

## Report of the Curator of Taunton Castle Museum for 1901.

THE progress in the Museum during the year has chiefly been of a general kind, calculated to increase its educational value, and, as the re-arrangement advances, to give greater facilities to the public for seeing the specimens and deriving knowledge from them.

There has been a steady increase in the number of visitors to the Museum, the total for the year reaching 5,047, as against 4,740 in 1900, and 4,978 in 1899.

Nearly every specimen in the Norman Keep has now been cleaned, including the china and coins, and every fragment of pottery—of which there are a few thousands—has been ticketed, to avoid any possible confusion in localities when shards are removed from the cases. The moth in textile-fabrics, and the beetle in wood, have been got rid of as far as possible, and preventives have been introduced. This room, which is devoted to archæological remains, is in process of re-arrangement, and has just been furnished with three large new table-cases, which, with the old one close to the north window, form a line of cases thirty-three feet in length along the middle of the Keep. Some of the British and Roman urns and pots have already been restored, and the human skulls are receiving attention.

The fine series of local specimens, illustrating the forms and development of implements of the Bronze Age, has been taken in hand, and the permanent ticketing of every specimen in white oil-paint commenced and nearly completed. The stone series is receiving like attention. The Mummy case has been removed upstairs and the Egyptian antiquities re-arranged in it. The clay tobacco-pipes of the seventeenth and later centuries, of which the Museum contains a fairly large collec-

tion, have been classified. All the new acquisitions during the year have been ticketed, identified, and displayed. The Athelney 'finds' (which are not numerous, however,) have been ticketed and exhibited temporarily in the Great Hall.

In the Great Hall several additions have been made, including Mr. W. Bidgood's eighty cases of local birds, and also his cabinet of Lepidoptera. Several specimens of the general collection of birds have been cleaned and re-mounted. Through the Rev. A. J. Woodforde's kindness, the hall has been adorned by three interesting flags—described below. Miss I. Gifford's collection of Somersetshire Algæ, which was acquired by the Society in 1892, has recently been named by the kindness of Mr. E. M. Holmes, F.L.S.

The re-arrangement of the Ethnographical Room has hardly been commenced; there is much to be done there, but this work has had to be put aside for the present, owing to the arrival of Mr. W. W. Walter's fine collection, which he has so generously presented to the Society, and for the reception of which the old Geological room upstairs is being cleared and furnished.

Throughout the Museum a number of minor arrangements, additions and improvements have been made, and many labels have been added. The majority of the swords and weapons in the Museum have been cleaned, a branch of the work in which the boy (Fred Reed) has been trained to show some discernment.

Every book in the Castle has been removed from its shelf in order that both the shelves and books might be dusted. A new Manuscript Library Catalogue has been commenced, but owing to pressure in other directions it has had to be temporarily discontinued. Some fifty volumes of publications of societies have been bound this year.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.

*December 31st, 1901.*