

Britons in Cheshire may be truly said to have ended. Every chieftain and noble that had not perished in the battle-field was driven from his estates, and the indisputable evidence of the Doomsday Book shews how quickly their confiscated lands were divided among the rapacious followers of the Norman Conquerors. Nothing remained in the possession of the Saxon landholders save a few townships belonging to the monastic institutions of Chester. Even these they were allowed to retain only a few years, ere they were wrested from them, and given to the Benedictine Abbey founded by Hugh, the first Norman Palatinate Earl of Chester.

II.—CLOSING ADDRESS.

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

On the close of this the Second Session of the Society's operations, the more than realization of anticipated success,—even in the face of difficulties and imperfections inseparable in a new Society,—may, I think, fairly lead me to congratulations; though generally I think suggestions and improvements more useful than mere mutual compliments.

When, two years ago, we first met in this room, it was with something like fear that we looked forward to the working of such a society; but a year's experience shewed us that we had nothing to dread, either as to its scope or to the means of carrying it forward. We found on every side matter of interest to illustrate and preserve, and gentlemen eager to lend us their assistance and support. We found that so far from our Society interfering with other Societies, we were but fellow-labourers in a field ready to yield to all *earnest labourers* a rich reward for any exertions bestowed on it. We found many kindred minds anxiously waiting for a channel in which they could put forth the result of their enquiries; and at the end of our first Session we had secured to ourselves, by the first volume of our Proceedings, a station among the foremost Societies of the kind.

Our Second Session has been wanting in no good feature which our first possessed, while I think I may venture to say we have had more energy and more practical efficiency. The Papers read have been more elaborate, while they have embraced as wide a range, and elucidated as many of our great divisions of investigation.

The number of our Members has been enlarged from two hundred and fifty to something more than three hundred—a list still much smaller than we hope soon to see it, but still a list which shews a widely extended desire to carry out the great objects of the Society. The recent elections of the Bishop of one of our Dioceses, of the Chancellor of the Duchy, and several other Peers, of the Historian of Cheshire, and of several of the Influential Members of other Societies, (The President and Secretary of the Chetham Society, and one of the Secretaries of the Archæological Institute,) are worthy of a reference on this occasion.

It would be tedious to make a minute analysis of the various Papers read during the Session. They are nearly twenty in number, and have been contributed by fifteen different members, some of whom are among the ordinary members of the Society. They are necessarily of a miscellaneous character. Thus: three are on the Roman period; two illustrating the Roman occupation of the district; and the third describing Roman remains discovered in it. Three Papers are devoted to our first division of Historical documents. Antiquities are the subject of two other Papers, one a Monograph on Door-fastenings of much value. Genealogy has been the subject of a most elaborate and valuable Paper by the Historian of Cheshire, who has most successfully traced the line of an ancient and time-honoured family. The kind feeling and active co-operation of this gentleman is most flattering to the Society. That department of our operations which comes under the head of Trade, Commerce, and Inventions, is especially worthy of, and I hope will be likely to receive frequent, illustration. This branch has been represented in an introductory Paper on the Cotton Trade, which I hope speedily to see carried forward, as well as to welcome other labourers in this field. Topography is ably represented, and the Parochial History of Mr. Sandford will, I hope, lead other Clergymen to emulate so good an example. I cannot now more than passingly allude to the illustration of manners in the Paper on the Tilting-ground at Gawsorth, or to the interesting account of an eventful period, in that on Warrington in 1745.

The plan of publication adopted this year, though perhaps less popular among distant Members, will, we hope, be generally approved. As the Papers read at our Society become more elaborate and important, delay in passing them through the press will be inevitable. We are publishing materials for history, and accuracy is a most important consideration.

The etchings and wood-cuts, for which the Society is indebted so largely to its Members, have been prepared with a view to the real *illustration* of the subjects to which they are attached.

Our collection of Books, Antiquities, &c., is fast increasing, and I cannot too forcibly set before you the value of our speedily procuring a Museum for the preservation of our rapidly accumulating stores. Whatever the amount of our treasures, they are comparatively useless at present. It is not enough for us to possess objects of antiquarian and historical interest, for us to assemble together specimens of the natural productions, or the manufactures of the district. Unless they are open to the Members and to the Public, in an educational point of view they are as if we had them not. While I confess that I cannot suggest any definite plan by which we can remove this want, I would most earnestly beg the attention of Members to the absolute necessity for active and vigorous exertions in this direction. The tables at our meetings have shewn the stores which are around us and the liberality of the possessors, and looking back at what has been done I look forward with much hope to the future. We must not cease to urge on Members the importance of comparison of specimens, and of the value which will always be attached, in such Societies as this, to the exhibition and explanation of objects of historical and antiquarian interest. There never was a period when more ground has been opened and more treasures exhumed. Everywhere we see investigation, in the real spirit of investigation, laying bare the time-covered relics of the past. The tumulus is giving us the knowledge of the burial ceremonies of our remote ancestors. The turf which concealed the habitations of our Roman predecessors is made to yield to us its history of Roman civilization. Church restoration is shewing us the principles on which the architects worked, and the spirit in which the painter embellished. And while investigations are going on, classification goes hand in hand to give us, in valuable manuals, the results of comparison and arrangement.

If then such is the case, if we have fallen on the beginning of this "good time," which must open to us those interesting and valuable realities, it must not be lost sight of in Meetings like these, that we are not keeping up with the spirit of the age, unless we, as a society and as individuals, take an enlarged view of the sphere of our operations. While we collect every-

thing of interest, we must collect with a definite purpose. The science of Archæology is now engaging the attention of earnest men in all parts of the Continent of Europe, and their discoveries are used, not as isolated facts, but as bearing on the whole history of the human race. With what success these labours will be crowned will mainly depend on the facilities of comparison and arrangement which the collections and publications even of such Societies as our own may offer. Let us consider it a privilege that we are enabled to enter into this band of brotherhood with all who are similarly engaged. Let our collections, our publications, our investigations, be open to all who are seeking for the truths which archæological discoveries add to the recorded facts of national development. Let us set an example of liberality and comprehensiveness, of care in investigation, and clearness in deduction. The days are long past when imperfect theories, or superficial and incomplete illustration can be tolerated in men calling themselves students of archæology or of any other science. We must actively co-operate with all who are similarly engaged, and this communion of kindred minds will, like virtue, be its own exceedingly great reward.

To adopt the language of one who has illustrated his theory in his own works, Mr. J. M. Kemble, "It is our business to rescue from neglect and ruin the fragmentary remains which tell of the past, but (unlike our predecessors) we group these facts by a system, class them as it were in genera and families, and by a stern induction wring from them a portion at least of the secrets which lie hid within the mist of ages." "The higher purpose at which we ought to strive is the record of human development, in the special terms of national development—the history of man imaged in the history of one collection of men."

The following votes of thanks were then unanimously passed :—

- 1.—To the Donors, Exhibitors, and Readers of Papers during the Session.
 - 2.—To the Directors of the Collegiate Institution for the use of the Board Room.
 - 3.—To the Honorary Curator and Honorary Secretaries for their zeal and ability in the service of the Society during the past Session.
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