

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

public and private documents ranging in date from 1086 to 1766, and numbering in all fifty-one. A reference to the Oxon poll book of 1754 gives the name as Maple Durham Gurney, the only voter from the parish being the then Vicar (Dr. Burton), who, by the way, voted for the Court Party. Reverting to the 'place-name,' 'Mapledurham,' it means 'the maple tree enclosure,' 'Malpedreham' appears in Domesday Book as having been held of the King by William de Warenne, there being a further entry of land held by Mile Crispin. The explanation is that (and for many years after) there were two manors called Mapledurham Gurney and Mapledurham Chazey, the second names being those of families who had once held the manor. As to the first-named and larger manor, it was held by the Warrennes and de Gournays until 1254, then passed by marriage to the Bardolphs, Lyndes and Iwardbys. The Blounts obtained the manor by purchase in 1490, and the family has retained it until the present day. The Bardolphs were a family of importance, and one of them built the south aisle in Mapledurham Church. The book gives a full account of them and their immediate successors. As to Mapledurham Chazey, it was the property of Richard de Chausi in 1166, and passed by marriage to the Stanshawe family, from them by purchase to the Norris or Norreys, after which the genealogical details are very intricate; but the manor of Mapledurham Chazey was ultimately sold by Anthony Bridges (1581-82) to Michael Blount, of Iver, Bucks, and the two manors, 'Gurney' and 'Chazey,' were thus united under one ownership. Although outside the scope of Dr. Cooke's history, those readers who know the locality will wonder if the valuable properties in the adjoining parish of Caversham, now and formerly held by the Blount family, came to them simultaneously with the acquisition of Mapledurham Chazey; but, judging from the exhaustive research revealed by the book under review, it may be inferred that, had such been the case, the author would have told us. The family names quoted suggest that the section of land known as 'The Warren' derived the title from its association with the Warrennes rather than, as hitherto understood, from being the home of many rabbits, and that Chazey Farm and The Chase are survivals of the former ownership of one of the manors by Richard de Chausi. The Blount family is, however, so closely interwoven with the

manors of Mapledurham that no mention of the parish is complete without it; but before 1490, when Mapledurham Gurney was purchased by Sir Richard Blount, his grandfather, Sir Walter Blount, was killed at the battle of Shrewsbury, fought in 1403. He is described by Shakespeare in the list of persons represented as Sir 'Walter Blunt (*i.e.* without the o) friend to the King.' The actual death is described in Scene III, Act V of 'King Henry IV,' first part, thus:—

Blunt :

'I was not born a yielder, thou proud Scot,  
And thou shalt find a King that will revenge  
Lord Stafford's death.'

(They fight and Blunt is slain.)

At a later date Sir Charles Blount, a devoted loyalist, was killed during the siege of Oxford through neglecting to answer the challenge of a sentry. There is, or was, when we last saw the interior of the house, a very fine portrait of this 'Lord of Mapledurham Manor' in the entrance hall. The Blount family has always retained the more ancient Faith, and a Roman Catholic service is still continued in the private chapel. Very few small village churches have ever been so ably and thoroughly described as St. Margaret's, Mapledurham, by Dr. Cooke; on the other hand, very few churches of that size have so much to describe. J. H. Parker in the 'Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of Oxon, 1850,' certainly failed to do justice to the church, and after a careful perusal of the account under notice one is tempted to wonder whether 'J.H.P.' visited the church at all. The 'samples' of entries in the 'Poores Book of Mapledurham' are, as usual in such cases, amusing, and although space is not too plentiful we venture to 'sample' a few of them.

1695/6 Paid for drinke at a publike meeting concerning Thomas Ffuller 1s.

1709/10 Paid for keeping Short Doll's child and a smock 7s. 1½d.; pd for burying old Henery Gray 13s.; pd ye traveling wooman for car'ing away the child that was left 12s.

1715/16 pd for bereying the man that wose drowned £1.2s.

1721/2 pd to the Ringers ye King's Restertuasion day (this was, we suppose, the 29th May; no date). Pd for klening of Danel Cotton and for klose and his borde; but the amount is

not stated. In the chapter headed 'Vicars of Mapledurham' is the following passage referring to Dr. Burton, Vicar from 1734 to 1765: 'When Burton had settled down in this delightful spot he considered there was nothing more pleasant in the way of innocent amusement, nothing more useful for the general good, than as far as his tastes permitted him to spend himself and his money on building, repairing and ornamenting, on elaborating the charm of the gardens in planting or training trees, or making pathways and carrying out works of a like nature, by which he hoped in some way to afford pleasure to his successors.' That his labours were not in vain is proved by the way the beautiful surroundings have been maintained.

The late James Rhoades, whose collected poems have quite recently been published, wrote some very beautiful verses in this particular place, entitled 'In a Vicarage Garden,' which are too long for quotation here, but form a delightful example of 'word-painting.' As for the mill, we once counted thirteen people simultaneously sketching 'Mapledurham Mill' on one long summer's day; and although that was forty years and more ago, the beauty of the scene around remains, and is evidently as keenly appreciated in the twentieth century by Dr. Cooke as it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth by Dr. Burton and Mr. Rhoades. May we conclude by the wish that all readers of an absolutely delightful book will join us in heartily congratulating the Vicar of Mapledurham on his very notable achievement.

**MAP OF ROMAN BRITAIN.** Scale, sixteen miles to one inch. (Ordnance Survey, Southampton; 1924; price 5/-.)

We congratulate the Ordnance Survey Office on having produced this map, which supplies a long needed want for those who study Roman Britain. It will be a fitting companion to Codrington's 'Roman Roads' in Britain, a fourth edition of which was published not so long ago. With this map is printed an excellent index and a short geographical account of Roman Britain, followed by a chronology of the principal events in the History of Roman Britain. One last word. The map is mounted on canvas, a boon to those who use it in the field. We ourselves have suffered from carrying unmounted maps when engaged on out-door work.