

SECOND DAY, THURSDAY, SEPT. 10th, 1863.

This morning the members re-assembled in the Council-hall, the President in the chair.

Mr. J. H. PARKER delivered an address on the "Ecclesiastical Houses appertaining to the Cathedral," which is given in Part II.

The PRESIDENT made some comments upon the observations of Mr. Parker, and said that an American, who recently visited the palace, remarked that it would be a capital place of residence for Bishop Polk, who was now a General in the Confederate army.

Mr. FREEMAN reminded Mr. Parker that the state-hall was destroyed in the reign of Edward VI., when the palace was alienated to the Protector Duke of Somerset. "It was pulled down," says Bishop Godwin, "by a knight of the court that, for a just reward of his sacrilege, soon after lost his head." The person meant was Sir John Gates, executed in the next reign. The palace, with other possessions of the bishopric and chapter, were given back by Queen Mary. The state-hall was not so completely pulled down as Bishop Godwin's description might lead them to believe, inasmuch as a subsequent picture of it shewed that the walls were nearly perfect long afterwards.

Colonel PINNEY asked whether the state-hall was not originally a justice-hall, as was generally supposed?

Mr. PARKER replied in the affirmative. The bishop was a prince in those days, and it was always the custom in medieval times for the baron's banqueting-hall to be also the justice-hall. Mr. Parker then went on to describe

The Deanery,

which he said was of a much later period (it might have replaced an earlier building), and was built by Dean

Gunthorp in the latter part of the fifteenth century. In alluding to the Precentor's and Organist's Houses, at the east and west ends of the Cathedral, he remarked that those persons who wished to throw entirely open the space around cathedrals made a mistake, for the principal building appeared apparently insignificant when a great space around was unoccupied, whereas when other buildings remained near they served as measures to the eyes to guide it in judging of the size and grandeur of the cathedral. The precentor's and organist's houses served this purpose. He next referred to the canonical house, now occupied by Archdeacon Browne, of the old part of which little remained ; and then went on to speak of

The Vicars' Close,

built by Ralph de Salopia. Each vicar had his own little house of two rooms, which houses were repaired by the executors of Bishop Beckington. The close, in its ordinary design, very much resembled a college at Oxford or Cambridge. At one end of the oblong area was situated the dining-hall, and at the other end the chapel and library. A principal vicar lived at a house at either end ; one of which buildings, nearest the chain-bridge, he had purchased and restored. The bridge was a unique specimen—he knew of no other like it—and united the Cathedral to the vicars' close for the accommodation of the vicars, so that they might assemble in their hall and walk in procession under cover to the Cathedral. The windows of the hall were of the time of Edward III., and the gatehouse of the same period, with windows of the date of Henry VII. One could only regret that so magnificent an institution for the vicars-choral was not appreciated. To a certain extent it still existed, and he hoped the remnant of life left in it might be revived shortly. Bishop Beckington built

the market-house, and the houses opposite the Town-hall in the market-place were distinctly mediæval, but modernized and spoilt. The whole of the ecclesiastical city of Wells might be restored to the state it was in at the time of the Reformation, for there was enough remaining to make out every part of it. The gate called the Eye was in a bad state of repair, and something was required to be done with it. He hoped the example set of restoring buildings in Wells would at least tend to preserve those that remained.

Thanks were cordially voted Mr. PARKER, whose lecture was illustrated by large plans prepared by Mr. Hippisley, and admirably executed sketches were drawn by Mr. Albert Hartshorne and Mr. A. Clarke.