The Rev. W. H. P. Greswell, F.R.G.S.

BY the death of the Rev. William Henry Parr Greswell on January 19th, the Society has lost an old and valued member, and one who rendered conspicuous service to archæological and historical research. He was born 74 years ago at Kilve, of which parish his father was Rector; and was educated at Bath, and Brasenose College, Oxford, where he won a classical scholarship and a Hulme exhibition. He came of a scholarly family; for his father, a former fellow of Balliol, was one of five brothers who held Oxford fellowships at the same time. He graduated with classical honours in 1871, and from 1876 to 1883 held the post of Lecturer in classics and English literature under the higher education scheme in Cape Colony. Returning to England, he was ordained to the curacy of Aisholt, a small parish lying in a fold of the Quantocks, and after five years there, was preferred to the Rectory of Dodington which he held for five-and-twenty years. While there, he married Blanche, daughter of Coventry Carew, Esq., of Crowcombe, who survives him. Retiring in 1913, he settled in Minehead, and there ended his days. The years at Aisholt and Dodington were busy ones, for book after book came from his active mind and industrious pen. The earlier ones were mainly concerned with the geography, history and politics of some of the larger British Colonies. But at the same time, as papers contributed to these *Proceedings* show, he was devoting a considerable amount of study to the early history of West Somerset, and of the Quantock district in particular. The results of these studies were given to the public in "The Land of Quantock," published in 1903, and now, unfortunately, out of print. He tells us in the preface that it "grew out of an original purpose to work out the history of the old boroughs of Nether Stowey and Stoke Courcy and to trace the fortunes of the Audley and De Courcy baronies. But the history of one Quantock village led on so quickly and obviously to that of its neighbour that I decided to summarise my researches under the convenient geographical heading of 'The Land of Quantock.'"

No one can read this book without perceiving the intense and passionate love which the author had for his subject. He rejoiced in the fact that he was born and bred on the Quantocks and that,

with the exception of the seven years in South Africa, he had spent all his life within sight of their gentle slopes and ever changing lights and shades. He knew all the " minor details of their combes, knaps, gullies, bottoms, goyles, ferny nooks and wooded sides," and delighted in following the evidences he found of the doings of former inhabitants ; old camps, old track-ways, place-names,— all had some story to tell.

Perhaps, Mr. Greswell's greatest interest lay in the struggles of Saxons and Danes. Accepting a suggestion thrown out by Bishop Clifford, he brought a wealth of evidence, gathered from original sources and from a painstaking study of the topography of the district, to show that the Danish Chieftain Hubba was defeated and slain at Combwich, near the mouth of the Parret, and not near Appledore on the Devon coast ; and that Alfred's decisive victory over Guthrum was gained at the Somerset Edington, on the Poldens, and not, as Camden states, at the Wiltshire village of that name.

He treated the whole of Alfred's great campaign most exhaustively in " The Battle of Edington," published in 1910.

But previous to this, Mr. Greswell had published " The Forests and Deer Parks of Somerset " (1905), and " Chapters on the Early History of Glastonbury Abbey " (1909). The former is recognised as a standard work on forest laws and customs ; while the latter brings to light many Celtic associations of the ancient Abbey. His last work, " Dumnonia and the Valley of the Parret," published only a few days before his death, throws the illuminating results of further thought and study on some of the subjects dealt with in his earlier works. But besides these books, he contributed articles to various reviews and magazines, and many papers to former volumes of these *Proceedings*. These books and articles are both a valuable contribution to the early history of West Somerset, and also a lasting memorial of his industry and painstaking research.

Mr. Greswell was mainly instrumental in the purchase and handing over to the National Trust of the Coleridge Cottage at Nether Stowey, of which he was a trustee up to the time of his death.

Though quiet and retiring by nature, he made many friends, and with these he delighted to talk over the problems he was trying to solve and the discoveries he was making. His friendship was highly valued by those who were privileged to share it, and many mourn his loss.

W. T. Reeder.