

## William Ayshford Sanford,

F.G.S., F.Z.S.

ANOTHER of the trustees, original members, and staunch supporters of our Society, Mr. W. A. Sanford, of Nynehead Court, near Wellington, passed away, peacefully and somewhat suddenly, on October 28th, in his eighty-fourth year—mind bright, memory active, a student to the last.

The Sanfords have held a prominent position in Somerset and Devon for a long period, and could trace their ancestry in both counties through several centuries. The Ayshfords of Ayshford, Devon, claimed to derive in lineal descent from Stephanus de Eisforde of Eisfored, in the reign of William I. Many of us can remember the visit to Burlescombe and that neighbourhood, during the Wellington meeting of 1892, when Mr. Buckle, Mr. Elworthy, and others unfolded this chapter of the family history. The Sanford deeds run back to John Sanford, lord of Brook Sanford, Somerset, who held that manor (which formed part of the parishes of Exton and Winsford) in the reign of Richard II. The family became possessed of the manor of Nynehead about 1600, and have resided there through three centuries.

Mr. Sanford was keenly alive to the fascination of antiquarian pursuits, several of which claimed a share of his time and attention; but Natural History and Archæology had special charms for him. He and his father, Mr. E. A. Sanford, joined our Society at its formation. The name of the former appears in the first list of local secretaries; while the latter was President at the Wellington meeting in 1862.



WILLIAM AYSHFORD SANFORD, F.G.S., F.Z.S.,

*From a Photograph by Colonel E. C. A. SANFORD, C.M.G.*

Many volumes of our *Proceedings* bear witness to the zeal of Mr. W. A. Sanford in connection with Natural History and Archæology. In 1860, at the request of the committee, Mr. Sanford presented a report on the state of the Natural History collection in the possession of the Society, in which he noted deficiencies and suggested remedies. In 1861 he contributed a paper to the *Proceedings*, entitled "Notice of Embletonia Pallida, of a new Hydrazoon and a new Infusorium," the result of a ramble along the coast near St. Audries. At the annual meeting of the Society, held at Shepton Mallet in 1865, he delivered an address on "The course of the rivers in Western Europe during the Pleistocene Period, and the distribution of the Mammalia affected thereby," which has a bearing on the discoveries of bones in the Mendip caves, to which Mr. Sanford and Professor Boyd Dawkins devoted so much attention, and which led to the publication of Mr. Sanford's masterly and elaborate "Catalogue of the Feline Fossils in the Taunton Museum," which was splendidly illustrated—mainly by the late Mr. W. Bidgood. This was followed by a most interesting paper "On the Rodentia of the Somerset Caves." To Vol. xiii of the *Proceedings* he contributed a "Notice of a burial by Cremation, of the Bronze Period, in the parish of West Buckland," relating to an interesting discovery made in 1867. In 1872 Mr. Sanford was elected President of the Society at the Taunton meeting. In his presidential address on that occasion he gave an outline of the advance of knowledge as to the period when man first made his appearance in these latitudes, a topic which at that time was occupying the thoughts of some of the highest intellects of the day. Then he grappled with the investigations that had been made as to a chronology of geology, referring to the science of the great physical laws relating to the earth and its changes, following somewhat the lines of thought indicated in his address at Shepton Mallet. Mr. Sanford took an active part in the proceedings of the Society

during the annual meeting, at Wells, in 1873, and guided the members during their visit to Wookey Hole. He described the animal remains found in the cavern, and the traces of human occupation which he and Professor Boyd Dawkins had discovered there. At the Wellington meeting, in 1892, Mr. Sanford was again elected president. In his address he dealt with the main geological features of this part of the country, as furnished by the great trough of the palæozoic rocks. He next passed on to the consideration of two great subjects which were then exciting the interest of geologists, and which he thought could be illustrated to a certain extent in that neighbourhood—the probable extension of the coal supply and the Ice Age, or ages. Mr. Sanford's last contribution to the proceedings of the Society was "On Bones of an animal resembling the Megalosaur, found in the Rhœtic formation at Wedmore," a valuable scientific paper.

This brief outline of his principal contribution gives, after all, but a faint idea of the work he did for the Society during the past half-century; and those who knew him best know also the zeal and earnestness with which his keen intellect and wide reading were brought to bear upon literary and scientific subjects.

A little book Mr. Sanford wrote some years ago, was eminently characteristic of the man. It was entitled: "Some points of interest in Nynehead Parish." Into a simple pamphlet of a dozen pages, he has crammed a large amount of local history, from the Conquest onwards, and has presented it in a most readable form. An outline of the history of the Sanford family naturally finds a place therein, for Nynehead without the Sanfords during the last three centuries would indeed be the play without Hamlet. An excellent description of the parish church is also given, for it was his great delight for many years to enrich, improve, and lovingly restore that building. This pamphlet was followed by a second, with a like title, in 1892. In the latter, Mr. Sanford gave an account

of some old monuments in the churchyard, as well as details respecting the remains of the churchyard cross, the bells, and the church plate.

It is not necessary to refer in detail to Mr. Sanford's contributions to the reports of the British Association, to the "Geological Magazine," to the "Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society," and similar works, but it is interesting to note that they all had reference to researches he had made in Somerset.

Mr. Sanford's removal will leave the names of only four original members on our list, although the Society now numbers 612, as compared with 339 during the first year of its existence.

The portrait which accompanies this notice is the reproduction of a photograph taken, comparatively recently, by Mr. Sanford's eldest son, Col. E. C. A. Sanford, C.M.G., to whom we are indebted for it.

C.T.

**Rev. W. P. Williams.**

THE Rev. Wadham Pigott Williams, of Weston-super-Mare, who was for many years Vicar of Bishop's Hull, and who became a member of our Society in 1867, passed away on September 12th, 1902. Mr. Williams was the eldest son of the Rev. David Williams, formerly Rector of Bleadon, whose geological researches and collections are well known to our members and to the public generally. In 1866, Mr. Henry Norris, of South Petherton, placed at the disposal of the Council a manuscript list of Somerset words he had collected. An effort was then made to get other members living in various parts of the county to carry on the work; and Mr. Williams was one of the volunteers. He received the most cordial co-operation of the Rev. W. A. Jones, of Taunton, who was at the time one of the general secretaries, and they made free use of such sources of information as were available. The result of their joint labours was the publication, in 1873, of a glossary extending over forty-two pages of the *Proceedings* issued in that year. This branch of study has been considerably extended since then; and the issue of "The Dialect of West Somerset," by Mr. F. T. Elworthy, in 1888, marked an epoch in our local literature. This work included a very able introductory paper read before the Philological Society in 1875; "The Grammar of the Dialect of West Somerset," issued in 1887; and "The West Somerset Word Book," published in 1888; thus making a volume of considerably over a thousand pages. But the work edited by Mr. Williams in 1873 (and largely contributed to by him) was a distinct advance on anything accomplished in the same direction up to that time.

C.T.



**R. C. A. Prior,**

M.D.

DR. R. C. A. PRIOR, of Halse, Taunton, and of 48, York Terrace, London, passed away on December 4th, in his ninety-fourth year. He joined our Society in 1859, and always evinced a lively interest in its work. He wrote an able and scholarly paper "On the Somerset Dialects," as an introduction to the Glossary appended to our *Proceedings* for 1872—Vol. xviii. He was also a considerable contributor to the great dictionary of the English language, now in course of publication under the editorship of Dr. Murray. In 1884, Dr. Prior wrote an "Obituary Notice of the late Rev. Dr. Giles," for Vol. xxx; and in 1890 he presented our Society with a bookcase, capable of holding some six hundred volumes, and has also been a contributor to our library. For some years past the deceased gentleman had resided in London, where he died. He was probably the oldest Magistrate for the County of Somerset, and took an active part in the work of the Bishop's Lydeard Division for many years. Dr. Prior was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London, and of the Linnean and other Societies. His best known botanical work is "On the popular names of British Plants: being an explanation of the origin and meaning of our indigenous and most commonly cultivated species," which is a mine of learning and research. Dr. Prior also published three volumes of ancient Danish ballads, which he had translated from the originals. Another of his works was "Notes on Croquet, and some of the ancient Bat and Ball Games related to it." Even this little volume gives ample evidence of very extensive reading, and is written in the most scholarly style.

C.T.