Proceedings

of the

Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society,

during the Year 1884.

THE Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting was held at Shepton Mallet, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, the 26th, 27th, 28th August.

Mr. W. E. SURTEES, in vacating the presidential chair, said that the office to which he had the honour of being elected twelve months ago, he was then about to resign. The happiest thing for an official so situated was to have an eminent successor. Led by the crest and defended by the shield of Lord Carlingford—*Forte scutum salus ducum*—he anticipated for them an exceedingly agreeable and instructive expedition, and three days of enjoyment.

Lord Carlingford then took the chair as President for the year.

Mr. GREEN *(Hon. Sec.)* read the

Annual Report,

which was as follows:—

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"In presenting their Thirty-sixth Annual Report, your

Council are glad to be enabled to repeat the assurance given last year of the continued prosperity of this Society.

"The number of Members amounts to 507, being about the same as last year.

"The financial position at the end of the year 1883 was satisfactory, exhibiting a favourable balance of £33. 12s. 6d., notwithstanding the outlay of £45. 1s. 6d. for books and book-cases purchased from the library of the Taunton Institution, as mentioned in last year's Report.

"The Castle Purchase Fund, at the end of the year 1883, showed a balance of £409. 3s. 3d. against the Society, as compared with £491. 11s. 5d. the previous year—a reduction of £82. 9s. 2d.

"It was stated in your Council's Report of last year that there was an absolute necessity for the re-roofing of the geological room, and that Mr. Ferrey had been requested to furnish a report on this subject. In accordance with his recommendation, and in pursuance of the sanction given at the last Annual Meeting, a contract was entered into with Mr. Charles Fox, of Taunton, under the supervision of Mr. Ferrey, for the sum of £324. This cost has been considerably increased by extra work, the necessity of which was not discovered till the old roof had been removed. But the result has been the re-appearance of a very ancient hall, with proportions which do honour to our Society.

"The re-arrangement of bedrooms for the Curator, and other work necessitated by the removal of the rooms in the roof of the geological room, have been satisfactorily effected at a cost of £64.

"The cost of plastering the geological room, the repair and restoration of some ancient windows, the re-building of a considerable portion of the upper main wall, found to be unsafe (all extra work), will, it is thought, bring the entire cost of the repairs and alterations to the sum of about £500.

"The Council are happy to report that the Society has

already received, through the liberality of its Members and friends, special contributions towards this expenditure, to the amount of £228. 11s. 6d. But, as there are no available resources out of which the balance can be paid, and it is most undesirable that the existing deficiency in the Castle Purchase Fund should be increased, they venture to repeat their appeal to all who may be interested in the preservation of the ancient buildings of the county to enable them, by means of additional donations, to liquidate the debt.

"In connection with these repairs, your Council present the following resolution, which was passed by the Building Committee, and your Council recommend it for your adoption:—'The Building Committee, finding that great inconvenience has arisen from the employment of a London architect, they would earnestly request that permission may be given to them to execute any necessary repairs without reference to an architect, but that in all cases a discretion may be left to them to employ an architect to superintend any important work, and that also they may be allowed to consult Mr. Ferrey in all cases that they may think of sufficient importance.'

"Your Council have to report that the staircase tower leading to the exchequer room has been re-built, through the munificence of Colonel Pinney, at a cost of upwards of £200, the work having been executed by Mr. Davis, of Taunton, under the superintendence of Mr. Ferrey. Duly appreciating this great liberality, the Society will no doubt authorise its Secretaries to report a vote of thanks to Colonel Pinney.

"Your Council report that the roadways to the Castle property over the Castle Green have been repaired to their satisfaction.

"Following a precedent set in Devonshire and Cornwall, the Committee have issued circulars to the clergy and churchwardens throughout this county, soliciting particulars of church plate, accompanied by forms to be filled up with dates, patterns, inscriptions, and other particulars worthy of record.

This has been responded to in many cases, but it is hoped that a far larger number of returns will still be forthcoming, affording interesting materials for future publication.

"Amongst our losses by death since the Society last met—happily, not numerous—your Council specially regret the death of Mr. John Henry Parker, C.B., the amiable and learned architectural writer, who for so many years had been in the habit of contributing to the instruction and cordiality of our Annual Meetings."

Mr. F. W. W. TYNDALE moved the adoption of the Report, which he thought would be accepted as an exceedingly satisfactory one.

Mr. J. M. SPENCER seconded the resolution, which was put and carried unanimously.

Mr. O. W. MALET read the

Treasurers' Account.

The Treasurers in Account with the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society, from Jan. 1st to Dec. 31st, 1883.

Dr.	£	s	d
1882, Dec. 31st.			
By Balance of former account	85	10	5
,, Members' Entrance Fees...	14	14	0
,, Members' Arrears of Subscriptions	9	9	0
,, Members' Subscriptions for the year 1883... ...	242	19	0
,, Members' Subscriptions in advance	5	15	0
,, Life Member	10	10	0
,, Excursion Tickets... ...	15	10	0
,, Donation from the Wiveliscombe Local Committee...	1	11	9
,, Sale of Engravings ...		10	0
,, Sale of Volumes of *Proceedings*	12	4	9
,, Museum Admission Fees...	26	12	0
	£425	5	11

Cr.	£	s	d
1883.			
To Expenses attending Annual Meeting, Travelling, &c.	21	9	8
,, Stationery, Printing, &c.	16	8	7
,, Coal and Gas	25	0	11
,, Cases, Fixtures, Repairs, &c. ...	11	15	11
,, Purchase of Books, Specimens, Binding, &c.	64	0	9
,, Printing and Binding Vol. XXVIII.	96	16	10
,, Illustrations	29	3	0
,, Curator's Salary. 1 year to Christmas, 1883	85	0	0
,, Subscription to Harleian Society, 1883	1	1	0
,, Subscription to Harleian Society, Register Section, 1883	1	1	0
,, Subscription to Palæontographical Society, 1883	1	1	0
,, Subscription to Ray Society, 1883 ...	1	1	0
,, Rates and Taxes	12	12	9
,, Insurance	4	10	6
,, Postage of volumes	9	2	6
,, Postage, Carriage, &c.	8	16	1½
,, Sundries	2	11	10½
,, Balance	33	12	6
	£425	5	11

1883, Dec. 31st.
Balance £33 12 6

H. & H. J. BADCOCK, *Hon. Treasurers.*

1884, Feb. 6th, Examined and compared with the vouchers, and found correct.

ALFRED MAYNARD,
EDWIN SLOPER.

Taunton Castle Purchase Fund.

Treasurers' Account from 1st January to 31st December, 1883.

Receipts.	£	s	d
By Rents of Premises	60	2	5
„ Rent of Castle Hall ...	44	19	0
„ Proceeds of Fancy Ball, held at Taunton, Dec., 1883 ...	67	19	8
„ Balance	409	3	3
	£582	4	4

Expenditure.	£	s	d
1882, Dec., 31st.			
Loan £500 0 0			
Less Balance in Bank 8 8 7			
To Balance	491	11	5
„ Repairs to Buildings, &c.	40	19	9
„ Insurance	3	16	6
„ Rates and Taxes	7	5	8
„ Attendance at Castle Hall and sundries...	5	16	3
„ Gas	7	15	3
„ Interest on Loan	24	19	6
	£582	4	4

1883. Dec. 31st.

Balance, viz:

Loan	450	0	0
Less Balance in Bank ...	40	16	9
	£409	3	3

H. & H. J. BADCOCK, *Hon. Treasurers.*

1884, Feb. 6th. Examined and compared with the vouchers and found correct, } ALFRED MAYNARD. EDWIN SLOPER.

Mr. GREENFIELD moved the adoption of these reports.

Mr. CHISHOLM-BATTEN asked to be allowed, before the motion was put, to call the attention of the Meeting to the remarkably flourishing state of the funds which Mr. Malet had read. They were mainly indebted to that gentleman for the purchase and acquisition of Taunton Castle. By his constant and unfailing exertions, Mr. Malet had enabled them to own that most valuable building, and he was very happy indeed to have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Malet read the favourable statement that a debt of only about £500 existed upon that great undertaking. To Mr. Malet the thanks of the Society were due; indeed all those who were interested in the preservation of antiquities in this county were indebted to him for the rescue and preservation of the Taunton Castle building.

Mr. E. D. BOURDILLON called attention to the passage in the report treating upon the works that were being carried on in the roof of the geological room at the Castle, and other improvements, and stated that there was a necessity for further contributions towards the expenses. As they had heard, there was a deficiency of between £400 or £500 on the Taunton

Castle Purchase Fund. It was the opinion of the Council that it was very undesirable that the cost of these additional works should form a further charge on the funds, which would increase the amount of the existing deficiency. If the Meeting would kindly bear in mind the recommendation of the Council, and their appeal for further donations, it would place both them and the Society in a much better position than would otherwise be the case.

The motion was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said he had much pleasure in proposing the re-election of the existing Officers and Vice-presidents of the Society, the Local Secretaries, and the Curator, with the addition of Mr. W. E. Surtees to the list of Vice-Presidents, and that of Mr. J. Heron, of Shepton, to the Local Secretaries.

Mr. SURTEES said he should be glad to propose that Mr. Chisholm-Batten be elected on the Building Committee.

Mr. E. D. BOURDILLON seconded the motion, and the list, as proposed by the President, with the addition suggested by Mr. Surtees, was unanimously adopted.

The PRESIDENT then proposed the election, to the Committee of Management, of Mr. Wilfred Marshall, Mr. A. Maynard, Mr. T. Meyler, Mr. H. Murray-Anderdon, Mr. E. Sloper, and the Rev. J. W. Ward.

Dr. HARDMAN, by letter, referring to the great kindness of Mr. Smith-Pigott, and Mr. Martin Gibbs, in relation to certain discoveries, made at Mynchin last year, and at Yatton lately, suggested that the Society should mark its respect by recording a vote of thanks to them.

Mr. GREEN seconded the proposition.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. SURTEES said that he recollected having, for more than thirty years, had the advantage of listening, at those meetings, to Mr. Parker. He was an Oxford gentleman, who contributed vast stores of architectural learning, and what was more, he set them an admirable example—a perfect temper. When he

was mistaken, or when anyone supposed he was mistaken, Mr. Parker always took the contradictions that he received with a most admirable temper, and set them a good example. He therefore ventured to move, that a copy of the last paragraph in the Report, alluding to the Society's regret at his loss, be sent to his family.

Mr. FREEMAN said he thought that he had disputed against Mr. Parker as much as anyone, yet that gentleman always took it remarkably well. He could endorse all that Mr. Surtees had said, and gladly seconded the resolution.

The resolution was carried, and an official notification of the fact was ordered to be sent to the late Mr. Parker's son.

Mr. DAVIS called attention to an inaccuracy in the last volume of *Proceedings*, pt. I. p. 38, regarding an action against the Corporation of Bath, of which body he is Architect, where it is stated that the result was a cost to the Corporation of £250.

Mr. MURCH said that the sum was not paid by the Corporation, but was raised by private subscription.

The PRESIDENT remarked that any error in matter of fact, not a matter of opinion, would no doubt be noticed.

The choice of a place of Meeting for next year was left to the Council as usual.

acting the part of teachers on these subjects, the choice would be greatly limited. Such Presidents you have had, and very distinguished Presidents they were — they are represented in this room at the present moment—and such Presidents I hope you will have again, but your President on this occasion makes no such pretensions. He has, however, this advantage; not being capable of teaching, but anxious to learn, he represents, I think, a pretty large class, and a class which I think is constantly increasing—viz., those who know enough of these great subjects to feel their deep interest and great charm, and who desire, as I do, to co-operate with, and support, such societies as yours.

I have a lively recollection of the last time that the Society met at this place; I am not sure whether it was in this room, or not. It met here very nearly twenty years ago, under the presidency of Major Paget. At that time I was almost a stranger, to both the Society and the neighbourhood; but since then I have acquired the privilege of an old inhabitant. I have turned into a Mendip man myself, and I feel entitled, as a Mendip man, to bid the Society and our visitors a hearty welcome to this portion of the Mendips.

The Mendips, so geologists tell us, are a chain of hills which once held the rank of mountains. They have certainly fallen from their high estate; but there was a period in the dim past, wise men inform us, when they towered thousands of feet above the sea, and formed an Alpine range in the south of England. That is no longer their condition, but they still form a pretty considerable barrier in the county of Somerset, a barrier which separates the dwellers in the north and east from those in the south and west, of this county So that I think it is very likely that some of those who come from the westward —and I am glad to see some here to-day—will find the north-eastern part of the county beyond the Mendips a *terra incognita* in the matter of archæology and geology. Taunton is of course the metropolis of the Society, and dwellers there—I

may call them the Cis-Alpine Members of the Society—look upon us Trans-Alpines in this corner somewhat in the light of strangers. I hope the present visit may put an end to that feeling, if it exist, and that, in a district which is certainly not one of the richest in the county in subjects of archæological or historical interest, the Members of the Society may at all events find the charm of novelty.

On the occasion to which I have referred, the visit—if I recollect aright—was confined almost entirely to the south side of the hills. We visited Doulting—which we intend to visit to-day; but there were other places that we visited, such as Ditcheat and Pilton, which are all on the south side. On this occasion, with the exception of Doulting, we propose to take another line. We propose to cross the hills, and visit a list of places, including churches and other objects of interest—Stoke Lane, Leigh-on-Mendip, Mells, Radstock, and Kilmersdon. Among these there are no doubt several of considerable archæological interest. There will also be an opportunity—and a good one—of examining a Roman road, a portion of the Fosse-way, which has been carefully uncovered for view, in the parish of Radstock. But I think I may say that on this occasion the principal objects of interest will be geological. The district in question is certainly, geologically, one of the most interesting in this country, one of the best fitted for the studies of a geologist, or for those who desire to know something of that wonderful and delightful subject.

It may not be known to you all that the district is celebrated in the history of the science of geology, because it is included in the field upon which the great and essential discovery—a very modern and recent one it is—of the regular succession of the strata, as ascertained with certainty by the regular and successive presence of extinct forms of life and organic remains, was made by Mr. William Smith, of Bath. In my friend Mr. McMurtrie, of Radstock, we shall have a most competent geological guide. Those who visit Radstock

will also have an opportunity of examining the interior of a Somerset coal mine, under the care of Mr. McMurtrie, and having a personal interest, not altogether theoretic or scientific, in the carboniferous strata of that place, I hope you will allow me to welcome and receive you there, and invite you to luncheon, both in my capacity of owner and as your President.

The double nature of the subjects of our Society, archæological and geological—I take geology as being the branch of natural science with which we are most concerned to-day—is very suggestive of thought. It is most strange to turn by an effort the mind's eye—and an effort it requires—from the inconceivable distances of time, the awful depths of the past, during which this earth was being prepared for the dwelling-place of man, to the time, according to our human scale very remote, but geologically of yesterday, when man, who was to be the heir of all the ages, entered into possession of the treasures prepared for him. Let us turn from the great stores of material,—from the quarries of Doulting, and the deposits of this neighbourhood, which formed themselves at a time geologically not ancient, but to us inconceivably remote,—to the appearance of man upon this earth, and then to the history of his progress and development. Let us turn to those records of man which begin, I suppose, with the bone caves, and go on with the camps and barrows, and the great monuments of Celt and Saxon; then to the later works, most interesting to us, namely, those of our own immediate ancestors. Let us work our way down through this tremendous progress of ages, to the time when the oolite of Doulting was converted into the Abbey of Glastonbury, and the Cathedral of Wells; also into those humbler, but charming and sacred buildings that stand around us; and think of the appearance of a being capable of conceiving the ideas which these buildings embody and enshrine. Ladies and Gentlemen, the churches of our land—the ordinary parish churches—are always a matter of

prime and deep interest to societies such as ours, and they have had a great influence upon the fortunes of these churches. Whether it has been altogether an influence for good may fairly be doubted. No doubt these societies have greatly increased and spread abroad a knowledge—popular knowledge—of architecture; an interest in our ancient buildings, and a pride in our churches—though it has not always been a pride according to knowledge and discretion. I happened to read the other day an address delivered at the meeting of the Royal Archæological Society last year, by an eminent architect; and he fell foul, as I for my own part was glad to find, with the restorers and restorations—for which his brethren, the architects, are no doubt, to a considerable extent at least, responsible, although they are very far from being the only guilty parties. This gentleman to whom I am referring said, most truly, that forty years ago the churches of the land were in a state which could only be described as indecent, and that now things were infinitely better. And so they are; but he went on to say—and I greatly sympathise with him—that the good which has been done need not have been mixed up with the amount of evil and destruction which has gone on under the name of restoration.

Unfortunately, the little knowledge of architecture—perhaps this is a case in which a little knowledge is dangerous—spread abroad a power of distinguishing between one style and another which hardly existed forty years ago, and led to false ideas of restoration; that is to say, restoration to some architectural style and pattern selected by the restorer. The effort to bring about that result led to all the useless and mischievous change and destruction to which many of us, I think, now-a-days, have opened our eyes. Many, I know, have done so—very many of the persons who have been more or less guilty of it themselves. Now the true word is not restoration, but preservation. That is the idea that ought to be present in the mind of every one dealing with an ancient building. Of course

there will always be doubtful questions—questions not to be settled by any rule; questions of taste and discretion, which it would be absurd and pedantic to ignore; but upon the whole, the great thing, I am convinced, is to aim, not at restoration, but preservation. In this matter, in its influence upon the prevailing ideas and feelings which shall govern every one's conduct in the future, such a Society as this has a very considerable responsibility.

The same architect whom I quoted just now said, "The Societies have raised the restoration fiend, and they must lay him again." The question for us is, "How are these things to be prevented?" Our answer, I think, should be this: By creating and fostering the historic sense—the historic feeling—in all these matters. I know no better safeguard than that. The sense of respect, and reverence, and tenderness for the works of our forefathers, the desire that not only our own years, but the generations of men, should be bound to each other by natural piety. That feeling is perfectly compatible, in my own mind, with the utmost ardour for improvement, and the greatest desire to change, when improvement and change are needed.

But certainly these are days in which the old order is changing more rapidly than ever in all things, moral intellectual and material, and giving place to the new. And thus it is precisely the time when it is of the greatest importance to keep alive and increase in our country that historic sense and that historic feeling of which I have spoken. Let me remind you, for a moment, of two or three matters to illustrate what I mean. Take first the progress of agriculture. Now, in the progress of agriculture, the desire to bring every possible yard of land under the plough has led to the utter sweeping away of many venerable relics of the past. Take your barrows, and camps, and stone monuments. Why the plough has made its way almost up to Stonehenge itself. I hope that process has been checked; I believe it has. We now have that piece of legis-

lation for which Sir John Lubbock deserves so much credit. His untiring efforts have been in a great measure crowned with success. And, what is of greater practical importance in many cases—I speak now of the many minor remains of antiquity—it has been discovered that it does not pay to plough up the down lands. I wish that it had been discovered sooner; but I believe that it has been discovered now, and we may hope that by such joint influences the process of destruction may not go on so easily as it has done.

Then we have the re-building, which is going on at an astonishing rate, of our cities and towns: one of the results, no doubt, of the prosperity of this country. Of course there is a vast deal of change, and a vast amount of destruction; much of which is, indeed, inevitable. It would be absurd to suppose that in all such cases the old can be preserved; but I have no doubt that if the historic sense and the historic feeling had at all existed in the minds of the owners, or of the public bodies which have had to deal with these new works, with all this pulling down and building up again, many a relic, it may be of some eminent citizen of olden times, might, nay, would, have been preserved to us.

Then again, take the subject of language. We have that most interesting subject, the local dialects of our country. No good thing, apparently, can be accomplished without some loss, and there can be no doubt that our universal schooling is bringing about a dead level in the English language, which is not to be avoided, but which is a strong reason for the preservation everywhere throughout this country of the records of these dying varieties. It is a reason for us here in this part of England, to preserve the records of that language of Wessex, which some enthusiastic western men have regretted did not become the language of English literature and of the English race. I do not know that we need regret that it was not the fate of Wessex, but of Mercia, to supply the language of the English Court and English literature: to create that

great speech which has such a wonderful destiny before it. I think I may change one word in Cowper's line, and say that we may be well content that Chaucer's language is our mother tongue. Yet the idea does supply a motive to every one who has turned his mind that way at all to observe, and, so far as in him lies, to preserve and appreciate the interesting relics of old speech which we may still find around us, and give some attention to a study which appears to me to be one of the most fascinating of all.

This Society, I know, has done a good deal for the preservation of what I have called the language of Wessex. I do not know whether still more might not be done; for instance, whether further efforts might not be made by those who take an interest in such subjects, to trace out the distinction between the dialects of Somerset east and west of the Parrett, and the supposed influence of the surviving Celtic race among us upon the language which they learned from their conquerors. However that may be, I can assure those who have not tried, of the intense interest which any one, with a little study and knowledge, may find in keeping his ears open for the local language, and in now and then lighting upon a new word, which carries his thoughts far away, and brings him into connection with half-a-dozen members of the great Teutonic family of languages. In comparing it, and discovering, as he will, its relation or its identity with the German, or Danish, or Early-English—I was on the point of saying Anglo-Saxon—Middle-English, or Gothic, he will find pleasure and profit; but the charm lies in getting such words from the living lips; and he can do so if he keep his ears open.

I will detain you no longer. I have said more than I intended, certainly, but I think I have kept my promise not to impart to you any archæological or geological information. I have only endeavoured to make my words an overture to our meetings; to strike a few notes which may be in harmony with the pursuits of these three days. I hope we may have some

fine drives over the neighbouring country, if we are favoured by the weather, and that those who are strangers here may see some of the splendid views from these our Mendip Alps, of which we have every reason to be proud.

Mr. E. A. Freeman moved a vote of thanks to the noble President for the sound and practical advice which he had been good enough to give them. For the last thirty-eight years he had in some measure watched the career of Lord Carlingford, for at that period he had occasion to look up to him as one who did certain things better than he did. Thirty-eight years ago he competed for the Lord Chancellor's prize, the subject being the effects of the Norman Conquest, but Mr. Fortescue, of Christ Church, got it, and he did not. He was very glad indeed that he did not get it, or he might have undergone the temptation—he would not say Lord Carlingford had yielded to it—of thinking that he had done all that he could in the matter, and had no more to learn. But he did not get the prize, and could not possibly, therefore, fall under the temptation. Perhaps in the period named he had learned a little more of that very subject in which Lord Carlingford outdid him. Since then, if his lordship had not written quite so much, he had done a great deal more than he (Mr. Freeman) had, and those who helped to make history were after all the persons whom those who wrote it had to look up to, because if they did not make it others would not have to write it. They had to thank their President for every word that he had said—above all things, for the warning that he had given them with regard to the preservation of the few things that were left. Lord Carlingford had spoken of the restoration of the churches. He for one could heartily agree with every word that the noble President had said on that subject. The most remarkable example of all within the last few years was that of the west end of St. Alban's Abbey, anything like which no mortal man ever saw. It utterly destroyed the whole history — the

wonderful history—of the western part of that remarkable building, and all because one particular man was allowed to work his own fancies. Some edifices were being finished which he could not help thinking would be better left unfinished, and amongst others he might mention the spire of St. Mary Redcliffe church, which was left in an incomplete state for several centuries. He could not help thinking that the man who left it unfinished knew better than the man who finished it. He thought it was a great pity to destroy Bishop Montague's ceiling in the parish church at Bath, which told how the church was left desolate at the dissolution, in the time of Henry VIII, and how the roof was at last put up by Bishop Montague, in the reign of James I. The old ceiling had gone, and in its place they had one with beautiful tracery, which was better in appearance, but it lacked the historic associations of its predecessor. Small domestic antiquities perished daily. There was no part of the kingdom richer in old houses—in the small bits of old houses—than this particular district. In the village of Croscombe nearly every house was an old building, and a great many of them were ancient houses. These were perishing day by day. Two years ago he saw that one of the best doorways in Croscombe was utterly destroyed. Many of these small bits of interesting antiquities had been swept away during the past twenty years, for no reason whatever. They perished daily, and no one seemed to care anything about them. If the owner were a rich man, and lived a long way off, he probably did not know of their existence; and if he were a poor man he swept the relics away in sheer ignorance.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells said he was only too glad to follow in the very cordial expression of thanks which they all owed to Lord Carlingford for the wise and suggestive remarks that he had made. They particularly interested him, touching, as they did, on so many points worthy of attention.

The resolution was cordially received.

Lord Carlingford, in reply, said he would not detain them beyond a moment. He would only express his most hearty thanks for the way in which they had received the resolution moved by his friend Mr. Freeman, and seconded by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese. But he must say a word with reference to the anecdote of Mr. Freeman. He remembered that soon after he became a dweller in that part of the country he attended an agricultural dinner at Wells, in the course of which he made the curious and almost grotesque discovery that when, years before, he obtained the Oxford prize for the English essay, upon the subject of the Norman Conquest, he had actually beaten the great historian, Mr. Freeman—who sat beside him at that dinner. He could not avoid at the time a certain sense of pride, but his permanent feeling in the matter had been to congratulate the University of Oxford, and whoever it was who chose the subject for the essay for which Mr. Freeman and he competed, upon the fact —he believed that he drew a reasonable conclusion—that they had directed the mind of Mr. Freeman to that great passage of English history, and so produced the great national work of which they had been since possessed.

This concluded the business of the Annual Meeting.