## The Carthusian Church at Witham,

built in the 12th century, and recently restored, was the object of the visit. At the Dissolution the manor and rectory of Witham, with the site and remains of the monastery, were granted to Robert Hopton, Esquire. Of his family was Sir Ralph Hopton, Lord Hopton of Stratton, famous in the Civil Wars. By the marriage of his sister, he leaving no children, the estate passed to the Wyndhams.

Bishop CLIFFORD said that he had received a paper from Mr. Hunt, who had asked him to read it, as he was not able to be with them himself in time to do so.

Mr. HUNT's paper contained some remarks on the vaulting of the roof, and was to this effect:

## On the Stone Vaulting of the Carthusian Church at Witham.

The most interesting architectural question connected with this Church is the possibility of a change in the design of the interior roof. Whether a change has been made or not, it is probable that the present stone vaulting is the work of S. Hugh of Grenoble. The Carthusian Order was founded in 1080, by S. Bruno, a native of Cologne, who established a monastery at Chartreux, in the diocese of Grenoble, which then formed part of the Empire. S. Hugh was deeply impressed with the sanctity and discipline of this Order, and left the house of Canons to which he belonged, to enter the Chartreuse. The Order was not introduced into England for nearly a hundred years. Then Henry II began to build this house at Witham, and dedicated it to the honour of the Blessed Virgin, S. John Baptist and All Saints. The Order did not obtain any great share of popularity in England. Only nine Carthusian houses were established in this country. Two of these are in this county—the one at which we are met, the other at Hinton, called Locus or Atrium Dei. The king met with no small difficulties in the management of his new foundation. The first prior refused to stay in

England and face these difficulties; the second died shortly after his coming hither. Henry began to fear for the success of his work. Happily a new name, that of Hugh of Avalun, now Procurator of the Chartreuse, was suggested to him. This suggestion was made by a noble of Maurienne. Mr. Dimock has shown how this fact points out the probable date of the invitation to S. Hugh, for in 1173 Henry was in treaty with the Count of Maurienne concerning the proposed marriage of his daughter to John the King's son, and in 1176 this scheme was at an end, and John made another match. Henry sent Reginald, Bishop of Bath, to beg Hugh to take charge of his new house, and the bishop succeeded in his mission, though not without considerable difficulty. Hugh came over, and was made prior, probably, as Mr. Dimock points out, in 1176. He found the few monks who were still on the spot dwelling in wooden sheds enclosed by a small mound and paling. Not even the sites of the conventual buildings, of the major and minor churches, of the cells and the rest were as yet marked out. In a Carthusian house there were two sets of buildings: the one was for the monks who were in Holy Orders, and who lived a purely spiritual life; the other for the lay brethren or conversi, who carried on the secular work and service of the establishment. Each of these bodies had their own Church as well as their separate buildings. If, as Mr. Parker thinks almost certain, the remains of the monastic buildings, which still exist in the farm close by, were part of the lay brethren's dwellings or the guest house, then the Church in which we are met would be their Church, the *minor ecclesia* of the monastery. This is the more likely because, as Mr. Dimock points out in the *Metrical Life of S. Hugh*, the *major ecclesia* is spoken of as a Church with aisles—

> "Fabrica consurgit, multo sudata labore
> Artificum: solidasque bases, stabilesque columnas
> Machina sortitur, nullum lapsura per ævum,"

while the Church now standing has no aisles. But there was a village here, and no doubt a Parish Church, before the foundation

of the monastery. In a note to Mr. Dimock's preface to the *Magna Vita S. Hugonis*, he says, "As solitude was an essential requisite to the early Carthusians, his (S. Hugh's) first act was to have the inhabitants all removed to other places; and it is just posible that, finding their Parish Church newly built and fit for the purposes of the convent, he retained it as one of the Churches of his new foundation. This, however, is very improbable; and, indeed, our author seems clearly to intimate that Hugh built both the Churches, as well as the other parts of the two mansions." In support of this view Mr. Dimock refers to two passages, one of which speaks of the site of the Churches as not fixed at the time of the arrival of S. Hugh. "Neque enim diffinitum erat usque adhuc, ubi major, ubi minor ecclesia, illa monachorum cellis et claustris, hæc cum fratrum domunculis et hospitum diversoriis, aptius construi debuisset." (lib. 2, cap. 5). The other passage only speaks generally of the completion of the buildings. "Ipse, completa jam ædificatione utriusque mansionis, fratrum scilicet et monachorum, solitæ sanctæ conversationis exercitiis, quo liberius, eo et impensius vacabat." Neither of these quotations seems to me to be at all conclusive against the adaptation of a building already existing. When S. Hugh came nothing had been decided: he may have fixed on the Parish Church already standing as the *minor ecclesia* of his new house: and, if the present Church bears marks of any changes such as S. Hugh would have been almost sure to have made in an existing English Church, then it appears to me that it is most probable that the building in which we are met is the old Parish Church of Witham, converted by S. Hugh to the use of his Monastery, but which has since the Dissolution returned to its original purpose. Such a change can, I think, be traced in the substitution of the stone vaulting for the older wooden roof.

A stone vault would be an unusual covering for a Church built by an English architect; it would be the one which would most probably be part of the design of an architect from the continent. S. Hugh came into England, as Mr. Parker has

pointed out to me, at the time when the choir of Canterbury was being vaulted over by William of Sens. The choir of Conrad was destroyed by fire in 1174, and the work of rebuilding was at once entrusted by Archbishop Robert to William of Sens, who designed the stone vaulting and carried on the work, until, in 1178, he was disabled by a fall from the scaffolding. This was probably the first attempt made in England to cover over a large space with stone vaulting. Though this, certainly the noblest of roofs, occurs frequently in early as well as in late Norman work, it is found only over small spaces, such as apses and aisles. I do not know a single case in England of a Norman nave covered with a vault, which can be proved to be the original roof, except the Chapel of S. Peter ad Vincula in the White Tower; and this, from its smallness and its situation, cannot be reckoned as an exception. On the continent the case is different. In the large Romanesque Churches of Germany stone vaulting over the nave is common, and the shafts from which the vaults rise prove, (if indeed there could be any question about it,) that this was the original form of roof. Vaulting is the rule in the Romanesque Churches of Italy. In Normandy these Romanesque stone vaults are found (among other examples,) on a grand scale in the naves of S. Stephens and the Holy Trinity at Caen, and, though it is possible that the present vaults may not be original, yet there are indications in the arrangement of the buildings, which prove that they replace other stone vaults of the same date as the rest of the Churches. If, then, S. Hugh used a pre-existing Church for one of the Churches of his new foundation, he probably found one with a wooden roof; and in adapting and altering it to suit his own taste he changed this roof into a stone vault. Nor does this preference depend for its proof solely on *a priori* grounds however strong. The *Metrical Life* tells us that the *major ecclesia* was vaulted:

> "Nam testudo riget sursum, pariesque deorsum,
> Non putrescibili ligno, sed perpete saxo.

The Church, if it existed before the coming of the new prior,

was no doubt built in accordance with the usual English ideas, but when S. Hugh came over he would bring with him the tastes which were common in Burgundy and the neighbouring lands. The English architect was accustomed to the open timber roofs of the naves of English Churches. He probably looked upon them as a means of adding light and dignity to the building, while he considered vaulting more appropriate to the smaller areas of apse or aisle. To the foreigner, on the other hand, these timber roofs must have seemed mean; they must have suggested the idea of mere temporary coverings to a man whose eyes were wont to look on the solid and majestic vaulting of some Burgundian nave.

Is there any indication of such a change as I have supposed in the design of the roof of this Church? I have lately received a letter on this subject from my respected friend and instructor, J. H. Parker, C.B., whose weak health unfortunately obliges him to decline the fatigue of attending our meeting. In this he says, "At Lincoln we find that the walls of the choir of S. Hugh were begun and partly carried up for wooden roofs only. During the progress of the work stone vaults were decided upon. Greater strength was needed to carry the weight of these vaults, and we, accordingly, find that the walls were doubled in thickness. This was managed in a clumsy way, a new wall was added inside the older one, and buttresses were built on the outside to help to carry the weight." Mr. Parker thinks that a change of the same kind has been made here. S. Hugh, who insisted on the stone vault over the choir of his Cathedral Church at Lincoln, was no doubt equally determined that his lesser as well as his greater Church at Witham should be covered with that roof, which to his eyes must have seemed most decorous. An interesting indication of this change still remains. On a visit which I paid to this Church during the progress of its late restoration in company with Mr. Parker, he pointed out to me a doorway in the north wall in the interior of the nave. Of this doorway there is no trace in the wall on the

outside. S. Hugh then found this Church built for a timber roof, probably covered with one. He naturally disliked this, and insisted upon stone vaulting; the walls were not strong enough to carry the increased weight, and, as he afterwards added an inside wall to the Lincoln choir, so here he added an outside wall to uphold the vaulting with which he covered the nave of his *minor ecclesia*. Mr. Parker is inclined to the opinion, which is, I believe, held by the able architect of the restoration, that this change was made in a Church which already belonged to the monks and had been built by them at the first foundation of the house, and used by them up to this time. It is thought that S. Hugh must have found a Conventual Church already built here, or else how could the monks have worshipped during the rule of the two earlier priors? This difficulty arises from being misled by the fact that S. Hugh was the third prior, and thus exaggerating the time which passed between the foundation of this house and his appointment to rule over it. In point of fact we need not trouble ourselves about these two earlier priors, for they probably held office for a very short time. Of the first the *Magna Vita* says, "Qui vero prædictis fratribus prior fuerat designatus, ad breve vix tempus in Anglia degere acquievit." And when we read that among the causes of his disgust was "ritus gentis alienigenæ," we may be pretty sure that he, at least, had no Church of his own in which he could order matters to his mind: indeed it is abundantly evident that he was disgusted with all things. Of the second the same authority says, "qui tædio simili affectus, morte beata finem laborum et vitæ initium citius accepit." Besides this the words I have already quoted—"neque enim diffinitum erat usque adhuc ubi major ubi minor ecclesia * * * aptius construi debuisset"—are conclusive against there being any Conventual Church here on the arrival of S. Hugh; but they by no means exclude the probability of there being a parochial Church here, which he afterwards determined to use as the *minor ecclesia* of his monastery. This indeed seems to me to have been the case. The vaulting is

evidently an addition; it is no necessary part of the Church, for there are no vaulting shafts. The walls are evidently doubled; the inside was finished first, the outside was added afterwards, blocking up the little doorway on the north side of the nave. This was done for strength to uphold the new vault. There was then an older Church, built for, and no doubt fitted with, an open timber roof. This older Church was not Conventual, for the very sites of the two Conventual Churches were not fixed upon at the time of the coming of S. Hugh. The Church, then, in which we are met, was probably the old Parish Church: its roof was changed and its walls were doubled by S. Hugh, and it was made the lesser Church of the Charterhouse here. It has now returned to its earlier uses.

The PRESIDENT next requested Mr. W. White, F.S.A., the architect of the restoration, to give some account of the work lately done.

Mr. WHITE said: I am glad to have heard the remarks and the letter relative to the work of St. Hugh, before entering upon my description. The suggestion as to the probable thickening of the walls to carry the vaulting was, I think, first made by myself. To this I shall refer presently, but it is necessary first to call attention to what seems an error with reference to Hugh being the first abbot, as has been stated, instead of being, as will clearly appear from history, the third. I remark this for architectural reasons which will appear presently[6]. The date given

(6). I have since found that I misunderstood the gist of Mr. Hunt's argument. His view is a very probable one, that this was the old Parish Church converted into the *Minor Ecclesia* of the Monastery; or, on the traditional supposition that this is only the chancel of a larger Church now destroyed, it may have been even the *Major Ecclesia*, which had pillars and aisles, the chancel being made over for conventual purposes, which was not infrequently done, as at Boxgrove, Arundel, &c. The nave in this case may have been destroyed by the decay of the roof, whilst the chancel was saved by the protection afforded by the vaulting alone. A remark made in Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary* is interesting if not wholly reliable. The italics are mine. "Here was *antiently* a nunnery; and *subsequently*, in 1181, a monastery... .. ..was founded by Hen. II in honour of the Blessed Virgin, St. John the Baptist and All Saints, which at the Dissolution had a revenue of £227 1*s.* 8*d.* The ruins were taken down in 1764, and a farm house now stands upon its site."

for the mission of monks from the Royal Chartreuse is stated to be 1181; but it would appear, from Mr. Dimock's preface to his *History of St. Hugh*, as quoted by Mr. Parker in the appendix to his paper on the "English Origin of Gothic Architecture,"[7] to have been in 1175 that Hugh himself came. The establishment must have existed already for some years, for he was the third prior; and he found the monks in a very discouraged and disorganised condition, living in temporary wooden huts. No grant of a site for a monastery had yet been made. He obtained this grant for them; and having provided all the requisite buildings, he left them in a flourishing condition.

Now this Chapel has been supposed to have been entirely built by Hugh; but it is not at all probable that the community could have held together in any way whatever for so many years, without having commenced their very first requisite, a Chapel for the perpetual office of their Order; and they would commence it with the intention of giving it some degree of permanency, although they might in the first instance make only a temporary roof. And when Hugh came he would not be likely to sacrifice all that they had expended upon it, and, wishing it to be put upon a more permanent footing, and having a knowledge of vaulted construction, he would naturally wish to adopt this as the most perfect means of effecting his object. In order to carry this vaulting it was necessary to thicken the walls of the building, which was already roofed in, in some way or other. And this is the only theory which will satisfactorily account for the evident difference in date between the round-headed windows and the vaulting, which is of pointed character, and it is quite exceptional to have corbels instead of vaulting shafts at this period. Now I must ask you to keep all this in mind, as it will have a material bearing upon a number of details to which I shall have to call attention in my description of the Church, and of what has been done, to which we will now proceed.

Prior to the restoration its plan consisted only of two bays

(7). *Archæologia*, vol. xliii.

besides the apse: we have added a third. It has been supposed to be only the portion of a larger Church. But this is impossible from its general form, proportion, and character. We found, moreover, the original half-corbel and springing of the vaulting ribs still imbedded in its original position on either side at the west end of the nave, though the west wall had been entirely removed and rebuilt in order to carry the tower, which was put up in 1828. In removing that wall to make way for the tower the builders let the vaulting of the western bay tumble down. They reconstructed it in timber framework, covered with lath and plaster, jointed to imitate stone. This we have replaced with new stone-work, to correspond with the old bays, except with regard to the vaulted surfaces, which have been executed in cut stone.

Another reason against this having been the portion only of a larger Church is, that the old marks of the sancte bell were found at the commencement of the apse. This bell would have been at the west end of the chancel had there been a nave. There might, however, have been a vestibule or narthex at the west end, such as still exists in several Churches in England. It is certain that some appendage at the west end was taken down, but there is no tradition as to what it was. Nor was it in any way a parish Church, or intended as such, till after the year 1458, when the Prior, John Porter, obtained a license to lay out a cemetery about the chapel in the Priory to bury secular persons who lived in the district, and to have a font in the chapel and a chaplain.

Unfortunately the foundations, being upon the slope of a clay hill, were insecure, and the pressure of the vaulting increased by the insecurity of roof, had thrown the walls about 10 inches out of upright on the north side and 12 inches on the south. In order to obviate this we have added massive buttresses as Hugh himself did at Lincoln; but we have made them flying buttresses, so giving greater resistance and security, and interfering less with the old work.

The vaulting is of the ordinary quadripartite form, with chamfered transverse and diagonal ribs, intersecting at apex. There are no wall ribs on either side. The filling is of a tufus stone, taken from a quarry long since exhausted in one of the neighbouring hills. The ribs are carried on a semi-octagonal corbel, consisting of abacus, bell-mould, and necking, of fine and delicate profile, with dwarf attached shafts. The finish and bond of the lower stone clearly shew that these were never carried down as vaulting shafts, as some have supposed; and from the manner of the bonding we might well conclude that they were insertions. The square trefoil-headed double piscina on the south of the apse appears to be of the same date. The east window is an insertion of the present century. We found it necessary, however, to lower it considerably, in order to come below the wall-plate of the new roof; and the semi-circular curve of the apse had been flattened off externally to admit this window. This curve has now been made good, but the window has been retained rather than restore what would clearly have been the original, viz., a round-headed window, making the seventh to correspond with the six side windows north and south. The east window had already been entirely removed and supplanted by another about the middle of the 15th century, there being an inner curtain rib of this date still remaining.

On the north side is a rood-loft staircase in the thickness of the wall, with upper and lower doorways of the same date, made probably by the Prior, John Porter, already referred to. Near this is a side door of earlier date, originally intended, no doubt, for communication with the monastic buildings. This doorway, finished inside with a very low segmental arch (not pointed), was blocked, and no indication remained of its exterior quoins. This doorway has been the subject of much discussion; but upon the whole we may conclude that it was filled up by Hugh, when he thickened the walls; for you will have observed that there is a handsome and well-cut double plinth all around the building. This plinth is one which would scarcely have been attempted by

the monks in their primary condition, and it was carried across this doorway, above the sill, in a manner which must have prevented its use.

We now come to the windows. These were supposed to be of the Georgian period. They are of somewhat ugly proportions, with round heads and large splays on the outside as well as on the inside. I found upon examination, however, that the original external rebate with fillet and part of internal splay had been cut away, the original section still remaining upon the sill nearly perfect. It would have been more satisfactory in some respects to have restored these windows, which had been thus spoilt, not only in their detail, but in their proportions also. I found, however, that their restoration would involve more destruction of existing work than I felt justified in making, and I, therefore, left them as they were. Now there is, as I said, a large splay *outside*, which is continued round the head as well as the jamb. In this arched head is a line or joint of masonry, about 11 inches from the surface of the wall, shewing a distinct outer arch built against the inner one. Several of these were somewhat displaced, and upon removing one of them I found that the inner arch had been finished complete and exposed to the surface. And it was this, first of all, that suggested to me the idea that the walls had been thickened to this extent; some of the jamb stones having been drawn or cut back for bonding. And the same thing was *attempted* on *one* of the south arches; but the builders found it better to add the arch as a separate piece of masonry, only continuing the splay to match the other. And this was doubtless done on account of the difficulty they would have had in supporting their poor rubble wall, *if the old arched head had been taken out for the purpose of making the new one.* This I consider to be one of the most interesting and remarkable features to be found in this little Church. There is a somewhat rudely chamfered set-off at the level of the sills of the windows, running all round the building. The walls above this set-off are now from 4 ft. 4 in. to 4 ft. 5 in., and below it 4 ft. 9 in. in thickness. The

whole thickness originally appears to have been but 3 ft. 5 in. There is in the body of the wall no mark of the thickening, and the mortar externally is as nearly the same in quality as in the inner part, but, perhaps, not quite so good. With such a rubble-built wall the outside facing would be easily removed to admit of being rebuilt with its increased thickness, the mortar having in it but little lime and but very little tenacity. The old putlog-holes would be used again for the scaffolding for the new thickened facing. In some cases the putlogs, not being sufficiently straight to be drawn, were cut off and left to decay in the walls, the holes elsewhere being filled in with masonry.

When the present restorations were commenced the building was covered with rough plastering. This was required to keep out the weather from the loosely-built rubble work. Much of it was falling, and the walls seemed scarcely firm enough to hold it. I was pressed to retain this or to renew it, for the sake of the protection it afforded to the walls; and also because the work was supposed to be unfit to shew, and the building to have been plastered originally. I could see, however, no direct evidence of this having been the case, and I found that a very much stronger and firmer finish could be made of it by having good mortar well pressed into the loose work and pointed. This, therefore, was effected. I do not myself see what interest there would have been in the uniformly flat surface of the plastering, or what beauty or association, except the "idea" of its having been, *perhaps*, thus rudely finished originally.

I felt the same also with reference to the modern western tower. It was an incongruous erection. Its east wall was in an insecure condition. Enlargement was required in the Church, and, in spite of what the Conservationists might say as to thus sacrificing a sacred relic of a past generation, I offer no apology for having advised its removal for the purpose of adding a bay to the Church and of building in its place a somewhat massive and lofty bell gable to carry the three old bells.

In adding this bay I have not followed the exact precedent of the old building, which would, I presume, have involved also an imitation of all the old features, even to the very thickening of the arches of the windows. But I have treated it in a manner which can in no way be mistaken for the original or confuse its history.

The most critical question with regard to the work was as to what should be done with reference to the roof. The roof was a modern one, constructed partly with old timbers on piers, built at such improper intervals as not to correspond with the main divisions of the vaulting, which was still spreading under its weight; and the piers had already separated everywhere an inch or two from the parapet. My first impression was to retain the parapet, as I had seen done at the small village Church of Easton, near Winchester, a building of somewhat earlier date than this. And it was said to have been the original treatment, though bald and ugly, with a roof of less than 45° pitch behind it. I did propose, however, to add to this a corbel table; and I proposed a roof of equilateral pitch. This steep roof was strongly opposed by some who had the best right to offer an opinion, on the ground that a Church of this date would not be likely to have a high roof. I had, however, discovered amongst the re-used timbers the portion of an old principal, with tenons for two purlins and for two collars, which shewed most unmistakably the equilateral pitch of the old roof; but upon further consideration I came to the conclusion that the parapet must be an entire innovation, and upon sending down to examine beneath the rough-cast the line of the old wall-plate was found, within a few inches of the position which I had indicated. After taking down the old parapet the original wall-plate was found crumbled to dust on the top of the wall at this height. The fact of the height of the top of the vaulting reaching above the level of the wall-plate made a tie-beam impossible, and the height of the lower collar in the old principal was just such as to escape contact with the stone work. Amongst the rubble and

rubbish filled in over the old wall-plate we found several fragments of stained glass and encaustic tiles.

The original font, evidently the one referred to as having been put up by John Porter, was found buried in the foundation of the tower on its removal. It has now been reinstated for its proper use, taking the place of a small one given when the tower was built. This modern one has been placed out of the way, in the recess of the north door before referred to.

I trust that the recent restoration is not one which can be said to have converted a 12th century into a 19th century Church, and that the history of so interesting a building, instead of being either destroyed or concealed and lost beneath the incrustations of the present day, has rather on the contrary rendered its elucidation and transmission to succeeding generations more safe and permanent than if the work had been merely patched and sustained in its old wretched state when taken in hand.

The company then paid a visit to the remains of what are held to have been either the buildings of the Domus Conversorum or the Guest House.

On their return they visited the

## Parish Church of Bruton,

where they were addressed by Mr. Carpenter, under whose directions extensive restorations had been carried out.

Mr. CARPENTER said: The Church is one of the grandest examples in England of the style of architecture prevalent at the end of the 15th century, and for which Somersetshire and Dorsetshire are particularly famous; there seems, indeed, to have been a feeling in these counties for rebuilding their Churches at this period. Here then, as in so many other Churches of the district, we do not find many traces of earlier work. At Bruton there can be no doubt that a parish Church existed from the earliest times, probably even so far back as the time of Canute and onwards, for coins were struck here at that time, and are occasionally found. In the time of the Saxons, too, the place

was of importance, for in 1005 a Benedictine Priory was established, in which great interest was felt by Ina, King of the West-Saxons, and his kinsman St. Aldhelm the first Bishop of Sherborne, in which diocese Bruton then was. Bishop Aldhelm presented a marble altar to the Abbey Church. We need not go further into the history of the Abbey than to mention that the son of Sir William de Mohun (to whom William I gave the Manor of Bruton), established in 1142 a Priory of Black Canons, on the old foundation, which, taking the style of Abbey in the time of Abbot Gilbert, was suppressed in his successor's days. Not much remains of the Abbey buildings beyond some materials re-used in the great buttressed wall next the vicarage, and the prior's house, on which are the arms and badge of the Mohuns and John Henton, prior in 1448. The Abbey property and the Manor of Bruton then passed into the hands of Sir Maurice Berkeley, standard bearer to King Henry VIII, and were subsequently purchased by Sir Henry Hoare in 1776.[8]

The parish Church (never a part of the Abbey) was strictly parochial; there are but few traces of the earlier building which stood here before the great rebuilding in the 15th century. It seems, however, that a small chancel, of apparently 14th century date, was removed in 1770, to make way for the present incongruous one. It is probable that the western tower was the first great work of rebuilding commenced, for on its eastern face is the stonework which fitted to the line of a steeper and more ancient roof than we now see. This tower is a very noble one, pre-eminently so, even in this county of noble towers. It is in a very pure 15th century style, and has a very rich belfry stage, with great windows, filled with perforated stonework. Over the west window are three (now empty) niches of beautiful design. The interior of the tower opens into the nave by a lofty arch, and was originally groined with "fan" vaulting in stone; of this only the shafts and springers remain, the rest has disappeared,

(8). The Abbey Church and buildings, I am told by Mr. Mackenzie Walcott, stood *eastwards* of the present Church.

and has been replaced by a poor imitation in plaster, which will before long make way for stonework again. During the restorations a very curious and interesting crypt was discovered in the centre of the chancel, extending under the earlier end of the nave. It was in six compartments, vaulted in stone resting on pillars, octagonal in plan, and reached by a ruinous winding stairway of early date. In its side walls were blocked-up *windows*, thus proving that a chancel of smaller dimensions and a nave of less length than now had stood upon it, and were destroyed, or partially so, when, towards the end of the 15th century, in the reign of Henry VII and the episcopate of Richard Fox of Bath and Wells, the great work of reconstruction of the nave and aisles was commenced. Unfortunately we do not know for certain by whom these works were undertaken. The Godolphins, however, bore a great part, as their crest is found on the carved panel under the cornice of the nave roof (on the south side in the easternmost bay), and it occurs again on a shield in the parapet of the north aisle, with a mitre and another device, and on another shield are the letters W.G. There is also carved the rebus of the name Bruton. It is probable that the nave roof was first completed, and then the aisle roofs, as these last are rather later in the character of their mouldings. The nave roof is divided into five bays, with carved tie-beams and tracery over. There are also intermediate arched timbers, with deep pendents most richly carved. The whole surface under the rafters is panelled, with bosses of carving at the intersections of the mouldings, and angels of various sizes with outspread wings are placed at intervals under the timbers and on the tie-beams. The eastern beam and a small portion of the mouldings adjoining are decorated with gold and colour, as frequently was the case where there was a rich rood-loft. The arches on each side are five in number, with large clerestory windows over, in which some fragments of the rich stained glass which once filled them are still preserved. Between the windows are niches with pinnacles and canopies, supported on shafts and carved angels.

The aisle roofs are quite as rich as those of the nave, and the eastern ends have even more delicate carving and panel work. At the east end of the north aisle was a chapel, and on the roof over it are carved and painted the instruments of our blessed Lord's Passion. In the north wall of this chapel was found a curious recess, the shape of which tends to the belief that in it was formerly a large picture of the Crucifixion; the carving above, too, would make it likely that this would be the subject. Westwards of this chapel was another dedicated to S. Catherine. The roof is picked out in vermillion and green, and there is an ancient inscription on the cornice, thus—"ȿANCTA CATHERINA WIRGINIȿ ORA. P. NOBIS." At the east end of the south aisle was also a chapel, the piscina of which still remains, with a richly-carved roof; and adjoining it, suspended to the roof, is the wooden-carved canopy of a tomb (most likely that of the founder), which stood under it, and has now disappeared. This chapel seems to have been appropriated by Sir Maurice Berkeley, at the Dissolution of the Abbey, for his initials M. B. are painted on the shields and bosses of the roof. The Berkeley family used the ancient chancel crypt as their burial vault, and many coffins are now in it. (The curious rise from west to east is caused by the passage having to pass over the arch of the vault into the chancel.) Each aisle or chapel had its own entrance doorway. That on the north has a porch, over which are built two rooms, reached by a turret stairway, probably for the use of the chantry priest. The effect of this lofty porch, or rather tower, is very fine. Over the external door is a square stone, on which can be traced the outline of the Crucifixion and the figures of S. Mary and S. John.

There was formerly a grand and lofty rood-loft across the chancel arch (this fine arch was discovered under a wretched modern one, built at the time of the erection of the chancel!) The turret stairs and doorway to it still exist. This rood-loft and screen seem to have returned round and surrounded the aisle chapels, and to have been also reached by stair turrets in each

outer wall, portions of which yet remain. Small pieces, in the shape of traceried panels, of these screens are worked up in the later rennaisance screen now in the west tower.

Early in the 17th century the Church was re-seated and the roofs repaired, and the before-mentioned screen, bearing date 1620, was erected. The roofs were again repaired in 1771.

In 1866 the state of the walls and roofs became very bad, and the opinions of Mr. W. Slater and Mr. R. H. Carpenter, architects, of London, were taken, and acting under their advice the restorations have been carried out. Mr. Slater died in 1872; and latterly the works have been continued under Mr. R. H. Carpenter and his partner, Mr. B. Ingelow, by Messrs. Clarke and Son, builders, of Bruton.

The work has been one of much difficulty, and has required the greatest care. The whole of the north wall and arcade of the nave had to be rebuilt, being thrust by the roof considerably to the northwards and much dislocated. The roofs have been most carefully repaired, only inserting new timber where absolutely necessary; in the case of the great tie-beams, for instance, new ends had to be put on, the old ends having become utterly rotten through the defective gutters. The rest of the work is renewed in a similar "conservative" manner, the result being that few would know that the old roofs had been taken off or been much interfered with. The lost and defective carving and angels wings have been replaced, on the patterns of the ancient work, by Messrs Pepper and Son, of Brighton, under the architects' directions.

The stonework generally has been cleaned and repaired, and new pinnacles put up where they formerly existed on the parapets of the nave and south aisle, and on the north tower. The 12 empty niches have been filled with figures, in stone, of the Apostles, each with his emblem, these are by Mr. Owen Thomas, of London.

The whole of the nave and aisles have been repaved and re-seated, working in the fine old oak bench ends of the 17th

century; and the western gallery, which blocked up the tower, has been removed, and the organ placed in a new chamber built for it on the south side of the chancel.

There yet remains to be effected, the alteration of the present incongruous chancel into one which will harmonise with the church, and for which sketch-plans have been prepared by the architects.

A beginning has been made towards the much to be desired filling of the windows with stained glass, for glass by Messrs. Clayton and Bell has been placed in the west window of the tower. The object of this window (which is inserted by the Bennett family) is recorded on a brass. The figures represented include our Lord in Majesty, with angels under Him, and below are the Blessed Virgin and S. Joseph, S. Anne, S. Thomas, together with the proto-Christian martyr S. Stephen, and the proto-British martyr S. Alban. Below these are figures of persons connected with the history of Bruton—King Ina and Bishop Aldhelm, and Henry VII and Bishop Fox, together with the Patron Saints of England, S. George and King Edward the Confessor.

The total cost of the works up to the present time may be stated at about £4,500.

After Mr. Carpenter's address a visit was paid to the Abbot's House, which stands in the centre of the town, and bears the arms of the Abbey. From this the party next went to the Hospital, founded in the early part of the seventeenth century by Hugh Sexey. The building is picturesque, and a good specimen of late Gothic work at a time when the rage for classicalism was fast displacing the older styles of building.

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## The Evening Meeting

was held in the King's School, the President taking the chair soon after 8 p.m.: it was well attended.

Mr. JOHN BATTEN laid on the table a copy of a Cartulary of Bruton Abbey, belonging to the Earl of Ilchester. It was taken as read, and the thanks of the Society were voted to Mr. Batten for the trouble which he had taken in making this document public. A wish was expressed that the Cartulary should be published by the Society; but it is too long to find a place in our *Proceedings*.

BISHOP CLIFFORD read a paper on the "Roman road between Exeter and Caerleon," which will be found in Part II.

Rev. E. L. BANWELL considered that the Bishop was robbing the Welsh of one of their roads and importing it into England.

Rev. JAS. BENNETT read an interesting paper on the "Barrows at Cadbury," by Professor Rolleston, and a "Notice of some Explorations made in the neighbourhood," by Col. Lane Fox. By the kindness of the Anthropological Society, for which these papers were originally written, we have been allowed to print them in our *Proceedings*, and they will be found in Part II.

Mr. E. GREEN next read a short account of the "King's March through Somerset, July 1644," which will also be found in Part II.

This brought the work of the Evening Meeting to a close.