The AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW

VOLUME II 1954

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Regional Farming in England
by W. G. Hoskins

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An Early Reference to the Welsh Cattle Trade
by H. P. R. Finberg

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The Poll Tax and Census of Sheep, 1549
by M. W. Beresford

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Some Early Ideas on the Agricultural Regions of England
by H. C. Darby

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The British Agricultural History Society

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The Agricultural History Review

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THE

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The British Agricultural History Society

THE REVIEW

It is encouraging to be able to record that Volume I of the Review has been remarkably well received and that there have been many compliments both from members of the Society and from the Press. The Editorial Board have been at pains to keep this second volume up to the same standard, and hope that it will have as kindly a reception.

There has been some criticism of the fact that the Review is at the moment only available to members of the Society and cannot be purchased by the general public. The Executive Committee feel, however, that as long as the Society's income will only permit the production of one issue a year, it would be unfair to members to sell it at a price less than the annual subscription. In fact anybody can obtain it, if he so desires, for one guinea, although this carries with it a year's membership of the Society. Once the Review appears twice a year the Executive Committee foresee no difficulty in selling single issues for a little more than half the cost of the subscription. It may be worth mentioning that there are adequate stocks of Volume I and that members may purchase copies for 10s. 6d.

The membership of the Society has continued to rise, and on the eve of going to press it stands at just over 270. It is to be hoped that all members of the Society will do their best to encourage others to join. A little over a hundred more members will make it possible to issue the Review twice a year.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting and one-day conference was held on 2 April 1954 at the University College of Leicester. Thirty-seven members attended. At the Annual General Meeting the officers of the Society were re-elected for the current year, and to fill the vacancies on the Executive Committee Miss W. M. Dullforce of Nottingham University School of Agriculture, Dr W. G. Hoskins, Reader in Economic History at Oxford University, and Mr Richard Lamb, a Wiltshire farmer, were elected. The Treasurer's report showed that receipts during the year (including 205 subscriptions) totalled £286 16s. 0d., and expenses amounted to £117 17s. 0d., leaving a balance as at 31 January 1954 of £168 19s. 0d. The Treasurer pointed out, however, that this figure did not take into account the printing of the Review, the bill for which had since been paid. He nevertheless thought that the position was satisfactory and that the Society could look forward with equanimity to the production of the second volume during the summer.

During the course of the meeting tribute was paid to the help which the Society had received during the previous year from the Association of Agriculture, who had enabled the Society to participate in holding conferences on agricultural history without having to accept financial responsibility.

Another point of interest which arose was the suggestion that the Society should compile a list of subjects on which its members were doing research, in order that members working on similar subjects might get in touch with one another. After some discussion it was agreed that if such a project were limited to members of the Society it would be far from comprehensive, but that if extended it would prove a mammoth task. The proposal is one which may be reconsidered at a later date.

After the meeting two papers were given. The first was by Dr J. D. Chambers, on 'Agricultural Trends in the Eighteenth Century, with special reference to the Trent Valley', and the second by Dr J. E. Handley, on 'Rural Conditions in Eighteenth-Century Scotland'. Later the members of the conference visited Belgrave Hall and the Newarke Houses at the invitation of the Director of Leicester Museums, to view the agricultural collections. At the conclusion of the tour the party was entertained to tea in the Newarke Houses by the Lord Mayor of Leicester.

Regional Farming in England

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE JOINT CONFERENCE, 5 DECEMBER 1953

By W. G. HOSKINS

I

IT is gratifying to be asked to address what is, I believe, the first full meeting of the new British Agricultural History Society, and I hope that I may do justice to the occasion. It is also somewhat intimidating to face so many who must know much more about practical farming than I do, not only in the new society but also in the Association of Agriculture, with whom this conference is being jointly held. I speak as a historian and not as a farmer, though—like many in this room—I am descended from a long line of farmers (five hundred years of them) which ended in the great depression of the 1820's and a consequent migration to the town, a movement which constituted a fundamental break with the past for most English families, a revolution in English cultural and social history, and one which has produced little but disastrous consequences for the economy and fortunes of this country. But let us tiptoe quietly away from such immediate controversy and apply ourselves to the more distant past.

The full title of my talk this morning is *Regional Farming in England: Problems and Sources*. It is necessary to make this plain at the outset, for I shall be making a survey, not of the work that has already been done, but of the vast field that lies before us awaiting cultivation. I wish to suggest, so far as I am competent to do so, some of the problems and enquiries that seem to me to be worthy of investigation, and to indicate some of the major sources of material for these enquiries.

The study of agricultural history in this country is nothing new. Economic historians have been engaged upon it, as part of a much larger province of enquiry, for the past two generations or so; but we agricultural historians have now reached the age and stature when we need a separate household—a new society and our own journal—where we can be independent, while at the same time maintaining amicable relations with the parents that begat us. Our parents are not sorry to see us go: it relieves the pressure on their own space and resources, and they wish us well in our new house; and for our part we look forward to spreading ourselves more generously over the things that most appeal to us and to following the devices and desires of our own hearts.

We want, for example, to study the actual farming practice of England more assiduously than has yet been done, and to correct what I believe to have been an over-emphasis on the legal and institutional side of agrarian history. Historians have tended to study the *manor* rather than the *village*, the legal concept rather than the physical fact, and to be more interested in tenures and rents than actual farming: to give elaborate consideration to questions of land-ownership and land-occupation, and to give little consideration to land-use: to be interested, in short, in the details of the machinery and to forget what the machinery exists for. Is this because some of our best historians of the land have been trained as lawyers, and none as a farmer?

All these things—manorial history and organization, land-tenures, and so forth—are important. I am not attacking them as subjects of enquiry. I have done my share at all of them, and I find them all interesting and worth doing. But I cannot help thinking that if our friends in the Association of Agriculture wished to read something in plain English about the actual farming of the past in some region or some period of time, what a dusty answer they would get if they opened nine books out of ten that are concerned apparently with the land. Let us, then, above all be practical in our studies of agricultural history, rather than theoretical and legalistic; let us remember all the time that we are dealing with actual men and women who have struggled to get a living off a real piece of country that we can go and walk over today, and keep in mind the facts of soil, climate, and topography rather than the nice distinctions of copyhold tenures, the workings of the manor courts, the heriots, fines, and amercements. Let us, while taking account of the machinery of land-ownership and occupation, devote more thinking to the actual uses to which the land has been put. Let us, in short, get down to Earth.

England is an infinitely diverse country, geologically, topographically, and climatically. It is said that the single county of Somerset contains from west to east a greater variety of geology than the whole of Russia from north to south. But before we consider the multitude of small regions, we must recall the two Zones that are fundamental for farming history as for much else: the Highland Zone of the west, and the Lowland Zone of the east, a division so fundamental that it extends down to the very houses in which people lived for as long as regional building styles lasted. If therefore we wish to compare our chosen region with another region, it is necessary to compare it with another in the same zone, or we may find we are trying to compare the incomparable. And let us spread our studies so that each zone gets adequate attention. So far, except for Professor Alun Roberts, we have concentrated mainly, and for accidental reasons, upon studies of Lowland regions—Lin-

colnshire, Wiltshire, Leicestershire. I shall always regret that when I chose to write a thesis nearly twenty years ago upon agrarian history in the west of England, well within the Highland Zone of Britain, I devoted myself to a study of the ownership and occupation of the land and said almost nothing about land-use, about actual farming in the county of Devon. I saw the error of my ways afterwards, and when I was urged to publish this piece of work I declined to do so on the ground that I must first repair this omission and study the thousands of inventories in the probate registry at Exeter to get a picture of the farming in my chosen period. The war came before I could set to work on this task, every document in the probate registry perished—unnecessarily, I may say—in an air raid, and the regional farming of Devonshire can now never be studied, for nothing can take the place of this class of record. Fortunately, there are other counties within the Highland Zone of which the records have escaped destruction.

Within the two fundamental zones of Britain lie, or lay, a great number of regions. A region may be defined for our purpose as a territory, large or small, in which the conditions of soil, topography, and climate (and perhaps certain natural resources also) combine to produce sufficiently distinctive characteristics of farming practice and of rural economy in the widest sense to mark it off clearly from its neighbouring territories. The region may be smaller than the county (e.g. the Lincolnshire Wolds) or considerably larger (such as the Cotswolds or the Fenland). This is an imprecise definition, no doubt, and as work proceeds on regional farming and a greater number of studies becomes available, the definition of a region may well be clarified and made more precise. Here the French and German geographers and historians can help us, for they understand these things better in countries where the region is still a living reality.

II

Where are the origins of regional farming in this country? We find distinctive regional economies well established in sixteenth-century England, if I understand aright the work of Dr Thirsk and Dr Kerridge. How much farther back must we look, and how does a regional economy establish itself? What are its main characteristics, and how have they evolved?

Farming regions cannot emerge until man has invaded the natural scene and lived in a chosen territory long enough to have learnt by experience what the local soils, terrain, climate, and natural resources allow him best to do, what he can best develop, and what is least worth his while to produce or make. There may have been rudimentary farming regions in Romano-British times (as, for instance, in the Cotswolds), but this is probably not a

profitable line of enquiry, nor ever will be, for it must be observed that one specialist does not make a region. The evidence of specialization from two or three, or more, Roman villas would not be conclusive, for a large estate is naturally best suited for specialization and we need to know what the generality of peasant farmers were doing at the same time before we can begin to talk of a farming region; and that we shall probably never know. Nor, if one found good evidence of farming regions in this period, would it help much, for one could not pursue the enquiry at all continuously.

Domesday Book is our first opportunity of observing the emergence of farming regions. It was compiled after some twenty generations of English settlement, after ten to twenty generations of farming experience over most types of terrain and soil. Here the detailed work of Professor Darby on the Domesday geography of England will be invaluable to historians, above all his distribution maps of plough-teams and population, and of the demesne livestock in the eight counties for which this information survives. It should be observed, however, that Professor Darby's regions, inside each of the six eastern counties of his first volume, are a modern geographer's regions, and they are not the regions—if there are any—that emerge from Domesday itself as distinct and contemporary rural economies. Here and there in the distribution maps one catches a glimpse of what may well be a true farming region even in the eleventh century, as for example in the remarkable concentration of sheep on the Essex coastal marshes. But it is still doubtful how far regional farming can be said to have existed in 1086. The most we can say is that it may have begun to emerge in certain very sharply defined districts in the more anciently settled parts of England, above all in the marshlands between the Humber and Dungeness, and perhaps again in the sheep-farming of the Cotswolds. Even then the records of the following century are so thinly spread that we shall not, I think, advance the subject greatly unless we are unusually fortunate with our estate material. Not until the thirteenth century do manorial accounts—our main source for this kind of enquiry in the medieval period—become sufficiently numerous for us to have an opportunity of detecting specialities developing in certain districts; and it yet remains to be seen whether this is so.

Even when we possess our manorial accounts, there are still two difficulties. The accounts tell us about demesne farming, but not about peasant farming: and how far can demesne farming reveal the *typical* farming of a region? The tithe receipts of monastic houses might reveal better the nature of peasant farming. Where our conclusions from these receipts tally with those of the bailiff's accounts, we can feel that we are on the right track. We may also find a small amount of useful material among taxation records, as, for example,

on the roll for the fifteenth in 1225 relating to the estates of three religious houses in south Wiltshire, which Eileen Power used in her *Medieval English Wool Trade.*

The other difficulty is that the thirteenth century is the period of high farming, with a capitalistic organization of agriculture on the large estates at least, and much evidence of inter-manorial and inter-regional traffic.[1] This is the accepted picture, but one may legitimately ask, I think, how far it is generally true of thirteenth-century England. Is it true, for example, of great tracts of the backward west and north, and of the smaller estates anywhere? For we must remember that it was the best organized estates that kept the best records (e.g. the see of Winchester or a Fenland abbey), and historians naturally tend to study these rather than disjointed scraps from elsewhere.

At any rate, by the mid-fourteenth century much of this large-scale and highly organized farming had broken down, giving way to a period of natural economy—a Peasant Economy—with a greater emphasis on subsistence farming. Demesnes were parcelled out on leases to local peasants, with a consequent diminution in the scale of farming and probably of inter-manorial traffic. The use of money was only a marginal affair in the later medieval rural economy, not the essence of the economy as it is today.

Did this reversion towards a natural or peasant economy strengthen or weaken the trend towards the development of regional farming? I cannot answer this question with certainty, but I suspect that regional farming was in fact greatly strengthened.

For one thing, we have to account for the undoubted strength of regional farming in sixteenth-century England, where it clearly has deep roots in the past. And secondly, a natural economy, with its greater emphasis on self-sufficiency and self-containment, would tend to intensify the natural or innate character of a region by weakening its contacts with outside—just as the railways, in the nineteenth century, by making external contacts easy and quick, finally *destroyed* the ancient regions of England.

A subsistence or peasant economy forced a region into a more intensive exploitation of its own natural resources, down to the smallest detail: down to the stones in the clay, the clay itself, the reeds in the marshy corners; everything provided by Nature is used, nothing is wasted. The old field-names and furlong-names all reveal this intensive and minute exploitation of the natural products of a limited territory; and we must pay due regard

[1] See, for example, R. V. Lennard, *Manorial Traffic and Agricultural Trade in Medieval England*, published by the Agricultural Economics Society, 1938. Mr Lennard's evidence is drawn almost exclusively from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

to this kind of evidence—however trifling it may seem at first sight—or our enquiry will be a distortion of the truth.

III

By the early sixteenth century our records multiply, and for the first time we can study in adequate detail the farming of the great mass of ordinary farmers. We are no longer dependent on purely manorial accounts, with their emphasis on demesne farming. The records still provide only a sample, but it is a comprehensive one, covering squires, yeomen, husbandmen, craftsmen-farmers, and even a sprinkling of cottagers and labourers. A detailed picture of English farming at all levels is now possible.

Among the records we must use to construct our picture in any one region are: (*a*) probate inventories and wills; (*b*) tithe disputes among the local ecclesiastical records; (*c*) manorial accounts (for local markets, etc.); (*d*) parish registers and rate-books.[1] These are all essentially *local* records.

Among the central records we should turn to: (*a*) Exchequer and other depositions; (*b*) lawsuits, for informaion about local markets, crops, and economic information generally; (*c*) fines (the precise interpretation of which has yet to be settled: they can be very misleading at first sight, but are nevertheless a valuable source for agrarian history); (*d*) lay subsidies and other taxation records, for the wealth of the farming class in general, and for comparison between farmers and other social classes, or between farmers of different regions; (*e*) muster returns and hearth tax returns, for population data (these again are not easy to interpret, but a study of population is essential if we are properly to understand a regional economy).

I need hardly mention that many valuable and relevant local records will have strayed into the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, and other national repositories, and that the above list is not intended to be a complete guide to all the material available for a study of peasant economies in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

IV

By the sixteenth century we have strongly defined farming regions, and here we may note that part of our task is to rediscover the ancient distinctive regions of England and their economies. We may well be obliterating or for-

[1] The Churchwardens' accounts for Stathern, in north Leicestershire, for example, contain many 'levies' between 1630 and 1677 showing the amount of land farmed by each occupier and the number of his beasts and sheep. See the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society*, XXIII, 1946-7, pp. 75–221. Stathern, indeed, would make an excellent subject for a study of farming history, for there is much medieval material also.

getting these if we thoughtlessly superimpose upon our chosen field the soil-regions or the topographical regions of the modern geographer. Where are the old *pays* of England, the very names of which are now largely forgotten? They may have lingered longer in the Highland Zone, as in Furness and Hallamshire: I do not know.

This search for the old regions—the historical regions rather than the contemporary regions devised by the geographer—imposes upon us the necessity to take a wide view of our subject. To be interested in regional farming is not simply to make a technical study of farming as an industry. It should be a study of the various economies in different parts of England, of the wider implications of farming history—its sociological implications, if you like, though one hates to use these airy words.

Regional farming, down to the mid-eighteenth century at least, was mainly peasant farming. It is the character of peasant farming that determines the character of a farming region. A score or fifty small farms are more significant than one or two big ones.[1] And the history of Peasant England has yet to be written. When it is written, apparent trifles will weigh considerably —the clay, the stones, the sticks, feed for the geese, and so on—as any one knows who has read about the closing years of this England in George Bourne's *Change in the Village*, a classic work for those who wish to understand how the old economy moved and had its being.

This peasant England can best be studied, perhaps can only be studied, region by region, because of the necessity for a detailed knowledge of trifles, of the multitude of products of the local soil that hardly ever appear in the records but which can be seen in the peasant buildings themselves or heard in the field-names. And this means that we must be prepared to walk the fields like a farmer, and not just sit in muniment rooms like a lawyer.

If one may generalize, and perhaps it is too soon to do this, the history of regional economies and of peasant farming falls into three broad phases: the emergent period in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the period of stability in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the period of disintegration of the old economies from the eighteenth century onwards. Regional farming does not come to an end, it is true, but it changes its character with the disappearance of the peasant and the coming of railways and large-scale industry.

[1] We probably over-emphasize the importance of monastic sheep-farming in the medieval period, even in the chalk and limestone country. On the Wiltshire downland manors studied by Eileen Power, the villagers' flocks amounted to between four and five times the monastic flocks, though the *average* villager's flock was very small (e.g. only eighteen at South Damerham and Martin).

And if one may be permitted to throw out a few hints about the kind of questions one should be asking, they might be these. How did the open-field system really work in different parts of the country? How did the rural economy as a whole work? And one might pay some special attention to the economy of the craftsman-farmer or the miner-farmer, who seems to me to have perfected a little balanced economy of his own. What a mistake it is to look upon him as a man who is failing to make a living in either world, as some of our economic historians are inclined to do, to speak of him as ekeing out a precarious living first at one thing, then at another! To me he is a man who is getting the best of both worlds, not the worst—a balanced man in a world growing increasingly unbalanced. But let the student of regional farming discover this for himself, as he assuredly will if he reads his records with imaginative insight.

When one turns to the period of disintegration, one will find its roots perhaps well back in the seventeenth century. Beneath the rock-like structure of peasant society in that period, two undermining forces are already burrowing: a population growing too quickly upon a relatively fixed supply of land, and the engrossing of farms into fewer and fewer hands. Even so, the structure stood solidly enough until the age of parliamentary enclosure; and here I think we must look in particular to the loss of common rights as dealing the mortal blow. They were the keystone of the arch that held the economy together. Then the industrial revolution destroyed the local industries in some regions, and the railways in others. But all this is telescoping a long and complicated story, which will vary greatly from region to region.

V

My time draws to an end, but there is one important thing yet to be said. I hope that all those who set out to study regional farming in England will extend their view to the farmsteads themselves. We know next to nothing in England about the evolution of the farmstead plan, or the farmhouse plan. They know far more about it in Wales and Ireland. There is still time to make such a study, though it becomes more urgent every year as prosperous farmers improve their houses and buildings beyond recognition and render them valueless as historical records. We take our long series of farmsteads in England—four centuries of them still standing—for granted, and do not yet perceive that a good deal of farming history is written in these buildings and is nowhere to be found in documents. There are indeed three sources for such a study. There is the archaeological evidence, which takes us back to the thirteenth century in Wales or upon Dartmoor, and may take us back even farther when the sites of deserted villages are fully opened up. Then

there are the probate inventories, which will give us an incomparable picture of farmhouses and their contents (including their implements and tools) from the early sixteenth century to the middle of the eighteenth. And finally there is the evidence of the buildings as they stand today, thousands of them waiting to be examined, measured up, drawn, and photographed. How does the plan and disposition of the farmstead as a whole vary from region to region, and are there distinct regional types, and if so when do they emerge?

VI

The history of farming must be studied on a regional basis. England may be a small country, but no country in the world has such a diversity of soils, climates, natural resources, and topography, in such a small space. We must be prepared to toil over minute details in such a study: there is no room for brilliant generalizations. Let us leave those to the political historian. We must get down to earth: to crops, animals, soils, buildings, implements. And yet with all this we must in the end take a wide view, for we shall really be writing, down to 1800 anyway, the history of a vanished peasant culture, one is almost tempted to say civilization.

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An Early Reference to the Welsh Cattle Trade

By H. P. R. FINBERG

HOW old is the trade in Welsh cattle? According to the standard authority, Wales before the Edwardian conquest was a predominantly pastoral country. It imported iron, cloth, salt, and much of its corn; but nothing seems to be known about its exports.[1] In a paper read some years ago to the Royal Historical Society Professor Caroline Skeel remarked that one of the Welsh words for cattle, "praidd," is derived from the Latin *praeda*, meaning booty. From this circumstance she drew the unkind, but probably not unhistorical, inference that "cattle-lifting rather than cattle-selling prevailed in early Wales." She also noted that the word "porthmon," signifying drover, occurs in Welsh literature as early as the fourteenth century. By that time cattle were frequently being purchased in Wales for royal and noble households; but the earliest date cited in this connection is 1312.[2] It is hardly necessary to point out that occasional purchases of this kind could take place quite independently of any organized traffic that might be carried on at regular markets. But a piece of evidence which I have been fortunate enough to discover in a hitherto unpublished source carries the history of the trade back to the middle of the thirteenth century, and tells us something of the way it was conducted.

In 1253 the abbot of Cormeilles, in Normandy, obtained leave to establish a yearly fair and a market on Tuesday every week in his Gloucestershire manor of Newent.[3] Royal grants of this nature usually included a proviso that no injury should be done to neighbouring markets and fairs, as there was always the possibility that a new market would be attacked as prejudicial to some established interest. And it seems that the one at Newent did not go unchallenged. The exact nature of the objections to it has to be inferred from the rejoinder made on behalf of Newent, since no complete record of the enquiry has come to light. Apparently the complainants declared that this new competitor was doing much harm to the old-established markets of Gloucester and Newnham-on-Severn. Merchants who in the past had come straight to these markets now lingered at Newent, while corn grown at New-

[1] J. E. Lloyd, *History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 1939, p. 606.
[2] *Trans. Royal Historical Soc.*, 4th Series, IX, 1926, p. 137.
[3] *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, 1226–57, p. 435.

ent was now being sold locally, and not, as hitherto, in "Ebrugge-strete" (i.e. Lower Westgate Street), Gloucester. In consequence, the price of corn at Gloucester had gone up.

A special jury, empanelled in 1258, gave sworn testimony rebutting these allegations. They denied that prices had risen in the Gloucester corn-market, and that traders arrived there any later than in the past. The small chapmen of Newent still went to Gloucester and Newnham to buy fish, hides, and salt. So far from injuring those markets, the Newent market had positively benefited them by bringing about an alteration in the routine of the Welsh drovers. And the jurors go on to explain that "the Welshmen who come from the parts of Wales to sell their cattle" arrive at Ross-on-Wye on Thursday. They cannot reach Gloucester in one day's journey from Ross, so on Friday night they lodge at Newent, which is more than eight leagues distant from Gloucester. They continue their journey the next morning, and when they have transacted their business in the Saturday market at Gloucester, they no longer push on further into England, as they used to do; instead, they make a circuit. They attend the Sunday market at Newnham, reach Newent again on Tuesday, and are back once more at Gloucester by Wednesday, which is also a market-day there.

A transcript of this statement is entered in a finely written cartulary of Newent which is now in the British Museum.[1] It is interesting to note that the Welshmen did not take what is now the most direct route from Ross-on-Wye to Gloucester. This leads through Huntley, and in places the road is very steep. There are several details in the statement that one would like to have seen amplified. Why did the Welshmen retrace their steps to Newent and Gloucester, instead of going straight home? Presumably in order to dispose of any cattle that remained unsold, and to purchase those other commodities which, as we have seen, they had to import from England.

One remarkable feature of the statement is that it makes no mention at all of the chief sufferer. Dymock, which lies about three and a half miles north-west of Newent, had its weekly market and annual fair. A survey taken early in the reign of Henry III credits it with sixty-six burgesses, and at that time it must have seemed well on the way to becoming a prosperous little market town. Perhaps it could have withstood the competition of Ledbury, only four miles away to the north; but unfortunately for Dymock, it lay off the drove road, and the rise of Newent proved fatal to its urban prospects. The market failed, and many houses fell into decay.[2] Newent, on the other hand, flourished sufficiently to be taxed, in 1307 and 1313, at the higher rate imposed on

[1] Add. MS. 18,461, fo. 60.

[2] S. Rudder, *A New History of Gloucestershire*, 1779, p. 409.

boroughs recognized by the crown,[1] although the Welsh wars of Edward I must almost certainly have involved some interruption of the cattle trade.

What route, one wonders, did the drovers follow when they travelled further into England, as we are told they used to do before 1253? Did they leave Gloucester by the Ermin Way, the old Roman road that led to Cirencester? If so, it would bring them, after some thirteen miles, to a track which branches off from the Ermin Way near Bagendon, and leads through Barnsley and Fairford to the Thames at Lechlade. On the Ordnance map this track is called the Welsh Way. It is certainly a drove road; one would like to know at what period it acquired its present name.

[1] James F. Willard, 'Taxation Boroughs and Parliamentary Boroughs', in *Historical Essays in honour of James Tait*, 1933, p. 431.

Notes and Comments

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HAY

When a partition wall was demolished recently in an old house in Billericay, Essex, it was found to be stuffed with hay, presumably for insulation. The wall is thought to date from the end of the eighteenth century. A sample of the hay, which was in quite good condition, came into the possession of the Museum of English Rural Life and was analysed. The analyst's report is as follows. "It would appear to be a sample from poor meadow land, and from the grass seeds and remains of the inflorescences we can say that the sample contains Bent (*Agrostis* species), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Rush (*Juncus* species), and Moss (probably *Hypnum* species)."

It is impossible, of course, to tell whether hay required for such a purpose was deliberately taken from poor meadow or whether in fact the contents of this sample are typical of a late eighteenth-century pasture in Essex.

PREHISTORIC SOCIETY

On the afternoon of Saturday, 10 April 1954, a hundred and seventy members of the Prehistoric Society visited the Museum of English Rural Life and inspected its collection of ploughs. Three demonstrations were also arranged. The first was a demonstration of modern ploughing technique with a tractor and trailer plough, in order that members of the Society might compare the action of the modern share, mouldboard, and coulter with earlier methods. The second demonstration was arranged and conducted by Dr E. C. Curwen, who with the help of Miss Isabel Smith ground corn with a rotary quern and a saddle quern. The highlight of the afternoon was a demonstration, conducted under the direction of Dr Iversen of Denmark, of felling a tree with a flint axe. A small Douglas fir was selected, about nine inches in diameter at the base, standing some fifteen feet high. It was cut about three feet six inches from the ground and members of the Society were amazed to find that the whole process took only a little more than twenty minutes. The Douglas fir was not ideally suited to the operation, for the wood was too spongy to obtain a clean cut. Nevertheless the demonstration was most illuminating, and showed that prehistoric man could fell small trees with comparative ease.

The Poll Tax and Census of Sheep, 1549

By M. W. BERESFORD

(*Continued from Vol.* 1, *p.* 15)

IT is in this atmosphere of proposals and estimates that Parliament discussed and approved the Bill which became 2 and 3 Edward VI c. 36. From a suggestion, the poll tax on sheep became law; the cloth levy was imposed; and instead of rough estimates of the sheep population, the Act set up the machinery to take a census of sheep in every parish, only eleven years later than Thomas Cromwell's attempt to number the parishioners by the recording of baptisms, marriages, and burials.[1]

The grant of supply to the King did not take any of the conventional forms. The usual *subsidy* (or tax on personalty) was not granted, nor the *tenth-and-fifteenth* (the old, and now conventionalized, local tax). Instead, in view of the danger in which the realm stood, the faithful subjects offered a *Relief* to be paid annually for the three years following.

In view of the close concern which this Relief was to have with sheep, there is a grim irony in the metaphor of sheep and shepherds in the preamble to the Act, akin to the tone in which the Prayer *for Landlords* in the Edwardian Prayer-Book was to ask that landlords should remember themselves to be "Thy Tenants."[2] This preamble to the *Act for the Relief* in 1549 calls on God to protect "this lytle Realme and us His poore Servants and little flock, takinge to his charge and defence our little Sheparde." The servants were modest about their grants, "besichynge his Grace not to cast his eies uppon the smalness of this our simple present."[3]

Despite the abandonment of the term *subsidy* in favour of *Relief*, the principle of assessment was not basically different in so far as it dealt with the assessment of personal property for tax. Those whose property exceeded ten pounds were to pay one shilling in the pound upon it. Aliens were to pay twice this rate if they possessed property at all: otherwise a poll tax of eightpence. It is necessary to dwell on this part of the Relief of 1549 because the assessment of the amount a man would pay for his sheep was related to the amount he would already have paid on his personal property. The property on which the tax fell was specified in the Act. Stocks of merchandise and sheep were particularly mentioned. Thus a

[1] Cox, *Parish Registers of England*, pp. 2–3.

[2] Reprinted in Tawney and Power, *Tudor Economic Documents*, III, pp. 62–3.

[3] *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, pp. 78 sqq. All the following quotations are from this Act unless otherwise acknowledged.

sheep-owner or a clothier would be assessed at 1s. in the pound (5%) on the value of sheep or cloth. The novel proposals in the second part of the *Act for the Relief* laid much more specific taxes on sheep and cloth.

The principle was the one we have seen in Hales's *Causes*, and a connection can be inferred from the entry in the Commons' Journal: "The Bill for the Relief of Subsidy of Goods, Sheep and Cloths for three years—to Mr. Hales." The three categories of sheep, on each of which a different rate was to be paid, were:

1. Ewes kept on enclosed ground for the greater part of any year, whether the enclosed ground were marsh or pasture: "that is to saye, groundes not comen nor comenlie used to be tilled." The tax on these ewes was three pence a head.
2. A tax of two pence a head on wethers and other shear-sheep on these same enclosed grounds.
3. A lower rate of three halfpence on all sheep on the commons or on enclosed tillage lands.

These rates were higher than Hales had proposed in 1548. The Act also made concessions to the small sheep-owner, although opponents of the Bill were later to argue that "it is to your poor Commons having but fewe sheep in number a great charge."[1] Men with fewer than ten sheep were only to pay a halfpenny a head; those with from eleven to twenty were only to pay a penny a head.

These concessions are the more curious when we take into account another important clause. A sheep-owner only became liable to pay any of the poll tax due on his sheep if his obligation exceeded the sum he had already paid that year on goods. A man whose sheep-tax totalled 10s. would pay nothing unless his relief on goods had been assessed at less than that sum. If his sheep tax did exceed his property tax, then he was only to pay the difference. It is this feat of subtraction before the sheep-owners' obligation was finally known which produced the ruled columns of some of the surviving collectors' accounts, headed:

> "Ye sums dew unto the kyng hys maieste for ye furst part of ye releyfe of the pole of sheyp, deducting the releyfe for goods a fore unto ye kyng payd."[2]

This said very briefly what the statute said longwindedly. The Hunts collectors arranged their figures in six columns tracing the logic of their calculations.[3]

[1] Preamble to 3 and 4 Edward VI, c. 23, *Stat. Realm*, IV, p. 122.
[2] Public Record Office, E 179, 122, 143. [3] E 179, 122, 144.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
The mens Names	Nombre of Sheepe	Place where they goe	Money due for theym	Whereof payde for goods	Remayneth unpaid.

In another Hunts roll tabulation is replaced by prose.

> "Somersham: cc iii^{xx} ii sher sheyp kept by John Castell ye elder, yeoman, most parte of ym yz on the comens."[1]

Castell, having already paid 23s. to the subsidy on goods earlier in the summer, had now to pay only the difference between that sum and the 37s. 9d. due for his sheep-tax: 14s. 9d. (It will be noticed that the sheep are being counted by the old 'long hundred' of six score, so that if the collectors wish to indicate a hundred sheep they will write v^{xx} and not *c*. Castell's entry makes this clear. He had 302 sheep by the long hundred (not 262 as the figure may first appear to read) and at three halfpence each (being "on the comens") 453d. or 37s. 9d. was due.

Such a double assessment and subtraction were not administratively difficult. The Act assumed that the Commissioners who assessed the poll tax on sheep locally would include many men who already served as assessors and collectors for the Relief on goods in the spring. The assessment on goods was to be completed by 20 March 1549, and the tax was expected at the Exchequer by 6 May. The Commissions authorizing the assessment of the poll tax on sheep were to go out five days earlier and the Exchequer wanted the returns from the counties in its hands by 10 October, and the payments by 1 November. The second and third instalments were to follow on the same dates in 1550 and 1551.

Another clause in the Act attempted to provide additional means of catching defaulting graziers. The Commissioners had already been told to empanel the parish priest and other honest villagers to help them: for the poll tax on sheep they were to conduct an annual census in June.

> "Yerely durynge the seyd thre yeres on the Tuesdays after the feaste of the Nativity of St John Baptist, there shal be a generall survey made of all and singular Sheepe in every Parishe, Village and other place ... chargeable to the payment of this Relief of Sheepe. Every sheepe shalbe taken for a Sheer sheepe that is at the tyme of the survey of the age of one yere or more, albeit the Sheepe be not at that time shooren."

The census was thus appointed for 25 June 1549. In his self-defence written later that year, Hales gave no account of the reception of the Relief, but, describing the debate on his unsuccessful Bill to force sheep-masters

[1] E 179, 122, 143.

to keep a proportion of cattle, he referred to a proposal for a Census of sheep similar to that found in the Relief.

> "I had thus devysed that the parson or Curat of every parisshe (to whom belongith the tithes) and two honest men shulde yerelye surveye everye mans pasture and shulde not onlie present who dyd transgress this lawe, but who did also observe it."[1]

This proposal was badly received. "This was it that byt the mare by the thomb. Men passe not moche howe manye lawes be made, for they see very fewe put in execution." We do not know how Parliament was persuaded to accept a similar device in the Act for the Relief. In that stage of the development of an independent spirit in the Commons we cannot be certain that a proposal incorporated in a vote of Supply to the Crown could have been resisted implacably. The concessions on purveyance in 1548 may also have quietened opposition.[2]

In the event, the most effective opponents of the census seem to have been the census-takers themselves. If the North Riding returns represent what the parish priest and the honest men of the village found that midsummer, they must have been men who did not know a sheep when they saw one. Only four or five villages in each wapentake were represented at all, and in these the flocks consisted of a hundred sheep or less.

The entries in the Lords' and Commons' Journals for this period are so short and formal that we cannot tell how the proposals were received in debate. I am inclined to think that the concession allowing a man to count the payment of the relief in goods against his sheep-tax was an amendment introduced to appease the opposition. No such suggestion had appeared in Hales's proposals of the previous autumn. Its effect would be to favour the larger property-owner. If his property tax already came to a large sum it would act as a shield against a further charge on his flocks. A man paying a property tax of 40s. could keep a flock of 160 ewes on enclosed pasture (or 320 ewes on the commons) without becoming liable to a penny of sheep-tax. A man assessed on his property for 10s., on the other hand, became liable to sheep tax as soon his ewes exceeded 40 or 80 respectively. (Flocks of fewer than twenty, as we have seen, paid at a lower rate.)

[1] *A Discourse of the Commonweal*, ed. Lamond, 1929, p. lxv.

[2] In the same month that the Relief was granted, Purveyance was abolished *for three years* by 2 & 3 Ed. VI, c.3; and fee farms were diverted from the Exchequer *for three years* and applied to local schemes of poor relief and public works by 2 & 3 Ed. VI, c. 5. Since the Relief was granted for three years, this savours of a *quid pro quo*.

Parliament rose on 14 March 1549. On 25 June the census of sheep was due to be taken. All that spring and summer the agrarian discontents mounted. Hales strove to dissociate himself and his reforming friends from the violence of the rioters. His opponents blamed his concession as an encouragement to the peasants to attack their landlords. In September, Hales sent the Lord Protector his long *Defence against Certain Slanders*. The first payment of the sheep tax was due at the Exchequer by 1 November.

By that day Somerset was in the Tower and his rival, Northumberland, in the ascendant. Hales had fled abroad for safety. The whole policy of agrarian reform seemed discredited, and on 16 November the new session of Parliament heard "the Bill exhibited by divers clothiers of Devon for remitting the Act of Relief for Making of Cloths,"[1] and on the 18th the Commons began to discuss the "last Relief for Cloths and Sheepe."

This news would not have surprised Hales. In his *Defence* he related the opposition which he had found when he toured the Midlands with the Enclosure Commissioners. Juries had been bribed or packed: landlords hoped that a fine would be the end of the matter, as it had been before; his Bills had been roughly handled in the Commons. "Perchaunce you wolde have saied that the lambe had byn cummyted to the wolfe to custodie." Only that February the Lord Protector's brother, the Lord Admiral Seymour, had expressed views which many of his fellow peers must have shared. The Marquis of Dorset reported that "a little before his apprehension the Lord Admiral, talking of a subsidy granted to the King of 2d. (*sic*) yearly for every sheep, declared that he would never give it."[2] Now, within a month of the first collection of the tax being due, the Commons were cautiously seeking permission to debate its abolition. Their caution did not stem from any affection for the tax: the difficulty was constitutional. On 18 November

> "Mr Speaker with the King's Privy Council of the House and twelve others of the House shall be suitors to know the King's Majesty's pleasure by his Council if, upon their humble suit, they may treat of the last Relief for Cloths and Sheep at four of the clock afternoon."[3]

There could have been few precedents for a Parliament seeking to back out of a subsidy only just granted for three years. On 20 November Mr Speaker reported that the Commons might "treat for the Act of Relief,

[1] *Commons' Journals*, I, p. 11.

[2] *Defence against Certain Slanders*, reprinted in Lamond, *op. cit.*, pp. lii-lxvii; Seymour's words: *Hist. MSS. Comm., Salisbury*; I, 1883, p. 71.

[3] *Commons' Journals*, I, p. 11. Subsequent dates are from the same source.

having in respect the causes for the granting thereof." The Council was reminding the Commons of the concessions they had received by the abolition of purveyance, and pointing out that the money had to come from somewhere, if not from sheep. On 30 November the Commons sent twelve members to attend the Lords for the 'Answer of the Relief'. Nothing appears about this in the Lords' Journal, but on 11 December a new Bill was introduced which reached its third reading in the Lords by 17 January. It became the statute, 3 & 4 Edward VI, c. 23: "An Acte concerninge the release of the braunches in the laste Acte of Relief for the payment for sheepe and cloths. Also a graunte of a Subsidy to be paid in one year." The poll tax on sheep and the levy on cloth were dead.

The preamble to the Act gave reasons for the repeal of the taxes.

> "(The) Relief of Sheepe is to your poor Commons havinge but fewe sheepe in nomber a great charge, and also so comberouse for all your Commissioners and Officers named and appointed for executing the same, that they cannot in manner tell how to serve your Highness therein accordinge to their duties."[1]

The cloth levy had also proved "comberouse," it was alleged, so that "such graunts shalbe from the said fourth day of November in [1549] deemed and adjudged voide." The 4th of November is not a date which appears in any of the earlier instructions for collection, so that it may be the date of the petition from the Devon clothiers which the House had heard on 16 November. The petitioners had then been told that they would receive an answer at the return of the Knights of the shire, that is, at the session's end. They were probably well pleased with the news their members brought them, a pleasure clouded only by the news of the extra grant which had been made to recompense the little shepherd for his loss of revenue.

> "Another grant, not as any recompense or satisfaction for your most bountiful and liberal release and discharge of your said humble subjects concerning the said Reliefs on Sheep and Cloths . . . but as a token and knowledge of our faithfulness and loving and willing hearts."

More prosaically, Parliament had granted an extension of the Relief on Goods; a fourth instalment was to be paid in April 1552. This is quaintly described by Professor Mackie in the recent volume of the *Oxford History of England* as a "small subsidy."[2] It was, of course, between £40,000 and £50,000, the size of each of the three previous instalments.

[1] *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, p. 122. [2] *The Earlier Tudors*, 1952, p. 500.

Before examining the surviving records of the assessment and collection of the short-lived taxes, a brief comment must be made on the common view, which derives from A. F. Pollard, that Northumberland's rise to power in 1549 marked a wholesale reaction and the end of opposition to enclosure. Pollard did not altogether resist the temptation to ennoble the character of Somerset by blackening that of Northumberland.

There is no need to proceed to the opposite extreme and whitewash Northumberland, or to deny that his policy was more sympathetic to sheep-masters than to those who suffered at the hands of sheep-masters. Yet the record of anti-enclosure measures during his period of office does not entirely support Pollard's thesis. Pollard stated that Northumberland's Parliament of November 1549 set to work to make the yoke of the commons of England less easy and their burden less light. In support of this view he said: "It proceeded to override all the laws passed against enclosures under Henry VII and Henry VIII."[1] Professor Mackie echoes this: "During the rest of the reign there was no further talk of agrarian reform."[2]

These statements are incorrect. An Act passed in the second of Northumberland's parliaments made it an offence, in the tradition of the Acts of 1489, 1515, and 1536, for any one to convert land to pasture if it had been under the plough since 1509.[3] Moreover, a new Commission of Enquiry was set up. Its returns were to be sent to Chancery and thence to the Exchequer to remain on record. It surely cannot be suggested that the Commission was to make these dangerous enquiries in order to do nothing. Nor did Parliament turn its back on all discussion of enclosure matters, as Professor Mackie says. Only a week after the issue of the repeal of the Relief had been raised, the Commons discussed a Bill "for having a Number of Sheep and Farms," no doubt the old issue of over-large flocks and the engrossing of holdings. Three days later they discussed a Bill "for the Commons, Sheep and Farms." On 4 and 13 January they debated a Bill "for the re-edifying of Decayed Houses."[4]

Nor did the prosecution of enclosers cease. I have set out below the number of enclosure prosecutions heard in the Exchequer during the two Protectorates.[5] These are not intended as measures of all anti-enclosure activity: the prerogative courts were also at work hearing similar cases; but they do show that in this particular court—where the principal attack

[1] Pollard, *England under Protector Somerset*, p. 271.
[2] Mackie, *op. cit.*, p. 506. He quotes one Act but ignores 5 & 6 Ed. VI, c. 5.
[3] 5 & 6 Ed. VI, c. 5; *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, p. 134.
[4] For all these dates see the *Commons' Journal, sub diebus.*
[5] Cases appearing in E 159 and E 368 (P.R.O.).

under the Henrician statutes had been directed—there was no real difference between the time before and the time after Somerset's fall. However

TABLE 2
Annual figures of enclosure cases in the Court of Exchequer.

Year	For having too-large flocks and engrossing holdings	Other enclosure offences
Somerset's Protectorate		
1547	6	10
1548	11	11
1549	8	14
Northumberland's Protectorate		
1550	16	12
1551	3	16
1552	0	9
1553	1	5

far Northumberland went in persuading graziers to support him against Somerset's measures, it is clear that he had not succeeded in barring the opponents of graziers from the courts.

The surviving returns for the Poll Tax on sheep do not cover the whole country, nor even the whole of that part of the country where the largest flocks were to be found. This imperfect survival of the collector's accounts is characteristic of this class of records of the Exchequer, where the only determinant of what survives is pure chance. There was no contemporary incentive to destroy some records yet keep others. The tax was repealed from 4 November 1549 and any one who had avoided the tax need have had no fears that the record might be used against him in the future.

Although the Act of repeal relieved taxpayers of their obligations from 4 November there is every reason to believe that the Exchequer went further and actually remitted the sums already paid. In any event, no penny from this tax is enrolled at the Exchequer, while the county payments from the Relief on Goods of the same summer are fully recorded in the usual style.[1] This is very odd, in face of the eleven surviving accounts

[1] I have examined enrolled *Views and States of Account* (E 368, 327, Easter term, States, m. 5, and Michaelmas term, States, m. 9, duplicated in E 102, 317) as well as the *Enrolled Subsidies* (E 359, 45). The first collection of the Relief on Goods began to be enrolled during Easter Term, anno tertio. The sums given are exactly the same as in the county collectors' receipts in E 179 with no additions for the Relief on Sheep or the Relief on Cloth. The next tax to appear on the rolls is the second collection of the Relief on Goods one year later.

described below which show that eleven Commissions did return their accounts and their money into the Exchequer as they had been ordered. These accounts show that in seven counties at least the Commissioners had not had the difficulties described in the preamble to the Act of Repeal. "They cannot in manner tell how to serve your Highness therein accordinge to their duties."

I have not been able to trace an order for the repayment of these monies, although such an order may exist. It is therefore possible that the eleven surviving accounts (dated from July to October) represent the only Commissions who had made their returns before the fall of Somerset and the new Parliament put a stop to the work. Hearing of the petitions against the Reliefs (and knowing the temper of the Commons) the others may have thankfully decided to hold their hand and make no return to the Exchequer until an order came. It never came. Whether the eleven Commissions had their collections returned we do not know; whether they redistributed the tax we shall not know unless new documents in connection with this tax come to light in the provinces. In any event, the Exchequer accounts show that the king received nothing.

The collectors' accounts come from five counties. The Public Record Office references for these are: Devon, E179/99/315; Hunts, E179/122/143, 144, and 146; Notts, E179/159/178, 182, and 185; Oxon, E179/162/275; Yorks, E.R., E179/203/251; N.R., E179/213/209; W.R., E179/208/211. Only for Huntingdonshire are they are anywhere near completeness. All the four Hundreds of that county have returns, made in September. There are signs at the bottom of the Normancross roll that a second, now lost, membrane was formerly stitched to it. The North Riding of Yorkshire's return seems to be as full a return as the Riding ever made, but the entries are so meagre that the collection must have been superficial. Only one hundred of Oxfordshire has an extant return. Nottinghamshire has three rolls detailed enough to suggest a less superficial assessment.

The rolls vary in legibility and clarity of lay-out. Like all Exchequer accounts of this period, they range from the clearest tabulation to the most unarithmetical prose. In Devon the collectors failed to describe the sheep, giving only a total sum due from each taxpayer. In the other counties the size of the flock is either given explicitly or can be worked out from the sums due from the three categories of animals. Thus, it is no help at all to know that Robert Trobrigge of Crediton paid "pro ovibus suis, ultra xii^{s} prius solut' pro bonis suis, 6d."[1] But the sums of money given for each

[1] These and the other quotations following come from the appropriate county rolls whose references have been given above.

sheep-owner in the Buckrose area of Yorkshire are accompanied by a note of the category of sheep. Thus, the flock at Skirpenbeck, assessed at £3 5s., was in the three-halfpenny category, so that the size of the flock—520 sheep—can be worked out.

The Act had distinguished between sheep which spent most of their year on enclosed pastures and sheep spending their time on open fields or common pastures. Hales, it will be recalled, had thought that there were about equal numbers of each type. In the small sample offered by these returns the majority were sheep grazing on the commons, but since these paid at the lower rate there was the temptation to declare a flock as a commons' flock. Rare is the occasion—as at Stainforth in the West Riding of Yorkshire—when a taxpayer was put down for both kinds of sheep. The Commissioners elsewhere seem to have been satisfied to make a simple sum of it: John Castell's 262 sheer sheep at Somersham, Hunts, went "moste parte of ym on ye comens."

In Nottinghamshire the sheep were often described as going "in severall pastures and severall marshes." While it is probable that the use of the word marshes does reflect the importance of the low carrs of the Trent valley as grazing grounds, there is the chance that the local Commissioners were standing strictly by the terms of the Act, which used the term "severall pastures and severall marshes." In another Nottinghamshire entry, the sheep on the commons were described more fully in words which do not derive from the Act and which seem genuinely descriptive: "goyng all ye yere in ye comen faldes feld" at Bunney, and at Flintham "in ye comon falowe feld." Instead of "on the commons" or "*in communibus*" the sheep not grazing within hedges were often described simply as "feyld sheep."

The Commissioners had to report any flock-owners who were living out of the county. In the East Riding, for example,

> "Yt ys presented that Sylvester Eade late dwelling in the Chepe in London and nowe dwelling in Stamforthe in the countie of Lincolne hath goinge in common at Mulforthe . . . eyght hundred sheepe."

Eade's flock was grazing over the site of the former village of Mowthorpe, on the Yorkshire Wolds half way between Duggleby and Kirby Grindalythe. In the Huntingdonshire returns the list of "them that hathe sheyp in the sayd hundred . . . and dwellythe owte of the shyre" had 22 names, as compared with 188 owners living in the county. Of these twenty-two men, all (except two Londoners and a Kentish man) lived in adjoining counties.

How large were the flocks on which tax was paid? Taking the 414 in-

stances which these returns offer we find the size distribution set out in Table 3. One useful method of approach is to group the flocks according to their size, and then see what size of flock was the most common. For example, eight of the 414 flocks for which we have details consisted of twenty sheep or fewer; sixteen flocks had between 21 and 40 sheep in each, and so on . . . . In Table 3 the number of flocks in each size group has been expressed as a percentage of all the 414 flocks. Thus the eight flocks numbering twenty sheep or fewer accounted for 2 per cent of all the flocks. Forty-eight per cent (or nearly half) of all the flocks had 140 sheep or fewer. The sample is such a small one that, outside Hunts and Notts, it would be foolish to draw any general conclusions from it. The median size of the flocks in the various county returns are also given for interest below.

TABLE 3

Percentage of flocks in each size-group of flock.

Size-group	%	Size-group	%	Size-group	%
0–20	2	141–160	12	281–300	5
21–40	4	161–180	6	301–400	5
41–60	6	181–200	5	401–500	3
61–80	5	201–220	2	501–600	1
81–100	5	221–240	5	601–700	0
101–120	13	241–260	2	701–800	1
121–140	13	261–280	1	800 +	1

The locale of the 414 flocks for which information is available is set out in Table 4. The only extant certificate for Devon has no details of flock-size. The median size of the whole group was 142 sheep. The median size in each county is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 4

Locality of the 414 flocks.

Huntingdonshire (four Hundreds)	186
Oxfordshire (Bampton Hundred only)	52
Nottinghamshire (four Hundreds)	73
Yorks, N.R. and W.R.	61
Yorks, E.R.	42

TABLE 5

Median size in each county.

Hunts	Hurstingstone Hundred	180
	Normancross Hundred	145
	Leightonstone and Toseland Hundreds	125
Notts		150
Oxford	Bampton Hundred	155
Yorks	E.R.	118§
	N.R. and W.R.	110§

(In the case of the counties marked § the sample is so imperfect that the figures have very little meaning.)

Set well apart from this general experience of a flock of between 110 and 150 sheep are the flocks of the larger sheep-masters. The largest recorded was 1,550 at Slepe (St Ives). There were also flocks of 1,213 (Warboys, Hunts), 1,203 (Abbot's Ripton, Hunts), and 1,094 (Settrington, Yorks, E.R.). The Huntingdonshire commissioners appear to have been most thorough. They taxed one man who had two sheep on the commons of the borough of Huntingdon. At Ramsey one of the commissioners had 252 ewes and 30 wethers on enclosed pastures, together with 377 field sheep. He duly taxed himself.

Nowhere did the commissioners report flocks near the prohibited size of 2,400, although from other sources we know that flocks of that size existed. As one might expect, the names of the sheep-masters and the location of the pastures include well-known figures and places in enclosure history. A flock of 800 sheep grazed over the lost village of East Tanfield, Yorks, N.R. The sheep-owner at Little Gidding, Hunts, was Robert Derwell. He had 600 sheep on the commons there. In 1594 the Court of Exchequer heard that once "the ffieldes and tilladge grounds belonginge to the said towne of Lyttell Giddinge did lye open and not enclosed."[1] It would be on these fields that the 600 sheep fed. In 1566 Derwell enclosed the fields and destroyed the farm-houses in the village.

> "The said fieldes are now enclosed with hedges and converted into severall closes, neyther is there now remayning any howses of husbandry nor eny land in Tilladge savinge yt wch is in the occupation of John Bedell, gent., as farmer unto Humphrey Drewell Esq."

[1] E 134, 35 Eliz., Hunts. Depositions of Henry Stretton, aged 68, and Henry Berridge, aged 60.

In Little Gidding in 1549 Drewell was the only flock-master taxed. There were probably other sheep which escaped, since there were eight farms then in occupation. It is common to find only one name per village in the tax returns, as if the Commission were satisfied with one victim. Occasionally fuller detail is given. At Yaxley, Hunts, William Cony had flocks of 916, 300, 241, and 200 sheep, all in different Huntingdonshire parishes. The flock of 916 was feeding in Elton fields. Three other Yaxley men were taxed: one for 504 sheep; another for flocks of 66 and 75; and the third for 88 and 45. At Conington, another village as shrunken as Little Gidding, Thomas Catton had 771 sheep, and Henry Hull 128. Hull also had 150 at Stukeley.

At the foot of the North Riding account there is a short note which provides the only evidence I have been able to find, other than the mournful complaint of the Devon clothiers in November, that the Relief on Cloth was also being collected that summer. On 26 July the Commissioners for the North Riding wrote as a tailpiece to their roll: "We the Commissioners aforesaid concerning the releyff of cloths . . . we fynde nothinge." A short note on this part of the Relief is given below,[1] but as far as records of collection go, my present report must be that of the Commissioners: I find nothing.

The nine months' events just considered came at something of a turning-point in English agrarian history. They mark the most serious of all the sixteenth-century attempts to check the spread of pasture by legislation and administrative action, set as they were alongside other measures intended to bring down prices and encourage tillage. They failed. The riots frightened Somerset's moderate supporters and robbed the reforming party of political power. The machinery of inspection and enumeration which the reformers hoped to initiate was delicate to handle even in a time of political agreement. Neither sheep nor men could be numbered by the passing of an Act of Parliament. The enumeration of baptisms was to remain sporadic until the institution of register books in 1598. Both muster-rolls and subsidy-lists from this period offer statistical lacunae which are at once the delight and the terror of the demographer.[2] Even if the first successful census of sheep did not come until 1866 (when there were nearly 17,000,000 in England and Wales)—that is, sixty-five years

[1] Appendix, p. 29 below.

[2] As witness Professor E. E. Rich, 'The Population of Elizabethan England,' *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser., II, 1950, pp. 247–65.

after the census of men—it is nice to remember that as far as the Statute Book is concerned, a census of sheep was ordered two hundred and fifty years earlier than the census of *homo sapiens*.

Although the agrarian policy of Hales and Somerset reads so gloomily, their goal was attained within a few years by the action of external events. Within three years of Hales's flight the whole aspect of the European demand for English cloth had been changed. Looked at from the standpoint of 1600, the mid-century had marked the peak of cloth exports, to be followed by a period of much lower demand, possibly only three quarters of the quantity at the height of the boom.[1] Economic reality pushed the graziers into action which moral sermons and Acts of Parliament had failed to effect. Calculations of profit and loss began to show that the best course of action was no longer the extension of pasture over tillage-land. Corn-growing began again to seem more profitable than wool-growing.[2] The great drive against arable in the Midlands was halted. There were still to be enclosures and the area of tillage would ebb and flow with fluctuations in the prices of grain and wool; but never again would the wolf-like sheep be an increasing menace to corn-growing husbandmen. The language of the preamble to the Act of 1597 may read as if depopulating enclosures were abroad again, but their whole scale of operation was tiny compared with the great enclosures of the early Tudor years.[3] Indeed, there is good evidence that these were halted even before 1549, but they were near enough in men's memories to encourage the fears of the rioters that summer and to encourage the reformers to lunge desperately at the grazier as the prime social enemy.

[1] For the figures see E. J. Fisher, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, x, 1939–40, p. 96.

[2] For a summary of this argument see P. J. Bowden, 'Movements in Wool Prices', *Yorks Bulletin of Econ. and Soc. Research*, iv, 1952, pp. 109–24.

[3] 39 Eliz., c. 2 (1597) *Stat. Realm*, iv, p. 893.

Appendix

A NOTE ON THE RELIEF ON CLOTH, 1549

I have failed to discover any documents recording the collection of this tax, perhaps because I have not been able to plumb the unsorted Miscellanea of the Exchequer. The preamble to the Act of Repeal may have been correct in saying that the Relief was too cumbersome. As in the case of the sheep tax Hales proposed to utilize existing machinery. The Commissioners appointed in the Act were travelling very much the same road in their assessments of the Relief on Goods as the Henrician subsidy; for the tax on cloth the aulnagers were brought in.

Clothiers and aulnagers were instructed to keep duplicate books recording the cloths made and sealed during the year. The Commissioners were to take the clothiers' books and the Exchequer the aulnagers'. From the cloths recorded in the books the levy was to be assessed.

This method of recording the cloths manufactured could have been easily abused. To begin with, the number of clothiers—particularly small clothiers—with whom the Commission and the Exchequer would have to deal was large. Nor was the assumption that the aulnagers sealed every cloth manufactured very realistic. The aulnagers had no recent experience in making accurate and detailed returns to the Exchequer. The aulnage (that is, the old cloth tax) was farmed out for a lump sum so that the Exchequer had not needed a genuine annual return.

We have not the exact terms of the petition against the Relief brought to Parliament by the Devon clothiers in November 1549, but we may read something of its terms in the preamble to the Act of Repeal:

> "... which Relief of cloth appeareth now so comberouse to all clothmakers, and also so tedious to the same for makinge of their bookes and the accounts thereof, by reason of the lacke of the Alnagers not always present when time requireth ... that in manner they are discouraged to make any cloth or to set any men on work about the same."

Tedious and cumbersome it may have been, but it is likely that some attempts were made somewhere to collect the tax, and I have not given up hope of tracing some part of this lost census of cloth production. Even if the central records have gone, there is the chance that some of the Commissioners preserved their copies of the assessments among their family papers.

Some Early Ideas on the Agricultural Regions of England

By H. C. DARBY

THE EARLY TOPOGRAPHIES

ONE of the features of English literature in the modern period—from about 1500 onwards—has been the development of a strong tradition of topographical writing. John Leland's *Itinerary*, compiled in the first half of the sixteenth century, consisted only of notes for a proposed "Description of the Realm of England" which never appeared. But before the end of the century, William Camden's *Britannia* provided such a description, and numerous revisions and reprints testify to the need it satisfied. There were many other topographical writings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Some were the reports of travellers like Celia Fiennes, Daniel Defoe, and William Gilpin. Others professed to give a synoptic view of the face of the realm, and were called by such titles as *England described* (1659), *The new State of England* (1691), and *England displayed* (1769); there were a lot of them, and some ran into many editions. Parallel with these general works were those that described particular counties. Some dealt largely with antiquities, like William Dugdale's account of *Warwickshire* (1656), others with natural history, like John Morton's *Northamptonshire* (1712); yet others simply called themselves "descriptions" or "surveys" or "views."

This array of topographical material in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contains a great deal of information about economic resources, about agriculture and manufacturing and towns. It also inevitably includes much reference to the varying face of the countryside. The following extracts from Robert Morden's *The New description and state of England* (1704) will serve to show the kind of information that is encountered. Incidentally, some of these extracts recall the corresponding accounts in Camden's *Britannia*, for there was much repetition among successive descriptions, and they nearly all contain passages obviously copied from earlier sources.

> *Gloucestershire:* "On the East part are the Hills call'd *Cotswold*, feeding many Flocks of Sheep. On the West, beyond the *Severn*, is the large Forrest of *Dean*, between them are the rich Vales of *Glocester*, and towards the North is *Eversholme*."—p. 53.
>
> *Norfolk:* "The Soil is various; in some places fat and rank, in others

light and sandy; in some places 'tis Champagn, and fruitful in Corn; in other parts Woody, and full of Heaths. Near the Sea are rich Marshes, fit for grazing of Cattle."—p. 129.

Leicestershire: "The Soil in the Southern part is extream Fruitful, the Fields yield plenty of Corn, and the rich Meadows, feed vast numbers of Cattle and Sheep, but the North part is but Barren, the earth being more Rocky and Stony, yet here upon *Bardon Hills*, are many Lime Rocks, wherewith the Natives improve the Ground."—p. 85.

The volumes dealing with individual counties also refer to these variations in the face of the countryside, some of them well-recognized and reminiscent of the *pays* of France. Dugdale's *Warwickshire* (1656), for example, drew a distinction between the area to the north of the Avon, known as Woodland, and that to the south, known as Feldon or open country. Geographical regions are rarely, if ever, separated by so precise a boundary as the line of a river, but the distinction to which Dugdale referred is borne out by earlier evidence and is reflected even today in differing types of settlement. Or again, John Aubrey, writing in 1685, drew a contrast between the south and north of Wiltshire, between the lands of chalk and of cheese.

It is not surprising that differences of soil should thus occupy men's minds in view of the great attention given to agriculture and to 'improvement' during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The books of the time are full of advice about the different treatments necessitated by different kinds of soil—clay, sand, and the like; and, as the eighteenth century progressed, there emerged a clearer picture of the soil differences to be found in the various English counties. Compare, for instance, the description of Dorset given by John Coker early in the seventeenth century with that by John Hutchins in 1774. Coker's *Survey of Dorsetshire* emphasized the difference between the clayland and the chalkland, but Hutchins, in his history of Dorset, drew a much more definite picture. After dealing with the ecclesiastical and civil divisions, he proceeded to discuss another type of division.

"There is another not yet described; I mean that which nature has formed. The others are arbitrary and mutable; this is fixed and invariable. Whatever changes a country undergoes, the soil and situation are still the same: and here the down, the vale, and the heath, will be always distinct; nature has set to each its proper bounds, which it cannot pass."—p. lxx.

There follows a characterization of each of the three divisions, all written with a surprisingly modern flavour. A rather similar contrast comes out between the more general treatment of Gloucestershire by Robert Atkyns in

1712, and the clear-cut summary of regional differences given by Samuel Rudder in 1779. It is clear that by the end of the eighteenth century topographical description was losing much of its vague character and was coming to rest upon a relatively detailed knowledge of differences in soil and economy. But even the best of these later descriptions suffer from a lack of definition. They are without an adequate physical and geological background and also without a proper cartographic basis. In this connection it is interesting to note that Lucien Gallois began his account of the idea of the natural region in France by saying: "If one wishes to understand how the idea of a natural region arose in France, it is necessary to go back to the first tentative attempts to draw a geological map of our country, that is to say to study the ground (*le sol*) directly."[1] While there are many differences, there are also many points of resemblance between the development of English and of French ideas about the region in the nineteenth century. They certainly have this much in common, that the provision of a geological map was a necessary prelude to satisfactory regional division.

EARLY ENGLISH GEOLOGICAL MAPS

As early as 1683 Martin Lister read a paper to the Royal Society entitled 'An Ingenious proposal for a new sort of Maps of Countrys, together with Tables of Sands and Clays, such chiefly as are found in the North parts of England'. It set forth the need clearly enough.

> "It were advisable, that a Soil or Mineral Map, as I may call it, were devised. The same Map of England may, for want of a better, at present serve the Turn. It might be distinguisht into Countries, with the River and some of the noted Towns put in. The Soil might either be coloured, by variety of Lines, or Etchings; but the great care must be, very exactly to note upon the Map, where such and such Soiles are bounded. As for example in Yorkshire (1.) The Woolds, Chaulk, Flint, and Pyrites, etc. (2.) Black moore; Moores, Sandstone, etc. (3.) Holderness; Boggy, Turf, Clay, Sand, etc. (4.) Western Mountains; Moores, Sand-stone, Coal, Iron-stone, Lead Ore, Sand, Clay, etc."[2]

After further describing the scheme, he concluded by saying that he left it "to the industry of future times." That Robert Plot, who wrote natural histories of Oxfordshire (1677) and Staffordshire (1686), was interested in the suggestion we may assume from a letter of 1683 written to him by a Mr Aston who said: "I received from Dr Lister two schemes of the sands and clays

[1] L. Gallois, *Régions Naturelles et Noms de Pays*, Paris, 1908, p. 7.
[2] *Philosophical Transactions*, No. 164, p. 739.

found in England, made by himself about twenty years since. He mentioned besides the great advantage of a map of the earths peculiar to some places and countries."[1] Lister was not the only man with these ideas, for John Aubrey, in his *Natural History of Wiltshire* (1685), observed: "I have oftentimes wished for a mappe of England coloured according to the colours of the earth; with markes of the fossiles and minerals."[2] But even without this, he made a tolerably good characterization of Wiltshire, going so far as to relate the character of the inhabitants to the qualities of the different soils.

The hopes of Lister and Aubrey remained unfulfilled in spite of contemporary concern with "the several kinds of the soyls of *England*," as a Royal Society enquiry of 1665 put it.[3] No other attempt seems to have been made until 1743, when Dr Christopher Packe "invented and delineated," as he says, "A New Philosophico-Chorographical Chart of East-Kent," on which were shown some features of relief and land use. In the accompanying *Explanation*, he says that it was the result of "frequent or rather continual Observations, in the course of my Journeys of business thro' almost every the minutest parcel of the Country" (pp. 98–9). But interesting though it is, it is far from providing a satisfactory soil map or geological map of eastern Kent.

Before the end of the eighteenth century, the mapping of soils was revolutionized as a result of the work of William Smith (1769–1839), called even in his lifetime "the father of English geology." His profession as a land surveyor took him about the country studying the varieties of strata and of soils. He had a close interest not only in geology but in agriculture and in the practical application of geological knowledge to farming problems, and he frequently attended agricultural meetings. One agriculturalist, having heard him explain the structure of Wiltshire and its influence upon cultivation, exclaimed: "That is the only way to learn the true nature of soils."[4] It was in 1799 that Smith coloured his first geological map, covering the country around Bath. In 1801, he coloured a small-scale map, calling it a "General Map of the Strata found in England and Wales." This was intended as a preliminary to a larger and more detailed map which at last appeared in 1815. It was on a scale of five miles to one inch, and consisted of fifteen sheets engraved and published by John Cary. Accompanying it was a short *Memoir*

[1] Printed in T. Sheppard, *William Smith: His Maps and Memoirs*, Hull, 1920, p. 93.

[2] J. Britton (ed.), *The Natural History of Wiltshire; by John Aubrey, F.R.S.*, London, 1847, p. 10.

[3] R. Lennard, 'English Agriculture under Charles II: The evidence of the Royal Society's "Enquiries",' *Economic History Review*, IV, 1932, p. 25.

[4] *Jour. Roy. Agric. Society*, VII, 1847, p. 446.

which provided a brief characterization of the physical and geological features of each county, and also a summary of the features of each type of soil. Based on this there were other maps, a smaller one on a scale of fifteen miles to the inch in 1820, and twenty-one separate county geological maps between 1819 and 1824. The rest of the nineteenth century was to see many improvements and refinements on Smith's work, but it was he who for the first time provided a geological basis for describing and classifying the variety of the English landscape. He wrote but little, but he compiled many notes, and his ideas became generally disseminated even before the appearance of his large map of 1815. And in this connection his close interest in agriculture must not be forgotten.

THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE REPORTS

When the Board of Agriculture was established in 1793, with Arthur Young as its Secretary, one of its first acts was to sponsor a series of county surveys.[1] It was only natural that soil differences should bulk large in reports concerned with "the cultivation of the surface, and the resources to be derived from it." The reports appeared between 1793 and 1815, and many of them were accompanied by what were frequently termed "maps of the soil." Indeed, one writer of 1822 went so far as to say that to the Board "must undoubtedly be ascribed the honour of having produced the earliest geological maps of any part of England."[2] This is true only in a broad sense, for the maps indicate not the stratigraphical relations of the different rocks, but the differences in their texture and utilization. It is difficult to be clear about the exact relation of these maps to Smith's work. It has been said that the information on some of them "was largely derived from the records of William Smith."[3] As we have seen, Smith certainly had strong agricultural interests, and he was consulted by Arthur Young.[4] On the other hand, it has also been said that "there is no doubt they were of guidance to Smith in his work."[5] Whatever be the precise relationships, there can be no doubt that they expressed the general preoccupation of late eighteenth-century agriculturalists with differences in soil and in the face of the countryside.

It was, however, far from easy to procure exact information about these

[1] For an account of these see Gordon East, 'Land utilization in England at the end of the eighteenth Century', *Geographical Journal*, vol. 89, 1937, pp. 156–72.

[2] W. D. Conybeare and W. Phillips, *Outlines of the Geology of England and Wales*, London, 1822, p. xlv.

[3] K. C. Edwards, *Nottinghamshire*, p. 450, being Part 60 of the *Land of Britain*, ed. L. Dudley Stamp, London, 1944.

[4] *Dictionary of National Biography*, article on William Smith.

[5] T. Sheppard, *William Smith: His Maps and Memoirs*, Hull, 1920, p. 101.

differences, and to delimit the various types of soil upon a map. Henry Holland, who wrote the account of Cheshire (1808), did not at first wish to produce a map, and only did so under pressure, after completing his report.

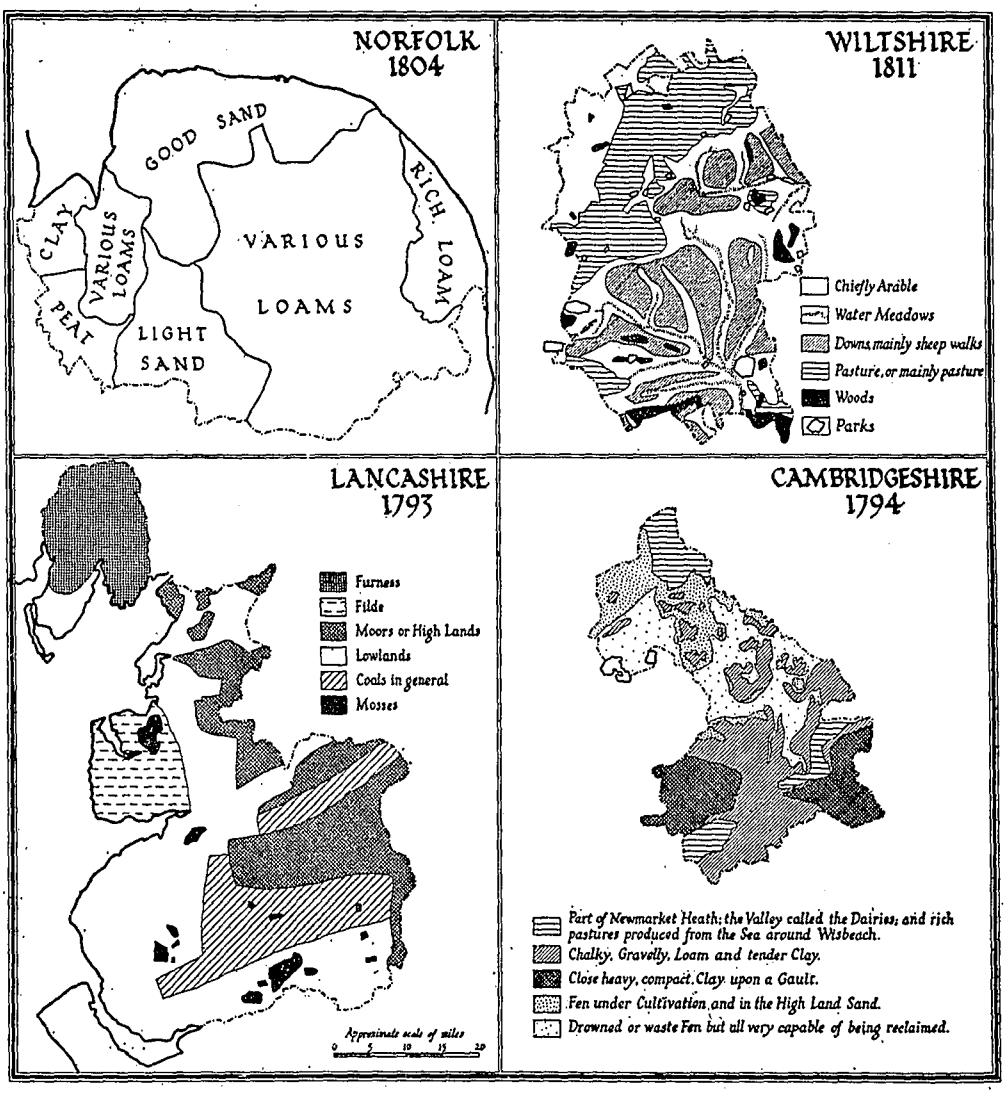

FIG. I

Representative regional maps from the Board of Agriculture Reports, circa 1800

"It was my original intention to have procured for this report, an accurate map of the soils in Cheshire; and, with this view, I sent several sketches to different parts of the county, to be filled up by delineations of the soil in each particular district. I was under the necessity, however, of relinquishing this design, in consequence of the very great intermixture of soils in

the county, which rendered it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain information sufficiently correct for their delineation in a map."—pp. 7-8.

Adam Murray also managed to produce a "map of the soil of Warwickshire" (1813), but he confessed that "the soil varies so much in all the districts of the county, (two or three different kinds of soil being often found in the same field), that any exact description cannot be expected." Other writers also confessed to the difficulty, and they frequently solved it by marking on their maps large areas of "miscellaneous" or "various" soils.

Some reporters, however, did not have to face this problem for their maps were not soil maps at all, but maps of land use or maps constructed upon some other basis. Taking the series as a whole, there was no uniformity about the basis of classification and the terminology. The four examples shown on Fig. I illustrate the different bases of classification and the variety in nomenclature. The division of Norfolk is based on differences in soil texture; that of Wiltshire on differences in land use; that of Lancashire largely upon relief and topography; and, finally, that of Cambridgeshire is a little more complicated in that its terminology reflects both land use and soil. Sometimes the division was based partly upon soil type and partly on other criteria. Thus Lowe recognized three groups of soils in Nottinghamshire (1794); A, Sand or gravel; B, Clay; C, Limestone and coal land. He then subdivided the first two categories to produce seven divisions in all: A 1. Forest and Borders; 2. Trent Bank District; 3. Tongue of Land East of Trent; B 1. North of Trent Clay District; 2. Vale of Belvoir; 3. Nottinghamshire Woulds; C Limestone and Coal District. A more interesting attempt was John Tuke's treatment of the North Riding (1794). His map shows two different classifications, one based upon soil, the other based on districts "each remarkable either for its climate, soil, surface, or minerals." (Fig. II.) Each district was distinguished "by the name by which it is usually known," or where, says Tuke, "names are wanting, I have given them such as are descriptive of their situation and circumstances." The boundaries of the two sets of divisions rarely agree, and most "districts" are characterized by more than one type of soil.

Soil types	*Districts*
1. Limestone Soil.	1. The coast.
2. Greetstone.	2. Cleveland.
3. Variety of Soils.	3. The vale of York, with the Howardian hills, etc.
4. Sandy Soil.	4. Ryedale, with the East and West Marishes.
5. Clayey Soil.	5. The Eastern Moorlands.
	6. The Western ditto.

In this way did some of the Board of Agriculture reporters attempt to solve the diversity presented by soil regions, agricultural regions, and geographical regions. Whatever the defect of these maps, they constituted the first large-scale attempt to indicate the regions of England. But interesting

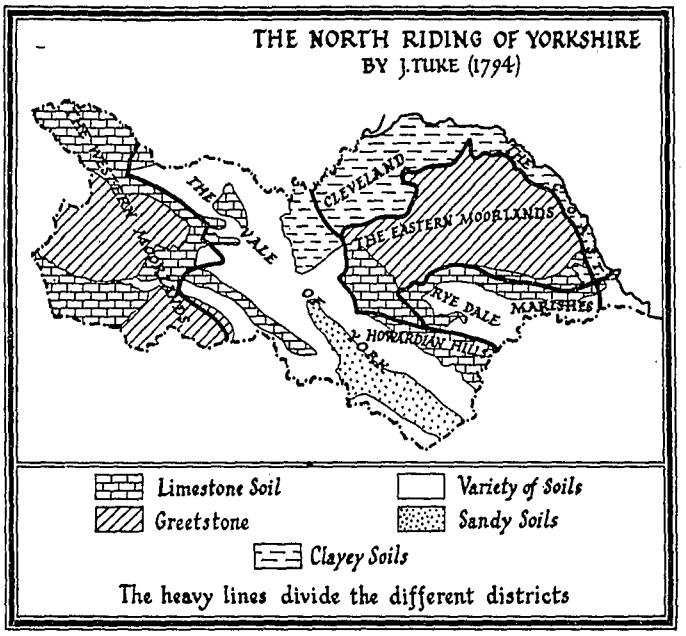

FIG. II

The regions of the North Riding according to John Tuke's *General View of the Agriculture of the North Riding of Yorkshire* (London, 1794)

as they are, an even more interesting experiment in regional division was being undertaken by William Marshall.

THE WORK OF WILLIAM MARSHALL

William Marshall (1745–1818) aimed at giving a picture of what he termed "the rural economy of England." His *Rural Economy of the West of England* (1796) pointed at the difficulty of describing the face and agriculture of England in terms of its counties. In words that recall those of John Hutchins in 1774, it contrasted the arbitrary political boundaries of counties with those of nature, and it also drew a contrast between different bases of classification.

> "*Natural*, not *fortuitous* lines, are requisite to be traced; *Agricultural*, not *political* distinctions, are to be regarded.
>
> A NATURAL DISTRICT is marked by a uniformity or similarity of SOIL and SURFACE; whether, by such uniformity, a marsh, a vale, an extent of

upland, a range of chalky heights, or a stretch of barren mountains, be produced. And an AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT is discriminated by a uniformity or similarity of PRACTICE; whether it be characterised by grazing, sheep farming, arable management, or mixed cultivation; or by the production of some particular article, as dairy produce, fruit liquor, etc. etc.,

Now, it is evident, that the boundary lines of Counties pay no regard to these circumstances. On the contrary, we frequently find the most entire Districts, with respect to Nature and Agriculture, severed by political lines of demaraction."—I, p. 2.

Thus the dairy district of northern Wiltshire extended into Berkshire and Gloucestershire; and the cider country or "Fruit Liquor District of the Wye and Severn" included parts of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire. Marshall went so far as to say that "to prosecute an Agricultural Survey, by Counties, is to set at naught the distinctions of Nature." Obviously, he underestimated the convenience—if nothing more—of the county as a unit of study, but, in doing so, he emphasized the natural bases upon which the rural economy of the country rested.

The Board of Agriculture reports lay great stress upon differences of soil. So do the studies of Marshall, but they also emphasize other elements in regional differentiation, such elements as intensity of relief and what Marshall called "cast of surface." Those stretches of country labelled "various" or "miscellaneous" on the soil maps of the county reports now disappeared in Marshall's classifications. Relief formed the main basis of his subdivision of the three counties of Yorkshire as set out in *The Rural Economy of Yorkshire* (1788), which, it is only fair to note, appeared a few years before the earliest Board of Agriculture report. It presents an interesting example of Marshall's method.

"Viewed as a field of RURAL ECONOMY, it is divisible into MOUNTAIN, UPLAND, and VALE. The VALE OF YORK, falling gently from the banks of the Tees down to the conflux of the Trent and Humber, is Nature's grand division of the County into EAST and WEST YORKSHIRE.

WEST YORKSHIRE naturally subdivides into mountains, which I shall term the *Western Morelands*; into *Craven*, a fertile corner cut off from the county of Lancaster; and into a various *manufacturing District*: EAST YORKSHIRE into *Cleveland*; the *Eastern Morelands*; the *Vale of Pickering* and its surrounding banks; the *Wolds*; and *Holderness*."—I, p. 2.

He then proceeded to describe each of the districts, and he illustrated his description by a map indicating the differences of relief that marked one

region from another; a second map showed the subdivisions around the Vale of Pickering.

In the following year appeared *The Rural Economy of Glocestershire* (1789), which also dealt with parts of Wiltshire and Herefordshire. The method of treatment is similar to that in the volume on Yorkshire, and it includes a map setting out what are called "the popular divisions of the county." The same general features characterize the reports on the Midland Counties (1790) and on the West of England (1796), though the maps that accompany these volumes are not very illuminating. The two maps that accompany the volumes dealing with the Southern Counties (1798) more nearly resemble those of Yorkshire in indicating "some well defined Natural Districts." This study of 1798, moreover, sets out clearly the goal to be aimed at in the delineation of natural districts upon a map. It was not his own method nor that of the county reports, but a combination of the two.

> "A GEOLOGICAL MAP of England, shaded somewhat agreeably to the sketch, I have given of Yorkshire, showing, not only its *mountain*, *upland*, and *vale* districts, but giving an adequate idea of their *elevations*, and *casts of surface*, would, in the instant, be a valuable acquisition to science. And, whenever the government of this country shall turn their attention to the country itself, such a map, or maps pointing out, at sight, the elevation, the turn of surface, the waters, the soils, and the substrata, as they relate to AGRICULTURE, will be found to be an acquirement of considerable value." —II, p. 358.

These regional studies did not complete Marshall's work, for between 1808 and 1817 he proceeded to "review and abstract" the Board of Agriculture reports, county by county, and the five volumes of this review were reissued as a whole in 1818. The account of each county is prefaced by a brief summary of its natural divisions. In these summaries, Marshall points again and again to the unsatisfactory nature of the county as a unit of study. Thus, in writing of the Fenland, he says (III, p. 3): "This one, and naturally indivisable District (a well-sized County in extent) requires six *County Reports* to treat of it." The account of the chalklands was likewise split between many volumes. Indeed, the natural districts of most counties joined up with others beyond its borders. "How irrational and inscientific," he wrote (IV, p. 398), thinking of Huntingdonshire, "to prosecute an AGRICULTURAL SURVEY, by *Counties*." Very occasionally, he refrained from setting out the natural districts of a county, and for very good reasons. Thus, in introducing Suffolk, he writes (III, p. 405): "My personal knowledge of this County is not sufficient to entitle me to undertake the arduous task of analyzing its

component parts, and separating them with the required accuracy, into NATURAL DISTRICTS."

The first of these five volumes of abstracts has the great merit of including a map of the "natural districts" of the northern counties (Fig. III). When one

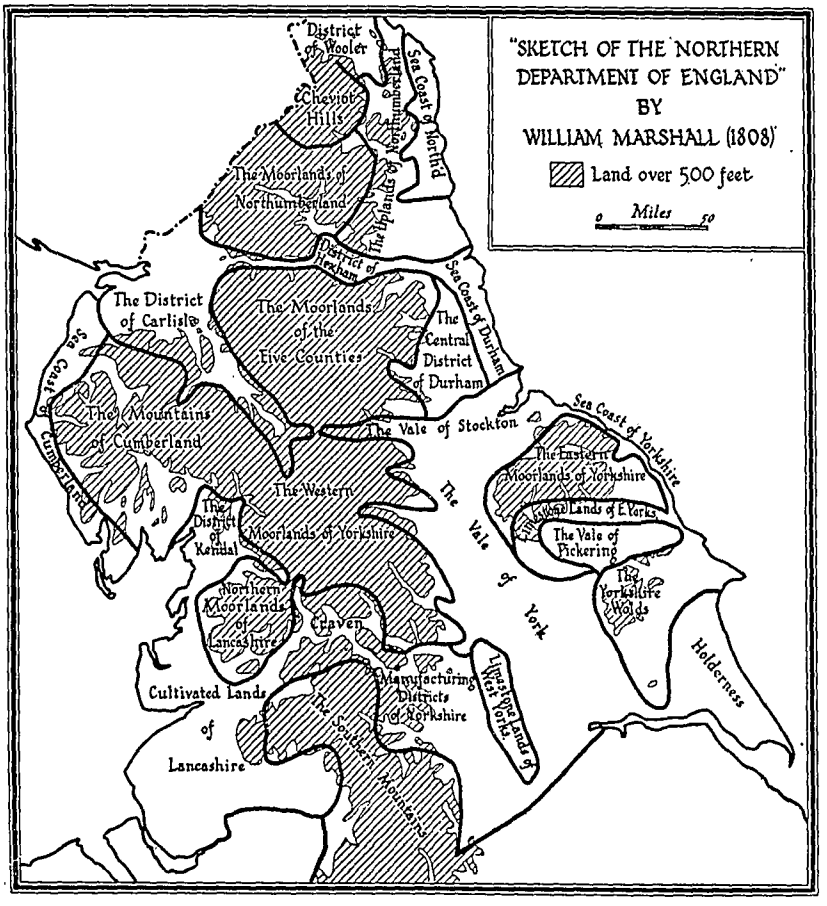

FIG. III

The "Natural Districts" of the Northern Department of England, redrawn upon a modern base from W. Marshall, *The Review and Abstract of the County Reports to the Board of Agriculture*, vol. 1 (York, 1808, reprinted 1818)

remembers the date of this map (1808), one cannot help regarding it as a considerable achievement. To subdivide the whole of the north of England cannot have been an easy task. The natural districts numbered twenty-nine. Some, like the plain of Carlisle, were "well-defined" natural districts, relatively easy to mark (1, p. 157). Others were not so easily separated one from the other, and the "sandy lands" and the "rush lands" of Lancashire were included in one unit called the "cultivated lands of Lancashire" (1, p. 243);

nothing is said about industrial Lancashire. There were other difficulties; the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire are said to be bordered "on the southeast, by the limestone lands of West Yorkshire," and a footnote is added to explain why: "The last being an *agricultural*—rather than a *manufacturing*—passage, and bearing a distinguishing natural character, I separate it as a natural district."—I, p. 326.

Unfortunately, the practice of including a map was not continued in the later volumes, and the omission is explained in the second volume:

> "Prefixed to the first volume of this Work, I offered a sketch engraving of the Northern Department, to show, with better effect than the verbal descriptions could convey, the several districts into which it naturally separates. And it was my wish to have accompanied the succeeding volumes with similar sketches. But finding the attention and time which it required, and the difficulty, in a recluse situation, of getting the engravings executed, satisfactorily; and, further, being aware (as is expressed in a note, p. 1, of the Northern Department) that nothing short of an actual and deliberate survey can determine the outlines with due precision;—I have deemed it right to bestow the time and thought that, in the present instance, such a sketch would have required, in a way which, I conceive, will be more profitable to the public;—trusting that the verbal descriptions will be found to be fully sufficient, as a GROUNDWORK for the required SURVEY." p. xv.

From the verbal descriptions, however, an effort can be made to reconstruct maps showing Marshall's natural districts. Taken as a whole, his subdivision constitutes the first large-scale attempt to distinguish the regions of England. For a long time it remained the only one.

COUNTY REPORTS OF THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The foundation of the Royal Agricultural Society in 1838 gave a great stimulus to British agriculture. Soon after its formation, the society decided to offer prizes for essays on agricultural subjects, the essays to be printed in its *Journal*. Among the various categories of essays, the ones of most general interest today are those which reviewed the state of English farming, county by county. The first of the series, that on the farming of Essex, appeared in 1845; the last was that on Middlesex in 1869.[1] Altogether, they numbered

[1] The complete list of counties is as follows: Bedfordshire 1857, Berkshire 1860, Buckinghamshire 1855, Cambridgeshire 1847, Cheshire 1845, Cornwall 1846, Cumberland 1852, Derbyshire 1853, Devon 1849, Dorset 1854, Durham 1856, Essex 1845, Gloucestershire 1850, Hampshire 1861, Herefordshire 1853, Hertfordshire 1864, Huntingdonshire 1868, Kent 1846,

thirty-eight, and besides these, there were also published some other county surveys that were not prize reports.[1] Taken together, this body of information presented the only detailed picture of English agriculture that had been drawn since the county surveys of the Board of Agriculture. Much of the material within these articles is concerned with agricultural practice, but the description of the farming of each county is made to rest upon an account of its physical circumstances. Sometimes, a summary of its geology is presented as an introduction; at other times, the article as a whole is organized on a geological basis, and the farming of each major soil division is described at length. Many of the articles are accompanied by geological maps, and the flavour of the series as a whole is distinctly geological. The work of William Smith and his followers seems to have borne full fruit, and the relatively vague descriptions of the eighteenth and earlier centuries put upon a definite basis.

The thirty-eight prize essays naturally vary a great deal both in their intrinsic quality and in their relevance to the problem of regional division. Even the least relevant contain much that is of interest, and the best frequently include interesting characterizations of what their authors sometimes call "natural districts" or "distinct divisions" or "agricultural divisions." It is difficult to select a representative sample of descriptive writing from so much wealth, but some idea of its nature may be obtained from the following introduction to the account of the Vale of Aylesbury. It was written in 1855 by C. S. Read as part of the essay on Buckinghamshire.

> "There is a large district reaching from Aylesbury almost to Winslow, to various parts of which the rich title of the Vale of Aylesbury has been applied. Without wishing to be particular as to words, it might be said that the term *vale* could not properly be applied to any portion of the district. It might be described as an undulating plain, from which now and then rise patches of elevated land, which are mostly capped with the Portland stone before mentioned."

Lancashire 1849, Leicestershire 1866, Lincolnshire 1851, Middlesex 1869, Northamptonshire 1852, Northumberland 1848, Nottinghamshire 1846, Oxfordshire 1854, Shropshire 1858, Somerset 1850, Suffolk 1848, Surrey 1853, Sussex 1850, Warwickshire 1856, Westmorland 1868, Wiltshire 1845, Worcestershire 1867, Yorkshire, East Riding (1849), North Riding (1849), West Riding (1849).

[1] The total of 38 does not include R. N. Bacon's report on Norfolk. It won a prize but was so voluminous that it was published separately as *The Report on the Agriculture of Norfolk*, London, 1844. Almack's account of Norfolk was included in the *Journal* for 1845, but this was not a prize report. Nor does the figure of 38 include the prize reports on North Wales (1846) and South Wales (1850).

It is a paragraph that might well have come from the modern Land Utilization Report, and indeed there is something like it in that Report.

The nature and nomenclature of these "divisions" or "districts" vary. Some counties were divided upon a strictly geological basis. Evershed, writing on Surrey in 1853, said: "In noticing the various agricultural districts the writer will strictly adhere to the geological divisions." The result was five divisions named as follows (Fig. IV): The Bagshot Sands, The London Clay, The Chalk District, The Greensand District, The Weald. Rowley, who wrote on Derbyshire in the same year, likewise made a strictly geological division into five areas, and described what he called "the peculiar and distinctive features" of each. In 1854 and 1855, Read's two essays on Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire also emphasized the close connection between geology and land utilization. "Most of the [geological] belts which run across one county," wrote Read in 1855, "extend into the other, and form similar kinds of soil which receive similar treatment." It is a statement that recalls William Marshall's criticism of the county as the unit of treatment.

But in most of the essays, the stratigraphical divisions are transmuted into generalizations about soil texture. In 1847, Raynbird, dealing with Suffolk wrote: "I have followed the example of Arthur Young in giving a map of the soils, believing that this will give a better idea of the distribution of the several varieties of land than any other method." To three of his soil divisions he was able to give a regional name of some standing (Fig. IV): Strong loam (Woodlands), Eastern sand (Sandlings), Western sand (Fieldings), Rich loam, Fen. Rather similar descriptive terms were used, for example, by Bearn in 1852 to denote the six divisions of Northamptonshire and by Evershed in 1864 to separate the two main divisions of Hertfordshire.

There are also counties where the soil regions were named after some dominant agricultural characteristic; Colbeck in 1847 described Northumberland under what he called "three heads": On Wheat Soil; On Barley or Turnip Soil; On Stock or Grazing Farms. These are marked on his primitive but interesting map of land utilization (Fig. IV). Rather similar to this classification is the almost identical division adopted by Dickinson for Cumberland in 1852 (Fig. IV), and by Webster for Westmorland in 1868: Land where wheat is grown; Meadow and pasture lands; Fell pasture and commons. Both their maps represent a distinct advance upon that of Colbeck.

Other writers, in their attempts at regional division, were not tied so closely to geological outcrop or soil texture, and linked up soil differences with other features. As far as nomenclature at any rate was concerned, they provided more balanced pictures of their respective counties. Legard, who wrote the account of the East Riding in 1848, faced the problem squarely.

"Its topographical features, as well as its geological construction, seem to require that it should be separated into three districts, which may be described as—1st, *The Wold district*, occupying the central high ground of the Riding; 2nd, *Holderness*, stretching out in a south-easterly direction

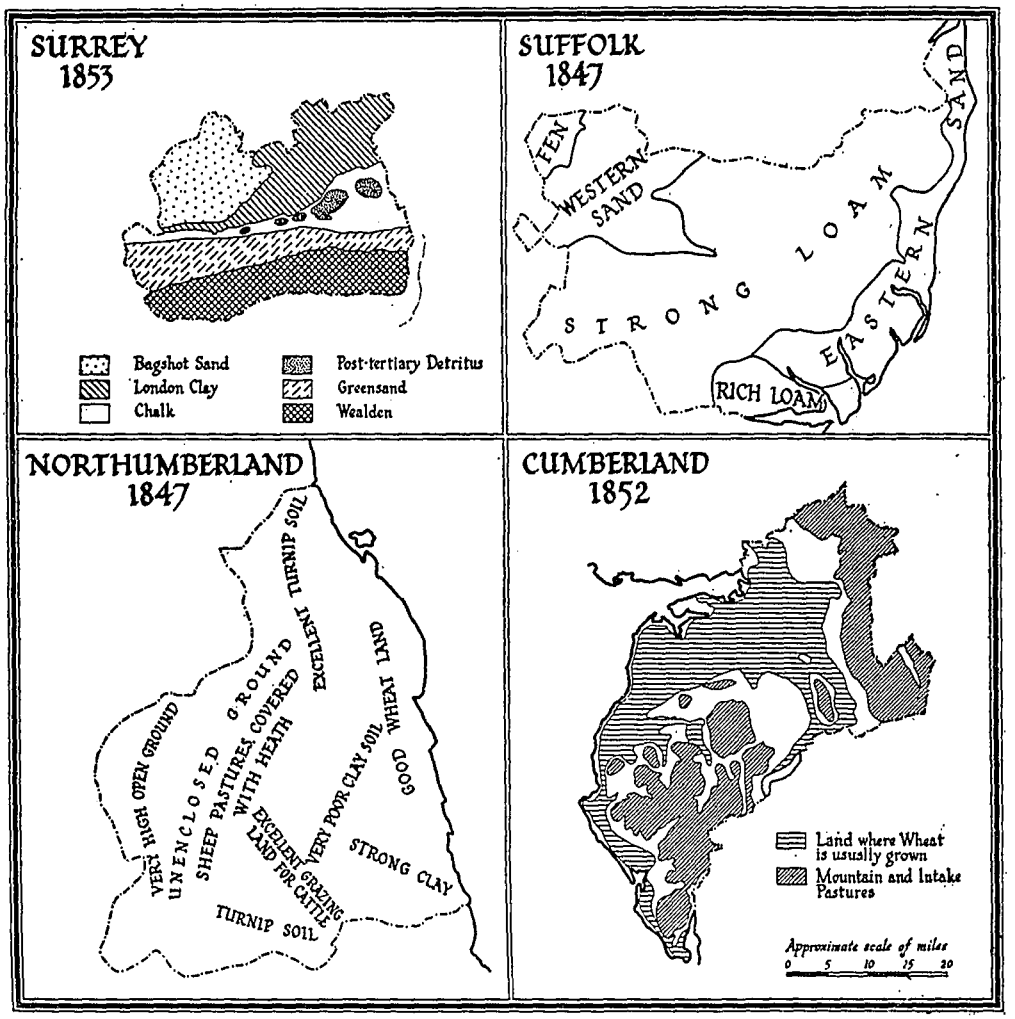

FIG. IV

Representative regional maps from the Prize Essays of the Royal Agricultural Society, circa 1850

from the Wold Hills to Spurn Point; and 3rd, *The Vale of York*, extending from the western escarpment of the Wolds to the rivers Derwent and Ouse."

He gave a clear picture first of the physical features and then of the land use

of each of the three regions. Acland, who wrote on Somerset in 1850, went a stage further. He supplied a physical map as well as a geological map, and then proceeded to expound his theme.

> "If the reader will take the trouble to glance at the annexed physical map, and to compare it with the geological map, he . . . will perceive that the county of Somerset naturally arranges itself in three main divisions, viz., *a Central Basin*, draining into the Bristol Channel between *two hilly districts*, one on the west, the other on the north-east."

There follows a long account of each district: the western and middle districts are further divided into nine sub-regions, all we are told, "quite distinct in their character." It is a surprisingly modern geographical presentation, and each region is characterized in terms of its physical features, its soil, and its farming practice. Perhaps the clearest statement of the principles of regional division, however, is to be found in Garnett's account of Lancashire (1849). He divided the county into southern, middle, and northern divisions, separated respectively by the Ribble and the Lune; and he then went on to contrast these with artificial administrative divisions in words that recall the comments of John Hutchins on Dorset in 1774.

> "Each of these great divisions is essentially different from the others in important points, such as the character of the soil, the climate, and the people, and I therefore would make this new division, rather than adopt either the ancient boundaries of the Hundreds or the Parliamentary Divisions, inasmuch as neither of the latter are marked by any great natural features, nor are they suggestive of any striking diversity in the soil or the inhabitants, and would not convey to the general reader any distinct idea of the districts as they are successively brought under his consideration."

Garnett noted that each of the three areas was far from being uniform in character, and he described some of the variations within each, but he made no formal division into sub-regions.

All these classifications based directly or less directly upon geology and soil raised certain perplexing difficulties, and something must be said about two groups of difficulties. In the first place, there was the difficulty of classifying soils and generalizing about their distribution. Both Raynbird writing on Suffolk (1847) and Evershed on Surrey (1853) encountered this problem. "The soils of the county of Surrey," said the latter, "are so various and unequally distributed that it would be impossible to find any very extensive tract of land of an uniform character." As we have seen, he solved the problem by adhering strictly to geological divisions. Webster, in his account of

Westmorland (1868), found the same thing: "Very often the most extraordinary variations occur in the soil in short distances, and even in the same field—very troublesome to the farmer, and puzzling to the valuer." Bennett, writing on Bedfordshire in 1857, had likewise felt the need of some generalization, and contented himself with three main divisions, although, as he said, "there are two or three sub-varieties which will require cursory notice." In the following year Tanner faced the problem in Shropshire:

> "In the division of Shropshire into districts it has seemed desirable to group together such tracts of land as possess similarity of character. This, however, in Shropshire is by no means easily done, in consequence of the rapid variations in the soil. It has seemed best to notice it under three districts, which are shown in the accompanying map."

Spearing, in a similar manner, divided Berkshire (1860): "Although there are many varieties of soil, yet for the present purpose, it is not necessary to make more than three agricultural divisions." When describing Wiltshire in 1845, Little had merely presented a generalized division into south and north, an arrangement that was reminiscent of the distinction that John Aubrey drew. In 1846 Corringham bisected Nottinghamshire into east and west, and in 1866 Moscrop adopted the same plan for Leicestershire. The local variations of soil and farming practice within each division were described in a discursive manner. Palin, who wrote on Cheshire in 1845, found himself unable to generalize on a regional basis, and so described instead not regions but four types of farms: Sand-land Dairy farms, Clay-land Dairy farms, Sand-land Arable farms, and Clay-land Arable farms. The four types were intermixed geographically just as the soils were intermixed. Another device adopted for some counties was to institute a category of mixed or miscellaneous soils; this was done, for example, for Essex (1845), for the North Riding (1849), and for Warwickshire (1856). All these difficulties registered the impracticability of making a regional division based on soil alone.

In the second place, there was the problem of the geological map itself. Read, who wrote on Oxfordshire in 1854, put the matter plainly after he had described the geology of the county:

> "This is a brief description of the Geology of Oxfordshire, and with the assistance of the map and the sections, may be tolerably plain to those conversant with the county. But farmers want maps which show the superficial accumulations and alluvial deposits. This is the geology—the geology of the surface, that is most useful to agriculture. . . It is to be hoped that geologists will pay the same attention to the surface of the soil as they have devoted to the substrata."

Ruegg, who wrote on Dorset in the same year, said much the same thing. After a long geological introduction and much praise of the geological map, he confessed:

> "And yet even the present careful survey leaves our *geocultural* requirements still unsatisfied. It is with the rock only that the geologist cares to deal: it is in the soil upon that rock that the agriculturalist has the chief concern."

Similar ideas appear in other of the prize essays and also elsewhere. Thus Trimmer in an article of 1851 emphasized the defects of current geological maps for agricultural purposes, and stressed the need for a soil survey as opposed to a geological survey.[1] He said that hitherto there had been only two attempts to provide such a soil map, one by himself covering Norfolk in 1847,[2] and the other in a map of South Wales for the Geological Survey. Some years after the last of the prize essays, Topley in his classical article 'On the Agricultural Geology of the Weald' was saying the same thing: "Over a great part of England an ordinary geological map is of very little use to the farmer, for there are often widespread deposits of 'drift' which completely cover up the rocks and determine the soil of the district."[3]

CONCLUSION

The arrival of the geological map round about 1800 greatly facilitated the classification of land into what were sometimes called "natural districts." But the new schemes of classification raised problems that are apparent both in the earlier reports of the Board of Agriculture and in the later ones of the Royal Agricultural Society. That their experiments in regional division came before the rise of formal regional geography is in itself an interesting fact. What is more, these experiments anticipated some of our problems, and are of more than historical interest to the present-day geographer and student of agriculture. Today, as at the beginning and at the middle of the nineteenth century, we sometimes find it difficult to avoid, in one and the same regional scheme, a mixed nomenclature based partly on land and partly on utilization. Today, as then, we are without a soil map of England.

[1] J. Trimmer, 'On the Agricultural Geology of England and Wales', *Jour. Roy. Agric. Soc.*, Series 1, XII, 1851, pp. 445–95.

[2] J. Trimmer, 'On the Geology of Norfolk as illustrating the Laws of the Distribution of Soils', *Jour. Roy. Agric. Soc.*, Series 1, VII, 1847, pp. 444–85.

[3] W. Topley, 'On the Agricultural Geology of the Weald', *Jour. Roy. Agric. Soc.*, Series 2, VIII, 1872, pp. 241–67.

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Notes and Comments

THE HISTORY OF THE PLOUGH

An International Conference for Research on Ploughing Implements was held in Copenhagen in June. It was attended by some forty persons representing most European countries and the United States. Mr J. W. Y. Higgs and Mr F. G. Payne attended from Great Britain. The idea of the conference was first suggested at the fourth meeting of the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnographical Sciences which was held in Vienna in 1952.

This was the first opportunity that international experts had had of meeting together to discuss problems relating to the history, development, and distribution of plough types, and the conference provided a most useful forum for the exchange of ideas. It was clear that in many countries great headway had been made with the study of plough types and that it was a subject which required far closer study in Great Britain. A considerable proportion of the conference was devoted to the discussion of a draft scheme for collecting information on an international basis to make available material for the compilation of an international atlas of plough types which might be published at a later date. The conference welcomed a Danish proposal to establish in the National Museum at Copenhagen a permanent bureau which would assemble information on the history of the plough from all over the world and thus establish a library and archive for the use of international research workers. It is to be hoped that everybody interested in the subject will send information which might be useful to the Secretary, Dr Axel Steensberg, The Danish National Museum, Frederiksholms Kanal 12, Copenhagen.

A committee was elected to supervise the work of the bureau, consisting of Dr Branimir Bratanić of Yugoslavia, Professor Jorge Dias of Portugal, Professor Sigurd Erixon of Sweden, Professor Heinz Kothe of East Germany, Professor Paul Leser of the U.S.A., Mr Ffransis Payne of Great Britain, and Dr Axel Steensberg.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS

The next meeting of the International Conference of Agricultural Economists will be held in Helsinki from 19 to 25 August 1954. The general theme of the conference will be 'The Impact of Technical Changes on Agriculture'. Papers and discussions will cover a wide range of subjects related to this field and although the final details of the programme are not yet available it is already clear that the meeting will not be without considerable interest to the agricultural historian. Before and after the conference tours are being arranged, so that members will have the opportunity of visiting farms and agricultural institutions in Finland and in Northern Europe. The Secretary of the Conference is Mr J. R. Currie of Wingett, Dartington, Totnes, Devon.

ALDERMASTON CANDLE AUCTION

The triennial candle auction for letting the church land at Aldermaston in Berkshire was held on 18 December 1953. The normal method of conducting an auction by candle is to insert a pin or nail a little way down the stem of a lighted candle, the last person to bid before the pin falls being the purchaser.

Such auctions as a means of selling merchandise were extremely common in the eighteenth century, when they appear to have been one of the standard methods of disposing of ships' cargoes, goods and stores of all kinds, and even of slaves. The following advertisement, for example, is taken from *Williamson's Advertiser* of Liverpool for 20 August 1756. "To be sold by the Candle, at 1 o'clock noon, at R. Williamson's shop, twelve pipes of raisin wine, two boxes of bottled cyder, six sacks of flour, three negro men, two negro women, two negro boys, and one negro girl."

'Sales by Candle' were also commonly used for the sale or letting of land and buildings. In addition to this survival at Aldermaston it is believed that such auctions still continue at Chedzoy in Somerset and Haxey in Lincolnshire. The meadow at Aldermaston is known as Church Acre and measures in area 2a. 1r. 33p. It was originally awarded to the Churchwardens in compensation for their lands, grounds, and rights of common, and the practice of letting it by candle auction is thought to date back at least as far as 1815. The money obtained for it, after the necessary fencing expenses have been paid, goes to the church funds.

The auction is something of a social occasion in the village and is well attended. The Vicar acts as auctioneer, that is to say he inserts the pin in the candle, and after it has fallen declares the purchaser. The proceedings take about twenty minutes and bids are very slow right up to the last minute or two when interest suddenly awakens and the bidding becomes brisk until the pin falls. This time the meadow fetched 162s., which compares unfavourably with the very high price of 255s. paid in 1950.

DERBYSHIRE RAMS' HEADS

There is a well-known story about three rams which were sold by a Derbyshire farmer in the year 1830 to a farmer in Surrey. The story relates how the rams, being dissatisfied with their new home in the south, walked back north to the farm of their upbringing. The farmer, amazed by their perseverance, took compassion on them and kept them until they died of old age. After their deaths he had their heads stuffed. A member of the Society, Mr I. H. Morten of Burbage, near Buxton, has been trying for some years to verify the truth of this tale and has at last succeeded in tracing what he believes to be the original heads. Two of them are now hanging in a public house at Eyam, and the third was apparently destroyed by moths during the last war.

LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Society will publish in its *Transactions* for 1954:

CRUCK-BUILDING IN LEICESTERSHIRE

by V. R. WEBSTER

A limited number of offprints of this paper will be issued by the Society in November, price 6s. (by post 6s. 4d.). Orders should be sent to the Secretary, Leicestershire Archaeological Society, The Guildhall, Leicester, before 1 October.

STUDIES IN LEICESTERSHIRE AGRARIAN HISTORY

Edited by W. G. HOSKINS

Copies of this publication, which includes contributions by R. H. Hilton, L. A. Parker, M. W. Beresford, W. G. Hoskins, and G. E. Fussell, can still be obtained from the Secretary of the Society or through any bookseller.

Price 12s. 6d.

Book Reviews

ROBERT TROW-SMITH, *Society and the Land.* The Cresset Press. 252 pp. 18s.

It is to be feared that Mr Trow-Smith's new book will find little favour with the 'scientific' historian, for the book is not an impartial presentation of both sides of a question based on the meticulous weighing of all the available historical evidence. On the contrary, Mr Trow-Smith is disarmingly frank about his intentions, telling us in his preface that he makes no apology for intruding his personal opinions into his historical tale "because in the last resort the proper relation between society and its agriculture is a matter of opinion and not of fact."

Society and the Land traces the impact of society on land and of land on society from the days of the Saxon pioneers to the present day. Three main historical periods are distinguished: that in which the pioneers farmed for their own subsistence; that in which the land was venerated as the source of social dignity by the great men of the nation; and that in which farming for profit led to the eclipse of the landlord and to the commercialization of the land.

In contrast to the rest of the book, the six chapters dealing with these three main periods are commendably objective and reasonably non-controversial. They certainly show that Mr Trow-Smith knows his facts and respects them. And they also show that he can re-tell a familiar story and retain the reader's interest. He is particularly skilful in two things. First, he has the happy knack of striking a very modern note in describing centuries'-old debates, e.g. some of the proposals in the *Common Weal* of Henry VIII's reign smack of "the manipulation of the market of the modern Keynesian thinkers"; the authorities of the city of London are shown to have practised "bulk-buying" as early as 1600. Second, he is a master of the illuminatingly apt quotation, though it must also be stated that he is tantalizing in his contempt for references. (Incidentally, the book is not only entirely without references, it also lacks an index.)

In the four last chapters, dealing with "modern times" and bringing the story up to 1953, Mr Trow-Smith is less concerned with the writing of social and economic history than with the development of his thesis that since the repeal of the Corn Laws Britain has followed "strange industrial gods which have brought her near to bankruptcy." While he is wise enough not to don the prophet's mantle, he nevertheless makes it plain that he believes we are now on the threshold of a fourth phase in the relation of society and land—a phase in which "agriculture is becoming the means of national subsistence."

Whether one agrees with Mr Trow-Smith's case or not one must admit that he can state it with formidable interest. Moreover, his argument never lapses into any of the mysticism and the nostalgic sentimentality which characterizes the writings of the 'fundamentalists' who share his views on the influence of industrialization and free imports on the fortunes of the land and of the people of Britain.

EDGAR THOMAS

E. W. MARTIN, *The Secret People.* Phoenix House Ltd. 1954. 319 pp. 21s.

Although this book is subtitled "English village life after 1750, being an account of English people, their lives, work, and development through a period of two hundred years," its main interest lies in its description of village life today and its analysis of the problems which confront those who live in villages—the secret people—together with suggestions for the solution of these problems. The author does not confine his attention narrowly to the conduct of agriculture but casts his net more widely, discussing rural crafts and industries, education, and the part played by women in rural society. The village craftsman, the village school, and the Women's Institute each receive critical ap-

praisal. A discussion of the changing roles and circumstances of the four main figures in the countryside—the squire or landowner, the parson, the farmer, and the labourer—together with that shady fifth, the poacher—over the last two hundred years provides the background for the author's discussion of the current problems of the countryside. This is not history for its own sake but a study of the past in order to understand the present and to be able to prescribe for the future.

For Mr Martin, the main issue is that of rural depopulation. How can the rural exodus be halted? In this volume he is concerned with the village; the problems of the country town are to be considered in a companion volume. The answer for the village is to refocus cultural life within the village itself, to revivify the village so that it will be able to stave off the counter-attraction of the town. Four main problems of special importance for every parish call for action: (*a*) education and recreation; (*b*) religion; (*c*) industrial development; and (*d*) the disappearance of the peasant. In education, Mr Martin looks to the village college, on the lines of the Cambridgeshire experiment, to become "the fructifying centre of village cultural life." In religion he finds the key to the situation is the country parson. With the disappearance of the squire, only the parson can give the village the leadership it needs. The man required "will not be a sporting parson, not a games master, or an organizer of fantastic revels, but a thinker prepared to take his ideas out into the open and fight for them." Only he can provide the stimulation of village life *from the inside* which is its present need. Thirdly, to restore hope to the village, new industries—either light industries such as plastics, clothing, jam-making, or rural trades and crafts—must be established in the country to provide an outlet for craftsmanship, seasonal employment for farm workers, and regular jobs for "the lusty young women" who would otherwise go to work in the towns.

Education, religion, and industrial development can give renewed purpose to village life, but the reorganization of these will not of itself keep the country worker on the land. This, in Mr Martin's view, can only be achieved by giving the rural worker—the peasant—more land of his own to cultivate, if necessary with State aid, as a practical recognition of his worth as a cultivator of the soil. There may be doubts about the practicability of such advice. The smallholding may be appropriate for certain kinds of husbandry but it is unlikely to be capable of universal application. Moreover, mechanization and modernization require capital beyond the normal resources of the 'peasant'. Nor can this recommendation find support from the historical narrative, one of whose main strands is the account of the disappearance of the peasant.

Finally, how can these changes be brought about? Here the main question is the role of planning. Does planning provide a glorious opportunity for their attainment or an inimical threat to the well-being of the countryside? Mr Martin looks for a system which will not only be expert but which will also make the local people feel that they have a real share in creating and influencing their future.

While Mr Martin is at home in the present-day village and writes with knowledge and sympathy of current problems, his work is of little value for the agricultural historian. Though he acknowledges bibliographical assistance in his preface, his book shows almost no acquaintance with the writings of the last twenty-five years. While the blurb on the jacket speaks of the second wave of enclosures, the book is innocent of any mention of the first. Enclosure was not a long and slow process but a revolutionary development after 1750. Nor do regional or local differences receive recognition. For Mr Martin, England before 1750 was "champion country, unenclosed." Further, since the squire, the farmer, and the labourer receive separate treatment, the discussion of problems is fragmented, contradictions abound, and repetition is frequent. The open-field system is seen through a romantic haze, while the account of the eighteenth-century enclosure movement follows in the main the school cer-

tificate answer of yesteryear. On other issues Mr Martin is equally old-fashioned. The appraisal of the contribution of Jethro Tull takes no account of Professor T. H. Marshall's criticisms and is therefore more fulsome than is nowadays the wont. Finally, the balance of the book is distorted. Much space is devoted to retelling the story of the village labourer to about 1830, but little is devoted to the subsequent features of English agrarian history. The chapter on the squire, for example, virtually ends in 1843, land the effect of foreign competition which forced after 1875 such changes in the conduct of English agriculture receives scanty treatment.

Mr Martin is aware of the defects and disadvantages as well as the virtues and attractions of country life, but he has not been able to impose a consistent interpretation on his book. A wide range of opinions receives mention but all points of view are given equal weight. In the end the reader is left to reach his own conclusions from the mass of conflicting arguments. However, if the book provokes further thought on the present problems of English rural society, it will not have been written in vain.

W. E. MINCHINTON

C. S. ORWIN, *A History of English Farming*. Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1949. 152 pp. 8s. 6d.

To cover the whole history of farming in one short volume of 152 pages is no mean feat of compression, and to make it interesting and digestible requires the practised hand. In Dr Orwin's hands this feat is accomplished so easily that we are apt to forget the artistry, the wide scholarship, and the sense of humour that went to make up the final successful performance.

The underlying theme of much of the book is the saga of the open fields, and here Dr Orwin is on ground that he has made his own. His lively description of the beginnings of the open fields, meadows, and commons of the early medieval village brings to life every detail of a way of life and communal farming that lasted for hundreds of years, when villages were tiny oases of cultivation in a vast area of forest and waste and lived entirely on their own resources. To all who are interested in Domesday this description of the medieval village will bring an invaluable insight into the Domesday scene as the jurors responsible for the making of the survey saw it.

Dr Orwin's saga begins at the first ploughing of the strips in the open fields and ends when the enclosures did away with these strips and formed them into a chequerboard of farms and fields enclosed by fences as we know them today. All the chief causes of the gradual change in the manorial and open-field system are passed in review: the services the tenant had to perform as rent for his strips and their gradual commutation for a cash payment; the labour shortage after the Black Death which made it easy for the peasant to demand freedom from these services, since he was for once in a good bargaining position; the drift of the dissatisfied away from the manor to the towns, where they gained their freedom but lost their security from want and had no one to care if they starved in bad times. The shortage of labour reduced the area of the arable and increased the grass, so that the traditional routine of the open fields was broken, and both lord and larger tenant kept as many sheep as they could, and so made more money with less labour. Their success often ruined the humbler peasants, who lost their stubble and fallow grazing for their sheep and their common rights for their cow.

The enormous increase of the population of the towns, with their extra million mouths to feed, was the spur which led to the drainage of the Fens, the Somerset marshes, the cultivation of Exmoor, and the enclosing of the open fields and later of the moors, commons, and woodlands all over England. In this enclosure the larger claimants got blocks of land which they could lay out in farms and fields for letting or their own occupation, but Dr Orwin points out that the little parcels of the smaller holders were useless to them as they could not afford to fence them, and in any case they were too small to produce corn

and also feed their sheep and cow. In desperation they sold out and migrated to the towns. The injustice to the smallholders seemed at the time a reasonable price to pay for the great improvement to farming as a whole, but it was to have serious repercussions later on.

For a while enclosed farming prospered, thanks to new inventions, new breeds of stock, new crops, and a number of pioneers who took advantage of all these things. We are given excellent descriptions of the work of all these inventors, breeders and pioneers who brought in the Golden Age of farming. In his last chapter Dr Orwin describes how the doings of the four partners in farming—the landlord, the tenant, the farm worker, and the Government—reacted upon each other, and we realize how the descendants of those who were unfortunate enough at the time of the enclosures to lose their stake in the land voted for cheap food. Regardless of what damage it might do to British farming, they brought pressure on the government to allow the farm produce of the new world to flood the home markets and ruin many British farmers. In spite of the lesson of two wars, the ghosts of the dispossessed at the enclosures still haunt the fields, and the cry for cheap food from abroad still rings in our industrial cities.

T. BEDFORD FRANKLIN

T. BEDFORD FRANKLIN, *A History of Scottish Farming*. Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1952. 194 pp. 12s. 6d.

The earliest evidence for the practice of husbandry in Scotland is supplied by archaeologists working in the Northern Islands. The excavation of the Early Bronze Age village of Skara Brae in Orkney, by Gordon Childe, disclosed a settled community, its members supporting themselves on the produce of their flocks and herds and by fishing—"being as comfortable and as well fed, probably, in 1500 B.C.," Mr Franklin suggests, "as in many a dwelling in these far-off regions only a hundred years ago." Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that with the addition of some primitive form of soil cultivation, this type of farming has persisted in the Islands and in the Glens up to the present day.

Invaders who spread across southern Scotland between 300 and 200 B.C. grew corn, but Mr Franklin quotes Caesar for the statement that at the time of the Roman invasion the soil was not cultivated for food. It was not until after the Romans had left Britain that Irish immigrants in Iona, amongst whom St Columba had settled, re-introduced a system of tillage and grain-growing.

It was to the settlement in Scotland of colonies of monks, particularly of the Cistercian Order, that the early improvements in farming are due. They reclaimed wastes, turned barren lands into fertile soil, and were alike flockmasters, stockbreeders, foresters, gardeners, and millers. In common with the Benedictines, they organized farm labour by lay brethren living in hamlets on the land, each occupying a few acres, the tribal element in social life being absent. The rule of the monasteries was peaceful, they were centres of law and order, and civilizing agencies in what, elsewhere, was a wild and turbulent country. A recognized authority on monastic life in Scotland, Mr Franklin has much to say on what its medieval agriculture owed to the Church. Right up to the time of the Union in 1707, however, poverty and misery seem to have characterized the countryside. The Scottish peasant farmers laboured under grievous burdens in the form of payments in kind and in services for rents and for the parson's tenth, for the delivery of corn to the laird's customers perhaps fifteen miles away, and life was reduced to the lowest margin of subsistence.

Improvements followed the Union, and the next century tells the story of the slow emergence of the country from a state of semi-starvation. Increasing intercourse with England provided travellers with demonstrations of better crop rotations and better farming methods, and the wealthier lairds followed their opposite numbers south of the Border in developing an enthusiasm for agricultural improvement. Progress was most rapid in the

southern and eastern countries. The policy of the Government after the defeat of the Young Pretender at Culloden, however, applied as it was to the destruction, once and for all, of the power of the clans, brought disaster to whole communities of clansmen in the Glens. Mr Franklin repeats the terrible story of the Highland Clearances, showing singular tenderness towards those landlords responsible for these barbarous acts by withholding their names. Thus, great consolidated holdings, grazed by immense flocks of sheep tended by alien shepherds, displaced some 45,000 crofters during the latter part of the eighteenth century, whose stock had been stolen, their homes burned, and they themselves turned adrift to sink or swim as best they might. It is not without interest to note that some three hundred years before there had been parallel action in England. Recent research by Dr W. G. Hoskins in Leicestershire social history has shown how landowners in the great Midland plain conducted wholesale evictions in Tudor times in which village communities were blotted out very much in the same way, to make room for the profitable sheep industry and the production of wool.

In his preface Mr Franklin notes that his method has been to concentrate, so far as possible, on the achievement of individuals for the elucidation of Scottish agricultural history, and this is particularly evident in his account of the work of the Scottish improvers in the past hundred and fifty years, which, he proudly claims, enabled them ultimately to surpass English farming methods. His book has a useful bibliography and a fair index.

C. S. ORWIN

EDITH H. WHETHAM, *British Farming: 1939–49*. London, Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952. viii + 172 pp. 12s. 6d.

The least satisfactory feature of this book is its title. Farming means to most people the job of running a farm, and in a book with such a title one may legitimately expect to find an account of the changes in farming practice during the decade in question, changes which have certainly been sufficiently far-reaching to deserve a book to themselves. But in fact this is largely a history of the administrative and economic changes which affected the agricultural industry during the war and immediately afterwards and of the response of the industry to those changes in terms of output and structure. As such, it is a highly competent piece of work, as one would expect from an author with Miss Whetham's academic qualifications and practical experience of the inner workings of government departments.

This is no mere colourless record of events. There is no lack of critical assessment of the wisdom, or lack of it, of the momentous decisions taken in those years. One detects here and there perhaps a trace of 'wisdom after the event', particularly as regards the somewhat confused and occasionally contradictory measures of the early months of the war, when it was only to be expected that many people would find themselves out of their depth. But on the whole the author gives full weight to the extraordinary difficulties facing the administrators during the period under review, and the book confirms the favourable impression most people have already formed of the performance of the Departments and the industry during that period.

Looking back twelve years after the event, it is easy to overlook the peculiar difficulties of some of the decisions which had to be made. As a case in point we are reminded of the situation in the spring of 1942 when the departments had to make up their minds as to the year in which agricultural output should be stepped up to its peak. The task, in the author's words, was to "synchronise the year of greatest output from agriculture with the year of greatest stringency in shipping, which depended primarily on the date to be fixed for the invasion of Europe by the Allied armies and the duration of the subsequent and final battles." If the year chosen, 1943, proved to be the wrong one, the industry responded so well to the further call which had to be made upon it in 1944 that total output in that year was not far below the peak.

Although at times, in reading this book, one feels a longing to escape from Whitehall into the fields, nevertheless its great virtue, particularly for those who spent the war years tied to the plough and the cow byre, is the clear and effective way in which it relates the farmers' effort to the war-time strategy of the nation as a whole.

In view of present uncertainties as to future government price policy for agricultural products, many readers will be keenly interested in the discussion, in Chapters VIII and XI, of the finance of increased food production during and after the war, a discussion which presents very fairly the arguments for and against the policy of achieving agricultural expansion through substantial price inducements.

One's only criticism of the book on the score of style is that the author sometimes overdoes the use of the question mark as a means of presenting to us the problems confronting the policy-makers. But perhaps not every one will find this irritating. On the whole the style is lively and lucid.

C. H. BLAGBURN

G. E. and K. R. FUSSELL, *The English Countrywoman.* Andrew Melrose, 1953. 221 pp. 30s.

The sub-title of this book, *A Farmhouse Social History*, does scant justice to its contents, for the authors have gone much further afield for their evidence than the farmhouse or farm cottages. In the belief that country life was "the only life known to most people" the authors have used memoirs of great ladies, tracts, poems, novels, cookery-books, and, indeed, any material they could glean. The evidence is plentiful, for most contemporary writings can be made to throw light on some matters which concern women. The authors have followed the chronological method. Their chapter-headings run: The Elizabethan countrywoman, Cavalier and Puritan countrywomen, In the days of the Restoration, The Georgian country housewife (1712–60), The country housewife under George III, Regency and early Victorian countrywomen, and The late Victorian countrywomen. Inevitably, therefore, as he progresses through the book the reader is sometimes conscious, if not of repetition, at least of having heard something like that before. Women's tasks are immemorial, childbirth and the upbringing of the family, the provision of food and comfort for the home, the care of the poultry and garden. In particular, the lot of the working farmer's wife changed little from the middle ages down to modern times. The grim necessity of early rising, firelighting, cleaning, cooking, washing up, washing clothes, making clothes and mending them, feeding poultry, and making butter and cheese, were with them from age to age. Their tools were traditional. It was only the nineteenth century that brought to remote small farms an iron cooking-stove with an oven beside the fire and sufficient coal to heat it. In the farmhouse, however, there was a rough abundance of food. "An egg's no use to me for breakfast, I want at least three," said a farmer's daughter to the present writer when they were both children early in the present century. She was voicing the traditional outlook of the English farming family. The women of the farmhouse did not write about their lives. The authors have found more to say of gentlefolk than farmers. Nevertheless the reader of this book is given a picture of the changing countryside, of the habits of the country gentry and the farmers, large and small, with the tragic chorus of the labouring poor. It is to the authors' credit that their account of the farm labourers is entirely objective. The authors have collected much scattered information and illustrated their text by many attractive plates. I hope it is not hypercritical to suggest that one or two of them would have been better omitted. Only contemporary pictures are of value. It is doubtful whether the countrywoman was quite so isolated and travel so difficult in the Tudor times as the writers suggest. It was easy enough to get about on horseback. There is no truth in the story that Elizabeth Elstob, the "Saxon nymph," had to change her name and hide herself in the remote country to avoid im-

prisonment for debt. After her brother's death "she was obliged to depend upon her friends for subsistence, but did not meet with that generosity she might reasonably expect; Bishop Smallridge being the only person from whom she received any relief. After being supported by his friendly hand for a while, she at last could not bear the thoughts of continuing a burthen to one who was not very opulent himself; and . . . she determined to retire to a place unknown, and to try to get her bread by teaching children to read and work; and she settled for that purpose at Evesham in Worcestershire. Here she led at first but an uncomfortable and penurious life; but, growing acquainted afterwards with the gentry of the town, her affairs mended, but still she scarcely had time to eat, much less for study."[1] Appleby is in Westmorland, not Cumberland.

DORIS M. STENTON

CHRISTINA HOLE, *The English Housewife in the Seventeenth Century*. Chatto and Windus, 1953. 248 pp. 21s.

This is an attractive account of the domestic responsibilities and achievements of married women in the seventeenth century, at a time when, as Miss Hole assures us, they were in practice, if not in law, equal partners with their menfolk. We may feel some uncertainty whether this was true of all classes in society, but it was certainly true of those women whose lives are made known to us through contemporary memoirs and diaries.

The book surveys the duties of the housewife from the time that her parents settled on a satisfactory husband for her until she buried him. It describes the marriage ceremony, the tasks involved in furnishing and keeping house, in cooking and nursing, in rearing and educating children—duties, indeed, that are familiar to all ages and classes, though time has changed their content. It also has something to say of the part that women played in managing farms and estates in the absence of their husbands, and, during the Civil War, of their courage in defending their homes, when necessary, against siege. At the end of it all, one cannot but share Miss Hole's respect for the seventeenth-century housewife, who was expected to be, and was, proficient in so many directions. One suspects that the surviving records reflect the lives of women who had exceptional gifts of character and personality. But at the same time, it is agreeable to read of the successful housewives, who discharged their many duties with efficiency and grace. No one would have called their lives tedious or narrow. Because of the obtrusive presence of death throughout life, women were obliged from youth to face the possibility of earning their own living, even while they equipped themselves for the alternative task of keeping house for the breadwinner. Many women married more than once, and would, presumably, have found themselves destitute had they not done so, but there were also others who finished life as widows competently managing farms or shops. If, as Miss Hole observes, "ignorance and silliness were not then considered marks of womanliness, as they were to be later," it was surely because the world was a harsh place for a widowed woman without good sense and resourcefulness.

Miss Hole condemns the false portrait of the seventeenth-century housewife, which romantic writers have garlanded with rosemary and lavender. But she idealizes the situation of women in another respect by failing to point out that her own account describes the life of the middle class housewife, not the life of the labourer's wife, who worked in the fields, and practised some bye-employment at home, as well as managing her house and family. The heroine of this book—necessarily, since the documentary material is limited—is the wife of the yeoman or gentleman, with servants to assist her, and a sizeable household to cater for. The preservation of fruit and jams, the preparation of herbal remedies and tooth powders, were therefore done on a large scale. Indeed, the recipes quoted here, and the illustration of a

[1] J. Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. IV, p.133.

seventeenth-century kitchen, suggest that her task was more akin to that of the bursar of a small college or school today.

A book which is primarily concerned with matters of fact nevertheless stimulates thought on the changes that have overtaken women's lives in the last two hundred years. Division of labour has narrowed the range of their domestic duties, and the smaller family unit has reduced the demands of the house upon their time. The field of activity has been extended in new directions. But for those who are interested in the old skills of the housewife this is a pleasing account of the spinning and weaving, the cheese and butter making, and the arts now largely forgotten of preparing salves, ointments, dyes, and soaps.

JOAN THIRSK

M. M. POSTAN, *The Famulus: the Estate Labourer in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. Cambridge University Press. 48 pp., paper covered. 7s. 6d.

This is the second in a series of occasional papers issued as supplements to the *Economic History Review*. Its theme is one which until now has been treated only cursorily by historians of the English village community. That hired labour had a place in the organization of the manor is a fact of which most students are aware, but this is the first detailed attempt to trace its evolution and assess its economic importance.

When the curtain goes up, we find that neglected figure, the Anglo-Saxon slave, in possession of the stage. Early codes of Anglo-Saxon law show that even peasants could be slave-owners; the slave must therefore have formed a very numerous element of the population. But by the date of Domesday Book he belonged to a rapidly shrinking class, employed mainly in ploughing. Who took his place when he finally disappeared? Professor Postan draws attention to the tenants recorded on certain Domesday manors under the designation of *bovarii*, smallholders who paid for their holdings by working at the plough for their lords. In twelfth-century surveys this class of tenant, under various names, becomes very prominent, no doubt because the Norman conquerors found large tracts of land awaiting development, and the most convenient way of extending the cultivated area was to establish households tied to the service of the demesne. It is tempting to assume without more ado that in this class we have the missing link between the slave labour of the eleventh and the wage labour of the fourteenth century: that, in other words, there is a straightforward sequence from the slave who is housed and fed under his master's roof, to the labourer who is remunerated with a rent-free tenement, and from him to the labourer who draws wages and pays rent. But Professor Postan warns us that this sequence is too simple to be altogether true. He shows that there was never a time when all the staff of the demesne occupied service holdings or were remunerated solely by rent-free tenures. In a particularly interesting discussion of the Monday-men, so called, who appear on many manors, he argues that these tenants must in fact have worked all the week and drawn wages for all but the first day's work, which they performed gratis by way of rent for their holdings.

By an oversight, Devon is omitted from the list of counties (p. 6) in which the recorded number of slaves touched a thousand, nor does Professor Postan allude to the independent evidence for the presence in the county of Huntingdon of slaves whom Domesday Book passes over in silence. The standard of proof-reading is far below that which we have learnt to expect from the Cambridge University Press. *Bubulcus* is misspelt nearly every time it occurs, and other misprints abound, *Chartres*, for *Chartes* (p. 9), *Charactères*, for *Caractères* (p. 14), *mutuari*, for *mutare* (p. 22), *Stafford*, for *Stratford* (p. 34), *Gerard*, for *Guérard* (p. 38) being some of the more conspicuous examples. These, however, are blemishes which can be put right when the paper is reprinted, as it will certainly need to be, for it is an authoritative and permanently valuable addition to the literature of our agrarian history.

H. P. R. FINBERG

MARGARET GELLING, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*: Parts i & ii based on material collected by Doris Mary Stenton. Volumes XXIII and XXIV of the English Place-Name Society. Cambridge University Press. Vol. XXIII, 1953, liii + 244 pp. 30s. Vol. XXIV, 1954, pp. 245–517 with maps, 30s.

The two latest volumes from the English Place-Name Society follow the high standard of production and presentation which one now expects. The fruits of a painstaking and lengthy task have been prepared by Mrs Gelling in as clear and readable a manner as is possible with such a subject.

The main part of the book covers the county hundred by hundred and parish by parish. The introduction incorporates a section on the geology of Oxfordshire by Dr W. J. Arkell which is supported by a sketch map. There is also, of course, an important section on place-name elements and their distribution.

Although few will read these volumes from cover to cover, for they are primarily works of reference, they will provide information invaluable to the historian and a wealth of enjoyable detail for those interested in the history of their own locality. It is a pity that at three pounds for the two volumes comparatively few private individuals will feel able to purchase them. One small criticism might be made of the layout. In a reference work of this type it is frequently necessary to refer to the index; it would be an advantage therefore if Volume II concluded with the Index of place-names in Oxfordshire rather than with the Index of place-names in other counties.

As in the volumes for Cumberland, published previously, a great deal of space has been given to field-names, which is a subject of particular interest to the agricultural historian. It is unfortunate therefore that in dealing with field-names the work is at its least satisfying. It is not easy to obtain authentic collections of field-names today, for in this era of mechanized farming the Ordnance Survey number has regrettably been found a more convenient means of identifying a field, O.S. 192 being more methodical than, say, Pit a Bush Quarter. On the other hand the older men in the village frequently remember field-names, and recourse to the deeds of any particular farm will frequently provide them. Many of the field-names in the survey however come from eighteenth- or nineteenth-century sources rather than modern ones, and there has apparently been no dearth of material, for the introduction states that Mrs Gelling and Lady Stenton have recorded only a representative selection of the names available. It is probably true that if too many field-names had been included the impression might have been given of the tail wagging the dog, and it is with the approach more than with the selection that fault may be found.

The authors approach the whole subject in a most scholarly manner, rightly, for too great a recourse to imagination or sentiment could do great harm. Field-names, however, often yield a wealth of agricultural history, and frequently an obvious opportunity for comment is lost by adhering too strictly to the presence of proven elements. To say that the approach is too scholarly would be to contradict the basic purpose of the work, but there are occasions when one feels that Mrs Gelling has been afraid to cast aside the well-proved formulae and to use her imagination and at other times to concede that common sense as well as historical fact can throw light on the origin of a field-name.

"Blenheim Palace," we are told, is "called after the Duke of Marlborough's victory in 1704." Yet among field-names many which might seem less obvious than the origin of Blenheim receive no comment at all; for example, Peat Pit, Flax Acre, Lamb Ground, Scab Hill, Twenty Bushel Piece, and Sainfoin Close. One might suppose that the continual appearance of the name Sainfoin, often comparatively early in the eighteenth century, was in itself worthy of comment.

On other occasions the theoretical explanation is given without mention of the common-sense agricultural. In the case of Picked Stone Field there is good precedent

for explaining that 'Picked' was a common name given to an angular piece of land. There is no mention that recourse to the map has proved this field indeed to be angular, neither is there any hint of the equally plausible suggestion that this might simply be a field from which stones were picked for making-up the roads.

Studying the lists parish by parish, one is driven to the conclusion that we have as yet a very imperfect knowledge of the sources of field-names and that the accepted interpretation of the elements is often applied much too rigidly. 'Dipping' or 'Dip', for example, are said wherever they occur in these two volumes to be probably related to "the dipping of sheep in a liquid preparation to destroy parasites." The rather older idea of washing sheep before shearing is not credited nor indeed is there any indication that the topography has been studied to see whether in fact the surface of the field is simply 'dip'-shaped.

In selecting the names, many such as Far Piece, The Paddocks, and The Pasture, could well have been omitted, and space thus saved to comment on others which occur in such profusion without comment. Snakes Tail Piece, Jack Tar Ground, Brand Iron Piece, Dibdane Furlong, and Lodging Acre might well repay detailed study on the spot. Has Lodging Acre, for example, a reputation locally for bearing grain which 'goes down' before harvest, as the name might imply? Where the names are supplied by local residents or schools rather than taken from enclosure and tithe awards or sale catalogues, as might be expected, the results are much more worth while. For instance, the field-names of Wardington parish which were supplied by Dr T. Loveday are a paragon of their kind; some sort of comment or explanation is provided for forty-five names, and of the thirty-eight or so not commented on at least fourteen might be said to be self-evident.

In the study of all forms of local history so much depends on local practices and conditions that the only satisfactory approach, to borrow a farming metaphor, is a 'dirty-boot' one. If the field-name section of these surveys is to remain a serious feature of future volumes, it is clear that, tedious though the task may be, there must be much more evidence of contact with the locality and the map. This rather detailed discussion of the field-name section should not, however, be taken as a reflection on the general standard of excellence of the Oxfordshire survey, a work on which Mrs Gelling and Lady Stenton are to be warmly congratulated.

J. W. Y. HIGGS

ANDRÉ J. BOURDE, Ph.D., *The Influence of England on the French Agronomes*, 1750–89. Cambridge Studies in Economic History. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1953. xix, 250 pp. 31s. 6d. net.

The farming of any area is determined by elevation, climate, and soil. Of these factors the first two are unalterable, but soil texture can be modified given adequate machinery, and its fertility changed by mixing or by adding manure. Where soil is capable of growing several different crops what is grown may be what is politically desirable, but the first thing any farmer wants to do is to earn his living. If he knows that he can do this to an accustomed degree by growing a certain range of crops, with implements known to him since boyhood, and methods he learnt at that time, he is not very likely to find novelty attractive. He is much more likely to find it economically risky.

This cautious attitude was encountered by the great improving landlords in England, where new methods are reported to have travelled less than a mile a year in the eighteenth century. In France there was more reason for progress to be even slower. Many peasant holdings were very small, and the peasants poverty-stricken and tax-ridden.

Two events that occurred in the early years of the eighteenth century in England had great influence upon the agronomes of France. The one was the rise of the famous Norfolk four-course husbandry, of which the eponymous hero was the renowned "Turnip Townshend." The other was the horse-hoe-

ing husbandry of Jethro Tull and his invention of new implements to conduct it, the seed drill and the horse hoe. Between 1730 and 1770 the four-course system seems to have been widely adopted in West Norfolk, and following Townshend's example, a good deal of marling to improve the soil texture. It took about the same four decades for Tull's seed-drilling and horse-hoeing to get a serious hearing, and much longer before they became anything like general in this country.

Already by 1750 French admirers of the Norfolk husbandry were writing about it, and advising its adoption in France. They suggested using marl and the sheepfold as new manures, and introducing improved implements. The obstacles were very large and progress was very slow.

One of the most prominent of the French admirers of English methods was Du Hamel du Monceau. He made a great deal of use of Tull's work, and carried out innumerable experiments with it, all of which he described in writings that were translated into English by Mills and Miller. He and Chateauvieux are the French improvers best known to English students of farming history, but there were many others, who both wrote about these methods and experimented with them.

Dr Bourde has analysed their interest and measured its effects both in terms of literary discussion and in the field. He has shown how widely dispersed it was, mainly, of course, amongst a section of the nobility and gentry, and how fierce was the controversy aroused.

The protagonists of the new ideas found the social organization and system of land tenure a serious obstacle. The system of fallow grazing rights forbade the sowing of winter crops. The peasants would not hear of using new implements. Many landowners were equally steadfast in their determination to leave things to go on in the traditional way. It was a mental outlook also discovered in England, where it was overpowered to some degree by the necessity for adopting improved systems on newly enclosed farms which, being provided with new buildings and new fences, were consequently more expensive to rent.

Enclosure was not so readily accomplished in France, with the result that the new 'artificial grasses', clover, rye grass, lucern, and sainfoin, could not be grown, nor could root crops, like the turnip, be introduced into the rotation. These crops would have provided for the sheepfold as practised in England, and this, in turn, would have made the soil more fertile, but the ordinary farmer was afraid of such an innovation.

Despite the difficulties, French interest in English methods encouraged a good many of that nation to visit this country to see the improvements in operation. Such enthusiasts made copious notes and wrote vivid descriptions when they returned home. Some of them tried to introduce on their own estates the methods about which they were so enthusiastic.

The gentry interested were scattered over France, and their influence was therefore widespread, but the practical results do not seem to have been equal to their enthusiasm. This may be true, but Dr Bourde's careful study has shown how closely the innovations in English agriculture were being watched by our neighbours in France comparatively early in their development, well before the fame of Bakewell's livestock had reached Europe, or either Holkham or Woburn sheep-shearings had been started.

Dr Bourde has pointed and described the transfer of ideas from England and France during four significant decades of the eighteenth century. Agricultural ideas had for long been exchanged between the Continent and this country. In these four decades English practice and ideas helped French improvers. English practice and ideas had been influenced by translations of continental books, French amongst them, and by the observations of English travellers abroad for centuries before that time, as indeed all European farming was influenced by the classic textbooks. This exchange of ideas, and of seed and livestock, has not yet been studied in any detail. Dr Bourde has shown the way, and

it now remains for English scholars to examine the advantages our own farmers have derived from the ideas and practice of other countries. Dr Bourde has set a high standard for emulation. G. E. FUSSELL

FRIEDRICH-KARL RIEMANN, *Ackerbau und Viehhaltung im vorindustriellen Deutschland*, Beiheft zum Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg, Preussen, III, 1953. Holzner-Verlag, Kitzingen am Main. 211 pp.

This is a well-documented study of German agriculture between 1590 and 1800. Inspired by the research of W. Abel into the influence of population changes on agriculture, Dr Riemann set out to measure the effect of the Thirty Years' War, when the population of Germany was reduced by more than a third, on farm production and specialization. Having traced the slow recovery of agriculture up to 1800, he shows that it was not until the mid-eighteenth century that population and the arable area were restored to the level attained before the war. The book includes a discussion of crops and yields, early improvements in the breeding of stock, the relative importance of sheep, cattle, and pigs, the price relationship of vegetable and animal products, and the wages of agricultural labourers. It emphasizes and fully illustrates the close integration of crop and stock husbandry throughout these two centuries, even though the balance struck between them differed between one region and the next, and altered in the course of the period.

JOAN THIRSK

GARDNER, H. W., and GARNER, H. V. *The Use of Lime in British Agriculture*. Farmer and Stockbreeder Publications Ltd and E. & F. N. Spon Ltd. 216 pp. 26s.

The value of lime in maintaining soil fertility has long been recognized and the application of it to the land in one of its many forms has been practised since time immemorial. During the years of depression at the end of the last century the practice gradually lapsed and liming therefore played a very important part in restoring the productivity of the land during the second world war.

Messrs Gardner and Garner have produced a very readable book which gives a clear picture of every aspect of the subject. The purposes of liming and its effect upon husbandry are clearly explained. There is also a chapter on the history of liming, which, although necessarily condensed, touches on such important aspects as the opinion of the early writers on chalking and marling, the early chemistry of Davy, and the later work at Rothamsted, Woburn, and Cockle Park.

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