

ELEVENTH CENTURY BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

[By A. MORLEY DAVIES.]

“Domesday Tables for the counties of Surrey, Berkshire, Middlesex, Hertford, Buckingham, and Bedford, and for the New Forest, with an appendix on the Battle of Hastings,” arranged with some notes by the Hon. Francis Henry Baring (London: The St. Catherine Press, Ltd., 1909).

One of the little moral stories of our childhood related how a little girl was set tasks to do by a wicked fairy called Disorder, who supplied her with materials in a state of such utter confusion that she was reduced to despair until the good fairy Order waved her wand and everything sorted itself into its place. To the topographical student, anxious to learn from Domesday Book all that he can about a place in which he is interested, Mr. Baring presents himself as the good fairy, though his task has been no mere waving of a wand. The present reviewer, having commenced a tabulation of Buckinghamshire Domesday some seven or eight years ago, and having left the work unfinished through want of leisure, can well appreciate the labour involved and the difficulties encountered in the compilation of the work now before him. Mr. Baring makes some apology for having dealt with counties of which he has little personal knowledge, and it is not for the local men who have failed to do the work themselves to reproach him for any consequent defects. All we will venture to do is to express regret that the proof-sheets were not submitted to someone with local knowledge, who might have prevented the numerous mis-spellings of the modern place-names. Except for this, and one error noted farther on, we have no fault to find. The necessity of condensing a large amount of information into tables of not unwieldy dimensions has necessitated abbreviations and symbolism that may be a little puzzling at first, but are soon mastered. Five minutes will suffice for the finding in these tables of information that might require an afternoon's search through the Domesday facsimile, with the further advantage of certainty that no detached item has been overlooked. We offer to Mr. Baring, on behalf of local topographers, our hearty thanks and congratulations.

Understanding of the meaning of Domesday Book has greatly increased of late years, thanks to the work of Round and Maitland particularly, as well as of Vinogradoff, Seebohm, and others. The realization that what had been taken for measures of area were in reality assessments for taxation was the greatest step forward, and though there are still many puzzles to solve, at least the student can now find out, if he will take the trouble, what is certain, what is disputed, and what is unexplained. On some of the uncertainties Mr. Baring offers suggestions in the notes accompanying the tables.

We may briefly mention some interesting comparisons that the tables enable us to make. Estimates of the relative density of population in different parts of the county in the Conqueror's reign must be made with caution, for the recorded population was only a fraction of the total, and may not have been the same fraction everywhere. In the case of freemen, only the heads of families were probably enumerated, while in the case of serfs (*servi*) it may have been that all were enumerated, and as the percentage of serfs varies between 11 and 23 in different hundreds, the proportion of the real population recorded may vary accordingly. If, however, we arrange the eighteen hundreds in turn of order of (a) apparent density of population, and (b) percentage of *servi*, we cannot trace any connexion between the two. It is therefore probable that the apparent density of population is an approximately correct indication of the real density.

Making the best estimates possible of the areas of the several hundreds (from the statistics of the Ordnance Survey), we find that the *recorded* population per square mile (which may be a quarter of the actual population or less) is abnormally low (3.7 per square mile) in the hundred of Burnham, which still had much unoccupied woodland, while elsewhere it varies between 6 and 11 per square mile, being lowest in the two other Chiltern hundreds (Desborough and Stoke), and Mursley and Stodfold in North Bucks; while it is highest (11.3) in Moulsoe, east of the Ousel. The density of population in 1086 does not seem connected with the largeness or small-

ness of the holdings, for Tichesele and Lamua, well manorialized hundreds, stand at the same level as Coteslai and Sigelai, where small holdings were common, while Bonestou, with many small holdings, has a rather lower population. In the eight centuries that have elapsed since Domesday Book was compiled there has been a complete shifting of the centre of gravity of population from North Bucks to South Bucks—a shifting in which we believe the enclosures of the 15th and 16th centuries played a large part. The parish of Creslow had a larger population in 1086 than in 1901.

The statistics of woodland, taken hundred by hundred, give no clear result, owing doubtless in part to the fact that most of the hundreds included both forested and cleared land; but there is also a serious suspicion that the returns are incomplete, for in Coteslai hundred no woodland is returned at all, and in Staines hundred Hampden and Missenden alone are credited with any. It is only by tabulation that these deficiencies are made evident.

One of the most fascinating things about Domesday Book is the glimpse it often gives us of ancient Saxon features still surviving in the Confessor's reign. The village of Lavendon, in the extreme north of the county, is almost as good an example of a community of very free small holders and "men" of as great a variety of lords as the village of Orwell in Cambridge-shire, which the late Prof. Maitland made famous. The following were the landowners of Lavendon in 1065, all of whom could give or sell their land without seeking their lords' permission:—

	Assessment Hides.	Team- lands.
8 thanes, of whom one, Alli, was the "senior" of the others	4½	4
a man of Alric son of Goding	2½	2½
a man of Bishop Wulfwig (of Lincoln) ...	2½	2
Humman, man of Alli	2½	2
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Alli, housecarl of King Edward	2½	3
a man of Borret [Burgret]	2	4
Borgeret and his man Ulvric	1½	1½
two thanes, Borret and Ulvric	1½	1
Turbert, man of Countess Goda [Gytha]	1	1½
Chetel, a King's thane	½	½

These ten items, scattered about under various headings in Domesday, are brought together by Mr. Baring's tabulation. The assessments add up to $19\frac{3}{4}$ hides, from which we conclude that the whole township was originally rated at 20 hides, but that in the course of the complicated series of sub-divisions and amalgamations of property that must have taken place, one twenty-fourth of a hide had somehow escaped notice.

Of all the pre-Conquest land-holders, we only know for certain that Chetel survived in 1086, for he still held the same land then. The rest of the township had been consolidated under four of the great tenants-in-chief of King William, and the under-tenants reduced in number. We can only wonder whether those with English names are survivors of the company of eight thanes, and whether Borgeret and "Ulvric" were two out of the three unnamed sokemen of 1086.

Thanchood seems to have been cheap in North Bucks in 1065, and Mr. Baring suggests, though with some doubt, that the term *tainus* may have been equivalent in North Bucks to *sochemannus* in the adjacent counties.

He also makes the observation that the small freeholders abounded mainly on the north-eastern side of Watling Street, and (in his notes on Bedfordshire) suggests a connexion between this and the boundary between the land of Alfred and Guthrum settled in the Peace of Wedmore. As Maitland expressed it, the influx of Danes must have checked the manorializing process.

Some thegns held as little as a virgate, the usual holding of a villein in later days. In Tyringham there were five thegns, one of whom turns out, when they are enumerated, to be the wife of one of the others.

It was quite the usual thing for a North Bucks thane to be someone else's "man," and sometimes he seems to have been the "man" of a very unimportant lord. Thus in "Brichstoch" (probably Burston, in the Vale of Aylesbury) there were three thanes whose lords are given as Earl Leofwine, Godwin Cilt Abbot of Westminster, and Alverad of Wing. We turn to Wing to learn something of "Alverad," and find no trace of him. Perhaps, however, "Wing" was a slip for "Aylesbury," as there was an "Alvied" of Aylesbury who held land at Pitstone.

Again, in Elstrop, there were four thanes, owning as lords, Earl Leofwine, "Wluuen," Leofwine of Mentmore, and Brictric respectively. But we find no Leofwine holding land at Mentmore; though there are two Leofwines in the adjacent township of Cheddington, one "a man of the King," the other "a man of St. Alban's." Each only held half a hide. If the former was Leofwine Wara, the King's prefect, it is strange that he should not have been called by that title.

The Wluuen in the above list may have been Wluuin or Alwin of Waddon (in Slapton), who was a man of Eddeva the Fair. In this connexion we may note an apparent mistake on Mr. Baring's part. He names the Saxon holder of Creslow in 1065 "Ulwen's wife," but Domesday Book says "Hoc M[anerium] tenuit Wluuen quaedam femina T.R.E. et vendere potuit." This seems to be the same woman as "Aluuen quaedam femina" who held a hide in Bricstoch "under Siward." The Norman-written "Wluuen" with its variants seems to have represented both a masculine and a feminine Saxon name.

The high position which women could hold in Saxon times is clearly indicated. Legally they must have had a better status than at any time since, up to the latter part of the nineteenth century. Not only were great ladies like Queen Eadgyth, the "Countess" Gytha, and the mysterious "Eddeva pulchra," acknowledged as "lords" by many men who held large estates, but among smaller freeholders we find, as already mentioned, husband and wife appearing side by side in a list of thanes. Again, "Eddeva," wife of "Wlward cilt" (who was one of Queen Eadgyth's "men") held several manors of the Queen, while her husband held others.

These few examples will illustrate what a wealth of interesting historical material is to be got out of Domesday Book, now that the labour of arranging its items in order has been accomplished.

We are glad to note that Mr. Baring confirms in general the conclusions of the present reviewer in his article on the "Ancient Hundreds of Bucks" (in these RECORDS for 1905); and at the same time to acknowledge his correction of a blunder therein. In the list

of omissions given in a footnote (RECORDS OF BUCKS, Vol. IX., p. 105) the last omission should have been "Ticheshle" instead of "Dustenberg."

In an Appendix, reprinted from the *English Historical Review*, Mr. Baring deals with a subject that concerns Buckinghamshire among other counties—the route followed by William the Conqueror's army on the march from Hastings to London. Mr. Baring's thesis is that the Normans wasted the land through which they passed, and that the result appears as a fall in the value of manors "quando receptum," *i.e.* when the new tenants received them from the Conqueror, as compared with the time of King Edward and with the date of the Inquest. By plotting on the map all manors that show this drop in value, Mr. Baring has traced the route of the army, and even distinguished between the main body and detachments which did less damage. A very interesting result is that the Berkhamstead at which William received the submission of London was not Great Berkhamstead, as usually supposed, but Little Berkhamstead. For this he finds collateral topographical evidence.

So far as our county is concerned, it appears that the main army marched from Wallingford along the foot of the Chilterns through Risborough to Aston Clinton, and then through Waddesdon and Claydon to Buckingham, and by Wolverton to Olney and Laven- don. Whether either Aylesbury or Buckingham was touched does not appear from the values given in Domesday, but Stowe is given as "waste" when the Bishop of Bayeux received it from the King—a case which Mr. Baring seems to have overlooked. A right wing moved from Aston Clinton through Cublington and Linslade to the Brickhills. Thence both it and the main body passed into Bedfordshire. Another detachment which crossed the Thames at Molesey seems to have communicated with the main body through Iver, Taplow, and Woburn.

We hope that the tabulation of Domesday Book will be carried on for the rest of the Counties of England before long. It is indeed somewhat surprising that such tabulation did not form part of the scheme of the Victoria County Histories.