Reviews

British Archaeology: A Book List. Council for British Archaeology, 1960. Pp. 43, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$. Price 5s. 6d.

The titles of some 800 books published up to the end of 1958 appear in this list, of which rather less than half are specially chosen for children. Adult books appear in two sections, the first arranged by periods (from the Old Stone Age to the Industrial Revolution) and, here and there, further divided into subjects. In the second, supplementary titles are classified under eight regional headings. The children's books appear (*a*) with, first, period and then subject headings, (*b*) by regions.

The children's sections should be very useful to school teachers, who will be glad to find that titles particularly suited to the younger age groups have been distinguished. The lack of guidance towards the relative merits of obvious alternatives may, however, be a matter for regret.

It is implied in the Preface that the adult sections are intended primarily for those with a rather limited knowledge of the subject; this is largely borne out by the general flavour of the list and its glosses, though close reading of the different parts betrays a rather fluctuating standard between the individual compilers. The 'amateur archaeologists' of the Preface could probably have tolerated a leaven of a few more advanced and specialized items. There is little to complain of so far as the books included are concerned. It is in its omissions that the booklist is vulnerable, starting with the surprising remark in the Preface 'The works of older antiquaries have been excluded, for though they often contain sound [*sic*] facts and observations, their conclusions have been modified by more recent research'. So, for example, we are deprived of Abercromby's *Bronze Age Pottery*, Evans's *Bronze Implements* and Pitt-Rivers' *Cranborne Chase*. Some subjects are poorly covered (e.g. Roman pottery, monumental brasses, heraldry), others are left out altogether (e.g. laboratory dating and analysis, hill figures, medieval wall painting, incised slabs). The obvious reluctance (save in the Scottish section) to include papers from the learned periodicals has led to the exclusion not only of the source material for some of the best known sites (e.g. Little Woodbury) but also of many fundamental studies (e.g. Professor Hawkes' surveys of the Iron Age). On the other hand, books on post-Renaissance painting and sculpture surely strain the terms of reference too far.

The regional section also suffers from its omissions, though, of course, no conceivable brief selection of this kind could hope to satisfy everyone. For some reason, Ireland, whether Eire or Ulster, has been completely excluded. Readers of *Oxoniensia* will miss Atkinson's *Excavations at Dorchester*. 'England West' lacks the names of Balch, Doble, Henderson, Horne, Knight, Morton Nance and St. George Gray. 'England East' has no item to cover Grimes Graves, and ignores Hull's *Roman Colchester*. Greenhill's *Incised Slabs of Leicestershire and Rutland* surely deserved a place in 'England Midlands', as did Miss Kenyon's *Jewry Wall*.

The list suffers from having to crowd too much into a small compass; it would breathe more freely in the edition which will certainly follow if, for instance, the children's section could be published separately—it is certainly important enough to warrant it. Further, it could greatly increase its scope and value if the remainder

were published in two parts, each as large as the present volume. Prehistoric and Roman Archaeology could be divided from the later periods, for example, and the needs of the more informed users catered for by the inclusion of important papers and even some of the older books, not all of which are quite as outmoded as the Preface suggests.

Misprints are very few, and unimportant, but oversight has allowed a discrepancy of price in seven out of eighteen cases where the same book is listed in more than one place—once with a difference of 12s. 6d.! H. W. CATLING.

Local History in England. By W. G. Hoskins. Longmans, 1959. Pp. 196; 9 plates; 5 maps and plans. Price 21s.

This is a book of ' encouragement and advice for local historians in any part of England '. It does not set out to be a complete text-book, nor does it offer a complete guide to all the sources. It leaves out a good deal, therefore, and is weighted in favour of Dr. Hoskins's view of the importance of topography—the actualities of the countryside rather than the minutiae of documents. The value of the book is that it deals less with where facts can be discovered, than with the use to which these facts can be put, when discovered. Much local history, as written in the past, has been little more than a conglomeration of facts, of interest only to the local antiquary, and perhaps flattering to the local gentry. As anything more than the raw materials of local history it has been useless. This sort of writing Dr. Hoskins deplores as arid; local history has a much wider importance than this, and its value is liable to increase as the study of sociology comes more to the fore. He suggests fruitful themes which the local historian is in a good position to work out: for instance, the reasons for population changes or the effect of the Enclosure Acts, and discusses the sources which can be used to illustrate them. Without themes of this kind local history is dull and unproductive.

For the local historian this book is optimistic; a detailed knowledge of palaeography, Latin or diplomatic, is not a necessary pre-requisite if one jettisons the idea of starting at Domesday Book and working forward. Dr. Hoskins even makes out a good case for starting in the 19th century and working backwards.

The emphasis of the book is topographical; indeed, of the nine photographic illustrations, not one is of a document. Keen observation of sites and structures, boundaries and buildings, and a sharp ear for old men's tales can aid the local historian as much as, and in many cases more than, the written document, and the importance of maps is emphasized again and again. Conveyancing instruments are not dealt with (surely the local historian will have to use these?); but even if the omission is deliberate one regrets that no mention is made in the additional references of Mr. Pugh's introduction to the *Catalogue of the Antrobus Deeds.* Nor is any mention made of the National Register of Archives.

It is a valuable and a pleasant book, full of Dr. Hoskins's own infectious enthusiasm. Only once is castigation meted out and this is to those responsible for the ' disgraceful ' state of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury inventories at Somerset House. Above all it shows how local history can be made an important study, as a corrective to those national historians who tend to assume stock response in ' the people ' or ' the peasant class ', for it is that branch of history which deals with the ' actual men and women who have struggled to get a living off a real piece of country that we can walk over today'. D. G. VAISEY.

REVIEWS

Index to Wills Proved in the Peculiar Court of Banbury, 1542-1858. Edited by J. S. W. Gibson. Bound with:

Custumal (1391) *and Bye-laws* (1386-1540) *of the Manor of Islip*. Edited by Barbara F. Harvey. Published by the Oxfordshire Record Society and the Banbury Historical Society, 1959. Price 25s. to non-members.

The latest volume of the Oxfordshire Record Society's series brings two contributions. In order to save printing expenses and perhaps to reach a somewhat wider public than would otherwise have been the case the Banbury Historical Society has shared in the publication of the first item, the *Index to Wills Proved in the Peculiar Court of Banbury*, 1542-1858, and is able thereby to offer it as the first volume in its own publication series. The review of the Index that follows can therefore be taken as applying to both volumes. The second contribution in the Oxfordshire Record Society volume, being of special interest to the southern part of the county, is left out of the volume put out by the Banbury Society. Mr. Gibson, however, who undertook the editing of the Index, has subsidized the publication of the Islip Custumal, for which the county as a whole must owe him a great debt of gratitude.

An index of this sort can only be judged in two ways: by its usefulness and its usableness. As for the latter, anyone intending to use this one is well advised to read the Introduction carefully before doing so, for it sets forth precisely what is and what is not contained in the index. This is important, because there is now a manuscript index in the Bodleian compiled many years ago by E. R. Cheyne which contains a combined index of the wills proved in all the Oxford Peculiar jurisdictions, that is, those of Dorchester and Thame, as well as Banbury. The Banbury index presented here is therefore an extract from this larger index, and not the whole. It is, however, complete for the Banbury Peculiar, which covered, besides the Parish of Banbury itself, those of Cropredy, Horley, Hornton and Kings Sutton (Northants) and the manorial court of Sibford Gower. For usableness, the index is all that such an index should be. The whole is cross-indexed by place name and trade, thus providing the main keys other than name which could be expected to be useful to the scholar. Variant spellings for names are given, though how completely this is done one can never be sure, as presumably Mr. Gibson worked from Cheyne's index rather than from the deeds themselves except where these were not included in Cheyne's index. He has wisely included all deeds, as well as other types of documents, which are of testamentary importance, such as administrations, bonds, inventories and accounts.

As for usefulness, publications of this sort have too honourable a place in the work of historians of local history to need any defence here. It may merely be noted that we can look for a growing rôle for such publications in larger fields as well. Historians are learning to ask questions of the widest and profoundest significance which depend for their answers largely on very mundane local records. W. K. Jordan has revolutionized our understanding of some aspects of 16th and 17th century social history with his *Philanthropy in England*, 1480-1660—based largely on wills.

The Islip custumal and bye-laws are of much more than potential value to scholars. They are source materials of immediate value and significance to the history of the county. These documents are Westminster Abbey Muniments (the manor of Islip with Murcot and Fencot belonged to the abbots of Westminster). Between them they provide something like a cross-section and (at least materials for) a narrative of the economy of the manor. The custumal caught the economy just

as it had gone over from one based on strict customary tenure and dues in kind and week work to one based on more fluid tenurial relationships, and payments in money and kind, with the earlier system still fresh in mind, and traces of it still in evidence. It shows that some peasants had acquired land in addition to their customary messuage and half-virgate by lease, though it seems to have been the lord's (the abbot's) intention to revert to strict customary tenure when the shortage of labour following the Black Death had been overcome. As the bye-laws published here show, the lord at this time (1386) was still interested in the detailed regulation of the manor's economy. By the end of the 15th century this was left to the steward and the homage of the vill. As Miss Harvey points out, 'the Abbot was now a rentier, with no direct interest in gleaning and pasture rights'.

Miss Harvey has done a thoroughly creditable job in preparing these two valuable documents for publication. The *apparatus criticus* provides additional information to illuminate the text whenever needed, and keeps the reader fully informed as to the state of the text. A short but valuable introduction sets the historical scene and relates the documents to other relevant material at Westminster Abbey. The whole production is evidence of sound scholarship and careful work. If one can raise any doubts it would be about including the facing English translation. Scholars using this material will not need it, and interested laymen would be better served by descriptive articles in their local history publications. Surely, in view of mounting printing costs and slender budgets this was expendable?

G. M. SCHWARZ.

A History of Banbury: the Story of the Development of a Country Town. By William Potts. Banbury Guardian Ltd., 1958. Pp. xvi + 253, illus. Price 25s.

William Potts, who died in 1947, spent his life in Banbury, edited the *Banbury Guardian* and for half a century collected materials for a history of the town he loved. The war held up its publication and it was left to Mr. E. T. Clark to see the book through the press and assemble the illustrations. Potts' aim was to add to Beesley's history, published in 1841, and in particular to show how the late fifth-century Saxon settlements of Banbury and Grimsbury, on opposite sides of the Cherwell, developed into the municipal borough of his own day. The result is a book that Banburians all over the world will treasure, while the stranger will find an interesting account of the growth of a particular English community. The author shows how the Saxon settlements at the junction of two prehistoric tracks became separate parishes in early Christian times and how Banbury itself fell under the influence first of the Bishop of Dorchester and then of Lincoln after the Conquest. The Bishop of Lincoln about 1225 turned it into a manorial borough enclosed by a wall and five gates; Grimsbury and several hamlets remained outside. The royal and parliamentary borough succeeded this under Mary's charter of 1554. The bailiff of that period gave way to a mayor when James I granted a fresh charter in 1608, which lasted until a quarrel between Jacobites and Hanoverians about the election of the mayor caused Banbury unintentionally to disfranchise itself in 1717. George I came to the rescue with another charter in 1718, under which the town is still governed; in 1835 the close corporation was replaced by a freely elected one. After the Local Government Act of 1888 Banbury petitioned for enlargement and in 1889 Grimsbury, Neithrop and the hamlets were brought within the borough boundary.

This development, the main theme of the book, is described with a wealth of interesting detail. Subsidiary aspects of Banbury's history include its ecclesiastical development, its castle and the part it played in the Civil War, the development of industry from the cheese cakes and ale of Tudor days through the handloom weaving to the present letterpress printing, agricultural machinery and aluminium. Unfortunately, however, the author chose to confine himself within a strictly chronological strait-jacket, so that the reader pursuing the growth of the town finds himself riding a cock horse to Banbury Cross between the Marian and Jacobean charters. Similarly the Elizabethan Puritans, who included Anthony Cope the parliamentarian, are separated from the later Nonconformists by the story of the Civil War, to the detriment of the reader's understanding of the evolution of Dissent in the town. On minor points, the attribution of the triangular shape of the original market-place to Danish influence in the tenth century seems doubtful. Elsewhere this shape is a characteristic feature of medieval town-planning; the older half of the double triangle at Thame can be dated to about 1220. The definition of ' furlong ' on page 249 as ' a strip of ploughed land ' is misleading. The map of streets at the end of the Middle Ages facing page 98 would have been easier to read had it been printed with the north at the top and it would have been more useful if it had been made to pull out. I should have liked a map of the town about 1890; I looked in vain for an index. There are half a dozen misprints. The fifty-one illustrations have been well chosen and beautifully printed. The book is well documented, the sources being given at the end of each chapter. While not in the same class as G. A. Thornton's *History of Clare* or Mrs. Lobel's *Bury St. Edmunds*, the book was worth publishing and contains many good things. G. H. DANNATT.

Tradition and Change, A Study of Banbury. By Margaret Stacey. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 1960. Pp. viii + 231. Price 35s.

It is tempting to write that this is a fascinating book, throwing a wealth of light on the life of a thriving market town whose history, traditions and progress are the admiration of us all, and providing a record for future historians which would be the envy of those whose task it is to write about the forgotten civilizations of Minos or the Incas or about ancient towns like Pompeii and Herculaneum, the details of whose social structure is almost unrecorded. But, in truth, this is not an easy book either for the general reader or for the historian. With its 49 tables, 20 charts and 7 appendices varying in complexity, its references to Hall/Jones scales, the focused-interview and other mysteries, it is a technical work most ably written by a social scientist for those versed in her skills. On every page there is food in abundance for the general reader, but the author's learning perhaps disguises from her the amount of statistical material which the general reader can digest. In fairness, it must be said that the book deserves a reviewer familiar with the techniques of the statistician, the sociologist and the social anthropologist; the present writer has none of these advantages.

The book is the result of three years' field-work by members of a team participating in the life of Banbury, and six years spent in analysing and sifting data. Its purpose is to study the social structure and culture of an old-established country town and the impact upon it of the sudden introduction of large-scale industry in the form of the new aluminium factory in the early nineteen-thirties. For the survey, the published records were searched and a pilot questionnaire was followed by a schedule

inquiry into over one thousand households. The evidence was collected by interview, observation and discussion. From the outset, attention was focused on the distinction between Banburians and immigrants, between traditionalists and non-traditionalists and the tensions which it seemed likely might divide them and which might provide the key to the social structure of the town.

The majority of the non-traditionalists, as might be expected, but by no means all, are immigrants. Similarly, many of the traditionalists, but by no means all, are Banburians. The division between old and new in Banbury is not one between Banburian and immigrant so much as between traditionalists and non-traditionalists. To understand this we must know what each of these terms stands for, and we learn that the traditionalists afford social, economic, political and religious leadership to the gentry and to the private business man and form the Anglican/Conservative group of the town with a wide range of social and sporting interests. On the other hand, the non-traditionalists do not concede to owners and managers the divine right of social or political leadership and they form the Free Church/Liberal group, very little concerned with sport and having quieter social activities but more concerned with cultural pursuits. The coming of the aluminium factory reinforced the Labour group in the town and brought with it a wider range of social interests, and with the coming of the immigrants Banbury felt the full force of non-traditionalism upon it. It would be a mistake to draw from all this a clear-cut picture of Cavaliers and Roundheads and the chart on page 173 shows the complicated cross-sections involved. For example, the alignment of Conservative and Liberal against Labour draws most of the non-traditional middle-class together with the traditionalists of all classes in opposition to the non-traditional Labour working class.

These propositions are developed chapter by chapter in detailed examinations of livelihoods, politics, religion, voluntary associations, houses and neighbours, the family and social status and social class. At the conclusion it is found that there is little evidence of tension between Banburian and immigrant, except, perhaps, at one time over the allocation of housing. One important key to the social structure and culture of the town is found to lie in the opposition of non-traditionalism to traditionalism, an opposition which contains within itself some of the problems of immigrant assimilation. Another and more important key is social class and social status cutting across the traditional and the non-traditional and giving rise to social divisions and tensions. Those who know Banbury from afar may well be startled to learn in the final conclusion that, for the reasons given by the author, the town cannot be considered as a community and though it may develop greater cohesion, it will never become a community in any full sense both because of its complexity and because it is so closely integrated with the wider English society.

To the outsider, Banbury is, in a corporate sense, Banbury and always has been, immigrants or no immigrants, aluminium factory or no aluminium factory. Its citizens, whether traditionalist or non-traditionalist, Banburian or immigrant, have a fierce and abiding pride in their town, are jealous of their traditions and institutions and unite in opposition to any higher authority seeking to plan them, to restrict their rights or to deprive them of their administrative or judicial functions, and like many other similar towns, have a certain sense of superiority over their near neighbours. The outsider sees in these characteristics only a united front and the tensions revealed in this study of its social structure and culture may come as a surprise not only to him but also to the residents of the town themselves. The

value of the book lies in what is thus revealed below the surface but it is by no means certain that all the conclusions would be accepted by Banburians, old or new, themselves.

Oxoniensia is largely concerned with the writing of history, particularly local history, and its readers will find the methods of the social survey unfamiliar and not always acceptable. It is understandable that names of persons and, perhaps, of streets mentioned in *Tradition and Change* should be fictitious, but it is difficult for those familiar with the methods of historians to accept that the numerous characters described should be no more than ' typical ' in a social sense of people who do exist, but none of whom may actually be found. The reader has, therefore, to accept the author's guarantee of the validity of her characters without the possibility of further check. For example, on pages 15 to 17 there is a description of ' Sir William ' about whom so many detailed facts are given that, if he exists, he would easily be recognized. In fact, he cannot be recognized except by those having an intimate knowledge of the neighbourhood, and not with any certainty even by them. An historian would be bound to ask how far he is a true character and how far he and the other characters in the book are the product of the evidence unadulterated by any bias or predilections, unconsciously expressed, of the author. The reader will often be tempted to think that many of the facts so industriously discovered and set before him accord with what he already knows from common experience of other towns like Banbury facing the dramatic changes of the twentieth century, and there are sometimes generalizations drawn from the investigations which are as true of Banbury as of almost any town in the whole wide world. For example, on page 69 we are told that among active adherents of organized religion, the elderly outnumber the young; women outnumber men; natives outnumber immigrants, and non-manual workers outnumber manual workers. Such a conclusion is surely of equal validity in any corner of Christendom and perhaps beyond. These, however, may be carping criticisms and it is hardly fair to extract isolated examples. All who are interested in Oxfordshire will wish to read and judge for themselves this revealing commentary on the life and institutions of one of the most cherished and ancient towns of the County.

H. M. WALTON.

All Saints' School, Bloxham. Bloxham, 1960. Pp. 36.

The story of the school, its early fortunes, its gradual expansion and its hopes for the future have been set out in this well illustrated centenary booklet. It is fascinating to be able to follow visually the development and adaptations of ' the derelict and abandoned school ' and of the old farm house, still in use, ' with much that has grown up around it '.

Bloxham is its own biography and the buildings their own chronicle, informed and inspired throughout its history by the faith of its Founder the Rev. P. R. Egerton, that it is the duty of the Church ' to take Education into her hands '. But in so brief a booklet there is very little room for the persons of the Bloxham past to come alive. ' Old Wilson, Bo Mallet ', the ' twelve strong men of each house ' are exceptions. The compiler is very conscious of the ' inadequacies of his commemoration of the past '. He hopes someone ' may soon be inspired to write a new and comprehensive History of Bloxham School,' a hope he will share with all Bloxhamists and also with many from Bloxham village who, too, are proud of the School.

E. M. WILKIE.

The Ipsden Country. By J. H. Baker. Reading, W. Smith and Son, 1959. Pp. 150, 11 plates, 57 drawings and maps. Price 10s.

The five long narrow ancient parishes—Checkendon, Mongewell, Newnham Murren, North Stoke, and South Stoke—running from the eastern bank of the Thames between Wallingford and Goring to some five miles east in the Chilterns form the subject of this pleasant and profusely illustrated book. With their riverside villages and rolling open fields in the west, and their wooded hamlets and detached farms and country houses in the east, these parishes have many features in common. A geographical feature they share is a profusion of small winding roads, especially in the east; an old local saying, ' All the roads lead to Ipsden but none of them ever get you there ', might be applied to several other villages. Their administrative history is also complicated, the relationship between the mother village and its hamlets having frequently changed; Ipsden, for example, which gives the book its name, was not a parish in the Middle Ages but a chapelry of North Stoke.

This book is not a history. Descents of some of the manors (based largely on the 19th-century manuscripts of Edward Reade, brother of the novelist Charles Reade) are given, but the history, and especially the economic history, of this part of Oxfordshire has not yet been written. The main value of the book consists of the author's memories, the recollections of people he has known, and his descriptions of the villages, the buildings, and the countryside, as they were during the earlier part of this century and as they are now. Each of the churches and chapels and each of the important houses is described, and of many there is a drawing. The book could only have been written by someone closely acquainted with the region; the fact that a donkey worked the water wheel at Ipsden House as late as 1904, for example, may not be important, but it was part of the history of that house.

For anyone who wants to know about these parishes, this book is indispensable. As an example of reasonably priced book production it is, except for the lack of an index, admirable. The detailed drawings, the majority by C. H. Chapman and many of them conveniently placed in the midst of the text, are charming.

HESTER JENKINS.

The History of the Borough of High Wycombe: from its Origins to 1880. By L. J. Ashford. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960. Pp. xiii, 343, maps. Price 35s.

The History of the Borough of High Wycombe: from 1880 to the Present Day. By L. J. Mayes. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960. Pp. xi, 94, illus., map. Price 15s.

The History of Chairmaking in High Wycombe. By L. J. Mayes. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960. Pp. xiv, 174, illus. Price 25s.

This trilogy of books on High Wycombe form a history which is of considerably more than local interest. The earlier history is the work of a scholarly master at Wycombe Grammar School, recently appointed to the post of Headmaster of the new Grammar School at Burnham, Buckinghamshire. Mr. Ashford took advantage of an Oxford Schoolmaster Studentship to pursue his subject with admirable thoroughness, and the result is a well-documented and accurate study of the development of this ancient Borough. He described it himself as ' an attempt to trace the history of Wycombe as a medieval town . . . and to see it as an historical unit ', and goes on to say, ' It is a mere fragment of the history of England. From the point of view of those modern historians whose wide and far-seeing vision can take in only the rise and fall of whole civilizations, it is no doubt as useless as the parish pump.

Yet for many centuries the people who lived in this small Borough formed a community with a life and character of its own; with its own problems and experiences in human relationships, its own hopes, terrors and achievements, and, if you like, its own crimes and follies. Such is, surely, the proper stuff of history on any scale.'

The second book takes up the story from the year when the medieval boundary of the Borough was abandoned. The author, the Borough Librarian and Curator of the Art Gallery and Museum, worked in co-operation with the author of the earlier history. The illustrations add much to the value of this book, and motorists who suffer from the familiar congestion in the main road today would hardly credit that the nostalgic scene on plate 6, ' Cows belonging to the "rated inhabitants" of the Borough, making their way through the town en route to their homes after leaving the Rye ', was a regular evening sight until the right of depasturing was extinguished in 1927. Other changes, equally drastic, are described, and illustrated. The general picture is of development and expansion only to be expected of a town with a thriving industrial life, situated on and around a main route to London and only thirty miles from the Metropolis. The chapter on ' Public Affairs and Politics ' is enlivened by a reference to the ancient ceremony of "Weighing the Mayor ", revived in 1893, and, in recent years, frequently filmed by news-cameras and shown all over the world. The account of the part played in local government by Miss Frances Dove, Headmistress of Wycombe Abbey School, is equally entertaining.

Mr. Mayes is a lucid and modest writer, whose wide knowledge of the neighbourhood includes a close acquaintance with the history of the industry for which High Wycombe is world-famous. He says, in his preface to *The History of Chairmaking in High Wycombe*, that his joint office as Librarian and Museum Curator have brought him ' many enquiries from students and others seeking to supplement the scanty material available in print '. The book is the result of knowledge accumulated and co-ordinated over the years, with the object of assisting such students. Much of the information it contains was obtained at first hand, from men engaged in the industry, including the old bodgers whose huts and primitive lathes, set up in clearings in the beech-woods, have survived into our own day. The development of the ancient rural craft of chair-making into a vast industry is traced, with some account of the methods used in manufacturing, the premises, and other conditions of work and pay, and the general effect on the town.

Interest in local history appears to be increasing and it is probable that these three authoritative and well-produced books will have a wide appeal. The Borough Council is to be congratulated on its choice of authors, and on arranging with Messrs. Routledge and Kegan Paul to undertake publication. MARY STANLEY-SMITH.

Oxfordshire Clergy, 1777-1869. By Diana McClatchey. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1960. Pp. 252. Price 45s.

The long-awaited publication of Dr. McClatchey's book is something of a landmark in both ecclesiastical and local history. Certainly nothing like it has been attempted for Oxfordshire in the recent past, and it opens up an enormous field of valuable study. We may perhaps feel at the end that we have suspected a lot of this for a long time, but now it is possible to turn to Dr. McClatchey and cite documentary evidence for the social status of the Oxfordshire clergy during the formative period between Bishop Butler and Bishop Wilberforce.

This is primarily a social survey: the clergy who ministered within the county are treated as a social group, and emerge as bulwarks of county society. The religious side of the matter is always in the background, but the author has left us to draw our own conclusions on the religious reasons for change and the religious merits of the high and varied status of the parish priest. This is partly due to the nature of the sources: financial and economic and judicial activity leave more or less permanent record, whilst spiritual activity and aspiration tend to leave less durable record on the fleshy tablet of the parochial heart. And Dr. McClatchey has an axe to grind: I fear she has been misled by the Victorian reformers into too rigid a separation of the sacred and the secular, so that there is a vaguely conspiratorial air about her admirable detective work: an interest in enclosures or in railway development is recorded triumphantly almost like the discovery of a skeleton in the rectory cellar! Perhaps as a parish clergyman in the 1960's one becomes too sensitive, but I fancy that the parson-baiters are in for a feast!

The main source for this copiously documented volume consists of the diocesan archives now mercifully in the safe keeping of the Bodleian; but the author has drawn on a bewildering variety of printed sources and local archives. The book is a model of industry and clear arrangement, and may safely be recommended as a model for future workers in the field. But the trouble with all such books which rely on archive material is that they are necessarily rather fragmentary. Too often one side of a correspondence can be discovered, too often a correspondence peters out just when it is getting interesting. A man's presence on a particular occasion has to be pressed into service as evidence of interest, and nothing survives to show the possible injustice of judging a man by the company he keeps—especially on public occasions. I am not suggesting that Dr. McClatchey is a great offender in this matter: she suffers from the nature of her material, and uses it both intelligently and fairly. But the inevitable result is a somewhat discursive volume, in which we have tantalising glimpses of people and incidents. We are left feeling we would like to know more: but where shall we find the material to add to what we have?

The book is divided into two parts. The first examines the position of the clergy against an economic background. Who did the work of the parishes? The county of Oxford is not a typical case, because the university had a great influence upon the pattern of parochial work. Fellows of colleges often did Sunday duty, or held the benefices as non-residents; whilst at a later stage in their careers they might desire to marry or to retire from teaching duties and thus take up more permanent work in a country parish. This gave the county the services, whether whole or part-time, of a group of able men, whose interests were not narrowly parochial. Otherwise, the story was much the same as elsewhere—non-resident incumbents, often related to the patron, who left the duties to ill-paid curates, men without influence who had little hope of a benefice. Dr. McClatchey makes it clear that the main underlying reasons for this state of affairs were economic; many benefices had no parsonage house, and many were too poor to provide a proper living. It was neither the Evangelical revival nor the Oxford Movement which brought about a better state of things: in fact the trough was reached early in the 19th century, when the Evangelicals had captured the Establishment, and the improvements began with the Parliamentary reforms of the 1830's. The Oxford Movement gave a great impetus because it magnified the office of a Bishop at a time when Oxford had a great though un-Tractarian bishop; and because it stressed the separateness of the clergy.

Bit by bit, the extraneous interests of the clergyman were whittled away. The priest had to serve the Temple rather than display the Christian faith in its completeness. Dr. McClatchey is clearly on the side of the reformers, but she makes it plain that there was still a lot of scope left to the parish priest at the end of her period.

It is impossible to avoid some comparison with present-day conditions. We find today that the motor-car has replaced the horse, but the peripatetic curate and the ubiquitous incumbent are back with a vengeance. The incomes of the clergy are being gradually improved by business methods, and perhaps we can hope to see a better standard of pastoral care in fifty years' time, just as the enclosure movement helped to lay the foundations for better work in the Victorian period. On the other hand, the clergy are still being squeezed out of the educational world, on the plea of pastoral necessity. Such comparisons in abundance will strike the reader of the first half of the book, and may colour his reading of the second.

The second part is more descriptive, and covers a great variety of activity. It also contains some more extended individual portraits, such as that of Vaughan Thomas, the gloriously eccentric vicar of Yarnton, whose work for the Radcliffe hospitals was of the first importance. Clergymen could win a local reputation in numberless ways—as farmers, teachers, magistrates, politicians and philanthropists, whilst the parson's pleasures ranged from antiquities to hunting. A good parish priest interpreted his duties in a very liberal sense; as time went on, more time might be devoted to services and sacraments, but hard facts forced the clergy to take their place as leaders of rural society. Often there was no resident squire, sometimes the parson and squire were related, but the incumbent was usually of a substance which marked him as a gentleman, education and religion apart. It is surely perverse to complain about this: it could not be otherwise. And now the wheel had turned full circle: Bishop Wilberforce's efforts to curb the farming activities of the rector of Chinnor seem rather dated when one has been reading such a book as Martin Thornton's *Essays in Pastoral Reconstruction*.

Dr. McClatchey seems to me to be on weak ground in reiterating the charge of unparsonical behaviour, which Victorian propagandists brought against the parson who took an active share in public and social affairs. But she is surely right to draw attention to the dangers of exclusive attachment to the ruling caste. Actively as the clergy worked for universal education, their vision was curiously narrow. It was thought right to teach a peasant child to read, but writing and arithmetic were considered dangerously superfluous, and even Bishop Wilberforce objected to educating children above their station (pp. 142-143). The clergy were amongst the most diligent and severest magistrates, and tended to exercise the most savage discipline against poachers (p. 195 f.). And the care taken to safeguard the clergyman's interests in the enclosure movement could not have endeared certain parsons to their flock. The clergy had their blind spots, but the general verdict seems to be that they cared for their people and showed their concern within a well-understood social framework, which many did much to improve.

On one point of personal detail, I fear I must join issue with Dr. McClatchey. On page 96, note 3, she records that Edward Elton, vicar of Wheatley, was surprised and disappointed that the name of Bishop Wilberforce did not appear in the division lists against the disestablishment of the Irish Church, adding, ' It was felt that the absence of a strong lead from him against the measure was not unconnected with his translation to the see of Winchester '. I am not sure whether my real adversary

is Elton or Dr. McClatchey, and at this time of day it is perhaps wasted effort to try to mitigate the general charge of ambition which posterity has levelled at Samuel Wilberforce. But on this particular point there is substantial evidence to be weighed in mitigation. Wilberforce was perhaps the most effective opponent of Irish disestablishment when Gladstone first introduced it in 1868. But he was convinced that as a result of the general election of that year, Gladstone had a mandate to disestablish the Irish Church, and in his view the only practicable course was to secure the best possible terms. He had a pamphlet ready for the press, in which he advocated this point of view, but on the advice of Gladstone and the Bishop of Peterborough (Magee) refrained from publishing. In desisting from the vote on both the second and third readings, Wilberforce was acting contrary to the expressed wishes of Gladstone, who knew that his friend was opposed to the measure and intended to do all he could to amend it (British Museum, Add. MS. 44536, f. 173). Reference to Hansard will show that the Bishop did all he could in the committee stage to amend the Bill. As for the charge of ambition, Gladstone had sought the archbishopric of York for his friend in 1862, and there is no reason to doubt that if Longley had survived the election of 1868, Wilberforce might have succeeded him at Canterbury. His appointment to Winchester was, therefore, a foregone conclusion, but it is worth noting that although the Irish Church Bill had its third reading on 12 July, the see of Winchester was not offered until 12 September, 1869.

The criticisms I have made must not leave the impression that I have anything but admiration for Dr. McClatchey's achievement. Her work, in typescript, was generously put at my disposal, and helped me greatly in my own researches; and now that it is in print, I hope many more people will be able to enjoy it and profit from it, for I am sure they will find it as fascinating as I did. Practically every parish in the county should find something of local interest, and all who are interested in the history of Oxfordshire, or of the established Church, should put this book on their reading-lists without delay. The first half contains copious information on matters to delight the historian, and the second should stimulate the appetite of the general reader for history which gets down to grass roots. Both will savour some of the authentic atmosphere of the period, and all may well be led to ponder why the achievements of the Victorians have withered so soon. Was it because the parson was accepted too blindly as an ecclesiastical squire, or did they adopt without enough scrutiny the belief that a parson should seek to separate himself from his people? I happen to differ from Dr. McClatchey on this point, but like her I am content to leave the decision to the reader.

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