

REVIEWS.

THE OXINDEN LETTERS.

The Oxinden Letters, Vol. I, 1607-1642. Edited with notes and an introduction by Dorothy Gardiner. Constable, 1933, pp. xxxvi + 328, with 13 plates, 12s. 6d.

MRS. GARDINER has produced in these delightful pages not only a solid piece of work in the publication of, as it were, another set of Paston Letters, but also a really entertaining book, richly garnished with portraits, pedigree, and attractive map (by Mr. E. J. Fedarb) of the Barham Downs countryside as it was in early Stuart days. The book is modestly described as an "unfinished sketch"—a biscuit thrown to the dog to see if he will beg for more: he will be a stupid beast indeed if he does not yap for another, made of the Civil War ingredients at the baker's command. The Oxinden Letters are happy in having found so able an editor, of whom, living appropriately in the shadow of Bell Harry, it may be said by paraphrase, *Fortunata et illa deos quae novit agrestes*. Nor is this mere complimentary verbiage, for I would risk the assertion that only a reviewer who knows and loves the magic of the lathe of St. Augustine can do full justice to the beautiful introduction with which Mrs. Gardiner has enriched the Letters. Not only does she prove her pains to know her stage, but in places (as in the sketches of Wingham, Barham Downs, and the valley of the Little Stour), she writes her advertisement with real artistry. So great a mass of material is gathered in this book that it is difficult to review it justly in so small a compass; the Kentish reader must rather be sent to the fountain, chiefly persuaded that here and with such a guide he can truly feel, *Nescio qua natale solum dulcedine cunctos cogit* And even he whose pulses are not already stirred by the very names of the seagirt eastern parts of Kent must surely

be quickened in some sort by Mrs. Gardiner's frame about her picture.

To make the barest patchwork of citations from the Letters, the reader's attention may be called to No. 136, wherein Sir Thos. Peyton of Knowlton writes, in 1639: "I know there never was suche an age as this is, and men had need of excellent virtues to live in it"—sentiments which are being echoed 300 years later.

In No. 137 we find Philipott, Somerset Herald, thanking God he was no party to a grant of arms to a Canterbury commoner; and in No. 72 we hear Sir Thos. Peyton's groanings about an aunt whom he would gladly help into her grave. A notable difference is seen between the spelling of the average male and female correspondents; several of the latter take us back to Paston or earlier times, with such phonetic forms as *daly*, *ansar*, *wenttar*, *dayngerus*, *coch*, *ant*, *consave*, some of them interesting witnesses to contemporary pronunciation, as *Keate*, agreeable to Pope's *tea* rhyming with *obey*. Perhaps No. 118 provides the winner in *exskuseesed*?

No. 143 is certainly one of the finest of the letters for style, with its description of Leeds Abbey and the delicious country (as still to-day) east of Maidstone; and we are reminded that just as the seventeenth century is the golden age of English epitaphs, so are many of its epistolary expressions of equal worth, when we read that Elizabeth Meredith's lips had "a prety kind of naturall swelling," and her cheeks "were like roses when their leaves are with a little breath stirred."

In No. 135 is mention of the burning political issue of "subsidies," very interestingly paralleled in the same year, 1639-40, by the lines on Captain Moyle's monument at Boughton Aluph:

"Say heavens, when yee did want a S^{ts} supply,
Did wee not send a royall Subsidy?"

No. 119 refers to the Latin comedy acted at the Deanery in Canterbury on a winter night in 1637-8, and in 126 we find Dean Bargrave hunting with the High Sheriff of Kent in

the spring of 1639 ; while in 237 is a meeting arranged for the famous crossroads "att Chollocke lees, at the ale house there."

Over the later letters is the shadow of the cataclysm to come, the division between the two eras living to us still in Jacobean mellow alabaster monuments and the more florid memorials of post-Restoration days. Canterbury is the hub of this little world of Oxindens and Peytons, as of that of the lower social order so vividly painted in the literature by and concerning the famous "Blue Dick of Thanet," where we meet the "over-awing greatnesse of those Cathedrall Prelates," shown when Culmer saw "the Deane and Prebendaries (as Laud's commissioners) sitting in plena curia" upon refractory Kentish clergymen ; and the poor alderman's hair standing on end when at Christmas, 1633, the high altar in Christ Church appeared decked with candlesticks and "other dressings very brave." Letter 226 is of great interest in telling us how on the eve of the crash no less a person than Charles I himself went up Bell Harry to enjoy the smiling Kentish acres from the summit of that miracle of beauty. A year later fell the scourge of scorpions which swept from the great church much more than had fallen under Henry's milder whip.

Mrs. Gardiner feelingly refers to Bishopsbourne and its wonderful yew hedges in the rectory garden, not forgetting Richard Hooker among all the actors who have passed across this old Kentish stage. One wishes that Isaak Walton's superb picture of the saint in this quiet valley were better known to-day : how many turned out of the Dover road, lured by the fame of this "obscure, harmless man," of whose works even Pope Clement VIII exclaimed that "there is in them such seeds of eternity that they shall last till the last fire shall consume all learning." Right through the period of these Oxinden Letters was still living in Bishopsbourne Hooker's poor parish clerk, from whom he would take the church key to lock himself in in every Ember-week, and who died broken-hearted at the evil days nearly half a century after his master had departed.

Very little criticism can be made of this fascinating book. One could wish that here and there the transcription were a little more consistent, as in the intermingling of medial *u* and *v* when a faithful rendering is given ; and it is strange to find on p. 141 that 3,000 marks equal not £2,000 but £166 13s. 4d. ! But these pin-points are best left till the end, when the delighted reader can bear them well enough.

V.J.T.

ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH, HYPHE.

St. Leonard's Church and the Ancient Town of Hythe, by the Rev. H. D. Dale. John Murray, London, 1931 (pp. 107. 2s. 6d.).

OF the Cinque Ports and two Ancient Towns the greater number, as well as certain of their limbs, have found historians of varying completeness and merit. The two central ports, Romney and Hythe, appear to have been left out in the cold hitherto, apart from scattered treatment in the county histories and frankly popular handbooks. This little book, by one of our members who was formerly Vicar of Hythe and is still a local resident, is an admirable attempt at a *via media* between a history of the town and port of Hythe and a popular guide book. Of excellent value at its modest price, it is well printed, has a plan and two photographs of the church, and many effective sketches of Hythe and its district, by Mr. A. H. Hallam Murray.

Small as is this book, it presents more items of interest to the reviewer than can be crammed into a limited space. Mr. Dale in his preface does not regard his work as free from all error, but the slips are neither many nor very serious. On p. 22 for "Furattes" read "Jurattes," and "berynge" for "beryuze" on p. 71. The coronation canopy of George I went not to St. Clement's but to All Saints in Hastings (p. 16), and (p. 84) Bp. Hamo of Hythe died not in 1353 but 1352. Were Rye and Winchelsea added to the Cinque Ports only in 1220 (p. 9) ? On p. 52 the word "steeple" does not necessarily imply a spire (as admitted on p. 74), but the

statement that few ancient churches in E. Kent have "high pointed steeples" should be taken *cum grano*: it would be easy to cite about a score. Mr. Dale seems rather perplexed (p. 73) by "coals for the new fire" on Easter Eve, 1480, which, however, present no difficulty, the "new fire" being a well-known item of the ancient Paschal ceremonies, very probably for the most part only Christian modifications of more venerable spring rites. On p. 69 we are cautioned against thinking that in fourteenth century England the clergy were generally unpopular, a warning which is hard to reconcile with contemporary witness, at least of the days after the Black Death. The chapters on religious plays and bygone punishments are full of interest, and pp. 88-90 witness the filthy habits of some of the mediæval Hythe townspeople.

There is a welcome allusion on p. 15 to the beautiful Shepway Cross erected near Lympne in 1924; but one feels that for the amusement of the general reader the information on p. 14 about the transport of royal persons to the Continent might have been supplemented by citing the curious obligation of the holder of Archers Court manor in River (Hasted, fol. ed. 4.39) to support the sovereign's head in the time of his *mal de mer*! The account on p. 105 of the Waterloo gunfire being heard in Hythe is very interesting and credible, since that in France during the late war was quite distinct on some days as far away as Fairlight, above Hastings.

Canon Livett's exhaustive paper in *Arch. Cant.*, XXX, on Hythe church leaves very little to be said on this subject, but Mr. Dale does well to include a good chapter on the famous bones, which have produced not a few fairy tales. To the useful list (p. 31) of processional tunnels one might add Tavistock in Devon, St. Columb Major in Cornwall, and Walpole St. Peter in Norfolk. Though "a Bishop sits on the N. side" (p. 44), neither the ancient nor modern English usage bears this out, as a glance at our great quires will show. On p. 53, one hopes that the "Irish round tower" idea may now imitate Rip Van Winkle; but the resurrection of the arms of Charles II from the parvise chamber into the

church is even more to be desired. The churches of Saltwood and Hythe, as stated on p. 63, have that *summon bonum*, a Frampton list of incumbents, the fortunate lot of but few.

Among the charming illustrations of Mr. Murray the least successful is surely the view of Hythe church and the Marsh on p. 24 : the Fairlight ridge is too close, and the town of Hythe seems to have vanished.

V.J.T.

PRE-FEUDAL ENGLAND.

Pre-Feudal England : The Jutes, by J. E. A. Jolliffe (Oxford Historical Series, No. III), Oxford University Press ; London, Humphrey Milford. 122 pages oct., 1933, 7s. 6d. net.

THIS interesting essay—only 122 unindexed pages—is really an expansion of a theme already developed by the author in the *English Historical Review*, XLIV, 1929. Much of the evidence there set forth has not been carried over to this essay and the summarized results are taken as having been proved. In this manner we are presented with the conception that Jutish Kent was divided into fourteen areas called lathes, each under the dominance of a King's town and reeve, and each having woodland holdings in the Weald. Two sorts of proof are offered. The first comes from study of the Saxon charters, the second from Domesday. The latter is the more important. It is Jolliffe's thesis that the assessment of Kent in the time of Edward the Confessor, as shown in the Domesday figures, shows that there were a number of groups each assessed at 80 sulings. He further states that by a study of the charters we may discover these same groups in being at an earlier period. He does not think that they were often described as lathes but more frequently by the Latin "regio" or by words compounded with "wara"—meaning "people of"—such as Limenwara-weald, the weald of the people of Limen.

The basis of all this is the 80 suling groups and it is extremely unfortunate that the way in which these are reckoned is not set forth. Jolliffe reckons the lathe of Milton

at 80 sulings, Domesday at $91\frac{1}{2}$. One might overlook a single example such as this if it stood alone. But the actual position is almost ludicrous. There is perhaps not a single one of his groups (they are not easy to disentangle) which is not open to the clear objection that the author has not studied the Domesday figures in the light of local research, or even in the light of a good map. Sometimes his error seems even worse. The manor of Hoo is stated in D.B. to be assessed at 57 sulings while of that manor certain men hold $4\frac{3}{4}$ sulings. Jolliffe makes the total assessment $61\frac{3}{4}$ sulings, that is, he includes the tenants' holdings as if they had not been already assessed in the manor of which they form part. Let us suppose that he is right in thus dealing with a problem which is not usually so decided. We must now require that he shall similarly reckon the tenants' holdings of other manors. This is not what we shall find him doing. He adds them when it suits his figures and not otherwise. If that seems too harsh a judgment we challenge him to produce a full statement of the way in which his 80 suling groups are made up.

Of his peculiar use of the words "regio" and "lathe" the reader may best judge by considering the following sentence from page 46: "Already in a document which can hardly be later than Domesday, the English schedule of the Rochester bridge-work, the 80 sulings of Maidstone-Eyhorn are spoken of as *Hollingaburna and ealla that lathe*, and though, to my knowledge, the vernacular term appears only once in pre-Conquest charters, the lathe must be the *regio* of the grants of the eighth century . . ." This reads very well if you happen to know nothing about the Rochester bridge work contributors. But if you do know something, the bottom falls out of our essayist's argument. The word *lathe* refers to the Hundred of Eyhorn alias Hollingbourne (Eyhorn is a hamlet in Hollingbourne parish, now called Iron) and not to any 80 suling group. This fact can be verified in several ways, but a well-known Cotton MS. (Galba E.4) is best for the purpose. Even if it did or could refer to an 80 suling group, it would not be a group of which

Maidstone formed any part, for Maidstone is mentioned in the schedule as an independent contributor to the bridge work. The remark "the lathe must be the *regio* of the grants, &c" is now seen to be an unfortunate conclusion. It is much more unfortunate that the author should boldly state "Of these regiones the charters have preserved the names of six, Eastry, Lyminge, Faversham, Hoo, Rochester and Rainham." The actual facts are widely different. We give below a list of the *regiones* mentioned in the charters. The identifications in brackets are those of the reviewer and have no further authority.

1. Apping lond (in Gillingham) is "in occidentale Cantiae in regione suburbanaque regis oppido ibi ab incolis Roeringa ham (Rainham) nuncupato." B.C.S. 335. Jolliffe makes Apping lond in Rainham although that place is in East Kent.

2. Suithhunec lond (about Monkshill in Hernehill parish) is "in regione suburbana ad oppidum regis quod ab incolis ibi Fefres ham appellatur (Faversham)." B.C.S. 335.

3. Seleberhting lond (North Preston Without) is "in regione qui dicitur Febres ham (Faversham)." B.C.S. 353. In a narrative charter from a Lambeth register another place, named Ibentea, is also stated to be "in regione Fefreshames." B.C.S. 340. Jolliffe does not distinguish between places which are in the region of Faversham and those which are suburban to it, but makes one "regio" cover both.

4. Kasing burnan (Manor of Casebourne in Cheriton) is "in regione on Liminum." B.C.S. 341. It is agreed that the district here meant is the Limowarleth of Domesday Book.

5. Cynincges Cua Lond (about Nagden in Graveney) is "in regione quae dicitur Westan widde (West of Blean Wood)." B.C.S. 348. Jolliffe makes no mention of this region. It is interesting to note that it is evidently the same region as one already described as suburban to Faversham.

6. Certain lands not identified are stated to be "in regione Easterege." B.C.S. 332. Since identification fails we cannot say whether Eastry manor or hundred or lathe is intended. B.C.S. 254 refers to the same area as "in regione Eastrogena."

7. Certain land not named is said to be "in regione quae vocatur Cert." B.C.S. 191. Jolliffe does not mention this region, which may be the Hundred of Chart.

8. Heahhaam is said to be "in regione caestrwara." B.C.S. 199. This means "in the region of the men of the

city" and the city is thought by Jolliffe to be Rochester, although everything else in the grant suggests Canterbury. It is true that the first witness after the King is the Bishop of Rochester and that the Archbishop does not attest. But he was a very old man and died this year so that one cannot build much on this fact.

9. Land near Brook land in Romney Marsh is stated to be "in regione Merscuuariorum." B.C.S. 335. Lydd in the same marsh is stated to be "in occidentali parte regionis quae dicitur Merscuuare." B.C.S. 214. So far as one can gather Jolliffe would identify this *regio* with Limenwarlathe but it is not clear on what grounds he considers himself justified in avoiding what looks like a very plain and direct reference to Romney Marsh.

10. Stoke in Hoo Hundred is said to be "in regione quae vocatur Hogh." B.C.S. 159. This looks like a reference to the Hundred of Hoo but Jolliffe says that it refers to an 80 suling unit comprising Hoo, Rochester and Chatham.

11. In B.C.S. 228 is a reference to a place "in regione vocabulo Brongehg"—Broomy Farm in Cooling. This is omitted by Jolliffe.

When a reputable author states that the names of six regions are preserved in the charters, the reviewer ought to be able to find six and no more. When he can easily find three of which all mention is suppressed and two more which are at least arguably distinct from any cited by the author, then the reviewer may grow suspicious, particularly since mention of those of which we hear nothing is fatal to the author's thesis. Particularly is it fatal to such bold statements as (page 47) "The *regiones* were the provinces of reeves." The Reeve of the West Wood ought to be a most romantic figure—and so he is—pure romance unalloyed with fact.

It is on material treated in this way, by judicious selection aided by untrammelled imagination, that the theory of 80 suling units is maintained. But, in archæology, imagination is not enough, and selection of evidence is not far removed from falsification. Very few persons are completely *au fait* with the Domesday records of Kent and with the Saxon charters of that county. These may detect the flaws but for most readers this thoroughly unsound essay will seem to rest on a well-established basis of patient

enquiry. It rests on nothing of the sort. We would suggest that Mr. Jolliffe might well join the Kent Archæological Society as a start and so come gradually to the study of the difference between Lyminge, Lympne and the Limen, and of the boundary line between East and West Kent, and particularly of the Kentish section of Domesday Book.

G.W.

THE PARISH OF DOWNE.

A History of Darwin's Parish, Downe, Kent, by O. J. R. Howarth and Eleanor K. Howarth, with Foreword by Sir Arthur Keith. Russell & Co. (Southern Counties), Ltd., Southampton. Small 8vo, 88 pp. Price 1s. 6d.

THERE is something about the bleak uplands of Downe which exercises strange influence among the learned. The names of Darwin and Lubbock should be enough for one parish but those who read this book will perceive that there are others. And they speak as learned men who take a holiday. Thus, Sir Arthur Keith does not devote his foreword to the lore of anthropology but tells us instead how "Sir Buckston Browne, instead of sitting down to breakfast, sallied out to the nearest post office, where he dispatched a telegram to Leeds." Dr. and Mrs. Howarth do indeed falter for one moment for, being geographers, they remain for nearly two pages fascinated with the soil which "offers obstacles to the gardener" and from time to time they return to it, sometimes in almost blank verse—"Here the slow oxen haul the plough which grates in the flinty soil." Their account of the early history of Downe is excellent. Not for them is that mere copying of ancient records which so often serves for history. They have visualised the conditions which those records illustrate. They have discovered why this particular village of all downland villages was called Downe. They know in what year the church was first built and by whom, and even what it cost. They have tried, although in vain, to date the churchyard yew. They know that their parish registers are of "the earliest year

for which any such records exist" but they are not satisfied with the mere fact and must needs find out why it should be so. This leads to a disquisition on the origin of these records and the discovery of their author "among the more unpleasant characters in English history" and, more to the point, in the near vicinity of Downe. There is indeed no plan of the church in this book, a departure from custom which will displease church architects, but there are better things from the point of view of those who mostly read such books as this, for example, the tradition of "a very old house which had horn windows in the attics" now replaced by "a blameless edifice of the middle Victorian period."

In fact, this is not, and does not pretend to be, a collection of records architectural or otherwise. It is a history of life in the parish of Downe, and of the famous people who have lived there. The chapter headings are: (1) Site and Pre-history; (2) The Early Manor; (3) The Church and its Registers; (4) Some of the Ministers; (5) Parish Accounts and Assessments; (6) The People; (7) Some Early Families; (8) The Lubbocks of High Elms; (9) The Darwins of Down House. To those on pilgrimage to Downe this book will prove a boon.

G.W.

THORNE'S CHRONICLE.

William Thorne's Chronicle of Saint Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, now rendered into English by A. H. Davis, M.A. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp. lxxviii + 740. 32s. net.

Since a year must necessarily elapse before a full review of it can appear in *Arch. Cantiana*, it may perhaps be permitted to draw attention to the appearance, just as this Volume passes through the press, of Mr. Davis's long-awaited translation of William Thorne's Chronicle. It is safe to say that the Chronicle is indispensable to any close student of East Kent archæology, and, as Professor Hamilton Thompson remarks in his Preface, "it is surprising that no edition

of the work should have appeared since it was printed some two hundred and fifty years ago in Twysden's *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores Decem*". Mr. Davis has been working for several years at the monumental task of translation, and not only his subscribers but also, it is to be hoped, other students will welcome the completion of his task.

A.M.

"SANDS, CLAYS AND MINERALS."

REFERENCE was made in Vol. XLIV to the appearance of a new quarterly, *Sands, Clays and Minerals* (A. L. Curtis, Chatteris, Cambs., 5s. per annum). Among a number of articles of more or less interest to archæologists in recent numbers is one (in No. 3) by Arthur R. Warnes, F.I.C., on "English Building Stones, their Decay and Restoration", which merits the attention of those who have the care of church fabric. Mr. Warne's book *Building Stones, their Properties, Decay and Restoration* (Benn, 1926) proves him an able authority on this too often neglected subject.