

Third Day's Proceedings.

The number of excursionists was not quite so large on Thursday, the third day, about seventy leaving Clevedon at 9.30 a.m. in the brakes to complete the last day of the programme. The weather was again delightfully fine. The first stopping place was

Clapton-in-Gordano Church and Court.

The Court House was first viewed from the exterior.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER explained that the house was originally the seat of the Arthur family, and on the front door was a coat-of-arms of the Arthurs. In response to a request to give the derivation of the nave "In Gordano," Mr. Weaver replied that Bishop Hobhouse considered it was a regional name, indicating a particular region in that district.

Mr. BUCKLE, in describing the church, said that for the most part it was Early English. The north side was the most interesting position from which to see the church. The tower was very early, it had got almost a Norman appearance on the outside. The screen leading into it was a fine massive piece of oak work, and had been recently brought there from Clapton Court. It was exceedingly rough though handsome, and in the middle was a coat-of-arms representing agricultural products. The spandrils of the screen above the arch were modern.

A gentleman explained that this screen stood originally in the manor house, and it was thought to be the latest

example in England of domestic woodwork. It remained in the gardens for some years, exposed to the ravages of the weather, and at last it found a refuge in God's house, where he hoped it would remain. He was sorry that modern additions were now put in it.

Resuming, Mr. BUCKLE said that the piers supporting the chancel arch were of a very rich character, with a number of good mouldings, and the capitals were treated in an extraordinary fashion, the purpose of which was to connect jambs and arch of different dates and forms unsuited to meet each other. On each side of the reredos were two pillars. Over them the moulding was corbelled out to form two stands no doubt intended for images. And the bases of the shafts were Early English capitals turned upside down. The porch there appeared to be another of those porches which had a gallery across it.

The Rev. G. MASTER, of Flax Bourton, gave a short description of the Arthur family, and said that the estate, after it had been in the family for a number of centuries, on their becoming extinct was invested in the Winter family. The chapel contained a monument and a number of tablets to the Winter family.

Weston-in-Gordano Church.

The next place visited was Weston-in-Gordano Church, and Mr. BUCKLE explained its most salient features. He said that the most remarkable feature about the church was the gallery in the porch, and so far as he knew it was the only church in England which possessed the gallery *in situ*. The gallery went right across the door leading into the church, showing that it was quite an addition to the building.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER remarked that Col. Bramble, who had made a study of these galleries, was of opinion that it was used for service on Palm Sunday.

Proceeding inside, Mr. BUCKLE said it was an exceedingly charming little church, and besides the gallery already mentioned, the whole building was one of the most attractive, to his mind, of those they had on their round that day. There was only one feature about the structure which was not of any particular beauty, and that was the chapel which had been added to it on the east side of the tower, and which spoiled, to a large extent, the general view of the church as seen from the main entrance gate. Passing round the north side, it gave one the impression of being a Norman church, but he had hunted all round the walls with the greatest care, and he had been able to find no Norman masonry. But it must be a conservative re-building of a Norman church, although all the walls were of the Perpendicular period. The nave of the church was very highly finished throughout. The tower was Early English, 13th century work, which was the only remains of the older building. The nave was not parallel with the tower. The very curious little stone pulpit was partially of the same date. The chancel was a good deal later than the nave, but it was added on in an admirable manner, so as to give the idea that it was part of the same design. The windows were very elaborate, but they harmonised with those in the nave. There was in the outline of the roof the same trefoil which they had seen at Wrington and Yatton, which shewed that in this district there was a decided revival towards the end of the 15th century of the old 13th century trefoil. The tower of the 13th century had got an arch on its eastern face, which shewed that there must have been a chapel or apse on that side. When the chancel was built, however, there was no chapel there, and some time, probably in the 16th century, the chapel was added in what might be called the mean modern manner. The screen was a bit of patch work, and seemed to have been put together anyhow. The stalls in the chancel were of very great interest, but most of the carving was of a rough character. Many of the seats in the nave were old, and there was seen again the

unusual feature in the poppy heads. As a general rule the Somerset seats had square tops, not poppy heads. On the right-hand side of the church, facing the west, was a monument to Sir Richard Percival, which was elaborately painted. He died in 1483. The monument was remarkable for having an inscription in French, at such a late date. There was a monument in this churchyard with the modern inscription "R.P. 1190," but Mr. Buckle thought that was a misleading date, because the cross on the top of the tomb was of considerably later date than that. Besides the narrow pulpit in the wall, there was also a Jacobean pulpit.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER remarked that the manor house here used to be the principal seat of the Percival family.

The Rev. T. G. BIRD, the Rector, afterwards read an interesting paper on the church, as follows :

"This church, although it has not much to boast of as regards its size, may justly claim a place among the most interesting of the churches of this diocese. For there are few churches to be found at the present day retaining so much of their ancient fittings as may be found here, where the church presents almost the same appearance as it must have done in the middle ages.

Whether there was a church here previous to the Norman Conquest is uncertain, but if not, one was built at that period, most probably by Ascelin, son of Robert Percyvale, Lord of Ivery, who accompanied the Conqueror in his expedition, and was rewarded with a grant of land at Quantock and East Harptree. Ascelin is mentioned in Domesday book as possessor of the Manor of Weston.

The church was either rebuilt or restored in the fifteenth century by Sir Richard Percyvale, who died 1483, and whose tomb remains on the north side of the nave. It has been thought from the appearance of the north wall, that the work then carried out consisted principally of altering the windows to the present Perpendicular style, and raising the walls two or

three feet to admit of the addition of the tracery. If this be so, the church is practically the original building.

The Norman font remains *in situ*, together with the high altar, the pillars in front of which are, however, modern. In the porch should be noticed the choir gallery, immediately over the south entrance to the church, and approached by a flight of stone stairs in the wall. Some nine or ten other churches in this neighbourhood formerly possessed similar ones, but all, with the exception of this, have now disappeared. Its use was, doubtless, to accommodate the choir at certain functions. In the Sarum missal, which was the one in use in most of the province of Canterbury, it is ordered that during the procession on Palm Sunday, seven boys should sing, on the south side of the church, *eminente loco*, the verses of the hymn, "All glory, laud and honour." This "high place" seems to have been generally erected for the occasion, but in this church, and some others, assumed a more permanent form. It may also have been used at the benediction of the fields at Rogation-tide, and perhaps for the first part of the marriage service, which then began at the church door, not, as now, at the choir gates.

Returning to the nave, the bench ends, with one or two exceptions, are the original work—those at the west end being the oldest. In the south wall, adjoining the arch opening into the tower, is a curious thirteenth-century stone pulpit. It is of simple construction, but interesting as an early specimen of a fixed pulpit. Opposite to it is another pulpit of oak, of the time of James II.

Originally the church contained four altars. In addition to the two still remaining, there was one on either side of the rood-screen, at the east end of the nave. A bracket on the north side is all that remains of the altar which stood there, but the one on the south side was *in situ* at the time Rutter wrote his history (1829), and is thus described by him—"At the east end of the nave is a stone oratory with a consecrated water-drain adjoining, westward of which is a curious reading-

loft of stone, approached by two steps." This, of course, refers to the pulpit already mentioned. The aumbry and piscina belonging to this altar are still perfect, and the return screen separating the chapel from the nave was in existence some forty years ago. These return screens, on either side, explain the absence of doors to the rood-screen. This latter is of fifteenth-century work, and was, of course, surmounted by the rood loft, of which there are now no remains, except one of the corbels which supported it, and the stone stairs, cut in the tower wall, by which it was approached.

In the choir, the ancient oak stalls with misereres (an unusual feature in a village church) remain in good condition. They are of fourteenth-century design, and there were originally four return stalls on either side the screen, but these have, with mistaken zeal, been removed to make room for a couple of modern prayer desks.

The chapel of St. Mary Magdalen, on the south side of the choir, is the most modern part of the church. There appears to be no record of its erection, but it is mentioned in the will of Sir James Perceval in 1536, wherein he directs that "his body be buried in the chapel of Mary Maudlyn in the church of Weston-in-Gordano." Its south window, and the wall below it, were removed from the chancel to make the arch opening into it, the eastern wall being built of rubble, with a window above the altar, much inferior in design. At the west end of the chapel another arch opens into the tower. Some years since, in rebuilding the organ, the ancient slab of the altar of St. Mary Magdalen was found beneath the organ platform, and it was restored to its original position.

Although the Percyvale family resided here for upwards of six centuries, their monuments are singularly few. It is possible that the havoc wrought by the Puritans during the Rebellion may account for the destruction of some. The family were staunch Royalists, and their property suffered much during those troublous times. The manor house and church were

ransacked, and records, registers, painted glass and other ornaments ruthlessly destroyed. The earliest remaining monument is the altar tomb in the churchyard near the porch. It is to the memory of Richard Percyvale, a crusader, who, as recorded by Lodge, died in the second year of king John, and was buried "in the church of Weston Gordeyn, under a magnificent monument of brass, gilt." There are two full-length crosses upon it, and sockets for six pillars, formerly supporting a canopy. Round the margin was the inscription, "Orate pro anima Ricardi Percyvale qui militavit in Terra Santa cum Rege Rycardo A.D. MCXC."

It would seem that after being mutilated by the Puritans, the stonework, no longer any ornament to the church, was removed to its present position. A copy of the original inscription has recently been inserted on a metal plate, below the slab.

Another monument, fortunately in good preservation, is that on the north side of the nave, to the memory of Sir Richard Percyvale, the restorer of the church in fifteenth century. It is elaborately decorated in gold and colours, and has upon its canopy three shields, one bearing the arms of Percyvale, impaled with those of Hampton, this Sir Richard having married Catherine, co-heiress of Richard Hampton, a gentleman of this county. The left-hand shield contains the arms of Ballowe and Cheddar, and the third has the Percyvale arms, together with another, unknown. Three angels below the canopy bear a scroll with this inscription: "Richard Percyvale, ye Lord have mercy," and on another scroll below, "For Thy byttyr Passion bring hys soule to Thy salvacion." On the slab of the tomb, in Norman French, remarkable at so late a date, "Cy gyste le corps de Rycharde Percyval le quel mourut l'an de boinet Jesus M.CCCC.LXXXIII. Dieu ay pitie de son ame."

Of Sir James, before mentioned, who was buried in the chapel of St. Mary Magdalen, no monument remains. Whether

it was destroyed by the Puritans, or whether he thought the chapel, of which he was probably the founder, sufficient memorial, we can only conjecture.

A few small headstones in the churchyard are the only other memorials of the family. The manor house, a stately building of fourteenth century, was still standing, in a dilapidated condition, within living memory, but has now entirely disappeared. The farm buildings, below the church, mark its site, and are probably largely constructed from its remains.

The registers date only from 1684, the earlier ones, as I before remarked, having been destroyed by the fanatical Puritans. The entries up to the beginning of the present century are very carelessly made, in many cases by an illiterate clerk, and many years have no entry at all.

The list of the rectors dates back to 1314, and for the greater part of the last two centuries they seem to have been non-resident, the parish during that period having apparently always been held in plurality, and with praiseworthy impartiality it has been tacked on to every one of the adjoining parishes in turn, though they are all in different patronage.

I omitted to say that the ancient sanctus bell remains in its turret above the chancel arch, and in the tower is a fine peal of bells, four of which are dated 1645.

In the absence of the President, the Rev. F. W. WEAVER thanked Mr. Bird for his paper.

Portishead Church

was the next place *en route*, but as time was short the party did not stay long here. Mr. BUCKLE pointed out the modern gallery in the porch which appeared to be only an alteration of the ancient gallery. The wall between the gallery and the church had been taken out and a pew made looking into the church. Attention was also directed to the staircase leading to the gallery. Mr. Buckle also alluded to the pinnacles on

the tower, which he said were fine and distinctive, and like those to be seen at Evercreech. There was little to be said about the inside of the church, though the columns were of rather a curious shape, and appeared to be an experiment. A curious feature of the church was the position of the pulpit, as it was approached by a staircase in the wall in a manner which looked as if originally it had led to the rood-loft. The pulpit stood out from the wall, and was reached by a wooden bridge.

After luncheon at the Portishead Hotel, the drive was resumed to

Portbury Church

where Mr. BUCKLE again took up the part of guide. He drew the attention of the visitors to the fact that the church was entered by a Norman door. Outside the building were also to be seen indications of Norman pilasters on several corners, notably at the two corners at the east end of the chancel and both the corners of the aisle. All those corners were, if not Norman, very old. Everything pointed to the church having been a distinctly important one from an early date. One of the first things which struck one in entering the church was its great size, and the magnificent gangways helped to give dignity to the appearance of the church. There was Norman work in the arch of the chancel, though the arch had been very much altered since it was first built, for the original Norman arch was very much smaller. It had been taken down and rebuilt probably some time in the thirteenth century. The arches and the nave were rather characteristic from the fact that they had no capitals. The two windows at the east end of the aisles were noteworthy, each containing five lancets united under one arch. On the north side of the chancel there was an enormous squint which reached the dimensions of a small chapel. Just beyond there was another chapel with a stone barrel vault. The sedilia in the chancel and in the south aisle were of Early English date. Before closing he must

draw their attention to the magnificent yew trees in the churchyard. He had been told that the tradition in the place was that the trees were the same age as the tower.

Visit to Failand House.

A pleasant drive was then made to Failand House, where the members of the Society were kindly entertained to tea by the President (Sir Edward Fry) and Lady Fry. After tea there was a pleasant surprise in store, for the Misses Fry had trained some of the local school children to give an exhibition of old English pastimes. It was an excellent idea, and one well in keeping with the gathering, and it was much enjoyed by those present. The games were played on the tennis lawn, and the children were in costume; decked with garlands of flowers they looked pretty, and went through their sports with evident enjoyment. There were other old-fashioned dances and a modern one with ribbons, and the whole concluded with a pageant march. The pleasure of the scene was enhanced by a programme of music, in which old-world tunes were introduced. One of the Misses Fry and a cousin interpreted the vocal parts admirably, and Miss Bulton, of Clevedon, accompanied with a violin.

The sports represented by the Failand children were taken principally from the Rev. W. F. Galpin's "Ye olde Englishe Pastimes" (Novello and Co.). They were, as far as possible, reproductions of what used to take place, though, from all accounts, a good deal has always been left to the taste of the performers. Additional information was found in Chambers's "Book of Days" and Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes of the English People," and for the dresses the Encyclopædia of Costume was found useful, though in this respect it would have required too much elaboration to be strictly accurate. The music ranged in date from the thirteenth century—when the famous "Sumer is i cumen in" is supposed to

have been written — to the seventeenth. The songs were arranged for the occasion for two voices and a violin. The programme of music was as follows :

PASTIMES.

Enter Milkmaids and dance the Hey ! Enter Foresters !
Enter Queen of the Revels, carried by Shepherdesses, and attended by
Shepherds representing the Seasons.
Maypole Dance, interrupted by Morris Dancers representing Friar Tuck,
the Hobby Horse, the Jester, and the Dragon.
Foresters shoot at Popinjay.
The Victor is crowned by the Queen.
Shepherdesses and Milkmaids dance.
Sellinger's Round, or the end of the world.
Ribbon Dance (modern).
Maypole Dance.
Pageant March.
Exeunt Omnes.

MUSIC.

“ Dargason ” (temp. Henry VIII).
“ Tucket for the Horns ” (17th century).
“ The Hunt is up ” (temp. Henry VIII).
“ Summer is a-coming in ” (cir. 1225).
“ Under the Greenwood Tree ” (temp. Charles I).
“ Come, Lasses and Lads ” (temp. Charles II).
“ Trip and go,” Morris dance (temp. Elizabeth).
“ Now, Robin, lend to me thy bow ” (before 1568).
“ Sellinger's Round ” (temp. Edward III).
“ Joan to the Maypole ” (temp. Charles II).
“ Hobby Horse Dance ” (temp. Charles II).
“ Pageant March ” (17th century).
“ Golden Slumbers ” (17th century).

At the conclusion, Mr. E. B. CELY-TREVILIAN, on behalf of the society, thanked Sir Edward Fry for his hospitality. In the domain of archæology, or in any other domain, between things which were purely ephemeral and things which were of a purely permanent character, they knew that they could not do better than place themselves under the guidance of a great judge.

Sir EDWARD FRY briefly returned thanks, and said it had been a great pleasure to him to take part in the proceedings of the Society's gathering.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER, on behalf of the society, also thanked Sir Edmund and Lady Elton for their hospitality, and Mr. Elton for his interesting paper on the history of Clevedon Court. He also thanked Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hill for entertaining them to tea at Clevedon Hall, also Mr. Edmund Buckle for so kindly giving his time in describing the churches. The society were also indebted to the help rendered by the local committee, not forgetting the Hon. Sec., Mr. Day; also thanks were due to the clergy for opening their churches, and to the owners and tenants of the houses they had visited. Last, though not least, their sincere thanks were due to Mr. Charles Tite, who very kindly came from Wales and undertook, at a moment's notice, to supply the place of Mr. Bidgood, in his unavoidable absence.

One of the party also added Mr. Weaver's name to the list of those to be thanked for their services, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. WEAVER, in returning thanks, humorously remarked that he hoped it would be his last appearance on the scene as "excursion secretary." He, however, had undertaken the office because Col. Bramble was not well. He should go back to Taunton and tell the committee that they ought to undertake this duty in succession.

Wraxall Church.

A short visit was next made to Wraxall Church, which was described by the Rev. G. S. MASTER, in the absence of Mr. Buckle. He said that he always looked upon the church and the one adjoining as being the most beautiful instance that he knew of a restored church in this century. The church had been restored by the munificence of the Gibbs family, Mr. Antony Gibbs having restored Wraxall Church, and Mr. Martin Gibbs the church of Barrow Gurney. The work of restoration at Wraxall had been carried out under the direction of Sir Arthur Blomfield. The chancel had been entirely re-

built, and the beautiful roof had been introduced, also the screen, of which he (Mr. Master) knew no finer example of modern work in wood carving. The screen had been extended to the organ and the organ-gallery, and, in doing that, part of the old rood screen had been utilised together with the staircase. The church was originally built about the middle of the fifteenth century, probably 1450, and it was a grand instance of a church of that date. The only portion of it now visible was the chancel arch. The porch was Early English, and the inner doorway was Norman in character. Beautiful stained glass had been introduced into the church by Mr. Kemp. The interior of the church was rather dark even on a very fine day, but this had been somewhat remedied by putting in some white glass in the east window, and other of the windows had had a large proportion of white glass placed in them with the same object. The restoration had only just been completed. There was a very fine tomb there of the Gordon family.

The Rev. G. S. Master having been thanked for his description of the building, this completed the three days' programme. The return journey was then made, Clevedon being reached at about 8 o'clock, and thus the proceedings were brought to a close.