CARUCATA TERRE.

Any really trustworthy early evidence on the ploughland is so valuable that no apology need be offered for noting a passage in the 'Registrum Roffense' (ed. Thorpe) bearing directly on the subject (pp. 64-6):—

Requisitus quot carucatae terrae sint in manerio de Hallynge [co. Kent] cum pertinentiis . . . sunt ex consuetudine quatuor carucæ, non tamen quatuor carucatae terrae. Requisitus quomodo scit, dicit quod quaelibet carucata terrae *de consuetudine regionis* continet ciiii^{xx} [180] acras terrae arabilis, quod non est in manerio.

The speaker was Thomas de Mepham, who *fuit senescallus Ricardi episcopi Roffensis* [1285-1250] *per duos annos et amplius*. His estimate was that to four ploughs there should be 720 acres. Now the actual arable land was only 717 acres.¹

The interesting point here is that this passage fits in exactly with the expressions of 'Fleta' (*De officio communis senescalli*), who tells us it was the seneschal's business to allot the ploughs in proportion to the ploughland *per hanc rationem, ut si terrae sint tripartitae tunc nonies xx* [180] *acrae facerent carucatam*, &c.; and therefore what Thomas de Mepham virtually says is that in that district the three-field system prevailed, the system by which sixty acres lay fallow in one field while 120 were cultivated in the two others. Canon Taylor made this passage in 'Fleta' (cf. *ante*, p. 151) the keynote of his paper on 'The Ploughland and the Plough' (*Domesday Studies*, vol. i.), and explained the well-known Kentish passage in 'Domesday' (*In communi terra S. Martini sunt cccc^o acrae et dimid^o; quae fiunt II solinos et dimid^o*) as meaning that 450 acres made 2½ sulings (or ploughlands), giving 180 acres to each. But as the suling was used as a geld-measure, and as the reading is doubtful, this is scarcely a safe conclusion from the passage in question.

It is needful here to observe that, under apparent conformity, there lurks a troublesome discrepancy. Mr. Seebohm, for instance, accepts without question 'Fleta's' three-field ploughland of 180 acres (sixty in each field²), though it is surely at 'direct variance with that ploughland of 120 acres (forty in each field) on which his theories are based.³ In other words, the unit of 120 acres may mean one of two things—(1) 120 acres of arable, of which eighty were always under plough and forty fallow; or (2) 180 acres, of which 120 were always under plough and sixty fallow—but it cannot mean both.

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¹ *Summa terrae arabilis dcccvii acras* (*ib.* p. 68).

² *English Village Community*, p. 47.

³ 'The normal hide consisted as a rule of four virgates, of about thirty acres each. . . . We know now what a virgate, or yardland, was. We shall find that its normal area was thirty scattered acres—ten acres in each of the three fields' (*ibid.* pp. 27, 37).