

Second Day's Proceedings.

On Wednesday morning the members left Grove Park in brakes for Bleadon, Axbridge, the Brents, and Brent Knoll Camp. The weather was very favourable, both on this day and throughout the Meeting.

Bleadon Church.

On leaving the brakes, the party inspected the Cross (figured in Pooley's *Crosses of Somerset*, p. 66) on the way up to the Church, where they were met by the Rector, the Rev. J. T. Langdale. Before entering the Church, Dr. F. J. ALLEN made the following remarks on the tower:—

“This tower belongs to the leading type of the Mendip district, namely, those having three windows abreast,—the triple window class. The principal towers of this class in the West Mendip district are those of Banwell and Winscombe, and this tower is a later and inferior derivative from their design. The peculiar features of this tower are; (1) the diagonal buttresses; in all other related towers they are rectangular, at least in their lower part; (2) the situation of the staircase at a corner; it is usually on one side, *near* a corner; (3) the great distance between the window-sill and the top string-course: the effect is better when they coincide.”

The party then went into the church where the President, Lt.-Colonel J. R. BRAMBLE, F.S.A., delivered the following address:—

“The church is said by Collinson to be dedicated to St. Peter, and this is followed in the Diocesan Kalendar. Weaver's *Somerset Incumbents* says SS. Peter and Paul. It consists of a nave, chancel, western tower and south porch. There are two arches in the wall on the north side of the eastern portion of the nave, intended to communicate with a north aisle or chantry chapel. This is stated, but I have been unable to find the

authority, to have been dedicated to St. Paul. The arches are now only visible from the outside, the interior having been liberally coated with plaster. West of these arches there are signs of the junction of a west wall.

“The two eastern bays of the chancel form the oldest part of the existing church (*Som. Arch. Soc. Proc.* III, pt. ii, 20). They are of good Geometrical work, and Mr. Freeman describes them as some pleasing work of that era. It appears by an entry in the Wells Registers that the chancel and high altar were dedicated 1317 (*Collinson* III, 571). The eastern window (modern) of three trefoiled acute lancets under a containing arch, and the four two-light side-windows are of very good design and proportion. All these windows have five foiled rear-arches and filleted hood-mouldings. Between the two south windows is a priest's door with five trefoiled cusps externally and a five-foiled ogee rear-arch. The window west of door is continued below a transom so as to form a ‘low side-window.’ The upper part of each light in the latter has tracery in the form of a pointed quatrefoil. There is a deep internal, but no external, splay.

“South of the altar is a plain slab of large size under an ogee arch in the wall. This might have been an Easter sepulchre although they are not usually on the south.

“The nave and western bay of the chancel of the same date of Perpendicular. I am disposed to think that a central tower formerly occupied the position of this western bay, standing between the chancel and nave—no transepts—in a similar manner to Christon. The present western tower was substituted about 1370.

“The pulpit of stone in the north-eastern corner of the nave is a modern enlargement of a former one. The font is Norman or very Early English. The remains of the stair and entrance to the rood-loft are by the pulpit.

“On the south side of the chancel within the altar rails are lying two interesting sepulchral effigies. For many years

these lay in the churchyard south of the church—at one time separately, but subsequently side by side. But they are not a pair—they are separate and distinct memorials. They are figured in Mr. Roland Paul's *Inscribed and Sepulchral Slabs of North-west Somerset*, and described as 'man and woman.' The effigies are much worn, but a careful examination shows that Mr. Paul's description is a mistake. Both are distinctly male—it may be sufficient to say that in no female effigies of the date are the feet and ankles exposed. The error is continued in the Rev. W. Jackson's *Visitors' Handbook*.

"The slabs on which the effigies repose are respectively of 6ft. 6in. and 6ft. in length, and are wider at the head than at the feet—the ancient coffin shape. On the longer the figure is under a trefoiled projecting canopy: the head rests on two cushions, the lower placed square and the upper diagonally.

"The neck is bare. On the head is a low-crowned hat with a narrow brim turning downwards. The ears are very prominent, the hair short. The gown extends to the knees: it falls in close folds (like a pleated alb): there is no girdle. There is a large square pouch, or gypciere, on the left side supported by a strap over the right shoulder. The right hand rests on the head of a staff—the lower portion missing. The left arm is also worn away. From below the knee the legs and feet are shown but they and the remains of some animal at the feet are too much worn for description.

"The shorter effigy differs somewhat in detail from the other. There is no canopy, the hair hangs in long locks, the pouch—square—is on the right side, the suspending strap coming straight down from the right shoulder. The hands are in the attitude of prayer. The feet and ankles uncovered. The gown hangs in loose folds from the shoulders, and has apparently a scapular shaped garment over it. There is a small shoulder cape, with sleeves tight to the elbow, where they terminate in short liripipes. There are vestiges of an animal at foot.

“The date of these effigies may be put at c. 1350, about the same period as that of the present nave and the western bay of the chancel. Probably they were originally in the chapel, of which they or one of them may well have been the founders.

“Gasquet, in his *Great Pestilence*, preface 18, 19, speaking of ‘the Black Death’ (1348-9) writes: ‘The New Religious Spirit found outward expression in the multitude of Guilds which sprung into existence at the time even the very adornment and enrichment of the Churches bears witness to the change. . . . Moreover the source of all this wealth and elaboration is another indication of the change that had come over the country. Benefactions to the church are no longer contributed entirely or at least chiefly by the great nobles, but they are now the gifts of the burgher folk and middle classes in fact the 15th century witnessed the beginnings of a great middle-class movement which can be distinctly traced to the effect of the great pestilence.’

“The carving in the east wall of the porch was probably the former head of the village cross, still standing by the west entrance to the churchyard.

“The celebrated William de Edington, afterwards (1345) Bishop of Winchester, became Rector of Bleadon, by exchange in 1321.”

MR. F. BLIGH BOND, F.R.I.B.A., has sent the following note on the chancel of Bleadon Church:—

“The existing chancel is of two dates, the eastern section being apparently of early XIV Century character, with a western addition of Perpendicular character.

“It would appear as though the central part of the original church had been pulled down, and if cruciform, as was very possibly the case, the central section rebuilt in connection with the chancel.

“But the chancel, as it stands now, is almost disproportionately short, when judged by ancient standards, and if the later portions were subtracted, what would remain would be

less than we should ever expect to find in a church of this date.

“Moreover, there is a problem internally which requires solution. There is a recess for a founder’s tomb formed in the south wall, but instead of this being placed at some distance westward of the sanctuary, it abuts upon the east wall, and there is no room left for sedilia, piscina, or other customary features.

“The low side window on this side also appears now in the centre of the south wall of the chancel, instead of at its western extremity.

“All these incongruities appear to be fully explained by a remark made by a late sexton of the place to a member of the Somerset Archæological Society some time ago. He said that in former times the chancel was twelve feet longer, but that for some reason it had been decided to shorten it, by bringing in the east wall.¹

“Mention was made at the summer meeting (1905) of a supposed chantry on the north side of the nave of this church, but an examination of the existing external features, such as the plinth mould, etc., shews that the north wall stands as it was in the XV Century.

“There are traces of arches in the masonry of the wall, but these seem to indicate the former existence of windows merely, not of an open arcade.”

Axbridge Church.

The drive was resumed through picturesque scenery to the ancient town of Axbridge, which possessed a corporation until 1886, and at one time returned a member to parliament. The visitors were welcomed at the church by the Rector, the Rev. H. Toft.

1. I think there can be no question of the truth of the statement as regards the chancel.

THE PRESIDENT (Colonel Bramble) described the church. He said :—

“Axbridge Church stands near the centre of the town, near the base of the foot-hills of the Mendip range. It comprises a chancel of two bays, with a chapel on each side of the western bay ; transepts, central tower, nave (no clerestory) of four bays, with north and south aisles ; south and west porches, the latter of large dimensions and with stone benches. West of the nave is a two-storey building known as the ‘Treasury.’ It may well have been used for that purpose, either solely or combined with accommodation for a caretaker. The upper room contains a chest with three panels (mitred) in front and three locks. The window has double gratings. In the angle between the chancel and the chapel north of it was formerly a building with pentice roof, which *may* have been a sacristy, but as its only apparent communication with the church was by a small loop or squint looking towards the high altar, I am inclined to consider it as an Ankerhold. These were much more common in England than is generally realized, and were frequently attached to churches.

“The ceiling of the nave is probably of the date of Charles I, and added when the church was restored, 1636, the date given on the west wall of the tower. It is ‘lace-work’ in plaster, with a pendant to each alternate rib. The roof of the chancel is modern, that of the aisles is panelled.

“The tower has fan-tracery, with a bell aperture. The parapets here and throughout the church are of diamond pattern, quatrefoiled and pierced, and the octagonal stair-turret is at the north-east angle. The peculiar feature of the internal arrangements is that there was a ‘double rood-loft’ (?). In addition to the rood-loft in its usual position (in a cruciform church) west of the tower, with its stair, in this case on the south side, there is a second stair east of the tower on its north side, opening from the north chapel. This is in connection with a beam crossing the east arch of the tower at a height of

some eight feet. The marks of this and subsidiary fittings are plainly visible. Similar stairs and marks will be found at Wedmore, Clevedon, and Crewkerne, and in other cruciform churches. It has been suggested that a platform connected the two galleries, and that this was used for miracle plays, but I can find no structural or other ground for such a suggestion. The nave pillars are square, with waved chamfers at the angles, and a three-quarter attached shaft on each face.

“There are a piscina and triple sedilia in south wall of chancel.

“Many Masons Marks will be found in the north wall of the north aisle.

“In the floor of the south chapel is a brass to Roger Harper, merchant, and his wife Joan, 1493.

“There are six bells, but none of age, having been recast in 1800 and later.

“The font stands north of the western entrance. It is octagonal with clustered shaft with trefoiled panels. At the angles are angels, bearing plain shields.”

The Rev. H. TOFT also gave some particulars about the church, and said that the theory was that the eastern end of the fabric was somewhat older than the nave, and when the church was enlarged the rood-screen was brought next to the congregation, while the original screen was at the chancel end. In 1581 a Passion Play was performed in the church, in which the choir of Wells Cathedral took part, and were fined for so doing.

The parish registers, which were afterwards inspected, dated from 1562, and the churchwardens' accounts from 1570.

Afterwards, Dr. F. J. ALLEN described the tower. He said :—

“This is another of the triple-window towers, nearly related to that of Bleadon, but of better design and probably earlier in date. Here we find the top window-sill coinciding with the string-course in the usual manner, not leaving that vacant

space between them which is the chief defect at Bleadon. The stair turret is placed symmetrically *at* the north-east corner.

“The design of the upper part of this tower is derived from that of the much finer tower at Banwell; but the Axbridge tower being central, showing only two stages above the roof, the statues in niches are placed a stage higher than usual.”

These statues were discussed by the members present, and it was concluded that the one on the east wall represented St. John the Baptist carrying the Lamb, while the western one represented a king, probably Henry VI.

The President, the Rev. H. Toft, and Dr. Allen, on the proposition of the Rev. F. W. Weaver, having been thanked for the information they had given, the members were afterwards photographed outside the south door of the church.

Subsequently the party was entertained to luncheon in Axbridge Town Hall, by the PRESIDENT (Colonel Bramble), who was heartily thanked for his hospitality, on the proposition of the Rev. J. A. Welsh Collins, seconded by Colonel Hendley Kirkwood.

Considerable interest was taken in the inspection in one of the rooms of the Town Hall of the old town stocks, the apparatus formerly used in bull-baiting, and a money-changing table with the inscription thereon: “Thomas Pennington made me, 30th April, 1627.” Some of the members visited one or two old buildings in the town.

East Brent Church.

A drive of five-and-a-half miles brought the party to East Brent, where they were met in the churchyard and welcomed by the Vicar, the Rev. F. S. P. SEALE, who gave the following interesting address:—

“The first thought of anyone on entering this church would probably be, here, if anywhere, we have the mingling of the

'ancient and modern,' and your last thought as Archaeologists on leaving the church, will, I feel sure be 'the old is better.' The Manor of East Brent was bestowed, by Ina in 690, on the Abbey of Glastonbury. For many centuries we have no record of any special benefit derived by the parish from the Abbey, though doubtless there were many; but Abbot John de Selwode (1457-1493) built on land adjoining the north side of the churchyard, a noble mansion. This was taken down in 1718, and there are no remains, except a buttress and some foundation stones of a modern cottage; but it must have been of considerable size as we are told that it had a chapel, hall, sumptuous apartments and magnificent portico. At the west end of the north aisle of the church, there is a door now walled up. This door could have been of no use to the parishioners, as no dwellings are on that side of the church; but through it the monks doubtless passed to what there is every reason to believe was their own aisle; for against the north wall are the remains of a canopied seat probably of the Prior in authority at the grange or mansion. There are similar seats in the churches of Brent Knoll and Lympsham, and the Abbot would doubtless occupy this seat when he visited these churches. The glass of the east window of this aisle is of the greatest interest being of the late XIV Century. The greater part is original, but the old crucifixion was stolen (strange to relate) some 70 years ago; this therefore, and also the Ascension, are new. The glass in the north windows is modern, with the exception of the three figures in one of them; this is supposed to be old German glass, and is considered by some connoisseurs to be very valuable.

"There is an effigy of a priest in this aisle, and another in the south aisle.

"The chancel and vestry were re-built by William Towry Law, who was Vicar from 1840-1845.

"In a small window on the north side are various pieces of old glass, amongst them a nearly perfect head of the Blessed

Virgin. On the floor is a monumental stone to John Aubrey, who died 1667. It has however the five crosses, and is supposed to have been the slab of one of the altars. The wall-painting of the chancel was done by Prebendary Denison during the time that he was curate to his uncle the Archdeacon. In one of the windows of the vestry are the Arms of Bishop Law and of Lady Ellenborough, who was a daughter of Captain G. P. Towry, and the mother of William Towry Law.

“The gallery at the west end formerly went across the chancel-arch until the new chancel was built. It bears the date 1635, and the pulpit the date 1634.

“The ceiling of the nave is also of great interest. It is embossed and composed entirely of lath and plaster.

“There is a similar ceiling at Axbridge, but in my opinion very inferior. On a boss opposite the door is the date 1637.

“Turning to the benches in the nave we are brought back again in thought to John de Selwode, as on one of the ends we have his monogram JS, thereby giving us the date of their erection: another bears the arms of Glastonbury and others the symbols of the four evangelists.

“On the west face of the tower above each other are three remarkable carvings. First, the figures of the Virgin and Child. Secondly, God the Father holding the crucifix on His knees: Col. Bramble considers that probably there was a dove over the right shoulder and if so it would be a representation of the Trinity. Thirdly, Christ enthroned crowning the Virgin. It is amusing to notice that Collinson and others speak of these carvings as effigies of ‘King with a Sceptre,’ and one as ‘King Ina embraced by a monk!’

“In the churchyard is an effigy of a civilian in gown with sleeves and lion at feet. There is a tradition that his name was St. Barbe and that he owned property in the hamlet of Rooksbridge, part of the parish.

“What is the meaning of the word Brent? Collinson

states that it means *burnt*, but what is the connection? I would rather accept Isaac Taylor's explanation that it comes from the A. S. *brant* = steep—a name the knoll justifies in claiming."

The Rev. E. H. BATES also made some remarks on the church, and observed that the cross in the churchyard was restored by the parishioners in memory of the fifty years' ministry of Archdeacon Denison.

The Camp of Brent Knoll.

After leaving East Brent Church some of the members drove in the brakes to South Brent, while most of the party made the ascent to the top of Brent Knoll from the north-north-east side.

Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY described the Camp. In the course of his remarks he said that the camp was situated on the summit of one of the insulated hills—at one time doubtless an island—which rose abruptly from the surrounding levels, as several others did in Somerset. Topographically it separated the villages of East and South Brent, its centre being five furlongs—in a bee line—from the church of the former, and three furlongs from the church of the latter. As an encampment for early man, its natural conditions could not well have been more favourable. The enemy could be seen approaching for miles in all directions. To the south-west the Quantock Hills might be seen with its chief camp of Danesborough; to the south, Bridgwater distinguishable by the spire of St. Mary's; rather more to the east were the levels of Mark Moor and Godney, terminating in Glastonbury Tor; to the west the Bristol Channel with the Welsh coast clearly visible on a bright day; to the north the Steep and Flat Holmes, Brean Down, Bleadon Hill and the Mendip range, including Crook's Peak; to the east Axbridge and the Cheddar Cliffs. Of the camps in this vicinity, Worlebury was seven-and-a-quarter

miles to the north ; Banwell seven miles, and Dolbury nine miles, to the north-east. A Roman road was generally supposed to connect the Clifton Camps with the Roman Villa near Yatton and Cadbury Camp, and the latter with the base of Brent Knoll and Huntspill ; but he believed it is not easily, and certainly not continuously, traced. Preb. Scarth said it had been traced across Brent marsh and was found about six feet under the present surface.

Geologically the whole of the Knoll belonged to the lower lias formation, but it was capped, within the area of the camp, by marlstone, which, from the present appearance of the surface, had been considerably quarried in all parts except the northern. This surface quarrying had greatly destroyed the ramparts encircling the hill ; although they were, no doubt, originally of some considerable magnitude before denudation, and more recently mutilation, had reduced their size, they were of the simplest design, with no evidences of outworks beyond an escarpment on the steep sides of the hill and a few terraces commanding the main entrance on the east. The ramparts enclosed an area of barely four acres, which Phelps recorded as five. The camp was roughly in the form of an isosceles triangle, the base on the south-west measuring 400 feet. As at Castle Orchard, which they had visited in 1904, there was a spring at the foot of the hill.

The base of the 'Jubilee stone' was 457 feet above sea, and the north end of the camp about 430 feet. Two early antiquaries had made gross errors on this point : Phelps gave 800 feet, and Rutter over 1,000 feet ! It only showed how careful we should be in copying anything from such untrustworthy sources.

He was not prepared to give a precise date to this camp, but its design was not Roman, although it was popularly called by the Ordnance Surveyors and others a 'Roman Camp.' It was of Early British *construction*, he thought, but in what century before our era it was thrown up excavations

only could prove. Preb. Gilbert Smith and himself had hoped to organize a little digging there in connection with that meeting, but field-work at Glastonbury and in Cornwall had prevented.

That Roman relics, and especially coins, had been discovered there as 'surface finds' there was no doubt, for there were several vague records in existence to that effect; but such accidental 'finds' were of little archæological or historical value, and sometimes led the antiquary astray in giving even an approximate date to an ancient earthwork. Seyer stated that coins of Severus and Trajan were found in an urn on the Knoll.

Through the kindness of Mr. W. Stoate he was able to quote a valuable extract from the MSS. of the Rev. John Skinner, vicar of Camerton (*Brit. Mus. Additional MSS.*, No. 33646), which ran as follows:—

"July 20, 1812. I sat up late penning in my sketches, and rose early for the same purpose; after breakfast we took a pick-axe and shovel, and climbed the Knoll, in order to dig within the entrenchment; in the course of a few minutes, Mr. Phelps and his brother, my companions, collected a good many pieces of the coarse Roman pottery, namely, some stone ware, black and brown, and also one of the flat-headed nails, of the same kind I found in the winter at Camerton, which was used for keeping on the stone tiling on the roofs of their dwellings. I understand, at different times, a variety of coins have been discovered here, and lately a piece of iron or steel, which is now in the possession of Mr. Anstis, of Bridgwater, which he denominates a stylus or pen. I am anxious to see this, never having seen one found in Britain. The ground at present is very unequal within the vallum, having been turned up by the quarrymen, who without doubt removed the foundation stones of the buildings and walls; yet towards the east there is a considerable space of ground which remains untouched, and perhaps contains many interesting reliques beneath the surface. On mentioning this to my companions, they promised to occupy some of their leisure in having it explored, and inform me of the result.

"In descending the east side of the Knoll, along a narrow ridge called the Saddle Back, we visited Mr. Yeatman's parsonage, and on informing him of our operations on the Hill, he said a brass ring had been brought to him which he conceived to be Saxon, which he gave to his nephew. I should have liked to have seen it. In the reign of Alfred there was a bloody battle fought near this spot with the Danes, who came off the Severn, and a farm still goes by the name of Battle Barrow; perhaps the ring in question might have been connected with this period."

South Brent Church.

After descending the Knoll, the whole party re-united at South Brent Vicarage, where, by the kindness of the vicar, the Rev. Preb. Gilbert Smith, and Mrs. Smith, they were entertained to tea in their beautiful garden. Afterwards, the Rev. Preb. W. E. Daniel, in the name of all present, warmly thanked Mr. and Mrs. Smith and their daughters for their hospitality.

The church was then visited, where the Rev. Preb. G. E. SMITH explained the building in the following words:—

“Before attempting to describe our beautiful church, I should like to say a few words on the origin of the name ‘Brent.’

“In *Domesday* there is no mention made of the Knoll: the entry is ‘Brent Merse,’ *i.e.* Brent Marsh; it may, I think, be inferred from this that the Knoll was named from the marsh in which it lies, and did not give its name to the marsh.

“In looking, if this is so, for the meaning of the name, we must search for some meaning applicable to the long stretch of rough marsh land from the sea at Burnham as far as Glastonbury.

“This, no doubt, was, at the time the name was given to it, an inlet of the Bristol Channel.

“To derive the name ‘Brent’ from the Saxon ‘Brennen,’ to burn, as has been commonly done, does not seem to meet the requirements of the Marsh, though it might apply to the Knoll. The same may be said of the Anglo-Saxon ‘Brent,’ = smooth, steep.

“Camden (1610), p. 230, writes: ‘The Monks of Glastonbury interpreted Brent Marsh to be the country of Fen-frogges, like as the little towne of Brent Knoll there which signifies Frog-hill.’ I cannot, however, find the word Brent = a frog in any language with which I have any acquaintance.

“The Scandinavian ‘Brent’ or ‘Brant’ = a goose or gannet,

seems a more likely derivation, since geese and gannets are more than likely to have frequented the tidal estuary of the river Brue.

“The Church is dedicated to St. Michael as might be presumed from its situation on the Knoll.

“At present it consists of a modern chancel of good proportions ; its roof, exactly similar to the roof of the parish church at Weston-super-Mare, proves it to be the work of the same architect, probably built during the first half of the last century.

“The Nave, originally Early English, about 1260 : of this only the south wall remains.

“The Chantry, now used as a vestry, is Decorated, and dates from about 1370.

“The most beautiful feature, however, is the North Aisle, Perpendicular, about 1480.

“The Early English Church was found to be too small for the population, and the north wall was completely pulled down and the present bays, which separate the nave from the north aisle, were built. These bays, being carried to the full height of the wall plate, give a dignity to the building which would have been absent if the usual arrangement of clerestory windows over the arches had been carried out. The great beauty of the carved oak roof of this north aisle and the carved bench-ends of the same date should be carefully noted.

“The jambs of the south door are Norman and were apparently not intended for door jambs. There is also a small pilaster of Norman work now at the end of the north aisle. These, I conjecture, were the chancel arch, and the drain of the piscina of a small Norman church which existed before the Early English Church was built.

“The tower at the west end is a fair example of a second-class Somerset Perpendicular tower.

“It will be very fully commented on by one who is more competent than I am, and so I need only add that its position on the side of our Knoll and its surrounding of trees add much to its beauty.

“Our quaintly carved bench-ends have been many times described and depicted. I would point out the singular coincidence that both in this church and that of East Brent, although the symbols of the Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Luke and St. John, are boldly carved on the bench-ends, that of St. Mark is absent in both churches. These bench-ends are of the same date as the north aisle.

“It is very usual to find north and south doors opposite, or nearly so, in our old churches. In this church, as well as in that of East Brent, there is no north door, but in its place a door-way (blocked up) in the west end of the north aisle.

“At the north-east corner of the north aisle, there is in the wall a corbel—an angel holding a shield with the stigmata on it. A somewhat similar one is to be seen at Worspring Priory.”

Dr. F. J. Allen made the following remarks on the tower :—

“This seems to be the latest of the triple-window towers : it is very plain, and its mouldings and window tracery are poor and flat. Nevertheless it has considerable dignity ; it groups well with the rest of the church and has a fine situation. The plain appearance of the tower is caused chiefly by the cessation of the buttresses at a low level, the long distance between the top string-course and the window-sill (as at Bleadon), and the absence of the customary niches above the great window. The niches are placed beside the west door instead.”

The homeward journey was made *viâ* Lympsham Church, the fine tower of which was greatly admired, but time did not permit of a stop being made there.

Conversazione at Weston-super-Mare Museum.

In the evening the Axbridge Branch of the Society entertained the members of the Parent Society who were attending the Annual Meeting and Excursions, at a *Conversazione* held at the Public Museum in the Boulevard ; about one hundred and seventy ladies and gentlemen were present.

The President of the Branch Society, Colonel Wm. Long, C.M.G., heartily welcomed the visitors.

Colonel Bramble, F.S.A., President of the Parent Society, then addressed the audience, and referred to the progress Weston-super-Mare had made during recent years, with special reference to the well-appointed building in which they were assembled, and its general contents.

During the evening the following papers were read:—(1) Mr. W. H. Palmer, Curator, on the contents of Weston-super-Mare Museum; (2) Mr. H. N. Davies, F.G.S., on Archæological Remains found in Coronation Road, Weston-super-Mare; (3) Mr. Montague P. Porch, on his recent discoveries of Palæolithic and Neolithic Implements from Upper and Lower Egypt.

The following is a brief summary of Mr. PALMER'S remarks :

“The collections are contained in three rooms, viz., the Eastern, Western, and Central Rooms, comprising the following :

“I. Prehistoric Remains. (*a*) From Worlebury Camp; (*b*) from Uphill and Bleadon Caves; (*c*) from Coronation Road, Weston; (*d*) a large collection of Palæolithic and Neolithic Implements, lately discovered by Mr. M. P. Porch in the terraces of the heights above Thebes and Upper Egypt at an elevation of one hundred to two hundred metres above sea-level, and from the ancient lake clays of Birket-al-Karun, Fayum, Lower Egypt; (*e*) Palæolithic Implements from the Mendip Caves, and from the Thames Valley; (*f*) Remains from the Roman Villa at Wemberham.

“II. A collection of Fossils arranged stratigraphically, and including good specimens of the Carboniferous, Oolitic, and Cretaceous strata.

“III. Minerals, arranged on the system of Jermyn Street Museum, London.

“IV. A collection of Mollusca, comprising sea, land, and fresh-water shells, British and foreign.

“V. Specimens of polished Woods, British and foreign.

“VI. British Seaweeds mounted under glass (56 species).

“VII. The Papyrus of Ani, or the Egyptian ‘Book of the Dead,’ arranged round the Western room.

“VIII. Specimens of ‘Elton Ware,’ presented by Sir E. H. Elton, Bart.

“IX. The permanent loan of objects from the Board of Education, including specimens of Electrotypes, British and foreign Lace, Water-colour Drawings, etc.

“X. Specimens of Early Printing, Autographs, etc., presented by the Trustees of the British Museum.

“XI. A miscellaneous collection of local and other curiosities.”

Mr. H. N. DAVIES, F.G.S., gave an interesting address on the Pit Graves discovered at Weston-super-Mare in Sept., 1902, of which the following is a résumé :

“Whilst excavations were in progress for making Coronation Road, the workmen struck into a pit grave and exposed a skull. I was at once communicated with and with the kind assistance of Mr. Nettleton, the town surveyor, was able to superintend the clearing out of a group of three pits. In this place the limestone rock was covered with an accumulation of soil and rubble 2ft. 6ins. thick. The rock below this was much broken, and the pits were sunk in this broken rock to a depth of about 3ft. 6ins. All three pits were filled up with a greyish sandy deposit, quite unlike the covering soil. A quantity of granular charcoal mixed with the sand gave it the characteristic greyish hue. In taking out this deposit pieces of a broken slab of thin lias rock were found—evidently the portions of a covering which had been shattered by the superincumbent weight of soil and rubble.

“*Contents of Pit 1.*—Two skeletons were taken out of this pit. The bodies had been placed in a squatting position and facing each other. On a broken slab of lias rock at the bottom were found many sling-stones—well-rounded pebbles, all nearly of the same size and weight; a number of fragments

of pottery of the coarsest description, no two pieces as far as I could recognise belonging to the same pot; and many broken bones of horse, ox, and sheep.

“*Pit No. 2.*—In this pit the only human remains consisted of the exceedingly thin bones of the cranium of a very young child. There were also animal bones and broken pottery, but no sling-stones.

“*Pit No. 3.*—This pit contained no human remains, but was nearly filled with broken bones of horse, ox, sheep, swine, and a portion of the lower jaw of a carnivore—I think a dog.

“*Male Skull.*—Perfect, oval, $7\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $5\frac{1}{2}$ in., cephalic index 72.0; mild aspect; chin, small, pointed, and supraorbital ridges not prominent. The teeth have flattened crowns, but are very sound.

“*Female Skull.*—Imperfect; higher crown than male; distinctly prognathous; oval, 7 in. by 5 in., cephalic index 71.4.

“Both are of Iberian type, common in this neighbourhood. Calculating height from the length of the femora, the male was about 5ft. 4ins., and the female certainly taller.

“A subsequent interment was discovered in the soil over the first pit. The body was laid with head to east, hand under head, and one leg much bent. The skull was somewhat massive, brow receding, strong orbital ridges, and a cephalic index of 72.4. The occipital bone very prominent. The femur, 17ins. long, indicates that the man was tall.

“A bronze fibula, and a stone pebble with an incised cross were found near the head.”

Mr. H. St. George Gray having made some remarks on Mr. Davies's paper, the lecturers were thanked for their contributions on the proposition of Mr. Ernest E. Baker.

During the evening refreshments were served. Those responsible for the arrangements of the conversazione were heartily thanked at the conclusion of the proceedings. The details were carried out most efficiently by Mr. Ernest E. Baker and Mr. W. H. Palmer.