

“Smalley, its History and Legends.”

BY REV. CHARLES KERRY. (Bemrose & Sons Ltd.)

It is pleasant to find that a former editor of this *Journal*, long laid by from active work by continued ill-health, has had sufficient strength recently to issue a particularly attractive and well-written small volume on the parish of Smalley, with which he has been so long connected. Mr. Kerry tells us in his preface that his book “has been written in a sick room, chiefly from notes made years ago, when Smalley in many ways wore an old-world aspect—with its old houses, its aged people full of legends and tales of their fathers, only too pleased to relate them, a population from the ancient home stock—each man carrying on the trade of his fathers, all combining to supply almost every local need.” Fifty years ago, he says, there were no fewer than twenty different occupations in the village, but now there are only seven.

The gossip collected about the village and neighbourhood is interesting and amusing, and quite worth chronicling ere it is all forgotten. Stocks, windmills, donkey shows and races, almshouses, charities, etc., are all laid under contribution; but the most entertaining items are perhaps those connected with the church in the not very remote past. Across the west end, about 1870, stretched a good-sized gallery, which served as accommodation for the boys of the Sunday School. But the men servants from Stainsby Hall and the old instrumental choir, conducted by Mr. Samuel Ottewell, occupied the front seats. In the centre panel of the front of the gallery was a contrivance

of three wooden rollers with ten facets, each bearing numerals; through the aid of this early example of a hymn-board, the clerk and congregation were able to ascertain the number of the Tate and Brady psalm that had been selected by the choir. The gallery steps were honeycombed on each side by the spiked crutches of one Jonathan Beniston. Old Beniston could neither read print nor music, but he thought himself a valuable member of the choir, as he contributed a droning bass accompaniment to the melodies, after the style, says Mr. Kerry, of a bagpipe "chanter." This same kind of performance used to be the custom in at least two other Derbyshire churches in the first half of last century, namely, at Wingerworth, in East Derbyshire, and at Alsop-en-le-Dale, in the Peak. This droning is called "vamping," and used not infrequently to be done for greater effect through a long kind of noteless foghorn termed a "vamping horn." One of these horns, over 6 ft. long, hangs in the vestry of East Leake church, Nottinghamshire.

This attractive-looking volume also contains various antiquarian details, and is admirably illustrated with photographic plates. It is a distinctly desirable book for the Derbyshire collector, and many will also like to possess it from pleasant recollections of all that Mr. Kerry has done for this Society's *Journal* in the past.