that the custom of ruling ceased about the year 1421.

The first author who certainly mentions black lead is Conrad Gesner, in his book on fossils printed at Zurich, in 1565; he says that people had pencils for writing, which consisted of a wooden handle with a piece of lead, or as he believed an artificial mixture, called by some *stimmi Anglicanum*, and he actually gives a drawing of a lead pencil, which shows that they could not have been very common. In 1596 Cæsalpinus gives a more or less complete description of plumbago or graphite, and a little later Imperato says that black lead pencils are much more convenient than pen and ink, because the marks made with it not only show on a white ground, but on account of their brightness will also show on a black ground; and Bartholomew Ambrosinus writing in 1648, still thought it worth while to give a representation, an enlarged one, of Gesner's figure of a lead pencil, to which reference has already been made. Very probably in the 16th century the use of plumbago was introduced into the drawing schools of Italy, where its superiority to chalk soon became evident; but artists also used silver pencils, and often not plumbago pencils at all, but pencils made of an alloy of two parts of lead and one of tin fused together.

The use of red and black chalk seems to be much more modern, but charcoal must have been long used by painters, as it is now for sketching or outlining their work.

How completely Browning makes us see this, as he does everything pertaining to art, in his lines on Andrea del Sarto—

"Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go,"

or when Del Sarto says:—

"I am bold to say,
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at the bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep."

When we think of all the pencil can do, it is strange to remember that the world has only used it a few hundred years, and yet what wonderful results my prehistoric friend on the Surrey heath may have produced with the fragments of flint he chipped so deftly, and then left for us to muse upon and ponder over.

A Book of the Week.

"LYRE AND LANCET."*

"Lyre and Lancet" is a story written in scenes, and it made its first appearance in the pages of *Punch*. The author of "Vice Versa" (and all the various *voces populi* that have charmed and delighted that innate sense of fun which is latent in even quite dull and sedate looking persons) has proved in this delectable comedy that he has not lost any of his keen humour and lightness of touch. "Lyre and Lancet" is heartily to be recommended as a companion for the holidays. It is full of mirth, and a smile lurks in every page. Mr. Undershell, a minor poet, and James Spurrell, M.R.C.V.S., are both invited down to Wyvern Court. By a series of coincidences which the art of Mr. Anstey makes marvellously probable, the poet and the vet. change places. The bard finds himself in the servants' hall, and the horse doctor among the elect company who are staying at Sir Rupert Cuberin's. Now it is easy to see what possibilities there are in such a plot, but Mr. Anstey makes the most of every possibility, and in consequence the scenes describing how miserable both these victims of circumstances were in their unaccustomed surroundings are delightful reading. It was, however, only to be expected that the vet. prospered the best, and certainly in the long run proved himself to possess a better nature than the poet, whose pseudonym, by the way, was Clarion Blair. Here is a specimen of his decadent verse, which Mr. Anstey has contrived to impregnate with the very essence of comic parody:—

"My love has sicklied unto loath,
And foul seems all that fair I fancied;
The lily's sheen a leprous growth,
The very buttercups are rancid!"

The sentiments expressed in these lines amply justify Archie Bearpack's apt remark on hearing them, "The Johnny who wrote that must have been feelin' chippy."

The verses and remarks theron that follow are all equally suggestive and happily expressed. The conversation engaged in by the habitués of the housekeeper's room at Wyvern Court lead one to suspect that Mr. Guthrie has a genius for intuition. Miss Dolman and Mrs. Chiffon, the ladies' maids, M. Ridevos, the *chef*, Mrs. Pomfret, the housekeeper, and Tredwell the butler, are admirable characterisations. This rigorous etiquette of the "Pug's Parlour" (as the sanctum of the housekeeper's room is called by the under servants) is amusingly illustrated by the indignation expressed by Mrs. Pomfret when the underscullery-maid had presumed to walk into the church pew before the second laundry maid. In the exalted circle of the housekeeper's rooms "Clarion Blair" is evidently considered very "un-genteel" indeed. But upstairs the vet. makes friends with all the ladies by talking to them about their pet dogs, and with all the gentlemen by giving them tips about the forthcoming races, and is voted not half a bad chap for a poet.

But readers must search the pages of the story themselves and read all the amusing and uncomfortable complications that arise from the changing of *rôles* between the two principal characters. The women of the story are also well drawn. The Countess of Cantire, Lady Cuberin, Lady Maisie Mull, Miss Spelman and Philipson are all living creations, although they only flit across the pages of this truly comic little book.

Some people may think that the reviewer praises this little volume too enthusiastically and argue that it is too slight to merit such warm eulogies, but the truth is that in these degenerate days it is so rare a treat to find a really good book of nonsense and it is so refreshing after reviewing a course of problem novels, pessimistic (*so-called*) philosophy (for true philosophy can never be pessimistic), and serious "nonsense," to open a little book full of breezy good sense although it is disguised behind the laughing mask of a most excellent comedy.

A. M. G

* "Lyre and Lancet," by P. Anstey. 3s. (Smith, Elder.)