

Second Day's Proceedings.

The weather on Tuesday had been exceptionally unfavourable, rain falling more or less throughout the whole day. On Wednesday a decidedly brighter state of things prevailed, the

rain having ceased, and the wind veered round further to the north. There were, however, occasional heavy thunderstorms, but in the intervals between, the sun shone brightly, and a beautiful view was obtained of the surrounding country. An early start was made for Whitestaunton, where the Society was received by the Rector (the Rev. H. A. Cartwright) and the owner of the Manor House, Commander F. Elton. R.N.

Whitestaunton Manor and Church.

In the grounds of the Manor House, the Rector (Rev. H. A. CARTWRIGHT) and the present owner of the estate (Commander F. ELTON, R.N.) showed the remains of a Roman Villa, which had been brought to light by the late Mr. Charles Elton, Q.C., M.P., who was President of the Society in 1882, and then resided at Whitestaunton. A ground plan of the villa was produced, and it was pointed out where the atrium had been, with a corridor, or passage surrounding it: two of the stone pillars which supported the roof of it remain among the *débris*; but it had been impossible to preserve the tessellated pavement. Some of the flues for heating purposes, some bricks, and some red sandstone slabs marking the places of hearths, were to be seen still. It was next pointed out, that in 1892 by the slipping of a wall a Roman room, paved with tesserae, some fifty feet east of the Villa, and fifteen feet above its level, was disclosed; that this was a rediscovery of Roman remains first found more than seventy years ago; when, in altering the course of the road, a room roofed with thin stone slabs, paved with tesserae, and standing over a clear spring in the wood was found—that this, it has been held, might have been a temple to the nymph of the spring. And that the spring—long known as S. Agnes' Well—now comes forth in the vaulted stone passage over which the road goes. On the way to the Church, Mr. Cart-

wright pointed out a huge rock on which it rests, and gave his own idea as to the origin of the name of the place, thus : when the first West Saxons came into the upland hollow in which we stand, the most conspicuous object in it would be this great grey rock. So when they had settled their "tun" near the spring, which never fails or freezes, they named it after the rock : the "tun" of the great Stan. (Stone) Stantune : the "White" first appears in Bishop Drokenesford's Register in 1321.

At the Church Mr. Cartwright gave an interesting account of its history and principal features. Looking to the west end they would see that there had been a church here before the present one. The old Norman font must have stood in a Norman Church ; and the font was made of Whitestaunton stone. With regard to the date of the Norman Church : In the "Returns of the Barons" (*Cartæ Baronum*) made to Henry II in 1166, a Robert de Stanton held two knights' fees, of "the old enfeoffment," *i.e.*, they dated from Henry I. It is probable, therefore, that Church and Font were in their places in the first thirty years of the XII Century. The present Perpendicular Church was—he said—probably built between the years 1478 and 1492, probably succeeding the Norman building. Some have held that it was considerably after this date. But these dates covered a period, when there were in possession at Whitestaunton two families, Brett and Hugyn. They had entered—how he did not yet know—into the heritage of the de Stauntons. The Brett was Lord of the Manor, held a moiety of it, and had the right of alternate presentation to the Rectory. The Hugyn held the other moiety, was in possession of the Hall, and was alternate patron of the Rectory. The Hugyns were very wealthy people, and, he believed, the present church was built by one of them, either John the elder (Will, 1483) or John the younger (Will, 1492): possibly by both. The latter, John Hugyn, at the end of his will gives twelve oxen to build a chapel over himself by the south door of the chancel, *i.e.*, of the church lately built. The north

chapel of "the Guild of our Lady," was probably already in its place: and the south chapel over John Hugyn was probably like it. The two-fold holding of the manor and advowson was brought to an end by the marriage of Simon Brett and Johanna Hugyn by 1513. They had Simon Brett's will (1530), in which he desired to be buried "at the foot of the high altar in the church of S. Andrew, Whitestaunton." Mr. Cartwright said he felt sure that he was so buried, and he believed it was his tomb against the north wall of the chancel, that Richard Symonds, the cavalier antiquary, noted, and described, when he came here with "the king's troope," in 1644: the tomb was now in the south chapel. On the tomb were the arms of Montacute—overlords from whom for a long period the de Staunton's held—Brett impaling Wadham or Phelips: and another coat of arms, three human heads in profile, not yet identified. Mr. Cartwright continued that the south (John Hugyn's) chapel was enlarged under the will (1587) of John Brett, the "Maker" of the manor house: that this was done in a manner hardly worthy of the rest of the church—possibly because his oldest son, Sir Alexander Brett, had become a Roman Catholic. And that John Brett's remains probably lie under the slab of Whitestaunton stone with a plain cross upon it in the middle of the south chapel. Mr. Cartwright pointed out the peculiar position of the piscina in the south window in the chancel: an ancient "dug out" chest: and the staircase leading on to the rood-loft. He said that if they looked at the west side of the chancel arch they would see the wooden blocks which held up the Rood, and the figures of the Blessed Virgin and S. John on each side of it. There were five bells, two being mediæval: one dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the other to S. George.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER, in thanking the Rector for his interesting description of the building, said that they were all the more indebted to him, as, although being far from well, he had yet kindly met them there that day.

Mr. EDMUND BUCKLEE said Mr. Cartwright had given them some interesting facts about the history of the parish which tended to throw some light upon the history of the Church. With regard to what had been told them about the Chapel on the south side, similar to that on the north side, it was succeeded by the Chapel which they now saw, and which was of debased architecture. In one matter he did not quite agree with Mr. Cartwright, and that was as to the small opening into the chapel having been originally the priests' door, because this was generally placed in the middle of the length, and would be just opposite to the door in the north chapel. He thought himself that this small opening which remained might possibly be a part of the screen-work which separated the south chapel from the chancel. With regard to the date of the Church generally, the whole building was of the Perpendicular style, but there was no appearance, to his mind of the Church having been rebuilt as a single design. It was probably rebuilt bit by bit, at different times, as the money came in. The windows had the ordinary Perpendicular tracery; the east window was rather similar, but it was not likely to be by the same hand as the windows in the nave. The north chapel was in different style to the rest of the Church, and he considered that the chancel arch did not agree with anything else. He should be inclined to say that it was a Church that had been altered and rebuilt from time to time, and it would be rash to fix upon a certain date. It was probably finished just before the Reformation came. The chancel arch was probably enlarged to put in the elaborate rood loft, and may have been the work of the early part of the XVI Century. The piscina was in a peculiar position in the window sill. The bench-ends were very curiously carved, showing great originality, and this was apparently local work, and did not belong to any particular school of carving.

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Whitestaunton Manor House.

The following description of the chief features of the Manor House has been contributed by the Rev. H. A. CARTWRIGHT :

Whitestaunton Manor House finds first mention in 1483 in the will of John Hugyn, thus : He requests his feoffees at his decease to “suffer Johan my wife to have the occupation of all the Howsyng above the west end of the Hall of Whites-taunton, and the occupation of the old Stable, the Kechyn and Bakehouse”—a stable that was old in 1483 may well throw the date of the hall a century back from this date—indeed when we think of the quantity of building stone that was quarried in Whitestaunton for the two Abbeys of Newenham and Ford from the middle of the XIII Century onwards ; and remember that the de Stauntons were people of importance in their day, we cannot help feeling that there probably was a stone hall here in that XIII Century.

The lie of the ground ; the present position of the cellars ; and a fragment of white stone flooring in one of the bedrooms seem to indicate, as Mr. C. Elton held, that the hall was not on the “ground floor,” but on the “first floor” ; and was entered by an external staircase. Part of the roof of this old Hall still remains. (*See Vol. XXVIII, S.A.S. Proceedings.*) Another relic of it can be seen in the Arms of de Staunton and Montacute, carved in Whitestaunton Stone, on the south side of the present Manor House.

Ninety years, roughly speaking, takes us from this will of John Hugyn, senr., in which we have the first mention of the hall, to John Brett, the maker of the Manor House, as it was seventy years ago. In 1576-7, some three years after John Brett had been settled in the hall of Whitestaunton, he began to do what many other country gentlemen were about, *i.e.*, to improve the old house that belonged to him. He did not pull down the old hall and build a new Elizabethan house as some

did. But, partly within and partly without the old hall of John Hugyn's will, John Brett built the Manor House of Whites-taunton—the "Fayre old Stone Howse" of Richard Symonds' Diary of seventy-seven years afterwards—1644.

There is no reasonable doubt that the dining-room with its open hearth, with its wainscoting with the initials J.B., 1577, on the capitals of the pilasters ; the morning-room, formerly the entrance ; the library above the dining-room ; and indeed the house as it now stands, with the exception of the drawing-room and what is over it, was the work of John Brett, and that it was carried out at the time of which we are speaking.

It was probably at this time that the stables, as they existed twenty years ago, took the place of "the old stable" of John Hugyn's will. Through the doors of these stables passed the horses of "the King's troop" when Charles I was following the Earl of Essex to the West.

Commander Elton received a cordial vote of thanks for allowing his house and grounds to be inspected.

Castle Neroche.

The drive was then continued through the delightful scenery, which is so well known, to that extensive camp at Castle Neroche, situated 900 feet above the sea level, and commanding a magnificent view of the country for many miles round. In anticipation of the visit, several excavations had been made in the camp and on "The Beacon," by the kind permission of the owner, Viscount Portman, and under the superintendence of Mr. H. St. George Gray. The result of the exploration was related to those present in an interesting paper by Mr. Gray, which has been amplified and printed in Part II, with illustrations.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER said the members were greatly indebted to Mr. Gray for his work at Castle Neroche, and the hope was expressed that excavations might be renewed in the future.

Ilminster and its Church.

The day's programme included a visit to Ilminster, and the drive to this interesting town was most enjoyable. After luncheon at the George Hotel, the Church was viewed (*see Frontispiece*), where the party was received by the Vicar (Rev. James Street) and the Churchwardens.

The Rev. J. STREET, in giving an interesting ecclesiastical history of the town and its Church, said the earliest reliable document in which the name of Ilminster ("Ile Mynister") was found was of the date 995, the "Confirmation" of King Ethelred. Thereby Ilminster was given back to the Abbey of Muchelney, from which it had been foolishly taken away "at a certain time, in a period of three heirs." This would carry the story of the parish and mynster far back into Saxon times; and it lent probability to the tradition embodied in the spurious Charter of King Ine, which was found with the Muchelney Cartulary, that King Ine gave Ilminster, in 725, to the Abbey of Muchelney. Till the time of the dissolution of the Monasteries, Ilminster was attached to the Abbey of Muchelney—the last Abbot was an Ilminster man. The present Church would thus be but the latest of a series of Churches built on the same site; the traces of the building which immediately preceded it were said to exist in certain mouldings beneath the chancel windows. The different parts of the Church differed slightly in date, bearing witness that they were the work of different hands, yet presenting a harmonious whole. Sir William Wadham, who died 1452, was the traditional builder of the "Wadham transept" and the tower; he lies with his mother in a magnificent tomb in the transept. The inscription on a metal scroll on the tomb had been largely worn away. Probably from this scroll they would have gathered the evidence of his work in the Church. The building had undergone three principal changes since its erection, these corresponding with three great theological



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In the Collection of Lt.-Col. J. R. Bramble, F.S.A.

From a Photograph by J. Reginald H. Weaver.

SILVER MEDAL OF NICHOLAS AND DOROTHY WADHAM. CIRCA 1618

movements in the Church—(a) the Reformation, (b) the Evangelical movement, (c) the Oxford movement. The first of these changed the appearance of things by the removal of the altars of the four chantries which had been founded in the Church—St. Catherine's, St. Mary's, the Holy Cross, and St. John the Baptist. The endowment of these chantries had been on a generous scale, together £35 a year in value, equal to about £500 of our money. A "shippe of silver," images of St. Christopher, and "Our Lady of Pitye;" the crucifix on the rood loft, the light before the high altar, were amongst the vanished features of the Church. In 1825 the Evangelical movement had reached Ilminster; the Church accommodation was increased by inflating the nave and inserting huge galleries, which covered two-thirds of the floor space; two of the fine columns on either side were removed, and the remainder hoisted on high bases; the aisle windows elongated; the clerestory windows reduced in number to three on each side; the roof raised and constructed on poorer lines, with lath and plaster ceiling. The Oxford revival worked with them also, and twenty years ago a work of restoration was begun in the chancel by the then lay rector, Major Vaughan-Lee; this spread onward, and within the last year the handsome oak west gallery had replaced the cumbersome, unsightly, and unchurchlike erections of the "twenties." Of the interesting scenes witnessed in the Church might be mentioned the funeral services of the Wadhams, who founded the college of their name at Oxford, and who died 1609 and 1618. They both rest in a rich tomb in the north transept. £500 was spent here and at Oxford on one of these funerals. The visit of the Duke of Monmouth to the Church on Sunday, 29th August, 1680, was an event of much historical interest, whilst in 1657 a scene between the "intruded" Presbyterian minister, James Strong, and certain Quaker women who confronted him in the "steeple-house," was worth calling to mind. The communion plate comprised two Elizabethan chalices; one of these, after

the Edmond pattern, was very handsome. The Churchwardens' accounts contained entries of surpassing interest, throwing a curious light on the local and national history. The principal of these entries were being published in a book on Ilminster, "The Mynster of the Ile," by the present Vicar.

Mr. BUCKLE said one of the most striking points in the architecture of the Church was the central tower, and when they found a Church of Cruciform shape they might be sure that it was a decidedly ancient building. The plan of the Church dated from a much earlier period than the present building. They had many instances of Cruciform churches where the view was interrupted as it was in that Church, and it was due to the fact that whilst the arms of the cross had been made larger, the tower remained the same size as the tower in the old Church. There was a remaining trace of an earlier Church in the east wall, where the narrow panelling seemed to be an indication of the width of the previous east window. The vestry was later. As to the date of the building, as William Wadham died in 1452, he did not think it probable that either the tower or the Wadham transept could go back to that time. The north transept was a very rich piece of Perpendicular work, without the usual characteristics of their Somersetshire architecture, and was not local work.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr. Street for his explanation of the features of the Church, and Mr. Buckle for his supplementary remarks, which plainly showed them that this was one of the most interesting churches in Somersetshire.

The church plate and registers were placed in the nave for inspection, and proved of great interest to many of the members.

Dowlish Wake Church.

A short drive brought the members to Dowlish Wake, where they were welcomed by the Rector, Rev. F. H. Mules, and

conducted over the Church, with its interesting monuments belonging to the families of Wake and Speke.

Speaking from the chancel, the Rev. E. H. BATES said that when the Society visited this Church in 1866, it was found to have been "so completely restored as to have become a handsome modern building, but possessed of no great interest to the archæologist." Mr. Freeman and Mr. Parker therefore reserved their criticism for the tower. This was pronounced to be of the XV Century, built into an earlier Church; to which Mr. Freeman added that the tower was about as strange outside as inside, and that, putting aside the mere dignity of outline, nothing could possibly be worse. "The west walls were carried out as buttresses. On the west side was a little window, as bad as anything could be. The embattlements were poor, and to relieve the summit of the tower were two gargoyles placed on the south side." A tradition was then started that the Church had been rebuilt by the Speke family, *temp.* James I, which would have explained the whole business, but the tradition itself seems to be baseless. It appears, therefore, more probable (as Mr. Buckle pointed out at Winsham on the third day) that the peculiar plan of the tower is due to an original Norman tower having been taken down when the nave and north aisle were rebuilt in the Perpendicular style, and then rebuilt with the same dimensions from east to west, while considerably widened from north to south. This does not altogether account for the poverty of design in the upper part of the building, the drawings in the Pigott collection showing nave and north aisle of the usual Perpendicular detail, with the chancel east window and a font of the Decorated period. The present font is modern. The Church also contains the Early Norman font, brought from the site of the destroyed church at West Dowlish; and an elaborate Tabernacle found built up in the wall of the Church. The chapel on the north side of the chancel was rebuilt about 1500 (*see below*). It contains an interesting series of monu-

ments. The oldest is that of a recumbent female figure in an arched recess in the north wall. The dress is very plain, the face sunk within a curved roll head-dress; the date probably XIV Century. The family of Wake came to an end with John Wake, son of Ralph whose death was compassed by his wife Joan, for which she was convicted and burnt to death. John died in 1348, leaving three daughters, Isabel, wife of John Keynes; Margery, wife of Hugh Tyrel; and Elizabeth, wife of Richard Michel. In the division of the property, Dowlish was allotted to Isabel Keynes, who died in 1359, and it is quite possible that the effigy may represent her as the founder of the chantry, but no positive evidence has been found.

Between the chantry and the chancel stands an altar tomb, on which repose the figures of a man in full plate armour with a lady by his side. The panels round the tomb contain male and female figures; and in the central one is a shield bearing: Barry of eight, over all an eagle with two heads displayed (Speke); on an inescutcheon of pretence, a bend ragulée cotised (Keynes). This shield would imply that the figures represent John Speke and Joan, daughter and heiress of John Keynes, who was great-grandson of Isabel Wake. John Speke died in 1442, and his widow, having apparently re-married Hugh Champernoun, of Modbury, in 1462. John Stourton, of Preston Plucknett, in this county, in his will, proved 27th January, 1438-9, ordered that "a tomb with two images of John Keynes and his wife be placed between the high altar of the Church at Dowlysshwake and the chapel of the chantry of the said John Keynes." (S.R.S., xvi, 146). There is no evidence existent to connect Stourton with Keynes, but it is possible that John Keynes' wife, Margaret, was a sister of John Stourton. He died in 1420, and his posthumous funereal honours seem to have been transferred to his son-in-law.

On the floor of the chantry is the brass of a man in full armour of the Tudor period, with two shields, one bearing

Speke, and the other, a chevron between three birds, apparently ducks. On the brass border is an inscription :—
“Hic jacent Georgius Speke miles et Elizabetha uxor ejus. Georgius fuit secundus Filius Johannis Speke. Edificavit hanc partem Ecclesie de novo. Obiit octavo die Octobris anno Domini quinquagesimo vicesimo octavo.” George Speke, great-grandson of Joan Keynes, eventually succeeded his father, Sir John Speke.

Having no children, his property came to his nephew, Sir Thomas Speke. His wife's surname is not known, and her arms were borne by more than one family in the West of England.

Against the north wall of the chantry is the monument, surmounted by a bust, of Captain John Hanning Speke, the African explorer. At the date of the Society's former visit, only three years had passed since the news of his discovery of the source of the Nile had excited the admiration of the civilized world. It is difficult to believe that so short a time has changed the map of Africa from that blank condition, when “Mountains of the Moon” alternated with the fancy which made

“Geographers on pathless downs,
Place elephants for want of towns.”

to its present filled-in state; and the Nile itself, from the Victoria Nyanza to Alexandria, has become *de facto* a river of the Empire.

The Rev. F. H. and Mrs. Mules afterwards entertained the members at tea at the rectory, and were heartily thanked for their kindness. This concluded the programme for the day, Chard being reached rather late in the evening.