

THE CHARITABLE MARQUIS DECREES EVICTION

By Lancaster M. Greene

The Marquis of Ailsa owns, among other lands, an island off the British coast. Tenants of various predecessors of the present Marquis of Ailsa have lived here for a long time. "A poor thing but mine own, subject, of course, to rent to the Marquis," one hears an islander say of his modest hut. The island folk raise cattle and sheep and little else but families. Not enough wealth, says the Marquis.

Recently this island made the news; a rumor had run among the inhabitants that the Marquis had decreed they should move. The rumor was confirmed; orders were given to abandon homes, get what sheep, cattle and pets they could into boats on a day set by His Grace, and, with all their families, they would be met by a ship, sent by none other than their patron, the Marquis. It could not come inshore for there was no harbor and the waters were none too easy to navigate.

No time for regret, no chance for the old to stay and die in their homes. Cattle and sheep which cannot be caught or be shoved into boats at the hour appointed are lost to the tenants. "While Britannia rules the wave, no Briton shall be

slave," one recalls; these are free people, subject only to the rights of a land owner, whose special privilege is subject to the will of the people. Neither of them seem to know that this privilege is subject to the people, because the privileges claimed by landowners have been claimed so long and so vigorously that what once was wrong has become right. It is all quite legal, arranged by the very best minds "for the good of society."

His Grace, of course, removed these islanders for their own good, he said. They could not live well enough on this island; it is too barren there for human beings to eke out an existence, especially human beings within the beneficence and charity of Ailsa. Is one to doubt His Grace because he might get more rent from these tenants in a place where they could raise more? Never! Well, hardly ever, Your Grace!

By the way, the Astors, Goelets, and a few others own most of the land under the island of Manhattan! Suppose they decide to move us for our own good?