

regions of the forest. Roads appear to have been made and villages built along the hillsides, and the heroic age tells of adventurers seeking fame and fortune by domination of territory dotted with these villages of deeply engrossed cultivators. The later organisation of power, especially in France, promoted the cutting of the forests, and market towns grew in what now became cornland, until, with the end of the Middle Ages, the growth of communication made the forest in many parts little more than a memory though still dominant in remote corners. The change of personality from the unfriendly forest full of wild beasts to the rich cornland dotted with villages focussing on market towns, is one of the most striking changes the earth has suffered since man spread over it. In the process is wrapped up more of the evolution of the nation-State and of our modern political-linguistic difficulties than we are apt to realise.

Healthy interrelations between geographical personalities are matters of urgent concern. There is special need to think of the remote corners, the Scottish highlands, the Welsh valleys, the Irish West, with conditions of hard effort for small return, and consequently with the export of men and women as a leading function. The value of this function is incalculable, for the great city eats up men and women soul and body, and until we have altered the basis of society our one hope of avoiding collapse is to have a stream of supply from the remote corners where treasures of ancient thought and inspiration survive and impart faculties especially of discernment and judgment. As Stevenson has it, "an honest old countryman has a sense of communion" with the powers of the universe, but he cannot vary from his faith unless he, "in a strict and not a conventional meaning," changes his mind. If the State does not yet provide education and health grants to the remote corners on a basis of area instead of a basis

of population, private effort is at least trying to show the way; city churches help mountain churches, and industrial magnates and their descendants are trying to help the people's effort to equip the youth who go out into the world, as well as, in Wales at least, to maintain the *genius loci*. Such helpful interactions will, however, not only stave off the collapse of our precarious civilisation; they may also keep the remote corner from hardening its activities into dead routine or falling into sheer eccentricity.

In the Midland Valley of Scotland, so open to the sea and the Continent, the inrush of new words ousted Celtic speech, though isolation from England allowed a good deal more of the heritage of Celtic place-names to be passed on than was the case in England, and also helped the Scots law to live, whereas, though the Welsh language persisted, Welsh law died largely for want of an administrative centre. The personality of the Central Lowland of Scotland is thus made very different from that of the rural Welsh valleys, and we see that we may consider geographical personality of many grades developed in regions of diverse size and character and owing much to the accumulated result of human work and intercourse through the ages.

The very large unit must include such wide diversities that, failing unusually strong links, the common measure of memory and feeling that furnishes the mainspring of social action may be low. The very small unit and the very isolated unit are apt to lose balance when intellectual, and perhaps physical inbreeding over-emphasises certain heritages. The healthy mean will generally be found in units smaller than those of the great States of Europe, and this reflection is full of bearing on modern thought about social and political organisation of a world which has become one market for endlessly diverse products of spiritual as well as material kinds.

Obituary.

WE regret to see announced in the *Chemical Age* the death on December 19 last, at the age of seventy-three years, of MR. HENRY ROWLATT AUGUSTUS OERTLING. Mr. Oertling was educated at University College, London, and as a young man entered the balance-making business founded by his father. For more than forty years he took an active interest in the management of the firm, and it was under his supervision and to his design that the short-beam Oertling balance was made. Other types of balance were also developed, and for many years balances suitable for educational purposes, as well as those necessary for scientific work requiring the highest accuracy, have been manufactured so successfully by the firm that the name of Messrs. L. Oertling, Ltd., is now well-known in scientific institutions throughout the world.

DR. JOHN HARLEY, who died at Beedings, Pulborough, on December 9 last, aged eighty-eight,
NO. 2722, VOL. 108]

was born in Shropshire, where he studied the geology of the region round Ludlow. He specially investigated the microscopical structure of the skeletal fragments in the Ludlow bone-bed, and published an important paper on this subject in the *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society* in 1861. During the following years, while physician at King's College Hospital, London, he contributed several notes on drugs to the *Pharmaceutical Journal*. He also wrote a memoir on the parasitism of the mistletoe, published by the Linnean Society in 1863. Dr. Harley bequeathed his geological collection to the Ludlow Museum.

WE notice with regret the announcement of the death on December 25, at the age of ninety, of DR. G. S. BRADY, F.R.S., hon. professor of natural history in the Armstrong College of the University of Durham, Newcastle.