

Wednesday: Excursion.

The morning was delightfully fine, and at 9.30, the carriages being in readiness, a goodly number of Members left Yeovil for

Hamdon Hill,¹

which was regarded as the chief point of interest, not only of this day's excursion, but of the whole meeting. After a pleasant drive, passing by Odcombe, the birth-place of Tom Coryate,² the cortege entered the camp by "Bedmore Barn," the site of the discovery of the large hoard of Roman coins in 1882, and drew up at

The Quarries

belonging to Mr. Charles Trask. The party having assembled on the edge of one of the deep excavations, at the bottom of which the workmen were engaged in quarrying the celebrated "Ham-stone,"

Mr. TRASK was asked to say a few words about the quarries. He said that the marl stone of the upper Lias was found plentifully along the level land within half a mile of the foot of the hill, on the western side. Above this were the Oolitic

(1). Leland says:—"Hamden hill is a specula, ther to view a greate piece of the country therabout. . . . The notable quarre of stone is even therby at Hamden out of the which hath been taken stones for al the goodly buildings therabout in al quarters."

(2). See Mr. Green's paper, part ii. page 24, and Mr. Hooper's paper in vol. xvii. p. 77.

sands, more than 100 feet in thickness, and on these were the beds of Ham stone of the Inferior Oolite. Whether the stone was formed from the denudation of the Mendips—which we are told were once several thousand feet high—it was not for him to say, but it may be interesting to take a glance at the position of the Oolites in the district south of the Mendips, to help them to understand their position. First of all they had the Doulting quarries, visited by the Society two years ago. Then, coming south, beds of lower Oolite were found at Cadbury, at Maperton, near Wincanton, and at places about Sherborne. Further south, again, there were some workable beds of stone of a similar character at Powerstock, near Bridport; and there were also a few beds to the west of Ham Hill, near Hinton St. George; so that they stood almost at the centre of what was once, probably, an immense deposit of the Inferior Oolite. The quarry they were looking into was about 90 feet deep from the surface of the ground to the bottom of the stone. “The workable freestone at this spot,” says Mr. Charles Moore, “is 58 feet thick, and almost entirely composed of comminuted shells, united by an irony cement, and is a remarkable deposit; for though attaining so considerable a thickness, it does not appear to be represented in any other locality, and yields a very excellent stone, of a light brown colour, due to the presence of carbonate of iron, an analysis proving it to contain fourteen per cent. of metallic iron. The grey beds, which occur at the bottom of the quarry, and average about 10 feet in depth, yield the best weathering stone. They are separated from the yellow beds by a band about one foot thick, containing many pellets of iron” The vertical fissures, which occur at irregular intervals, run mainly north and south. The late Professor Daubeny gave some speculations as to the force required to cause these rents. At some places the beds were much tilted. The quarries at this part were much deeper than the old quarries, which reached up to about 200 yards of this spot, and extended over the west part of the

hill; but at no part were they more than about 20 feet deep in stone. The Ham stone tiles, with which so many of our old buildings are covered, were quarried from the north part of the hill. Instead of the ochre or sand beds in the quarry before them, there were at that part thin layers of hard stone, and these were worked to an even thickness by a "tile-pick." The working of tiles is now a lost art on the hill. It was not difficult to say when this stone was discovered, because it was laid bare at many points when the entrenchments were made round the hill; and the stone—as walling-stone—was largely used in the ramparts. It was also used by the Romans—some stone coffins having been found in the district. The stone was no doubt used in Saxon times, and there was abundant evidence still existing to show that it was largely used in buildings of the Norman period over a very wide district. Taking a circumference, Ham stone was found in old churches and other buildings, at Sherborne, Milborne Port, Blandford, Dorchester, Lyme Regis, Bridport, Axminster, Ford Abbey, Chard, Taunton; as far west as Tiverton; at Bridgwater; and to the north, at Lydford and Sparkford, where the Doulling stone district was met. The most extraordinary thing about the use of the stone in old times to such an extent was the difficulty of hauling it such long distances, at a time when there were no hard roads. Many groups of hut-circles had been excavated away in the soil over these quarries. They were all about five feet in diameter, and about five feet deep. Just twenty years ago he found the first hut-circle, and in it were nearly twenty human skulls and other bones, besides a quantity of sling-stones, horses' teeth, and bones of other animals. There were also some "querns" of Millstone-grit, which were now in the Society's Museum at Taunton. Some remains of Roman pottery, with burnt stones and earth, were found with the soil which covered the bottom of the hut-circle. These circles all had some such remains in them, but generally they were but few. Mr. Trask then referred to the historical

“stone” which existed on the hill about sixty-five years ago. It was a large mass of rock, and spoken of far and near as the “Ham stone.” Its size may be judged from the fact that the owner of the manor received about £100 as royalty from the quarryman who cut it up. Parties resorted to this stone in old times as they do now to the “Frying-pan.” This rock stood close to the road leading down to Stoke, near the boundaries of the three parishes—Norton, Montacute, and Stoke—and, he had no doubt, was one of the meeting places of the “folk-moot,” which were often held at some well known stone.¹

The Rev. H. H. WINWOOD read a paper on the geological features of the hill, written by Mr. Horace B. Woodward, F.G.S.² Mr. Winwood added that he had discovered a shell, which would prove that the stone was inferior Oolite, as it was only found in that formation. He thought it an error to call the sands Liassic sands. If they could not agree to call them Oolite sands, let them say they were Midford sands, and thus waive the question.

Professor BOYD DAWKINS gave an exhaustive and exceedingly interesting address, in the course of which he deprecated the use of long and difficult Latin names where unnecessary, and advocated the study of Geology being made as plain and simple as possible. Alluding to the formation of rocks, he asked those present to realise some of the deposits which go to make up stratified rocks, or rocks formed in strata. They may be divided into the deep sea formations and the ancient shore formations. In the first place, near high-water mark there was a bank of shingle, next the sand, and then the mud. In the two latter there was generally a mixture of shells, and remains of various other marine creatures, broken by the currents and the dash of the waves. There were also,

(1). This stone is mentioned by Tom Coryate. See Mr. Green's paper, part ii. p. 26.

(2). This paper will, we understand, be published in the *Transactions of the Bath Field Club*.

in the warmer seas, corals, more or less broken; and coral reefs on or near the shore. On the other hand there were deep sea deposits, the "globigerina ooze" and the red clay, descending, the one to 2,200 fathoms, and the other to 4,000 fathoms. To which did the Ham Hill stone belong? In the first place, the broken shells and the mixture of sand in the stone pointed out that it was formed not far from the ancient shore; not deeper, say, than 150 fathoms. He did not agree with the theory that the materials which composed the rock had been derived from the breaking up of the Mendips. The hills of Devon and of Wales mark the coast line of the ancient land, against which the Oolitic stone of Ham Hill and the lower Oolites was accumulated. From this, to the east and south, the Oolitic sea extended, with coral islands here and there. The waters of the Oolitic sea teemed with all manner of life. There were sharks (*Strophodus*) and an infinite variety of shell fish, and large marine reptiles—Icthyosaurus and Plesiosaurus. The land was covered with pines, and the graceful foliage of the *Zamia* and *Cycas*. In the recesses of the forest lurked huge reptiles, rivalling the Rhinoceros in size—the Megalosaur and the Iguanodon; while in the air the Pterodactylus—a kind of reptilian bat—performed the functions of birds of prey. Ham Hill, which stands out so boldly, is a monument of the denudation which has gone on in ancient times, and which is now going on so slowly that it escapes ordinary notice. There was a time, he believed, when it would have been possible to walk from Ham Hill to Glastonbury Tor without descending into a valley; but the intervening rocks have been removed by the action of the sea, rains, and rivers; and by the action of frosts and carbonic acid, until they now had the hill standing out as boldly as it does over the fertile plain which constitutes the garden of England.

The PRESIDENT moved a vote of thanks to Professor Boyd Dawkins for his lucid explanation of the origin and development of the strata of that interesting place. They

were particularly indebted to him for coming down to Somerset and giving them the benefit of his scientific learning, and he only hoped the Professor would see his way to accompany them on their excursions for years to come.

Professor BOYD DAWKINS acknowledged the compliment, remarking it was always with exceeding great pleasure he came down to Somerset, for he felt almost a Somerset man, although he had been transplanted to less favoured climes.

The Earthworks.¹

Mr. HUGH NORRIS (*Hon. Local Sec.*) then took charge of the party, and under his guidance they proceeded to inspect the ancient earthworks which form the magnificent Camp of Hamdon Hill. They were first conducted to the southern margin of the hill, where the main entrance was pointed out. This entrance is almost perfect; it had evidently been constructed with great skill, and was capable of being strongly defended.

Professor BOYD-DAWKINS drew attention to the manner of the increased protection afforded, viz., by the in-turning of one of the ramps, and the construction of a second rampart to guard it. With regard to the age of the fortification, the learned Professor said the date was clearly defined. The people who used this mode of fortification were the Neolithic people, the Non-Aryans, who preceded the Celts. They were a military people, and wherever they had a weak point to protect they were sure to defend it on strictly military principles—the same principles as would guide a general in the work of defence to-day.

Notice was taken of the very important nature of the earthworks in this direction, on the summit of which the party clambered towards the west front of the hill. During this short ramble the enormous strength of the wall and ditch became obvious to even the least instructed.

(1). See *Proceedings*, vol. iv, part ii, p. 84, for a plan of this camp.

Continuing along the western ramparts, Mr. NORRIS, in passing, drew attention to the mounds which cover the whole of this part of the hill, caused by the continual quarrying, which had gone on for ages, and which had entirely destroyed the original contour of the surface. Crossing the hill at its narrowest part, and entering upon the Romanised portion of the Camp, the party drew up at the eastern entrance, overlooking a magnificent tract of country, with the church of Stoke immediately beneath. Mr. Norris having given a brief description of this approach,

Professor BOYD-DAWKINS, in reply to an invitation, here offered some remarks on the above-named entrance, as well as on archaic earthworks in general; which, from his well-known intimate knowledge of the subject, were especially valuable. The Professor explained that camps of this kind were not only Neolithic and pre-Celtic in the first instance, but they had been used by the Celtic peoples, and others who succeeded them in the occupation of this country. The reason why they were so abundant on rising ground was due to the fact that in those days, long before the Romans came over, during the Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron ages, the country was divided into small communities, and each of these Camps was merely a place of refuge to which they drove their cattle and betook themselves when the country was up. The principal excitement of the people was obtained from eating, drinking, and fighting, and stealing one another's belongings. So it happened that after the crops were taken in, in the autumn time, after the shadows began to grow longer, the rule was for these communities to set to work fighting with each other. He believed this was the result of the monotony of their lives. At any rate, it would explain the large number of these camps, to which the villagers withdrew in times of danger. The camps were undoubtedly of high antiquity. He could not distinguish between the Belgic and the Celtic. The present camp may have been used by the Belgæ, but certainly long before

the Celts were known in Europe these camps were in existence. When the Romans came they seized the camps, and the Roman and other remains which had been found in them proved the correctness of these observations. Professor Boyd-Dawkins concluded his observations with a sketch of the contest which raged in the neighbourhood whereof these fortifications formed a centre, between the English or the West-Saxon invader and the Welsh, or the old Celtic, the Romano-British people, and commended the fortifications to the Members of the Society as a place than which there was none more worthy of being worked out in the country.

A pleasant half-hour's stroll brought the party to the north-east angle of the encampment, where a halt having been called in the far-famed "Frying Pan,"

Mr. NORRIS exhibited a diagram of the hill, enlarged from the map illustrating a notice of the Camp, by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, in the twenty-first volume of *Archæologia*, and offered some local explanations to the information already given. The part of the hill on which they were now standing, comprised a portion of the Romanized entrenchments. The Camp itself, as had been stated, was originally a British hill-fortress, of which the number in this country was very great, and indeed must be computed "not by hundreds, but by thousands." (Roach Smith.) The present example was not only important from its strength, and from the evident skill that had been expended in its construction, but it was one of the largest, if not the very largest, in this country, its circumference being quite three miles, and its enclosed area comprising an extent of more than two hundred acres. Whomsoever we may consider its first occupants, it was in all probability an ancient British *Oppidum*, appropriated by the warlike Belgæ, a century or so before the Christian era. It was, so to speak, the citadel, or place of refuge for the inhabitants of a large outlying district, and its value was undoubtedly enhanced by its neighbourhood to the river Pedred or Parret, which boundary (as its name signifies)

was crossed by an important British trackway, just two miles to the westward. When the Roman invaders held rule in Britain, cuckoo-like, they occupied many of these strongholds, made ready to their hands, if only they found the sites sufficiently important or commanding to suit their purpose. This hill-fort being close to the Fosse-way (which was simply the British trackway just alluded to, perfected by Roman art), and also hard by the river, was assuredly taken possession of; and an irregular, rectangular, oblong earthwork, sufficiently distinct at present to enable us to give something more than a mere guess as to its boundaries, was constructed. It occupied a good space on the northern spur of the hill; and it has its counterparts on Hod-hill near Blandford, at Clifton, and in other places one might name. The former of these Mr. Roach Smith quotes as "a model of Roman castrametation." The best authorities are somewhat divided in their opinion as to who really were the latest adapters of these irregular British camps. Some, as Sir Richard Colt Hoare, and Mr. Roach Smith, consider the rectangular earthworks alluded to, to have been altogether the work of Roman military engineers; others, as Mr. G. T. Clarke, and Mr. Franks, of the British Museum, feel assured that they were constructed by Romanized Britons, or, as Professor Boyd Dawkins has so well put it, by those inhabitants of this island, who had "become saturated with Roman traditions and Roman civilization."

The Roman occupation of Britain came to a close in the early part of the fifth century, after which this spot must have been occupied by the race just mentioned; and although there is not the slightest evidence that the Saxons ever made use of the hill as a stronghold, yet it is impossible (at least in the mind of the speaker) to divest oneself of the idea that this particular fortress played a conspicuous part in that struggle which ended in Saxon predominance and British utter subjection through all the country east of the Parret, as recorded in the English Chronicles under the date 658.

Now, in a spot that has been so long occupied in the way explained, it cannot excite any wonder that many "finds" or relics should, from time to time, have come to light; although such discoveries now are comparatively few and far between, for the very obvious reason that the whole surface has, from time immemorial, been either quarried or passed under a more or less skilled form of agriculture. To instance the antiquity of the quarries, it may be sufficient to state that some Roman coffins, of Ham stone, are to be seen in the Dorchester Museum.

The relics now brought to light, are chiefly unearthed when once more turning the rubbish heaps that have accumulated during the ancient quarrying process. A very few wrought flints, chiefly small, rude implements or flakes, are now and again cropping up, and sea pebbles, presumably used as sling stones, are very common on the hill. The speaker is in possession of a very curious core, not much above an inch long, evidently the remains of one of these pebbles, from which rude flakes had been detached. In the local Museum at Yeovil were several bronze celts, both of the usual hatchet form and socketed; also a socketed gouge, and one or two British coins of the degraded-horse type, alluded to by Dr. Evans, in his work on British coins. Whilst of a later date have been exhumed some very perfect and beautifully preserved fibulæ, and an elegant little lamp of great rarity; also the still rarer remains of a lorica or shirt of scale armour, and portions of a British chariot, all of bronze, besides weapons and implements of iron, bone, and pottery; bones and skulls—human, as well as those belonging to the lower animals. Specimens of all these, and other relics, are to be seen, either at Yeovil, or in the valuable Museum of Mr. Walter Walter, at the foot of the hill. About forty years since, nearly a hundred iron swords were ploughed up on the plateau called Butcher's Hill, within the line of earthworks. They were straight, about 2 ft. 5 in. long, and one and a half inches broad;

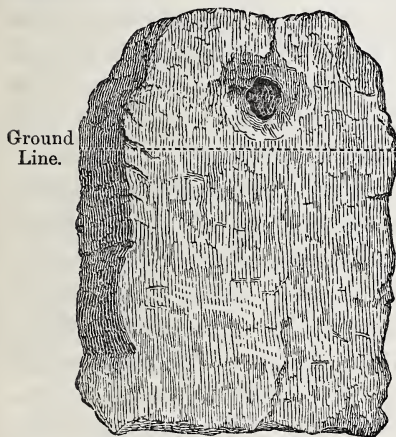
both edges being turned in at the base for about three inches, so as to form a handle. Several of these weapons are in the Society's Museum at Taunton. They are supposed to have been swords in a state of unfinish, and placed together in sheaves to await completion by the armourers of the period.

There seems to have been no record of any Saxon remains being found on the hill, but in a Museum collected by the speaker's father there was the head of a formidable "brown bill," dug up here some fifty or sixty years since; possibly a relic of the great struggle which took place in 1069, between Robert de Mortaigne, the Conqueror's half-brother, and the brave Saxon churls of Somerset and Dorset; who, goaded by his tyranny, besieged the proud Earl in his Castle on St. Michael's Hill at Montacute.

Mr. Norris then drew attention to the coins that, from time to time, had been found upon the hill. In 1816, a large number of denarii and other small coins, dating from Aquilia Severa (about A.D. 220) to Tetricus, senr. (about A.D. 272), were dug up. Some of these are in the speaker's possession, and many more in Mr. Walter's Museum. In the years 1882-3, near the point where the party first entered the fortress, at a place called Bedmore Barn, were discovered by some farm labourers three big amphoræ full of large brass coins, chiefly belonging to what is called the Antonine period, *i.e.*, about the middle of the third century, and numbering six or eight hundred, at the least. The greater portion of those preserved are in the hands of Mr. Troyte-Bullock, of North Coker House; of Mr. Phelps, of Montacute House; and of Mr. Harding, of Montacute Abbey Farm. The two last-named gentlemen have also, in a nearly perfect condition, the vases in which these coins were found, and Mr. Harding is in possession of a quite perfect funeral bowl, exhumed in the same locality.

The speaker then directed attention to the slope once occupied by the stones described by Sir R. Colt Hoare, in the

following words:—"Not far from this (the Frying Pan) are some curious relics of antiquity; and such as, perhaps, do not



22 in. high.
14½ in. wide at ground-line.
4 to 5 in. thick at ditto.

exist in our island elsewhere. They are low stones, fixed in the ground at certain intervals, and perforated; and are supposed to have served, originally, as picquets for the cavalry." (*Archæologia*, vol. xxi.) Sir Richard was possibly wrong in his supposition, but the object of these stones has never been satisfactorily explained. It is much to be regretted that, without exception, every perfect stone was some years

since wantonly removed, only two being now known to exist, and these are in the possession of gentlemen in the neighbourhood.¹

The amphitheatre in which they were now assembled, although not much bigger than a cock-pit, was, doubtless, a small arena, in which were celebrated, during peaceful occupation of the Camp, those athletic sports and military games, so dear to the heart of every Roman soldier. Such small amphitheatres were not so uncommon as to have escaped the notice of antiquarian explorers; that eminent authority, the Rev. Prebendary Scarth, having recorded quite a number of similar excavations in Camps like this.

In investigating these hill-fortresses, the great water question was frequently a puzzle to antiquaries. How did the

(1). Since the date of the meeting, several other stones have come to light. They are stated to have been mischievously dug up by persons at work on the hill, and thrown into the ditch below, whence three, at least, have been reclaimed; one of which, here figured, is now in the possession of the Hon. Local Secretary.

occupants of isolated camps obtain ready access to supplies of water for themselves and their cattle? In this case there exists an old covered-in well, a short distance behind the "Prince of Wales" inn, whence, within the speaker's remembrance, water was constantly obtained. This well, upwards of 170 feet deep, was reputed to be Roman; it is more probable, however, that it was of mediæval, if not, indeed, of later construction. The presence of very manifest earthworks at the foot of the hill, just north-east of the "Frying Pan," and close to the spot where the stream, called "High Lake," may be seen from the turnpike road, shews us where the military occupants of the Camp obtained this necessary of life; whilst evidence of early burials on the north-east angle of the hill, at the side of the narrow, steep road descending to the village of Stoke, proves how careful, under the marvellous Roman influence of which we have spoken, were the military authorities to institute strict sanitary regulations at this early period of our history.

Mr. H. W. HOSKINS, with reference to Mr. Norris's remark, that no Saxon relics had been found on the spot, asked if "Ham" was not the name of the hill?

Mr. NORRIS replied that certainly it was.

Mr. HOSKINS rejoined, "Then there is one Saxon word, at least, connected with the place."

Mr. NORRIS stated that he had elsewhere¹ given his reasons for demurring to the correctness of that belief, but that time did not permit of his re-opening the question on that occasion.

The Rev. Professor EARLE said "Ham" was clearly the Saxon for home, and he was of opinion, although there was no "Ham" on the hill, it applied to the village of Stoke-sub-Hamdon, which lay below it. There was no reason, in his mind, for concluding that the Saxons never occupied the ramparts, because no traces in the shape of relics had been found.

(1). The Camp on Hamdon Hill."—*Proc. of the Som. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc.*, vol. xxx., 1884.

It was quite possible to give too much weight to this negative evidence. They must remember that the Saxons were very poor, as compared with the Romans. They had nothing like the same accoutrement and commissariat; their outfit was, in fact, what they carried upon their backs, and consequently, they would be the less likely to leave traces in the shape of ornaments or weapons; whereas the Romans were so rich in money and manufactured articles, that they could hardly help leaving relics wheresoever they pitched.

The PRESIDENT then proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Norris, for his remarks on this very important hill fortress; which proved that he was striving to follow in the footsteps of his father, whom he remembered as an excellent antiquary.

This was duly acknowledged, Mr. NORRIS expressing his deep obligation to Professor Boyd Dawkins for telling the assembled Members so much that he could not tell them, and for so readily affording his kindly aid when the speaker was drifting towards uncertainty or misconception.

The party then descended the hill to the village of Stoke, and partook of luncheon at the "Fleur-de-Lys" inn. This inn was probably originally the Manorial Guest House, and still possesses some features of interest, the doorway being of early 15th century work. After luncheon they proceeded to

The Beauchamp College,

now known as the "Parsonage Farm," occupied by Mr. Darby.

Mr. GREEN described the house as being a very old Manor House, of various dates—the earliest part 15th century. There is a pretty bell turret on the chapel.

The Rev. W. J. ROWLAND read the following notes regarding the connection of the Beauchamps and Gurneys with Stoke. The Chantry-house at Stoke-sub-Hamdon was originally erected when the Chantry was founded (in 1304, or shortly afterwards). Very little, if any, remains of the earlier buildings. The house which now exists, with its hall, domestic

apartments, gateway, etc., probably dates from the reign of Henry VII. So many alterations and adaptations have taken place, that it is by no means easy to explain the uses which the several rooms of the College once served. The Chantry precincts are entered through a fine Tudor gateway, beside which is a less pretentious entrance for those on foot, now blocked up. The hall, with a good 15th century collar-beam roof, is on the ground-floor, on the north side of the entrance. A floor of timber has been inserted about half-way between the ground-floor and the roof; apparently after the property came into lay hands, in the 16th century. In order to afford light to the upper chamber thus formed, the original walls of the hall have been pierced with windows of a late date. The little room over the porch is approached by a narrow stone staircase, leading from an ogee-arched doorway on the left of the entrance passage. The kitchen and outhouses appear to have been situated on the south-west of the hall. In the east wall of the room supposed to be the kitchen is a handsome ambry, or cupboard, of the 15th century. The little gabled room with the bell-cot has been supposed to be the Chapel of the community; but this is most likely an error, as the room runs north and south, and there would be no occasion for a Chapel, with the Chantry so close at hand. No traces are to be found in this room of either altar or piscina. The bell was probably used to call the priests to meals and to their several duties. The part of the buildings which faces the street has been in a great measure re-built since the reign of Henry VII.

The history of this religious house is somewhat as follows: Sir John de Beauchamp of Hatch built a Castle at Stoke in the reign of Edward I, in the precincts of which was a free Chapel, dedicated to St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra in Lycia.¹

(1). Only a few mounds of earth now mark the site of Beauchamp's Castle, though the name "Castle" is still attached to the locality. These mounds are situated about two hundred yards to the north of the house under notice, but on the opposite side of the road, and in a spot answering to Leland's description.

In the year 1304, Sir John de Beauchamp petitioned Walter de Haselshaw, Bishop of Bath and Wells, to be permitted to found a Chantry in his free Chapel of St. Nicholas, and to endow a College of five priests to celebrate masses for the souls of his father, brother, ancestors, etc. The Bishop granted this petition, and allowed the endowments belonging to St. Nicholas, together with the tithes of the parish Church of Stoke-sub-Hamdon, to be set aside for the support of the new College. One of the five Priests was to act as Prior. Five masses were to be sung daily. The arms of Beauchamp were to be embroidered on the garments of the priests, who were "to tarry together, and in one house sh^d eat and drink together, and sh^d lie in one chamber, unless sickness or any other reasonable cause sh^d arise." The College of priests had the privilege of refusing to keep horses, dogs, and hawks, for the benefit of the founder or of his heirs. In the 15th century the Manor of Stoke-sub-Hamdon passed into the hands of the Gournays, whence has arisen the mistake of calling the Chantry-house Gournay or Gurney House. Leland, who visited Stoke in the reign of Henry VIII, says: "Gurney was Lord of Stoke-sub-Hamdon, and there he lieth buried in a Collegiate Chapel by the ruins of his Castle." He thus describes the place:—

I saw at Stoke in a Botom hard by the Village very notable Ruines of a greate Manor Place or Castelle, and yn this Maner Place remaynith a very auncient Chapelle, wheryn be diverse Tumbes of Noble Men and Wimen. In the south west side of the Chapelle be 5 Images on Tumbes, on hard joynid to another, 3 of menne harneshid and shilded, and 2 of women. Ther hath bene a Inscription on eche of them, but now so sore defacid that they cannot be redde. I saw a shelde or 2 al verry of blew and white. Ther be yn this parte of the Chapelle also 2 Tumbes without Images. Ther is in the North side of the Body of the Chapelle a Tumbe in the Waulle without Image or Writing, and a Tumbe with a goodly Image of a man of Armes in the North Syde of the Quyer of the Chapelle with a sheld as I remember al verry, and even afore the Quier Doore but without it lyith a very grete flatte Marble stone with an Image in Brasse flattely graven and this writing yn French about it.

The inscription on the tomb of Sir Matthew de Gurney,

describing in French his military services, is given by Leland. This celebrated warrior married Alice, the widow of Sir John Beauchamp of Hatch, the fourth of that name. He died in 1406.

The Chantry House is thus mentioned by Leland:—

Ther is a Provost longging to this Collegiate Chappelle now yn Decay, wher sumetyme was good service, and now but a Messe said a 3 Tymes yn the Weeke. The Provost hath a large House yn the Village of Stoke therby.

The endowments of the Chantry escaped Lord Cromwell's Commissioners in the reign of Henry VIII; but in the reign of Edward VI fell to the rapacity of the Protector Somerset. A survey of the yearly value of the College, Provostrie, Free Chapel, and Parsonage of Stoke-under-Hamden, was made by Hugh Poulet and Thomas Dyer, in 1548; and a lease of the lands and tithe belonging to the Chantry and parish Church was granted to Mrs. Elizabeth Darrell for twenty-one years. In 1552 the property was leased to Mr. Thomas Strode, whose initials, with the date ("T.S. 1585"), may be seen carved in the wainscot of one of the sitting-rooms in the Chantry House. The Chantry lands and the tithe are now impropriated. The names of the fields are the same as in the days of old. The tithe barn is large, but inferior, architecturally, to many other Somerset barns. The mistake of calling the Chantry House "Gurney House" can be traced to Camden, who says, in his *Britannia*, "Stoke-under-Hamden, where the Gornays had their Castle and built a College," and the error has been strengthened by Parker, in his *Domestic Architecture in England*.¹

(1). Note by the PRESIDENT. This mistake was also made by Mr. Gurney, the author of *The History of the House of Gournay*, who paid a personal visit to Stoke, and embellished his work with several wood-cuts of the Provost's House and buildings round it, as representing the residence of Sir Matthew de Gournay. With regard to the site of the Beauchamp Castle, the evidence in support of the spot indicated by Mr. Rowland (near the residence of Mr. Bonville Weare) is strongly corroborated by a presentation of the Homage at a Court of Survey for the Manor of Stoke, held 28th August, 1616. In answer to a question whether the Lord had any Castle within the Manor, the Homage say, "There was, as they have heard, a Castle within the Manor, in certain ground called *Gardens*, but whether the Lord did dwell there they knew not, neither have they heard." This ground is now divided into three fields, called *Garden Closes* (Nos. 732-4-5 on the Tithe Map), lying immediately behind Mr. Weare's house (No. 604), and the adjoining orchards (Nos. 612-13-14) are called *Castle Orchards*.

Mr. GREEN said some confusion in all histories had arisen from Leland's account, and from the utter disappearance of the Castle. The Castle of Stoke was built temp. Edward I, by Sir John Beauchamp, and a license to crenellate it was granted by patent, 7th Edward III. It would be in the Chapel belonging to this Castle that Leland saw the many rich tombs he describes. The Stoke property passed later to the Gurneys, the last being Mathew de Gurney, who died in 1406, without issue, when his estates fell to the Crown by a previous settlement. Annexed to the Duchy of Cornwall, Stoke afterwards passed in exchange to the Earl of Huntingdon, and after other changes of ownership was re-united to the Duchy, to which it now belongs.

The Dovecot, in a field at the back of the house, was visited. It is circular, and entered by a low door. There are recesses in the wall for 500 pigeons, or more. It is now in a dilapidated condition, the decayed roof having been only recently removed.

Stoke-sub-Hamdon Church.¹

Mr. FERREY said, originally it was a Norman Church, with nave and chancel only. Subsequently, in the 13th century, transepts were added, and it thus became cruciform in plan. A peculiar feature consists in the position of the tower; which, instead of being at the west end, is on the north side of the nave. The lower part is clearly transition Norman; whilst from the bell-chamber stage to the parapet is apparently Early English work. But there are some peculiarities in the masonry and general character of the composition appertaining to the 15th century. The south transept is of rather later date than the tower. It is of the early Decorated period, though it is somewhat unusual in Churches to find one-light windows in any but the Norman and Early English periods. The roof of the south transept is, as nearly as possible, a copy

(1). Illustrations of this Church will be found in vols. iv. and xvii. of the Society's *Proceedings*.

of the original one, which was too decayed to be preserved. The chancel arch is a beautiful specimen of the Norman period, but the capitals are modern. The Norman chancel was, apparently, widened in the Early English period; the windows being of that style. The appearance of the lower portion of the side walls leads to that theory, and the old Norman corbel-table to the eaves has been re-used. There are two tempera paintings over the chancel arch, which appear to be 15th century work. In the porch over the doorway is a tympanum, which was opened in its present state in 1857; having been blocked up in masonry, which no doubt preserved it, to a great extent.

Mr. GREEN furnished an ingenious explanation of the allegory figured on the tympanum.¹ Some trouble was taken by Mr. Greenslade, a former incumbent, to get the meaning of this allegory: and with the assistance of a French antiquary, who had given much attention to such subjects, some conclusion was arrived at. First, there is Sagittarius. The zodiac on Churches is supposed to represent the World, a place of fatigue and unrest, as *contra* the Church, a place of repose and rest. Sagittarius, as the emblem of activity, here bends his bow on a lion, which appears as unsuspecting of the danger. The lion, as an emblem, is sometimes the Devil, sometimes the Saviour. Here he is the Saviour, on the same plane as Sagittarius (that is, on earth), the danger coming from the world; and it will be observed both are at the foot a tree. This tree would represent the Tree of Life. The lost words in the inscription are supposed to be *arbor vitæ*; the *v* alone being now slightly marked. On the branches of the tree are the birds of the air—innocents, who flee the earth. One bird reposes, musing and contemplative, on the top of the tree; the others are pecking—noting that Wisdom is the Tree of Life to those who lay hold on her (Proverbs). The *Agnus Dei*, on the same level with the birds, apparently springs

(1). See an illustration in vol. xvii of the Society's *Proceedings*.

or leans towards them, as an expression of interest and care for their happiness: thus completing the theological idea. The story, then, may be read as intimating that the strong man of the world, ever armed, is ever assaulting, by temptations, the unsuspecting Christian.

Proceeding to the outside of the Church, near the west door, Mr. FERREY drew attention to a mutilated kind of stone hood, placed against the north wall, which created some interest, and could not be explained by any present. The carving is evidently of the 13th century period. The idea has been given that it was a portion of a sepulchre, but Mr. Ferrey could not believe it to be that, and in the whole course of his experience he had never seen such a canopy of so early a date. After examining the work, without coming to any conclusion as to its origin, the party proceeded to the north side of the Church, where traces of different styles of architecture can be very easily made out. For example, there are three small windows in close proximity to each other, all of different periods, viz., the Norman, the Early English, and the Perpendicular. From the east end, various alterations in the Church can be well seen. The pitch of the roofs has been lowered, the nave walls heightened, and battlements put up in the Perpendicular period. The east window is of the 15th century. The drip-course to the west end of the chancel appears to have been cut off, and does not extend the whole distance across; which will strengthen the belief that the chancel has been widened. There is a projection on the east wall of the tower (exterior), about which Mr. Ferrey confessed himself to be puzzled. Many abler men than he, however, have been unable to account for this singular projection, including Sir Gilbert Scott, who could form no theory respecting it. There is, perhaps, no Church in the diocese so thoroughly representative of the various styles of architecture, from the Norman to the Perpendicular date. There is a low-side window, sometimes called a leper's window, to be seen on each side of the chancel.

Mr. NORRIS also made some remarks concerning the figures on the tympanum, in the course of which he alluded to an elaborate pamphlet thereon, written in 1867, by the late Rev. W. Greenslade, a former vicar. He also stated that during the restoration (in 1861) of the Church at South Petherton (the adjoining parish), two heavy arch-stones, bearing in beautifully sculptured *alto relievo*, the figures "Leo" and "Sagittarius," were discovered. The style of these latter would indicate a late Norman date, presumably about the reign of King Stephen. He knew of no other examples in the neighbourhood.

Montacute House.¹

The party next proceeded to Montacute House, the seat of the Phelips family, where they were courteously received by Mrs. Phelips. This grand specimen of Elizabethan domestic architecture created considerable interest amongst those present.

Mr. GREEN pointed out the prominent features of the building. There are nine statues in niches on the garden front, intended to represent the nine worthies. Three of these are Gentiles, three Jews, and three are Christians. The Gentiles are: Hector, the son of Priam; Alexander the Great; and Julius Cæsar. The three Jews are: Joshua, the conqueror of Canaan; David, King of Israel; and Judas Maccabæus. Finally, there are Arthur, King of Britain; Charlemagne; and Godfrey de Bouillon, King of Jerusalem. Speaking of the west front, Mr. Green drew attention to the screen, which was brought from the Horsey mansion at Clifton Maybank, about the year 1786, by Mr. Edward Phelips, then the owner of Montacute.²

(1). An engraving of this house will be found in vol. xvii of the Society's *Proceedings*.

(2). Note by the PRESIDENT. It was probably this gentleman who adorned the entrances to his mansion with the hospitable invitations taken from Pope's *Imitations of Horace*, Sat. ii :—

"And yours my Friends."

"Through this wide opening gate none come too early, none depart too late."
And another line on one of the pavilions in the east court :—

"Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest."

The armorial glass in the windows attracted some attention, and a paper on this subject will be found in Part II, p. 90.

After wandering through the rooms, examining the pictures, china, and works of art, the party assembled on the lawn, where

Mr. GREEN drew attention to St. Michael's Hill, upon which it was stated a castle once stood; a statement which had been doubted. He then read an extract from the Quo Warranto Roll of Edward I, which states that the Prior of Montacute held or owned St. Peter's, juxta the Castle of Montacute; and the burg or market, with the tolls and fair of Hamdon, and the Castle and Chapel, with appendages. At the present time there are no signs whatever of any building having existed on the hill.

Mr. NORRIS here read the following extract from Leland:

The Towne of Mountegue hath a poore market and is buildid of stone as commonly al Townes therabout be. I redde in the Booke of the Antiquities of Glessenbyri that this Toun was caullid yn the Saxons Tyme Logaresburch. Sum thinke that ther was a great Castel and Fortresse at this Toune yn the Saxons Tyme. Sum say that the Counte of Moretone builded a Castelle there sone after the Conquest: but that a Castelle hath bene there, and that the Counte of Moreton lay yn it, it is without doute. This Counte chaunged the olde Name and caull'd it Montegue, bycause it stode on a sharpe point of an Hille, and syns that Name hath prevaylid. This Counte of Moreton began a Priory of Blake Monkes a 3 or 4 in numbre under the Rootes of Montegue Hill, enduing it with 3 fair Lorde-shippes, Montegue and Titenhull joyning to it. The 3 was Criche¹ a 10 miles from Montegue West South West. The Counte of Moreton toke part with Robert Curthose agayn King Henry the first, and after was toke, put in Prisone, and his landes attaintid: at the which tyme the 3 Lordshipes gyven to Montegue Priory were taken away, and then were the Monkes compelled to begge for a certein season. At the laste King Henry the first had pyte of them, and offerid them their owne Landes again and more, so that the wolde leave that Place and go to Lamporte, wher at that tyme he entended to have made a notable Monasterie. But the Monkes entretid hym that they might kepe theyr old House. and upon that he restorid them their 3 Lordshipes, translating his mynde of building an Abbay from Lamporte to Readyng. Then came one Reginaldus Cancellarius, so named by likelihod of his office, a

(1). Creech St. Michael, near Taunton.

man of great Fame about King Henry the first, and he felle to Relligion, and was Prior of Montegue and enlarged it with Buildinges and Possessions. And thus the Priory encreasing, and the hole Lordship of Montegue beying in the Monkes Possession, the notable Castelle partly felle to ruine, and partely was taken doune to make the Priory. So that many Yeres syns, no Building of it remaynid, only a Chapelle was sette apon the very toppe of the Dungeon, and that yet standith ther. (*Itinerary*, vol. ii, fol. 52.)

Commenting on this account, the speaker remarked that the "King's Antiquary" had here become somewhat 'mixed'; confusing *Robert de Moretaine*, the builder of the Castle on Mile's Hill, with his son *William*, who founded the Priory at its "rootes." The former was doubtless stationed here by his half-brother, the Conqueror, with a view to curbing the turbulent spirits—British and English—in the far western portion of his newly-acquired dominions. And hard work, at first, he seemed to have found it; for, as Professor Freeman had so eloquently told us in the seventeenth volume of our *Proceedings*, the down-trodden, but undaunted, men of Somerset and Dorset "rose with one heart and one soul," to beard the lion in this very den of his. Alas! how unavailingly! for his friend, the fighting bishop of Coutances, first succeeded in raising the siege, and then followed up his success by a series of ruthless mutilations on the persons of the vanquished, too horrible to relate. If any one desired to picture to himself the form these cruelties probably put on, let him read the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of the year 1137, and congratulate himself that upwards of nine centuries had elapsed since the atrocities, above alluded to, might have been witnessed from the very spot on which the party was now standing.

He further desired to call attention to the fact that, according to Collinson (vol. iii, p. 45), the name "Montagud" was given to the place in compliment to Drogo, the first Castellan of the fortress on the hill, and the confidential friend of Count Robert de Mortaigne; the "original cognomination" being derived from Montagu in Normandy, where Drogo's family had possessions, and were seated, long before the

place in England received its name. The speaker also made reference to the legend of the "Holy Rood;" which, being discovered on the summit of the same eminence, was not long after *miraculously* removed to Waltham Abbey, and was the relic specially selected by King Harold, before which to perform his last religious rites, on starting to resist the Conqueror at the field of Senlac.¹

Before leaving, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mrs. Phelips, on the proposition of Professor BOYD-DAWKINS.

Montacute Priory

was next visited, and Mr. Harding, the occupier, afforded every facility for inspecting this interesting building.

Mr. FERREY said the building was a remarkably well-preserved specimen of the 15th century. It was evidently connected with some monastic institution, and might very probably have been the house of the Prior. The gateway was a very good example of the period, whilst there was a beautiful oriel window on the first floor. Inside the gateway there was some groining of good character, and an interesting Jacobean fireplace. On the building there was a mitre, with the initials "T.C." (probably Thomas Chard), the same as existed at Ford Abbey near Chard. There were turrets on either side of the archway, but they were not of the same height or breadth.

Mr. NORRIS would simply call attention to the fact that the beautiful bit of architecture before the Society must be taken as the existing representative of the original Priory, which was founded by William de Mortaigne, the Conqueror's nephew, in 1091. This was the noble who took part with Robert Curthose against King Henry I, as related by Leland. It was under his Castle of Tenchbrai in Normandy that the decisive battle was fought which made Henry supreme, and

(1). *Vide*. Harl. MSS., 3776; and Cott. MSS., Inl. D. vi; also, "The Legend of Montacute," in Pooley's *Old Crosses of Somerset*.

which led to the imprisonment of William, and the confiscation of the property of the Priory here, together with his own estates.

Attention was called to a perfect manorial dovecot standing in the Priory grounds, which differed from the usual shape in being square instead of circular.

Montacute Church.

Mr. FERREY said the Church was of Norman foundation originally. It was dedicated to St. Catherine, and, like that of Stoke-sub-Hamdon, no doubt originally possessed only a nave and chancel. The arch to the chancel, however, bears unmistakeable signs of being earlier Norman work than that of Stoke. Subsequently the Church seems to have been made cruciform, the arches opening into the transepts, showing a transition between Early English and Decorated. The organ loft on the north side of the nave was quite modern. The sculptured corbels supporting it are very curious, some of them being ancient, removed from another part of the Church, but others modern. One very curious and unique feature in connection with the Church was an abbreviation of the Ten Commandments, which occupy the panels on either side of the modern reredos. Mr. Ferrey had never met with such an example (which, of course, is post-Reformation work) before, and would like to know if there were any more of the kind in the district.

The PRESIDENT then drew attention to the monuments in the north transept, described by Collinson as "the effigies in stone of David Phelips, Esq., and Anne, his wife, who died in 1484; of Thomas Phelips, Esq., in armour, who died in 1588; Eliza Phelips, 1598; and of Bridget Phelips, 1508;" but without any reference to authorities; and perhaps he christened them according to instructions. Upon the one against the west wall (said to be David and Ann) there was no inscription until very recently—only a loose board standing against it,

with names and date painted as they now appear on the base. There was not, so far as his researches enabled him to speak, any evidence that there ever was a David Phelips, an ancestor of this family, much more that this was his tomb. The earliest member of it connected with Montacute, he had met with, was Thomas "Phelipp," who, in 1480, purchased a house adjoining his garden in Montacute. He died in 1500, and by his will he gives all his property to his wife, Joan; but, as he directs his body to be buried in the Priory Church (a distinct building from the parish Church), his monument would hardly be erected in the latter. A second Thomas (son, no doubt, of the former) also resided at Montacute, and both he and Agnes, his wife, were buried there—she in 1564, and he in 1565. Perhaps it might be their monument.

Looking at the canopied tomb, he questioned whether we saw it in its original state. It has evidently been much altered, and in his opinion the shield with the modern Phelips coat at the top and the panels at the back, on which the inscriptions are painted, are comparatively modern additions. But the general style corresponds with that of the commencement of the 17th century; and, not improbably, this monument was erected by Sir Edward Phelips to his father and mother, Thomas and Elizabeth, as stated by Collinson. There are, you will see, on the interior of the canopied roof, three armorial bearings:—1, an eagle's head erased; 2, a rose; 3, a lion rampant, gorged and chained. The first two are charges in the Phelips quarterly coat. The third might refer to a supposed alliance with Philips of Wales, who bore a lion rampant. There was however a little difficulty in this interpretation. According to his theory, the eagles' heads were first introduced by a marriage with a daughter of Phillips of Herefordshire (who bore three eagles' heads on a chevron), not long before 1591, in which year there was a coat "in Mr. Phillip's House in Montagu," of a chevron between three roses, impaling, on a chevron three eagles' heads erased.

Consequently, if the eagle's head indicated the Herefordshire match, the monument could not refer to the Thomas Phelips who died 1588, as his wife was a Smith of Long Ashton, and there is no suggestion that he was married more than once.

There was a Richard "Philipps" of Winterborne Whitchurch, who died in 1606, his wife (who, in a recent pedigree, is said to have been Mary Skerne) having pre-deceased him. By his will he directs his body to be buried in Montacute Church, and authorises his executors to remove his wife's remains from Langport to Montacute, and to spend £20 on a monument to them. Could this be the one? The arms of Skerne, or Skrine, were—three castles, quartering a lion rampant; with a castle for a crest. You have a lion, but how can you account for the absence of the castle, which would naturally have the precedence over the lion. Richard Philipps was one of the marshalmen in Somerset in 1588, and had served in Spain, and therefore entitled to be clad in some kind of armour.

Coming last to the single effigies, until the inscription, "Bridget Phelips, 1508," was painted on it a few years ago, there was no attempt to identify it. Bridget Phelips was the wife of Sir Robert Phelips. Her son Edward was born in 1614, and she did not die until 1634 or 1635. From the identity of the head-dress and the pattern of the cushion with those of the lady in the canopied tomb, it was evident, the President thought, that both figures came out of the same atelier; and if the canopied tomb was erected by Sir Edward to his father and mother, he would suggest that this was his tribute to the memory of his wife, presuming that she was the lady who was buried at Montacute, 18th April, 1590, and registered as "Margaret, wife of Mr. Edward Philipps."

After a long, but interesting day, the party returned to Yeovil by six o'clock.

Evening Meeting.

The Chair was taken by Mr. GREEN, in the absence of the President.

Mr. GEORGE ESDAILE, of Manchester, read a paper on "Evidences of the Occupation of Bath by the Twentieth Legion," and illustrated his arguments by means of a number of diagrams and drawings, which added much to the interest taken in the subject. The paper will be found printed in Part II, p. 48.

The CHAIRMAN said the subject Mr. Esdaile had brought before them was one of considerable interest. He had endeavoured to prove that a legion of Roman soldiers once occupied the site of the present city of Bath. This theory had been altogether denied by some, who contended that Bath was never occupied as a military station, but that it had always been what it was at present—a city of pleasure and idleness, renowned for its baths, which, no doubt, had existed from time immemorial. He did not think Mr. Esdaile's conclusions would be generally accepted, but that was no reason why they should not be brought forward. Mr. Esdaile would no doubt leave it to others to disprove.

Some further discussion took place, to which Mr. ESDAILE replied, and a vote of thanks was passed to him, on the motion of the CHAIRMAN.

The Rev. J. B. HYSON gave some account of the old parish books of Tintinhull, which had recently been found. The MSS. were of various dates between 1433 and 1678, and a paper on the subject is printed in Part II, p. 68.

A vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Hyson, on the proposition of the CHAIRMAN, who took the opportunity of making some remarks on the question of prices then, as compared to modern times. He also pointed out that although Cromwell might have been in the neighbourhood of Tintinhull at the

time recorded, it could only have been as an officer of the army, and had then no more to do with the management of an army than a captain of the present day.

Mr. GREEN then read a paper on "Tom Coryate, and Forks," which is printed in Part II, p. 24.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Green terminated the proceedings of the evening.