ANGLO-NORMAN CHURCH HISTORY[a].

If it be true, as we believe it is, that one great requisite for the biographer is to have some kindred feelings with the man whose actions he proposes to narrate, then we need not be surprised to find that the labour which two advanced Liberals of our day have bestowed in the work before us on three medieval prelates and their times has produced anything rather than a satisfactory result. Joint authorship has at no time any particular recommendation for us, and we here see its defects and discordances prominently brought to light. One of the writers (whether Washington or Mark we care not to inquire) is evidently far more anti-episcopal than the other, and he seems to have furnished the bulk of the book, the main particulars of which are uniformly related in a disparaging tone; but his *confrère* comes to the rescue with a character of each prelate much more favourable than we should look for from the premisses; so that we are left to choose between them. Both authors, however, agree that the Church history of "the first five Norman kings" is "sterile" and "obscure;" and they inform us that it is only the example of Lord Macaulay in "relieving and unravelling the history of the thirteenth century," that has induced them to bestow a thought upon their subject. When we consider the tone of his lordship's narrative, we need not wonder that his imitators have found Lanfranc "deficient in veracity" (p. 56); Anselm, the prime actor in a scene that "closely bordered on the ridiculous" (p. 173); and Becket, though on the whole much the best spoken of, the author of "a letter breathing the spirit of a Luther rather than that of a favoured saint, within two years of his apotheosis" (p. 431). Scant justice the three prelates are likely to receive at such hands, yet the appearance of this book is no mean testimony to the hold that their names have on the memories of men, and it may be worth while to see in what light they are represented seven or eight centuries after they have passed away by avowed opponents of the Church system that they supported. It is, indeed, with the opinions enunciated, rather than with the facts brought forward, that we have to do, as the latter, being drawn mainly from such ordinary sources as the translations of Malmesbury and Orderic, supplemented here and there by Dr. Henry and Thierry, add nothing to our previous knowledge; but that is a complaint that may be urged against too many modern biographies.

Lanfranc, then, we learn, was born at Pavia, in the year 1005; his father was a senator of the city, and the son, after a course of study at Bologna, adopted the profession of the law, in which he attained high reputation. But his ideas were too "large and expansive" for his occupation, so he strangely retired to a less civilised country, Normandy, and there he for awhile contented himself with teaching logic at Avranches, and training up a school of subtle disputants. But he was unhappy in this also: "his mind was struggling to break those huge mysteries which lie round about every form of religious faith, and which must be passed ere a man can find himself within the sacred enclosure." As a means to this end he became a monk at Bec, then "poor, and unknown, and unvisited," but by his talents to be

[a] "The Three Archbishops: Lanfranc—Anselm—A'Becket. By Washington and Mark Wilks." (London: Alfred William Bennett.)

raised to distinction. From a simple monk he soon became prior; founded a school which eclipsed the forsaken seminary of Avranches; made journeys to Rome, sometimes on political, sometimes on ecclesiastical affairs; was removed to the monastery of St. Stephen at Caen, and founded a school there also; maintained a long controversy with Berengarius; and eventually, on the displacement of Stigand, was, much against his own will, consecrated archbishop of Canterbury. This high office he held for nineteen years, dying at the age of eighty-four, on the 28th of May, 1089.

Arrogant and impetuous, yet knowing how to give way at the proper moment in his contests with his lord, William of Normandy; a stern disciplinarian to his subordinates, especially if Saxons; inspired, indeed, by a contemptuous aversion for his English flock; and an opponent of Berengarius from policy rather than from conviction,—such is the Lanfranc of our authors, as shewn in their record of his acts; and it is only by the duality of authorship that we can understand how, from such premisses, the following character has been arrived at:—

"The character of Lanfranc has been shewn in the actions we have recorded of him, and needs neither criticism to expose its weakness, nor eulogium to extol its merits. It is sufficient to say of him, that if he was ambitious, it was the ambition of lofty attainments, and that he never sacrificed to itself the interests of others; that if he was haughty, it was the pride of a man who felt himself superior in nature and in pursuits to the creatures around him, who squandered or dreamed away their lives. In a period of tranquillity and order, when merit usually receives its appreciation, and industry its reward, it would be small praise to say of a public man, that he had kept his hands unstained by bribes, had taken no advantage of his position to benefit himself. But in an age when plunder and rapacity were general, when offices in the Church were obtained by purchase, and property in the State amassed by theft—to be able to say of one whose opportunities were great for self-aggrandisement, that in his time no sinister means could profit a bishop, nor could an abbot obtain advancement by purchase [b], that though he amassed wealth, yet no voice was raised to denounce its owner, while many blessed his benevolence—is to indicate a character of high moral worth. And all this may be said of Lanfranc."—(pp. 140, 141.)

Agreeing in the main with this, we could wish that our authors had not contented themselves with denying so very faintly as they do the charge to which, in more places than one, they give currency, that Lanfranc was, from first to last, a mere adventurer, who entered the Church as the readiest way of rising in the State.

It is, however, mainly as a teacher that Lanfranc is celebrated in these pages, and though there is nothing very striking about it, we may give a few readable passages from our authors' estimate of schools and scholarship in the middle ages:—

"A modern reader, and especially one engaged in education, would be interested to know what forms the instructions of such a teacher as Lanfranc would take, what books he would expound, what subjects he would teach, whether his pupils were dependent solely on their memories for the retention of his discourses, or whether there were text-books to which they could refer. It is to be lamented that no pupil or disciple of such a man has left us a record of these things, or that no student at Bec had also been its chronicler. But, failing such information, we must content ourselves with the general descriptions and accidental notices which occur in the pages of the ordinary histories of ancient and modern writers; remembering that they extend over a period of two or three centuries, but one in which neither the schools nor books underwent any considerable change.

"The schools of the middle ages were of three kinds. First: Those established in connexion with cathedrals. Second: Conventual, or those annexed to monasteries.

[b] "Malmsbury, book iii."

And third: Secular, national, or municipal schools, independent of religious institutions. Of these last, such men as Charlemagne and our own Alfred were the originators and most prominent supporters. Charlemagne especially devoted himself to the establishment of seminaries, and was greatly assisted by the learned of his time. The Bishop of Orleans, under his direction, opened parish schools, in which the education offered was gratuitous. 'To Alcuin,' we are told, 'the universities of Paris, Tours, Fulden, Soissons, and many others owe their origin and increase[c].' The schools of Paris, that became so celebrated in the twelfth, date their birth as far back as the ninth century; and it will be remembered, Lanfranc himself held one of the schools at Avranches, prior to his entrance at Bec.

"But a more important and more numerous class of schools were the conventual, or monastic seminaries, which the younger members of society were free to attend. The originators, and most of the supporters of monastic institutions, enjoined upon their followers the necessity of opening schools in connection with their foundations, and the result was that, during the seventh century for example, many monasteries were founded, both in England and on the continent, in each of which schools were opened. But, as it was shewn in the last chapter, the monks were not an intellectual class of men, and the labour of teaching was not generally in favour with them. Owing to this circumstance, and the universal decay of learning during the tenth century, schools were badly supported, and the cause of education progressed slowly. But towards the close of that period a more vigorous and intelligent spirit was apparent, and the desire for instruction again took possession of the minds of men. * * *

"The most common arrangement of the subjects of instruction between the eighth and twelfth centuries was that known as the Trivium and Quadrivium, the first of which included grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric; the second,—music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. At no time in the middle ages does the whole of this course appear to have been studied. The laity were proverbially ignorant, and the clergy almost invariably idle. That most illustrious patron of learning, Charlemagne, was incapable of writing; and one of the most industrious of the clergy speaks of the 'long and intricate calculations of arithmetic as sufficient to overwhelm the mind and throw it into despair[d].'" * * * * *

"The changes in the course of study that had taken place at the beginning of the eleventh century do not appear to have been very great. The division of subjects remained the same as in the eighth century, but was not more strictly attended to than then. The only part of the Trivium that received much attention was the Latin language, taught from the little treatise by Donatus, and from the extracts of Priscian. A growing importance attached to the art of reasoning. In the next century this subject, or dialectics, as it was called, received more than its due share of attention; but in this age it was regarded rather as an abstract science than as one to be applied to the solution of theological and ethical questions; and even Lanfranc himself denies that he makes use of it, when arguing with Berengarius the doctrine of the real presence, although his fame as a teacher rests almost entirely upon the success with which he taught this most intellectual of the arts. * * * *

"In grammar, the work most esteemed was called a Donat, owing to the fact of its having been compiled by Donatus, a grammarian of the fourth century, and, in connexion with another by Priscian, was in general use. As a scholar proceeded he was introduced to the 'Cato,' and the 'Doctrinal,' written by Sauvage, and other books, which were used for construing, and consisted of sentences, moralities, maxims of conduct, and even precepts of behaviour. Some were composed of precepts and examples united, as the 'Chastisement of a Father;' but the morals were very insipid. With regard to the classical authors read at this time, great diversity of opinion exists; but it is certain that, shortly after the Conquest, Virgil, Ovid, and others were daily studied in the schools[e]. Ingulphus, speaking of the reign of Edward the Confessor, says, 'I was educated in letters in my tender years at Westminster; from whence I was afterwards sent to the study of Oxford, where I made greater progress in the Aristotelian philosophy than any of my contemporaries, and became very well acquainted with the rhetoric of Cicero[f].' Dr. Lingard, commenting upon this passage, while he admits the doubt as to the date originally assigned to the work of Ingulphus, asserts that the

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[c] "Henry, Hist. Eng., bk. ii. vol. iv."

[d] "Ibid., bk. ii. ch. iv."

[e] "Fosbroke, British Monachism."

[f] "History of Croyland Abbey, p. 147. Bohn's ed."

classical authors mentioned in it were much more studied in the eleventh century than is generally supposed."—(pp. 23—30.)

Not at all more satisfactory is the sketch of the life of the second Norman archbishop. Possibly from a desire to write Church history rather than biography, such a picture is drawn that the reader will hardly conceive its original to be Anselm, the first of the Schoolmen, as he has been termed, who, as his latest editor remarks, "wrote numerous devotional works, which prove that the contemplation of the divine mysteries and the interior exercises of religion were far more to his mind than the public controversies in which he engaged for the defence of the Church." It is these latter, however, that his present biographers chiefly dwell upon, and their neglect to fulfil a promise made of noticing his "several learned works" (p. 161) will be a sufficient excuse for our offering hereafter a brief extract from one of them, which has very recently made its first appearance in an English dress[g].

Anselm, some thirty years the junior of Lanfranc, like him an Italian, and monk, prior, and abbot of Bec, was his successor in the archiepiscopal see. Of a devout temperament, his dreams, even from childhood, were of a monastic life, and when, after various difficulties and delays, he became a scholar under Lanfranc, he did not long remain a layman. He soon joined the fraternity, and ere long became the teacher of the school; after awhile he was chosen abbot, and for several years ruled his house wisely and well, even according to the shewing of our authors, who evidently are not prejudiced in favour of such institutions:—

"The life of Anselm at Bec did not differ very materially from that of his predecessor,—except that the convulsions in Normandy and the kingdom on the other side of the Channel required him to pay greater attention to the affairs of his monastery. His disposition was extremely meditative and religious. He loved to spend nights in the contemplation of mysteries, the meaning of which the wisest rarely extract. His piety was eminently *moyen age* in its character,—sombre, penitential, grotesque, and yet at times sublime in its expression. Severe as a prior and abbot, he seemed to feel both for himself and his monks that heaven was only to be reached by forced marches. He insisted that daily privations and mortifications were the especial glory of a monk. The inmates of Bec were, besides, often robbed of their simple fare to supply the necessities of strangers. Many years had passed since the little brotherhood had been obliged to submit to the rigours of a limited dietary. With the increase of Lanfranc's pupils, the wealth of the abbey and the number of monks had been greatly augmented; but during the administration of Anselm, owing probably to a failure in their crops, and certainly to the expenses incurred in making and putting up a new bell, the convent table was supplied with only beans and peas. A letter of the abbot remains, in which he thanks Lanfranc for the gift of twenty pounds sent by the archbishop to assist them in their temporary difficulties.

"The literary employments of Anselm during his life at Bec partook of his devotional character. He did not, as his predecessor had done, take much part in the controversies that were raging about him. No one who looked upon that mild and scholarly man, could have supposed that in a few years he was to be the forlorn hope of the ecclesiastical veterans who waged so terrible a war with the civil power."—(pp. 160, 161.)

The steps by which the abbot attained to his higher but less desirable dignity are told with a strong effort to make him appear anything rather than the truly pious and conscientious man that he was; but the known facts of his life will ever preserve to him the character of a sufferer for

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[g] *Cur Deus Homo*, (Oxford and London: Parkers,) "a work in which Anselm maintained, against Abelard and other rationalists, the wisdom, justice, and expediency of the incarnation of God for man's redemption."

conscience' sake. It is abundantly evident that he did not seek promotion, and it is equally clear that he refused to retain kingly favour by compliances that he esteemed sinful. This conviction has forced itself on his biographers, and they are obliged to do him justice in the parallel that they institute between him and his predecessor:—

"Anselm died on the 21st of April, 1109. They buried him near to his friend and master, to the south of the altar. His contemporaries have left a dreary record of his miracles, and of the marvels that occurred in connexion with him; they are not sufficiently ingenious to deserve transcription, and the only value we can attach to them is, that they shew us how very far before his time this great man was. He was undoubtedly the greatest and best man of his age; the world generally gives to Lanfranc the highest seat as a politician; and some have placed the piety of Anselm in the second place: the contrast is hardly a fair one; it is one in which both men lose. Lanfranc was a man whose courage and decision seemed more real than Anselm's, because accompanied with a greater force of expression; unconsciously, probably those who were opposed to him felt that they had to overcome decision not merely based on principle, but fortified by personal feeling; that his determination would be hardly less strong if there were no question of principle involved. With Anselm it was not a personal matter at all; it would have been, we believe, an impossibility to have engaged that man in a dispute about a single acre of ground which belonged solely to himself; rather than arouse or feel animosity and wrath, he would have sacrificed his right of possession. Even in the statement of his determination, his sensitive mind shrunk from a violent expression, and so quietly did he utter his decision that men of warm and pious tempers could not believe it real till it had been supported by time. A man can be a politician of any fortune, who considers facts in relation to the principles which underlie them; the successful politician is a man skilful in arrangements, rapid in resources, brilliant in execution, capable of seeing all present conditions, but careless of future contingencies; one whose moral nature submits without question to the necessity of an hour. Such a man was not Anselm; Lanfranc would never have gone into exile, nor would he have had any necessity for the admonitory letters of pope Paschal to restrain his zeal in the matter of clerical marriages and offspring.

"In regard to the religious character of the two men, we have no hesitation in placing Anselm above his predecessor. Lanfranc's mind was of that logical, critical order, that he could rest nowhere between atheism and superstition. That solemn authority which the Church possessed gave him at once the quiet certainty for which he longed; without it he would have hurried distractedly from object to object, striving to beat out from nature a something to believe; but when the Church supplied him with *the something*, he was satisfied; and then the power of the man came out, strengthened by the reverent authority of the universal Church, trusting to the voice that seemed to him from God, which told him his doctrine was truth; he laboured with an untiring industry and unquestioning faith to prove the Church had not erred. Philosophy and common sense condemn his method, but the hearts of all reflective men sympathize with the worker. With Anselm, the whole thing was different; doubt was an abnormal state with him, faith his natural condition; the truths he held were such as the affection of men have ever clustered around. Had no Church pronounced them true, his mind would have gone directly towards them, would have embraced them, and he would have proved them for others. He employed his logic not for the satisfaction of his own mind, but for the conquests of his creed. He taught that to the knowledge of God man might be directed only by the light of reason; but it is impossible not to see that the argument of the metaphysician is denied by the experience of the saint. To see the position he must have occupied had his intellect been ungoverned by those holy affections of his soul, we have only to look at the extravagance of the following century. By those who lived around him, however, Anselm was less understood than he is by the present day. It was reserved for a philosopher of a later age to appreciate and employ his methods, and for the Church in the fifteenth century to recognise his sanctity by canonization."—(pp. 306—309.)

The work of Anselm to which we have alluded is entitled "*Cur Deus Homo*, or Why God was made Man," and its publication is a gratifying circumstance, as affording the opportunity for the general reader to gain some idea of what the writings of the Schoolmen really are. The book is

a dialogue between Anselm and Boso, in which the latter brings forward many of the subtilties with which modern rationalism assails both the fact and the mode of man's redemption, and the former "justifies the ways of God to man" with arguments that have been often used, in somewhat modified language, by more modern writers. One brief citation from the chapter on Necessity will give a sufficient specimen of the scholastic reasoning of the eleventh century:—

"*Anselm.* We said just now that it is not correct to say that God cannot do a thing, or that He does it from necessity: for every necessity and impossibility is subject to His will. Now His will can yield to no necessity or impossibility: for nothing is necessary or impossible except because He so wills it. But that He should will a thing to be, or not to be, on account of necessity or impossibility, is contrary to the truth of His nature. Wherefore, (since all that He wills, and only what He wills, He does,) as no necessity or impossibility precedes His willing a thing to be or not to be, so neither does it precede His doing or not doing it, although He may unchangeably will and do many things. And as when God does a thing, after it has been done there is no longer a possibility of its not being done, but it is always true that it has been done; and yet it is not right to say that it is impossible for God to make what is past not past; for there no necessity of not doing it, or impossibility of doing it, operates, but the simple will of God, who wills that truth should always (since He Himself is Truth) be as unchangeable as He is: so if He purposes that He will unchangeably do a thing, although what He purposes could not, before it is done, possibly not be done, still there is not in Him any necessity of doing it, or impossibility of not doing it, because the only thing that operates with Him is His will. * * * * *

"Every necessity is either compulsion or prohibition; and these two necessities are directly opposed one to the other, as are 'must' and 'impossible.' For instance, whatever is compelled to be, is prohibited from not being; and whatever is compelled not to be, is prohibited from being; even as what must be is impossible not to be: and what must not be is impossible to be, and conversely. Now when we say that a thing must be or not be with God, it is not meant that there is with Him any necessity either compelling or prohibiting; but it is intended to express that in all other things there is a necessity prohibiting them from doing and compelling them not to do, contrary to what is spoken of with reference to God. For when we say that God must always speak the truth, and that it is impossible for Him ever to lie, nothing else is said but that it is impossible that anything can make Him either not speak the truth or lie."—(pp. 98—100.)

In the case of Becket the materials for a biography are far more abundant than in that of either of his predecessors in the archiepiscopal chair; Professor Stanley has enumerated no less than twenty-nine narrations[h], mostly by contemporary writers, which treat of his life, or more particularly of his death; but not above two or three of them have been consulted by our authors. Their sketch of the great champion of the Church is therefore very meagre indeed, so much so as hardly to bear analyzing. It commences with a rather tedious discussion of some ballads supposed to relate to his parentage, in which the pretty legend of the Saracen lady traversing many lands, crying, "London, London! Gilbert, Gilbert!" is dismissed as unworthy of credit, and the future archbishop is set forth as the son of Gilbert Becket, a London magistrate, and Rose, his Norman wife. A considerable number of pages is occupied by a reproduction of the description of London and its inhabitants from Fitzstephen; others, by fanciful speculations as to the cause of Becket's sudden advancement, and the rise and progress of his dispute with the king. These occupy so much room as to leave small space for the detail of mere facts; and when we come to the closing scene this is dismissed in a way that shews tamely indeed when placed side by side with the vivid and picturesque, yet minutely accurate,

[h] Historical Memorials of Canterbury, p. 45.

narrative of the accomplished author of the "Historical Memorials of Canterbury," a narrative most fascinating to read, but even still more impressive when, as has once been the case, delivered *viva voce* on the very spot where the prelate's life-blood was poured out in what he believed a just and lawful quarrel[1].

As with the other prelates, such facts as are given respecting Becket are told in a depreciatory tone, but we are happy to find, and to quote, one passage, which may act as a corrective, for it gives a fair and candid estimate of his position and character. After alluding to the contrariety of opinion that exists regarding him, the authors remark :—

"The first point on which arises a difference of opinion is that of Becket's demeanour immediately subsequent to his consecration. His monkish biographers, intent upon the glorification of an unnatural ideal, set forth, with super-clerical extravagance of diction, a certain change of character, immediately upon that event. 'Contrary to the expectations of the king and of all men,' says Fitzstephen, 'the glorious archbishop Thomas so abandoned the world, and so suddenly felt that change which is the handiwork of the Most High, that it filled all with astonishment.' But this 'painting with the vermilion rather than with the pen,' as one of them expresses it, has done great injustice to its subject. It has been made the ground of an historical calumny no less unjust and unphilosophical than that which, for nearly two centuries, divided the career of Cromwell into that of a fanatic and a hypocrite—honest regicide and crafty liberticide. All such violent bisections disappear before a candid examination of facts, and a charitable construction of motives. Looked at closely, all Fitzstephen's evidences of 'conversion' resolve themselves into indications of a natural adaptation to new circumstances. He who as chancellor had delighted in fine garments and a costly housekeeping, hunting and falconry, great company and books of law,—as archbishop wore sackcloth, fared on bread and water instead of meat and wine, submitted his back to the scourge, washed the feet of beggars, doubled his alms, and sat in the cloisters reading books of devotion. But the latter were just as proper to the archbishop as the former to the chancellor. The outward signs of humility and mortification enumerated were so thoroughly professional, that they excited remark only from their contrast to previous characteristics. So far from their being carried to the excess which would alone argue either affectation or fanaticism, there is indisputable evidence of this being accompanied by his old display of wealth and taste. . . . . .
And when Becket was in exile, so did the native taste cleave to him, that John of Poictiers counselled a more chastened style of living, as more in keeping with his own condition, and the habits of the religious house in which he found sanctuary. It may well be concluded, therefore, that Becket's demeanour was at least free from the charge of a hypocritical profession of saintship.

"The next point that arises is that of his change of relationship to the king. The popular notion on this head appears to be, that having obtained the primacy by countenancing the royal expectation of his proving a faithful as well as able servant, he insidiously converted it, from motives of personal ambition and pride, into a rival dominion; breaking faith with a generous master, and arrogantly opposing himself to the laws of which he had been the chief administrator. We have seen that there is no ground whatever for the first part of this theory—that so far from seeking the primacy, he as little desired as expected it; accepted the appointment with a reluctance which there is no reason to suspect; and expressly foretold the rupture of his friendship with the king. But here, again, probability as well as testimony is against the ordinary belief. Becket was at any rate well acquainted with the lives of Lanfranc and Anselm,—better still with the troubles of their successors,—and best of all with the character of Henry. It is giving him little credit for the foresight and calculation which should always accompany ambition, to suppose that he anticipated a life of easy power, where all his predecessors had found a seat of thorns. Even had he deliberately resolved to prove traitor to those spiritual principalities which he must solemnly swear to serve, before obtaining the means to serve another, he could scarcely have reckoned upon the quiescence of pope or clergy; the pope, whose anathema would leave him without a subject or a friend; the clergy, whose revolt would paralyze the favour of

[1] This occurred in July, 1858, at the meeting of the Kent Archæological Society.

the king. There is no escape from these difficulties but in the natural hypothesis that Becket was an honest man,—after the nature of men,—neither a miracle of saintship nor a prodigy of wickedness; but one of those strong, brave men, to whom resistance is easier than servitude,—who meet events as they come, without timid calculation, though not without some anxious foresight,—who may stoop to dissimulation for a moment, as a soldier may step behind a tree to avoid a momentary danger too great for him to encounter, but who scorns either to yield or flee in the great, prolonged battle of his life."—(pp. 368—372.)

It is satisfactory to find such a judgment as this put forth in the present day of one who is too commonly either over or under-estimated, and it reconciles us to passing over in silence several matters on which our opinions do not accord with those of our authors. Their work, on the whole, is readable, and if it should reach another edition, it might be improved by rectifying some strange instances of carelessness with regard to names. Though we can guess what is meant, we object to hear of "the Ante Regis," "Robert de Belèscue," "the earl of Montaigne," the battle of "Finchebray," "the earl of Poniton," or the castle of "Forlaise;" neither is it more to our taste to read of "Herbert de Boshaen," "Roger, earl of Clerc," the monk "Guin," or the murderer "Fitzarre;" we think "the Kentish village Runnel" must mean Romenal (Romney), and should prefer "plenary" to "pleasing absolution." These matters are not of consequence in themselves, but they suggest unpleasant doubts as to the trustworthiness of the book in other and more important respects.

FOSSIL FISH.

According to the "Sussex Express," some extraordinary specimens of fossil fish have been dug up by a party sinking a well at Mr. Best's brewery, that seem to substantiate Dr. Mantell's theory of this portion of the Weald having been in remote ages the site of an estuary, or the bed of an immense river, previous to the crust of the earth being so perfected as to become the abode of mammalia, and very possibly thousands on thousands of years before it was inhabited by man. The well-diggers under the super soil found a sand rock, extending in depth nearly ten feet, beneath which they came upon a chalky *débris* in the shape of marl, intersected occasionally by layers of a harder substance. At the depth of forty feet from the surface they suddenly came on a smooth sand rock, evidently once the bed of a river, for it was here they came upon the fossils, and it is somewhat extraordinary that they should hit upon the specimens found in the small circumference of a well. One of them is a petrified eel, evidently of the conger species, perfect from the lips to the tip of the tail, measuring a trifle over four feet in length, and lying on its belly, with the body slightly undulated, exactly as we see the muscular movements of a dying eel assume when we have severed the upper part of the spine. The other is a perfect petrifaction of a fish that the writer of this article is not naturalist enough to define, but it seems to be of the salmon species, which the tail and the dorsal fin specify, but the lower part of the body is not so tapering as the salmon, the salmon trout, or the common trout, of the present day. It more resembles an occasional visitor in our brooks known as the "bull trout," that is shorter and thicker in the body, but in other respects very much resembles the salmon trout. The length of this fossil is about two feet six inches, a size the genera does not grow to in these times, and the depth of the body at the dorsal fin, nine inches. The specimens are really worthy the attention of the geologist and naturalist. We must observe that the fossils are covered with bivalves and other shells, evidently the accumulation of years after the fish, by getting into waters charged with petrifying qualities, met with death.