

Proceedings
of the
Somersetshire Archaeological and
Natural History Society,
During the Year 1891.

FTER an interval of twenty years since its last visit, the Forty-third Annual Meeting of the Society was held at Crewkerne on Tuesday, August 18th, and the two days following.

On the occasion of the Society's visit to Crewkerne in 1871 the Meeting was presided over by Dr. E. A. Freeman, and although there were some hopes that he and others would have been again present, yet so few of those who took part at that date are able to do so now, that the time may surely be said to have come when for the sake of new and younger Members, interesting centres like Crewkerne may be again visited.

The feature of the meeting this year was the division of the labours of the Secretary, by which all matters pertaining to the annual gathering were undertaken and ably carried out by Col. Bramble, who was assisted by a hard-working and painstaking Local Committee.

The proceedings were opened at the Old Grammar School, when the Chair was taken by

Bishop HOBHOUSE, at 11 o'clock. He said that he had been requested to do so in order to formally open the meeting. This was generally done by the retiring President — Mr. Hobhouse, M.P.—who, unfortunately, was unable to be present; and perhaps they would allow him to make known the regret his nephew had expressed by telegraph at his compulsory absence. After formally opening the meeting, he

should call upon the elected President to take his place. He proposed that Col. Hoskins be asked to take the Chair.

The PRESIDENT, on occupying the Chair, said he was much obliged for their kind reception, but he regretted that a more talented expert in archaeological matters had not been found to take the office. He would, however, do his best. He then called on

Col. BRAMBLE (*Hon. Sec.*) to read

The Report of the Council.

“On its Forty-third Annual Meeting, the Council of your Society congratulate you on its being in the condition of those countries whose happiness is said to consist in having no history. Notwithstanding the grievous loss referred to later on, progress has been continuous.

“A steady influx of new Members has increased its numbers and its power.

“The Society’s finances are still in a healthy state. At the end of the year 1890 there was a balance at the credit of the General Fund of £78 8s. 6d.; not quite so large as last year, but yet satisfactory, considering that nearly £50 was paid for printing the Library Catalogue, which will not occur again for some time to come. The Castle Purchase debt outstanding was reduced during the year 1890 by £41 6s. 4d., leaving only £212 18s. as the total debt on the Society’s property at the end of that year.

“A collection of fossils, minerals, recent shells, and coins, bequeathed by the Rev. Prebendary Howes, late of Exford, has been added to the Museum, together with other objects of interest, of which a full list will appear in the *Proceedings*.

“The Library, now becoming one of the most important of the Society’s possessions, has been further enriched by the addition of the publications of various other Societies in exchange for its own volume of *Proceedings*. Valuable gifts have also been received, including a complete set of the

Government Reports on Market Rights and Tolls, from Mr. C. I. Elton, Q.C., M.P.; *The Annual Reports of the British Association*, 1865 to 1889, from Dr. Prior (and by the recent affiliation of your Society to the British Association, these Reports will in future come to your Library regularly as a matter of course); Dr. Hamilton Kinglake has presented Kinglake's *History of the Invasion of the Crimea*, and Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edition 1690. Miss Atherstone has also sent a handsome solid mahogany book-case, with about 150 volumes of miscellaneous works, including some first editions of authors, which have become scarce and costly. A special gift has to be acknowledged from the Rev. Dr. Penny of a copy of Collinson's *History of Somerset*, to be used in the preparation of materials for the proposed County History.

“A recommendation was made in the Report of your Council for 1890 (see p. 5, *Proc.* 1890), relating to a systematic Archæological Survey of the County. This matter has not been forgotten, but for two reasons has been left in abeyance—the new Ordnance Maps have not yet been published in full sheets, and the whole subject will be dealt with in the scheme for a new County History, promoted by the President in his address at the Annual Meeting last year, held at Castle Cary.

“The subject of a new County History was considered at an evening meeting (see p. 35, *Proc.* 1890), by the President (Mr. H. Hobhouse, M.P.), when a resolution was passed that the matter should be referred to the Council of the Society, to draw up a scheme for ensuring during the next few years a systematic preparation of materials for a County History, especially in respect of parochial records, natural history, and folk-lore. A special meeting of the Council was accordingly held on November 8th, 1890, at Taunton Castle, the result of which was that a small Committee for the purpose of organizing the work was appointed, consisting of Mr. Maxwell Lyte, C.B., Mr. Emanuel Green, the Rev. W. Hunt, Mr. H.

Hobhouse, and the Rev. J. A. Bennett. Subsequently, upon the lamented death of Mr. Bennett, Mr. Chisholm Batten was appointed to take his place, and Mr. F. T. Elworthy was added to the Committee. This Committee was instructed to consider the whole question, to draw up a practicable scheme, and to report to the next Annual Meeting of the Society. The scheme proposed by them has been widely circulated among the Members, and the Committee's Report is appended hereto.

“ Since the date of the last Annual Meeting your Council have had to deplore the loss of their able and honoured colleague the Honorary Secretary, the Rev. J. A. Bennett, whose death unexpectedly occurred after a very short illness in December last. The labours of Mr. Bennett on behalf of the Society were indefatigable—his perfect temper, kindliness of manner and affability not only endeared him to individual Members who were brought into contact with him, but tended in a very high degree to promote the interest of the Society's meetings, and so to increase its general popularity and thereby its power for usefulness. In addition to the short obituary notice in the volume of *Proceedings* issued since his decease, your Council feel they would be doing scant justice to the memory of their late much valued Secretary if they did not now formally put upon record their deep respect for his character, and their sense of the great loss the Society has sustained.

“ For the future conduct of the Society's business, consequent upon the lamented death of Mr. Bennett, it has been considered desirable to divide the Secretarial labour by the appointment of two additional Honorary Secretaries, and with that view Mr. F. T. Elworthy has undertaken the correspondence and editorial work in connection with the general supervision and the preparation of the annual volume of *Proceedings*; while Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Bramble F.S.A., has accepted the direction and management of the Annual Meeting. Both

these appointments by the Council were made early in the year, the respective duties have been performed up to the present by these gentlemen, but their official position should now be recognised and confirmed by the Society.

“ The Council have to record the death of the Rev. Preb. Howes, by which the Society loses an old and valued Member.

“ An application for a new Local Branch, to be called the ‘ Axbridge Branch ’—to include the district comprised within the Axbridge Petty Sessional Division—is under consideration, and no doubt will be established very shortly.”

The adoption of the Report was moved by Mr. CHISHOLM BATTEN, who said that the Society had, during the past year, produced a great deal of practical work, if there had been no sensational events to record. The steady way in which they had gone on adding to their wealth, in the shape of objects of interest in the Museum, and more particularly the large and valuable additions to the Library, would, he hoped, induce the gentlemen of the county to see that when they presented articles of antiquarian or scientific interest to the Museum, or books to the Library, they were placing their treasures in a very excellent repository. The more this was done the more the Society would prosper and be the nucleus of lasting and valuable information to the whole of the West of England.

The Rev. Prebendary NEWELL, in seconding the proposition, alluded in feeling terms to many valued officers and members whom the Society had been accustomed in years past to welcome to its meetings. He acknowledged that new men were coming forward to take their places, and he specially referred to Mr. Buckle, the recently elected Diocesan Architect, who had already done much to enhance the interest of these gatherings in his own particular sphere.

The PRESIDENT next called upon

Mr. ELWORTHY, in the absence of the Chairman (Mr. Hobhouse, M.P.), to read the

Report of the County History Committee

“Your Committee suffered a most serious loss shortly after our appointment by the lamented death of the late Secretary, Mr. J. A. Bennett. Messrs. F. T. Elworthy and E. Chisholm Batten were afterwards added to our numbers.

“Your Committee have since held several meetings and have carefully considered Mr. Hobhouse’s draft scheme and the other documents referred to them. We now present to the Annual Meeting of the Society a scheme¹ of preparation, which, given certain conditions, is in our opinion practical and calculated to secure the production of a creditable County History within a moderate space of time. Foremost among these necessary conditions rank (1) the existence of a number of zealous workers in the different districts of the county, (2) the provision of a sufficient fund for editorial and other expenses, and (3), eventually, though not immediately, the judicious selection of a competent editor with his heart in the work. Given these essentials, the preparation of a County History (now so long delayed) ought to be a work not exceeding the resources, and well worthy of the highest efforts, of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society.

“HENRY HOBHOUSE,

“June 17th, 1891.”

“(Chairman of the Committee).”

In moving its adoption, Mr. ELWORTHY said it is most important to know on what basis we should work, and it is also important that before beginning, a full record should be before us of everything written on the subject. We are in a position in this county of having that part of the work already done for us, and we have only now to bring that great labour to its proper issue. One of our former Secretaries, Mr. Green, has done this work, and those who have seen it are perfectly astonished at the amount of time and pains he has bestowed upon it. Mr. Green has the County History almost at his

¹ Printed at end of Part I.

fingers' ends. He has had the idea of forming a complete bibliography for over forty years. Not only has he spent years of his leisure time, but he has spent thousands of pounds in money in the collection of the books and materials he now possesses. Work like that can only be done by concentrated effort, constant watchfulness of opportunity, an indomitable will, a purse ever ready, and in fact a touch of almost madness in the pursuit, or as we should say in Somerset "he must be mazed arter the books." It is hopeless to expect anyone else to take up the work as he has done. Times have changed, old records and documents have been hunted for until possessors knew their value only too well, and ask prohibitive prices for them accordingly. Mr. Green may not have everything, but among those he has are thousands of documents which could not be got again. The result of all that labour and outlay is now to be had for the mere cost of printing. Mr. Green seeks no payment nor profit for himself, but freely offers that magnificent work on the terms only of being saved from actual money loss in publishing it. Surely in the county of Somerset there is sufficient interest and public spirit to bring the fruit of all this labour to perfection by putting the work in a durable shape, safe from future loss, and out of the danger of fire. The seeing it through the press would be great, the indexing heavy, but that is all to be had free, gratis, and for nothing. Surely no county had ever before such an offer. The book will be large and it must be costly. It will not find a large sale, and yet it is invaluable, for it is indispensable. It is the first step towards a County History of any real value, by whomsoever written, and without it there can be no real history. Shall this Society which possesses Taunton Castle turn its back on a work which when once completed, will stand as a foundation in all time to come for future historians to build upon?

Mr. SLOPER seconded.

The PRESIDENT next called on

Mr. SLOPER, in the absence of the Treasurer, to read the

Forty-third Annual Meeting.

Treasurer's Account.

The Treasurer in Account with the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, from January 1st to December 31st, 1890.

DR.		CR.	
1889, Dec. 31st.	£ s d	1890.	
By Balance of former Account	£3 10 7	To Expenses attending Annual Meeting	26 0 6
," Members' Entrance Fees...	16 5 6	," Excavations at Cary Castle, and Plans of the Site	5 0 0
," Members' Subscriptions in Arrear ...	6 16 6	," Stationery, Printing, etc.	16 13 1
," Members' Subscriptions for the Year 1890 ...	261 18 0	," Purchase of Books, Specimens, etc.	9 9 6
," Members' Subscriptions in Advance ...	3 13 0	," Coal and Gas	24 15 2
," Two Life Members ...	21 0 0	," Cases, Fittings, Repairs, etc.	15 17 5
," Excursion Tickets ...	9 15 0	," Printing and Binding vol. xxxv	58 18 4
," Sale of Publications ...	8 18 8	," Illustrations	23 5 0
," Museum Admission Fees ...	25 7 9	," Postage and Carriage of vol. xxxv	9 10 5
	£437 5 0	," Printing Library Catalogue	49 8 10
1890, Dec. 31st.	£78 8 6	," Curator's Salary, 1 year to Christ- mas, 1890	85 0 0
Balance ...	£78 8 6	," Subscription to Harleian Society, 1890	1 1 0
1890, July 29th.		," Subscription to Harleian Society, Registers, 1890	1 1 0
		," Subscription to Palaeontographical Society, 1890	1 1 0
		," Subscription to Ray Society, 1890	1 1 0
		," Subscription to Early English Text Society, 1890	1 1 0
		," Insurance	4 10 6
		," Rates and Taxes	12 3 0
		," Postage, Carriage, etc.	10 12 11
		," Sundries	2 6 10
		," Balance	78 18 6
	£437 5 0	£437 5 0	

H. J. BADCOCK,
Treasurer.

Examined and compared with } ALFRED MAYNARD.
vouchers, and found correct, } EDWIN SLOPER.

Taunton Castle Purchase Fund.

Treasurer's Account, from 1st January to 31st December, 1890.

Receipts.		Expenditure.	
1890.	£ s d	1890, Dec. 31st.	
By Donation from Mr. Good- land ...	10 6	To Balance	£ s d
," Rents of Premises ...	60 9 9	," Repairs to Buidings, etc.	56 1 2
," Rents of Castle Hall ..	50 12 1	," Rates and Taxes	7 5 7
," Proceeds of Fancy Ball, held at Taunton, Dec., 1890 ...	22 16 3	," Castle Hall Expenses and Sun- dries	3 10 9
," Balance ...	212 18 0	," Gas	6 3 6
	£347 6 7	," Insurance	3 16 6
		," Legal Expenses re Conveyance of Garden	2 2 0
		," Interest on Loan	14 2 9
		£347 6 7	

1890, Dec. 31st
Balance ...

H. J. BADCOCK,
Treasurer.

1891, July 29th.

Examined and compared with the } ALFRED MAYNARD.
vouchers, and found correct, } EDWIN SLOPER.

Mr. Sloper spoke especially of the debt upon the Castle purchase, and he urged the Society to pay off that amount. They would then possess property valued at between £6,000 and £7,000. The duty would be before long imposed upon them to restore the Castle Hall, towards which they looked with considerable anxiety, but yet with great confidence and much pleasure.

The adoption of the Treasurer's Report was moved in a humorous speech by the Rev. Dr. PENNY, seconded by Dr. CRESPI, and agreed to.

Bishop HOBHOUSE desired in a formal manner to express on behalf of the Society the regret felt at the loss of its late able and laborious Secretary—the Rev. J. A. Bennett,—and in feeling terms he moved that the heartfelt condolence of the Meeting should be conveyed to Mrs. Bennett and her family.

Mr. HUGH NORRIS seconded.

Rev. J. C. ODGERS moved, Colonel LONG seconded, and it was carried unanimously, that the Officers of the Society be re-elected, with the addition of Mr. H. Hobhouse, M.P., as a Vice-President, and that the appointment of Mr. F. T. Elworthy and Col. J. R. Bramble as Honorary Secretaries be confirmed.

The election of several new Members was also agreed to, on the proposition of Mr. W. B. SPARKS, seconded by Rev. Preb. GRAFTON.

Bishop HOBHOUSE proposed, and Col. BRAMBLE seconded, the re-appointment of the County History Committee, as referred to in the Annual Report just read.

The Rev. T. S. HOLMES said in answer to an enquiry for a

Report of the Somerset Record Society,

that inasmuch as it was a distinct and independent Association, with its own separate subscribers, he as Hon. Secretary, had not been entrusted with any formal report to the present Meeting. At the same time he detailed the work being done,

and also what they intended publishing this year and next. He asked for further subscriptions in order that the publication of Somerset records might be adequately carried out.

Mr. ELWORTHY, as one of the delegates from the Somersetshire Society to the annual Conference held under the auspices of the Society of Antiquaries, stated he had been unable to see sufficiently the advantage to be gained by this Society to warrant his recommending a contribution of £1 per annum towards the expenses of these Conferences. He was unable to report that any important business had been transacted.

The PRESIDENT then delivered his address.