

Book Reviews

M. I. FINLEY, *The Ancient Economy*. Chatto & Windus, 1973. 222 pp. Map. £3.50.

Professor Finley is an image-breaker and his writing is caustic and salutary, nor would I care to quarrel with his surgical analysis of the ancient economy. He points out that the modern conceptions of economy did not exist among the Greeks and Romans, not because they were fools, but because the economic structure of their societies was different, in that it did not constitute "an enormous conglomeration of interdependent markets" (Roll). The rest of the book is virtually an essay written to demonstrate the reasons for this: the lack of a conception of the relationships and trends to be deduced from statistics, the absence of a system of planned investment involving calculations of costs, labour output, overheads, transport, and the state of the market, which did not exist on a world scale. A major factor blocking the development of a world market was the expense and difficulty of transport (Finley might have done well to mention here the researches of Lefebvre des Noëttes); hence all the cities which attained exceptional size were near the sea or close to navigable water-ways—Athens and Rome alone subsisted on grain imported from any distance.

There were also psycho-social obstacles: the Graeco-Roman attitude favoured wealth but saw agriculture and land primarily as the basis of leisure; liberty was the freedom from the necessity of working physically. The Greek prohibition which prevented non-citizens from holding land restricted credit because the non-citizens, who conducted the lion's share of trade and manufacture, could not lend on mortgage. Nor in Rome did the *equites* constitute *in toto* a business class; only a minority of them were publicans, contractors, and moneylenders; the *equites* no less than the senators, as Finley observes in his chapter on 'Order and Status', were landowners; there was little correspondence between class (in terms of wealth) and economic function on the one hand, and social status on the other.

Status among the senatorial aristocracy, indeed, prevented them from engaging in commerce in the accepted sense, ready as they were to acquire wealth by grant, purchase, conquest, or confiscation. Precisely this attitude it was, thinks Finley, which explains the absence of any drive to increased productivity by technical innovation. But the agriculture of the large estates was not simple subsistence agriculture, for they produced large incomes—and there's the rub. The aristocratic status attitude, nevertheless, was also one of the factors determining the non-productive character of the ancient city; Finley follows Max Weber in stating that the ancient towns were primarily centres of consumption, and in those which were entrepôts of trade the merchants were predominantly foreigners and non-citizens.

In treating of labour, Finley points out that the term "slave" covers a number of differing categories, from the convict labourer in the mines to the rural helot and the slave carrying on an independent business for his master. It was the status-revolution in the later Roman Empire, which by levelling the poorer citizenry down to the same status as the tied tenant and the *servus casatus*, reduced the greater part of the rural population to dependent involuntary labour, and this development was rapid in proportion as the sources of slavery dwindled. Moreover, the gruelling taxation of the late empire could not be passed on by the big landlords to slaves, but it could be passed on to *coloni*.

Examining tenurial and rural problems, Finley finds that statistics on the size of holdings are scarce and unreliable but he thinks that on the whole small holdings were unrentable because of the surplus of smallholders' sons who had to be employed on them. Large landowners, on the other hand, seeing land as the basis of leisure and uninterested in increased production, a quick turnover of capital, or the exchange of goods, were under no impulse to improve their estates.

As to the cities, Finley's major problem is

to explain how they paid for those needs not furnished by the agriculture conducted by their landowning citizens and their tenants? His answer is, by agricultural produce and by invisible exports—tourism (I assume that includes cult-income) and re-exports. No single ancient city, wrote Hulme (Finley concurring), attained importance by virtue of its manufactures. The establishment of the Roman Empire, states Finley, led to urban growth as a means of increasing services, but not of enlarging urban production, and urban revenue was never invested to increase it. In medieval Europe the rural nobility were consumers of the urban products; not so in the Roman Empire. As the latter developed, craftscentres were withdrawn more and more to the rural estates, resulting in an atrophying of the city as a productive unit. One factor in all this was the absence of a productive credit machinery; the ancient world never discovered fiduciary money or the concept of a public debt. (Without disputing this finding, it might nevertheless be interesting to mention that the *Anonymus de rebus bellicis* writing in the fourth century, did propose something like it, as C. E. Stevens has pointed out, drawing our attention to leather money found at some place in north-western Britain.) Few loans to expand production can be traced; there were no permanent business partnerships aimed at combining resources, and crafts organizations never endeavoured to control prices or to extend free production. Selling and buying were the province of non-citizens, and big capital was in the hands of the landed aristocracy.

All this produces the further conclusion that ancient imperialism was not mercantile imperialism and did not involve capitalist exploitation. Ultimately the imperial government, by concentrating in its hands army-supply, withdrew from the market the economic potential of the wealthy class, which thereupon entrenched itself in its autarkic estates, and so a dyarchy was born which presaged the feudalism of the European Middle Ages.

Like most worthwhile books, Finley's inquiry poses as many questions as it answers. I confine myself to some minor matters,

which may possess major implications. In analysing concepts differing in oriental and Graeco-Roman society, Finley states that "the word 'freedom' cannot be translated into any ancient near-Eastern language, including Hebrew." Whether or not the matter is relevant, it is desirable to correct this misstatement for the sake of numerous potential readers. There are three words in Hebrew for freedom, the earliest of which occurs in Leviticus, the latest on coins of A.D. 70. Finley defines Mediterranean as a unified region of light-soil agriculture—perhaps too sweeping a statement, as an examination of the ancient occupation of the red soils, the rendzinas, and the alluviums of some ancient Mediterranean countries might show. The Mediterranean "on the whole is no place for nomadic peoples"; no doubt, but the nomads of North Africa and Arabia thought otherwise, witness the expansion of Islam, and the nomads should never be left out of account when we estimate the major problems of the region. In his general thesis of the non-existence of large marketing areas in the Roman Empire, Finley may be overstating his case. Against Wheeler's cautionary tale of the single terra sigillata bowl in Gothland, here cited, we may quote sites where terra sigillata potters' stamps run into hundreds; the problem is not export over the frontiers but internal circulation. Dunning showed that an industry producing shale vessels in southern Britain in Roman times sold up to a radius of 200 miles in the earlier period, its customers including seven villas—and to a radius of fifty miles in the later period. Both figures are well beyond the "four to five miles" deduced by Messrs Hodder and Hassall for the radius of Romano-British market centres; in any case the distribution of the products of several local Romano-British pottery industries, to say nothing of oysters and coal, is sufficient to refute their deduction. Nor can statements on the autarkic economies of later Roman estates be accepted without qualification: archaeology offers contrary evidence (see *Agrarian Hist. Eng. and Wales*, I, ii, pp. 247-48), and the problem becomes one of assessing it. My own view is that it was precisely the non-autarkic character of the estate economy

which led to its swift demise in some provinces under barbarian conquest—more especially Britain. As to the landowner's incentive to increase production—granted a non-capitalist mentality and the non-availability of liquid capital to apply it—how are we to interpret Finley's complementary statement that the big estates produced large incomes? Cheap labour and the thorough exploitation of manpower are not sufficient. Surely, this also implies good maintenance and accounting, sound cultivation, likewise much improvement in the restricted interior sense, and efficient planning within the accepted framework. Moreover, the examination of a number of reasonably excavated villas in western Europe (e.g. Ditchley, Bignor, Wittersbach, Mayen, Köln-Müngersdorf), of investigations in Syria, and relevant passages in the Talmud, show that their buildings could develop from a single hutment in the first century B.C. or A.D. to a complete range of residence plus *bâtiments d'exploitation* in the third and fourth centuries. Evidently the incentives to increase rural production existed, and cannot be explained solely as the results of massive taxation or the demands of prestige spending. Or, to take a piece of literary evidence: when Nero and Seneca extended big loans to British notables in the early sixties of the first century, were they merely for consumption? This is the period of the first systematic organization of the *annona* in the province, and also of the first villa-building; could all these loans have been expended on consumption and prestige-building, or were they also spent on the increased productivity without which the invested capital could not be repaid?

Hulme's axiom that no ancient city owed its growth to its manufactures, and the associated statement that the mercantile elements were preponderantly non-citizens, also evoke questions. Did none of the sons of *equites* who joined the municipal aristocracies engage in commerce? And is either axiom proven with regard to such oriental cities as Carthage, Tyre, and Sidon? Were these places mere, entrepôts, and were their aristocracies purely landowners? And what constituted the *raison d'être* of the Nabataean kingdom? It may be

significant that despite recorded imperial legislation suppressing the crafts guilds in the towns of Asia Minor, they nevertheless survived sturdily, as inscriptions indicate, and if they were not composed of citizens in Tarsus, guilds apparently took the place of *phylae* in a number of other Asiatic cities. Did they owe this toleration to the probability that their manufactures were essential to the imperial economy and more particularly to the army?

A point may also be made concerning the relative absence of technological progress, especially in connection with agriculture, in the Roman Empire. This may be a fact, but should not cause us to ignore the revolution created by the spread of Graeco-Roman civilization, with its concomitant diffusion of improved tools, new plants, and perhaps rotations. All this meant a great rise in bulk production. Was all the private enterprise responsible for this the result of mere search for status?

Moreover, were no Roman imperial wars commercial in aim? What about Augustus's expedition to Arabia? and even if Trajan's annexation of the Nabataean kingdom was purely political (a term which begs the question), it gave Rome control of the centres distributing wares from Arabia and India to Syria and the Mediterranean—and whatever Trajan wanted, there is a limit to the economic blindness which we may legitimately ascribe to him and his advisers. Finally, Professor Finley could perhaps have said more of the economic importance of the Roman imperial crown-domains. Remarkable in the empire was the hiatus between direct political influence and economic power where the privileged classes were concerned: notable exceptions were the Jewish patriarchate and the ephemeral principate of Palmyra—fringe exceptions perhaps, but useful to emphasise some of the *arcana imperii*.

One correction. A peculiar error on page 145, para. 2, line 1, should be corrected in a second edition or impression: here the word "absence" surely should be "presence". It should be added that Professor Finley's bibliography as embodied in his notes will be invaluable to all interested readers.

SHIMON APPLEBAUM

K. D. WHITE, *A Bibliography of Roman Agriculture*, Institute of Agricultural History, Bibliographies in Agricultural History, no. 1. University of Reading, 1970. xxviii + 63 pp. 85p.

All of us read too much, and generally three-quarters of what scholars read in their special fields they find to be superfluous and repetitious; they read much of it just in case. Good bibliographies are one way out of the dilemma, and if the bibliographer can add a word of guidance to enable his beneficiaries to discriminate he will be saving them much useless effort. For the same reason, woe to the reviewer of a bibliography, because he is sure not to have read anything like the works listed in it.

This one begins with a useful and quantitatively temperate introduction devoted to the importance of Roman agricultural history, and the formulation of some major unsolved questions which have to be answered in that field. There follow sections on the literary and archaeological evidence, the environmental conditions of Italian farming, the Roman agricultural writers and their respective values. There is then an analysis of the attitudes of ancient writers to various problems, including markets and labour, efficiency and productivity, incentives to progress, traditions and innovations; and then come conclusions, one of which is the recommendation to use given contemporary agricultural systems for the undersanding of ancient farm-management and output.

To write two or three lines summarizing a high proportion of the works listed must have been the devil of a job, and we should be lenient here, but the validity of such short notes is, as I stressed above, a vital part of the bibliography. How useful, in fact, are they? One can only judge by scrutinizing instances well known to oneself. On pp. 25 and 34 we find as an item C. Thomas, *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain*. White's summary reads: "Distinguishes regional differences, noting gradual trend towards symmetrical planning of farms and better standards of building construction." Now the work is in point of fact a symposium of articles by various specialists, including Professor Thomas, and edited by him, on rural settlement in Roman Britain;

the papers were given at a conference held on the subject by the Council for British Archaeology. Their contents are far more varied and revolutionary than White suggests, and where the problem of the Romano-British settlement pattern in the south-west of England is concerned, constituted a major breakthrough. I do not wish to be hypercritical, but this is a demonstration of how difficult the task really is of isolating the essential. To take another case of a different nature: Adam Dickson's *The Husbandry of the Ancients* (1788) "excludes animal husbandry; also typical mediterranean techniques, e.g. viticulture. Good on soil, ploughing, manuring. Now much outdated." But, as one of my seniors said, Dickson is one of the few who have written sense on Roman agriculture, and how many works of this sort have we from the pens of working farmers? Out of date—maybe; but surely the fact that Dickson wrote before the agricultural revolution had got into its full stride is precisely one of the chief merits of the book for students of Roman agriculture!

On another tack, I find the Middle East somewhat under-represented; the study of the Nabataean-Byzantine irrigated cultivation of the Negev has a respectable literature (much of it in English), and a little consultation with Israel scholars could have obtained the requisite list. Centuriation—no reference to the work of Margary and Nightingale: I am prepared to back Nightingale's find as genuine Roman land division. Among villas, the absence of F. Fremersdorf's masterly report on his splendid excavation of Köln-Müngersdorf (published 1933) is a blemish; this is, to the best of my knowledge, the only case where every structure in the farmyard of the villa was excavated and defined; the economic implications were analysed by Schmitz (*Bonner Jahrbücher*, 139, pp. 80 ff.). For the same reason one regrets the absence of direct reference to the reports on Anthée (Belgium) and Martres-Tolosannes (southern France), although briefer accounts on them are to be found in Grenier (no. 413), which is classed, somewhat inadequately, under "Estates and estate management." Under Roman Britain I see no specific references to literature dealing with field-systems. Under agrarian

legislation, add Courteois *et al.*, *Tablettes Albertini*, 1952, on the Mancian lease. There is doubtless much discussion of ancient economic theory (or the lack of it) in the works listed here: in another edition much useful bibliography on the theme could be drawn from Finley's *The Ancient Economy* (1973). And lastly, can prehistoric agriculture be separated from Roman agriculture in the provinces? However, there are doubtless limits to what space will permit. What about a much-needed bibliography of prehistoric agricultural studies?

Misprints in this publication would be a sitting target. Rather should we investigate the sociological causes for the decline of good proof-reading in the present decades. But I cannot refrain from quoting (p. 20): "The authors agree [sic] that there has been in historic times a small but significant decrease in rainfall." This is only one reason why White's bibliography will find a permanent place on my shelf.

SHIMON APPLEBAUM

G. E. FUSSELL, *The Classical Tradition in West European Farming*. Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1972. 237 pp. 13 plates, 12 figs. £4.20.

In this volume Dr Fussell utilizes all his formidable expertise in the literature of European farming to consider the problem of the extent to which the medieval and later farming books were based upon their classical forerunners, both Greek and Roman. Since this is a subject with which most English readers will not be very familiar it is most useful to have Dr Fussell's analysis of the classical writers and his assessment of their continuing influence even into the nineteenth century. He believes that this influence has been generally underestimated, and states (p. 11) that the "debt that modern farming owes to the classical tradition has been obscured and confused in the studies of agricultural historians." It would have been interesting if he had explored this theme more systematically in his chapter on the classical authors, but the implication is that modern historians have not fully appreciated the extent to which classical writers were familiar with leguminous fod-

der crops like lucerne, clover, and beans. Although it cannot be argued that anything like a Norfolk four-course rotation was used in Roman times, it is clear that fodder crops were sometimes used as catch-crops between cereals, partly to improve soil fertility. As long ago as the fifth century B.C. Xenophon noted that some Greek farmers in Macedonia and Thessaly ploughed in beans as a green manure; while Roman writers, like Pliny the elder and Marcus Columella, were familiar with lucerne and praised it highly as food for livestock.

Dr Fussell has divided his immense subject into six chronological chapters, of which the first on 'Farming Systems of the Classical Era' is perhaps the one which will be found most interesting because its subject is probably the least familiar. The works of the leading classical writers on farming, the Greeks Hesiod and Xenophon, and the Romans Cato the censor, Varro, Marcus Columella, Pliny the elder, and Palladius, are all usefully analysed. It seems that Marcus Columella, who lived in Spain near Cadiz in the first century A.D., wrote the best treatise.

The subsequent chapters cover the early Middle Ages, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the sixteenth century, and the period 1700 to 1820. By the end of the eighteenth century the scientific and empirical approach had largely displaced classical authority.

During the classical period the Romans improved on Greek methods, principally by establishing a three-course rotation of two cereal crops (usually wheat and barley) and a fallow in place of the Greeks' simpler two-course crop and fallow system. Neither Greeks nor Romans were particularly good at livestock husbandry, which is not surprising in a Mediterranean climate. For the same reason they were good at cultivating vines, olives, and fruits. There was apparently little advance in farming technique between the birth of Christ and the end of the Roman empire.

The classical tradition was carried on in medieval times in two streams. The Greek was incorporated in a work called *The Geoponika*, written in Byzantium in the tenth century. It was a collection of farming advice made from earlier Greek and Roman works, many

now quite unidentifiable. The Roman tradition was carried on by Petrus de Crescentius, a thirteenth-century lawyer from Bologna, whose work *Liber Commodotus Ruralium* ran to twelve volumes. It relied heavily on earlier classical authors but also included advice based on his personal experience in travelling all over Italy and beyond the Alps. Because it was concerned primarily with Mediterranean farming it has never been translated into English.

In fact England was the country where the classical tradition was least felt. This was partly because Mediterranean practices were unsuited to the English climate (though the classical works were frequently translated and reprinted in Germany) but more importantly because English farming writers adopted an empirical approach almost from the beginning. The first printed book on English farming, Fitzherbert's *Boke of Husbandrye* (1523), was not based on the classical models and gave advice derived from practical experience. Most of the better-known authors of the pre-scientific age, like Thomas Tusser, Sir Richard Weston, Walter Blith, and John Worlidge, followed the same principle. An exception was Leonard Mascall, whose *The First Booke of Cattell* (1591) was largely based on classical sources.

On the continent, as might be expected, the classical tradition was much stronger. Not only were the originals frequently reprinted but well-known later works were impregnated with the classical ideas. Prominent examples are Camillo Tarello's *Ricordo d'agricoltura* (late sixteenth century) in Italy, Conrad Heresbach's *Rei rusticae libri quattuor, universam rusticam . . .* (Cologne, 1570) in Germany, and Oliver de Serres's *Le Théâtre d'agriculture et mesnage des champs* (1600) in France.

By the eighteenth century the classical tradition was dying. Dr Fussell believes that Jethro Tull's experimental work in England in the early decades signalizes the birth of a new, inquiring, scientific spirit. It soon spread to France, and thence over the Continent.

The most important question arising from Dr Fussell's study is: did this long ascendancy of an ancient tradition act as a brake on the development of European farming? This is

very difficult to answer, because although we know how often the classical works were reprinted (and it was frequently), we do not know whether any practical farmers (as opposed to landowners with literary tastes) ever read them, or whether they were influenced by them. Dr Fussell implies that it would have been difficult for farmers in the Mediterranean regions to have improved on the classical methods in the pre-scientific age, and therefore that the continuance of the tradition can have done no harm. We have seen that it had very little influence in England (or in the Netherlands). It may have had some inhibiting effect on experimentation in France and Germany, but we cannot be sure.

Dr Fussell has written a book which will be of considerable value to the specialist trying to sift the European farming literature, and one which the general reader will find not uninteresting, particularly the excellent opening chapter on the classical farming writers.

M. A. HAVINDEN

D. B. GRIGG, *The Agricultural Systems of the World: an Evolutionary Approach*. C.U.P., 1974. ix + 358 pp. 48 tables, 25 maps. £6.60 hardback; £2.75 paperback.

This scholarly, well-documented, readable but occasionally irritating book is the fifth title of the *Cambridge Geographical Studies*. For non-geographers, the key to its interest and fascination lies in its sub-title: *An Evolutionary Approach*. The introduction is followed in Part One by chapters on the early history of agriculture; the diffusion of crops and livestock; and technical and economic changes in agriculture. Part Two then broadly follows Finch's (1957) version of Whittlesey's world map of types of agriculture. The major types of farming discussed in succeeding chapters in this part are: shifting agriculture; wet rice cultivation in Asia; pastoral nomadism; "Mediterranean" agriculture; mixed farming in Western Europe and North America; dairying; the plantation system; ranching; and large-scale grain production. Each of these chapters opens with a brief account of the current characteristics of the relevant type of agriculture and then goes back to its early history, leads up to the "modern period", and in

most cases ends with a good summary. Then follows a short concluding chapter, an appendix (after C. D. Darlington) on regions of plant domestication; references; a thirty-five-page bibliography; and a rather inadequate index.

This text is so full of historical interest that it is difficult to know which chapter or sections to recommend to the agricultural historian. But chapters 1 (Introduction), 2 (Early history), 4 (Technical and Economic Change), and 14 (Conclusions) would serve a first course followed by a second course—chosen from the chapters on types of farming—which might be one either familiar or exotic to the reader. But whichever way he approaches the book he will find it reflects three underlying themes.

The first is that explorers, merchant adventurers, military conquerors, or the mass migrations attributable to population growth took with them (by accident or design) their own familiar species of crops and stock but, more important, their knowledge of and prejudices about their own familiar farming systems and agrarian structures. The migration of the farmer's mind—"squared neat between the hedgerows of his brain" (to use an apt phrase of Vita Sackville West)—was probably as important, for better or for worse, as the diffusion of economically or nutritionally useful species. Where he could not stamp his "inherited" system or species on new lands, he either adapted his old practices or adopted the species and techniques of his new locality—or perished in a failure often unrecorded by history.

The second is that over the 10,000 years since agriculture was introduced, techniques and thence systems have intensified and slowly improved yields both in the homelands and in newly settled or conquered lands. Thus, in the case of wet rice (i.e. "paddy" or as Grigg calls it *savah* rice), broadcast seeding was replaced by careful transplanting, and yields were raised by better soil cultivation, more weeding, more green or animal (including human) manure, better varieties, and perhaps double cropping, e.g. a wet rice and a dry wheat crop in the same year.

Third, growing population pressure (which

Grigg aptly terms *nutritional density*) was met by better husbandry if migration was not feasible. This phase lasted until about A.D. 1600 when "there was probably very little difference in agricultural productivity between Europe, India and China" (p. 284), and the New World and Australasia were still in a very primitive stage. Then came the European steps towards rotational farming and simple but labour-intensive mechanization—what one might call *ecological revolution*.

Finally, from 1850 onwards the ecological revolution yielded to what Grigg terms the "agricultural revolution"—perhaps *agro-industrial revolution* would be a better description. This was based on urban industrialization, better transport, and, no doubt Grigg would now add, non-renewable fossil-fuels. This post-1850 revolution created the great gulf between the agricultures and diets of "developed" and "developing" countries.

How, the reader may ask, can we close this gap? The above rather free interpretation of Grigg's approach suggests to this reader that the growth of the nation state and of increasingly parochial nationalism rules out migration, and that we cannot rely on rapid industrialization of "developing countries" to feed their rapidly growing *nutritional densities*. This leads to the second course. Can farm people in the developing countries, by sheer good husbandry and labour intensity, bring food output from the European yield levels of the seventeenth century (about 770 kg./ha. for wheat in Britain) to those of say 1880 (when U.K. wheat yields were about 1,750 kg./ha. as against 4,500 kg./ha. today) to meet a predicted doubled *nutritional density* within thirty to forty years? In other words, can man apply the seventeenth and eighteenth century "ecological revolution" of western Europe to developing countries or must he rely on an "agro-industrial revolution" which has yet, in many areas, still not been born, and which may be too late to meet the potential nutritional densities of A.D. 2010?

Finally, some minor criticisms. Too many local or vernacular terms are left undefined, e.g. *inquilinos* (p. 132), *caingin* (p. 108), *canadas* (p. 141), *saeter* (p. 193). The bibliography rarely gives the publishers' names, and some-

times also omits the place of publication. The index is inadequate. The one-and-a-half-page concluding chapter is too short. After so much research effort one feels that the author could have given us a considered distillation of the knowledge he has acquired and of the principles which appear to him to have emerged from what must be a unique study in depth. In particular, one would appreciate his conclusions on the critical question (p. 5) "does increase in *nutritional density* lead to new, more intensive types of agriculture, or do new farming techniques permit higher densities, or do they proceed simultaneously?" But these are no more than blemishes on an excellent, though-stimulating book which, from this reviewer's travels and reading, is difficult to fault on contemporary facts.

A. N. DUCKHAM

PHILIP GRIERSON, *English Linear Measures: an essay in origins* (Stenton Lecture 1971). Department of History, University of Reading, 1972. 37 pp. 50p.

This pamphlet, a slightly fuller version of the original lecture, examines the evidence for the origin of the standard English measures of length. Beginning with the laws of King Ethelbert of Kent in the early seventh century, textual and material evidence is presented, discussed, and meticulously footnoted. The main theme is the derivation of nearly all basic measures from natural objects or natural actions; the barleycorn, the palm, the foot, the journey between rests. Henry I is supposed to have distributed a standard yard based on the length of his own arm, while in sixteenth-century Germany the shoes of the first sixteen men out of church, placed end to end, gave the length of the perch. The use of parts of the human body as units of measurement was so widespread that similarity of such units between societies is in itself proof of nothing: Grierson is scornful of the "mathematical romanticism and diffusionism run mad" of those who build speculations on the chance resemblance of measures used thousands of miles and hundreds of years apart.

The standardization of these units, and their fitting into an arithmetical relationship

with each other, came long after their invention. In England the smaller units were re-defined in the twelfth century in terms of the newly created yard, leaving an awkward relationship of $5\frac{1}{2} : 1$ between this new measure and the perch; the perch being part of a sequence through the furlong to the mile which resisted change. However, another basic point which Grierson stresses is that the existence of uniform standards did not mean that everyone used them. Different commodities retained their peculiar units, and local communities retained their customary measures: how many of us, he asks, will adapt immediately to metres and kilometres? The result is that rough comparisons of measurements based on "natural" units such as the foot are possible, but greater precision is illusory. Indeed, some of Grierson's own comparisons may overestimate the interest in accuracy of early writers and minimize the tendency to estimate distances and areas by eye or from local tradition.

In all, this is a fascinating little booklet, and necessary reading for anyone intending to use quantitative analysis of early measurements. Professor Grierson should be made to give us the lecture on English weights, which he had to cut out, and then another on areal measures.

ROBERT S. DILLEY

EDMUND KING, *Peterborough Abbey, 1086-1310*. C.U.P., 1973. xiv + 288 pp. £5.60.

The sub-title, *A Study in the Land Market*, does less than justice to Dr King's work, which proves to be much more than a study in the buying and selling of land. In successive chapters he discusses the knights of Peterborough, the freeholders, the obedientiaries, the customary tenants, the lay officials, and the organization of the estate. Not all the problems examined by Dr King call for such elaborate discussion. For example, the desire of peasants to provide holdings for their younger sons and dowries for their daughters operated from time immemorial, according to G. C. Homans; but this simple and convincing thesis is relegated to a footnote.

A particularly interesting chapter is devoted

to the colonization of Northamptonshire. Premising that the clearance of woodland and reclamation of fen must have been a continuous process from the refoundation of the abbey in the tenth century, but does not begin to be recorded in detail until the early twelfth, Dr King shows us the abbot first leading his knights and free tenants in opposition to the crown and its oppressive enforcement of forest law, then later engrossing as much as possible of the assarted land by purchase and exchange. The conversion of woodland to arable was followed by the conversion of fen to pasture; but the process was not uniform, and no single pattern emerges for the estate as a whole.

H. P. R. FINBERG

EDWARD T. MACDERMOT, *The History of the Forest of Exmoor*, revised edition by R. J. Sellick. David & Charles Reprints, 1973. xvi+480 pp., illus. £6.50.

Exmoor, mostly in west Somerset but some large part in Devon, was described by Camden as "a filthy, barren Ground" and Defoe added "And, indeed, so it is." It has a long and varied history and was probably a vast common pasture in prehistoric times and for a long while afterwards. What is more, it has attracted to itself two first-class histories, MacDermot's *History*, which first appeared in 1911, and C. S. Orwin's *The Reclamation of Exmoor Forest*, which appeared in 1929, and in revised edition in 1970. Further, these two books complement each other neatly in date, for MacDermot takes the story down to the final enclosure in 1820, and Orwin virtually begins at that point and deals with the great work of reclamation that followed this enclosure. Rarely can it have happened that two books dovetail so neatly, and books, too, written by distinguished scholars, and of equal value.

Edward MacDermot was a barrister by training, but was able to settle on Exmoor where he spent the last part of his life collecting materials for his *History*, and tramping all over the moor in all weathers; and latterly in writing his fine *History of the Great Western Railway* which became a model for later railway histories.

This new edition includes a good deal of new material which MacDermot collected down to the time of his death in 1950. Now edited by Roger Sellick, with a short account of MacDermot's life, this will become the standard history, not only of Exmoor in particular, but the standard by which all other histories of such a type of country will be judged.

The author searched every scrap of record from Domesday Book onwards: the footnotes show a brilliant array of conscientious scholarship. It is odd that Domesday makes only one rather cryptic entry to this Moor. It belonged to the King, who exacted every third penny of rents for the pastures, and every third animal. In later records we see that various parishes miles away from the Moor pastured their animals there during the season, just as they did for miles around Dartmoor. Technically the moor was a royal forest, i.e. subject to Forest Law. Economic historians will know that this did not mean a forest in the physical sense of the word, and indeed Exmoor is almost devoid of trees to this day except in the deep sheltered valleys. So MacDermot, being a lawyer also, devotes a great deal of space to Forest Law, to the successive Wardens, to the courts, and to permabulations of the Forest. All of this is done in massive detail, but so far as agriculture is concerned it is nearly all, naturally, to do with cattle, sheep, and horses. Nevertheless, the agrarian historian will derive much material from this quarry. There are eight maps to guide him around, and a number of additional photographs which were not in the original edition.

MacDermot's *History* of Exmoor is a masterpiece and will always remain the standard work. We may add little bits here and there in the course of time, notably perhaps on the pre-Domesday period, but that is about all. It is a pleasure to have this book back in circulation again since it had become very scarce, and indeed practically unobtainable. This, and the reprint of Orwin, covers the entire ground: the publishers are to be congratulated on making both classics available to us again.

W. G. HOSKINS

HENRY A. LANDSBERGER, *Rural Protest: Peasant Movements and Social Change*. Macmillan, 1974. xi + 430 pp. £8.

This is a comparative history of rural protest spread over four continents and over a time-span of a thousand years, to which a dozen specialists from different parts of the world were invited to contribute under the guidance of a master-plan. For Dr Landsberger, its editor, in briefing his authors, sent them precise guidelines in the form of a questionnaire, based on his own researches on the Latin American peasant and raising such questions as: what were the societal changes preceding the emergence of a peasant movement? what were the movement's goals and ideologies, its means and methods and mass base? and what were the movement's allies, and the conditions of success and failure?

The authors' "answers" to these questions occupy the major portion of this book; and, for the reader's convenience a summary of their findings and how they relate to the initial guidelines is given by Dr Landsberger in an introductory chapter; and it is fascinating to see how far the contributors have been able, or been willing, to work within the analytical framework provided. Some have clearly done so with greater readiness, or greater success, than others; and this was not simply a matter of the author's choice but also of the material that he had to hand. Among the most successful chapters in this respect are Dr Hilton's study of peasant society and feudalism in medieval Europe, Landsberger's own study of the English Peasant Revolt, and Longworth's on the Pugachev rebellion in Russia, which skilfully combine attention to their own particular problems with conformity to the model prescribed; and two modern studies, the first by Alexandrov on peasant movements in developing countries, and the second by Huizer and Stavenhagen on rural protest and reform in Latin America. The least successful is probably Molnár's and Pekmez's chapter on rural anarchism in nineteenth-century Spain, which is less an analysis than a recital of events. Two studies on peasants in politics, which have been written from somewhat differing ideological viewpoints, are Galaj's on Poland and Jack-

son's on Eastern Europe. Finally, there is Hobsbawm's study of "social banditry" which, with the best will in the world, lends itself less readily than any other to the Landsberger model; for, in the author's own words, his banditry is "not so much a form of peasant movement as a symptom of peasant unrest." Yet this is one of the few chapters in the book in which a serious attempt is made to discuss not only "politics" or goals but also the ideology or *mentalité* of the people concerned.

The book, in fact, contains some excellent pieces, and it is, moreover, an invaluable compendium of rural protest in both medieval and modern times. But has it, seen as a whole, been able to realize the aims that its editor had in mind? Does anything like a common pattern emerge from its pages? The real problem is that, even within the context of a single country in a short period of history, peasants form a disparate group; and even if we follow Eric Woolf in lopping off the landless labourers, they do not belong to a single social class. All serious students of rural protest have found that there is no such thing, and there never was, as a *typical* peasant, and have been compelled to divide the rural population into separate interest-groups, the number of which may vary from one country to the next. Thus Landsberger cites Lenin's division into three—the well-to-do, the "middle", and the "poor" peasants—in the case of Russia, and Mao's five categories, of small landholders, sharecroppers, poor peasants, farm-labourers, and handicraftsmen in the case of China; and it is doubtful if even Mao's more generous formula, if given a wider application, would take account of Indian "untouchables" or Mexican *colonos*; let alone the more subtle distinctions between the "landed labourers" and "landless proletarians" noted by Alexandrov in some countries of Asia and North Africa today. Granted that all these groups are (to use Landsberger's phrase) "low-status rural cultivators;" but such a definition of the peasantry, though it may be as accurate as any, is so open-ended as not to take us very far.

So the *social* variables, within the geographical area and over the time-span covered by this book, are, to say the least, considerable. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in the move-

ments described, there should be a rich variety in the forms of protest and organization, and in the aims and ideologies that underlie them. We need but note such varied manifestations of protest as the medieval *jacquerie*, Pugachev's armed rebellion, the land occupations in Latin America, Burma, and Sumatra, the *taxation populaire* of eighteenth-century France and England (though not confined to peasants) and the variety of peasant leagues and parties and workers' unions that the authors describe. Basically, the problem of ideology may be somewhat simpler. If we except the landless labourer who (as noted by Alexandrov) has become reconciled to his new status as a proletarian, its essence is the desire for land, whether to be privately owned or to be worked in common; and, at times, as Huizer and Stavenhagen show in their study of Mexico and Peru, protest becomes a demand not for something new but for a restitution of land that has been unlawfully usurped by others. This basic ideology appears to underlie all the movements (other than those of the rural proletarians) that are related in this book, whether they be of well-to-do farmers, small landholders, sharecroppers, or landless peasants who aspire to get some pickings from the division of large estates or traditional common lands. (As off-shoots of this basic ideology we may note the toleration of the "social bandit" observed by Hobsbawm and certain types of popular religious belief, as in the Pugachev revolt.)

The position becomes far more complex when the peasant movement assumes a more overtly political dimension, either as a projection of the peasants' own demands or when it serves as an ally or catpaw of others. This can only happen, as several contributors show, when the movement becomes infused with an ideology derived from other social groups. The result may take a variety of forms, of which examples are given by Alexandrov for Syria, India, and Turkey, Jackson and Galaj for eastern Europe, and Huizer and Stavenhagen for Latin America. In some of these cases, where the peasants assimilate the ideology of others but turn it to their own use (the National Peasant Federation in Mexico at the time of Cárdenas is a good example), it seems

fair enough to treat them as "peasant" movements; but this was hardly the case with the numerous bourgeois-led "peasant" or "agrarian" organizations in eastern Europe in the 1920's and 1930's described by Jackson: the Czechoslovakian Agrarian Party and the Croat Peasant Party, which postured as champions of all the rural producers, are obvious examples. Though they had a peasant base and attracted the peasant vote, to call them "peasant" parties is just as much a misnomer as it would be to give the name "labour" to the Whigs and Tories of late nineteenth-century England when they were the sole contenders for the working man's vote.

Yet, with all this, it would be a gross exaggeration to claim that Dr Landsberger's model breaks down at all points. There are certainly other common factors that emerge from these studies, though they are by no means all peculiar to rural protesters alone. One is that positive results have been achieved only when peasants were united and were ready to take action of their own. Conversely, as shown by the contributions on eastern Europe and Latin America, a slackening of peasant activity allowed their movement to fall under the control of middle-class groups, and the peasant interest became sacrificed in the process. Another is that such movements, both in medieval and modern times, have most often been precipitated by "modernizing" influences such as commercialism or the impact of an industrial revolution, or by a fresh breeze from outside. (This is, of course, a variant of the "rising-expectations" theory of which so much is being written today.) A further common factor is that organization has been most likely to take shape where there has been some earlier experience of co-operation within an established community: thus, as with urban or industrial workers, organization and protest emerge not from the isolation of the uprooted but from community and experience commonly shared. Again, it has been noted that leadership is most efficacious when it is either in the hands of men sprung from the peasants themselves or in those of men from closely associated groups, such as village craftsmen, schoolmasters, or parish priests: the bourgeois outsider, though he may start

with the best of intentions, often turns out to be the kiss of death. Finally, a factor noted by Lefebvre, Woolf, and others (though discounted by Fanon): peasant radicalism is unlikely to emanate from the poorest of the poor, but far more likely to be born among the "middle" or more prosperous members of the rural community; yet, as a movement develops, numbers begin to assume a greater importance, and the poor and the landless come into their own.

Such results are important as far as they go; and it would be quite unfair to Dr Landsberger to suggest that he has failed because all the bits and pieces do not fit neatly into place. He has never claimed that they would, and has, insisted in fact that his model serves to emphasize differences as well as similarities; and the differences—and no attempt has been made to deny it—are evident enough. So he certainly cannot be charged with what old-fashioned historians like to see as being almost an occupational disease of the social scientist: with scratching around for common denominators and patterns where they do not exist. Of this he has not been guilty, as a careful reading of the introductory chapter will convincingly show. But, in his concern for specifically peasant problems, he may perhaps more justly be charged with having made two omissions. Too little account, I believe, has been taken of the dramatic impact made on peasant (as on all other popular) movements in the past couple of hundred years by the great social and political explosions of the French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions; and it might perhaps have been pointed out that several of the common denominators in rural protest have been no more peculiar to rural than to urban communities.

GEORGE RUDÉ

RODNEY HILTON, *Bond Men Made Free*, Temple Smith, 1973. 240 pp. £3.80.

Professor Rodney Hilton is one of our leading authorities on peasant movements and a new book from his pen is always welcome. The present volume is no exception.

The book divides easily into two parts—a macrocosm and a microcosm. First the author deals with the general problems of

medieval European peasant societies, and describes the nature of medieval peasant economy, early movements and their problems, and mass movements of the later Middle Ages. He then takes the English rising of 1381 as a sort of "working model" of all such risings, and discusses the events of the rising, its general background, the areas of revolt, the social composition of the rising, the allies of the rebels, and their organization and aims.

Professor Hilton sees "conflict" as the ruling principle of medieval peasant societies. His interpretation is unashamedly Marxist: we meet the feudal nobility, the bourgeoisie, and the industrial working class on his very first page, and capitalism and social stratification in his conclusion. In 1973, which is a long time after the Hungarian October Revolution of 1956, all this sounds very old-fashioned. A harsh critic might even protest against the prolongation into this century of outmoded Hegelian concepts, or wonder why we should prefer the millenarian beliefs of Victorian radicalism to the millenarian beliefs of the middle ages.

Happily, Marxist ecclesiology does not much affect the main chapters of the book which summarize clearly and ably the subjects with which they deal. The careful empiricist merely notes a strange deliberation in the actors which is never present in real life. Both lords and peasants seem to have greater knowledge of needs and desires than is generally so. Evidently there are plans, designs, and plots in the events of the past which were almost certainly unknown to the men of the past. Power, even economic power, is much less positive than Professor Hilton thinks it is. In his society there is no co-operation and enjoyment amongst the poor, no genuine belief that lordship had a valuable part to play in society. The lords are parasites and the peasants their victims.

Apart from these strictures, Professor Hilton's book is remarkably up to date, but he apparently still thinks that the old English *ceorl* was a freeman, and that "feudalism" and "manorialism" came in with the Norman Conquest. It is time such "-isms" were banished altogether. Modern experience of Dark Ages societies is of a gradual release from slavery

through serfdom and varying degrees of freedom and unfreedom to something like our own condition. Some of the peasant revolts come at stops in the way but power is in neither the hands nor the heads of either lords or peasants but in the fertility of the fields and the procreative power of the people. What the swinked hedger did in bed at night was far more important than the counsel of kings or the demands of lords, and politics merely the art of the possible.

H. E. HALLAM

JAN DE VRIES, *The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age 1500-1700*. Yale Uni. Press, 1974. xx + 316 pp., illus. £6.75.

A version of this study was originally submitted as a doctoral dissertation at Yale. The first observation of a reviewer must therefore be that this is no ordinary academic exercise: least of all does it resemble those North American excursions into European history which proliferated in the golden age of research affluence in the '50's and '60's and were based on all too brief encounters with European archives. Dr de Vries's study impresses at once by its mastery of European sources: Dutch and Netherlandish sources especially. I am sure that the author would be the first to agree that it could not have seen the light of day without the groundwork already done by Professor Slicher van Bath and his school of rural history at Wageningen, which helped to achieve the quiet revolution in social-agricultural-demographic history of the last two decades. Equally, it might have been a less significant contribution to economic history at large without the argumentative life which has obviously been injected into it in part by the Yale economic historians with their bent for economically orientated economic history and model-building. It is thus an unusually successful product of combined European and American team-work.

Its major theme may be stated thus. Until late in the sixteenth century the Netherlands shared with the rest of Europe those chronic crises of food shortages, famines, and general poverty endemic in all peasant societies dependent on unspecialized agricultural production. In such a situation the effects of popu-

lation growth could never be anything but negative. This "peasant model" is convincingly elaborated by Dr de Vries and contrasted with what he calls his "specialization model." Here producers concentrate on specialized crops using more efficient labour which in turn gives rise to the sale of surplus produce to the towns and cities and the purchase of their manufacture. Population that is surplus to rural needs emigrates to the towns or is absorbed in ancillary but vital activities such as dyke or canal construction, transport, ironmongery, smithery work, etc. Hence economic growth, investment, urban growth, burgeoning trade and industry which are able to thwart the hitherto dominant Malthusian forces constricting, interrupting, or reversing steady growth. At the centre of the process lies the peasant household. Would the communal restraints of ancient field systems on agriculture change the legal and customary restrictions of marriage, inheritance, and lordship, the habits governing the labour of women and children, the complexities of land tenure, and the nature of terrain—would all these compel the peasant household to reject specialization? Or would circumstances combine to allow of its acceptance?

With these alternatives clearly set out, Dr de Vries turns to his home ground and the social geography of the Netherlands—the north especially. In Holland (the province) particularly he finds a "new country" reclaimed, untrammelled by feudalism, or by an all-powerful noble class or by any rigid system of co-operative peasant farming. The difference between the north and south Netherlands in all respects was very great; between Holland and most of the rest of Europe it was enormous. Even before 1500 peasant ownership in the northern Netherlands was widespread. Population density was not yet exceptional but urbanization (in the south especially) was unusually high.

Between 1500 and 1750 the north underwent extraordinary development in all respects—urban concentration, inter-urban transport, foreign trade, local industry. High rural birth-rates were a basic necessity to general economic and urban growth, for cities grew large by immigration (domestic rather than

long distance): and likewise cities killed off their inhabitants. The fluctuations in the economic fortunes of the United Provinces after 1650 are explicable to a great extent in terms of this high urban mortality.

Methodically Dr de Vries elaborates his critique of the conventional view of economic development which he finds proposed by a historian like Pirenne. In this view, it was *urban* economic life which spread "an infection [to the countryside] which roused the peasant from his age-long torpor" (p. 3). The essence of Dr de Vries's historiographical emendation is that the impulses to change do *not* emanate exclusively from the cities: they emanate also from the fundamental transformation of *rural* society and its activities—in fact, from the rural adoption of the so-called "specialization model." In Holland this new rural economy becomes the basis for a new *total* economy, preceding—and surviving (as the author's namesake Dr Johan de Vries demonstrated some years ago in his own account of the economic "decline" of the Netherlands in the eighteenth century¹)—the process of total expansion that reached its ceiling about the middle of the seventeenth century.

Turning to the detail of this change in rural economy and society, Dr de Vries describes the emergence of a prosperous, independent farmer class, farming larger, more specialized farms, keeping larger and better herds of stock, producing a wide variety of crops and products—milk, cheese, hay, clover, wheat, barley, oats, oil seeds, tobacco, hemp, madder, hops, flax, rape, etc. With better drainage and generous application of manure, animal and human (there are interesting details of the carriage of night soil by boat from towns to the countryside which remind one of Hertfordshire's comparable benefit by the Lea Navigation and the New River), crop yields underwent spectacular improvement. Horticulture, cabbages, roots, orchards, and bulbs were all incorporated into the rich tapestry of rural production. Transport and investment produced a land of high wages, high employment, high population—itself placed in an international setting; an exchange economy

based on a unique utilization of water transport, oceanic and domestic.

Inevitably, this is a study which evokes comparisons. English readers will find the comparisons of Frisian and East Anglian peasant inventories specially intriguing. Of even greater importance is the implicit contrast (p. 235) between the specialization of Dutch rural society and its supply of emigrants to the towns (which may have brought economic development to a halt in the eighteenth century), and the development of rural domestic industry elsewhere, which could lead (as in England) to thorough-going industrialization. In spite of occasional exaggerations (largely in a laudable pursuit of clarity), Dr de Vries substantially succeeds in justifying his model and his argument. The role of the new agriculture in Dutch economic growth is sharply and succinctly delineated. The author usually knows how far to go in his capacity as theoretical economist to make theory support history without smothering or distorting it. This is, without question, a contribution to economic history in general (not merely Netherlands history) of outstanding importance which every historian concerned with the understanding of economic change will have to reckon with. Its merits are great, its weaknesses relatively minor. Dr de Vries does not always manage to avoid the kind of jargon to which social economists in North America seem occupationally prone. There is a scattering of verbal infelicities which it would be difficult to find in any dictionary. His occasional preoccupation with the implications of his study for general development economics seems to me to distract from rather than enhance its quality as history. Finally, in his desire to emphasize the role of the rural economy, he tends to underplay the role of, e.g., seaborne transport in the rise of the Dutch economy, or rather, to be fair, let us say that the space he gives to transport might tempt a less than strictly attentive reader to underestimate its role. These, however, are small blemishes. They do not affect the high quality or central importance of a study in which every economic historian will find something of interest. This is an original, thought-provoking,

¹ Johan de Vries, *De Economische Achteruitgang der Republiek in de Achttiende Eeuw* (Leiden, 1968).

but mature contribution to agrarian and economic history.

CHARLES WILSON

JOYCE BANKES and ERIC KERRIDGE (eds.) *The Early Records of the Bankes Family at Winstanley*, Manchester Univ. Press for the Chetham Society, 1973. viii + 113 pp., 4 plates, 1 map. £4.80.

In 1596 James Bankes, a London goldsmith-banker of probable Lancashire extraction, purchased the Winstanley estates some three and a half miles south-west of Wigan, where his descendants still reside. He kept a memoranda book in which he set down much (and often contradictory) fatherly advice to his children on the practicalities of farming, together with a record of his purchases and some notes on his tenants and their forms of tenure. The book is valuable as evidence of the commonplaces of farming practice in the Lancashire Plain, and for comparison with the near-contemporary accounts of Robert Loder of Harwell and Henry Best of Elmswell. The present volume also prints Bankes's probate inventory of August 1617, and his grandson's accounts and rentals for the period 1667-78.

In his introduction, Dr Kerridge sees Bankes as an empiricist, working without professional advice, who made mistakes in his early years but who eventually learned to conform to the long-established practices of his neighbours and peers. Thus, he began by growing corn, "for therein is the most profit of husbandry", but he ended by advising his son to "Make no more tillage to get corn than to serve your house." (Nevertheless, the value of the "corn growing upon land" appraised in his inventory was £90 13s. 4d, almost the same as the value of his cattle.) The chief crops of this region were oats and barley, with some wheat, peas, and beans. Horse teams, or mixed ones of oxen led by horses, were employed, and the main improvement available to the local farmers was marling. Sheep were kept in small numbers only, and it was normal policy to invest in the rearing of cattle in permanent pastures and in convertible closes. In all this Bankes eventually followed the customs of his neighbours. Dr Kerridge's observations are helpful and convincing, ex-

cept that his statement (p. 6) that Bankes bought young stores from the North Country is not supported by the references he quotes.

Bankes was an industrial as well as an agricultural landlord, and colliers, nailers, and cutlers were amongst his tenants, but he was not directly involved in industry. He was much concerned with the organization of his estates, but unfortunately his "book of account" is lost. He followed the common policy of offering long leases at low rents and competitive entry fines, and his observations upon these matters make interesting reading. It is a pity that Dr Kerridge's introduction is marred by polemical attacks upon those who do not share his belief that the pursuit of free enterprise and self interest inevitably led to the benefit of all.

DAVID HEY

J. PATTEN, *Rural-urban migration in pre-industrial England*. University of Oxford, 1973. School of Geography Research Paper No. 6, 61 pp. No price stated.

The study of rural society has long been a well-established branch of historical inquiry in this country, and in recent years vigorous attempts have been made to promote its urban counterpart. It would be regrettable if this were to lead to a dichotomy of interests and points of view, since the history of the crucial relationships between town and country for the most part remains to be written.

One avenue of approach is through the study of rural-urban migration, necessary not only to permit growth but also to sustain the very existence of the pre-industrial town. But, Dr Patten observes, "detailed reconstruction of these movements has barely begun, and no explanatory framework has yet been constructed." His study offers a critical review of the main sources of evidence which may be deployed (including records of freemen, apprentices, marriage certificates, settlement papers, wills, and deposition books), and stresses the need to consolidate them. He also attempts to draw conclusions from the limited range of studies so far carried out, with reference to London and a number of English provincial towns. There are over a hundred references to case-studies, sources, and theo-

retical works. Whilst it does not pretend to be more than a provisional sketch, new researchers will be delighted to avail themselves of such a useful guide to what has been, and what might be done, in this field.

W. A. ARMSTRONG

E. H. HUNT, *Regional Wage Variations in Britain, 1850-1914*. Clarendon Press: Oxford U.P., 1973, xii + 388 pages. 3 maps, 15 figs. £8.25.

This book, a revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation, is concerned with analysing the influences bearing on regional variations in wages in the second half of the nineteenth century and early years of this century. For this purpose, Dr Hunt makes great use of material on agricultural wages; he notes that variations in agricultural wages form a good guide to those in other occupations the wages of farm labourers forming a kind of floor or reference point for the wages of other workers.

It is impossible in a brief review to do justice to a complex, highly-detailed, and wide-ranging discussion, but some of the author's main conclusions may be summarily stated. The importance he attaches to low levels of productivity as a factor in the low-wage areas has already been made known through his 1967 article in the *Economic History Review*. The existence of these areas, he argues, cannot be explained by differences in the cost of living, or by greater dependence on family earnings; indeed, the highest proportion of female labour employed in agriculture was to be found in areas where male labourers were relatively well paid, as in Northumberland. The marked tendency for the pattern of wage differentials to persist in this period prevailed despite migration from the low-wage areas. There was considerable mobility (thought probably not very much influenced by railways), but it was sufficient only to prevent unfavourable market forces from making the existing differentials even wider. The influx of Irish and other immigrants also operated as a minor factor in the direction of sustaining wage differentials: this it did through the concentration of immigrants in London, and in the case of the Irish, the north-west, so reducing the attrac-

tiveness of the cities concerned to the English labourers.

These few generalizations provide only the barest of summaries. If not a book for the general reader—and certainly its price is not its most attractive feature—a close study of the author's evidence and arguments will repay the specialist enquirer.

G. E. MINGAY

ARTHUR SELDON (ed.), *The Long Debate on Poverty*. Institute of Economic Affairs, 1973. xvi + 244 pp. Paper £2.50.

The Institute of Economic Affairs is an independent trust specializing in the study of markets and pricing systems, and is financed by the sale of its publications and by voluntary contributions from individuals, organizations, and companies. It has assembled here eight essays on industrialization and "the condition of England", written by a team of historians whose soundness, it must have seemed, could be relied upon.

Dr Hartwell discusses the Industrial Revolution as the first example of modern economic growth and argues that if it served to make poverty more explicit, in the long run both poverty and inequality were reduced. Drs Henderson and Chaloner restate their views on Engels, whose famous essay is interpreted as a political tract rather than a scholarly monograph. Dr Boyson, ruminating on the life of the Lancashire factory worker, supposes that he "probably preferred his big coal fires and hot water with air pollution to the scenic views with few coal fires, few hot meals and rare hot water under the domestic system." Dr McCord presents some new, if unsurprising evidence on the scope of Newcastle charities, which were not "inspired by machiavellian plans to disarm disaffection"; and Mr Hansen recounts some of the history of the Friendly Society movement, commends the healthy instinct behind it, and concludes that with the development of wage-related contributions and social benefits in the last decade, politicians appear to have joined in a conspiracy against the public, to see how quickly they can dispose of every sound principle of state welfare policy. Mr Jefferson, an economist, has been rereading the social novels of

the 1840's; though his analysis lacks subtlety, it would be difficult to dissent from his main conclusion, that such novels often misleadingly misrepresented normal social conditions and their use should be more carefully qualified than has often been the case, especially by ill-instructed literary critics.

Two papers set a much higher standard: Professor Mingay offers a summary of the transformation of agriculture over 250 years, which is a masterpiece of lucidity and compression. Professor Coats presents an able and learned essay on the Classical economists, industrialization, and poverty, which makes it plain that they were "neither spokesmen for dogmatic *laissez-faire* nor uncritical apologists for the status quo, but moderate, humane and liberal reformers," and warns against uninformed generalizations about their pernicious influence, such as textbooks often contain. Both authors judiciously refrain from contentious asides, and from drawing facile policy conclusions such as litter the rest of the book.

On the whole, this book will disappoint even those who, like this reviewer, would welcome a challenge to the pessimistic orthodoxies of a large proportion of the present generation of students, fostered as they are by the idiosyncracies of some recent influential left-wing contributions to the debate. For, taken in the round, this version of English social history is no more objective than that which it seeks to supplant. Given that the contributors include a number of historians of high academic calibre, we may attribute some of its major structural weaknesses to an apparent total lack of coherent planning, or editorship. Of course, in the light of its sponsorship, this could be a matter of policy and principle. At all events, the outcome is a very ragged book. Some essayists are concerned with the long-term effects of industrialization, and some the short. Though the book is misleadingly described in the preface as "about poverty rather than about history," only Hartwell attempts to define poverty, (pp. 12-13). There is no concluding chapter to draw together the implications of the various essays, and in the woefully inadequate preface contributed by Mr Seldon, it is merely asserted that the volume forms a corrective to the im-

balance which he supposes to be "still widespread in historical teaching that modern poverty has its roots in the advent of industrialization."

W. A. ARMSTRONG

ROBERT W. MALCOLMSON, *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850*. C.U.P. 1973, xii + 188 pp. 10 plates. £3.80.

This revised version of a doctoral thesis, completed under the supervision of Mr E. P. Thompson, makes a pleasant and useful study. The author has collected a great deal of interesting material from contemporary sources, some of it well known, much quite fresh and new. Although his book is not especially concerned with the countryside, it brings out very well the wide range of sports and amusements which once enlivened the rural scene: it is good to find that the existence of "Merrie England" was by no means a romantic myth.

Already by the eighteenth century, however, many of the old diversions were in decline. The change was hastened in the early decades of the following century, when to the new moral fervour was added the discipline of urban industrialism. The enclosure of commons and waste lands, and the outward sprawl of the towns, reduced the areas freely available for sports and amusements. At the same time there developed humanitarian attacks on certain blood sports, such as bull-baiting, resulting in the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1835. The legislation, however, had a class bias, condemning the blood sports favoured mainly by the labouring classes, while leaving untouched the fox- and stag-hunting of the wealthy. Further, many of the old annual holidays and festivals were frowned upon and died out. Even the hiring fair came under attack, though it continued in some areas throughout the century. In 1805 the *Gentleman's Magazine* reported that at the hiring fair in Axbridge, Somerset, "many of the fair filles-de-chambres, dairy-maids, and even fat cooks and greasy scullion wenches, are so civilly greeted by their amorous swains, that the fair is productive of much business for the country justices and their clerks, parish-officers and midwives, for many miles around."

Traditional recreations declined, the author

concludes, through the passing of the predominantly agrarian society, "strongly parochial in its orientations, marked by a deep sense of corporate identity; it could not be comfortably absorbed into a society which was urban-centred, governed by contractual relations, biased towards individualism, increasingly moulding its culture to the requirements of industrial production. In the new world of congested cities, factory discipline, and free enterprise, recreational life had to be reconstructed. . . The low point of this particular process of social depression was roughly coincident with the second quarter of the nineteenth century: much of the traditional culture had disintegrated, and the new possibilities were only beginning to emerge."

This view, of course, is not a new one, though it is here refurbished with an impressive body of local illustrations. The author perhaps neglects the transition of rural pastimes to an urban setting in the early stages of industrialization, and is inclined to assume too great a degree of dreary uniformity in nineteenth-century urban conditions. Patterns of town growth were varied, and the attractiveness of the towns to rural workers had many facets. But this opens up a large subject and goes much beyond the restricted boundaries of this valuable study.

G. E. MINGAY

T. LINDSEY BAKER, STEVEN R. RAE, JOSEPH E. MINOR & SEYMOUR V. CONNOR, *Water for the Southwest: Historical Survey and Guide to Historic Sites*. New York City, N.Y., American Society of Civil Engineers, 1973. xiv + 205 pp. 49 illus. \$5.00.

The major part of this volume is taken up by a list of sixty locations of historical and technological significance for water supply systems in the American south-west. The list gives details of the historical development of the site, the surviving remains now to be seen, and references to published sources. It is amply supported by photographs, drawings, and an extensive bibliography. A brief introduction recounts the efforts made to secure water supplies by the prehistoric Indians, the Spanish, and modern American settlers since the early nineteenth century.

G. E. MINGAY

DENNIS R. MILLS (ed.), *English Rural Communities: the Impact of a Specialised Economy*. Macmillan, 1973, 259 pp., illus. £4.50 hardback; £2.50 paperback.

Dr Mills has brought together in this volume a collection of eleven essays designed to help students concerned with the impact of a specialized local economy upon the geography of rural communities. The essays, all of which have been published previously in various geographical journals, range over the centuries though with a strong emphasis on the last 150 years. They are accompanied by an introduction from the editor, and there are numerous maps, diagrams, and tables, though some of these are reproduced on so diminutive a scale as to require a strong pair of eyes. Those contributions which will probably appeal most to the readers of this journal include that by H. Thorpe on the influence of demesne farming on the parish of Wormleighton, Warwickshire, D. R. Mills's two papers on rural settlement around Lincoln, and the geographical effects of the settlement law in Nottinghamshire, M. B. Gleave's discussion of dispersed and nucleated settlement as influenced by enclosure in the Yorkshire wolds, R. Lawton's paper on nineteenth-century rural depopulation, and June Sheppard's report of three sample studies of rural population change since 1851.

G. E. MINGAY

GERHARD AHRENS, *Caspar Voght und sein Mustergut Flottbek. Englische Landwirtschaft in Deutschland am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Hans Christians Verlag, Hamburg, 1969. 172 pp. DM 7.50.

This is an absorbing account of one of Germany's outstanding agricultural improvers who introduced English methods of husbandry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and had even stronger links with England than his more renowned contemporary, Albrecht Daniel Thaer. Despite the fact that Dr Ahrens has had to piece together his account of Caspar Voght's life from scattered fragments surviving from a much larger collection of manuscripts, he has nevertheless been able to paint a remarkable portrait, which he sets against the wider back-

ground of the movement for agricultural improvement in north Germany. This owed everything to the inspiration of foreign, and particularly English and Scottish agriculturists, and yields revealing glimpses of the circle of agricultural improvers as well as of the export trade in English seeds and implements.

Caspar Voght was the son of a prosperous Hamburg merchant dealing in silk and linen goods. Voght entered his father's business at the age of thirteen, and was sent on a European tour when he was twenty. At that time he was interested in the world of literature and the theatre; his most exciting experience in London in 1772 was seeing David Garrick on the stage. But when he returned in 1786 it was with different objectives. He had recently bought three farms at Flottbek, outside Hamburg, and had a radical programme of estate improvement in mind. He visited the estate of the poet, William Shenstone, in Halesowen, Worcestershire, where Shenstone had created a beautiful garden and park, combined with a farm run on efficient business lines. Voght was deeply impressed by this, and returned to Flottbek taking English agricultural implements and ideas with him. In 1793 he returned once more to England, this time staying for two years. He lived in London for part of the time where he attended lectures on scientific subjects; he visited many enlightened landowners and farmers in various parts of England, to whom he was introduced by Sir John Sinclair; he travelled through Ireland, following almost exactly the course of the journey described by Arthur Young in his *Tour in Ireland*, this book having been published in German translation in the same year in which it appeared in English, i.e. 1780. Finally, he attended courses of lectures at Edinburgh University, striking up a warm and admiring friendship with Andrew Coventry, first professor of agriculture there. On his return to Germany, he maintained an active correspondence with a wide circle of people in England and Scotland, was a member of the Linnaean Society from 1793 onwards, the Royal Society of Edinburgh from 1794, and the Medico-Botanical Society of London from 1830. At his death he left a library of 6,000 volumes, of which 570 were concerned with

agriculture, and half of these were in English or French.

The influence of English agricultural ideas on Voght's management of the estate was far-reaching, and, indeed, the convenient label "English," in fact, embraces a very substantial Scottish contribution. Voght had formed a high opinion of Scottish forestry skills while in Scotland, and he had met the Booth family in Falkirk, owners of one of the large tree nurseries there. He persuaded the son, James Booth, to go to Flottbek and take care of the tree plantations on his estate. A whole ship's cargo of trees and shrubs followed, and 25 hectares were planted with firs, Scotch pine, and larches. Later on, since there were difficulties in getting trees to survive the journey in good condition, James Booth set up his own nursery, at first under Voght's ownership, and then under his own. Son and grandson continued in the business (the grandson returning to Scotland for a time for further training) and in the end the Booth nursery in Hamburg became the largest of its kind in Europe. The consequence of this successful pioneer enterprise was that many other tree nurseries were set up in the same area, the damp but mild climate proving ideal for the purpose. Today a triangle of land, centred on Halsenbek and Rellingen, boasts about 1,500 such enterprises, occupying 2,500 hectares of land.

The afforested portions of Voght's estate, however, were only part of a much larger farming enterprise. On the agricultural land enormous effort was expended in levelling out rough fields, draining wet land, diverting river courses, and planting hedges. Practically all the carting was done by Scottish two-wheeled carts, the horse harness came from England, six different types of English plough were in use, including a Norfolk and a Surrey plough, and an iron plough invented by the Scotsman, James Small. The drill invented by the Rev. James Cook of Lancashire in 1783 was put to work there; a threshing mill was bought from Scotland, costing £200; and to house it a special house was built in Flottbek. From Scotland came Alexander Rogers to manage the farm, and Christian Wilde to set up a workshop making English-style implements.

The enormous care given in England to the preparation of manure was another lesson carried home to Hamburg. In 1798 Voght contracted with the municipal authorities to clear the streets of Altona in order to get the manure for his land, and after 1800 he took over partial responsibility for street cleaning in Hamburg, carrying the rubbish to Flottbek by barge. He introduced English rotations on his fields, and as fertility improved, he was able to intensify cropping. Starting in 1800 with two years of grain in every six, he was able by 1815 to grow grain in alternate years, planting clover, rape, or potatoes in between. Then when wheat profits slumped, he turned more seriously to potato production, determined to break the near-monopoly which Dutch potatoes had in the Hamburg vegetable markets. He imported seed potatoes from Holland and England, launched a price war by undercutting the Dutch, and in the end successfully captured the Hamburg market. Clover was another serious business for Voght, and a bunch of clover appeared in his coat of arms.

Little is known in detail of Voght's profits from his farm. Although he left an enormous quantity of manuscripts at his death, he had no heirs, and they became dispersed among friends; the estate accounts which did survive intact were destroyed in the Second World War. Dr Ahrens is unable, therefore, to give much precise information on this score, but it is clear that in the early days of the Flottbek venture much money was poured into it from Voght's Hamburg business, which, after his father's death, concerned itself with the corn trade. The latter collapsed in the French wars, seemingly around 1799, and thereafter the estate had to stand on its own feet. All that is known of its subsequent development suggests that it was a profitable enterprise. The population of Flottbek increased to supply the labour on the estate, and Voght built three new rows of cottages to accommodate his workers. He generously provided for the old age of his workers and their widows, his benevolence in this respect reflecting a long-standing concern for poor relief which had occupied as much of his energies as his farm. He had devised a system of poor relief for Hamburg

in collaboration with the economic writer, Johann Büsch, and after it had been successfully introduced into his native city it was copied in other towns of Europe. Voght had many invitations to write and lecture about it, and it received considerable publicity in England.

One final aspect of Voght's wide interests was agricultural education. He showed a sympathetic understanding of peasants' reluctance to adopt innovations. He had the resources to withstand the failure of a novel crop, whereas his neighbours were finally and irrevocably deterred by a single mishap. So he pursued a quiet but persistent policy of lending implements like the potato plough, hoping that his example would eventually convert them. But he saw in the education of their sons his best hopes for the future improvement of peasant husbandry, and finally set up a small school at Flottbek. It catered for only a few youths, who were sons of well-to-do landowners, and who could afford to pay the fees; it did not last very long, but in its short life, Heinrich von Thünen was its illustrious pupil.

Perhaps the most instructive lesson of this book for the English reader lies in its picture of English agriculture, seen through the eyes of a perceptive, well informed, even brilliant foreign agriculturist. Voght came to England and singled out men, some of whose names and work have been undeservedly forgotten since; he reminds us that Scottish forestry had a reputation as high as English agriculture in the late eighteenth century; and his extensive purchases of English and Scottish equipment raise the question, what material remains industrial archaeologists might find in Low Germany, if they set themselves to search for it.

JOAN THIRSK

ROBERT STEWART, *The Politics of Protection: Lord Derby and the Protectionist Party, 1841-1852*. C.U.P., Cambridge, 1971. viii + 240 pp. £3.80.

Dr Stewart's book is a straightforward account of the formation and decline of the anti-Peelite group during the great Corn Law crisis and its aftermath. British historians have tended to concentrate on the victors in this struggle and to write about the economic basis of their victory, to the neglect of the

political side. To this extent Dr Stewart's book, based as it is on a wide range of printed and manuscript sources, is useful. Unfortunately the book contains a number of features which cast doubt upon Dr Stewart's sureness of touch in matters of economic history. There is a discussion (pp. 116-17) of the British balance of payments from 1815 to the mid-1840's, which depends on figures from an article in the *Quarterly Review* of September 1847, and ignores Professor A. H. Imlah's reworked figures. Contemporary estimates are important as indicating what the informed public believed to be the position at the time, but they were far from the truth in this case (see A. H. Imlah, *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica*, 1958, pp. 70-1). Readers are informed in a breath-taking generalization that "there was a deep-seated repugnance to improvement amongst large landowners" (p. 39). Dr Susan Fairlie appears as Mr Fairlie (p. 37), and her conclusion that the Corn Laws were generally effective in maintaining a considerable difference between the price of wheat per quarter in the north German ports and in British ports is ignored (*Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., XXII, 1969, p. 106). A tod of wool is referred to twice on page 142 as a 'rod'.

W. H. CHALONER

GERAINT JENKINS, *The Craft Industries*. Longman, 1972. xxi + 128 pp., illus. Plates. £3.50.

This tenth volume in Longman's *Industrial Archaeology Series* departs from the usual theme of explaining the significance of the monuments of industrial history to examine methods and processes of the craft industries. Mr Jenkins has chosen to study eighteen crafts, ten of which he has already described in his earlier book, *Traditional Country Craftsmen*, 1965. The new crafts he discusses in this new book are: paper, glass, boats, cutlery, edge tools, needles, nails, and chains. For the rest he has been able to incorporate new material that has become available since 1965, particularly in his chapter on pottery, and at the same time to revise the structure of his earlier material. With the exceptions of chapters 1 (baskets), 6 (glass), and 9 (clogs and boots), the text is supported by references to the sources,

and there is a select bibliography for further reading together with a note on the location of some existing craft workshops.

The Craft Industries is in no way a work of analysis despite the generalized assertions made in the book's introduction. The author concedes that not all the "craft industries" are included. He gives no basis for the term, nor does he say what other crafts are "craft industries." He comments that many industries of national importance had their beginnings in small local workshops; but among the crafts in the book there are some, for example, straw-plaiting, that had great local importance but never gained national importance before their decline. There is no attempt on his part to investigate the stage at which, he says, craftsmen's horizons were widened to produce goods for export beyond their locality. All that he says is that there was some stage at which this happened. Thus the work has to be examined as one purely of craft description, constructed to some extent from the author's own field studies, and from a selection of contemporary and historical sources. While he has avoided the subjective treatment common to a large proportion of the craft literature, there are occasions when an inaccurate impression is conveyed. For example, in the description of rush-mat-making in Anglesey the comments are those made by Anna Jones in 1927. Jenkins repeats her note about the acquisition of the skill as "either hereditary or acquired in early childhood" as the reason for the industry's not extending beyond the village, but he omits her qualification that "this is not the universal belief." As in *Traditional Country Craftsmen*, Jenkins credits the sixteenth-century plaiters from Lorraine with the introduction of straw plait to Britain, thus following the view held by T. G. Austin (1871) and H. Inwards (1921), although J. G. Dony, whose authority on this subject is considerable, and whose work is included in the select bibliography, thought it was a tradition lacking in confirmation and one for which he found no evidence.

In the study of clog-making, where there is the highest proportion of original material, Jenkins has quite correctly identified the structure of the manufacturing side of the trade, although a correction is required to the list of

clog factories as the businesses in Rossendale and St Helens are only "single-man" ones, and the third of the three main factories is to be found in Cudworth (near Barnsley).

Of those crafts not previously covered in *Traditional Country Craftsmen*, paper, glass, and boat-building are treated quite briefly while more space is given to the five metal-working crafts that conclude the book.

The book is illustrated by photographs and line drawings of most of the crafts. The industrial archaeologist especially will be interested in those that accompany the last three chapters. The Welsh clog-maker, who also appears in *Traditional County Craftsmen*, is reported to have lost his sight and to have given up the craft but his workshop will, it is hoped, be reconstructed at the Welsh Folk Museum.

It could be said that this book is not for critical scrutiny but for the "interested layman," and indeed the errors in the references, and the few spelling mistakes, will not detract from an appreciation of the tools and processes of crafts that have become unfamiliar to the present generation. The student of industrial archaeology or of the crafts will find in the references a select bibliography a useful list of twentieth-century works. All the same, the book would have been much more worthwhile had the author revised his previous material to encompass developments over the intervening years in both the crafts and their study. *The Craft Industries* is a work of restatement rather than research. A historical and analytical study of the crafts and their relationship to industrial development has yet to be written.

ALAN PITTWOOD

R. O. ROBERTS, *Farming in Caernarvonshire around 1800*. Caernarvon, Caernarvonshire

Record Office, 1973. 91 pp., 12 plates. £1. Mr Roberts' book is a welcome addition to the growing volume of publications concerned with the agrarian history of Wales in the early nineteenth century. The major part of the book is taken up by a reproduction of a manuscript survey of the Vaynol estate in Caernarvonshire compiled by an estate agent or surveyor at the turn of the eighteenth century. Although Mr Roberts does not indi-

cate the overall acreage of the estate, it embraced at least sixteen parishes throughout northern Caernarvonshire and the Llŷn peninsula by the late eighteenth century when it was under the ownership of the Thomas Assheton Smiths, father and son. As pointed out in the introduction, the extent of the Vaynol estate, encompassing both lowland and mountain environments, is such as to render the survey complementary to Edmund Hyde Hall's admirable *A Description of Caernarvonshire, 1809-11* (ed. E. Gwynne Jones, Caernarvon, 1952). The survey itself, which sets out the names of occupiers and lessees of individual holdings, also provides information on farm size and acreage under cultivation. However, by far the most valuable contribution of the survey to the pool of our present knowledge of the agriculture of the early nineteenth century lies in the light which it casts upon the general condition of farming on a large estate in North Wales at that time. Husbandry standards, the state of rural housing, and the range and method of construction of farm buildings all came under the scrutiny of the surveyor, while details of building materials and miscellaneous items of farm equipment were also included in his report.

In common with all surveys and "General Views" undertaken by individuals, the validity of the opinions of the Vaynol surveyor regarding the standards of farming practised on the estate were conditioned to a considerable extent by the breadth of his experience, and by his knowledge and appreciation of the physical constraints upon farming in the area under investigation. In this respect, an absolute statement like "The land (is) badly managed" may only be accepted as fully authoritative if the commentator was sufficiently conversant with local conditions to be in a position to assess what comprised good and bad management within that farming environment. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Mr Roberts offers no clue as to whether the compiler of the survey was a locally bred resident steward of the Vaynol estate or a professional agent from outside the local area. Whoever he may have been, the surveyor managed to resist the temptation, common among his contemporaries, of indulging in flights of vague subjectivity. In-

stead he based his assessment of husbandry standards upon sound criteria such as, *inter alia*, the extent of drainage and manuring, and the degree to which farmers followed a succession of arable cropping with sown clovers and grasses.

In many ways, this survey of the Vaynol estate mirrors some of the problems which are now generally believed to have inhibited good husbandry practice throughout much of nineteenth-century Wales. Thus the viability of different farms suffered as a result of the constant sub-division of holdings between family members upon the death of the lessee, while the survey suggests that fear of increased rents tended to act as a disincentive towards tenants' capital investment in land improvement. Although Mr Roberts briefly mentions these and other matters in his introduction, one feels that the value of this excellent little book would have been enhanced by a more wide-ranging discussion of farming on the Vaynol Estate in relation to farming in other parts of the principality. Nevertheless, local historians throughout North Wales will no doubt be delighted at the opportunity of purchasing a book of this quality, containing, incidentally, no less than twelve black-and-white plates, for only £1. Indeed, the publication of more material of this sort would be of immense benefit to the study of the agrarian and social history of Wales.

RICHARD J. COLYER

MANFRED BUMB, *Landwirtschaftliche Verbesserungen im Schottischen Grafschaften, 1700-1850*. Reihe der Forschungen Vr. 6, Schauble Verlag, D.506 Bensberg, Germany, 1973. viii + 245 pp. Price not stated.

The study of agricultural progress is basic to the history of particular localities, the people who lived in them, and how they procured their living. There is of course really no need to say this to readers of the AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW, but it is preliminary to some remarks upon this study of a comparatively restricted part of Scotland wherein improvements in farming technique and animal husbandry took place during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Such studies are local history *in excelsis*, and very far from the castigation levelled at them in the *Saturday Review* of 11 May 1889, which was that "the

dullest of all dull books is a conscientiously compiled parish history." Dr Bumb's book is not open to any such criticism. Conscientiously compiled, as would be expected of a German scholar, it is far from being dull, dealing as it does with an area of Scotland where striking advances were made in the 150 years under consideration.

One thing about this work is a trifle surprising. A "foreign" air might have been expected, and the book is written in German, but the appreciation of local conditions, the circumstances that made for change, and the people who stimulated and encouraged these modifications, is international rather than anything else.

The work of the Scottish improvers is not so well known as that of the English noblemen and gentry who figure in every school textbook, but in their own country they exercised great influence. The farming of Aberdeen and the Mearns was extremely primitive before their influence was brought to bear. The plough was an immense structure hauled by anything up to ten or twelve oxen, and sometimes preceded by a ristle to open the surface sufficiently to allow the massive plough to split if not to turn a furrow. These things have been made abundantly clear by Scottish authors whom Dr Bumb has not failed to consult, as indeed he has consulted all the rather large variety of contemporary and recent sources.

After a careful description of Scottish farming before improvement, Dr Bumb passes on to an intensive study of conditions in Aberdeen and Kincardine, describing the implements and their use, animal husbandry, and the economic conditions in which the work was done. The names of the "improvers" who were propagandists of novelty are pretty well known. I myself wrote a sketch of the work of Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk so long ago as 1931; but that was trivial compared with the examination of his influence and example described by both native historians and now again, in perhaps more detail, by Dr Bumb, who adds to Grant several other outstanding examples, including that stupendous athlete, John Barclay of Ury. The last chapter of the book carries the story to 1850.

This book seems to me to be an addition to knowledge despite the existence of native studies on much the same lines, and it has the advantage of bringing an unprejudiced and unpatriotic mind to the subject so that it is presented without prejudice. It is certainly one more book that must be read by students of the history of the progress of farming in the northern part of Great Britain.

G. E. FUSSELL

ALAN ROGERS (ed.), *Bulletin of Local History, East Midlands Region*, VIII. Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham, 1973. 151 pp. 65p.

This very commendable *Bulletin*, containing three major articles, notes on local history, a comment on the development of local history in the West Midlands in recent times, notes on sources, publications on the local history of the East Midlands for 1972, articles on East Midlands history, reviews of books and publications, short notices, and details of local history courses, more than confirms the health and vigour of local history in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire.

The Derbyshire Record Office, the subject of the first article, was set up in 1962, but still lacks a published guide. Its archivist, Miss J. Sinar, serves therefore a useful purpose in making known its contents to a wider public, particularly with respect to its rich holdings of industrial records, including those on coal and lead mining. Over the last two decades probate or household inventories have attracted interest from a growing number of local historians. John Bestall, who until his untimely death in March 1973 was Deputy-Director of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at the University of Sheffield, has related the progress of a research group in Chesterfield working from 800 probate inventories dated between 1521 and 1700. The third article by Mr D. L. Roberts, given over to 'Recording Vernacular Building in a Wide Field', raises important issues. "Recording vernacular building," he says, "has become a science." This particular study concerns Kesteven where the variation of building types both chronologically and in materials is very wide:

"from brick and stone farmhouses influenced by eighteenth and nineteenth century pattern books to simple mud and stud structures of the sixteenth century" (p. 19). A mass of information collected from a four-year survey has been subjected to computer analysis.

No more than a third of the *Bulletin* is given over to articles; its prime function for two-thirds of its content is to provide a local history reference and information service. The section entitled 'Notes on Local History' refers to recent developments in oral history and then moves on to contributed news from Record Offices and from other organizations, including the Midland Railway Project Group. The 'Notes on Sources' section concentrates on some nineteenth-century statistical sources, including registers of electors, the increasingly valued reports of statistical societies, religious censuses, the reports of inspectors appointed by the Public Health Board, 1848-55, and Bastardy Orders in Quarter Sessions papers.

Dr Rogers acknowledges the assistance which he has received from others, including Mr J. H. Davies who, as Librarian to the Department of Adult Education in the University of Nottingham, has compiled the bibliography entitled 'Publications on the Local History of the East Midlands, 1972.' It distinguishes purely county material from works which have a more regional and wider interest or touch on sources and techniques. Equally useful is the bibliography of 'Articles on East Midlands History' compiled by Mr A. Cameron. Reviews, short notices, and notes on the publishing scene occupy some 40 per cent of the volume, which concludes with a valuable index to volumes I-VIII compiled by Mrs S. Davies.

Dr Rogers is to be congratulated for editing this eighth, and to date the largest, edition of the East Midlands Region *Bulletin of Local History*. There is "no shortage of material for future issues" (p. 1). While for the editor the size of the volume raises problems, and "the effort involved in its preparation is becoming very great indeed," how many regions or counties are there which would not warmly welcome a similarly informative annual publication of their own?

JOHN WHYMAN

S. G. MCRAE and C. P. BURNHAM, *The Rural Landscape of Kent*. Wye College, Wye, Kent, 1973. 214 pp. 15 tables, 6 plates, 31 figs., 21 maps. £1.50.

Wye College assumed responsibility for producing the 1973 handbook which accompanied the annual meeting of the British Association held at the University of Kent at Canterbury in 1973. For each annual meeting of the British Association it has long been customary to prepare a regional handbook, and over the years these regional volumes have grown larger and more elaborate, despite inflation and other problems. The 1973 volume, however, broke with this long and costly tradition, and *The Rural Landscape of Kent* appears as a low-cost handbook written over four months by two main authors and a small team of eight subsidiary contributors, compared with previous handbooks compiled over two years by twenty or more authors. It has 214 pages while the 1972 Leicester volume reached the record total of some 600 pages. It is in every way an excellent production. No academic institution is more qualified to produce the kind of handbook expected for such a scientific meeting held in Kent than Wye College. It will serve for a long time as a useful reference work on the landscape and history of Kent, full of interesting detail and thoughtful arguments.

The authors have combined the function of leading "the wayfarer in Kent to a greater understanding of what he sees" (Introduction) with the theme, stated on page 158, that "the natural features of the landscape and present human activities are closely entwined." There is much in this volume of interest and relevance both to the present and the past. Because local and agricultural history tend naturally to be restricted to studies of particular communities or particular farms, estates or farming regions, both local and agricultural historians will benefit from having at their fingertips recent information on natural features as described in this book, each chapter of which concludes with a bibliography of useful references which also are pinpointed in the text. Separate chapters set out in detail the latest facts and research bearing upon climate, geology, physiography, soils and land use capability. Soils are given as

the pivotal point around which the book revolves (p. 49).

The book has also a considerable historical content in its widest sense ranging from pre-historical times through to the 1970's, and the chapters of greatest general interest to the historian include particularly those on agriculture, extractive industries, transport and settlement pattern, and rural buildings. In the chapter on agriculture and horticulture Kent's claim to the title "Garden of England" is shown to be beyond dispute. The trends, developments, and improvements in twentieth-century Kentish farming are fully documented. The range of crops grown, and the contrast between different parts of the county, are two striking features of agriculture and horticulture in Kent. This has been so for some centuries. Diversity in Kentish farming has deep roots, and Dr McRae rightly points out that

the changes brought about in Kent by the arrival of refugee Flemings in the 16th-17th centuries have not normally been given due recognition. Besides being the main-stay of the Kent woollen industry which flourished until the industrial revolution, they were the first to introduce market gardening and hop growing to Kent, and probably also did much to encourage the growing of fruit in the county (p. 106).

Despite extensive and intensive farming, Kent is still today one of the most wooded counties in England. The county enjoys natural fame for many reasons. Thus "from an Ecological and Natural History point of view Kent is one of the richest counties in the British Isles" (p. 85). It is also one of the richest counties from an ornithological viewpoint, and is perhaps the most important county in the British Isles for moths. Ever-increasing pressures on the environment have been checked in the twentieth century by town and country planning and nature conservation, so that Nature Reserves, National Trust Sites and Forest Walks are listed for sixty-three places in Kent (fig. 10, pp. 96-7).

Kent is an old-settled county and the link between landscape and human activity so closely entwined today "was doubly so in the

past when the power of Man to change his environment was much less" (p. 158). Settlement in Kent passed through several phases up to 1800 since when the population within the ancient boundaries of the county has increased more than tenfold, and the increase continues. Neolithic settlement occurred in and near areas of shallow well-drained chalky soils as in Thanet, near Dover, and along the valleys of the Cray, Darent, and Stour. An interesting comparison with underdeveloped regions is shown by the fact that favoured Bronze Age sites near the coast, or near streams and rivers, find repetition in nineteenth-century Malaya or Amazonia today.

Transport by road, railway, navigable river, and canal, and through ports and airports, is treated historically. Links with the Continent have constituted a common theme with respect to Roman roads, eighteenth-century turnpikes, nineteenth-century railways, and the long-advocated Channel Tunnel. The influence of the Continent shows up in other respects, while in terms of buildings "The Kent coast has always been of great strategic importance, and immense sums have been spent on fortifying it from medieval times onwards" (p. 182). The history of Kentish buildings is closely related to the history of the extractive industries, particularly with respect to building stone, bricks and tiles, and chalk products. It has often been the case that buildings appear as "a natural outgrowth from the ground on which they stand." Kent is rich in timber-framed buildings, and "many a timber-framed house in the Weald must have been built from oaks that grew nearby" (p. 175). Other products extracted from the ground have included sand and gravel, road metal, coal, iron ore, and fuller's earth. The types of building treated historically include churches, castles, military works, domestic and agricultural buildings, oasts, windmills, and watermills. Old oast houses, modernized with new equipment, are still used by many hop-growers, but not so with windmills and watermills. At least 400 windmills have existed in Kent (p. 195), while Kentish watermills at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 numbered 352 (p. 197). The latter were employed in corn-milling, and

in cloth, iron, and paper-making. Included also in the chapter on buildings is an interesting section compiled by Mr Burnham on the development of parks and landscaped gardens. The year 1777 was important in Kentish landscaping and gardening. Launcelot ("Capability") Brown was at work at Chilham, while in the same year hot-houses were built at Knole to grow pineapples (pp. 190-1).

The twentieth century has seen many changes, achievements, and problems. Prominence must be given to improving and widening the education and research in agriculture and horticulture carried on at Wye and Hadlow Colleges, and at the East Malling Research Station. Wye College is notable for its farm and horticultural unit, and associated with the College is an Agricultural Museum at Brook, housed in a medieval timber barn and an oast house, which is well worth visiting. Road improvements have been notable in Kent since the 1920's when motor-traffic problems began to centre on week-end traffic to the coast, yet some congested roads will probably remain in 1986. Natural and man-made catastrophes have included the spectacular landslide at the Warren in December 1915, which closed the railway line between Folkestone and Dover for nearly four years (p. 154); the damage caused by a ship to Kingsferry Bridge across the Swale to the Isle of Sheppey, which was closed for ten months in 1922 (p. 155); and the 1953 floods which required restorations works in Kent costing about £10 million (p. 131).

Criticisms of historical fact are literally few. Timber shortage may not have been a major factor in the decline of the Wealden iron industry, which was already very apparent in the 1720's when Daniel Defoe in his *Tour* noted an abundance of timber in the Weald. To suggest that "from the 16th century maritime related settlement in Kent was virtually confined to the Medway Towns" (p. 160) ignores what we know from other studies and contemporary sources, including nineteenth-century Navigation and Shipping Returns, of Kentish coastal and river ports as communities involved in an extensive hoy traffic, fishing, boat-building, and foying, not to mention smuggling. The heavy eighteenth-century hoy traffic in agricultural products and hops to

London as an important food market deserves greater stress. Although Herne Bay and Margate ultimately flourished with the coming of railways (p. 161), this was certainly not an initial feature of the 1840's and 1850's.

Apart from these minor criticisms, and regret that the index does not extend beyond place names, Dr McRae and Mr Burnham have produced a scholarly study of the developing Kentish landscape, which is well-supported by comprehensive chapter bibliographies, tables, maps, diagrams, sections, and plans.

JOHN WHYMAN

T. J. RAYBOULD, *The Economic Emergence of the Black Country: A Study of the Dudley Estate*. Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1973. 272 pp. £5.25.

Dr Raybould has provided us with a notable monograph on the regional history of the west Midlands. It is of course concerned with a heavily industrialized area, and though the writer has something to say about agricultural practice, his material does not allow him to say a great deal. However, on the management and revenue of landed estates between the eighteenth century and the twentieth there is much information, painstakingly gathered and carefully sifted, and this will be of great interest to all those who have to deal with estate records. For if few properties were so heavily industrialized as the Dudley estate, many historians turning to estate records primarily for agricultural evidence will find a significant admixture of data on mineral or other industrial revenues which has to be taken into consideration.

While coal and iron production in this area goes back as early as the thirteenth century, the great expansion came in the late eighteenth century when John Wilkinson introduced the manufacture of coke-smelted iron. Under the second Viscount Dudley from 1774 a most determined attempt was made to take advantage of the new technological and transport situation, by both the direct working of minerals, principally coal, and by leasing them. It was seen that a tenure situation which included great commons and wastes, and many copyholds, was not the best basis for exploita-

tion, and the Viscount was the prime mover in a whole series of Enclosure Acts which eliminated commons and substituted freeholds for copyholds, but on terms which were highly advantageous to the Viscount as a great landowner and possessor of manorial rights, involving not merely the consolidation but the considerable expansion of the mineral-rich lands in his absolute possession. Opportunity was taken to obtain rights to work minerals with extraordinarily favourable terms concerning compensation for surface damage and wayleaves. Equally, the indispensable transport facilities were encouraged, mainly by building connections to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire and the Birmingham canals, the principal ones being the Stourbridge and the Dudley canals. The effectiveness of these canals in their service to industry prolonged the era of water transport in the area, and may have been one reason for the late arrival of main-line railway connections. On the other hand, the estate railway system was remarkably extensive, and was partly operated for public use.

Perhaps the most interesting element in the story is the way in which the profitability of what was essentially a remarkably well-endowed property fluctuated with the varying interest and energy of owners or trustees, and of the land and mineral agents they employed. Especially was this so in the late 1820's when conservative and supine agents were in power. In fact a period when the estates were held in trust between 1833 and 1845 was generally beneficial, but mainly because of one experienced and enterprising landowner among the trustees, Edward John Littleton, Lord Hather-ton, and the fortunate appointment as auditor of James Loch, the brilliant administrator encountered in important recent studies of the Sutherland and Bridgewater estates. Loch and his assistants transformed the accounts, and, after 1836, Richard Smith the mineral exploitation.

The estate renewed its direct interest in ironworks, notably from the 1850's with the development of Round Oak. In the late nineteenth century this offered a counterbalance to the local tendency to a decline in the quality and the vigour of the industry, paralleling the

decline in the supply of local raw materials. The fall in the demand for wrought-iron led to a short-lived sale of the works to a public company which erected a steelworks on the site in the early 1890's, only to fail at once. The Dudley family then resumed the direction, installed a highly successful management, and retained control until nationalization.

Perhaps the main criticism of the book is of its title—possibly one of those cases where a publisher feels that a very exact one would seem too narrow? Within the covers there is no attempt to suggest that the book goes beyond the estate study of its sub-title, or to claim a complete coverage of the economic history of the Black Country. The internal analysis of the documentary material is good, but there is not a great deal of attempt to relate the findings (other than a couple of perfunctory references to Rostow) to any but the immediately adjacent themes in the economic history of the period. However, a very useful survey has resulted from the examination of estate sources which, though extensive, have been far from complete and have presented problems to the historian. Leases, in particular, have been used to great effect, reinforcing the opinion that this reviewer first formed twenty years ago that few classes of record hold more untouched riches for the economic historian.

J. R. HARRIS

G. E. FUSSELL. *Crop Nutrition: Science and Practice before Liebig*. Coronado Press, Lawrence, Kansas, 1971. 232 pp. \$6.50.

One always picks up a new book by Mr Fussell with a slight twinge of fear for he can be as dangerous to our accepted ideas as carbon¹⁴ and at any moment compel us to do a lot of fatiguing rethinking. This work on crop nutrition—a concise history of the subject—is not, however, particularly damaging in this respect, and takes a very balanced view of the many problems. For example, many people regard Stephen Hales as the eighteenth-century's most-forward-looking pioneer. Important as he is, says Mr Fussell, he must not be credited with too modern an outlook; he did not realize, for instance, that the soil water contained essential mineral nutrients in solution. Of course Hales's *Vegetable Statics* (1727)

really was the statistical approach so badly needed. It was a method which opened the way to the final solution of the story of how plants feed. And what a story it is! Looked at in cold blood anything more ridiculous than the fact that plants get their carbon from the air is difficult to imagine. No writer of science fiction has come near anything so strange. No wonder the agricultural chemist had a hard road to follow. "Do you mean to tell me that vast oak is made out of gas? You must be mad!" would the man's patron or employer exclaim, leading the wretched individual to tremble for the fate of his daily bread.

How science and practice were reconciled is the story this book tells so well, a masterly summary of the two parallel lines of an involved subject. Had it not been solved the modern world would not exist. Needless to say the book is written with the clarity, wit, and scholarship we associate with this author's pen, so that any rethinking we have to do can be done with a minimum of distress.

To chart the science is comparatively easy compared to recounting the practice; scientists of every age are only too anxious to record their ideas at length. To do the same with practice is more difficult, as Mr Fussell points out; and he further indicates that it was fortunate that the majority of farmers could not, or did not, read these early works.

Mr Fussell's book is in nine chapters, and runs from prehistoric man to Ingen-housz and to Humphrey Davy's *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry* (6th edn, 1839), the major and minor landmarks being picked out and discussed on the way. There is an extensive and valuable bibliography with 360 entries.

The cynic may reflect that even erroneous theories can lead to improvement. The humus theory of Albrecht Daniel Thaer—that plants got their carbon from soil humus—led to a great conservation and manufacture of farm-yard manure, and to considerably improved crops. It even has its followers to this day—the late Sir Albert Howard and the present fringe school of organic farmers who, if they cannot really believe Thaer to be right at least wish he were—such are the complexities of the subject.

Crop Nutrition is a most valuable book and should be widely read; it is to be hoped that it

will be published on this side of the Atlantic.

GEORGE ORDISH

M. J. WISE and E. M. RAWSTRON (eds.), *R.O. Buchanan and Economic Geography*. Bell's Advanced Economic Geographies, 1973. ix + 226 pp., 11 illus. £4.

This republication of twelve of Professor Buchanan's articles published between 1930 and 1959, ably presented by the editors, is a worthy tribute not only to the author's significant contribution to the then newly developing economic geography but to his activity in academic affairs down to the present. The work is scholarly, interesting, and unpretentious in style; in particular, *Approach to Economic Geography*, is a well argued thesis on the nature of the field, and contains good examples of the no-longer-fashionable regional synthesis. A major theme of Buchanan, the importance of the "physical milieu," is a timely reminder of the dangers of neglecting the factors of climate, topography, soil, and plant, in the current preoccupation with economic and social data. Buchanan's best work, on the pastoral industries of his native New Zealand, is omitted, and it is to be hoped this will reappear separately as the editors anticipate.

F. BEAVINGTON

M. M. POSTAN, *Essays on Medieval Agriculture and General Problems of Medieval Economy*. Cambridge U.P., 1973. vii + 302 pp. £4.80. *Medieval Trade and Finance*. Cambridge U.P., 1973. vii + 382 pp. £5.

Professor M. M. Postan's reputation and influence in the field of medieval economic history illustrates very well that big books are in no way a necessary means by which a scholar makes his contribution to his subject. These two volumes of collected essays are the principal monument to a scholarly life which ranges from 1928 to 1970 according to this representative collection, which has continued since that date, and which we hope is by no means over.

As he explains in his introduction to the volume on trade and finance, it was after his initial work on the formation of capital (perhaps he should have said money capital) that he realized that explanations about the nature of the medieval economy could not go

far without a previous examination of its agrarian base. This then began with the well-known article on 'The Chronology of Labour Services' in 1937, and has continued ever since. In fact, three-quarters of *Medieval Economy and Society* (1972), his summary in book form of his previous work, is devoted to the agrarian economy. The medieval volume of E. Lipson's *Economic History of England* (1937 edn), which sums up what one might call the pre-Postan era of medieval economic history, devotes a good deal less than one-third of its pages to agrarian problems. One of the main reasons for this disparity is undoubtedly the fact that Postan's influence and example have stimulated so much work on agrarian history that the changed proportion reflects a change in knowledge as well as a change in emphasis.

Paradoxically, however, the balance of the material printed in these two volumes is more favourable to trade and finance than to agriculture, though this is partly due to the reprinting of a very substantial article from Volume II of the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* entitled 'The trade of medieval Europe: the North' which, because of its attention to the trade in agricultural products, is very important for the agrarian historian. But even bearing this in mind, Postan's contribution to financial and commercial history remains significant. It is important not only because he destroyed concepts of the primitiveness of medieval English commercial practice by describing the flexibility of credit arrangements and the variety of forms of business partnership. He also showed how important it was to demonstrate that progress in the field of commercial techniques was a function of changing economic needs, a fact that could easily be forgotten by those concentrating on the legal and diplomatic aspects of commercial instruments. He also corrected the tendency on the part of English historians to be dazzled by the technical brilliance and tentacular financial dealings of the Italian merchant bankers, properly reducing them to size in the general context of the English economy.

Postan has significantly altered our understanding of medieval economic development by his insistence on the fundamental importance of agriculture, as well as radically chang-

ing the accepted order of priorities in agrarian history. He has done this in two ways, first by introducing to what previously had been a very descriptive historical method an element of theory, and secondly, by detailed work on specific problems which had previously been the object of very vague generalization. The report on the medieval economy which he presented to the Ninth International Congress of Historical Sciences in 1950 gave a framework for the study of agrarian problems which was of particular importance in that it provided for some an alternative to the only other coherent theoretical concept of development then current, that provided by Marxism, and particularly by the Russian Marxists. It was in this report that Postan rejected a unilinear concept of development and presented a picture of economic expansion up to the thirteenth century, of contraction from the third decade of the fourteenth, and of renewed expansion from the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The explanation was to be found in the relationship between land and people, a cycle of population growth, expanding cultivation, and over-exploitation leading to soil exhaustion, and to a downward turn in the population figures.

The unilinear conception of development had already been challenged on other grounds in his 'Chronology of Labour Services', where the relationship between labour services and money rent was no longer seen as one of the gradual development of a higher and higher proportion of money rent but as a fluctuating proportion dependent on the changing labour demands of the demesne which diminished in the twelfth, increased in the thirteenth, and diminished again from the end of the fourteenth century, a fluctuation dependent on the movement of agrarian prices. The demographic determination was not yet emphasized here, but the Postanian critique of over-simple ideas about the "rise of a money economy" (the subject of another essay published in 1944) makes its appearance.

Whatever one might think about Postan's conceptual framework, the work on specific problems which buttresses his general interpretation has been of the greatest value, amongst other things because it has vastly en-

larged our understanding of the basic unit of medieval society, the peasant household. Whereas most other historians had been vague about the relation between the size of the landholding and the peasants' living standards, Postan effectively reinforced the analysis already made by the Russian historian, E. A. Kosminsky, by showing in his 1959 article (with J. Z. Titow) how vulnerable to crop fluctuations were the poorer peasants, whose mortality figures, calculable from heriot payments to the Bishop of Winchester, rose and fell with the price of grain. The Achilles heel of medieval agriculture, shortage of livestock, was clearly as important in this respect as shortage of good arable land. Postan's 1962 article on village livestock, based mainly on the original assessments of movables for the royal subsidies of the thirteenth century, showed how meagre were the livestock holdings of the majority of peasants.

His contribution to the discussion of the nature of the peasant household cannot of course be fully evaluated without reading his chapter in the new edition of the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* I, not reprinted in these essays. An important reprint, however, is of his introduction to the Northamptonshire Record Society's edition of the *Carta Nativorum* (1960). In addition to discussing such important matters as the history of the lease, he touches on a subject of great interest for the student of the peasant economy. This concerns the factors which determine the size of particular holdings, apart from the more general considerations connected with the size of the whole peasant population in relation to available resources. Some historians suspected that the creation of big family holdings would in many cases need to be explained in terms of the successful participation of their possessors in production for the market on the basis of the exploitation not only of the family's labour but also of wage labour provided by landless or near landless workers. This was Kosminsky's view, influenced no doubt by the detailed analysis of Russian peasant agriculture which was made by V. I. Lenin in his controversy with the Narodniks. Postan, whilst agreeing that the peasant land-market was active, even though veiled rather than revealed by manor-

ial documentation, suggested that peasants took on or got rid of land rather because of the fluctuating subsistence needs of the family than because of the pull of the market. This view may perhaps be traced back to the writings of the Russian agronomist A. V. Chayanov, whose ideas were by no means Marxist, and therefore would, apart from their intrinsic merit, appeal to Postan. Chayanov is referred to by Postan in the article on Winchester heriots, and one feels that in some sense he lies behind the criticism of Kosminsky in the paper under discussion. One should add, of course, that Postan, in criticizing, always recognized the merits of Kosminsky's contribution, being in fact responsible for introducing his work to English historians.

Perhaps enough has been said to indicate the wealth of material which is in these two volumes, though what has been mentioned by no means covers all. Clearly one can criticize at many points both the detail and the overall interpretation, or both. Serious doubts, for instance, about the evidential basis for the view that by the end of the thirteenth century the limits of the good available land had been reached have been expressed by Miss B. Harvey. Yet new research on the effects of the great famine of 1315-17 would appear to support Professor Postan's suspicions that at least as early as this the turning point in the favourable economic conjuncture of the central middle ages had been reached. These are fruitful disagreements which should encourage further investigations. Perhaps there is also another dimension which is missing in Postan's work, no doubt because of the need felt to correct earlier interpretations. His justifiable insistence on the importance of the underlying economic trends, with their demographic determinant, leads to something of an underestimation of both the dynamic and the conservative elements in social relationships which, often working through legal and institutional forms, could affect the movement of history. Thus, while on the one hand recognizing the economic disadvantages of villein tenure, he is not inclined to attribute much importance to the efforts of villeins to alter the situation. He fully understands the peasants' battle with nature to get a living and even

anthropomorphizes nature as man's punisher for his temerity. But he does not regard the peasants' battle with the landlord as being of any significance. Changes in peasant conditions would have happened irrespective of rebellion. Similarly the wars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were of minor importance. Changes in society "would have occurred anyway, war or no war." But war was one of the most important formative influences in the elaboration of the apparatus of state, especially on the fiscal side. The political game, in which war policy played a considerable part, also had the distribution of patronage, and so of movable and immovable wealth, as a major objective. Law, then as now, was a crucial instrument of social control. The economic historian has to be a social historian as well, as in practice Professor Postan has often shown himself to be. But let us turn his own words against him. Medieval economic history would *not* have been the same today, Postan or no Postan, and we should be grateful for his contribution.

R. H. HILTON

T. H. LLOYD, *The Movement of Wool Prices in Medieval England*. Economic History Review Supplements, 6. Economic History Society. C.U.P., 1973. vi + 75 pp. £1.90. The choice of subject for this special supplement published by the Economic History Society betokens the pervasive importance of wool in the economic life of Medieval England, though the author, Mr T. H. Lloyd, somehow manages to skirt around some of the most pertinent underlying issues. Thus, in seeking to explain the movement of wool prices he emphasizes political factors and monetary considerations. Only once, with reference to the decline in wool prices during the famine years of 1315-17, does he give any indication of recognizing that the condition of the grain harvest (by influencing the level of agricultural income) could have a significant impact on the market for wool. This analytical weakness is further evidence by assertive statements such as "in the production of wool, as in all other branches of farming, the peasants had much lower costs than the lords."

The structure of the study is also unbalanced.

Much of the material is either peripheral to the main topic or is milked dry of substance by Mr Lloyd. Both of these defects are blatantly evident in the treatment accorded to some half-dozen price-lists of a hypothetical nature pertaining to the wool of different areas. As Mr Lloyd recognizes, such "price schedules are not a perfect substitute for real transactions." Nevertheless, some seventeen pages of text and appendices (i.e. almost one-quarter of the entire study) are devoted to reproducing and reviewing these schedules, several of which, moreover, are undated. A digression on contractual wool sales and two basically simple diagrams illustrating relative price movements (figs. 1 and 2) occupy a further nine pages. In sum, the reader gains the distinct impression that the material has been blown up to produce a monograph when an article of moderate length would have sufficed.

The statistics utilized by Mr Lloyd have been drawn largely from traditional sources. The main innovation is the compilation of regional price series, some eighteen area groupings being distinguished. The series are mostly composite ones representing simple

arithmetic averages of selling prices in different manors. In turn, the regional prices have been averaged to give annual (national) mean prices. Unfortunately, the material available to Mr Lloyd does not lend itself well to this kind of treatment: the data are too thin, and the product too heterogeneous.

Mr Lloyd's wool prices cover the period 1209 to 1500. No prices at all are reported for twenty-one of the first fifty years, while in the final 100 years the data become progressively fewer and observations more heavily representative of lower-quality wools. Thus, while Mr Lloyd's annual mean series shows a 30 per cent decline between 1420-9 and 1470-9, his Northumberland and Durham series indicates a 28 per cent rise during the same period. Certainly, as far as the fifteenth century is concerned, scholars would be advised to consult the primary data, wherever possible, rather than place any great reliance upon Mr Lloyd's statistical averages. Finally, it may be noted that certain of the figures appearing at the top of pages 46 and 47 have been transposed.

P. J. BOWDEN

Shorter Notices

D. O. PAM, *The Fight for Common Rights in Enfield and Edmonton 1400-1600*. Edmonton Hundred Historical Society Occasional Paper (n.s.) no. 27, 1974. 40p. (Obtainable from Hon. Sec., Edmonton Library, Fore St, London N9 0NX.)

This valuable addition to the publications of the Edmonton Hundred Historical Society deals with the survival, despite the pressures exerted by the London market, of the numerous common fields and extensive commons in Enfield and Edmonton. The manor of Enfield became part of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1420, and the Duchy, as the author remarks, was a notoriously lax landlord. Similarly, in Edmonton divided lordship followed in 1537 by the passing of the manor to the crown led to the establishment of very

low rents which discouraged the tenants from seeking enclosure. Attempts at piecemeal enclosure met with determined opposition, especially as it was possible for men with only a few acres of enclosed land to overstock the commons with excessive numbers of beasts. Here weakness in the landlords' management gave the tenants the upper hand and enabled them to resist the most intensive exploitation of the soil.

J. C. WILKERSON (ed.), *John Norden's Survey of Barley, Hertfordshire 1593-1603*. Cambridge: Cambridge Antiquarian Records Society, 1974. 120pp., map. Price to non-members £4.50.

The manors of Barley lay in the north-eastern corner of Hertfordshire next to the border

with Cambridgeshire. The survey by John Norden, well known for his *Surveyor's Dialogue* and other works, was completed in the early years of the seventeenth century. The Cambridge Antiquarian Records Society is to be congratulated in making this interesting document readily available to a wider circle of scholars, and the value of the volume is greatly enhanced by J. C. Wilkerson's wide-ranging and detailed introduction. Among the many points which he touches upon are the enclosure of the parish and the computation of its tithes, the decline in the number of farmers, and the seed rates for various crops in 1682-4. In Norden's time the farmers were all highly inter-related by marriage, and the survey records each of their 1,798 strips in the six open fields with the occupier's name, the size, and the manor to which it belonged. Not the least fascinating aspect of the survey is the field names, which include such vintage specimens as Dead Woman's Cross, Klondike, and Noons Folly.

JOHN FISHER, *The Political Plough*. Hugh Evelyn, 1974. v + 20pp. Illus. Paperback 90p.

This political pamphlet of 1821, now reproduced in facsimile, deals in rhyme with the demand for increased agricultural protection. Reference is made to George Webb Hall, whose Central Agricultural Association brought pressure on Parliament to this end. An introduction by Travis Crosby gives details of Webb Hall's career, and places the pamphlet in the context of the period.

JOHN ROWE, *The Hard-Rock Men: Cornish Immigrants and the North American Mining Frontier*. Liverpool: Liverpool U.P., 1974. xii + 322pp., 20 plates; 2 maps. £5.50.

John Rowe's new study extends his interest in Cornishmen across the Atlantic to the mining camps where their native skills were employed in exploiting newly discovered lodes of gold, silver, and copper. This fascinating story is thoroughly documented and neatly integrated into the broader history of the American mining frontiers, and it succeeds in throwing a great deal of new light on the problems and hazards of seeking wealth in a new country.

There is some incidental but valuable discussion of the early farming which accompanied the mining settlements, and the volume is attractively illustrated by photographs old and new, including some taken by the author himself.

N. J. G. POUNDS, *An Economic History of Medieval Europe*. Longman, 1974. xii + 562pp., 57 maps and figures. £4.95.

This substantial volume, intended for undergraduates and sixth-form students, covers the centuries from the later Roman Empire down to the close of the Middle Ages. Individual chapters deal with major topics such as population, agriculture, towns, manufacturing, trade, and finance, and the whole is amply illustrated by numerous maps, charts, and tables, making a highly comprehensive and valuable text.

ALWYN JONES, *Rural Housing: the Agricultural Tied Cottage*. Occasional Papers on Social Administration no. 56. Bell, 1975. 78pp. Paperback £1.70.

This useful study concentrates on the question of the hardship arising from dispossession of tenants of tied houses in agriculture, a problem compounded by the shortage of alternative housing in rural areas, and the arguments of the N.F.U. that the tied cottage serves both to house essential workers and to attract workers to the industry. Much of the pamphlet is concerned with the current legal position of the tied house and the case for its continued existence. The historical background to the problem is covered in a brief survey containing some breathtaking generalizations which will astonish, if not enlighten, the readers of this journal.

JOHN HARVEY, *Early Nurserymen*. Phillimore, 1974. xiv + 276pp. 16 plates. £4.75.

John Harvey's studies of the development of specialist nurseries will be well known to readers of this journal. (An article on the stocks held by early nurseries appeared in Part 1 of volume XXII, 1974.) In this new volume he provides a survey of the growth of the trade in seeds, plants, bulbs, and trees, beginning with the planting of gardens and

orchards in the grounds of early medieval manors and castles, and concluding with the work of such a familiar figure as William Cobbett, and that of the Falla family, who in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries transformed the nursery gardening of the north of England. Separate chapters are devoted to the growth of the London and provincial nursery trades before and during the eighteenth century, and the appendices (which take up over half of the book) provide details of the cultivation of rosemary, the plants cultivated, and the inventories, wills, bills, and letters of leading nurserymen. Mr Harvey's story throws light on an interesting aspect of the Englishman's traditional love of gardens, and particularly of the aristocratic taste for beautifying the grounds of country mansions; his well-researched, detailed, and readable discussion will undoubtedly rival the success enjoyed by his earlier work, *Early Gardening Catalogues*.

BOOKS RECEIVED

The inclusion of a book in this list does not preclude the possibility of its review in a subsequent issue of the *Review*.

Bol og By: Markbogsanalyser og Markdriftstudier. Landbohistorisk Selskab, 1974. 133pp.

Cleveland and Teesside Local History Society Bulletin, no. 24. Spring 1974. 27 pp. 25p.

Cleveland & Teesside Local History Society Bulletin, no. 26. Autumn, 1974. 34pp. 25p.

D. R. DENMAN, *The King's Vista: a Land Reform which has changed the face of Persia.* Berkhamstead, Herts., Geographical Publications Ltd, 1973. xv+368 pp. 23 illus. £6.50.

Etudes Rurales 51. Ecole pratique des hautes études, Sorbonne, Mouton, 1973. 174 pp.

Etudes Rurales: Agriculture et Sociétés en Asie du Sud-est. Paris, Mouton, 1974. 576pp.

NANCE LUI FYSON, *Diseases and World Health.* B. T. Batsford, 1974. 94 pp. Illus. £1.50.

CHARLES HIGHAM, *The Earliest Farmers and the First Cities.* C.U.P., 1974. 48 pp. Illus. 65p.

FRANK E. HUGGETT, *A Day in the Life of a Victorian Factory Worker.* Allen & Unwin, 1973. 80 pp. 22 illus. £1.95 hardback; 95p. paper.

P. LASLETT (ed.), *Household and Family in Past Time.* Paperback ed. C.U.P., 1975. xii + 623pp. £3.50.

EUGEN MEWES, *Terra Nostra: Culegere de materiale privind istoria agrară a României.* Centrul de Informare și Documentare Pentru Agricultură și Silvicultură, 1973. 486 pp. Illus.

POUL RASMUSSEN (ed.), *Viborg Landstings Skøde-og Pantebøger II 1645-1652.* Copenhagen. Landbohistorisk Selskab, 1973.

Sechzehntes Jahresheft, der Albrecht-Thaer-Gesellschaft. 149 pp. 1973.

ARTHUR SELDON (ed.), *The Long Debate on Poverty.* Second impression with introduction by Norman Gash, Institute of Economic Affairs, 1974. xxxii + 243pp. Paperback £2.50.

M. S. SWAMINATHAN, *Our Agricultural Future* (Sadar Patel Memorial Lectures), New Delhi, All India Radio, 1973. 54 pp.

PETER TEMIN, *Causal Factors in American Economic Growth in the Nineteenth Century.* Economic History Society: Studies in Economic and Social History, Macmillan, 1975. 80pp. Paperback 85p.

Spring Conference 1976

Members are asked to note that the Society's Annual Conference will be held at Homerton College, Cambridge, from 4 p.m. on Monday, 12 April until after lunch on Wednesday, 14 April 1976.