Wednesday, August 5th.

Punctually at 9.30 a.m., in lovely weather, a large party started for Cerne Abbas, about eleven miles distant from Sherborne, passing Long Burton and Holnest, where there stands in the churchyard (almost overshadowing the church) the mausoleum erected by the late Mr. J. S. W. Sawbridge-Erle-Drax, sometime M.P. for Wareham. At a distance of seven miles Middlemarsh was reached: it is situate near the source of a branch of the river Lidden. About two miles north of Cerne, Minterne Church and Minterne House, the seat of Lord Digby, were passed, and then, in less than a mile, the pretty little village of Upcerne, which lies nestling among hills, came in view, and a drive of little more than a mile brought the party to

Cerne Abbas

which may well be described as a decayed and decaying village of some nine hundred inhabitants. The members first viewed the Abbey Barn, on which an interesting paper has been written by Mr. H. J. Moule (see *Proceedings of the Dorset Field Club*, vol. x). The author comes to the conclusion that it is a misnomer to call these buildings *Tithe Barns*, and proves pretty conclusively that they were "storehouses not of tithe corn only, but also of the crop itself off the home farms of the convents."

This barn is noteworthy for the beauty of its masonry, the entire facing inside as well as out being of squared flints and freestone; and also on account of its great size, in consequence of which it had originally two pair of transeptal wagon entrances.

The church of St. Mary was next inspected under the able guidance of Mr. Edmund Buckle, who said that the chancel walls were of Early English date, containing two blocked lancets, and that the nave and aisles shewed three different dates of Perpendicular. The eastern half of the church was the oldest, then came the magnificent tower and west front (together with the insertion of the east window), and finally the bays connecting these two parts and the addition of the nave clerestory. At first there was no structural chancel, a pierced stone screen was the only division. But when the nave clerestory was added in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, a solid wall was built reaching from the top of the screen to the roof, and almost completely cutting off the chancel—an arrangement which was retained until the insertion of the present arch designed by Sir Gilbert Scott. This screen and wall are not opposite the pillars, but die into the arches of the arcades in an awkward manner. But their present position is the ancient one, for the old stone floor remains, sloping up from the west end, and with two steps at the chancel entrance.

This church was at first a mere chapel: there was never at any time a churchyard attached to it, but the parishioners were, and still are, buried in the churchyard of the Abbey church. The East window (date *circa* 1500) is full of coats of arms, among which that of Berkeley is to be noted.

In the north aisle of the church is the following inscription:

Here
Lyeth ye body of Joseph
son of George and Edeth
Sommers who departed ys life
January ye 7th A.D. 1702
etatis suæ 9
A little time did blast my prime
And brought me hether
The fairest flower within an hour
May fade and wether.

A curious street of fifteenth-century houses leads up to the site of the Abbey Gateway, which is now occupied by the "Abbey House," built after the Dissolution: these two-storey half-timbered houses had stone party walls, corbelled out in front of their timber faces, to prevent the spread of fire from house to house.

The sacred spring (commonly called St. Augustine's Well) was next visited. According to William of Malmesbury, St. Augustine (*circa* 600) came to preach to the pagans of Cerne, who behaved very rudely to him, and having tied cows' tails[1] to his followers drove them away from the place; but having repented, they recalled St. Augustine, who came back and struck the rock at this place, whence flowed an abundant supply of beautiful water. The whole story seems to be purely mythical. The Rev. Prebendary T. S. Holmes has kindly (at the Editor's request) supplied the following "Note."

"The district, afterwards called Dorset, was in the time of Augustine British territory, and the people were Chris-

(1) The account occurs in *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (Rolls Series) pp. 184—6. Where the original has *caudas racharum* (the Editor of William of Malmesbury queries *vaccarum*). Another account says *fishes'* tails (*see* Dugdale's *Mon.* II, 621, note b.).

tians. Ethelbert's influence as Bretwalda might have provided a safe escort through the lands of Ceowulf, the West Saxon king, but not beyond it. Nothing is known of this visit till five hundred years after this date, and it is probable that Aldhelm was the first English bishop that penetrated so far into this district. The book of Cerne, however, points to Celtic Christianity as existing here before the time of the first bishop of Sherborne."

The spring is surrounded by high and thick walls of masonry, and Mr. BUCKLE said that there was probably at one time a chapel over the well: he called the members' attention to the fact that it was a celebrated *Wishing Well*, into which no pin need be dropped, and no doubt some of them availed themselves of the unique opportunity. This spring forms the water supply of the village, and though situate in the churchyard is said to yield a perfectly pure water.

Before reaching the scanty remains of the Abbey, Mr. BUCKLE called attention to some very mysterious mounds which occupy a field named Beauvoir, adjoining the spot where formerly stood the Abbey Church. These include three large rounded knolls: they cannot be terraces for a garden; but far more probably have an origin similar to that of the famous

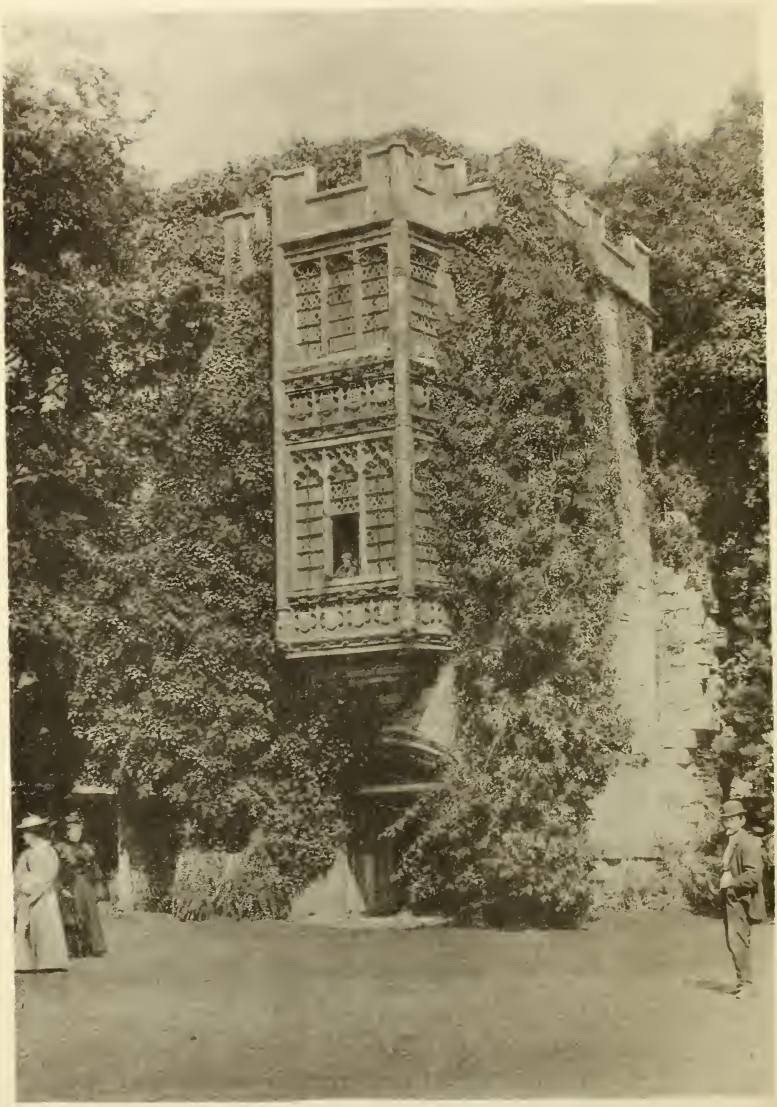
Cerne Giant

a portentous object overlooking the village, which some have thought due to Phœnician influence, representing Baal, or Hercules, or the Sun, the source and origin of all things; at any rate all agree that it is of very great antiquity.

Cerne Abbey*

was founded, according to William of Malmesbury, by St. Augustine in the sixth century, but the earliest certain appear-

* *See* Dugdale's *Monasticon* II, 621—30.



CERNE ABBAS: GATEWAY TOWER.

ance of any religious foundation here occurs about A.D. 870, when Edwold, brother of St. Edmund the Martyr, retired from the world and led a hermit's life near the celebrated spring which has been already mentioned. He died in 871 and was interred in Cerne Abbey, and was held in veneration for his sanctity and the miracles wrought at his tomb.

The following seems to have been the arrangement of the Abbey buildings. The great gateway occupied the site of the present house, and gave access to a long and narrow courtyard with another gate at the far end. On the right stood a fourteenth-century house, and beyond that the later Abbot's house, while a passage between these two led into the cloister court. Further on were farm buildings on both sides of the outer court, and on the right hand side a fish pond, supplied by a conduit from the river at Minterne. On the left hand side of the entrance, foundations of other buildings still remain, as well as the enclosing wall which follows the course of the river to the ancient bridge near the back entrance to this outer courtyard. The cloister court stood further east in the field just north of the churchyard. The church was partly in this field, partly in the churchyard, where many fragments of tile floors have been found some five feet below the present surface, and the conventual buildings lay on its north side, in that part of the field which appears to have been artificially levelled.

There are two portions of the Monastery still standing: that first visited, consisted, Mr. BUCKLE said, of a building of a purely domestic character of the end of the fourteenth century, containing on the upper floor a hall 26 ft. by 17 ft. 6 in., with a chamber beyond, and was probably the Abbot's house before the building of the second more ornate one. It was, however, altered in the following century by the insertion of some windows and a fine chimney piece (now in the Abbey House) bearing the monogram I V under a doctor's cap, which is assigned to John Vanne, who was abbot from 1458 to 1470.

The beautiful entrance to the later Abbot's Lodging, of

which an illustration is given in this volume, and which reminds one of that at Ford Abbey, is undoubtedly the work of Thomas, who was abbot in 1508 and whose rebus, consisting of a T, a fish, and a crosier, is still to be seen among the arms on the front of the building.

This fragment is undoubtedly the porch of the Abbot's Hall. The lowest storey has a fan vault, and over this are two rooms with bay windows forming a sort of tower. At the back may be seen what remains of the Hall itself: the plain dado indicates the height to which the panelling was carried, and above that are corbelled out the wall shafts from which sprang the great oak roof.

In one of the upper rooms some floor tiles have been collected bearing the arms of England; England a bend sinister; Clare; and also the following coats—*Vair. Barry of 8. A fret.* Quarterly. 2nd Quarter *a lion ramp.* [rest gone].

Among other arms on the front of this building may be mentioned those of the founder, Ailmer, Earl of Cornwall; the Royal Arms, Daubeney, Cerne Abbey (*a cross* [sometimes *engrailed*] *between four lilies*) and Fitzjames.

Mr. E. A. Fry has kindly contributed the following account of

Thomas Sam, the unknown Abbot of Cerne.

In the list of abbots of the Monastery of Cerne, given by Hutchins in his *History of Dorset*, vol. iv, p. 23 (third edition), the name of the last but two of them is left blank, only his christian name, Thomas, being known. Hutchins surmised that his name might be Salmon, from the fact that one of the escutcheons on the gateway still remaining 'is inscribed with a text T, inclosing a crosier and fish (probably the rebus of the abbot by whom the building was erected).'

It was only by making a search among the Patent Rolls at the Public Record Office in London, that the difficulty has been cleared up.

From these documents it appears that on 4 July, 12 Henry VII (1497), license was given to the prior of Cerne to proceed to the election of a new abbot, as Roger (Bemyster), formerly abbot there, had died.

The next document is the Patent for the restitution of temporalities to the Abbey, and is dated 19 August of the same year, and from it we learn that abbot Roger Bemyster having died a natural death, a new abbot, Thomas Sam by name, had been elected, and that the temporalities which had lapsed to John, bishop of Salisbury, as bishop of the diocese, were ordered to be restored to the new abbot.

Further information as to date of death of an abbot is sometimes to be gleaned from the Privy seals, but in this instance there is nothing more to be found in them than what is on the Patent Roll.

The next record we have of abbot Thomas Sam is that of his death, which took place on 3 December, 1 Henry VIII, 1509, upon which Robert Westberye was elected abbot. This information is to be found in the *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, documents nos. 769, 822 and 1200, which are abstracts from the Patent Rolls and Privy Seals for that year.

From the above evidence it would appear that Hutchins is in error in stating that Roger Bemyster was summoned to Convocation in 1503 : this must refer to Thomas Sam.

The name *Sam* is not unknown in the West, for we find Lawrence Sam' and Agnes his wife, of Ashill, Somerset, included in a Recusant Roll *circa* 1591.[1]

The family of Sams of Langford, co. Essex, bore: *Gu. two salmons in pale ar. finned or* (Burke).

Luncheon was served in the New Inn, the fruit and flowers being most kindly provided by Lord Digby.

(1) See *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries.* Vol. V., Part xxxv, p. 112.

After luncheon the members drove to

Buckland Newton,

where they were hospitably received by the vicar, the Rev. Canon RAVENHILL, who gave an interesting description of the church, which, according to Bacon's *Liber Regis*, is dedicated to The Holy Rood. He said that the church was restored in 1878. The family of the Ven. William Gunning, archdeacon of Bath (1852—60), and vicar of this place, put in three windows to his memory, which represent St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Andrew, and thus show the vicar's connection with Bath and with Wells. There are also monuments to the Foy and Barnes families.

The manor and advowson of Buckland Newton belonged originally to the abbey of Glastonbury, but were ceded by that house to Jocelin, bishop of Bath, as the price of its independence of his rule, and were subsequently ceded by the bishop to the dean and chapter of Wells. Mr. BUCKLE said that the walls of the fine Early English chancel had been raised in the fifteenth century, and a flat roof added, but that two of the roof corbels on the north side belonged to the earlier period, while those opposite were clumsy copies of the later date. The chancel arch was of the fifteenth century, and the west window and tower arch were early Perpendicular. The nave and aisles seemed to have been entirely rebuilt in the fifteenth century.

There is a curious monument bearing the arms *Or 3 leaves vt. between two chains in bend az.*, and it has (which is rare) a Greek motto, *σίδηρον διῆλθον*, "I have passed through iron," (cf. *Ps.* cv, 18). The crest is a demi-figure, nude ppr., holding a chain. It expresses the great grief at the loss of his wife of the Rev. Nathaniel Selleck, vicar of Buckland Newton, 1679—1690; he was also prebendary of Wells. Hutchins gives the inscription on the monument, which has now entirely perished.

H.S.E.
Anna Selleck, uxor Nathanaelis Selleck, A.M.. ecclesiæ Cathedralis Wellens. præbendarii, et hujus ecclesiæ vicarii, quondam relicta venerabilis viri Henrici Dean, LL.D., Dioceseos Bathon. et Wellen. Cancellarii; orta patre Gulielmo Peirs, S.T.P., archidiac. Taunton, avo reverendo in Christo patre Gulielmo nuper Bathon. et Wellen. episcopo. Obiit idibus Maii, Anno Domini, 1680. Magnum sui desiderium relinquens Nathanaeli Selleck, superstiti marito, qui conjugi charissimæ monumentum hoc mœrens ac pie posuit.

After a refreshing tea on the Vicarage Lawn, the members were conducted by Mr. Ravenhill through the grounds of Castle Hill (where they were kindly received by Mrs. Holford) to the camp on Dungeon Hill, where he read a paper by Mr. CUNNINGTON, the well-known expert, of which the following is a shortened account—

"This camp is about twelve miles north of Dorchester. On a visit of the Dorset Field Club in July, 1878, two pieces of a Roman quern were found in one of the valla. In making small researches in 1881 in the vallum, three pieces of Roman pottery were discovered: one the base of a small well-made drinking cup with fluted sides, of the Fordingbridge or New Forest pottery, the other of black and fine red ware . . . . . .

"The shape of this camp is oval with one ditch; the vallum raised from the outside, above the level of the camp itself. Its situation is most imposing, commanding the whole of the Blackmore valley, and, as a military position, one of immense strength and importance, its main features closely coinciding with those noticeable at Maiden Castle, and again with Cadbury Castle. It has not perhaps been noticed that Maiden Castle, Dungeon Castle, and Cadbury Castle are almost equidistant—about fourteen miles apart—in a straight line from south to north, in fact in as straight a line as could be had with due care for their physical and strategical requirements, each in high position, commanding a vast area to the north, east, and west, the consecutive work of the same people for the same end or purpose."

Wootton Glanville

was the next place visited. Mr. BUCKLE described the church which, according to the *Liber Regis*, is dedicated to St. Mary. He said that the most noticeable thing here was a beautiful Chantry Chapel of the Decorated Period, supposed to be founded *circa* 18 Edward III, by Sibilla de Glanvill, in memory of her husband, whose effigy it probably is, which occupies a fine niche. There is a magnificent squint from this chapel to the chancel: the chapel contains an altar slab of Purbeck marble. There are also some fine ancient tiles, with arms of the Paulet, Beauchamp, and Clare families, those of Edward the Confessor, and also a set of two tiles (which often occur) depicting a stag hunt. There is a pre-Reformation "Ave Maria" bell, and also one which has been re-cast, but which still bears the inscription:

"Sunt mea spes hii tres
Jesus, Maria, Johannes."

The members reached Sherborne about seven o'clock, after spending a most enjoyable day.