

## The Site of the Castle of Cary.

After luncheon the Members met on the site of the Castle, where excavations had been made to determine the structure and arrangements. Rain fell heavily.

Mr. BUCKLE said: There can be no doubt whatever that the footings which have been disclosed belong to a Norman Rectangular Keep. The plan consists of a square of about 78 feet on each side (according to Mr. Francis's measurement), with external walls 15 feet thick, and one transverse dividing wall 8 feet thick; together with a fore-building along one side. Where the fore-building occurs the main wall of the keep is reduced from 15 feet to 8 feet, although the outer wall of the fore-building is only 3 feet thick above the plinth. A short length of chamfered plinth remains on

this outer wall. [Probably some deduction should be made from most of the above dimensions to allow for a set off at the ground level.]

In Mr. G. T. Clark's book on Castles I find fifty-five places enumerated as having had Norman rectangular keeps; twenty-seven of these are described at length, and of this number *only four are larger than Cary*, viz:—

Colchester, 152 × 111 ft.      Dover ... 98 × 96 ft.

London ... 118 × 107 ft.      Middleham, 100 × 80 ft.

(In these dimensions the projections of chapels, etc., are not included.)

Apparently hardly any have thicker walls, though several have stronger foundations.

The dimensions of some other keeps are—

Kenilworth, 87 × 58 ft.      Rochester, 70 × 70 ft.

Norham ... 86 × 64 ft.      Taunton, 50 × 40 ft.

Bowes ... 82 × 60 ft.      Clitheroe, 33 × 33 ft.<sup>5</sup>

This comparison suggests two questions. How came Cary to have a castle of the first rank? How was it that so strong a place was so easily destroyed?

On the east side of the keep, adjoining the outer wall face, is found some concrete paving, and a few inches below this, another similar paving; the space between the two layers of concrete being made up largely of animal bones and potsherds. The existence of pavings at two distinct levels seems to point to an occupation of the keep for a considerable length of time. On the assumption that it was destroyed by Stephen, it seems probable that it was built at a considerably earlier period; it can hardly have been one of the *adulterine* castles.

Fire was one of the instruments of its destruction. Much burnt stone is found among the debris.

On the east side of the keep (the side most exposed to

<sup>5</sup> The smallest in the book.

attack) was a very wide and deep ditch, guarding the inner ward of the castle. The bottom of this is now filled with loose stones, presumably part of the debris from the walls of the keep.

Between this ditch and the keep is a very large bank of earth. This seems to have been thrown up after the destruction of the keep, and as a substitute for it; for it overlies both the footings of the keep and the loose stones in the ditch. Probably remains of the curtain wall may be found low down in this mound.

The inner and the outer wards of the castle are clearly marked out by the contour of the ground. The outer ward is protected on the east side by a mound (perhaps containing a curtain wall) and ditch; on the west side by an escarpment, with apparently a retaining wall.

The position of the manor house, which succeeded the castle, is shown on the map of the manor, B.M. Add. MSS. 9050. The house seems to have been very large, and to have occupied, roughly, the same position as the present manor farm. There are, however, indications of walls between this house and the keep, which may possibly refer to the curtain wall on this side. Probably the stone for the manor house was quarried out of the keep; and on the demolition of this house, the stones were again used in the farm buildings, in the positions in which we now find them. The map referred to appears to be fairly accurate, and the presumption from it is, that the site of the keep has never been used for any subsequent building, so that whatever is found upon this site may be assumed (in the absence of further evidence) to belong to the Norman castle.

The explorations were continued for some time after the Society's meeting, and notes on the excavations, by Mr. Gregory, with plans by Mr. Francis, will be found in Part II.

Leaving the site of the old Castle, the Members assembled in the Market Place, where breaks were in readiness to convey them to