

Rebiews.



THE REGISTERS OF THE PARISH OF ST. MARY, READING, 1538-1812.

The registers of this important and historical church are being transcribed by the Rev. G. P. CRAWFURD, and Vol. I., containing the Baptisms, List of Vicars, and Collections on Briefs, has already been published. We desire to congratulate Mr. Crawford upon the conclusion of this portion of his arduous labours, and to express our hope that he will receive sufficient support and encouragement from those who are interested in genealogical investigations which will enable him to complete the remaining volumes. It is satisfactory to note that so many inhabitants of Reading and the neighbourhood have shown themselves public spirited enough to subscribe towards the publication of this work, and we hope that the example which the clergy and parishioners of St. Mary's have set will be speedily followed in the other ancient parishes of Reading and the neighbourhood. When transcribers, like Mr. Crawford, are willing to devote their time and energy in the production of works of this magnitude, it is not too much to hope that they may receive public support and sympathy in their labours.

The present volume opens with a List of Vicars which is remarkably complete, dating from 1173 A.D., when William de Lincoln held the benefice, to the present day. The churchwardens have wisely placed a permanent record of this list on a tablet over the south door of St. Mary's Church. It bears witness to the continuity of the Church of England, as the present Vicar has ably pointed out in two sermons recently preached in St. Mary's Church; inasmuch as one John Whetham held the benefice during the four reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth, when the Church was gradually purging herself from Roman errors and freeing herself from external control. It must not be supposed that this instance of John Whetham was an isolated one. We have abundant evidence to show that happily in this country the Reformation occasioned no violent disruption, but was a gradual movement which, without disturbing the foundations of the ancient Church, preserved for future generations all that was sound and good in pre-reformation practice, doctrine and worship, and restored the Church of England after the model of a primitive and purer age. We notice later the record of the troublous time of the Commonwealth when in 1641 Thomas Bunburie was ejected, and the vehement Covenanter, Christopher Fowler, sent to supply his place. At the Restoration the Puritan is displaced by Peter Mews, who afterwards became Bishop of Winchester. The List includes several noted names of illustrious men, amongst whom we may mention William Lloyd, afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, one of the seven Bishops committed to the Tower by James II. for their defence of the liberties of Englishmen, Archdeacon Nares and Dean Milman.

The preface of Mr. Crawford's work is written by one of the most eminent historians of the day, the Lord Bishop of Oxford, and is a valuable contribution to the study of Genealogy and Parish Records, and ought to be carefully read by

every one. When we turn to examine the Register itself we find the names of many distinguished families, *e.g.*, Addington, the father of Lord Sidmouth, Speaker of the House of Commons; the Vatchells, of Coley Park (1480-1750) who have left their trace behind them in *Vatchell* street, *Vatchell* almshouses, the *Vatchell* aisle in St. Mary's; Hammond, who was Governor of Reading during the Civil War; Wingfield, from whom Lord Powerscourt is descended. The Aldworths, Kendricks, Blagraves and Blandys all frequently appear in the register, and it is interesting to notice that the Barnard Peerage case was established and decided in favour of Mr. Henry de Vere Vane by the references to the St. Mary's Registers. The events of history are duly reflected in these silent chronicles. On page 56 we see the effects and confusion caused by the Civil War. On page 71 we notice that the abjuration of the covenant was signed by Peter Mews when he was instituted. Want of space forbids us to call attention to very many other interesting matters in this valuable work, and we fear that we can only do scant justice to Mr. Crawford's book. The briefs are full of suggestive entries which invite attention especially the collection made on June 1st, 1670, "for the redeeming of poor Mary Mews from slavery," and the note on page 245 relating to the 230 French priests who driven from their own country by the Revolution "found in this kingdom a hospitable and charitable asylum." The index to the Register is a work of vast magnitude, containing thousands of names carefully arranged, and is a monument of industry and labour.

In conclusion, we would urge upon our readers the great advantage they would confer upon historians and the students of genealogy by subscribing to the publications of works of this nature. Mr. F. N. Garry has been engaged for some time upon the very interesting Churchwardens' Accounts of the same parish, which we hope will shortly be published. Mr. G. W. Palmer has set a noble example in defraying the cost of the publication of the Municipal Records of Reading, upon which Mr. Guilding is at present engaged. Mr. Crawford has nearly finished the transcription of the second volume of the St. Mary's Registers. When this programme of work is accomplished, the inhabitants of Reading will have a storehouse of information relating to their town accessible to all, which for interest and importance it will be difficult to surpass.

