Mr. Brooke said, "Whilst on the subject of Wilmslow Church, I take this opportunity of stating, that after visiting the Church last August, and after making a careful examination of the Tomb of Henry Trafford, I am of opinion that I was in error respecting a word which occurs in the inscription, and which I originally thought was a contraction for "etiam," but which is given in Ormerod's Cheshire, as "et."—(See note at the foot of page 138 of Vol. I of the Society's Proceedings.)—After again inspecting the inscription, I now believe that Ormerod's account of the word is substantially right, and that though it is not very legible it is meant for "&," the contraction for "et"; and consequently that the portion of the inscription where it occurs is to be read thus:—"Rector etia' eccl'ie de Siglesthorne, & i'ti' eccl'ie qui obiit," &c., &c.

Mr. Brooke exhibited an autograph letter written in December, 1788, from the Rev. Brownlow Forde, afterwards the Rev. Dr. Forde, who was then the Minister of St. Catherine's Church, in Temple Place, Liverpool. St. Catherine's Church, now pulled down, stood where the Fire Police Station now is. Dr. Forde was a person of extensive literary attainments; and in after life obtained the appointment of Ordinary of Newgate, where he officiated in that capacity at the execution of many extraordinary offenders, amongst whom may be mentioned Col. Despard, Bellingham, the assassin, &c., &c.

Mr. Brooke also exhibited a Bond of Indemnity, dated the 15th of October, 1784, which Mr. Roscoe, the well-known poet and historian, executed to the Corporation of Liverpool, whilst he was a Solicitor practising in Liverpool.

An interesting conversation arose, in which Dr. Thom, Dr. Hume, Mr. Brooke, Mr. J. Mather, &c., joined, respecting St. Catherine's Church, which Dr. Thom said was built about 1764, and until about February or March, 1776, was held by a body of Presbyterians using a liturgy very similar to that of the Church of England. In 1776 it was given up to the Church of England.

A conversation also took place relative to the Grammar School at Great Crosby, about to be re-opened by the Merchant Tailors' Company.

The following Papers were read:—

I.—Introductory Address.

By H. C. Pidgeon, Esq., Hon. Secretary.

It seems to be a useful arrangement that we should commence the Session with an introductory address, and I have therefore ventured to undertake the office of giving it on this occasion. It is not, however, to enter on the mutual congratulations in which we might honestly and heartily indulge on the termination of a Session so successful as the first

Session of our Society confessedly has been ;—it is not to point to what we have been enabled to accomplish in that brief period, with a limited number of workers, with comparatively small means, and with as yet an imperfect organization :—Such are not my motives. I am anxious rather to direct your attention to the future than to the past. I am much more desirous to point to means calculated to give a proper direction to our future efforts ; to endeavour to strengthen individual resolves ; to call on you to concentrate your isolated studies, to combine your various aims, if you will work successfully in the great work to which we as a Society are devoted. If with such objects I may appear dictatorial, I will yet study to be brief.

No member of the Society, who has attentively read its original Prospectus, or who has perused the documents issued by its Council, can be ignorant of the extent and variety of its contemplated collections ; but he may, perhaps, be unmindful of the minuteness and detail with which each general head is capable of being illustrated. Minuteness and detail are the very life of a Society like ours. Its members, various in their tastes, habits, pursuits ; distributed through a large district which it is proposed to illustrate ; each having, it may be, sources of information peculiar to himself, are yet linked together by a common bond, that of contributing, however little, to the great stock of knowledge which is to form the common property of all.

I fear that many have a feeling of timidity which prevents them from sending to the Society a record of such small matters as come under their own observation. Let such persons reflect that some of the most valuable contributions which our literature has received, have been the minute records of small facts which have, from time to time, been jotted down by eye-witnesses of the circumstances. My promise of brevity compels me to abstain from a recital of the eminent services to history of many such narrators ; but I may say that many a fact which is held back under the idea that it is recorded and known to us, may escape and be lost, when the time comes at which it would be most valued by the anxious enquirer. Better would it be that the future historian should have twenty accounts of the same transaction, than that the modesty or apathy of members should have prevented its being placed on record.

Nothing is too fragmentary to be preserved. It is the nature of knowledge that one fact illustrates another. One circumstance known, the enquiry is pursued, the missing links in the chain of evidence are sought and discovered: each discovery widens the sphere of observation, till at length the whole truth is made clear.

Let no one then imagine, because anything appears to him to be incomplete or insignificant, that therefore he is called on to destroy or withhold it. What is isolated and incomplete in the hands of one, is under the more practised and comprehensive glance of one who has looked at the subject with the devotion of genius, an important link in the great chain of human knowledge. When the Society is enabled, from the liberality of its members, from its own resources, or from a proper appreciation of its objects on the part of the great public bodies,—when from either or from a combination of these the Historic Society finds its collections formed into a great Public Museum, then shall we see many a hitherto neglected or hardly cared for relic of past ages, many an unconsidered trifle, elevated to rank which its former possessor hardly dreamed of, forming perhaps a connecting link in some great classification of its collections.

Nor let it be thought that duplicate specimens are not useful. It is not many days since I learned from the Newspapers of the valuable interchange of such duplicates between the Antiquaries of Scotland and Denmark, an interchange as honorable as useful to each party.

Another important consideration is, that we are decidedly an Educational Society. Hardly an hour before I wrote these lines I was delighted to read in the account of the late Chester Congress a speech of Mr. Planche, who mentioned with the true enthusiasm of genius the delight with which, in a ramble through the Cloisters of Chester Cathedral, he had been able to impart some information to a poor woman, who exclaimed "what would I give to know what that means." But it is not that poor woman alone who is ignorant. If we look back to the first printed catalogue of the rarities of the Gresham College, we see that much has since been done; and yet much as we have progressed, how little, lamentably little, is the real knowledge which the people have on subjects like ours. I could point to Literary and Philosophical Societies whose funds are spent in trifles, while they suffer almost unique objects of antiquity to be taken from their town,

to afford matter of discussion for the Antiquaries of the United Kingdom. We yet want a large measure of popular education on these subjects, before the illustrations of the arts, sciences, and manufactures of our forefathers will be esteemed and preserved as they ought. Let us set a good example in this particular. I think we have done something even now to call public attention to our studies and collections;—for it is a very well-known fact that the well directed, energetic, successful labours of those bound by the common tie of special fitness, call public attention forcibly to the measures which they advocate, and thus re-act in the mass by which they are surrounded. The strong call of public opinion raised in answer to the warnings of Archæologists, has prevented many a meditated spoliation in these Railway times—and public opinion is preserving and restoring many a relic which in other times would have been sacrificed without an effort to save it.

While in other things centralisation seems the order of the day, in our pursuits diffusion seems to be the right and proper mode of proceeding. As long as Antiquities were the special province of the Society of Antiquaries of London, were they cared for as they are now? The cumbrous machinery of such a Society seemed to clog its progress. The important quartos in which its proceedings were inshrined, found fit audience, mayhap, though few. Who could venture to contribute to such learned pages? It is not long since other Societies, not rivals, were established, which holding their Annual Meetings in different parts of the kingdom, carry the knowledge, the enthusiasm, the spirit of enquiry into communities who had heretofore slept over the treasures of which they were the natural custodians. Who among us will look back to the Congress at Chester, without feeling that in that week some chord was struck, which will long continue to vibrate? Who has not benefited from the interchange of opinions, the discussion of doubtful points, in which he then engaged? I, for one, shall long remember with pleasure, the events of that brief period, and shall hope to cultivate many of the friendships I then formed. What an additional source of pleasure it will be to me on every future visit to Chester, that I was enabled to examine its Antiquities with the aid of the experience of those who have devoted their lives to these special pursuits: that I can trace the history of its Cathedral with the minute accuracy which those lectures and examinations have given, that with the careful and skilful knowledge of my

antiquarian friends in the British Archæological Association at my command, I can again wander to all the traces of the Roman occupation of Castrum. Such visits are benefits to the whole district, and we who were enabled to afford some hospitality to the visiters at the Congress, have received in return an intellectual food far more enduring than that which we were privileged to dispense.

Societies like ours react on Society by the exposure of many a fallacy and vulgar error. Your keen and able Archæologist is a sad dethroner of the idols of popular worship. Let the statement be never so often put forth, with never so much plausibility and minuteness, if it is not true it will not stand the light of investigation. Many of us have read of the heroic conduct of the crew of a French ship during the late wars, who were said to have sunk with their dismantled vessel, giving a cry of exultation for their country. I mention this long believed story to illustrate both the value of investigation, and the importance of making a note* of every thing when found, as Captain Cuttle wisely says. It is not many weeks since I saw in some publication, but cannot call to memory where, that after the fiction had passed current for nearly fifty years, the truth is at last made clear (the Captain's letter dated on board the conquering British vessel being in existence,) that that French ship, succumbed as others did during the same eventful period, without any of the romance with which it had been illuminated. But while vulgar errors are exploded, it forms a curious chapter of the history of the human mind, that such things have been believed; and the errors themselves often give great insight into the actual condition of the country, and form not the least amusing or instructive chapters of its history.

One practical improvement which I would suggest in our Society is, that of the association of the members in different districts, and the private meeting of such members as reside near, and are known to each other, to collect, arrange, and transmit to us, here in the centre of operations, such information as they can glean respecting their own neighbourhoods. With such help, with excursions in which others might be invited to join, much might

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* This was written before the Publication of the very useful periodical for the communication of facts and enquiries among literary men was announced.

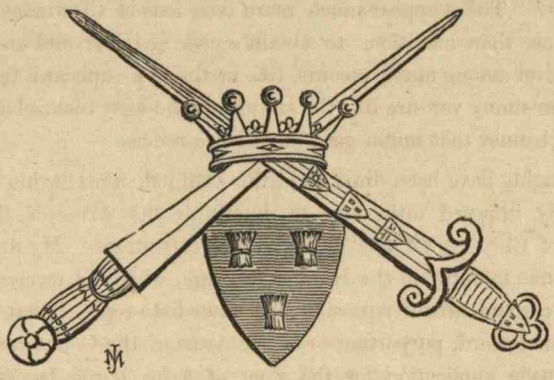
easily be accomplished, the value of which would amply repay the exertions used. I may here mention, and it may be interesting to some to know, that in this way we are investigating the Roman Road in the vicinity of Warrington, aided by the local knowledge and previous researches of some members of the Society in that town, who arrange the plans, procure labourers, and thus render smooth the path to be pursued. Of such excursions we may expect much fruit, and I venture to dwell on it a moment as one of the happy devices by which knowledge is made easy. If members would prepare such information as they can procure, and then with such others as have command of pen and pencil, go over their respective districts, we might accumulate a stock of new facts which it is most pleasing to think of, which would raise our society high in the rank of similar Associations.

Our Society requires a better organization for collecting information as to the discovery of Antiquities, &c. For this purpose I hope we shall appoint active members, as Local Secretaries in the chief towns and districts of the counties. We may also have corresponding members, who may transmit to us intelligence of what is going on in their own neighbourhoods. These and similar additions to, and improvements of, our means of observation and collection, will of course, receive every attention of the Council.

But perhaps the greatest want which we feel is the absence of a library of reference to which we could in all cases apply, when difficulties present themselves in our researches. Our want of easily accessible libraries is a national disgrace. To the honor of our district I may refer to the Chetham Library at Manchester, and the Library at Warrington, and if envy is allowable, I may say I do envy the inhabitants of those towns the facilities which their readily accessible stores of knowledge afford. But I hope better days are coming, when we may have in Liverpool a large public collection of Books, exerting their cheering and informing influence on the often painful and perplexing path of the student.

Let us not be disheartened by apparent difficulties. The providential law, that while nothing can be done without exertion, little or nothing is denied to well-directed labour, should operate on us as it has operated on the best and wisest who have preceded us. It should lead us to individual exertion

and to combined efforts. It should cheer us in our moments of anxious toil, as it will certainly reward us for our many hours of depression by the fruits with which it will reward our aspirations and our labours.



II.—An Investigation into the Right of the County Palatine of Chester to bear a Coat of Arms.*

By Colonel the Hon. Sir Edward Cust, K.C.H., Vice-President.

Heraldry is a science not perhaps sufficiently estimated by the philosopher; nevertheless it is found to maintain a powerful influence over the mind of man in all circumstances, and Republics as well as Monarchies know it. It is however solely influential for good in any community; for if occasionally it ministers to pride and vanity, it always is an incitement to the union of families, and to deter men from disgracing them. It is of course a most useful ally to history, often assisting to clear up that, which without it, might be obscure; and to explain the errors or blunders of partial or ignorant Annalists. It is to be regretted, that the estimable members of the Heralds' College do not bestir themselves, to give the science of which they are the constituted guardians, its just honour in the world. In these days, it is not enough that a man should write himself F.S.A.; Antiquarians must be up and stirring when Archæology is obtaining a new existence, by the more overt assemblies

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* The wood-cut is from a drawing by Randle Holme.