

Obituary Notice.

Since the last issue of these Transactions the Society has lost a valued supporter and friend by the decease of the Rev. John Griffith, LL.D. For ten years previous to his retirement in 1891 Dr. Griffith had taken a lively interest in the Society, and promoted its work in certain directions with characteristic energy. His active co-operation may be dated from 1880, when he was fortunately instrumental in bringing to light (March 19th) the long-lost ancient Register book of the Abbey parish. This interesting discovery he communicated in a paper read January 30th, 1881, illustrating its archaeological value. Subsequently his researches in Parish Register lore were opportunely turned to account on various occasions.

His accession to the Committee in September, 1882, proved a source of practical strength and a stimulus to activity in exploration. Dr. Griffith was a special friend to excursions within the county; he was seldom induced to go beyond its limits. In these expeditions the part most congenial to him was the investigation of prehistoric antiquities—earthworks, tumuli, primitive roadways, common field tillage, &c. It has been remarked, "We used to say he thoroughly loved a bit of prehistoric mound or dyke-making." He had a very felicitous way of imparting his extensive information, studying simplicity, and modestly veiling his erudition. His interesting contributions on various subjects (unfortunately not committed to print) may be pleasantly recalled by the following summary of "Proceedings."

In January, 1882, he gave an address on "The death and burial of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester."

At an excursion made in September following he dealt, at Colmans Green, with passages in the life of John Bunyan in connection with the habitation he there frequented in times of persecution. At Nomansland he gave the story of the dispute between the rival Abbots of Westminster and S. Albans about the manor rights. In the expedition made to Dunstable, 1883, at the Five Knolls he explained the course of the Ickneild

Way and other primitive tracks within the county. He also commented on the notable earthworks called Totternhoe Camp and the British *oppidum* of Maiden Bower. The informal or conversational meetings introduced by Dr. Griffith were effective in stirring up interest and popularising antiquarian studies. At those conducted by him in the winter of 1883 the Charters and *insignia* of the Corporation of S. Albans were among the objects agreeably discussed.

In the excursion of 1884 he gave an address in the Royston Cave descriptive of its discovery and the antiquarian controversies on the subject. He also contributed notes and anecdotes relating to Royston and Little Horstead.

The Vicar of Sandridge had studied with enthusiasm the history and antiquities of his own parish church; the results of his investigations he summarized in a paper on "The Church of S. Leonard," read January 22nd, 1885. In this he expressed his views on the undertaking which had long been near his heart—the judicious restoration of the deteriorated structure. It will be remembered that these were happily realized three years later, the renovated Church being re-opened June, 1888. Among the characteristic points of this excellent restoration work, executed under the direction of Mr. William White, F.S.A., the unique and skilful treatment applied to the ancient chancel screen, adapting it to new structural requirements, is very noteworthy. It is to be regretted that the Vicar's excellent paper, having been reserved for enlargement, has not been available for printing in the Society's Transactions.

In 1885 he delivered at Hitchin notes on the "Biggin Almshouses" and on Hitchin Priory.

In 1886 he rendered much appreciated service by conducting an excursion to the eastern part of the county, in which the ancient Church of S. Leonard, Bengoe, S. Mary's Church, Ware, and Ware Priory were explored, and their antiquities illustrated by local friends.

In the following October Dr. Griffith represented the Society at the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Domesday Survey, having devoted much attention to the subject in connection with Hertfordshire.

In 1887 he presented on behalf of the Egypt Explora-

tion Fund some antiquities discovered in the Delta of the Nile. These were explained in a lecture given by his son, Mr. F. L. Griffith (October 21st), then recently returned from the excavations at Defenneh. Some further specimens were presented in 1890.

In the excursion of August 5th, 1887, the Celtic earthwork at Redbourn, known as "The Aubreys," was pointed out and commented on by Dr. Griffith. Happily his paper, "Redbourn Camp," is preserved in the "Transactions."

In 1888, August 2nd, he illustrated with much research, enlivened by anecdote, the history of the Manor and Church of S. Mary Magdalen, Great Offley.

In 1889, his excursions contribution was an able exposition of the "Ancient Common Field Tillage," delivered at Cold Harbour, where the vestiges of the system were pointed out.

At an additional excursion, September 13th, planned by him, and conducted in concert with Mr. F. Kinneir Tarte, he interpreted at the Rye House the historical traditions of the place and some popular legends.

His last excursions enterprise (June 16th, 1890), productive of the very pleasant and instructive visits made to Much Hadham Church and Palace, Standon Church and Lordship, and the Roman *tumuli* at Youngsbury, will be fresh in the memory of the excursionist members.

It will be recognized that this record represents a very considerable amount of antiquarian effort freely bestowed in the cause of the Society.

On Dr. Griffith's retirement, consequent on failing health, the general regret at the loss of his services was expressed by a resolution passed at a meeting held June 4th, 1891.

By August of the following year he had passed to his rest.

H.F.

S. Albans Architectural and Archæological Society.

BALANCE SHEET FOR 1892.

Receipts.		£	s.	d.
Balance from last year—				
In Bank	9	5	6	
In hand of Secretary	2	7	8	
	<hr/>			11 13 2
Ordinary Subscriptions	24	3	0	
	<hr/>			£35 16 2

Examined and found correct,
 March, 1893. G. N. MARTEN.

Payments.		£	s.	d.
Printing	14	2	6	
Illustrations	6	6	7	
Meetings and Excursions	12	6		
Stationery and Binding	11	6		
To Soc. Antiquaries, London—Subscription to Archæological Congress	1	0	0	
Postages and Parcels	1	9	4½	
Custodian	1	0	0	
Cheque Book	2	0		
	<hr/>			25 4 5½
Balance in Bank, Dec. 31st	11	0	6	
Less Balance due to Secretary	8	9	½	
	<hr/>			10 11 8½
	<hr/>			£35 16 2

HENRY J. TOULMIN,
Hon. Treasurer.

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