

The Excursion.

The first halting point of the pedestrian tour round Langport was the beautiful

Church of Quish Episcopi.

MR. J. H. PARKER explained the various points of interest in the building. He said it was a Church of several dates. The doorway was of the time of Henry II., but the outer door of the porch was of the 13th century. The walls were of the 14th century, and the arches were of the same date. The windows generally were of the 14th century; in some the tracery had been cut out, and the 15th century tracery put in. The Chapel appeared to have been thrown out in the 15th century; but in buildings of the Perpendicular style, it was difficult to fix dates. Accurate dates as to this style would be of the utmost service, and this was the county of all others to ascertain them in. The Church towers of Somerset were magnificent, and the tower of this Church was one of the finest specimens. Investigations of wills would bring forward a great deal of incidental and interesting information, and would often lead to the fixing of dates respecting the fabrics of old Churches. Cathedrals had a separate and certain fabric-fund, but parish Churches were built in former times, much as they are now, by public subscription. It was a popular opinion that these magnificent towers were built by the Monks in the time of Henry VIII., and that those ecclesiastics, when they found the money must go, preferred to spend it for the glory of God rather than for the good of the State. He was afraid that the idea, though a pretty one, was entirely

imaginary, inasmuch as the naves and towers of the Churches never did belong to the Monasteries. The chancel was left to the Monastery, but the nave was as much secular as ecclesiastical. The nave was always built by the laity, and not by the clergy; and he considered that these beautiful towers constituted a proof of the wealth of the county at the period of their erection. They were probably raised all through the 15th and down to the middle of the 16th century.

It was common to assume that they were all of the time of Henry VII. and Henry VIII., but he suspected that some of them might be earlier. The chancel windows of this Church were all of the 15th century. He regretted the absence of Mr. Freeman, who knew Somersetshire Churches better than any man in England. There had originally been two chantry Chapels, forming one aisle; but the windows were not built at the same time. The letters "I. H. U. S." in one of the stained glass windows, shewed that the Latin form of the name of our Saviour was used instead of the Greek, and was not, in his opinion, a reliable guide as to date. Although the ceiling was whitewashed, it was by no means a bad one, and seemed to be the original. The oblique opening in the corner of the chancel wall was popularly called "a squint," and enabled persons in the side aisle, or transept, to see the Priest at the altar, and also assisted the voice in a wonderful way. Ignorant people blocked up these openings, and he was pleased to see that the squint in this Church had been left open. The staircase-entrance to the rood-loft was ornamented; in most Churches it was plain.

After an inspection of the exterior of the Church, Mr. Parker directed the attention of the company to

the tower, one of the finest of its kind and type among the beautiful Somerset towers. The mode of filling up the belfry windows with stonework, instead of boards, was almost peculiar to this county, and was much to be admired. The recent restoration of the tower appeared to him to have been carefully executed. The parapet and battlements had certainly been well restored. He should be glad to see images restored to the niches ; for there was no probability of their being worshipped in these days, and an empty niche was an unmeaning thing. The pinnacles of the centre buttresses of the tower had been cut off ; and he was gratified to hear that it was intended to replace the pinnacles.

A visit was made to the old Vicarage House, on the opposite side of the road, to inspect old coats of arms inserted in the wall. Mr. Parker said the arms were those of Henry VII. ; the walls of the house had been re-built, and the stone door-ways, windows, and arms re-inserted.

The Hanging Chapel,

now occupied as a museum by Mr. E. Quekett, brother of the deceased Professor, was next visited. Mr. Parker said it was manifestly a very old building ; but it could not have been a gateway or part of a fortification, as there was no portcullis groove, and no gate-hinges. He ventured to question the interpretation given by Mr. Munckton of the name Hanging-Chapel, inasmuch as he knew several similar Chapels with the same title. He expected that in this case the story was made to fit the name, and not the name to fit the fact. Chapels over archways were called Hanging Chapels. Mr. Munckton declared quite true that three men were hung at that

Langport Church

was then inspected. MR. PARKER considered the tower to be of the time of Henry VII., and added sometime after the body of the Church was erected. A piece of sculpture over the inner door of the porch was very curious, representing a lamb inside a ring, the ring being held by two angels, and a bishop standing on either side. The chancel was the richest and best part of the Church; the ceiling was particularly good, and the richer part, as was often the case, was that over the altar. If the old colour of the ceiling were restored it would be a beautiful object, as it was a fine piece of work. The whole chancel was a fine specimen of Perpendicular work of about the 14th century. The badge of Richard III., the Paulett arms, and the Heron arms were to be seen in the stained glass of the east chancel window. The glass was good English glass of the period. English stained windows had more white glass than the windows of other nations, our ancestors having had the good sense to know that in this island light should not be shut out as in the south. The oblique opening, or squint, in the pillar had been left unstopped. The ceilings of the nave had been spoiled.

Subsequently the party visited the grounds of Mr. Vincent Stuckey, and Hurd's Hill, and walked round fields outside the town, under the guidance of the Rev. F. Warre, who pointed out what he believed to have been earthworks and other ancient British remains.

Shortly after six the members and their friends dined together at the Langport Arms.

Evening Meeting.

At eight o'clock a second meeting was held in the Town Hall, for the reception of papers and discussion.

The REV. T. HUGO read a paper on Athelney Abbey, and MR. WALTER BAGEHOT gave an account of the Battle of Langport during the Civil Wars of the time of Charles I., and the position taken and influence exerted by the Club-men of those days.
