

Clevedon Court.

The company afterwards proceeded in brakes to Clevedon Court, where they were kindly invited to luncheon by Sir Edmund and Lady Elton, in whose absence Mr. Elton presided.

Sir EDWARD FRY proposed the health of "The Host."

Mr. ELTON, in returning thanks, said he had just received the news that he had been elected a member of the Society, and he begged to thank them for having elected him. On behalf of Sir Edmund and Lady Elton, he wished to say that it afforded them the greatest pleasure to invite the members of the Society to their house on that occasion.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER, on behalf of the Society, returned thanks to Mr. Elton for the cordial welcome he had given them.

Description of Clevedon Court.

Mr. ELTON then proceeded to give a remarkably interesting address descriptive of the Court. He said : It is with considerable diffidence that I rise to address you on this ancient and historic mansion ; selected as it has been by Thackeray as the foundation of his "Castlewood," and described as it has been by Rutter, in his "Delineations of North-West Somerset," as one of the most perfect examples of mediæval domestic architecture in England. So many abler heads than mine have dealt with it. I feel, therefore, I am quite unable to throw any fresh light on the matter. However, as archæologists, I feel that you will be the last people to expect to hear any new thing. I therefore crave your indulgence if I but repeat what may be stale news to many of you. I shall not attempt in the presence of experts to give you in any way a technical or learned address, but, like Truthful James in the poem, "I will tell in simple language all I know," and I hope the result will not end in the building of "churches of old red sandstone" or anything else. First of all, then, there is little doubt that there was originally a house here as far back as the time of the Norman Conquest. None of that now remains, but it is probable that from its foundations the most ancient parts of the present building arose. I direct your attention particularly to the room in which we are now seated. It forms the central part of the earliest structure. The original date would be early fourteenth century or about the time of Edward II. It has, of course, been largely altered and added to in the Jacobean period, and, later still, in the Georgian, when the present ceiling and the debased top to the fine Elizabethan window were added. If we divest the hall of all later additions, we shall find that it consists of a large and very high chamber, at

the four corners of which were turrets or newel staircases, three of which are still extant. The floor would have been of stone. The chamber would be lighted as far up as the present ceiling by mere slits in the walls, through which arrows, stones, or possibly boiling lead might be discharged on the heads of over-curious and suspicious-looking strangers. In cold weather a fire would be lighted in the middle of the room, and the smoke would find its way out by two apertures in the roof at either end. The two entrances to north and south, through Gothic archways of noble proportions, were each guarded by a portcullis let down from the rooms at each end of the minstrels' gallery. The grooves by which these descended may be examined at leisure. In fact, besides being the living room, it was a strong place whither the lord of the manor and all depending on him might resort in times of stress for temporary safety. A dais would extend across the end of the room, and all would dine here in common, the servants sitting below the salt. We will now remove with a wave of the hand the white ceiling which obscures our view. Above it we see a high-pitched roof, and at either end two very beautiful windows belonging to the Early Decorated period, and above them the flues for the escape of the superfluous smoke that I have already alluded to. The blackening remains of soot are still clearly discernible about the tracery of the windows, and at either side are the unmistakable signs of the old hammer-beam roof, which has long years back ceased to exist, having either fallen into such decay as to compel its removal, or—dreadful thought—having been ruthlessly destroyed when the mischievous tide of architectural degradation reached its height under the House of Hanover. Out of the hall, on the eastern side, by a series of fourteenth-century doorways, which you may have noticed on your right hand on entering, the kitchen and other offices were reached. Behind me, on my left, you will observe a fine Jacobean doorway of stone, placed there by the Wake family, descendants of Kingsley's hero, "Hereward

the Wake," who for many generations occupied the property. It has, I regret to say, in degenerate days been painted and grained to imitate oak. It seems to appeal mutely for scraping, but it would be a hazardous task, and it would require ages of wear and tear, dust and dirt, to retrieve the sombre dignity of its ancient origin were this done, and after all it is not snobbishly assuming a higher position than it is entitled to, but rather a lower, for being stone it is content to take precedence as oak. So we will leave it. On my right you will see a fourteenth-century doorway restored after the disastrous fire which nearly destroyed all the west wing of the house in 1882. Opposite you see a debased doorway, once its match, leading on to the Queen Anne staircase. Above the old doorway I would direct your attention to the two-light window of the Early Decorated period. On the other side of that window is by far the most interesting characteristic of the house. I remember my grandfather (Sir Arthur Elton), himself an ardent archæologist, describing the "lady's bower," which proves that even archæologists may be mistaken, for he lived to see the truth laid bare, though, alas, a terrible fire, which occasioned the discovery, led up to his untimely death from sorrow and shock. The little room was no lady's bower, but neither more nor less than a tiny chapel, described by some authorities as a hanging chapel, from its position on the first storey. No tradition, no word, no sign, had escaped its sealed lips for centuries. Here was a room ancient and oak-panelled, certainly used for generations as the boudoir of the lady of the manor—this was all we knew. After the fire the panelling was being removed and some slight repairs executed (mercifully the flames had hardly reached the chamber), when in the eastern wall a fine square window, with reticulated tracery of the Early Decorated period was brought to light, carefully concealed within and without by masonry. Beneath this the altar slab, smashed off level with the wall, and on the right hand side of the piscina, with a canopy of

the same period, and the bowl broken off, had been covered in with the same diligent care. The whole has been restored to the likeness of its former beauty under the able hands of Mr. Davis, city architect of Bath, whose name will ever be associated to his honour with the restoration of the western wing of the house. The south window of the chapel, which has always been *in situ*, has been considered to be the finest example of square-headed window of the Early Decorated period in existence. Out of the chapel winds precipitously a newel staircase on to the roof, from whence the curious may obtain a view of the windows above this hall to which I have referred. I must not omit to mention the solar, or lord's chamber, which is the room above the library, connected with the chapel by a small doorway cut through the thickness of the wall. The western wing of the house was largely built by the Wakes in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, but the presence of a 14th century doorway at the top of the Queen Anne staircase, and a decorated buttress of the same period between the drawing-room and library, points to the former existence of buildings coeval with the hall. The whole of the interior of this part of the house was practically destroyed by fire, including a beautiful example of Jacobean mantelpiece with the Wake arms in the library, and one of the date of William and Mary in the drawing-room; also some ancient stained glass bearing the Wake knot and the family motto, "Wake and Pray," with the date 1570. Luckily the outside shell was robust enough to withstand the flames, and it still stands with the self-same ivy and creepers affectionately clinging to its dear old walls. The west front was restored by Sir Arthur some thirty years ago, as a former baronet, unfortunately possessed with the taste of the period, had pulled down the old west front and had put up what he conceived to be an improvement. I need not pain you by dwelling on the fact that the improvement was in the style commonly execrated as Strawberry Hill Gothic. It is now with slight exceptions practically the same as it was just

before the fire. In passing into the Elizabethan wing just touched upon you will notice the enormous thickness of the wall. When that part was being restored, Mr. Davis found that it was really a double wall, that is to say, when the builder of the time added to the house on that side he had not bored into the old wall to seek the support for his rafters and roofing, but had built up an entirely new wall alongside the old one, an example of labour and energy which the modern jerry builder might well take note of, though I could not recommend him to carry it out in detail. It was probably this extraordinary wall as much as anything else which saved the whole house from being destroyed by the flames. I must now draw your attention to the eastern wing of the house, especially to the kitchen. This room has been a good deal pulled about and altered at different times, but mainly it belongs to the same date as the hall. It originally reached from the ground to the roof, and extended to twice its present breadth, but other rooms have since encroached on its space in both directions. The walls are of great thickness. On either side of the southern gable of the kitchen are two beautiful little pinnacles of curious design, one of which is still in fair preservation. The kitchen communicated through an open court yard, and thence by the 14th century arches, with the hall. The buildings between the kitchen and the hall were originally much lower than those we now see, the upper storeys having probably been added by the Wakes. At the summit of the little gable, between the porch-room over the front entrance and the kitchen, you will notice a stone figure, supposed to be the bear and ragged staff of the King Maker. One has to be told this to believe it, as it might as well be an old lady with an umbrella from what we can see of it. However, there is method in our madness, for in the reign of Henry VI Thomas Wake held the manor of Clevedon of Richard, Earl of Warwick. Behind the kitchen, at the extreme north-east corner of the house, are the remains of a square tower which seems to belong to the

14th century period ; it has been much altered, cut down, and filled in with rooms. However, in an interesting picture, dating from Queen Anne, which hangs in the passage upstairs, the house and grounds are shewn surrounded by high walls, embattled here and there. A part of them, with an ivy-clad embrasure, still remain on the east side of the flower garden. The walls do not, I think, date back before the Jacobean period, for though cast in a somewhat earlier mould they altogether lack the strength and boldness of mediæval work. The front view of the house is generally recognised to be the finest, but to those who prefer to dwell on the rambling incongruities of an ancient pile I would recommend the view obtained from the "Esmond Terrace," which embanks itself picturesquely against the steep sides of the hill. From thence also one can plainly make out the original conformation of the more ancient parts of the building, somewhat in the shape of a capital H, the hall forming the cross stroke. And as you continue to gaze may you hear the echoes of that long forgotten day :—

" When men were less inclined to say,
That time is gold, and overlay
With toil their pleasure."

Before closing I would wish, as briefly as possible, to enumerate the different families who have held the court and manor of Clevedon, from the time of the De Clyvedons, who raised this hall, to the present day. From the De Clyvedons it passed by marriage to Thomas Hogshaw, thence in the same way to the Lovells, whom we find in possession in the first year of Henry IV, and again through their heiress, Agnes, to the Wakes. Roger Wake was attainted of treason in the first year of Henry VII, and forfeited all his rights ; he was, however, pardoned, and received restitution. Here we have the original counterpart of a deed of recovery against Roger Wake in 17 Henry VII, by which a large portion of the property was disentailed : the seal is that of the Court of

Common Pleas : also several files of accounts of about 1630, and a survey of the manor in 1629, which I discovered some time back in a cellar. They were in an old oak chest and wringing wet, yet the paper is as good, and the writing as clear as if it had been written yesterday ; they are in beautiful preservation. The Wakes sold the property to their kinsman, Digby, Earl of Bristol, and from the executors of the third earl of that name, in accordance with the directions in his will, it passed by sale in the seventh year of good Queen Anne, to the then head of the Elton family. I have now come to an end of my remarks. Before bidding adieu to the old place, however, I may perhaps remind you, though possibly not yet exactly of archæological interest, that hither have come in the less remote past Hallam the historian, Arthur Hallam, the hero of a pathetic and undying friendship ; Tennyson, who immortalized that friendship in "In Memoriam" ; Coleridge, Thackeray, and many another literary giant of a bygone age.

At the conclusion of the address Sir EDWARD FRY thanked Mr. Elton for the interesting description he had given them of the Court. The visitors then proceeded through the different rooms of the mansion, which are marked throughout by the beauty of antiquity. In answer to a lady, who asked which was the bedroom in which Thackeray was accustomed to sleep, Mr. Elton informed her that the great novelist visited Clevedon Court so often that he probably slept in every room in the house, at one time and another. Before leaving, the party ascended the turrets to the roof, where a delightful view of the picturesque grounds of the Court was obtained.

Clevedon Parish Church.

The party next drove to the parish church of St. Andrew, where Mr. EDMUND BUCKLE, hon. Diocesan Architect, commenced the first of his descriptions of the churches. He first of all remarked upon the distance it was from the Clevedon

Court House. In most parishes they found that the church was near the Court House, but here the Court House was right at the other end of the parish. It was a very interesting point, and one which he thought might well be worked out by local archæologists. The church was one which had its history plainly written upon it. There was certainly there in Norman times a small church of cruciform shape, with a central tower, but without aisles; and the nave was very much smaller than the present one. The two Norman arches remaining under the tower were remarkable for their oval shape, which gave them somewhat the effect of pointed arches. It was quite obvious that the original church had no aisles, by the buttresses which remained in the nave, and from the position of the buttresses it could be seen how much narrower the nave of the Norman church was than the present. The north transept still retained the Norman walls, but the chancel seemed to have been entirely rebuilt, though a large number of the Norman corbels have been preserved. The first great change in the plan of the church was the pulling down of the Norman nave in order to erect a larger nave, which took place probably in the 13th century. The new nave had no aisle any more than the Norman nave had. It was quite clear that the object of the re-building was to obtain a larger space, for the north-west corner of the nave was carried to the extreme limit available, and a wide splay cut off this angle externally to avoid interference with some object beyond or with the boundary of the churchyard, and the additional width of the new nave was obtained mainly on the south side, and so the nave was thrown much out of the centre of the chancel. There was no clerestory, and although the width of the Early English nave was the same as now, the height was very much less. The north transept was added at the same time as the nave. That, like the nave, was placed quite out of the centre of the arch leading to the tower, and for a similar reason—the desire for space and width. The eccentric position of the nave prevented the transept from being widened to-

wards the west, so all the additional width had here to be obtained on the east side, and the centre line was thrown a great deal to the east of the centre line of the tower. In spite of the great length of this transept there was only one small window in the east wall. After the completion of the nave and transept, the two tall arches looking towards this nave and transept were inserted in the tower, giving it a very lop-sided appearance. The next step in the growth of the church was the addition of the south aisle, which was of the Decorated period. The arcade should be specially noticed on account of the peculiar way in which the arches spring from corbels instead of capitals. The rood has been in two different places. Just over the Norman chancel arch, on the north side, could be seen an opening, which must have led into the rood loft at one time; but later on the rood loft was moved to a position west of the nave arch. With regard to the furniture of the church, the bench ends were noticeable from their having poppyheads—some were old and some new. Mr. Buckle referred to the reading-desk, which contained four panels of Dutch carving, each with an inscription in the Dutch language. Attention was called to the indications of a gallery in the porch, across the top of the south doorway, the purposes of which were not known. It, however, seemed clear that it must have been put there for some ritual purpose. They knew that in the middle ages the first part of the wedding service took place at the porch, and this gallery may have been for the musicians. At the conclusion of Mr. Buckle's description of the church, several of the party inspected the tomb of Arthur Hallam, who lies buried there. He was only in his twenty-third year when he died at Vienna, and his remains were brought to Clevedon for interment. His father, as is well known, was the celebrated historian of the Middle Ages, while his mother was Julia Maria, daughter of Sir A. Elton, Bart., of Clevedon Court. Tennyson's reference to his friend's last resting-place in his "In Memoriam," is well known.

Tea at Clevedon Hall.

After leaving the church, the party proceeded to Clevedon Hall, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hill, who had invited the archæologists to tea. Mrs. Hill graciously received the guests, and she and Mr. Hill and their sons and daughters were assiduous in their attentions to the wants of the party, who afterwards inspected the beautiful conservatories and grounds of the mansion, spending a most enjoyable time there.

The Evening Meeting.

In the evening a meeting was held in the Public Hall, Clevedon, for the reading of papers and discussion thereon. Sir EDWARD FRY presided.

A paper had been prepared by Mr. McMurtrie on "Ancient British or Roman Discoveries in the Quarries of Radstock," (*see* Part II), but Mr. McMurtrie was unable to attend through illness, and the paper was read by the Rev. H. H. WINWOOD. At the hall were exhibited a number of specimens to show the nature of the deposits.

At the conclusion of the paper, the CHAIRMAN said it was interesting to observe the remains of the pre-historic iron age, and that the second remains, supposed to be later, contained bronze. He thanked Mr. Winwood for reading the paper.

The Rev. E. H. BATES next read a learned paper on "The Five-Hide-Unit in the Somerset Domesday," his remarks being illustrated by a printed chart (*see* Part II).

The CHAIRMAN said they all knew that the investigation of hidage was one on which a great deal had been written, and on which a great deal of light was still required, and the paper just read was a very interesting contribution to it. It convinced them of one thing at least, that the difficulty of equal taxation was not a modern one. Their thanks were due to Mr. Bates for his interesting paper.