

## Luncheon

was provided in the Banqueting room, by the kindness of the Worshipful the Mayor, to whose invitation a large company responded.

The Mayor (Alderman JOLLY), who presided, gave the toast of the Queen, which was duly honoured, and spoke of the pleasure it gave him, on behalf of the citizens of Bath, to welcome so learned and important a Society. Even if one had no practical knowledge of the subject they all felt a deep, if somewhat vague, interest in all that concerned the past. He alluded to the richness of Bath in historic interest and mentioned that it had been said that to completely uncover the Roman remains they would have to excavate half Bath. He did not think that many citizens of Bath knew the extent of the discoveries that had been made.

Mr. SKRINE thanked the Mayor for the hearty welcome he had given the Association, and for his generous hospitality.

From the luncheon the members passed to the civic library, where was displayed the magnificent plate belonging to the corporation, including two large maces used on state occasions. Several of the city charters and other municipal documents of interest were exhibited, concerning which a paper was read by Mr. AUSTIN KING (Printed in Part II).

The new portions of the Guildhall were also examined under the guidance of Mr. B. H. Watts.

## The Abbey.

After leaving the Guildhall the members of the Society went to the Abbey, where the architectural features both outside and in were described by Mr. E. BUCKLE. He drew attention to the Norman remains—the bases buried under the pavement, and the arch at the east end of the south aisle—the only fragments that survive of the great church founded by Bishop John of Tours (the first bishop of Bath), and dedicated by Bishop Robert. This was truly a great church, for the nave alone occupied the entire site of the present building, and the choir must have extended nearly to the other side of Orange Grove. But in due course it became ruinous, and when Bishop Oliver King (about A.D. 1500) was moved to rebuild it he deemed it expedient to reduce the size of his new church to that which we now see.

The story of the new building is well told in Harrington's *Nugæ Antiquæ*, whence we learn that the bishop lying at Bath on the occasion of Prior Bird's institution in 1499 dreamed that he saw a vision of the Holy Trinity, with angels ascending and descending by a ladder, near to the foot of which was a fair olive tree supporting a crown, and a voice that said, "Let an Olive establish the Crown, and let a King restore the Church." This warning he applied partly to his master, King Henry VII, and partly to himself; and he at once began the rebuilding of the church, and on the west front he had carved an architectural representation of his dream. Unfortunately this front was built of one of the softer of the Bath stones, and much of the carving has now hopelessly perished. But there is a large literature on the subject, and we are consequently able, to some extent, to understand the scheme of this elaborate front. Presumably the figure in the large niche at the top represented the Trinity. Below and on either side is a choir of angels, with two shields in the midst of them. The bearings on these shields have now perished, but Carter ascribes them

to Cardinal Adrian. If this is correct it shews that though the west front is entirely devoted to a representation of Bishop King's dream, it was not actually completed until after his death. In the centre of the window tracery is an angel with another shield, of which again only the outline is now visible. On the turrets on either side the ladders form the most conspicuous features, with the angels ascending and descending. But grouped with the ladders are twelve niches containing the figures of the twelve apostles, St. Andrew, the tutelary saint of Wells, being especially prominent. At the base of the ladders are figures, apparently of shepherds, perhaps emblematical of the bishop's office; and over these figures scrolls, on one or more of which it is supposed that the words occurred, "De Sursum est," which Harrington assures us appeared on the west front, indicating the divine origin of the bishop's dream. Lower down are large figures of St. Peter and St. Paul in niches on either side of the west doorway, and these figures, we are told, formerly bore the following inscriptions:—"Claviger ætherius factus de Simone Petrus," and "Ecce furor Sauli factus conversio Pauli." The doors themselves belong to a later date, being the gift of Sir Henry Montague, and they bear both his own arms and those of his brother, the bishop, as well as the motto, "Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum."

On the buttresses, at the ends of the aisles, are presentations of the olive tree, rising from a crown and surmounted by a mitre, with large labels beneath, from which the text has entirely perished. But we have it, on Harrington's authority, that one of these bore the words:

"Trees going to choose their king,  
Said 'be to us the Olive king.'"

The other, he states, had certain French words which he could not read; but these words have been conjectured to be the corresponding phrase from the Vulgate:

“*Ierunt ligna, ut ungerent super se regem :  
Dixeruntque Olivæ : Impera nobis.*”

*Judges, ix, 8.*

One text still remains prominent over the two aisle windows : “*Domus mea domus orationis.*” On the centre mullion of these windows are two statues, one a very puzzling figure of a man with a deed in his hand, and something like an elaborate aureole over his head ; the other, that of a man in armour, holding a money bag, supposed to represent Henry VII.

One peculiarity of the church is the fact that the lower story has depressed arches and poor tracery, while the clerestory has acutely pointed windows with fine tracery of the Somerset pattern. It has been suggested that the original architect was an East Anglian and that only the upper part is due to a Somerset Architect, but against this theory must be set the fact that the plan shews great resemblance to St. Mary Redcliffe, at Bristol (a thoroughly Somerset building), where also the transepts are very tall and narrow compared with the nave, a variation from commonplace planning, which has a remarkable effect at Bath, since here the central tower is in consequence oblong on plan with the east and west faces much wider than those to the north and south.

Another curious feature is the square head to the east window with the arched form below, and something of the same kind may also be noticed in the tower windows, each of which is enclosed in a rectangular frame.

The building probably owes nearly as much to Prior Bird as it does to Bishop King, and it is satisfactory to find a permanent memorial of the prior in the charming chantry chapel on the south side of the altar. The sculpture of this chapel is full of plays upon the name Bird, and it also contains one very interesting feature, namely, Bird's arms ensigned by a mitre and crozier, shewing that Bath monastery claimed the position of a mitred priory, an honour which was in the gift of the pope. This claim is further borne out by the glass in St.

Katherine's church above Batheaston, where Prior Cantlow, Bird's predecessor, is accorded similar honours.

After the death of King and Bird, the work was carried on by Prior Gybbs, but before long came the Dissolution, and the building was still unfinished. Bishop King was succeeded by Cardinal Adrian and Cardinal Wolsey, Bishop Clark and Bishop Knight, and the fact that none of them completed the work gave rise to the following lines, which have been ascribed to Harrington :

“O Church! I wail thy woful plight,  
Whom King nor Cardinal, Clark nor Knight,  
Have yet restored to ancient right.”

It was not, however, until the beginning of the seventeenth century that another bishop completed what King had begun.

In the interval the monastery had been dissolved and the church made over to the corporation, but it still remained very incomplete. Sir John Harrington was walking with Bishop Montague in Orange Grove, when they were caught in a shower, and the knight artfully led the bishop for shelter into a part of the church which was still roofless. Bishop Montague remarked that they were still in the rain. “How can that be,” returned Harrington, “seeing that we are within the church.” The ruse was successful, for Bishop Montague took the matter up at once, and by the time he left the see the church was practically completed. Montague's principal work was the covering of the nave with a coved plaster ceiling of good Gothic design; this unique ceiling has unfortunately been removed to make room for the “restoration” of a fan vault such as Oliver King may have intended, but the plaster ceiling in the vestry happily still remains. Montague's tomb stands appropriately under one of the nave arches. This is not Gothic but in the stately Jacobean style of his own day. He was translated to Winchester, so that on his tomb appear the arms not of Bath and Wells but of Winchester. Winchester,

like Bath, has for its arms the keys of St. Peter crossed by the sword of St. Paul, but the field at Winchester is coloured a royal red, that at Bath a watery blue. This (the sole distinction, except for the circling garter) was overlooked at the restoration; the arms on Montague's tomb were assumed to be those of Bath Priory, and the coats on the roof were painted in imitation of those on the tomb, so that now the building is decorated in a meaningless manner with several coats belonging to the see of Winchester.

From the Abbey a move was made to the Roman Baths, where Major DAVIS made a lengthy statement, chiefly relating to the steps taken by the Corporation to excavate and preserve them under his supervision. He believed there was another bath as large as that uncovered, but as the members of the Town Council were not antiquaries, and could not spend the rates on antiquarian research, that bath would probably not be uncovered.

Mr. ELWORTHY gave a short general description of Roman baths, pointing out the distinction between *Balnea* and *Thermæ*. Those at Bath were *Thermæ*, of probably second or third class as compared with the like in Rome. He showed clearly where was the *Caldarium*, in which are still to be seen portions of the *hypocaustum*; but until the remains at Bath are carefully and thoroughly examined in a scientific manner by competent experts nothing of real value will be known as to what may be still existing of *Aquæ Solis*. The works now in progress may possibly render such an investigation for ever impossible; while for the present the recent discoveries are a sealed book.

At the

## Evening Meeting

the chair was taken by the Very Rev. the DEAN OF WELLS.

Canon CHURCH read a paper on the Chartularies of the Priory of SS. Peter and Paul (printed in Part II) which led to a lively discussion.

The DEAN, in tendering the thanks of the meeting to Canon Church for his interesting paper, said he was the greatest living authority on matters relating to the Cathedral Church of Wells or the Bath Abbey. He had touched most impartially upon many points of difficulty, and even in speaking against his enemies.

Mr. ELWORTHY also spoke of their deep debt of gratitude to Canon Church, for it was only by such diligent work as his, aided by a ripe scholarship, which brought out for us the real domestic history of the days of our forefathers.

Canon CHURCH, replying to one or two questions asked by Bishop Brownlow, said when the chapters of Bath and Wells could not agree about the election of a bishop each chapter selected proctors, who met half-way between the two cities—at Farrington Gurney—to agree, if they could, upon a bishop. The first time, however, they failed to agree. Canon Church had thought that Bishop Jocelyn had not, perhaps, shown that gratitude towards Bath which from his early bringing up he might have been expected to exhibit. He devoted himself so exclusively to Wells.

Bishop BROWNLOW thought the bishop perhaps did the monks at Bath a good turn by living at Wells, and gave an instance in his own communion where, under somewhat similar conditions, the presence of a prelate would have been embarrassing to the monks.

Canon CHURCH, on this point, said he only meant that there was a certain loss of dignity to the Bath chapter through Bishop Jocelyn giving himself up so completely to what is now the cathedral city.

### **The Forest of Mendip.**

The Rev. T. S. HOLMES read some notes prepared by Bishop Hobhouse on a map of the forest as it existed in olden times (printed in Part II).

In the discussion which followed it appeared that there are

now existing three of these maps, *viz.*, that presented by Bishop Hobhouse to the Wells Museum ; one in possession of Mr. T. Fortescue Horner, of Mells Park, of which a photograph was exhibited ; and a third in the Society's Museum at Taunton, presented some years ago by Mr. William George.

### **The Clevedon Family.**

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER gave the digest of a paper by the late Sir John Maclean on the Clevedon family (printed in Part II).