

Excursion.

Another excursion took place this day. The route commenced with NAILSEA CHURCH and MANOR-HOUSE. The manor-house is chiefly of the time of Elizabeth, with an earlier part, of the reign of Henry VIII. Some of the rooms are handsomely panelled, and in one of them the arms of the Cole family are carved above the mantel-piece.

Nailsea church is a small Perpendicular building, consisting of nave, chancel, western tower (a fair specimen of something between the Bristol and the Taunton type), south aisle running part of the way along the chancel, so as to form a chapel, matched by one on the north side. At the junction of this with the nave is a remarkable staircase to the pulpit. The nave-piers are of a rather unusual section. There is no chancel-arch, but corbels with curious sculpture supported the rood-beam, an arrangement found also in several neighbouring churches where the chancel-arch is present.

At a short distance from Nailsea is CHELVEY. The church of this parish has memorials of the Aish and Tynte families. One of the latter is an incised slab of the 13th century—a mode which Mr. Parker stated is common in France, but very rare in England, where brasses are generally used. The doorway is Norman, and there are some 13th century windows. There is a place in the pulpit for an hour-glass.

Chelvey Court is a mansion of the reign of James I. It

has a fine illuminated and gilt mantle-piece, a noble staircase, and several panelled rooms. The house contains a secret chamber, probably intended for the concealment of a Roman Catholic priest. It was built by an ancestor of the Tynte family, to whom the estate belongs.

The party next drove towards BROCKLEY COMBE, and passed up that fine and romantic defile. The sides are deeply wooded, and high limestone rocks appear above and between the foliage. The loftiest of these rocks reaches a height of 300 feet. But few spots are there in Somerset exhibiting a more wild and varied beauty. Descending from Broadhill-down, and passing close to Barley-lodge, once the residence of Hannah More, the party arrived at WRINGTON.

The house in which Locke was born adjoins the churchyard. The church is a noble edifice. The lofty nave, with its clustered pillars and foliated capitals, the shafts carried up and supporting angels with shields, the fine Perpendicular windows and clerestory, present a picture rarely equalled in parochial churches. The chancel is small, compared with the church, and in the Decorated style, having been retained from an earlier building when the other part of the church was rebuilt.

At Wrington and Yatton Mr. Freeman enlarged at greater length than elsewhere on the principal features of those two splendid churches; but as his remarks chiefly consisted of a demonstration on the spot of criticisms made in his several papers before the Society, it may be enough to refer to his two essays in the Society's volumes for 1851 and 1852, especially to the criticisms on Wrington tower at p. 55 of that for 1851. One or two points, however, it may be well to mention here. The nave would have been much finer had there been six bays instead of

four. As it was, the nave of Martock church was grander, having greater length and richness. Mr. Freeman corrected a statement that had been made—that he had said it was the finest tower in the world. His words in the Society's *Proceedings* are, "the finest square western tower, not designed for a spire or lantern, in all England, and therefore possibly in the whole world." He did not compare it with towers of totally another description, or with those of cathedrals and abbeys.

Leaving Wrington, CONGRESBURY was soon reached ; and here also is a large church, but one of a different character. The tower is surmounted by a spire. Mr. Freeman made some remarks on towers and spires, saying that the comparison could hardly be made with fairness in Somersetshire, where the towers surpassed those of any other district ; while the few spires, like this of Congresbury, were rather commonplace. Spires should be studied in Northamptonshire, where there are very few great towers without spire or octagon. Titchmarsh is almost the only example of any importance ; but the spires, both Early and Perpendicular, are as fine in their own way as the Somersetshire towers are in theirs. The comparison indeed lies between two equal forms of beauty, the tower being the perfection of dignity, and the spire the perfection of elegance. The pillars of the south aisle are Early English, and are surrounded by detached shafts, while the opposite aisle is Decorated. This peculiarity gives a singular appearance to the church. The detached shafts were added in the course of restoration. Mr. Freeman remarked that they were not there when he last saw the church, but there was no doubt that they originally existed, as the bases were there. The clerestory is Early Perpendicular, and is remarkable for its great number of small windows, set close

together, in a way more usual in the east than the west of England. Some Decorated windows remain, especially some square-headed ones with remarkable tracery.

The RECTORY-HOUSE has a very remarkable porch, the arch of which is richly ornamented with an imitation of the well-known tooth-ornament of the 13th century, but really built about 1470 by the executors of Bishop Beckington, the arms over the doorway, cut in the original stonework, being those of the see of Wells, and of the executors, Pope, Sugar, and Swann, the same as in the Vicars' Close, at Wells, so that this house was built about the same time with that work. An engraving of the porch is given in the present volume.

It is remarkable that in the chapel of the Vicars' Close some fragments of Early English sculpture of the time of Bishop Joceline are built in as old material in the spandrils of the window arches. This would lead us to suspect that the tooth-ornament here also is old material used again, as often happens, but in this instance it does not appear to be the case; it seems to be clearly copied, although such an example is almost unique; probably those executors had a taste for the earlier style, and introduced it when they could.

At YATTON the manor-house is so exactly on the same plan as Clevedon Court, that there can be no doubt that it is a copy of it on a much smaller scale, and at a later period the style is Perpendicular, but early in the style, probably about the same age as Tickenham Court, *circa* 1410.

At Yatton, where the excursion terminated, the fine church met with great admiration. Mr. Freeman again commented at length on the building, but for most of his criticisms we may again refer to the Society's volume for 1852. He also pointed out the gradual way in which the

church had been rebuilt. A Decorated window in the south transept shows that a cross church of the earlier Somersetshire type preceded the present one. The chancel, which is Early Perpendicular, was first rebuilt, then the central tower, and the transepts remodelled, probably without departing from the scale of the older church. But on reaching the nave the ideas of the builders enlarged, and the present magnificent nave was added on a scale quite disproportioned to the eastern part. Not being hampered by any western tower, they were able to carry it out to a greater length than that of Wrington which was a great advantage. At the west end is a wooden gallery which, as it closely agreed with the style of the nave and was clearly not recent, both Mr. Parker and Mr. Freeman were inclined to look upon as an ancient west gallery, being not quite unique, though exceedingly rare. It appears, however, from information received from Mr. Barnard, the vicar, that it was made, about 40 years ago under the direction of Mr. Lyson the antiquary, which accounts for a resemblance to ancient work very unusual at that time. The tower is surmounted by an unfinished spire; a feature not unusual, Mr. Freeman said, in this district, but exceedingly rare in those parts of the country where spires were numerous. In Northamptonshire, where there were so many spires, he only knew of one incomplete, and that was at Naseby, and was said by the people to have been broken during the famous battle. Near the church is a good house of the 15th century, the exterior perfect, with the interior modernized.

The party having left the church, thanks were voted to the local secretary (Rev. T. Bliss), to Mr. Parker and Mr. Freeman, to the ladies for their company, and to the President for presiding. The proceedings of this very gratifying and successful anniversary then terminated.