

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

THE PLACE-NAMES OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

By A. MAWER & F. M. STENTON

(Cambridge University Press, 18s. net.)

Truly our county is fortunate; we were early in the list for attention by the Historical Monuments Commissioners, and now the first volume of the Place-Name Society devoted to a single county is concerned with Bucks. Professors Mawer and Stenton have employed the method of seeking the earliest sources of spelling in a variety of deeds, and this certainly takes them nearer to the true origin than the conjectural guesses which used to be in vogue.

To give readers some idea of the methods and results it seems not inappropriate to compare their derivations with those set out in these pages a quarter of a century ago by Archdeacon Bourke. It is true that he confined himself largely, as the title of his paper announced, to "Place-name Endings in Bucks," or, as we now call them, the "second element" of names; still a comparison is possible between the knowledge available then and now. The Archdeacon comes out of it very well indeed; he does not indeed draw the nice distinction of our present authors between the place-endings derived from O.E. *beorg* meaning a "hill," and O.E. *burh* meaning a "fortified place;" nor does he draw any line between O.E. *ham*, meaning "a manor," and *hamm*, meaning "fold, or enclosed place;" still he saw that Turville really contained "field" as its second element, and that while Ibstone contained O.E. *stan*, "stone," the ending of Ravenstone was O.E. *tun*, "an enclosure, or farm."

Turville furnishes a good example of Professor Mawer's careful methods; he quotes fourteen authorities down to 1545, and two later; these show that Domesday Book slipped in calling it "Tilleberie," that the original name was "Thyrefeld," and the

Normans softened it to a sound which became identified with the French personal name still preserved in Weston Turville. Sometimes when the available evidence ranges from the seventh to the seventeenth centuries—as in the case of Datchet—our authors prefer not to commit themselves to a definite origin. This particular instance, Datchet, troubled the Archdeacon, who would scarcely have been puzzled by Meadle if he had seen the Assize Rolls of 1227 which give “Madhulle” and “Medhulle,” and so open the way to *mæd-hyll*=meadow-hill.

As an example of the extreme care which has gone to the compilation of this volume the name of Long Crendon may be taken; between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries over fifty authorities are cited, and the verdict at the close is “Creoda’s hill.” Unlike some cases in which the first element is a personal name this is one in which an historical person is intended; Creoda was “father of King Cynric, and thus the ancestor of the later West Saxon kings”; and “an almost contemporary Creoda occurs in the Mercian royal genealogy.” Good; one expects something of the same kind might influence the name of Crendon Lane, High Wycombe; but the earlier forms all begin *Cro*—, and the suggestion is that the word *croh*=saffron, lies at the bottom of it. The name of the pleasant old house in Wing Parish—Crafton Lodge—is shown to mean no more than “saffron farm.”

It is tempting to quote much from this fascinating volume; or to observe the conclusions reached in the Introduction, that the lower part of the centre of the county was a region of early Saxon settlement, that the Chilterns became peopled (sparsely enough) at a later date, and that the northern part was inhabited by Angles rather than by Saxons. But readers must search for themselves, aided by the maps which are thoughtfully placed in a pocket in the cover.

In many cases the lack of early forms precluded the inclusion of any suggestion as to the origin of names, thus Speen is omitted, which is unfortunate as one would much like to know whether it could be assigned, as the Berkshire Speen has been to “spon,” a chip,

shaving, or shingle. We look in vain for Dropmore, or for the Littleworth which adjoins it; though the Littleworth in Wing parish is traced back to Lytel, a name which is also buried in the Lillingstones. This reminds one that Professor Mawer mentions that Lillingstone Lovell was part of Oxfordshire until 1844, but does not mention under Stokenchurch that it was also part of Oxfordshire until 1896. Our lost place-names — Ashridge, now part of Hertfordshire, and Caversfield, now part of Oxfordshire, do not come into this volume, of course, but it might have been worth noting, under Coleshill, that it was an island of Hertfordshire set down right inside Bucks until 1844.

There is a wonderful array of variant renderings of Lenborough, near Buckingham, closing in 1493; it may be pointed out that as late as 1685 the word was spelt "Leathenborough" (see the Verney Memoirs, IV., 330), which is much nearer to revealing the true root than the later spelling, which was in vogue when the great Gibbon owned the manor, and so became a Worthy of Bucks!

THE MANOR AND PARISH RECORDS OF MEDMENHAM

By the REV. A. H. PLAISTED

(London: Longmans, Green & Co., 15s. net.)

There are some parishes in our own, as in every county, which give the impression of poverty; neglected buildings, broken fences, and a general air of untidiness betoken a lack of ready money. This can never be said of Medmenham, which, to a peculiar degree, yields precisely the opposite impression. It is only fitting therefore that a parish so opulent outwardly should have its story told in a fitting manner. This volume authoritatively states all that one may wish to know about Medmenham, in historic times at all events; it states it in an ample volume of over 400 pages, well-printed, and well-illustrated; altogether a worthy monument to the devotion of the Vicar.

After a very brief description of the famous earthwork at Danesfield, and the less familiar camp in Gillman's Wood, in which Hugh de Bolebec subsequently built his castle, Mr. Plaisted gives a paragraph to the

derivation of the name of Medmenham. Alas! for poor humanity; the guessing-game of derivations is sad work. According to our author the name signifies the home of the Medings, the family of "the old Saxon Medd." When Langley wrote his *History of Desborough* (1797) he had no hesitation in saying: "The evident etymology of the place is a village in the meadow." Edmunds ("History in the Names of Places") was quite happy to derive it from "madm, treasure," and so made the full name indicate "the place where the king kept his money." Now that we have a really scientific work on our place-names (reviewed in the current number) we find Professor Mawer tracing back to an adjective "medeme = moderate-sized, small," but the full form of the name then being "medemanhame," dative; this explains the second "m," which Mr. Plaisted can only account for by assuming its interpolation in oral transmission.

As soon as the Vicar reaches historic times he feels the ground safe beneath him, and disentangles the Bolebees, and de Veres better than it has been done before,—by Lipscomb at all events. As he passes through the Middle Ages he draws freely on Close Rolls, Patent Rolls, Feet of Fines, and all the other wealth of historic facts in P.R.O. and the British Museum. The way in which a précis of some thirteenth century deed is inset in the text in slightly smaller type and with full reference to its source, might form a model for all such work; it could not be improved.

Chapters which follow deal amply with Wittington, Bockmer, and Danesfield, a neat summary of the salient dates closing each chapter. The Abbey is next dealt with, firstly in its proper function; at the time of the Dissolution it had fallen into very low water as there were only two monks, "servants none; the house wholly in ruin." There follows the more famous (and slightly infamous) history of the Abbey after the Dissolution; here Mr. Plaisted is particularly good as he tells the amazing story of the Duffields, who owned the Abbey from the middle of the sixteenth century until the latter part of the eighteenth, thus covering the period when Sir Francis Dashwood (Lord le

Despencer), and his brother, Sir John Dashwood King, Bubb Dodington (Lord Melcombe Regis), the fourth Earl of Sandwich, Churchill, Lloyd, and Collins, all three poets of sorts, Thomas Potter, son of the Archbishop, Sir William Stanhope, Paul Whitehead (whose heart was in the West Wycombe mausoleum and afterwards stolen), the famous Dr. Bates, and the great John Wilkes, M.P.,—all formed at some time or other members of the “Order of St. Francis,” deriving their name from Francis Duffield the fifth.

Mr. Plaisted dispels many of the absurdities which scandal attached to the club, in particular in telling us that it lasted only eight years, and that “the meetings were never protracted beyond a week at a time, nor held more than twice a year;” it was finally “wrecked on the rocks of political discord.”

Thus far we are only half-way through the book, the second half dealing with the Church and various aspects of the village in detail. When dealing with the Churchwardens’ Accounts an entry is given which certainly deserves quoting for its unconscious humour:

“Relieved a woman with a past ... 1s. 0d.”

The final chapter, which deals with “The King’s Highway,” includes the river, and contains much that will be new to most readers.

The pleasure afforded by this book led the writer of this notice to visit the scenes it describes, and there on the King’s Highway, not far from Bockmer, he saw a notice-board, which had probably become too familiar to the Vicar to deserve quoting, on which carters were enjoined, when descending the hill, to fix “drug-bats.”

“Drug-bat” is a perfectly good dialect-word, derived (says the Oxford Dictionary) from Middle English “druggen,” meaning “to drag,” whilst the English Dialect Dictionary tells us that a “bat” is “an iron drag chained to the wheel of a cart when going down hill.” The odd thing is that the word is not used in the Vale or north of the county.

The book is very accurately printed, apparently, the two following slips might be corrected in a future

edition: p. 183, for "Tichford" read "Tickford"; and p. 293 for "Ellesborough" read "Edlesborough."

THE TEMPLE MEMOIRS

By COL. J. A. TEMPLE and H. M. TEMPLE

(London: H. F. & G. Witherby. 250 copies printed at £1:5:0 to subscribers.)

As the centuries pass family after family has played a great part in the life of our county,—has waxed, waned, and died out,—*tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe*, some have left their names in places, such as the Cheynes, Dayrells, Reynes, Beauchamps, Mandevilles; whilst others, like the Giffards, Dentons, and Dormers, have passed away (even the houses in which they lived have vanished), and left small trace. None so completely attempted to dominate the entire county, though, as the Temple family, and when it became merged later with the Grenville family the bulk of the county may be said to have been subject to their influence from Wotton to Dropmore in the south, and Wotton to Stowe in the north. The rise and progress of this family, their greed for political power, which was their ultimate undoing, are set forth in this volume more clearly than has been attempted previously. It is true that it embraces a wider field than Bucks, but the days of grandeur, the days when the eyes of all England were turned to Stowe; when there were published the countless editions of Guides and Descriptions of the beauties of Stowe which still litter our second-hand book shops in dozens,—in these palmy days the Temple interest centred in Bucks.

The history of a great family, which intermarried with the eleventh in descent from Henry VII. and could claim cousinship with a goodly section of the peerage, is not easily told in short compass, and one is sure that Colonel Temple would have had no difficulty in doubling the modest 200 pages in which he attempts to compress a very wide extent of facts.

The more or less legendary origin of the family in the Earls of Mercia is critically discussed in the opening chapter, and the story of Godiva is explained by

the literal construction of a metaphor, her nudity not being of the physical kind, but a mere phrase used to denote the generosity with which she built and endowed a Benedictine Abbey near the present site of Coventry.

The connection of the Temple family with Bucks began in 1554, when Peter Temple leased the manor of Stowe from the Bishop of Oxford, and built the first mansion there. His eldest son, Thomas, made the famous marriage with Hester Sandys of Latimer, who lived to see over 700 descendants of her body, if Fuller is to be trusted. Sir Thomas was one of James I.'s first batch of two hundred baronets.

It is not the object of this notice to follow the rise and spread of the family; it is only necessary to say that it is clearly set out in this volume, and supported by admirable pedigrees which have the authority of Herald's College behind them. All members of the family are treated with engaging candour, and one ends by feeling that one knows them; thus, after quoting Pope's famous lines on Lord Cobham (the fourth baronet) we are reminded that—so far from "Oh, save my country, Heaven!" being his last words—he was in such a passion at being unable to carry a glass of jelly to his mouth that he "threw the jelly, glass and all, in the face of his niece, Hester Grenville—fell back and expired."

There were consolations in life for the niece as she was destined to marry William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and to be the mother of yet another William Pitt. Her brothers, Earl Temple and George Grenville, are given no very amiable characters; the first being "quite devoid of statesmanship, and with an insatiable appetite for intrigue;" and the public acts of the second, in Macaulay's words, "may be classed under two heads, outrages on the liberties of the people, and outrages on the dignity of the Crown." The Brydges blood came in by the marriage of George Grenville's grandson, the second Marquis of Buckingham, with the only child and heir of the last Duke of Chandos.

The astonishing ways by which the first Duke of Chandos enriched himself at the public expense when

Paymaster-General are clearly indicated; he had a remarkable personality, however, as "despite extravagances and weaknesses, Chandos was one of the most popular peers in England, as he spent great sums in charity and good works."

The crash of the second Duke of Buckingham in 1848 is very well explained as due to purchasing land with borrowed money just prior to the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846; the collapse in land-values which resulted, following upon long years of extravagance and the costly visit of Queen Victoria to Stowe in 1845, helped to bring about the end. The third, and last, Duke of Buckingham, seems to have been the most sane of them all.

The 19th and 20th Chapters are devoted to a description of the "Gardens," for which our authors have more admiration than most people, to whom their sole interest lies in the example they afford of the execrable taste which was by no means peculiar to Lord Cobham, by whom many of the useless masses of stonework or brickwork which litter the grounds were built. The succeeding chapter deals with the house itself, and makes it clear that the house built by Peter Temple in the middle of the 16th century still exists inside the enormous additions of Sir Richard Temple, the third baronet, Earl Temple, and the Marquis of Buckingham. Here again our authors find more to praise than to censure; and that is strange, because it is certain that never since the Middle Ages did English domestic Architecture achieve anything so uncomfortable; as a monument to Palladio it might pass, as a house to live in it can never have afforded the combined dignity and comfort which characterize so many of our Elizabethan and Jacobean houses; one has only to look at the plates facing pages 178 and 180 to see the mischief wrought by the first Lord Temple; in the first (which represents Sir Richard Temple's work) the south front exhibits some bedroom windows at least; in the later view they have been sacrificed to a neo-Classical fetish.

It is ill work discussing matters of taste, and one would wish to end this brief notice by thanking Col.

Temple and Mr. Markham Temple for bringing together so many facts regarding the family to which they belong.

A few misprints should be noted; on page 51 the parish of Stantonbury is called Stanton Low, a name which belongs to the farm adjoining the church. On page 107 the mausoleum at West Wycombe is said to be "in" the church, this should read "near." On page 114, line 3, the word "Hartwell" has crept in; Louis XVIII. was at Hartwell, near Aylesbury, after he left Gosfield. On page 150 a "want" is a mole, it can never be a rat.

BURNHAM, BUCKS

An Historical Sketch by W. H. WILLIAMS

London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 2s. 6d.

This little book of 64 pages is written by one of our members with the avowed object of assisting an appeal for the church; it must not be considered therefore as a complete parish history. But within these narrow limits Mr. Williams manages to compress much that is important and something which will be new to many of our readers, such, for instance, as the account of the sixteen deeds preserved in the church, which begin as far back as 1296. One deed (2 Edw. VI) sets forth the liability of the churchwardens to undertake repairs of certain property "except tylyng ground pynnyng and wallyng under hornhygh;" this last expression Mr. Williams interprets as liability of the tenant for damage done by the horns of his cattle to the cob walls. On page 45 an excessive antiquity is attributed to the chest in the chancel, and on page 36 a low-side window (enlarged later) is called a "leper's window," and the long-discredited theory of the use of which these windows were put is given. The mention of such slight blemishes merely proves the high standard reached by this useful little work.

VICTORIA HISTORY OF THE COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAM
Volume Three

London: The St. Catherine Press; 3 Guineas.

This third volume is entirely occupied with parochial history; it opens with the boroughs of Aylesbury and Wendover, which receive very full treatment. The next 300 pages are occupied with the various parishes comprised in the three Chiltern Hundreds; then follow 140 pages which cover the Hundred of Cottesloe, and the volume closes with an account of the Borough of Buckingham. A very great proportion of the county therefore is covered, and the treatment accorded to each parish is similar to that given in Volume II. The difficulties which the Victoria County Histories have had to face have been very serious, and one cannot be too critical if the complete volume leaves anything to be desired. The serious blemish undoubtedly reveals itself on the very title-page, where a Note informs us that the volume was completed in 1914, but that its publication has been delayed through "the War and other reasons." This means that in nearly every parish the names of present occupiers or owners have undergone great change, and it is very sad to read in a book dated 1925 the names of friends who have been many years dead, but appear here as living. The illustrations are seldom very happy; the half-tone blocks being generally far too dark, though some of the line drawings are clear and admirable.