

Mr. PARKER delivered an address on the Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages, in which he stated that Somersetshire was the richest county in England for old houses. There was hardly a parish in the county which did not contain an Elizabethan dwelling or one more ancient still. The generality were of the fifteenth century. He was not aware of any of so early date as the twelfth century, for they were naturally and necessarily rare. The

finest example of the houses of the thirteenth century which existed in England, or perhaps in Europe, was the Bishop's residence at Wells. Its arrangement was not unusual for the period. The lower story was vaulted, used only for cellars and entrance-hall, the living apartments being entirely upstairs. The principal hall was on the first floor, and probably the chapel at the end of it. This house was found in the fourteenth century not sufficiently large on state occasions—bishops in those days being important lords—and another palace was built by the side of it, which was now a ruin. That appeared to him to have been merely state apartments, with of course a kitchen, but not a regular dwelling-house. The Bishop's residence was a most remarkable pile of buildings altogether. He knew nothing equal to it. It formed part of a group of building in connection with the church, chapter-house, and close—all constituting one magnificent conception, giving an idea of the magnificence of the middle ages they could hardly obtain elsewhere. Mr. Dickinson informed him that the houses of the Canons were in the town, and not in the close, although they usually were enclosed within a wall. There were several houses of the fourteenth century in the county. One they visited last year at Meare, the hall of which was also upstairs. It was a common practice in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to have the lower story of the house vaulted, so that the cellars or store-rooms were fireproof. There was also a good house of the fourteenth century near the church at Martock, very curiously arranged.

The specific notices of the Manor House and other domestic buildings which would be visited in the course of the Excursions, were reserved, and will be found in the following Report.

Mr. R. A. KINGLAKE called the attention of the meeting to an advertisement from which it would appear that the Collection of Mendip Cave-bones made by Mr. Beard was for sale. Lord Talbot de Malahide and others thought it very desirable to preserve to the county a collection so valuable in itself, and especially interesting to the members of this Society from the locality to which they belonged.*
