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Reviews.

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE READING MUSEUM. PT. I. ETHNOLOGICAL COLLECTION, BY DR. JOSEPH STEVENS. Dr. Stevens has added to the many favours which he has bestowed upon Reading and its Museum by writing this catalogue of the contents of the collections contained therein. It is an extremely valuable work, replete with the learning which the Hon. Curator has made his own, and most instructive to all who will peruse its pages. Some years ago, in the columns of *The Antiquary*, the Editor of this journal published an account of the Reading Museum, and strongly advocated the publication of a catalogue. But the work of Dr. Stevens is no barren list of names and objects. He has written descriptive notes on all the important collections which Reading Museum is

fortunate enough to possess, giving full information relative to such subjects as Palæolithic and Neolithic Flint implements, Romano-British relics, Coins, Lake dwellings, Mediæval Antiquities, &c. The work is extremely valuable to all students, and there are few who will not learn something from a careful study of its pages.

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THE HISTORY OF THE MANOR OF BENSINGTON (BENSON), A MANOR OF ANCIENT DEMESNE, BY REV. M. T. PEARMAN, M.A. (ELLIOT STOCK). Benson has been fortunate in its historians. The Vicar, the Rev. J. E. Field, contributed recently to our columns an account of the parish, and now Mr. Pearman has published this valuable and learned work on the history of the Manor. He begins with the conquest of the territory of the Bensingas in 571, and traces the story of the Manor to the time of its present owner, Sir F. Stapleton, Bart., of Greys Court. It has passed through many hands and witnessed many curious episodes. Offa fought a battle here in 777 and took the town, dedicating the church to his favourite saint, St. Helen. It was a "royal vill" for a long period of its history. The Danes harried it. Domesday describes its resources and extent. There is a curious story in the Abingdon Chronicle of the way in which the Abbey acquired a mill at Benson. Alured de St. Martin received a grant of lands here from Richard I. The Harcourts held the Manor in the time of Henry III., as also did Engelard de Cygony one of the Flemish Mercenaries, so hated by the English, who were brought into the country by John. In 1226 it was granted to Gilbert de Winterbourne, a servant in the buttery, who had to pay certain dues to the King, and carry the King's corn with his man and cart, for one day in the Autumn. In 1244 the King granted the Manor to his brother Richard on his union with the Lady Senchia of Provence, sister of the Queen. A valuable treatise is given by the author on tenants in Ancient Demesne, which is full of information. The notorious Piers Gaveston held the Manor, as also did the Black Prince, who received it as a dower of his wife, Joan of Kent. Thomas Chaucer, of Donnington, said to be the poet's son, also held it, and many other men distinguished in history. The volume is written with the greatest clearness and accuracy, and must have entailed a vast amount of labour and research in its compilation. We congratulate Mr. Pearman on the results of his work. He has previously published several monographs on the history of Oxfordshire, and this volume will greatly add to the debt which local historians owe him for his laborious research into the antiquities of the County.