

NOTICES OF BOOKS

 ROLLS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF OF BEDS
 and BUCKS, 1332—1334.

BY G. HERBERT FOWLER.

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We were already much indebted to Dr. Fowler for his production of the *Pipe-Rolls of Beds and Bucks, 1189—1199*. He has now increased our obligation by the magnificent monument of scholarship which deals with the Sheriff Rolls of 1332-4. Two documents are dealt with. The first is unique, and is a Roll of Writs and Returns; it was found in the William Salt Library at Stafford. The second is the third known example of its kind, and deals with Bedfordshire. It was found at Drayton House, Northants, by one of our members, Miss Joan Wake.

In his introduction Dr. Fowler outlines the multi-farious duties of a sheriff in Edward III.'s reign; he makes it very clear that the office was then, as he says, far from being a sinecure. He shows that writs were issued from and returned by the Sheriff to the Courts of Chancery, Exchequer, King's Bench, and Common Bench. Since some kind of writ is at the base of every entry in the Roll this leads Dr. Fowler to an interesting speculation as to how far attorneys were organized to obtain these writs for their pro-vincial clients, and how far the Sheriff, or his messengers, acted as agents in procuring them. Next is considered the area over which the writ was enforce-able; then come the service of Summons, Attach-ment, distraint, and arrest writs, with numerous other consequential documents, the function of which is described and the writ is illustrated from actual examples; then the Return of the writs is explained. This Introduction, which makes the tangle of mediæval

law as easy to follow as an account of a modern law-suit in the *Times*, occupies some 30 pages, and is followed by half as many pages of select entries "chosen primarily to illustrate the kind of work which was imposed upon the Sheriff," but with additions "because of their legal, social, personal, or topographical interest." The entries are an expanded transcript of the original Latin, which is by no means difficult to follow in that form, and becomes quite easy with the invaluable Martin's *Record Interpreter* at hand.

Such an extraordinary insight into the working of the Law provides a picture of county life in the fourteenth century of which we have no parallel. The present writer is quite incompetent to do it full justice, but it is so clearly set forth as to interest all our members. He has but one grumble to make, and that concerns the very unattractive formation of the publication. It is probably designed to be uniform with other publications, but a page which measures $14\frac{1}{2}$ by $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches forms a volume 2 inches higher than Lipscomb, or the *Victoria County History*. It is printed in double columns, and the pages are so closely set as to make reading no easy process. Knowing the great difficulty of reproducing such material, however, the reviewer can only conclude by an expression of gratitude to Dr. Fowler for having given us such a great monument of his faithful scholarship.

THE PENN COUNTRY AND THE CHILTERN

BY RALPH M ROBINSON.

JOHN LANE, 15S.

Mr. Robinson is the last man in the world to wish to pose as an antiquary, and this is not the place in which to attempt any serious review of this volume with its occasionally successful illustrations by Mr. Charles Bathurst. It would be both idle and ungracious to point out the slips inevitable to one who does not profess himself a topographer. To take two examples at random from either end of the book we find (p. 4) it stated that "on the lawns of Hughenden the Young England party was born." This is not

borne out by Monypenny's *Life*, which assigns its origin to 1843 (vol II., ch. 6), and its culminating point to 1844 (vol II., ch. 8), whilst Hughenden was not acquired until 1848 (vol. VII., ch. 6). On p. 196 of Mr. Robinson's book is a description of Bledlow, where the Lyde is called the "Glyde," with perfect disregard of its obvious derivation.¹ Still more un-happily the word is repeated with a misquotation of the lines regarding the strange chasm for which the best source is Anthony à Wood's *Life*.² In 1649 the tradition, one presumes, was fresher.

On p. 57 Mr. Robinson quotes from a book by Mr. E. S. Roscoe; it would have been more graceful to quote from the earlier edition of that delightful work which bore the title *Penn's Country* (1907)—but it might then have discounted something from the creation of the present book's title which is given on p. 5.

No, it is an agreeable work,—bulky for walkers, but charming for literary loungers. The wise topo-grapher will not quote from it without further verification.

WADDESDON AND OVER WINCHENDON

BY C. OSCAR MORETON. LONDON: C.P.C.K., 6S. 6D.

These parochial histories by the late Curate of Waddesdon are of considerable interest. In order, probably, to make them useful to the parishioners a certain amount of general history has been introduced into the text. This is always regrettable, as one always grudges space for this purpose in a work of purely local interest.

Whilst there is not much evidence of original work in some directions, it must be remembered that Mr. Moreton was less interested in the Manorial history than in the Rectorial history, and that in the case of Waddesdon, with its three "portions," is very interesting. The Registers and Churchwarden's books

¹ See Mawer and Stenton's *Place Names of Bucks*, p. 169,

² Edn. 1772, p. 61.

have been usefully drawn upon, and a great deal of valuable information about field-names and personal names is made available. At the end is a large map showing the actual fields and forming a record of the highest value. Another interesting map of Westcott and Woodham is based upon the 16th century map at Doddershall.

The book is well "documented," but the proofs have been badly read and references to pages are sometimes left blank. Mr. Moreton surprisingly attributes (pp. 133 and 164) the excellent *Bucks Biographies* to "Miss Verney" !

Altogether one wishes that every parish had as useful a record of the known facts relating to its history.