

Second Day's Proceedings.

Leaving Yeovil at 9.30 a.m., the members, conveyed in carriages and motor-cars, started for the day's excursion, (passing close to Larkhill Quarry, where Mr. E. C. Gardner recently found evidence of the Roman road which branches

off from the Fosse Way at Ilchester, in a S.E. direction to Dorchester,¹) the first stop being made at

Preston Plucknett.

The party were met at the Abbey Farm by Mr. T. Hawkins, the occupier. In a description of the building the PRESIDENT said that it was known as Preston Abbey under the mistaken idea that it had been a possession of Bermondsey Abbey, but this part of the village was always in lay hands, and was at one time owned by the family of Plucknett. After they died out at the end of the reign of Edward II, the family of Stourton succeeded, and, to borrow Gerard's description, "Preston gave habitation unto John Stourton, who being owner of it, built that ancient and in those times faire house, which still remains."² His will, made 10th Nov., 1438,³ contains very particular directions as to his burial. His body was to be taken to Stavordale Priory in his best waggon drawn by his best team of oxen, which were to remain as a bequest to the Priory. From this document they could get a good idea of the large number of outbuildings required when nearly everything had to be made at home.

The house as they saw it now had been lengthened by an addition beyond the chimney which marked the limit of the old house. The original entrance was through the projecting porch, on the right side of which was the great hall. It was a curious fact that in these old manor houses the hall was so often found converted into a cider cellar. Barrington was another instance. Of course they were inconveniently large for dwelling-rooms, and the occupiers used to repair to smaller chambers for comfort, and so the hall was turned into a cider-cellar, or even baser use. It was highly probable that beyond the hall there were originally more rooms, as in the wall were

1. *Som. & Dor. N. & Q.*, XI, art. 197.

2. Gerard's Survey, *Som. Rec. Soc.*, XV, 108.

3. *Som. Mediæval Wills*, *Som. Rec. Soc.*, XVI, 143.

traces of doorways now walled up. The fire-place in the hall was hidden behind barrels, but Mr. Hawkins said it was there.

A drawing made by Mr. T. Buckler in 1811, given in the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, Nov. 1841, shows a chimney at the apex of the south gable. This may have been removed at the same time when the roof of the hall was lowered about six feet, cutting off and destroying the upper portion of the oriel window. Mr. Hawkins stated that this was done in his grandfather's time, because the walls were unequal to the strain, and that the old people used to say that their parents could remember that there were buildings below the hall of equal extent to those remaining between the porch and the barn.

By the kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins the party were allowed to pass through the house, noticing in one of the rooms the old chimney-place, so large that a small closet had been fitted into it.

In the barn the President said that the building was remarkable for its size, rivalling those at Bradford-on-Avon and New Place, Tisbury; and for the excellent preservation of walls and roof. It is no doubt contemporary with the house. The long narrow windows on the south side differed from those in the opposite wall by having a lateral opening half way up, a feature more commonly found in military architecture. The roof was singularly free from cobwebs, perhaps due to the wood being Spanish chestnut.¹

Ham Hill Camp and Quarries.

The members then proceeded *viâ* Odcombe to Bedmore (or Batemore) Barn, where they left the conveyances and traversed the hill on foot for the purpose of inspecting the great entrenchments and the quarries.

When in the vicinity of the Roman villa on the east side of the Hill, Mr. R. HENSLEIGH WALTER, M.B., addressed the

1. For a further account of Preston, with illustration, see "Historical Notes on South Somerset," pp. 88-104.

members and said it was hoped that Professor Boyd Dawkins, and Mr. A. H. Allcroft, the author of "Earthwork of England," would have been with them that day to assist in the description of Ham Hill, but unfortunately other engagements had prevented them. As a young member of the Society he deemed it a great privilege to address them, and for what he lacked in archæological knowledge he craved their indulgence, but he trusted that his shortcomings in this direction might be somewhat atoned for by the keen interest he took in that absorbing camp with its apparently inexhaustible store of treasures. Typical relics had been found from time to time of the later Stone, Bronze and early Iron Ages, and the Romano-British Period, yielding Imperial Roman coins from Marcus Agrippa to Arcadius, covering the whole period of the Roman occupation. His interest in the Hill was probably hereditary, as not only his father, who gave his collection to their museum, and his grandfather, Richard Walter, who had the privilege of acting as the Society's guide on Ham Hill nearly sixty years ago, but Henry Norris, his mother's father, and her brother, Hugh Norris, who also gave his collection to their museum—and had recently been elected a Vice-President of the Society—had all been eager collectors of relics from Ham Hill for nearly a hundred years, the first recorded find of relics being in 1816. On the geology of the Hill they would presently hear an able exponent in the person of Mr. Winwood, whilst Mr. St. George Gray had consented to explain the ethnological significance of the relics found.

Though many flint implements had been found there, it was doubtful whether the entrenchments were earlier than the Bronze Age. The earthworks were three miles in length, and enclosed over 200 acres. The trenches were as a rule double, and at the more exposed points, treble, and it is difficult to believe that such stupendous ramparts could have been thrown up without the use of metal implements.

The place-name *Hamdon* was also referable to the Bronze

Age, being in every probability, as suggested by Dr. Norris, a corruption of *Afon-dun*, the Goidelic name—"the fortress by the water"—as doubtless in early times Ham Hill stood out as a promontory overlooking the inland sea extending from the Bristol Channel.

Where they now stood was the eastern entrance to the Camp, and there were traces of an ancient trackway extending downhill towards Ilchester, which could be traced from Bedmore Barn through Montacute. It was probably the trackway leading to the ford across the Ivel. In the orchard close by, three crocks, containing about 800 coins, were discovered nearly thirty years ago. One of the pots and a number of the coins were now in Taunton Museum.

The recollection of that find attracted his attention to this part of the Hill, and in 1906 he obtained permission to do a little digging. A few minor relics were found there, but at a spot near the gate he came upon what was probably a Roman rubbish pit, containing a large number of fragments of Romano-British pottery, and pieces of roofing-tiles and flue-tiles. This convinced him that a large dwelling must have been close at hand, and in the following year he explored the adjoining field which was then under the plough. Innumerable fragments of roofing-tiles lay on the surface, and probing where they appeared most thickly, he came upon definite foundations, which were uncovered to the extent of 160ft. x 40ft., disclosing the existence of a large villa containing twelve rooms as far as could be ascertained (*Proc.*, LIII, i, 87; ii, 179). The exigencies of cultivation only permitted of the foundations being uncovered, but in the course of the work a few interesting relics came to light; no opportunity, however, was afforded to excavate the rooms of the villa. In one small room the concrete flooring was still in good preservation, but the tessellated pavement had been previously torn up, and the tesserae—enough to fill two wheelbarrows—lay scattered over the surface of the concrete. It had been hoped to have the foun-

dations uncovered for that meeting, but unfortunately terms could not be arranged with the tenant, and the project had to be abandoned.

In reply to the President as to British burials near that spot, Mr. WALTER said that he knew of two. The only one he saw in position had the bones in the contracted position, and with it a hammer-stone was found. Some years ago, Sir R. Colt Hoare said he believed there was a Roman *oppidum* on the other side of the road, but no foundations were now traceable. Mr. Walter believed it was on the northern side of the road, and he thought it was more than probable that other buildings existed there. Foundations were noted at some distance from the villa recently discovered.

The members having crossed over the Hill to the north-west side, the Rev. H. H. WINWOOD, F.G.S., said that in the absence of Prof. Boyd Dawkins, which was much to be regretted, he had been asked to say a few words on the geology of the Hill. They were standing at the edge of the quarry which shows the finest section on the Hill. The last time the Society visited it, in 1887, this quarry, now worked by a company, was then in the hands of Mr. C. Trask, who was present and gave an account of the methods of raising the stone. One need hardly remind Somerset folk that the quarries on these hills have been for many centuries celebrated for the excellent quality of their stone. Whether there is any evidence of their having been worked in Roman times he was not prepared to state. We know that churches as far back as the eleventh century were built of this material. That they were known to Leland is certain, as he mentions them in his travels. Members of the Society during their progress through the county could not fail to notice this warm-looking stone used for the piers, porches, mullions and tracery of the various churches they have visited; not to mention the numerous houses, such as Montacute and Brympton, and many other fine examples of domestic architecture.

Its rich warm colour easily distinguishes it from any other material used—formed of a mass of broken up shells held together by an iron solution which gives it that delicate shade—and its resistance to the action of the weather forms its chief value in building.

With regard to its geological position, he might say, in the first place, that Ham Hill had always been a puzzle to geologists, and still remained so. Briefly, it undoubtedly belongs to the great Jurassic system, but the question was to what especial division of that system? He need hardly mention that during the excursion they had traversed the whole of the Liassic strata forming the lower grounds below—Lower, Middle and Upper Lias—the latter having been the happy hunting grounds of the late Charles Moore, whence he obtained his unique collection of fossil fish. Those who crossed the field in front of Montacute Priory, and followed the lane leading to the back of Bedmore Barn passed through the whole series of the “sands,” some 100 or more feet in thickness.

And now comes the question to which of the two formations do these sands belong? To the Liassic beds below, or to the Oolitic beds above? This has been a burning question dividing the east from the west. The western disputants, with the late Chas. Moore at their head, H. B. Woodward and others, considered them to belong to the upper or Oolitic division. Buckman and Richardson, on the other hand, put them down as Liassic! Who shall settle the controversy? The late Professor Phillips (called “judicial Phillips”), in my opinion comes nearer the truth when he calls them “Midford Sands,” as at Midford, near Bath, they were first described by William Smith, the father of English geology. Whether the lower part belongs to the Lias, and the upper portion to the Inferior Oolite, as some suppose, or not, they are in any case acknowledged to be *passage beds* from one formation to another, and thus a transition from deeper water which deposited the Liassic beds below, to shallower indicated by the laying down

of more sandy materials. Resting upon or succeeding these sands in ascending order we have the Ham Hill stone, or the "building Freestone" as it is sometimes called—*Freestone* being used to denote any stone that can be readily cut and worked. The position of these limestones in the geological series is not open to much doubt, and we are able from certain characteristic fossils to assign them to the horizon of the Inferior Oolite.

Mr. Hensleigh Walter, whose observations on this hill are now well-known, has kindly forwarded to him the following fossils from the hard workable beds:—*Ammonites Dumortieria* (Moore) and three forms of *Rhynconella cynocephala*, with single, double and treble plaits on the mesial fold. These fossils indicate without much doubt an Inferior Oolite facies, and one belonging to a low horizon.

In conclusion, Mr. Winwood stated that the section measured some 50ft., including the "riddings," and that it was very important that all fossils from the workable beds should be noted in helping to confirm the exact position of these beds in the Inferior Oolite series.

It may be mentioned that Mr. Winwood's attention was called to the fact that similar comminuted shell beds are being now deposited off Portland Bill, and in future times, should the sea-bed be raised, formation similar to the Ham Hill beds would be the result.

A tour of the hill was then made, the earthworks being followed to the Stoke side of the Hill. A halt was made at "Ham Turn," near the "Prince of Wales" Inn, where Mr. H. St. GEORGE GRAY read an instructive and concise paper on the archæological remains discovered on the Hill. This is printed in Part II of this volume, with illustrations.

The PRESIDENT said that before they left that celebrated Hill they would wish him to thank Mr. Winwood, Dr. Walter and Mr. Gray, for the three most instructive and interesting addresses they had had that morning.

Before dispersing, Mr. R. H. WALTER made some further remarks, and stated that a few years ago that particular spot greatly interested him as some hut-circles yielding Late-Celtic remains were discovered. They were in the immediate neighbourhood of "Ham Stone." Ham Stone was a large block of stone projecting upwards from the stone bed, measuring 30 by 18ft., and about 20ft. in height. It was standing until 1824, when it was sold and cut up for building purposes. From this point of vantage an extensive view of the whole of the surrounding country could be obtained; it was doubtless used by the earlier inhabitants as a watch-tower and possibly at times as a beacon. An old lady, still living in Stoke, well remembered being taken to the top of it as a child, and she says there was a depression in the top which showed signs of burning as by fire. It had rough steps cut in it. In the early part of the last century there was a couplet current amongst the village children which greatly appealed to the juvenile mind. It ran:—

"When Ham Stone hears the Norton chimes at midnight clack,
It rolls down-hill to drink at Jack O'Beard's, and back."

It was quite possible that the situation of the Late-Celtic village was influenced by the existence of "Ham Stone," and the dwellings arranged in close proximity to so effective a lookout.

The members then skirted the eastern side of the northern promontory of the Hill, and when at the "Frying Pan," Mr. Walter stated that its origin was very doubtful, and authorities were divided in opinion. It was said to be too small for an amphitheatre, and although he had run a trench through it, he had never found anything pointing to its being Roman. It was possibly something more recent—perhaps a mediæval cock-pit. It was customary for the guild of stone-masons to hold their annual festival on Shrove Tuesday there, and this might account for the name—the "Frying-Pan."

There were traces of a large rectangular walled enclosure

near by—possibly to hold cattle or horses—as there was no evidence of this being a residential portion of the camp. The large holed stones which had now all been uprooted were fixed in the ground on the slope close by—apparently not arranged in lines. The holes in them were cut square, possibly to allow woodwork to pass through them. Fifteen remained within recent years. (One figured in *Proc.*, XXXII, i, 49).

After luncheon at the “Fleur-de-Lis” Inn and the school-room opposite, the members visited the

Chantry House, Stoke-under-Ham.

The history of the foundation of the collegiate chantry attached to the free chapel of St. Nicholas in his court (curia) at Stoke by John de Beauchamp II, Baron of Hatch (*ob.* 1337), is given in full in a paper on the barony of Beauchamp by Mr. J. Batten in *Proceedings*, XXXVI, ii, 20. The chapel itself has long since disappeared. When Leland, about 1540, visited Stoke, he saw “in the village the ruins of a great manor place or castle, and in this manor place remaineth a very ancient chapel wherein be diverse tombs of noble men and women” (*Proc.* XXXIII, ii, 87). The site of this chapel was discovered on the 22nd March, 1889, and the grave of the founder opened by the late Dr. W. W. Walter, who contributed a paper on the finds to the *Proceedings*, XXXV, ii, 127.¹

Leland further observed “that there is a provost belonging to this collegiate chapel now in decay, where sometime was good service, and now but a mass said three times in the week. The provost hath a large house in the village of Stoke thereby.” Collinson (III, 320) confused this house with the castle, and says, “The once noble mansion of the Beauchamps and Gournays is now in ruins, its small remains being converted into offices for a farm-house, and the chapel into a cyder-vault (as usual).” By the kindness of the occupier and his wife, the party were enabled to examine this interesting

1. See also *Som. & Dors. N. & Q.*, I, art. 285.

building, after the Rev. G. G. Monck had pointed out the principal features. The outer gateway still remains unchanged, but the different portions within have been so altered to fit them for domestic purposes, that it is impossible to designate any single portion to its original use. The small building on the left of the entrance is usually called the chapel, because of the bell turret still remaining on the gable;¹ and it is very likely that the five inhabitants would require a small oratory for the recitation of services morning and evening. Its position, north and south, does not necessarily militate against this view. The hall has been much knocked about in the efforts to turn it into a two-floored cottage. It is now abandoned to decay, and the floor is dangerous to the casual antiquary. The present dwelling-house has little to attract beyond a room with Elizabethan panelling. One piece bears the date 1585 and the initials T.S.; also I.C., R.S., M.S., W.F. These initials probably refer to the family of Strode. Gerard, writing about 1633, says, "The college came to its period under Henry the eight, and is now become the dwelling of Mr. Strode descended from those Strodes in Dorsett."² Their monuments may still be seen in the church. The columbarium was also examined with much interest. Before leaving, Mr. Bligh Bond pointed out that the ogee-headed doorway on the left side of the entrance was probably part of the old house.³

Stoke Church.

The party then proceeded to the Church, where the Rev. G. G. MONCK, Vicar of the parish, read an elaborate paper

1. Illustrated in C. R. B. Barrett's "Highways and Byways of Somersetshire," p. 177.

2. Survey of Somerset, *S.R.S.*, xv, 101.

3. The late Mr. Daniel Gurney, under the mistaken idea that this was the residence of Sir Matthew Gournay, illustrated his great work on the "History of the House of Gournay" with several views of the house. The book itself was generally known among his friends as the "Apocryphal Book of Dan." (*Bibliographer*, I, 59.)

on the building and its history. Professor Freeman contributed a very full account, with three illustrations, in the fourth volume of our *Proceedings*, and the seventeenth volume contains three more, including one of the tympanum over the doorway. On account of the natural advantages of Stoke as a dwelling-place, Mr. Monck was inclined to postulate pre-Norman work in the existing structure, but there is no single feature referable to that remote period; and, with the exception of the south wall of the chancel in Milborne Port Church, this county is not known to contain any Saxon masonry. With regard to the tympanum, Mr. Monck preferred an historical solution. On 26th December, 1135, King Stephen usurped the throne from his cousin, the Empress Maud, then wife of Geoffrey of Anjou, whose crest was a lion rampant. Stephen took the zodiacal sign of Sagittarius for his badge; and in this essentially Norman district of England the sculptor would seem to pay a compliment to his master in representing the triumph of Sagittarius over the lion.¹

Mr. BLIGH BOND said that the Church possessed features of peculiar interest. It had been thought that the chancel had been widened at one time, the reason for this opinion being the appearance of a broken plinth course in the east wall. The presence of Early English windows in the side walls would at first sight seem to lend colour to this assumption, but the existence of Norman features in these walls supported a contrary argument. The fine chancel-arch with its enrichments was of the XI Century. The little windows were also, he considered, of the same period, and he saw no reason to suppose that they were pre-Norman. Next in point of date was the north transept or chapel under the base of the tower, generally spoken of as a work of the Early English period. He preferred to describe it as Transitional Norman. The caps supporting the vaulting had a form peculiar to XII Cen-

1. *Archæologia*, XLIV, 149.

tury work, derived from the idea of the wooden post formed from a tree-trunk with lopped branches; A.D. 1180 was a probable date.

The south transept might be termed Early Decorated, as the nature of the architectural detail would shew it to be a work of the beginning of the XIV Century. He called attention to the peculiar position of the window in the wall of the nave high up over this transept. This window was also Decorated.

As to the nave roof, it consisted originally of flat rectangular panels, but the longitudinal divisions had been removed, leaving the cross-beams, and these had at some time had a plain ceiling nailed up to them. The marks of the laths still disfigured their surface. There was nothing to suggest a high-pitched roof in what remained—which was of XV Century character—but there was very possibly a high-pitched roof there in earlier times.

As regards the canopy outside the north wall of the Church, he had never seen anything like it, and there was nothing visible which would give a clue to its meaning. But the ground seemed to have risen, and perhaps excavation might reveal some feature at present concealed below.

The connection of the carving on the tympanum of the north door with King Stephen offered some difficulty, as the date this would imply was very late for the work, which in design and execution looked like XI Century work.

The windows in the north wall of the chancel had Perpendicular tracery-heads on Early English jambs. Their original character was of the middle of the XIII Century. There was part of a XV Century stone screen in the north transept, and this had formerly stood in the archway towards the nave, but it had been terribly mutilated, having lost both ends, and its remains were now poked away behind the organ. The staircase which once gave access to the rood-loft was also the tower stair, and afforded a curious feature.

It had been suggested, on the strength of the oblique position of the piscina in the chancel, that there might have been a Saxon apse, but he should hesitate on so slender grounds to assume the former existence of an apse, though such a feature was usual enough in a Norman church, such as he believed this to have been. The apse is not characteristic of pre-Norman churches, unless one goes back to the Romano-British period.

A circuit of the exterior of the Church was then made, Mr. Monck pointing out the chief features. The belfry is of Early English masonry, whilst the tower battlements and gargoyles are of the XV Century. An interesting correspondence between two of the Norman enrichments was noted. (1) One of the shafts of the Norman south door of the nave is worked to resemble a palm stem. (2) A palm leaf is incised over the head of the small Norman light in the same wall.

The drive was then continued to

Montacute House.

Mr. BLIGH BOND gave a description of the house, and said that that oft-quoted expression of the poet, "the stately homes of England," inevitably rose to the mind when viewing the building, which represented the flower of English architecture. Two causes contributed to bring about that wonderful outburst of architectural glory. Peace and great prosperity had come in, bringing a security which favoured the development of fine domestic architecture; whilst Gothic architecture, having reached its climax under the first Tudors, was stimulated into new life by the renaissance of classic styles, architecture had become a branch of polite knowledge, and therefore they got that beautiful blend of the Gothic with the Italian in the houses of the nobles and gentry. The house was of vast size, and being erected between 1580 and 1601 by Sir Edward

Phelips,¹ it was just in the best period of Elizabethan architecture. The stone screen of the west front, which was of large extent, came, it is known, from the great Manor House of Clifton Maybank, just south of Yeovil. This had been the home of the Horseys, and the arms of that family were said to appear on the screen. The President said that this was a mistake. It was the Horsey badge which was to be seen there—a little ornament of horses' heads. Edward Phelips the purchaser of the screen substituted his own shield.²

It had generally been supposed that the architect of Montacute House was John Thorpe, whose name had been preserved by Horace Walpole, who was also responsible for the statement that he built the great houses of Longleat and Burleigh. This was founded on the fact that this John Thorpe was a *dilettante* architect, who left a portfolio of sketches in which there were designs of a similar nature. Horace Walpole apparently had no real warrant for saying that John Thorpe was the actual architect,³ and the question was whether the great works of this date were done by professional architects, or whether there were guilds who designed and carried out these works.⁴

With regard to the interior, the great hall was very fine, and had a curious screen at one end. At the other end there was a representation of a very quaint old Somerset custom, in relief,

1. Sir Edward Phelippes (as the name was then spelled) was Master of the Rolls, Speaker of the House of Commons, and Chancellor to Henry, Prince of Wales. On 14th July, 1613, he was appointed ranger of all royal forests, parks, and chases in England. But he does not appear to have found favour in this capacity, for when entertaining King James at his country seat at Wanstead, he congratulated the King on killing a fat buck, and said "I hope your Majesty and I shall live to kill many more here as fat as this." His Majesty answered him in contempt, "Yes, you and I"; which the good old man took so much to heart that he died shortly after. (MSS. of John Pym, *Hist. MSS. Commission*, Report X, App., pt. vi, p. 84.)

2. See *Proceedings*, XXXII, ii, 100.

3. In the life of John Thorpe in the *D.N.B.*, LVI, p. 320, his claims to be an architect in the modern sense of the word are very carefully dealt with. "He has also been confused with that other *ignis fatuus* of archæology, John of Padua."

4. It is suggested on reasonable grounds that the cultured owner may himself have been responsible for much of it.

which was known as "Riding the Skimmington,"¹ ridiculing a man who had been beaten by his wife. The performance was described in *Hudibras*. He also drew their attention to the large handsomely-panelled dining-room, and a smaller room dated 1599. The panelling was regarded as having been brought from the older home of the family, being some forty years anterior to the date of the building of the house. The great gallery, the chief apartment of the house at the time of the Civil War, had its furniture and books destroyed at that time. It was sixty yards long, and extended the whole length of the top floor. The best room was considered to be the library, where there was ancient heraldic glass in the windows dated 1599, some being later, whilst a few shields had been added in recent years to complete the series.²

A tour of the house and gardens was then made, and the party took tea in the Constitutional Hall, afterwards paying a visit to

St. Catherine's Church, Montacute,

which Mr. BLIGH BOND described as being of various dates. There was a Norman chancel-arch, and some chevron work of the same period, which was once over the north door. The Norman work in the chancel-arch was of the earliest type. He called attention to the hagioscope on the south side. The two transepts were each Early English, many of the mouldings being characteristic of the period. The window in the south transept was an early form of geometrical Decorated, or late XIII Century, and possessed tracery which made it a most interesting window to architects. He quite well remembered as a pupil that his master asked him to draw that window. The rest of the Church was Perpendicular, the tower being a magnificent example, one of its best features being the quatrefoil ornament. The lower band had been shaved off on the

1. A good representation of the Hall, including this subject, is given in "The Connoisseur," Dec., 1910.

2. See "Armorial Glass at Montacute," *Proc.*, XXXII, ii, 90.

south side of the tower to make a smooth surface for playing hand-fives. There were interesting monuments in the Church—most of them to the Phelips family.

A curious feature in the chancel was a post-Reformation stone frame, of rectangular form, fixed as a super-altar enclosing the modern reredos. This frame was dated 1543. He did not know of a similar feature elsewhere. Round about it was inscribed :

“Worship ye the Lord in His Holy Hill—written in the Ps. 28.”

“Fear God and keep His laws.” Deut. 6.

“Love God and thy neighbour.” Matt. 22.

“Pray you for the good state of this whole Parish and all the Xtian Church, A.D. 1543.”

They would also notice on each side of the altar, occupying empty Tudor niches, two curious black-letter abridgments of the Ten Commandments—a specimen of those on the north side being, “Ye shall make no graven images to do godly honour to them.” Also on the north wall of the chancel, under a rough cross, the black-letter inscription : “Everyone that shall knowledge me before man, him will I knowledge before my Father which is in Heaven ; and who shall deny Me before man, him will I deny before my Father.”

Coming to the nave of the Church, he regretted to say it had been so heavily restored that but little of the old work could be recognised. The gallery which supported the organ-loft was modern, with the exception of one corbel, namely, that at the east end with the grotesque head. This was discovered in the Church, and the others were made in order to harmonise with it. He was told that they had been copied from examples in South Kensington Museum. The Rev. C. F. Powys, the Vicar, said the original one was dug up at the time of the restoration of the Church.

Mr. Bond further pointed out that the rood-loft had been approached from the north side. There was a recess within the north transept, which it was evident had once been the

lower door to the rood-staircase. It was doubtful if there had ever been an entrance on the south side of the Church.

Montacute Priory.

Before the members left the Church, the Rev. F. W. WEAVER, F.S.A., gave some particulars of the Cluniac Priory of Montacute. He pointed out that the Priory Church had completely disappeared, while the Parish Church alone remained. He said that Volume VIII of the *Somerset Record Society* contained the fullest account (hitherto printed) of this interesting foundation; there Canon T. Scott Holmes gave a striking sketch of Montacute in connection with the Congregation of Cluny; he himself had written on the fate of the monks; while Sir Henry Maxwell Lyte had supplied a most complete list of priors, with particulars concerning most of them. In particular Sir Henry pointed out that Thomas Chard, the last prior but one, whose initials are over the gateway, was a totally different person from Thomas Chard, *alias* Tybbes, the last abbot of Ford. The initials T.C. referred to are under a mitre, because this prior was consecrated Bishop of Solubria in Thrace, and acted as suffragan in the dioceses of Exeter and Bath and Wells. (*Proceedings*, XLII, ii, pp. 70, 71.)

The Priory of Montacute was founded¹ in 1102 by William, Count of Mortain, but, as Canon Holmes points out, the Cluniac houses never took root, so to say, in England; they were looked upon as foreign bodies (and in fact until the time of Henry IV all the priors of Montacute have foreign names). The monks had to journey all the way to Cluny to be professed, and so it happened that some monks were forty years before they were professed, and some were never professed at all. During the French wars, the revenues of the alien Priors were constantly seized by the King. In 1339 the advowson

1. For the earlier foundation of a college of priests at Leodgaesburgh, in honour of the finding of the Holy Cross there, see *S.R.S.*, VIII, lx.

of Montacute was handed over by the Crown to William de Montacute, earl of Salisbury; and, in 1407, the Priory renounced its allegiance to Cluny, and from that date ceased to be alien, and remained till the Dissolution an English monastery.

The PRESIDENT remarked that since that morning they had visited two parishes, and he did not think there was a single phase of English history that could not be illustrated from their story. On Ham Hill there was a British camp, how old not even Mr. Gray ventured to say. They knew the Romans took possession of the hill and drove the people out and established a small camp of their own. From that they passed to Anglo-Saxon times, for the hill at Montacute marked the site of the legendary finding of that Holy Cross, which was the *raison d'être* of the building of Waltham Abbey. Not only did Harold pray before it, but his soldiers marched to Hastings with the cry of "Holy Cross." They knew how the Norman baron established himself there, and Domesday Book recorded that "Robert de Moretaine owned Montacute and there is his castle." The Norman baron was succeeded by that Cluniac Monastery, one of those buildings which covered the whole land, and must have been the most conspicuous objects before the Reformation. The Castle and Priory gave way to that magnificent house, which was one of the glories of their English architecture and English sense of freedom, for while the people of every other nation had still to live in castles, that house—typical of English life, freedom, and responsibility for three centuries—was built. There was yet another link, for it was in the "Frying Pan" on Ham Hill that those great meetings of agricultural labourers took place many years ago, which led statesmen to realise that there were many people without the vote, and which resulted in the enfranchisement of the English agricultural labourer, and his restoration to a position from which a succession of conquerors had depressed him.

After inspecting the gatehouse of the old Priory, thrown open by Mr. and Mrs. G. R. Norman, the party drove back to Yeovil.

Conversazione and Local Museum.

In the evening the MAYOR OF YEOVIL (Councillor Edmund Damon) and the MAYORESS kindly entertained the members of the Society and a large number of Yeovil residents to a *Conversazione* at the Town Hall. A musical programme, under the direction of Mr. F. E. Bastick, was contributed, and refreshments served. The loan collection in the Justice-room was the centre of much interest, and was open for three days. At certain hours this Local Museum was open to the general public, and hundreds of children were conducted through the room under proper guidance. The Museum Committee worked assiduously, and consisted of the Mayor, Messrs. S. Burt, E. C. Gardner, F. R. Maggs, H. Stiby, and R. Hensleigh Walter, Mr. W. A. Hunt (*Chairman*), and Mr. J. B. Paynter (*Secretary*).

At the conclusion, COLONEL CARY BATTEN said they had had a most successful meeting, and were greatly indebted to the Mayor of Yeovil for lending them that hall, and for the kind hospitality of the Mayor and Mayoress that evening. They were also indebted to the musicians for the entertainment they had given them.

THE MAYOR said that his pleasure was ten times greater than theirs, in having the privilege of entertaining them on that auspicious occasion. It was a great event for the town to be visited by the Somersetshire Archæological Society. He hoped the visit of the Society would have a beneficial effect on their townsmen, and act as an incentive for the study of archæology and natural history.

Mr. CHAS. TITE proposed thanks to the members of the Local Committee, and those who had been kind enough to

organize that excellent loan museum. Those of them who knew anything about this kind of work realised how much labour had been expended. In thanking them on behalf of the Society, he should especially like to mention Mr. Paynter, who had acted as secretary, and other members of the Committee who had had a large share in the work.

Dr. W. A. HUNT, on behalf of the Museum Committee, acknowledged the vote of thanks, and thanked them for their kind expressions. He wished to thank all the ladies and gentlemen who had lent objects for that museum. He would like to see a town museum at Yeovil. They could not attempt to rival Taunton, but he thought the time was come when they could bring the necessary materials together and found a permanent local museum.

Among the loan exhibits were :

Pewter flagon, Yeovilton Church.—Exhibited by the Rev. B. T. Bussell.

Bronze celt.—Exhibited by Mr. T. W. Dampier-Bide.

A large and valuable collection of antiquities found on Ham Hill, some having been removed from Taunton Museum for the purpose, others recently found.—Exhibited by Mr. R. Hensleigh Walter, M.B.

A few archæological remains from Ham Hill.—Exhibited by the Rev. H. Cornish, Odcombe.

Facsimile of the gold torc found at Hendford, Yeovil, 1909 ; a silver medal commemorating the unsuccessful invasions of Monmouth and Argyll in 1685 ; a penny of Henry III struck at Ilchester ; jailer's keys and branding instruments, Ilchester Gaol ; three bone pins, Roman, found by Mr. E. C. Gardner at Larkhill Lane Quarry, Preston Plucknett, 1909.—Exhibited by the Som. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Society.

Gold model of a bronze fibula found at the Meare Lake-village, 1910.—Exhibited by Messrs. Franklin, Hare, and Goodland.

Drinking-vessel of the early Bronze Age, found at Stoford

in the parish of Barwick; picture of Yeovil Church, *circa* 1760; brief for losses by fire granted to Yeovil, 1640; grant by Charles II of an annuity to Francis and Rachel Wyndham, 1682; *facsimile* of Civil War pamphlet of Battle of Babylon Hill, 1642; report on the sanitary condition of Yeovil 1852, with map 1831; "Clastrum Regale reseratum," by A. Wyndham; "Eikon Basilike," 1648; "Memorial of the Royal Martyr," by T. L.; day-cap, night-cap, and knife of Charles II; rent-roll of the borough of Ilchester, *circa* 1535.—Exhibited by the Rev. E. H. Bates Harbin.

Bell from Ilchester Gaol (weight 1 cwt.), tolled at executions; Morden's map of Somerset.—Exhibited by Mr. J. Trevor Davies.

Engraving of the old George Inn, Yeovil; water-colours of the market-house, the stocks, the shambles, and the old Angel Inn (painted 1810); photograph of the leaden angel (51ins. high), the sign of the old inn where Parr's Bank, Yeovil, now stands; lock and key from Ilchester Gaol; plaster cast of the face of John Chaffey who died in his one-hundred-and-fifth year at "Preston Close," Dec. 27th, 1875; medal commemorating the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Princess of Teck, given to all the school children of Yeovil by Mr. S. Watts, July 6th, 1893; box of bullets made at Bristol for the late Mr. George Harbin, of Newton, when commanding the Yeomanry at Yeovil during the Reform Riots, 1832; a large series of coins and medals, electrotypes, and gems, etc.—Exhibited by Dr. W. A. Hunt.

Local prints and paintings.—Exhibited by Mr. J. Nicholson Johnston.

Two locks, Ilchester Gaol; cross-bill shot at Hendford; and other specimens (not local).—Exhibited by the Rev. E. A. May.

Fossils from the Yeovil district.—Exhibited by Mr. H. Monk, Yetminster.

Another series.—Exhibited by Mr. S. Burt.

Another series.—Exhibited by Mr. R. J. Pocock.

Iron implements, Jordan Hill, Weymouth; horse-shoe, Crewkerne; three keys from Martock; Yeovil trade tokens, etc.—Exhibited by Mr. W. C. Norman, Honiton.

Human osteological remains, and various fossils and minerals.—Exhibited by Dr. H. M. Page.

Panel painting of the old skin market, Yeovil; print of Yeovil market-place, 1839; Yeovil, from Babylon Hill, 1839; photograph from a water-colour of the old market-house, Yeovil, 1810; standard weight for gold, dug up at Hendford Manor; two ancient views of Cadbury House on panels; print of Compton House, Sherborne, 1794; etc.—Exhibited by Mr. J. B. Paynter.

Old print of St. John's Church, Yeovil; local tokens, etc.—Exhibited by Mr. Frank Raymond.

The following guns:—XVI Century match-lock; XVII Century wheel-lock; a flint-lock, *circa* 1630; a flint-lock, by J. Manton, 1815; a first detonating pellet-gun, 1807; another, improved; a detonating tube-lock, 1818. Pair of pistols, *circa* 1630; percussion cap pistol; pair of duelling pistols; needle rifle, 1852; and an early form of C.F.B. loader, elaborately ornamented. Local XVII Century trade tokens; old English gold watch; and a snuff-box which formerly belonged to the Prince of Canino.—Exhibited by Mr. H. Stiby.

Key, West Coker; models of leather and wooden vessels used in the Sherborne Pageant.—Exhibited by Mr. J. B. H. Goodden.

Andrea Ferrara sword; "hare-rabbit" (stuffed).—Exhibited by Colonel Goodden.

Inlaid oak coffer, etc.—Exhibited by the Mayor of Yeovil.

Rapier, Toledo blade; local token and medals; works and sermons of John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, 1609 (in original binding);¹ carved oak boss from Yeovil Church; ¹ XIV Cen-

1. Subsequently presented to Taunton Museum by Mr. Gardner.

ture earthenware vessel found near North Cadbury Church.¹
—Exhibited by Mr. E. C. Gardner.

Pictures of ancient buildings, Ilchester and Northover ;
plan of Ilchester, 1723 ; plan of Ilchester Manor, 1834.—
Exhibited by Mr. J. W. Goodford.

Large holed stone from Ham Hill (see p. 53), etc.—Ex-
hibited by Capt. R. S. C. Chaffey.

Puzzle-jug, 1783—probably Donyatt ware ; etc.—Exhibited
by Mr. Orman.

Case of china, etc.—Exhibited by Mr. Geo. Summers.

Glazed jug, dated, and inscribed “Chardstock,” middle of
XIX Century ; several other art specimens (not local) including
armour, carved panels, wax plaques, and soapstone figures.—
Exhibited by Mr. Edgar Vincent.

Brass casket found over a hundred years ago on Mr.
Newman's estate, Barwick ; large oak carving taken from the
old Angel Inn, Yeovil.—Exhibited by Mr. H. M. Watts.

Among the other exhibitors were : Mr. F. Plank, the Rev.
A. W. Gummer Butt, Mr. F. T. Rogers, Mr. E. Pittard, Mr.
Fred Raymond, Mr. W. Roberts, Mr. W. Marsh, Dr. C. J.
Marsh, Mr. A. E. Lovell, Mr. E. H. Fletcher, Mr. G. F.
Munford, Mr. J. E. B. Bellamy, and Dr. C. E. S. Brettingham.

Third Day's Proceedings.

Leaving Yeovil on Thursday in brakes and motor-cars, the
members proceeded to

Brympton.

Here they gathered in the forecourt of the house, where
the President announced that unfortunately (owing to the
absence of the owner, Sir Spencer C. B. Ponsonby-Fane,
G.C.B.) they would not be able to go over the house.

1. Subsequently purchased by thirty-two members of the Society for
Taunton Museum.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER said that many theories had been put forth as to the puzzling building between the Manor House and the Church. Some people thought it was the house occupied by the priest who served the chantry founded by Sir Peter d'Evercy in 1309. Others thought it might have been the original manor-house; while the late Mr. John Batten threw out the suggestion that possibly it was used as the stables of the mansion.¹

Mr. BLIGH BOND said the building in question, as far as they could see, belonged to the XV Century. Its features were not suggestive of anything more than domestic work.

The PRESIDENT said perhaps it was the original manor-house, as at some places recently they had seen the old manor-house still standing beside the later one.²

Mr. BLIGH BOND said that the west front of Brympton House showed on the north side a wing of Henry VIII period, the work of John Sydenham. The original house was recessed back in the centre, and hidden by later additions. The large bay window in the Tudor wing bore the arms showing a crown, feathers, fleur-de-lis, and a portcullis. The porch in the centre was a modern work bearing the date 1720. It was originally a simple bay window, and was converted into a porch by Lady Georgiana Fane.

Proceeding to the north side of the house, Mr. Bond pointed out that a little of the Tudor work could still be seen behind the north-west wing. Some remarks and opinions offered during the visit may be summarized thus: it is not likely that the modern portion was built before the Rebellion, because when Sir Philip Sydenham offered the house and estate for sale in 1697, it is described as a large *new built* mansion house, which cost £16,000 (in another paper £20,000). Sir Philip's

1. Chantry House,—E. Chisholm Batten, *Proc.*, XXXII, i, 34; Original Manor House,—J. J. Hooper, *Proc.*, XVII, 86; Stables,—J. Batten, "Historical Notes on South Somerset," 57.

2. Cothelstone, Combe Sydenham.

grandfather died in 1642, and his posthumous son (or his trustees) could hardly have laid out such a sum before his coming of age. This took place in 1664, and Sir John Posthumous Sydenham was then married to Elizabeth, daughter of John Lord Poulett. She died childless in 1669 (*Complete Baronetage*, II, 113). As the head of a lead spout on this part of the building bears a shield showing the alliance, it seems most probable that it was built by Sir John during his short married life, and that he took as his model his father-in-law's house at Hinton. Mr. J. Batten points out that "the appearance of the west end of the new portion conveys a strong impression that the execution of the plan was arrested for want of funds, or some equally cogent reason, and that the building was abruptly closed as simply and as inexpensively as possible."¹ It does not follow that either building was designed by Inigo Jones, for "Many buildings, including the garden fronts of Hinton St. George and Brympton, have been attributed to Jones with very slight authority." (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xxx, 119.)

At the garden front Mr. BLIGH BOND said the work there was characteristic of Inigo Jones, and recalled the style of the Banqueting Hall at Westminster. The composition of this front was very pleasing, but had one fault in that it had no central architectural feature, there being an even number of windows in uniform series. Apart from this it was a fine piece of work and well designed.

Brympton Church.

Inside the Church, which stands close to the house, Mr. BLIGH BOND said that it was a beautiful little model of the earlier mediæval type of church in this county. It never had a tower, and was originally smaller, and had received an addition in the shape of a chapel on the north side of the

1. "Historical Notes," 35.

chancel. The Church was, perhaps, originally cruciform—a nave, two transepts, and a chancel. That transept, which contained the chantry, was afterwards lengthened to the east by the addition of another chantry-chapel. The style of the original building was early XIV Century. There was a beautiful arch to the south transept, and a very fine geometrical Decorated window in the south wall. There was also a piscina in the wall, and other features of Decorated work of a rather later date. There was a very interesting stone rood-screen of the XV Century. The lancet-headed openings made it look like Early English work, but he was satisfied that the windows had once contained tracery of XV Century character, which had been scraped away.¹ Some traces of the cusping could still be seen. The stone benches attached to both sides of the screen were an unusual feature. Those on the choir side one could understand, because they were part of the stalls for the clergy and choir, but one wondered what was the meaning of the narrow stone bench attached to the west front. Other examples were very rare. It had been suggested that they might have been confessional benches. There was some warrant for believing that confessions were sometimes heard from the west side of the screen—the priest would be in his stall on the other side. In the chantries were several effigies, amongst them an ecclesiastical figure, partly original, but with a new head. There was also the figure of a lady, and the crucifix near her head was said to be modern, and left in an unfinished state to give an idea of antiquity. The two effigies now in the north chapel, as well as the others, were lying in the churchyard in Collinson's day, and he described that of the ecclesiastic as having a shaven crown.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER said that the late Mr. Batten made a life-long study of Brympton Church, and had described

1. See drawing of restoration in Bond and Camm's "Roodscreens," vol. II, p. 431, fig. 129.

its heraldry. On the screen there were three coats. The first was that of the Stourtons, who came to the place after the D'Evereys. Mr. Batten came to the conclusion that the middle coat was that of the Wynford family, who presented to the living in 1427, 1445, and 1449. The Wynfords seemed to have owned the manor between the D'Evereys and the Sydenhams. The third coat was clearly that of the Beauchin family of Beauchinhays, in the parish of Whitchurch Canonycorum, Dorset.

In reply to a question, Mr. Weaver said the arms on the screen would give the date as about 1440.

Tintinhull Church.

The members then drove through Thorne Coffin to Tintinhull. On alighting they inspected the village stocks, and proceeded to the Church, where they were met by the Vicar, the Rev. A. C. Brown, and the Rev. Dr. S. J. M. Price.

Mr. BLIGH BOND said the Church was a most interesting one, although the changes which had been made were not for the better. Within living memory a good many alterations had taken place, and in the old days there was a fine stone screen—he did not know of what type, as there was little of it left. There had also been an interesting western gallery, of the Stuart period, like the pulpit. In the fabric itself there was work of many dates. The string-course around the walls, tower and windows was indicative of early XIII Century work—about 1220, to judge by the moulding. At that period there was simply a nave and chancel. Forty or fifty years later the tower was added and the window near the pulpit blocked, and on the other side they would see the remains of a corbel course, showing that that was an outside wall, subsequently included in the tower. The tower was late Early English. Work of the earlier period might be seen in the interior of the chancel lights, which apparently dated from

about 1220, but the lights had been filled with Perpendicular tracery. The very beautiful little double piscina had been reconstructed, but seemed to contain original stone-work. He thought it had been carefully restored, and wished they could say the same of other things, and especially of the windows. Dr. Price had told him that there had been until recent years an interesting east window of the XIV or XV Century. This had been taken out, but there were sufficient parts left to make a reconstruction on paper. When the Church was restored some years ago this was sacrificed and the roofs modernised; and there were other things not quite as they would like to see them. The rood-screen had been removed. The chancel-arch, though old work, was not the original, and was evidently of the Decorated period, judging by the mouldings and carved capitals. Probably the original would have been much narrower. Within it were the remains of a low stone screen, the portion on the north side being original. This contained a piscina, showing that there had been an altar on that side of the screen. There must have been a rood-loft there, as there was in almost every parish church. There was very slight trace of it although he could see marks of insertion. Dr. Price said there was documentary evidence of a large and magnificent collection of lights about the rood-loft—he thought about fifty lights, which was a large number. There were a few good old tiles in the chancel floor, and two brasses dated 1416 and 1464. In addition to the Early English and Decorated work there was other work representing three periods. There were two kinds of Perpendicular work, the earlier of which was shown in the little window with small heads carved in the tracery mullions. Of the same period was the ribbed roof and the outer wall of the porch, which was original. The pulpit was of the period of Charles I, and the oak back and tester over were complete.

The Rev. Dr. PRICE said that printed records mentioned a postern gate erected about 1400 on the eastern side, which

had a Latin inscription, "Let us rejoice and go into the House of God."

Mr. BLIGH BOND further said that there was a bracket on the north wall which showed, he believed, the site of an altar to St. Nicholas. There would have been originally no less than five altars—the high altar; two against the screen, or at the east end of the nave; one to St. Nicholas; and one in the tower. There was some fine Perpendicular wood-work at the west end of the Church.

Attention was called to a peculiar sundial over the south porch. A similar one may be seen at Middle Chinnock Church. The members closely inspected the exterior of the building and some interesting theories were raised with regard to the postern. It was pointed out that the inscription faced the Church and would be seen by those going out, and that the Tudor rose shown in the margin was a badge of the Beauchamps, and that possibly the stone might have been brought from St. Nicholas' Chapel at Stoke-under-Ham.

Tintinhull Court was then inspected by the permission of the Hallett family, and a visit was subsequently paid to the house of Dr. Price, a XVII Century building roofed with Ham stone tiles, the product of an industry which has now completely died out.

Ilchester.

VOTES OF THANKS.

A drive along the Fosse Way brought the party to Ilchester. Luncheon was served in the old Town Hall, after which

Sir EDWARD FRY, G.C.B., said that as that was their last luncheon together and they would not hear the familiar whistle many times more, he thought he should on their behalf propose a warm vote of thanks to the President for the interest he had taken in the Yeovil meeting and the courtesy with which he had carried out his congenial duties. His knowledge and

assiduity had never been better exemplified, and on their behalf he begged to tender their warm thanks for the capable manner in which the President had conducted the proceedings.

The Rev. H. H. WINWOOD, F.G.S., seconded, and cordially endorsed what Sir Edward Fry had said as to the courtesy and decision the President had exhibited. Decision without courtesy was not pleasant, but the way in which he had combined the two was admirable. They had a President interested in the growth and interpretation of history and also in natural history, and he was pleased to hear him say on the previous day that geology was not a dry subject.

The PRESIDENT thanked Sir Edward Fry for the judgment delivered on him and which he had tempered with mercy. It had given him great pleasure to conduct that party on a three days' excursion which had not been marred by inclement weather. They had had a pleasant time together, and the real difficulty in the organization of the Yeovil meeting had been to know what to leave out. Great pressure had been put on them to include things of equal interest, but he thought they would agree that they could not have done more without discomfort—for the half is sometimes better than the whole. Sir Edward Fry had passed sentence and he (the President) desired to include in that sentence a large number of accomplices, as he had been indebted to a considerable number of people. He had been dependent upon their Assistant-Secretary, Mr. St. George Gray, very much. Presidents came and Presidents went, but Mr. Gray went on for ever, and better and better the longer he went. He also owed a great deal to Mr. Bligh Bond, who gave them the benefit of his professional knowledge on church architecture; and to Mr. Weaver, whose ripe erudition on historical points of interest was of great service to the Society. He also desired to include in that vote of thanks the Mayor and Corporation of Yeovil, for their official reception and their willingness to stay and learn. Also to Mr. Damon and Mrs. Damon, in their personal capacity, for

the pleasant conversazione which was a source of great enjoyment. He also wished to thank the Local Committee and Mr. J. B. Paynter (*Local Secretary*), who worked hard at very short notice and collected together the very representative loan museum they had had the pleasure of seeing. They took very great care because they had a hope—and he trusted their hope would be realized—that the collection might form the nucleus of a permanent museum. It was fitting that a town of the size of Yeovil should have a museum and a library, and he hoped that the spirit which had now been stirred would not soon die away. Then there were all the incumbents of the different Churches visited, who had thrown open their buildings, and had allowed Mr. Bond and himself to monopolise their pulpits. Unfortunately, with the exception of the Vicar of Stoke-under-Ham, they did not give them the benefit of their own knowledge, and he always believed that what a man could see from one or two visits was nothing compared with what a man who lived and worked in the place did. They also had to thank the owners of Nash, Montacute, and Brympton. As they were aware, Mr. and Mrs. Phelps were away and they were indebted to Mr. Hull—Mr. Phelps' right-hand man—for the trouble he took to show them over Montacute. At Brympton circumstances did not permit of their going inside, but they were indebted to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane for allowing them to view the external glories of the house.

Ilchester Town Hall,

in which they had lunched, was managed by a Town Trust, and as they had no funds, that accounted for the condition in which they saw it. Ilchester was a town of departed glories.¹

1. On the staircase of the Town Hall, the Rev. W. D. H. Armstrong exhibited an ancient map of Ilchester which he had enlarged, for the benefit of the members, from the coloured plan in Buckler's "*Ilchester Almshouse Deeds*" (1866).

There was hardly anything left of the ancient Ilchester with the exception of the mace, preserved in the Town Hall, which might date back to 1200, and had an inscription which had not yet been deciphered. As to the gaol, which was sometimes remarkable for the uncomfortable condition of the unfortunate prisoners, that had also almost entirely disappeared. There was a field outside where people used to be hanged, called "Hanging Mead," and there were people in the Alms-houses now who could remember seeing—from the bridge—public executions. When an old man was asked, "John, you have lived here all your life, have you ever seen anyone hung?" he replied, "When I wur a bwoy I zaw one hung." Another being woke up out of a calm doze and asked the same question, shortly replied, "Yes, lots."

Ilchester Church.

The members then proceeded to the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, where they were met by the Rector, the Rev. W. D. H. Armstrong.

The PRESIDENT, proceeding to describe the Church, said he had hoped that Mr. Armstrong would have addressed them. Of the eight churches which formerly existed there only that one remained. Its most interesting feature was the octagonal tower, of which there were twelve examples in the county. Mr. Freeman had long since noticed how peculiar they were compared with the octagonal towers in Northants and Lincolnshire. In Lincolnshire the octagonal part was little more than a finish to the tower, whereas in Somerset the square was a base for the octagon. In Northants if they took away the octagon they would still have a tower, but if they took away the octagon from Ilchester they would have a stump. That building had been enlarged by the addition of the south aisle, and when the wall which extended the length of the Church was taken down a pillar was discovered with the nail-head

moulding which was a special feature of the Early English period. Of the earlier Church there was nothing left. The chancel was Decorated though not of a good type, and there was an interesting window at the east end which might well be Norman. The capitals with their pillars were Early English, and there were traces of three periods of architecture in the windows which complicated matters. The windows at the side were Decorated, but he was not satisfied as to which were old and which were new. The only addition the Church apparently had was the chantry chapel on the north side, which, he should judge from the character of the tracery in the arch, was very late—not before 1500. It contained a flat-headed window with a little old coloured glass, also very late, and what was also very interesting to see, the springers for vaulting. It did not look as if it had ever been finished, perhaps from lack of money. There was also a canopy formerly for the image of the patron-saint, whose altar stood in the aisle; and an interesting memorial tablet to the Raymonds, prominent citizens of Ilchester in the XVI Century.

Before leaving the Church he would like to draw their attention to the proposal to erect a memorial to Roger Bacon, who was an inmate in the priory of the White Friars at Ilchester. He was one of the greatest philosophers and experimenters of his time, and anticipated a large number of discoveries by about five centuries, for which, of course, he was very much persecuted. At present there was no memorial to him. He was born in Ilchester in 1214, and was popularly known as the inventor of gunpowder. Subscriptions could be sent to Mr. J. B. Paynter, of Yeovil.

The Rector said the form of memorial would depend on the amount subscribed.

In answer to a question, the President said that the carved stones built into the walls of the tower were the remains of an older church there or elsewhere. The memorial crosses were discovered in the churchyard when the aisle was built.

The party then walked through the main street of Ilchester over the bridge to the site of

Ilchester Gaol.

The PRESIDENT said that the row of buildings now used as cottages and the wall which they saw before them were the only remains above ground of the old County Gaol at Ilchester, which was mentioned in almost every record down to 1840. There were some bells in existence each said to be the bell rung when prisoners were going to be hanged—he knew of two and there might be more.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Tuson the party then proceeded through the grounds of the adjoining house, passing through one of the original doors of the prison to the site of the old exercise yard, and were shown the spot where numbers of executed felons were buried. On the other side of the river the President pointed out the site of Whitehall. It was originally a nunnery, but the Bishop had to intervene so often that it was turned into a sort of free chapel.

Lines of the foundations of Roman walls could be traced in the field on the other side of the river, and Mrs. Tuson remarked that in dry weather the outlines of buildings could be distinctly traced.

The President said that Prof. Haverfield's article on Roman history, in the *Victoria County History*, was rather depreciatory about Ilchester as a Roman stronghold. He did not know what ground he had for his opinion, for the extraordinary number of remains—especially coins—implied that Ilchester had a very considerable population in Roman times. It was said that in that town one could not dig potatoes without digging up Roman coins. He wished to accord thanks to Mrs. Tuson for the trouble she had taken in conducting the party round the site of the gaol.

Limington Church.

Here, the members were met by the Rector, the Rev. D. B. BINNEY, who gave them a hearty welcome. It was, he said, twenty-four years since they last visited the Church—the summer before he came into residence there—and a paper was read to them by Mr. John Batten on the former owners of Limington. He could not add anything to what was said on that occasion. Almost the earliest person they knew of was the founder of the chantry chapel, Sir Richard de Gyverney, and the figure beside him was supposed to be his widow, but who the other two figures were supposed to represent he could not say. He had heard a theory that it was Sir Henry Power with his wife, who was formerly a member of Parliament for Somerset.¹ The chapel was in the same state as originally built and there had been no alteration in the church since their last visit. They had a startling mishap about five years before, when a portion of the roof on the east side of the chapel—great stone slabs—fell *en masse* to the ground. This was caused by a settlement in the north wall of the chapel, which was not injured internally. It had been put in repair by Mr. E. Buckle. On the outside the peculiar high-pitched roof appeared to be unconnected with the church roof, and he used to think that the founder of the chapel had ambitious ideas and intended to build a church to match his chapel. The arch corresponded with the chancel-arch, though the priest would come in by another door to say mass, and it was independent of the parish church. The bench-ends were very interesting, and were, as far as they were composite, brought together about forty-five years ago in the time of Mr. Brancker, a former rector. Whether there was a top to the screen he could not say. Mr. Binney called attention to the ancient coffin-lid—a remarkably fine specimen—found in frag-

1. Illustrations in *Proc.*, VII, ii, 5.

ments under the floor in 1882. In the bench-ends were the arms of the Marquess of Dorset, Lord of the Manor at the end of the XV Century. It was the Marquess of Dorset who presented Thomas Wolsey, as he then was, to the living of Limington in 1500, and he held it for nine years.¹ He was succeeded by Walter Cox, whose initials were at the end of the bench. The font was rather interesting though somewhat the worse for the ravages of time, but the pulpit was not in keeping with the other parts of the Church.

The PRESIDENT said that the oldest part of the Church was probably the entrance doorway, which really seemed to be transitional—between Norman and Early English. The chancel-arch was peculiar in that it had no capitals and the moulding died into the wall. The tower-arch had exceedingly peculiar and grotesque corbels. The chancel, he thought, belonged to the early part of the XIV Century, and to the same period one would put the north window, which was an example of the floriated rear-arch, and reminded them that they were getting near East Somerset. As regarded the north transept there was a beautiful Decorated window. The carved linen-work on the screen was good, and so were the bench-ends with the coats-of-arms and the initials. There were various readings of the initials, one of which gave “W.C.”—“Wolsey, Cardinal!” The chancel was Perpendicular, without a sign of anything earlier; and when he saw Perpendicular work he always suspected restoration, for if they found anything early in a church they always found it in the chancel. The remains of the coffin-slabs were quite early—about XIII Century, and there were probably three rather than one. The tower was plain and well proportioned.

The Rector called attention to the socket of the sanctuary knocker on the door, and an ancient wooden lock.

At Mr. Binney's invitation tea was served on the Vicarage

1. Wolsey and Sir Amyas Pawlet, *Som. & Dor. N. & Q.*, x, p. 9.

lawn, when Miss Binney and friends were assiduous in their attentions to the guests. Before leaving, the President thanked the Rector for his address in the Church and his hospitality.

Ashington.

The members were met at the Church of St. Vincent by the Rector, the Rev. M. C. GOODFORD, who made a few remarks. He called attention to an external niche, and read the following from the *Gentleman's Magazine* of Sept., 1820 :—
“There is a small niche on the outside of the Church at the eastern end, above the roof of the chancel. The group consists of three human figures—a man standing between two females—admitting a conjecture that this refers to the history of the martyred saint, Vincent, to whom the Church is dedicated. He is here represented with his hands bound after sentence has been passed on him. On his right a woman with folded arms is looking piteously upon him, and the other appears absorbed in greater grief, turning aside her head unable to behold him. The niche is only 2ft. in height and 11ins. in breadth, the figures 10½ inches high.” Mr. Goodford went on to say that before going into the Church he would like to point out that he was not responsible for the false concord on the brass. He found the inscription on the brass when he came there. The registers dated from 1567. An account of the incised slab formerly in the Church was given when the Society visited it in 1886. There was one mistake, as it was said that until the Church was restored this was visible. This was not correct, as his father, who was a great antiquary, would never have had it covered up. Mr. Goodford called attention to a small window discovered when the west wall was scraped.

The PRESIDENT called attention to the bell-turret of which there were several examples in that neighbourhood, including Brympton and Chilthorne Domer. He also drew attention

to the excellent Perpendicular window which contained a small portion of ancient glass. Inside the Church he pointed out some well-carved woodwork which was dated 1637. The little window had the appearance of an Early English lancet, and showed that there was an earlier church. There was a curious panel in the door and he had seen nothing like it. The registers were in good preservation, and the communion plate was Elizabethan, with the early date of 1570.

The Manor House was then inspected by the kindness of Mr. W. H. Cox, and later, the President thanked both the Rev. M. C. Goodford and Mr. Cox, remarking that he hardly knew which of them seemed most interested in the buildings they had charge of.

The party then drove back to Yeovil, *viâ* Mudford, and so concluded a pleasant set of excursions.