

Book Reviews

E. J. HOBBSAWM and GEORGE RUDÉ, *Captain Swing*. Lawrence and Wishart, 1969. 384 pp. 70s.

The aims of this book are clearly stated in the Introduction. "We have tried to describe and analyse the most impressive episode in the English farm-labourers' long and doomed struggle against poverty and degradation" (p. 15); "... to describe and analyse an entire epoch of the English farm-labourers' history, that of the rise and fall of their improvised, archaic, spontaneous movements of resistance to the full triumph of rural capitalism, in the light of the greatest movement of this kind" (pp. 18-19). "The task of this book is ... the difficult one ... of reconstructing the mental world of an anonymous and undocumented body of people in order to understand their movements" (p. 12). This description and analysis are concerned with the period in which "a rural society which was in some senses traditional, hierarchical, paternalist, and in many respects resistant to the full logic of the market, was transformed under the impetus of the extraordinary agricultural boom (and subsequent, though temporary, recessions) into one in which the cash-nexus prevailed, at least between farmer and labourer" (p. 15).

The book is logically divided into four parts, followed by valuable appendices. Part I, 'Before Swing' (by Hobsbawm), Part II, 'The Rising' (by Rudé, apart from ch. 9), Part III, 'The Anatomy of Swing' (by Rudé), and Part IV, 'Repression and Aftermath' (chapters 13 and 14 by Rudé, 15 by Hobsbawm). Throughout it is a thought-provoking and a challenging book to read: it is a most difficult book to review. One finishes reading it and remains unsatisfied by it. This is an excellent recommendation of it; it has done its job precisely because it should provoke further work and result in more detailed regional studies.

Part I could be expanded into a complete short book. As it stands it forms an essential introduction to the description and analysis of the labourers' revolt of 1830-1 which follows; it helps to make clear why it was that "... the

labourers and their sympathisers did not normally want a disruption of the old society, but a restoration of their rights within it, modest, subaltern, but *rights*" (p. 61). It reveals, equally clearly, why this demand was doomed to failure.

Part II could have been improved by the addition of several maps of the areas in which the risings took place. The accounts are clear and vivid but the geographical spread of the movement would have been easier to follow with the aid of county or regional maps. More comment on, and a greater tying in of, the maps on pp. 26, 28, and 179 with the text would also have been useful. Hobsbawm's chapter which sums up this part is fine. The riots were essentially a *rural* and a local phenomenon; they were concentrated essentially in the region in which cereal farming was combined with low wages; the poorer counties were the rioting ones; the larger village, containing a higher proportion of village craftsmen than the rest, was more likely to riot than the smaller; "... we are not entitled to assume that religious dissenters initiated, inspired, or led the movement" (p. 186). Difficulties of drawing firm conclusions are made perfectly clear and the need for further research by local historians is indicated.

Part III deals with the pattern of the revolt and discusses the labourers' victims and allies. It establishes these facts: (1) "the basic aims of the labourers were singularly consistent: to attain a minimum living wage and to end rural unemployment" (p. 195); (2) "the distinctive hall-mark of 'Swing'—even more than arson or the threatening letter that gave the riots their name—was the breaking of agricultural machinery" (p. 197); (3) "this was essentially a labourers' movement with essentially economic ends" (p. 220); (4) prison and judicial records, relating to nearly 2,000 persons who were tried in some thirty counties, fully confirm that the rioters were predominantly country labourers (p. 242); (5) the records suggest that the rioters as a whole were respectable and responsible people: "... one is struck by

the frequent reference to the good characters and high moral qualities of these labourers and craftsmen (p. 247).

Part IV gives an account of the fate of the 1,976 prisoners who were tried by ninety courts sitting in thirty-four counties. "From no other protest movement of the kind—from neither Luddites nor Chartists, nor trade unionists—was such a bitter price exacted" (p. 263). The Australian records reveal that "... these men stood out from their fellow-convicts both by the nature of their crime and by their general respectability and high moral characters. But there is nothing in their later careers to suggest that they brought with them from England any particular ideology, or political opinions or outlook, that mark them off from other settlers, whether free or bond, in the Australian colonies. The tradition of 'Captain Swing' appears to have died with their conviction and transportation" (p. 279).

One wishes that the final chapter, 'Aftermath' (by Hobsbawm), could have been doubled in length. Its main purpose is to ask relevant questions and to indicate the urgency and necessity of further work on the farm-labourer and his world in the period 1830-70. "... of all the many gaps in our knowledge of the farm-labourers' world in the nineteenth century none is more shocking than our total ignorance of the forms of agrarian discontent between the rising of 1830 and the emergence of agricultural trade unionism in the early 1870s" (p. 282). Incendiarism became the characteristic form of rural unrest after 1830. Hobsbawm calls this terrorism the "active response to defeat" and asks whether religion (dissent) became the passive form: he suggests that dissenters represented the forces of internal modernization within rural society and that chapel members, together with members of the Friendly Societies, created potential rather than actual activists. To suggest that the growth of village dissent represents a *passive* form of response to the defeat is unhelpful and misleading. The creation, expansion, and maintenance of dissenting chapels demanded activity, organizing ability, and courage: to call this religious and social revival "an escape from, rather than a mobili-

sation for, social agitation" (p. 291) is an unhelpful approach to further work on this period. Hobsbawm asks why so long a period separated the revolt of 1830 from the rural unionism of the 1870's and calls the first an 'archaic' and the second a 'modern' movement. The forms of the two movements were certainly different; were the aims (at village level) really so different? The labourers in 1830 did not want to disrupt the society of 1830 but to restore their rights within it. The labourers of the 1870's (at village level) did not want much more: as in 1830, their aims too were essentially economic. They wanted better pay within the society of the 1870's—a society which they had already helped to make sufficiently different from that of 1830 by the spread of their self-help organizations (chapels, friendly societies, temperance movements) to be a tolerable society for men with very modest expectations. One can regret that their expectations were so modest, that those who remained in the villages (those who had not migrated to towns or emigrated overseas) could be content with so little, but we should recognize both that labourers had done something to create societies of their own within the wider society, and also that their local rulers had taken effective steps to buttress up the deferential society through the creation of village schools. The village schools, provided by their 'betters', had been amazingly successful by 1870 in helping to stabilize rural society by reinforcing deference: their important influence is not mentioned in this excellent chapter, but the very fact that their educational aims were so narrow made their achievement relatively easy; pupils learned attitudes and modest expectations rather than the three Rs; these lessons did affect their future behaviour as adults.

The only errors I have found concern Lincolnshire. The authors underestimate the extent of arson here: between mid-November 1830 and mid-March 1831 they counted twenty-eight fires (p. 167); over this same period forty-three are in fact reported in the *Stamford Mercury*. (Others are mentioned, but not located, in the Reward notice issued by the Magistrates for the Parts of Lindsey on 1 December 1830 (*Stamford Mercury*, 3.xii.

1830.) Nor is it true that no threshing machines were destroyed. In the same period four such destructions are reported—one at Barrow on Humber (where a farmer destroyed his own machines whilst his stacks were still ablaze), others near Grantham, at Moulton, and at Kirton Meers. At this time some landowners advised their tenants to discontinue the use of machines. ("Sir Gilbert Heathcote . . . has . . . expressed his wish that his tenants shall not any longer use thrashing-machines."—*Stamford Mercury*, 26.xi.1830.) Such advice was apparently acted upon: the *Stamford Mercury* reports the markets scantily supplied with wheat with the consequence of very high prices—"approaching a famine price"—with the comment that the price "... would not have advanced so early but for the general disuse of the machine, owing to the alarm that has been produced by tumultuous assemblages, and the spread of incendiaryism through the county. This has induced some landlords to interdict the use of them upon their estates"—(*Stamford Mercury*, 7.i.1831). Of "tumultuous assemblages" there is little evidence. Three labourers of Heckington were convicted of an unlawful assembly "... in having met together with several others and demanded an increase of wages. They had previously sent the crier round the town, proclaiming the object of the meeting by the following handbill: 'Notice is hereby given to all labourers, to meet upon the Green at the hour of seven, for to state the wages here, or else at Sleaford they must appear; and if no justice there be done, elsewhere then they must run'"—(*Stamford Mercury*, 14.i.1831).

These are small corrections to suggest; they make the maps on pp. 199 and 202, and Appendix III, inaccurate as regards Lincolnshire. There are some mistakes in place names. On p. 168 read *Muckton* for Monckton, *Bourne* for Bowen (and, I suspect, *Woolsthorpe* for Wothorpe; but Wothorpe appears as in Northants on p. 344). Muckton and Bourne are mis-spelt again on pages 340 and 350 respectively. One other minor point: I am unconvinced that the labourers had no concern with, no wish for *land* for their own use (p. 16). Land should have been mentioned in chapter 15;

it was certainly not a demand of the rioters in 1830-1, but some rural labourers did wish for land in the form of large allotments—it was vital for cow-keeping and very helpful with pig-keeping. In Lincolnshire some moves were made in the period of revolt (and more between 1830 and 1870) to provide some allotments for labourers.

The authors of this excellent and challenging book will expect and hope that historians will add to their findings and perhaps modify some of their statements. The best way of repaying our debt to Hobsbawm and Rudé will be to attempt to follow up their work.

REX C. RUSSELL

FRANK TYRER (ed.), *Blundell's Diary. The Great Diurnall of Nicholas Blundell of Crosby, 1702-1728. Vol. I, 1702-1711*. Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1968. vii+350 pp. 63s. to non-members.

Blundell's Diary has long been known to historians through the printed selections edited by the Rev. T. E. Gibson in 1895 and more recently by Margaret Blundell in 1952. Only with the appearance of the present volume, however, have we received the promise of the complete text and a fully annotated edition.

There is much in this diary of the south-west Lancashire squire Nicholas Blundell, (1669-1737), of Little Crosby which is of especial interest to agricultural historians. Blundell, after all, was a practising farmer, and his diary—methodically kept for twenty-six years—accurately reflects this central concern of its author. Abundant details, then, are to be found here, for example, of Blundell's interest in cattle-rearing and fattening, of the payments he received for pasturing the animals of others, and of the purchases and sales he made at market towns such as Liverpool, Ormskirk, Preston, and Haslingden.

But Blundell's farming was varied and often of an improving kind. Coleseed—useful for cattle cake as well as for oil—was grown on his estates, as were clover and turnips. Barley, oats, and wheat, however, were Blundell's principal crops, but on a much more limited scale peas, asparagus, and artichokes were also grown in his well-marled ground. Blundell is known to

have read books on husbandry, (see pp. 204 and 214), and to have been willing to experiment with methods recommended there. But although he tried out new crops and methods, Blundell clearly kept an eye firmly fixed on the market. "Wheat being now at a good rate," he wrote, for example, in May 1709, "I set threshers at work to thresh all I had" (p. 214).

Much in this diary is of more than local and passing interest. Valuable information, for instance, can be gleaned here about agricultural prices and wage-rates, and about the weather, reports on which Blundell regularly included in his diary from March 1709 onwards. The present well-indexed volume takes the diary up to the end of 1711. The second and third instalments—which will complete the project—are to appear within the next four years, and it is to be hoped that the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire will receive full support for embarking on this ambitious and costly venture in publishing.

R. C. RICHARDSON

SIR WILLIAM GAVIN, *Ninety Years of Family Farming: The Story of Lord Rayleigh's and Strutt & Parker Farms*. Hutchinson & Co., 1967. xi+246 pp. 50s.

The author's association with the Strutts' highly successful farming enterprises in Essex began in 1910, and this sober, factual account is a welcome addition to agricultural histories covering the past century. After two or more generations as watermillers at Chelmsford, John Strutt settled seriously to farming at Terling, a few miles away, about 1720. It was another John (1727-1816), Tory M.P. for Maldon, who built Terling Place, still the family mansion. The net rental of his Essex estates in 1781 was £3,443 (5,257 acres) and in 1816 was £6,619 (5,835 acres). It was yet another John (1796-1873), second Lord Rayleigh, evangelically convinced at twenty-six, who left behind some remarkable letters of 1831-2. One of these records his having persuaded the parish vestry to pass five resolutions encouraging labourers' thrift, eschewing wages

subsidised from the rates, and binding himself to give every man "who brings up all his children to the age of 14 without parish relief, except in case of sickness, a reward"—three children £5, four £7, five £10, six £15, and seven children £20! He actively supported labourers' allotments, and by 1832 twelve acres had been allocated in holdings of from 8 rods to 1 acre. Their tenancy agreement—an early one—is given in full. Of the nine conditions the first and last read: "That the allotments be cultivated by spade husbandry, and no horses used, without leave, but for the purposes of carrying on manure and taking off the crops," and "That those Occupiers who manure most and cultivate best their Allotments be entitled to an increased quantity of land when opportunity offers."

The outstanding figure, however, is the Hon. Edward Strutt (brother of the third Lord Rayleigh), who died in 1930. As manager of the estate, he attacked the acute depression of the 1880's with phenomenally realistic energy, personally taking over the farms from the bankrupt tenants, and succeeded, among other methods, by applying day-to-day costing of both farming and dairying, and by creating the internationally renowned Terling herd which contributed largely to financial recovery. Precise statistics are afforded for 1882-96, without a break, in a number of tables. The chapter on the expansion of 1896-1914, with further detailed tables, includes the dramatic decision of 1900 to enter the London milk market, trading as Lord Rayleigh's Dairies Ltd, until its sale in 1929 to the Express Dairy Co., after which retail dairying was continued locally. The author is on very firm ground in describing the effect of the disastrous 1920's, and it is noteworthy that Strutt and Gavin were the experts whom the Government selected as their Chief Agricultural Advisers in the First and Second World Wars respectively. An earlier chapter gives a balanced account of the two Fellows of the Royal Society, whose scientific achievements added so much lustre to this remarkable family.¹

¹ For the partnership in the land-agency side, see review of J. Oxley Parker, *The Oxley Parker Papers, from the Letters and Diaries of an Essex Family of Land Agents in the Nineteenth Century*, 1964, in *A.H.R.*, XIII, 1965, p. 67.

This is a change from doctoral theses revised for publishers, and Sir William's experienced and practical narrative, often enlivened with personal reminiscences, fills an important gap in modern agricultural history.

F. G. EMMISON

HAROLD H. MANN, *The Social Framework of Agriculture: India, Middle East, England*, ed. Daniel Thorner. Frank Cass, 1968. xxx+502 pp.

A book which consists of a collection of essays on scientific subjects, written for the most part in the early years of the century, and with such titles as 'Note on the Diet of Tea Garden Coolies', 'Calcutta Drink Shops, 1903-4', and 'Millets in the Middle East' must be taken up with a slightly sinking feeling. Apart from the fact that it is difficult for one reader to be interested in such a diverse range of topics, the question arises as to how relevant are views expressed in a totally different climate of opinion, in a sphere of science (agriculture and animal husbandry chiefly) where vast changes have since been made, and a great deal of what the author advocated has been taken in hand. The material might be thought dated, and with some justification.

However, there are good reasons why this book is both valuable and valid for our time. The first is that Dr Harold Mann was a personality rare enough to be worth encountering, even posthumously and through his prose. He was a man of deep compassion whose scientific mind worked for one end only—the betterment of the poor and undernourished. Every sentence he writes shows his unremitting commitment to the peasant, the outcast, the underdog, and underprivileged. The questions he set out to answer through his long dedicated life, mostly in India, were "How far is the condition of the rural population improving, or the reverse? How far are changing economic conditions in India affecting rural life, both in its economic and rural aspects?" In the present world of Peace Corps and the like, this does not seem so strange: in the days of the British Raj for a European to concern himself with every detail of the life of an Indian outcaste, not to save an untouchable soul but

to recognize its dignity, is a marvel worth preserving.

The second reason why the book satisfies is that it is written in a good, strong, and entirely jargon-free prose. Sociology like any other science must have its special phrases to convey concisely a large body of thought, but sociological jargon can be tedious. In Dr Mann's day little of it had been invented, and this, for the general reader, is a relief. To better the lot of the agriculturist Harold Mann needed to know the total structure of his life—village economics, family structure, inheritance and work patterns, population trends, life expectancy—and without fuss this he set out to learn, and sets the results before us as unfussily. He offended a great many people with the results he obtained. His discovery of acute rural poverty in India was predictable, but his announcement that "necessary, irreclaimable poverty" was the lot of one third of a typical English village in 1905 was an uncomfortable conclusion for both government and landlord.

His village and urban studies were a pioneering venture, and in my opinion form the most interesting part of the book. His house-to-house study of a Bedford village in 1905 would make most people think twice about casting a nostalgic eye back to a cosy, rural past. A couple with eight children could not be called poor if they had 33s. a week to live on, but of the wage-earning community only 35.5 per cent were able to maintain themselves above this pitiful level of primary or secondary poverty. As the author puts it "during life it is a weary and continual round of poverty. During childhood, poverty conditions are almost inevitable. As a boy grows up there are a few years intermission, till as a young man he has two children: then poverty again till these children grow up, and finally at best, a penurious old age." His studies of Deccan villages, and of groups of outcastes living on the fringe of towns, are fascinating, for close statistical surveys of communities, in depth and over a period of time, are not abundant even now. Always he complains of having to "nibble" at a subject, and asks us to consider his work as a "starting point" and one could wish for less

"range and diversity" of a brilliant mind; and the book itself could have some of the bittier chapters pruned without loss; the chapters on the Tea Industry for instance are repetitive and not very enlightening.

Dr Mann's early chapters are filled with hope and enthusiasm—irrigation, artificial manure, careful capital investment, co-operative techniques, an identification with the peasant community and the working outwards from such an understanding—these would revolutionize the village economy of India, "break the vicious circle of listlessness, low production, and squalor, leading to further listlessness, low production, and squalor." The later essays, however, show a growing despondency. In spite of schemes like 'The Servants of Rural India', Local Development Associations, co-operative farming projects, and Gandhi, India's peasants stayed poor and sickly. And this is the strange, sad part of the book; that a man of such perception could write that "an excess of population" could be "of great advantage in the rehabilitation of the country." All his work in increasing food supplies, improving sanitation, and generally raising the standard of living, was to be cancelled out by the appearance of millions of extra mouths to feed. Dr Mann was one of many who ignored the threat which has become a present, appalling catastrophe. But his book remains a source of a great deal of information, and an inspiring example of a lifetime's work for others. It cannot help but interest anyone concerned with people—how they live, how they till, apportion, and pass on their land—and in a great part of the world, starve.

IRIS MACFARLANE

W. S. VUCINICH, *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*. Stanford U.P. and Oxford U.P., 1968. xx+314 pp. 81s.

This is a collection of papers given at a conference held at Stanford in December 1966. It covers a wide, though not exhaustive, range of subjects, the common theme, running through all the papers, being that of the 'separateness' of peasant society within the broader society. This point is excellently made by Professor Riazanovsky in his concluding

comments. Papers by Professors Petrovich and Fanger on 'The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Histography' and 'The Peasant and Literature', respectively—reviewing the attitudes to the peasantry from the 'outside' so to speak—emphasize how the Russian intelligentsia never really understood the peasants themselves. The lack of adequate sources, mentioned by more than one contributor, makes the task of the modern scholar doubly difficult. In view of this the book as a whole makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Russian Peasant and how the Soviet State has inherited the 'Peasant Problem'.

Other papers examine the peasant as soldier and factory worker, and his attitude to religion. There is also a detailed study of the emancipation. To the agricultural historian, however, perhaps two papers are of particular interest. They are Miss Matossian's 'The Peasant Way of Life', and Professor Watters's discussion of 'The Peasant and the Village Commune'.

Miss Matossian discusses peasant life on the eve of emancipation: examining settlement patterns, housing, economic organization, dress, diet, and the family. Despite her rather narrow range of sources, she presents the material in a detailed and imaginative way. She closes with a description of her idea of a 'typical peasant family', their everyday life, birth, marriage, death. In doing so she appears at times to be idealizing the peasant—a mistake she professes to avoid. One or two points of fact are also in question. She suggests that bear meat, like hare, was taboo. This was not the case. Bear meat was eaten even though it was discouraged by the church. She claims also that the term *promysel* referred exclusively to the manufacture of goods for the market, whereas in fact it was used much more widely than that, embracing almost all forms of off-farm occupations. Despite such minor disagreements, hers is a most informative paper, managing to bring the peasant to life.

Professor Watters, tackling that most difficult of subjects—the commune, presents a thorough and informative paper. He describes the characteristics of the commune, its history,

land purchase, and land tenure classifications. At times, however, he is apparently unclear over points he is trying to explain. For instance, he uses the words 'mir' and 'obshchina' independently implying that they refer to different phenomena. If they were different this should be explained and justified. If they were the same why use two words? And why retain the Russian? To the non-specialist or reader who does not know Russian this only serves to confuse. There is reason to believe that 'mir' and 'obshchina' were two words for the same thing, the former used by peasants and the latter by outsiders. As such they reflect different points of view. Professor Watters makes no mention of this.

The habit of avoiding English terms and using Russian ones is common to all the contributors. This is all very well at a specialist conference but in a work intended for a more general audience the practice is merely confusing. Another practical criticism is that all the footnotes are placed together at the end of the book. This makes reference awkward and appears to serve no useful purpose. It is unfortunate that these points should detract from a work of a generally high standard of scholarship.

R. MUNTING

GEORG VON BELOW, *Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft des Mittelalters, in ihren Grundzügen, aus dem hinterlassenen Manuskript, herausgegeben von Friedrich Lütge*. 2nd edn. Gustav Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1966. viii+114 pp. DM.24.

This incomplete manuscript of Professor Below, who died in 1927, was found among his papers and first published by Professor Lütge in 1937. Below wrote it some years before his death, intending it as the first part of a general textbook on the German economy. But his main interests did not really lie in the writing of summary outlines and the work was set aside. Nevertheless, this fragment covering the Middle Ages was sufficiently complete in itself to be worth publication. It was printed without alteration beyond a few additions in footnotes to make the references clear, and to bring them up to date. This second edition is a photo-

graphic copy of that of 1937 and no attempt has been made to add to the bibliography beyond that date.

It is instructive and chastening to read the considered judgments of an earlier generation of historians, for we still work over the same problems. There are many arguments in this book—e.g. that German society originated in free communities; that the first German settlers began life in villages—which do not find support among historians at present. But every now and then Below draws attention to a fact or a relationship, which has been forgotten in the interim, and which lights up the scene afresh. Professor Lütge's footnotes pointed out some of the matters on which he and his contemporaries disagreed with Below in 1937, and it is remarkable to see how little viewpoints have changed since then. Historians of the last three decades maintain a surprising unity on the principal issues; recent research has added to our knowledge of local eccentricity but has only served to underline the continuing validity of their first conclusions.

JOAN THIRSK

HANS-JÜRGEN SCHMITZ, *Faktoren der Preisbildung für Getreide und Wein in der Zeit von 800 bis 1350*. Gustav Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1968. 134 pp. DM.38.

This slim monograph originated in the work of a seminar which analysed the economic information in the chronicles of a monk, Reiner of Lüttich, for the years 1194–1230. It led on to a wider search for similar information in other early writings printed in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. The results presented here include all references to grain and wine production, starting in 800 and continuing to 1350. They include not only exact statements about prices and the quality of the harvests, but also contemporary evidence on other factors affecting prices, such as weather, war, the overseas trade in grain in years of shortage, the speculative activities of merchants, and municipal and governmental attempts at controlling prices. The chronicle of Reiner of Lüttich gives the only continuous series of comments on prices and harvests and these are tabulated and presented in graphs on pages 80–91; the detail

taken from the chronicle of another ecclesiastic, possibly an abbot, called Mankon, and relating to Friesland is set out on pages 91-3. In view of the paucity of information on food prices before the thirteenth century, this is an instructive exercise though the information that it yields is necessarily fragmentary.

JOAN THIRSK

HELMUT BREUER, *Die Maas als Schiffahrtsweg*. Aachener Geographische Arbeiten, Heft 1, 1969. Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH: Wiesbaden. 315 pp, 23 diagrams, 4 illustrations, 57 tables. DM.16.

Dr H. Breuer's brilliant exposition of the history and geography of the Meuse navigation begins with an account of this strange river, with its long, narrow, meridional basin, rising in the Plateau de Langres and reaching the North Sea at the mouths of the Rhine. It continues with an estimate of its importance at all periods of history and a prognostic. Because it runs north and south and because it can be linked by canals to the Paris Basin and the Rhine, individual sections have played a local role in trade. Dr Breuer's account shows in detail its importance in mineral and bulk trade but he has paid little attention to the trade in agricultural materials and fertilizers. It is a pity that they figure mainly as 'other items' in the statistics quoted, though proper emphasis is given to artificial fertilizers in recent times. A student of agricultural history would, however, find much essential background material in this finely constructed book with its many maps, diagrams, and tables.

D. J. DAVIS

J. W. GOUGH, *The Rise of the Entrepreneur*. Batsford, 1969. 326 pp. 50s.

Although Mr Gough feels that Professor J. U. Nef's description of industrial expansion between 1540 and 1640 as more 'revolutionary' than that of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is an exaggeration, he does perceive a very broad advance in business organization and technology during the earlier period. Many of the developments took place in the extractive industries, for at the start of the period Britain lagged in industrial technique behind ancient mining and metal-working areas of Flanders and southern Germany. From these areas entrepreneurs and technologists came to exploit the Wealden iron and glass or the Cumberland copper of the frontier land of Britain, just as a little later Dutch entrepreneurs spread to even newer frontiers within Europe from the Pontine marshes to the Swedish metal mines. Strictly agricultural enterprises about which Mr Gough has something to say are Vermuyden's fen drainage, and, to a lesser extent, Britain's large-scale sheep farming. He also examines the cloth industry, the one major agricultural processing industry then organized in large units. Mr Gough treats only a few entrepreneurs biographically. More commonly he sets their activities within his accounts of the industries which engaged their attention—the book is indeed divided into industry-by-industry chapters. The sources used on Tudor and early Stuart enterprises are numerous and up to date, and altogether the book represents a detailed source of reference on industry at that period.

E. L. JONES

Shorter Notices

Marshall's Rural Economy of the West of England (1796). *A Reprint of the Rural Economy of the West of England including Devonshire and parts of Somersetshire, Dorsetshire, and Cornwall*, by William Marshall. 2 vols. David and Charles, 1970. 332+388 pp. £8 8s.

William Marshall's survey of the west of England was published not long after the Board of Agriculture had taken a decision to commission its own general views of agriculture on a county basis. It was fortunate that William Marshall's plan was then so far advanced that he did not contemplate abandoning it. His *Rural Economies* of different regions of England are deemed in many ways superior to those of the writers for the Board of Agriculture. They certainly adopt a system of analysis which is more congenial to present-day historians. He had a strong sense of the distinctive qualities of natural regions, and considered it an absurdity that a farming survey should be divided by counties. The wisdom of this has become ever more apparent, even though, for reasons of practical expediency, the county boundary still has to be used frequently to delimit research. The reprinting of these volumes on the west of England will be warmly welcomed by historians, though they will blench at the price.

W. PITT, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Worcester* (1813). David and Charles, 1969. 428 pp. £5 5s.; CHARLES VANCOUVER, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Devon* (1808). 1969. 480 pp. £5 5s.; JOHN HOLT, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster* (1795). 1969. 240 pp. £4 4s.; ARTHUR YOUNG, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Norfolk* (1804). 1969. 532 pp. £5 5s.; ARTHUR YOUNG, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lincolnshire* (1813). 1970. 490 pp. £5 5s.; ARTHUR YOUNG, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk* (1813). 1969. 432 pp. £5 5s.; ARTHUR YOUNG, *General View of the Agri-*

culture of Oxfordshire (1813). David and Charles, 1969. 362 pp. £5 5s.

Every local agricultural study takes as its starting point the *General View of the Agriculture* of the county concerned. David and Charles's decision to reprint them all is of the greatest importance to agrarian historians. The volumes are too familiar to readers of this REVIEW to call for further description. Suffice it to say that the reprints reproduce the originals, including the valuable maps and engravings (though the order of these has been slightly rearranged), and we are promised at the end a new work that will offer critical comments on the whole series.

EDWARD MOOR, *Suffolk Words and Phrases* (1823). David and Charles, 1970. 526 pp. £5 5s.

Despite the fact that Moor's work was a quarry for Joseph Wright when compiling his *English Dialect Dictionary*, it still has value in its own right, for its explanations of words are discursive and anecdotal. This consideration has prompted the printing of a new edition. It is, of course, full of agricultural dialect words, with information on the same or similar terms used in other counties. Stanley Ellis adds an appreciative introduction.

J. M. STRATTON, *Agricultural Records, A.D. 220-1968*. John Baker, 1969. 204 pp. 50s. Mr Stratton has set out the material presented by Thomas Baker in *Records of the Seasons, Prices of Agricultural Produce, and Phenomena observed in the British Isles* in a summarized form, and added further material including some long-ish surveys from *The Times* to bring the record after 1912 up to date.

G. C. BRODRICK, *English Land and English Landlords. An Enquiry into the Origin and Character of the English Landed System, with Proposals for its Reform* (1881). David and Charles, 1968. 604 pp. 75s.

This is a welcome addition to the library of nineteenth-century reprints. At a time of great heart-searching by politicians and agri-

culturalists, Brodrick attempted to explain the state of the English landed system by means of a historical survey going back to the Anglo-Saxon period. As the author of earlier essays on 'The Law and Custom of Primogeniture' and 'Local Government in England' he set the problem in a wide context. His book therefore

contains a number of useful analyses, including a chapter on foreign systems of land tenure, based on the foreign office reports of 1869-70, a summary table dividing landowners into classes, completed for him by Bateman, and an appendix of tables on agricultural exports and prices.

Letter to the Editor

MADAM,—Your illustrated article 'Harvesting by the Gauls' was most interesting. The machine appears to be neither a combine harvester nor even a binder but simply an ear remover. It had no moving parts except the wheels. The principle of the thing appears to have been that the machine was pivoted on the axle, and the man behind the machine kept the pointers at such a level that they entered the crop just below the level of the ears. These pointers separated the crop and guided the heads on the straw down the openings until they reached a knife, probably a fixed 'v' shaped one at the end. To cut these heads off the machine depended on its forward action and the holding power of the roots in the ground. This is where the thing would fail. If it was a wet season the roots would pull out of the ground before the heads were cut off. Some assistance was given by the pressure of other heads coming down the channels, but as is seen in the drawing, a man had to walk backwards, in front, pushing the heads against and over the knives, with a wide ended tool.

The heads I suppose were collected on the larger sheet and every so often put off on to the ground or put into a cart. Perhaps the divider in front of the wheel on the right was lifted off and the heads raked to the right clear of the uncut crop.

Obviously it was a wealthy man's tool and when it did work was very labour saving in the field. But it shows how poor the crops must have been in those days compared with ours today for in our sort of crops it would not have moved a yard, blocking up straight away; it only could have worked in a very thin crop. Was the curious thing beneath the horses mouth a spare sickle hung on the machine in case it broke down, or was it something to stop the horse lowering its head to eat the crop?

The comment by E. Esperandiu about the man "guiding two animals," does not seem to apply unless he thought each shaft went to a separate animal.

E. A. POCKOCK

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