



THOMAS WM. COWAN, F.G.S., F.L.S.

Thomas William Cowan

F.E.S., F.G.S., F.L.S., F.R.M.S., PH.D., D.SC.

DR. COWAN, who passed away at Clevedon on May 23, 1926, had been a member of our Society twenty years, and had done good and useful work in the county in many ways. He was best known as one of the leading authorities on bees and bée-keeping, and had written several standard works on the subject, notably: *The Honey Bee, its Natural History, Anatomy, and Physiology*; *The British Bee-Keepers' Guide Book*; and *Wax Craft: all about Bees-Wax; its history, production, adulteration, and commercial value*. Some of his books ran through many editions, and were translated into several languages. He was one of the founders of the British Bee-Keepers' Association, and was for a considerable period chairman of that body, his last work being the history of the first fifty years of its existence. He was also honorary member of several kindred associations in Europe and America. He owned and edited the *British Bee Journal* for a considerable period; and was a Fellow of the Entomological, Geological, Linnean, and Royal Microscopical Societies; a Doctor of Philosophy; and a Doctor of Science. Yet, it is safe to say that the majority of those who had known him many years had but little idea of his numerous and varied activities, or the wide range of his attainments, such was his quiet, genial, modest, and unassuming manner.

He was a remarkably able linguist, and his collection of books relating to the honey bee is probably one of the most complete in existence, his own volumes, in many languages, forming a considerable section thereof.

Dr. Cowan was born in St. Petersburg in 1840, and received his early education there, his father having held an appointment as civil engineer under the Russian Government, with the rank of a general. He came to London to continue his studies at the Royal School of Mines, and had a successful career in his father's profession. On his retirement he spent some years in Surrey and in California, but subsequently settled down at Bishop's Hull, near

Taunton, and ultimately removed to Clevedon. He took charge of the herbarium at the Museum, thoroughly overhauled it, and made considerable valuable additions. He was also President of the Taunton Field Club, and was keenly interested in the botanical, entomological, and microscopical sections of our Society.

Some sixty years ago, Dr. Cowan built one of the first steam carriages used upon English roads, with which he achieved a speed of twenty miles an hour, but the passing of the Locomotive Act, with its many restrictions and the limit of speed to four miles an hour, put an end to his labours in this direction.

CHARLES TITE.

Joseph Hamlet

PREBENDARY HAMLET'S connection with the work of the Society began in 1905, when, after nine years' membership, he was elected a local secretary by the Council. From that time his attendance at the business meetings held at Taunton Castle was fairly regular, especially after his election as a councillor in 1913. Later on he became a member of the Finance, Editorial, and Museum and Library Committees, for all of which he undertook his full share of duty. As time went on his services were frequently acknowledged, and he often presided at council meetings in the absence of the elected chairman. In August 1925 Mr. Hamlet was elected to the position of Chairman of Council, which office he held up to the time of his death which occurred at Budleigh Salterton on July 23, 1926. Ten days previously, although looking extremely ill, he attended the annual meeting of the Society at Glastonbury and presented the annual statement of accounts; and that afternoon he was an attentive listener to the discourses on Glastonbury Abbey by Professor Hamilton Thompson and Mr. Bligh Bond.

Mr. Hamlet knew much of the detail of the Society's organization, and in certain departments of its work he took a very keen and practical interest. Although a member of the Editorial Committee he did not contribute very frequently to the Society's *Proceedings*, but his reviews, such as that on the *Victoria County History, Somerset*, and a few obituary notices including that on the late Canon Church (vol. lxi) were extremely useful for permanent record. He contributed also a description of Barrington Church (vol. lxxvii), of which parish he had been vicar since 1885; a note on Miss Roper's paper on 'The Earliest English Herbal' (vol. lxxvii), also a note on 'The Daubeney Tomb in Jerusalem' (vol. lxxxi); and he was instrumental in the publication of a geological paper on Barrington (vol. lxxvii). He left behind him a manuscript book entitled 'Materials for the history of Barrington in the thirteenth century,' which has been presented to the Society's library.

When the Bath and Wells Advisory Committee for the Protection

of Churches was established, Mr. Hamlet was elected acting-secretary until a more permanent appointment could be made.

Mr. Hamlet was a good antiquary and took a general interest in genealogy and history, and in archæological excavations. His knowledge of geology and botany was by no means small. But perhaps his chief hobby and that in which he was most keen were the affairs of local government, and in his later years he was actively engaged in the work of the Rural District Council, Parish Council, Board of Guardians, and the Somerset Poor-Law Institution.

Mr. Hamlet became successively a prebendary of Wells in 1910, rural dean of Ilminster in 1921, and sub-dean of Wells in 1925. He was a man of strong personality, and his love for children was well known. His all-round knowledge was considerable, due no doubt to his remaining a student to the end.

He will be gratefully remembered for the amount of time, during the last twenty years, that he gave to the business of the Society and the work he did for it.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.