

plan by planes of successively steeper inclination.

The plates which accompany the book are as thoughtfully and ingeniously composed as the text. We commend the whole treatise as the most complete, so far as we know, and the most interesting and instructive for practical use, that has been published in this country.

SEEBOHM'S VILLAGE COMMUNITY.

The English village community, examined in its relations to the manorial and tribal systems, and to the common or open field system of husbandry: an essay in economic history. By FREDERIC SEEBOHM. London, Longmans, Green, & Co., 1883. 464 p., 13 maps and plates. 8°.

It is now many years since G. L. von Maurer wrote his Introduction to the history of marks and manors. Since then the subject has attracted many students, and has been much looked into and talked about. Many books have been written upon it; those of Nasse, de Laveleye, and Maine being the best known to American readers. The impression conveyed by these writings is, that the mark or village community, though almost always found upon a manor, under manorial overlordship, was in its origin independent. Manorial overlordship arose, we are told, in later times. The village community was drawn under it, and became subject to it. It has been the work of modern times to restore it to its ancient independence. This is the theory of von Maurer and his followers, which we have gathered from their books. Objections to this theory are from time to time raised. It is urged that the village community is usually found under manorial landlordship; that it is, therefore, an open question whether the village community, or the landlordship over it, is the earlier institution. In Mr. Seebohm's book, which now lies before us, it is maintained that landlordship is more ancient than the village community, that the village community arose under landlordship, as a community of slaves or serfs, that it has been slowly emancipated from slavery and from serfdom in the course of centuries. Our economic history, we are told, begins with the serfdom of the masses under manorial landlordship. Looking through the records, back to the earliest period, we find no free village communities, only manors with village communities in villenage upon them. The argument upon this point is almost conclusive. The existence of a manorial system during the Saxon period of our history is established beyond doubt.

But there were parts of Britain which were not manorial, where village communities (the village community being considered a part of the manor) did not exist. What was there in the parts of Britain where there were no manors? By the side of the manorial system was a tribal system more ancient, perhaps, than the manorial system. Then follows an account of the tribal system of the Welsh and Irish, which is extremely interesting. It is not clear at first, why, in a work upon English economic history, so much space should be given to the institutions of the Welsh and Irish; but we find out directly: it is that we may the more clearly understand the statements of Caesar and Tacitus regarding the Germans. It is well known that the statements of Caesar and Tacitus are very vague; that they become intelligible only in the light of extraneous evidence. We ourselves should not have presumed to draw this evidence from the Welsh laws, nor from the Brehon tracts. It has always seemed to us best to keep the records of different peoples quite distinct. We should, therefore, have turned from Caesar and Tacitus to the German folk-laws, formulae, and documents. The tribal system of the Germans is very well described in the German records. It happens, however, that the tribal system of the Germans resembles very closely that of the Welsh and Irish: so, though we do not follow all the steps of Mr. Seebohm's argument, we come, at last, to very nearly the same conclusion. What we have in the time of Caesar and Tacitus, and afterwards in many places where the manorial system has not been developed, are tribal households (to use Mr. Seebohm's phrase),—isolated farmsteads, occupied by groups of descendants and heirs; the land being held by them as an undivided inheritance for two or three generations, and then divided, several households arising where there was but one before. Mr. Seebohm finds a vestige of this system in the custom of Gavelkind in Kent, where we have divisions among male heirs, with traces of the right of the youngest to the original homestead. Almost everywhere else in England the tribal system has quite passed away.

Already, however, in the time of Tacitus, the manorial system was germinating. The free tribesmen who lived in the tribal households here and there—*ut fons ut campus ut nemus placuit*—had slaves who cultivated the land for them. These slaves were distributed by the tribesmen in village communities, in regard to which they were very much in the position of the later manorial

lords. It was only a step, indeed, from this condition of things to the manorial system. This step was taken immediately after the permanent settlement of the Germans within the limits of the Roman empire. The land system of the later empire was very much like a manorial system. So it happened, that, while the Germans were approaching this system on the one hand, the Romans were approaching it on the other. They reached it together.

This is the briefest possible *résumé* of Mr. Seeböhm's extremely interesting and valuable book. The argument is well arranged and very convincing. It is, perhaps, a little too much encumbered by details; but we should be sorry not to have these details, and the book is quite readable in spite of them. The account of the manorial system is the most complete that we have. The book is a mine of information upon the subject. It will be found indispensable to students. It is very well printed, and illustrated by plates and maps. It would be worth having for these alone. In conclusion, we must heartily congratulate the writer upon the completion of so excellent and useful a work.

STEARNS AND COUES' NEW-ENGLAND BIRD-LIFE.

New-England bird-life; being a manual of New-England ornithology. Revised and edited from the manuscript of Winfrid A. Stearns, by Dr. Elliott Coues. Boston, Lee & Shepard, 1881, 1883. 324+409 p. Illustr. 8°.

UNDER this title Mr. Winfrid A. Stearns and Dr. Elliott Coues have just produced an excellent and much-needed work. Previous to its appearance we have had no complete or satisfactory exposition of the subject, despite several attempts on the part of inexperienced or otherwise incompetent authors to cover the interesting field: hence the present book is doubly welcome.

It has appeared in two volumes, or parts. Part i., issued two years ago, begins with Turdidae, or thrushes, and carries the subject through Oscines, ending with the family Corvidae. In addition to the 270 pages occupied by its main portion, there is an 'Introduction' of fifty pages, which includes useful chapters on the classification and structure of birds; the 'Preparation of specimens for study'; the 'Subject of faunal areas'; and the 'Literature of New-England ornithology.' Including those devoted to its special index

as well as to the introduction, part i. contains 324 pages.

Part ii. was published early in the present year. It has in all 409 pages, of which ten are occupied by an 'editor's preface,' and eight by the index; the remaining 397 pages treating the general subject from Tyrannidae through the successive families to Alcidae, last and lowest in the scale of New-England bird-life. Both volumes are rather copiously illustrated with fairly good woodcuts; some of which are full-length figures, others representations of the heads, feet, wings, etc., of birds, designed to show technical or distinguishing characters. Most of these cuts have done similar duty before, but on this account they are none the less useful in the present connection.

The plan of the book is so clearly and tersely outlined in the preface to part i., that we cannot do better than give it in the editor's own words:—

"It is the object of the present volume to go carefully over the whole ground, and to present, in concise and convenient form, an epitome of the bird-life of New England. The claims of each species to be considered a member of the New-England fauna are critically examined, and not one is admitted upon insufficient evidence of its occurrence within this area; the design being to give a thoroughly reliable list of the birds, with an account of the leading facts in the life-history of each species. The plan of the work includes brief descriptions of the birds themselves, enabling one to identify any specimen he may have in hand; the local distribution, migration, and relative abundance of every species; together with as much general information respecting their habits as can conveniently be brought within the compass of a hand-book of New-England ornithology."

This plan is consistently and faithfully carried out. The descriptions of the birds, to be sure, are a little meagre and unsatisfactory at times; but it must be remembered that they are intended primarily for a class of amateurs who are not fitted, either by experience or inclination, to wade through more exact, technical diagnoses.

The biographical matter is written in the editor's well-known and eminently characteristic style,—a style not wholly free from faults perhaps, but, in the main, so finished and picturesque that it is sure to attract and interest every lover of birds. In the present instance, the only fault we have to find with these biographies is that they are often too brief and general,—in short, that there is too much condensation. Especially is this the case among water-birds, where the account of habits, distribution, etc., is frequently crowded into a few lines. Doubtless this was necessary