

## REVIEW.

### THE ICKNIELD WAY.

[By EDWARD THOMAS, with Illustrations by A. L. COLLINS.]

London: Constable and Co., 1916.

This is a book which should find a place on the shelves of good Bucks folk who are interested in their county, for this ancient British road ran right across this county, sometimes plainly traceable now, sometimes quite obliterated. Dr. Plot ("Natural History of Oxfordshire, 1677") wrote: "Of the four Basilical, Consular, or Praetorian ways I have met with but one that passeth through this county (Oxfordshire) . . . . called by its own name at very many places [Ikenildway] to this very day . . . . coming into it out of Bucks at the parish of Chinnor and going out again over the Thames at Goreing." But, as a good Staffordshire man, he doubted if it had so good a title to be one of the four great ways of England as the Stafford road of similar name. Morden's map of Herts and Bucks (1695) shows it passing through Dunstable, where all agree it crossed the Watling Street, leaving on its right Totternhoe, Edlesborough, Ivinghoe, Marsworth, continuing through Wendover, Princes Risborough, and Bledlow. Mr. Thomas believes it to be the only one of the four royal roads which has not been Romanised at any point, and suggests that, if it had the importance in the Middle Ages of ranking with these roads, its primitive character would explain its decay.

A map is given of a portion only of the road, namely, that included between Wantage and just beyond Wallingford. A map to a smaller scale showing the whole course of the road as generally accepted, should certainly have been included.

There are some rather curious digressions, such as in the chapter "Odsey to Edlesborough;" another has much about the inferior prints hung in the bed-

room where he slept in a country inn; another a good deal about tap-rooms, that of the Jolly Drover in particular. The chapter Streatley to Sparsholt tells the tragedy of an eccentric philosopher who lived in a barn on the down with wife and children, who ended his days in the workhouse. Chapter IX. treats not of the Ickniel Way, but of the Ridgeway of the Berks downs.

The author has gone actually over the road, chiefly on foot. Having followed the road which he calls the Upper Ickniel Way through Aston Rowant and Watlington to Goring, the author returns to Ivinghoe and follows the Lower by way of Aston Clinton, Weston Turville, Chinnor, and Lewknor to Watlington, where it joined the other. Westward from Goring the road is shown on the map with a firm red line as far as Upton only, with a broken line as far as Lockinge Park, which is accused of having obliterated it two centuries ago.

The illustrations by A. L. Collins are admirable. He is a master of line, and shows how much may be expressed with few touches.