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## TYPICAL CHURCH TOWERS OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

### PART XII.

#### SOMERSET.

OF all the counties in the south of England Somerset is the richest in mediæval remains. Not only does it possess noble abbeys such as Glastonbury, Bath, but its parish churches are quite remarkable for their rich and beautiful detail.

Perhaps no county in England shows more distinctly the peculiarities we have previously pointed out with regard to church steeples than does Somerset. Nothing could well be more unlike than the Somersetshire towers and those of the bordering counties. The Wiltshire towers are for the most part solid, plain, and somewhat low as to proportion. The Devonshire ones, although well proportioned as a rule, have heavy solid pinnacles at the angles, rather small belfry windows, and little ornamentation about them. The Dorset towers are often handsome, but even these possess little and few of the features of the Somersetshire examples.

That the peculiar form of tower for which Somerset is so remarkable did not develop itself until the fifteenth century in no way detracts from the singular circumstance that we find a county possessing a form of church tower remarkable for extraordinary richness and elaboration, but absolutely different from any other in this country—and how can we account for this?

Now let us just enumerate the marked features of these Somerset towers. They are generally far more lofty in proportion than towers usually are in England. Sometimes, as at Taunton St. Mary Magdalen, and Wrington, there are three rows of duplicated windows over the roof level of the church; the buttresses at the angles are of very slight projection, as though they were intended more for ornament than constructive support. The belfry windows are unusually large and handsome, in some examples, notably St. Cuthbert's at Wells and St. John's at Glastonbury. The panelling beneath them is arranged so

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TAUNTON, SOMERSETSHIRE.