

The Presidential Address.

The Dean of Wells, DR. JEX-BLAKE, then delivered his Address. He said :

Little need be said to so cultivated an audience as this regarding the claims of Archæology or the study of Antiquities.

Man must ever be interested in the antiquity of man, and the date of man must be carried much further back than seventy years ago had been imagined. Wookey Hole alone, which Professor Boyd Dawkins explored in 1859, would convince us of this : and the singularly clear exposition of the facts given by Mr. Boyd Dawkins would make iteration by me odious : a central fact being the mixture of implements wrought by human hands with the bones of animals long extinct in Europe. The rhinoceros, and the elephant, and the cave bear notably. But the evolution of man, and man's civilization : the identity of man in the midst of constant developement : the days of small things—the cave-dwellers of that day slowly changing to be the present wielders of steam and steel, masters of electricity, magnetism, and wireless telegraphy—must deeply interest every active mind. Physically considered, the double land-bridge between Europe and Africa,—one by Gibraltar, and the other not less surely by Tunis, Sicily, Italy ; the breaking of that double land-bridge, and the cutting off of elephant and rhinoceros from retreat to their southern home ; can hardly fail to rouse even a sluggish imagination.

I am not an archæologist in any high sense ; but some of the happiest hours of my life have been spent in the pursuit of archæology and excavation. In May, 1900, I stood in the Forum of Rome, and in May of this year I stood on the same ground ; and in more than one spot in the Forum the change is marvellous. The old Rome—Roma Quadrata, the square Rome of Pelasgi ; hence called by those old Greeks *ΡΩΜΗ*, which is Greek for strength—was on the Palatine Hill, while Sabines occupied the opposite height of the Quirinal : and after the union of the two settlements and the two races, the Forum lying between them was their meeting ground ; drained by a wandering brook, afterwards straightened and arched over, and named the Cloaca Maxima. Touching the Forum at the centre of its southern flank was, in 1900, the N.N.W. angle of the Palatine : and above it stood the Church of S.

Maria Liberatrice, with six columns of marble, exceptionally magnificent even for Rome. But in May, 1902, I saw that the N.N.W. angle of the Palatine had been cut away; *i.e.*, that a front of 200 feet towards the Forum, and 200 feet inland from the Forum, about 100 feet deep, had been cut out and carried away, S. Maria Liberatrice and all. But what was revealed by the massive removal? The Basilica of S. Maria Antiqua, with a large atrium in front of it; running back from the Forum 200 feet, and at right angles to the Forum. How do we know this Basilica was Santa Maria Antiqua? Because a fresco in the interior shows a dignitary of the Court, Theodotus (a Greek name, in Greek character), offering to the Virgin a model of the Church itself, bearing the name Hagia Maria, which is Santa Maria Antiqua. How do we know the date of this Basilica as a Church? Because a pope stands under a Christ enthroned, with his name, Greek, and in Greek letters, Zacharias, who occupied the papal chair, 741—752, and was canonised. How do we know that he did it himself, in his life-time; and not, like Bishop Beckington, the great benefactor to Wells, by will, coming into force only after his death? Because the nimbus over his head is square, and not circular.

Within the Basilica, and I quote from Macmillan's "Italy": "on the left wall is a long row of standing saints, with scenes from the Old Testament and the New, above and at the sides To the right on entering the choir, Cain and Abel, and the healing of Jeremiah In the chapel to the left of the apex is a very remarkable crucifixion; our Lord fully draped in very dark blue, with the Virgin and Longinus on the left, and St. John and the soldier offering hyssop on the right. Below, Theodotus offers the model of the church itself, with its name. He was, however, only a restorer; for below the fresco which represents him, are two earlier and successive layers of Christian painting, which prove an earlier decoration of the church."

Why are inscriptions in a church at Rome in Greek? For the same reason that the whole New Testament was written in Greek, including the Epistle to the Romans; because Greek was the general learned language, the common tongue of the cultivated world. Also many of the popes of the first eight centuries were Greeks. Zacharias himself came from San Severino in Basilicata in South Italy; and there was no other pope of that name. But do you suppose that Santa Maria Antiqua was the earliest occupant of the spot? No: the building was due to the Emperor Caligula, and the Christian atrium had for centuries been a Roman swimming bath, and the church itself had been a pagan Basilica, truly so called. Is there anything else of Caligula there? Yes: from his palace just above, about one hundred feet above, is the zig-zag path, and down it the mad Emperor—who was murdered in a chamber close by, and whose uncle and successor, Claudius, was found in another chamber close by, hiding in terror just after Caligula's murder—down the zig-zag path Caligula walked or rode or drove, to shew himself to the people assembled in the Forum. And at what point did he shew himself? On the steps of the Temple of Castor and Pollux, twenty or twenty-two yards off, just the distance between wickets. Three columns of the temple still stand intact, above the steps Caligula stood on: beautiful Corinthian columns of Parian marble, overhung by a very bold entablature. Why was the Temple of Castor and Pollux built there? Because it was there that the great twin brethren slaked at the living spring of Juturna the thirst of the steeds on which they had just led the Roman armies to victory, at the battle of the Lake Regillus; and then rode to tell in full life at Rome the same tale that the Athenian ran from Marathon, eighteen miles, to tell at Athens, dying as he said "We won." And is that spring of Juturna a myth? or is it a dried-up pool? Neither: the Lacus Juturnæ is still there: a bubbling spring, enclosed by banks of marble with an island

of marble in its midst ; there in the forum Romanum still, discovered less than two years ago. And is it a wholesome spring ? Yes ; scores of cups, metal or glass, were found there ; and a statue of Æsculapius himself, the god of health and healing, stands there, attesting its salubrity. Also the artificial marble well of Juturna, fed underground by that living spring, stands a few yards off ; and Juturna herself is carved on it, a woman pleading with a warrior. The warrior is her doomed brother Turnus : whose hopeless interview with Juturna, just before he is slain by Aeneas, is splendidly told by Virgil at the close of the Æneid. On one panel of an altar close by stand side by side Castor and Pollux ; and on another panel are carved Leda and the swan, the mythical parents of the Dioscuri : for the swan was Jove himself. I have told the story briefly : but a more fascinating revelation of archæology since Schliemann discovered first the oldest city, then the second city—the Homeric Troy—it would be hard to name ; and I advise you all to visit Rome and the Forum, if you have not already done so, often, and study it yourselves.

Now as to Glastonbury and the environs thereof. I will not anticipate the predestined interpreters, but I will say just this : Glastonbury is acknowledged to be the very cradle of British Christianity ; and later on it is the one great religious foundation which lived through the Norman Conquest, and in which Briton and Englishman have an equal share, as Mr. Freeman said again and again. It is the first Benedictine Monastery founded in England, on the lines of that first Benedictine home for monks, founded 450 A.D. by St. Benedict himself ; close to Subiaco, overhanging the sparkling waters of the Upper Anio ; hard by the site of the villa of Nero, who had dammed up the Anio to form a lake. Subiaco, of course, is *sub-laqueum*. There you still see the Sacro Speco, the holy cavern, now a chapel, where the lad of fourteen devoted himself to God ; still see the little plot of ground where the young man rolled him-

self among the brambles to subdue the temptations of the flesh.

The Church of Glastonbury is an Abbey Church, but it surpassed in scale and grandeur almost every Cathedral Church in England. It just equals in length the 500 feet of Canterbury Cathedral; including Becket's Crown at the eastern end of the one, and the Galilee and Lady Chapel at the western end of the other. 'A spectator standing with his back to the western wall of the Lady Chapel,'—as Mr. James Parker said here in 1880,—'on looking beyond the altar screen at the foot of the Galilee steps, and through the open western doors of the great Church, would obtain a view of the whole length of the grand nave, rising by steps up to the space beneath the tower; and then, probably, by further steps up to the choir and the east end, where the altar stood. Such an interior view could not, probably, have been found elsewhere in England.' You will find in the *Proceedings* of 1880 Mr. Freeman's fine inaugural address, as well as Mr. James Parker's triple address, well illustrated. Further, there is an illustrated work of faultless architectural logic by Professor Willis of Cambridge, read originally at Dorchester, Aug. 4th, 1865, which deals cogently with these points. (1) The identity of the so-called St. Joseph's Chapel, (*a*) with the site of the wicker Church, (*b*) with the Lady Chapel of the Abbey. (2) The crypt of St. Joseph's Chapel. (3) The final arrangement of that Chapel. (4) The disposition of the east end of the great Church.

To have read that book so closely as to have understood the precise meaning of every well chosen word; to follow the converging drift of every successive sentence, and to have fully grasped the whole argument, would supply a reader of average cultivation with a sound basis for understanding what architectural archæology is. It is fair to add that Mr. Parker had, at the meeting of our Somerset Society at Glastonbury, Aug. 25th, 1859, already identified St. Joseph's Chapel with the Lady Chapel: adding that there is no trace of any other Lady

Chapel ; and that the Lady Chapel of the early Church at Canterbury is at the west end.

The British village, one mile-and-a-quarter distant, is unique in the three kingdoms, I believe. It is also quite unlike the pile-houses of the Swiss lake villages, where I dredged thirty years ago. I hope that Mr. Arthur Bulleid may be here to-day, for it was he who, on the inspiration of Bishop Hobhouse, followed up the Abbot's water-ways ; and presently he came to that field with 65 flattened tumuli, oval in shape. The generosity of the late Mr. Bath at once permitted free excavation ; and eventually gave to the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society about five acres of land, on which the village, with its river-quay, stands. The contents that were worth extraction are mostly in the Glastonbury Museum ; sorted exquisitely out of many tons of soft, brown peat, by the deft fingers of Mr. Arthur Bulleid. The Museum is a model of what a small local Museum should be, and shows us how apparent obliteration means, sometimes, gentle preservation ; shows us how water-logged vegetable mould in Somerset may embalm plain relics of hard, primitive life ; as effectually as at Herculaneum and Pompeii dry, volcanic ashes enshrined dainty surgical instruments ; with the mirror of the belle, the razor of the beau, and the *batterie de cuisine* of the gourmet.

And now I will end with a word about a great favourite of mine, Meare. The chancel of the church at Meare was built by the same abbot who built the Manor House and the Fish House, Adam de Sodbury, full five hundred and seventy years ago : but the nave is about one hundred and fifty years later. About forty years ago lay in a chest in Meare church the armour of the fifteen men whom the abbot furnished for the King's need : seen in the church and in the chest by our Society, August 30th, 1859 : now to be seen—*some of it*—in Glastonbury Museum : having become and having happily, *some of it*, ceased to be, private property meanwhile.

Putting aside palaces and castles, I can think of no village in England that possesses two houses of such great interest as unaltered specimens of the Middle Ages as that Manor House and that Fish House. These are older than the Order of the Garter, older than Windsor Castle: only a century-and-a-half later than the still existing lady chapel at Glastonbury; a century-and-a-half later than the completion of the beautiful North Porch of Wells Cathedral, or than the commencement of the Great West Front. The Manor House was a real Manor house; not a summer residence or hunting lodge like Northwood or Sharpham, a real Manor house where the Lord of the Manor resided for a while and met his people on questions of legal, manorial, parochial, duties, rights and business: a real Manor house, necessarily requiring a large hall where all the parish might meet on occasions of business or of State. The hall possesses noble windows, and a noble fire-place still remaining; with most singular small stones, like tiny bricks, of great hardness, at the back, to bear the heat of the roaring fires of forest wood from Mendip. The Fish House sadly needs a roof, and I hope this meeting will not break up without undertaking to collect funds, to roof fitly and strongly that interesting Fish House. An incendiary destroyed some twenty years ago—to punish his master whose property it was *not*—the roof of that building; the unique survivor of monastic Fish Houses, which old Time had spared. ‘Tempus edax: homo edacior: homo cum igne edacissimus.’

The Rev. H. H. WINWOOD, in proposing a vote of thanks to the President for his learned and interesting address, remarked that he was old enough to remember the disputes between the late Professor Freeman and Mr. James Parker. He agreed that the word “Somersetshire” ought to be abandoned by the Society, seeing that Professor Freeman had shewn that the county never was a shire.

The Rev. Prebendary GRANT seconded, and agreed in the expression of opinion that the name “Somersetshire” ought to

be changed to "Somerset." He had heard a great deal of adverse criticism on this subject, and knew of one gentleman in the neighbourhood who had refused to join the Society on account of the retention of the name.

The motion was heartily carried, and the PRESIDENT briefly acknowledged the compliment.

This concluded the business meeting.