LAND WITHOUT BREAD

Before you see the film which has been announced for this meeting, I should like to tell you very briefly something about this district of Spain which you are going to visit - especially about some aspects of it which do not appear in the film.

when I made this film my intention was to give the bare facts, not to interpret them or to invent new ones. I was drawn to this place because of its drama and awe-inspiring poetry. The little I had read of it had made a deep impression on me. I knew that there, for centuries, human beings had been struggling against a hostile land, where nature gave them no hope of ever overcoming her. Travellers and geographers alike pronounced this place as uninhabitable.

And yet the climate is genule, the water plentiful, and vegetation there is all around. But climate, water, vegetation, the earth itself seem to be trying to stifle human life instead of encouraging it. There are bees, and they make honey, but the honey is bitter. The water is pure, but its very purity is harmful, for it is completely lacking in those mineral salts essential to health. In fact, this water is a breeding-ground for the terrible Anopheles mosquito; and all the inhabitants of this district suffer from malaria.

You will want to know the name of this region - it is called LAS HURDES, and it is in the West of Spain, very close to the Portuguese frontier.

Until very recently this district was completely cut off from the rest of the world - separated by the huge labyrinth of

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side you goe one rills which has been encounced for this succes and the party for the first of the place of the pl Tilestoons - story of anten era pay delay alend to subgrate white about more parents in the state of the state forthe, not to interpret them or to invent new once. I were drawn I the so not never to be but the best of the property of the state of and have been bed spinled manual appropriate and years to seed on most ever source shoul altrans a sentence pates, and phisches simply sould not speed the time as sooily also has divitable reason out tolered at execute and now but vogstation ov , worse, organic this change and supply sold and the state of the sta one the vened wink your has a wood o'd aren't adlantuced to al wilted Anna best and ound of horse off the desting of the series harmed the constant is national vicestance at three legislation of busers-malbassid a al resper bldr .togl al .difeed of feltarese To stoot Idedn't all the bas too tobeen selected ald land ode 207 That metion are movement sold all more reliant tolaints ship month in the college stat to emen out work of these tile out ody or onoin view , ninch to drow and mint it ben tendent by the statement of well as our party, shade belletinest

hills which none but climbers could penetrate. There was no means of getting into touch with these mountain fastnesses, and even within the region itself communication was almost impossible between the different villages. And this is not surprising; men make roads only when they want to get somewhere, and Las Hurdes does not lead anywhere. It is a lost land, far from all human succour. Not only is it unfriendly to man; it is opposed to all human traffic.

so cut off are these villages from one another that one of the inhabitants once told me that it was 20 years since he had seen his daughter, who was married to a man from the next village. This village was six miles away. But to get there meant a tramp of several hours through thick undergrowth and over sharp craggy paths, and this man simply could not spare the time. He needed all his strength, every moment of his time, for the hard daily toil on this ungrateful land, from which it was difficult to scratch his bread.

The majority of Spaniards knew nothing about Las Hurdes until 1922, when some publicity was given to it by the visit of the former King Alfonso XLLL. It was said then that the existence of such a place was a disgrace to Spain. Personally I do not agree. The problem of these people is so deep, so intangible, that action by a government could not get at the root of it. Our great Unamuno has said, perhaps paradoxically, that Las Hurdes is the glory rather than the disgrace of Spain. Is it not worthy of our admiration as well as our pity, that a handful of men are striving, and have striven, to eke out a livelihood toiling hour after hour, century after century, without ever giving up in their

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hopeless task? And even supposing that the existence of such a place were a disgrace to Spain, what of it? Let that country which has nothing to be ashamed of cast the first stone.

The first historical document proving the existence of Las Hurdes is a comedy by the prince of Spanish geniuses, Lope de Vega. He did not ever go there, but he had heard of it as a primitive, pastoral region. It is interesting that the discovery of this place by the Spaniards should coincide with the discovery of America - the everlasting paradox of the Spanish mind: it discovers at the same time the Lost Land of Las Hurdes and the Promised Land of America.

It is believed that it was at the beginning of the XVlth century that this region was first inhabited. Jews, fleeing from persecution under Ferdinand and Isabella sought refuge in this deserted country. As time went on there were added to its numbers outlaws fleeing from justice. And in the ensuing years few people ever ventured into this savage place, where it was unbelievable that human life should exist at all.

There is no time in this brief introduction to tell you of the various additions to the inhabitants, which helped to put new blood into their veins, and which prevented their total degeneration. You will see something of this in the film itself.

Both Spaniards and Frenchmen have studied the problem. But we must mention the most valuable of all the documents, which is also the most accurate one - it is the book written in 1929 by the French professor Maurice Legendre. For 20 years he went to this place every year to study it, and his book is remarkable for its objectification and accuracy.

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Prench professor Maurica Lagendro. For 20 years he went to the place every year to study it, and als book is remarkable for its objectification and securety.

Professor Legendre says that Las Hurdes is unlike any other place in the world-for two reasons: its wretchedness and its tragedy.

We know that there are many groups of people in the world who live under wretched and precarious conditions - in the Atlas Mountains, in Chinese villages, in Hindoo settlements. But usually, if the conditions become impossible - that is, permanently impossible - the population emigrates en masse to subsist in less desperate surroundings. Not so in Ias Hurdes. If by chance one of them should leave, he returns almost at once. It is a living death to be there, yet it is a living death too until they can get back again. I have met some who can talk French. They had worked in France as labourers, but as soon as they got together enough money, thay hastened home again. I have even met one who had been to America.

Usually, people who are permanently in want emigrate all together or slowly disperse, leaving the village emptymand deserted. It is the opposite in Las Hurdes. The population does not disperse, in fact it has greatly increased, and at present the district is over-peopled. How far is it possible to explain so unexpected a phenomenon?

And so, it is not wretchedness which makes Las Hurdes unique in human society, but the fact that this wretchedness is permanent. It is not the tragedy, but the fact that there, tragedy has no end.

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There are a number of strange ideas about Las Hurdes. The most persistent is the belief that the people are savages. Nothing could be further from the truth. If these people are unlike anyone, they are unlike savage tribes. Among savages, life is not nearly so hard. Man has only to reach out his hand to gather the fruits of nature. There is no spiritual conflict between the savage and his circumstances. A primitive civilization has a primitive culture. But in Las Hurdes a primitive civilization goes with a modern culture. These people have the same moral and religious principles as we have. But in their case the means for satisfying those needs are hardly any better than those of the cave man.

I do not know whether there is any human society which has

fewer utensils that these people. Though they live in an age of

such frightfully complicated mechanisation, their tools are
and

scanty, primitive. In the upper region there are no ploughs, no

beasts of burden: there are no fisearms, no steel weapons at all.

There are hardly any domestic animals - for example, there are
no dogs or cats. You will see in the film what sort of animals

do exist there. There is nothing on wheels. There are no jars,
no bottles, no forks. I could go on with the list indefinitely.

So you can imagine my surprise when one day I discovered that in one of the villages - it is true it was the most advanced of them all - there was a sewing machine - an out-of-date model, very

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out last and sail foods the bit opening to todawn a ore orest . . Deliver oth steone Bar will torred one all subjection such original the areas of the state of the transfer of the state of the state of the · artsigg ; megavas sadakal plogicars avairables a fort convers Tonzag St militario de la contrata del contrata de la contrata de la contrata del contrata de la contrata del la contrata del la contrata de la contrata del la contrata de la contrata de la contrata de la contrata de la contrata del la contra and the state of t Date I Wrong to Side Date of the State of th reflytions principles on we have. They appear our selection and party not smear the week with the First with the state of the boar one over patrick and degree that you can tardly one the original sloth was worne ground allers for all specifications and for the to on addition the other thought the design the design the service of the service loop after the Carlo Harris Land Bar Market Tiller Harris Tolk The sale of the sa the track of the series of the and the property of the west of the party of the party of the party of the party of west waste where the world will be alleged to the track of the bear of the contract of the con . The parties of the second of the second of the second of THE SECOND SECON to Whetheren when the the We want to be and the one hi THE ARMS TO SELECT THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF THE

to their appions are simple. Their grim daily buil make any maintion-

rusty - but a real Singer.

The few utensils which are seen have been brought in from Castile or Extremadura by some who went off begging in those regions. In the district of Las Hurdes nothing is made. There is no skilled labour. I once met a man who said he was a baker, but henhad had to give up long ago because he had no dough to make into bread. This is the secret of their great poverty - the soil produces only briars and brambles - hence they have no means of procuring raw materials, and in consequence there is no oraftsmanship.

What do they wear? Much the same things as we do. The men wear jacket and trousers, the women bodice and skirt. But so patched and darned that you can hardly see the original cloth. I once counted 72 different places where one garment had been mended.

Another point hard to believe is that here there is no folklore. The whole time we were there we never heard one song. The
men are silent at their work, and have no songs to make their task
a little lighter. But even their silence is different. It is
not the silence of death but the silence of life. This is not so
poetic, perhaps, but it is much more awe-inspiring.

Nor did we see drawings on rock or wall. Yet, just where this district begins, in Las Batuecas, there is one of the finest examples of cave-drawing in existence. In other words, thousands of years ago, this place was the heart of human culture; and now the men who live there know nothing of artistic expression.

The character of these people is very gentle. When they talk, they lament their misfortunes, their slavery to this cruel land. Their customs are simple. Their grim daily toil makes any relation-

Anch'vo OUNIEL 7486-6 -3rusty - out a real Singer. most at changed need eved meen was dollny offences we'l now worldens. In the district of las Burdes nothing is made. There is no skilled labours. I once mer a men who said he was a belur, - wireved from them to serses eds at aid! . Daned of dies on even your monen - noidment has arely the menus they and ores temporalises what do they wear? Such the same things as we do. The sam wear jacket and trouters, the women bodies and skirt. July an parely one darred that you can hardly see the original clothe. .beharm good had figures and produ ascald finerells at heduson come Another point hard to bolleve is that here there in rollelore, The whole time we went there we never heard one under you much to present to from this hall, take to do bereaty sen ere ellent et their work, and have no conge to make their team a listin lightor. But ever abeir silence is differents it is on for al alary .oll to consile out the disable of life. poutle, savinge, but it is each more suc-inspiritue. mint erony sunt . ser . Lieu to meet no aguivers ous or bis well Transcor Theredre supports ton opinion of the electronic when themil and to one al eredt, andered and al lenged folyalb abaseucsi , solow redfo al vocastelko al palwers-ovas lo selegance of years ago, this place was the heart of human culture; and now the agn who live viere knew nothing of arilatic expression. The character of these papels is very gentley when they talk, rail there to composed the philosophers and socialegists; they lament their mistortunes, their alsvery to this order land. Their outrans are simple. Their with daily tell makes any relation-1672€ ship impossible unless it serves some useful purpose. There is no gaiety, no joyful recreation. Because of the smallness of their dwellings a whole family is obliged to live in a single room. There is no doubt that this leads to incest, of which some cases do exist. This is perhaps the only moral defect of which they can be accused; and we might say with St. Thomas: "To be virtuous it is necessary to have a minimum of material well-being". And in Las Hurdes even this minimum is lacking.

Many suggestions have been made for the solving of this crying social problem. We cannot go into these now. All that we can say is that although some have been tried, none has proved effective. Perhaps the only solution is the one which an old woman suggested one day when we met her on an indescribable path. When she saw us she put down her bundle of wood and came to us. "You are engineers," she said "and you are coming to improve our poor lot. Well, I tell you there is no cure. If you want to rescue us from this hell, take us out of here by force. We cannot leave here now of our own free will."

And she is right. To solve their problem we should have to drag them away by force, send them out into other parts of Spain, and destroy completely their wretched homes.

Professor Legendre supports the opinion of the old woman when he says "Las Hurdes is what it is because of its isolation. It may be that by drawing the people back into the world by making roads for them, it will gradually cease to be." Yet a road has been made, and these people have not flocked out along it. They are still there to confound the philosophers and sociologists.

If Las Hurdes is unique in human society, because of its

of Story . Occarry for the cone cone was dearfy making office of the cone of t The same and the second standard so the second seco POSTERIOR ROBRIGATION ROBRISH THE PROPERTY OF This was to lead with the control of Fig. 788 tot 7 8468 till water by any day ally albump rost and a wall a same and ANTHANANT TOURSTEN THE THE PROPERTY OF THE PRO ". Baltone habanatatorer news senten and habana . "hard-tros THE TANK THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF "Addition was they again with later or alternatively being alternative to the later accounts to to Improve our poor lot. WHIT, If we'll you show as no owner. II Topode the little with the tid war of all toying follows been report of what to produce the language is found too four or a want of the product of the A PARTY TO THE TANK THE TOTAL STATE STATE STATE OF THE TOTAL THE TANK WHEN WELL Loyelas . Hadar out . Sandy becomes wiseld ogsåden mid blocken und Indicator Logondre, supports the colutes of the old tone you of the resident to be a seed of the same of the same of A THE REAL PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF THE PART Branch 110 Pranting the Pennic Progress of the Control of the Property of the Printing of the A WILLS Stollers Total Amendant Supran Hi waters that the hand extent and the number of its inhabitants, there are nevertheless other parts of Europe where similar conditions of life exist - in France, in Italy, in Czechoslovakia. But these are isolated cases which up to the present have not roused the interest of men of science. Besides, they are gradually disappearing. In the French Alps, for example, in Savoy, about 20 years ago there were two villages of this type. Today there is only one of them left, and it will probably disappear very soon. And this one, like Las Hurdes, is cut off from human contact, and for six months in the year it is entirely inaccessible owing to the heavy snows. The inhabitants make bread only once a year, and this, with a few vegatables and some starchy foods, is their principal diet.

Almost all the inhabitants of the French village are dwarfs or cretins and if by chance one of them should develop normally in body and mind, he soon leaves the village. In this respect it is already different from Las Hurdes.

As we have seen, one of the things which is unknown in Las Hurdes is idleness. In the village of French Savoy, however, there is a terrible period during the winter when the whole population is idle for six months, unable to leave their wretched hovels. Under such circumstances, relationships within the same family are common.

In Czechoslovakia and Italy, it appears, there are also examples of similar conditions. But my information about them is very scanty because there is hardly anything scientific written on the subject. I have never seen these places. I had hoped to accompany the psychiatrist Dr. Lacan, of the hospital of St. Anne in Paris, on an expedition to these scenes of retarded civilization

sectedfactor of the interior of the formattening there are nevertheless al misolan cala lo enulstanon malimin acons agogua, to atmen medico reserved in Iteland despendention and the second second second second second distant and at ... Industrially offerences and making the property of the property sales for sand one synce to seeds averaged adjust of the son the Associate the control and supply the lot to associate is at he probably disputate were good, industria one, like he and al addres win and has instance, assess and and its day al askant with avenuary and act of anive sidiasonous risting at the rear inhabitanta said hone a year a cons. when anext wine attacked The state intlantar plant at about govern supplies addresses. II Jesques aldi di ... an allin adi avvari done on Aula han Nord Al The Particular wave appropriately and the factorial theories at and all approximate the behavioral of the contract of the cont thought in this name. As the result of the party of the p borne and minist addinguisalor meanstenerale done reball . minted THE PARTY AND POST OF THE PROPERTY AND ADDRESS OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR well topde not represent the time conditions and man to helpfore. or head, had I .. agenta agent true tower aven I .. . tooling the house secondary the barchistrist Dr. Local to the parallel at the parallel

still existing in Europe, but my professional duties and the political situation completely ruined our plans. But I still hope it may be possible to go some day.

I should like to end this introduction by recalling those friends who worked so unselfishly to produce this film with me. Our work was the fruit of love for this unhappy country. I had been able to find public and private support for my other films, but for this one I could not find anything like enough. In Europe, there are hardly any of those cultural groups or patrons of art which in America are willing to finance educational films. It was a humble Spanish worker, Ramon Acin, who made it possible for me to make this film; he gave me all his savings - a thousand dollars, which was all the film cost.

By one of those strenge tricks which the Censorship plays, a few incidents were suppressed by the French authorities, particularly in the first reel; so you are going to see it in a slightly reduced form. In this first reel there are two details I wish to correct. They were actually corrected in a second version, which was shown in several European countries, but by mistake they sent me a copy of the earlier one. These mistakes are, first, in one of the captions it says that the films was made under the First Spanish Republic - it should be, of course, under the Second Spanish Republic. Apart from a few sound errors there is only one more correction to make - in Europe the film was not known by the title given here - Unpromised Land - it was called "Land Without Bread".