

Book Reviews

PETER MATHIAS, *The Brewing Industry in England, 1700-1830*. Cambridge University Press, 1959. xxviii+596 pp. 85s.

The Industrial Revolution has been presented for the most part in terms of changes in the mining, metallurgical, and textile industries. Now we have for the first time a detailed and scholarly account of the 'revolution' in an industry of the food and drink group, and one which was wholly dependent for its raw materials, barley and hops, on native agriculture. By the end of the seventeenth century the terms 'ale' (originally a sweetish, unhopped malt liquor) and the newer 'beer' (a bitter, hopped malt liquor) had come to describe more or less identical products following the victory of the latter drink. Beer brewing was already to a great extent a factory industry in London and the larger towns. There was even a certain amount of automation, based on horse-driven pumps and gravity feed, and there existed a mass retail market for beer similar to that served by the flour miller and baker. But expansion in the larger breweries was limited by the cost of transport and the risk of deterioration in the finished product. Then in or about 1722 came the invention of porter and the subsequent growth of porter brewing, particularly in London; in fact Mr Mathias's book deals mainly with the period during which the cheaper and hardier porter reigned supreme. "The appearance of the new beer should be seen . . . as an event of the first importance, or as an invention exactly equivalent in its own industry to coke-smelted iron, mule-spun muslin in textiles, or 'pressed-ware' in pottery." After the application of the rotative steam engine to the trade from 1784 onwards it became possible to speak of 'power-loom brewers', and in 1796 Samuel Whitbread brewed "for the first time in any brewery in the world, over 200,000 barrels of porter in a single season." The basis of this industry was 'John Barleycorn'. As Mr Mathias remarks, wheat, "the queen of

cereals, has exercised a far wider dominion over the textbooks of farming history than she has ever enjoyed in the fields." In the early eighteenth century the national output of barley, which, unlike wheat, could be grown profitably in every county in England and Wales, was almost certainly greater in bulk than that of wheat. (An unfortunate error in line 18 on page 390, where 'bushels' should read 'quarters', makes nonsense of Charles Smith's estimate of 1766 for English oat, rye, and wheat production.) Mr Mathias's chapters on national and regional barley farming, malting, and the hop industry and its markets are in themselves a first-class contribution to the history of English agriculture. This scholarly book is, however, packed throughout with well-digested information, drawn very largely from hitherto unquarried business archives, and it is difficult to see how it can ever be superseded.

W. H. CHALONER

B. H. SLICHER VAN BATH, *De agrarische geschiedenis van West Europa (500-1850)*. 416 pp. Aula-Boeken, Het Spectrum N.V. Utrecht: Antwerp, 1960. f. 3.50 (about 7s.). Paper back.

Ever since I read André J. Bourde, *The Influence of England on the French Agronomes, 1750-1789*, I have been convinced that one of the most neglected factors in the history of the development of farming is the relation with each other between the various systems practised in the different countries of western Europe, and at a later date those of the world. My studies for the last two volumes of the *History of Technology* underlined, at least in my own mind, this conviction. The most familiar nexus amongst all of these is that between Flanders and this country which I have discussed in a minor way in an essay 'Low Countries Influence on English Farming' (*English Historical Review*, Oct., 1959). There are many others: the persistence of the classical tradition along the Mediterranean littoral,

the influence of the Arabs in Spain and Sicily, the development of a four-course rotation in Piedmont and the Moselle highlands, the relation between Denmark, Schleswig, Friesland, and north-west Germany, both in cattle-breeding and crop rotation.

Such studies as those of Dr Bourde and my own only sketch the fringes of the subject. Now comes to hand Professor Slicher van Bath's elaborate and careful study. It is a major work in a minor dress, covering more than a thousand years in time, and an equally wide area in space. By the year 500 A.D. the economy of the *Pax Romana* had collapsed; by 1850 the modern period of mechanical industrial production was well established, and new transport facilities had made the importation of overseas foodstuffs possible. Times had changed. This is not to say, of course, that industry had not been developed, and that the exchange of manufactured goods for foodstuffs did not exist before that date; but the recovery of a money economy had been slow in appearing. It took nearly a thousand years.

Professor van Bath has described in detail the so-called natural economy of western Europe between the collapse of the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages. He describes the slow emergence of feudality, and he brings to our notice many documents of the early middle ages that are not, I suspect, too well known to agricultural historians in this country. He has compiled convincing figures showing area yield and kinds of grain cultivated in different districts, and he has discussed the feeding habits of people dependent for their nutrition on their systems of agriculture and the crops cultivated.

The recovery and increase of population between the ninth and the thirteenth century is familiar ground, as is the general effect of the Black Death. From this time onwards there have been innumerable local-period studies, and the general outline of the progress of western Europe is perhaps better known. It would be supererogatory to re-sketch it here. It is enough to say that a comprehensive description of what happened from the limits of east Germany to the Atlantic, with some

glances at Scandinavia and occasional references to Spain and Italy, is provided. The progress in land reclamation, the change in the relation of landlord and tenant, the effects of economic, demographic, and industrial development are not neglected, and instructive statistical tables, when the material allows, are provided. The development of new techniques in farming is discussed. A glance at the bibliography shows a remarkable acquaintance with the vast literature of the subject. This is a book that has long been wanted, is most admirably designed, and should be translated into English without delay.

G. E. FUSSELL

J. A. SYMON, *Scottish Farming Past and Present*. Oliver and Boyd, 1959. 476 pp. 42s.

As Mr Symon puts it at the beginning of Chapter XVIII: "From the agricultural standpoint Scotland is not one but several countries, each with varying conditions of soil and climate determining its system of farming." This is what gives rise to the difficulty of writing, in one volume, a comprehensive and satisfactory account of Scottish agriculture from earliest times till the present day, even when in this case the writer is one who has upwards of fifty years of experience behind him as a practical farmer, a lecturer on agriculture, and a representative of the Government concerned with agricultural education and research. This difficulty becomes evident from those chapters of the book which deal with the eighteenth century onwards.

The first hundred pages bring the story through the feudal and monastic periods up to the beginning of the eighteenth-century improvements. Much valuable material is set before us, for example on early leases (pp. 67 ff.) and teinds (81 ff.). By combing through the *Acts of the Parliament of Scotland* and such works as the *Rental Book of the Cistercian Abbey of Coupar-Angus*, Mr Symon has amassed a deal of useful statistical information about exports of cattle, sheep, hides, and wool, exports and imports of grain, the value of fishery products, the numbers of animals and hens, and the quantities of produce rendered as rent

in kind (from which an idea of the agricultural output for some parts of the country may be gained).

The first two chapters are illustrated by seven Figures, the sources of only two being given. The sickle plough on p. 7 looks like a poor copy of the one shown in Maclean's *History of Mull*, 1925, II, p. 112, or in J. Macdonald's *General View of the Agriculture of the Hebrides*, 1811, p. 156, and the caschrom is too awkwardly shaped to be workable (*caschrom* is invariably spelt wrongly throughout the book with a grave accent above the *a*). The "cuppled house" on p. 27 should also be better represented. The illustrations are not as closely linked with the text as one would like, and this also applies to most of the photographs, in themselves excellent, which ornament the latter part of the book.

For the eighteenth century, a certain diffuseness of treatment is evident. Thus, to get anything like a complete story one must read Chapters VII, IX, XVII, and XIX, and, for the Highlands and Northern Islands, Chapters VIII and XVII. The emphasis is on the individual achievements of "leading personalities." It is not easy to get the pattern of eighteenth-century agriculture clear for the various parts of the country, and Mr Symon is too apt to generalize for all of Scotland what is in fact characteristic of only a small area, as can be seen from the concluding paragraph of almost every chapter in the book. Considering the enormous wealth of material at the disposal of the eighteenth-century agricultural historian, his somewhat scanty treatment of the period is surprising. For this period, and throughout the chapters which take the story of Scottish agriculture through the periods of depression and prosperity caused by the wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Mr Symon tends to paint pictures of unrelieved gloom or of all-embracing rosiness. The mixture of grain crops and beef-production gives Scottish agriculture considerable elasticity, even when times are very bleak.

The two chapters on the Highlands and Northern Islands are in many respects inadequate, and in some points inaccurate.

Machairs, incorrectly described on p. 119 as "peat-covered lands," are properly tracts of bent-covered sandy soil. In a book of this size and scope one would expect a better source than John Gunn's *Orkney Book* (1909) for information on the complicated story of udal land tenure in Orkney. The great part played by the beef industry in the Western and Northern Islands, and its considerable influence on agriculture, is not mentioned. It is also worth remembering that the clearances, which turned much cultivable land into sheep-runs, gave a considerable boost to the herring industry from the re-settlement of displaced persons at the coast. As always, however, we are given a lot of handy statistical information; but a full treatment of agriculture in those areas really demands a separate volume by a specialist.

Chapter XVIII, on land settlement, deals with crofting agriculture among other things. Since 50,000 of the 75,000 agricultural holdings in Scotland are under 50 acres arable (p. 424), one would like to see a somewhat fuller treatment of the subject. Crofting, even more than farming, is a way of life rather than an industry, and since the geography of Scotland will probably always make crofting agriculture an essential part of its economy, the ideal type of land settlement would seem to be that in which, by a series of holdings of graded sizes, a young man of enterprise and ability could climb the ladder of agricultural success without any great initial outlay of money. It is well to be reminded that a Lowland croft, which is run like a miniature farm, is very different from a Highland croft, though both to some extent come under the definition of a croft, on p. 287, as "any self-contained and separately occupied small unit of from one to ten or more acres, exclusive of outrun."

This meaning of the word *croft* came into use towards the end of the eighteenth century and became firmly established after the *Crofters Commission Report* of 1884. In the days before enclosures, the word was applied to the infield, or cultivable land around the build-ings, or a portion of this, but not to the whole agricultural unit. When this has been realized, the problems raised about medieval "croftis"

on p. 287 and elsewhere become non-existent.

The chapters dealing with twentieth-century agriculture, bringing the story up to the present day, and those dealing with specific topics—livestock, poultry and bees, grasslands, the potato, etc.—are the best parts of the book, and will have the widest appeal to the farming public. The great and ever-increasing part which the government has played in all branches of agriculture, chiefly from the time of the 1914-18 war, is here documented by one who has inside knowledge of the department most intimately concerned with agriculture. His keen interest in experiment and research on subjects which, like bees and horticulture, are not exclusively agricultural, and in the diffusion of knowledge through instructors, advisers, group discussions, etc., results in a readable and informative section. The story of the Highland and Agricultural Society, of the various Research Institutes and Associations, of the ramifications of their work, and of the increasing influence these bodies are exerting on all branches of food production (and thereby on the social well-being of the nation) makes very interesting reading.

The appendices are of considerable value. The first, giving a chronological list of books relating to Scottish agriculture down to 1850, should, when used in conjunction with the similarly large bibliographical appendix in J. E. Handley's *Scottish Farming in the Eighteenth Century*, make it unnecessary for future writers on Scottish agriculture to use up space on book lists. The other appendices give a list of the Acts of Parliament relating to agriculture from David I to George VI; the fiars prices of oats from 1647-1956, thus supplying a need which Malcolm Gray felt in *The Highland Economy* (1951); and a group of tables containing agricultural statistics relating to crops, labour, production, distribution of different types of farms, and so on. In a book so generously endowed with appendices, one might also wish for a glossary, since a number of Scots words, such as *muirburn*, *winning*, *shielings*, *haining*, *mashlum*, etc., are not al-

ways glossed in the text, and will not all be found in English dictionaries.

The book as a whole is well produced and pleasant to look at. It is to be hoped that the fair number of misprints and minor errors will be corrected in a later edition.

ALEXANDER FENTON

THOMAS C. SMITH, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan*. Stanford University Press, 1959. xii + 250 pp. 40s.

The author, an associate professor of history at Stanford University, considers that the rapid modernization of Japan after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 was prepared and determined largely by agrarian development in the Tokugawa period. In the first part of this book he studies the traditional seventeenth-century village with respect to its land system, social organization, farming practices, and the structure of political power. Then in the second part he traces the process of transformation of the village from the eighteenth century onwards, through the growth of markets, rising agricultural productivity based on technical advances, changing farming system and class structure, and political conflict in the village; and he stresses the importance for Japanese history of agrarian changes, the central feature of which was a shift from co-operative to individual farming, "perhaps justifying comparison with the agricultural revolution in Europe." Finally he makes clear the significance of these agrarian changes for later economic and political development. Besides making full use of the researches prosecuted since the war by Japanese scholars, usually unfamiliar to foreign students by reason of linguistic difficulties, he also utilizes original materials himself. His work is a most attractive survey of the subject, and at the same time a clear and reliable summary.

The most interesting point of his study for English agrarian historians is that he always tries to compare the agrarian changes of the Tokugawa period with contemporary agrarian development in western European countries; but finding that they took entirely different courses, "despite the fact that the

starting points in the two cases were similar in important respects," he notices the inadequacy of the comparison. It seems to me, however, that an interesting and profitable comparison might have been possible had he tried to choose the counterpart of agrarian changes in Japan at the corresponding stage of economic development in European countries, instead of comparing directly two different developments merely because they happened during the same period.

K. UGAWA

K. CAMERON, *The Place-Names of Derbyshire*. English Place-Name Society, Vols. xxvii-xxix, 1959. lxxiv + 830 pp. £5 5s. (i.e. 35s. each).

Comparatively little work has yet been done on the farming history of Derbyshire. These three substantial volumes on the place-names of the county, therefore, are specially welcome. Mr Cameron contributes an interesting and informative introduction using the collective evidence of place-names to suggest the chronology of early settlement, leaving the reader the no less absorbing task of looking at each parish individually and speculating upon its later history of colonization and expansion. This labour is immensely rewarding, for most of the eastern half of the county as well as much of the north-west was originally densely wooded, and much clearance did not take place until the later Middle Ages. As Mr Cameron shows, the Anglo-Saxons skirted the forests by entering the county from the Trent valley and moving north and north-west along the Dove and Derwent valleys. A map showing the place-names suggestive of former woodland illustrates this argument better than words (though the purpose of the map could have been made more readily intelligible to the casual reader if it had been given a title. The same criticism can be made of all the maps, which, be it noted, are in the pocket at the end of Vol. III, not at the end of Vol. I as is stated in the table of contents and on the dust-jacket).

Many parishes in eastern Derbyshire, therefore, admirably illustrate assarting and

the growth of new settlements. Staveley, for example, itself meaning 'clearing from wood where staves were got', begot Staveley Woodthorpe by the twelfth century, Netherthorpe in the thirteenth, and The Hague by the fourteenth century. Alfreton parish acquired a new hamlet called Riddings in the mid-thirteenth century, and in the early fourteenth century Swanwick (a dairy farm) and Somercotes (summer shelters), both suggesting that they originated as the headquarters of summer dairy pastures and later developed into permanent settlements. In the Peak district of north-west Derbyshire, the *booths* of Edale parish likewise imply temporary summer pastures in the royal forest (the earliest documented reference dating from the mid-fourteenth century, at least a century after the first references to the booths of Rossendale and of Macclesfield Forest in Cheshire), which had been transformed by the mid-Tudor period, and probably much earlier, into permanent cattle stations, officially called *vaccaries*. As pressure on the land increased, colonists were found to populate even the most barren hills of the Peak. The parish of Hope Woodlands, lying in a region which is nowadays classed as land of little agricultural value, had attracted settlers to Ashop and Lockerbrook farms by the beginning of the thirteenth, and to Ronksley and Rowley farms by the mid-fifteenth century.

For a county which probably occupied almost as many of its inhabitants in its mines as in its fields by the beginning of the seventeenth century, there are surprisingly few place-names to suggest the importance of minerals, though some of the names of the groves, that deceptively alluring term for a leadmine, have survived. As for the absence of pre-English names in the leadmining area, Mr Cameron seeks to solve this problem by suggesting that the mines were worked only in the summer months and were temporary sites only. But the temporary use of land for summer pastures did not prevent other places from acquiring names that persisted into the era when they became permanent settlements. Place-name study, of course, is a

treacherous bog, and the most difficult propositions to defend are those which argue from silence. Mr Cameron is more aware of the dangers than we who look on, admire, and criticize. He treads most warily of all when considering the possibility of the survival of British villages into the Anglo-Saxon period. On this controversial issue, he seems to veer rather towards the side of those who think that few Celtic settlements survived except in the north-west. Many of his arguments, however, provoke retort. For example, even though it be accepted that "few of the names [containing the element 'walk'] bear the mark of any great antiquity," this does not prove that they were not old settlements. One would not expect such names to be of any greater antiquity than the Anglo-Saxon settlements around them. And if, as Mr Cameron believes, Walton still means a 'farm of the serfs', where, it may be asked, did the serfs come from? The stimulating debate on the survival of British villages can now continue with fresh arguments based upon Derbyshire. Mr Cameron can feel satisfied that his three volumes will start more discussion on this and other topics, for he has equipped his readers with much new knowledge enabling them to take another and more intelligent look at the Derbyshire countryside.

JOAN THIRSK

CONYERS READ (ed.), *Bibliography of British History: Tudor Period, 1485-1603*. Issued under the direction of the American Historical Association and the Royal Historical Society of Great Britain. Oxford University Press, 2nd edn, 1959. xxviii+624 pp. 63s.

The second edition of this familiar and invaluable work covers the new material on Tudor England published during the last 25 years. It is identical in form with the first, except for a rearrangement of the section covering Wales. "An exhaustive survey of the material in print has been made to 1 January 1957. Many entries have been made of books and articles appearing since that date, but no complete survey of this more recent literature

has been attempted." Altogether the volume contains over 6,500 items: some five thousand new titles were collected, of which about one-half were finally included. A comparison of the various sections thus provides an interesting if salutary conspectus of historical studies during the last generation. That on 'Political History' has expanded by nearly 60 per cent, on 'Cultural and Social History' by more than 100 per cent, but on 'Economic History' by only 30 per cent. Of the last 'Agrarian History' (under the title of 'Rural Conditions') comprises, with 102 entries, less than one-quarter, but 'Industrial and Commercial History' more than three-quarters. The problem in 'Economic History', we are told, has been rather one of "getting everything in than of leaving anything out." The present reviewer has not noted any serious omissions, though occasionally the editorial comments seem insufficient. Some further note than "The standard book on the subject" now seems called for against H. L. Gray's *English Field Systems*.

In the field of Local History the volume is open to more serious criticism. Everyone will sympathize with the editor's statement that "There is a real need for a critical bibliography of English local history, a field in which there are so many tares among the wheat. . ." It is therefore all the more pity that the present highly select entries have not been more carefully checked and sifted. It is one of the few sections not stated to have been submitted to the scrutiny of specialists, or of scholars in this country, and it is the one which most evidently requires it. The list of 'Other Works' now added under each county, generally consisting of half a dozen articles in local archaeological collections, which also appear generically under 'Local Societies', is too selective to be of much assistance. The choice of entries under 'Town Histories and Records' seems particularly haphazard, quite apart from the fact that many works so listed, like J. S. Brewer's *Hatfield House*, are not 'town histories'. To cite one county only: out of the seven items mentioned in this section under Kent, it is strange to include no less

than three works on Dover, Bridgman's *Sketch of Knole* (which is little more than a Regency guide-book), a history of Chislehurst, and nothing on either the episcopal city of Rochester or the county town of Maidstone. There are useful if old-fashioned works by J. M. Russell on Maidstone (1881) and F. F. Smith on Rochester (1928). If anything were to be included on Knole it should have been C. J. Phillips's *History of the Sackville Family* (2 vols. [1930]). The cross-references to items in Gross's *Bibliography of British Municipal History* and *Sources and Literature of English History . . . to about 1485* contain several unnecessary repetitions of items cited in full in the text, and no. 671 is an error for 677.

A casual examination, indeed, shows that the volume as a whole should have received more careful checking. Dr Finberg appears as an author on p. 364, but his name is not indexed; an index reference under Dr Hoskins's name (4335a) does not appear in the text; G. R. Batho's initials are wrongly given on p. 345; 'Deene' is mis-spelt in the index (p. 554); Dr Willan's name is mis-spelt on p. xii; Ireland's *History of Kent* remains garbled, as in the first edition, under the name 'Weland'; and Bridges's *Northamptonshire* was not compiled from "the manuscript collections of Sir Peter Whalley," but (as the title page indicates) from the manuscript collections of John Bridges by the Rev. Peter Whalley.

A. M. EVERITT

DAVID THOMSON (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History*, Volume XII, *The Era of Violence: 1898-1945*. Cambridge University Press, 1960. 602 pp. 37s. 6d.

Whoever may profit by reading this book, it will not be a student of agricultural history. A brief early chapter entitled "The Economic Map of the World" suggests some reasons for the general dissatisfaction with which this volume has been received. If Professor Allen had been able to concentrate on an Economic Map of Europe he might have succeeded. As it is, we can be told, of the agrarian story, only that

the first world war led to a shortage of food-stuffs in Europe, thence to over-production in Canada, Argentina, etc., to surpluses, "serious disequilibria," policies of protection, and industrial consumers paying higher prices for food. These are economic trends, not history. More interesting pieces of agricultural history may be found in the editor's own chapter on "The Transformation of Social Life." But if we are to read about agriculture in a passage on the failure of democratic political institutions in a chapter on social life, we clearly need a better index than is provided here. This volume contains a brilliant chapter on the Peace Settlement of Versailles. For the rest, one deplores that the editorial plan was not more definite and more capable of realization.

NORMAN SCARFE

VAL CHEKE, *The Story of Cheese-Making in Britain*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959. xii+348 pp. 40s.

This is a delightful story of cheese-making and although historians may claim that it is not a history in the true sense, it is a book that will remain for long an important source of information. It is attractively written. The chapters on early history, more especially those dealing with cheese from Saxon to Tudor times and cheese-making in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are of special interest to the local historian. In spite of the modern progress in cheese-making which the author refers to in great detail, it is unfortunate that economics and costs of production prevent us from having that rich flavour of a slowly matured and mellow blue-veined cheese. No longer do we see Blue Wensleydale in any quantity, Blue Vinney (the lovely Dorset blue) is no more, and the epicurean's dream, a Blue Cheshire, appears to have vanished entirely. It would almost appear that there is a small fortune to be made by an enterprising cheese-maker who will provide us with these delights of bygone days. A great deal of patient research has gone into the writing of this book, not only about cheese-making, but also about the lives and living conditions of those who made the British

cheeses in farm dairies throughout Great Britain.

The appendix is too scientific for the layman, and may not be detailed enough for the dairy technician; and its connection with the story of cheese-making is rather remote. Apart from this, it is a book that is a useful addition to the literature of agriculture.

ALEXANDER HAY

PHILIP A. WRIGHT, *Traction Engines*. A. & C. Black, 1959. xiv+90 pp., illus. 21s.

Little serious attention has yet been paid to the history of the steam traction engine, except by Mr Ronald Clark in his excellent studies of the firms that built them in the eastern counties. Mr Wright's book is therefore welcome as a brief general survey of the subject. Though it is primarily concerned, as its title implies, with the machines themselves, it discusses also the uses to which they were put. It has therefore something to offer to the historian who is interested in the mechanization of agriculture during the past century. The plates are useful, with a gorgeous frontispiece in full colour; and the book is admirably produced.

JACK SIMMONS

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS RESEARCH INSTITUTE. *The Agricultural Register*, New Series. *Changes in the Economic Pattern, 1957-9*. Oxford University Press, 1960. xii+148 pp. 25s.

This useful compilation is the second of the post-war series and follows much the same pattern as its predecessor. It has chapters on agricultural policy including the small farm scheme launched in 1959; on marketing and prices of the main products, including fruit and vegetables; and a general account of the place of agriculture in the British economy, as well as summaries of current information on rents, wages, employment, and other inputs.

Mr Frankel, the main author, has included much detail which is only of indirect concern to British agriculture, such as the international agreements on wheat and sugar, and the

negotiations between the Sugar Board and the refiners over the implementation of the agreed price for Commonwealth sugar. Future issues could be even more valuable if the text were rigorously pruned of these less important matters and all the sources quoted instead.

EDITH H. WHETHAM

MARY D. LOBEL (ed.), *A History of the County of Oxford*. Vol. VI, Ploughley Hundred. Oxford University Press, 1959. xxviii+390 pp. £6 6s.

Ploughley Hundred lies east of the Cherwell, on the borders of Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, and most of its thirty-odd parishes are on the belt of cornbrash between the oolite plateau and the Oxfordshire clay. Its uplands are rather bleak, and cornbrash soil is not the county's best. Although Bicester, its market town, is an ancient road junction, the Hundred is remote, and came into public notice only in times of crisis, which is why the district was pounced with skirmishes in the Civil War, and why Bayard's Green in Stoke Lyne parish was a tournament ground, and a great place for baronial intrigue, in the days before tournaments were made spectacular and respectable. Neither the Oxford canal, completed in 1790, nor the railways made much impression outside the Cherwell valley; apart from some quarrying and fishing the Hundred's staple was agriculture, and until the twentieth century its society stayed sharply divided between the parks and houses of its improving landlords and celebrated fox-hunters, and the village life so ably and movingly described in Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise and Over to Candleford*. Now, with the United States Air Force at Heyford, and a variety of other camps and bases spilling into Bullingdon Hundred, things are not what they used to be.

The Hundred's agrarian history follows an appropriately traditional pattern. There is evidence of pagan Saxon settlement at Oddington and elsewhere, and then of a gradual extension of the cultivated land that continued into the thirteenth century. There were often

two open fields made three before the sixteenth century; at Fritwell there were eventually seven, and at Islip six, but at Fringford strips and closes lay in one apparently undifferentiated maze until 1762. The Black Death did severe damage; Tusmore seems to have been depopulated by 1358, when it was emparked, and even conservative landlords like the abbot of Westminster, lord of Islip, had to grant leases and copyholds to their restless tenants. Charlton, where the plague caused fewer deaths, steadily lost its villeins by flight in the fifteenth century, and their lands were eventually absorbed by freeholders. Yet almost all the surviving medieval churches contain fifteenth-century work; the land was not a desert. There was some consolidation and private enclosure in the sixteenth century—enough to provoke an abortive rising at Hampton Gay in 1596—and sheep farms multiplied, but most of the ground remained arable until the great age of parliamentary enclosure, the latest act being that for Charlton, in 1858.

Despite the longer courses of rotation that multiple fields allowed, the arable showed signs of strain in the seventeenth century, when sainfoin was widely introduced to relieve the soil. The improving landlords, squires and rectors, who seized their chance after enclosure, often turned to dairy-farming and stock-rearing, with root crops and a Norfolk course on the dwindling arable. This was the normal pattern round Bicester, where the market flourished until the early eighteenth century, when the butter in which local estates began to specialize went to London by wagon; the town's cattle markets continued to prosper, but its general market declined in the face of plenty. So did the fortunes of the poor; the Bicester Emigration Committee even sent 111 of them to Liverpool in carts, *en route* for the United States on the rate-payers' money, but many of them worked their way back to destitution in Oxfordshire rather than perish in Eden.

This volume of the Victoria History follows the satisfactory pattern of its predecessor (reviewed *supra*, VI, pp. 117–18). Each parish

has an essay on economic and social history which sketches what is known of its farming; there are good field maps, and some pleasant illustrations. The introductory chapter on the Hundred is a little more general this time, although it is still overloaded with administrative history; there is some geology, which is an improvement, but the railways and the Oxford canal would be better noticed there than under the parishes, and so would the pattern of settlement. Certainly the book cannot be wished more expensive, even though its price represents a mere three shillings a parish, and if it were to be longer, then the extra space might best be given to longer quotations from Flora Thompson. If, after all, the reader wants to know what it felt like to live in Ploughley Hundred in the 1880's, *Lark Rise* is still his book.

GEOFFREY MARTIN

H. CECIL PAWSON, *Cockle Park Farm. An Account of the Work of the Cockle Park Experimental Station from 1896 to 1956.*

Oxford University Press for the University of Durham, 1960. xiv+262 pp. 35s. net. Cockle Park Farm of 461 acres became the Northumberland County Agricultural Experiment Station in 1896, and in 1917 60 acres adjoining, known as Paradise Farm, were added. Both were in poor condition when they were taken over, and, even in 1917, the rent paid to the landlord, the duke of Portland, was only 11s. 10d. an acre. In 1938, in order to facilitate arrangements for building improvements, the whole was bought on a 999 years' lease for £8,000. With the reorganization of the agricultural advisory service after the war, the Station was handed over in 1947 to King's College, Newcastle, by whom it has been administered ever since.

The subject of this review covers the whole sixty years of the Station's existence, practically up to the present time. It is written by Professor H. C. Pawson who has been associated with it personally for the last forty years, and in whose affections it obviously occupies the position of a favourite child. According to him, the book "presumes to be

history," and it is on this presumption that it can stake its claim for notice by agricultural historians. In fact, however, 188 of its total of 262 pages are a description of the Station's experiments during this period, and it is hard to believe that their contribution to agricultural knowledge is primarily historical. At the same time, they provide a first-class record of the experiments on which the Station has built its reputation, and they remind the reader that these deal not only with basic slag and wild white clover but with other subjects extending over the whole range of arable crops, of cattle and sheep, and even of horticulture and forestry. By 1954 there were no fewer than 1,500 plots running simultaneously.

No agricultural historian can read this book without profit. The contrast between the emphasis on basic slag for enriching the nitrogen content of the soil through clovers sixty years ago and the present-day reliance on synthetic nitrogen is an outstanding example of change. The idea that silage can provide an additional source of protein instead of merely replacing roots has a more recent origin. But the fact that experimental plots of wheat were yielding up to 60 bushels per acre in 1905 and over 30 cwt in the 'thirties indicates that today's yields have been attainable for many years under suitable conditions. In some other ways we have made remarkably little progress. Very early in his tenure of office Gilchrist found that there were big variations in the amounts of dry matter in swedes, due largely to variety, season, and soil. At Cockle Park 8 tons of swedes grown in 1904 had as much feeding value as 11½ tons grown in 1901. Yet the only tables of feeding-stuffs composition generally available to research workers today give a single analysis for swedes, with no indication what the deviations from it may be. This example draws attention to the lack of scientific data which handicaps so much agricultural research at the present time.

From the historian's point of view much the most interesting parts of the book deal with the history of the Station itself, the five-

hundred-year-old peel tower (a note on which appears as an appendix), and the biographies of the Station's first three directors. Each of these came from across the Border from farming stock, and it is possibly because of this that the early experiments at Cockle Park were related so closely to the financial side of farming. In addition, the times were depressed and the findings of science were unlikely to be followed in practice unless it could be proved beyond reasonable doubt that they would be successful financially. Somerville was fortunate in having chosen the application of phosphate (in basic slag) to poor grass land for his main experiments, for the results were spectacular in spite of the limitations of finance and staff under which he laboured.

But after three years at Cockle Park he left for Cambridge, and was succeeded by Middleton. Middleton's time there was short, too, and he was effective mainly in carrying on and extending the work Somerville had initiated. Middleton had already made a name for himself in India before he came to Northumberland, and he had a distinguished career subsequently at Cambridge and at the Board of Agriculture. But he spent long enough at Cockle Park for the fine scientific approach which he possessed to be recognized by his colleagues and successors.

Gilchrist, the third of the trio, made Cockle Park his lifetime's work and interest. His best known contribution to improved farming was the seeds mixture incorporating wild white clover, which made Cockle Park a worldwide name. In the Foreword, Sir John Russell writes that Gilchrist failed to receive the rewards that his work entitled him to. It was too empirical to attract the notice of universities, while the State bestows its honours not on professors of agriculture as such. Somerville and Middleton both received knighthoods, but they had left Cockle Park first, and they achieved fame in governmental work as well as in academic research.

The illustrations, which add to the pleasure of reading the book, include a photograph each of Somerville, Middleton, and Gilchrist. Somerville's is a reproduction of a painting

presented to him in 1923 by the Oxford University Plough Club. As those who can remember him personally must now be confined to his Oxford acquaintances, this choice is a particularly happy one.

For the rest, the references to prices and other conditions at the beginning of the century make an interesting comparison with those of today. There were instances of wheat being sold at 18s. a quarter, of rents at less than 10s. an acre, and linseed cake at £8 5s. a ton. The value of a calf was put at 40s. and cattle were usually valued at between 30s. and 40s. a cwt. Forty years ago a visit from Newcastle to Cockle Park, nineteen miles

away, took a full day and involved a train journey to Morpeth and a 4½-miles trap or horse-charabanc ride, and must have required a considerably greater sacrifice of the King's College students' time than is involved today. Communications with the College had to be by letter and a bedroom was reserved for the use, when he required it, of the Scientific Director. *Cockle Park Farm* is not a history book, but there is a lot of history in it. Moreover, the new emphasis on animal husbandry at Cockle Park is rapidly banishing those experiments which this book relates to the realm of history.

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