

REVIEWS.

ECHOES FROM THE PAST LIFE OF BURGATE, SUFFOLK.

By PERCIVAL OAKLEY HILL.

With many illustrations, 7/6.

Published by W. E. Harrison, The Ancient House, Ipswich.

For love, Echo pined away until nothing but her voice remained and to re-incarnate her voice, love must respond.

It is with this revivifying love for his old Love—Burgate Church and Parish—that a former Rector materializes the echoing voices of the past in the pages of this excellent little history of Burgate.

The main portion embodies, in tabulated form, a running commentary on parish events through succeeding centuries.

Parish histories are few because great staying power is needed for the collecting material and then a nice perception as to when collecting should cease and collating commence, coupled with the horror of finding blanks which must be filled, statements that conflict, errors to confute and other torquemada tortures that break the faith of incipient historians and compel them to recant.

Mr. Oakley Hill has not recanted, his faith, patience and courage have supported him through the throes of construction and authorship and his book having been tossed and turned in the Charybdis of his own mind is now cast upon the Scylla of public criticism.

Here it will meet with well merited appreciation coupled perhaps with a few comments and questions betokening an intelligent interest in the results given us of his deliberations.

The first line in the book states that Burgate is situated in "High Suffolk." Does this refer to a geographical position or to a matter of altitude? There has been much speculation as to the origin and position of High Suffolk and high ground in Suffolk is not High Suffolk.

An ingenious and we hope incorrect derivation of the place name Burgate, ascribes it to the passage of the body of St. Edmund through the village on its journey to Bury St. Edmunds. Hence the name Burgate or—"The Way to the Burying."

Those who regard the site of the Church as a typical Saxon Burh or fossed and fenced mound of strategical importance as a military position will regret its change from a prehistoric landmark to a passing pageant.

And what will Aluric Stickestac do about it? seeing that his name suggests that he received it from the ancestral home being situated on the staked steep slope of this mound.

Readers who mind their ps and qs may criticise the spelling of the name Copinger with two ps. Two are correct, but custom prefers single blessedness.

The Suffolk peasant was not using slang but was misconstrued when reported on page 55 as saying the horses were "all in a ucky sweat"; he really said in a muck o' sweat. A common (in two ways) expression and used by a Lady (?) in "The Vicar of Wakefield."

The fittings and furniture of the church are well and lucidly described and under an illustration of the high altar is a tantalising statement to the effect that the original Stone Mensa with crosses is placed beneath the above altar. There does not appear to be any further mention of this—the much sought for and most valued of church antiquities—nor does it seem to have found a place in our very short list of Suffolk Stone Altars.

It is only natural that the limited capacity of a small book forbids the elaboration of subjects such as above or of the chimney, part of which it is stated, may have been in the Rectory of 1303.

Though small this book does not suffer from any undue condensation of its literary contents for its small size is in great part due to the cleverness with which the publisher has economised space and used small but clear type on paper of the right quality. Its pages number 110 and include 22 illustrations, a List of Rectors from 1199, Monumental Inscriptions in Church and Churchyard, Marriages from 1560 to 1753, Pedigrees de Burgate and Stoneham and an index.

H.A.H.

TIMPERLEY OF HINTLESHAM: A STUDY OF A SUFFOLK FAMILY.

By SIR GERALD H. RYAN, Bart. and LILIAN J. REDSTONE.

With 12 Illustrations, 3 Maps and 2 Genealogical Tables. 8/6 net. (Methuen and Co., Ltd., London).

The actual period covered by the title of this book is from 1450-1720, but an excellent dissertation on the origin and interests of the family before they became Timperleys of Hintlesham, is included.

This courtesy of politely introducing a local family to the reader is appreciated but often omitted by compilers who leave too much to the imagination, considering it sufficient to concentrate on individuals of the period, regardless of extra-parochial events and connecting links.

In many cases this isolation provides the recorder with no option, for an owner is found in possession of an estate without leaving the vestage of a trace as to how he got there—conjecture being his only bridge of access.

In the case of the Timperleys the bridge is not conjecturable but the approach to it is possible via a choice of paths.

Nor is this to be wondered at considering that up to the 13th century, and often later blood relationship can rarely be ascertained other than by circumstantial evidence.

The requirements of early days prior to the stabilization of surnames, were satisfied with one Christian name, and any departure from this custom would have been resented as impious and unbiblical.

To distinguish an individual from his namesakes he was earmarked with what functioned as a postal address and was as easily changed, until a man's individuality was tangled in a multiplicity of aliases through which it is next to impossible to trace a descent by blood.

Out of this initial maze the Timperleys are cleverly extracted and established at Hintlesham.

Here, by a happy touch, the reader is made to feel at home, not in rustic banishment but in a social centre where the proportionate blending of local and current history raises the performers out of the bucolic role of Actors in a village play to a cosmopolitan stage where the lime-light, though centred on the Timperleys, does not leave other actors on the stage in darkness and obscurity.

In 1594 Hintlesham Hall passed to a Nicholas Timperley, who was the first of his line to be openly known as a recusant Papist, and in his person we are introduced in a most edifying manner to the operation of the penal laws against Roman Catholics.

A notable feature of this book is the wealth of footnotes and references which supplement the text and give proof to the thoroughness of its composition.

A history of the Hall follows that of its owners and is accompanied by maps one of which gives the position and names of some 70 fields, in 1595. In addition to the maps, which are three, there are 12 illustrations and 2 genealogical tables, together with a commendable index, completing a book which is an exemplary model of a family history.

H.A.H.

THE RUINED CHURCHES OF NORFOLK.

By CLAUDE J. W. MESSENT, A.R.I.B.A.

Price 2s. 6d. net. (Norwich: H. W. Hunt, 14, Orford Hill). 1931.

By the Same Author.

THE OLD COTTAGES AND FARM-HOUSES OF NORFOLK.

With 112 pen and ink illustrations by the Author, mostly full page.
Price 10s. (Norwich: W. H. Hunt, 14, Orford Hill).

There is a tendency among members of County Archæological Societies to become unduly topical and local in their investigations, under the equivocal impression that a County Society must not poach upon another county's preserves.

This is correct in spirit but there are so many branches of the science that are not enclosed in county bounds that trespass is pardonable.

Architecture for example has no respect for county restrictions, the limitations that influence its features are those of available building material, topographical conditions and popular requirements, and when these are in the balance the division of a county is but a cartographical expression.

According to this point of view Mr. Messent's two books fall within regional boundaries where we may legitimately tread, to study Suffolk architecture in Norfolk.

There is a fascination about ruined churches often absent from elaborately preserved fabrics, possibly because ruins retain the very earliest plan and material of a structure, the majority of our churches exhibiting a patchwork of later additions loosely adapted to a base with which they do not synchronize and disturb the balance of the original planning.

It seems incredible that Mr. Messent is able to chronicle 240 ruined churches in Norfolk and we might question his accuracy if he had not confirmed it by providing a description and locality for every one of them, and in several cases illustrating them with his own pen and ink sketches.

It is a delightful book for a motorist, questing for the picturesque and romantic, for here alphabetically arranged under the villages he finds the information he requires but would fail to obtain locally.

It is to be hoped that the assured success of this book will stimulate some son of Suffolk to compile a similar book on the ruined churches of Suffolk.

"The Old Cottages and Farm-houses of Norfolk" bears a title that guarantees popularity. Homes have an appeal to all lovers of home. They have both individuality and personality. No two are ever quite alike and each has a distinct attendant atmosphere alluring, forbidding, friendly or jarring, conveying instinctively antipathy or love at first sight.

The book is planned and laid out in sections each dealing with the building materials used in the county either entirely, partly or in conjunction, all of them being local productions and referred to under nine heads—brick, flint, clay lump and Carstone belonging to the first group of materials out of which houses are built entirely, whilst timber, weather-boarding, limestone, clunch and pilfered monastic stone are used in others, partly or in conjunction.

These substances are dealt with in separate sections giving an account of the initial stages through which the material passes before it is fit for the builders' hand, together with comments and hints on the history of the materials before, during and after the process of building, with regard to peculiarities, durability, weathering, convenience of locality, adaptability for decorative purposes and other information highly interesting to lovers of archæology and architecture.

A noteworthy feature of the book is the very large number of excellent pen and ink sketches by the author. No word-painting can

convey the true picture of a building to the mind's eye, as their infinite variety baffles the limitations of language, and verbal descriptions must be supplemented with pictorial illustrations to ensure a correct impression being provided.

Photography supplies a handy and sufficient method of illustrating for general work but when an author has the ability and patience to illustrate his own work with his own sketches, the advantage is obvious and is especially apparent in a work of this description, in which the general appearance of the building is often subservient to a special feature, to which attention must be drawn and which can be emphasised in a sketch but not in a photograph.

Norfolk patriots may question the allegation that they are indebted to Flemish Weavers for their brickwork. As they have never been so out of the world, and architecture, as to require foreign instruction in the elementary art of brick making.

Very many writers on East Anglian history attribute our national progress and evolutionary advance to foreign inspiration. So that future generations will regard us as a savage race without initiative, whom the Flemish folk civilized and taught us all our arts and crafts.

The chapter on dovecotes, though errant from the title of the book, is welcome, as dovecotes are not common objects of the countryside, and are a pleasing side line, deserving of attention, as their day is over and like windmills they are passing away.

Eight of the eleven sketches are of the tower type and in dating them the author appears to have drawn his conclusions from restoration work which may perhaps make him centuries too late. These commodious, detached cotes must have originated when permission to possess a dovecote was a prerogative of Lords of the Manor and Rectors. Rectors sometimes used the church tower for their pigeons and the nesting boxes let into the inner walls are often mistaken for putlog-holes. The Poet Rector Skelton, of Diss, abused this privilege.

Dovecotes were often moated and diminutive moats bear witness to to a vanished Duffus.

H.A.H.

SEA-TANGLE.

A NOVEL BY MIRABEL COBBOLD (Author of "Deborah Lee.").
7/6 net. (Heath Cranton, Ltd., 6, Fleet Lane, London, E.C.4).

The atmosphere of "Sea-Tangle" breathes of Suffolk, but the staging is on the sea aboard a cargo boat plying as a free lance, on lawful and unlawful occasions.

As a bolt from the blue the heroine drops upon the scene, which, although it was not exactly an Eden, was at any rate without an Eve.

Here her fascinating femininity coupled with hypnotic powers, together with the gifts of a seer, provide tragic results which supply abundant novelty, romance and adventure to keep the reader enthralled from start to finish.

The hero is a complex super-man, outwardly more devil than god, but with possibilities for either, and on this the story hinges. In the restricted accommodation that obtains aboard a boat with a mixed crew and a maiden to be wooed and won who is obviously asking for trouble, the sex question is naturally prominent, and is remarkably well handled from an essentially feminine point of view, totally unconvincing to the average male, who will always provide the active and not the passive element in the sex problem—but this is a novel.

The *Deus ex machina* is Ricky, the Mate, of Aldeburgh, a visionary demiurge, endowed with a psycho analytical mind in a deformed body. A philosopher who expresses his deliberations in the Suffolk dialect and is in possession of that simple theosophy—a compound of superstition and faith, which is unperturbed by intellectual complications.

Such relics of atavism still linger on our coast, more rarely inland, and are perhaps descendants or throw-backs to those ancestors of ours who obtained for Suffolk the epithet of Silly, that is auspicious or of good omen. The epithet has a spiritual significance applicable to the souls not the soil of Suffolk. As education advanced, faith in omens and superstitions fell from grace and was looked upon as foolish, and as a natural sequence the word "silly," which defined them, changed its meaning and followed public opinion in respect to omens.

Omens did not change but faith in them did. Early faith venerated and called them silly and later faith accepted the word as defining them and retained it unaltered in form but applying it as interpreting the more advanced views.

In this way Ricky resembles Silly Suffolk, being possessed of qualities which one age venerates and another derides.

Those who feel the call of the sea will find a stimulating echo in the variagated life aboard this smuggling cargo boat—Life in the rough. Not the *dolce far niente* langour of a luxury liner. Those who want a love story will find it—also in the rough. The psychist will find food for reflection and those who love adventure have it provided every day in every way.

Some readers may think the title of the book redundant as Tangle is seaweed and "Sea" Tangle pleonastic, but if the word Tangle was unqualified we might overlook the neological word play. Only when it is cast up on the shore is Tangle entangled. In its element it undulates and sways in graceful and intricate lacing, illustrating the poetry of motion but is never entangled in confusion.

"Sea-Tangle" gives us both the poetry of motion and the entanglement of emotion. Tangle entangled.

H.A.H.

CORDUROY. By ADRIAN BELL. 3/6.
And SILVER LEY. By ADRIAN BELL. 3/6.

Publisher: Cobden Sanderson.

The companion books "Corduroy" and "Silver Ley" present us with two acts of a scene in the tragedy of agriculture, staged in the form of autobiographical novels in which the author tells of his life on a Suffolk farm—in "Corduroy" as a farm pupil and then as a farm owner in "Silver Ley." Each part, in defiance of Euclid, being a whole and complete in itself.

"Corduroy" should be read first as it is introductory and raises the curtain on the author at the age when brook and river meet, abandoning London life and entering a Suffolk farm as pupil, presumably about 1923.

Farm life is a theme that has inspired the pens of myriad writers—writers who have studied it, imagined it and idealised it from every point of view, but here we have idealism realised by one who has lived it.

Apart from the passing pleasure provided by a perusal of its pages these books possess an abiding historical value. "Corduroy" is more than a name, it is the sign-manual of an era in farm life which it aptly symbolises, whilst "Silver Ley" may rank with "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "The Song of a Shirt" in calling public attention to the distressed state of agriculture, which calls aloud for alleviation no less than did slavery and sweated labour.

"Corduroy" by its title, conveys in anticipation a mental picture of farm life, but it also does much more, for it symbolises an epoch of the same.

The smock frock which was synonymous with "Giles" and symbolised his activities up to about 1850, no longer applied to the corduroy clad agricultural labourer of the later part of the century, and another symbol was needed to indicate as happily and briefly an occupation, a type, an epoch and a vogue. All of which find expression in the title "Corduroy."

The Corduroy age was killed in the Great War. Even now are we commemorating its final obsequies and soon its epic will be sung. We will hear its voice in the distance while its spirit remains earth-bound but it is past and dead and village life knows it no more.

A new era, Phoenix-like, is arising from its ashes with greater potentialities for good or evil than any previous agricultural age.

For another "Peasant rising" is in progress, not "in arms" but in mental equipment and educational advantages that raises the country to the level of the town. What auguries does this incredible omen portend?

Both "Corduroy" and "Silver Ley" deal more especially with the long established yeoman farmer who owns hereditary acres and whose philosophic mind was not unduly disturbed by the vicissitudes of the war. A sound man whose credit was good and in bad weather could cast anchor and ride out the storm.

Less happily situated are the tenant farmers, who in the opulent days of the war, optimistically bought their farms at the top of the market with borrowed money, on which now the interest they have to pay far exceeds the rental value of the land.

With the bottom knocked out of the corn market and a slump in stock, the problem to be solved was how the farmer could keep going and the latter, in addition, meet his obligations.

To this pertinent question the author of the books seeks a solution, and as friends are ever ready with advice received various suggestions, such as "Don't buy anything and don't sell." This like many a Suffolk adage is a dark saying for the farmer cannot follow it and lead the "Simple life," supporting himself on the produce of his farm. His tranquility is rudely disturbed by the demands for cash to pay rates, taxes, tithe, etc., which necessitates capital or credit, but at the same time it is a solution of the problem, and appreciated on a Suffolk farm, where political economy is empirical and gauged by rule of thumb.

There is no attempt at chronicling Suffolk dialect in either of these books, probably because the story deals with current events when the vernacular had lost its purity and was no longer to be heard from the lips of the peasants.

The few local words that are introduced bear witness to this for they are words imported from Norfolk and the "shires." In one or two instances these words are true, if not pure, Suffolk, being made up of inapplicable words such as a Suffolk peasant employs when the word he wants fails him. He does not hum and ha whilst trying to catch the evasive word but with an impatient gesture thrusts in any word that comes handy. A primitive combination of gesture and voice from which language originated.

No written page can convey the musical intonation which is the charm of Suffolk dialect and has earned for it the aphorism—Norfolk set to music.

The recreations of a country farmer are realistically recorded as by one who writes from personal experience. Hunting, shooting, tennis, dancing, outings all have their day and all through the books there is a touch of poetic vision and artistic colour that brightens mediocrity and presents life on a farm in an atmosphere both attractive and creative, veiling the thorns and thistles engendered of the primeval curse laid on the ground with a covering of flower and fruit.

H.A.H.

FATHERS OF THEIR PEOPLE.

By H. W. FREEMAN.

(Chatto and Windus).

Readers who commence a book by first peeping at the last page will find that this book concludes with the news of the Declaration of War—the Great War of 1914.

It is therefore not a war novel, nor does the type of Suffolk farmer that figures most conspicuously therein belong to this century but to the yeoman farmer of "Dog-cart" days. A fast vanishing type of farmer of everlasting memory, for they provided our nation with the typical Englishman "John Bull."

As a class they were qualified by right of long descent to rank as county gentlemen, but lacked the educational passport to that circle, the exclusiveness of its conventions in village communities being more marked then when nearly all the country clergy were cadets of good houses.

The central figure in the book, Adam, the son of Isaac Brundish, is the direct descendant of a long line of ancestors who owned Pond Hall Farm, and is the embodiment of a type, rather than a representative of the farmer you may expect to meet to-day.

He is a product of the ages, and judging from his name and that of his father, sprung from that strong but narrow minded puritanical stock of indomitable and unbending will, efficient in all they undertook, be it good or evil, virtue or vice.

These characteristics are well portrayed, and skilfully combined in the persons of Isaac and Adam Brundish, producing a blending of despot and patriarch, that gains for them and the book the title of "Fathers of their People," and contains just enough double entendre to captivate the whimsical fancy of the Suffolk peasant.

The character sketches of the Suffolk peasant are inimitable, containing touches of sentiment, humour and point of view that only those who know them well can thoroughly appreciate. These are rendered effective by being recorded in the Suffolk idiom and form of expression as well as the actual words used: words that off the farm would be considered coarse and at times immoral.

The writer is, however, describing an unexpurgated farm, and does not attempt to delude his readers with the idea that farm life is all cream, jam and lambs.

It is impossible to judge the language and morals of village life by any accredited standards as they possess hereditary codes which are based on the Old Testament rather than the New, and to which they are falsely true and guilty without guile.

Adams' son, Dick, both in name and nature, breaks away from the puritanical narrowness of the parental stock except in the will and ability to perform. He can concentrate but is spasmodic, and his escapades supply novelty and adventure to colour the picture and enliven the scene.

The reader who removes his kid gloves and rose-tinted spectacles will find in this book a fair view of Suffolk farm life before the advent of motor buses, peasant soldiers returned from the war, wage bills, and the pauperising dole, when the untutored peasant was self-reliant, honest and true to his limited standard of duty to God and his neighbour.

His creed was naturalistic and humanitarian, his impulses and passions were designedly implanted to be followed, not thwarted, and his actions and language immaterial, as long as he hurt no one by word nor deed.

Before the war the Suffolk peasant was not vicious, he was unmoral, but no scandal monger, evil speaker, liar nor slanderer, and workers on the farms lived their incongruous creed, much in the manner depicted in this book, and will any discriminating reader cast the first stone?

H.A.H.

PARISH CHURCHES OF RURAL ENGLAND.

By PHILIP J. TURNER, F.R.I.B.A., F.R.A.I.C.

Last year Mr. Philip J. Turner contributed a most excellent Paper on the Tyrell Chapel at Gipping to our Proceedings, and has now published an article on "Parish Churches of Rural England" in "The Canadian Geographical Journal" of December, 1931, Vol. III, No. 6.

Writing in Canada he describes her parish churches as England's finest and most characteristic contribution to mediæval art, 12,280 being of ancient origin, and indicates three periods, and attendant contributory causes, for an increased activity in church building, viz., the Norman period, 1066; secondly, after the signing of Magna Charta, 1215; and thirdly, after the Black Death, 1349. The reasons for attributing building activities to this last, as a cause, are novel but convincing if the effects of the cause are protracted.

The article contains 26 good and clear illustrations of church exteriors and interiors, of which nine are from Suffolk. These include the imposing structures of Lavenham, Long Melford and Southwold, whilst the interior of Worlingworth is given as an example of a double hammer beam roof and that of Cretingham of a single hammer beam roof and St. Martin's, Tuddenham, as a type of the arch braced roof.

Other interesting mention is made respecting roofs, those of East Anglian churches being quoted as unrivalled, as no other country in Europe has anything to compare with them.

This article, though all too brief, is replete with little known but useful information on such matters as the origin of the parish, peasant church builders, church sites, usages and planning, the altar as a focus, and other apposite side-lights.

In addition to these inherent features, attention is directed to scenic influence on church building and planning.

Bells and bell ringing is touched upon and screens and pews allocated and assigned.

The article concludes with a glance at the secular uses to which the church nave was put in the Middle Ages

This article being written for a people who know little or nothing of English Church life and traditions, is an education to us at home who take things too much for granted, without due regard for their origin. To all such this wonderfully succinct article provides provision for information and reflection.

H.A.H.

MARDLES FROM SUFFOLK.

TALES OF THE SOUTH FOLK.

By ERNEST READ COOPER, F.S.A.

(Heath Cranton, 6, Fleet Lane, London, E.C.4.)

The author of these gossip yarns is well known to a wide circle of readers through his rescue work in snatching from oblivion vanishing fragments of ancient and forgotten lore, more especially connected with the Suffolk coast.

His present contribution to literature contrives a double debt to pay. Primarily to future students of maritime history, who will find ready to hand in its pages, little known and out of the way notes on seaside life and occupations, written in the sands but here placed on permanent records.

As, for instance, a roll call of bygone sailing craft, summoned from the vasty deep, to give an account of their life and labours. Of pioneers who sailed from our shores to open up new lands and trade routes. Of smuggling days and smugglers' ways and many such touches of local colour which will provide a setting for the great epochs of history.

The statistical portion of this book is not intended for a connected whole but rescues a few scattered beads of a broken chain for further additions and stringing together.

A large portion of the book is in lighter vein, and flits from grave to gay, from lively to severe, giving examples of Suffolk humour and whimsicalities, in that form of expression and idiom which the title of the book, "Mardles from Suffolk," leads us to expect.

By way of comment, this word mardle, used in the sense of gossip, appears to have migrated or to have become confused with maudle.

A real old Suffolk peasant who some 25 years ago was persuaded to make a Dictaphone record of Suffolk dialect for a German university, would call a pond a mardel, and the duck weed growing on it, "Mardels." This appears to be recognisable dialect. For mardle or mardel would then mean a diminutive mere or mar, and mardels would fall into place as—of, or belonging to, a little mere.

This peasant would describe gossip as—maudlin about all mander of what. This is evidently of Biblical origin. The peasant gossip, maudle or maudlin, usually consists of lamentation over their ailments and other evils of a tearful nature and derived from the name of the weeping Mary Magdalene (pronounced maudlin).

Suffolk dialect has intermarried so freely that her vernacular is polyglot and hybrid but she still retains specialities of syncopated words and the elision of letters and syllables, as well as her quaint expressions and dry humour, which pass as dialect and mark her speech as distinctive but are rapidly becoming national, and this book will be welcomed as a life line cast to a sinking swimmer. H.A.H.

The Books reviewed in these pages may be obtained from the Ancient House, Ipswich.