

## In Memoriam.

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BY the decease of Mr. Thomas Serel of Wells, in 1887; of Mr. Henry Badcock, in October, and of the Right Hon. Viscount Portman, on Nov. 19th, in this year, the Society has lost three of its original Members.

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Viscount Portman was Patron of the Society from its foundation, in the year 1851. His residence was at Bryanstone, in Dorsetshire, but the acreage of his property in Somerset was far larger than that in Dorsetshire. Indeed, the family of Portman is properly a Somersetshire family, and Orchard Portman, near Taunton, was their seat. The family is traced by Burke up to the reign of Edward I, at that time living at Orchard Portman. By inter-marriage the name Berkeley was added, and the first to be mentioned as of Bryanston was Henry William Berkeley Portman, who died in 1761.

Viscount Portman's long life of 90 years was an active one in every way. In politics, in county business, in all matters connected with agriculture and the management of estates, in sport, and in many public matters he took an active and energetic part. He represented Dorsetshire from 1823—1832 as a Liberal, and was the first member for Marylebone in 1832—1838. In 1837 he was raised to the Peerage as Baron Portman, under Lord Melbourne's Government, and acted for some time as whip to the Liberal party in the House of Lords. He was Lord Lieutenant of Somerset from 1840—1864, and Chairman of Quarter Sessions in Dorsetshire, from 1861—1882. In the early days of the present reign he was appointed a Member of the Council of the Duchy of Cornwall, probably

on account of his extensive acquaintance with the management of property, and later he was made Lord Warden of the Stanneries, an office which he retained till his death.

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In Mr. Henry Badcock the Society has lost one of its earliest friends and officers. He was, jointly with his brother, Mr. Robert Badcock, who died in 1872, original Treasurer of the Society, and always felt a warm interest in its development, from its modest inception to its present state of prosperity.

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The Society has also to lament the loss of one of its most active Members by the death of Mr. Thomas Serel, of Wells, in 1887, at the age of 73.

Mr. Serel was an ardent and painstaking antiquary, and succeeded in accumulating a large number of valuable manuscripts relating to the See, the Corporation of Wells, the College of Vicars Choral, and the principal county families, as well as other relics of the past, which threw much light on the history and social customs of Somerset, and which, but for his vigilant care and unostentatious labours, would in many instances have been lost or destroyed. Many of these records have from time to time been exhibited in various parts of the county, and the bulk of them have now found a safe abiding place in the Museums at Taunton and Glastonbury respectively.

Mr. Serel's knowledge of local and county history, topography, and folk-lore was almost unique. From his store of information he frequently enriched the columns of the newspaper press, and occasionally he gave lectures in different towns in the neighbourhood upon subjects of local interest which displayed considerable research. In the year 1875 he published by subscription *Historical Notes on the Church of St. Cuthbert*; a book of 150 pp., which contains a mass of valuable

and interesting information; and he has left behind him a MS. complete list of the Mayors of Wells, the Recorders, the Town Clerks, and the Churchwardens, and to many of the names is attached a short biography of the individual. His active interest in the welfare of the city, and in the preservation of its ancient features never faltered, and the destruction or "restoration" of ancient land-marks now and again in the city and neighbourhood was a sore grief to him. His kindly disposition and unassuming manners, and his attainments as a local antiquary and historian, gained for him many friends in every walk of life, and his death has left a void which it will be difficult to fill.

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