

Report of the Curator of Taunton Castle Museum for the year ending December 31st, 1911.

DURING recent years the annual reports of the Council of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society have been so complete that little additional remains to be said in this report. Since the annual meeting of the Society at Frome in July last, all the work in connection with the Diamond Jubilee Fund has been completed at an expenditure of nearly £1060. The last work to be finished was the decorating of a room on the ground floor, which will be furnished in due course in a suitable manner for the exhibition of the Charbonnier Collection of Pewter, and the Coins, Tokens, Medals, etc., belonging to the Society; early printed and illuminated books and specimens of binding will also be shown in this room.

During the autumn the new Library has been furnished with tables and chairs and is now available to members requiring a "silence room" for study. Some time must elapse before the whole of the Society's Library is re-arranged and catalogued, and the manuscripts and documents preserved in the Strong Room have also to be properly arranged and listed. The Library has been enriched during the autumn by donations from the Rt. Hon. H. Hobhouse, including many reports of the *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 1891-1905, and two valuable Cartularies, described in the "Additions to the Library," and in the *Somerset County Gazette*, Oct. 21st, 1911. Sir Prior Goldney has presented a number of botanical books which belonged to the late Dr. R. C. A. Prior. The eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, a very useful addition

to the Library, has been purchased out of the Woodward bequest—a fund set aside for the general improvement of the Library and the furnishing of the Museum with new cases, greatly needed in connection with the contemplated re-arrangement of several departments of the Society's collections. It is hoped that the large room upstairs, at present containing the Surtees Library, the Walter and Norris collections, and miscellaneous exhibits, will eventually become the Somerset Room of Antiquities. In preparation for these proposed developments a large number of objects have been permanently labelled this year, and at the present time the local prints, engravings and portraits, are being systematically ticketed for exhibition on the staircase and elsewhere. In this connection the need for more wall space is greatly felt.

Early in the year a handbook, entitled "Structural Notes on Taunton Castle," by Mr. J. Houghton Spencer, was published by the Society; price 4d., by post 5d.

Much time during the autumn has been expended in the ticketing and cataloguing of the Jervis-Smith collection, consisting chiefly of archaeological and ethnographical specimens from many parts of the world. The objects were brought together by the late Rev. F. J. Jervis-Smith, F.R.S., Millard Lecturer in Mechanics, Trinity College, Oxford, whose connection with Taunton is well known, his father having been mainly responsible, by his zeal and munificence, for the erection of the Churches of St. John, St. Andrew, and Holy Trinity. The founder's grandson, Mr. E. J. Jervis-Smith, is also presenting some interesting objects to the Museum, including some good specimens of ancient glass from Glastonbury Abbey.

The Museum has been enriched by the purchase of the Monmouth buckle and button, mentioned in the annual report of the Society and fully described under the "Additions to the Museum," and by a number of coins, including a few valuable English coins from the Norris collection, a large number of Roman silver coins found several years ago at Charterhouse-

on-Mendip, and about eighty small silver coins of the late Roman Empire found in the great hoard at Holway, Taunton, in 1821. The Society previously owned a small collection from this hoard. The officer's uniform and sword of the 1st Gloucester Royal Garrison Artillery Volunteers, Clevedon Corps, *circa* 1860, is also an interesting acquisition by presentation. The archaeological collections from Ham Hill have grown, and a large portion of a cuirass or *lorica* found in 1911,—consisting of over 300 scales,—is one of the finest specimens of Roman armour hitherto found in Britain.

One of the largest collections added to the Museum during the year is the series of Late-Celtic relics discovered at the Meare Lake-village in the early summer, the result of the researches of Mr. Arthur Bulleid and Mr. H. St. George Gray, on behalf of the Society. These antiquities have been kindly presented by the owner of the field, Miss Emma Counsell, of Clifton. A source of satisfaction to Somerset antiquaries was the publication at Christmas of Vol. I of the work on the "Excavations at the Glastonbury Lake-village, 1892-1907." This handsome volume (royal 4to. size) contains 380 pages, 58 plates, and 136 illustrations in the text.

The Natural History sections of the Society have made good progress during the year. The Entomological Section has been at work in the field, and the members hope to form a type collection of lepidoptera for the Museum. The Ornithological Section has added considerably to its members, and great interest has been taken by local ornithologists in the type-written notes upon Somerset birds. The Botanical Section was unable to arrange any field excursions during the season, but the members have had the advantage of taking part in the annual foray of the British Mycological Society, who made Taunton Castle its headquarters from September 18th to 23rd. The meetings and excursions were most successful, and are reported upon by Mr. E. W. Swanton elsewhere in this volume. On September 18th that Society was

welcomed and entertained to tea by the members of the Taunton Field Club; the Club also held conversaziones at the Castle on March 2nd and November 16th.

There have been no changes in the Museum staff this year. The assistant, M. S. Bevan, who has now been in the employ of the Society for nearly three-and-a-half years, has shown an increasing aptitude for his duties, and his ticketing has been a noticeable feature of his work.

The Society at this date consists of 867 members, *viz.*, 857 ordinary members, nine life members, and one honorary member, the total at the end of 1910 being 855.

The following is a list of the monthly attendances of visitors to the Museum and Library for the year just completed:—

	No. of Members.	Total Visitors.		No. of Members.	Total Visitors.
Jan. ...	124	414	July ...	87	633
Feb. ...	89	393	Aug. ...	103	1137
Mar. ...	184	598	Sept. ...	135	923
Apr. ...	122	729	Oct. ...	84	481
May ...	102	512	Nov. ...	85	403
June ...	77	601	Dec. ...	79	313
				1271	7137

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY,

*Assist.-Secretary, Som. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Society,
Curator of Taunton Castle Museum.*