

Wednesday : Excursion.

On Wednesday morning, at ten o'clock, the Society met on the top of

Brandon Hill,

to hear a description by Colonel BRAMBLE, F.S.A., of the ancient lines of fortification.

The speaker remarked that the original fortifications merely included the old city. Commencing from St. Nicholas's Gate at Bristol Bridge, they went up Baldwin Street, and by Stuckey's Bank there was the Gate of St. Leonard crossing the road. At that time Clare Street did not exist. Then, following down between St. Leonard's Lane and St. Stephen's Street, they got to St. Giles's Gate, at the end of Small Street, and from thence to the gate still existing under the tower of St. John's Church. Then, following round by Tower Lane

to Wine Street, and leaving the Castle on the outside the line, they returned again to the Gate of St. Nicholas. These were the original fortifications of the city. Subsequently there was another line northward along the River Frome, and one westward in the line of Old King Street; also one from the Avon on the one side, North of Redcliffe Church, along Portwall and Pipe Lanes, extending to the Avon again at Tower Harratz, which occupied a portion of the site of the present railway station.

These fortifications did very well so long as there was no artillery to attack the city, but after the introduction of artillery it became necessary to have more extended defences.

At the time when the Civil war broke out Bristol was to a great extent confined on this (Brandon Hill) side to the ancient walls, but there was still a considerable suburb. Col. Fiennes, who was in command of the city on behalf of the Parliamentary party, drew a line of fortification along the heights which commanded the city, commencing at the river below Brandon Hill, and extending to the further end of Kingsdown. Just below them, in the direction of Bedminster, there was at that time hardly a house to be seen. The line of fortifications commenced on the height over the river, near where they saw the Gas Works, with the Water Fort (the earth-work foundation of which still existed), mounting seven guns. The river was at that time open to the tide, and the New Cut beyond it did not exist.

Mounting the hill, the line of fortification consisted of a rampart and double ditch, and half-way up was a semi-circular bastion, which enabled the defenders to flank the outside of the wall, both upwards and downwards.

Then there was the Brandon Hill Fort, on the site of which they then stood. This was elevated on an artificial mound, something like twenty feet high, and there was a rectangular fortification carried out beyond it in a westerly direction.

This fort on Brandon Hill was the highest point of the fortifications—higher by a few feet than the Royal Fort, though without actual measurement this would hardly seem to be the case.

Then, passing from Brandon Hill, there was a wall with angular lunettes or small bastions in it, passing down into the hollow until they got to Park Row. Park Street did not then exist. In Park Row, about fifty yards inside the wall, was a small fort, known as the Essex Fort; and it was near this point that the Royalists subsequently made a breach and entered the fortification; this was known as the Washington Breach, from the officer in command of the attacking party, Colonel Washington.

Then passing onwards up the hill, in a north-easterly direction was the Royal Fort, and very extensive portions of the walls still remained. That was the most important fort with regard to strength. Passing thence over Kingsdown, there was another fort, portions of which also remained, near the south end of Kingsdown Parade, named the Colston Fort, after the officer in charge. They passed again to the further end of the Kingsdown Hill, and came to the Prior Hill Fort, which was also a very important one—strategically the most important of all, because it came just at the angle where the direction of the line of fortification changed. This fort looked away over the Stapleton Hills and commanded the Gloucester Road towards Horfield.

Then the line of fortification changed to the south-east, and crossing Stokes' Croft, where there was a gate, went down to Lawford's Gate, which was strongly fortified. In fact, all the gates on that side were practically small forts. Running thence almost due south, the line of wall went straight to the Avon, opposite to the fort which he had previously mentioned as occupying a portion of the site of the railway station—Tower Harratz.

Tower Harratz was on the south side of the Avon, and the new wall appeared to have run to the river on the north without any special fortification at that point. No doubt Tower Harratz was sufficient powerful to command both sides of the river.

Then they got into the old line of fortification which had been added in former times, for the protection of the Redcliffe suburb; but for the better defence of the river there was on the other side, occupying a portion of the site of what was now Queen Square, a very strong battery erected.

These fortifications were subjected to two sieges. In the first instance, the city was in the hands of the Parliamentarians, but a breach was made in the wall at Park Row, and Colonel Fiennes surrendered. Afterwards, when the city was in the hands of the Royalists, under Prince Rupert, the line of fortification they were then on was very strongly attacked from time to time, but the defenders succeeded in holding it. Ultimately the Prior Hill Fort, at the further end of the range, was captured, and very soon the city surrendered. This surrender, it had been strongly asserted at the time, was without any adequate cause, and it did the reputation of Prince Rupert much injury.

The MAYOR pointed out that all the houses they could see in the directions of Clifton and Southville, and many others in other directions, had been built since the days of which Colonel Bramble had been speaking. He then referred to the riots of 1831.

After a few words from Mr. T. POPE, the party proceeded to

The Cathedral,

where, in the Chapter House, Mr. T. POPE read a short paper, in the course of which he said:—The Abbey of Saint Augustine's (now Bristol Cathedral) was founded by Robert Fitzhardinge in the year 1142. Of this Church little remains;

probably only the lower portions of the aisle walls to the existing Church, with the staircase leading to the tower in the north aisle, and even this is doubtful. The tower piers were Norman, but have been rebuilt within the last few years. Some portions of the north and south transepts are also Norman, as you will see by the pilaster buttresses on the exterior.

The original Church consisted probably of the choir, of about the same length as at present; north and south transepts and nave, extending probably as far west as the present one. Mr. Honey, Clerk of the Works to the building of the new nave, tells me he found the concrete bases of the two western towers where the new towers are built. This, to my mind, settles the question that there were two western towers, of which, until lately, I had grave doubts, even although I have been told William of Worcestre speaks of two belfries at the west end. Now, William of Worcestre was born 1415, and died 1484, which proves the towers were standing somewhere about that time. The nave, according to William of Worcestre, seems to have been about 93 feet long. The new Ordnance Map shows by dotted lines a large building close to the west end, marked *Aulea Regia*, and by the side of it a smaller building, marked *Prior's lodgings*. The two western towers were no doubt Norman, and were probably built more as a means of defence for the western entrance, and as watch towers for the river and Ashton Valley, than for ornament, the Abbey being outside the city walls, and liable to attack by parties either coming up the river or from the west.

The dates of the principal parts of the building, as given by Mr. King, *Murray's Cathedrals*, are, I think, substantially correct—Transition Norman, 1142 to 1179. The double Norman capitals in the grave-yard are probably capitals to centre shafts of triforium openings, not portions of small cloisters, as mentioned by Mr. Godwin. There is a shaft of

early Norman work in the Abbot's house, and remains of wall and openings at east side of cloisters, probably the monk's day-room, with dormitory over same, where the consistorial court now is. You can see the marks of a high-pitch roof against the south transept, and a Norman window in same; but the large south transept window must have been placed there afterwards. There is also a small Norman window opening into the room over Newton Chapel, which makes me think it must have been the watching chamber, always supposing there were similar windows on the eastern side.

The Chapter House and vestibule are fine specimens of Transition Norman, and the centre arch is pointed. An attentive examination of the east end of the Chapter House has convinced me it is of its original length, as you see the return Norman pilaster buttress on the eastern side. The angle buttress is of late date; possibly placed there on account of the transverse vaulting rib settling. Fragments of very similar work remain in the walls of the house at the bottom of the Lower Green, and a fine piece of Norman diaper was found under the Chapter Room floor at the time of the alterations which were made by my father, about 1830. The great gateway to the Lower Green has not, I think, been rebuilt, as stated by Mr. Godwin, as there are no signs of it, and the label moulding is 15th century work; the same date as the upper part of the gateway. The label may have been altered. The side gateway is, I think, rather the older and finer work of the two. I see nothing to mark a greater age in the doorway to Abbot's lodgings in the Lower Green, nor in the segmental Norman archway leading from it.

Early English work (date, 1196—1260), about as follows: the elder Lady Chapel, north transept, tomb in Berkeley Chapel, and refectory, and probably the infirmary. Over the interior archway in the Lower Green, leading to the Bishop's Palace, are some Early English windows, in some

cases having the heads joined with straight pieces let in between the springing stones. The distances between these windows being just sufficient for a bed, makes me think the room must have been originally the infirmary; placed at this level to avoid the fog and damp of the Canon's Marsh. The straight heads, of course, are modern insertions.

The site of the small cloisters is, I think, clearly marked by the old plinth now remaining *in situ* at the back of the College School. On the ground floor was the kitchen, with large chimney, and subterranean way, leading possibly to the water-gate, the river coming at that time probably nearer to the Abbey than it now does.

The subterranean way was discovered by me in making some alterations to Canon Norris's house, of which the above building forms part, but was only partially excavated.

A fine piece of Early English foliage, worked on both sides with foliage and figures, was discovered in forming the Deanery road near the elder Lady Chapel, of which I have drawings; it appears to have belonged either to a tomb or shrine. Many of the arcades in the elder Lady Chapel are covered with painting under the lime white.

The beautiful doorway in cloisters, formerly the entrance to the refectory, must make us all lament the loss of that room, now replaced by the College School of very late Gothic.

Geometrical Decorated work, 1283 to 1294: roof and east window of Lady Chapel, and possibly eastern windows of north and south aisles, which are certainly of earlier date than the other traceried windows. Possibly these windows were inserted in the eastern end of choir at about the same time as the east window of Lady Chapel, and upon the building of eastern Chapel were lengthened and placed in their present position. The tracery of the windows called Nell Gwynne's, is so different from all the other windows, there must be a reason for it.

In 1234, land was purchased by the town for making the new trench, which must have tended to isolate St. Augustine's Abbey, and strengthened the affections of the Bristol men for their Church of St. Mary Redcliffe. This isolation of the Abbey Church from the town of Bristol, together with Abbot Knowle's mistake in refusing burial to the body of King Edward, must have produced great loss of revenue to the Abbey, and eventually have prevented the completion of the nave by Abbot Knowle; which is much to be regretted, as he was evidently a man of grand ideas, and under him we should probably have had a west end which would have been a pleasure to see.

The whole of the Church looks very much like German work, but may be the result of the foundations being placed upon a thin bed of sandstone, resting upon a thick bed of clay. I am informed all the settlements are due to the original builders not having cut through these beds to the thicker rock; the construction may therefore have been the result of weak foundations and want of money; possibly, also, the cloth workers from Germany and Flanders imported their own ideas of architecture with them.

The great east window is probably, after Carlisle, the finest one in England. The Carlisle window was executed about 1300, after the great fire, which destroyed the eastern portion of that Church (1292); so that probably the date of the new window was about that time, perhaps worked by the same man, both being Austin houses. The recesses for tombs are almost unique. The sedilia have also much the same character, and are restored exactly from the fragments remaining. At the east end of the Church, on the exterior, are the marks of two straight joints in the masonry, as if some relics had been placed under the altar; and, indeed, during the last alterations, upon removal of paving, we found the foundation of an altar in that position, and remains of very early pottery, but no vestige of

apse—in fact I do not think the English ever used the apse, except in alien houses, and the first followers of the Conqueror, full of recollections of the Abbeys of Caen.

I think Abbot Knowles only laid the foundations of south wall of nave and porch, but never built the nave. Britton shows two bases west of tower, but expressly states they were not Norman. My father said he found several of the Norman bases *in situ* on the south side. The next Abbot, Snow, 1332 to 1341, seems to have built the Berkeley Chapel and vestibule to same. He was the only Abbot who attended Parliament. He also built the Newton Chapel. The floor of Berkeley Chapel had formerly the marks where a screen stood, dividing it into two Chapels, and you can still see the remains of an altar.

Perpendicular: Abbot Newland, 1481—1515, central tower; Perpendicular work in north transept, including roof. Britton states, Walter Newbury, 1428, built the tower. Robert Elliot, 1515—1526, vaulting of south transept. Doorway and Lady Chapel, work of Abbot Somerset, 1526 to 1530. The great north transept window was inserted in 1704. The ancient choir screen, 1547, is lying neglected in the churchyard. These remains of fine western screen should be replaced in the Church, and not be let go to ruin in the churchyard.

Perpendicular: remains of reredos, north aisle.¹

The chancel of Almondsbury, belonging to St. Augustine's Abbey, reminds me much of the elder Chapel of Bristol Cathedral in purity of detail, although most of the Church has been utterly ruined by restoration, only the chancel and lead spire remaining. This Church belonged to Bristol; the Abbot had a house there.²

Mr. REYNOLDS having said a few words as to the orders of

(1). See Note, Skelton's *Bristol*.

(2). See Britton's account of the murder of one of the officials in going there.

the old Abbey, the Members went over the Cathedral and around the outside of the structure. When outside, a somewhat animated conversation, as to the restoration of the Norman gateway, ensued between the MAYOR and Precentor VENABLES, of Lincoln, who had joined the party in the course of the morning. On their reaching the gateway the reverend gentleman entered a strong protest against the restoration proceedings. He considered that the gateway was one of the most unique monuments in the country, and he could not but strongly protest against the work now proceeding, which he looked upon as nothing less than an act of vandalism.

The MAYOR defended the action of the authorities. They had done their very best to preserve the ancient beauties of the city, and had spared neither time, money, nor trouble on the work at that gateway. They had had the best advice that could be obtained. They had destroyed nothing of value. What had been removed was only an old house fallen into decay, and they were restoring the ancient work and filling up the gap occupied by the old house.

The Chapter House.

The centre arch of vaulting is pointed. An attentive examination of the east end of the Chapter room, with Mr. J. Reynolds, has convinced me, said Mr. POPE, it is of its original length, there being the original Norman buttresses at the east end.

The Mayor's Chapel

was then inspected. The MAYOR explained the proposed improvements.

Mr. POPE said this was the Church of the Bons Hommes. He believed that all the seats in the chancel were partly wood and partly plaster. It would be a very good thing to get rid of them. The date of the west window was comparatively modern, and it was cut off in the fashion they saw in order to

allow of the alteration of the line of the street. The roof was a fine specimen of 15th century work, and the side windows belonged to the 13th century, going into the 14th. The moulded arches were fine specimens of the work of the former century. The old west window was taken away to Brentry, where it was put up, and still remained, he believed.

Mr. JOHN TAYLOR read a short paper on the "Hospital of St. Mark."

A visit was then paid to

The Law Library,

to see the 12th century room there, and the Tudor room. The party afterwards strolled through Maryleport Street (being greatly interested in the fine examples of old Bristol to be seen there) to

St. Peter's Church.

The Rev. W. T. HOLLINS received the Society, and gave a short account of the Church. He believed that they had the earliest fixed date in the city belonging to that Church. The body of the Church was supposed to be 15th century, and probably the only old part of the Church was the base of the tower, about which there was a controversy as to whether there was anything Norman.

The company looked over the interior, and Mr. BULLEID expressed his opinion that the former rector had been guilty of an act of vandalism in removing the skeleton (stone) from Aldwarth's tomb, and placing it in a box.

An interesting will was read by Mr. W. GEORGE, it having been the last will and testament of Thomas Norton, dated 1449, in which, among other things, he expressed a desire to be buried in the chancel of the Church.

It may be interesting to add that Robert Aldworth, who founded a colony at Pemaquit, Maine, New England, in the 17th century, left his money to the Elbridge family; and

ultimately that money went to the founding of the Bristol Infirmary.

From St. Peter's Church the Members walked across the old churchyard to

Norton's House,

now known as St. Peter's Hospital, and as the place where the Bristol Guardians hold their weekly Meetings.

Here Mr. CHARLES WINTLE assumed the conductorship, and, on behalf of the Governor, Deputy, and the Members of the Board, offered a hearty welcome and refreshments to the visitors. He then proceeded to give some account of the house, premising that Mr. John Taylor was responsible for the facts, and if they were wrong he must bear the blame. The house was now called St. Peter's Hospital, and was where the relief of the poor was administered. Until about the year 1859, the poor were also kept in the adjoining premises. The poor-house was afterwards removed to Stapleton.

This house was built originally about the end of the 12th century, by John Norton, and was bequeathed by him to his two sons, who occupied it. The premises were occupied by successive generations of the family until 1580, when Thomas Norton sold them to Sir Henry Newton, of Barrs Court, but none of the Newton family lived in the house. It was rebuilt by Robert Aldworth, and in 1634 his relative, Elbridge, became possessed of it. Subsequently it was used for trade purposes, and a Mint was established within the walls of the house. In 1695 the Mint ceased to work. The property was afterwards purchased by the Corporation for £800, and converted into a Workhouse.

They had books dating from the end of the 17th century to the present time, and in some of the old books were very curious entries. The Clerk to the Board (Mr. Simpson) had kindly found a few for him, and he would read one or two.

In 1696, the books recorded, a clerk was appointed at a salary of £10, which was raised the next year to £20. Even in the present days of economy they paid more than that to the Clerk. Another entry showed that in those days they were severe on beggars, for one was sent to the Bridewell for three years. Another entry recorded the banishment from the city of singers of lewd ballads in the streets.

The room in which they were assembled (the Court Room) had had the fine Jacobean ceiling recently uncovered—it was before buried in plaster—and as he had had something to do with the restoration and painting of the ceiling, he must ask them to excuse the weak points in it. They had no example to go by, and did what they considered best. The ceiling and the upper part of the fireplace were evidently put up by Aldworth.

Mr. GEORGE read an extract from a register, showing that the Bishop of Worcester, in 1464, granted Norton leave to celebrate Divine service in an oratory within the mansion during his sickness.

A vote of thanks was given to Mr. Wintle and to the Guardians, on the motion of the Rev. Prebendary SCARTH.

On the way from Norton's House, towards the Dominican Priory, a short time was spent at the remains of

Bristol Castle.

These are but scanty, and are so buried among a quantity of modern houses, that, in face of social as well as physical difficulties, it needs a determined antiquary to make a full investigation.

The Dominican Friary

is a most interesting building, now converted into a large Quakers' School; hence the singularly incongruous name of Quakers' Friars. Here, as so often throughout the meeting, Mr. TAYLOR gave the Members the benefit of his ample

knowledge. Great part of the early walls and windows of the building still remain, and amongst them, upon the ground floor, some Early English windows of very beautiful workmanship, and in a remarkably perfect condition.

By the time the party reached

St. James's Church,

the Members had dwindled considerably; much more so, probably, than would have been the case if they had known how much of interest there is to be found in it. The Norman west-front, with its intersecting arcade and circular window, is, perhaps, the most interesting part, but the whole well repays inspection. A few only visited the external arcade of the clerestory, which can only be seen by climbing to the ridge of the south aisle roof.

The VICAR (Rev. J. Hart Davies) exhibited in the vestry the Church plate and a remarkably fine and perfect set of Church account books; one of the earliest of them is, unfortunately, missing at present.

In University College, an

Evening Meeting

was held, at which Mr. GEORGE ESDAILE, C.E., read a paper on "Roman Bristol and Roman Gloucester, compared with the *Castra Prætoria* and the sites of the *Castra Peregrina* and of the *Castra Equites Singulares* at Rome." He said, so far all that had been written about Roman Bristol had been of the vaguest nature, and had been prefaced by "probably" and "in all likelihood." He was therefore the more anxious to apply that which, in his opinion, was the only solution of the question, viz., whether it was possible to plot in, within the city of Bristol, the area of the Roman camp as given by Hyginus, to whose scheme he had before referred in the papers

he had read to the Society ; and as he thought it was possible, he endeavoured to summarise the evidence and make the application. The writer then referred at length to traces of a Roman Camp, which he believed substantiated his views, instancing the construction of the roads in and around the city. He exhibited a diagram of a Roman Camp in Bristol, and compared it with one in Gloucester, where there was admittedly a Roman Camp. The area of the Camp in Bristol was the same as those in Chester and other well-known Roman Camps, and it also agreed with those found in Rome.

Somerset Heraldry.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER (Evercreech) read a paper on “Somerset Genealogy and Heraldry.” Printed in the Second Part.