

Swindon, its History and Antiquities.

By Mr. RICHARD JEFFERIES.

(Read before the Society at Swindon, September 16th, 1873.)

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Contents.

ACCOUNT OF THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING AT SWINDON....	121
THE MUSEUM AT SWINDON	154
THE NAMES OF PLACES IN WILTSHIRE: By the Rev. Prebendary Jones, F.S.A.....	156
SWINDON, ITS HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES: By Mr. Richard Jefferies	180
RECENT ROMAN FINDS AT CIRENCESTER: By Professor Church....	186
LONGLEAT PAPERS: By the Rev. Canon Jackson, F.S.A.....	192
ANCIENT CIRENCESTER, AND ITS STREETS AND HUNDREDS: By the Rev. E. A. Fuller	216
AVEBURY—ARCHÆOLOGICAL "VARIA." By the Rev. Bryan King..	228
A ROMAN RELIC.....	233
THE LATE JOHN THURNAM, Esq., M.D., F.S.A.	234
THE LATE J. Y. ACKERMAN, Esq., F.S.A.....	235
THE SOCIETY'S HERBARIUM.....	236
NOTICE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY	236

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IN the following remarks I shall confine my attention almost entirely to the town and parish of Swindon, and I shall endeavour, as far as possible, to avoid repetition of what has already appeared upon the subject. The first reliable relics of antiquity with which I am acquainted are some Roman coins, found at Westlecote, in the cornfields, and now in the possession of T. Hatt, Esq. They are much corroded, but four of them bear the following inscriptions, as far as I can read:—No. I. is very small, apparently copper. Head of a monarch, with rayed crown. On the reverse, an indistinguishable figure and the letters S. P. Q. No. II., a head crowned or wreathed, with the words Tacitus Avg. No. III., head wreathed and the words Constantinus Avg. The reverse appears to be a trophy. No. IV., head with fillet and Constantinus Avg. Reverse, a wreath enclosing three illegible letters. Round the wreath the inscription Constantini Max Avg. The inscription “Constantine,” on the best preserved of these coins, lends some slight countenance to a theory which I beg to suggest, that Swindon first came into existence as a small outlying settlement from the

Roman station at Nidum, now Nythe, Lower Wanborough. I have seen a handful of small coins of Constantine found at that spot. Perhaps the paucity of Saxon remains may be due to what I have lately seen stated as an historical fact, that this very northern corner of Wiltshire, where we now stand, was the last spot from which the ancient Britons were driven by the invaders. Here it is said they maintained an independence, to a very late period, a statement attested by the prevalence of the pure Welsh or British name Lydiard in this neighbourhood, both as the names of persons and of places down to this very day. The details in Domesday relating to Swindon have been already published. The first mention of Swindon which I can find after Domesday is an order from King John to the Sheriff of Wilts, in A.D. 1205, in these words:—"Know ye that we have quit claimed to Hugh de Cature £7. 18s., claimed from him for stock on the manor of Swindon, and therefore we command that you hold him discharged. Witness our order at Benton, 8th July." In the reign of Henry III., the manor of Swindon was given to William de Valence, Earl of Pembroke. The Hundred Rolls, under Blackgrove Hundred, contain some interesting entries, showing the state of Swindon at this period:—"Hundred of Blackgrove.—The Jury say that William de Valence holds one knight's fee of the King, in chief, in Swindon. And it is of the Honour of Pontlarge. The Abbot of Malmesbyrie holds half a knight's fee in Nether Swindon of the King in chief, and Robert Stine holds the other half of the Abbot. But how it was alienated, and how it is held they know not. William de Valence has right of gallows, assize, and bread and beer in High Swindon, by grant from the crown: and has set up a new market in the said vill, but by what warrant they know not. They say that William de Valence has warren in High Swindon. Borough of Marlborough.—The Jury say that William de Valence set up a market in the vill of Swindon which is of much injury to the King, and to the Burgesses of Marlborough, to the amount of 40s. a year. This he hath done for 15 years past of his own authority, and they know not by what warrant." So that there was a market in Swindon six hundred years ago, and a market of such importance as to do serious injury to Marlborough.

What Swindon market is now we all know. But the most singular thing to modern ideas is the fact of this great landowner, Valence, having the right to erect a gallows in Swindon: of his own authority to try, and execute offenders. This irresponsible power vested in one man must often have led to great abuses. What a contrast to the ballot box of to-day—when we seem about to err on the other hand, by diffusing power too widely. The manor of Swindon remained in the hands of the Valences and the Talbots, their relatives, until a late period. But a great many other smaller proprietors are mentioned. In 1316, the State Archives record, Everard holds in Swindon the third part of one ploughland of William Spilman by Sergeants: worth *Xs.* a year. Philip Avenel holds lands worth £4 in Swindon, under the Abbess of Winchester, and she of the Crown in chief, and pure alms of ancient feoffments. Robert de Pontarch holds Swindon for the tenth part of a knight's fee, in chief of our lord, the King. Avenel is a name still well known at Chiseldon; and Everard survives at Wanborough. In Edward the Third's reign: Robert of Blunsdon (Bluntesdone), for the priory and convent of Ederose, holds at Swindon and Blunsdon lands and goods. Robert of Blunsdon, for the Priory of Ederose, holds in Swindon one tenement and one ploughland. Christina, wife of John Atte Berghe, had certain rents at Swindon in Richard the Second's time. In 1401, Joan, a descendant of the Duke of Gloucester, had land here. Thomas de Neville, in 1407, claimed the third part of the manor of Swindon. Three silver coins found in the fields at Westlecote appear to be of Edward the Second. The best preserved shows a crowned head, with the inscription EDWARD * * * ANGLI. The reverse is divided into four quarters, by a cross, and in each quarter are three small dots, with these letters in the margin, NDON (London) CIVI. The other two are similar. On one, EDW—R can be traced, and on the other LONDON CIVI. It has been stated that it was while riding between Swindon and London that Bolingbroke was overtaken by Mowbray, and a conversation ensued which resulted in a mutual accusation of treason. Both were banished. Holyrood Church at Swindon was dedicated to St. Mary in 1302, and Richard

de Hagheman was the first incumbent presented by the Prior of Southwyke. Edward III. received from Parliament a subsidy of the 9th and the 15th to support him in his wars. The Inquisition preserves the following record of the Church at Swindon:—"Inquisition taken at Marleburg (Marlborough), before Robert Selyman, &c. On the oaths of Robert Styne, John de Wyght, John Putman, and John the Milward, who say: That the ninth part of corn, wool, and lambs in the said parish, deducting expenses, and the portions paid to the Prior of Southwyke and Prior of Walyngford, is worth this year £X. And they say the value of the said corn, wool, and lambs does not amount to the full valuation of the church: because the rector in the same holds two virgates of land (arable) with meadows, and pastures of the endowment of the church, which are worth by the year 16s. 8d. Then the rent and services of his tenants are worth by the year 6s. 8d. Then the tithe of hay is worth per annum 54s. 4d. Then the tithe of mills, milk produce, flax and hemp, and other small tithes, are worth by the year 23s. 3d. Then mortuary fees and offerings in the same parish are worth £4, which are included within the valuation of the said church. Then they say that there are no merchants or others in the said parish who are liable to the tax of the 15th; and that there is no other benefice liable to be taxed for the ninth. In the time of Edward III., as now, it appears that the hay crop was important here, the tithe on hay producing most. It is curious to note that there were no merchants in Swindon. At the Dissolution of Monasteries, 1545, the Commission of Enquiry into Ecclesiastical Property, state that:—"Swindon.—John Unthanke, vicar there, declares on oath that his vicarage in land, tithes of corn wool and lambs, and in small tithes, and all other profits and emoluments as by Bill of Parcels exhibited, and in the hands of the Commissioners, of the annual value of £15. 19s. 5d. Deductions paid therout to the Archdeacon of Wilts for procurations, and synodals every year, 12s. 3d.: net £15. 7s. 2d. Whereof the tenth is 30s. 8½d. To Sarum, from the Church of Swyndon, per annum 6s. 8d." The Swindon monks had a granary, which was afterwards granted to the cure for a residence. It was so many yards from Holyrood church, agreeing with the distance of

the present vicarage (Mr. Baily's). The walls of Mr. Baily's house are very thick, and when a portion was removed the interstices were found to be full of oat-hulls and corn-chaff, carried there by the mice in the granary. Behind the house are the remains of a dove-cot, or *columbarium*. The nearest approach of the Civil War to Swindon appears to have been the march of the Royalist Major Dowett to Lydiard Tregooze. Cromwell issued a decree for the enclosure of Eastcott, in 1657. Up to that time there appears to have been common land at Eastcott, extending over about 600 acres. The deed is of immense length, and gives minute instructions as to the disposal of the property. Those who had manured their commonable land since March, 1654, "and had since that time received no profit thereby, either by sowing the same with grass, or feeding, and cutting the same," were to receive 6s. 8d. per acre compensation for those unexhausted improvements—an early instance of a principle now recognised by agriculturists. Forty-six acres were given to the lay-rectors (the Vilets) as compensation for tithes: freeing all from tithe except three grounds. The deed is signed Lenthall (Speaker of the House of Commons), and W. Martin. The name of Goddard is so closely interwoven with the history of this place that it is impossible to pass it over without reference, though I have only recently issued a work upon that family. I will now only make a few addenda, which have come to my knowledge since that publication. *Notes and Queries*, in a review, gives three other etymologies of the name: God-ward, a god-like disposition. From Goddard, the name of a mountain in Switzerland; and from God-red, good-in-council. I find from a pedigree, forwarded to me by the Rev. F. Goddard, that through Fettiplace, the family are descended from the Royal House of Portugal. Thomas Fettiplace married Beatrix, a natural daughter of King John of Portugal. Some time between 1646 and 1652 a cavalry regiment was raised in the Marlborough division: and among those who contributed horses are many names from this neighbourhood. Duke of Marlborough for Liddington, Barbury, and Cote, one horse; Mr. Oliver Calley, of Burderope, one; Mr. Goddard, of Ogbourne, one; Mr. John Goddard, of Ogbourne, one; Mr. Goddard, of Purton, one; Mr. Francis

Goddard, of Cliffe, one; Mr. Thomas Goddard, of Swindon, one. I have found a letter from John Goddard, Esq., to Henry Cromwell, which seems to argue much influence with him:—

“To His Excellency the Lord Henry Cromwell, Governor of the Fources in Ireland, these humbly present. My Lord, I am not insensible how well it might become me upon ye accompt of duty and engagements, by frequent letters to certifie the reall Honour and syncere affections I owe and beare unto your Lordship if that would not be an interruption to your weighty affairs and withall of no reall service; and yet upon such an apprehension, I cannot acquit myself altogether of coming short in due observance, and therefore I know not how ill it may become me now to give your Lordship trouble of any lines relating to a private business or person; however, I presume, upon your Lordship's favour and indulgence. The bearer hereof Clinton Maund, a Master of Arts, and Fellow of the College in Oxford, to which I relate, hath upon occasion professed to me how his heart hath been drawn out to serve ye publicke if Providence should open a way; and now having some small affairs calling him into Ireland he expressed his desire to embrace any suitable employment there upon my recommendation thereto; which I was very free to furnish him withall, not upon presumption of any interest of mine in your Lordship (though I am fully persuaded it may be more than I deserve), but upon what I have had opportunity to observe in him, that is ye power of godlinesse, with a very good measure of learning and parts; considering withall, that he is not in any necessitous condition, but that besides ye accommodation of his fellowship in the college (which doth afford such a subsistence, as idle drones amongst us who take no thought of serving their generation can satisfy themselves to live upon all their days), he had many pupills, affording a considerable advantage, and needed not to distrust a constant supply in that kinde, if he had looked no further; so that upon ye whole my apprehensions in relation to him are that there may rather be want of such persons for public employments, than of employment for such persons; otherwise I might truly say, I had no such personall engagements towards him as might occasion to your Lordship the trouble of these lines in his behalf, which are humbly submitted to your Lordship's consideration by, my lord, your humble and affectionate servant,

J. GODDARD.”

A few years ago Mr. Charles Goddard, of Swindon, entered the Royal Navy, and went out to China in search of pirates. His ship chased a junk, boarded her, and a sharp conflict ensued. One of the pirates, seeing that all was lost, seized a burning joss-stick and rushed to fire the magazine. Mr. Goddard, who was a very young man, foresaw his intention, and sprang after him, cutlass in hand. He was too late, the magazine was fired, and the gallant young officer blown into the air. He was picked up, but only lived a few hours. The *Times* had a long article on this act of heroism. In 1772, when Ambrose Goddard was elected as county member, the

VOL. XIV.—NO. XLI.

Q

motto used by his supporters, and worn as a card in the hat, was—"Goddard's the man, and freedom's his plan."—Irrespective of all party politics, I feel that I may confidently say that there are numbers who at the expected election¹ in the spring will repeat that ancient motto, and say—"Goddard's the man." We know that real, that is, constitutional freedom, is his plan.

Recent Roman Finds at Cirencester.

By Professor A. H. CHURCH.

I MAY preface my too imperfect account of recent Roman finds at Cirencester by mentioning the great obligation that town is under to Mr. G. Moffatt, of Goodrich Court, for his handsome gift of the best sepulchral monument ever found at Corinium. This stone is now duly placed in the Museum. And I may venture to allude here also to the dispersion of the Purnell collection, which took place in May, 1872. I then secured the beautiful statuette of Diana, found many years ago in Mr. Gregory's Nursery, together with many other objects in bronze and bone, which are mentioned in Messrs. Buckman and Newmarch's volume on Corinium and its Artistic Remains of Roman origin. At the same sale I competed unsuccessfully for the oculist ointment stamp, described in the same work, which was secured for the British Museum. I obtained a well-preserved urn full of bones. I regret exceedingly that the curious civilian monument to Philus, son of Cassavus, which was in the Purnell collection, has not found its way back to Cirencester, Miss Purnell having presented it to the Museum at Gloucester.

¹ This expectation was verified by the return of Mr. Goddard as one of the Members for Cricklade, February 5th, 1874. [ED.]