

Opening Address.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IN undertaking the duties of President for the year of the Somersetshire Institute of Archæology, I must ask you to give me credit for doing so with a full sense of the insufficiency of my resources for filling the office as it ought to be filled. I must also ask your kind indulgence for my shortcomings on the score of the scanty leisure I have had at my command for getting together any information which might interest or instruct you. It is, however, some consolation to me to reflect that the atmosphere of Wells is so charged with archæological interest that it is impossible for a company like the present to come together within its precincts without imbibing some archæological enthusiasm and adding some wealth to their archæological store. I see, too, many around me who will know how to improve the occasion, and satisfy the aspirations of those who have come here to learn.

The first thing that occurs to me to mention, and I do so as a matter of hearty congratulation, is the very considerable increase of knowledge of the early history of Wells and the diocese, which we have acquired since the Society last met at Wells, on August 19th, 1873.

On looking back at the *Proceedings* for the year 1873, I find that I then made the following remarks: "I believe there are in the possession of the Dean and Chapter, and also under the custody of the Registrar of the Diocese, some most valuable manuscripts, which would throw a flood of light upon the history of Wells, and of the whole county. They are taken such care of now that nobody ever sees them, or is a bit the wiser for them. It would be a worthy labour for our Society to assist in giving them to the archæological world. For a true reflection of the mind and sentiments of a certain age, and a faithful picture of the events and circumstances of the time, nothing can compare with original documents. Get the permission of the Chapter, get a competent person to make the selection, raise a guarantee fund for the expense, procure a competent editor, and the thing is done."

Since the above words were spoken we have had the thick volume, 574 folio pages, published in 1881, by the Rev. Herbert Edward Reynolds, Librarian of Exeter Cathedral, on *The Foundation, Constitutional History, and Statutes of Wells Cathedral*. Mr. Reynolds tells us that by the kindness of the Dean and Chapter he had access to many manuscripts in their possession—the Liber Albus, the Liber Ruber, Chyle's *History of the Church*, the original Charter of Queen Elizabeth, and some others. In his preface, of nearly three hundred pages, he gives an immense amount of information, derived chiefly from Chyle's curious history. Among other things is a chapter on the Bishop's Palace. Chyle says that it was begun by John de Villula, "who, on the site of the cloisters and other buildings erected by Bishop Giso for the use of the canons, raised for himself and successors a stately Palace. Afterwards comes Bishop Jocelyn to be bishop, who first obtains leave (of King John) to impark some of the lands next adjoining the palace, making it thereby the more august, and afterwards builds within it a private chapel, very sumptuous . . . (so that) for the height of the roof and breadth

of its area, few exceed it—scarce that at Lambeth, not much Whitehall itself. The great hall within the Palace, now (*i.e.*, in the last quarter of the 17th century, in the episcopate of Peter Mew) ruined and lying open, was built by Robert Burnell, bishop in the time of King Edward I; a man in great favour with his Prince, being first Lord High Treasurer, then Lord Chancellor of England, and at the same time Lord President of Wales. The largeness of which building bespeaks its founder a man of great and hospitable soul; his public honours and employments requiring a large retinue, calling to him a great influx of all sorts of people; else much beyond what the bishoprick could possibly require. But all the time their Palace lay open, without any mote or circumvallation, till Bishop Ralph's time (1329, Edward III), who finding such a plenty of water issuing out from under the church, and passing by the Palace, had a broad trench made round it, so as to receive this water, within which he also builds a high and very substantial stone wall, with battlements, and a terrace round it on the inside; with several redoubts and half-moons therein, after the manner of fortifications. These walls he joins together by a stately gate and gate-house, castle-wise; making it not only serviceable and defensive against rogues, and any sudden assault, but likewise very magnificent and graceful to the beholder."

It seems, however, that Bishop Ralph's successors did not keep up what he had so well begun. For, when Bishop Beckington succeeded to the See, in 1443, he found the Palace much out of repair. Chyle says, "His predecessor, Bishop Stafford, having received of Bishop Bubwith, his predecessor, for dilapidations, in money 1600 marks, and in mitre, jewels, and other precious things to the value of 1200 marks more; yet laid out nothing during his time, being eighteen years, but left all ruinated; selling that very timber which he had cut down for repairs, and putting the money into his own pockets." In his will, Bishop Beckington complains of this, and says

that, instead of redress or any refunding, he only got fair words and empty promises; and adds that he himself had spent more than 6000 marks on the repairs of the different buildings of the See."

I will only add that Chyle, after reciting how Sir John Gates—who was "a great Puritan, episcopacy's common enemy"—had sold the timber and lead of the Palace, to the ruin *almost* of the whole fabric, and *totally* of the great hall," adds, with evident satisfaction, that "within less than two years after, on the 22nd August, in the first year of Queen Mary, he was beheaded in the Tower," for joining the Duke of Northumberland's attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne.

Chyle's *History* contains also a full account of the buildings of the Deanery, the Vicars' Close, the Chain Bridge, Bubwith's Hospital, and many other buildings for which Wells is, or was, remarkable. It gives copious information as to the property of the See, of the Dean and Chapter, of the Prebendaries and Vicars Choral. It gives a curious account of the Ordinal of the Cathedral, the rites and ceremonies, the habits and gestures used in Divine service; and also divers rules concerning the dress, the behaviour, and the amusements of the choristers. Some of these are very quaint. For instance, the boys are to go to the common hall without any noise or tumult; they are to march up to the table in order, the little boys first, the bigger boys following; they are to say grace audibly; when seated, to behave themselves respectably; not to dirty their napkins on purpose or rudely; to take up their meat courteously, not to gnaw it or tear it with their nails; not to drink with their mouths full; not to clean their teeth with their knives; and if they were obliged to speak, to speak in Latin, not English. At night, after saying their prayers, kneeling two and two at the foot of their beds, they were to jump into bed—two little boys with their heads to the head of the bed, and one big boy with his head to the foot of the bed,

and his feet between the feet of the two little boys. In their games they were never to mix with outsiders; swearing, fighting quarreling, and bad language, were strictly forbidden; and it was the duty of two of their number, appointed weekly, to keep a strict watch, and report every breach of the rules to the Head Master."

The same volume also contains the ancient statutes of Wells, of wonderful scope and minuteness; large extracts from the *Liber Ruber*, containing deeds, writings, and muniments of the Cathedral; and divers Chapter Acts, Bishop's orders, Cathedral squabbles, and many miscellaneous documents which it is impossible to classify, but which throw great light upon the manners, customs, and opinions of the times.

Another important step in the direction of opening the treasures of the Registry of the Dean and Chapter for the use of the archæologist and the historian has been the preparation by our Secretary, the Rev. James Bennett, of *The Report on the MSS. of Wells Cathedral*, published by the Historical MSS. Commission, and presented by command of Her Majesty to both Houses of Parliament. This is a work of immense labour, containing brief explanations of entries on an infinite variety of matters—some extremely curious—from the charters of Edward and Harold down to the sale of the Lady Chapel to Sir John Gates, in 1552, and later, 1662. Such calendars are invaluable; without them the richest collection of materials is almost useless—materials which cannot be found might as well not exist, for any practical purpose—and the whole realm of archæology owes Mr. Bennett a great debt of gratitude for the conscientious labour, accuracy, and skill with which he has executed his arduous task, "all for love, and nothing for reward."

A no less important event in our archæological annals has been the formation of the Somerset Record Society, of which the Rev. James Bennett is also Secretary. This Society started some three years ago, with about 100 subscribers, and an

income of over £100 a year; both since considerably increased. The firstfruits of its formation was the publication of *Bishop Drokensford's Register*, edited by Bishop Hobhouse. This, with the Bishop's careful and interesting preface, sheds a flood of light upon the condition of the Church in the beginning of the 14th century—reviews numberless strange practices, certainly more “honoured in the breach than in the observance,” discloses many circumstances of the daily life of the period which ordinary history leaves untouched: such as the frequent acts of legitimization of candidates for Holy Orders (connected with the married clergy) the innumerable cases of non-residence, the holding of benefices by unordained persons, and youths under age; the abuses of benefit of clergy, the manumission of serfs, and the like. Another feature of the society of that time which might not occur to an ordinary reader of history, but which must have had a far reaching influence, is pointed out by the Bishop in his preface, when he is commenting upon the entire absence of any mention of preaching as part of the Bishop's functions—“It may well be doubted,” he says, “whether Bishop Drokensford (or any other bishop of his class) could freely communicate with the people of his village flock in their mother English tongue. His correspondence was written in Latin; his communications with his bailiffs on manorial business were in French, and that was *probably* the daily language at his table, as it *certainly* was in all his intercourse with his Sovereign and nobles, and his utterances in Parliament and Synod.” This is, of course, in harmony with what we know of the language of Court, as seen (*e.g.*) in the familiar examples of “Honi soit qui mal y pense,” the motto of the Order of the Garter; the formulæ, “Le roi s'avisera,” in interposing the Royal veto, “Le roi le veut,” in giving the Royal assent to Acts of Parliament; the crier's “Oyez, oyez;” and the use of the French language in the Courts of Chivalry, sixty years later than Drokensford, in the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV—as seen, for

example, in the great suit between Sir Edward de Hastings and Sir Reginald de Grey, concerning the right to bear the arms of Valence, Earl of Pembroke, when Sir Edward states his case in French:—"Devant vous mes très honorez le conestable et marechal d'Angleterre, ou vos Lieutenants en cour de chevalerie d'Angleterre, Je, Edward, seigneur de Hastings, chevalier," etc. And I only pause one minute to note in passing, what an unsatisfactory political and social condition of the nation is revealed, when the king, and the nobles, and the bishops, and the great proprietors, and Courts of Law, and Houses of Parliament, spoke one language, the language of the Conqueror, and the common people spoke another, the speech of the conquered.

Another volume has since followed, by Emanuel Green, Esq., viz., *The Survey and Rental of the Chantries, Colleges, and Free Chapels, Guilds, Fraternities, Lamps, Lights, and Obits of the County of Somerset, as returned 2nd Edward VI, 1548.* But I have not yet had leisure to read it.

I turn next to some works of a different character, but of great charm and intense interest—I mean the three biographies lately written by Canon Church, and communicated to the Society of Antiquaries; to wit, *The Lives of Bishops Reginald, Savaric, and Jocelyn*; covering the time from 1174 to 1242. In these papers the personal characters and work of the three Bishops, in connection not only with the Diocese, but with some of the most important historical events of the time, are brought out with much force, at the same time that many important details concerning the fabric of the Cathedral and the building of other churches, and other purely Diocesan details are abundantly illustrated by contemporary records, many of them here for the first time brought to light. The murder and canonization of St. Thomas of Canterbury, the great buildings at Glastonbury, the accession to the throne, and preparation for the crusade of Richard I; mingling with the more domestic events of the Diocese—the repairs of the Cathedral, the

building of Witham church, the foundation of Prebends, and the like, make the episcopate of Reginald Fitz-Jocelyn de Bohun a good theme for an ecclesiastical historian. The marked and almost eccentric character of Bishop Savaric; his restless disposition, and almost perpetual motion, so well described in the lines written after his death—

Hospes erat mundo per mundum semper eundo
Sic suprema dies fit sibi prima quies.

Anglicé,

Through the wide world a ranger, and ever a stranger,
The first rest that he found was six feet under ground;

his desperate battle with the monks of Glastonbury, who held on like bull dogs to their independence of the Bishop; his frequent attendance on King John in Normandy and elsewhere; his place on the King's left hand at the Coronation, as previously Reginald had walked on the left had of Richard, and as the Bishops of Bath and Wells have done ever since; the constant fire of dear-bought mandates from Rome, excommunication of rivals, interdicts, and the other *fulmina belli*; all this again makes a very lively and instructive biography. While in Bishop Jocelyn, to use the eloquent words of his biographer, "We have an instance unique in the long roll of the Bishops of this See, of a son of the soil rising through all the grades and offices of the Church to the Bishopric, living at Wells through the greater part of a long and beneficent life, dying there, and buried amongst his own people."

It is, indeed, a pleasing picture which shows us the two brothers, Hugh of Lincoln, the elder, and Jocelyn his younger brother, "growing up on their father's land at Launcherley, attached to the household of the Bishop, showing early abilities which qualified them to become by degrees leading Judges, counsellors, statesmen, and Bishops, of their day, and thus acquiring (in the most honourable way) grants of land and preferments in Church and State." And it is a pleasing sequel to this picture of their early life, to see Hugh, the elder

brother, dividing his great wealth between his (native) Wells and his adopted Lincoln; while Jocelyn gave all he had to Wells, "the place he loved so well," in which "he had been nourished from his infancy," and where, as his fellow canons attested at the time of his election to the See, "he had lived in all good conscience before them all his life hitherto." "Thus," Canon Church adds, "the brothers, in a spirit of local patriotism and pious devotion which will comparé with that of Florentine citizens and builders of Italian towns, became the makers (and adorners) of their own native city."

I must just add that though the charm of Jocelyn's episcopate lies in its domestic character and in his quiet work "for the good of the Church of God in his own home as restorer, builder, legislator, and reformer;" and though the greatest visible monument of his fame is the beautiful west front of our Cathedral, unsurpassed in beauty by any Cathedral in England; yet we must not suppose that he escaped the storms and tempests of that troublous time, or shrank from taking that part in the affairs of his country which belonged to his high estate. In obedience to the Pope, and as a check to the tyranny of King John, he had published the Interdict, and then fled the country with his brother Hugh (1208). After his return from exile in the King's peace (1213), he had been by the side of Archbishop Langdon when Magna Charta was extorted from the King in 1215, and he was present at the consecration of Salisbury Cathedral. All this, and much more, you will find well told in Canon Churches's *Account of Jocelyn, Bishop of Bath*, also communicated to the Society of Antiquaries.

I have also had the pleasure of seeing another very interesting biography, belonging to a later age—that of Bishop Fox, in the reign of Henry VII—now in the press, under the auspices of the Somerset Record Society, written by Mr. Chisholm Batten. As Fox belonged to the class of statesmen Bishops, and held successively the Sees of Exeter, Bath and

Wells, Durham, and Winchester, his life necessarily embraces a wide range both of secular and ecclesiastical interest, and will, if I mistake not, be another valuable contribution of archæology to our general historical knowledge. I think, therefore, that I was justified in mentioning, as a matter of hearty congratulation, that a very considerable addition to our knowledge of the early history Wells and the county has been made since the Society met at Wells, in 1873, even if I had confined my instances to those enumerated above, and a few other publications which I had in my mind—such as Mr. Holmes's careful *History of Wookey*, Mr. Weaver's *Somerset Wills and Visitations of Somerset*, Dr. Pring's *Briton and Roman in Taunton*, *The Register of Bishop Fox*, the late Mr. Serel's *History of St. Cuthbert's Church*, Mr. Irvine's *Fabric of the Cathedral Church of St. Andrew in Wells*.

But, by a curious coincidence, Bishop Hobhouse, to whom our Society owes so much, and who is a master in archæological research, has furnished me with a list of recent publications, all supplying materials for that grand desideratum, a *History of Somerset*:—

Recent publications: Eyton's *Domesday Studies*, 2 vols.; Archæological Society's *Proceedings*; Somerset Record Society, 2 vols.; *Survey of Glaston Manors, 1192*; Lyte's *Lords of Dunster*; Davis's *Records of Bath*; Malet's *History of the Malet Family*; *Bishop Fox's Register*; *Reports of Historical MSS. Commission*, embracing collections at Dunster, Longleat, St. Audries, Axbridge, Bridgwater, Bath, Wells (Corporation, Chapter, Diocesan Registry); Single parishes—[*Wookey*, by Mr. Holmes]; *Yeovil*, by Mr. J. Batten; *Wedmore Chron.*, by Rev. S. Hervey; *Backwell*, by Rev. Preb. Burbidge; *Somerset Wills*, by Rev. F. Brown; *Somerset Visitations (Heralds)*, Rev. F. W. Weaver; *Somerset—Lists of Incumbents, 1309—1730*, Rev. F. W. Weaver; Hugo's *Somerset Nunneries*; Hugo's *Taunton Priory*; Canon Church's *Three Monographs*, published by the Society of Antiquaries;

numerous parish magazines, containing sketches or fragments of parish history.

Unpublished Contributions: *Mells*, Rev. G. Horner; *Cheddar*, Rev. Preb. Coleman; *Evercreech*, *Batcombe*, *Bruton*, *Wincanton* (including Staunton Priory), *Witham Friary*, *Tintinhull*, by Bishop Hobhouse;¹ *Charlynch*, by Rev. W. A. Bull.

Publications before 1840: Collinson's *County History*; Phelps's *County History* (unfinished); Savage's *Hundred of Carhampton*; Savage's *History of Taunton*; Hoare's *Monastic Remains*; Hoare's *Hungerfordinna*; Rutter's *Delineations of N.W. Somerset, 1830*.

I think this is very encouraging. And if these good examples are contagious, and publications based upon careful research and accurate knowledge continue to issue in the same, or perhaps increasing ratio, from different parts of the county, as well as from Wells, we may hope that the President who will preside over the Society's next meeting at Wells will be able to announce to the Members that a good county history is in the press, or perhaps to congratulate them on its completion.

But I must turn for one moment to some other, though not unconnected, aspects of the vast subject embraced by archæology. When I was for two or three weeks in Normandy, last June, I was impressed—as I suppose everybody is—with the wonderful beauty and grandeur of the Norman churches. In the sublime conception, and the vigorous execution of those stupendous architectural designs, one seemed to see the reflex of a mind and character of extraordinary force and elevation. One saw, too, in the great number of such churches, of nearly the same age, evidence of an insatiable activity of power, a restless putting forth of strength, a courageous confronting of difficulties with the determination to overcome them, which are also the marks of a great con-

(1). Most of these are very incomplete, but they would form a backbone for complete histories. They are all in the hands of the local clergy.

quering and organizing race. I saw the same features in the castles of Falaise, St. Aignan, and Mont St. Michel; and they appear also in our own Norman cathedrals, minsters, and castles on the Welsh border. When then my attention was turned to the Norman Conquest of England, by being in the birth place and in the burial place of William the Conqueror (Falaise and Caen), and being surrounded by the familiar names of places—such as Bayeux, and Coutance, and Avranches—which occur so often in the history of the Conquest, it was impossible not to feel the close connection between the character of the builders and the prowess of the warriors. And this feeling was brought to its height when in the cathedral city of the martial Bishop Odo, with its magnificent Norman church, one had spread before one's wondering eyes the Bayeux Tapestry, which I am almost ashamed to say interested me more than all the cathedrals put together. There in those vivid scenes depicted by the Royal lady's needle in imperishable colours, where Edmund, and Harold, and William, and Bishop Odo, seemed to stand and move before one in bodily presence—where the whole history of the Conquest, as William wished it to be understood, is unfolded just as if one had been present; where you see the Conqueror baffled for a moment by the *fait accompli* of Harold's coronation, yet in an instant forming his plan, building his ships, crossing the sea, disembarking his army, entrenching himself at Hastings, advancing with his Knights in coat-of-mail, crushing the Saxons, slaying the three Royal brothers, and so winning England as his prize; you are irresistibly made to feel the immeasurable superiority of the Norman race, and are perhaps reconciled to the conquest of your native land, which infused fresh vigour into the people, and, under God, made England what it has been in the centuries which followed. The point, however, of my observations is that prowess in architecture and prowess in war go hand in hand; and that the buildings which it is the province of archæology to study

and explain are a clue to the character of the people who built them, and I think this observation is borne out by the history of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, and Moors.

I have mentioned the Bayeux Tapestry. It is to me an unaccountable fact that the art of drawing, which in the time of William the Conqueror had acquired the wonderful vigour displayed in the Tapestry, and was capable of representing men, horses, ships, battles, and complicated actions, with such clearness and force, should have stood still, and been in disuse, and made no progress for nearly 500 years. Only think how much fuller and richer our knowledge of English life and manners would have been if we had a succession of paintings of equal merit, depicting Cœur de Lion, and the Edwards, and the Henrys, and their courts, and their armies, and their ships, and their provisions, and the sports, and all the appurtenances of the daily life of the people. But we have them not, and so archæology must do the best she can with the materials at her disposal to reproduce the life of the ages that are gone by. It does, however, seem strange that so useful and pleasing an art as that of drawing and painting should, though not actually extinct, have been so little used. That it existed we have abundant evidence in the beautifully illuminated missals and other MSS. of early times, in early painted glass in churches, in fresco drawings, such as the St. Christopher in Wedmore church, and many others elsewhere, and in occasional portraits. There is at Westminster a very early portrait of Richard II, and I think this Meeting ought to be reminded of the most interesting portrait discovered a year or two ago by our Secretary, the Rev. James Bennett, in South Cadbury church, and described in last year's report. The church is dedicated to St. Thomas, and so about contemporary with Bishop Reginald, though much modernised. Mr. Bennett told me that while poking about his church he had noticed that the wall in the south-east end of the aisle sounded hollow. He accordingly pulled it down, and in doing so dis-

covered behind it the very deep splay of a small Norman or transition window. On the side of this splay was a portrait in vivid colours of an ecclesiastic, a bishop, with strongly marked features, and his mitre on his head. Surely it is the portrait St. Thomas of Canterbury. I hope that this mention of it will cause an archæological pilgrimage to Cadbury, and that some new Chaucer will rise up to immortalize it.

I ought, perhaps, to have adverted to the recent very important discoveries of the Roman baths at Bath, to that of the Roman villa near Yatton, the great find of Roman coins at Harptree, and to the other discoveries in Mr. Dawkins's department. But if I said more, I shall run the risk of exhausting myself and my hearers likewise. I cannot, however, conclude without expressing the deep regret which I am sure is shared by every person in the room, that we are deprived of the pleasure and benefit of Mr. Freeman's presence, and of the instruction we should have derived from his rich stores of knowledge; and our earnest hope that the present indisposition will soon pass over, and leave him a free man to pursue his great role of teaching and enlightening his fellow-men.

At the conclusion a vote of thanks was passed to the President, on the motion of the DEAN.

The assembly then adjourned to the Palace, where between 200 and 300 guests were hospitably entertained by the BISHOP and Lady ARTHUR HERVEY, to whom a hearty vote of thanks was accorded.

At the conclusion of the luncheon