The Siege of Sherborne Castle in 1645.

BY HUGH NORRIS.

ON Sunday, July the 27th, 1645, a notable religious function was celebrated at Martock, the like of which has never been witnessed in that place, before or since. This was nothing less than a church parade of the whole Parliamentary army, attended by Fairfax and Cromwell, together with all its leading officers, saving only those who were engaged on special duty elsewhere.

How the troops happened to be there, and in what way that circumstance came to be connected with the taking of Sherborne Castle, will appear as the narrative goes on. In any case this Sunday offered the first opportunity for organising a public thanksgiving in recognition of the marked success that had attended the proceedings of the New Model army before Bridgwater. It was also taken advantage of as a day of rest for the fatigued soldiers, who had been constantly either fighting or marching since their hard won victory at Naseby, exactly six weeks previously.

After the surrender of the western fortress on the 23rd,[1] it took two days to settle terms, to carry out the evacuation of the garrison, to appropriate supplies, to make sure of the hostages, and to hold the inevitable council of war, at which would have to be presented the all-important question, "What next?"

An all-important question, truly! For whatever the decision arrived at, it was one which involved immense responsibilities. If a false move were now made it might almost peril

(1) *Proceedings*, vol. xxiii, pt. ii, p. 22.

the existence of Fairfax's army ; at any rate it would probably deprive its recent exploits of more than half their value ; whilst, on the other hand, if a bold and vigorous policy could be successfully carried out, peace—a more or less lasting peace,—might be not unfairly reckoned on.

The situation was this.

There were still enough Royal troops west of Taunton, *i.e.*, in Devon and Cornwall, to give a deal of further trouble if left to their own devices, and these could not be deemed completely cut off from the Royalist headquarters whilst Bristol was in the hands of the king.[2] It is true that a continuous chain of garrisons extending from Weymouth and Lyme Regis on the English channel, to Bridgwater on the Parret estuary, was now in the hands of the Parliamentary forces, but so long as a king's ship could sail unmolested into King-road,[3] whether from Devonshire or Ireland, or run across the Severn-sea from Wales to Bristol, Fairfax could not be said to be master of the situation.

But the army was somewhat bare of supplies, and the munitions that fell into its hands at Bridgwater were by no means adequate to a due preparation for the arduous task of laying siege to the city in question, which was then held by the fiery Rupert and a strong garrison of seasoned troops. The same want of means also stood in the way of at once doing any great things in the far west.

Then again Bath, though weak in its garrison and distracted

(2) Charles himself at this moment was at Cardiff, endeavouring to imbue the Welsh gentry with some amount of enthusiasm in his cause ; but not meeting with the success he expected, he very soon started for the north Midlands, still, alas ! followed by those misfortunes which would almost seem to have been his exclusive inheritance.—*Vide* Symonds' *Diary*, 218 ; Clarendon, Book viii ; Gardiner, *Civil War*, ii, 289.

(3) A fort at Portishead, mounting six pieces of ordnance, in possession of the king's troops, defended King-road at this time. This was taken by Lieut.-Col. Kempson, of Welden's brigade, on the 28th of August, and within a day or two after, the 'road' was occupied by a small flotilla from Milford, commanded by Vice-Admiral Moulton for the Parliament. (Sprigg, *Ang. Rediv.*)

by internal dissensions, was in the hands of the Royalists, and able to give some support, *quantum valeat*, to the king's nephew at Bristol.

On the other side, Sherborne Castle was strong and reputed to be impregnable by those whose interest it was that it should be considered so. It was bravely held by Sir Lewis Dives,[4] stepson to the Earl of Bristol, "an active enemy and resolute soldier," as Sprigg calls him.

It was also alleged that in order to ensure entire success in any attack that might be made on its walls, it would be needful, first of all, to quiet the "Club army" in central Dorset, whose numbers were now becoming formidable and whose attitude was very menacing, especially towards the Parliamentary forces; altogether out of character with its assumed principles of neutrality and self-defence.

These combined circumstances were probably duly weighed by the more responsible officers attending the council at Bridgwater, which was held on the 25th of July, but there was evidently some difference of opinion as to the proper direction of the next move.

At the outset of the meeting it seemed as if the generals were disposed to march direct on Sherborne, but the final consensus of opinion was in favour of first of all striking a decisive

(4) [The surname of this gallant defender of Sherborne Castle was DYVE, at least if we follow the spelling on his monument in Combe-Hay Church, as given by Collinson, iii, 336.

> "Here lyeth the body of Sir Lewis Dyve, of Bromham, in the co. of Bedford, Kt., only son of Sir John Dyve, of Bromham, Kt., by Dame Beatrice, his wife, daughter of Charles Walcot, of Walcot, in the co. of Salop, Esq., who was afterwards married to the Rt. Hon. John, E. of Bristol, by whom she had issue, the Rt. Hon. George, now E. of Bristol. The said Sir Lewis Dyve took to wife Howard, daughter of Sir John Strangways, of Melbury Sampford, in the co. of Dorset, Kt., and by her had issue living at the time of his death, three sons, Francis, Lewis, and John, and one daughter, Grace, who married George Hussey, of Marnhull, in the co. of Dorset, Esq. He died April 17, 1669."—Ed.]

blow at the remains of Goring's army in the west. Accordingly the next day (Saturday, July 26th) saw Fairfax with his forces at Martock, "where, resting the Lord's day, there was a thanksgiving for the successe in the taking of Bridgewater,"[5] as before mentioned.

It strikes one that this march to Martock was more or less indirectly brought about by the obvious indecision of the council of war just held, and was possibly undertaken by Fairfax with a view to gain time for further consideration.

We are distinctly told by one who seems to have been well acquainted with the movements of the whole campaign, that "the general was at this time much troubled in his thoughts, concerning his march further west, before Bath and Sherborne were absolutely reduced, and the disaffected Clubmen brought to more obedience."[6]

In such a state of things, there could hardly have been selected a more appropriate spot as a temporary centre of operations than the aforesaid village. The result of Fairfax's Sabbath cogitations was, that in the exercise of his undoubted authority as Commander-in-chief, he took upon himself, notwithstanding the decision of the council, to order an immediate countermarch to Wells, first, however, detailing a brigade of horse and foot in the direction of Sherborne, under Col. Pickering, a trustworthy officer, with directions "to face that garrison, and to view the same, and if there were hopes to reduce it, to sit down before it, in order to a siege."[7]

A party of horse and dragoons under Col. Rich was at the same time sent on to Bath, with a view to find out how things were looking in that part of the County, and to report at the headquarters in Wells, where Fairfax would await any news that might be forthcoming, and which indeed was not long in reaching him; for on the morning of Wednesday, the 30th of

(5) Sprigg.
(6) Sprigg.
(7) Sprigg.

July, he learnt that Bath had surrendered to Col. Okey under somewhat curious circumstances the night before.[8]

It appears that in the early part of the preceding day, the 29th, Colonel Rich summoned the governor to surrender, but met with a decided refusal. Towards dusk, however, some dragoons under Col. Okey drew near the bridge by which the city gate was approached, and "creeping over it on their bellies," surprised the guard, and seized on the muzzles of the muskets protruding through the loopholes in the wall, "which so affrighted the warders, that they ran to their work which flankered the bridge, and left their musquets behind them, as of no use to them, so of as little to us," (the assailants); the owners being by this time hiding behind stone walls. Okey's men instantly blew in the gate, and so became masters of the bridge, on which the deputy governor in a fright sounded a parley, and surrendered without further resistance; doubtless as much to the surprise and delight of his adversaries as to his own chagrin.

This daring act occurred just in the nick of time, for Rupert having got wind of the meditated attack on Bath, had marched out of Bristol to its assistance with fifteen hundred horse and foot, and was within four miles of Okey's "braves," when he was informed of the fate of the city, but, as Sprigg has it, "comming too late *he retreated.*"

Wednesday, July 30th, found Fairfax's army drawn up on Mendip with intent to march on Bath, but the general on hearing of its capture, sent his main force back to quarters in Wells, whilst he himself, with two regiments of infantry, hastened to aid Col. Rich in securing his prize. Resting one night in Bath, he returned to Wells the next morning, after strengthening the little garrison with his two regiments above

(8) See also "A Full relation of the taking of Bath on Wednesday, July 30, 1645," in *King's Pamphlets*, Brit. Mus., No. 218.

Sprigg says that the city was taken on the 29th. It seems probable that the surprise was on the 29th, and the formal surrender on the 30th.

mentioned. This unlooked-for success set him free to turn his sole attention to the reduction of Sherborne.

Accordingly on the 1st of August, the army marched from Wells to Queen Camel, where they quartered for the night. Fairfax and Cromwell meanwhile, with a small escort of horse, rode on to "view" the works and castle, which they did cursorily the same evening, and again more carefully the next morning (Saturday, the 2nd), on which date the army itself reached Sherborne.

The result of this reconnoissance was, that the generals decided on approaching the Digby stronghold by the slower but surer process of a formal siege, in preference to making any attempt to reduce it by storm, as had been first intended.[9]

There is no doubt that this was a wise decision on the part of the two commanders, since the threatening behaviour of the Clubmen (or "Associates" as they called themselves) of Dorset, Wilts, and Somerset, imperatively demanded instant action on the part of the army.

Fairfax, who lost no time in setting himself down before the walls of the castle, on doing so, received certain intelligence that there was to be a big meeting of the Clubmen that very day at Shaftesbury, whereupon Col. Fleetwood was despatched with a thousand horse to surround the town and take the ringleaders, about fifty of whom he at once brought into camp as prisoners. Chief among these were the notorious Mr. Hollis, Dr. Goche, and three others, named Carey, Young, and Cradock. All the prisoners were disarmed and placed in confinement until the military authorities could find time to deal with them; the result being that they were sent in durance vile to London after the siege was over.

On the day following (Sunday, August 3rd), news was brought that all the country of Wilts, Dorset, and part of Somerset was up in arms, to the number of ten thousand men,

(9) Sprigg.

under pretence of rescuing the prisoners of the previous day, but really with the intent of cutting off provisions on the way to the camp, and thus hindering Fairfax from accomplishing anything decisive at Sherborne, before Goring could manage to raise the siege (of which they had hopes) with his "army of the west."

Sprigg, to whom we are indebted for much of the above information, has left a graphic account of the proceedings that followed, and how, after a deal of garrulous diplomacy on the part of Club leaders, who talked very loudly but who did little else, Cromwell was sent to attack about four thousand of them who were strongly posted in the old Romano-British camp on Hambledon Hill, by Iwerne Courtenay, then called "Shrawton" or "Shroton." After some temporizing on the part of the Parliamentary commander, who was anxious to avoid bloodshed if possible, he ordered his troops to make the attack. In so doing they were at the outset repulsed in consequence of the strength of the Clubmen's position, and the extreme narrowness of the approach, which would not admit more than three horses abreast.[10] But Major Desborough (the gallant officer who headed the decisive cavalry charge at Langport) on seeing the state of affairs, crept round to the Associates' rear, unseen, and completely routed them, killing some and taking many prisoners. The Club army was so thoroughly disorganized by this surprise, that they not only at once gave in, but were convinced of the hopelessness of the movement, at least when confronted by opponents so powerful and active as Fairfax and Cromwell.

The latter, who really pitied the deluded men, having inflicted his punishment, proceeded to talk to them like a father, and this so touched the hearts of "the poor silly creatures," that, as he afterwards told Fairfax, they confessed they now

(10) The fact seems to have been that the troops strove to approach by the old strategic entrance to the original British camp, and their failure affords a standing testimony to the engineering skill of our so-called savage ancestors.

saw how much they had been misled by their leaders, and after promising to be dutiful subjects in future, declared they would be hanged before they would ever come out again.[11]

Henceforth we hear no more of them, and the whole country was freed from their intrusion. Documents found on their leaders proved, beyond doubt, the existence of a compact solidarity between the Royalist party and the so-called Club army. Sprigg tells us that commissions under the Prince's own hand were found on some of the prisoners, and this was corroborated by letters, etc., discovered amongst Sir Lewis Dives's papers when the siege was over. The same authority assures us that the immediate effect of this rout was, that whereas the army could previously send neither "messengers nor parties," now a man might ride very quietly between Sherborne and Salisbury.

Having thus successfully accomplished his mission, Cromwell rejoined Fairfax, who had not left Sherborne, and thenceforth the siege was assiduously pressed forward until the end.

It is no part of the writer's purpose to describe the fortified home of Beauclerc's magnificent chancellor at Sherborne: this has already been well done by others in our Transactions. Suffice it to say that when Stephen, in the exercise of an astute, if not altogether just policy, destroyed so many strongholds erected by his turbulent subjects, those of Bishop Roger[12] were spared on account of their solidity and grandeur. The lordship of that at Sherborne was thereafter chiefly vested in the Church or the Crown, and this may possibly account for the fact of its sound condition at the outset of the Civil War; a condition which, as we have seen, was such as to forbid the hope of taking it by storm.

In the autumn of 1642 it had been occupied for the king by

(11) Gardiner, *Civil War*, ii, 306.

(12) Devizes, Sherborne, and Malmesbury. The latter, though condemned by Stephen (Will. Malms. *Modern History*), was not destroyed until the reign of King John. (Camden).

the Marquis of Hertford, who held it intact against a besieging force, largely outnumbering his own, commanded by the Earl of Bedford; and possibly this evidence of the strength of its defences had some weight in the deliberations of the Parliamentary commanders when they decided on testing its stability by a formal siege. The garrison at this time was commanded, as we have seen, by Sir Lewis Dives, half brother to the Lord Digby, a brave man, and a capable soldier, of whom sober John Evelyn remarks that "he was indeed a valiant gentleman, but not a little given to romance when he spake of himself";[13] the truth being that in this respect he could not have been easily surpassed by that mendacious old humourist, Sir John Falstaff.

The king, according to Clarendon[14] and others, had "spent six days too long" enjoying himself at Sherborne Lodge, "the brave seat of the Earl of Bristol,"[15] in the previous October, whilst awaiting some reinforcements from Bristol which had been promised by Rupert, and on his departure he had left Dives in charge of the castle, at the same time conferring on him the title of Commander-in-chief for Dorset. Here his permanent garrison consisted of one hundred and fifty old and seasoned foot soldiers, "his own regiment," and some horse.[16] This force, however, must have been considerably augmented at the time of which we are speaking.

The cautious behaviour of the besieging generals strikes one as being a compliment equally sincere to the capacity of Sir Lewis Dives and to the strength of the position. It was needful, moreover, to take great care of the valiant men who had undergone so much fatigue, and so many privations, since their famous march from Leicester in the preceding June,[17]

(13) *Diary*, i, 268. *See* also Markham, *Life of Fairfax*, n. p. 241.

(14) *Civil War*, Book viii.

(15) Symonds, *Diary*, 115.

(16) Clarendon, Book viii.

(17) *Proceedings*, vol. xl, part ii, 128. See also a very interesting paper entitled, "From Leicester to Langport," in vol. xxxix, of the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, by Major G. F. Browne, D.S.O., D.A.A.G., etc., etc.

especially since we are told that the Parliamentary army was not reinforced by country recruits to the extent that its commanders had been led to expect.[18]

Cromwell returned from the rout of the "Club army" at Hambledon, on Tuesday night, the 5th of August, and, as has been remarked, he immediately proceeded to assist Fairfax in the reduction of the castle.

The latter officer had not been idle in Cromwell's absence. We know that he had already commenced his "approaches," but we are not told much about the early details of the siege, beyond Sprigg's quaint story that whilst the Lieut.-General was reading the Clubmen a lesson, "a commanded party crept underneath the stone wall close by Sherborne Castle, and gained the hay-stack within a stone's cast of their works."

The exact situation of this hay-stack does not appear, but it was probably somewhere on the north side of the fortress.

On the day following (the 6th), the besieged made a new "work," on which they planted some ordnance with a view to dislodge the assailants who had sheltered themselves behind the hay-stack. Dives's men were, however, driven from this position and their guns taken, but with the loss of four officers wounded and one killed on the side of the assailants.

The Parliamentary troops seemed still to dwell on the idea of storming the fortress, but were restrained by their commanders in council, who were influenced, not merely by cautious motives, but also by the arrival of news that a big breaching gun was on its way from Portsmouth, and that a number of Mendip miners were available for sapping operations if their services should be required.

These considerations tended to prevent any hasty or doubtful action on the part of the besiegers, who had to content themselves for the present with diligent work in the trenches. The same evening a Captain Horsey was killed by a sharpshooter, stationed on one of the corner towers of the castle,

(18) Sprigg.

with a "birding-piece." This officer was buried next day, together with a Captain Flemming, whose death at the capture of the cannon has been mentioned.[19] The first named officer was John, third son of the Sir George Horsey, who made "ducks and drakes" of the noble inheritance of Clifton Maubank, which had been enjoyed by his family from the time of Edward III.[20] The deceased soldier is said to have been the last of his race,[21] and we are told by Sprigg that he was buried "after a martiall manner in the Abbey Church at Sherborne, being the place where Captaine Horsey's ancestors were intombed."[22]

On Friday, the 8th, Sir Thomas Fairfax, whilst engaged in inspecting the works of the besieging party, narrowly escaped being killed by one of his own men, some of whom were amusing themselves by driving and shooting the park deer.

Those who worked at the approaches and batteries from this time forward received a shilling a day, and as much by night, the duty being considered especially hazardous.

On Monday, August the 11th, the big (or as it was called the "whole") cannon arrived from Portsmouth, but the battery platform not being quite ready, it was not used for a couple of days after it had been brought into camp.

About this date, or a little earlier, Goring's movements in the west seemed to imply that he had an idea of attempting to raise the siege; he was, however, foiled in his design by the ubiquitous Massey, of which news reached Sherborne on this day.

On Tuesday, the 12th, the miners from Mendip arrived and at once commenced their duties, but were much hindered by the besieged showering lighted faggots on their heads as they

(19) In the Abbey register of burials, this officer's name is entered as "Clements." (Hutchins, 3rd ed., iv, 272)

(20 and 21) Rogers, *Memorials of the West*, pp. 45 and 59.

(22) The Horsey monument is situated in what is called the "Wickham" chapel.

worked. These missiles also set fire to a wooden bridge which was being constructed over a small rivulet thereby, but the flames were soon got under, and the bridge repaired.

Fairfax, seeing things so far advanced, notified to Sir Lewis Dives that if Lady Dives or any women were in the castle and would like to come out, he would gladly permit them to do so. This courtesy was as courteously acknowledged, but the offer was declined, the commander expressing his determination to hold out to the last.

On Wednesday, the 13th, the miners had advanced to within six feet of the wall, and one master gunner was killed. Another gunner named Jenkins was also killed by the man in the tower who made such good use of his fowling piece.

On the 14th, the big guns were in full play by 11 a.m., and before six in the evening they had made a breach in the wall wide enough to admit ten men abreast, and so incessant was the fire, that the ammunition now and then got short, on which a number of adventurous soldiers employed themselves in rushing after the shot as they rebounded from the wall, in order to their being used again. For this perilous service they were rewarded at the rate of sixpence[23] for each cannon-ball so recovered; which Sprigg thought was not a bad bargain on the part of the commanders.

On seeing the practicability of the breach, Fairfax again and again summoned the governor to surrender, but the latter seems by this time to have completely lost his temper, as after threatening to hang the messenger of peace, he sent him back with a ridiculously bombastic and somewhat insolent refusal.

And now the work waxed hotter and hotter! Another gunner was killed by the man with the fowling piece, and the stormers got so close to the wall that the defenders were unable to depress their muskets sufficiently to make their fire effectual against the attacking party, and so in default of

(23) Hutchins says "six *shillings*," but this is an evident error. Sprigg explicitly states the sum as six *pence*.

better weapons they had to resort to the expedient of hurling stones on the heads of the foe, some of whom had by this time gained possession of one of the corner towers, which gave them an opportunity, of which they were not slow to avail themselves, of making an end of the gallant fellow who had done such execution with his shot gun.

The men were now very impatient to storm the inner defences of the castle, but the caution of their commanders again interfered, although the boldest among them were near enough to pluck wool out of the packs that were hung in front of the wall in order to mitigate the destructive force of the cannon balls. The besieged meanwhile placed strong guards at the breach, and as the shades of evening came on, they lighted up the neighbourhood by means of bonfires within the walls, with a view to provide as far as possible against the danger of a night surprise.

But by two o'clock in the morning of the 15th, Sir Lewis Dives, seeing that all chance of successful resistance was over, and having, as our informant says, "cooled his brain with a little sleep," sent a curiously worded and somewhat condescending letter to General Fairfax, offering to surrender the castle on such "conditions as are fit for a soldier and a gentleman with honour to accept." Fairfax, with whom war was a serious business, with success for its sole reward, tersely and somewhat brusquely replied, "No terms but 'quarter,' seeing he (Sir Lewis) had slipt and slighted the opportunity; and he was not to expect that, except he rendered speedily."[24]

This message given, the general proceeded immediately to the front, there to direct in person the details of the impending assault. Within two hours, six thousand faggots had been got ready to fill the ditch in front of the breach, and storming parties had been organized, but in the meantime the soldiers who had gained possession of the first tower, rushed from it to a second, and "from thence proved as good marksmen as the

(24) Sprigg.

others," doing great execution upon the enemy within, and forcing the gunners from the ordnance defending the breach.

Amongst the killed in this *mêleé* was the governor's own secretary.

In the meantime the Mendip men had kept pace with the soldiers, and had penetrated the foundation of the curtain wall, where they laid a mine, which, however, was not fired because the besiegers rushing *pêle mêle* through the gap, drove the defenders from the main court, and thence from work to work into the keep itself, which being perceived by the rest of the troops, the whole attacking army poured into the space within the entrenched walls. The commandant, convinced that the game was up, replaced the red royal banner by a white flag, and sent a drum to sue for quarter; in this, however, he was anticipated by his own men, who, throwing down their arms, had craved quarter for themselves. This was instantly granted by Fairfax's soldiers, who "inclined rather to booty than revenge."

And now the work of plunder commenced, in a somewhat disorderly manner no doubt. The blood of the besiegers being up, it seemed impossible to restrain them, but to their credit be it said, there is no record of any actual outrage after the surrender of the castle.

All who were found within its walls, except Sir Lewis and Lady Dives, together with a few of the more distinguished inmates, were thoroughly stripped of their belongings, and "loot" of much value was acquired. Hutchins says that amongst those taken, were "several commissioners of array, three members of parliament, nine captains, eleven lieutenants, three cornets, five colours, fifty-five gentlemen of Wilts and Dorset, ten clergymen, six hundred common soldiers, fourteen hundred arms, thirty horses, besides eighteen pieces of ordnance, one mortar and *a murtherer*."[25]

The work of spoliation lasted the whole day and most of the

(25) *Hist. Dorset*, iv, 273.

succeeding night, but was confined to the castle itself, for it has been stated as a fact redounding to the further credit of the Parliamentary army, that although there were found amongst the prisoners about sixty inhabitants of Sherborne who had taken up arms in defence of the king, yet not one of their residences in the town, or one of the inmates thereof, suffered molestation.

The next day, August the 16th, was market day, which the soldiers celebrated by keeping up a thriving bit of traffic with the surrounding country folks, in the disposal of the booty that had fallen into their hands.

A few days later the castle was condemned to be "slighted," that is, destroyed for all further purposes of defence; a decree that was duly carried out in the following October. Out of its ruins, Mr. Wildman, quoting Hutchins, tells us have been built certain additions to the modern castle (or lodge), much of the stables, part of the garden walls, and Castleton Church.

Sprigg says, with truth, that "the reducing of this place was of the greater concernment, in regard of the influence it had upon the disaffected Clubmen in these parts, who, having the countenance of this garrison, were made so much the more bold in their attempts and meetings."

Sherborne Castle, from its position, from the strength of its defences, and from the unquestionable capacity of its governor, had been a sharp thorn in the side of the Parliamentary general throughout his campaign. Besides standing in the direct path of troops marching westward, it had been near enough to the southern sea-bord to receive and to give support in that direction, whilst communication, more or less direct, could take place with Langport, Bridgwater, and even Bristol, so that apart from its vicinity to the headquarters of the Club army, its destruction was as great a calamity to the Royalists as it was a boon to the opposite party.

The fall of Sherborne left the king no stronghold of importance in the counties of Somerset and Dorset. His occu-

pation of Bristol alone prevented Fairfax from being master from sea to sea; if that city could be wrested from Rupert, all the western peninsula comprising the counties of Devon and Cornwall, which were still pretty loyal, would be shut off from Charles's main army. Consequently, at a council of war held the day after Dives's surrender, it was decided that Bristol should be at once attacked.

At the end of a week the Parliamentary army was investing that city, and the siege had begun. The event of that siege, and the subsequent disgrace of Rupert, are matters of history, with which at present we have nothing to do.

Such then is the latest chapter in the story of the survivor of the twin fortresses erected by Henry I's great minister, Roger of Sarum, close upon eight hundred years ago. I speak of Devizes and Sherborne.

Of the former, Henry of Huntingdon, a contemporary historian, says there was none grander within the confines of Europe. Of the latter he adds that it was scarcely inferior to its sister stronghold.

The Norman castle of "the Devizes" (of which the keep alone remained in the seventeenth century), has long since disappeared from the face of the earth.

The picturesque ruins of Sherborne, so jealously conserved by successive owners, remain;—a standing testimony to the truthfulness of the old chronicler. Let us hope they may long endure as a venerable landmark in the history of this country, associated though they be with two of the most disastrous periods recorded in that history:—the days of Stephen and the days of Charles.