

Wellington Parish Church.

MR. EDMUND BUCKLE said that such a Church would in most counties be considered to be in the front rank; but that we in Somerset had so many fine churches, that we were spoiled for anything but the very best. In describing the Church he thought he had better begin at the end, and explain

what took place during the restoration of 1848. At that time, the chancel was taken down and rebuilt one bay longer than before; the south aisle was lengthened one bay; and the north aisle was taken down and rebuilt with alterations: it was certainly lengthened one bay, and he believed it must have been widened at the same time.

The Rev. W. PULMAN said he believed it was widened two or three feet.

Mr. BUCKLE said that at the time that work was done a few Norman stones were found in the walls, and asked whether they could be produced.

Mr. PULMAN said he had tried his best to find them, but without success.

Mr. BUCKLE, continuing, said that the old chancel inclined strongly to the south,* but that the new one had been built in a straight line with the nave. Formerly, there had been but one arch on each side of the chancel, and they would notice that on each side one arch was now composed of old stones, the other of new. The Early English east window and piscina had been preserved and re-used in the new chancel; but according to the drawing in the Pigott collection the old chancel had an early door and window on the south side, which had now disappeared, and the buttresses of the old chancel were very different from those of the new. The east window deserved notice as a very early example of tracery; the main lights were lancet shaped, without foliage in the heads, though the circles pierced in the tracery above were all cusped.

The south porch was of the same early date, but it had undergone great alterations. It seemed that part at least of this work was done in 1577, for the churchwardens of that date commemorated it by placing their names upon a tablet over the church door. The capitals of the outer arch had been cut back in a highly original manner, and the inner doorway had

* See post p., 248.

been apparently entirely re-built, and much reduced in height. There was now an awkward misfit at the springing of the arch, and the label over was an addition of the later date. There was evidence of two niches in the porch. The bottom stone projected beyond the plaster; and he had a strong suspicion that if the plaster were knocked away there would be found the remains of canopy work over. At the west end of the south aisle there was a mark of a very much narrower aisle. It seemed to indicate the width of the aisle against which the south porch was originally built; but if so, the inner doorway must have been rebuilt twice, because it was quite impossible to believe that the present aisle was not built until 1577. It was true that Perpendicular work was carried on till as late a date as this, but the aisle lead up to a chapel which of course could not have been built at that period.

There remained one more piece of early work, and that was the tomb at the east end of the north aisle. Both the arch under which the figure lay, and the figure itself, seemed to date from about the year 1300. They would notice that the arch was in the eastern wall at present, but that was impossible as the original position of the monument.

Mr. PULMAN said the monument was at one time in the north wall of the aisle.

Mr. BUCKLE, continuing, said they might take it that the figure represented the founder of the north chapel; and it was an interesting figure in many ways. The marks of ironwork upon it were obvious. If they looked at the figure they would see the marks along the side, where the ends of the iron hoops were fixed, which were bent over the figure and connected by horizontal bars to form the hearse for supporting the pall. Besides that, an iron bar went across the arch from side to side, so that apparently the monument was doubly railed in. The inscription on the tomb had now nearly perished, but it appeared that what was left of it some fifty years ago read thus:—"Richard"—surname almost perished—"a friar of

Wellington, here lieth in grave. Jesus Christ, God's Son, grant him"—and the rest is missing. He took it that this was a very remarkable instance of the early use of English for a monumental inscription.

[The following is the transcript made by Sir — Hill, of the British Museum :—

+ RICHARD : PEPⁿ : d MERE : OF :
 WELINTONE : : LIGGITH : IN : GRAVE :
 IHV : CRIST : GODES : SONE : GRAWNTE :
 HIM :

It is quite evident that the transcriber was a better copyist than translator. His own letters plainly read thus,—

Richard Per (sone d(e Mere (*i.e.*, Parson of Mary)—the back stroke of the R in Per having being defaced. Surnames had not then been fully adopted. Here we have another unexpected confirmation of the dedication of the Church, dealt with *post*, pp. 240-244, *et sq.*—Ed.]

The bulk of the Church belonged to the 15th century. The nave and the ceiling over it were all of that date; also the two old arches of the chancel and the two which separate the chapels from the nave aisles. On two of the nave piers were worked niches, intended to contain small images. The ceiling was rather a queer-looking object at present, papered with modern wall-paper, representing boards; but if they imagined that paper away, and the space between the ribs whitewashed, the roof appeared to be perfect in every respect. The east window of the south aisle had been taken out at the time of the restoration, and was now re-placed behind the organ, where it was difficult to get a view of it; but on the central mullion of that window was a most interesting crucifix; the cross was not made as usual of hard lines, but consisted of foliage budding upward into two arms, with the figure attached upon it.* On each side of the jambs were niches for figures; and the old

* See *post*, p. 260.

piscina remained in its original position. Evidently the altar under this window must have been one of considerable importance. In the south wall, just to the west of the chapel arch, there was another canopy of a niche of Perpendicular date, which must have contained another figure, and which might possibly be an indication of another altar placed a little to the west of the one just mentioned.

An interesting discovery was made in 1848. It turned out that some of the stones used in paving the chancel were actually part of an ancient reredos; and from the fact that the face of the reredos had been previously plastered over, and the decalogue painted upon the plaster, it was safe to infer that this was the reredos behind the principal altar. It was a beautiful specimen of early Perpendicular carving, and was now preserved in the Taunton Museum.*

The chancel arch was of considerably later date. There must have been a smaller arch there at the time the rest of the arches were built, and that arch had been subsequently enlarged in a very rough fashion, probably as part of a scheme for introducing a large and elaborate rood screen. It seemed to be a poor imitation of the beautiful panelled arch leading into the tower from the nave. The tower itself was one of considerable interest. It was the only part of the Church built of freestone throughout on the outer face. The rest of the Church was no doubt intended to be stuccoed over. One of the main features of the tower was the great prominence given to the turret, which was placed in the centre of the southern side of the tower. The southern side, as usual, was the side first approached, and the only side from which the Church

* For a description of this reredos and of other points of interest in connection with the Church, see a Paper by C. E. Giles in the first volume of these *Proceedings*. It appears to me that his interpretation of the group at the foot of the cross is a mistaken one. The figures on the sinister side seem to represent the Virgin Mary, with a lily in her hand, supported in the arms of St. John (both deliberately defaced), and further off the Centurion; while on the dexter side are Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.—E. B.

was well seen ; and the turret had been placed there with the deliberate intention of making it as conspicuous as possible, and the whole design of the tower on the south side was centred in that turret. The west front of the tower was quite different ; there, an elaborate doorway, with handsome niches on either side (unfortunately now empty), was surmounted by a large and imposing west window ; above that was a great blank space leading the eye up to the belfry windows and the rich group of pinnacles at the top. The tracery under the transom of the west window deserved particular attention, for the pattern was of a very unusual character. Instead of the lights being finished with cusped arches underneath the transom in the usual way, in this case the two tracery bars, which started from the mullions as though to meet in an arch, took an ogee curvature and changed into short vertical mullions running up into and dying against the horizontal transom. The central opening thus took an anomalous shape, and tiny batement lights were formed in the spandrils.* Other examples of this class of tracery were to be found at Holcombe Rogus, Old Cleeve, and Queen Camel.

The whole tower was very carefully thought out. It was, he considered, quite a work of art ; although it was not so elaborate or so ambitious as some other towers, it was worked out with a completeness that gave evidence of very great thought. The varying batter given to the buttresses and turret, and the unusual device of setting the parapet back behind the wall face (instead of making it overhang), in order to bring the pinnacles and buttresses neatly together, were examples of the care bestowed upon the tower.

At the time immediately before the Reformation they found

* This tracery seems to be derived from the various patterns in which a batement light stands immediately over the centre of one of the large lights ; in these cases the point of the arch seems out of place, cutting as it does into the sill of the small light over ; and by omitting this arch-point and the sill of the batement light the anomalous form in question is obtained.—E. B.

evidence of four altars in the church, besides the high altar, as to which he referred to Mr. Elworthy's paper, printed in Part II.

There was little left of the old bench ends. A few had been worked up in the panels of the pulpit,* and others in the fronts of the galleries. Those in the pulpit shewed two coats of arms, *A cross fleury*, and *Three trefoils*, but they were probably mere fanciful devices.

The reading desk was curious; it seemed to be made out of some old piece of Jacobean furniture, probably a bedstead.

Mr. PULMAN said it was so.

Mr. BUCKLE, continuing, said there were in the belfry two large figures of Moses and Aaron painted on boards, adding that he had seen similar ones at Lyng. The Popham tomb, he said, was the latest addition to the church, and was a magnificent example of an Elizabethan monument. The painting was all modern and well done, for it seemed a faithful re-production of what was there before. He was not clear where the monument originally stood, but quoted Collinson to the effect that in his time it was in the chapel on the south side of the Church, and was then surrounded by a palisade of wood and iron.

Mr. ELWORTHY said he remembered the railings, and that it stood forward, several feet in front of the present position, partly under the chancel arcade. Referring to the old tomb at the eastern end of the north aisle, he said it was impossible it could be that of a friar of Wellington as had been alleged, for the simple reason that there was never any monastic building or community here, and therefore there could have been no friars. Another remarkable feature of the Church was the complete absence of all pre-Reformation heraldry. This could be accounted for by the fact that from the 10th century—904—down to Reformation times, the manor of Wellington belonged to the Bishops of the Diocese, and consequently, they being the

* See post, p. 296.

temporal lords of the manor, there would have been no resident families of importance enough to be able to set up heraldry in the Church ; whereas, no sooner had the manor passed from the Bishops, than coats of arms at once appeared.

The Bells bear the following inscriptions :—

1. Thomas Mears, Founder, London, 1841. Mr. John Pope, Mr. Alexr. Webber, Churchwardens.

2. On earth Peace. Amen. Thomas Wroth, *Fecit*, 1748.

3. Thomas Mears, Founder, London, 1841. Mr. John Pope, Mr. Alexr. Edward Webber, Wardens.

4. Mr. Joseph Gifford, Mr. John Wood, Churchwardens. Thomas Bilbie, *Fecit*, 1781.

5. Fear God. Honor the King. 1748. T. W.

6. Mr. Joseph Gifford and Mr. John Wood, Churchwardens. Thomas Bilbie, Collumpton, *Fecit*. 1781.

7. Draw Nigh to God. 1609. G. P.

8. 1748. The Revd. William Jesse, Vicar. Philip Gifford and John Jones, Churchwardens. James Perry. Thomas Marsh. John Thomas. *Nos resonare jubent Pietas Mors atque Voluptas. Diam. 50 In.*

The party then drove to

Poole Brickworks,

where they were received by Messrs. G. B. and T. N. Sully, who at once conducted them to a large clay pit.

Mr. USSHER, of the Geological Survey, said the clay exhibited in the Poole Works was the Keuper marl, the uppermost member of the Triassic or new red sandstone formation. It extends in unbroken succession from Sidmouth and Seaton on the English Channel, to Bristol, whence through the Midlands it strikes north to Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.

There were two aspects in which geology might be regarded—as ancient history, and ancient geography. Confining their attention to the former it would be necessary to review briefly the various epochs of the earth's history, which had left memem-

toes in the hills and dales of Somerset. Passing through the successive invasions which formed the domain of written history, and passing by, but not stopping at, the black damp hearth whereon squatted and shivered the ancient Briton of Godney Moor: the caves with their wild beasts, whose habits had been so ably depicted by their President and Professor Boyd Dawkins; and escaping from a shower of the rude flint weapons of palæolithic man, they passed beyond the bounds of records of the human race. The scene changed to a time when the sands which now form the summit level of the uppermost slopes of the Blackdown hills were deposited in the sea, which stretched from Kent to the borders of the high land of the Quantocks, Exmoor and Dartmoor. He must ask them to go further back through the oolitic period, which was exemplified in the rocks forming the hills of Cadbury (where they met on a previous occasion), stretching thence to Dorsetshire and northward to the Cotswolds. Of these rocks familiar examples would strike them in the Inferior oolite from Doulling, furnishing the Doulling stone, the Fuller's earth, and Bath oolite. Stretching their retrospective vision further back in geological time, they passed through the lias quarries of Street and the Polden hills, wherein are entombed the great sea lizards which form the characteristic feature of the life of these seas. They then came to the Rhœtic or Penarth beds, composed of white lias and black shale, containing fish, teeth and coprolites, which in Somerset were invariably found to rest upon the Keuper marls. The Keuper marls rest upon a series of red sandstones. Their lower portion indicates a change into this sandy condition, and the marl was thereby rendered valuable, as shown in this pit, for the manufacture of bricks. But here and there calcareous matter occurs both in bands and apparently also in sporadic water-worn fragments, which may have been derived from a contemporaneous erosion and destruction of such bands. The upper parts of the Keuper marl, Mr. Ussher explained, in conclusion, are generally too plastic to afford material for brick-making.

At the close of Mr. Ussher's address the party saw some of the processes carried on, and on leaving the works a vote of thanks was passed to the firm, on the motion of Colonel Bramble, and acknowledged by Mr. G. B. Sully.

The next halt was made at

Bradford Church.

Mr. BUCKLE said the arcades were Early English of a very simple character, but most of the work belonged to the 15th century. The two arches on either side of the chancel opening into the two chapels were of interest because of the difference between the two sides. One arch had the small capitals and the mouldings which were met with pretty generally throughout Somerset; the other arch had the Devon capital formed of one lozenge with carving upon it. So that these two arches, although of nearly the same date, were clearly made by masons coming from different parts of the country—from Devon and from Somerset respectively. They would find many examples in this neighbourhood of a Somerset arcade on one side and a Devon arcade on the other; indeed it was so common that it almost appeared to have been done deliberately for the sake of the contrast.

Under an arch in the south aisle there was a figure of a knight in armour; date, about 1380.

The tower was planned on the same principle as that at Wellington, with a turret on the south side as a conspicuous feature.

The chancel arch was curiously arranged. It would be noticed that it was cut clear away. It appeared to have been cut back for the purpose of putting in a rood screen, of which nothing was now left. In the churchyard were the parish stocks, still fit for use.

Rev. P. P. BROADMEAD exhibited several old parish books.

The Rev. Preb. BULLER said the Bells in the Church of St. Giles, Bradford, bear the following inscriptions:—

1. Est Michi Collatum I H S istud nomen amatum.

2. Est Michi Collatum I H S istud nomen amatum.
3. AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA. R.S.
4. Be meeke and loly to heare the word of God. 1646.
I W S B. William Purdue cast mee.
5. Omnes ✠ Sancti ✠ Confessores ✠ Orate.
P Nobis U

This Tenor is a noble Bell, bearing the same legend and arms of Bergaveny, as on the Talaton Tenor. The letters are those of Roger Sampson, of Ash Priors.

The Latin legend on Bells 1 and 2 was one of the usual legends of Robert Norton, who flourished in Exeter in the time of Henry the Sixth.

The party then drove to

West Buckland Church

which has been very recently restored.

Mr. BUCKLE drew attention to the decorated arcades, and to the chancel arch, which had been cut away as at Bradford, but in an even bolder and more irregular manner; and to the tower, which was a simpler edition of Wellington tower, with its turret centrally placed on the south side, and a cluster of similar (though simpler) pinnacles at top.

Professor BOYD DAWKINS pointed out that the bowl of the font was of Purbeck marble of a stock pattern worked at the quarries, and thence distributed about the country. He said he had seen Purbeck fonts of this same pattern in various churches, scattered over a wide district.

The staircase to the rood loft is a feature in the south wall.

The Bells in the Church of St. Mary, West Buckland, bear the following inscriptions:—

- 1 Deo et ad EIUS Cultum. ALEX. CARSWELL
WILLM WOODALL WARDINS. T. WROTH CAST
MEE ANNO SALUTUS 1694. Conveniat Populus in
unum et Serviat Domini. Diam. In. 32
2. C. & G. Mears, Founders, London. W. Baker, R. G.



Gerbestone Aug. 16. 1892.

Edward Pennington

GERBESTONE

Thomas Churchwardens 1848.	34½
3. Ditto.	39¾
4. Anno Domini 1606 G P	42
5. Be meek and Loly to heare the word of God. R P	
Anno Domini 1629 IC—RT—WP	44½

Gerbestone.

Mr. BUCKLE said this house was Jacobean or late Elizabethan, of about 1600, or possibly a little earlier. The general plan looked much earlier than the building itself, for it decidedly suggested the old arrangement of the hall, with a passage behind the screens going through into a court behind; and he should not have expected to find such a plan in a new building of that date. The ceiling over the hall was very low and constructed of beams of timber whitewashed over, and he thought that on one side there were a few of the oak mullions which they so often found in the west of Somerset instead of stone ones. There was an old door opening into the back yard from the kitchen; but the front door was modern.

Mr. ELWORTHY thought the date was rather earlier than that given by Mr. Buckle, for in 1585 the owner of the property, whose name was Perry, and who had then recently died, was assessed for one light horseman for the purpose of defence against the expected invasion by the Spanish Armada. The plan of the house suggested that it had been of earlier date, and reconstructed internally in Elizabethan times.

Mr. MONDAY read a will relating to the property.

COL. BRAMBLE said the mullions were identical with some found at Nynhead. There were numbers of dated houses, 1590, 1610, and 1630. If this were, as thought, 1582, it was earlier than any dated house with that mullion he had ever seen. He generally put it at from 1590 to 1610.

On returning, the Members dined together at the "Squirrel" Hotel. Mr. SANFORD presiding.