

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Our Lady of Batersey. By John George Taylor, B.A. (George White, 396, King's Road, Chelsea. 1925.) In his title, Mr. Taylor emphasizes the importance of the Parish Church as the centre of popular life and the basis of local history. Primarily his book is a history of St. Mary's Church, but it develops into a history of Battersea from its earliest mention in a Westminster charter of A.D. 693 to modern times. It is based on a careful and reasoned study of an enormous amount of printed and MS. material. Very full use has been made of the Registers and other archives of the Church itself, and for the period before these begin the authorities include rentals and surveys and other documents in the Public Record Office, Wills at Somerset House, Charters and heraldic MSS. in the British Museum, and, above all, the Muniments of Westminster Abbey. Some idea of the magnitude of Mr. Taylor's task (and incidentally of the work being done by our Treasurer on Surrey Place-Names) may be gathered from Appendix A, which enumerates seventy different spellings of the word "Battersea," with dates and sources. The earliest form is Batricesege in 693, and other early forms are Badoricesheah and Batriceseie. The name evidently means the island of Badric, though the Norman form Patricesy, which appears in Domesday, gave rise as early as 1085 to the erroneous derivation of "Patrick's island." The form Battersea first appears in 1595 in the Churchwardens' Accounts.

It is only to be expected in a work of such magnitude that there should be occasional errors in transcription, and one or two minor points call for criticism, such as the reproduction of the initial *ff* in mediæval documents instead of representing it by the capital letter; and a few of the abbreviations are somewhat cumbrous, such as "Domes." rather than "DB" for Domesday Book, and "S.A.S. Coll." instead of the normal "S.A.C." for these *Collections*.

But these are small points. Mr. Taylor's use of his materials is well shown in the clear account he gives of the charter of A.D. 693, and its bearing on the earliest ownership of Battersea. He inclines to the view that this grant of land was to the Abbey of Barking, and that the claim of Westminster Abbey is based on mediæval tampering with the charter. The Westminster ownership of the manor dates

from William I's grant in 1067. From this date he carries on the history of Battersea through the Middle Ages to the Reformation, when the manor was retained by the Crown. From the time of Elizabeth he is able to draw on the Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Registers, and so can write a much fuller narrative in addition to the special chapters he devotes to these sources. This arrangement involves occasional repetition. For example, the payment of 3s. 4d. for killing a fox in 1645 is worth mentioning once, but hardly twice (pp. 72, 250). Such repetitions, however, are only occasional, and the extracts from these local archives are full of interest, and often give illuminating flashes on the life of the period—for example, the various burial and disinfecting expenses for the Plague in 1644 (p. 252), or, in the early nineteenth century, the payments to armed watchmen for guarding the churchyard against bodysnatchers (p. 247). Another illustration of social usage is given in the various amounts raised for charitable objects by Briefs. These precursors of Flag Days and newspaper appeals were Royal Letters authorizing the collection, either in Church or from house to house, of funds for some private or public object of charity. £12 8s. 9d. was the sum raised in Battersea for the victims of the Fire of London in 1666; while collections in aid of persecuted Protestants abroad were frequent and productive. In the seventeenth century begins the connection of Battersea with its most illustrious family, the St. Johns. Besides giving a full account of its principal members (especially Sir Walter St. John, founder of the school, and his capable wife, Lady Johanna, whose lively character is illustrated by some entertaining extracts from her letters) in his general narrative, he devotes a special chapter and an Appendix to the East Window of the Church and to the St. John genealogy, which it depicts. A careful and detailed study of the internal evidence enables him to ascribe its erection to Sir John St. John in the year 1631, and to give a clear account of its component parts. This window is of particular interest as being the chief relic of the older church preserved at the rebuilding of 1775. Most of the monuments were re-erected, but only those for which representatives of the families concerned were willing to pay; so that many interesting memorials were destroyed. The story of the rebuilding is told in detail from the minutes and accounts of the Committees concerned. The scope of the work does not allow more than a brief summary of the enormous expansion of Battersea in the past century, consequent on the arrival of the railway in 1838; but the stages by which the original Island of Badric expanded into the modern borough may be followed in the excellent map, which is worthy of better material than the rather flimsy paper on which it is printed. The earliest date and authority for each place marked on the map is given in an index (Appendix H), in addition to which there is a comprehensive topographical and subject index to the volume as a whole.

The printing, binding, and general appearance of the volume is admirable, and it is a matter for special congratulation that the author has been able to include so many well-reproduced illustrations.

Altogether it is a most valuable contribution to the history of our county, and makes us look forward with pleasure to Mr. Taylor's promised history of Sir Walter St. John's School.

R. L. ATKINSON.

The Romance of English Almshouses.—By Mary F. Raphael. (Mills and Boon. 10s. 6d. net.) The author describes over fifty Old English Almshouses, mainly in the south and south-west of England, and illustrates them with many excellent photographs; but one could wish that the origin and history of the buildings had been dealt with more fully. Some beautiful examples of mediæval work are illustrated, notably the almshouses of St. Cross, Winchester; Leicester's Hospital, Warwick; and Ford's Hospital and Bond's Hospital at Coventry. Two buildings of Surrey interest are described, although not illustrated—the Whitgift Hospital, Croydon; and Trinity Hospital, Guildford.

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS.

Two works of considerable interest to our members are in course of preparation, and a brief indication of their subject-matter is given for the convenience of members who may wish to subscribe before publication.

The Printed Maps in the Atlases of Great Britain and Ireland: A Bibliography, 1579-1870, by Thomas Chubb, late of the Map Room, British Museum. This book, which will consist of about 320 pages, represents the life work of Mr. Chubb, and will contain particulars of all known Atlases of Great Britain and Ireland. It will be issued on subscription at 42s., to be raised to 50s. on publication, by the Homeland Association, 37, Maiden Lane, W.C.2.

The Mystery of Wansdyke, by the late Albany F. Major, O.B.E., F.S.A., and Edward J. Burrow, F.R.G.S. In this work the course of Wansdyke, sometimes known as the Devil's Dyke, is described in detail by Albany Major, and illustrated by Edward J. Burrow with about 120 drawings and a large number of Plans and Maps. A limited edition of 1,000 copies, to be issued to subscribers only, will be published at 25s. by Edward J. Burrow and Co., Ltd., Cheltenham.

THE PRESERVATION OF ETHNOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS.

IN Vol. XXXVI of the *Collections* Lord Onslow pleaded for the careful recording of all ethnological specimens, and a wider publicity has now been given to his appeal. On May 29, 1926, a letter from him, outlining the main points of his Note in the *Collections*, was published in *The Times*, together with a leading article which emphasized the importance and urgency of the matter. A further letter from Lord Onslow, on rather fuller lines, has also been given prominence in the Royal Anthropological Society's publication, *Man*.

In his letters to *The Times* and *Man*, Lord Onslow quotes a personal experience of the necessity for compiling records without loss of time. Thirty-five years ago his father, while Governor of New Zealand, made a collection of Maori products, including Kiwi rugs and rugs made from *Phormium tenax*, or New Zealand flax; greenstone ornaments; *meres*, or battle axes; greenstone axe-heads and adzes, and articles made from shell and bone. Lord Onslow has been attempting to catalogue these specimens, but although he was in New Zealand at the time they were collected and has been assisted by members of his family who were there also, his task has proved by no means easy, and in twenty years' time would have been practically impossible.

He gives a further reason for preserving records of specimens of Maori or other primitive handicraft:

"Races like the Maoris" (he writes in *Man*), "who were without knowledge of metals till a recent date, but who, nevertheless, reached a high state of civilization, must have lived in a somewhat similar manner to our ancestors of several thousand years ago, who also were without the use of metals and used stone implements. Indeed, a comparison between stone articles from New Zealand and Neolithic specimens from European countries shows that this was the case. . . . So that a study of the history of ethnographical specimens of the kind I have mentioned may not be without its value in solving some of the problems of the Stone Age in Europe."

In view of the importance of preservation, perhaps it is not redundant to repeat the advice of Sir Frederick Kenyon, the Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum, that all ethnological specimens should have labels attached bearing as full a record as possible of the origin, date, and circumstance of their acquisition, and that if the owner does not wish to retain the objects he should consult the British Museum as to their most suitable destination.

D. G.