REVIEWS.

Harrison of Ightham. A Book about Benjamin Harrison of Ightham, Kent. Prepared for publication by Sir Edward R. Harrison. Oxford University Press, 1928.

The fame of Benjamin Harrison, the grocer of Ightham, has extended far beyond his native county. There is no book dealing with prehistoric archæology in which his work is not discussed, and it is owing to him that, as Mr. Reginald Smith says: "the North Downs of Kent must be regarded as the classical site for eoliths." Some account of his discoveries was given in Mr. Bennett's book on Ightham, published in 1907, but a fuller account of the man and his work was called for, and this has been supplied by the present book. Sir Edward Harrison has compiled his father's life with modesty and ability, and the book gives a delightful picture of a loveable character, who has been compared with Gilbert White of Selborne. It is not a formal biography. On the title page it is stated to be "made up principally of extracts from [Harrison's] notebooks and correspondence." After three preliminary chapters compiled from auto-biographical notes, the story proceeds to detail the events of Harrison's life in chronological order, and ends with two chapters of a personal nature and one on "Wild Flowers and Natural History." This method has the advantage of giving a vivid picture of Harrison's daily life and the growth of his ideas, but it mingles the important and the ephemeral, and leaves the reader to pick out the great story of the eoliths from a mass of heterogeneous matter. Fortunately a sufficient index has been added.

Benjamin Harrison was born at Ightham in 1837 and lived there until his death at the ripe age of 83. For fifty-four years he kept a general shop in the village. He went to school at Seal and afterwards at Platt, a hamlet of the

neighbouring parish of Wrotham, where a kindly master fostered his taste for geology. While still a boy he read every book on natural history and geology that he could get hold of, and his tastes were encouraged by Major Luard (afterwards Luard-Selby) who then lived at Ightham Mote. He was an eager student of antiquities in the neighbourhood and found Roman coins at Ightham at the age of 12. At fifteen he entered his father's business, and, in spite of long hours and the absence of bank holidays and early closing days, managed to snatch a few precious hours each week for his scientific pursuits.

His life work Harrison found only gradually. At first the claims of botany competed with those of archæology, and between the ages of 23 and 27 he was passing through the "wild flowers stage." To the end he remained a lover of nature, and in his rambles ferns and flowers as well as flints attracted him. But his interests slowly centred in flint implements. He was singularly fortunate in his surroundings. Ightham stands on a patch of valley gravel in the Lower Greensand or Folkestone beds which rise to a height of 600 feet at Oldbury Hill. To the North the gault vale separates it from the chalk plateau which reaches 770 feet at Terry's Lodge and is deeply scored with old river valleys. Through the village runs the little river Shode or Buster, which rises as a nailbourne at Yaldham, and falls into the Medway, and bears traces of a remarkable geological history. The area which Harrison termed "his world" comprises about 16 square miles of this country, and his knowledge of it became extroardinarily detailed and minute.

In 1854 he discovered in Rose Wood an ancient village settlement, dating back to the Stone Age and consisting of a workshop of flint implements and basin-shaped pits forming the dwellings of a neolithic people. Nearly ten years later he read of the famous discovery by Boucher de Perthes of flint implements and the bones of the mammoth and other extinct animals mingled together in the diluvial gravels of the Somme at Abbeville. A storm of controversy had arisen over this discovery, which appeared to throw back the

existence of man to the Glacial period. De Perthes published his discovery in 1846 and 1849, but was regarded in France as an amiable visionary, and the matter was not taken seriously until Sir Joseph Prestwich after careful investigation on the spot read a notable paper before the Royal Society in London in the year 1859. A new world was opened to Harrison :

> " Neoliths, he knew, were made and used when the surface of the country was more or less as it is to-day. Palaeoliths, the tools of a more ancient race, were not likely to be found scattered indiscriminately over the existing land surface : it was necessary to search for them in the gravels brought down in the beds of rivers and representing the washings of ancient surfaces. Boucher de Perthes found palaeoliths in the gravels of the River Somme : Harrison would search for palaeoliths in the gravels of the Ightham stream, the Shode."

It was not however until about 1878 that Harrison devoted himself chiefly to the study of palaeoliths, and his success in convincing his friends he consulted was not at first great, though he received welcome confirmation of his views from Lord Avebury (then Sir John Lubbock). But in 1879 he made the acquaintance of Sir Joseph Prestwich who had a country house at Shoreham near by, and this event proved to be of the utmost significance. Harrison's work during the next seventeen years was done in close co-operation with, and under the advice of, Prestwich, and the association was profitable to both. Palaeoliths were found by Harrison at levels higher than the gravels of the Somme, and not only on the surface but in undisturbed ground. Later on (1890) his excavations on Oldbury Hill afforded proof that the caves or shelters that crowned the hill were the dwelling-places of human beings in palaeolithic times.

In the course of his work in the higher levels of the chalk plateau Harrison found implements which, by reason of their rude character, seemed to be the tools of a race older than palaeolithic man, and to establish the existence of man in Kent in pre-glacial times. This was indeed a revolutionary idea and it was met with almost universal scepticism. In spite of criticism, Harrison, with the cautious support of Prestwich, steadily pursued his researches. He met

objections by finding his " old olds " (as he called them before the name of eolith had been coined) in high ground unmixed with palaeoliths, and also by disinterring them *in situ.* The late Sir John Evans was the chief doubter and was never convinced, but the contest was carried on with an amiability honourable to both the protagonists. A memorable paper by Prestwich read to the Anthropological Institute in 1891 put the archaeological world in possession of Harrison's discoveries and of their implications and brought general recognition of the value of his work. Complete victory in this instance has not been achieved and the issue is still in suspense. There is however an increasing tendency to accept eoliths as showing human handiwork, and in the words of Ray Lankester, as carrying " the antiquity of man at least as far back beyond the palaeoliths as these are from the present day."

Harrison had become a famous man, and the little shop in Ightham has seen many famous visitors. In 1899 he was granted a Civil List pension (increased later) and the Royal Society purchased an annuity for him. His happy and useful life closed peacefully in 1921, and his memory is perpetuated in part by a tablet with suitable inscription in the church of St. Peter at Ightham and in part by the purchase and vesting in the National Trust of Coldrum Stone Circle.

The number of flint implements collected by this indefatigable worker during his long life was enormous. He was generous in his gifts of specimens to his co-workers and correspondents, but a representative collection of his "finds" can be seen at the Maidstone Museum.

Harrison was essentially a field worker and wrote for publication little beyond a pamphlet on eoliths which appeared in 1904. During the greater part of his life he suffered from deafness, and this handicap prevented him from becoming a member of learned societies.

The book is an important and charming record of a remarkable man and the interest is sustained to the end. It is well printed and illustrated. The only point for correction we have noticed is on page 3 where in one of

Harrison's own notes Sir John Evans is made to describe Town House, Ightham, as a " palaeolithic " house. This is possibly a slip for " medieval." F.W.H.

Richborough Castle. Second Report on the Excavation of the Roman Fort at Richborough, by J. P. BUSHE-FOX, F.S.A. The Society of Antiquaries. 1928. Price 7s. 6d.

Subscribers to the Richborough Excavation Fund have had to wait some time for this second report, but now it has been issued they can have little complaint to make. In form, in writing, and in editorship, in contents and in illustrations, it is all that could be desired, and the very pattern of what such a report should be. This and future issues will be worthy exponents of this most important site. If one might venture to criticize, it is that in each future volume a map of the island of Richborough in relation to the surrounding land might be given as a frontispiece, that in place of the repeated heading of every page the subject dealt with should be indicated, and that in the coin lists the name of the emperor or other individual issuing the money might be indicated in bolder type.

The present report deals with further areas on the lines marked out in 1922-23, and in a masterly introduction, which is quite fascinating to read, outlines what was found in 1924-5 with the history of the fort as revealed by the spade to that date. Richborough as a site has the inestimable advantage of being a hill of sandy loam with a surface capping of black pebbles, which in the Roman period seems to have been surrounded completely by the sea at high tide. Its position made it safely land-locked, but at the same time, while being within easy sail of Gaul, it guarded the sheltered passages which led, by way of Reculver and the Swale, to the Medway and the mouth of the Thames. A small island to be of value must have its own water supply, and this Richborough has, with the added advantage that the sand is a perfect filter and a safe medium in which to sink wells down to the water level without timbering. If a well became choked or foul,

it was an easy matter to dig another, and the medieval mind would see no harm in using the old one as a rubbish pit.

Investigation of the site has revealed that the ancient roadways were constructed of a thick mass of black pebbles quarried at certain spots where they occur as a definite deposit. There seems no clear evidence of cementing the pebbles, but in places an ochreous river gravel, which naturally packed hard, was used. As to walls the elucidation of site III., which is the most important piece of work described in the Report, gives us methods of construction during three distinct periods. The 1st c. house on the site, although it had good cemented floors and decorated walls, was built of chalk and unrolled flints from the nearest quarry; the 2nd c. house, which was on a much bigger scale, had walls of large rounded flints, possibly dug at Stonor, with bonding courses of bricks and brick quoins, while the 4th c. baths, which used part of the site, had poorly built walls, and the builders even used chalk alone in places. Some early erections inside the fort seem to have been timber framed, but the generality of the 4th c. houses were wattle and daub huts with thatched roofs.

The question of the object of the great concrete foundation comes up for consideration in the Report as the clearance of the site drew attention to it. The castle has for long been noteworthy for its massive blocks of Hythe greensand and still larger blocks of the oolite of Marquis near Boulogne. Both these could be brought by water almost from door to door and, being easy to dress, any shaping they might require seems to have been done adjacent to the concrete core they were intended to face. Masses of chippings cover the ground, especially between the platform and the medieval chapel, and this area is besides almost a mortar pavement from the material which it is suggested was mixed on the spot by the masons engaged in the building. While it is still a moot point if the building—monumental or otherwise—erected on the substructure was completed, there is no doubt that it was covered with blocks of greensand not meant to be seen, while possibly the white oolite was exposed. In

position both these were clamped together by massive dowels on to which an architectural facing of white Carrara marble was pinned by bronze dowels. From the scale of the moulded fragments which remain the treatment was truly monumental.

As digging proceeds the question constantly arises concerning the accumulation of soil on the site. When the work was started, one section of the wall was completely buried and the removal of three feet over a large part of the area has exposed the original facing as well as Roman structures which were within a foot of the surface. Up to 1894 the site had been a ploughed field for one hundred years. The above stripping of its surface deposits in 1924-25 exposed a number of hearths and patches of pebbles at high levels, indicating the latest Roman occupation level of the site. The average depth of the occupation deposits is 5 feet to 6 feet, 60 to 70 inches, which would give an accretion of soil of 3 to 3½ inches a century since the conquest in 43 A.D., but this addition to the general level took place as to three-quarters during the first three-and-a-half centuries, when there was intensive occupation, and only a quarter during all the subsequent centuries of decay and desertion.

This second Report develops the striking story of the house upon house in the N.E. corner with the curious feature of two of the 3rd c. triple line of ditches coming to a stop up against the western wall of the 2nd c. house. The whole masterly story of the working out of the variousfeatures here is helping to make Richborough at this late date one of the classic Romano-British sites with which is bound up the Anglo-Saxon conquest of the country. Little evidence is yet to hand to give us the Antonine and later history of the area within the walls till the third quarter of the 3rd c. The first quarter of the 2nd c. undoubtedly saw the at least partial erection of the great monument and, from the quality of the pottery, glass, etc., found, there was a good class of civilian life about the site; however, there was no small change in circulation and the artificers must have been paid in kind not cash. As a matter of fact denarii form nearly

half the coins found of the period 98 A.D. to 235 A.D., and the copper and bronze coins are almost invariably badly worn.

The later 2nd c. decay of the place when it was no longer a military fortress is a point that still needs solution, and this may not be settled till extensive trenching of the ground outside the castle is possible. The way also in which materials from the monumental structure were got rid of is rather intriguing. Before the existing late 3rd c. walls were built pieces of marble were being worked into walls, and the marble is now found scattered through most of the 3rd c. levels. Has the greater mass been burnt into lime to build the walls we see? In this connection an interesting point is the difference in construction between the walls of the fortress with their good mortar—with much pounded brick—as compared with that of the stretch of late walling on the East face, and with that of the walls of the Saxon Chapel. The builders of the latter largely used shell gravel for their mortar.

Following the summary and description of the excavations is a valuable account of the chapel of St. Augustine and the early references to it, with notes on its architecture by Mr. A. W. Clapham, F.S.A., The various finds during the two seasons are then dealt with under the main headings "Small Objects in Metal, Bone, etc.," "The Pottery" and "The Coins." These are all worth going through for the often valuable information included in the descriptions, but a special word of praise must be given to the analysis and research which has gone to the compilation of the section on the coins. These numbered 16,825, and so many interesting points have been opened up in the cataloguing that Mr. F. S. Salisbury, who was responsible for the work, has given us a new outlook on the mints and distribution of the copper coinage of the House of Valentinian and the House of Theodosius; and this has enabled him to touch on the still debatable point of the Roman evacuation of Britain. Mr. J. W. E. Pearce adds an analytical note on the coins found in the course of the two summer excavations, the elucidation of which meant no light task, as those who have had to deal with Richborough coins can testify. W.P.D.S.