

MR. JAMES PARKER then gave an address upon the
Documentary Evidence relating to the Early History
of Glastonbury.

He pointed out that there were two chief sources—the tractate of William of Malmesbury, and the Secretum. The tractate of Malmesbury, entitled “De antiquitate Glastoniensis ecclesiæ,”

was evidently written to order, and was addressed to Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, who was appointed Abbot of Glastonbury in 1126, and it was probably completed before 1135, since William of Malmesbury in his later works refers to his having already written it, and he must have died about 1142. It was however very unfortunate that the earliest MS. which exists was transcribed some 60 or 70 years after the death of the author, and so much has been evidently interpolated that it is hard to say what is Malmesbury's own and what the later scribe's. We could however be sure of some portion being Malmesbury's, as the substance was transcribed into an early edition of his "*Gesta Regum.*"

Mr. Parker referred to many of the stories and to their probable origin. The legend of S. Philip's disciples (amongst whom was Joseph of Arimathea) was supported, if not actually made to rest, on the two words in a general history written by Freulfus, a Bishop of Lisieux, in the ninth century, viz., "*Philippus Gallias,*" whence Malmesbury inferred that as Philip came to Gaul so might he have come to Britain. But this word Gallias can be traced no further back than to Isidore of Spain, of the seventh century, while from Eusebius, who collected all that was known about the Apostle in the fourth century, it would appear that Philip never left Asia Minor. As to the doubtful names of Phaganus and Diruvianus, they only dated from the twelfth century, though the story with which they were connected, namely of Lucius sending messengers to Pope Eleutherius, was of earlier date. The clumsily forged charter of S. Patrick would not bear investigation, nor would the story of his visit to Glastonbury fit in with the other legends. The same with S. David of Wales. It was a question whether, when Malmesbury wrote, the thought of connecting the hero of the popular romance of the day with Glastonbury had suggested itself to the monks. The fanciful derivations of Glastonbury, Sugway, &c., were probably not Malmesbury's own, nor is there any reason to

suppose that the name Avalon had been applied to Glastonbury, or the name Inisvitrin manufactured, (giving the place an appearance of being British,) when his MS. was completed. Some of the stories had evidently been told to Malmesbury, and he had inserted them with more or less caution.

The other chief source for the documentary evidence was a chartulary, compiled by order of Abbot Monington, in which were transcribed all the charters and documents which the Abbey possessed relating in any way to their property. It was called the "Secretum," and was preserved in the Bodleian Library. Copies of some of the charters could be obtained from other sources, but this was the most complete and probably the most authentic transcript of them.

The earliest charters of which copies were preserved were three, appertaining to property granted during the reign of King Ine of Wessex, 688-728. These were severally discussed, and the lecturer thought that, allowing for certain errors in the transcription, and after discarding certain interpolations prompted by the zeal or piety of successive scribes, the substance might be accepted. A third document of King Ine, termed a Privilegium and dated A.D. 725, recited previous gifts, the earliest going back to the time of Abp. Theodore, 668-690, some of the grants being made under Kings Cenwalch and Centwin, as well as some under King Ine, and herein confirmed. Taking these four charters together and comparing them with other charters of a similar age, and taking into account the names both of persons and places, and several minute details, it was contended they bore the test very satisfactorily, and pointed to a religious community having settled here in Glastonbury towards the close of the seventh century, and some few years before King Ine came to the throne. Again, taking them in connection with subsequent charters (and there were some twenty or thirty in all to which he was able to refer, more or less perfect, and of dates anterior to the Conquest) there was a natural sequence, and it seemed that

Glastonbury must have had its origin in the period named. Incidentally too the history which these charters seemed to afford could be easily reconciled with some of the names recorded by Malmesbury, as having existed on the altars and tombs in his time; though he enveloped them in mystery, it would appear that it was rather out of desire to enhance their value and exaggerate their antiquity, to please those for whom he wrote his tractate: his evidence could not fairly be taken as proving that they actually belonged to a præ-Saxon age. Still Glastonbury must rank amongst the earliest of the religious establishments in England. Augustine only established his monastery at Canterbury at the beginning of the seventh century, and at the end of that century Glastonbury was of sufficient importance to have large possessions conferred on it by King Ine, and hence in the Chronicles it is Ine, and Ine alone, who has the credit of founding that minster.

The meeting then adjourned, and, after a short time had been allowed for luncheon, assembled in the grounds of

The Abbot's Kitchen.

Mr. JAMES PARKER pointed out that the Great Guest Hall, with other buildings, was recorded to have been commenced by Abbot Fromund, 1303-22, but was not completed till the time of John de Breynton, Abbot 1335-41. It would have been an odd thing to build a Guest-hall without there being a kitchen attached to it, and the structure before them must therefore have been begun as soon as any other part: Probably the foundations of all the new buildings were laid at the same time; and the kitchen no doubt formed an important part of the general plan, and by accident it has been the only part preserved. He could not point out the plan of these new buildings, and he believed there were not sufficient remains to judge of either their extent or of their arrangement. Those who called the building the Abbey Kitchen called it by a wrong name, as that would give the idea that the refectory of the monks was in this part of the precincts. It should be

called the Abbot's Kitchen, that is the kitchen belonging to the Great Hall where the Abbot entertained his guests. Looking at the building from an architectural point of view, supposing that he did not know anything of its history, he should say it was a good specimen of the 14th century style. There were two classes of windows in it; and they would see, if they examined the tracery, that the window on the west side was older than the others, although from the continued courses of the masonry it would appear that the two windows were put into the building at one and the same time. The window on the south side was rather late in character, and would be ascribed to a date not earlier than 1340; the window on the west side belonging rather to the character of the reign of Edward II. In the window on the south side they saw faint traces of the Perpendicular style creeping in, that is, the mullion appeared as if continued through the upper part of the window. At the first sight, therefore, he thought that that window must be an insertion, and that the walls belonged to an earlier date; but on a second inspection he was of opinion that it was in its original place and belonged to the structure, while that on the other side was an older window which had been worked up into the later structure, of the time of Fromund, when the new buildings were first planned and commenced. Whether or not it had been removed from another part of the buildings of course he could not say, but they must remember that sometimes windows were actually made before places were provided for them. It agreed very much with what would be the work of the early years of the 14th century.

A particular feature in the Kitchen was the upper part, commonly called the *Louvre*. This was a French word, and they had a corrupted form of it in *luffer*-boards, that is those boards used in windows of towers. The louvre was a very common feature in halls, as well as in kitchens of the Middle Ages. In kitchens they were very essential, because, the small chim-

neys not being lofty enough to carry off the smoke from the very large fires it was necessary to keep, an opening was made at the top to carry off the smoke and steam. If they looked inside they would see that the arrangement was very peculiar—he believed unique, at least he knew of no other place existing where they found three or four air-holes round the great central air-hole. The nearest like it he knew was at Durham, and though there were a great many minor differences, the general aspect was much the same. When complete the building of course had four chimneys, one at either corner, and if they wanted to see something which was probably like what this was originally they must go to Oxford, and they would see in the design of the detached chemical laboratory, on the south side of the New Museum, one evidently adapted from the kitchen at Glastonbury, but with four large chimneys still standing erect and giving a character to the building.

Another example of a fine medieval kitchen existed at Stanton Harcourt, some few miles from Oxford. There was much the same principle to be seen there as in Glastonbury, but it was carried out somewhat differently. There the whole of the upper part was of wood, and the arrangement was such that the whole of this topmost story was surrounded with luffer-boards, and some of the original boards were actually in existence. By pulling a cord all those in any one opening could be opened simultaneously, like a Venetian blind, and they were as easily closed; so, when needful, only those away from the wind could be opened, and the others closed, in order to carry off the smoke. It was a very ingenious arrangement, and sufficient was remaining to see exactly how it was managed. The date of the kitchen at Stanton Harcourt was however rather later than that of Glastonbury.

There was another example which he had seen many years back, which, from what he remembered, bore great resemblance to that at Glastonbury, though the structure was octagonal in

plan, and that was at Fontevrault, on the river Loire. At the time he visited it, it was described as the Chapter-house, and so they would find it described in most books of some 30 or 40 years ago. Possibly if the one they were now inspecting had been found in a different position as regards the Church, and had no chimneys or fireplaces in the corners, they might well have supposed it was a Chapter-house.

Since examples of medieval kitchens were so scarce, it was very fortunate that so fine a one as this had been preserved; though it was certainly singular, when so much had been destroyed, that of all the domestic parts of that once enormous Abbey, the kitchen should be the only part which survived. Although, as he had said, there seemed to be little doubt that the Prior's Hall and the Guest Hall were built about the same time as that kitchen near to them, he could not, he was sorry to say, attempt to explain the meaning of the few ruins adjoining the kitchen, or point out exactly where the Guest Hall stood in relation to the kitchen—much less the Abbot's Parlour. He was afraid, too, that even by digging not much light would be thrown on the matter; because when, after the Dissolution, the Abbey buildings were sold, those who took off the roof for the sake of the lead, dug up the foundations for the sake of the stone.

The Rev. J. T. FOWLER, of Durham, said that we ought to keep in view the distinction between the Abbey kitchen and the Abbot's kitchen. Great monasteries often had, he believed, three separate kitchens; the Abbey Kitchen proper, close to the refectory, which commonly formed the side of the quadrangle furthest from the church, and had the kitchen just outside it. In Cistercian houses, however, the refectory was built north and south, and had the kitchen adjoining on one side, both opening out of the cloister court. Then the Abbot had often a great kitchen of his own, to serve for the exercise of hospitality. This was connected with the Abbot's Hall, just as at Durham there is a kitchen connected with the Castle

Hall, quite distinct from the monastic kitchen. At Durham the Bishop, who took the place of Abbot, resided in the Castle. Mr. Fowler believed that there were kitchens at Westminster and elsewhere connected with the Abbot's Halls, and quite distinct from the refectory kitchens. Then there was, thirdly, the infirmary kitchen. Of the three, he thought the famous Glastonbury kitchen was the *Abbot's Kitchen*, and not the *Abbey Kitchen*, grounding his opinion mainly upon its great distance from the church, and suggesting that the foundations of the *Abbey Kitchen*, if existing, might probably be found in the apple orchard, considerably to the east of this kitchen, and due south from the nave of the church.

*The Abbey Ruins.*¹

The party then proceeded to the ruins of the Abbey Church, under the guidance of Mr. Parker, halting first on the south side of ST. JOSEPH'S CHAPEL; from thence they proceeded to the GREAT CHURCH, taking up a position where the central tower stood; and afterwards to the CHOIR. At each place

Mr. JAMES PARKER gave an architectural and historical address on the ruins, which he has since kindly enlarged and corrected from the reporter's notes. This will be found in Part II, p. 25.

The Rev. J. T. FOWLER, being called upon, gave a description of the general arrangements of Monastic Buildings, observing that there was nothing here to guide them, almost everything having been swept away. In every great monastic building there would have to be provision for Divine service, monastic business, refreshments, and sleeping. All these requisite buildings would be grouped round a yard or cloister court. The Church was almost always, as in the present instance, on the north side. On the eastern side of the quadrangle should be found a passage going eastwards to the Cemetery. Between the south transept of the Church and the Chapter House there would be what was called the Slype,

(1). See *Proceedings Som. Arc. Soc.*, vol. ix. pl. i. for illustrations.

where it was customary to allow the corpse to lie the night before burial. In the Chapter House all monastic business was transacted, and often in connection with it was the Prison, as at Durham. On the south side of the quadrangle would be the Refectory, near the door of which would be a Lavatory. South of the refectory would be the Abbey Kitchen. The west side of the cloister walk would be occupied by the Dormitories. The north walk of the cloister would lead to the Church, and this north walk was generally provided with seats for the monks. Mr. Fowler concluded by pointing out what he considered would be the position in the Church of the high altar.

MR. NEVILLE-GRENVILLE said when Professor Willis examined the ruins he pointed out where the altar should be, and with a crowbar sounded and got at the foundation.

The PRESIDENT proposed that the thanks of the Society should be accorded to Mr. Austin for his kindness in allowing them to go over the ruins, and expressed the pleasure the Society felt at finding the place so well cared for by him. Also to Mrs. Rees-Mogg and Miss Naish for throwing open to them the grounds of the Abbot's Kitchen; and to Mr. Parker and the Rev. J. T. Fowler, for the trouble they had taken in explaining everything to them.

The thanks were unanimously accorded.

The party next proceeded to the

Tithe Barn.

MR. PARKER said he did not know where the earliest mention of barns (*bere-erns*) occurred, but places for storing the wheat (*bere*)—or rather bar-ley—were probably as old as our language. The many bar-tons, or enclosure where the barn or granary was situate, testify to this, as the name is found in charters as early as any other *ton*. Every monastery had its chief barn, which in later times took the name of the tithe-barn. And some monasteries whose possessions were scattered had of course more than one tithe-

barn. In the present instance they had a barn on which the architect had lavished the same skill as on the domestic buildings, and had perhaps gone one step farther, and had lavished somewhat the same artistic skill as he would on a church. He had not seen in any other part of the country the figures of the four Evangelists sculptured and placed on the four corners, as was the case there, and which appears to have been followed in other cases in the neighbourhood where barns were erected at the cost of this Abbey. That barn was not so large as many other tithe barns in the country, and did not strike him as being so large as might have been expected to have belonged to a monastery of such an extent as that of Glastonbury; but still there was no doubt that it was the head tithe-barn of that Monastery. With regard to its date, it was probably built in the time of Nicholas Frome, who was appointed in 1420. However, this was rather a guess from the style of architecture than anything else; for, though we have a record of considerable buildings erected during his tenure of office, such as houses rebuilt in the High Street, the ale-house and bake-house at Southend, the miller's house, and the wall the whole length of the south side of the Abbey garden, the mention of the tithe-barn does not occur. Probably this arises from the cost of building coming under the ordinary expenses of the house, and not defrayed by any special benefaction. Taken altogether, the barn was one of the best preserved he had ever visited.

The PRESIDENT said there was a barn at Wells, although not so good as the one they were inspecting. This was certainly the best piece of work in a barn he had ever seen.

The Tor.

The party having climbed the hill and assembled near the tower on the top of the Tor,

Mr. PARKER said he would only make a few general observations as time was pressing. When we remember that the

Archangel S. Michael was stationed on the summit of the Hill and Castle to guard Rome—that the “Mounts” in the two respective bays off Cornwall and Normandy are dedicated to S. Michael, no wonder that this lofty hill, which afforded a suitable spot whence the saint could watch not only over the Abbey lying beneath, but it may be even said over the whole of Somerset, was here surmounted by a chapel dedicated in his honour. We have no record when the chapel was first built; but in Henry I’s time there was a charter granting a fair to be held annually “apud monasterium S. Michaelis de Torre.” The charter being dated April 1, 1127 (the King being then at Bordeaux), we may say that the hill was dedicated to S. Michael before that date and that there was then a chapel here. In those days a fair was a very important event, and was a great source of revenue to the landlord. In the time of John de Taunton, who was Abbot in 1274, there is a record that the little church on the hill was destroyed. The words of the chronicler, John of Glastonbury, are “At this time in the year 1275, on the third Ides of September (Sep. 11), the Chapel of S. Michael of Torre fell down by reason of an earthquake.” The earthquake referred to was undoubtedly nothing more than a landslip, for which the geological formation of the hill, namely limestone resting on a bed of clay, provided the requisite elements, and of which the present appearance gave evidence. About 1290 a series of indulgencies were granted for the purpose of restoration, and it was no doubt soon afterwards that S. Michael’s Chapel was rebuilt. He should put the tower down as 14th century work, with 15th century additions to it; but they would see that the whole of the eastern part of the building had been done away with, and that now only the tower remained.

The Evening Meeting

was held at the Town Hall and was presided over by Mr. Freeman.

Mr. J. MC MURTRIE read a paper "On the Lamb Bottom Caverns at Harptree," which will be found in Part II, p. 1.

Mr. W. BOYD DAWKINS said he had listened to the paper with very great pleasure, Mr. Mc Murtrie having put the matter before them in a very simple and practical manner, explaining one of those explorations which were only to be carried out at great risk to the explorer. He need hardly tell them that wherever they got thick masses of limestone there they would be sure to get great subterranean passages of the kind described. The one in question seemed to him to be an admirable type of the whole series. The hollow made in the solid crystalline limestone by the dissolving action of the carbonic acid in the rain water became widened more and more, until they got the result which had been described that evening. If it happened that a large quantity of water converged upon one point they might have a most stupendous hole excavated. Those caverns were really great subterranean water courses, and whether dry or not at the present time they were originally excavated by the action of the carbonic acid, which caused the limestone to be dissolved. The theory that the caverns might have been formed by fissures mechanically produced would not hold good at all. That they were formed many ages ago, long before this country had any history, was proved by the objects which were found in those caverns, representing animals which were in existence in this country at those times. They had the arctic beasts side by side with the southern beasts, as had been proved to the satisfaction of all geologists. He had very great pleasure in adding his testimony to the value of researches such as those made by Mr. Mc Murtrie.

The Rev. H. H. WINWOOD also made some remarks.

Mr. EMANUEL GREEN read a paper "On some Flemish Weavers settled at Glastonbury A.D. 1551," which is given in Part II, p. 17.

Mr. JOHN MORLAND called the attention of the Society to an old road he had discovered in excavating at Northover, about one mile from Glastonbury, and wished the Society to visit and inspect it while they were in the neighbourhood.

It was intimated that if time could be found a visit should be paid to the road in question.

The meeting closed with votes of thanks to the readers of papers.
