

A DAY WITH REV. BARING-GOULD AUTHOR WHO WROTE STANDING

By Dent Dormer

While practising in Plymouth I was honoured by a friendly visit of Rev. Baring-Gould, which resulted in an invitation to spend a day with him at Lew Trenchard.

When I arrived we strolled through the grounds and discussed bird life and the bird sanctuary he was cultivating in the deep gulf fronting his house. This led to a continuation of the same theme at lunch, in which Mrs. Gould and her charming daughter joined.

We then viewed the curios, and experienced a lively time killing moths that had invaded a valuable piece of ancient tapestry, which caused him much concern, until I dispersed the clouds by assuring him that a weak solution of perchloride of mercury in water would settle the matter at once and for ever.

When entering the church which adjoins the mansion he pointed out the sculptured arms over the granite doorway, and referred to his relationship to those gone before. His work-bench was a well-used lengthy table with high legs, placed against the wall, before, and on which, he did all his literary work - standing.

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I asked him if he ever had trouble with publishers in disposing of his work. "Well, of course," said he, "one can't please everybody," and he mentioned a well-known firm who had always returned his script, until he had well made his name, "but, he said, "when I find my work does not please their readers I never patch or alter it, but start again with fresh inspiration and new construction."

When we drew near the ingle-nook we smoked and discussed the good and bad points of the "Indian weed," ecclesiastical carving, and such like, and I noticed when I narrated an exciting incident that he caught my enthusiasm, and his naturally solemn countenance lit up with a fervid glow that made him appear ten years younger.

In my wanderings, whether on Dartmoor or in the vicinity of the Cornish moors, I found Baring-Gould's name and personality remembered and cherished by many cottagers who were proud to think of him as "a gatherer of old songs and a repairer of mystery circles and such like objects. just for the love of old time-worn objects," and at such times heard several anecdotes relative to his activities.