

Parish Church

dedicated to All Saints.

Mr. EDMUND BUCKLE, hon. diocesan architect, described the architectural features of the building. He dealt first with the outside, and said he had no doubt they all admired the magnificent position which this church occupied, overlooking the Parret valley. The tower was a fine example of a Somerset tower, of what he should call the second class. The proportions were good, and the design simple. Little money had been spent upon it, and yet a great effect had been produced. But the detail was decidedly poor. The arrangement of the buttresses was very common—three at each corner, one diago-

nal and two square buttresses. The idea in the builder's mind when he started was undoubtedly to first of all put a diagonal buttress against the tower, and against that to put two square buttresses. They would notice the portcullis inserted in the parapet—which was a probable indication that the date was the time of Henry VII.

There was one striking feature, and that was the exceeding grandeur of the chancel, compared with the rest of the church—both inside and outside. In Somerset churches the nave and the aisles were generally the grand parts, and the chancel was often exceedingly poor compared with them. The nave and aisles were the work of the parishioners, and the chancel the work of the rector, and (as so often happened in the case of religious bodies) the latter desired to take as much as he could, and give back as little as possible. They often found that the Early English chancel was left in its original state, while the nave was rebuilt on a grand scale. Here we found exactly the contrary.

The building projecting on the south side was the “Heron Chapel.” It was precisely in the character of the chancel; and they could see how very much finer it was than any part of the nave. The presumption was that the Heron family must have built the chancel as well as the chapel. The Heron coat of arms, containing three heron's heads, appeared in the glass of the chancel.

LIEUT.-COL. BRAMBLE said it appeared to have been moved from some other windows of the chancel, and put together, so as to form one fine window; there having been a number of small fragments, one here and one there, before.

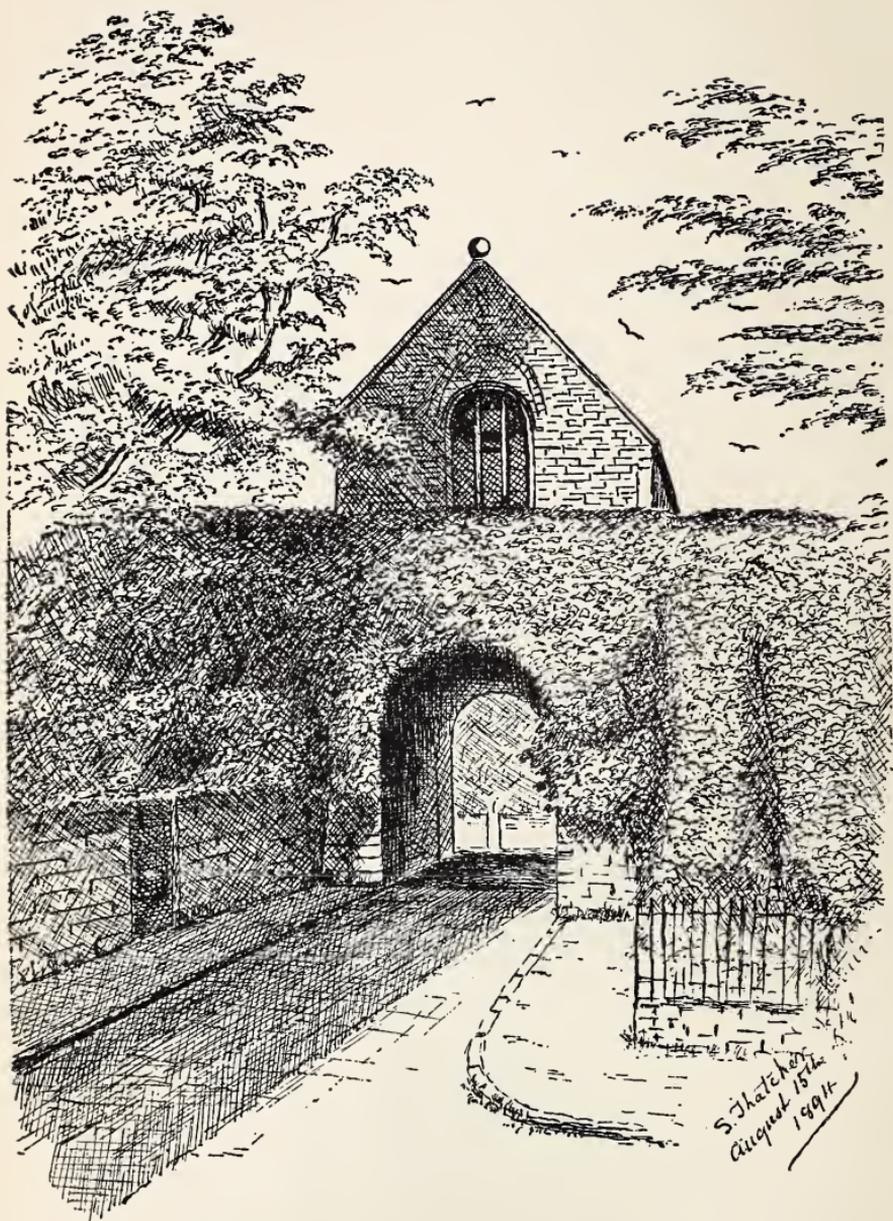
Continuing, Mr. BUCKLE said another remarkable feature was the vestry at the east end, under the east window. It was approached by two doors—one from each side of the chancel. There were several examples of this in Somersetshire; one at Kingsbury, and another at Crewkerne, but it was an unusual feature.

The two windows on the south side of the chancel should be observed, because of the great beauty of the tracery and transom; it was a class of window of which they would see several examples in the neighbourhood—with little tiny quatrefoils under the transom.

Inside the church, as on the outside, the principal features were, said Mr. Buckle, the chancel and the south chapel. Both of these were loftier than any other part of the church, and there was a magnificent oak roof to the chancel, with a fine carved cornice all round. Another principal feature was the glass in the east window, the whole of which—or very nearly the whole—was ancient glass.

At the top of the east window there were two crests. The one on the left was an eagle in modern glass for the Winchester branch of the Pawlet family. On either side of the crest were two coats of arms. The one on the left was the Pawlet, and the other was the Heron. Below there were four small figures of saints. They were not at all clear. He found it stated that the figures on the left-hand side represented St. James the less, St. James the greater, St. Bartholomew, and St. John. The latter was quite clear. In the row below there were eight small figures of saints.

There were also some large figures of saints in the window. These, he understood, had been collected from the side windows. These saints had their names written under them. The first on the left was St. Cecilia, the next one was the Archangel Gabriel; in the centre was St. Mary. The latter two figures were together, and formed a sort of Annunciation. Then there were St. Elizabeth, St. Laurence, St. Anthony, and St. Clement. The latter two were clearly defined, and St. Clement had the papal tiara and double cross. Next came SS. Peter and Gregory; and the last was stated in the label to be St. Joseph. He carried in his hand two pots which were not usually associated with him, and, he believed, Col. Bramble had a theory as to whom it represented.



S. J. Hatch
August 15th
1894

HANGING CHAPEL, LANGPORT

LIEUT.-COL. BRAMBLE said he did not think St. Joseph was represented with two silver cruets in his hand under any circumstances. This figure had Eastern dress, and had all the appearance of being one of the Magi. There was another figure similar to this one in the immediate neighbourhood—at Curry Rivel, where the saint was represented with two pots in his hand, and with “St. Vincent” inscribed under him. It was perfectly evident at Curry Rivel that the inscription was put under the wrong figure. St. Vincent was represented with two large hooks.

Mr. BUCKLE noticed the vaulting under the tower, and the panelled arch leading into it. On the right there was a curious window to find in a church, being nothing more than a square domestic window.

LIEUT.-COL. BRAMBLE said the only similar window he knew was at Liscard. Here on the outside there appeared to be a receptacle for holy water.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER read a copy of the “Will of John Heyron” (printed in Part II), which is very interesting, as it fixes the date of the Heron Chapel.

The chapel of Saint Mary, over one of the ancient gates of Langport, was next visited. It now goes by the name of the Hanging Chapel, possibly from some local tradition of an execution there: more probably from its situation over the archway. It is now used as a Freemason’s lodge-room.

Huish Episcopi Church.

The church of Saint Mary the Virgin, at Huish Episcopi, was the next halt, where the Rev. J. STUBBS (Vicar) read a paper (printed in Part II).

Mr. BUCKLE said they would see that this tower was of a totally different character from that of Langport. It was much more highly elaborated, and the design was altogether different. The Langport tower was simple in the forms of its decoration, and in the distribution of it; its beauty was almost

entirely due to the dignity of its outline. In this case the beauty of the tower came mainly from the great masses of ornamentation. The proportion was good here also; they could not find a fine tower without that, but the proportion was not in his opinion the strong point of the tower. It was divided up into a series of storeys, reproducing one another; and it had very elaborate string courses, with rows of quatrefoils. The parapet did not belong to the original tower at all. It had one of those features which they found in a great many cases—the flying pinnacle—at each corner, a pinnacle quite detached from the tower. It stood on the gargoyle, and seemed out of place. The parapet was an entire misfit. The buttress of the upper stage was set diagonally, but the pinnacle over was set square. The man who designed the tower intended that there should be a diagonal pinnacle on the top of that diagonal buttress. At some later period the original parapet was taken down, and another put up, which had the effect of considerably altering the outline of the tower. The idea of the overhanging pinnacle came in with the Renaissance work, and represented the classic cornice. Here they had a diagonal buttress on the belfry stage, and immediately below two square buttresses; then there were three more buttresses against these. So that they had a group of five buttresses set up against each other and dying into each other. Mr. Stubbs had related two stories with regard to the tower. There was a certain amount of reasonableness in attributing this tower to Sir Reginald Bray, but if he were the architect it was certain he only gave the outline. The buttress was a Somersetshire feature which Sir Reginald would not have reproduced. The other story about it ought not to be lightly dismissed, as there was a strong probability that there was something at the bottom of it. Of course, it was perfectly well known that in old times it was thought necessary that there should be a sacrifice to the earth to induce it to bear the weight that was going to be put upon it. This Pagan idea

was certainly continued largely in Christian times. Sometimes human beings were built into the foundations alive, sometimes animals were substituted. Just in the same way it was thought that on the completion of an important work like a tower there should be a sacrifice to the gods of the air in order to prevent the tower being blown down or destroyed by lightning. There was a great deal of evidence that the form of sacrifice was by throwing over from the top a living body. Mr. Baring Gould said these stories of the master and the apprentice occurred in two forms. In one of the stories the master of a neighbouring work, out of jealousy and envy, went up the tower the apprentice had built and threw himself from it. The other form of the story was that when the tower was finished the master pushed the apprentice over the parapet. That was much more probable on the face of it. In either case human life was sacrificed, and the tower was thus thought to be insured against destruction.

Meetings for Discussion and Papers.

Returning from Huish, past the Castle Dyke, of which the name only appears to remain, a meeting was held in the parish room (the PRESIDENT in the chair), when papers were read by Mr. NORRIS, on the "Battle of Langport," and by Mr. SANFORD, on the "Dinosaur from Wedmore Rhœtic Beds," both of which are printed in Part II.

At the

Evening Meeting

at the same place, papers were read by the DEAN OF WELLS, CANON CHURCH, and Mr. BUCKLE, all relating to recent discoveries in the east cloister garth of Wells Cathedral. These are printed at length, and form the beginning of Part II.

In the discussion which followed, a member asked for further information as to the setting out of the old Lady Chapel on lines so divergent from those of Bishop Stillington's, which were parallel to the Cathedral.

MR. ELWORTHY said the Chapel appeared to be orientated approximately to Lady-day, while the Cathedral was in a line pointing much further south, in accordance with St. Andrew's day : that these matters were considered of greater importance in the Middle Ages than at present.

MR. BUCKLE disputed this view, as insufficient to account for the facts.