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early extinction ; still, there is no sign that he minded behaving in Ireland with that ghastly cruelty which distinguished the English in their early occupation of that island.

The story is, of course, immensely dramatic, and Mr. Thompson makes the most of his opportunities, especially in the great trial scene, where he made his accusers look fools and knaves much as Strafford did not so many years later, and with the same effect of turning those who hated him into his devoted admirers. His life was full of paradoxes. It is curious that the man who is, perhaps, most loved by us among all the Elizabethans should have been so generally hated in his time : it is strange that he should have been brought to death by Spain on the ground that he had plotted with Spain against England ! And, in spite of all that Mr. Thompson can do, the reader will be apt to close the book with mixed feelings about the last and most dazzling of the great Elizabethans.

BONAMY DOBRÉE

## FROM SEED-TIME TO HARVEST

VILLAGE ENGLAND. By SIR WILLIAM BEACH THOMAS. Maclehose. 8s. 6d. net.

AT first glance *Village England* appears to be a fulfilment of a wish of Edward Thomas, who once said : " Some day there will be a history of England written from the point of view of one parish, or town or great house." Its first chapter deals in a spirit not far removed from Thomas's own with the Happy village, its character and characters, its roads and farms and houses and ponds and gardens and with some aspects of its vanished and vanishing life. The English village is rightly depicted as having a pedigree which puts the oldest families to shame and Sir William Beach Thomas revels in its antiquity and praises village life fervently and from many angles. English country life represents for him something unique both in character and beauty. His villages are earthly paradises, little Edens, and the ugly village, as common in fact as the lovely one, has no place in his book at all. Similarly the mean or degenerate or suspicious countryman has no place. England is the fair and happy isle and his view of it essentially temperate and warm-hearted. Unlike Hudson, he is never outraged or angry. Springtime comes and goes, the cuckoo calls, the migrants depart, the apple flowers, the fox barks, the primrose flowers on Christmas Day—whatever happens excites his admiration or wonder or curiosity, but never his indignation or rage. Thus his book, though very charming and well-informed, is a trifle enervating. It never blazes up with that lyrical or rhetorical excitement and passion that fires the pages of Hudson. The atmosphere is a little comfortable. The chapter on ice has no bitterness in it ; one does not shiver. The heat and fragrance of the summer days are dissipated before they reach us.

His real gift is an insatiable appetite for knowledge. He assimilates everything and anything, is astonishingly catholic in taste, and full of understanding for all phases of country life. To my own disappointment his survey of the English village ends in less than thirty pages. The rest of the book falls into the category of his own *Yeoman's England*, to which it is a perfect companion. Divided like that book into twelve sections for the twelve months of the year, it deals with every aspect of English life from seed-time to harvest, from the first thrush's egg to the first fox, and from the first flower to the last leaf of the year.

H. E. BATES

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