

Evening Meeting.

In the evening, a meeting was held in the Castle Hall for Papers and discussions. The PRESIDENT occupied the chair, and was supported by the Mayor, and the Rev. F. W. Weaver.

Red Deer on the Quantocks.

The PRESIDENT read a paper on "Red Deer on the Quantocks." He said that the origin of his reading that paper was that in his last address as President at Bridgwater he was reported to have used these words:—"There was a general belief that, as on Exmoor, which had been a Royal forest from time immemorial, so on the Quantocks red deer had been for centuries. These beautiful animals, however, were claimed to have been first turned out on the Quantocks by Mr. C. E. J. Esdaile's father, and this was confirmed by Lord Ebrington." He would now wish to withdraw Lord Ebrington's confirmation, which was given by him in his book on staghunting, because last winter he met him and asked him about this question, whereupon he told him that he (Mr. Stanley) had been his authority on the question of Mr. Esdaile turning the deer out. He (the President) had thought Lord Ebrington had independent knowledge of his own of what was in the documents belonging to the Esdaile family, but he was quite prepared to take the responsibility upon himself. The Rev. Mr. Greswell wrote a letter to the *Somerset County Gazette* on the subject, and seemed to have to a certain degree convinced the editing secretary of that society.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER: I am not responsible for all I print.

The PRESIDENT, proceeding, said he was glad to find that the committee cordially agreed with his suggestion that he should read a paper on the red deer on the Quantocks. He hoped they would be very lenient to him, as a study of

Domesday was one of the most fearful things he had ever undergone, and it was very difficult to understand. Mr. Stanley then read his paper, which was of an interesting character, and in which he said there was no proof at all that in old days there were more deer on the Quantocks than in any other part of England, and also asserted that the forest laws did not apply to the Quantocks. He said: I will first take Mr. Greswell's arguments which have been printed with my address, and then proceed to his other arguments. Leland certainly observed that there was a red deer park in the bottom at Nether Stowey, and another of fallow, but these deer in a park are not the red deer for which we are looking, but park deer, fenced in and not ranging over the hills. Mr. Weaver also says that Mr. Greswell brings evidence forward to show that a large portion of this part of Somerset was accounted "forest" from Domesday downwards. We are, I believe, at all events Mr. Greswell and I are, willing to accept Mr. Eyton, generally, as our authority. Now what does he say positively, preface, page 34?—"The Somerset survey names no king's forest at all under any specific name of such forest, but it gives the expanses of such forests in the large areas of wood and pasture which it annexes to certain manors of the *Vetus Dominicum Coronæ*. The Royal forests of Somerset thus vaguely noticed by a technicality of Domesday, proved in the following century to be five in number—Exmoor, Neroche, Selwood, Mendip and North Petherton. Though in a Domesday point of view the Royal forests may be said to have been annexed to the Royal manors, this must be understood collectively of both. No particular forest can be pointed out as having been apportioned to a particular manor. A mass of Royal Forest was annexed for instance to the three Royal Manors of Carhampton, Williton and Cannington. They had among them 14,400 acres of wood and 21,600 of pasture, in all 36,000 acres, which, though not altogether forest in a physical sense, were afforested in a technical sense,

that is, deemed to pertain to the King's Forest." This is the paragraph which Mr. Greswell quotes, leaving out "for instance," which connects the paragraph with what has gone before. Going on to page 130, where details of the north-western manors of Somerset are considered, we find "On the whole the Domesday measurements of the above territory exceed the measures of the corresponding parishes by 214,585—198,119, that is 16,466 acres. There can be but one construction of all this. It is that much of the woodland and pasture attributed by Domesday to the King's Manors and to other manors of this region really comprehended forests and uplands pervading districts which were geographically external. When we come to the North Petherton Manor and Hundred, for instance, we shall see that none of the King's Forest of North Petherton was deemed by Domesday to be appurtenant thereto, and there are other like instances." As regards West Monkton Manor, says Mr. Eyton, p. 164, the difference of the "two measurements was probably King's Forest, and accredited in Domesday like North Petherton Forest to the Royal Manors of South and North Somerset." But this only affects the Domesday survey, which does not separate the forests from other manors; but a century later we find bounds of the forests described, and a century later still we find the perambulation of the forests taking place, and what had long been promised carried out, that the lands that had been added to the forests by the kings were disafforested. Near the Quantocks the only forest was North Petherton, the names of whose rangers have come down to us, and one of them, Sabina Peche, who made P. de Hamme her deputy, who acted as ranger of the king's forests in Somerset, we read had Newhalle, in Holford. The tenants here had their lands by the service of attending at Petherton Park in fawning season, or paying a fine for non-attendance; this service was afterwards changed (*Collinson*, vol. iii, p. 457) into a certain rent, and is still paid. Would she (the ranger) have sent those who held under her to

North Petherton if there had been special fawning on the Quantocks? This may be the origin of a curious dispute about a payment from Holford to North Petherton. Red deer existed over all England at one time, and whether they ceased to exist or not is a matter of evidence. Is there anything to show that two hundred years ago, at any particular time, there were any red deer on the Quantocks? Lord Ebrington has the records of the North Devon Staghounds, and the "no doubt with justice" of Lord Ebrington's corroboration, I freely withdraw, because it was based on the circumstances which I told him myself. But I can quote his authority that there is no record of any deer having been ever hunted on Quantock by the North Devon Staghounds. Mr. Greswell's evidence is based on his disbelief of what I have written regarding Mr. Esdaile and Mr. Crosse's authority in a poem on a stag hunt. As for the first point I believe Mr. E. J. Esdaile was on Cothelstone-hill, as Mr. Greswell suggests, on the occasion of the earliest visit, but did not announce that he had turned out deer on a neighbouring property. As to Mr. Crosse's writing on "The Walks on the Quantocks," this I found was written and read before this association in 1854, September 12th; this is more than fifteen years after Mr. Esdaile began turning out the deer, and if they were red deer that Mr. Crosse saw, they were probably some of them. But it seems to be forgotten that there was a herd of fallow deer (that got out of Crowcombe Park as I have heard), which existed in Lord Taunton's time, and was hunted by Wodrow, and I suspect the great electrician might in the dead of night have made a mistake with them. The poem said to be on a stag hunt appears at page 62 of "*Memorials of Andrew Crosse*," but it is "Lines on a red deer turned out before the staghounds on Broomfield Hill." If there had been red deer on the Quantocks the carted deer would not have been resorted to. I have not been able to find any date for this poem, nor any account of the carted deer on Broomfield Hill. The passage out of "The

Walks on the Quantocks" is as follows:—"Often have I stumbled on the red deer while crossing the hills at the dead of night or disturbed the fox with the light of my lantern." I should suggest that he mistook the fallow deer for red deer in his nightly walk with a lantern. The occurrence that I mentioned to Lord Ebrington was that the late Mr. E. J. Esdaile having kindly come to see me, when he for a time partly recovered his health, walked around the house at Quantock, which he had not seen after Lord Taunton had finally finished it, and talked to me of old things. I asked him about the red deer. He said, "I turned out the first on the Quantocks." I asked him where, and he said at the top of Cockercombe. I find from Mr. Charles Esdaile, his son, that this must have been ministerially on his part, as his grandfather, also Mr. E. J. Esdaile, was alive, and the son no doubt assisted at the enlargement of the deer. I went to London a few days after his visit, and when I came back to Somerset in the autumn his old disease had returned and I never had any more talk with him about Somerset days, which I had much looked forward to doing. The extracts from Mr. E. J. Esdaile, sen.'s, diary, with which I have been favoured, show—"that in 1833, during and all through the winter months, a hind was often seen in the woods on Quantocks. She was twice found and hunted by some harriers. I cannot find out she had been seen during 1834. In 1836 mention is made of a stag's horn being picked up in 'one of our (Mr. Esdaile's) plantations by the keeper.' In May, 1839, three hinds from Dulverton were turned out in Cockercombe, one five, one three, and the other one year old. There is reason to believe that the first mentioned beat her way back again on May 18, 1840. I turned out two more hinds on Quantock, one of which—a ten-years-old deer—had been turned out before the staghounds on Gibb Hill on the 15th, and after a chase of seven hours was re-taken at Heath's House, near Huntspill—fifteen miles from Bridgwater." In another account she was said to be uncarted. So much for Mr.

Esdale's journal; now for the evidence of Wm. Palmer, frankly given by Mr. Greswell, and another Wm. Palmer, who died this spring, who say they did not see the red deer on the Quantocks till about the same time—between 1830-40. I would observe that Mr. Esdaile was a sportsman second to none on the Quantocks. He was given the command by Mr. Newton Fellowes, afterwards Lord Portsmouth—who had failed to do so on the previous day—to kill a deer for Sir F. Knight, the details of which are given Collyns, p. 172; and he, possessed of ample means, may be fairly given as being as high an authority as we can get. Well, who were the Wm. Palmers? Why, the son and relation of John Palmer, well known on the Quantocks as the votary of sport, though I may say never on his own land. However, he died just ninety years of age, a favourite with all, and who said to my wife that he liked to see her, but he wanted now to see the 'squire, because he kept him alive with his brown sherry. Well, is not this a most extraordinary undesigned coincidence, that these two in their different classes of life should attribute the same time for the introduction of red deer into the Quantocks, the first from his knowledge of what he had done himself and the other from his observation of what he had seen on the Quantocks? Mr. Greswell assumes that the Quantocks were really a Royal forest; he says that the red deer were protected by the forest laws. If they had been Sabina Peche and P. de Hamme would not have sent people to North Petherton at fawning time, and, indeed, they would have been themselves the rangers. As for the argument from what Leland saw at Nether Stowey, of course I am aware of it, as part of the land now belongs to Mrs. Stanley, and I have often read the passage in Leland. There is an argument that the permission to enclose shows the existence of deer, as they were to stock the enclosed park. But I submit that the Nether Stowey deer park is not on the Quantocks at all. I know the ground well; bought from H. Harvey by Sir P. Acland and Lord Taunton,

to whom it came from Mr. Balch; it is the old manor of Lord Audley. The land is below Nether Stowey village in what Leland calls a pretty bottom. At Coripole, now Currypool, there was a deer park in 1585; at Quantoxhead the Luttrells, at Cothelstone the Stawells, had a deer park, but I submit that there were just as many deer parks away from the borders of the Quantocks, and two of these were not on the Quantocks. Mr. Speke, of Whitelackington, Mr. Champernowne in the same neighbourhood, and the largest deer park of all, the one at Hinton St. George, are the proofs that I would adduce. Besides these three there was the Bishop of Winchester's larger deer park near Taunton, of which Cardinal Beaufort made Sir H. Luttrell ranger. There is no proof that the Cardinal ever owned Halsway except that his natural daughter, wife of Sir E. Stradling, is supposed to have done so, and Mr. Warre's allusion to his hunting on the Quantocks is of too frivolous a character to view it as an historical statement. In later years Col. Luttrell (that would be after 1848) found deer on the Quantocks when he kept the foxhounds, but they were not found in the earlier part of the century. In 1867 the *Field* newspaper congratulated Sir T. Acland, Lord Taunton and others, on the fact of a herd being established on the Quantocks. In 1846 I find the first meet recorded in Mr. Collyns' book. A lady who lives at Marsh Mills and whose father was a most intimate friend of Mr. Tom Poole, tells me she never remembers hearing of the red deer having been in their time on the Quantocks. In the Coleridge-Wordsworth time there is no allusion to them. I cannot find any evidence that there were red deer on the Quantocks for 150 or 200 years before Mr. Esdaile turned some out, and Mr. Bisset continued to do so, except occasional deer, which appeared there, as one did some years ago at Street, and one for the last four years at Clovelly. I find it was not a Royal Forest or the deer there protected by the forest laws, and I may fairly claim that they had not been on Quantock before 1839, since

the time that they generally became extinct in England.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER read extracts from a paper by Rev. W. Greswell, who was unable to attend. It took a somewhat different view of the subject, coinciding with that taken by the late Rev. F. Warre (*Som. Arch. Soc. Proceedings*, v. XII). Mr. Greswell's paper, or rather the substance of it, appeared in the *Somerset County Gazette* for October 8th, 1898.

The Right Rev. Bishop BROWNLOW read a learned paper on the divisions of the Bishopsrics of Wessex (*see Part II*).

The PRESIDENT cordially thanked Bishop Brownlow for his paper, and expressed pleasure that the late Bishop Clifford's successor showed such ability and willingness to assist them in their discussions.

The Rev. Preb. HOLMES rose to thank Bishop Brownlow for his valuable paper, and for calling attention to the Crawford Charters, and though too late for a serious discussion, would remark that up to the appearance of these documents it would seem that all our information was derived from one source. There was no evidence at Rome, either of the letter of Pope Formosus to the bishops of England, *audito nefandos*, or of the threat which was averted by the consecrations in 911. The bishop had referred to Wilkins, Mansi, Cosart, Labbe and Jaffé, but all these gave as the authority for their statement William of Malmesbury, who gave one account in his *Gesta Regum* and the other in his *Gesta Pontificum*. The Crawford papers, however, seem to suggest that the statements made in the Canterbury, Winchester, and Cottonian MSS. may not have been founded on Malmesbury, but on something earlier, and that probably Malmesbury had before him some archetype which was an attempt to explain the question, and of which he gave part in his *Gesta Regum* and part in his *Gesta Pontificum*. The second point he would remark on was that the consecration of the bishops could not have been earlier than 910, since Asser of Sherborne did not die till 909, or Frithstan of Winchester before 906. De Gray

Birch's heading to the document concerning the consecration gives it as from Formosus to Eadward, which is ridiculous, seeing that the Pope died five years before Eadward became king. It seems, therefore, that an attempt has been made, and probably as early as the time of Dunstan, to make as one story facts connected with two events. First there was the letter which is probable, and cannot reasonably be rejected, of Pope Formosus, 891-896, to the English bishops, in condemnation of the deplorable condition of the English Church. Organization was wanting, sees were vacant, and heathenism was gaining ground again. Then there may have been another message, probably sent by Pope Sergius IV, which was followed by the consecrations. It was hardly likely that there had ever been any signatures to the charter, because it would almost seem that the charter was only an after-thought, drawn up to give an appearance of authority to an historical explanation of an event that had occurred three generations previously.

The Rev. Mr. RICHARDSON read a paper on St. Anne's Chapel, Brislington.

This closed the evening's proceedings.