., the editor of *Organic Gardening*, who has started a movement in the New World which promises soon to become an avalanche. Mr. Rodale was the prime mover in bringing out the first American edition of *An Agricultural Testament* and is responsible for the simultaneous publication of this present book in the United States and of a special American issue of Lady Eve Balfour's stimulating work—*The Living Soil*.

In India I have made full use of the experience of Colonel Sir Edward Hearle Cole, C.B., C.M.G., on the Coleyana Estate in the Punjab, and of Mr. E. F. Watson's work on the composting of water hyacinth at Barrackpore. Messrs. Walter Duncan & Company have generously permitted Mr. J. C. Watson to contribute an appendix on the remarkable results he has obtained on the Gandrapara Tea Estate in North Bengal. In this fine property India and the rest of the Empire possess a perfect example of the way Nature's law of return should be obeyed and of what freshly prepared humus by itself can achieve.

I owe much to a number of the active members of the New Zealand Compost Club, and in particular to its former Honorary Secretary, Mr. T. W. M. Ashby, who have kept me fully informed of the results obtained by this vigorous association. The nutritional results obtained by Dr. G. B. Chapman, the President, at the Mount Albert Grammar School, which show how profoundly the fresh produce of fertile soil influences the health of schoolboys, have been of the greatest use. In Eire the Rev. C. W. Sowby, Warden of the College of St. Columba, Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin, and the Rev. W. S. Airy, Head Master of St. Martin's School, Sidmouth, have placed at my disposal the results of similar work at their respective schools. These pioneering efforts are certain to be copied and to be developed far

and wide. Similar ideas are now being applied to factory canteen meals in Great Britain with great success, as will be evident from what Mr. George Wood has already accomplished at the Co-operative Wholesale Society's bacon factory at Winsford in Cheshire.

For furnishing full details of a large-scale example of successful mechanized organic farming in this country and of the great possibilities of our almost unused downlands I owe much to Mr. Friend Sykes. The story of Chantry, where the results of humus without any help from artificial manures are written on the land itself, provides a fitting conclusion to this volume.

In the heavy task of getting this book into its final shape I owe much to the care and devotion of my private secretary, Miss Ellinor Kirkham.

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