

Book Reviews

WALAFRID STRABO. *Hortulus*. Trans. Raef. Payne. Commentary by Wilfrid Blunt. xi+91 pp. Illus. Hunt Botanical Library, Pittsburgh, Penn., 1966. \$12.

The first thing that strikes the eye about this book is the beauty of its production, a lovely cover, excellent paper, and fine printing. This is just as it should be for a modern version of a gardening poem more than a thousand years old. Walafrið Strabo composed his *Hortulus* in the ninth century A.D., and few people would have been more surprised than he (if it were possible) to find that his poem has survived, and is being read today. It deals with the pleasures and pains of monastic gardening at Reichenau and St Gall. Most commentators (the work was first printed in 1510) suggest that Walafrið owed a debt to Virgil. Perhaps he did in a manner of speaking, but there is little similarity between the content of the *Georgics* and the *Hortulus*. The latter has much more the character of a *Herbal*; the former with some elasticity of imagination can be regarded as a farming textbook.

The *Hortulus* opens with a panegyric on the pleasures of gardening, coupled with an exordium to spare neither manual labour nor dung spreading. Beyond that there are few instructions concerning the actual cultivation of the herb garden, though the difficulties created by weeds and wet patches are acknowledged as obstacles in the path of success that must be overcome. The main part of the work consists of short verses describing individual plants and their medicinal uses. It is the usual pattern of the innumerable *Herbals* that were produced from the day of Dioscorides until modern times. Such criticism may sound derogatory, but is dictated by one point of view. The poem itself, or each few verses on a plant, such as Southernwood, is charming, and is illustrative of the state of herbal medicine in the ninth century. The lily and the rose, as most commentators have remarked, were Walafrið's favourite flowers because of their religious associations as well

as their intrinsic beauty. Of the value of the poem as literature there can be no doubt: more, it is a valuable historical document.

The Hunt Botanical Library edition contains a photographic reproduction of "the St. Gall draft of the *Hortulus* (the Vatican Codex no. 469 leaves 29-39)," a Latin version in modern printing, and a translation in unrhymed verse. It is a pleasure to handle the volume which has made Walafrið's poem more readily accessible to the historian of gardening, and of botany, and to the general reader.

G. E. FUSSELL

C. R. HART, *Early Charters of Eastern England*. Leicester U.P., 1966. 280 pp. 55s.

Dr Hart's work makes a very valuable contribution to Anglo-Saxon studies. The book is divided into three parts: pp. 21-113 present a critical catalogue of the known pre-Conquest charters of Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Rutland, and the Soke of Peterborough; pp. 117-209 contain up-to-date scholarly editions with full apparatus of the early charters of Barking Abbey and of Thorney Abbey; and pp. 213-49 treat of land transactions entered into by the four great fenland abbeys of Ely, Ramsey, Peterborough, and Bury St Edmunds. There is also a useful short introduction, and carefully prepared indexes of places, and of persons and corporate bodies. Part I registers and analyses some 167 documents relating to the eastern counties. Sound observations on points of detail characterize this section of the work. Dr Hart's general judgement on authenticity is fair and dependable. Where he disagrees with other scholars (as in relation to the Ramsey evidence) he sets out fully the reasons why. No student of agrarian history in the eastern counties should fail to consult this section. Dr Hart makes many new identifications of places, and his comments on the people concerned in the transactions are always well based. For Suffolk alone,

for example, in very few pages he gives an edition of a hitherto unpublished Lambeth manuscript version of a Christ Church charter, makes several plausible new identifications of places (Wortham on p. 54, Redgrave on p. 62), and gives a thoroughly convincing interpretation of the bounds of Bury St Edmunds (pp. 54-8). Incidentally his Christ Church charter has interest for post- as well as pre-Conquest historians, and may well, as he suggests, be connected with the great pleas at Penenden Heath. To readers of this journal Part II will be almost as interesting as Part I. Dr Hart brings together existing material relating to the abbeys of Barking and Thorney. For the early Anglo-Saxon period Barking has a special importance, and it is good to welcome new editions of the Erkenwald and Hodilred charters. Dr Hart's analysis gives us a good example of the way in which acceptance of Christianity and the establishment of tenure by book helped to bring about a slow territorialization of political and social authority. It was in the interests of king and church alike to establish security of tenure. The setting up of wealthy abbeys, endowed with 300 hides or more, had vast social consequence for the community—and for earlier smaller churches such as St Peter *ad murum* (still happily with us). Part III is naturally shorter than the other sections, but is again packed with important material which adds much to our knowledge of people and of places connected with the fenland abbeys. One notes a valuable appraisal of Turkil of Harringworth (pp. 236-8), neighbour and active supporter of Hereward, which strongly suggests that he should be identified as the man chiefly responsible for the re-apportionment of the fen south and east of Whittlesey Mere. Dr Hart is constantly aware of the problems, linguistic, diplomatic, and historical which encompass his material. He reminds us of the peculiarities of the situation in the east where muniments do not survive in any quantity until after the Benedictine revival got under way in the tenth century. He brings out well our dependence on Bury St Edmunds records for the last phase

of Anglo-Saxon diplomatic history. By his painstaking, modest, and lively approach to his difficult task Dr Hart has made documents of primary importance to the legal, agrarian, and social historian much more accessible and often much more tractable, and so has put all serious students of the period greatly in his debt.

H. R. LOYN

F. R. H. DU BOULAY, *The Lordship of Canterbury. An Essay on Medieval Society*. Nelson, 1966. xiv+418 pp. 4 maps. 7 tables. £4 4s.

The long-recognized enigmatic character of medieval Kentish society has attracted the attention of many writers. One of considerable import is Professor du Boulay, who has published papers and edited texts in this field and who has now collated and expanded his hitherto disparate works. The result is an important study of the medieval archbishopric of Canterbury, comparable in many ways with R. A. L. Smith's account of the administration and estates of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, which was published in 1943.

A discussion of the archives of the archbishop constitutes a useful introductory chapter. Throughout the book Prof. du Boulay makes clear the extent to which his conclusions had to be qualified by the limitations of the source materials available to him. The account of the archbishop as territorial magnate and of those communities under his lordship is more or less chronological. The author deals first with the acquisition of the property (completed in essence by 1086, and concentrated in Kent and Sussex) and the enfeoffments to military tenants in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This is succeeded by a lengthy account of rural society, occupying a quarter of the entire text. There then follows in turn an examination of the archbishop's demesnes, and of the management of the estate, household, and Liberty (the archbishop's private franchise). The study concludes with the compulsory property exchanges forced on Cranmer by Henry VIII, exchanges which marked the

end of the Canterbury estates as the Middle Ages had known them.

From the point of view of agricultural history, the sections on rural history and on the management of the demesnes are of most interest. Prof. du Boulay's description of the agrarian economy of medieval Kent, as reflected in the documents of the archbishop, is lucid and stimulating. His account of the sulung and yoke, for example, should do much to clear away the mists surrounding these peculiarly Kentish units for apportioning services. Sulungs and their quarter-fractions, yokes, were real enough in the sense that they were of precise acreage and extended over the ground so that the fields of a township lay within some yoke, and local men knew well enough in which yoke their possessions lay. But the yokes were not themselves a field system. The size of the yoke varied from manor to manor and Prof. du Boulay favours the view that, as yokes of different sizes were found even on a single manor, the sizes must have been in some way related to land values. The reviewer has recently shown that this was certainly the case at Gillingham. On the rôle of the yoke during the Middle Ages, Prof. du Boulay is clear. About its origins, he is justifiably reticent, although the reviewer considers the evidence in support of the suggestion that a yoke must at one time have been equated with the real holding of a family is more substantial than Prof. du Boulay believes. On the decline of the yoke, Prof. du Boulay seems excessively cautious, observing its disappearance "for reasons which do not immediately appear." Yet the *raison d'être* of the yoke was the apportionment of labour services, so that some discussion of the impact of the commutation of services upon 'jugation' was to be expected. None is provided. Certainly, the reviewer's examination of the evidence for Wrotham and Gillingham has led him to suggest that with the commutation of services on these manors the yokes lost their utility and gradually disappeared from the records.

There emerges from this study as clear a picture of the medieval agrarian economy as

the source materials will allow. The absence of a series of crop accounts prevents the author's saying much about rotations and yields on the demesnes. The growth of population and the operation of gavelkind tenure are seen as fundamental factors in the development of a pattern of smallholdings and scattered farmsteads. Partible inheritance encouraged subdivision of holdings but the free alienability of land promoted early leasing, exchanging, and buying of land and thus the augmentation, consolidation, and enclosure of individual holdings. Proximity to London and the continent, coupled with the precocious spread of commercial influences, contributed to the early development of an active land market.

This study confirms the existence in Kent of an irregular open-field system, although Prof. du Boulay avoids the term 'open-field', preferring to describe tenants' lands as "not regularly intermingled strips, but blocks and patches of crops within larger fields, with pasture available elsewhere for the tenants' beasts." Livestock of those tenants who had helped plough the demesne, and of any others who had arranged terms with the lord by which their animals could feed upon his stubble, were pastured in common with those of the lord on many manors. Probably some tenants with parcels in larger fields followed this demesne practice by mutual agreement but there was undoubtedly a minimum of common pasturing on the arable in Kent. Co-operative ploughing is evidenced but it was not associated with a common-field system. The emphasis of this entire study, in fact, is upon the individualism and private enterprise which characterized medieval Kentish society.

In the space of this review, it has been impossible to treat all of the many facets of rural history dealt with by Prof. du Boulay. He has written, for example, an extremely lively account of assarting and of woodland management. Some themes of medieval Kentish history which have yet to be exhaustively studied are frequently touched upon here—such as the ever-growing impact of London,

the changing distribution of population and of prosperity, and the detailed progress of enclosure. One can detect—as was Prof. du Boulay's intention—the imprint of Marc Bloch upon this excellent study. There is evidence throughout of an attempt “to resurrect the past as well as to analyse it,” to give an historian's kiss of life to the seemingly dead documents of medieval administration. Furthermore, the estates are appropriately placed in their geographical context and agricultural activities are related to properties of soil and location as well as to factors of supply and demand. It does, however, seem a pity that Prof. du Boulay rarely compares the archbishop's estates with others in Kent and makes little attempt to see Kent in an English context. Some practical application of *la méthode comparative* of Marc Bloch is appropriate even in a regional monograph.

ALAN R. H. BAKER

MARGARET CASH (ed.), *Devon Inventories of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series, Vol. XI, 1966. xxv+206 pp. Available from Mrs Miller, c/o Devon and Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter. 40s. post free.

Readers of this journal will be well aware of the value of probate inventories as a source for agricultural history, and especially for details of the crops and livestock kept by countless ordinary farmers whose activities appear in no other record. For reconstructing an objective pattern of farming to balance the subjective accounts of commentators or improvers there is no comparable source. The Devon and Cornwall Record Society are therefore to be congratulated on this volume, containing 266 inventories dating from 1531 to 1699, even if they are, in the editor's words, “a pathetic few compared with those which are known to have survived until 1942 when the Exeter Probate Registry was destroyed by enemy action.” It is gratifying to be given even this small portion when we had thought that all were lost. The volume is welcome also because it relates to a pastoral

county in the ‘highland zone’ of England, whereas most of the previously published volumes of inventories come from the midland and eastern counties.

Another interesting feature of this volume is its chronological spread. Unlike most collections of inventories which have very few examples from the period 1640–60, when the administration of the Church Courts, which handled probate matters, generally broke down, this collection derives mainly from that period. No fewer than 109 (41 per cent) of the inventories were made between 1640 and 1659 (86 in the 1640's and 23 in the 1650's). This is partly because of the fortunate survival of a file of inventories, mostly dated 1640–9 from the records of the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Exeter. In fact most of the inventories in this volume have survived because they were the subject of Court actions. In some cases the deceased's executors claimed that the inventories undervalued the goods they listed, and in others it was claimed that the value of the personal estate was insufficient to pay the legacies listed in the will. This also raises the interesting question of the reliability of the valuations given in inventories. Clearly they cannot always have been the same as the market value, but the fact that they were intended to approximate as closely as possible to it is suggested by the case of Joseph Clarke of Malborough whose inventory was made on 30 July 1684; for this inventory gives not valuations, but the prices actually received when the goods were “sold att publiq serveis to the best profferers.”

The editor deals skilfully with the formidable complications of transcribing inventories accurately and her glossary is a helpful guide both to the meaning of archaic terms and to old Devon dialect. In her introduction she gives a useful survey of the material relating to houses and their contents, but the treatment of occupations and agricultural matters is more summary. Even though many of the inventories do not state the deceased's occupation it would have been helpful to have had a list with reference numbers of those that do

(and in the case of others the occupation can often be deduced from the contents) so that the reader could easily turn up stonemasons, weavers, etc., without having to search through the whole volume. Similarly tables of crop acreages (where these exist) and livestock numbers at different periods are also valuable. Admittedly there are too few examples from each decade to make for very reliable comparisons over time, but an analysis of the very limited figures for crop acreages is not without interest. For instance four farmers with crops growing in the summer, whose inventories were taken between 1641 and 1654, all grew a far higher proportion of oats than was usual in the midlands, and far less barley, reflecting the pastoral nature of the Devon economy. The farmer with the largest sown acreage was Leonard Yeo of Huish (near Torrington in North Devon) who had 59 acres of growing crops consisting of 25 acres of wheat, 20 acres of oats, 10 acres of barley, and 4 acres of beans and peas. The other farmers had an even higher proportion of their acreage devoted to oats—the major crop in two cases. This is just an example of the value of inventories for regional comparisons.

However, perhaps it is unfair to expect an editor to provide too much analysis. That is the historian's task and in this volume a considerable chunk of most intractable raw material has been very ably processed for his use.

MICHAEL HAVINDEN

NAOMI RICHES. *The Agricultural Revolution in Norfolk*. With a New Bibliographical Note by W. H. Chaloner. Frank Cass, 2nd edition, 1967. x+194 pp. 45s.

After thirty years Naomi Riches' volume deserves reprinting, but the publishers have been unkind to her and to potential buyers in the way they have handled it. Their re-edition is heralded as carrying a new bibliographical note, but this extends to only one and one-quarter sides and lists some quite marginal references while failing to notice any of Dr Allison's work or two or three other relevant

articles. Cass reprints such as Chambers' *Nottinghamshire* have been prefaced by essays on the continuing evolution of their subject, with appropriate citations. Several agricultural historians could have performed this essential duty for the present book, including at least four who have lately written on Norfolk.

A proper introduction might have done away with the dustjacket pitfall which invites us to learn of Norfolk's "remarkable leadership over the rest of the country" during the "agricultural revolution" of the eighteenth century. Such a position might have been acceptable in the 1937 edition. Later research has not only tugged so hard from either end of the 'agricultural revolution' that—for want of any meaningful definition—it has come to pieces, but has also relegated Norfolk to a slightly less prominent position among a number of early-developed counties. It should be pointed out that Naomi Riches did not justify her own claim that Norfolk was foremost in husbandry technique, since, while her work examined Norfolk in exemplary depth, it contained virtually no *explicit* comparison with the advance of other areas. Her implicit comparisons, apparently redounding to Norfolk's credit, came home to roost in the final, puzzled section on the county's decay as a node of progressive technique during the early nineteenth century—a feature which is easy to document. Yet much waste continued to be caused by thoughtless publicity for the 'Norfolk system' as a means of improving agriculture anywhere in Britain. Despite some notorious failures in the west, it was still necessary in 1849 for Read to declare that "the Welsh farmer, therefore, should adapt his system of improvements to his own soil and climate, and not to that of Norfolk," and for Pusey to warn in 1850 that "there is indeed a source of loss which lies in the *mis-application* of practices, as . . . in the transfer of systems, as from an eastern corn-growing county to the mountains of Wales."

Agricultural history, too, for long suffered through taking for granted the rôle which propagandists like Arthur Young had indi-

cated for Norfolk husbandry. Nowadays we have a better perspective and should be able once more to read Naomi Riches' material with profit. Although Norfolk was certainly early advanced we can see that much of the supposed distinctiveness of its agriculture was not only patchy within the county, but becomes illusory when the practices of other counties containing sizeable portions of light land are investigated. *The Agricultural Revolution in Norfolk* is worth reading again as a rich and compact county study and a minor classic which marks a never-to-be-forgotten stage in the historiography of English farming. Nevertheless, non-specialist readers ought to have been warned not to accept the emphasis on Norfolk's importance at face value.

E. L. JONES

K. E. HUNT and K. R. CLARK. *The State of British Agriculture, 1965-1966*. Agricultural Economics Research Institute, Oxford, 1966. vi+184 pp. 21s.

This book continues a series of reviews which the Agricultural Economics Research Institute has produced from time to time since 1952. It is the first to have appeared since 1960 and, like the other six, it provides a comprehensive statistical description of the agricultural industry. There are about 150 pages of tables and charts which deal with such subjects as land use, agricultural population, international trade, commodity supplies, and prices. This issue differs from its predecessors in providing in addition to the statistics a new section which reviews the economic approach to the industry and refers to some 300 key books, articles, and research studies. They cover subjects as diverse as the National Union of Agricultural Workers, the problems of the small farm, international commodity agreements, and the marketing of food. The compilers had three classes of user in mind when they decided on this innovation: teachers and students, especially in agriculture and its allied subjects; those in industry, commerce, market research, etc., who are investigating for the first time some aspect of

agriculture with which they are unacquainted; and foreigners who may wish to study British agriculture in order to compare it with their own. The two parts together provide a comprehensive source book for the study of the British agricultural economy, and subject and author indexes amplify the guide to the references which the contents list provides.

Almost by definition few allusions to agricultural history can be expected in a review of this nature, but by including what the compilers term a long view of British agricultural history the recent book by C. S. Orwin and E. H. Whetham is referred to and some which cover the war and pre-war periods although they were published before 1960.

To the extent that the recent development of farming has been the result of adopting the discoveries of scientists, publications which describe these innovations and their effect on farming can be appropriately included, and attention is drawn, therefore, to the 'Farmers' Guide to Agricultural Research', which has appeared annually since 1925, in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society* and to Sir John Russell's *History of Agricultural Science in Great Britain, 1920-1954*. It would, however, be invidious to emphasize one section, even to readers who are likely to be less interested in the whole, for *The State of British Agriculture* is a compendium whose usefulness is in its comprehensiveness rather than in the excellence of any of its parts.

W. HARWOOD LONG

SYBIL MARSHALL. *Fenland Chronicle*. C.U.P., 1967. viii+280 pp. 45s.

This is an absorbing chronicle which captures and preserves life as it was lived on the fens in the nineteenth century with all its facets and in all its aspects from birth to burial. Nothing is overdrawn or merely whimsical; nothing is softened or idealized. On reading these pages, those whose parents came from the fens will recollect much that they heard in childhood; others will receive a truthful portrayal of the harshness of this environment with its hunger, discomfort, and disease. Yet the overall

picture is not one of misery or despair. The flowers of spring, the games of children, the Sunday School treats, and anniversary services, the joys of the fair, battles of wits, practical jokes, and horseplay all fit into the story. The resulting picture is of people who combatted or endured the harsh conditions of their lives and, for the main part, preserved to the end their feelings of kindness and neighbourliness.

The value of the book lies partly in the author's faithful picture of the externals of fenland life and partly in her sympathetic treatment of the joys and sorrows, hopes and despairs, triumphs and defeats which form the common lot but which have a flavour of their own in the fens. Those who are unfamiliar with the idiom of the fens should not rush through the book but absorb it by reading two or three chapters at a time. It is, however, a book which can be thoroughly recommended both to the general reader and to the student of social and economic history. Its value will increase with the passage of time.

F. WEST

FRIDLEV SKRUBBELTRANG, *Det Indvundne Danmark*. Det Danske Hedeselskab and Gyldendalske Boghandel, København, 1966. 497 pp. 76.00 kroner.

The existence of a national drive to pioneer the wastelands is a common enough theme of agricultural history during the past 150 years. Rather few would expect, however, to find evidence of this drive manifested in a land as long settled as Denmark, in the bosom of ancient Europe. The year 1966 was the occasion of the centenary celebration on the part of the Danish Heath Society of its rôle in the effort to wrest arable from the heathlands which have long covered the glacial outwash plains of central Jutland. Heath, moors, and drift sand once composed one million hectares or roughly one-third of the land area of Jutland, but today scarcely 200,000 hectares remain in this primitive state. An area equivalent to approximately one-quarter of Jutland has been won from the wilderness and today supports fields, pasture, and forest.

An achievement of this magnitude, accomplished in the course of a century, is something to be self-congratulatory about. It is the story of this landscape revolution as contributed to by the Heath Society up to 1914 that Dr Fridlev Skrubbeltrang of the University of Copenhagen has written. The narrative is composed according to the following scheme: heathland reclamation prior to 1866, the founding of the Heath Society, the period when the Society was dominated by E. M. Dalgas, and the time of stormy transition between 1894 and 1914.

The entrepreneurs of the Heath Society did not originate the idea of turning the sandy and acidic soils of central Jutland to modern, agricultural usage. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, official attention on the part of the King and his ministers had been focused, from time to time, upon the problem of reclamation and the best methods for achieving it. The history of the "potato Germans" of the heathlands near Viborg in the 1760's is celebrated in fact, and the landscape residue of their efforts is yet visible. The largely unco-ordinated early efforts lacked a commanding central purpose and any realization that the heathlands would have to be studied before they could be utilized successfully. Admirable work on the part of individuals to clear land and to initiate forestation within the context of the reforming spirit of the times—epitomized in the enclosure movement at the end of the eighteenth century—are summarized at length by the author in the first portion of his book.

The founding of the Danish Heath Society and its initial success was the result of a complex of factors. After the loss of southern Jutland and Schleswig in the war of 1864 with Prussia, a national rallying cry was raised by far-seeing leaders to win within what had been lost without. A great national loss was turned to positive purpose, and a cause of suitable attractiveness thereafter existed which could serve as a rallying point for both interest and investment. The international circulation of scientific and reforming ideas in the middle of the nineteenth century had

as a precipitate in Jutland the adoption of the principle of co-ordinated, scientific programmes backed by adequate capital in the attack upon the heathlands. In addition, and fortunately for Danish affairs, there existed a group of men who could clearly anticipate the needs of reclamation, muster the influence and resources to attempt it, and provide the continuity of leadership essential for an effective programme. The personalities, their manoeuvres, and the initial experiments with drainage, forestation, and land clearing come within the author's scope in the second section.

The personality of Enrico Mylius Dalgas (1828-94) looms like a giant in the history of the Heath Society and its work in Jutland. Partaking of the positive characteristics of a breadth of view as international as his name, Dalgas provided the stimulating leadership, political acumen, and technical grasp vitally necessary in the Society's efforts to popularize the idea of heathland reclamation and to lead the way therein. The author unravels the complex history of the maturing of the concept and its related agronomic innovations through the thickets of Parliament and in the field trials where drainage, marling, and windbreak experiments were carried out. The Heath Society, in time, became one among many agencies working for the conversion of heathlands to profitable usage. Governmental investment and support of the programmes in terms of law-giving were of course essential all along. At its foundations the process rested upon the shoulders and clog-shod feet of those ultimately responsible for the reclamation work, the farmers and their families who actually won the land to the plough. Dalgas's orchestration of the central theme was undoubtedly the key to the Society's eventual accomplishments. It is therefore fitting that his tenure as a directive force in the Society should receive special emphasis.

At the death of Dalgas a reshuffle of the leadership within the Heath Society resulted in attendant dislocations. The very success of the reclamation process necessitated the ex-

amination of new goals for the Society and also served to promote active criticism of the organization in its function as the heathland's patron. The enactment of new laws governing the reclaimed lands and a widening of the organizational structure were attended by reformations in the economic structure of the Society and the adoption of new research programmes. Thereafter, increasing attention was paid both to techniques for marshland drainage and to research into sustained-yield forestry as the conversion of the heathland in the traditional context pushed ahead to a foreseeable conclusion. Within a period of thirty years about the turn of the century, wasteland in Jutland was reduced by nearly 35 per cent, an impressive indication of the success of the concerted reclamation efforts. Skrubbeltrang concludes this volume at the First World War, a turning point in the history of Denmark's heathlands as it was a watershed in much of Europe.

Of the two critical comments which can be made of this volume, one is more a criticism of the potential readership, for a lack of ability in Danish will prevent many potential readers from opening the book. The second evaluation is one frequently voiced by geographers, namely, that the study could have profited from a wider use of maps. The folded map of the status of Society and State forestation and drainage efforts by 1913 whets the appetite for more. The demonstrated competence of the author to deal with agricultural history in Denmark is well known, and this first volume is a complete narrative of the official Society story. Herein pride of place has been given to the managers and leaders and their policies; *Hedens Opdyrkning i Danmark*, published in 1953 as a commemorative work, tells more about the quiet epic of the farmers themselves who contested the heath beneath the broad skies of Central Jutland.

With the success of *Det Indvundne Danmark* to go upon, one waits eagerly for the sequel which should bring the story up to the present day and the current search for identity and mission on the part of the Heath Society. For now that the heathlands have been so

completely converted to arable and forest plantation that a heathland museum has been established, what more is there for the Danish Heath Society to aspire to or to accomplish?

ROBERT M. NEWCOMB

NICOLAS SANCHEZ-ALBORNOZ, *Las Crisis de Subsistencias de España en el Siglo XIX*. Colección de Estudios y Monografías, Series C, No. 1, Instituto de Investigaciones Historicas, Rosario, Argentina, 1963. 124 pp. No price stated.

This is a series of short essays, arising out of work undertaken at Rosario in 1961 and 1962, on agricultural crises in Spain between 1820 and 1868. The first essay discusses the legislation prohibiting the import of grain into Spain between 1820 and 1868. The second is a study of food prices during the food crisis of 1856-7: prices of wheat are tabulated for all months from June 1856 to May 1857, and the price rise in various provinces represented in graphs. Considerable regional differences emerge, for poor communications militated against the development of a national market. The food crisis is then discussed in association with the financial and commercial crisis of 1857, population trends, and bank deposits and withdrawals between 1839 and 1867. The appendix contains two local wheat price series for 1780-1805 and 1827-58. The whole is essentially an interim report on a large subject, but English agricultural historians will welcome news of this research at present in progress in Argentina.

JOAN THIRSK

T. M. PERRY, *Australia's First Frontier: The Spread of Settlement in New South Wales, 1788-1829*. Melbourne University Press in association with the Australian National University, 1963. 163 pp. illus. \$A6.00, 60s.; R. L. HEATHCOTE, *Back of Bourke: A Study of Land Appraisal and Settlement in Semi-arid Australia*. Melbourne University Press, 1965. xv+244 pp. \$A6.50, 65s. The creation of a successful primary industry is a major theme in Australian economic history. The spread of land settlement is basic to

this theme, but has been little studied since Professor Stephen Roberts's pioneer work many years ago. Hence the books reviewed here are welcome additions to a limited literature.

Dr Perry's concern is with the first forty years of Australian history, from the first perilous toe-hold established at Port Jackson by the First Fleet in 1788, to the proclamation, in 1829, of the boundaries of the Limits of Settlement, embracing 22,000,000 acres and 35,000 settlers. During the first three decades settlement was confined largely to the Cumberland Plain, hemmed in by the Blue Mountains. The land was generally unattractive to farmers, but agriculture commenced on pockets of better soils near Sydney and Parramatta, and within a few years spread to the alluvial soils of the Hawkesbury river, where farmers balanced the "greatest luxuriance" of their crops against the risks of flooding. By the early nineteenth century farmers were clearing the 'forest lands' of the rest of the Plain.

A way was found across the Blue Mountains in 1813 and within two years a small number of settlers with their stock was permitted to move to outlying areas. Land was still available in the Cumberland Plain, but falling fertility, recurrent flooding, droughts, plagues of caterpillars, and the disappearance of natural feed compelled the settlers to look beyond the Plain for pasturage for their sheep and cattle. The direction of movement was controlled by government policy. Governor Macquarie wanted Westmoreland and Bathurst to the west to be carefully settled by the Colony's few respectable stock holders. Here were grazed the great sheep flocks owned by absentee proprietors and cared for by assigned convict servants. Meanwhile, small settlers rearing a few cattle for the Sydney market were directed southwards towards Argyle. They might have gone north to the Hunter Valley but Macquarie wished to keep remote the outlying penal establishment at Newcastle. Not until the 1820's was the Hunter opened up to meet the growing demand for land from newly-arriving free

settlers, colonial free-born, and ex-convicts. The area possessed water transport to the growing Sydney market and became a mixed farming frontier, economically and socially distinct from the big-man's sheep frontier to the west, and the small-man's cattle frontier to the south.

If the first view of Australia was unattractive, the prospect of the semi-arid plains of the interior was mysterious. Early opinions fluctuated between "the broad oasis spreads its vesture fair", to "yon barren Desert's broad and drear expanse." The settlement of this region is studied by Dr Heathcote who takes the Warrego Country of Northern New South Wales—Southern Queensland as his focus. In the mid-nineteenth century cattle men, advancing ahead of official land settlement policy, sought out the river frontages and water holes for their stock. In the 1860's and 70's new techniques, notably those exploiting artesian water, brought the sheep men; but also led to overstocking, deterioration of the natural feed, difficulties emphasized by the severe droughts at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During the present century official attempts at closer settlement have led to the break-up of the large holdings of graziers, but to only a slow growth of population and stock densities, which are still lower today than those reached in the late nineteenth century. Dr Heathcote argues that government policy directed towards conservation of the natural resources of the semi-arid plains and closer settlement is misplaced. He believes the stockmen have probably been right to exploit the resources of the region, using the feed when it is available after good rains; for unused pasturage does not survive the ravages of drought and bush fire.

Dr Perry and Dr Heathcote are geographers. Their accounts of the spread of settlement in Australia are mainly in terms of the interaction of environment, land disposal policies, and general knowledge of the potentialities of unsettled lands. Dr Heathcote, in particular, has an interesting discussion of 'historical geosophy:' the historical develop-

ment of geographical knowledge, true and false, about the inland plains. Of the two, Dr Perry is the better historian. He tells us nothing of the capital and labour requirements, or the state of the market for agricultural products necessary for settlement, but, as befits an enquiry that starts with a consideration of the relevance of F. J. Turner's frontier thesis to Australian history, Dr Perry makes some interesting observations about the differences in social arrangements and, by implication, political institutions, at the different frontiers. And he can tell a story. Dr Heathcote appreciates the importance of capital, transport, and markets for the development of the semi-arid plains, although he does not explore them. But his book is marred by repetition, poor organization, and a prose style often as semi-arid as the plains he treats, occasionally watered by a striking phrase (his title for example). None the less, both authors have placed historians in their debt, not least because of their excellent statistical appendices. May they stimulate historians of Australian land settlement to build upon their geographical foundations.

L. A. CLARKSON

CARLO PONI, *Aspetti e Problemi dell' Agricoltura Modenese dall' Eta delle Riforme alla Fine della Restaurazione*. (*Aspects and Problems of Modenese Agriculture from the Age of Reform to the End of the Restoration*.) S.T.E.M., Mucchi, Modena. Reprinted from vol. LX, 4th ser., Collezione Storica del Risorgimento e dell' Unità d'Italia. 54 pp. No price stated.

Only in specially favoured parts of Italy is the country naturally suited to agriculture. Even in these parts the intervention of man has been essential on the one hand to drain marshes or irrigate dry land, on the other to preserve the soil from denudation by terracing the mountain slopes to prevent climatic erosion. Yet there are areas in Italy that have always, or at least since classical times, been very productive either in cereal foodstuffs, the vine and the olive, or animal products. And it has been a tradition since classical

times that fodder crops, trefoil, lucern, lupins, and so on, should be cultivated to be used as green manure or for animal fodder. It was perhaps this tradition, not necessarily transmitted by the literature, that stimulated the idea of alternate husbandry in the mind of the sixteenth-century Tarello, who was probably the first European to suggest it in writing although it may have been practised in the field in the Low Countries, if not to perfection, at least to some degree since the fourteenth century.

Unfortunately the words of this agricultural prophet, Tarello, were not generally accepted, even in his own country, and were ignored elsewhere, because his book failed to be translated into the vernacular languages, or to be circulated in Latin, the *lingua franca* of that time. Professor Poni has emphasized the importance of this point in his opening pages where he considers the proposals for reform in landownership and tenure made by Muratori in the middle of the eighteenth century.

Though Muratori was anxious that the country should be freed from the burdens imposed upon the peasantry by the continuance of the feudal system, he was not apparently fully conversant with the need for changes in the methods of production that had been advocated by Italian writers on farming technique ever since the Renaissance. He did realize some of the most important necessities, and invoked State intervention to reduce the privileges of the feudal aristocracy who put obstacles in the path of agricultural development. Muratori laid it down that it was the State's business to make main drains and embankments against floods and to create a working system of water control. The landowner or his factor should persuade the peasants to drain their lands of stagnant water by making ditches. The water problem seems to have been a major obstacle to agricultural progress in Modena.

The difficulties of the peasants were increased because landowners preferred to live in the city, and were opposed to the changes that were essential to progress. Some peasants followed their example, leaving their farms and becoming beggars in the city, but many

of the most severe handicaps were those common to all the small farmers of Western Europe. For one thing there was a very scanty supply of manure for the arable. Experiments with other forms of fertilizer than dung were needed as well as scientific investigation into plant nutrition etc. The introduction of new crops such as sesamum, sorghum, tobacco, and buckwheat, combined with the reduction of the area under vines in favour of mulberries, was also suggested.

The rotations defeated progress. In the eighteenth century the pasture was kept separate from the arable instead of the production of forage crops and crops for human consumption being integrated with one another.

After the Napoleonic conquest an agricultural society was founded in 1804 and began to function in 1806, but before a real reform of systems could be introduced it was essential that economic and social conditions should be changed. Increased production turned upon the introduction of a rotation that would include supplies of forage and so provide better nutrition for stock and, with the additional supplies of better manure that this would ensure, increase the yield of grain crops. These aims were not achieved, and with the restoration there was a return to feudal conditions in the early years of the nineteenth century. By the 1840's conditions were very bad. The countryside was invaded by masterless men who begged and robbed, and though there was a great deal of discussion in government and other circles very little of moment seems to have been done to improve the economic and social conditions of the share croppers and the oxherds. It is a disappointing conclusion for Professor Poni to have to leave with his readers.

G. E. FUSSELL

Villages Désertés et Histoire Économique, XIe-XVIIIe Siècle. Les Hommes et la Terre, XI, S.E.V.P.E.N., Paris, for the vie Section, Centre De Recherches Historiques, École Pratique des Hautes Études, 1965. 619 pp. 75 figs. 133 pls.

This volume was produced on the occasion of the first international symposium on deserted

medieval villages which formed one of the sessions of the Third International Economic History Conference at Munich in August 1964. The twenty contributions to this large volume are not the papers read at the conference but a series of papers collected by the Sixth Section of the *Centre de Recherches Historiques* who organized the symposium. During the past few years the Sixth Section, under the direction of F. Braudel, has initiated an important research project on the deserted villages of France and the Mediterranean countries where this subject has been much neglected in the past. This volume is a preliminary report on the progress of this research and is designed to point the way to future work. Of the 619 pages, 340 are devoted to work in France, 172 to the work of the Sixth Section in the Mediterranean, only leaving about 100 pages for summaries of work in other countries. This publication does not, therefore, give a general survey of work in progress or accomplished on the deserted villages of Europe; this still remains to be written.

The book is divided into four parts. In the first, six authors describe the problems of studying deserted villages in France and list the various methods used to tackle them. In the second, six further essays describe the work actually done in France from both the historical and archaeological aspects. The third part summarizes historical research by students of the Sixth Section on the deserted villages of Greece, Italy, and Spain. In the fourth part five authors give summaries of greatly varying value on the work carried out on deserted villages in northern Europe, in Germany, England, Norway, and Sweden, Poland, and Denmark.

In the first part, on the problems and methods of investigating deserted medieval villages in France, G. Duby points out that the late medieval population decline is much better documented than the earlier expansion. Although declining population may have affected marginal land, economic factors and manorial policy were a greater cause of desertion. M. Roncayolo shows that geography cannot explain desertion as so much depends

on how land was utilized or exploited; but much help can be given on the questions of soils, geology, drainage, erosion, and the disruption by man of the natural equilibrium. P. Courbin describes how the two deserted villages excavated by the Sixth Section were chosen out of eighty possible sites, and how the excavations were planned, organized, and equipped. R. Chevallier gives a useful general survey of air photography, mainly in the Somme area, but it is a pity that so few of his 84 plates are of deserted villages. J.-M. Pesez lists the various possible documentary and cartographical sources and describes many problems which are common to English research such as the definition of farm, hamlet, and village. His *cri de cœur* on the *Dictionnaire Topographique De La France* reminds us very much of our experience with early volumes of the *Victoria County History*. J. Monfrin describes work on place names quoting De Loigne's early list of 93 sites in the Pas De Calais published in 1903. He draws attention to the value of the *Vieux* place name in suggesting a migrated site and suggests that the *Mézières* place name, usually associated with Roman sites, may also refer to medieval ruins.

In the second part, on the results of work on deserted medieval villages in France, J.-M. Pesez and E. Le Roy Ladourie give an excellent summary of the work so far accomplished in locating French deserted sites, illustrated by nine maps of different areas or types of desertion. They show that the reasons for desertion are much more complex than in England, and in particular how plague and war losses were quickly made good; desertion in these periods were mainly on marginal land. C. Higounet discusses deserted *bastides* showing that it was new towns planted on marginal land which were the first to go in the late medieval economic recession. J. Glenisson and J. Misraki show that the populations for *bastides* rarely came from more than forty miles away. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was great mobility of population due to war, etc., but after 1450 people were much more settled. G. Demains d'Archimbaud reports on her excavations at

the castle and village of Rougiers, Provence, inhabited between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. W. Hensel then describes the trial excavations carried out, under the direction of Polish archaeologists for the Sixth Section, at Montaigut, Tarn, and Saint-Jean-Le-Froid, Aveyron. A series of twelve-foot grids showed extensive traces of structures and complex levels together with many small finds.

In the third part H. Antoniadis-Bibicou lists and maps 2,049 deserted villages in Greece based on documentary evidence. The peaks of desertion were in the fourteenth-century economic recession and during the nineteenth-century war of independence. C. Klapisch-Zuber and J. Day list and map deserted villages in Liguria, Tuscany, Roman Compagna, Calabria, Sardinia, and Sicily from documentary evidence. It is a pity that this was not linked with the field work by the British School at Rome in the area north of Rome. N. Cabrillana lists and maps 4,000 deserted villages in central, southern, and eastern Spain from the documentary evidence. It is to be hoped that these surveys will now be followed up on the ground.

In the final section W. Abel summarizes the work carried out on *Wüstungen* in Germany, mainly by geographers, in over 500 papers. Scharlau's division into *Ortwüstungen* (deserted villages) and *Flurwüstungen* (deserted fields) is described and some account given of drowned villages on the north-west coast. M. W. Beresford summarizes the pro-

gress in England since the publication of the *Lost Villages of England* in 1954. H. Bjørkvik describes the desertion of farms in Norway and Sweden which seems to be due to many different factors. He shows that the retreat from marginal land was in full swing well before the Black Death. A. Gieysztor reports on work in Poland based on place name and historical evidence. T. Ramskou gives a most unsatisfactory account of work in Denmark as it is all about prehistory or migrations of Viking times. The period covered by this book (eleventh-eighteenth centuries) is not mentioned, despite the important excavations carried out over the past thirty years by Prof. Axel Steensberg.

This volume gives an excellent summary of the preliminary work on deserted medieval villages by the Sixth Section of the Centre De Recherches Historiques during the past five years in France and other Mediterranean countries. The authors are to be congratulated for presenting so fully at this early stage their first findings. So often one has to wait a very long time before the results of such complex research is published. The other essays in the final section do not cover the great amount of work in progress in other parts of Europe, e.g. that in Czechoslovakia and Rumania where a great deal has been achieved since the war. It would really have been better if a general survey had not been attempted and the volume had concentrated on the very important work initiated by the Sixth Section.

JOHN G. HURST