

## Treasure Closet, Deanery, Wells.

DURING the repairs of external stone-work, June, 1899, at the Deanery, a horizontal hiding-place was discovered. On the north, or garden front of the deanery, is the new building of Dean Gunthorpe (1472-98), with its fortified tower. The banqueting hall, with its flat ceiling, had a grand guest-chamber over it, now sub-divided into two spacious bedrooms; and the embattled heads of two fine bay-windows—carrying Gunthorpe's guns, and Edward IV's *Rose en Soleil*—rise six feet above the ceiling of the banqueting hall.

In removing the decayed stone-work that roofed in the fan vault of the southern bay window, richly carved with Gunthorpe's badges (gun and hand grenade) an unsuspected hiding-place was laid bare. The original entrance was twenty-one inches square, opening from the floor of the eastern half of the great guest-chamber. This entrance had been closed, with lath and plaster, at a comparatively recent date, perhaps early last century. The floor line of the recess is one foot below the floor line of the bedroom, and the top of the aperture is eleven inches below the curve of the arch (8ft. 7in. span) that supports the external roof. The floor of the recess is 4ft. 1in. in width, large enough to have hidden, for a short time, a fugitive, even while Henry VII, on his march into the West against Perkin Warbeck, was entertained in the Banqueting Hall below, Sept. 30, 1497. Probably the recess was usually a receptacle for plate, tapestry, and other valuables; and, perhaps, no house of any importance, built before the end of the fifteenth century, was without some well-devised hiding-place. Dean Gunthorpe, as is well known, was not only a great scholar, who had studied Greek in Italy, but chaplain to Edward IV, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal to Richard III, and in possession of other well-endowed Court appointments. He was an ardent Yorkist, like the Bishop, his co-temporary, Richard Stillington, of Bath and Wells; and his estate had to pay to Henry VII a

ransom, or benevolence, of £200, equivalent, perhaps, to £3,000 of to-day. He was more fortunate than Bishop Stillington, who spent the last years of his life a State prisoner in Windsor Castle. (See *Somerset Archæological Society's Proceedings* (xl, ii. 5).

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