

## REVIEWS.

THE OLD WATER MILLS OF NORFOLK, by Claude J. W. Messent, A.R.I.B.A., with 60 illustrations. Price 6s. And

THE WEATHER VANES OF NORFOLK AND NORWICH, by Claude J. W. Messent, A.R.I.B.A., with 112 illustrations. Price 3s. 6d.

As far as East Anglia is concerned these two books are a pioneer movement towards the grouping of water mills and weather vanes in a class by themselves and apart from the casual mention they have received hitherto en passant.

Water mills individually have a fascination and charm peculiar to themselves to which grouping may seem prejudicial, and while we dream they are slowly but surely passing away. The ideal must be based upon the real and as Mr. Messent reminds us, very soon there will be nothing left of the real for sentimentalists to idealize.

The chief value of this book lies in the fact that water mills are rapidly disappearing, not so much through vandalistic demolition as from neglect and natural decay. They are passing away and would do so unnoticed and unrecorded if Mr. Messent had not stretched out a hand to illustrate and describe these perishing ones about to die.

For this, among other reasons, the book should be acquired before the limited issue is sold out so that when lost to sight a memory may be found upon our shelves.

Mr. Messent's book on weather vanes is compiled and issued with the same commendable preservative spirit. It illustrates and records 112 weather vanes which from their exposed position and flimsy construction rarely brave the elements for more than a century or two.

Their lineage however dates back to remote antiquity and their popular name of weather "cocks" preserves their original form and symbology, for in pagan days B.C. the cock surmounted heathen temples or Fana dedicated to Jupiter, and as the natural herald of the dawn from that lofty position hailed the rising sun. Jupiter, as his name denotes, being "Dies Pater" or Father of the Day. These cocks were not weather vanes but were a part of the structure which crowned the summit and faced the east. They were not an ornamental adjunct but were an essential constituent of the building without which these Fanes, towers and obelisks would be incomplete, meaningless and profane.

In this context "profane" is not used as a pun but as an illustration.

Early church builders with the ingrained idea that the cock was a sacred symbol denoting that the Church was consecrated and not profane naturally included this acknowledged indication, but the more educated Christians objected that it was profane and must be suppressed.

The heated controversy that arose was solved and assuaged by the politic dictum of St. Gregory that as pagan people were converted, not destroyed, so pagan symbols, decorations and the like, should be converted and not cast out or destroyed.

The cock was therefore harangued and as it made no objection was deemed converted and the bird of Jupiter, according to popular acceptance, became a reminder of St. Peter's betrayal of his Lord.

This popular idea is however a late and fanciful conception, contrary to the gentle Christ-like spirit of that day, which was not vindictive and would not stigmatize the dead Saint with an epitaph so cruel.

The conversion in fact was less crude and cruel. It retained its age old significance, but in its qualified interpretation now heralded the dawn of Christianity and hailed the Risen Son of Righteousness.

Following the example of Prof. Skeat Mr. Messent derives the word "Vane" from the A.S. Fana, a small flag, but possibly the origin is much earlier and is associated with the Fane (Fanum, a temple) of which it was the crowning feature—a derivation which the controversy above mentioned supports.

Both of these books can be obtained at The Ancient House, Ipswich, and when funds permit should be acquired as a matter of patriotism. Not only because they are interesting to the individual purchaser but—a point often overlooked—in consideration of future generations.

For in the past many an artist and historian has made similar attempts to benefit posterity by illustrating and recording tottering edifices, crumbling buildings and threatened earthworks, which in his day were dying but were not, as now, dead and buried. The public did not buy their works or contribute to the cost, with the result that many ancient monuments have passed away unlettered and unsung. To-day we lament this lack of foresight but cannot very well blame them if we in our day fail to support similar tentative ventures.

H.A.H.

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THE STAMPS OF CHINA (WITH THE TREATY PORTS AND FORMOSA), by Dr. Leonard B. Cane, F.S.A. (Stamp Collecting, Ltd., 8, Buckingham St., Strand, London, W.C.2. 8vo. 3s.).

This very attractive "Stamp Collectors' " Handbook, written by one whose interest is by no means confined to Bungay and its Castle, will be welcomed by the philatelist. It has already been awarded the "Stamp Collecting" Silver Medal for 1938.

We are reminded that the postal system of China goes far back into antiquity, the first Government posts being said by the Chinese Postal Department to have been established during the Chou Dynasty (1122-255 B.C.). Only government messages were then carried, but in about the year 1402 A.D. this postal system was extended to include private messages.