

A Description of the Rev. Frederick Brown's
Collection of Manuscript Somerset Wills
and Pedigrees, now preserved at Taunton Castle.

BY EDW. ALEX. FRY.

THIS valuable collection was presented to the Somersetshire Archæological Society in 1889, by the executor of the late Rev. Frederick Brown, in accordance with directions in his will, but no adequate index of its contents accompanied the gift, and I doubt very much if Mr. Brown ever compiled one. Mr. F. A. Crisp printed selections from it in six volumes in 1887-1890, and here the matter rested till, happening to refer to it and finding it impossible to make full use of it without great waste of time, the idea occurred to me to undertake a General Index. Permission was readily accorded me by the Council of the Society, and a Card Index is the result. It has taken me about two years to compile, as I could only do it in spare hours.

Mr. Brown seems to have done the work at least twice over. He apparently took some leading Somerset family, compiled a pedigree of it and added an abstract of such wills as related to that family. He then seems to have written it all out again more neatly into another book, and in some instances did it a third time. It is for this reason that there will be found several references to the same will. In spite, however, of the extra labour he thus imposed upon himself, the work is most exact, and I believe it all to be quite reliable, and the mere

fact of so much information about Somerset families being focussed into thirty-two volumes is a great boon to all those interested in these matters.

As a rule, the information commences in the reigns of Henry VIII or Elizabeth, and the pedigrees, etc., are often worked out to quite modern times or until the family became extinct in the male line.

By the help of the General Index now made, it will be an easy matter to refer to any family Mr. Brown took in hand, and the Card Index will enable anyone to refer to any particular individual in that family in a very short space of time.

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AT TAUNTON CASTLE.

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