SECOND DAY.

Excursion.

A large party started at ten o'clock. The road lay through a beautiful country, with charming green lanes, in many places overshadowed with trees. The village of Walton-in-Gordano was the first visited.

WALTON CASTLE was pronounced by Mr. Parker to be a a house of the time of James I. or Charles I., built in the mediæval style. The ruins of the old church are of the period of Richard II. The font was removed from it to to the new edifice, which also has the old porch re-erected.

Not far distant is WESTON-IN-GORDANO, where the Rev. W. Hautenville read an account of the Percival family, by whom the church was founded. The Rev. F. Browne

also gave some particulars of several of the more distinguished members of the same family. This church has been very beautifully restored. Weston church is one of a very singular and almost unique ground plan, closely resembling the yet more singular one of St. Mellons, in Monmouthshire. It consists of nave, chancel, south porch, tower south-east of the nave, with a chapel east of it attached to the south side of the chancel. This, with a sancte-bell cot over the gable of the nave, produces a highly picturesque outline. Of detail there is little or none. The tower is Early English, the rest chiefly Perpendicular. The church contains a monument to the Percivals, which Mr. Freeman said was the latest instance he knew of a French inscription on a monument in England, the date being 1483. The Rev. F. Warre remarked that at Hinton St. George there was a monument to Sir Amias Poulett, which was a century later, and had an inscription in French. A curious gallery over the doorway in the porch was the subject of much speculation. Above it was a niche, and a passage made in the wall led to it. Remains of a similar gallery in the porch were afterwards found in other churches, and it was considered a local custom; according to the tradition of the county, it was used for singing or chanting a part of the service on certain occasions, as at weddings. Such a gallery is quite distinct from the usual room over the porch, erroneously called the parvise.

The following notice of this gallery has since been supplied by Mr. Elliot, one of the Secretaries, in a paper read by him at one of the conversazione meetings of the Society :—

" I subjoin a description of this gallery, extracted from a letter to the Editor of the *Ecclesiologist*, by the Rev. W.

Hautenville:—'The style of this church is Perpendicular, this, therefore, is the character of the platform to which I wish to draw your attention. It is carried across the width of the porch, the ends of the two beams which support it being inserted in the side walls, and it seems as if the moulding on the front had originally been carried downward in an arched form at each end so as to rest on corbels; as on removing the yellow dab, square holes were found beneath the line of the front. The stone moulding of the doorway, above the platform has been cut away, so that the beam next the wall rests on the projection thus formed. On the two beams the floor must have been placed, but below this there is a framework, deeply moulded on the under side, which evidently contained panels. The whole of this platform was highly coloured, the red being still visible (as was the niche). Access to it was gained by a staircase formed in the thickness of the east wall of the porch.' Mr. Hautenville says he is informed that the staircase is an addition to the porch, and suggests that the platform from its small size and the fact of its having a moulded front, could be no part of the parvise floor. In this I quite agree with him. The measurement of the porch is 13ft. long inside, by 16ft. wide; the gallery 10ft. long by 3ft. wide; the moulding in front 1ft. As it remains a subject of discussion among those members of our Society most competent to give a decided opinion on the subject, I will offer one fact, which, it appears to me, may account for its construction. It seems quite evident that the gallery was added to the porch long after its erection. During the 14th century we find ceremonies accumulated, which would require additions and alterations in the original plan of the fabric for their observance. Mosheim tells us that the other additions that were made in the Roman ritual in the

15th century, related to the worship of the Virgin Mary, public and private prayers, the traffic of indulgences, and other things of that nature, and that we need not a particular detail to convince us that in this century religion was reduced to a showy compound of splendid trifles. Now just at this period, May 6th, 1424, we find Sir John Percival presented Walter Toucker to the living of Weston, on which occasion John Reynolds, rector of Portisbead, whose emoluments had been infringed by his parishioners frequenting the church of Weston, lodged a petition with the bishop, and obtained an injunction that the said Walter Toucker should not, under a penalty of the lesser excommunication, admit any of the parishioners of Portishead to any of the religious rites of his church of Walton, to the prejudice of the said church of Portishead. May not then some of the additions made in the Roman ritual at this period have been celebrated in the church porch of Weston, causing the erection of the gallery, and attracting the parishioners from the neighbouring church of Portishead?"

Weston once had a manor-house, but it has entirely disappeared. The remains of an old building still in existence was pronounced by Mr. Parker to be part of a barn of the 15th century.

Portishead Church has a nave, north aisle, chancel, and western tower, and, like Weston, keeps its sancte-bell cot. The tower has been described and criticised at length by Mr. Freeman in the Society's *Proceedings* for 1851, p. 57. The other points worthy of notice are the east window, a specimen of transition from Geometrical to Flowing tracery, the flying arch across the north aisle from the pier of the chancel-arch, something like those at Rushden and Thedor, in Northamptonshire, the stone pulpit, the coved

roof of the nave, and the font, Norman with Ionic volute, like those in some Roman capitals.

The manor-house at Portishead was described by Mr. Parker as being of the date of Henry VIII., with a turret in the Elizabethan fashion—a very good example of the period.

Portbury Church formed the next point in the programme. The churchyard contains two noble yew-trees, said to be as old as the edifice itself. At the foot of one of them a former parish officer has immortalised himself by the inscription "Francis Bevan, *Churchworn*, 1733." The Church consists of nave and aisles, chancel, and western tower. The pillars have Norman bases, and there is a fine doorway of that style under the porch. The Norman jambs of the chancel arch remain, but on one side at least they seem to have been built up again together with the arch itself, which at present is not in the centre of the church. There are some very pretty Early English sedilia in the south aisle. The greater part of the church was built by Lord Berkeley, and some of the windows are very like some of those in Berkeley church, Gloucestershire. The church is large and curious, and especially remarkable for its great width, but it is heavy and awkward in its general effect both within and without, and the tower is very poor.

The Priory at Portbury is a mere ruin consisting of four bare walls. Mr. Parker conceived the part remaining to have been the prior's house, but whether there were any extensive buildings beside it was impossible to say. The date was that of Henry VII. The Rev. T. Hugo said the house was one of St. John of Jerusalem, and was only required to accommodate two or three knights.

Portbury Camp was then examined. The Rev. F.



The North East View of:
CHAPTON: IN: GORDANO: Somersetshire. Alfred A. Clarke. 1861.

Ferd. Lith. Taunton

Warre pointed out the entrance to it, between two circular earthworks, from which a path appeared to have led to the top of the hill, which is surrounded by an earthwork. He considered it to be intended merely for the protection of cattle. In a marshy district, where the land was sometimes overflowed, it was necessary to have places where the flocks might be driven, and the fortifications were just such as to prevent the herds and herdsmen from sudden attack. The largest work of this kind he had seen was Brent Knoll.

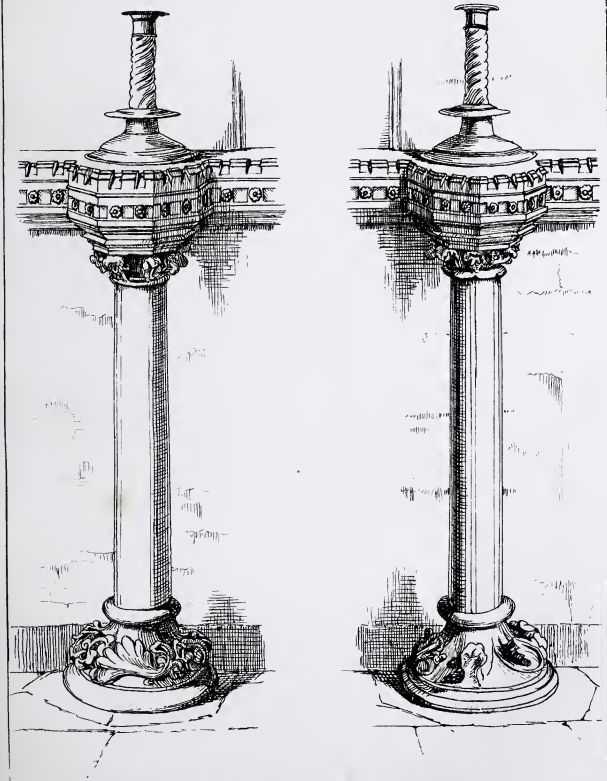
The party then arrived at CLAPTON-IN-GORDANO.

Clapton is a much smaller church, of singular and irregular outline. It consists of a nave, chancel and western tower, with a sort of transept chapel north of the the nave, and a very narrow chapel north of the chancel. This arrangement allows the introduction of a large squint, growing into an archway, like so many in Pembrokeshire, and some elsewhere. A great part of the church is 13th century work, including the tower, the upper stage of which batters very much. It retains its original corbel-table, but on it has been placed a later parapet, without pinnacles. But the most remarkable thing in the church is certainly the bench-ends, contemporary with the older parts of the building, and therefore about the earliest wooden seats in England. The church seems to be threatened with "restoration," to consist in the removal or destruction of these seats, and the removal of the pulpit from its original place. A strong opinion was expressed by all present as to the needless and barbarous character of these changes, which it may be hoped the good sense of the parish may avert. Another curious feature is the reredos, in which are two Early English capitals headed to those upwards and used as bases. Illustrations of the bench-ends and reredos are given in the present volume.

The manor-house of CLAPTON-IN-GORDANO must once have been of considerable importance, and although but little now remains, that little is highly interesting. The interior of the present house (which is only a portion of the original one) has been thoroughly modernized, the last remnants of antiquity having been cleared out in 1860, the old partition walls destroyed, and the very curious early screen fairly turned out of doors. The original parts of the house are of the time of Edward II., but the only portions now remaining visible of that period are the doorway under the porch and the buttresses; but a considerable part of the walls belong to the same work, and the very beautiful screen (which has now been built up under a stone arch in the open air) as the entrance to the garden, opposite to the entrance door. Mr. Parker saw no reason to consider this wooden screen as any earlier than the arch in which it stood, or the doorway, although Mr. Godwin puts it a century earlier; the tracery in the head appears to belong to the original work, and no such tracery was in use in the early part of the the 13th century, nor before the time of Edward I. or II. Still it is probably the earliest and most remarkable domestic screen in existence. The tower-porch was added in 1442, as appears from the arms over the door, Arthur and Berkeley impaled. The chancel of the church and the family chapel on the north side of it were rebuilt at the same time as this tower. It very commonly happens that some part of the church is rebuilt at the same time as a manor-house. The gate-house is of the time of James I.

After leaving this place, the party returned to Clevedon.

A public meeting was held in the evening, at which Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Freeman, Mr. Parker, and the Rev. F. Warre, severally gave an account of the proceedings of the



REREDOS, CLAPTON CHURCH, SOMERSET.

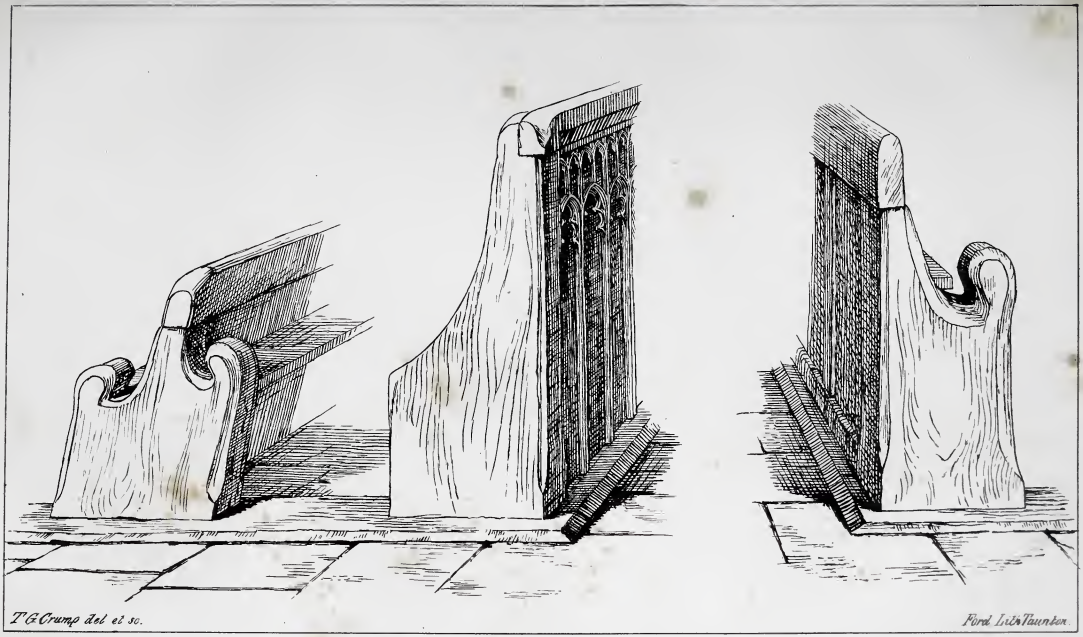
T. G. Crump del. et sc. Ford. Ith. Taunton.



INTERIOR OF PORCH, WESTON-IN-GORDANO.



WESTON-IN-GORDANO SOMERSET



BENCH ENDS, CLAPTON CHURCH.

day. Mr. Freeman mentioned that at Walton a notice was placed in the church saying that the initials "I.H.S." meant "Jesus the Saviour of Men" (*Jesus Hominum Salvator*). This was a mistake, the more accurate form of the monogram is I.H.C., that is simply the common Greek abbreviation of the name *IHΣOYΣ*—the C form of the sigma being very common in MSS.