Thursday

was considerably finer than the day before, and a large party started at 10 a.m. for the Excursion. On the way to the Cannington Park Quarries, a visit was paid to

Street Farm.

This interesting old residence is now rented by Mr. Wm.

Rood, and belongs to the Earl of Cavan. It is a fair example of the domestic architecture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Portions of the house have been removed, and considerable alterations have been made in what remains, so that it is difficult to discern the original ground-plan ; but there are still features about the place which render a visit to it peculiarly interesting. The common hall, with its minstrels' gallery and raised dais, where the master of the house and his family sat, has disappeared, but a domestic chapel remains in a good state of preservation. It is now used as a china closet. The chapel is only large enough to accommodate the priest and his assistant, and, that the religious ceremony might be seen when mass was being performed, three peculiar squints have been made in the walls ; two slanting ones affording a view of the altar from a spacious room on the first floor, and one in the side walls affording a view from one of the rooms on the ground floor. In the chapel there is a piscina, remains of the altar, and places for two figures, and a receptacle evidently used for keeping the sacred vessels. The winding staircase shows a wealth and lavish use of oak timber, which was common enough in those days, but which would be quite impracticable now. The steps are all made of a single block of oak.

The Rev. F. Brown gave a few genealogical particulars of the families which occupied the manor house, showing that their descendants are still connected with the county of Somerset. The Manor of Cannington was granted to Sir Edward Rogers on the 8th of May, 1538. It was before that time part of the priory of Buckland. Sir Edward Rogers came of a Bradford (Yorkshire) family, and was knighted in the year 1548. He did not know how the connexion between him and Queen Elizabeth took place, but it is quite certain that at her first Council at Hatfield, in 1558, she made Sir Edward Rogers a privy councillor, a chamberlain of the household, and captain of the guard. He died in 1568. The Rogers, though now entirely extinct, were connected by marriage with almost all the leading

families of the county of Somerset. Sir Edward was succeeded by Sir George Rogers, who married an heiress to large estates in Cornwall. This lady made several bequests of money for charitable purposes, among them being a curious bequest of three shillings to be paid to three poor widows of Cannington for a thousand years—of course not the same widows. Sir George Rogers died in 1582, and was succeeded by his son Edward. He married a daughter of Sir John Popham, the celebrated judge, and had many children. Sir Francis Rogers married Eleanor, daughter of Sir Hugh Smith, of Ashton. Amy married a Baronet of Hampshire; Elizabeth married Thomas Bamfield, near Frome; Mary married Sir George Wynter, of Dynham; and their descendants still hold some of the property around Porlock. Others married persons not connected with the county. All the property ultimately vested in the person of Eleanor, who married Sir Francis Popham, of Littlecoat. How it passed afterwards from Sir Francis Popham he did not know.

Bishop CLIFFORD said the manor was now Crown property.

It was stated by a Member that the bequest mentioned still existed, and was paid every year.

Col. PINNEY said some question had been raised as to where the old hall was. He believed that in all these old houses they entered into the common hall first, and, from appearances he could detect, it must have been on the left as they entered this building. The centre part of the structure consisted of an open court, beyond the court was the kitchen, the people in those days having quite as great a dislike to the smell of cooking as we have now, and the small pent-house, which was used when the dinner was brought in, still existed.

The party then went on to

Cannington Park Quarries.

Mr. BIDGOOD, Curator of the Society's Museum, here offered some remarks on the nature of the Cannington Park limestone, of which the following contains the general purport:—The

geological position of the Cannington Park limestone has been a puzzle to geologists for a considerable time; but during the past few years the general opinion has been in favour of its carboniferous origin. The fossils from these quarries in the Society's Museum (presented by the late Mr. Baker) have been identified as of carboniferous age, and the limestone itself bears a general resemblance, as regards structure, colour, &c., to the mountain limestone of the Mendip Hills. As long ago as 1816, Leonard Horner, in his "Sketch of the Geology of the South-West Part of Somerset," published in the *Transactions of the Geological Society*, discussed the subject. He considered the limestone to be of transition (Devonian) origin, and stated his opinion that, although no organic remains had hitherto been discovered in this limestone, it was very probable that, by a more minute examination, madrepores and shells would be found there, for there were laminæ of calcareous spar dispersed through it, which were strong indications of organic remains. In 1837, the late Rev. D. Williams read a paper before the British Association, wherein he mentions this subject, and places the limestone below the Devonian rocks; but subsequently he appears to have considered them as of the same age as the limestones of the Quantocks. Professor Phillips and Sir H. de la Beche considered the limestone to be of Devonian origin, and of the same age as the limestones of the Quantocks; but the latter states that the connexion with the Quantocks cannot be traced satisfactorily. The late Mr. Wm. Baker, of Bridgwater, however, in 1853, in a paper read before this Society, and published in their *Proceedings* (Vol. III, p. 125), abandons views previously held by himself, and, in opposition to the opinions of the Geological Survey and other authorities on this subject, upholds the carboniferous origin of the Cannington Park limestone, announcing at the same time the discovery of fossils, which he believed to agree in character with fossils from the mountain limestone of the Mendip Hills. The discovery of a fossil shell[4]

(4). This specimen has recently been presented to the Museum by Mrs. Payne.

was first made by the late Mr. J. H. Payne, in October, 1852, and subsequent search by Mr. Baker and others produced several species of shells and corals. Mr. J. H. Payne, in a paper on the "Geology of the Quantocks," published in the Society's *Proceedings* (Vol. V), says, "The limestone bed of Cannington Park is of a very different appearance to any we observe in the Quantocks, and I cannot consider it as being analogous; indeed, I have very little doubt in my own mind that we shall succeed in placing it as a true mountain limestone, and having geological reference to the Mendip range, rather than to the Quantocks." Notwithstanding this evidence as to the carboniferous origin of the Cannington Park limestone, Mr. Etheridge, in 1867, as Palæontologist to the Geological Survey, published his opinion that the limestone was of Devonian origin, and an outlier of the Quantocks. He, however, gives no reasons for this opinion, and adduces no fossil evidence, so that considerable doubt is thrown upon his statement, and the results by which he arrived at such a conclusion. In 1871, Messrs. Bristow and Woodward, of the Geological Survey, communicated a paper to the *Geological Magazine*, wherein they considered the Cannington Park limestone to be of carboniferous age, presenting the ordinary features of the mountain limestone of the Mendip Hills, Clifton, and South Wales. In the *Proceedings of the Bristol Naturalists Society*, Mr. Tawney has reviewed the subject, and considers that the evidence is conclusively in favour of the limestone being carboniferous. The determination of these rocks as of carboniferous origin would materially strengthen the probability of the existence of coal south of the Mendips; and it is therefore not at all improbable that under the Somersetshire marshes may exist some portions at least of the coal measures.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr. Bidgood for his remarks, and regretted the absence of Mr. Winwood, Mr. Moore, and others, who might have carried on the subject. The spot on which they now stood gave him, he said, an opportunity of pointing out the scene of King Alfred's deeds. Just before them was

the place spoken of by Asser, where the King defeated the Danes after they had landed, and before he went to Athelney. The Danes landed in the hollow which faced the quarry, and the Saxons went down to meet them, and at the first encounter were defeated. A few, however, went to a neighbouring fort, which had only a loose wall, but was inaccessible on all sides except from the sea. The Danes, instead of attempting to take the place by assault, set a guard to prevent the Saxons from getting to the springs of water that were at a little distance from the hill on which the Saxon fort stood. But suddenly, at daybreak, the Saxons threw themselves on the Danes, defeated them, and killed their chief and many of his followers, and carried off the spoils. Though the Danes were thus defeated, they remained (writes Ethelward) in possession of the ground. Bishop Clifford explained how this could happen by pointing out the locality. The hill known as Cannington Park, near the quarries, was, he said, the site of the Saxon fort, which by some Chroniclers is called Kenwit or Kenwit-tun, which he sought to identify with Cannington. The fort or camp still remains, constructed of loose stone as Asser describes it; the springs are near the quarries, where the Danish chief and his guards were posted to watch the Saxons. The Danes had landed near Combwich, but a large portion of their forces were probably on the opposite bank of the river at the time when the unexpected sortie of the Saxons took place. At low tide the river cannot be passed, for the deep mud prevents its being forded, and the boats are useless from the absence of water. The Saxons knew this, and timed their attack accordingly. The Danes on the opposite side of the Parret were unable to come to the assistance of their comrades till the tide rose. They then came over in force, and were masters of the field; but it was too late. The Saxons having overpowered the guards and slain the Danish chief, had made good their retreat to the Quantocks some time before. Thus, concluded the Bishop, the words of Ethelward, which have caused much difficulty to historians, viz., that the Danes, though

defeated, remained masters of the field, receive an easy and simple explanation from an inspection of the locality. Asser says that this battle took place in Damnonia, and the Chronicles say Defnescire; and the Bishop contended that as Damnonia extended to the Parret, so also originally did Defnescire, and that the addition to Somersetshire of the country west of the Parret was made at a later period than A.D. 878, when this battle was fought.

Mr. SLOPER considered that the opinions advanced by the President were not borne out by the earliest and best Chronicles; that his etymology was faulty, and his topography mistaken. He urged with some warmth that the battle did not take place at Cannington, but at Countisbury in Devon. He allowed that the root in Cannington was the same as that in Cynuit, namely, the Celtic *Cenn* or head, but he declared Countisbury to be only a corruption of Cynuit, and he believed that Pen was really the forest of Exmoor. The Chronicles were, he thought, explicit as to the battle having taken place in Devon. As to Ubbaslowe being the burying place of Ubba, he had been there, and believed that it was nothing more than an artificial mound, raised to give refuge to sheep and cattle in time of flood.

No discussion followed this attack, and the party proceeded to

Stogursey, or Stoke Courcy.

Here there was much to interest visitors in the Norman Church. Sir ALEXANDER HOOD pointed out to the President the extent and nature of the late restoration.

The PRESIDENT said that this was one of the handsomest Churches in the county, and he only wished that Mr. Freeman had been there to explain its different beauties to them. Sir Alexander Hood had, however, pointed out the restorations which had been carried out, and he would convey to them what Sir Alexander had told him. Stogursey was the great seat of the De Courcys—the De Courcelles mentioned in Domesday,—and it was not surprising, therefore, to find here a Norman Church of considerable

dimensions and great beauty. The oldest part of the building was the tower, which was built over the centre of the Church. The body of the Church had been rebuilt, and there were records extant giving the items for rebuilding it, in the reign of Henry VII. The tower was remarkable on account of its not being square. It was built oblong, and they would at once perceive the advantage of such an arrangement in a large Church like this. Many of the Norman Churches in this country were built in the same way. The massive masonry of the transeptal arches would have the effect of shutting out the chancel from the view of the congregation, but to avoid this the tower was built in the shape of a rectangle, and the front arches were built wider than the others. The pavement of the nave was now at the original level. Before the restorations were undertaken, the floor was above the pediments of the front chancel arches, and at another period the floor descended from the porch to the chancel steps, so as to give the people behind a better opportunity of seeing. The transepts and chancel were approached by a series of steps, and this arrangement added to the noble appearance of the building. There had been a rood-screen, which was now removed, but whether that was part of the original disposition of the interior he was unable to say. The old Norman font was a particularly interesting feature in the Church. This font had been removed from its position in the Church, but Sir Alexander Hood had been able to rescue it, and restore it to its proper position. The font was of great antiquity, and very much like those they saw in ancient manuscripts, in which people were baptized by immersion. A similar font to this was to be seen in Canterbury Cathedral. There were three altars in the Church. The farther end of the Church had been completely destroyed; but Sir Alexander had had it restored. He had found enough traces to enable him to judge of its original disposition, and it was restored accordingly. It was a restoration which very well agreed with the rest of the Church, and very great credit was due for the manner in which it had

been done. A window in the south side of the chancel looked like an original Norman window, but it was difficult in these days to decide always what was original. He learned from Sir Alexander Hood that it was an original window, but it did not always occupy its present position. At the time the restoration was undertaken, there was in that place what was called a churchwarden's window of three lights. That was removed to the south transept, and the present Norman window, which was more in harmony with the other windows of the chancel, was put in. The roof of the Church, an open-timbered one, was, of course, not original. Over one of the tower arches was once a window which looked into the chancel. That, he presumed, was for the use of the ringers, so that they might see when they had to ring the bells. The tower was very substantially built, evidently not for the sake of ornament, but with the view of defence, for, as they read in the old Chronicles, the churches, in the troubles which took place at different times, were used as means of defence against any attack which might be made on the village. That was the reason they were built so strong and with flat towers.

Sir ALEXANDER HOOD added that there were two recumbent monuments. One was the last but one of the Verneys. It was a figure clad in armour, and on a shield near the head were the arms of the family. The other monument was the figure of a man, but he had not been able to ascertain anything connected with it. Whether it was the figure of a layman, a soldier, or a priest, he could not say. He might mention one circumstance which might be new to those present. The Sacrament in the Church in the time of Henry VII and Henry VIII was suspended by a cord in the choir; for he found in the churchwardens' accounts an entry—"For a cord for hanging the sacrament, 2d." He found a considerable portion of the revenue of the Church arose from selling ale at Pentecost. He had found a bill for fifty bushels of barley, 16s. 8d., and for twenty bushels of oats, 2s. 6d. The Church ale was so popular in the parish that it sold for 5d. a quart, so that there was a good margin of

profit. The ale in the 8th year of Henry VIII, he found by the accounts, was sold for £6 13s. 4d., and in the 17th of Henry VIII for £7 1s. 8d.

Bishop CLIFFORD said there was another interesting matter to which Sir Alexander Hood had directed his attention. It was a stone scooped out and looking very much like a holy water stoup, but after examining it, he had come to the conclusion that it was a box, used probably for receiving alms. He was strengthened in this view by the marks on the stone work which corresponded with the iron fastenings.

Mr. REYNOLDS, of Bristol, drew attention to the extreme beauty of the mouldings of the chancel arch columns. He said those facing the nave were decidedly of a classical tendency, and were very rare in this country. Instances of them were to be found in Canterbury Cathedral, the work of William of Sens. The present ones must have been the work of a foreign carver or architect, and were no doubt copied from Roman mouldings. The transept mouldings were essentially English, and were much the same as mouldings which he had seen at Iffley.

Stoke Courcy Castle,

the next object visited, was the principal fortress of the powerful house of Courcy in the 12th century. It passed to Faukes de Breauté by his marriage with the heiress of that family, and was dismantled when the Justiciar Hubert de Burgh at last found an opportunity of overthrowing the Norman adventurer, who strove to become above the law. The Castle in the next reign became the head of the barony of Fitz-Pain. From this family it came by marriage into the possession of the house of Percy. It was taken and burned by William, Lord Bonville, brother-in-law of the Earl of Warwick, soon after the first battle of St. Albans, and has ever since lain in ruins. Traces of the bridge, remains of two towers, some walls, and the sally port may still be seen. It is to be regretted that a house is being built exactly between the two towers. After examining the ruins, the party

were kindly entertained at luncheon by Sir Alexander Hood at Fairfield House. When luncheon was over, the drive was continued to

Dodington Manor House,

a fine specimen of domestic architecture of the 16th century. The house is in perfect preservation, and affords a good example of the Elizabethan style of building. The date, 1581, appears outside, and in the great hall over the chimney-piece. It is worthy of remark that in the hall the timber is rough-hewn and wavy.

The PRESIDENT pointed out the disposition of the principal rooms, which was as usual in great houses of that period. A narrow passage under the minstrels gallery had upon one side the hall, and on the other the kitchen, buttery, and other offices. Where the chimney was, there used to be the raised part of the floor for the "high table," at which the master of the house and his family dined, while the servants and others of a low degree were seated below. On the right of this dais was a door leading to the withdrawing room, where was a fine cornice; near this was the oriel or ladies' room.

The Church is modern and commonplace. It has one or two bits of old stained glass. From Dodington the party drove to the little inn called the Castle of Comfort, and thence ascended the hill to

Dawesborough Camp;

the dampness of the atmosphere spoilt the view.

The PRESIDENT observed that the camp was circular, and surrounded with a double fortification. In old books and deeds it was called Dawesborough. It was, he thought, so called from the beacons or *dawns* which were lighted to give notice of the coming of an enemy. These beacons were called dauntrees, and this he believed to be the derivation of the name Dundry.

Sir A. HOOD said that he intended to have the camp cleared, so that it might be seen better; at present it was much overgrown.

The party then drove back to Bridgwater, and the business

of the Meeting ended. The Local Museum remained open for another day, under the care of Mr. Bidgood.