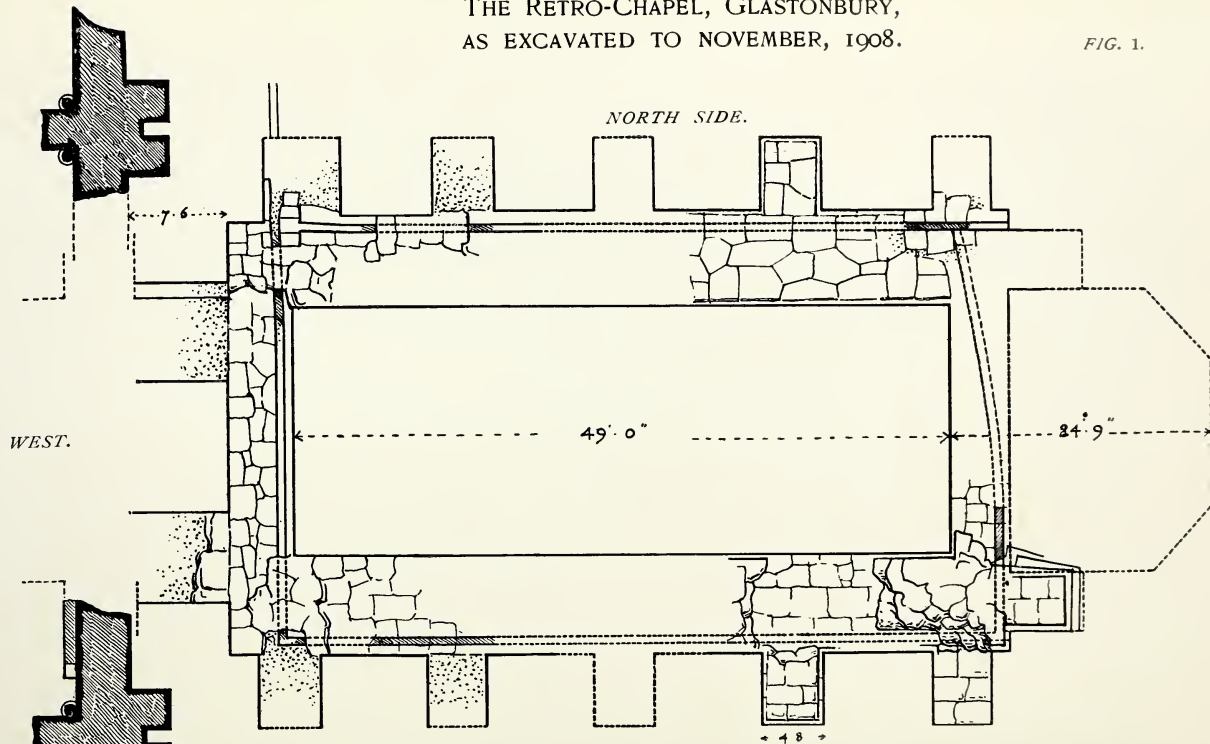


THE RETRO-CHAPEL, GLASTONBURY,  
AS EXCAVATED TO NOVEMBER, 1908.

FIG. 1.



N.B.—The rectangular footings (49 ft. internal length) are believed to represent Abbot Beere's work. An additional length of 24 ft. 9 ins. would be required to bring the total measurement into harmony with that given in the Inventory. A conjectural extension is shewn. The stoning indicates existing foundations. The spotted portions shew where the trenches were filled with freestone dust.

## Glastonbury Abbey.

### REPORT ON THE DISCOVERIES MADE DURING THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1908.

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BY F. BLIGH BOND, F.R.I.B.A.

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#### PART I.

THE present year will be memorable as having witnessed the restitution of the Abbey estate into the hands of the Church of England by the completion of the scheme of purchase, which was the result of the far-seeing and enterprising action of the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

As a consequence of this change it has at last become possible to attempt a systematic examination of the site and precincts of the Abbey Church with a view to throwing light upon those doubtful points of the plan which have been for so many years past a matter of controversy, and regarding which so many different theories have been held. The Trustees of the building very readily granted to the Somerset Archaeological Society the necessary permission to dig, and as a result work was commenced at the end of May and, assisted by exceptionally fine weather, has been carried on almost without intermission well into December. The work was dependent upon voluntary subscriptions: the Society being unable to guarantee any sum of money towards the cost, as it is well known that their hands are at present full; and it was not considered advisable to issue any public appeal to those

interested in the Abbey whilst the Bishop's fund for the purchase of the property was still far from complete, and whilst the Trustees were also faced with the additional necessity of raising a large sum of money for repairs in order to preserve the ruins for the benefit of future generations. Hence the summer's work of excavation has been dependent upon the voluntary contributions of a few friends, and happily these have been sufficient to meet the expenses of labour down to the end of September. Since that time the work has been continued in preparation for next year's formal transfer of the property, by which time it is necessary that the permanent excavations already undertaken should be completed, and everything in perfect order. This is being carried on in the faith of future support, the cost of labour to the end of the year being about £18 over and above the amount subscribed.

The sum of about £43 in all had been placed at the disposal of the Rev. H. L. Barnwell, Vicar of Glastonbury, who is acting as Treasurer, and a report and statement of account will shortly be published together with an appeal for funds for the prosecution of further researches during 1909.

There were several points in regard to the plan of the Abbey which called for investigation. Some of the principal ones may here be enumerated. There was, to begin with, the question of the existence of western towers; that of a North porch, which Professor Willis believed had existed; and the question of the form of the transepts, whether these had western aisles, like Wells, or were without such aisles, as is more frequently the rule in monastic churches of this character; but the principal point which called for some immediate effort at elucidation was in regard to the plan of the East end of the great Church.

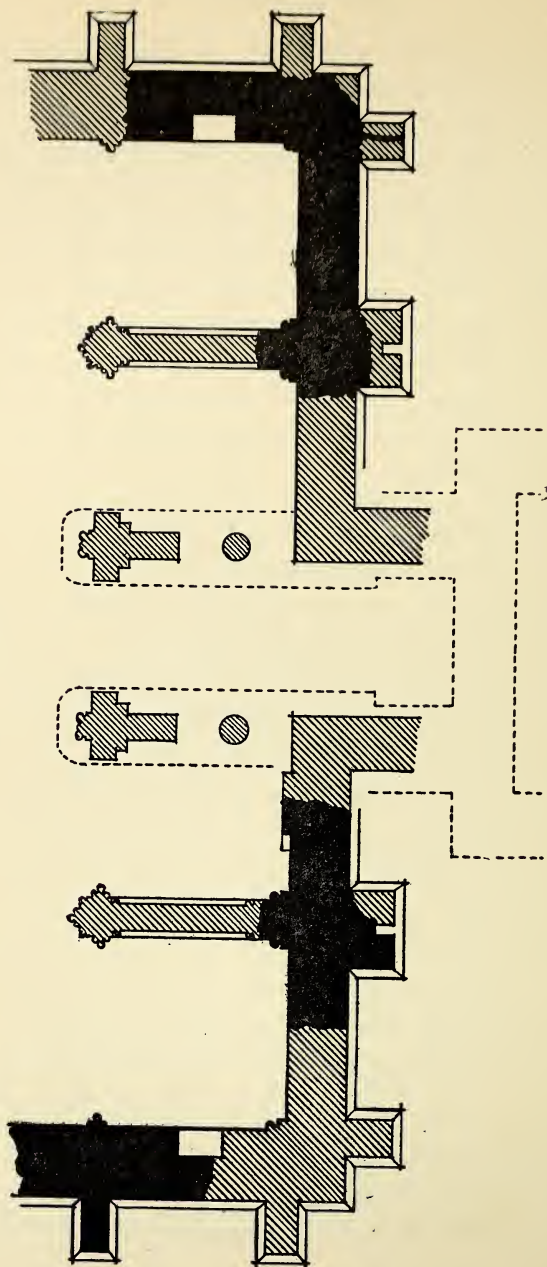
The plan of the Abbey with which most of us are familiar, is that prepared by Professor Willis and published in his 'Architectural History of Glastonbury Abbey' in 1866. This shows an ambulatory around the end of the presbytery

and behind the position of the High Altar, with a row of five chapels in line flanking it on the east side, and forming the eastward extremity of the Church. Willis's plan has been adopted almost without alteration in the guide book at present in use locally. He shows the five chapels divided by screen walls, two of which are still in evidence, their position being clearly marked on the fragments of the eastern walls still standing. These mark the width of the two extreme chapels at the north and south ends of the ambulatory. Willis's reason for believing that the residuum of space between these chapels comprised three more chapels is given on page 41 of his work, and he quotes William Worcester in support of his theory.

This writer says that he found five columns in a row to the east of the High Altar, and between each column a chapel with an altar. The passage might be interpreted to include the responds on north and south walls in the series of five columns, and this would give four chapels only, but it is quite as reasonable to assume that William Worcester counted each respond as a half-column, implying the existence of four complete columns between them, and thus of five chapels. Willis decides in favour of the latter view on three grounds: first, the position of the Altar of which remains are still visible on the wall of the chapel which is the most southerly of the central groups of three; secondly, that it can be shewn that William Worcester is in the habit of counting arches and pillars in this peculiar manner; and thirdly, that the position of certain foundation walls discovered in 1812, as marked in John Britton's plan of the Abbey (Fig. 2) appear to correspond precisely with the position which would be taken up by two more screen walls of a similar nature to those already described, and which would have the effect of dividing the space fairly into three almost equal divisions. Unfortunately, as he says, the practice until well on in the XIX Century, (in fact until after John Britton's time), was to remove not merely

WEST

FIG. 2.

**GLASTONBURY ABBEY.**

RETRO-CHOIR SHEWING APPROXIMATE POSITION OF PIER-BASES FIGURED IN "BRITTON'S ANTIQUITIES," WITH THE FOUNDATION TRENCHES RECENTLY DISCOVERED (IN DOTTED LINES).



the wrought stone, but also to eradicate the foundations, and he was convinced therefore that there was no hope of discovering any details of plan by excavations, so that, possibly on this account, he undertook no work of this sort himself. Nevertheless, all who read his book attentively must admit the soundness of his reasoning, and the value of his conclusions. Britton describes the portions of walling discovered in 1812 as being "the bases of two pillars of singular form and situation—probably part of the crypt."<sup>1</sup>

In regard to the form of the chapels other authorities were disposed to vary in their conclusions to some extent from Willis, but in the main his views held their ground unchallenged until recently. Parker, for instance, thought that there were certainly three Altars in the central group<sup>2</sup>: but he preferred to think that there was no structural division of this space. Willis's plan shews the central chapel with an eastward projection of some ten or twelve feet beyond the other four, and he was influenced in assuming this projection by two facts: first, the entire absence of any remains of the east wall of the Church at this point; second, the special mention by Leland of a chapel built by Abbot Beere in honour of Saint Edgar at the east end, which, as Willis says, would not have been worthy of mention as a distinct building if it had been only one of the ordinary chapels.

In 1904 the subject received the attention of the Royal Archæological Institute, and certain excavations were made by Mr. St. John Hope who read a paper on the subject, and published a plan in the *Archæological Journal* for Sept. 1904. Mr. Hope entirely traversed the conclusions of Professor Willis, and arguing chiefly on negative grounds, contended that there were four chapels only, of equal depth, nothing whatever projecting beyond the east wall. His plan shews a central division wall, the existence of which he assumed from William

1. Britton's *Arch. Antiq.* IV, p. 195.

2. *Som. Arch. Proc.*, Vol. XXVI (1880), p. 99.

*Vol. LIV (Third Series, Vol. XIV), Part II.*

Worcester's statement about the columns. This he interprets in an opposite sense to that adopted by Willis. But his excavations yielded no positive evidence as to the form or number of the chapels, and the whole subject remained in a highly debatable position. A careful study of his paper had long since persuaded me that the writer, in discounting the conclusions of Willis and Parker, had not given sufficient weight to the positive evidence furnished by the record in Britton's *Antiquities*, of the position of the piers and walls attached, which had been discovered in 1812—13 and sketched by Wild.

It also appeared that the excavations made at this part of the Church had not been carried in the direction most likely to bring to light any definite data, since they did not at any point touch the position of the piers in question. Further, such facts as were revealed by these excavations seemed to suggest an interpretation differing somewhat radically from Mr. Hope's conclusions, as follows :—

*A.*—In respect of the trench which he cut westward down the centre of the choir, beginning at the line of the east wall, he says he found here loose building rubble resting on clay at 1ft. 3ins. deep, for a distance of 6ft. 6ins. westward of the east wall. This would be of course exactly on the line of the central division wall of the four chapels shewn on his plan. Now, there is nothing in Mr. Hope's report to suggest that this clay bed which he encountered was anything other than virgin soil, whilst from the evidence of other trenches recently cut, it appears that fifteen inches is about the normal depth of the superficial layer of the natural clay in this part of the grounds.

Hence, if Mr. Hope assumes a wall here of substantial thickness, and substantial height, as his plan would suggest, the inference is that he considers a footing of 15 inches in depth below the present grass level to be a sufficient foundation. But the choir floor was, if anything, lower than the present

grass level, and even were it not so, the rules of building construction would scarcely permit of so shallow a foundation as 15 inches. Moreover, in all ascertained depths of footings in parts of the choir adjacent to this end, it is seen that the customary depth is as much as four feet or thereabouts; the conclusion being, that unless the clay bed revealed by the excavations was formed of clay thrown in here to fill up after the removal of the old foundations, there could have been no central wall here dividing the chapels. There is abundant proof, however, now forthcoming that clay was not used for the filling of the trenches where the stone footings have been eradicated. The excavations of the present year tell the story of the fillings with remarkable clearness, and in every case the situation of old walls has been rendered quite unmistakable by the character of the filling material discovered, as compared with that forming the sides of the trenches.

*B.*—As regards the cross trench cut in 1904 from north to south, just outside the line of the east wall, Mr. Hope says that this trench was carried down 2ft. below the old level, and further tested with a crowbar, *but revealed no signs of masonry, foundations, or footings.* From this report (which is negative also in the sense that it does not specify the nature of the material found in the trench) the conclusion is drawn that there never was a building such as Willis shews projecting centrally eastward of the east wall of the Church. Now if the writer had said he had met with nothing but virgin clay at a depth of 2ft. along this line, this conclusion would certainly have been a sound one. But it now appears that the soil encountered upon this line was not virgin clay but was, at all events for a considerable part of its length, nothing but loose building rubble, and, as subsequent excavation has shewn, there is here no vestige of natural clay at a less depth than 4ft., or 4ft. 6ins., except near the centre. The space is filled with a deposit of disintegrated freestone or “banker-dust,” implying that the virgin soil has been removed for the purpose



of constructing footing-walls which have since been eradicated.

I now proceed to detail what has been already undertaken in the work of excavation, and the conclusions drawn from the result attained, which appears to be of a highly interesting nature.

*First Excavation.* With the object of opening up the site of Wild's southern pillar I sunk a short trench north and south across its assumed position, and at a depth of 16ins., I came upon the virgin clay at both ends of the trench, but found that the clay had been cut away to a depth of approximately 3ft. 10ins. as a foundation for precisely such a screen-wall as Willis had inferred the existence of. The sides of the clay trench were absolutely clean cut and presented a hard and uniform surface, and the bed of the cutting consisted of a hard clay or marl face containing nodules of virgin rock, obviously the bed rock of the old building. The cutting terminated with a rounded end as though for the foundation of a pier or engaged column, approximately in line with the respond on the south aisle wall, again corroborating Willis' plan. Britton, in describing the footings discovered in 1812, suggests that they were "probably part of the crypt"—a loose conjecture merely. This view is once for all negatived by the discovery of the virgin rock at a depth of less than 4ft. below the choir floor. This, as appears from other excavations, is the normal depth for wall footings at this end of the Abbey, and in any case the impossibility of the existence of a crypt in connection with these shallow footings is self-evident and need not be further dwelt upon.

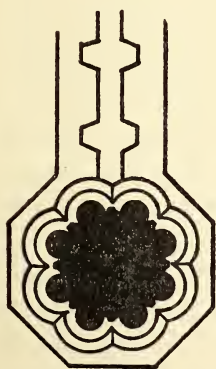
*Second Excavation.* A sinking was made on the north side in a corresponding position, and traces of a similar division wall were at once apparent. This trench was carried out through and beyond the line of the east wall, with the interesting result that it was found that the division wall extended in a direct line eastwards several feet beyond the east wall of

the Church. The footing was clearly marked in the clay, being upwards of 6ft. wide and about 4ft. 6ins. deep outside the east wall, whereas the width of the portion inside the east wall was about a foot less. This is precisely what one might expect, following the usual rule regulating the relative thickness of interior and exterior walling. The stumps of the two surviving screen walls shew that these were approximately 2ft. 10ins. thick, and my cutting reveals a foundation for the other two of 5ft. 4ins. or thereabouts within the line of the east wall. As this foundation continues eastward at an increased thickness, it may be assumed that Professor Willis's plan showing a central projection, is, so far, correct, and that walls of perhaps 4ft. in thickness on a 6ft. 6in. footing would have existed here. There is, therefore, every reason to consider that in William Worcester's time (that is before Abbot Beere's work was taken in hand) the form of the east end would have corresponded very closely with Willis's plan. The trenches at this point yielded nothing but a soft powdery rubble of freestone dust mingled with rough chippings of

freestone, amongst which were a number of broken fragments of mouldings, chiefly XIV Century in date, with small pieces of encaustic tile, and one or two mouldings or ornaments of black marble, apparently from some monument.

Research in the British Museum has yielded some further information as to the precise character of the two missing division walls. The plan of their footings alone is given by Britton, but it seems that there was something left of the superstructure in 1812. Kerrich, whose antiquarian notes are there preserved, records much matter relating to Glastonbury, and gives a freehand

Fig. 3.



SKETCH OF PIER  
BY KERRICH 1812.

sketch (Fig. 3) of these pieces of walling when they were first uncovered.

It will be seen from the diagram here given that they took the form of a clustered pier with a foundation for a mullioned wall or fenestration in connection with same. The piers sketched by Kerrich appear to correspond with the smaller circular footings shewn on Britton's plan, rather than with the massive ones. The latter, from their solid appearance, are suggestive of buttresses supporting the main divisions of a large east window, bayed out to the east after the manner of that of Gloucester cathedral, where the convexity of the great glazed wall is thus strengthened. Monington, we know, remodelled his choir under the influence of Gloucester.

The pier sketched by Kerrich is an octagonal cluster of shafts suggestive of a date similar to that of Monington's work in the choir. It is unfortunate that no measurements are given, and no scale is attached to the sketch, but the shaft of the pier could hardly have been more than 2ft. 6ins. in diameter, which would give about 15ins. for the thickness of the stone mullions in the fenestration.

A careful investigation of the remains of the Altar back on the existing fragment of the east wall, shews that this chapel must have been almost exactly 11ft. 8ins. in width, and it is satisfactory to find that the same result is arrived at from the ascertained position of the screen wall as inferred from the evidence of the trench. The Altar was about 13ins. nearer to the south than as shewn in the plan of 1904, there being a further piece of plinth *in situ* below the grass on that side, and the surface indication is misleading. The whole of this wall appears to have been covered in the XVI Century with a thin casing of Perpendicular panelling in freestone, and one fragment of this remains in position.

*Third Excavation.* (Fig. 1.) We now arrive at the question of the Chapel of Saint Edgar of which we are told that it was built by Abbot Beere (1493—1524), and that Abbot Whiting

‘performed some part of it,’ that is to say he either completed or else extended it : It certainly seems unreasonable to suppose that a chapel which it took two Abbots to complete could be a work of so little importance that it could be comprised within the limits of a pre-existing building, the walls of which, so far as any indications survive, were of XIV Century date and built by Abbot Monington. For other reasons also I had formed the opinion that some work of a more extensive and important nature was to be looked for, and in the winter of 1907 this feeling had become a strong conviction. The examination of the fragments of carving and moulded stonework remaining in the Abbey grounds yielded evidence corroborative of this theory, and I expected to find traces of a large building connected in some manner with the east end of the Church. I therefore prolonged the second trench eastwards until, at a distance of 7ft. 6ins. from the outer line of the east wall I was rewarded by finding the edge of a massive cross-wall running north and south for a length of 31ft. 6ins. The footings were of excellent masonry composed chiefly of blue lias stone, and having a width of nearly 5ft. and a depth of 3ft. or so. There was no appearance of bonding between these footings and those of the two projecting walls of the central chapel which connect with it on plan, but it was evident that the one had been built against the other.

All the stone from the northern connecting wall had been removed, but of that on the south a considerable quantity remains and shews a width of about 6ft. 8ins.

Between these connecting walls the virgin clay remains, and rises to within about 16ins. of the grass ; the same clay that Mr. Hope found in his central trench.

The long wall proved to be parallel to the east wall of choir and symmetrically placed with regard to the Abbey plan : its upper surface was about 2ft. 2ins. below the level of the grass, and the bottom about 3ft. lower.

A well formed square drainage channel was found running



the whole length towards an eject at the north end, and here it was joined by another similar drain coming from the eastwards, and still carrying water.

The whole of the long wall having been cleared it was found to return at both ends to the eastward in a manner which suggested the existence of a large rectangular building. The eastward returns were cleared at first for a distance of five or six feet when the position of two large buttresses, or what appeared to be such, was shewn in the clay.

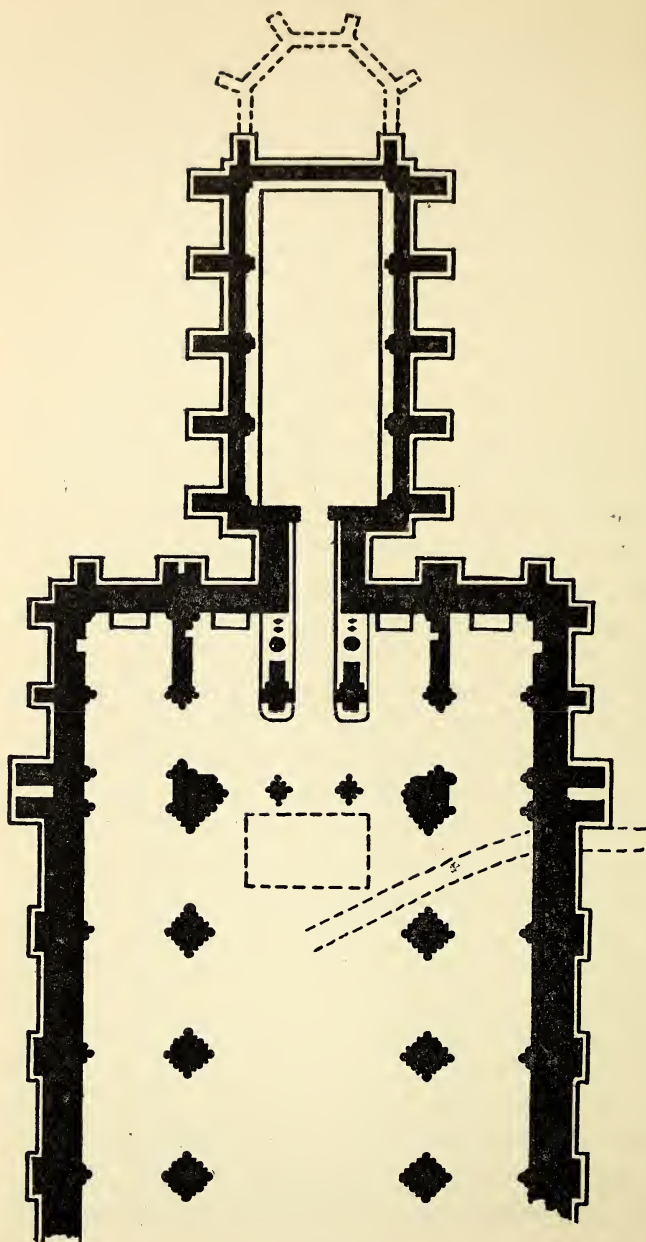
All the filling which came out of the trenches was very carefully turned over and was found to contain many fragments of moulded stonework clearly of XVI Century date, also numerous fragments of window glass of the same period, some of which was stained and shewed surface paintings of various designs. One small piece exhibited a perfect fleur-de-lys, retaining its border of leadwork. Many of the stone fragments were carved and were found to retain distinct traces of gold leaf, vermilion and other colours. Work was continued along the south return of the chapel, and the position of the second buttress was marked at a distance of 12ft. 6ins. from the first. Acting on this clue a new sinking was made on the line of the south wall at about 25 feet further to the eastward and there, not only was a considerable depth of walling encountered but the footing of the fourth buttress was found in perfect condition. The south trench was then carried yet further and revealed large masses of stonework and a fifth buttress, and beyond this the south-east corner of the rectangle was made clear together with the footings of the return buttress to the eastward. At this point the return or eastern wall of the rectangular chapel was soon laid bare and was found to be of the same character as the first and to contain a precisely similar land drain, the existence of which has also now been proved for the whole length on the north and south walls of the chapel. A shaft was next sunk in the lawn over the north-east corner of the chapel, and there the junction of the walls



was again visible, together with the further end of the drainage channel in the north wall. More recently the footings of the north side have been opened up, and are found to be very well preserved. The range of buttresses tallies with those on the south side, and in parts a considerable quantity of stonework remains. I am now able to lay down the plan of the chapel with approximate accuracy, and it appears as a chapel of four bays, each of 12ft. 6ins., to which a certain margin of length, say 18ins. or so, must be added at each end to make the clear internal length of the chapel, which thus appears to have measured about 53ft. x 25ft. internally. (Fig. 4.) The greater width of the footings of the north and south walls (which are approximately 7ft. as against the 5ft. of the end walls) is suggestive of a type of plan having internal piers or responds marking the bays, and carrying the arches of a heavy stone groined, fan-vaulted roof of the period. The character of certain fragments, still preserved at the Abbey, tends to shew that there was somewhere in the Abbey a vaulted roof of this nature designed for a width of some 25ft. and for bays of about 12ft. 6ins. constructed in a manner somewhat similar to the roof of Henry VII Chapel at Westminster. I have plotted some of these fragments and have developed the curves, and I trust at some future time to be able to shew with reasonable probability the nature of the roof they indicate. I do not venture to assert now that the fragments in question actually belonged to this chapel, but until a more probable place of origin can be found for them the assumption is that they did belong to it. Bishop Stillington's Chapel at Wells Cathedral, which was a building of the same period, shared a similar fate in being demolished very soon after the Reformation, and like this chapel it seems to have been lost for a long while to memory as well as to sight. The design of elaborate fan-groined roof of that chapel has however been satisfactorily restored from numerous fragments, and it is to be hoped that by careful comparison and measurement of the features re-

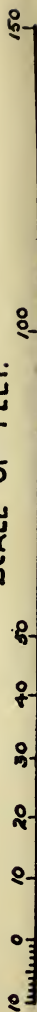
FIG. 4. GLASTONBURY ABBEY.

PLAN SHEWING THE PROBABLE FORM OF EAST END OF CHOIR WITH RETRO-CHAPELS IN THE XVI CENTURY.



WEST.

SCALE OF FEET.



maining at Glastonbury some knowledge of the form of the XVI Century vaulting there, may yet be recovered.

It was at the south-east angle that the footings discovered proved to be the most perfect, and here the stonework still reaches a height of approximately 6ft. 6ins. above the choir floor, but as all the walling is rough walling and genuine footing wall it may be safely assumed that the actual floor of this chapel must have been yet higher, and, indeed, could hardly have been less than 8ft. above the level of the choir. The rapid rise of the ground at this end supplies a reason for this difference. The level of the ground, it is true, has been raised considerably to form what is now a lawn, and 60 or 70 years ago when this land was a turnip field it was a couple of feet lower, but was still about 7ft. above the choir floor.

We come now to the question of the length of this chapel. About the beginning of the year whilst looking up the various authorities who have written upon the Abbey, I had occasion to examine Phelps's work in which a copy is given of an inventory made in the time of Queen Elizabeth. This inventory gives the total length of the Abbey, followed by the length of each main division given in series from east to west as follows :—"The great Church in the Aby wase in length 594 foott as followeth : Chapter House, 90 foott in length ; Quier in length 159 foott ; in breadth 75 foott. The bodie of the Church in length 228 foott. Joseph's Chapel in length 117 foott."

It appears to have escaped the notice of modern antiquaries that there was something very peculiar about this entry, seeing that the Chapter-house was in a totally different part of the Abbey and could not, therefore, rationally be included in any series of measurements of the total length, but in the light of our previous convictions it appeared clear to myself, and to Mr. Allen Bartlett, who assisted me in these investigations, that a strange clerical error had been made by the Chronicler, and that for *Chapter-house* we must read *Retro-chapel*. More

recently my friend, the Rev. F. W. Weaver, has pointed out that in Warner's Glastonbury (of which we were unfortunately only able to consult a mutilated copy) the same inventory is contained, together with a note referring to the plan, and showing that in Warner's mind at all events, the idea of a Retro-chapel of length corresponding to the inventory, did suggest itself. Warner and Phelps give a plan of the Abbey in which a Retro-chapel is shewn by dotted lines and an apsidal ending is suggested. They also give a second plan of a Retro-chapel in which a much greater length is shewn, and these are noted respectively as being the Retro-chapel and the same *according to its original dimensions*. Now, the curious part of the affair is this, that the rectangular chapel which has now been excavated does not fulfil the requirements of length necessary to bring it into harmony with the inventory. It has certainly added greatly to the length of the Abbey, increasing the total over all from about 510 to 580 feet, but the inventory says 594 feet, and that is an inside measurement, so that some further extension must be looked for. My present theory is that the rectangular chapel was the chapel built by Abbot Beere, and that the additional length which has yet to be uncovered corresponds with the part of the work which Abbot Whiting performed. It seems to have been known to Warner and other writers that the chapel had an apsidal ending, though unfortunately they do not give the source of their ideas.

Not only they, however, but numerous other people seem to have had knowledge of this extension of the Abbey, as certain guide books published in 1800, and republished in 1810 and 1814, all give the total length of the Abbey buildings as 580ft., and I find this statement is repeated as late as the middle of the XIX Century in another guide book written by a clergyman, and again in a more recent guide still current. Yet these hints of traditional knowledge have not been regarded by those antiquaries who have studied the subject

during later years, and it is perhaps natural that they would be unwilling to endorse popular statements of this sort which could not be corroborated.

So Professor Willis starts afresh without any reference to this great Retro-chapel and following him comes the theory that there never was, and never could have been, any extension whatever beyond the east wall of the choir.

The interest which has been manifested in the re-discovery of this chapel has led the trustees to arrange for the permanent opening up of its whole area, and this work is now being undertaken by our workmen with the help of the students of the Wells Theological College, who have already performed some excellent work in this direction ; but much remains to be done, and there is an enormous accumulation of soil to be cleared away before the proportions of the chapel can be properly manifested. Meanwhile the Abbey fence has been removed 70ft. further back, so as to include the lower portion of the lawn within the Abbey grounds, and the road which at present traverses this part of the site will be diverted.

A trial shaft has been sunk further to the eastward, and just outside the line of the presumed extension of the chapel walls. This has revealed the presence of building stone lying in the trench at a depth of 10ft. or so under the lawn. There is at this point a deep clay filling, and right underneath it, just upon the top of the virgin soil, the edge of a curious deposit of wood and bones has been touched. Small portions of this wood have been examined and appear to consist of twigs, or small stakes, interlaced hurdlewise ; they are blackened to the appearance of charcoal, but there is conclusive proof that the blackness which penetrates to the heart of the wood is not the result of fire, but is simply a peculiar stain resulting from long submergence, as the bark, which is in some cases left perfect, retains its colour of pale brown or yellow. One or two rib bones, believed to be human, were found associated with the wood and these were also blackened. The wood



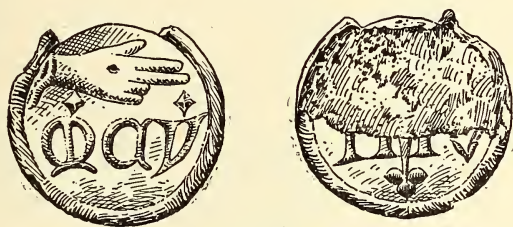
showed traces of vivianite,—the peculiar blue substance which is found when vegetable and animal remains of great antiquity are unearthed. It is felt that some further investigation at this point will be well worth while, as it is quite possible that we have here traces of very early habitations.

The remainder of the summer's work I hope to deal with more fully next year, as to do so at any length now would occupy too large a space in the pages of this volume.

Briefly the results are as follows :—

Excavations have been made in the centre of the body of the Church which have revealed the footings of the two large piers at the west of the crossing, and attached to each of these footings have been found certain remains of masonry of a very different character, being much rougher in construction and inferior in composition. It is too soon to say definitely what these old walls denote ; they may be either the remains of footing walls of an earlier church, or they may be footings of a later date placed in this position to form the sleeper walls for the ends of the great flight of steps, which would mark the difference in level between the nave floor and the transepts, and would in this case have acted also as a support for a parapet wall fencing in the higher level. But they present many unexplained problems, and the excavations must be carried further before it is safe to launch any positive theory. From the inner angle of the south-west pier a trench was carried diagonally towards the centre of the crossing and beneath it was found a portion of ancient pavement of lias stone lying roughly at about the level of the nave floor, and cut to a line making an angle of about 45 degrees with the general line of the Church. From certain appearances it is conjectured that the apsidal termination of one of the older churches, either that of Turstin or Herlewin, may have ended at about this point. There is evidence of a rough foundation, and of a channel course for water, about a foot wide, following the diagonal line for a certain distance, and then turning to the

west parallel with the south-west pier footing. Beneath the level of this old pavement, and almost in the centre of the crossing, were found the broken remains of a stone coffin, apparently of early date; the bones had been thrown out and lost, and all that could be recovered of the stone coffin has been put together above ground. Close to some of the rough footing walls, in the north cutting, there came to light a small medallion of baked clay. On the obverse is seen the hand of

**FIG. 5.****GLASTONBURY ABBEY.**

TERRA-COTTA MEDALLION FOUND IN TRENCH NEAR  
N.W. PIER OF CROSSING.

*ACTUAL SIZE.*

Our Lord stretched out in blessing, shewing an incision representing the Sacred wound, and this has the appearance of having at one time contained a jewel. Beneath it are the letters *M.C.V.*, possibly numerals indicating the date 1105, with four-pointed stars over the initial and terminal letters. This date would correspond very nearly to the time at which Abbot Herlewin inaugurated his building scheme, as he became Abbot in 1101. It is possible, therefore, that in this little medallion we may see a token struck to commemorate the date of the founding of his Abbey. On the reverse side, of which the greater part is chipped away, may still be seen the feet of three letters and the lower end of a foliated cross. The letters very readily suggest the *I.H.S.*

It has been suggested<sup>3</sup> that these letters are not I.H.S. but I.H.V.—a contraction of ‘Jesu’ (I.H.S.V.) whilst those on the obverse are M.C.V.—a shortened ‘Mercy,’ the whole forming the petition ‘Jesu Mercy’ upon a pilgrim’s medal or sacramental token of the XIV Century.

The difficulty in accepting this view lies in the absence of any mark over the M.C.V. suggestive of the elision of letters, unless the four-pointed stars can be thus regarded.

The character of the letters themselves would seem as readily referable to the XII as to the XIV Century, whilst on the reverse the pointed termination is quite as proper for an ‘S’ as a ‘V’ since the angular S may be seen upon some of our coins from the IX Century downwards. With regard to the V on the obverse, a careful inspection of the original shews that the letter is slightly longer than the others, but is forked nearly to the bottom, as a V.

It has also been suggested<sup>4</sup> that the two supposed stars above the M and V are not stars, but nails, and, with the letters, bear relation to the hand outstretched above, thus

✧                      ✧  
**Manus Christi Vulneratus.**

The remainder of the work undertaken this year has been chiefly on the site of the supposed western towers, and will be detailed, it is hoped, next year.

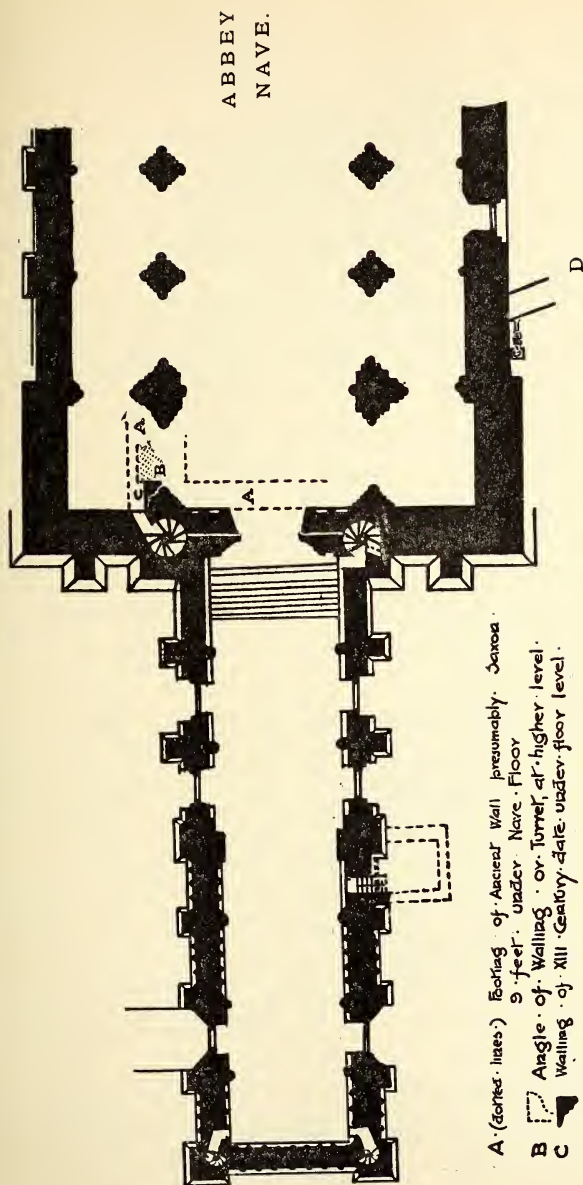
To summarise its results, it may be said that they strongly support the theory that the aisles were terminated with two massive towers, having square turrets of large size containing stone newel staircases flanking the great west gable of the nave. (Fig. 6).

The projections on the western face are very marked—being some six or seven feet for the base of these turrets. A but-

3. The present opinion of Mr. St. John Hope, (based upon a sketch published in the ‘Guardian’.) The British Museum authorities also seem inclined to consider that the letters M.C.V. represent words, not numerals, and that the date of the token is a late one.

4. Dr. J. A. Goodchild, of Bath.

PLAN OF WEST END OF NAVE, WITH GALILEE AND CHAPEL OF ST. MARY, SHEWING PROBABLE FORMS OF WESTERN TOWERS, ETC.



WEST.

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Position of Skeleton (Fig. 7) is shewn against s. wall of Nave.

tress footing of equal projection has been exposed on the western face of the south-west tower, nine feet south of the turret above-mentioned.

On the south side of the nave the footing of the tower projects about two feet beyond that of the aisle wall further east; and here, in the angle between this projection and the position of the old west wall of the cloister, there came to light a very curious interment.

At a depth of three feet or thereabouts below the present grass level, just alongside the footing of the aisle wall, on the south side, the skeleton of an elderly man was found imbedded in the clay.

There was no sign of a coffin, nor had the bones ever been disturbed. The skeleton was in good condition and in perfect order. It lay close to the wall, the left shoulder being less than 12ins. from the rough stone footing. The head was towards the west, and was encircled by a headpiece of freestone, in the shape of a square block, with circular hole in the centre, and a necking just large enough to admit the head of the skeleton.

A sketch is appended shewing this very unusual feature. (Fig. 7). The skull was finely developed, the body well-proportioned. The total height was approximately 6ft. 3ins. Over the feet was a stone slab laid slantwise, and another was placed on edge beyond it, making the end of the grave.

There were signs of longitudinal pressure down each side of the body, as though from the weight of the sides of a hollow superincumbent monument, and the bones had risen down the centre line. Consequently the sacrum and spine were unduly prominent, and the wings of the pelvis and shoulders appeared as though forced back.

Strangely enough, a broken skull was seen lying just below the leg-bones, and with it some other fragments of what was presumed to have been an older interment. These bones were very much decayed.

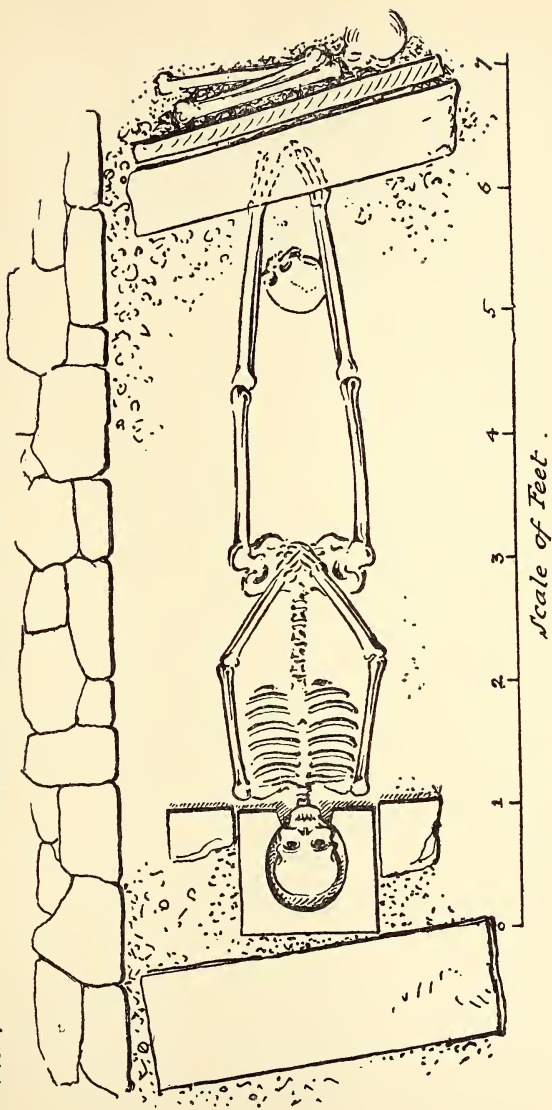


EAST.

NORTH SIDE.

SOUTH WALL OF NAVE. (ROUGH FOOTING)

FIG. 7.



WEST.

From its position, the interment could hardly be earlier than the latter part of the XIII Century, as the Abbey was not completed until about that period. The acceptance of an earlier date for the interment would argue a greater antiquity for the wall-footings adjoining it. The slanting stones at head and foot of grave are roughly parallel, and appear to follow the line of a wall abutting on the nave on the eastward or cloister side of this interment, the footings of which have yet to be excavated (see D, fig. 6).