

## The President's Address.

LORD CARLINGFORD said ;—Usually on these occasions it was the first duty of the annual President to introduce his successor, but that was a duty which he would pass over on the present occasion, because he had to introduce himself. At

the request of the Council he had gladly undertaken the duty, and accepted the honour of being their President for another year. Many of them, probably, knew the occasion of the difficulty in which the Council found themselves the other day—that, having elected as President Mr. Llewellyn, of Langford Court, it turned out that this gentleman was, he understood, greatly absorbed in occupations of a different kind, not of an antiquarian nature. He felt rather sorry that Mr. Llewellyn was not able to give them the benefit of his experience, because he believed that gentleman had been carrying on a close investigation of that portion of Somerset from village to village, which might have been of value to the Society. However, he believed that Mr. Llewellyn's researches related rather to the future than to the past, and that his natural history was at the present moment confined—so he was told—to an investigation of that variety of the genus *homo*, which had been lately discovered, known under the name of the agricultural voter. But he felt sure that Mr. Llewellyn would not have resigned his position as President of the Society except under the pressure of absolute necessity, and that he would be willing, and let them hope, one of these days would have the leisure, to serve the Society. Therefore, it fell to him to say a very few words on the present occasion. He felt very glad that the Society had chosen Weston as its place of meeting this year. Weston had very strong claims upon the choice of the Society. As had just been mentioned, it was thirty-four years since the Society met there, in 1851; this being quite one of the earliest places visited by them. Many things had happened since then, and among these events had been the remarkable growth of Weston from comparative insignificance into the important town and watering-place in which they were then met. He hoped that the numerous and well-to-do inhabitants and visitors of Weston might furnish a considerable number of new Members to the Society. Some, indeed, they had just elected, although he

would have been glad to hear a greater number of Weston names. In that neighbourhood, and within drives of it, they would find a considerable number of very interesting places during the three days. In his part of the world, up on Mendip, they were apt to describe this part of the country under the name of the Marshes, which, perhaps, was not quite respectful. But he knew that the neighbourhood contained many objects of interest—such, for instance, as the churches of Banwell, Kewstoke, and others, also Woodspring Priory, and the newly discovered Roman villa, besides some private houses, which they hoped to visit. Among other objects, the district especially contained that remarkable ancient camp on Worle Hill, close above them, to which that afternoon would be devoted. In the volume for the year 1851 there was an extremely interesting paper on Worlebury Camp, written by a gentleman whose loss the Society had since had to deplore—the Rev. Frank Warre. Mr. Warre described the camp with his then knowledge of it as one of the most interesting primæval antiquities he knew of—one of the most remarkable monuments of the old races which lived, fought, and died in those scenes, before the beginning of our history. But a great deal of enquiry was then still left to be made, and a great deal of investigation of the subject had recently been carried on. He was glad that a work upon Worlebury was now on the point, he hoped, of being published by subscription—a work, the result of the laborious exploration and antiquarian knowledge of two gentlemen, Messrs. Dymond and Tomkins. He hoped that one of those gentlemen would give them the benefit of his knowledge that afternoon, and no doubt the book would be very valuable. He felt glad to hear that they would be conducted over the camp by Mr. Dymond, one of the authors of the book. He believed Mr. Tomkins was absent. There was a matter briefly referred to in the Report, which, they would agree with him, was one of great interest to the Society, and to which he would

like to ask attention for a moment—a project for the establishment of a small daughter society, a branch of the Somerset Archæological Society, for the purpose of securing the editing and publication of some of the most interesting of the county records preserved in, or relating to, Somerset. This was immediately connected with that idea and hope which he thought ought always to be present to the mind of the Somerset Archæological Society, namely, the production of a real and complete county history. He mentioned it last year, and it was rather discouraging to feel that it was an object of great difficulty of attainment, requiring a vast amount of labour, and a great deal of expense, and therefore it appeared to be still a long way off. Still he contended it was an object which the Society ought to keep before it, in the hope that one of these days it might be accomplished. They had, of course, outgrown the Collinsonian epoch, and although that was a very meritorious book in its way, what they wanted to do was to keep up to the level of antiquarian knowledge, historical criticism, and the science of these days. The comparatively modest plan which he was now bringing before them, and which he desired warmly to recommend to them, was a movement entirely in that direction. He thought he could not bring it before them better than by stating in a few words what had been done in the matter. The plan was first put forward a few months ago, by a few gentlemen, whose names were so weighty in matters of that kind, that it was impossible for the Society, and for him as President for the time being, not to pay great attention to it. These names were Bishop Hobhouse, Mr. F. H. Dickinson, Mr. Green, the Rev. W. Hunt, and the Rev. Mr. Bennett of South Cadbury. In the circular which these gentlemen had sent out they said: “There has been, for many years, a general and increasing feeling, which has often found expression in the addresses of the Presidents of our Society, that there is great need of a new and complete history of the county. In order to assist in meeting

this want, we beg to submit to your consideration the following suggestions:—It is proposed to form a branch of the parent Society, to be called ‘The Somerset Record Society,’ for the purpose of seeking out, editing, and printing such records as bear upon the history of Somerset, and will aid the future historian of the county.” Then followed some details, and the circular went on to state:—“Our aim is—1. To publish one volume or more per annum. 2. In the choice of records for publication, to keep in view the work of tracing the stream of county life and the devolution of property from the earliest documentary period. 3. In the treatment of records, to present them in such form as will preserve the important parts of the original wording, but to give also such translation and annotation as will open their contents to the general reader, and thus spread an interest beyond the narrow range of experts.” This plan, which was brought before him, appeared to be one which he was bound to lay before the Council with a strong expression of approval and interest, and the Council gave it their sanction most willingly. The Council did not undertake to support it by a handsome endowment or a handsome annual subscription out of its own funds, for the good reason that it had no funds for such a purpose. He wished it had most sincerely, and that the Society were in a position to support out of its own means such an enterprise as that. He entirely sympathised with the speaker who deplored that the funds of the Society were so slender that it was not in a position to undertake any special expense of this kind. He could not say that the Society was in a position as to strength of funds worthy of so great and extensive a county as Somerset. But whether there were any means of making the Society more popular, or whether it would be wise to increase the small subscription which was now paid, was a matter on which he would not then express an opinion. He thought there was a great deal in what had been said by Prebendary Scarth and Mr. Green as to the possibility of increasing the popularity, and

therefore the strength and income, of the Society, by making the annual volume more complete, more varied, and more interesting. The success, and popularity, and attractions of the Society depended very largely upon the interest of the annual volume, and whatever could be done to make that volume more interesting, and to make a larger number of people desire to possess it on their shelves, would undoubtedly contribute, perhaps more than anything else they could do, to increase the popularity of the Society. But, as he had said, although the Society had not been able to assist this proposed Somerset Record Society out of its own funds, it could, at all events give it all the sanction and moral support in its power. It could recommend it heartily to the support of the Members of the Society as individuals, and to all who took an interest in the history of their county, whether they were Members of the Society or not. That was what he, on behalf of the Council, now desired to do. He would tell them what the result had been within the comparatively short time that the circulars had been issued. He gave it them in the words of the Rev. J. A. Bennett, who was acting as temporary Secretary of the proposed Record Society:—"Upon receiving the sanction of the President and the Council of the parent Society to our proposals, I circulated copies of your printed letter among all the officers of the Society and a limited number of other gentlemen, in order to ascertain how the proposal would be received. The results are as follow: Promises of help in money donations, upwards of £55; in subscriptions, upwards of £75; in permission to inspect and use documents, from Mr. G. Troyte Bullock, the Dean and Chapter of Wells, Mr. R. Neville Grenville, Mr. Merthyr Guest, Mrs. Harbin, Mr. H. Hobhouse, Mr. G. F. Luttrell, Colonel Paget, M.P., Mr. W. Phelps, the Registrar of the Diocese, Sir E. Strachey, Bart.; in literary help, from Mr. J. Batten, Rev. F. Brown, Mr. J. B. Davidson, Mr. B. W. Greenfield, Rev. G. Horner, Canon Jackson, Mr. O. W.

Malet, Rev. J. B. Medley, Mr. Jerome Murch. In addition, Mr. J. Batten kindly allows the Society to have the fruits of his labours upon the 'Bruton Cartulary'; Mr. E. Green has in readiness the 'Chantry Surveys of Somerset'; and I hope to be able to offer also shortly 'A Calendar of the Contents of Bishop Drokenford's Register.' These results, in view of the limited circulation of the letter, are, I venture to think, satisfactory, and justify the expectation that a wider appeal to public bodies and to individuals will enable you to enter upon the work upon a scale adequate to the historical position and resources of our county." He recommended this interesting matter to their best attention, confidently hoping that they, as a General Meeting, would confirm the action of the Council in having given their full sanction and encouragement to this public-spirited project. He strongly sympathised with what had been said by Mr. Scarth. It was evident that the Society was crippled in many ways by the scantiness of its funds. He should like to see a more adequate report of the proceedings at the Society's visits to places of interest published in their annual volume, and they would agree that the excellent geological addresses they had last year would have been a very valuable addition to the volume which had just appeared. In conclusion, his Lordship expressed the hope that the Weston meeting might prove a pleasant and profitable one to them all.

Mr. JOHN BATTEN proposed, seconded by Prebendary SCARTH, a cordial vote of thanks to Lord Carlingford for his interesting address.

This being carried with acclamation, his Lordship briefly responded.

The meeting then broke up.

By invitation of the Local Committee, at one o'clock the Members were entertained in the Masonic Hall.

Lord CARLINGFORD, after the luncheon, expressing thanks on behalf of the Society for the welcome courtesy, proposed "The Local Committee," coupled with the name of

MR. SMYTH-PIGOTT, who, in reply, welcomed the Members to Weston-super-Mare, and expressed the hope that the gathering would be an enjoyable one. He alluded to some of the places to be visited during the meeting, and mentioned that he had recently been engaged in some excavations at Woodspring Priory, which would enable the Members to see portions which had not previously been opened.