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PAPERS, &c.

On the Perpendicular Style, as exhibited in the Churches of Somerset.

PART II.

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IN the paper which I had the honour of reading before this Society at its last annual meeting, I endeavoured to point out the chief general characteristics of the local Perpendicular style of Somersetshire; and I further examined in detail the most magnificent of its features, its stately and elaborate western towers. On the present occasion, I propose, with your indulgence, to continue the subject with regard to the other portions of the churches. But before I directly enter on these questions, I will make a few desultory remarks supplementary to my former discourse, as, since its delivery, I have made a very extensive tour through various parts of the county. I have seen

many magnificent buildings with which I was previously unacquainted, or which I knew only by drawings; and I am only glad that the result of my inquiries has been, that very little modification of my former views is required. I have not found any distinct class of enriched towers besides those which I before endeavoured to classify; but I have seen so many fine individual examples, that I cannot help bestowing a few words upon them. I may also mention that a third church of the cathedral and abbatial type must be referred to the local style. The Minster at Sherborne, which I examined in the course of my journey, although situated beyond the limits of the county and diocese, must be considered as being, in all its most essential characters, a Somersetshire church.

Of the first, or Taunton type, I have seen several very splendid examples; two especially—Bruton and Huish Episcopi, which may fairly dispute between themselves the first rank in their own class. Huish is one of the most majestic of towers; I shall never forget the effect of my first twilight glimpse of it. But I may add that at no subsequent moment did I admire it so much as at that first glimpse; whereas, in the case of Wrington, I always find that the first feeling, when I revisit it, is one of disappointment, but that its super-eminent beauty gradually grows again upon me. But to return to our present competitors: Huish is by far the grander and more enriched; but Bruton has a simple dignity about it approaching more nearly to the exquisite grace of Bishop's Lydiard. The battlement and pinnacles of Huish are a marvel of elaborate work, but I must confess that those of Bruton please me much better, as being more truly the natural finish of the tower; and I am not sure that the horizontal bands of foliation at Huish do not carry the principle of

contrast* too far. Neither of these towers is very conspicuous for loftiness ; they rise but two stages above the roof, and the treatment of the lower stage in each has much boldness and originality. Kingsbury Episcopi is a third noble tower, of much the same proportion and general treatment. It resembles Huish in its foliated bands and in its battlement, but the latter has still less connexion with the parts beneath, owing to the distance at which the pinnacles crowning the buttresses are set from the angles. This gives the belfry-stage a look of too great hardness and squareness. Mark, Long Sutton, and Langport, are also towers of the same class; handsome steeples, and which, out of Somerset, would command great admiration, but immeasurably inferior to the three magnificent structures which I have just been describing.

Of the Bristol type, I before stated that though its ideal excellence is greater, its actual specimens are commonly of inferior merit to the Taunton class. I have not found this remark belied in my present travels. Montacute is the best tower of this kind that I saw, but no one would compare it to Huish or Kingsbury, though it has borrowed from them their characteristic bands of foliation. The turret is at the north-west angle, so that it stands out very boldly and prominently; it lacks, however, the small spirelet common nearer Bristol. Of Bleadon I spoke somewhat disparagingly, on the strength of an engraving which I find was far from doing it justice. It is not a first rate tower, but is still a bold and handsome structure ; the turret is crowned with a spirelet ; and we may remark the diagonal buttresses, unusual in Somerset, except in much smaller towers. Of these last, Hutton is a very pleasing example, closely resembling its neighbour

* See History of Architecture, p. 348—50.

Locking, which I mentioned in my last paper. Mudford is also a pretty little tower of the same class, chiefly remarkable for foliated bands on each side of its belfry windows. Muchelney is a tower of more pretension than any of these, except perhaps Montacute, but less pleasing, the stages being awkwardly managed, and the belfry-windows placed too low down.

I believe I am right in referring these two last towers to this class; my drawings at least do not show any buttresses at the angle occupied by the turret, but I have no view from the other side, where they may exist, especially at Muchelney. If any one blame me for not having made more extensive drawings or notes, I must plead what I consider the very valid excuse, that I visited Muchelney when it was very nearly dark, and Mudford during a violent storm of rain.*

Of the class represented by Temple church at Bristol, where buttresses do exist at the angles, and yet the turret soars conspicuously above all, Yeovil is a very grand example. It is indeed comparatively plain, and without pinnacles, but its solidity of mass and strongly projecting buttresses produce a most striking effect. South Brent, in like manner, has a turret rising above the buttresses; but here all the buttresses terminate below the belfry-stage, so that the latter is somewhat bare.

Yeovil leads the way to a group of towers, chiefly in the western part of the county, some of which might be referred to the first, and some to the second class, but which seem to have more in common with each other than with either of them. I allude to certain towers of considerable height and great boldness of outline and dignity of general effect, in which there is nevertheless an entire

* At Mudford I have ascertained that the turret does stand free without buttresses.

absence of the usual elaborate detail. They are well built and finished, but have hardly any ornament of any kind ; instead of the usual rich parapet, there is a mere plain battlement, with small or no pinnacles. Indeed, where they existed, they have been mostly knocked off, rather, according to my taste, to the improvement of the tower. Of these, Minehead and St. Decuman's have the turret connected with buttresses, after the Taunton and Lydiard fashion ; at Martock and Queen Camel the upper part of the turret stands free, but the lower part is cloaked with buttresses ; at Cannington alone have we the true Bristol arrangement, though without the spirelet. It may be remarked that none of these plain towers are attached to very large and elaborate churches, except Martock, which is consequently unpleasing, while none of the others are. The tower there seems nearly as unworthy of the church as at Huish the church is unworthy of the tower.

Of the third class, I have found no fellow to add to the small band I enumerated on a former occasion. The nearest approach to it I have seen is at Lympsham, where the belfry-stage and the large corner pinnacles are treated exactly as at Wrington, but then that belfry-stage is only the uppermost of three which rise above the roof, and the two lower of which are treated quite in the ordinary manner. This tower is most beautiful at a little distance, but on a nearer approach it is rather disappointing ; partly because the *gradual* increase of lightness is not sufficiently observed, partly because the rough masonry of its walling does not harmonize well with its ornamental portions. In the distant view also it has a great appearance of massiveness, which, on a nearer approach, is found to be very far from its real character. I have now also minutely examined Backwell, and see no reason to retract

the observations I made on it on the strength of Mr. Barr's engraving.

Spires I find to be, especially on the eastern border of the county, a little less rare than I had imagined, though still very far from common. I have examined Frome, Castle Cary, Trent, East Brent, and Worle, besides two or three which I saw in the distance, but could not reach. But to one used to the glorious spires of Northamptonshire, none of these seem of much beauty or grandeur. They are mostly quite unconnected with the tower either by broaching or by flying buttresses; they are of no great height, and without crockets or prominent spire-lights. Generally, as far as any unity of effect is concerned, they might just as well be away. Their most remarkable feature is a small band of panelling, at about half their height. Trent, however, is a pleasing Decorated tower and spire of quite another character.

I am now brought round again to my main subject, and will now proceed to the consideration of the

CENTRAL TOWERS.

My observations have hitherto been confined to western towers; but the prevalency of genuine cross churches affords considerable scope for the introduction of that still nobler feature—the central lantern. We have already mentioned several of earlier date, as the small square tower of Whitchurch, and the octagons of North Curry and Stoke St. Gregory. But we have also several noble specimens of Perpendicular central towers. For the Perpendicular architects, as we have already seen, often carried out, after their own fashion, cruciform designs commenced at an earlier period; and they even erected from the ground, in their own style, such magnificent cruciform piles as Crewkerne and Ilminster. It is indeed probable

that the plan of those churches may have been greatly influenced by the fabrics which doubtless preceded them; but that the architect chose thus to reproduce the forms of an earlier period, shows an appreciation of the noblest outline which a church can assume, one which, with all my preference for the Perpendicular style, I must confess to have been comparatively rare during the period of its prevalence.

The whole position and circumstances of a central tower combine to give it a character very different from one which stands free from the ground. Consequently, though even the central towers of Somerset retain much of the general local character, we must not look among them for the same typical specimens as among those which occupy the west ends of the churches. The central steeples, in fact, have far more individuality, and cannot be so well ranged in classes. I have already mentioned the singular occurrence of the diagonal buttress in this particular position, where, to my mind, it is singularly out of place. We have, however, a very striking example at Othery, and others of inferior merit at Dunster and Yatton. This last, which supports the truncated spire, I must confess to be quite common-place, and altogether unworthy of the extraordinary splendour of the nave and west front; but that at Othery has a boldness about it which disarms criticism. All three have diagonal buttresses at three corners, and a prominent turret at the fourth, so that they may be considered as approximating to the second, or Bristol, type of western steeples. At Yatton the buttresses run up and support the pinnacles; at Othery they are finished somewhat lower down, which is perhaps more pleasing where the buttresses are diagonal and the pinnacles of no great consequence, as the slope of the buttress has a very bold effect. Probably the reason

for the difference is constructive, one having to support a spire, and the other not ; the arrangement at Dunster is intermediate. This Othery steeple is, in fact, one quite *sui generis*, and deserves attentive examination. Its height, for a central tower, is extraordinary, rising fully as much, in proportion to a smaller church, above the main body of the building, as the tallest of the western towers. The belfry-stage contains one tall, broad, four-centered window—window, that is, in the Somersetshire sense, as only a small portion is pierced—the effect of which is very striking, and to my mind not altogether unpleasing. The intermediate stage contains niches.

The usual double buttress, with a turret at one angle, occurs in several central towers. To this head we may perhaps refer the tower of Bristol Cathedral, a low and massive, but singularly venerable structure, and for which, as for the rest of the church, I must confess a special affection. There is something extremely effective in the five windows side by side, and the broad space above in the parapet, with its numerous small battlements. At Axbridge is a noble tower of this class, of remarkable height, with pinnacles at the three corners, and a bold turret at the north-east. It has, however, very much the effect of a western tower. Wedmore has another slightly resembling it, but having no pinnacles, and being altogether inferior. But there is a far more stately tower, though of somewhat smaller elevation, at Ilminster, which is evidently a Perpendicular version of the central tower at Wells. It is, indeed, one of the very noblest parochial towers I know ; and the only approach to a fault that I can discern in it is, that the single angle-turret breaks in upon the regularity of design more than is desirable in an erection of such great architectural splendour. This steeple

rises two considerable stages above the roof of the church, and is divided into three bays by slight buttresses running up the whole height, and finishing in pinnacles. The great corner-pinnacles approach somewhat to the Wrington and Glastonbury type, but their finish is rather a dome than a spire; the domical form comes out still more clearly in the top of the stair-turret. Each bay of both stages contains a long transomed window of two lights. The whole effect is most admirable; I do not know a more majestic composition of its own class.

Crewkerne is, in most respects, a grander church than Ilminster; but its tower will not bear comparison. This however partly arises from the arrangements of the church. At Ilminster the four arms of the cross are nearly of the same height, the difference being so small as scarcely to bear upon the proportions of the tower. At Crewkerne the nave is far higher than the choir, which I cannot but think an inexcusable fault in a cross church, and that one nearly of an uniform date. The result is that the tower from the west looks too low, from the east too slender; and it has not sufficient merit in other respects to counterbalance this original defect. The part which rises clear above the nave must, I suppose, be considered as forming one lofty stage, as it contains only one long two-light window; but at the centre of its height there is a set-off in the buttresses, a string along the face of the tower, somewhat like the band in the same position at Mudford, and a break in the window greater than an ordinary transom. The appearance is that of a window which has somehow or other broken through into a stage below its proper one. If I am not intruding on Mr. Ruskin's province, I would compare it to an unwelcome visitor who has thrust

his legs through the ceiling, while his body remains in the room overhead.

The double buttresses at Crewkerne finish, each in its own pinnacle, at a little distance from the angle, which certainly produces an effect of weakness. The like is the case with the angle-turret, which terminates in an array of small pinnacles, instead of a single spire or dome. Between these two splendid fabrics lies the little church of Kingston, which I have already mentioned as an example of the Iffley type, a nave and chancel with a tower between them. Plain and unpretending as is this little steeple, it exhibits the genuine Somersetshire feeling in its double buttresses away from the angle. Its staircase-turret is placed on the south side, near the east end, but it cannot be said to occupy a corner.

There is another central tower which I must mention, in the desecrated Priory church at Woodspring. The ground plan is very singular ; a nave and north aisle, a choir, now destroyed, and a central tower ; there are no transepts, but a lantern is formed by arches in the thickness of the wall. The tower itself is of the same class as Dunster and Othery, except that the angle-turret is wanting, and that the work generally is more elaborate. The character of the belfry-stage is unusual in Somerset, there being a single large window in each face, so far resembling Othery, but with no likeness whatever in the individual windows actually employed.

Of the noblest form of central towers I can only produce from Somersetshire a very unworthy representative, though as there are several grand churches in the county which I have as yet been unable to reach, I would fain hope some of them may contain specimens fit to

maintain the credit of Somerset in this respect also. The form I allude to is that in which the tower is supported by four equal polygonal turrets, one at each corner. This, when the tower rises from the ground, I must, maugre the malison of Mr. Ruskin, consider very inferior to the ordinary buttressed form ; but for a central tower, borne up by the four arms of a great cross church, it is surely the grandest that can be devised. Buttresses in this position never look natural; they almost always, even at Ilminster, involve some awkward shift or other; but the turrets rise from the centre with much less impropriety, seeming in some sort to be the external prolongation of the four great piers on which the tower is supported. No one, I think, can fail to recognise the infinite superiority of this arrangement who compares the great tower of Canterbury with that of Gloucester, or the smaller examples at Cricklade and Ashford with the extremely beautiful, but far inferior, erections at Wolverhampton and Melton Mowbray.

Of this form I can here produce nothing better than the tower of Bath Cathedral. I am far from entirely depreciating that church, which certainly possesses great majesty of effect both within and without ; but there are few buildings in which the architect seems so often to have gone wilfully wrong. The unusual proportion between the aisles and the clerestory was a bold experiment, and how far it may be thought to have succeeded is, to a great extent, a matter of taste; but there really was no reason why the tower should not have been made square, or why its windows should have been set in square panels. Still, from any point where the peculiar shape is not very conspicuous, there is a good deal of dignity and justness of proportion about this steeple. But the addition of spires to the turrets

here and elsewhere has very much affected the general character of the building. I am by no means clear that the change was not an improvement; still it seems too hazardous an experiment to be altogether justifiable.

WEST FRONTS.

In those churches where the tower is central, scope is thereby given for a regular façade at the west end, which otherwise is in most cases sacrificed to the western tower. Now no one who has given much attention to our old churches, can have failed to remark that in no respect are they generally more defective than in this. No real architectural design is commonly extended to it; the naves and aisles are left, as it were, to finish themselves as they can: their terminations, in fact, remain a mere *end*, and do not aspire to the dignity of a *front*. This is seen very conspicuously in St. Giles', Northampton, and still more so even in a church in every other respect so magnificent as that of Stafford. Such cases as Felmersham and Berkeley are indeed very superior; but even here, though the terminations of the two naves are beautiful in the extreme, the ends of the aisles are entirely unworthy of the rest, and exclude anything like a regular architectural design. In the Perpendicular of Somerset we often find this blot removed. Certainly in many cases, even in Somerset, we find good opportunities thrown away. At Wedmore there is little pretence to a regular front, and at Dunster none at all; while at Axbridge, where there is a little more, it is greatly concealed by the parapets. But, on the other hand, even in such comparatively plain west ends as North Curry and Stoke St. Gregory, there is a real design, though a very simple one, and a degree of finish elsewhere unusual. Woodspring Priory has only the termination of a nave, (the single

aisle not reaching to the extreme west) but something more is attempted by the addition of turrets. Still the incongruity between its high gable and the depressed arch of its west window must have been fatal to its general effect. The west ends of Crewkerne and Yatton rise far above this standard; we have here genuine fronts, quite worthy of forming the entrance to any small cathedral or abbey. Crewkerne in fact at once suggests Bath as its fellow, and there can be little doubt as to which of the two fronts should claim our preference. Between Crewkerne and Yatton it is less easy to strike the balance. The general notion of both is the same; a west front without towers, with the natural terminations of the nave and aisles left undisguised, but with the gable of the nave flanked by polygonal turrets. Thus far the main elements are the same; but a more entire diversity is effected in their treatment than perhaps might have been considered possible. Thus at Yatton the turrets are hexagonal, and crowned with small spires; at Crewkerne they are octagonal and embattled, with vestiges of small pinnacles, like those on the angle-turrets of the tower. I cannot but think that their loss has been a gain; but the arrangement of Yatton is more dignified still. The pitch of the gable at Yatton is not satisfactory; it should have been either higher or lower; at Crewkerne it is very flat and embattled. This battlement is also carried along the ends of the aisles, while at Yatton they are far more elegantly finished with one of the elaborate open parapets of that district. At Yatton the ends of the aisles have more dignity given to them by being finished with small turrets at the angles supporting pinnacles, while at Crewkerne there is nothing but the common double buttress. Both have west windows as large as the space will allow; in neither perhaps is the tracery of the very first order; but that at

Crewkerne is decidedly preferable, as the heavy central mullion has a very awkward effect at Yatton. Both have large and magnificent western doorways, that at Crewkerne at once suggesting the portal of King's College Chapel. Either front is a most noble and magnificent design, of a character quite unsurpassed among our parochial edifices; indeed their bold and harmonious simplicity might read a lesson to several of our proudest cathedrals, including the stately fabric of Wells itself.

Of west fronts of other kinds I have hardly anything to say, as the two most remarkable, that last mentioned and St. Mary Redcliffe, hardly come within my direct province, as their main peculiarities are entirely owing to architects earlier than Perpendicular times.

GENERAL EXTERIORS.

From towers and fronts I must now proceed to the bodies of the churches. The subject of their external appearance I have to a certain extent forestalled in speaking of their general character. I there observed that the clerestory is by no means so universal in Somerset as in many other districts, even where the Perpendicular style is far lass prevalent. We find it absent even in very large and magnificent churches, as Axbridge, Dunster, Wedmore, and Yeovil. I conceive this partly to arise from the predilection of the architects throughout the whole west of England and South Wales for various modifications of the coved or cradle roof. This necessarily involved an external high pitch; and it is of course only in structures on a very magnificent scale that sufficient elevation is afforded for both a high roof and a clerestory. That this was the cause I imagine is pretty clearly shown from the very slight appreciation of merely picturesque beauty shown by the Perpendicular architects in Somer-

setshire. It is not usual, when the clerestory is absent and the nave has a high roof, to find a covering of the same sort added to the aisles, so as to produce the effect of varied groupings among the numerous gables. Dunster is the only example which occurs to me on a large scale. There are smaller instances at Minehead, St. James in Taunton, Bishop's Hull, and Whitchurch, in which last case, as we have seen, the Perpendicular enlargement was conducted with a most unusual regard to the former character of the building. But even where the aisle has a high roof, it is often disguised with a parapet or battlement, as at Crowcombe and the two Lydiards; more frequently still does the high roof of the nave rise above aisles with a lean-to, finished with a parapet of various degrees of richness. This somewhat unpleasant contrast is conspicuous at Trull, Burrington, Portishead, Portbury, Churchill, St. Werburgh's at Bristol, and even in such stately fabrics as Temple in the same city, as Yeovil, Wedmore, and Axbridge. The peculiar arrangement in the choir of Bristol Cathedral is in a manner analogous, but, as we have seen, does not directly proceed from a similar cause.

Among churches without clerestories, I must not omit to mention the very remarkable edifice at Cannington. This is an uniform Perpendicular building, very short and very lofty; there is no constructive distinction between nave and chancel, within or without, except that the aisles do not run to the east end. A single external roof embraces nave, aisles, and chancel. The arrangement then is identical with that of some of the worst modern churches; and my first momentary impression was that the church was modern, or greatly modernized, but such is not the case. It is rather like Whiston in Northamptonshire, only with a steep roof. The general external effect is, of course, not good, but the height of the east end is magnificent.

When the clerestory is present, it is generally of moderate elevation, quite sufficient inside, but very frequently, as at Crewkerne and Stoke St. Gregory, precluded by the large parapet of the aisles from having its due effect without. It is not usually so thickly set with windows as is frequently the case in Perpendicular churches in other districts; the aisle is commonly much more "diaphanous" than the clerestory. Thus at Wrington, Yatton, Banwell, North Curry, Glastonbury, and Cheddar there is only a single window of moderate size in each bay, so that they are by no means thick together. At Crewkerne there are indeed two windows in each bay, but the immense width of the bays absolutely required it, and it in no degree approaches to the appearance of Newark and other churches where a similar arrangement is used. At St. Mary Magdalen, Taunton, St. Cuthbert's, Wells, St. Stephen's, Bristol, and at Bruton and Martock, there is a single window in each bay of greater breadth, but still nothing at all out of the way. At St. Stephen's the clerestory is strangely enough concealed by a compass roof to the aisle, reversing the ordinary defect.

In the three great churches, however, we find the clerestory far more conspicuous. At St. Mary Redcliffe the clerestory is indeed much larger than is usual in churches of any kind, but I do not think that any one can call its size disproportionate either within or without. Within it certainly is not. At Bath the designer seems to have imitated Redcliffe without much discretion, and has produced a clerestory of decidedly disproportionate size, throwing the aisles into complete insignificance. The Redcliffe arrangement seems also copied in the choir of Christ Church, Hampshire. It is also to be found in an exaggerated form in Sherborne Minster, where the clerestory is decidedly the most important portion of the building, and occupies a still larger



BRUTON CHURCH, SOMERSETSHIRE.

share of it than at Redcliffe. This is still more conspicuous within, owing to a cause which I shall mention when I come to speak of the internal architecture of the churches.

Bath Cathedral appears also to have aped Redcliffe to its own prejudice in another respect. It involves, I trust, no lack of respect for what, I suppose, we may safely call on the whole the most magnificent parish church in England, to say that the position of the tower and the narrowness of the transepts at Redcliffe are decided faults. A church of that size, and one which, in every other respect, affects the cathedral type, ought unquestionably to have exhibited the genuine cross form, and the predominant central tower. Next to that, a pair of western towers, like Llandaff, would have been desirable; next to that, one vast tower at the west end, like Boston or St. Michael's, Coventry; anything rather than the tower thrust into a corner, depriving the church of all outline, and throwing the remainder of the west front into the most ludicrous insignificance. But, the tower being banished to this strange place,—not, be it observed, by the fault of the Perpendicular architect,—it was thought good to make a wonderful display of height and narrowness in the transepts. In this case of Redcliffe the freak was comparatively harmless, both because the tower had been thus banished, and because the addition of transept aisles prevented the notion of narrowness from being pushed to an extreme. But our Bath friend again imitated Redcliffe with still less success; he made his transepts as narrow or narrower than his model, though there was to be a central tower, and no aisles to the transepts. Hence the narrowness is ludicrous without, and absolutely painful within, and that strange shape is given to the tower on which I have already commented.

I am inclined, on the whole, to set down the nave and

aisles of Banwell as, externally, the most thoroughly beautiful I know among churches of its own kind—that is, churches of considerable size, which neither make any approach to cathedral character, nor yet exhibit the common parochial type on the exaggerated scale of Boston or Coventry. The proportions of the aisles and clerestory are absolutely perfect. I have hinted that the Perpendicular clerestories are, if anything, a little too low, and the windows a little too small. Banwell has hit the exact mean; its range of three-light windows with pointed arches is most stately. It surpasses both Wrington and Yatton in its proportions, and also in the pinnacles, which divide the bays of the clerestory, instead of merely rising from the parapet. Again, the turrets at the east end of the nave are extremely noble, and as the chancel in its roofs and character does not harmonize with the rest, it is a gain that the aisles are not continued beyond the chancel-arch, so that we are spared the lean-to roofs abutting against space, as in Wrington and other cases. I also prefer the porch rising to the full height of the aisle rather than the smaller one at Wrington. The only defect is the important one of the masonry, where we miss the fine ashlar of Wrington. On the whole, I have no doubt in assigning Banwell the first place in these respects; but Wrington, even in the body, comes so very near to it, and so infinitely surpasses Banwell and every other church of its class in its inimitable tower, that I must, on the whole, assign to it the highest rank among genuine parochial churches in Somersetshire, and, therefore, in England.

Yet I must here mention two very formidable rivals, Bruton and Martock. Wrington nave is, like so many others, cramped at both ends; an addition of a bay or two to its length would have been a decided improvement.

At Martock the nave is longer, having six bays, with a well developed clerestory; there is also a much larger and finer chancel. But the tower, as I have mentioned, is very unworthy of the rest of the fabric; and, even in the aisles and clerestory themselves, though increase of size produces an increase of general majesty, we do not find the same exquisite delicacy of treatment. The battlement, though it appears in a graceful and elaborate form, is a finish decidedly inferior to the straight pierced parapet of the northern type. And I am not sure that the break in the aisle, marking the presence of distinct chapels, is any improvement in external effect.

Bruton, with the exception of its modernized chancel, is certainly one of the best churches in the county. I have already mentioned its beautiful western tower; I hardly know whether to find a fault or a beauty in the presence of a second smaller tower over the north porch. This erection is of a form intermediate between a belfry and a gateway tower, and, while it of course adds much variety and character to the outline, it manifestly hinders the due effect of the very fine clerestory to which I have already alluded. The aisle, especially on this north side, is quite unworthy of it. The clerestory has the pierced parapet on both sides, the aisle on the south side only.

CHANCELS, ETC.

I have already mentioned that the chancel, or part of it, is very often retained from an earlier building; so that, as the earlier building was also, in most cases, smaller and less elaborate than its successor, comparatively mean chancels are attached to some of the most magnificent naves and towers, as is very conspicuously the case at Wrington. In any case the arrangement usually adopted of continuing

the aisles along a single bay of the chancel is one not calculated to give any great dignity to that portion of the church, which often remains somewhat disjointed and inharmonious, being prevented from assuming the form either of the distinct chapel-like chancel, or of the regular choir with aisles. The most interesting chancels are therefore those which contain portions of earlier work. At Ditcheat is a beautiful Geometrical chancel, which the Perpendicular architects have endeavoured to bring into harmony with the rest of the church by the infelicitous expedient of an upper range of windows in the same wall. Bleadon also retains some pleasing work of the same æra. Martock has a grand high-roofed chancel, almost entirely remodelled in Perpendicular, but retaining, externally at least, a superb quintuplet of lancets. Within it is barbarously blocked by an incongruous reredos, a disfigurement which I observed in several other churches, as Burnham and Yeovil.

Of chancels essentially Perpendicular, the best specimens occur in the south. North Curry may be practically classed under that head, though a great proportion of its walling is of Decorated date; North Petherton and Langport are also above the average, but for a truly noble example of a chancel in the true Perpendicular style, we must go to Ilminster. I know no parish church which externally approaches nearer to the cathedral type, although neither choir nor transept is furnished with aisles. This appearance must be mainly owing to its glorious central lantern, but the choir forms no unimportant feature in the view from the north-east. It is of three bays, well buttressed and windowed, but offering nothing for especial comment; its beauty lies in general harmony of design and execution. We may however remark the vestry projecting below the east window, which is certainly a Somersetshire localism, as it

occurs also at North Petherton, Langport, and Kingsbury, and it clearly has been also the case at Crewkerne, although there the building itself has been destroyed. There is another at Hawkhurst in Kent.

Both at Ilminster and Crewkerne the north transept is the most enriched and elaborate portion of the church. At Ilminster, though more ornamented, I cannot consider it as rivalling the simpler beauty of the choir. A square spandril is not generally a desirable finish for a window, and I cannot but think that crocketting, as in the north front, is by no means a suitable enrichment for a gable. The similar view at Crewkerne, from the north-east, is very striking, but I cannot think it is equal to Ilminster. There is an affectation of irregularity about it which does not suit the Perpendicular style and low roof; nor is the effect improved by the actual presence of a high one in the choir itself. Regular aisles to the choir and transepts would have been effective one way; a thoroughly picturesque structure, with distinct chapels and apses, would have been equally so, another. At present neither effect is gained; it is irregular without being picturesque, and that while the whole character of the architecture cries for the strictest regularity of design. In detail and masonry, however, these portions of Crewkerne church are much the best that I have seen in the southern part of the county, and, except in the use of a heavy battlement instead of an elegant pierced parapet, they approach very nearly to the beauty of Wrington and Banwell. The work, however, in its general character, and especially in the forms of its windows, some of which are very broad, with excessively flat arches, struck me as not being strictly of a Somersetshire type. It rather reminded me of some of the best Perpendicular work elsewhere, as at St. Mary's in Oxford, at Fairford, and at Whiston and Brington

in Northamptonshire. But possibly the resemblance may only consist in the fact, that at Crewkerne we see some of the distinctive features of *late* Perpendicular work more clearly displayed than is usual in Somerset. I do not think any of the churches I mentioned have any windows of the extreme flatness of those in the transept at Crewkerne, where there is no pretence at a point at all, the arch being completely elliptical or three-centred; which of those two it is I leave to mathematicians to decide.

I may mention, as analogous to the additional care expended upon the north transept at Crewkerne and Ilminster, the great splendour bestowed upon the north aisle in the churches of Mark, Lympsham, and the two Brents, all lying near together, and the three last presenting a striking similarity. Importance is also often given to the north side by the presence of a turret, which sometimes receives great prominence; I have mentioned the little spire at Burrington; there is a similar one at Worle. It is however sometimes found on the south side, as at Minehead and Dunster; but the other is decidedly the more usual position. We have also seen the addition of a second tower on the north side at Bruton; in the somewhat similar case of Wedmore it occupies the south. All these manifest an inclination to have some secondary tower or spire besides the grand western or central one; and I only wonder that I have not come across any Somersetshire church exhibiting the peculiar arrangement of Purton and Wimborne Minster.

CROSS CHURCHES.

Crewkerne and Ilminster are decidedly the finest parochial cruciform churches which I have seen in Somersetshire; but there are some other very noble examples. Dunster is a very large and striking building, but, to say

nothing of its present miserable and disgraceful condition, there is something unsatisfactory in its original design. In so large a church, and that too one connected with a conventual establishment, we should certainly have looked for some approach to the architectural character of a minster, whereas it has decidedly less of that mysterious effect than either Crewkerne or Ilminster. There is nothing about it different from an ordinary parish church, except the enormous length of its western limb. This was apparently owing to the choir running considerably west of the tower; the rood-screen remains two bays down the constructive nave, and that this is its original position is shown by the staircase turret. The whole church is an example of opportunities thrown away; there is neither clerestory nor west front, and there is a general appearance of irregularity about it hardly pleasing in so large a church.

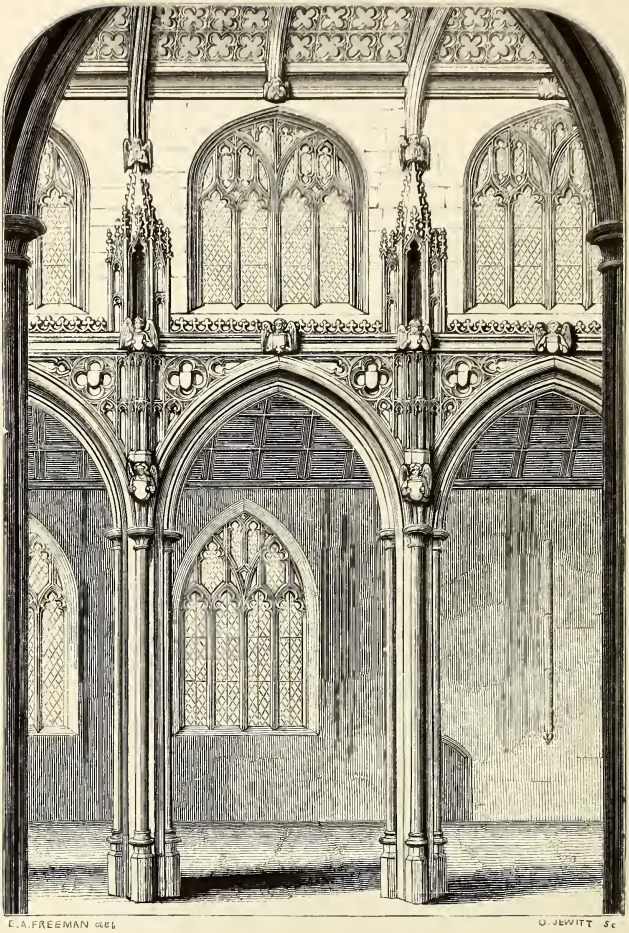
Ditcheat is its exact opposite; all its four limbs cluster round a massive central tower with the most exemplary regularity; the way in which the chancel is reduced to uniformity I have already mentioned. It is a handsome church, with a clerestory, and some approach to a west front; but it is rather spoiled by an enormously heavy battlement running all round.

Wedmore is a large and striking church, to some of whose features I have already alluded. It is very irregular, but in a different way from Dunster. The latter has the irregularity of a small picturesque church on an exaggerated scale; that of Wedmore is essentially the irregularity of a large building. On the south side the appearance is most singular. The tall and somewhat bare central tower rises from among a mass of buildings which seem to have no sort of connexion with each other. Some rather curiously arranged chapels and sacristies cluster around the chancel, but both

chancel and transept are thrown into utter insignificance by the group of structures attached to the south aisle. I have mentioned that the porch grows into something like a college gateway ; east of this, on the same line, is a large chapel, with enormously lofty windows, stretching east so as to join the transept, but projecting far in front of it. The west and north sides offer nothing very remarkable.

Another very fine cruciform church is that of Axbridge. It has, externally at least, no individual feature which can be compared to the grander portions of Ilminster and Crewkerne, but I am not sure whether it is not a more harmonious whole than either of them. And this, notwithstanding some palpable defects. A building of this class certainly wants a clerestory, and we feel the lack here more acutely than at Wedmore, from the very cause that this church is a compact whole, gathered closely around its predominant centre, and not, like Wedmore, a collection of unconnected fragments. The four main limbs have high roofs ; the aisles, with much the same height in the walls, have lean-to roofs, adorned on the south side with the pierced parapet. Hence, as the transepts project scarcely at all beyond the aisles, the distinction is left to be made almost entirely by means of the roofs, so that, especially on the south side, the gable of the transept has rather the air of a mere interruption to the horizontal line of the aisle than of a distinct portion of the church. Perhaps the effect rather resembles that of such churches as Fairford and Magor than of the complete and genuine cruciform structure. The extreme east end is here also unconnected, and unworthy of the rest of the building. Nevertheless, the general effect of the whole is both striking and satisfactory ; to the noble central tower I have already alluded.

Yeovil is a very large and fine church with transepts,



NAVE, MARTOCK CHURCH, SOMERSETSHIRE.

but its only tower being western, it can hardly claim the rank of a genuine cruciform church. It is, however, a magnificent building, and in its general effect singularly combines (of course on a considerably smaller scale) the distinctive features of the two principal churches in Bristol. Viewing its whole length, especially from the north side, so long a range of uniform Perpendicular work, with tall narrow transepts and western tower, can hardly fail to suggest the notion of St. Mary Redcliffe. On the other hand, in another important point, it resembles Bristol Cathedral. The clerestory is absent, or, to speak more truly, the aisles are the full height of the nave and choir. I mean that the positive height of the aisles is so great that there is nothing felt to be wanting, as in most cases where there is no clerestory. At Axbridge, for instance, a clerestory could be added to the nave; it might, or might not, be an improvement, but the proportions of the church would admit of it. At Yeovil nothing of the sort could be done; like Bristol, the building forms a regular design on another principle. The church is uniform throughout, and the walls are of the same height in aisle, choir, and transept. The effect of the arrangement, as at Bristol and Dorchester, is to produce a magnificent series of large and lofty windows. I need not say that here we have a large and stately choir; aisles are attached to its two western bays, but the two eastern stand free, forming a noble presbytery. The absence of a clerestory gives peculiar facilities for this arrangement. Of the tower I have already spoken; a low ancient building, now at least used as a school, is attached to its south-west angle. This is far from improving the appearance from that side; it makes the tower quasi-central, and suggests the notion of an aggregate of buildings like Llantwit or St.

Wollos at Newport, whereas the leading idea of Yeovil church is clearly that of the most perfect regularity. The best point of view is from the north-east.

Before I quit the subject of cruciform and quasi-cruciform churches, and therewith of Somersetshire exteriors generally, I must revert for a moment to the earlier type of church which preceded those which form my more immediate subject. I mentioned that in these cases a side tower was by no means unusual. Under these circumstances the church seems generally to be cruciform, the tower forming one of the transepts. This is the notion at Frome, but it comes out much more distinctly at Somerton and Stoke Hamdon. In the former, the tower becomes octagonal, as soon as it is clear of the aisle; in the latter, it is square throughout, and its belfry-stage is a beautiful specimen of Early English masonry. This whole church is, as a record of architectural changes,* one of the most interesting in Somerset, but it contains little or nothing illustrating the local Perpendicular. This position of the tower is by no means an unpleasing one, producing a varied and picturesque outline, and slightly sharing the effect of a real central tower. There is surely a strong affinity between the appearance of Somerton and of North Curry. Indeed, for a side tower, I think it by far the best position; better than a porch tower, which can hardly fail to be unconnected; far better than one terminating an aisle, which naturally suggests the idea of an

* It would be a still more important record of doctrinal changes, could we believe a piece of information which I received from its sextoness, namely, that "this church was built for the Roman Catholics, but was never occupied by them." The church is a Norman one, with Early English and Decorated alterations. Are we to suppose that, during so long a period, this parish was blest with unknown precursors of Wickliffe, whom ecclesiastical history has ungratefully forgotten to record?

unfinished west front with two towers. The Somerton arrangement indeed stands in the same relation to Exeter and Ottery which St. Mary Redcliffe bears to York and Beverley, that is, a tower might be conceived forming the other transept; but the Exeter plan is so unfamiliar, and, indeed, so grotesque, that it is not likely thus to present itself to the mind.

INTERIORS.

I now come to the second main portion of my subject, the interiors of the Somersetshire churches. The excellence of the local style is shown in the best interiors fully as much as in the towers, but, from some cause or other, first-rate interiors are by no means so usually met with as first-rate towers. Nevertheless they are decidedly common in proportion to their frequency in parochial work in most other parts of England. It is certainly by no means common to find the interior of the nave and aisles of a parish church forming a really grand architectural whole during the Early English and Decorated periods. Warmington, in Northamptonshire, is well known as a glorious exception; but, unless it be the nave of Berkeley, I am unable to provide it with a fellow. St. Mary's at Haverfordwest has indeed an arcade of perhaps unparallelled magnificence, but it is only one arcade; there is no other aisle to match it, and the clerestory and roof are of a later date. It is in the Perpendicular style, and, above all, in the Perpendicular of Somerset, that we first find the interiors of parochial churches systematically constructed so as to deserve the name of great architectural wholes. Elsewhere, and at an earlier period, the impression on entering a church is usually one of disappointment. The exterior may, by dint of a picturesque outline, or even of a certain kind of proportion,

produce a stately or elegant effect; but the interior seldom exhibits any really great architectural *coup d'œil.* That picturesque effect, which is a fair external substitute for real artistic design, can hardly extend to the interior; so that in many cases it is simply common-place and uninteresting; in others it is a valuable repertory of architectural or ecclesiological curiosities, of individual portions, it may be, of extreme beauty, but the whole does not constitute one great work of art. The grand churches of Northamptonshire, even such buildings as Higham and Rushden and Oundle and Irthlingborough, can hardly claim a higher place; such interiors as Islip and Fotheringhay exhibit the Perpendicular style, and some slight approach to its Somersetshire perfection. But with those whom I now address the case is widely different; in your most typical parish churches, no less than in the grandest minsters, the exterior is but the husk and shell of the higher beauty which is in store within. And this, because both of them are works of art in the highest sense; it is no mere picturesque outline, no mere collection of interesting details, which gives their charm to the magnificent naves of Taunton and Bruton and Martock and Wrington, and perhaps still more perfect in its own kind, though of a decidedly inferior kind, the lofty, and spacious, and thoroughly harmonious church of Yeovil. Here we do not immediately note down some individual capital or window which attracts our attention; the eye is not drawn away to contemplate a font of singular design or sedilia of unusual arrangement; the most gorgeous display of monumental splendour is postponed for subsequent and secondary consideration; it is the real triumph of the noblest of arts which rivets the attention; it is the one grand and harmonious whole which lifts the mind in admiration of an effect as perfect in its own way, as

truly the work of real design and artistic genius, as Cologne or Winchester or St. Ouen's. The graceful arches rise from the tall and slender columns, with just as much connexion as Continuous effect requires, just enough distinction to hinder the ascent from being too painfully rapid.* Above, the windows of the clerestory agreeably relieve the recesses of the massive timber roof, and unite it into one whole with the arcades beneath. The roof itself, borne on shafts rising uninterruptedly from the ground, is proclaimed as no botch or afterthought, but an essential portion of the great design; or else it rests on the more elaborate support of angels and niches, once exhibiting the choicest display of the subsidiary arts. The stone vault alone is wanting to rank such piles with cathedrals and mitred abbeys; it is, however, represented in the main body by its noblest substitutes, and its own splendours are reserved for the western belfry or the central lantern. Here, supported on its four lofty arms, it forms the crown of the whole edifice; there, the soaring panelled arch, the spreading fan tracery beyond, the tall and wide western window finishing the whole vista, make us feel that the stately towers of Wrington and Axbridge and Kingsbury are but the beacons to guide us to the still higher splendours which are reserved for those who shall tread within the consecrated walls.

I do not feel that I am drawing an ideal picture, because it is only in a very few instances that it is realized. Of course such magnificence, though less rare than elsewhere, is still rare, even in Somerset; but the few first-rate naves (even without counting Redcliffe and Sherborne, as belonging to a higher class of buildings) do really merit almost any amount of commendation which can be bestowed

* See History of Architecture, p. 389.

on them. Among these, I think, we must, on the whole, give the first place to Martock, though my old favourite Wrington, decidedly superior without, forms a very formidable rival within.

In my paper of last year I spoke of the distinguishing and characteristic merit of Somersetshire work, as consisting in the combination of the unity and grandeur peculiar to the Perpendicular style, with much of the delicacy and purity of detail more commonly distinctive of the earlier styles. I also referred to St. Mary Redcliffe as exhibiting this character in its highest perfection, and as having probably been the model after which the smaller edifices were designed. But we must look for the germs of the local Perpendicular style at a much earlier period than this. We can trace them up to an early stage of the Lancet style. Somersetshire does indeed contain examples of a noble variety of that style quite alien from our present purpose, but of which I shall hope to treat on some other occasion, and to show its influence on other parts of our island, by tracing the relation in which Wells and Glastonbury stand to Llandaff and St. David's.* But Somersetshire contains at least one noble example of an Early Gothic interior of widely different character, and in which, I think, we may fairly recognize the first parent of the local Continuous. Every one knows the superb church of St. Cuthbert at Wells, with its magnificent Early English arcades and its Perpendicular clerestory superadded. Now here it requires a technical eye to see that it is superadded; the Early work has quite the general effect of the ordinary Perpendicular of the county; the immensely tall shafts are utterly unlike the generality of Early English pillars, and especially unlike those in the neighbouring

* See History and Antiquities of St. David's, p. 64.

cathedral. The Early English arcades of the nave do not seem to differ more widely from the Perpendicular ones of the choir and side chapels than the latter do from one another. The general effect is the same throughout.

Coming on further, the Decorated work in Bristol Cathedral is another step towards the local Perpendicular. It is intensely Continuous; indeed it is so to an exaggerated extent, which the Perpendicular builders did not generally imitate. We must take it in connexion with the Decorated work at North Curry and Frome. In these cases the imposts of the piers are continuous; the mouldings, among which the wave-moulding is predominant, being carried uninterruptedly along pier and arch, unbroken by any shaft or capital. At Bristol, the pier itself is of this character, only the members which are attached as vaulting-shafts are provided with capitals. But no arrangement can be more thoroughly Continuous; and this is the more remarkable, as the tracery is rather behind-hand in its development, whereas generally we find the tracery very far in advance of the arcades.

The choir of Bristol, from its very small elevation in comparison with its width, and from the absence of a clerestory, has a general effect of massiveness, which in a Gothic church is somewhat oppressive. But looking directly across the choir, it is at once seen that the arcades taken alone have an extraordinarily light and soaring appearance. The bays are narrow, the piers slender and lofty, the arches wonderfully acute. This last feature indeed is caused by the peculiar arrangements of the roof, and is not to be found in either the earlier or the later examples with which we have compared it. But the general notion of the arcade is one which may claim very close relationship with the Perpendicular of Wrington and St. Stephen's; and

I have always greatly admired the skill displayed by the architect in its adoption. The proportions of the Romanesque church on whose foundations he built forbade any great positive elevation, or any general effect of lightness. He judiciously threw his whole strength into this particular feature, and worked out this wonderful effect of loftiness in the direct side view, to the sacrifice of everything else. Had the side elevation been cut up into arcade, triforium, and clerestory, or even into arcade and clerestory only, the necessary shortness of the piers would have exiled the notion of height from the only part in which it could take refuge, and have left it no place in the whole building. Indeed the whole cathedral is one to which justice has never been done either in an æsthetical or an historical point of view.

If then we trace up the local Perpendicular to an earlier tradition, carried on through the Early English and Decorated churches which I have mentioned, and attaining its complete perfection in the transepts of St. Mary Redcliffe, erected at the very turning point from Flowing to Perpendicular, we may easily understand the peculiar character of its fully developed form. The Early style, to a great extent, forestalled the Continuous; therefore the Continuous, not appearing as something utterly strange and new, retained a good many of the features of the Early.

Among these features I reckon the constant use of round, and very frequently of flowered, capitals, the continual occurrence of the wave-moulding in various positions, and the peculiar and very beautiful variety of Perpendicular tracery so commonly met with, compounded of the Alternate and Supermullioned forms.* I do not say that none of these features are to be found out of Somersetshire—it occurs

* See Essay on Window Tracery, p. 191 et seqq.

at once that the round flowered capital occurs in the vaulting-shafts of Winchester Cathedral,—but I think I may safely say that they are rare, except in this county and in districts subject to its influence. The Perpendicular of the midland counties is decidedly different; the capitals are usually octagonal, and not flowered; the sections of piers and arch-mouldings, especially the latter, seldom resemble what we find in Somersetshire; and the beautiful tracery of the Somersetshire windows is almost entirely unknown. Market Harborough, Oadby, Great Claybrook, Narborough, Whiston, Islip, and Fotheringhay, all in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, have very good Perpendicular interiors; but both in composition and detail they differ widely from the Somersetshire specimens, and moreover differ much more widely among themselves than the latter do. And, to come nearer, the Perpendicular even of Gloucestershire, except in some of the southern parts where Bristol influence is at work, is widely different from that of Somerset; the Perpendicular parts of Gloucester Cathedral are clearly not of the same class as Redcliffe and Sherborne; nor does Cirencester present any marked resemblance to the great Somersetshire parish churches. Less elaborate buildings, as Dursley and even Northleach, differ still more widely from Somersetshire churches of the second order. In few of them is the Perpendicular notion so fully carried out; in still fewer do we find the same retention of earlier details.

PIERS AND ARCHES.

Nowhere is a local impress in architecture more easily to be recognized than in the pillars of the Somersetshire churches; one uniform section runs through the whole, any deviation from which is at once noted as an exception.

The idea of nearly all is a lozenge with attached shafts; in a vast majority of cases this assumes the form of a hollow lozenge with a shaft attached to each of the cardinal points; in some of the richer examples, as Wrington, Yatton, and St. Stephen's, smaller shafts are inserted in the hollows of the lozenge, making a cluster of eight. In another variety the lozenge has not a mere hollow, but the space between the shafts is occupied by a wave moulding. This occurs in four churches which I have already mentioned as closely resembling each other in various points, the two Brents, Lympsham, and Mark, as also in the more distant ones of Carhampton and St. Decuman's.

The capitals, as I before said, are usually round, and often flowered. In the latter case the form is very elegant, but, when floriation is absent, I cannot consider the round section as any gain, especially in the rather rude shape which it often assumes in the less elaborate churches. A very beautiful variety is when the capitals take the shape of angels bearing shields or scrolls. This is most common in the northern district, but it also occurs in St. Mary Magdalen at Taunton.

In the arches, the mouldings of the piers are generally continued; the hollow or other moulding of the lozenge runs on uninterruptedly, while the shafts are carried up in the form of round bowtells, which, as their position demands, are finished off with an ogee fillet.

This is the typical pier and arch; it is of course subject to exceptions. These are not uncommon in the section of the capital, but much less so in that of the pier itself. The latter, in almost all cases, retains the lozenge form under some modification or other; the plain octagonal pillar and the elongated mullion-shaped cluster hardly occur. At Crewkerne they are of a very unusual and elaborate sec-

tion, but still the lozenge form has by no means completely vanished.

As the section of the piers is the most prevalent of the Somersetshire characteristics, so it is the least distinctive; the other points are seldom met with elsewhere, while this lozenge section frequently is. For instance, the section of the piers in St. Mary's at Oxford is only a more elaborate form of that of Wrington and St. Stephen's; but as soon as we reach the capitals and arch-mouldings, the resemblance vanishes. The fact is, that what elsewhere is one not uncommon form among others, becomes in Somersetshire nearly universal.

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Exceptions are more common in the capitals. The departure from ordinary practice generally consists in carrying the abacus all round the pier, instead of leaving the sides of the lozenge to be continued uninterruptedly in the arch. Sometimes, as at Mark, Wedmore, Dunster, and St. Decuman's, the capitals follow the section of the pier, (whether the usual one or any other) or some slight modification of it, as at Trull. In others, all the shafts are gathered together under one lozenge-shaped capital; this, which I believe is a Devonshire custom, occurs in a rude form in the choir of Dunster, and in a very elaborate one at Lydiard St. Lawrence. It is a form well adapted to render the capital a beautiful individual feature, but it is one completely destructive of all Continuous effect. Octagonal capitals to individual members of the cluster are by no means common, but they also occur in some parts of Dunster.

In the cases where a more elaborate section of the pier is employed, some difference necessarily follows in the mouldings of the arch. Some mouldings necessarily rise from the subordinate shafts, and even those rising from the principal

ones are often less strictly a mere continuation of the latter, the large bowtell being often cut up into several smaller members. They still however adhere to the main rule, that the principal hollows of the pier be continued uninterruptedly in the arch, and that the principal projections be represented, but with the interposition of a capital.

The proportions of the piers and arches are very various; but they depend less upon the presence or absence of the clerestory than might have been expected. This is because the height of the clerestory is, as we shall presently see, more commonly taken out of the roof than out of the arcades. The general tendency however is to a rather tall pier, and most commonly to a rather narrow arch, as at Wrington, Yatton, and St. Stephen's. At Yeovil, of course, the absence of the clerestory, or more truly the height of the aisles, introduces a still more lofty pier. Sometimes, however, the arches are very broad; thus at Crewkerne, though the pillars are extremely lofty, the arches are so wide, that a length of nave which would commonly have been divided into five bays, here contains only three. The four-centred arch is common enough in subordinate positions, as in the side arches of chancels, but it is not usual in the main arcades. Bath Abbey, as we all know, is, for a special reason,* an exception. Four-centred arches also occur in the naves of Taunton and Bruton, but though of a variety of that shape perhaps more ungraceful in itself, they seem better suited to enter into the general composition.

CLERESTORIES AND ROOFS.

I said just now that the height of the clerestory was generally taken out of the roof, not out of the arcades. I mean that, when the clerestory is absent, the nave has

* See History of Architecture, p. 351.

generally a high-pitched roof; when it is present, a low one. Thus the actual height of the whole church externally, and that of the aisles both inside and out, may be identical in two churches following the two different arrangements.

When the roof is low, that is, when there is a clerestory, we generally find exceedingly fine tie-beamed roofs, as at Martock, Somerton, Wrington, Taunton, Bruton, and, above all, St. Cuthbert's, which drips with foliations, almost like the nave of St. David's. When the roof is high, different forms of the cradle roof occur. This is the local roof of Somersetshire and the West of England in general; and I would impress on the minds of all who are concerned in such matters, the necessity of carefully preserving this noble feature, which, in too many so-called restorations, I have found destroyed; I may especially mention a bungling substitute which I found at Trent. Would that the opposite example of Banwell were followed throughout the county. This sort of roof has this advantage, that it can be made of any degree of plainness or richness, and, still more, that it allows any amount of decoration to be superadded to an originally plain design. We may have merely the arched rafters, with or without some ornament where they cross the horizontal pieces, or we may cover them with a ceiling of wood, which again may be panelled and painted to any amount of gorgeousness. Examples of all these different stages may be found in different churches. Queen Camel is a good study; there is a fine tie-beam roof in the nave, and an equally good coved one in the chancel; both increase in richness over the rood-loft and the altar respectively.

The form of the arch employed in these roofs is very various; pointed, elliptical, semicircular; the latter is the

most common, and I decidedly prefer it. Cannington, however, is a fine specimen of the pointed form.

The tie-beam roof is, as far as I remember, confined to the churches which have the clerestory, but the reverse rule will not hold good, as is shown by the cases of Yatton, Banwell, and Congresbury; but these three lie so close together that this is probably a localism within a localism.

I must here not omit to mention some rich roofs of later date, which seem to be a cinque-cento variety of the old coved roof. That of the nave of Bath Abbey is well known; but finer ones, to my mind, with tracery, pendents, etc., occur at East Brent and Axbridge, and even in the poor little church of Biddesham. That at Axbridge bears the date of 1636.

The ordinary arrangement of the clerestory windows I have already considered; I have now to speak of the connexion of the clerestory with the roof and the arcades. To bring an elevation into complete harmony, the vertical division into bays, and the horizontal division into arcade, clerestory, and triforium, (if there be any,) should both be marked in the decorative construction. There should at least be a string running over the arches; and the clerestory should be divided by shafts supporting the roof, either rising direct from the ground, or corbelled off over the piers. Where these are not found, as at Long Sutton and St. John's at Glastonbury, the interior has an unfinished look, and can hardly aspire to the name of an architectural design. When they occur, a spandril is formed by the pier arch and the roof shafts, and a further spandril is left between the roof and the clerestory window. To fill these up is a further development.

Two principal forms of vertical division occur in the great Somersetshire churches. At Wrington and Yatton

we find the most perfect of all, a shaft forming a member of the pier carried up straight from the ground. This is the more remarkable at Yatton, as its coved roof did not require any roof-shafts at all; they are clearly added wholly for the improvement of the general effect. And I think we may fairly add St. Cuthbert's; the shafts, of course, cannot rise from the ground, but they somehow look as if the designer would have made them do so, had he planned the church from its foundations.

In the other variety no shafts rise from the ground; but a niche is placed between each bay of the clerestory, supported by a shaft corbelled off above the pillars; the same figure, usually an angel, serves for a finial to the niche, and for a corbel to the roof. This confusion is clearly a mistake in decorative construction,* and, together with a certain want of simplicity in the whole, must make us consider this form abstractedly inferior to the other. Nevertheless it is one of the most gorgeous magnificence, and it will be observed that it is very nearly identical with that of the splendid nave of St. Mary's in Oxford, the chief difference being that the latter has no shaft below the niche, a point on which the advantage lies on the side of the Somersetshire examples. Of these the grandest is Martock, but the same plan is also followed at Taunton and Bruton, which resemble each other in so many points.

Of the means of filling up spandrils, the most natural is by figures similar to those which are used in the spandrils of doorways, or by other analogous processes. Of these there is an early example in the choir at Ely, and they seem so natural a development from the figures often inserted in the same position in Early Gothic buildings, that one wonders they are not more commonly met with in

* See History of St. David's.

Perpendicular work. Martock is the only strictly parochial Somersetshire example with which I am prepared. Here the design is one of singular magnificence ; the spandril patterns are very elaborate, the string above the arches has a crest of Tudor flowers, and angels appear as a sort of keystones.

There is also an extremely local practice, which looks like an attempt to bring the roof and clerestory into some degree of that connexion with each other which the vault alone can completely effect. Both at Wrington and Banwell a trefoil arch is thrown across from the capitals under the roof, the rear-arch of the clerestory window fitting into its upper foil. It has quite the aspect of an arch traced out for vaulting, yet such could hardly have been its intention. In the aisles of Yatton, and the nave of Congresbury, we find arches nearly similarly employed, and the spandrils filled up with panelling, which probably was the intention in the others also, unless indeed a *timber* vault was at any time contemplated.

Between Wrington and Martock must lie the rivalry for the palm of superior internal beauty. The greater size of Martock,—Wrington, as I said, being decidedly too short,—gives it an unquestioned superiority in general effect ; taking bay against bay, the case is not quite so clear. The general notion of Wrington is of a higher class ; it has more of simplicity and harmony, its pillars are more elaborately clustered, its capitals are richer ; while Martock suffers a little from its clerestory seeming comparatively bare between the extraordinary splendour of its arcades and its roof. Still there is such a magnificence about the latter as to disarm all criticism, and, I think, on the whole, to establish the claim of Martock to the first place among the strictly parochial interiors of the county.

The charge of possessing a clerestory unworthy of the arcades which support it, which I have brought to a certain extent against Martock, is far more applicable to St. Stephen's in Bristol. The arcades, taken alone, are, both in proportion and detail, some of the most beautiful I know ; but instead of the due horizontal and vertical divisions, we have the clerestory windows recessed from the wall, the sill being brought down to the arch, so as to leave a sort of pilaster between. If the church were vaulted, and the blank part of the recessed space panelled, it might be tolerable, but at present the effect is decidedly unpleasing.

And now for a few words on the interiors of the three great churches, Redcliffe, Sherborne, and Bath. For the first, words would fail to do justice to that noble vista, exhibiting, as it does, the most perfect form of the art carried out with a degree of individual merit which approaches to faultlessness. And yet no one can fail to recognize here the genuine local style, only carried out with more elaboration in detail, and with the changes in proportion rendered necessary by the addition of vaulting. The proportion of pier, arch, and clerestory is perfect; the clerestory is, appropriately, somewhat larger than in the smaller buildings ; and from this cause, as well as from the addition of vaulting, the piers are rather less slender than at Yatton or St. Stephen's. In the nave, the quasi-triforium space is panelled, as at St. Michael's, Coventry ; in the transepts there is an ornamented spandril, as at Martock ; a preferable arrangement, as the lines of panelling do not rise well from the convex surface of the arch. The arcade of the transept and the clerestory of the nave would produce absolute perfection.

The presbytery of Sherborne is very like Redcliffe, and

yet very unlike it. Nothing can at first sight seem more dissimilar than the soaring clusters of Redcliffe and the huge masses of wall which divide the arches at Sherborne. Yet a little consideration will show that the style of the two is essentially the same, and even that the leading idea is the same, the differences being occasioned by the respective circumstances of the two churches. Redcliffe was a Perpendicular church erected from the ground; Sherborne was a remodelling of an earlier Romanesque minster. The vast piers of its predecessor probably lurk beneath the casing of shafts and mouldings with which the art of later days has enveloped them. They preserve their old height and their own circumference, or probably a still greater one than of old. But such piers as these could never be made part of a true Continuous Gothic range. The architect clearly felt this; he attempted no arcade; he made the roof and its supports the main feature, and thrust the arches behind them, not so much a continued range, as separate gateways attached by responds to the vast masses which bear up the roof. The vault springs from a shaft rising from the ground; the panelled rear-arch of the window also rises from the ground; everything is concentrated on the wall and the roof; the arches, timidly retiring, are only one degree more important than those which open into the side chapels of King's College. Hence the gigantic clerestory, in estimating which we must also remember that the old triforium had to be swallowed up. The triforium space is, to my mind, better treated than in the nave of Redcliffe; certainly it is better adapted to the leading idea of the elevation.

The nave of Sherborne is very inferior to the presbytery. The elevation consists of two parts utterly unconnected

with each other. The arcade, in utter contrast to the presbytery, is so very uninterrupted that it has no connexion or reference whatever to the upper portion; panelled arches also, in this position, seem to me a mistake, nor am I provided with any other Somersetshire example. But the clerestory alone is most noble, and exhibits exactly the same feeling as that in the presbytery.

I will extend that remark to the choir of Bath Abbey. After the very ingenious defence of that cathedral made at our last Annual Meeting by one much better conversant with the building than myself, I must be very cautious in my criticisms ; but I cannot bring myself to admire the low piers and broad arches, with their enormous mouldings, so completely deserting the multiplying for the magnifying principle. But the grand clerestory windows, fitting into the magnificent fan vault, are noble in the extreme, notwithstanding a certain poverty of detail. The vertical division, lost in the nave of Sherborne, is here fully brought out by shafts with angel capitals supporting the vault.

BELFRY AND CHANCEL ARCHES, ETC.

Those arches which do not form part of continuous arcades, and those which are in less conspicuous positions of the churches, sometimes resemble, but more frequently differ from, the main arcades of the nave. Subordinate arches, as those leading into small chapels, or from aisles into transepts, are very frequently segmental or four-centered ; they are also often panelled, or furnished with discontinuous imposts. The great transverse arches, the chancel and belfry arches, cannot fail to be important features; but the same circumstances which detract from the importance of the chancel in the Somersetshire churches,

while they imply the presence of the chancel arch, necessarily diminish from its importance. It is often low, and generally disproportionately broad, and with insufficient responds. At Huntspill, for instance, the arcade is continued uninterruptedly into the chancel, and the chancel arch springs from shafts corbelled off above it. In others again, as at North Petherton, one pier of the ordinary range may be seen throwing out arches in four different directions, which is never pleasing. In others there are responds with continuous imposts, or the arch is panelled, as at Weston Zoyland.

This last remark I may extend to the western belfry-arches also, but they are features of far greater importance and beauty than the chancel arches. Indeed it is clear that on no part of the church was greater attention displayed. Few architectural displays are more magnificent than a panelled arch of this kind, rather narrow, with responds of a vast height, and the space beyond vaulted with fan tracery. This is seen in all its splendour at Wrington, Long Sutton, and, above all, Kingsbury Episcopi, where the arch is double, and there is a magnificent display of niches on each side of it. The vaulting is usually, but not invariably, of the fan form; in one instance, Castle Cary, I found fan tracery wrought in wood.

In cross churches the chancel and belfry arches are brought together as members of the central lantern. Of this glorious feature Somersetshire possesses some exceedingly fine examples. Sometimes, indeed, as at Yatton and Wedmore, we find the small incongruous arches of an earlier church; but Ilminster, Crewkerne, Dunster, and Axbridge, all possess tall and stately Perpendicular lanterns. Among

them the tower of Ilminster retains its precedence within as well as without. The soffits of the four arches are panelled, but they are connected by a series of tall shafts with round capitals, almost, Perpendicular though they be, calling to mind the lantern of Merton College Chapel. They are crowned by a noble dome of fan tracery. Such is also the case at Axbridge; but the arches there are somewhat plainer, more resembling those usual in the nave arcades. Crewkerne and Dunster are of inferior character, and the latter loses much of its beauty as a lantern, much as the church gains in point of interest, by the Norman arch remaining immediately to the west of it.

I have now done with architecture, and my scheme excludes ecclesiology; nevertheless, I cannot restrain one passing word of admiration for the two forms of pulpit common in this county,—the stone ones of Perpendicular date in the north, and those of wood in the cinque-cento style in the south. Still less can I omit the magnificent rood-lofts, more closely connected as they are with strictly architectural considerations, as giving more scope to the introduction of those side turrets which often become important architectural features.

I have now concluded two main branches of my subject; the exteriors and the interiors of the Perpendicular churches of Somerset. A third still remains, the relation of Somersetshire architecture to that of other parts of the kingdom. The imitations of it in South Wales I have often alluded to, both in these papers and elsewhere, and I shall hope to work out this branch more fully. But this is only part of the subject; I should wish diligently to

compare Somersetshire work with what occurs in the bordering districts of Devon, Wilts, and Dorset. It would be also desirable to compare it with the other great land of Perpendicular, East Anglia, of which I know personally next to nothing, but where, from all I can gather, the style must assume a very different form. Whether I can make all these investigations before your next Annual Meeting is very doubtful; but I trust, that if not at that, at least at some subsequent one, I may be able to put so necessary a finish to the examination of a subject which, what with journeying, drawing, and writing, has been the business of many hours, which I am by no means inclined to regret as either unpleasantly or unprofitably spent.