

The Excursion.

ON reaching the point of the hill at Anchor Head, the party left the carriages and scaled the defences of the ancient camp. After a brief breathing time, they scoured through the camp, led to the important points of the fastness by the indefatigable writer of the able disquisition which had just been read, and whose thorough conversance with the details of the fortifications, so well qualified him for the post of a leader on the occasion. The party then crossed the hill on foot to Kew Steps. Here attention was called to a large but shallow pit on the open down, in which it was stated no water remained as in neighbouring hollows. It was surmised that an extensive cavity existed beneath it. After a short controversy as to the origin of the cylindrical furrows in a depression or excavation at the top of the pass, the party descended the steps; here their leader pointed out the remains of flanking masonry built with the evident intention of narrowing the pass, and terminating at a spot, which he indicated, with a strong gateway. Presumptive evidence was thus offered that the pass had been constructed for military purposes, and in times much more remote than hitherto surmised. At Kewstoke, the party were received by the Rev. R. C. HATHWAY, vicar, and after an inspection of the church, and its most interesting feature, the old Norman doorway, re-entered the carriages, and proceeded to the ancient Priory of Woodspring.

Here an elegant refection had been provided by Mrs. SMYTH PIGOTT, the possessor of the estate. That lady was herself present, and most courteously received the visitors in the dining hall. We may here mention that the regretted absence of Mr. PIGOTT, from the meetings of the Society, was occasioned by serious indisposition. At the ancient entrance gateway, a paper on the Priory was read by the Rev. F. WARRE. At the close of the reading the party visited in succession the cloisters, the tower, and the noble but dilapidated refectory, now occupied as a wagon-house. Standing near the refectory, the Rev. F. Warre read an interesting notice respecting an ancient reliquary found at Kewstoke Church, now in the Society's Museum, at Taunton.

"I cannot" said he, "leave the subject without mentioning the discovery of a very curious reliquary in Kewstoke Church, which is probably connected with the dedication of Woodspring Priory to St. Thomas of Canterbury. The weight of the clerestory having forced out the north wall, which was of 14th century work, a mutilated piece of carved work which was built into it, was removed when the wall was pulled down, and proved to be a reliquary. In the front is carved a figure in an arched niche having shafts of early English character. This figure, the face of which seems to have been purposely mutilated, holds something, probably a heart, in its hands, but it is so defaced that it is now quite impossible to decide. At the back was discovered an arched recess, within which was a small wooden cup, containing what was supposed to be human blood. Now this reliquary was manifestly of earlier date than the wall into which it was built, and appears from the capitals of its shafts, nearly to correspond in style with that in use about the time of the dedication of Wood-

spring. The opinion of the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, to which it was submitted, was, that it probably contained the most valued relic possessed by the Priory—probably some of the blood of Thomas à Becket; and that the monks, foreseeing the desecration of their conventual church, had deposited it in the parish church of Kewstoke, hoping by that means to preserve from profanation a relique, in their eyes of the greatest sanctity, being no less than the blood of their murdered patron, St. Thomas of Canterbury.”

From the Priory, the excursionists proceeded through a richly diversified country to the ancient and beautiful Church of Banwell, whose bells rung out a merry peal by way of welcome. Here in proximity to the lofty and handsome tower of the church, the company listened to an able disquisition on its architectural character and merits, from Mr. FREEMAN. They then visited the interior, where that gentleman continued his remarks.

On leaving the church, the party proceeded to the delightfully situated residence of CHANCELLOR LAW, where a collation had been munificently and with great elegance laid out, open to an unlimited number of guests, consisting of the members of the society and their friends. The beautiful grounds were thrown open to the visitors; and many of the more adventurous descended into the celebrated stalactite caves, which had been lighted up for the occasion.

The tables having been cleared, the company assembled round Mr. QUEKETT, to hear his paper on the structure and formation of Pearl, which the talent of the author and his eminent qualifications as a lecturer, rendered so interesting, that he was compelled a week or two afterwards, to yield to the pressing solicitations of the Committee, to repeat his lecture at the Society's Museum, at Taunton, to the great enjoyment of a numerous assembly of hearers.

In bringing the proceedings to a close, the High Sheriff, at the conclusion of Mr. Quekett's paper, took occasion on the part of the Society, to thank the Chancellor in the warmest terms for the handsome manner in which they had been entertained; their reception had been in every way worthy of his distinguished character for unbiassed hospitality, and for that kindness of feeling which had rendered him alike beloved and honoured by all classes amongst whom he moved.

The CHANCELLOR expressed the great pleasure and satisfaction he had enjoyed in receiving the Society, and in having taken some part with them in these interesting proceedings. After thanking Mr. Quekett, and passing a well merited eulogy on his able paper, he concluded by expressing a hope that on some future occasion the Society would again visit this neighbourhood, where a large unexplored field of great antiquarian interest still invited their further investigation, and that they would then afford him the gratification of again entertaining them on a more extended scale.
