

Proceedings
of the
Somersetshire Archæological and
Natural History Society,
during the year 1881.

THE Thirty-third Annual Meeting of the Society was held at Clevedon, on the 23rd, 24th, and 25th August. The general proceedings began in the Public Hall about eleven o'clock, when E. A. Freeman, Esq., D.C.L., LL.D., took the chair.

Dr. FREEMAN said he was there only for a short time, merely as a bird of passage here in this island, which was accounted to be outside the world, on the way from one continent to another. He was in Clevedon for a still shorter time to put an end to his official character as regarded this Society. There was an old maxim, *nemo est hæres viventis*, nobody is the heir of a living man. He did not think that maxim would always hold good. In Domesday, at least, from which there was no appeal, antecessor and successor were often found living in the same place. It was so now. He was still alive himself, and was the antecessor, and here was his successor, Mr. E. H. Elton. He had nothing more to do but to give up his chair to him. Mr. Elton was well known to all of them in Clevedon, and was well able to be their guide and leader.

Mr. EDMUND H. ELTON then took the chair, and after a

few words of thanks delivered his address, which, however, is put in its usual place, after the business matters. He then called upon

Mr. C. J. TURNER (Secretary) to read the

Report of the Council,

which was as follows:—

“The Council of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society have much pleasure in presenting to you their 33rd Annual Report.

“They are happy to say that financially your Society continues in a sound and improving condition.

“The Committee have at length thought it expedient to remove from the list of Members about thirty names, representing nominal subscribers who have failed for a long time to keep up their subscription. Each of these has been written to many times, and all have had ample opportunity given them of continuing Members of the Society. Although this step has lessened the apparent strength of your Society, it has in no degree prejudiced your financial position.

“Your Council report, with much regret, the loss by resignation of your Hon. Secretary, the Rev. W. Hunt, whose very able management for the last eight years has conduced so much to the well-being of your Society, and to whom they also owe so much for the skill and learning which he has brought to bear on the editorship of the annual volume of *Proceedings*.

“Your Council, after much consideration, have succeeded in securing the valuable services of Mr. Emanuel Green for the management of the Annual Meeting this year, and they have great pleasure in proposing to the Society that he should be invited to fill the vacant post of Honorary Secretary. Mr. Green has contributed many valuable papers to the Society’s volumes, and is well known as a diligent student of the history and antiquities of Somerset.

“In accordance with a resolution passed at your last Annual Meeting, the accounts of the Society have been made up to the 31st December last. Your Council, therefore, have only half a year’s account to present. The balance on the 31st December amounted, on the general account, to £50 10s. 8d. in favour of the Society; and on the Castle Purchase Fund the balance against the Society had been reduced from £751 1s. 7d. to £675 16s. 7d. Since the closing of this account your Committee have received a bequest to the Castle Purchase Fund of £50, from the late Mrs. Sarah Payne, of Taunton, and a kind donation of £5 by J. Marshall, Esq., of Belmont. To the same gentleman they are also indebted for the very valuable donation of 32 Saxon coins, all struck at mints in this county.

“Your Council would also record the thanks they owe to Miss Atherstone, for kindly presenting to the Society—besides some valuable engravings of pictures by Martin—several books illustrative of local history, and written by her father, whilst residing within the precincts of Taunton Castle. To J. Albert Porch, Esq., of Glastonbury, your thanks are also due for an oil painting which now adorns the great Hall of the Castle. And your Council would report a valuable addition to the Library of about 100 volumes by a bequest of the late Rev. O. S. Harrison, of Thorne Falcon.

“The next volume of the Society’s *Proceedings* is now in the hands of Mr. Hammond, of Taunton, who has succeeded to the business formerly carried on by Mr. May. The publication of this volume has been necessarily delayed by the resignation of your Honorary Secretary; but his work in this particular has been well sustained by your able Curator, Mr. Bidgood, and the volume, it is hoped, will very soon be ready for distribution.

“Your Council recommend the formation of a *Bibliotheca Somersetsensis*, a work which it is considered this county should no longer be without, and suggests that materials should be

collected for making a complete list of all books, tracts, or manuscripts treating of persons or objects connected with the county, or written by natives or inhabitants of the county.

The Rev. H. M. SCARTH said he had been connected with the Society from its commencement, and he was very much gratified to find that its affairs were in such a flourishing condition. He felt that the interest in the Society had been well sustained, and he hoped it might be increased and extended considerably. Other societies in other counties had sprung up since this one had been established, and there was some rivalry between them. This Society was the first, and they ought not to allow themselves to fall behind others. The Gloucestershire Society was extremely vigorous, and he thought that unless they in Somerset considerably increased in energy they might be distanced by it. That he would be sorry to see, because hitherto they had been the leading Society. The success of the Gloucestershire Society was to be attributed in some measure to the fact that it worked from three centres—Bristol, Gloucester, and Cheltenham,—at each of which there was a local committee, under the general supervision of the whole body. The Somerset Society having its head quarters at Taunton, left out a great deal that was found in Bath, and also in the neighbourhood of Wells. He would merely throw out the suggestion that if they had a centre established at Wells, another at Bath, as well as that at Taunton, they might add considerably to the success of the Society. He had great pleasure in moving the adoption of the report.

The Rev. H. H. WINWOOD, in seconding the adoption of the report, congratulated the Society on its prosperity. He approved of Mr. Scarth's suggestion, as tending to give the Society larger scope—a little new life; and he hoped that the endeavours of the Secretaries to obtain information would be supported by the Members.

The report was then unanimously adopted.

Society was pretty full, the other was quite empty. He hoped the attention of archæologists would be drawn to the condition of the Taunton Castle Fund, and that something would be done to put it in a better position. He had listened with great interest to the suggestion that had been made in regard to the increase of centres, and thought it a very good one. He was sure that if increased local action were resolved upon, they in Bath would render all possible assistance to promote the success of the Society.

Mr. JOHN BATTEN (High Sheriff of Dorset), in seconding the motion, said they might congratulate themselves upon the fact that the loan account on Taunton Castle, although it was not in a very flourishing state, was sinking down to a sum that they might hope to be able to manage. They were very much indebted to several parties for the assistance they had rendered with regard to this fund. He trusted they would have the support of all parties. The ladies might materially assist them by appearing in all their graces at the fancy dress ball.

The accounts were unanimously adopted.

The PRESIDENT (in the absence of Col. Bramwell) proposed the re-election of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, with the addition of Dr. Freeman, the retiring President.

Mr. BRAIKENRIDGE seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. ADAMS proposed the re-election of the Treasurers—Mr. H. Badcock and Mr. H. J. Badcock.

The Rev. Mr. WARREN seconded. Carried unanimously.

Dr. FREEMAN proposed the re-election of the Honorary Secretaries, with the addition of Mr. Emanuel Green, in the place of Mr. Hunt. In doing so he said he was sure they could not help weeping and wailing over the departure of Mr. Hunt, but he hoped that something might be done whereby they would retain his services in the future. It would be impossible to find a more energetic officer than he had been for many years. The Society had made a good choice in his suc-

cessor, as Mr. Green had been known as a hard worker in the antiquities of the county, especially with regard to the 17th century.

Mr. SHUM seconded the motion, remarking that he felt sure Mr. Green would discharge the duties to their entire satisfaction.

The Rev. H. H. WINWOOD, as must be the case with everybody, could not help regretting the loss of Mr. Hunt, and he wished they could in some way retain his services. If he would but take a trip to the Continent they would next year be happy to welcome him again with renewed health and strength. In speaking of Mr. Hunt's ability, he need not say they had got an admirable man in his place in the person of Mr. Green, who was full of energy, and the Society would get plenty of work out of him; still he hoped that in some way or other they would retain Mr. Hunt's services.

Mr. BATTEN considered that the meeting should cordially express its thanks to Mr. Hunt for his great services. He therefore proposed that a hearty vote of thanks be accorded to him.

Bishop CLIFFORD seconded the motion, which was carried with acclamation.

Mr. TURNER said he would take care that the wishes of the meeting should be conveyed to Mr. Hunt.

The election of the Secretaries was then agreed to.

Bishop CLIFFORD proposed the re-election of the Local Secretaries, with the addition of the Rev. W. Hunt, the Rev. J. Bennett, of South Cadbury, Mr. Arthur Dickinson, of Clevedon, the Rev. W. P. Williams, of Bishops Hull, and the Rev. H. G. Tomkins. He felt sure they would experience great advantage from the services of those gentlemen. The Local Secretaries were very useful, not only for any papers which they supplied, but also for the purpose of exciting interest in the affairs of the Society. This being one of the oldest societies, they had a disadvantage as compared with

Gloucestershire in one way, and that was that so much of the ground had been gone over before, whereas other societies were young, with new fields open to them. That was one reason why they should put fresh vigour into the Society, by having, if possible, additional centres.

The motion was seconded by Major C. E. DAVIS, who also spoke in support of the additional centres. He, as well as other Members, resided in Bath, and it would be to the advantage of the Society to have a centre there.

Dr. FREEMAN proposed the re-election of the Committee, observing that the more scattered about they were the better it would be. What Mr. Scarth had said was very much to the point, and he thought they ought to feel very much abashed to learn that Gloucestershire was so much ahead of them in the art of decentralization. Gloucestershire was comparatively little older than the 10th century, setting a lesson to Somerset, which never had a century. He expressed the hope that Wells would be one of the new centres, and remarked that nearly everything of importance had flown away from Wells. For aught he knew, even the Cathedral itself might take wings and fly away. At all events, Wells should be one of the chief centres of the Archæological Society.

Dr. HARDMAN seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. GREEN proposed the election of Mr. Bidgood, as Assistant Secretary and Curator.

Mr. SCARTH, having known how Mr. Bidgood had acted in former years and the great interest he took in the Society, had great pleasure in seconding the resolution.

The proposition was carried *nem. con.*

Some discussion then took place regarding the place of meeting next year, and it was decided to leave the matter in the hands of the Council.

Twenty-two new Members having been elected, the proceedings of the general meeting terminated.