

Obituary

LADY RUSSELL OF SWALLOWFIELD.

With deep regret we have to record the passing away from earth of Lady Russell of Swallowfield Park, the widow of the late Sir George Russell, M.P. for the South Eastern Division of Berkshire, and for many years President of the Berks Archæological Society. Those of us who enjoyed the personal friendship of Lady Russell will long remember her gracious kindness, her genial presence, her brilliant conversation, and will deeply regret the passing years which have deprived them of a friend whom they regarded with deep affection. The daughter of Lord Arthur Lennox and grand-daughter of the fourth Duke of Richmond, Lady Russell was connected with the leading great families of England and knew every one. She played a prominent part in great social functions and public affairs and in the political duties which devolved upon the wife of a busy Member of Parliament. She was particularly interested in genealogy, and as Sir George once said to the present writer she had the instinct of a sleuth-hound in following a scent; and if some difficult problem in manorial or family descent arose she would never rest till she had solved it. Especially was this evident in her charming work 'Swallowfield and its owners,' a copy of which, presented by the author, is on my library shelves. A considerable portion of this work was published in the Quarterly Journal of the Berks Archæological Society before its appearance in book form. It was Lady Russell's keen interest in archæological research which induced Sir George to accept the office of President, as his very numerous engagements, he knew, would prevent him from taking much active personal effort in the Society's work; but he realised how eager and capable his wife would be in helping forward the Society's efforts. Some may recollect a visit we paid to Swallowfield Park, our cordial welcome, and the paper Lady Russell read on the story of her house. During her last year her life has been clouded with illness, and she lived much in retirement. But amongst her friends Lady Russell lives still as a cherished memory, and we shall not forget the gracious lady who always

welcomed us so cordially, who was a true friend to us all, and to whom, as well as to her husband, Sir George, the Society is indebted for much encouragement and inspiration.

P. H. DITCHFIELD.

Reviews

THE EARLY HISTORY OF MAPLEDURHAM. By the Rev. A. H. Cooke, M.A., Sc.D., Vicar of Mapledurham. (Humphrey Milford; Oxford University Press; 12/6 net.)

Since the publication in 1920 of F. S. Thacker's 'The Thames Highway,' no topographical work relating to any portion of Berks and Oxon has made a stronger appeal to dwellers near Reading than the admirably produced volume under notice. The three counties which make up the diocese of Oxford have each of them formed the subjects of local history and research, embodied in volumes ranging in size from the huge folio to the demy 16mo, and, of course, varying very much in interest. Oxon can boast of Skelton's famous 'Antiquities,' 'Plot's Natural History,' and in modern times 'Cornbury and the Forest of Wychwood,' V. J. Watney's almost monumental work, with a host of others more limited in scope, of which Burns' 'Henley-on-Thames' and Beesley's 'History of Banbury' are almost 'classics.' Bucks has been finely described (*inter alia*) in Lipscomb's 'History of the County' and Langley's 'Hundred of Desborough,' not to mention two volumes of the publications of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments; while Berkshire can point to the works of the famous Elias Ashmole, of Lysons, Brayley, and others, more especially the 'Newbury' of Mr. Walter Money and the 'Wallingford' of Mr. Hedges. All local antiquaries have, or ought to have, these volumes on their shelves, and it is equally due to themselves that they possess 'The Early History of Mapledurham,' which is a model of careful construction, scholarly, informative, and never even approaching that offensive epithet 'dull,' which is unfortunately too often misapplied by the 'Philistines' to historical works.

So much by way of introduction. Proof of the care taken in the compilation is evinced even on the second page, which gives a table of variations of the spelling of the name culled from