

## REVIEWS

*The Romance of a Chiltern Village*, by the Rev. A. H. Plaisted, Vicar of Medmenham. (The Village Book Shop, Medmenham, 1958).

This is the latest of the Rev. A. H. Plaisted's books on the pleasant Thames-side village of Medmenham. His earlier volumes, *The Manor and Parish Records of Medmenham* and *The Parsons and Parish Registers of Medmenham*, are exhaustive so far as the subjects with which they treat are concerned. The present volume, however, deals with the general history of the parish: its church, principal houses, ancient families, farms, highways and traditions; in fact, with every aspect of village life throughout the centuries. The book is well produced and illustrated and, supplementing as it does the author's earlier volumes, it can confidently be recommended to all who are interested in Buckinghamshire local history.

A.V.W.

*Collins' Guide to English Parish Churches*. Edited by John Betjeman (Collins, 1958, 30s.).

This long-awaited book deserves a warm and appreciative welcome. There are 16,000 parish churches in England and the Isle of Man; no one is ever likely to visit them all, but many travellers in a strange district must have wished for some selective list showing the more interesting, either in an æsthetic, architectural or historical sense. Forty-four contributors cover the country by counties; each section has an introduction followed by a selective list of churches with brief notes on the outstanding points of interest. The Editor has himself written the London section and has had a hand in six of the counties; he has also contributed a long and fascinating introduction, part architectural development, part liturgical history, which will probably cause amused agreement or shocked disapproval, but his wit, erudition and love for the English Parish Church can never be in doubt.

Mr. Rouse has contributed the section on Bucks. and few will probably quarrel with his selection. He has distilled admirably the atmosphere of some of the more remote churches such as Boveney, Dunton, Hitcham, Tattenhoe and Stowe. In another

edition Colonel Bernard (of Nether Winchendon) should be correctly spelt and the reference to Aylesbury churchyard amended.

The whole book would gain from simple county maps showing the position of the selected churches. E.V.

*The Church and Village of Fulmer* (R. E. A. Lloyd, 1959). *Gerrards Cross and its Parish Church*, by E. C. Rouse and Rev. J. Gordon Harrison (1959).

Both these short histories deal not only with the parish church but also the villages concerned. Both too celebrate particular occasions—the centenary of the parish in the case of Gerrards Cross (formerly part of Chalfont St. Peter) and the 350th anniversary of the building of the present church in 1610 in the case of Fulmer.

Although only a few miles apart, the two parishes have little in common; the Gerrards Cross booklet describes in some detail not only Sir William Tite's Italianate Church but the parochial history of a rapidly expanding parish. Fulmer is by contrast an ancient foundation and there is more early history of the village and a more detailed description of the church itself.

The Fulmer book is particularly well produced, but both are good examples of the contemporary type of church guide with greater stress on social history and perhaps less antiquarian detail than in the past. E.V.