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WILTS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Yesterday the annual meetings were commenced at Wootbury, and there was a fair attendance of members and visitors. The general meeting commenced at three o'clock in the Town-hall. The Bishop of Salisbury was announced to preside, but another engagement kept his lordship in Salisbury until the evening. In his absence, Mr. W. H. Laverton was voted to the chair, and amongst those present were Canon Jackson, Canon Warro, Revs. W. P. S. Bingham, H. Cave-Brown-Cave, C. H. Wilson, H. T. Scudamore, J. Clark, A. C. Smith, W. A. S. Merewether, W. C. Plesderleath, H. G. Goddard, J. R. M. Kirwan, Messrs. A. Mackay, H. W. Pinniger, W. H. Bell, H. J. F. Swayne, H. E. Medlicott, J. P. Haden, E. O. P. Bouverie, S. Anderson, C. W. Pinniger, A. B. Fisher, Dr. M. Thompson, &c., and numerous ladies.

The Rev. A. C. SMITH, one of the hon. secs., read the report, which stated that the committee had again with satisfaction of reporting the steady progress of the society, which, though not yet numbering amongst its members so large a body of Wiltshire men as it deserved to do, yet contained on its books 373 names—a slight increase since this time last year. They had to lament the loss of several members, and the list contained the names of some whom they could ill afford to spare. Reference was made to the services and abilities of the late Mr. Nott, Mr. Meek, Mr. Hill Clarke, and the Rev. A. O. Hartley. With regard to finance, it was needless to say more than that whilst the income was sufficient to cover the annual expenditure with economy, they were not in a condition to incur any extraordinary expense in the way of exploration, restoration, or otherwise, as they were often invited and sometimes expected to do. More issues of the magazine had been made, and they contained several papers of exceptional interest. The library and museum had been enriched with many donations, several of which were of great value, as illustrating the topography, antiquities, and natural history of the county. The committee, thanking the donors, reminded all members of the importance of preserving in their museums objects which, when scattered and in private hands were of little value, were of the highest interest when collected, classified, and arranged for the purposes of study. Afield the committee had to report very important work, and again carried out by the munificence as well as by the personal superintendence of General Pitt Rivers, whose excavations at Bothely Dyke in the south of the county were mentioned in the reports last year. This year the General, according to the request of the secretaries, made a large section through Wans Dyke, a little to the north of Old Shepherd's Shore. This section was scientifically cut, under the eye of the General, by a body of men. Though nothing was found to indicate the exact date of the throwing up of Wans Dyke, the discovery of some fragments of Samian ware on the original surface of the Down, beneath the rampart, in addition to the finding of an iron knife and an iron nail in the position in which these relics were respectively found proved to the satisfaction of all who examined them that the work was not pre-Roman, as had generally been supposed. But whether Roman or post Roman (possibly even Saxon), there was no evidence as yet to show. They rejoiced, however, to add that General Pitt Rivers was not satisfied that the evidence had been exhausted, and proposed shortly to make further examination into this interesting earth-work. Though the society had done something towards elucidating some obscure details of the county history, they were profoundly sensible that they had as yet only touched the border of the great questions before them.—The Rev. W. P. S. BINGHAM moved the adoption of

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—The Rev. W. P. S. BINGHAM moved the adoption of the report, and Mr. H. J. F. SWAYNE seconded the motion, which was adopted.—On the motion of the CHAIRMAN, seconded by Mr. BOURNIE, the committee and officers were re-elected. The Rev. Canon Warre, of Melksham, and Rev. W. P. S. Bingham, of Westbury, were appointed as additional honorary secretaries.—The Rev. CANON JACKSON read a paper on "Some Notes of Westbury History," and was thanked for his paper. The meeting then came to a close.—At six o'clock a dinner was held at the Lopes Arms, Westbury, when the Bishop of Salisbury presided. After the customary toasts had been drunk the proceedings terminated, and a conversation was held at the Laverton Institute.—The BISHOP read a paper on "The Roman Conquest of Southern Great Britain: Its character and influence especially upon our own county." Having traced the lines of Roman occupation in the county, he then connected them with the general history of the Conquest. Though there was a great paucity of Roman remains in Wiltshire, there was yet evidence of a considerable network of Roman roads with villas upon them, showing that for a long time the county was peaceably occupied by the Romans. The three great Roman roads—running from Cricklade to Old Sarum, from Ogbourne to Andover, and from Silchester to Exeter—were noticed, and the discovery of Roman coins at Wauborough, and of Roman villas at Brossham and Meldenhall. At the time of the Roman invasion Wiltshire was almost wholly outside the sphere of the warlike operations. The quiet and peaceable habits of the people were left unbroken. Their virtues and defects were matters of long and steady growth, and he who would work in Wiltshire must take that into account. Conservative for good and ill, friendly but undemonstrative—such were the Belgae and such were the Wiltshire people. The Bishop was thanked for his paper, and the Rev. W. C. Plouderleath followed with one on the White Horse.—The meetings will be continued to-day and to-morrow, and numerous excursions have been arranged.

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