Second Day's Proceedings.

On Wednesday morning a party of one hundred and fifty ladies and gentlemen left the George Hotel in a long string of brakes and carriages, for excursions in the neighbourhood, including Meare, Wedmore, and Mark. The weather was deci

dedly favourable for a drive of something like twenty-five miles, the roads being free from dust and the sun was not unpleasantly hot. The first halt was made at the

Lake Village,

about a mile and a quarter from Glastonbury, in order that the site of this interesting lake habitation might be visited. The owners of the field are the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society; and it will be remembered that in March, 1892, an important discovery, from an archæological standpoint, was made by Mr. Arthur Bulleid, one of the secretaries of the local society, and subsequent excavations revealed a lake village. During a few days previous to the visit of the Society, trenches were made across two 'untouched' mounds, under the superintendence of Mr. H. St. George Gray, Curator of the Taunton Museum, who, besides laying bare some interesting remains connected with the construction, heating, and foundations of two habitations, also discovered portions of four weaving combs, a bronze fibula and several other relics, fully described and figured (*see* Part II). Animal remains were also found. The party having assembled on the site,

Mr. Morland said he had been trying to ascertain what the country was like before any of the timber which they saw exposed was brought there. On one side it was distinctly bounded by the range of Glastonbury, and between that, he believed, the river Brue was formed. He thought that the Brue helped to form the boundary before men took to cutting straight courses for rivers. On the other side stretched five or six miles of water or lake, which accounts for the name of Meare. That lake appeared on successive maps, always diminishing in size, and finally it was drained, and the site became pasture ground. So they had an area which had been practically a shallow lake. Everybody knew that those artificial islands were of common occurrence. They were known in Switzerland and

Bavaria, and on the Danube, and in other places. Sometimes they were made in one way, and sometimes in another. The Swiss made an upright dwelling. Here there was no great depth of water, and it was very much easier for them to make a huge island than to construct a building on piles. What they did was to stake off a certain area of the moor and fill it inside with all kinds of rubbish. They saw there a portion of the outside area of the lake village. The whole area was about four or five acres. The piles now were all on the slope, but they were originally upright. They had been squeezed out by the mass of material pressing against them. The piles were very carefully sharpened. Mr. Morland proceeded to shew a piece where the cuts were made 2,000 years ago, and he said they had never seen the light of day until then. There were many pieces of timber inside, and they must have been brought from some little distance in order to form those hut islands. Those islands showed very careful building, sometimes with timber, sometimes with stones or peat, and sometimes with brushwood. They used any sort of material they could find to fill up. In after days a great change came over that area, and it ceased to be used, and had since been covered up with flood soil, so that the whole area had become considerably levelled. It was a very doubtful piece of policy, looking to the future of the land, whether it was wise to cart away that mud, because it had made some of the richest ground in Somerset in the past, and probably it would have done the same in the future. Mr. Morland then proceeded to another part of the village and described a large, square-shaped clay hearth, ornamented with incised circles,—the finest hearth found in the village. He said that the huts were, for the most part, of a rounded form. The houses were built with bare walls, about 5ft. high, of wattle and daub, with a hearth, or hearths, of stone or clay in the centre. He did not know that he could say much about the precise form the huts took. There were fragments in the Museum at Glastonbury of the clay which

was used, and which showed the marks of the fingers of those who handled it. Mr. Morland then conducted the party to two other spots, where, he said, the mounds had just been opened, which had not been previously touched, and which shewed the structure, foundations, hearths and floors of the mounds. He stated that as many as seven floors of clay had been discovered in one mound; and that in other cases only one floor had been found. All the clay used for the buildings was brought from a distance. Mr. Morland also described what is known as "the Causeway," and a large piece of wattle-work, which was partly exposed to view.

In reply to a question, Mr. Morland said the date of the village was fixed in this way. The people who lived there used iron for their tools and weapons, and iron was not used in this country until *circa* 200 B.C. No Roman remains or coins were found there.

Meare.

From the Lake Village the party drove to Meare, where a visit was first paid to the

Fish House.

Mr. BUCKLE, in describing the building, said it was a remarkable example of a small house of the XIV Century, and it was almost perfect. It was traditionally called the Fish House, but so far as he knew there was nothing documentary to identify it in any way. Still it seemed to be a reasonable enough description of the house. It stands right on the edge of the lake, and they knew that the chief fisherman of the Abbey of Glastonbury lived at Meare. He was one of the most important of their chief servants of whom they heard accounts from time to time in the records, and that was supposed to be the house in which he lived and which also formed his office. It had this peculiarity, that there was no internal communication between the ground and upper floors. The ground floor seemed

to be intended for the business department, where he kept his tackle, etc., and the upper floor was the dwelling place. The front door of the house was in the middle of the wall, and was presumably approached by a stone flight of steps. The upper part of the house consisted of two rooms, one small and one large, and the two together made the whole of the fisherman's cottage. It was a fine example of a superior cottage of the XIV Century. There was one ornamental window in the gable end, which had some nice tracery in it. The house was not quite complete. There was some sort of an appendage at one end which had now disappeared. For that period, however, the house must be regarded as in a very perfect condition, and it was almost unique.

The Manor House

was, by permission of the occupiers, next visited. It is in good preservation and contains a fine baronial hall on the first floor, which is reached by means of a large oak staircase.

The Rev. F. W. Weaver said the whole of the parish at one time belonged to the Abbot of Glastonbury, and this Manor House was one of his residences. The magnificent fire-place in the hall was worthy of notice. The windows were very fine. The old roof had disappeared, but otherwise the house was in very fair preservation.

The Parish Church.

The party next wended their way to the church, where they were met by the Rev. Prebendary Grant, who apologised for the absence of the Vicar, who had been obliged to go to Weston to recruit his health. His son, however, had prepared a paper about the church and its history, which would be read to them shortly.

Mr. Buckle then furnished a few particulars about the church, which he said belonged to two principal periods. The

chancel was a great deal older than the nave, and was XIV Century work. There was a great deal of interest about the tracery of the windows. The architect was certainly a person of original mind, and evidently had some idea of the direction in which the architectural style was tending at that time, for there was a little touch of Perpendicular put in on the top of an otherwise purely Decorated window. The roof of the chancel too was a little peculiar; it looked so much more like the roof of a hall than that of a church. The bulk of the nave and aisles were rebuilt in the time of Abbot Selwood at the close of the XV Century. They knew it was his doing because he had put his monogram up outside. The older church was lower than the present, and was no doubt a smaller church altogether. As to the roof, it was a good Perpendicular nave roof. There was one curious feature, and that was that the carpenter had left his name, "John Jackman," there. It was on a stone corbel in the south aisle. The position of the rood loft was clearly marked, and there was a very fine XV Century stone pulpit, to which he called special attention.

Mr. H. R. Bussell, son of the Vicar, then read the following paper:—

Notes on the History of Meare.

It would, I am afraid, be impossible to put before this Society anything like a coherent sketch of the history of this parish, within the few minutes which I am allowed, and therefore I must ask you to be a "little blind" to some of my omissions, and trust you will agree that it is better at the present moment merely to endeavour to bring to your recollection some of the more important of its features.

Although at one time entirely overrun by the sea, and this well within the limits of history, the gradual retreat of the waters led eventually to the formation in this district of three islands—Ferlingmere, Westeie, and Godeneie; now known as

Meare, Westhay, and Godney, respectively. These islands, together constituting the Manor of Meare, are stated to have been granted by Cenwealch, the seventh King of Wessex, to Berthwald, Abbot of Glastonbury and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, in the year 670.

In Domesday the manor is entered as one of the possessions of the Abbey, being described as follows :—

"To the Manor of Glastonbury adjoins an island which is called Mere, where are 60 acres of land. The arable is one carucate, and there are 10 fishermen, and 3 fisheries, which pay 20 pence, and 6 acres of meadow, and 6 acres of wood, and two arpents of vineyard. It is worth 20 shillings."

The next record is contained in Bishop Drokensford's Register, one of the extracts from which informs us that the church was dedicated by that bishop on the 7th August, 1323, "at the petition of Adam [de Sodbury], Abbot of Glastonbury, and John de Bourne, Vicar, in honour of the B.V.M., All Saints, and especially St. Benignus, Confessor." The particular mention of St. Benignus in connection with this building would appear to support the circumstantial statements of the Abbey chroniclers, when they declare that that saint was actually buried in this place, though it should be noted that the traditional date of his death and presumed burial took place at least a century before this spot passed into the hands of the Abbey under the alleged grant.

The portions of this building which were dedicated by Bishop Drokensford in 1323, and which still remain, are the chancel and the tower. These may have been the work of Abbot Kent, who built the adjoining Manor House, and who ruled the affairs of the Abbey from 1291 to 1303. There was, however, a substantial building here in 1292, which was valued at the sum of 6½ marks, and we cannot doubt but that a still earlier building existed; for it is impossible to imagine that the pious monks would leave the spiritual welfare of our ten fishermen quite uncared for, even though, like the first Chris-

tian Church in Britain, their place of worship were but a precarious structure of wood and wattles. The present nave and aisles are the work of Abbot Selwood, as evidenced by his monogram in the parapet over the south aisle, and date from the latter half of XV Century, the pulpit being of the same period. The vestry was built on to the chancel in 1823, by the Rev. William Phelps, the author of *The History of Somerset*, and a former vicar of this parish.

It is most unfortunate that the two features of this building, which Collinson in his *History* finds particularly worthy of note, should both have disappeared. One of these was "the very fine old painted glass" in the east window of the north aisle, which was removed about the beginning of the last century, because the churchwardens of the time considered that it had a tendency to make the church dark! The other feature was "an ancient painting," which filled up the whole of the great arch which divides the nave from the belfry, on the top of which was the cross triumphant in the clouds, surrounded by a number of the celestial host, sounding instruments of music. I may add that under this symbolical choir was formerly appropriately situated the old singing gallery, where the village orchestra indulged in those "quaint symphonic flights" on the hautboy, the double-bass, and the bassoon, which rendered them famous in their day and unforgotten in our own.

With regard to the Manor House (which has just been visited), it was first of all built by Abbot Kent, about the year 1300, but seems to have been afterwards almost entirely re-constructed by Abbot Sodbury, the Wykeham of this locality, and then restored again by Abbot Bere. But here, too, there was also an earlier building, of which no trace is left; for, in 1252, Abbot Michael Ambresbury, having ruled over the Abbey for eighteen years, and being desirous, as he said, "of giving up the employment of Martha, and of removing himself into Mary's repose," was permitted by the monks, in consequence of the high esteem in which they held

him, not only to retain a set of rooms within the precincts at Glastonbury, but also to have their country house at Meare as a residence for the remainder of his life.

In Abbot Bere's Terrier, which was made after a personal perambulation of the whole of the Abbey estate, in 1517, this house is described as "a very handsome and ample Manor House, founded long ago, but adorned by the present Abbot with new chambers, with stews, fisheries, and orchards within the precincts of the manor." It is also mentioned by the Commissioners in their Report to Henry VIII, after the dissolution of the monastery, as containing a "fair large hall, 8 fair chambers, a proper chapel, kitchen, buttery, and pantry, and all offices suitable. Finally," they say, "the house is fair for a man of worship," adding, however, with a touch of candour, that "the *air* thereof is not very *wholesome*, saving to such as have continued *long* therein."

In 1547 the Manor House, together with the rest of the manor of Meare, passed to the great Duke of Somerset; but on his attainder it, of course, once more reverted to the Crown. In 1684 it was again in the hands of the Dukes of Somerset, and so remained till the year 1758; but since that time it has often changed owners, and has eventually become very much sub-divided.

These few notes would not be complete without some reference to the famous "Mere Pool," and the ancient Fish-house upon its shore. The latter building also dates from the time of Abbot Sodbury, and was the residence of an official or officials connected with the fisheries, and also used as a store-house for dried and salted fish. It may at one time, perhaps, have been inhabited by the Robert Malerbe, a water-bailiff and head boatman, whose duty it was to pilot the Lord Abbot from Meare to Glastonbury, or Brent, or Butleigh, or Nyland, or Godney, or wherever he wished to go by water. The pool itself was fed by three rivers from the east, and was from 400 to 500 acres in extent. It contained a "great abundance of

pikes, tenches, roaches, and eels, and of divers other kinds of fishes;" while on its reedy banks, and in the woods of Stileway and Westhay, were to be found the nests and breeding-places of great numbers of swans, herons, pheasants, geese, duck, and other wild-fowl. It was, indeed, never completely drained until quite modern times. So late as 1765 we find in the Churchwardens' Accounts, that John Warfield, the sexton, was paid 1s. 6d. for "*rowing* the church-clock from Glaston;" while at the beginning of the XIX Century the two places were connected only by a bridle-path, passing through a ford at Cold Harbour.[1] In 1836, when Mr. Phelps was vicar, he says that there were then 3,000 acres of bog in the parish, and it may be gauged from this how long, arduous, and, happily, at length *successful*, the task of the Drainage Commissioners has been.

It is a matter for regret that the owner of the Fish-house still continues to refrain from taking any steps towards the preservation of its fabric, and this in spite of the excellent example which has been set him by this Society. At the same time, and in conclusion, one cannot but regard with pleasure the general fact that, from their position in this remote part of the country, our old buildings here are practically secure from many of those evils which in other places so often involve their destruction, save alone that one contingency against which we have *no* power to contend, the silent, "unimaginable touch of *Time*."

Wedmore Church.

After leaving Meare the drive was continued to Wedmore. Here luncheon was first partaken of at the Schools, and then a move was made to the church.

(1). That travelling under these circumstances was a matter of more than ordinary difficulty we find evidence in the Parish Registers for this period—the period of the XVIII Century—where we have more than one entry of the burial of certain unhappy strangers, whose drowned bodies had been found in the neighbourhood.

Mr. BUCKLE said that the church, as in so many other cases, began by being a cruciform building, but in this case it had remained cruciform. The tower was still central, and consequently there was a great block formed of the four low and massive pillars in the middle of the church. It was the same at Yatton, Crewkerne, and other places. At the south porch there was a fine doorway, and the work in the doorway was another example of the Early Somerset style. It probably dated from the latter part of the XII Century. There was another fragment of early work in the window at the east end of the south aisle: that was XIII Century work. Besides the elegant tracery there was a cusped inner arch, making it look very rich. Since the original building of the church there had been so many additions in different places that the plan was no longer very clear. All the work round the tower was Perpendicular. The aisles were so tall that they gave a very spacious effect, but looking at the church from the west the result was unsatisfactory from the little height that the nave rose above the aisles. The setting out of the nave was peculiar. The corbels were only just above the level of the arches and just over the point of the arch. They could see the position of the rood loft quite high up. That was not the first rood loft in the church. On the other side of the tower there was provision for a rood loft low down. A chapel had been added on the south side, almost completely cut off from the body of the church. It was entered by a separate door leading out from the side of the porch. It was originally divided from the church by a wall, so that it made as it were a large pew with a large squint looking towards the altar. There were a large number of interesting things in the church of a minor character. On the north of the west tower arch there was a picture of St. Christopher, or rather there were parts of two pictures. He supposed the first picture had been there some time and was probably getting dull and worn out, so they got some other painter to paint it over again, and he

painted it very much on the same lines as the former. The body of St. Christopher was part of one painting and the head of another—that was why the head was put on in so uncomfortable an attitude. It had, however, been very well preserved, and the colouring had stood well since it had been uncovered. It was all white-washed over at one time. There was a stone altar at the end of the south aisle with the crosses on it clearly marked. The chancel showed the mark of the early building. The side arches of the chancel were worthy of special notice because of their enormous width. The north-east chapel had a very fine oak roof divided into panels, each of which contained a painting of an angel. On the outside of the church the principal features were the two towers, because the porch really formed a tower from some points of view. The tower had had one or two changes of plan. The belfry storey appeared to have been an addition. It was a belfry storey, which was used largely about Mendip, with pinnacles set on the walls, which were intended to run up through the parapet and finish clear against the sky.

Col. Bramble made a few supplementary remarks. He said first of all he would like to make a confession. Many years ago he was visiting the Church under the guidance of a former vicar, who, unfortunately, told him there had once been a spire upon the tower. This information he had embodied in a paper he had written for the Clifton Antiquarian Club. Subsequently the vicar had written him that the information was founded on a misapprehension, and that there had never been a spire. He desired to take this public opportunity of correcting the error in his paper. With regard to the double rood loft there were at least two other instances in the county—one at Axbridge and another at Crewkerne—both like Wedmore, cruciform churches. The tradition at Axbridge was that they used to have miracle plays performed there. The south porch was very interesting indeed. There were two upper storeys, in the same way as at Edington

in Wiltshire, and Wraxall in Somerset. But the lower stage of Wedmore, as at Wraxall, was originally without a floor, and contained one of the "porch galleries" which were common in that neighbourhood, to which, however, they were almost entirely confined. The canopied niche, which they saw over the doorway inside the church, was until recent years *outside*, looking southward, and stood over the gallery. There was a peculiar niche or loop higher up in the same wall, which might have been a place of observation for the caretaker, or simply for the purpose of giving light. Then, again, there was a very interesting little monument, formerly lying inside the stone altar at the end of the south aisle but now removed to the south of the tower. It consisted of a cross with a female head with flowing hair confined by a fillet, apparently a monument to a child. Some years ago the face had scaled off, and, at the speaker's suggestion, it was refixed by the then vicar, the Rev. Sydenham Hervey. There was another interesting monument in the north chapel. When he was there some thirty years ago it was in a different position and much more elevated. On it was a brass to one of the Hodges family, dated 1630, and was the latest military brass he knew of in England. The effigy was habited in a buff coat, breeches, and high boots, but still retained the little gorget of plate—the small remnant of armour which was formerly worn by officers in our own service, and was still retained by French officers. He carried in his right hand a short hunting spear, and wore the earliest example with which the speaker was acquainted of a sword, with the modern form of hilt.

The registers of the church dated from 1611.

Mark Church.

Leaving Wedmore, the drive was continued to the village of Mark, where the church was inspected.

Mr. Buckle, in describing the building, said it was now nearly all Perpendicular work, but it was built on the lines of

an earlier church. The wall on the south side was an early structure, and the south doorway was also of the Early English type, while the whole appearance of the nave suggested that it was Early English, converted into Perpendicular. Referring to the arches, he said the thickness of the wall on one side was due to its age, and when part of it was cut, in order to add a chapel, it was found necessary to put in arches of a much greater thickness than was used when a new arcade was put up on the other side, in order to add a north chapel. These arches were also of a late date, and were put in at a time when builders wanted to keep their pillars as small as they could, and it would be noticed that the pillars which carried the two arches were no thicker than the other pillars, although they had to carry a thicker wall. The church had a nice wagon roof to the nave, with a row of richly carved figures as corbels at the bottom of the ribs ; but the north aisle, which was subsequently added, had got a magnificent roof, divided up into small square panels, treated for the most part with tracery or other carving, and a rich cornice. The same pattern roof occurred in the north porch, but in that case a plain white-washed ceiling had been put underneath the oak ceiling, and, except where it was torn down in one place, they saw nothing of that ceiling. That porch was very similar to the porch at Wedmore, although it had not got a tower over it. There was one corbel left, which probably had to do with the support of the gallery there. The side chapels of the chancel seemed to be later additions. The Perpendicular font had a row of angels round the base of the bowl. The screen which separated the east end from the rest of the church was made up of various fragments, and part of the structure appeared to be portions of a mediæval screen, with which was mixed some Jacobean carving. The other screen, on the south side, seemed to be altogether of a later date. Inside the chapel on the south side there were some plain oak benches. In the chancel were four figures of the Evangelists, placed one

at each end of the stalls. These were Renaissance figures, which appeared to have been brought from abroad. The outside of the church was decidedly fine, and there was a good tower, with the usual changes of plan as it rose. The lower part of the tower, until the belfry stage was reached, was of one design. The pinnacle belonged to another date and different ideas of finish.

The Rev. F. W. Weaver read a few notes on the church which had been written by Mr. A. H. Giles, of Weston-super-Mare, one of the members of the Society.

The following brief description of Mark—his native place—is taken from the diary of the late Rev. J. A. Giles :—

"He who has read Fielding's novel of *Tom Jones* will remember that the writer mentions Mark as the place in which the 'Man of Mark' was born. It is situated not far inland from the angle of the county formed by the coasts of the Bristol Channel—four miles south-east of Burnham, nine miles to the east of Bridgwater, two miles westward from Blackford, and ten miles from the city of Wells. The whole neighbourhood is an extensive plain, through which run three rivers—the Axe, the Brue, and the Parret ; all three Celtic names ; earlier, no doubt, than either Romans, Saxons, or Normans. The greater part of this wide plain was marshy and liable to floods when I was a child, and probably was covered by the sea, many hundreds of years ago, as far as the Mendip Hills, and the high land which runs from Wells along by Glastonbury and Polden Hill, to the Quantock Hills beyond Bridgwater to the west.

"It has been said that this parish derives its name from the Evangelist, St. Mark ; but the church is not dedicated to that saint, and I am more inclined to refer the name to the Anglo-Saxon name *Mearc*, a boundary ; but in the absence of written evidence it is impossible to speak with certainty on such matters.

"The church is a fine specimen of the Perpendicular style

of architecture which prevailed in the reigns of the Lancastrian Kings of England—Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI. In the churchyard stands an old cross. There are no other antiquities worth seeing, as far as I know, in all the parish.

"Of High Hall, once an ancient edifice just beyond and opposite to the bridge over the rhine, only a small outhouse remains, now a public-house, and bearing no trace of its former condition. It was once a fishing seat for the Abbots of Glastonbury, who came down thither in their barges—perhaps along the present rhine, or at all events by some water-course running through the marsh land lying between Mark and the town where the Abbey is situated. There is a tradition that one of the Abbots feasted a King of England in High Hall, and the name 'King's Way' is still given to a road or lane running off at right angles from the street between High Hall and the parish church, and leading towards Cross and Winscombe. Also the name of King's Hill is given to a field on which is a knoll about six feet high, in Southwick Street, and not far from Southwick House,[1] belonging also formerly to my family."

The property called "High Hall" belonged to my ancestors for at least three generations, and it is clear from deeds in my possession that the ancient edifice was pulled down in the year 1668.

The following account of the churches of Mark and Wedmore was written in a letter to his brother, Dr. Giles, by Mr. Charles E. Giles, one of the founders of our Society (*vide* Vol. xxxv, p. 5, of the *Proceedings*):—

"Mark church was originally one of three chapelries, the other two being Blackford and Chapel Allerton, depending on Wedmore church, called in the vernacular a quarter cathedral, probably from *Quatre*, it being cruciform, and in heraldry *quartered*, being used. These chapels were probably small

(1). Southwick House was pulled down many years ago.

churches of the thirteenth century. Allerton certainly was so: having been rebuilt by me, I can testify to the date. Blackford was destroyed by fire many years ago. Mark was reconstructed in the XV Century, in the same manner as were more than half of the smaller Somersetshire churches, viz., by first of all rebuilding the western part of the nave and adding a tower; then rebuilding the eastern part, which until then was retained, because the tower generally stood in that part, and was required for the bells until the new tower was complete. Then the old aisles (if there were any) were altered or rebuilt; and if only one existed, a second was added, and finally the chancel was altered, not rebuilt. Thus the south porch (once detached) and chancel walls are of the XIII Century, and the south aisle seems to have been first added; or perhaps the whole south aisle and porch were built at once, but the XIII Century archway was retained; the north aisle being here the last and richest part, including the stair turret to the rood loft, and the rood loft itself, with the wood-work of the interior. The roof is one of the best in the county, and equal to almost any in England for its size. I think my grandfather, John Giles, is responsible for removing the (perhaps less rich) roof of the north aisle, which was no doubt decayed, and putting up what was at that time thought to be a great work, but which Douglas Giles[1] used smilingly to describe as David in top-boots, playing on the harp. Did our grandfather also remove the certainly splendid rood screen and loft? If so, are any fragments still remaining in any of the farm houses at Mark?[2]

"Wedmore church was built or rebuilt in the XIII Century, by the masons who built Wells Cathedral nave (not the west front), and who did much of the work at Glastonbury

(1). Late Archdeacon of Stowe.

(2). It seems likely that C. E. G's grandfather's grandfather restored the roof of the nave, as his name (William Giles) and that of his fellow churchwarden (George Morse) are painted on the ceiling, with the date, 1756.

Abbey. No doubt Mark church was then built. Wells Cathedral west front is exceptional and foreign, being in the new style introduced first at Canterbury Cathedral, from Sens, by William of Sens; which style afterwards spread over England, modified only by native workmen and traditions. Wells nave and Glastonbury are native work, peculiar to Somerset, and very fine."

After the inspection of the church, tea was partaken of in the vicarage grounds, and the return journey was made to Glastonbury, which was reached about seven o'clock.