

Glastonbury Abbey.

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IN attempting a sketch of the history of the Abbey of Glastonbury, I am well aware that I am undertaking a task, in which if successful there can be but little merit, while a failure will fairly expose me to blame, as deficient in research and careless in execution. All that is known of so celebrated an establishment,—the mitred Abbot of which was one of the first of a princely hierarchy both in place and power, and was inferior to few of England's nobles either in rank or influence; whose church was equal, if not superior, to any of our cathedrals both in size and beauty,—has of course often been laid before the public. I need only mention Warner's history of Glastonbury, to shew at once that in this paper there can be but little originality; it is merely a compilation from the works of authors whom every one may read for himself if he chooses; the only use it can possibly be is to save my audience trouble, though

many of you are probably better acquainted with both the history and remains of Glastonbury than myself. The best excuse for the undertaking is, that we are assembled at the place itself, and that there can hardly be a fitter subject for the attention of the Archaeological section of a Somersetshire Society, at their annual meeting, than the history and remains of one of the most noble relics of days gone by, to be found either in this or any other county. Without then any further preface beyond offering my thanks to my colleagues of the Archaeological section of the society, by whose kind assistance I have been enabled to produce this sketch, such as it is, I will at once proceed to give a brief abstract of the history of that magnificent establishment, the Abbey of Glastonbury, and a description of those venerable and beautiful remains which still bear witness *to its former splendour*.

To those who hope for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, the circumstances attending the first introduction of that faith into these islands, cannot but be a subject of very great interest; but, unfortunately, on this point we have no surer guide than tradition. It is certain that the Gospel was preached in this country as early as the first century, and made such progress, that Lucius King of the Britons is said to have built a magnificent cathedral at Winchester about the middle of the second century. But of this very apocryphal potentate little or nothing is really known;

even the tomb which the vergers of former days used to point out as containing his remains, has been satisfactorily shewn to be that of Bishop Godfrey de Lacey, who presided over the diocese of Winchester during the latter part of the twelfth century; nor is it very evident, even if he ever existed, how a petty prince, ruling by permission of the Romans, could have been so great a man as he is represented to have been. But even supposing that he really did found a church at Winchester at the time he is said to have done so, still, Glastonbury has a prior claim to the honour of being the site of the first Christian Church in Britain; and that claim appears to be as well substantiated as one of such high antiquity can easily be.

It is said that about A.D. 63, Joseph of Arimathæa and Simon Zelotes were sent by St. Philip from Gaul into Britain, and having received permission from the British prince Arviragus, founded a christian church at Avalon or Glastonbury. Now without discussing the probability of the truth of this legend, which is so corrupted by the accompanying superstition of the miraculous thorn, as to be at least very doubtful, still, we know that some one did preach christianity in these islands about that time. Now it is an ascertained fact, that St. Paul was at Rome near about the same time as Caractacus, the king of the Silures, and it is stated that the release of the apostle and that of the British captive, took

place in the same year. The circumstances of the captivity and release of so remarkable a person as the British chieftain, were no doubt the topics of general conversation at Rome ; and we can hardly doubt, but that the salvation of the western barbarians, must have been deeply interesting to the great apostle of the Gentiles, whose labours we know were extended to the extreme parts of the west. It is therefore at least as probable that St. Paul himself preached the gospel in this country as any other apostle ; and the following circumstances render it not improbable, that he did in person preach the faith at Glastonbury, and founded there the earliest christian church which existed in these islands.

Setting aside the possibility of St. Paul's wishing to convert the subjects of Caractacus, which would certainly have induced him to land some where on the coast of the Bristol channel, we know that both before the invasion of the Romans and during their occupation of this country, a considerable trade was carried on between the inhabitants of Gaul and Britain, in the ores produced from the mines of the latter country ; and that an emporium of no small importance existed at Uphill, the Roman Axium, at which place part of the produce of the mines of Mendip was shipped for exportation. This then was very likely to have been the landing place of any person coming from Gaul, particularly if we suppose him already interested in the Silures or in-

habitants of South Wales; and when once landed, it was not likely that so zealous an apostle as St. Paul, should have neglected to offer the tidings of salvation to the people of the country, the traces of whose habitations may yet be seen at Bleadon, in the immediate vicinity of Uphill, and on Worle hill, at a very short distance from it.

It must be remembered that at the time of which we are speaking, the low ground at the mouth of the Uxella or Parret, as well as that between the coast and Glastonbury, was, if not actually covered by the sea,* at least a morass unfit for human residences; and that after leaving the coast, Avalon or the passage town on the water, called otherwise *Inis-witrym*, from the glassy water upon the banks of which it stood, was probably the first town of any size at which he arrived; and if he found the local magistrates, whether Arviragus or any other person, disposed to give him permission, what can be more likely than that he would there establish a church among the converts he had made, and that a building would be consecrated there, for the services of that religion which he had introduced. Whether this building stood on the site of the present abbey, or, as is generally supposed, on Weary-all hill, it is impossible to discover; no doubt it was small and humble, and built, like other British houses, of wood; but it was the first Christian Church that stood in Britain, and perhaps sanctified by the consecration

* See Mr. Stradling's paper, *supra*. page 48.

of St. Paul himself; and if so, how much more noble than the splendid fabric which the christians of after days raised in its vicinity, the ruins of which, even in their present state, declare how magnificent was the piety of our ancestors.

However this may be, whether Glastonbury was honoured by the presence of the great Apostle of the Gentiles or no, certain it is, that christianity was introduced into this country at a very early period, and took firm and abiding root here. As early as A.D. 314, British bishops took part in the Council of Arles, and the flourishing state of religion in these islands is mentioned by many of the primitive christian writers. During the first three centuries our holy faith was of course exposed to the same fiery trial in this island, as in the rest of the christian world; but it is probable that Avalon, as it had received the word gladly, still held it firmly; for in the fifth century, at no long interval from the first introduction of monachism into Britain by the Welshman Morgan, better known by the name of Pelagius,—we find the historian Gildas, driven from his retreat on the Holmes by the terrors of northern piracy, taking refuge at Glastonbury, and there ending, we will hope in peace, a life which the calamities of his country, the sins of her rulers, and the dangers of the church, appear to have combined to render miserable. Here too, about A. D. 533, St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, is said to have retired, together with a

number of his Irish disciples, and to have established a rule of discipline for the community which he found here, over which he presided till his decease, for about thirty years after ; which rule having been improved and completed by his successor, St. Benignus or Benedict, continued to be observed by the monks of Glastonbury, till St. Augustin exchanged it for the Augustin formulary A. D. 605.

Paulinus, bishop of Rochester, and St. David, bishop of Menevia, are mentioned, as having been great benefactors to the abbey: and the fact of its having been chosen as the burial place of king Arthur, is alone sufficient to shew, that in the middle of the sixth century, it had attained to a very high degree of importance and reputed sanctity. The history of this christian prince and gallant warrior, is involved in mystery, and has been so overlaid by the romantic fables fashionable in the 13th and 14th centuries, that his very existence has been doubted. He has been supposed by some, to have been merely a personification of the desperate contest, which raged through nearly the whole of the 5th and 6th centuries, between the christian inhabitants of Britain and the pagan invaders, known in history by the generic name of Saxons ; or else to have been a mere mythical hero, whose mighty actions are no more worthy of a place in history, than the expedition of Jason, or the labours of Hercules. But if the antiquaries of former days were justly accused of "admiring the inscription, doating on

the dust," I cannot help thinking that those of the present day are in some danger of doubting the existence of the inscription, because in the course of twelve or thirteen hundred years, some dust has collected upon it; and it appears to me that they will be more likely to arrive at the real meaning of the letters by carefully removing as much of the dust as they can, than by refraining to look at it all. This is the course which has been pursued by the learned historian of the Anglo Saxons, Mr. Sharon Turner, who has shewn in the treatise appended to his valuable history, that in the writings of the Welsh bards, some of whom were probably actually contemporaries of king Arthur, he is represented as a very different person from the fabulous hero of the *Morte d'Arthur*,—not as a knight errant following the quest of the holy Sangreal,—nor, "girt with British and Armoric knights," holding high festivals of the round table at Caerleon or Camalet, and, in a manner somewhat inconsistent with his character as the champion of Christendom, receiving aid from the mighty enchanter, Merlin; but simply as a gallant prince and warrior, striving to the death against the Saxons, at once the ruthless invaders of his country, and the bloody persecutors of his faith.

Nor is there really the smallest improbability in his being buried at Glastonbury; for if he died on the banks of the river Camal,—and that a desperate and prolonged contest did take place

in that part of Cornwall, in very early times, is evident from the military works which still exist there,—what could be more likely, than that the great champion of christianity should be brought to the great christian church at Glastonbury, and there interred among the first preachers of that religion, in defence of which he had fought so gallantly? The legend, that his famous sword, Excalibur, was received by an arm that rose out of the river, and that he himself was carried by Morgana, or the Lady of the Lake, or water, to Avalon, if translated into simple prose, may mean no more than this,—that the great warrior Arthur being killed in battle at Camelford, was embarked on the river, and transported to Glastonbury by sea, instead of being carried by land through Devonshire, and the western part of Somerset, at that time occupied by the hostile Saxons. Of the discovery and exhumation of his remains, in the reign of Henry II, Camden, on the authority of Giraldus Cambrensis, who professes to have been an eye witness of what he describes, gives the following account. “When Henry the second, king of England, took knowledge out of the songs of British bards or rythmers, how Arthur, that most noble worthy of the Britons, who by his martial power had many a time daunted the fury of the English Saxons, lay buried here, between two pyramids or sharp headed pillars,—he caused the body to be searched for; and scarcely had they digged seven foot deep into

the earth, but they alighted upon a tomb or grave stone, on the upper face whereof was fastened a broad crosse of lead, grossly wrought, which, being taken forth, shewed an inscription of letters; and under the said stone, almost nine foot deeper, was found a sepulchre of oak, made hollow, wherein the bones of that famous Arthur were bestowed; which inscription or epitaph, as it was sometimes exemplified and drawn out of the first copie in the abbey of Glastonbury, I thought good for the antiquity of the character, here to put down. The letters being made after a barbarous manner, and resembling the Gothish character, betray plainly the barbarism of that age, when ignorance, as it were by a fatal destiny, bare such sway, that there was none to be found, by whose writings the renown of Arthur might be blazed and commended to posterity; a matter and argument doubtless meet to have been handled by the skill and eloquence of some right learned man, who in celebrating the praises of so great a Prince, might have won due commendation also for his own wit; for the most valiant champion of the British empire seemeth even in this behalf only most unfortunate, that he never met such a trumpeter, as might worthily have sounded out the praise of his valour, but behold the said crosse and the epitaph therein."

Now this description, the truth of which has often been called in question, though why it should

have been so, is not very evident, except that those who deny his existence might be rather puzzled to account for the discovery of his tomb,—contains a piece of internal evidence, which appears to me strongly to vindicate the veracity of the narrator. In the time of Henry II, the usual way of interring persons of importance, was to enclose the body in a stone coffin, and it seems probable that if Giraldus had invented the story, he would have represented the hero as buried in a coffin of that material; but he distinctly says, “a sepulchre of oak made hollow,” not simply an oak coffin; and we can hardly suppose that, unless he had seen it, he would have described a mode of interment which modern research has proved to have been sometimes used among the Celtic tribes cognate with those of Britain, with whose customs Giraldus was most likely totally unacquainted. If my hearers should be inclined to smile at my credulity, I can only plead that it is very harmless, for it can hardly make a man a worse christian to believe that St. Paul preached in his native land, or less devoted to his country, to believe that Arthur was buried in his own county. At all events, I do not envy that man, who would not run the risk of believing a little more than the truth, rather than lose, through too much caution, the pleasure of receiving as facts, many of the most heart-stirring events recorded in history.

But however celebrated the Abbey of Glastonbury had by this time become, the names of only three

abbots of British race after St. Benignus, have come down to us,—Wongret, to whom the king of Devonshire is said to have granted lands in *Inis-witrym*, Salemund, and Bregoret. But no sooner were the Saxon pagans converted to christianity, than their piety and repentance shewed itself in liberal gifts to the church. St. Paulinus, the first Saxon Archbishop of York, about A. D. 630, besides other benefactions, rebuilt the whole church with timber, and covered it with lead; Kenwalch, Kentwine, and Baldred, granted lands to the abbey, among which the manor of Pennard was given to the abbot by the last mentioned monarch. But of all the West Saxon kings, Ina appears to have been the most munificent benefactor to the church of Glastonbury. In the year 708, he pulled down the old buildings of the monastery, and re-built them in the most sumptuous manner; the church he caused to be re-consecrated, and dedicated to God, in honour of Christ and the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul; and besides plate, jewels, and vestments of enormous value, he bestowed upon the abbey the manors of Brent, Doultling, Pilton, and Sowly, and exempted from episcopal authority, the churches of Glastonbury, Sowly, Brent, Moorlinch, Shapwick, Street, Butleigh, and Pilton. But this well intentioned, though really unjustifiable usurpation of the episcopal rights, was, like all other exertions of zeal not according to knowledge, the source of great mischief; the independence of these churches being the subject of

controversy between the monks and the bishops of the diocese, for upwards of 400 years.

From this time the abbey appears to have increased in splendor and wealth, receiving from time to time munificent benefactions both from royal and private piety, until the incursions of the northern pirates spread distress and poverty through the whole island. Of this suffering, Glastonbury appears to have undergone its full share, for in the reign of Edmund, the abbey had so fallen from its ancient splendor, that that monarch thought fit to appoint the celebrated St. Dunstan to restore it to its former magnificence, and granted him the free use of the royal treasures for that purpose. In the year 942, the new foundation was laid, and in 944, a charter was granted to Dunstan and the Benedictine monks, whom he had introduced, confirming all former grants, increasing their privileges and powers, and empowering them to hold their lands, as free from all claims, as the king held his own. Though after the death of Edmund, who was buried in the church of Glastonbury, St. Dunstan was banished, and deprived of his abbey by Edwy, the bounty of the Saxon and Danish monarchs still enriched Glastonbury with a profusion of wealth; Edwy, Edgar, and Edmund II, vied with each other in liberality to the church; and Canute not only granted a charter in favor of the abbey, but also gave it this remarkable privilege, that no subject should enter the Glaston twelve hides, without leave or permission

of the Lord Abbot. The last Saxon abbot, Ailnoth, or Eglenoth, being one of the principal men in the nation at the time of the Norman conquest, was deposed A. D. 1077, and carried by the conqueror into Normandy. At this time the wealth and power of the abbot of Glastonbury were enormous; a mere list of his numerous manors, if read here, would tax your patience to no small extent. His privileges and immunities, derived from royal charters, were such as perhaps no other subject has ever enjoyed. He was exempted from episcopal jurisdiction,—held his lands as free as the king held his own,—no subject could enter his district without his permission, and he was first in rank among the abbots of England, that dignity having belonged to Glastonbury until it was transferred to St. Albans by Pope Adrian A. D. 1154.

The fatal event of the battle of Hastings, and the accession of the Norman conqueror to the throne of England, which exerted so disastrous an influence upon the freedom and fortunes of the Saxon inhabitants of this country, appear to have been severely felt by the church of Glastonbury. The list of its manors soon after the conquest, shews a lamentable deficiency; nor was the diminution of their property the greatest evil which befel the monks in consequence. In place of the Saxon abbot, Ailnoth, Thurstin, a rapacious Norman, was forced upon them by the conqueror, who squandered and alienated their possessions, and

tyrannized over them with such cruelty, that at length the sturdy spirit of the Saxon monks was roused to resistance ; and on their refusal to submit to his authority, the abbot expelled them from the chapter house, by the assistance of a body of Norman soldiers, who followed them into the church, where a desperate contest took place, in which two monks were killed, and fourteen wounded, in spite of the sanctity of the place. So great however was the scandal which arose from this unhappy affray, that William, though certainly not usually favourable to his Saxon subjects, removed Thurstin from the abbey and banished him to Caen, of which he had been a monk previously to his appointment to the abbey of Glastonbury, and restored to the monks several manors, which he had alienated from them. William Rufus, however, bribed by a gift of 500lbs. of silver, replaced this rapacious dignitary ; but such was the determination of the monks, that they again resisted his introduction of some novelty in their church music ; the church was again polluted with slaughter, nor was the mutiny quelled till three monks had been slain, and eighteen wounded, by the Norman soldiery, whom the abbot had again called to his aid. Many left the monastery, nor did the whole number return till after his death, when, under the prudent and just rule of his successor, Herlewyn, the abbey began to recover from the ill effects of Thurstin's rapacity and tyranny.

Herlewyn, who seems to have devoted himself to the good of the community over which he presided, laid the foundation of a new church, which was completed by the munificent exertions of Henry de Blois, brother to king Stephen, to whose proficiency in architectural science, the churches of St. Cross, Romsey, and others, still bear witness; but his church at Glastonbury, with the exception of the tower, was, together with the greater part of the monastery, destroyed by fire A.D. 1185, only fourteen years after his death. The munificence of Henry II, and the exertion of the monks, however, shortly repaired this misfortune; the king immediately sent his chamberlain, Ralph Fitz-Stephen, to examine the ruins, and to take the necessary steps for re-building the church and monastery; and so expeditiously and well was this done, that though the work which had been stopped at the death of Henry, was not completed till A.D. 1193, 5. Richard I, the new church of St. Mary was dedicated by Reginald, Bishop of Bath, on the feast of St. Barnabas, A.D. 1186.

The next event worthy of notice, which is to be found in Dugdale, is the investment of the abbot, Henry de Soliaco, or De Swansey, about the year 1189, with the privilege of using the mitre, ring, gloves, dalmatic, tunic, and sandals, and of blessing the sacerdotal vestments, which he obtained from Pope Celestine; but upon the elevation of this

abbot to the see of Worcester, an event took place which highly exasperated the feud, which had existed with more or less violence between the abbey and the bishops of the diocese, ever since the unfortunate exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, granted by Ina to Glastonbury, and some other churches subject to that abbey.

It was one of the conditions of the release of Richard I from captivity, that Savaricus, a kinsman of the Emperor, should be made Bishop of Wells, and should hold Glastonbury together with that see. Having been consecrated, he immediately assumed the title of Bishop of Glastonbury. The monks, highly resenting this infringement of their privileges, in the year 1199 elected William Pyke as their abbot. Pyke however was excommunicated, and several monks committed to prison. Pyke then repaired to Rome, where he died suddenly, not without suspicion of having been poisoned; and the commissioners appointed by the Pope, awarded to the bishop no less than eleven manors, as his share of the property belonging to the abbey. Nor did the effects of this iniquitous proceeding terminate at the death of Savaricus, which took place soon after; for these manors were claimed by bishop Jocelyn; who succeeded him in the see of Wells; nor was it till A.D. 1218, that the monks regained their ancient privilege, at the price of the manors of Winscombe, Pucklechurch, Blackford, and Cranmore, (with the right of presentation to

their churches,) which were assigned by the commissioners appointed by the Pope, to the bishop of Wells and his successors in the see for ever.

In the year 1295, St. Michael's chapel on the Tor hill was thrown down by an earthquake. Three years afterwards, King Edward I and his queen, visited Glastonbury, and the bones of Arthur were again exhumed. From this time to the reign of Henry VIII, the fraternity of Glastonbury seems to have flourished under the rule of many excellent abbots, among whom John De Taunton, John Kent, Geoffry Fromond, Walter De Taunton, John Bremton, Walter De Monnington, John Chinnock, John Selwood, (at whose death, a dispute arose between the monks and the bishop, as to the right of nomination of the abbot,) and Richard Beere may be mentioned as benefactors,—standing high in the favour of kings, nobles, and people, and being an object of peculiar reverence to all classes. Even the disastrous wars of the roses do not appear to have impoverished or injured this splendid establishment, to any great amount; for at the reformation we find that its revenues were valued at £3508 13s 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d, exclusive of plate, jewels, and vestments of enormous value.

Richard Whiting, that high spirited and conscientious abbot, who to the last defended the trust reposed in him by the church, equally against the threats of Henry, and the temptations held out by that monarch, was indeed placed

in an exalted post. A mitred abbot, a peer of parliament, lord of wealth which in those days was really enormous, exercising a princely hospitality, and breeding up in religious learning at least 300 sons of noblemen and gentlemen; his personal character such as to double the influence accruing from his elevated rank,—it might have seemed that he was beyond the reach of misfortune; but the ire,—I should rather say the lust and avarice—of a despotic king, “rode forth upon destruction’s wing.” Arrested at his country residence at Sharpham, he was hurried to Wells, there subjected to the mockery of a trial on the absurd charge of embezzling the plate of the monastery, and though, as it is stated, acquitted of the charge, he was murdered,—for I will not call it executed,—on the Challice hill, which overlooks the buildings of that splendid establishment, which he had governed so well. The monks were dispersed, the manors granted to rapacious courtiers, and of all the noble buildings which then composed the Abbey of Glastonbury, none are now left standing, but those mutilated, though still beautiful fragments, which I will now proceed to describe.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION.

With the exception of the beautiful ruins of that hallowed edifice, which we now look upon, little remains of the great abbey of Glastonbury; for of all the domestic buildings, necessarily attached to so vast an establishment, all have disappeared, but the very remarkable kitchen, the porter’s lodge,

and the abbey barn. Of the church, we can still trace the vestiges of St. Joseph's chapel, the choir, transept and nave, and the curious building which connected St. Joseph's chapel with the body of the church, commonly known as the ante-chapel; of these the most ancient is St. Joseph's chapel, and with the description of that building it will perhaps be best to begin.—This chapel, which is a beautiful specimen of very late Norman or transition work, is a parallelogram, measuring from east to west about sixty six feet, and from north to south thirty six. Its north side is divided into four bays by buttresses without stages, projecting about two feet from the face of the wall, having shafts at the angles, with early English bases and capitals, but with the square abacus, rising from a base, consisting of a plain slope and late Norman or early English surbase, and finishing with a peculiarly elegant termination. The lower compartment of each bay, is enriched with an intersecting arcade, the shafts of which are divided at about half their height by a bead slightly undercut; the arches are enriched with a moulding in some degree approaching to the toothed ornament, perhaps a transition from the zig-zag. Above this arcade, is a very bold string course of transition character, which supports a window, the head of which is semicircular, deeply set in the wall, the arch being of two orders, with shafts in the angles, having transition capitals with the square abacus, supporting varied mouldings

of late Norman character ; the angle of each order is moulded into a bold three quarter round, and over each is a plain dripstone, supported by corbel heads. The entrance on this side, was by a most elaborate door-way, in the second bay from the west, occupying the whole space between the buttresses, the arch being enriched with four series of medallions, exhibiting many curious varieties of costume ; the second and fourth series are supported by shafts having early English bases and capitals, with the square abacus ; the first and third are continued to the level of the bases, where they terminate in a plain square, rising from a simple chamfer of the same shape. Over the door-way is a pediment formed of two bold rounds of different sizes, divided by a hollow. At each corner of the chapel stands a turret, which is little more than an enlarged buttress, having shafts at the angles, supporting at the level of the cornice, a bold string course, above which is an intersecting arcade, the shafts of which have no abacus. The turrets are covered with a pyramidal roof of ashler work, the cornice moulding of which is very rich ; the upper compartment of each turret is pierced, on the east and west sides, with openings of a form common in early English and decorated buildings.

The west front is of similar character to the north side, the arcade filling up the space between the turrets (of which that at the south-west angle is in a state of total ruin,) and supporting a triplet of

semi-circular headed lights, of great beauty, the two side lights of which have been filled up with tracery of a much later date. The south side is similar to the north, but the entrance is less elaborate; a door of much later date has been opened in the south-eastern bay of the chapel. The basement of the interior is occupied, as externally, by an intersecting arcade, the vaulting springing from large shafts between each bay, at the level of the string course under the windows, which appear to have been filled with tracery of a later date. Each compartment of the arcade has been painted; the design of the decoration, as far as can be seen, was a trefoiled arch, in the spandrils of which are depicted a crescent and an estoile, or it may be a sun. This symbol is a very ancient one of the Messiah and the blessed Virgin; but it also occurs in some of the coins of the Plantaganet kings of England, and may perhaps refer to their visits to Glastonbury; it has also, when combined with the square, a masonic meaning, which I am not at liberty to divulge.—Under the chapel is a crypt which extends also under part of the ante-chapel. Immediately to the west of the south-eastern turret, is a door-way of later character than the rest of the crypt, leading to a very curious well, surmounted by a low semi-circular arch. There was also an external entrance, communicating with this well by a flight of steps. This chapel from the style of its architecture, which is Norman, of so late a

date as to be fairly called transitional, I conceive to have been built by Henry de Blois, about A.D. 1136, and to have been originally detached from the church,—my reasons for which supposition I will give afterwards.

The part of the ruins to be now mentioned, as being next in antiquity to St. Joseph's chapel, is the church itself. This magnificent building consisted of a choir or presbytery, (which in a conventual church was in fact the chancel,) tower, transepts and nave; the choir as well as the nave having north and south aisles. Of the nave nothing now remains but three bays on the south side, the chief peculiarity of which is, that the windows, which, unlike those of St. Joseph's chapel, have externally pointed arches, are internally semi-circular, with mouldings of Norman character, having shafts at the angles, with the square abacus, while those of the vaulting shafts are octagonal. The length of the nave from the steps, descending from the transepts, is about 185 feet, and the breadth about 96; on the south side of the nave, were situated the cloisters, of which nothing now remains.—Of the transepts little can be traced, beyond the remains of two small chapels on the north and south sides, and the majestic tower piers, two of which still remain, together with enough of one arch, to give us some idea of what the splendour of the church, when entire, must have been. On the eastern side of these piers may be seen the

remains of panel work of much later date, probably the remains of a clerestory. The north side of the presbytery is nearly gone, but of the south, seven bays still remain, differing from those in the nave, the windows having pointed arches both externally and internally. The last two bays to the east, present a very different arrangement both of mouldings and plans from the others, and may perhaps have been the Lady Chapel, which was not invariably at the east end of the building; particularly as the ground rises immediately to the east of the presbytery, hardly affording room for the foundations of any building larger than a small apsis, with which the east end perhaps terminated, as is the case with many churches of about the same date, as Easton, near Winchester, built by Henry de Blois, and Tidmarsh, in Berkshire, which is an early English building of rather later date than this part of Glastonbury. Abbot Walter de Monnington is said to have added two arches to the presbytery about A.D. 1374; but if these two bays are his work, they are a wonderfully successful imitation of an earlier style than that which prevailed in his time. The whole of this vast edifice, though very similar both in ornament and style to St. Joseph's chapel, is of rather later date, and no doubt the work of Fitz-Stephen, who was sent down by king Henry II to superintend the rebuilding of the church, after the conflagration, which had, with the exception of the tower, destroyed the whole church erected by

Henry de Blois. From the east end of the presbytery to the steps descending to the nave, is about 184 feet, and the breadth, including the aisles, about 68. In this part of the church are three stone coffins, one of which is calculated to hold a corpse 9 feet 6 inches in length; but this probably included the peaked bacinet, common in the fourteenth century.

The latest portion of the church now standing is that which is commonly called the antechapel; it is of early English character, and probably not very early in the style; it appears to have contained a flight of steps, descending from the great west entrance to the nave, which was through an arch pointed above and having under it another of a segmental form, of almost, if not quite, decorated character, to the level of St. Joseph's chapel, at the foot of which was a doorway on the north side. The construction of the buttresses is very peculiar, and the interior arcade, though no doubt adapted to that of St. Joseph's chapel, consists of trefoiled arches; the windows also are large and pointed, and on the under part of the arch where it joins St. Joseph's chapel, may be seen a panelled ornament of a different character from any other part of the building. The rebuilding of the church, which had been stopped towards the end of the reign of King Henry II, was not completed till A.D. 1193, 5 Richard I, but whether this part of the building be of a

date sufficiently early to have been finished at that time, I will not venture to decide. From the top of the stairs to the east end of St. Joseph's chapel is about 40 feet, and the breadth of the ante-chapel 28 feet. The whole length of the church externally, from the east end of the presbytery to the west end of St. Joseph's chapel, is about 510 feet.

My reasons for supposing that St. Joseph's chapel was originally a separate building from the great church, are these,—first it is in itself a complete and beautifully proportioned building, having at its eastern angles, turrets similar to those which form its western termination; which would hardly have been the case, had it been originally intended to be merely a continuation of a larger edifice. Secondly, the arch connecting it with the ante-chapel, is manifestly of later date than the chapel itself; from which it would seem probable, that the original eastern termination has been pulled down. But what appears to me to be almost conclusive is this,—the style of architecture in which it is built can hardly be later than the time of Henry de Blois, who, we know, not only built the great church and many domestic offices in the abbey, but also completed the work of abbot Herlewyn. But we are told that the whole church built by Henry de Blois, with the exception of the tower, was destroyed by fire A.D. 1185. Now if St. Joseph's chapel be of earlier date than this, (which it certainly appears

to be,) had it been at that time connected, as at present, with the great church, its preservation from that catastrophe would be irreconcilable with the statement above made ; but if we suppose, that until the erection of the ante-chapel in the 13th century, it was a distinct and separate building, the difficulty disappears ; for though we are told that a great part of the abbey, as well as the church, was destroyed by the conflagration, I have no where found it stated that the chapel dedicated to St. Joseph of Arimathæa, which certainly existed from very early times, was included in the destruction.

Of the domestic buildings of the abbey nothing remains but the great kitchen, the porter's lodge, and the abbey barn, all three of much later date than the church. It is said that the kitchen was built by Richard Whiting, the last abbot of Glastonbury, in the reign of king Henry VIII ; but this can hardly be the case, for (setting aside the improbability of such a man as Richard Whiting expending the wealth of his abbey upon a magnificent kitchen, at a time when he must have known that destruction was hanging over the whole establishment,) the style and details of the building seem rather to indicate the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th centuries, as the date of its erection ; and it seems probable that it is the work of abbot Breyn-ton, who, amongst other domestic buildings, is said to have built a kitchen some time in the latter part of the 14th century.

This is all that is left of the great abbey of Glastonbury, the first christian church which existed in these islands. Is not the sight of these mouldering ruins, enough to fill us with apprehension lest the warning of the poet—

“ Delicta majorum immeritus lues,
Romane, donec templa refeceris,”

may be truly applicable to ourselves?—at least we ought to contemplate them with awe and sorrow ; for albeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, this mighty temple was raised to His service by the efforts of zeal, which, in one point, was surely according to knowledge ; in that it expended to His honour and glory, that wealth, which we in our days are too apt to waste in personal luxury, or to lavish in vainglorious ostentation.
