



Reviews.

BEAUTIFUL ENGLAND.—There are many evidences that Englishmen are beginning to appreciate their own country, and a proof of this is the publication of many typographical works from the humble guide books of the Homeland series to the gigantic works of the Victoria County Histories. Messrs. Blackie & Son have inaugurated a new series of books illustrated by Mr. E. W. Hastlehurst, the text being written by divers hands, who have accomplished their work with accuracy and attractiveness. The books are slight and it is no easy task to compress so much information in a slender volume. Three books of the series have been sent to us for review, and we naturally turn the leaves first of the *Oxford* volume. The text has been written by Mr. F. D. How in a bright and pleasant style. It is not intended to serve as a guide book, but the writer describes pleasantly the noted features of the city, its spires, meadows, trees, gardens, bells and colleges. Want of space excluded the possibility of any detailed accounts. Perhaps he might have spared us the harrowing description of the end of the Oxford Martyrs. Mr. How has evidently not read the articles in the *Cornhill* on Gladstone's connection with All Souls, or he would not have stated that his "impulsive, eager vivacity would harmonise ill with the spirit" of the college. The author's style is inclined to be decorative in places, and why was Christopher Codrington dubbed a Knight? *Canterbury* is described by Canon Danks, and the letterpress is simply and effectively written. He knows the city thoroughly, and one could not desire a better cicerone. Mr. Walter Jerrold writes on *Shakespeare Land* which we have just been visiting under the auspices of the British Archæological Association. The book would have been useful at the time of our visit. It is simply written in a chatty fashion. All legends and traditions are accepted with consummate faith. We are not told much about anything else except the poet and his times, and should like to have heard something more about the town. However, this book with its pleasant pictures is likely to be eagerly sought after by tourists, and will be a most attractive souvenir of the old town.

OXFORD COUNTY HISTORIES.—(H. Frowde at the Clarendon Press, Oxford). We cannot commend too highly this series of books intended for the use of boys and girls to stimulate the knowledge of local history and the faculties of imagination and observation. The University Presses of both Oxford and Cambridge have inaugurated series of this nature, the latter having begun an admirable set of volumes entitled the Cambridge Geographies. We wish well to both their attempts to educate young minds in the best of studies. The old methods of teaching history, obliging children to learn lists and dates of kings and battles, is being supplanted by a better system. School excursions are multiplying; the power of observation is being encouraged, and great credit is due to Mr. Lambourne, the author of the Berkshire volume of this series, for his efforts in this direction and for the compilation of a book which will be of immense value

to young students. It is excellently planned and arranged. The style is well adapted to the comprehension of young people, and the information given is nearly in all classes reliable and founded on the best authorities. The White Horse is wisely not assigned to King Alfred; but was not Uffington Church rebuilt in the 13th century by the monks of Reading, not of Abingdon? If we mistake not the church had been transferred to the former monastery before its re-edification.

OXFORDSHIRE by H. A. Liddle, M.A. is a little different in style from that of the Berkshire volume. The language is not so simple, or so well adapted for the use of young scholars. It is a good history of the county which will be studied with interest by the teachers, and furnish material for lessons; but we question whether it will be so much enjoyed by young people. It follows the lines of Mr. Faulkner's popular history of the county. The earlier chapters do not describe very clearly the pre-historic story of the Shire; and uninstructed minds will not grasp a true conception of the stone age by the mere mention of the words Palæolithic and Neolithic, and it is questionable whether the Rollright-Stones and other megalithic monuments in the shire have any connection with the Druids. There is a lack, also, of the study of architecture which finds a prominent place in the preceding volume. The writer mentions Burford Church as "one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture in the county," and concludes tamely "but to appreciate its charm you must see it for yourself." It is not enough for people whether young or old "to see a church for themselves;" they need an instructor to point out its beauties, its various styles, the story of its building written in stone; and it should be the object of such works as these to assist the reader in the interpretation of the building.

WOOD CARVINGS IN ENGLISH CHURCHES.—I. MISERICORDS by Francis Bond (Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press) 7s. 6d. All Mr. Bond's work is valuable, and few of his many books will be more acceptable to many readers than this. He combines sound antiquarian and architectural knowledge with the most painstaking research, and the present work reveals the carefulness of his study of a difficult and obscure subject in the production of a volume which will be of immense service to all ecclesiological students. Besides Miss Phipson's "Choir stalls and their carvings," we know of no work which attempts to treat of their misericords at all fully. There have been many monographs on those of particular churches, but this is the first work which deals at all exhaustively with the subject, and the illustrations alone are of immense value, as misericords are so placed that it is difficult to see them, much more to photograph them. Mr. Bond tells us with good reason that we must not call them misereres, but misericords. He explains their usefulness in throwing light on mediæval arts in general, in affording us a history of social life in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, of that history which does not find its way into books. Besides some of the college chapels at Oxford and St. George's Chapel, Windsor, we have not many examples in the three counties, but references are made to the churches of Sutton Courtenay and Englefield, Berks, Woodstock, Swinbrook, Caversham, Chinnor, Oxon, and Eddlesborough, Bucks. Want of space prevents us from dwelling on all the interesting questions discussed in this delightful volume, which all antiquaries will desire to possess.