

cooking meat after the manner of a gridiron. Now, it is remarkable that similar stones were found in the pit-dwellings at Hurstbourne Siding, near St. Mary Bourne (*Hist. of St. Mary Bourne*, p. 31); the stones being described as of two kinds—one being the ordinary “pot-boiler,” the other differing in having “flattish facets, and much blackened, conveying the impression that they had been used in constructing earth ovens for baking or smother-roasting.” And in support of this, the Hon. W. O. Stanley’s researches in the “Circular Habitations on Holyhead Island,” are quoted in the same volume, in which he says that “there are traditions among the Highlanders of a method of preparing their feasts after hunting. They made a pit and lined it with smooth stones, and near it placed a heap of flat flint stones. The stones, as well as the pit, were properly heated with heather. The venison was placed at the bottom and a stratum of stones above it, and stones were repeated alternately till the pit was full; the whole was then closed in with heath to confine the steam.” These examples appear to corroborate Mr. Hewett’s idea, and lead to the impression that, although perhaps not always conducted on one plan, such rude forms of preparing food were in use among the more uncivilized inhabitants of Britain.—JOSEPH STEVENS, Reading, February, 1896.

Reviews.

“SOME NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF WHITCHURCH, OXON” (Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row, 1895).—Under this extremely modest title, the Vicar, Canon Slatter, has sent forth an admirable little history of his parish. These historiettes are increasing, and they are important contributions towards a really comprehensive county history. In 1890, the Rector of Pangbourne (Rev. R. Finch) gave us his charming “Short Account of the Parish of Pangbourne in Berks”; now we have an account of the parish exactly opposite *ripales*, at any rate they are, if not more; and the rival rectors are to be equally congratulated: either Shepherd, would, no doubt, as with Palæmon presiding, gain equal prizes—

“So nice a difference in your singing lies

That both have won, and both deserved the prize.”

Vir. Bucol. 3.

Mr. Finch had Bere Court to boast of; Canon Slatter discourses most exhaustively of his parishioner—Hardwicke House. Space will forbid our more than passingly glancing at the contents, but the

whole book forms a model for all such adventures. We give the origin of this in the author's own words : " When I came to Whit-church, I provided a book, properly indexed, in which to enter " information that might be useful to my successor. The facts thus " collected have attained to a certain degree of continuity ; but I " should hardly have ventured to publish these, if I had not in my " (parish) chest come across some documents which seem of great " interest, and one of them of great rarity ; I allude to the first " Poor Law accounts of the parish, under the earlier Acts of Eliza-beth, 5 Eliz. cap. 3."

Following out in order the table of contents, we learn—

1. *As to situation*, that, what is most unusual, some 300 acres of the parish are on the Berkshire side of the river. This arose from Whitchurch being one of the 83 manors granted to the all devouring Milo de Crispin by William the Conqueror. Hyde Hall, as it used to be, which stood on the site of Purley Hall.
2. *Antiquities*. Canon Slatter has no less than a Roman Camp, a Saxon Village, defended by a deep trench and probably palisade, and also a Danish Camp, more or less on the site of the Roman, to tell us of, and does it with rare perspicuity.
4. *Hardwicke*. Under this heading a vivid picture is given of the sufferings and sacrifices of the Royalists, in the Civil Wars of Charles I.'s time. R. Lybbe, of this place, was Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1640 and 1643 ; he is giving reasons in a MS quoted, why he cannot furnish the King with any more money : " He is in debt £300 through holding office already. " He has just been plundered of £800 in money and plate ; " all he could save was his horses, and three of these are " already in the King's service." It was a way they had in those days, witness the Reading Mayor's banquets to Prince Rupert, and what became of the plate !
- 9, 10. *The Poor Law*. Here again we epitomise the account of the author, giving it in his own words : " On entering upon " the charge of this parish, I found in my chest a Register " which had been used at one time for separately reporting " the burials in woolen. Within the same cover appeared " a document of a very peculiar and interesting character. " It was a small quarto book of paper leaves put into a " parchment cover, which was formed out of a beautiful " mutilated MS of an old Missal. The contents of the book " are chiefly the account of the collections for the relief of

"the poor, beginning 1569. The Acts of Elizabeth of 1593
 "and 1601 are usually looked upon as the beginning of poor
 "law legislation, but these are only the conclusion of a long
 "series of Acts for the purpose."

We had marked various other pages for reference, but the above must suffice. We commend this book heartily to our readers. There is hardly a class or taste but will find here something specially interesting. We reverse the old adage, "Happy is the parish that has such a history, or, at any rate, such an historian"!

* *

CHRONICLES OF FINCHAMPSTEAD IN THE COUNTY OF BERKSHIRE, by William Lyon (Longmans, Green & Co., 1895).—The awakened interest in local history seems to us to be one of the most noticeable features of the present day. Whether this awakening is due, directly or indirectly, to the passing of the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894, as some would have us believe, or whether these much debated measures have nothing whatever to do with the matter, the fact remains that our villages and lesser towns have at length become conscious of their own identity, and have begun to see that their records and their traditions are of some real value, as threads in the great tapestry of history, threads without which indeed the web would still hold together, but the pattern would be incomplete. And in the counties with which this Review is more particularly concerned, we can find no lack of this interest in local things. For, within the last few years, many books have been published which deal, more or less fully, with the life and growth of small and unimportant places in those counties.

The book which is before us now, is an admirable example of what such work should be.

It is seldom, says Mr. Lyon in his preface, that the laborious study of a small country parish can repay the long microscopic search which it involves. But if the fruits of such study are presented to us as Mr. Lyon has presented them, there is little fear that they will fail to attract anyone to whom the annals of his neighbourhood are of any moment at all. Although the local materials for his work are most meagre (Mr. Lyon tells us that there are in the possession of the parish, no Churchwardens' Accounts, no terriers, no Registers earlier than 1653, and no Vestry Minutes before 1848), yet, by diligent search elsewhere, he has brought together an imposing array of documents and deeds, from which with much skill he has constructed a most readable book. It is admirably

printed, and illustrated, sufficiently dated, and supplied with a good index and an appendix in which are given *in extenso* all documents too long to print in the text. And not content with putting down a bare chronicle of his parish Mr. Lyon has interwoven with it a very clear and accurate account of so much of contemporaneous history as is necessary to the full elucidation of local affairs.

Finchampstead seems to have been in former years a place of some importance, placed as it was on the great Roman road from London to Silchester and onwards to Bath and Cirencester. Mr. Lyon's chapter on this Roman road will serve as an excellent guide for those who are interested in tracing its course. We may note in passing that he seems to agree with the late Mr. Hughes that the locality of Barley Pound Farm between Froyle and Crondel (on a branch road leading from Bagshot to Winchester) marks the site of the ancient Vindomis. We must refer our readers to Mr. Lyon's remarks upon this vexed question. In Finchampstead itself somewhat to the east of "Six Acres Field" (where the Roman milestone now at "Banisters" was found in 1841), and just south of the line of the Roman road, stands a hill which has every appearance of having been a fortified camp connected with the main track by a deeply cut loop. On this hill the church of Finchampstead now stands.

The Church, which stands on the hill upon the site of the old Roman camp, retains work, especially in the walls which dates from the time of the Conquest, or even earlier. Mr. J. O. Scott thinks that the original building consisted of a nave, chancel and a simple apse. Considerable alterations appear to have been made in the fifteenth century (to which period the fine roof of the nave belongs) and again in 1590. The brick tower dates from 1720 and is of much interest considering the time of its erection. The bowl of the font is thought by Sir A. Blomfield to belong to the year 1030, and in 1855 a very remarkable piscina, assigned to the 12th century, was discovered bricked up in the wall of the apse. With the exception of the Jacobean pulpit little other church furniture now remains.

It is perhaps needless to say that the various articles mentioned in the inventory taken in 1552 by the Commissioners of Edward VI., the "littell chailes of silver with a cover of percill gilt," the "pisce of Latin," the "oyle box of Tinne," the "three belles whereof is owing for one of them which of late was new caste Ls," and sundry vestments have disappeared long ago. But there is still in the possession of the Rector of the parish a fine Elizabethan chalice,

with paten cover dated 1591, and a pewter flagon. As we have said, there are hardly any parish documents. As we have said there are hardly any parish documents. A copy of the Register, from 1609 to 1653, (in a very imperfect style) is in the Diocesan Registry at Salisbury, there in the custody of the parish date from 1653, when the Parliament took up the question of registration. In 1698, the curious and invidious custom began of adding to the entries the condition of the persons registered. Thus, while "Mr. John Banister" is described as a rich man, "John Martin" is scathingly entered as "not worth six hundred pounds." But we can hardly be surprised at this paucity of documents, when we read in a minute of 1852 that it was resolved that the Vestry of the parish should "meet at the hour of six o'clock in the evening at the 'Greyhound Inn,'" whither the parish chest was removed for the greater convenience of these convivial vestrymen, whose principal concern seems to have been the extermination of sparrows. (When we realize from numerous entries in the Wardens' Accounts of other parishes, especially in the 17th century, that the alehouse was the usual place for the transaction of parish business, we can only congratulate ourselves that we have any documents left at all. It was perhaps with no little wordly wisdom that the legislature has prohibited the holding of the new Parish Councils on licensed premises).

In the list of Rectors from 1299, which Mr. Lyon appends to this chapter, it is worthy of remark that from the year 1744, when the Rev. Ellis St. John was instituted to the Rectory on his own presentation, and (if the entry in Diocesan Registry at Salisbury is to be relied upon) *before he was in Holy Orders*, down to 1892, the living of Finchampstead was held by four members of the same family from father to son, the last of whom, the late Rev. Edward St. John, as lord of the Manor of West Court, sold the advowson to the late Mr. John Walter, of Bearwood.

The history of this Manor, to which the advowson appertained, is remarkable and Mr. Lyon devotes three long chapters to it. Originally within the boundaries of the Royal Forest of Windsor it was held in the time of Edward the Confessor by Earl Harold on the tenure of entertaining the King at Reading, and paying for five hides in addition. It is valued in Domesday at £8. Henry I. granted it, together with Aldermaston and three other manors, to Robert Achard, all five being held by the service of *one* knight's fee only. Robert Achard's son Richard, as tenant *in capite* of Aldermaston, appears to have granted the Manor of Finchampstead to

Alard Banastre. In the thirteenth century William Banastre, the fourth in succession from Alard, divided it between his two daughters and co-heiresses Constance and Agatha, who married respectively John and Peter de la Hoese. From that time the Manor has remained thus divided into the East Court and the West Court moieties, the right of presentation to the Rectory falling, until recent years, alternately to the respective owners. From the de la Hoeses the East Court division passed by descent, marriage, or sale, through the families of Foxley, Warbleton, Pakenham, Marryn, Cawood, Hinde and Harrison, until, in 1661, Sir Richard Harrison sold it and the alternate right of presentation to Richard Palmer, of Wokingham, a member of that family of Palmer so well known for their benefactions to their native place, the memory of which still remains in the "Palmer Schools." To their kinsman, Henry Fish, the Manor passed in 1712. Of his descendants, Mr. Charles Fyshe Palmer is celebrated for his tremendous electioneering battles in Reading from 1818 to 1837. In 1849, the heirs of this gentleman sold the property to Mr. Walter, of Bearwood, who became the twenty-seventh possessor of East Court since the sub-division in the 13th century. We have seen that the West Court moiety of the Manor also came into the possession of the family of de la Hoese in the 13th century, by the marriage of Agatha Banastre with Peter de la Hoese, who held it in right of his wife from the chief lord of Aldermaston by service of half a knight's fee, the total annual value of the property being, in 1307, £9 6s. 7d. From the de la Hoeses and Collees, who succeeded, the West Court Manor and the moiety of the advowson passed to that interesting family of Parkyns, or Perkins, of Ufton, whose romantic history and house have been so well described by Miss Sharpe in her "History of Ufton Court." The Perkins family in 1584 sold West Court to George Tattershall, a connection by marriage, and a member of another staunch Roman Catholic family which figures largely, as does that of Perkins, in the Recusant Rolls of Berkshire. After being for a few years in the hands of the family of Howard of Graystoke, Earls of Arundel and, after 1664, Dukes of Norfolk, the property was purchased by James Goodyer, of Dogmersfield, Hants. By the marriage of Martha Goodyer with Ellis Mews, who assumed the name of St. John, the family of that name came into possession in 1723. With the history of the St. John's, sportsmen, parsons, and country gentlemen, several of whom have been Rectors of Finchampstead, this interesting chapter comes to an end. The late Rev. Edward St. John sold

the West Court share of the advowson to Mr. Walter, who thus became possessed of the entire right of presentation. Mr. Lyon gives us an interesting account of the old house of the Manor, traces of which and its terraced garden are to be found on the Church hill. In this old house the owners of East Court long resided. We wish Mr. Lyon could have found space to give a description also of the house of West Court. It possesses some wonderful oak panelling and carving dating probably from the time of the Tattershalls, and it has also, if we mistake not, some curious associations with the early life of George III. It has been impossible within the limits of this review to follow Mr. Lyon very closely in his account of the descent of this ancient Manor. Descents of this kind are often very difficult to trace, and Mr. Lyon has devoted much care to their elucidation. But we cannot help wishing that these three chapters had been rather more systematically arranged. There are too many digressions, which might with advantage have been placed in an appendix. However, we do not wish to protest too much, as Mr. Lyon gives us several genealogical tables which are of great assistance; and he is never dull. These chapters will prove to be for the ardent genealogist as happy a hunting ground as Windsor Forest and Finchampstead were for the Norman Kings.

Among the many other interesting things in the book, we can only refer to the account in Chapter VII. of the house and property of "Banisters," which belonged to the ancient family of that name for nearly seven centuries, until 1821. It was held directly under the chief lord of Aldermaston, and not under the mesne lords of East or West Court, by the picturesque service of the "presentation of a rose at the Feast of the Nativity of S. John the Baptist." This tenure is mentioned in the Feet of Fines for Berkshire of the time of Edward III., and in a terrier dated 1550 it is more fully defined as "a rent of a *red* rose." At the risk of appearing fanciful, we cannot help thinking that it might be interesting to trace the growth of this definition during those years when the rose was so significant a badge and its colour divided the land.

We have tried to point out in this slight sketch some of the salient features of Mr. Lyon's book, and we are sadly conscious of the fact that we have omitted for lack of space much that would interest the genealogist, the architect, and the historian, who may each find in its pages points which will repay further study. To those who are contemplating the task of writing a history of their

parish we can give no better advice than to take the "Chronicles of Finchampstead" as their model.

* * *

"THE NORTHERN GENEALOGIST," edited by Mr. A. Gibbons, F.S.A., Heworth, York, enters upon its second year in 1896. Mr. Gibbons is the author also of *Early Lincoln Wills*; *Ely Episcopal Records*, compiled for the Bishop of Ely; *York Will Indexes*, for the Yorkshire Archæological Society; *Reports on the Records of the Bishop of Lincoln*, and of the Corporation of Grimsby, for Her Majesty's Historical MSS. Commission; and several other Antiquarian works.

"The Northern Genealogist" is a quarterly miscellany of pedigrees, wills, marriage bonds, parish registers, family collections and other genealogical information from original sources. It is supplied to subscribers only, at 10s. 6d. per annum, post free.

