



Person: Edwin Lees (1800 – 1887)
Description: Presentation by the Worcestershire Naturalists' Field Club
Source: Supplement to Berrow's Worcester Journal
Date: 27 November 1869
Repository: British Newspaper Archive
Transcription date: 9 October 2014
Annotated by: Richard Middleton
Notes:

Transcription reproduced with kind permission of The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

THE WORCESTERSHIRE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB.
PRESENTATION TO MR. EDWIN LEES

A special joint meeting of the Worcestershire and Malvern Field Clubs was held on Tuesday, the occasion being the presentation to Mr. Edwin Lees, the senior vice-president, of the portrait and tea service subscribed for by the members of the club and other friends. No name is better known in connection with the natural history of 'Worcestershire than that of the gentleman whom his friends have thus delighted to honour. It would be impossible to recount all the services Mr. Lees has rendered to the cause of education in natural history in this county; suffice it to say that he has been an enthusiastic observer in the fields of nature from early youth, that he was associated in the establishment of the Worcestershire Natural History Society in 1831. that he was one of the originators of the Worcestershire Naturalists' Field Club in 1848, that he has been a firm supporter of the Malvern Field Club from its commencement, and that his good work has been recognised by his appointment to the office of vice-president of both clubs. As a genial companion, as a zealous student of natural science, ever ready to impart of his abundant knowledge to his fellows, either in the field or by his pen, and that in a way at once interesting and instructive. Mr. Lees has obtained universal respect, and in saying that he is eminently entitled to the honour which has been paid him we are but expressing the sentiments of all who know him. We cordially echo the wish that Mr. Lees may long be spared to pursue his researches in the field and to enjoy the esteem of his numerous friends.

The members of the two clubs assembled at the Natural History Room, Foregate-street, at eleven o'clock, and the local museum recently formed was inspected, after which they met in the council room, where the Rev. W. S. Symonds, F.G.S., president of the Malvern Field Club, delivered an address on the utility of local collections:-

Mr. Symonds spoke as follows :- Gentlemen, - When I received the programme of this day's proceedings I learnt, for the first time, that I was expected to make some remarks upon the utility of local collections, and on the local museum, now attached to the general museum of the Worcestershire Natural History Society. Before I enter upon this subject you will permit me to remind you that there is one absent whose presence we all miss, and with whom, had he been living, a gathering of this kind would assuredly have brought us face to face and hand to hand. I need not say that I allude to our departed friend Sir Charles Hastings, who was the principal founder of the beautiful museum you have visited to-day. and who took the greatest interest during the closing period of his life in establishing a room which should be attached to the general museum, but which should be set apart for collections of minerals, fossils, shells, birds, insects, and plants which have been found, and may hereafter be found, in this county and immediate district. It was under the auspices of Sir Charles Hastings, who was assisted by the Rev. Mr. Pearson, Mr. Hugh Strickland, and Mr. Lees, that the Worcestershire Natural History Society was established in 1834; and this leads me, in the first place, to say a few words respecting the general museum before I allude to the local museum. When we visit such a Museum of Natural History as is now contained beneath this roof, the first thing that strikes us is that it must be considered a most instructive and entertaining exhibition to all those who have

the privilege of living near it, and of examining the various collections; and we naturally enquire whether such an institution is yielding to the inhabitants of Worcester an education on natural history subjects which is at all proportionate to the cost incurred, and the trouble undertaken by its efficient and hard-working curator, Mr. Reece. Now I believe that the Council would tell you that such has not been the case hitherto, at all events to the extent which we had hoped. But, gentlemen, we may be nevertheless assured that the time is rapidly approaching when such a general museum as you possess at Worcester will become a most important agent in the education of the people. Notwithstanding the difference of opinion between National Education Leagues and National Educational Unions, there is but one opinion among the classes that rule this land, and that is that somehow or other we should teach every poor man's child to read and write and cipher. To this conclusion we all come at last, and, before many years have passed, I have no more doubt that a still greater change will be brought about in the education of the masses of the people than that I am now addressing you; and if this is to be the case, who can doubt in these progressive times that educationalists of all classes will see the advantage of interesting and instructing the young of all classes in a knowledge of the earth they live on, and the varied productions of life and organization placed upon it by the Creator throughout countless ages? Such a museum, then, as you possess at Worcester, so admirably adapted as it is to illustrate all branches of natural history, is, I consider a most important acquisition for the future instruction of your people: for depend upon it, however the national system of education may be carried out, the works of God will not be ignored as they have hitherto been, and the time is coming, and coming rapidly, when this museum will be appreciated for the work it will fulfil. With respect to the local museum I believe that a room or compartment, set apart for local specimens, is a most important adjunct to every general museum. In most museums local specimens are so commonly drafted into the general collections that it is very difficult to find any typical specimens which we may have travelled miles to see. Now this cannot happen if you have a local room. Many of you, probably, have visited the little Alpine museum at Lucerne, in Switzerland, or the Zoological Museum of the Alps at Geneva. Here you see a series of quadrupeds, birds, and insects, collected and arranged, and illustrative of the Alpine country you are visiting, and you find collected together the very things you want to see when you are travelling in that country. Now compare these local collections with the museum at Basle, where they have a fine general museum, but in which local specimens are so jumbled together with foreign specimens that you cannot derive half the pleasure or information, as a traveller, that you derive from the humble but local museum at Lucerne. And I therefore say by all means institute a general museum in every important county town, but keep your local specimens separated so that they may be conveniently and quickly examined by the passing traveller, and studied in detail by the local student. We have an example of the advantages to be derived from local collections in Dr. Grindrod's admirable museum at Malvern. You possess in the general collection of this museum an unusually fine series of foreign and British minerals, and you are to be congratulated upon their possession; but let me assure you that an especial interest to the passing naturalist attaches more particularly to the humble case in your local collection where lie the minerals of the ancient Malverns, the old Laurentian gneiss, the ancient traps and lavas, the hand specimens which illustrate the structure of those hills. There are few finer collections of shells than the collection in the general museum, and every naturalist will acknowledge this. There is also an excellent series of the land and fresh-water shells of this county and neighbourhood, principally collected and presented by Mr Reece; and it is well that this collection is placed within a local room. You possess, or ought to possess, among your fresh-water shells specimens of *Unio antiquior* of Strickland, and which he found associated with the remains of elephants, rhinoceroses, and hippopotami in the old river gravels of the Avon. This shell is now extinct in Great Britain, although it still lives in the Loire and some rivers in the Auvergne. Many a conchologist would travel miles to see an English specimen, and its place should be in your local room, where it may be easily seen and without a long search. Again, you possess a fine collection of fossil bones from the Himalayas and from Australia, and such specimens are truly valuable for reference by those who take not only an interest in palaeontology, but in works on geography, travel, and natural history. But you have also a good collection of the fossil remains of those great quadrupeds, the mammoth, and others I have just

alluded to, which once lived and died hard by the very spots you now inhabit, and frequented the shores of the rivers that now flow past your homes. It is well to have their relics placed in your local room as having been inhabitants of ancient Worcestershire long before the conquering Roman had any existence, or before a race of men far more ancient than the Roman had found their way to the mammoth-haunted forests of ancient Britain. Placed in a local collection the traveller may see them at a glance; or the working man or young naturalist, who may perchance discover the teeth or jaws of an elephant or a rhinoceros in an old river drift of the Severn, Teme, or Avon – for they have been found in the old river beds of all these rivers – may easily compare his specimen with those you possess, and thus learn, it may be an important first lesson in the geology of his native county. I might say much more on the advantages I believe might accrue from local collections and exhibitions, and of the importance that belongs to them, especially when attached to general museums. We have, however, other objects to visit in this ancient city besides the museum, and it is time that we adjourned for their inspection. (Applause.) On the proposition of Capt. BARTLEET, a vote of thanks was unanimously accorded to the rev. gentleman for his excellent address.

THE EXCURSION

Immediately on the conclusion of the address, the naturalists walked forward in a body to St. John's, Mr. B. Smith having invited them to inspect his conservatories and extensive nurseries in the Bransford-road. The morning had opened gloomy and foggy, but like genius, surmounting every obstacle, the sun shone cheerily forth, blue sky appeared, and even the November landscape, lit up in smiles, gave spirits to all. Mr. Smith most courteously received his visitors, and conducted them through the various glass houses filled with shrubs and plants, forming in many cases vistas of wondrous length, and pointed out all that was eye-worthy about and around his vast establishment. One conservatory in particular, filled with choice Chrysanthemums, in the finest bloom, of all colors and shades of color simple and clustered, made an exhibition that would have been worthy a long journey to behold, and excited general admiration. Several single trees of some age had also a picturesque effect; and it was the general conclusion that in these celebrated Nurseries the arrangements of their worthy designer really approached perfection. Mr. Smith, before they left, invited the party within his offices, where he has a large room arranged in antique style, with appropriate furniture, and in which is an old original painting of King Henry IV., discovered at Ombersley, hidden beneath flooring, a few years ago. Champagne, sherry, and other wines liberally served, with biscuits and cake, here refreshed the naturalists, and revived their spirits after an imbibition of the morning's fog. In the centre of the table was placed a most magnificent cluster of black grapes, which it was almost a pity to destroy, only that it was necessary to test their exquisite flavour.

After time sufficient to regale all the visitors, Captain BARTLEET expressed the pleasure that the united clubs had felt from this visit, and thanking Mr. Smith for his courteous attention, proposed his good health, which was warmly accorded, and Mr. SMITH blandly replied. The party then proceeded en route through broad walks, lined with hundreds of Conifers and other evergreens, and in their way had to notice, with deep expressions of regret, the havoc made by some malicious miscreant in injuring a great quantity of thriving and beautiful *Wellingtonias* and Silver Firs.

Passing forward into the Malvern road from Mr. Smith's grounds, the party went on to the Nursery of Mr. J. S. Haywood, at Lower Wick, and inspected his Fernery, which prettily surrounds with its rock-work a little circular pond, with grotto constructed of masses of travertine and other stones, fossils, &c, and has a pretty effect. And here it ought to be observed that the arrangements of the day, and the successful carrying out of the presentation project is greatly due to the zeal of Mr- Haywood, who, as treasurer to the Club, has been most energetic and spared no labour in the work he has under- taken. Hastily passing on to the Priory Ferry through the meadows, the naturalists crossed the Severn to the Cathedral, which had been thrown open to their inspection, and the Dean and Chapter most politely gave the visitors every facility, and directed the Crypt to be lighted up. Without such aid it is difficult to examine this gloomy subterranean chamber of columns, which is divided by them into eight aisles; and additional zest was given to this examination by some lucid remarks of Mr. J. Severn Walker on its

architecture, which he ascribed without doubt to the early Norman period, when St. Wulstan was Bishop of Worcester, temp. William the Conqueror. The lady-chapel, transepts, choir, and nave having been perambulated, Mr. T. Baxter, librarian to the Dean and Chapter, invited the party to inspect the library, recently placed under his charge, in rooms fitted up for the purpose over the southern aisle of the fabric, access being obtained by a stone stair from the Cloisters. Mr. Baxter exhibited several ancient illuminated MSS., Bibles, &c, as well as early printed black-letter books, on which he descanted with true bibliographical zest. A portion of the naturalists then went on to the Royal China Works, where Mr. R. W. Binns, the director, was in waiting to receive them, and while some inspected the processes of manufacture, others inspected the cases and cabinets of Mr. Binns, where the most choice specimens of ancient and modern porcelain are preserved, and the beauties and characters of which were described by that gentleman with the critical acumen for which he is distinguished. Some recently finished porcelain vases of artistic aspect were highly admired.

THE DINNER

At four o'clock the members of the two clubs, with several of their friends, in all about forty in number, sat down to a very excellent dinner at Mountford's, Captain Bartleet in the chair, with the Rev. W. S. Symonds in the vice-chair. The dinner went off most pleasantly, and was concluded by a brief series of toasts, each one of them introduced and two or three of them responded to by equally brief speeches. In suitable terms the Chairman gave, and with suitable honours his hearers received, the toast of the "Queen and the Royal Family." The healths of the "Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese" followed, and was duly acknowledged. Mr. Laslett, M.P. for Worcester, then rose and gave, as the next toast, the "Army, Navy, and Volunteers." While referring in highly eulogistic terms to the invaluable services of the army and navy and to the fine spirit which animated the volunteers, Mr. Laslett adverted to the powerful influence which such societies as Naturalists' Field Clubs were able to bring to bear to secure the blessings of peace. The honourable gentleman referred in becoming terms to the testimonial which was about to be presented to Mr. Lees, and concluded by expressing his hearty good wishes for the continued prosperity of the Worcester and Malvern Clubs. Dr. Fraser, of Wolverhampton, spoke in appropriate terms to this toast. The other toasts were, - the "Malvern Field Club and the Rev. W. S. Symonds," given by the Chairman and acknowledged by Mr. Symonds; the "Worcester Field Club and its President," given by Mr. Symonds and acknowledged by the Chairman; "Mr. Solomon Cole," the painter of the presentation portrait of Mr. Lees, given by the Rev. W. Thorn; and the "Visitors," by Mr. Mathews, acknowledged by Dr. Bull and Prof. Buckman. Dr. Griffiths read a letter from Mr. W. Douglas, expressing that gentleman's regret at having been unable to be present, with his congratulations to Mr. Lees. In the course of the speeches special reference was made to the great services of Professor Buckman and Mr. Mathews, and of Dr. Bull in Herefordshire. Mr. Symonds observed that their distance from Worcester rendered it difficult for many members of the Malvern Club to take such a part as they would desire at the Worcester meetings; and Captain Bartleet, having alluded to the existence in England of two solitary Natural History Clubs twenty-three years ago, congratulated the members of the two clubs then assembled in friendly union on the gratifying fact that Naturalists' Field Clubs now were flourishing on every side, and were doing good service in the delightful work which he himself, in common with those who heard him, regarded with such deep and loving interest.

The members and their friends rose shortly after six o'clock, in order to attend the evening meeting at the Museum.

THE PRESENTATION

At six o'clock a large number of ladies and gentlemen assembled in the lecture-room of the Natural History Society. Among those present at the meeting, or who had taken part in the previous proceedings, were: - Captain Bartleet (president of the Worcestershire Club), the Rev. W. Symonds (president of the Malvern Club), Edwin Lees, F.L.S. and W. Mathews, jun., F.G.S. (vice-presidents of the Worcestershire Club), the Rev. R. P. Hill and Dr. Griffiths (hon. secs.), the Mayor of Worcester (R. E. Barnett, Esq.), Wm. Laslett, Esq., M.P., Professor Buckman, Revds. T. L. Wheeler, sen., W. Thorn, J. H. Thompson, J. Paul, D. Seddon, C. Boutell, E. Robinson, T. Smythe (Hindlip), T. L. Wheeler, jun., F. J. Eld, B. Arthure, and J. Adlington, Drs. Grindrod, Fraser, and Bull, the Sheriff of

Worcester (Mr. Willis), Capts. Fraser and Addy, Messrs. Firkins, R. Smith, J. Severn Walker, T. Southall, Walker Rennick, Hyla Holden, W. and J. S. Burrow (Malvern), S. Cole, J. S. Haywood, Wellesley (Malvern), T. Baxter, F.G.S. Wilson Burgess, W. Ponting, C. H. Birbeck, T. S. Stock (Northfield Priory), H. Walter, J. Twinberrow, H. Grainger, J. D. Jeffery, J. Tree, J. Ll. Bozward, W. George, J. Wood, J. M. Skarratt, J. Redgrave, C. Fisher (Malvern), J. W. Scott, J. Close, J. Longmore, J. Woodward, R. Andrews (Bosbury), J. Newton, Wilson, J. Grainger, C. C. W. Griffiths, W. Edmunds, W. Chadwick (Stourport), J. W. Hopkins, R. Newman (Bewdley), J.G. Sylvester, Walter Wood, Pow, H. Rowe, Close, jun., Pemberton, Maclean, H. Rose. T. West, H. Caldicott, Tyrel, D. A. Cooper, J. Tree, J. Wood, Harlow, &c.

On the wall above the chair was the portrait of Mr. Lees, painted by Mr. Solomon Cole, the excellence of which, both as a portrait and as a work of art, was generally admired. Above the picture was the inscription, in ancient red letters on a white ground, "Long life to the original." This side of the room was beautifully decorated by Mr. J. S. Haywood, the worthy treasurer of the Worcestershire Club. On the table in front of the chairman were displayed the massive silver antique tea and coffee service, and the very elegant skeleton time-piece upon an ebony-and-marble stand, which formed part of the testimonial. These articles were supplied by our fellow-citizen, Mr. J. M. Skarratt, Broad-street.

After some delay, in consequence of the non-arrival of the President, the Rev. W. S. Symonds was voted to the chair.

The Rev. W. S. Symonds, F.G.S. president of the Malvern Field Club, in addressing the assembly, said : Ladies and gentlemen, - Although it gave me great pleasure, when I received a request from the hon. secretary of the Worcestershire Field Club (Dr. Griffiths), and from my old friend Mr. Lees, that I should undertake the presentation of the excellent portrait you see before you, I felt that I had no easy duty to perform. In these days the language of compliment has almost passed away, and the less we use the flowing periods of our ancestors in referring to personal worth, the better our audience and the friend we refer to are pleased. Nevertheless I do not think there was ever a time when men were more ready to appreciate good work done, or to sanction by their approval the well deserved testimonial of a neighbour and a friend. And it is this feeling that has brought us here to-day. Whatever may be the personal regard entertained by any of us towards Mr. Lees, we have assembled here for the purpose of presenting him with his portrait, for the reason that he is, and has been for many years, a hard-working contributor to the annals of natural history, and more especially to the natural history of his native country. (Applause). As a friend of Mr. Lees, and acquainted with somewhat of his early history, I perhaps may be allowed to say that the love of nature and of all her works, which has been so eminently characteristic of the man, commenced in boyhood when he was forced by circumstances to face the early struggles of life fatherless and alone. In the solitude of his early youth he acquired a love for wild flowers which in after years became an enthusiasm; but he had to encounter the first lessons of botany with a want of books and references, and an absence of all companionship, while what scholarship he could attain to he had to work out for himself. (Hear, hear.) Years passed away, and with them came fresh work and new duties; but he still continued an observer in the fields of nature, and when set up in business in this city he tried his " 'prentice hand" at literature by the publication of three little works - "A Guide to Worcester," " Christmas and the New Year," and "The Worcestershire Miscellany." It was in 1834 that he was associated with Sir Charles Hastings in the establishment of the Worcestershire Natural History Society, and he was the honorary curator to the society for the first three years of its existence. His first lecture before the society was published in 1831, under the title of "The Affinities of Plants with Man and Animals, their Analogies and Associations." At and after this time Mr. Lees wrote numerous papers in "The Naturalist" and "Phytologist," both monthly publications; and he also contributed to "Loudon's Magazine of Natural History " and the "Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh." In 1841 he wrote "The Botanical Looker Out," a volume which was the result of numerous excursions and observations, and the second edition of which was published in 1851. In 1843 the "Botany of the Malvern Hills" came out, of which a third edition was published this year (1869). The latest product of his pen is a work well known to all members of field clubs, "Pictures of Nature around

the Malvern Hills." In 1848 the Worcestershire Naturalists' Field Club was established, through the exertions of Mr. W. Mathews, Professor Buckman, and Mr. Lees; and, after holding the office of president for several years, Mr. Lees retired on the nomination of Canon Cradock, and was appointed permanent vice-president. With respect to his connection with the Malvern Field Club, he joined us on our first organisation in 1853, and in 1859 was elected vice-president on the decease of the Rev. F. Dyson. I need not say that he has ever proved himself true to his calling, and himself, a veteran naturalist, ever ready to assist our studies in the field by his field lectures, or our literary contributions by his pen. And now, ladies and gentlemen, having brought before your notice a brief resume of the amount of work done by our friend in the way of natural history literature for Worcester and Worcestershire, let us wish him health and strength, and brain to enjoy those works of nature he has so loved to treat of "unto a green old age." (Applause.) He has lived long enough to have witnessed the great changes in natural science since as a boy he first gathered wild flowers on the Wrekin, or he penned his first paper to the "Phytologist." I well remember Sir Charles Hastings giving me a description of an excursion he made, in company with Dr. Buckland and Mr. Lees, over the geology of the Malverns and Abberley Hills; but how has the study of geology progressed since then? Truths that were then everywhere derided and denounced are now accepted by every student of the science, and are surely taking root among all educated men from the one end of Christendom to the other. The great Linnaean system of botany has been superseded by the "Natural System," and the very face of botanical science may be said to have changed since the days of our friend's youth. He has lived to see the masters of his favourite study become the great advocates for the law of development, and genera and species can no longer form for him the firm basis they constituted in the days of his youth. Yet notwithstanding these great changes I am satisfied that he is able to look back from the present to the past confident and confiding - that He who constituted the great law of progress intended that we, His intellectual creatures, should pursue, however humbly, in its wake. (Loud applause.)

The portrait, which was surrounded with evergreens, was here unveiled amid the cheers and universal expressions of approval of the audience. The portrait is from the work of Solomon Cole, Esq., and represents Mr. Lees in morning costume partly enveloped in a dark blue plaid toga, which well contrasts with the carefully painted head, while the pose of the figure is easy, one hand being visible emerging from the toga. In the button-hole of the coat the artist has placed a flowering branch of the *Rubus Leesii*, so named by Professor Babington, of Cambridge, a now British species of bramble first discovered by Mr. Lees in Devonshire. At the bottom of the portrait is a metallic plate, with this inscription : -

"This portrait was presented to Edwin Lees, Esq., F.L.S., F.G.S., senior Vice-President, by the members of the Worcestershire and Malvern Naturalists' Clubs, and other friends, as a token of esteem and recognition of his long and faithful services in the office of Vice-President to the Clubs, Nov. 23, 1869."

Mr. E. Lees, who on rising was loudly applauded, said : It would certainly save me some effort, and abridge the proceedings of this evening, if I could justifiably suffer my feelings to overwhelm me, and silently bow my thanks to indulgent friends; but if, after more than half a century devoted to observation and research, I was unable to utter the sentiments impressed upon my mind by the mark of respect that you have shown me, I should feel myself entirely unworthy of your generous consideration. But though a slight feeling of self-esteem prevents my saying that I have done nothing worthy of your regard, yet I am oppressed with the thought that I have not come up to my own *beau ideal* of the good service that should merit your high commendation, though ever desirous to shape my efforts *con amore*. (Hear, hear.) There is another thing that I wish my compeers to understand, and that is, that I have no desire to arrogate any superior merit to myself, and that if partial and warm-hearted friends have now selected me as a recipient of their favour, I am quite sensible that there are gentlemen present more deserving of a public acknowledgement than myself (No !) and who I trust will in turn have their merits duly appreciated by a discerning public. But in this world circumstance and providential arrangement determine everything; the favourable

tide that sets in, whether from friends or "the Providence that makes our ends rough hew them as we may," is not to be lightly disregarded, and what Shakspeare calls "the spoils of opportunity" must be taken when they arise before us. What can occur but once in a man's life, surely the most cynical need not murmur at, and time if not infirmity whispers to me, that if any presentation was to come to my share, there was but a narrow margin of life left within it might be made. I therefore cordially thank those warm-hearted friends who thought the good time was come to cheer my lagging spirits, and who preferred to offer a life-like portrait to a living man rather than place a heavy comfortless stone over his unconscious remains, for rain and frost to deface. (Hear, hear.) Assuredly it is more pleasant to see smiling faces around me on an occasion like this, and to appreciate your good opinion as a living man, than that a sepulchral stone should only echo on the cold ear of death - "Alas, poor Yorick." My friends, then, have pressed around me with a kindly greeting, just, as it may be said, in the nick of time, when with powers necessarily weakened by the lapse of time, I have still some remaining energy of mind, and legs, that if they cannot do the pace they once did, are not yet quite disabled, and I can yet take the field and observe Nature in her wild haunts, if not with quite the enraptured ardour of a first love. The "wonted fires" that fed early enthusiasm yet remain, and "Othello's occupation" is not yet quite gone. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) On the present occasion (though I desire not to be tedious), I feel that that it would be apposite to touch upon two topics - 1st, my own propulsion and devotion to Natural History and the beauties of Nature; and, secondly, to the formation of the Worcestershire Naturalists' Club, and the various fields I have trodden with its members, and the observations that we have made together in the course of nearly a quarter of a century. When as a school-boy I first gazed upon the blue range of the Malvern Hills, and wondered what lay beyond their long mysterious line; and when, with the romance of a youngster, I stole a truant's day to climb the mossy banks and explore the trenches of those inspiring hills, I little thought that I should ever describe and catalogue their plants, or examine their rocks and adjoining Silurian strata with a grave scientific eye in rambles with my compeers of the Malvern Naturalists' Club. The early days of delicious excitement and novelty passed away, and later vexations, trials, and disappointments on the troubled sea of life's contentions, without a paternal guide, but endeared me the more to those sequestered glens and sylvan coverts where all is peace and repose, and where, as the Tyrolese say of their snow-invested summits, "in the snow is no sin." True delight and enjoyment there nestles in purity, amidst

"Awful scenes that calm the troubled breast,
And woo the weary to serene repose;
Can passion's wildest outbreaks hush to rest,
And whisper comfort to the man of woes."

(Applause.) Nature does offer a soothing panacea to the troubled mind, when sorrows and mortifications pour their arrows upon the inexperienced straggler in life, as the black tempest driving along the sky surrounds some mountain summit, rising high in air, tinted darkly blue in the shadow of overwhelming clouds. On rushes the storm with tumultuous fury, and the involved peak seems totally blotted out. But after a space the black clouds have swept on, the mountain re-appears smiling in the sun-beams, and tipt with a coronal of snow left on its head, glitters in storm-clad beauty brighter than before. So the perturbed spirit of the undisciplined man that studies nature is renovated with fresh strength and vigour to contend with the troubles of every-day life. (Applause.) It is only the observer of nature that knows the pleasure of investigating her stores, and finding out the name of plant, insect, bird, or quadruped that has come under notice, or been collected in an excursion. In my younger days it was difficult to obtain instruction in any department of Natural History, for illustrative works were rare or inaccessible, and there existed no popular teachers as at present. And yet now a taste for this kind of knowledge may be developed without teachers, and the future man pourtrayed in the whims of the boy. I remember a school fellow who used to fill his desk with stones of various kinds collected in his walks, and his pockets broke down with the weight of the pebbles he gathered, that left a simulated "Northern drift" behind him as he walked, though then unable to distinguish a mineral, or know a granitic pebble from a sandstone one; and while I myself collected leaves and flowers as pretty objects, none could tell me how to

name them. But when at last knowledge was attainable, it was like the discovery of a treasure that required years to count. With that knowledge, dating from the first determined plant and insect, came a flood of enthusiasm leading to unnumbered rambles and explorations productive of pleasures not to be forgotten while life remains. (Hear, hear.) Yet I must admit that, if nature does dispense unexhausted treasures for her votaries, they are not the valued stores of £. s. d. that stimulate the merchant, the trader, or the technical professional man to constant effort. Those whose primary aim is the wealth that commerce only acknowledges, will not find it in the wild domain of nature, and the lover of observation, if hemmed in by the necessities of exertion for the support of a household, can only snatch the enjoyment he loves at widely-recurring intervals, like an occasional opening of blue sky among the clouds of a stormy day; or if too determined on his favourite pursuit to abandon sordid profits for ethereal delights, he is left behind in the struggle for riches, prizeless as the boy and the butterfly depicted by the poet –

“As rising upon purple wing,
The insect queen of eastern spring,
O'er emerald meadows of Cashmere
Invites the young pursuer near,
And leads him on from flower to flower,
A weary chase, a wasted hour;
Then leaves him as she soars on high
With panting heart and tearful eye;
So Nature tempts the full-grown child.
With hue as bright and wing as wild.”

– (Loud applause). Nature, then, should be loved for her own sake. But if the observer records his views and discoveries anxious to advance the cause of science, such are the difficulties in his way, the expenses of publication, and the comparatively few purchasers of books not devoted to sensation or excitement, that it is as much as can be expected if a book on natural history or technical science pays the expenses of its getting out, and it often does not do that. Thus scientific men have found it necessary to organise societies, such as the Linnaean, the Geological, and others, who publish the papers of their members at the expense of the general fund, and this is imitated in the transactions of provincial clubs. This brings me to the formation of the Worcestershire Field Club, nearly a quarter of a century ago. It was in the summer of 1847 that my old friend Professor Buckman (whom I am most happy to see here to-night), with myself, then on a visit to him in Birmingham, responded to an invitation from my esteemed colleague, Mr. William Mathews (whom I also gladly greet here this evening), to join him at Park Hall, near Kidderminster, where his father then resided; and there we – I will not say in the name of the people of England, but assuredly in the interests of the naturalists of Worcestershire – formed our infant field club, and commenced operations with only four members, one of whom was elected president and another secretary. Thus we had two officers and two privates to form our first corps of observation. The growth of the club from that little band has been mainly due to the energetic efforts of my talented friend Mr. ¹Mathews, who was, however, obliged, by the grave obligations of professional work, to which matrimony was superadded, to resign the post of honorary secretary that he had so long adorned. Dr. Griffiths, who now holds the portfolio of secretaryship, can tell you that now above 130 members are upon our books, though at times death and removals have thinned our ranks. That we have done some work in the field, the volume published on the "Botany of Worcestershire," as well as the records of more than a hundred excursions that the local newspapers have from time to time detailed, will abundantly show. (Applause). These notices of our excursions in every part of the county and its confines would alone fill a large volume if collected together; and here, perhaps, you will excuse my egotism if I claim the slender merit of having written almost all these reports of our excursions, which possibly may have interested some readers in our "imminent scapes" by flood and field – and I know these accounts have been looked and read with pleasure in Australia – though our thanks are due to the editors of those papers who thought the notices of our

¹ The spelling of William Mathew's name seems to be inconsistent throughout this document; it is often rendered as Matthews.

explorations worthy of being placed prominently before the world. (Hear, hear). But let me also do justice to our brethren of the Malvern Field Club, who, if entering the path of exploration a little later than ourselves, with an energy I must admit more intense than our own, as regards geology especially, have, hammer in hand, broken into the rocks of the hills, and the Silurian strata, and forced them to reveal secrets previously hidden from view. It would be difficult to find at the head of any field club so energetic a president as my esteemed friend, Mr. Symonds, whose name is familiar to all geologists, and who, in his determined steps among "old stones," "old bones," and "Stones of the Valley" the quaint titles of his vividly descriptive volumes, marches on undaunted amidst the ice floes of the "Glacial Epoch," till lost to our view in the misty sublimities of "countless ages." Research and active field work has thus, under his direction, been ably carried on. (Hear, hear.) I know that it is sometimes said by the exoteric mass of mankind, insensible to scientific thought and high aspirations, that our members may be a set of very fine fellows, but who really only turn out for holiday recreation and the enjoyment of feasting *al fresco*, or otherwise as they may be pressed by hospitable engagements. (Laughter). I don't deny that naturalists understand physical enjoyment as well as other people, and that out-of-door effort does often promote that internal sensation called hunger, which, if we do not naturally feel, we must see the doctor to advise about, that he may amend if he can this loss of appetite. If our subscription and consequential ramble gives change of air, which the physician is sure to advise if decoctions and mixtures shaken and taken fail of their intended effect, and saves the medical fee, why should the world grumble; and if, when tired by scientific effort, we do refresh, we say with Shakspeare, as supplementary to the usual grace, "May good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both." (Applause). But if with some physical enjoyment is paramount in exploring the fields of nature, there is besides a mental bliss superadded in getting for a moment beyond the confines of a sordid world, and forgetting the petty cares, contentions, jealousies, envies, misrepresentations, scandal, and bickerings of every-day life, with only the fields, woods, and hills then to commune with, fresh inspiring air to imbibe, and light and life to contemplate under the glorious canopy of God's blue sky : -

"Then only to feel that we breathe, that we live,
Is worth all the joys that earth elsewhere can give."

- (Applause). But this is not all: observation and science step in, and one great advantage is obtained, that individual researches are assisted by friends in council, whose opinion is taken on dubious points, and in case of any discovery which might be doubted, the eyes of many witnesses establish the fact, while each member is prompted by emulation to look out with diligence that he, at least, may find something worthy of record. We often hear of the "whoo-whoop" of the fox-hunter; and in times past away, but to which memory fondly recurs, not seldom have I heard that joyous shout of botanical friends - from Thompson, Baxter, or Matthews- when something rare has come before their raptured view. There is yet another pleasing trait of club life which is mentioned by Mr. Brady in his paper "On the Uses of Field Clubs," in the transactions of the Tyne-side Naturalist Club-

"Though the pursuit of natural history is avowedly the chief end and object of the field meetings, they certainly answer another and scarcely less important purpose very admirably. They offer a means of friendly intercourse between those who have the same pursuits, and who probably under other circumstances might never shake hands together from one year's end to another."

- My own experience well bears this out, for at various times, when rambling about the country, brother naturalists have recognised me, and pleasantly renewed that intercourse that had been commenced in field excursions with the Malvern, Worcestershire, and Woolhope Clubs. This very summer a gentleman claimed acquaintance with me as one of my audience, when I once lectured on the summit of the Worcestershire Beacon, at Malvern, when there was a great meeting of many clubs; and another Woolhopeian clubman, with a bevy of ladies in his charge, came upon me amid the ruins of Conway Castle, and introducing me as able to descant on flowers literally and symbolically, a most pleasant conference ensued. These are

inspiring incidents that keep up the interest of research; and now completing the fairy ring of my excursive observations, impulsively thrown out, I cannot but mark my own vivid sensations and the undying love of nature still possessing me, and which I cannot entirely give up while Divine Providence still permits my residence and movements in this sublunary scene, with these lines of Wordsworth, that must be my apology for a life too much, perhaps, devoted to observation, and too little generally useful to the world. (Loud cries of " No, no.")-

"Therefore am I still

A lover of the meadows and the woods
And mountains, and of all that we behold
On this green earth, well pleas'd in Nature
And the language of the sense to view
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my soul, and source
Of all my moral being."

(Cheers.) Again permit me from my heart to thank you all- members of the clubs, subscribers to the portrait fund, and friends here assembled- for the mark of kindness and esteem you have bestowed upon me, and I have been touched exceedingly in receiving the remembrance of friends who had long been removed from my immediate view, but who have shown that sunny memory was yet awake, and that time and distance had not produced the ice of alienation. My benison upon them, and may God bless all of you. (Applause.) The portrait itself seems to smile its approval of your kindness, and artistically painted as it is by a skilful pencil, may it, if only for the talented artist's sake, exist for the curious gaze of your descendants, when perchance in the mutations of time it may get into some collection to be criticised only as the "portrait of a gentleman unknown," when the original shall be laid in the silent dust to which we are all destined, and when the works left behind us can alone testify that we once lived on earth, and tried to influence or instruct our compeers and compatriots with those talents, however humble, that the Divine Being had bestowed upon us to be usefully employed. (Mr. Lees resumed his seat amid loud and long-continued applause.)

The PRESIDENT of the club (R. S. Bartleet, Esq.) said it was his duty to have been there before the commencement of the proceedings; but, in proceeding to the house to which he had been invited, he was unfortunate enough to engage a coachman who did not know the suburban districts of the faithful city, and this had delayed him. He fortunately arrived in time to hear the greater part of the interesting speech made by his worthy friend, Mr. Lees He congratulated their veteran friend on the assemblage of so many subscribers, graced in addition by the presence of ladies. It must be a source of great gratification to him to be surrounded by his friends and neighbours as well as by his old comrades in the field. He (Mr. Bartleet) thanked Mr. Lees for the service he had done him personally in inducing him to run away from the cares and troubles of this life into the fields and study the objects of nature- so far superior to those of art; and he believed the same feeling existed in the minds of a great number of those who were members of the club. (Applause.) Mr. Lees was always so zealous so determined, and held out so many objects which should induce them to accompany him in his researches that it always afforded them great pleasure to avail themselves of the opportunity. (Applause,) He hoped Mr Lees would not be content with the honours he had already received, but would only look on them as a stimulus to induce him to continue his exertions in so good a cause. (Cheers.)

After an interval, during which the company partook of refreshments laid out at the upper end of the room,

The CHAIRMAN announced that a letter had been received from the Rev. M. Day, who much regretted that unavoidable engagements prevented his attendance. It would have given him much pleasure to be present.

Mr. W. MATTHEWS, M.A., F.G.S., vice-president, said it was a matter of no small gratification to him to join the many friends and admirers of Mr. Lees in presenting to him that handsome service of plate and that admirable portrait, in token of their appreciation of his distinguished merits as a natural historian,

and of the signal services he had rendered to this county in connection with the study of natural history. When Mr. Lees commenced this study the difficulties which beset it were such as many younger members of the club were perfectly unable to appreciate. It was about 22 years ago since Mr. Lees, Mr. Buckman, and himself first met together and organised the Worcestershire Naturalists' Club, and at that time there were only two or three such clubs in existence. Their numbers at first were of course extremely small, but since that time they had been gradually increasing, until they had reached the very large number of 130. The formation of their club was followed in due course by the foundation of clubs in almost every county in Great Britain; so that there was no county in which there was not a band of zealous naturalists diligently engaged in developing the natural history of this kingdom. He was himself under no small obligation to Mr. Lees. Whatever knowledge of natural history he possessed was due in no small degree to the very valuable assistance and instruction which he had received from Mr. Lees at the numerous meetings of the club, and there were very few members indeed who were not under the same obligation to him. (Applause.) The club must not forget that an increase of numbers did not always mean an increase of efficiency. The society was organised for the purpose of studying the natural history of the county, and to that work they must stick as closely as they could. Mr. Matthews next directed his attention to the Darwinian theory, and said that, whatever they might think of the truth of the theory Mr. Darwin had propounded, on one point there was no doubt – that gentlemen taking up this theory, for or against, had suddenly acquired entirely new eyes in looking into the facts of natural history. There were many genera of British plants which had a very large number of so-called species, and it was almost impossible to draw the dividing lines. Mr. Lees had obtained great reputation in connection with the bramble genus. He supposed he would be correct in putting the number of species at between 50 and 60. Some botanists belonging to the modern French school had carried the division of brambles to an extent which would make even Mr. Lees's hair stand on end. In one district one gentleman found between 200 and 300 species, and in a second district another gentleman found 200. No doubt if either of those gentlemen came over and met Mr. Lees, and they went out botanising together, Mr. Lees's species would be enormously increased. He advised every English botanist to add to his investigation of British plants very considerable researches into the plants of Europe. Mr. Mathews alluded to the discoveries on the continent of species of columbines and pinks, and said that anyone who brought home collections of all the specimens he could find it would be almost impossible to ascertain the dividing lines. He did not think field clubs could do better work than to bring their powers of observation and research to bear on this question. It would be a very great satisfaction to every member of their clubs and to every person who esteemed their friend Mr. Lees, and appreciated his great services in the cause of education in natural science, to feel that those features which they had known so long and loved so well would be preserved by the noble portrait on the walls of that room. (Cheers.)

Professor Buckman, F.G.S., F.L.S., said he would give them a short lesson as to the manner in which club members worked when at home. A great deal more was found out in the closet than in the field. The lecturer then proceeded to narrate the result of some experiments in regard to flax and clover dodder. Twelve years ago he observed on a farm on which flax was cultivated a large quantity of dodder – a parasitic plant, with long fibrous parts spreading from one flax plant to another, without touching the ground, and deriving its nourishment from the flax plant around which it was twisted. Two or three years ago he sowed some flax and dodder seed in a pan in a hothouse. In a very short time the dodder commenced to send out a little radicle downwards; this was the root of the dodder seed. The flax seed also began to germinate. When the dodder stem came above the ground it looked for the nearest plant of the flax around which it twisted itself, and as the flax plant grew it lifted the dodder out of the ground. The lower part of the dodder died away; and the dodder entirely derived its nourishment from the flax plant, and around which it had twisted itself, and without touching the ground it spread from plant to plant in every direction. By and bye the flowers came out, and these flowers produced the seed. There was scarcely a sample of foreign flax seed but what contained more or less of the seed of the dodder. The professor also pointed out the result of his experiments with clover dodder, and then said he had found that if the dodder could not find flax or clover plants it would take to other plants rather than die. In one case the dodder took possession of some chickweed,

and in another case of a tomato plant. With regard to the subject of species, it was possible that many so-called species they met with, not only in England but on the continent and in America, were more or less variations and not true species – influenced as to form and colour and size, and various other little points, more or less by the plants upon which they took up their residence. He had addressed them with the view of showing how they might experiment at home. There was room for further experiment, and if at any time he should make any further experiments on this matter he should have pleasure in explaining them in the same manner he had done that evening. (Applause.)

The Rev. J. H. THOMPSON introduced to the company a plant new to Great Britain, the *Rapistrum rugosum*, and presented the specimen to the institution. Referring to his observant friend Mr. Lees, he said that when he was studying botany at Oxford he found that the man for him to become acquainted with when he came to Worcestershire was a man of the name of Edwin Lees. He believed Mr. Lees had done more for the study of natural history in this county than any man living. Having remarked that Mr. Lees had done what Mr. Mathews advised them all to do, compared the British flora with the floras of various countries of Europe, and alluded to the great facilities afforded to travellers now-a-days, Mr. Thompson evoked considerable merriment by enumerating in rapid succession the countries, towns, mountains, seas, rivers, &c, he had seen in company with Mr. Lees, and in very humorous terms described their visit to Zermatt, in Switzerland, and their ascent of the pass of San Theodule. When they had got a few thousand feet high he and the guide began to think of their dinner; but Mr. Lees (whose turn it was to be "master" that day) was determined to proceed. They got to a height of above 11,000 feet, slept on the mountain top, agreed next morning to go down the wrong side of the mountain, and so extended their travels that they did not get back to their dinner at Zermatt for five or six days. In conclusion Mr. Thompson expressed a hope that Mr. Lees might long be given health and strength to enjoy his excursions, to compare bramble with bramble, and to record from year to year the result of his interesting observations. (Applause.)

Dr. GRIFFITHS delivered an excellent address, in the course of which he observed it was his pleasing duty and proud privilege on this occasion to welcome the assembly in the name of the president; and he regarded their presence not only as a token of esteem for the veteran vice-president, the guest of the evening, but likewise as evincing an interest in the welfare of such meetings and a pledge of their success. He ventured to lay before them some thoughts on the character and claims of that excellent institution, the Worcestershire Naturalist's Field Club. The materials and inducements towards the natural education embraced by the "teaching of common things" were noticed as derived from the scenes of our earliest and most agreeable associations, and were such as to challenge our inquiry and excite minute observation. This kingdom of research was entered by members of the different field clubs with the ordinary appliances of collectors, certain tools of the smithy, good eyes, and good temper, while it supplied a happy medium of social intercourse, and promoted the diffusion of intelligence by comparison of opinion. But the beauty of every line of nature was loved rather for the idea it gives us of something within and beyond itself than for its own sake merely :

"A man that looks at glass
May on it stay his eye,
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass
And so the heavens espy."

Another merit of these field meetings was that they took a man out of his own personality – his little world of self – and doubled, nay, quadrupled his natural powers of insight by forcing him to look at nature through the eyes of others, each of whom is for the time being another self, a fresh object of more serious study than is bestowed on men at large –

"Knowing that nature never did betray
The heart that loved her, 'tis her privilege
Through all the years of this our life to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform

The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life.
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings."

Art was then dwelt on at some length, as the implement and complement of science, idealising its laws and concentrating their glory. Speaking of classical education, the dead languages were to be regarded most useful as precious avenues of ancient thought, but could not be regarded as the sole or chief instruments of modern culture. We cannot live on the Spartan diet of Greek roots, aeolic digammas, "stony-hearted verbs," or be for ever digesting minute classic particles, no more than the soul can feed on formulas or theorems of Algebra, on leaves of plants or electrical currents. Independently of the humility of mind which is fostered by every step that the learner takes in contrasting his insignificance with the vastness of creation, the habit at the same time acquired of classifying a number of ideas, and careful induction, must be conducive to good mental training. The system of education which can leave the mental condition of the public body in the state we find it, touching table-turning, and flying through the air, so that one is found, like the witch of Endor, raising spirits, and Davenport teaching them to play the fiddle, must have been wanting in some main principle, and calls aloud for the cultivation in the rising members of society for a scientific habit of mind. In this age of intense mental activity, when we are making colts do the work of horses, the price we pay for our high pressure civilisation is an augmented ratio of cerebral disease. In many of our educational institutions the "great hothouse, with forcing apparatus, is always at work, for mental green peas to be produced at Christmas, and intellectual asparagus all the year round"—and which, by impairing the elasticity of the mind and its organic nutrition at a time when it is most required, was sufficient to cause that sad disaster related by Charles Dickens of the young gentleman, who by the time he had got his whiskers lost his brains. Peculiar pursuits exercise a particular effect upon men's character, and a powerful bias is produced by professional habits or exclusive contemplation of any study, affording another illustration of that *esprit de metier*, which led the honest carrier in the threatened city to recommend a "fortification of leather." How instinctively do we cry out in passing through the streets, "This man is a newspaper editor : that a publican." Yet it is not altogether the green plaid waistcoat and unbarbered face that certify us as to the one, nor the red nose and portly paunch that make us pronounce upon the other. The vest and beard of the former might pertain to a Jew clothes man or a landscape painter, and the proboscis and elaborate abdomen of the latter would be no less proper to an alderman, but the habits of the man, the bent of his mind, stamp the character of the individual. Thus, nothing can be more natural than that undertakers should be the "jolliest dogs" in life, since events which wet the cheeks and break the hearts of others are sources of the most comfortable of all comforts — pecuniary comforts to themselves. Thus the "coelum" afforded by the excursions of the Worcestershire Field Club allows us to change the "animus" too, and the whole spiritual being a season of relief, while we feel with the poet Young -

"The more our spirits are enlarged on earth.
The deeper draught they shall receive of Heaven."

In conclusion, the excellence of such institutions as the Worcestershire Naturalists' Club and Kindred Societies will be felt when things which

"Play around the head, but, come not near the heart,"

have lost their charm, and will be embalmed by that memory which marks with light the interviews we enjoy amid life's vicissitudes with those souls who make our souls wiser.

Mr. E. LEES said they would all feel their excellent president was entitled to their thanks for the able manner in which he had conducted the proceedings of that day. Their thanks were also due to him for his government of the club during the last two years. Although he was a little late that evening, during the earlier part of the day he weighty duties to perform, and he had come a considerable distance to do what he could for the club. Mr. Bartleet was one of the best presidents they ever had. (Applause.) He made it a point of duty, as a president ought to do, to appear constantly in the field, and had assisted them in the best possible way in promoting their researches. Mr Lees alluded to Mr. Walker Rennick as the originator of the testimonial, then acknowledged the interest Mr. Bartleet had taken in the matter, and the kindness he had invariably shown to every member of the club, and concluded by saying that their president was worthy of all the praise they could bestow upon him. (Cheers.)

Mr WALKER RENNICK seconded the vote of thanks, and expressed his concurrence in all that had been so well said by Mr. Lees.

The PRESIDENT in acknowledging the compliment said he had been assisted in every way by all the members of the club. He esteemed very highly the honour they conferred by electing him to the post, and he only wished he had had the ability to have rendered greater service to the club. There were few presidents, he thought, who could congratulate themselves upon terminating their period of office in so agreeable a manner as he had been able to do. It was not only a great gratification but a great honour to him to have assisted in any way in the respect shown to Mr. Lees.

Dr. GRIFFITHS said he thought it due to the kindness of the Dean and Chapter, who had given them facilities for examining the noble Cathedral, that they should accord to that body their heart-felt thanks, coupled with an expression of their gratitude to Mr. Baxter, the librarian. (Applause.)

Mr. HAYWOOD seconded the vote of thanks, and said their gratitude was especially due to Mr. Baxter, to whom they were indebted for his great assistance on this and on many other occasions.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that their best thanks be given to Dr. Griffiths and Mr. Haywood, who had under- taken a very active part in arranging the proceedings.

Mr. JEFFRY seconded the motion.

The proceedings terminated with the distribution of photographic facsimiles of Mr. Lees's portrait to the subscribers.
