

Proceedings
of the
Somersetshire Archæological and
Natural History Society,
during the year 1877.

THE Twenty-ninth Annual Meeting of the Society was held at BRIDGWATER, on Tuesday, August 7th, in the Town Hall. Bridgwater has twice before been the scene of meeting. The second Quarterly Meeting was held in this town in 1850. In 1856 the Annual Meeting was fixed for this place. It was, however, found that the British Archæological Association had determined to hold its Congress at the same time and place, and the Committee of the Society therefore yielded the ground to the Association, and only met to transact their ordinary business. In August, 1858, the Society held its tenth Annual Meeting at Bridgwater, under the presidency of The Hon. P. P. Bouverie. The weather during the Meeting was so unfavourable that the intended Excursions were for the most part abandoned. This year the Mayor and Corporation favoured the Committee with an invitation to make their town the place of Meeting, promising a hearty welcome to the Society, a pledge which was amply fulfilled. The arrangements for the Meeting were chiefly carried out by Rev. J. Odgers and Messrs. Barham and Winter-

botham. Mr. J. R. Poole, and many other gentlemen, gave much valuable advice and assistance.

The public proceedings began at 12 noon. The rain, which fell in torrents, somewhat thinned the attendance at the opening Meeting. The Chair was taken by the President, Mr. JEROM MURCH.

The PRESIDENT said that his object in appearing before the Meeting was simply to resign to his successor the office which he had the honour of holding, and he therefore begged to propose as President for the ensuing year, The Hon. and Right Rev. BISHOP CLIFFORD. He considered that it would be unnecessary for him to say anything in support of this proposition. The Bishop was well known in that district, and, indeed, throughout the county, and he was sure that the Society would benefit by his presidency. Unfortunately, the weather was uncongenial; but he hoped that it would brighten, and he was sure that in every other respect the Meeting promised to be most successful.

The proposal was seconded by Mr. C. J. TURNER. Mr. Murch then left the Chair, and Bishop Clifford was voted President with much applause.

The Rev. W. HUNT said he had much pleasure in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Murch for his able services as President. The Society could not have had a better man for the work, and those Members who were able to be at the Meeting last year would have a pleasant remembrance of the occasion.

Mr. F. H. DICKINSON was not able to be at Bath last year, but was well aware of the qualifications of Mr. Murch, and as he had performed the duties of the office so well he was entitled to the thanks of the Society. He had much pleasure in seconding Mr. Hunt's proposal.

The motion was agreed to with acclamation, and Mr. MURCH briefly returned thanks.

The PRESIDENT then called upon Mr. C. J. Turner, Honorary Secretary, to read the

Report of the Council.

“The Council of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society have the honour of presenting their Twenty-ninth Annual Report. They have the pleasure to announce that the number of Members has increased from 453 to 489 during the past year. This is a guaranty that the usefulness and objects of the Society are more and more appreciated by the public.

“The amount of unpaid subscriptions is still large, although reminders for payment have been frequently circulated. It is earnestly hoped that those to whom this remark especially applies will remember their obligations, and send in the arrears due to the Society. The Council take the liberty of again suggesting the advantage it would be if Members would give their Bankers a general order to pay the subscription.

“Some important additions have been made to the Museum of the Society. Amongst these the Council think that the interesting collection of Bronze Celts and other objects, discovered in the grounds of the Taunton Union, is especially worthy of notice.

“The Council have taken steps to enlarge the library, and make it more worthy of the Society, by the issue of a circular asking for contributions of books, from those who may have works of intrinsic value or of local interest to part with. A catalogue of the books is in progress, under the able supervision of Mr. Eden, and it is hoped that before the end of the year a guide-book to the whole Museum will be prepared, to be sold to visitors at a very small price.

“‘Field Excursions,’ by which those who desire it may acquire an accurate and scientific knowledge of the district, have been set on foot at Taunton, and one experiment of the sort amongst the Quantock Hills has been made with success.

“The Council beg leave to call the attention of the Society to the resolution of the Committee expressed in page 4 of the last year’s Report, recommending the removal of the ruinous buildings in the courtyard of the Taunton Castle. The Council

would now recommend this Meeting to sanction the removal of such of these outbuildings as are ruinous and unsafe. They recommend, also, that the building called the "Stable" may be so far repaired as to fit it for purposes of a store-house.

"The Council cannot close this Report without referring with great sorrow to the death of the Rev. Thos. Hugo, by which the Society has lost one of its oldest and most valued Members, who often enriched their volumes with papers of great research and local interest.

"The Council wish to record their thanks for the cordial invitation to visit this ancient town by the Mayor and Corporation of Bridgwater.

"A report on the Pigott Collection of Drawings is appended.

"Since the writing of this Report, the Council and the Society generally have to deplore another sad loss in the death of Mr. H. Danby Seymour, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, who ably and genially presided over the successful meeting at Sherborne. The loss of Mr. Danby Seymour will leave a blank not only in the Society, but in many spheres of literary and practical usefulness, which were advanced by his ability and accomplishments."

The Pigott Collection of Drawings.

"It will be in the recollection of the Society that a very valuable collection of Drawings, bearing the above designation, was many years ago placed in their custody, under directions from the Court of Quarter Sessions. The collection had been made at great expense by the late John Hugh Smyth-Pigott, Esq., and that gentleman in his last moments gave verbal directions to his friend and physician, Dr. J. H. Pring, to place the same at the disposal of the County Authorities, adding some expressions of his wishes on the subject.

"The collection comprises about 1,150 drawings of Churches and other architectural antiquities in Somerset, by Messrs. Buckler, and drawings also of the Monastic Seals of the Western Counties, from the collection of the late Mr. Cayley.

"The Lord Lieutenant and the Court of Quarter Sessions determined, in 1858, that this important Collection should be deposited in the custody of your Society. A question having been lately addressed to your Curator as to such custody, the Committee recommend that they should be authorised to draw up an account of the circumstances under which the Society holds the Drawings, and that such account, together with a list of the Trustees appointed at the above date by the Lord Lieutenant and the County, should be printed, and a copy pasted into each volume of the Collection for ready reference.

"The following are the Trustees of the Pigott Collection of Drawings, appointed by the Lord Lieutenant and the County in 1858:—

- The Lord Lieutenant of the County.
 - The Lord Bishop of the Diocese.
 - The Members of Parliament for the County.
 - The Chairman of Quarter Sessions.
 - The Clerk of the Peace for the County.
 - James Hurly Pring, Esq., M.D.
 - Edward Frederic Smyth-Pigott, Esq.
 - The Rev. George Octavius Smyth-Pigott
- } For life.

"The Committee further recommend that the above list of the Trustees should appear annually in the Proceedings of the Society."

The Report having been adopted,

Mr. F. H. DICKINSON said that attention had been called in the Report to the resolution of the Committee, recommending the removal of some ruinous and unsightly erections in the courtyard of the Castle, and it seemed to him that it would be advisable that the Society should pass a definite resolution on the matter. He did not think that there could be any possible objection to this removal. No antiquarian interest attached to these erections, and he begged to move that the sanction of the Society should be given for their removal.

The motion was seconded and agreed to.

Mr. TURNER added that Mr. Malet, who was not able to be present, had that morning received from Lord Clifford ten guineas towards the Purchase Fund, and that £5 had also been received from Mr. H. Danby Seymour, whose death they so deeply regretted; the money having, he believed, been remitted only the day before that gentleman died.

The Treasurers' Report was accepted.

Mr. WELMAN then proposed the re-election of the Vice-Presidents, with two important modifications: the Society had lost one of the most popular and not least able of their Vice-Presidents, by the death of Mr. H. D. Seymour. He begged to propose as an addition to the list the name of Mr. Jerom Murch.

Mr. A. L. WINTERBOTHAM seconded the proposal, and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. TURNER proposed the re-appointment of Mr. H. Badcock and Mr. H. J. Badcock as Treasurers for the ensuing year, and spoke of the kindness which these gentlemen had long shown in giving their services to the Society.

The Rev. J. ODGERS seconded the proposal, remarking on the great importance to a Society of this kind of having business men to manage finance matters.

Mr. MURCH proposed the re-appointment of the Rev. W. Hunt, and Messrs. O. W. Malet and C. J. Turner, as Hon. General Secretaries for the ensuing year, saying that the Society was much indebted to them for the services they had rendered.

Mr. SURTEES said that he was very glad that it had fallen to his lot to second the proposal. They were most fortunate in having such a triumvirate to manage the affairs of the Society. Mr. Hunt for the most part took the charge of the purely literary work; Mr. O. Malet had exhibited extraordinary skill and perseverance in collecting funds, by which a very great part of the Castle Purchase debt had been cleared off. Mr. Turner managed the local affairs at Taunton with zeal, taste, and ability. With respect to the recent purchase of the property, he would

say that the addition was not only valuable in warding off the possible nuisance of a pig-market, but as securing an integral portion of the Castle grounds.

The motion was agreed to.

The Local Secretaries were re-elected, with the addition of Rev. J. E. Odgers and Messrs. A. G. Barham and W. L. Winterbotham.

The Members of the General Committee were also re-elected.

The Rev. W. HUNT, in proposing the re-election of Mr. W. Bidgood as Assistant Secretary and Curator, remarked that his two colleagues and he himself could bear testimony that they could not have a more efficient or a better helper. For many years Mr. Bidgood had given up a large amount of time to the work of the Society, and the services which he rendered were poorly compensated by the small salary which the Society was able to give him. It would be difficult to find another man so suited for the post, or one who could and would give so much substantial help to all schemes for advancing the efficiency of the work of the Society.

Mr. TURNER seconded the proposal, saying that the Committee were very glad to be able to retain Mr. Bidgood's valuable services.

Mr. HUNT said that it was usual at the opening Meeting to say something about the place of Meeting for the next year, and then after having ventilated the subject, to refer it to the decision of the Council. Two or three places had been suggested to him. Mr. Sanford had more than once spoken of Dulverton. It was no doubt a place of great natural beauty, and one where the Natural History side of the Society would find rich materials. He should be strongly in favour of it, if only the commissariat was likely to be satisfactory. Mr. Freeman had proposed Glastonbury, and if the Society met there they would have the advantage of having the admirable monograph on King Ine finished.

Dr. FARMER observed that he did not think that sufficient

accommodation or means of conveyance could be had at Dulverton. He thought that the Society was too apt to run in grooves as regards the place of meeting ; why should they re-visit Glastonbury, when the hills and country round Minehead were so little known : he thought the Society should visit that part of the county. Portishead was another place where they would find much to interest them.

Mr. HUNT replied that the Society had already met at Dunster, and at Williton ; that he remembered the Williton Meeting as the most sterile he had ever been present at. No one read a paper, and scarcely any one made any remark worth listening to, so he was for keeping clear of the neighbourhood for a while. He thought that the neighbourhood of Portishead was fairly worked at the Clevedon Meeting : at the same time more might be done there, and he would keep the suggestion in mind.

Mr. F. H. DICKINSON said that he did not think that any decision could be made then, and moved that the Council be empowered to fix the place of the next General Meeting.

Mr. MURCH seconded the proposition, which was agreed to. Ten new Members were elected.