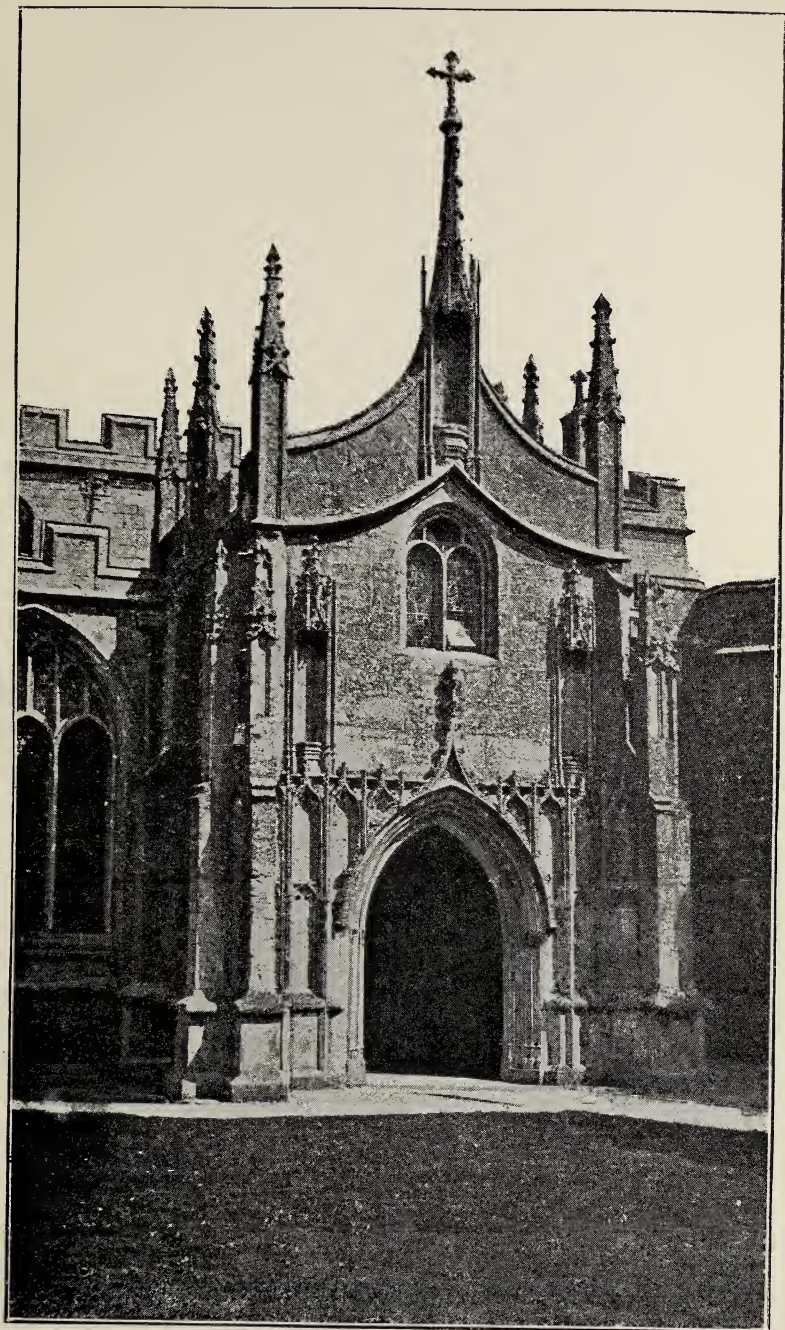


Wednesday,

Shortly after 9.30 about one hundred members and friends were seated in eight well-horsed breaks, which were joined *en route* by private carriages, and drove to

Bells Church.

Mr. J. F. F. HORNER (in the absence of Mr. E. Buckle) kindly described the principal features in this admirably restored edifice. In some respects, he said, his task was a simple one, because the church embraced only one style of architecture, to which, he thought, their President, on the previous day, did not quite do sufficient justice, for here in Somersetshire they could look with pride upon the Perpendicular style. Though he did not think that church was equal to many others in the county, it might be taken as a good illustration of what Perpendicular architecture could, and could not, do. They knew to a certain extent when the church was built, because Leland spoke of it in the sixteenth century as built "in time of mind." The church did not display



CHURCH PORCH, MELLS.

the exaggerations which the Perpendicular style subsequently introduced. The arcades were good and solid for Perpendicular, and were well able to support the weight they had to bear, instead of tapering away almost to nothing to show upon how little a builder could support his roof. It was said that the font was a Norman one, but it looked as if its base had been cut and altered at a later date. The east window was just as it was before the restoration, but had been raised. They would notice that the style of the windows in the chancel was different from that of the other windows. He used to be told that they belonged to an earlier date than the others; but the latest idea was that they were possibly put in during the time of the Laudian revival, when Wadham College, Oxford, was built in a style worthy of himself by William of Wykeham. The side screens were, he believed, nearly a facsimile of those which were partially *in situ* about fifty years ago. The chancel screen was modern. There had been a rood-loft similar to the one in the parish church at Frome. The staircase leading to it was once used as a chimney, and it was not now in the best condition. The chapel at the end of the North aisle was of a rather later date than the church. The wainscoting round the church consisted of the old Jacobean seats which did service until 1876. All the patterns at the ends of the pews were different. They were carved about forty years ago, and kept in waiting until the restoration. The roof was new. He could remember when there was a ceiling in the chancel, but not in the other part of the church, although he had been told that formerly there was one there too. When the ceilings were taken down there were no carvings to be seen. The roof of the nave was considered good—better than that of the chancel, which was cut in two by lateral bands. His brother completed the restoration commenced by his father. He ought to apologise for the painted windows, but they were made in Mells. Not many places could say that their painted windows were made in the parishes where they existed. The firm that

made the Mells windows was now in Frome. Some of the glass in the canopies was old ; but the more part was new.

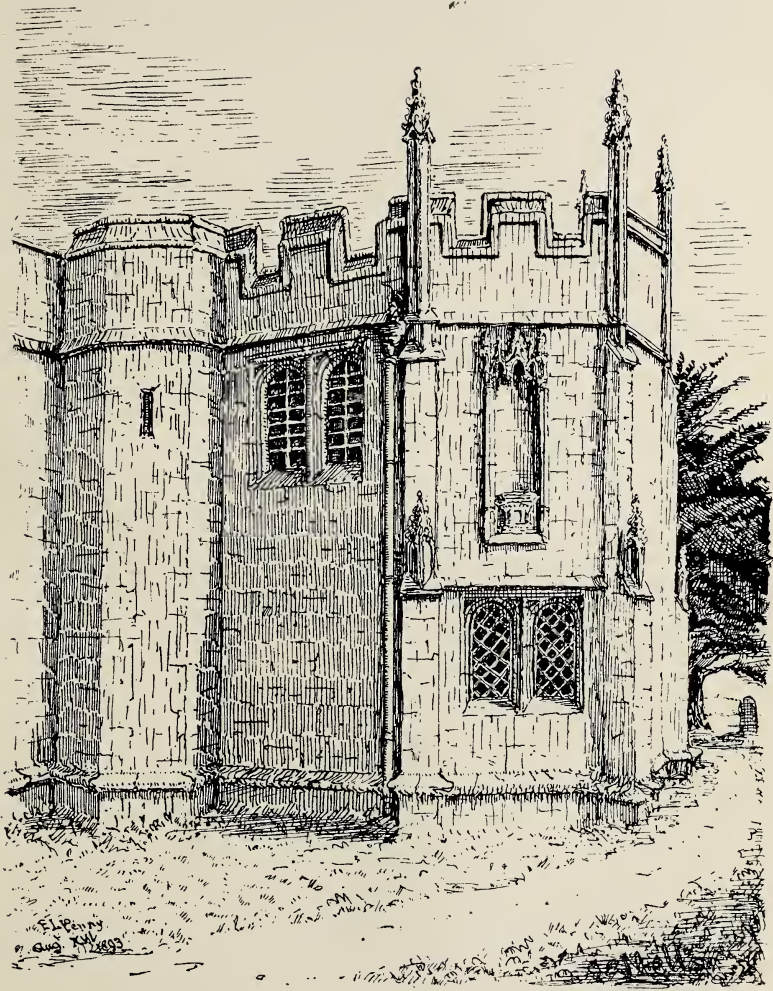
Mr. ELWORTHY elicited the fact that the church was dedicated to St. Andrew, and that the Lye Chapel referred to in historical works was at Leigh-on-Mendip. The living in fact was Mells-cum-Leigh. Leigh Church was dedicated to St. Giles.

The Rev. E. D. LEAR, rector of Mells, called attention to the parvise and chapel vestry. He had been informed that when the church was built the architect was told to beat it if he could ; and then he built Leigh Church. In the north-east corner they would notice that a small piece of the battlement was carved work ; and at Leigh Church it was all carved, except one small space corresponding to the portion at Mells. It was supposed that the mother robbed the daughter. Mr. Lear also raised the question as to the chancel arch having been cut off by the rood-loft. The stone cross that was let into the wall in the south-east corner was supposed to have been blessed abroad, and then brought to Mells. There were some old relics in the vestry.

The cross referred to was afterwards pointed out ; also the carved armorial bearings of an ancient family named Sharland, cloth-workers, who lived in the village, but were known as London merchants. It appeared to consist of three tents.*

Mr. BUCKLE, who unfortunately was prevented from arriving in time to give a description of Mells Church, like those which he gave so admirably at the other churches afterwards visited by the Society, pointed out to some of the party, who lingered in the church after the rest had left, that, in his opinion which was based on a previous examination of the mouldings, both the nave arcades and also that which separates the chancel from the South aisle were not " Perpendicular " at all, but " Decorated," and were the remaining parts of a

* A tent between two Parliament robes, on a chief an Agnus Dei en soleil ; probably some *Taylor's Company*.



THE VESTRY, MELLS.

previous church at least 100 years older than the rest of the building as it now stands, and that, therefore, it might well be that the chancel windows are really earlier than the others, and need not be attributed to an imaginary alteration in the 17th century. This view is supported by certain fragments of decorated work which were found built into the East wall during the recent restoration.

The next move was to the

Manor House,

close by, which was described by Mr. HORNER, who said that only one-third of the former building now remained. He believed it formerly occupied three sides of a square, and that the entrance was where the present avenue exists. The courtyard was in the same position as formerly. The two-thirds of the building that had disappeared were pulled down a little over one hundred years ago by his great-grandfather. The remainder then became a farm-house. It was afterwards converted into a school, and it had its small chapel, where about twenty boys were trained for holy orders or mission work abroad. It next became a dwelling-house for members of his own family or let to tenants. If they could explain where the demolished wings joined the present building it would be most interesting.

The Rev. E. D. LEAR invited the party to enter the building, and its many points of interest were carefully examined, including the wide fireplace down which the moon sometimes shines, the chapel, a Stuart picture, and the Latin inscriptions in old English characters over the fireplace, doorways, etc. It was stated that Charles I. held his court in the house, and obtained £100 and a supply of boots from Wells. Mr. Lear said he believed that the house was built in the form of an H in the time of one of the Henries, and that the chapel was added when the house was altered.

Returning to the vehicles, the party passed Upper Vobster, Babington Park, and Ammerdown Park, to

Kilmersdon,

where the church was visited, the party being received by Lord Hylton and the Rev. H. G. J. Veitch.

Mr. E. BUCKLE, speaking in the churchyard, on the south side of the church, pointed out the large remains of Norman work visible from that position. The Norman corbel table, consisting of a fish-scale moulding alternating with boldly-carved corbels, ran with some breaks along the whole of the nave wall and round the chancel, thus apparently defining the plan of the old Norman building; and in the nave wall might be seen a narrow slit, with a lintel over, carefully marked off by sham joints into a semi-circular arch head, an example of sham construction of the Norman period. In the Perpendicular period the walls had been raised, so that the old corbel course was left about half way up the present wall, and the windows were inserted in two ranges, some below and others above the corbel course; the upper ones answering to the clerestory windows on the opposite side, where a Perpendicular aisle had been added, and all the Norman work destroyed. The tower was one of those with a group of inter-penetrating buttresses at each angle; it was slighter in proportion than Mells (another tower of the same class), and had one feature peculiar to the towers of North Somerset, viz., the short string-course under the window-sills, with stopped and carved ends.

Inside the church he drew attention to the Norman fragments in the chancel and the south doorway; and showed that all the rest of the interior was of late Perpendicular date. The roof cornice was similar to those at Mells and Hemington and in the lady chapel at Frome; a fan vault seemed to have been intended under the tower; the aisle was very late, and retained on its roof part of the old painting, perfect or

nearly so; some of the benches were curiously rough carpenter's work, but of very massive oak.

A question was raised as to the history of the stone screen at the east end of the aisle, and the Vicar replied that this screen was traditionally supposed to have been brought from St. Andrew's, Holborn. Certainly it is a misfit in its present position.

Symonds relates in his Diary that the east window was in his time very old, and contained the two following coats:—

(1) *Arg.*, a chevron between three eagles displayed sa.

(2) *Arg.*, a griffin segreant gu. armed az. [*Botreaux*].

The next move was to

Ammerdown,

the seat of Lord Hylton (President); the drive through the picturesque and well-wooded park, from the lodge near the railway, being a charming variation in the day's proceedings. The party of about one hundred-and-twenty were heartily welcomed by Lord and Lady Hylton, to a bountiful and most acceptable luncheon. Ample provision was made for all, and nothing was wanting to the comfort of the visitors. The paintings, ancient indentures relating to the estate, the terraces, gardens, conservatories, and a fine fountain situated in a shady grove near the mansion, were all visited and examined. Before leaving, the DEAN OF WELLS, in felicitous terms, proposed a very cordial vote of thanks to Lord and Lady Hylton. He said they had hitherto known Lord Hylton as a man of war, and they had been deeply interested in seeing the saddle upon which he rode as one of England's heroes, in the famous charge of the Light Brigade at the battle of Balaclava, but now they knew him as a man of peace. They were greatly indebted to him for having come down from his home in Surrey to entertain them so hospitably in Somerset.

The next halt was at

Hemington Church.

MR. BUCKLE said this was a charming example of a country church, set in beautiful surroundings. Its special interest was to be found in its Early English aisle. He drew their attention to what was a typical example of a Norman chancel arch. It was very small and very low. The position of the rood loft door showed that only sufficient room was allowed beneath the rood loft for a person to walk under it. In old times it would not have been possible to see from the nave into the chancel at all. It was remarkable how completely the chancel was screened off from the nave in former times. This arch was the only part of the Norman work left, as the church was rebuilt in the 13th century. The aisle and arcade on the north side was exceedingly rich. The shafts of the windows were something like Purbeck marble, but he thought it was a local marble, as the "forest marble" had been known to exist near that spot. The trefoil arches of the windows were pretty. The arcade of the chancel had four marble shafts. There was a piscina set in the respond, and from its position it might possibly have been intended to serve both altars. The church was subsequently raised, the later portion being in the Perpendicular style, and a flat roof was placed over it, instead of the old pointed roof rising from comparatively low walls. The corbels were carved to represent angels, as at Kilmersdon and Frome. The next most important feature of the church was its tower, which, in some respects, was very unlike Somersetshire towers generally. Though it was a beautiful one, both in design and colour, he felt bound to say that the arrangement of the windows was unsatisfactory, and weak in appearance, owing to there being two large openings in the middle storey of the tower, and only one on each side of the bell chamber over. In the floor of the aisles there were some nice lias tombstones, with deeply-cut heraldic designs upon them.

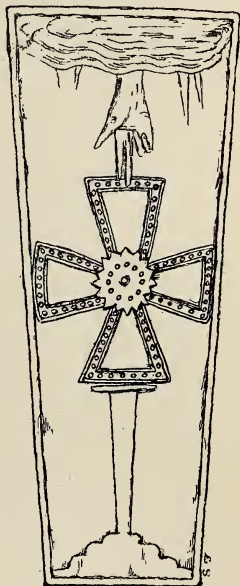
Another longish drive brought the party to

Lullington Church.

This church has been well described by the Rev. D. M. Clark, in the volume for 1851. A second visit to it was paid by this Society in 1875, when remarks upon it were made by the late Prof. Freeman and Mr. J. H. Parker, which will be found in the *Proceedings* for that year.

The date of the chantry chapel was 1280, and that of the chancel 1320. Returning to the font, Mr. BUCKLE described it as a magnificent relic of the same period. It has a plain base, above which it is encircled with an arcade of semi-circular arches interlacing. Round the upper part is a line of ornament with masks, which are considerably defaced. On the top edge is another inscription, of which, however, only portions can now be deciphered, and which, the speaker said, no one can make out.

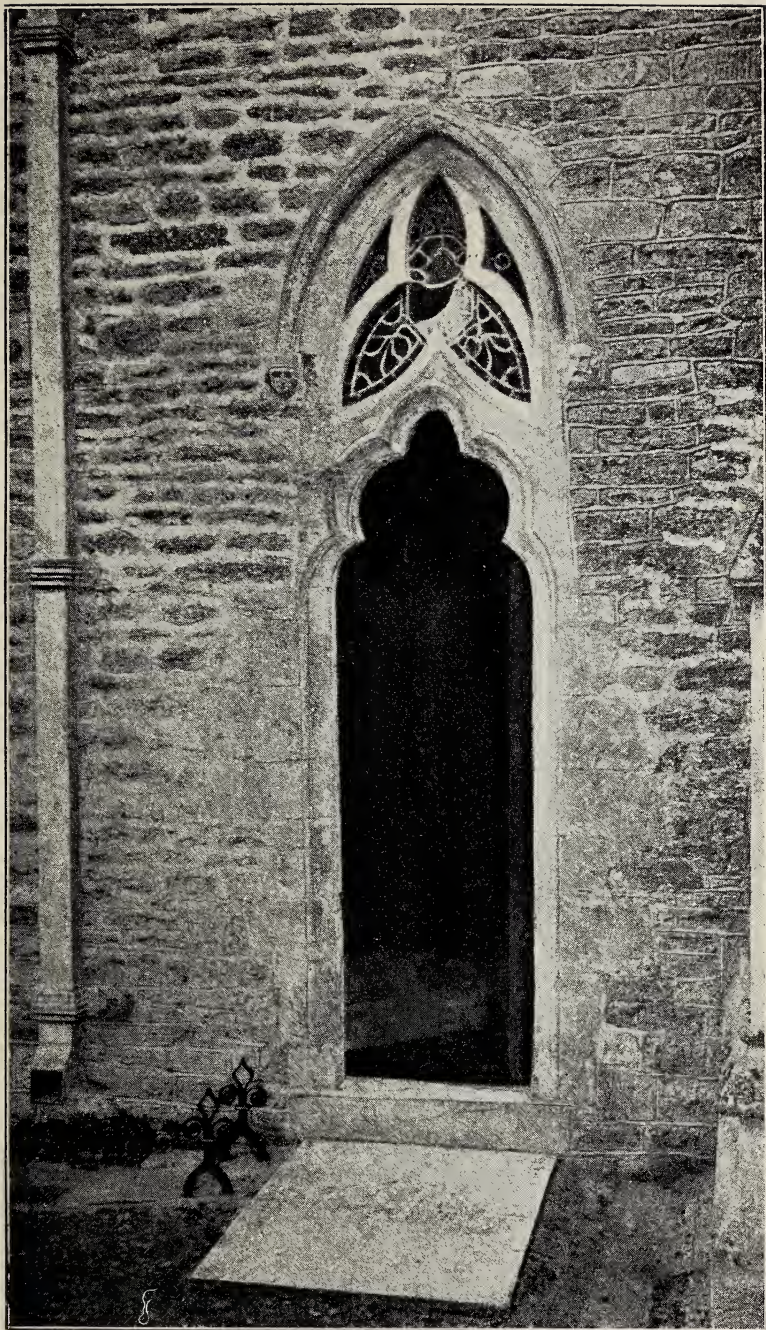
Against the wall in the vestry is a large stone, apparently the cover of a tomb: on this is carved an unusual type of cross, above which is a hand in the attitude of benediction, reaching down from a cloud—a very frequently used emblem of the Almighty Father, especially in the early middle ages.



Again entering the vehicles, another lovely drive through the park brought the party to Orchardleigh House, where they were cordially received by Mr. and Mrs. Duckworth. Tea was spread on the lawn near the terraces, under the welcome shade of some wide-spreading trees. After a cordial vote of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Duckworth, proposed by the Dean of Wells, a delightful walk through gardens and park led to

Orchardleigh Church.

The Rev. J. B. MEDLEY first described the external features of this church, beginning at the west end, because, he said, the church had been entirely altered in appearance, and it was well they should try to realise what the church was like before it was restored in 1879. It was then entered by a west porch, which cut off the beautiful window at that end. From the photographs of the interior they would see how completely the church had been altered. When Sir Gilbert Scott came there in 1878 he got men to dig down four feet on the south side of the church, and at that depth they found the jambs of a south porch, the soil at that time being four feet higher than at present. On the right side of the porch was found the chalice exhibited at the museum at Frome. The man who found it said it was an old candlestick ; but on taking it to Mr. Singer he pronounced it to be a chalice 600 years old. It was probably buried with the first priest who lived there, and who was laid to rest on a very rough plank, with the bark still on the wood. They ought to pass round the outside of the church and see the priest's door on the north side. One thing of interest found in the church was the skeleton of a dog in the Champney chapel. There was a tradition to the effect that a member of the Champney family was rescued from drowning, off the coast of Denmark, by a large and skilful dog. A monument was erected to its memory in the park. The stone had been destroyed, but the only word it bore was known to have been "Fidèle." It was said that a former bishop ordered the body of the dog to be exhumed and buried elsewhere ; but as the skull and skeleton of the animal were found in the church, the order must have been disobeyed and the monument erected as a blind. Attention was called to the remains of a large and ancient tomb-stone, found in the course of the excavations, and now placed in the churchyard. In-



PRIEST'S DOOR, ORCHARDLEIGH.

side the building, Mr. Medley said he would simply refer them to the alterations made in 1879. All the old seats had been done away with; the west window was formerly blocked up by an organ gallery, which had been removed; one window had been inserted by Messrs. Clayton and Bell, the glass of which though new was an imitation of the old. The other glass was old, but newly arranged. There were only eight figures of the apostles, four having been destroyed accidentally by a gamekeeper. In the window over the North door (1480) the Father was represented seated on a rainbow, the Son on the cross, between His knees. The central piece was quite new, for there were only the Father's hand, face and feet, and one side of the rainbow left. The apostles in the North and South windows of the chancel were all labelled with sentences, and there were emblems of each. St. Philip held an osier basket, an emblem of the basket of bread. There was a similar instance at Norwich. There were also in the west window a figure of a king, very much decayed, and another of St. Michael overcoming the Evil One. Mr. Medley also called attention to the font. The work, he said, though rough, was fine. The stone for that, as well as for the Lullington font, was supposed to have been brought from the Oldford quarries, and it was stated that Longleat House was built of the same stone; but there was no hard stone now found at Oldford, that now quarried was chiefly used for lime-burning.

Col. BRAMBLE briefly thanked Mr. Medley for his descriptions, and Mr. MEDLEY responded.

The party then returned to Frome, and in the evening attended a *conversazione* at the Frome Literary Institute, where the local museum had been collected by the local committee, and which was prettily decorated for the occasion. This lasted from about 7.30 to 10.45. The proceedings commenced with a pianoforte recital by Mrs. Harrold, who also acted as accompanist to most of the songs subsequently

sung. Those who rendered songs during the evening were—Dr. Rattray, Miss Barrington, Miss M. Cuzner and Mr. Welham. Miss Penny contributed a violin solo. All these musical items were much appreciated.

At an early stage Lord HYLTON, the president of the Society, alluded to the extraordinary collection of beautiful articles arranged in the temporary local museum, which, he said, must have taken much time to get together. He also thanked the local committee for their kind invitation.

During the evening two papers were read. The first was by Mr. W. DUNN, the Clerk of the Peace for Somerset, entitled "Ancient Records of Local Interest." At the commencement Mr. Dunn said he could hardly with justice use the word "ancient" in regard to the Sessions Records (on which his paper was founded), for the year 1646 was the date of the oldest, but from that time to this there was an unbroken series, excepting for the years 1655 to 1665. Speaking of the books as books, Mr. Dunn called attention to the clearness of the writing, and the almost perfect preservation of the paper. For his paper he laid two volumes under contribution—those for the years 1646 to 1655 and 1655 to 1676. First of all Mr. Dunn remarked on the varying "captions" or headings of the Sessions rolls in consequence of the successive changes in the government of the country during the period under review. The principal materials of Mr. Dunn's paper consisted of petitions presented at the Sessions from different parts of the county; of the punishment meted out in certain cases, and of orders made in reference to various matters. These illustrated the history of the times in regard to Somersetshire.

The Rev. W. E. DANIEL, vicar of East Pennard, read a paper on the accounts kept by the Frome Churchwardens from the year 1567 till the time of William and Mary. He said that with one exception in Latin, all the entries were made in English.

Towards the end of the evening Mr. E. THOMPSON exhibi-

bited a collection of some two hundred specimens of dried wild flowers from the neighbourhood of Frome, the object being to present a general idea of the local flora. The principal flowers were accompanied by observations, including a reference to the local geology in relation to the distribution of plants.

A continual source of pleasure to those present during the evening were the many objects of interest and beauty in the local museum.

The papers read at the conversazione were published in full in the local press, immediately after the meeting.