



## Notes and Queries

RELATING TO BERKS, BUCKS AND OXON.

*Communications are invited upon all subjects of Antiquarian or Architectural interest relating to the three counties. Correspondents are requested to write as plainly as possible, on one side of the paper only, with REPLIES, QUERIES and NOTES on SEPARATE SHEETS, and the name of the writer appended to each communication.*

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### Notes.

FINCHAMPSTEAD, ANNO 1099.—Having had occasion to spend a day at the British Museum, and to search the records and events of the Twelfth Century, I came across the following quaint record in the year 1099, which may be of some interest to the people of Finchampstead, in the County of Berks.

I am quoting from the “*Annales Monastici*”—Luard. Vol. 1 *Annales de Morgan*—from MS., Trin. Coll., Camb.

“1099.—Hoc quoque anno visus est sanguis ebullire de terra apud Fiscamstede in pago Bercensi; et post haec apparuit coelum tota nocte rubrum tanquam arderet.”

(Translation).

“In this year also blood was seen bubbling forth from the ground at Finchampstead, in the County of Berks, and after this the sky during the whole night, appeared red, as if it were on fire.”

I wonder if this weird chronicle has ever been referred to in the history of the parish or the County? If so I have never seen it.—JOHN W. MARTIN, Nortoft House, Reading, 19th April, 1909.

The marvellous spectacle of the Bloody Well at Finchampstead has not escaped the attention of Berkshire historians. Cox, in the *Magna Britannia*, p. 191, quoting from the continuator of the Saxon chronicle, tells of this “well which boiled up with streams of blood, its waters making red all others whence they came, to the great amazement of the beholder.” In 1103 the Anglo-Saxon chronicler states: “This year blood was seen gushing out of the earth at Hampstead (Finchampstead) in Berkshire.” Mr. Lyon, in his excellent history of Finchampstead, mentions this well, and states that so great was the superstition of that period that this occurrence was regarded as the usual precursor of some national calamity, such as the death of the King, or floods, famines, &c.

I had not seen before the allusion to this well in the “*Annales Monastici*,” and am glad to have the reference which Mr. Martin quotes.—  
EDITOR.

NEWBURY MUSEUM.—The numerous collections are being arranged by Mr. Harold Peake, and a description of them has been published in the Newbury paper. Of the typical collection illustrating the culture of Northern and Central Europe Mr. Peake writes :—

“ Even in its present imperfect state the Typical Collection will be of great assistance to those who are anxious to make a brief survey of the civilization of the Old World during the last forty-four centuries ; especially is it of use to the young, that they may realise how the different periods of history, which they are studying, are related to one another. Boys and girls at schools of all kinds should be encouraged to visit the Museum and to study the objects intelligently, and I shall be very pleased to make special arrangements to meet parties of teachers in the Historical room to explain the arrangements in greater detail.”

THE OLD RECTORY, CAVERSHAM.—Recently has been offered for sale, the historical 16th Century Residence and grounds of nearly six acres known as “ The Old Rectory,” at Caversham. This unique old Residence possesses many historical associations, and is reputed to have been the gift of Henry VIII. to Cardinal Wolsey. The fine old gateway, and the ancient porch of Norman design, surmounted by a carved figure of Cardinal Wolsey in niche, together with the high massive old stone wall, pierced with arrow slits, are striking and familiar features of “ the once rural village of Caversham. Previous to the dissolution of the Monasteries, the church and tithes of Caversham belonged to the Augustinian Abbey of Notley or Nutley, in the Parish of Long Crendon, Bucks, and at the Surrender of Notley in 1538 “ The Old Rectory ” passed into lay hands, and was owned by families named Browne and Alexander, and it was by the latter that the very interesting oak staircase, bearing date 1638, which still remains, was presumably built. Considering that it was around “ The Old Rectory ” that much of the fighting took place in the year 1643, during the great Civil War, it is extraordinary that this staircase and the “ Old Mulberry Court ” still remain. This interesting “ Old Rectory ” is now the property of Lt.-Col. Caversham Simonds. The old world pleasure grounds slope down to the river Thames, and the property comprises a right to a Fishery on the river Thames from Caversham Bridge to Taylor’s Ait, near Mapledurham.

SERVICES OF GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.—The finest and costliest dinner service in the world is in the possession of his Majesty the King. This is made out of solid gold. It is only used on important State occasions, or when a Royal visitor is being entertained. When not in use it is securely placed in the strong-rooms of Windsor Castle and guarded by soldiers. To give some idea of its size it is only necessary to state that the service will dine no fewer than 150 persons, and when it is all arranged the tables present a scene of dazzling splendour. The set was collected by George IV., and its value, apart from its historical association, is beyond estimation.—The millionaire Duke of Westminster is said to possess a magnificent set of silver plate which is declared by experts to be the finest in the world. But in the matter of quantity, however, his Grace of Cumberland is credited to have as much as twelve tons !

THE POET SWINBURNE AND SHIPLAKE.—Possibly with the frequent changes in society in this neighbourhood the fact that Shiplake can claim Algernon Charles Swinburne as the second great poet who has been associated with the parish and often resident with his parents at Holmwood, is ignored, yet the old Shiplakians grieve for the death of the great poet even as they did for his predecessor, Alfred Tennyson. In the year 1865, Admiral Charles Henry Swinburne bought Holmwood, in the parish of Shiplake, from Mr. Charles Joseph Stonor, whose father had been accidentally killed by the fall of a tree at that place. Admiral Swinburne was the second son of Sir John Edward Swinburne, of Capheaton, Northumberland. The Swinburnes are such an ancient family that they are considered feudal lords, taking their name from Swinburne Castle, Northumberland. In May, 1836, Admiral Swinburne married the Lady Jane Henrietta Ashburnham, daughter of George, third Earl of Ashburnham, by his second wife, Lady Charlotte Percy, sister of George, the fifth Duke of Northumberland. Of this marriage there were born six children—two sons and four daughters. Lady Jane Swinburne is said to have been very beautiful as a young woman, and on her presentation to William IV. so impressed him with her charms, that the vivacious old king gave her a hearty kiss. Algernon Charles Swinburne was born on April 5th, 1837, in London. Admiral Swinburne, after buying Holmwood, built an entire new wing on to the house, containing a fine room to hold his splendid library, many books of which had been bound at Strawberry Hill in Horace Walpole's private press in the celebrated red and yellow morocco binding. Previous to living at Holmwood the Swinburnes lived at East Dene, a charming house opposite old Bonchurch Church, hanging on a cliff over the sea. This, after the death of one daughter, Edith, in 1863, the Admiral sold. Though not residing entirely with his parents at Holmwood, the poet was a constant visitor, and according to a sister's evidence many parts of his poems, plays, and prose were written when visiting there. In 1865, the same year his father bought Holmwood, Mr. Swinburne published "*Atalanta in Calydon*," which at once rushed him into celebrity. This was succeeded by "*Chastelard*" in the same year, followed by "*Poems and Ballads*" in 1866, 1878, 1889; "*Songs before Sunrise*," 1871; "*Mary Stuart*" 1881; "*Marino Faliero*," 1885; "*Study of Victor Hugo*," 1886; "*Lochrine*," 1887; "*Rosamond, Queen of the Lombards*," 1899; "*Erectheus*," "*Love's Cross Currents*," 1905, and many other poems and prose pieces. With Admiral and Lady Swinburne lived Lady Elizabeth Ashburnham, half-sister to Lady Jane. She was the most charming old lady, and munificence itself, contributing £700 to the restoration of Shiplake Church in 1869. The whole Swinburne family contributed largely to the restoration, and Lady Jane presented a fine set of silver-gilt Communion plate, and, together with her three daughters, worked two altar cloths and pulpit hangings and a banner. On March 4th, 1887, Admiral Swinburne died at Holmwood, universally regretted, and was buried at Bonchurch, the new church, in the Isle of Wight. Lady Elizabeth Ashburnham died on March 13th, 1879, aged 92; and the same year Lady Jane Swinburne sold Holmwood to Henry

Akroyd, Esq.; hence the connection of the poet and his family with Shiplake had lasted 14 years. Lady Jane Swinburne died November 26th, 1898, aged 87.—EMILY J. CLIMENSON.

READING IN 1824.—The remarkable growth of Reading in recent years is very forcibly shown in a scarce and valuable Provincial Directory of the above date, in which it is described as "an ancient borough and market town, with a population of 12,867 persons," and the number of Parliamentary electors 875. The topographical notes throughout the volume are extremely well done for the time, some of which are very useful as regards dates and local information. We are told that the Corporation, consisting of a Mayor, 13 Aldermen and 13 Burgesses, are the Lords of the Manor; that two markets are held weekly—on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and a cattle market for the town at Loddon Bridge, where the herds from Wales and the western counties were met on their road to Smithfield.

Among the public buildings noticed are St. Lawrence's Church, rebuilt in 1434; St. Mary's, rebuilt about 1551, of materials purchased from the Abbey church, which was then destroyed; St. Giles's spire is described as 70 feet high, made of wood, covered with copper, and erected in 1790, at the expense of £573 19s.

In the year 1560, the upper part of the Hospital of St. John was converted into a Town Hall. In 1672 it was repaired at the expense of John Blagrave, Esq. In 1785 it was rebuilt, and is a very handsome room 108 feet in length, and 32 feet in width, adjoining which is a spacious Council Chamber. The destruction of the upper part of the walls of the Abbey is attributed to the Parliamentary soldiers, to whom every stone appealed as a relic of Popish idolatry.

The commercial part of the Directory contains the names of many families of interest, but it is very observable how few are represented in the town at the present day. Possibly from the fact that Reading had the reputation of being "a genteel town and remarkable for the politeness and civility of its inhabitants," young ladies' select academies were very numerous, Castle Street and the Bath Road being apparently the fashionable quarter.

Following alphabetical order in hastily glancing through the professionals and traders, we first come to the attorneys. Of these the name of Blandy is the only one that survives, and who for some four centuries have never failed to have a representative honourably associated with our county history. Of the auctioneers mentioned we do not find a descendant of the name in the same business. The banks of John, Charles, and Henry Simonds, and Stephens, Harris, and Stephens are still local institutions; as well as the brewers of the former name. The business of Mr. Thomas Huntley, in London Street, was the nucleus of the firm of Huntley & Palmers, which has given to Reading such a wide-world reputation. Neither the physicians nor the surgeons have a representative in the same profession, unless one of the May family.

There were 68 inns and public-houses at this time—the golden age of the coaching era. Of the famous coaches of the day, the Royal Mail,

stopped at Mr. Brooker's opposite the Crown Inn, and did the journey to and from London to Bath at 10 miles an hour, average, including stoppages; William's started from the Broad Face; the Star from the George and the Crown Inns; the Chronometer, from the Castle, in Castle Street: this was a noted coaching and posting hostelry, the favourite Pickwick's, from the Castle; Shackel's, from the Bear, an historic house, and much patronised by George III., when out with the Royal Staghounds; the York House, Regulator, Prince Regent, and the Blue, were also crack coaches on the old Bath Road, as were the Hero, to Brighton; the Royal Dart to Oxford; and the Rocket, to Southampton.

**HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS.**—The Historical MSS. Commission has recently issued some reports which contain allusions to our three counties, as the following extracts show:—

**READING ABBEY.**—Amongst the records preserved by the Bishop of Salisbury is a chartulary of the Abbey of Reading, found 29th January, 1688, in the archives of the Bishop of London, and then, as is expressed restored to the see of Salisbury. Its date is of the early 16th century. It comprises 94 folios.

**THIRTEENTH CENTURY LEASES, &c.**—The manuscripts of Mr. F. H. T. Jervoise preserved at Herriard Park, Hants, include the following:—

1297. May 20.—Deed of Thomas de Coudray by which he assigns his manors of Lyford, Berks, and Molsho, Bucks, as security for the payment of £30 rent for the manor of Herriard for the life of the said Thomas.

1297.—Indenture of lease by Peter de Coudray, Knt., to his eldest son Thomas of his manors of Bertone Sacy and Herierd, co. Southampton, Lyford and Padewurthe, co. Berks, and Molesho, co. Bucks, at an annual rent of £100.

1361, 10th June, 35 Ed. III. At Reading.—Release from Henry de Aldrynton to William de Spersholte and his heirs of all his right in the lands which he had by the gift of John Loveday in Cherlton, Wanetynge, Grove, and West Lokinge, Berks.

**FORCED LABOUR ON ROADS.**—*Temp. Jac. I.*—Statement of reasons against the continuance by Parliament of the Act made 18 Eliz. c. 20 ordering all inhabitants within five miles of Oxford to find for every yardland one wain or cart, and every labouring person to give six days' work about the highways and bridges within one mile of Oxford at midsummer and Allhallow-tide, or else to forfeit five shillings for every default.

**CARRIER'S GRIEVANCES.**—March, 1620.—Petition to Parliament from the carriers who travel with wains, carts, and waggons against a proclamation issued about two years before, forbidding their having more than five horses to a cart, which, by reason of the deep ways in winter, the heat of summer, the steepness of hills, and the longness of journeys will so limit the burthens as to compel the raising of the carriage rate; further, two-wheel carts do more hurt (to the roads), are very subject to overthrow, and very dangerous in deep waters. The names of 15 carriers in Wilts, Hants, Sussex, Berks, Oxon, and Northants are subjoined, with particulars of five special cases of grievance, one of which concerned Thomas Edgerley, the Oxford carrier.

OLD GRANTS IN BERKS AND BUCKS.—The following are amongst the papers of Sir William Clayton, Bart., preserved at Harleyford, Marlow :

Ante 1284.—Grant by Sir William, of Englefeud, to his brother Alan, of Englefeud, and the heirs of his body lawfully begotten, of one moiety of a virgate of land with appurtenances in Echecote, which John, *filius presbyteri*, formerly held of the said William, to hold the said land to the said Alan and the heirs of his body lawfully begotten, freely, &c., at the yearly rent of 5s., payable one moiety at Lady Day and the other moiety at Michaelmas, in lieu of all services. Reversion to William and his heirs in the event of Alan's death without lawful issue. Warranty clause. Alan pays 40s. for the grant. Witnesses :—John of Englefeud, Thomas de Sancto Andrea, Robert of Craunford, Thomas of Echecote, John of Thedmers. Seal wanting.

1480, July 4.—Grant by Thomas Frowik, knight, Reginald Asshe, of London, merchant, and John Tatersale, gentleman, to Isabella Osbern, widow, of all the messuages, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, and services, with their appurtenances, in Lynford Magna in the County of Buckingham, late of her brother, Edward Walshe, son of Richard Walshe of Lynford Magna, of which messuages, &c., the grantors are feoffees to her use. Two seals broken.

1443, April 8.—Grant by Robert Englefeld, lord of Englefeld, esq., to Drew Barentyn, Thomas Walron, and William Kendale, their heirs and assigns, of divers messuages, lands, tenements, rents, and services, with appurtenances in Englefeld, to hold the same of the chief lords of the fee by the due and wonted services for ever. Seal broken.

AN ANTIQUARIAN "FIND."—Some weeks ago the Hall-keeper (Mr. G. Cheney) discovered in the dungeon of the Town Hall, Wallingford, a life size oil painting of apparently a Jewish Priest in full vestments, with mitre, ephod, girdle, and breast-plate set with precious stones, and holding a censor and chain. The picture is in fair preservation.

PUGILISM IN BERKSHIRE.—Few newspapers in England can show such a valuable series of records as the ancient files of the *Reading Mercury*. In its pages of the year 1807 we find the following notice of a wonderful pugilistic encounter :—On Tuesday last a most desperate pitched battle for five guineas was fought at Newbury between a tinker named Symmonester, celebrated for agility, and a jolly miller named Harrison, equally noted for strength, both inhabitants of that town ; the contest lasted an hour and twenty minutes, in which there were sixty severe rounds. Although the man of metal was assisted the whole time of action by his wife's affectionate attention with a bottle of rum and water, which at intervals she sent to him by his daughter (a damsel about seven years of age) and had also fought fifty pitched battles, and shewed much science, yet the athletic limbs and long wind of the miller at last prevailed. The amateurs present were highly delighted and speak of the contest in the highest terms.

OLD CUSTOMS.—The Court Leet in connection with the Lordship of the Manor of Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire, was held at Beaconsfield. The steward of the manor (Mr. A. E. W. Charsley) conducted the proceedings, and those who attended to pay "homage" were engaged for nearly three hours. Among the officers elected were ale-tasters, constables, head-borough, hayward of the manor, sellers of leather, bailiff of manor, and bellman and town crier.

At Bourne, Lincolshire, a few days ago, a curious custom was kept up in connection with a local charity, known as the "White Bread Meadow." A race was run by two boys during the letting of the charity land by auction. At the commencement of the bidding the two lads were started on the race, and the bidder, when the winner breasted the tape, was declared the tenant for the coming year. Subsequently an adjournment was made to an inn, where a repast of bread and onions and ale was provided.

THE HERALDS' VISITATIONS OF BERKS.—There has recently been issued by the Harleian Society the first volume of the Four Visitations of Berkshire—1532, 1566, 1623, and 1665-66, ably edited by W. H. Rylands, F.S.A. This invaluable work will be hailed as a welcome addition to our county history, and as tending to develop what is an essential item in all such information—authentic data whereon to base the groundwork in constructing genealogy. The Visitation of 1532 also contains the Arms of the Abbey of Abingdon, impaling those of the last Abbot, and the Arms of the Abbey of Reading; that of 1566 the Arms of the towns of Abingdon, Reading, and New Windsor. In that of 1623 those of Newbury, Wallingford, Maidenhead, and Wokingham are included. In the Visitation of 1665-6 the very fine seal of Christ's Hospital, Abingdon, is given—dated 1554.

It was remarked by Fuller in his time that "the lands of Berkshire are very skittish, and apt to cast their owners," and that has been held true to the present day. With the exception of the Eystons, of Hendred, there does not appear to be any family which has in lineal male descent held the same estate and resided in the county for 300 years. Neither do we find any family descended in the male line from any of those enumerated in the Visitations now residing in the county, with the above exception. The Hungerfords, Fettiplaces, De La Beches, Besils, Englefields, are extinct. The last male Pusey died more than a century ago, and the estate and the Pusey horn passed from his daughters to a younger branch of the Bouveries, who also represent in the female line another old Berkshire family, the Pleydells. The Throgmortons were originally a Warwickshire family, and only migrated to Berkshire on the marriage of a cadet of their house with the heiress of the Yates'. The Cravens have had estates in this county for two centuries and upwards. Many of the Berkshire gentry nevertheless come of ancient families, but their estates are small compared with other counties, and it is a remark common to other parts of England how rarely the same property is held by the same family

for more than two or three generations, and a sort of fatality seems to befall certain families, places, or properties.

To seek for the descendants of ancient Berkshire families one must look for the representatives of the old yeoman class, or middling sort of gentry, who farmed their own lands generation after generation, of fair but not large fortune, in their habits simple, in their callings gentlemen farmers, in their manners uncourtly but kind, in their politics what we would call constitutional loyalists, in the pursuit of all their ends earnest, brave, and self-reliant. Even so late as the early part of the last century the number of yeomen farming their own lands was greater in Berkshire than in any other county of its size in England, but at the present day is far from keeping up this proud position. The adding of farm to farm was not then so prevalent—a practice which was strictly prohibited in former times by Act of Parliament, any person taking above two farms together, and they to be in the same parish, being subject to heavy penalties.

We are glad to hear that the Harleian Society are bringing out a second volume dealing with Berkshire, which will contain a quantity of interesting and useful information. This will be followed by the monuments in every church in Berkshire, under the same able editorship—in fact Ashmole “up to date.”

ABBOT BEAUFORST OF DORCHESTER.—To the account of the Abbots of Dorchester in the Victoria History of Oxfordshire (II. 89-90), a note is appended, as follows:—“There is a brass at Dorchester representing a bishop, and below it, but detached, are the words:—‘Here lieth Sir Richard Beauforeste’ (Hist. Dorchester, 15). There might have been an abbot of this name, but as Sir Richard Beauforeste is known as a prominent layman, who bought the abbey church at the dissolution, it is more probable that the name on the inscription has no connexion with the figure of the abbot.”

Three statements in this note require correction.

1. The brass does not represent a bishop; for the effigy has neither mitre nor episcopal vestments; but it represents a bare-headed ecclesiastic wearing the mantle of an Austin canon (wrongly described in Haines’ *Monumental Brasses* as a cope) over surplice and fur amys, and holding a pastoral staff, clearly indicating an abbot of an Augustinian house.

2. It is not Sir Richard Beauforeste who bought the abbey church at the dissolution. This person is described by Leland (cited in Addington, *History of Dorchester*, 104) as “one Beauforest, a great riche man,” and in his will (printed *ibid.* 98, from Skelton’s Oxfordshire) he describes himself as “Richarde Beauforest of the Towne of Dorchester within the Countie of Oxford, Gent.”

3. It is unquestionable that the inscription now placed below the figure of the abbot properly belongs to it. The brass is on its original slab; the inscription exactly fits its matrix and has its original rivets; and there is no sign of any alteration such as must almost certainly have appeared if an inscription other than the original had been substituted. The character of the lettering also is of a date half a century earlier than



Richard Beauforest's will, which is dated 1554. But the connexion of the inscription with the effigy is conclusively proved by the adjacent stall-end (formerly close to the brass, as figured in Addington, p. 16, but now a few yards away from it) ; for on this is carved a pastoral staff, having a scroll twined round it, with the words " Rychard Beauforest." It is therefore certain that there is an abbot of this name ; and the title of " Sir " upon the brass is the ordinary designation of an ecclesiastic. It may seem strange that he is not designated abbot. Possibly he had resigned.

From the list to which the note above-cited is appended it appears that no name of an abbot of Dorchester has been discovered between 1458, when abbot Thomas granted the advowson of Werpesgrave on Warpsgrove to Edmund Rede, esq., and 1513, when Roger Smyth, the abbot here, was consecrated bishop of Lydda, as suffragan to the bishop of Salisbury (Addington, 15). Thomas was elected in 1455 and Roger resigned in 1533 ; therefore, these two must have held the abbacy for seventy-eight years or else another must have intervened.

The date of the brass is fixed by Haines as *cir.* 1510, and every expert will agree that it is undoubtedly of the early years of the sixteenth century. We have, therefore, documentary proof that Sir Richard Beauforest was abbot here between the two who have been named ; unless indeed (for it is the only possible alternative) he was abbot of some other house and by some chance was buried here.

It appears from the visitation of Gloucestershire, 1574 (cited in Addington, 99) that the family of Beauforest was of Dean in that county. Richard who bought the abbey church and gave it to the parish married a Gloucestershire lady named Alice Pates and was lessee tenant of Dorchester manor under bishop Longland (*ibid.*, 91) who held the see of Lincoln, 1521-1547. Richard was eldest son and heir of Thomas Beauforest who lived in Cornwall and married Margaret Basset ; and they had also a daughter who married an Abingdon gentleman, named Branch. Thomas, the father, was eldest son and heir of Thomas Beauforest of Dean, and had two brothers whose names do not appear. It is reasonable to conjecture that the abbot may have been one of these, and therefore, uncle to Richard Beauforest the benefactor of Dorchester.

There is a brass in the church (now much mutilated and pushed into a corner at the head of Sir John Stonor's monument) representing William Tanner, Richard Beauforeste, and their wife Margaret, who died March 10, 1513 (see Haines, *Monumental Brasses*). It is possible that this Richard Beauforeste, who married the widow of William Tanner, may have survived her in 1513, and may be the same person who married Alice Pates and gave the church to the parish. But as the inscription appears to imply that he, as well as Margaret, his wife, was dead in 1513, he may have been another near relative—uncle or cousin—of the abbot of the same name.

J. E. FIELD.

### Queries.

**DODD FAMILY.**—Can any reader supply the parentage or the birthplace of Moses Dodd, of Streatley and Aldworth, who died in 1779, aged 79? He was living at Streatley 1735-9 where three sons were born to him, namely (1) Thomas, who lived at North Stoke and died without issue in 1803; (2) Moses, who lived at Aldworth and died also in 1803, leaving a son Moses, born 1870; and (3) John, who lived at Ipsden and died 1824, leaving a numerous family, several of those descendants remain in the neighbourhood of Wallingford. It is believed that descendants of Moses, the second son, live in the neighbourhood of Wycombe. The elder Moses was not a native either of Aldworth or of Streatley, as far as appears from the parish registers.—J. E. FIELD.

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### Rebiews.

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**UNTRAVELLED BERKSHIRE** by L. S., illustrations from photographs by Walton Adams (Simpson, Son, Martin & Co.), 7s. 6d.

This is an admirable Berkshire book which will be welcomed by all lovers of the Royal County, and the author who veils his identity under initials has done good service in investigating the story of our more remote villages. We surmise that it is the work of a lady. The sympathetic appreciation of Berkshire character, the quaint talks with bucolic rustics, the light touch with which antiquarian subjects are dealt, form a pleasant feature of the book, and the writer is to be congratulated on the production of a very charming volume.

The author has hit with accuracy upon the special characteristic of Berkshire scenery when he insists upon its diversity and variety, a quality that constitutes so much of its charm.

"Berkshire (he writes) is a country of surprises. Therefore, if Mr. George Moore is right in his definition of happiness as the faculty for being surprised, given the necessary capacity, there is plenty of room and opportunity for felicity in Berkshire. Also . . . the better one gets to know the country, the more this special peculiarity strikes one. No satiety is possible, or any weariness caused by monotony. Not indeed that such a thing as monotony in nature can possibly exist anywhere, except for the merely casual observer. But in Berkshire, even for the casual observer, monotony is absent. I think the feature of variety is one of the chief attractions of the county, even of its charms. Infinite change, infinite interest, endless uncertainty. There are the Downs, over which we have lately been wandering; there is the Thames with all its luxuriance of distinctive beauty, to say nothing of the smaller rivers. Berkshire is well watered. Then there are the woods, the copses of hazel, oak, and beech and alder; there are the fir-woods, solemn, and quiet, and grand, and restful, as some great cathedral; and there are the commons; scenery to suit every mood and every temperament; and to some natures,

certainly, to some moods, I think the commons will especially appeal. The

"Solitary places ; where we taste  
The pleasure of believing what we see  
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be."

There are many commons in Berkshire, each one differing from the others, each one possessing its own distinctive features ; each one of them beautiful, so beautiful that it is difficult to decide to which one to give the palm.

He tells of the delights of Crookham Common, of Bucklebury and the Berkshire Rivers, of Aldworth and its effigies, Blewbury and its miser parson, East Ilsley and its Sheep fairs, East and West Hagbourne and much else that delights us about the quiet villages in the Lambourn valley, village industries and the faith of the rustic. The photographic illustrations are excellent.

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT AND THE LIFE OF ROBERT CATESBY, ALSO AN ACCOUNT OF CHASTLETON HOUSE, by Mary Whitmore Jones (London, Thomas Burtleigh) 2s. 6d. The chief interest of this little book is centred in the history of Chastleton House, one of the finest in Oxfordshire, which the writer describes as a veritable "Mansion of ye olden time, and dull indeed must be the mind that can view it without feeling anything of the spell of the old historic past." It was perhaps unnecessary to tell again the oft-repeated story of the Gunpowder Plot which was completely recorded a few years ago by Mr. Philip Sidney in a work reviewed in this journal. The authoress's spirited account of the adventures of Arthur Jones has been printed before in Mrs. Sturge Henderson's *Three Centuries in North Oxfordshire*, in which volume occurs also "the inventory of all and singular the goods and chattles and debts of Walter Jones, &c." here again printed. But there is much of interest in the story of the manor of Chesterton and in the history of the home of the family. It is most satisfactory when the members of old families take such a keen interest in their pedigree and their history and can write so well and worthily of their homes and family traditions.

LANDS AND TYTHES OF HURLEY PRIORY, 1086-1535 by the Rev. F. T. Wethered, (Charles Slaughter & Son, Reading). The author's former work on *St. Mary's, Hurley*, dealing with the history of the Church and Benedictine Priory of Hurley, based on mediæval charters and deeds, will be remembered by most of our readers, in whose libraries it will have found a welcome place. He has increased the debt which Berkshire Antiquaries owe to him by publishing a new volume based upon Hurley deeds and documents preserved among the muniments of Westminster Abbey. These are of great value, and the author has added greatly to their interest by his admirable notes and explanations which show wide reading and great knowledge. From this book we learn much concerning the daily life of a monastery, of the order and regulations of the monks, the duties of the monastic servants, and much else that is of great importance. Hurley Priory had many possessions, and we gather much history of other places, of Pyrton and Clare, Esgarston (which masquerades under the modern corruption East Garston), Streatley, Bucklebury, &c. We are glad to have the complete charter printed in full with the writer's useful and accurate Glossary. A history of the Priors, a description of the seals, a list of vicars, and a diocesan history of Berkshire complete the book. A slip of the pen caused the author to write in the preface that the year 630 saw the commencement of the Diocesan History of Berkshire, instead of the year 635 A.D. Mr. Wethered desires that this very slight error should be noted and corrected.

ENGLISH TOPOGRAPHY.—We have received an admirable catalogue of works on British Topography and Local History from Mr. B. H. Blackwell of Oxford. It is so complete that many collectors may like to know of it.