

The Society then left the Hall, and soon afterwards visited the earthworks and ruins of Sherborne Castle, under the guidance of Mr. CLARK. The substance of Mr. Clark's explanation, which he has prepared for the Society, is as follows :—

### Sherborne Castle.

The Castle of Sherborne, the ancient chief seat of the Hundred of that name in the county of Dorset, occupies a plot of elevated land, placed intermediate between the junction of two water-courses, the contents of which largely contributed to its defence. The one rises beyond Hanover Hill to the south and east, and flows south of the Castle, at this time being employed to feed the lake in Sherborne Park ; the other, rising at Seven Wells on the north, descends by Pointington and Obourne, turns the mill close north of the Castle, and, finally, combining with

the other stream, skirts the southern border of the town, and is known as the Yeo, which becomes one of the principal rivers of the adjacent county of Somerset.

Both streams, as they approach the Castle, are connected with broad, low tracts of land, now fertile meadow, but anciently more or less impracticable morass. One of these tracts is traversed by the railway, another is partially covered by the lake, and a third, of smaller extent, lies close east of the Castle, and intervenes between it and the town.

The source of the name of Sherborne has been the subject of dispute, some reading it the "Shire burn," or boundary brook of the county, and others the "Clear burne," as in Clearwell and Brightwell, from the Saxon Scir, Scyr, or Sheer: pure, bright, clear. As neither of the streams connected with the town are, or, so far as is known, ever were, the boundaries of the shire, and as their sources are copious, and not impure, the latter etymology is probably the correct one.

The site of the Castle is indicated by Nature for a residence in troublous times. A knoll of rock and gravel, about 200 yards in length, or east and west, by 150 yards in breadth, rises about 40 or 50 feet above the surrounding meadows. The surface has been levelled, and an oval area of about 150 yards by 105 yards, has been traced out, and its margin scarped and pared into a steep slope of about 45 feet deep. The material has not been thrown upwards and inwards, as was usual, but outwards; so that the slope descends into a broad and deep ditch, the counterscarp of which is a bank, more or less artificial, beyond which on the north is a broad level, and on the south and south-east, in part, is level land, and in part a second ditch, down which flows the southern stream. As the knoll was rather longer

than was needed, its two ends, east and west, were cut off by the ditch, and form detached eminences, or outworks, beyond it. That to the west is bold and small, and commanded the approach from the town to the principal entrance of the fortress ; that to the east is lower, but of wider extent, and may have been used as a safe pasture ground for the stock of the garrison.

To the south-west of the Castle a very considerable bank of earth has been thrown up across the bed of the southern stream at its deepest and narrowest part. This was evidently intended to pen back the waters. Whether it is original, or has been added in Norman times, is doubtful. On the northern side no such dam was needed, but the water was to some extent penned back by the weir of the Castle mill.

As Sherborne was an episcopal residence from the 8th century, and was held by prelates who took a full share in the wars of a very turbulent part of England, it is probable that the earthworks which have been described were thrown up in the 8th, 9th, or 10th centuries, and defended after the English manner, either with masonry of a very light description, or with palisades of timber.

As the present masonry is of a most substantial character, and of a date apparently of the first quarter of the 12th century, it is most probable that the Norman prelates found it convenient to retain the English defences until they were able, after half a century of occupation, to replace them with others of a Norman type, and which still remain.

In the laying out of the present works, the earlier platform, which was, no doubt, merely rounded, was converted into a sort of rhomboidal octagon, the angles of the main figure being cut off. The curtain by which this

outline was formed was irregular. Its opposite ends were 74 yards and 59 yards long, and the sides 113 yards and 112 yards, while the opposite short sides, representing the angles, were 28 yards and 37 yards, and 33 yards and 38 yards. The angles at which these sides met varied from  $121^{\circ}$  to  $143^{\circ}$ , and the eight averaged about  $135^{\circ}$ . The curtain was of sound, coursed rubble, with interior and exterior quoins of ashlar at the angles. It was 7 feet thick, and about 30 feet high. Its whole length was 492 yards, of which about 110 yards remain, more or less perfect, in six fragments. The gate-house stands on the curtain, and, besides this, an old plan shews three rectangular towers, upon the short sides of the wall. Of one of these there is a trace in a heap of rubbish towards the north-east, from which it appears as though these mural towers projected mainly inwards. No doubt the ditch was at the same time deepened, and the exterior bank may then have been raised or strengthened; and this is probably meant when it is said that Bishop Roger "made the ditch and a false mure" outside it.

The gate-house stands at, and takes the place of, the south-western angle of the enclosure. It is bonded into and of the same date with the curtain on either side. It is a square tower of 28 feet, projecting 14 feet beyond the curtain. It has a basement and three stories. The basement is occupied by the entrance passage, 11 feet broad, and two lateral masses of 8 feet 6 inches each, solid in front, but in the rear of the work, occupied, the northern by a barrel-vaulted lodge, full-centred, 4 feet 6 inches by 7 feet, with a small cupboard in the north wall. There is a narrow door of 18 inches, with a segmental head, opening into the passage; it has also a loop to the court. In the opposite wall is a well stair, 5 feet in diameter, which seems to have

had a door, now built up, towards the court, and to have ascended to the roof, opening upon the three upper floors. It is said that the whole angle, including the doorway, fell down, and was rebuilt solid. This would account for there being no present trace of the opening. The main passage has a segmental arch in front and rear, the jambs of the former being broken away; and in the centre is a rebate for a pair of gates opening inwards, the arch of which is gone. There is no portcullis, and no trace of either an outer or inner grate. Except at the ribs, the passage was covered with flat timbers, as was usual in Norman gate-houses.

The first floor was one room with a large, full-centered window in front and rear, probably fitted up for two lights. On the north side two loops, now much broken, commanded the front and rear of the curtain. Between them was a fire-place. On the south side a mural passage from the well-stair had two loops corresponding to those above mentioned.

The second floor has two large Tudor windows front and rear, a fire-place to the north, and on each side doors opening on the battlements of the curtain. The upper floor is nearly destroyed; only the sills of its two two-light Tudor windows remain. The flues of the fire places in the north wall are bent and coaxed to reach the north-west angle, where they ascend as a turret which ends in a pyramidal top, below which, towards the north and south, are three small, round-headed arches, for the escape of smoke. The chimney-head looks Norman, but the fire-places and flues have the appearance of having been inserted in the wall in the Tudor period. The whole requires a more careful examination than the height of the chimney, and the ivy which covers it, will allow of to ordinary visitors.

A weather-moulding, remaining upon the interior face of the south wall, shews that while, originally, the lateral walls of the gate-house were of their present height, the front and rear walls were no higher than the top of the first floor, the roof sloping to the front and rear from a central ridge. Afterwards, probably in the Tudor period, these two walls were raised, two new floors added, and a flat roof substituted for the old one. This makes the age of the chimney-head the more problematical. Altogether, this gate-house is a very peculiar and interesting structure. It is certainly Norman, and of the age of the connected curtain; and the flat pilasters at each angle shew that the two lateral walls are original, and were always of their present height. The present approach is by a causeway, apparently solid, contained within two walls, and 66 feet long, such being the breadth of the ditch at that point. This, no doubt, replaces an older bridge, at the inner end of which was a gap and a draw-bridge.

The domestic buildings seem to have formed a square, or nearly so, of about 35 yards, broken by the projection of the keep, which stood at the south-west corner, that nearest to the gate-house. The group, though detached, is not central, standing towards the north-western angle of the area.

The keep is, or has been, rectangular, 41 feet broad, probably, by 66 feet long. The walls are 9 feet thick. Its basement, at the ground level, is divided, longitudinally, by a wall 6 feet thick, into two long barrel vaults, 8 feet 6 inches broad. The original entrance seems to have been at the north end of the east vault, and near it is a rude aperture in the cross-wall, probably an original doorway. There seems to have been a loop in the west or exterior wall. Appended to the south end of the east wall is a turret,

23 feet broad, by 17 feet projection, probably without any exterior opening at the basement level. The south end of the keep has been much altered. The dividing wall ceases at 22 feet from the north end, and a chamber is thus formed, 22 feet square. In the centre of this stands a cylindrical, very decided Norman pier, 3 feet in diameter, which carries the vaulting of the chamber. The south wall, and the adjacent parts of the lateral walls, have been destroyed, and rebuilt only 4 feet thick ; and in its centre, where this new wall receives the main thrust of the vault, it has been strengthened by a half-round exterior pilaster, of 4 feet projection. The wall on each side of this pilaster has been pierced by several large windows, the rough openings of which are 5 feet broad, expanding inwards to 7 feet ; of these two, and a part of a third remain. The pier is undoubtedly Norman, and the basement floor, possibly, always had a vaulted chamber at this end, but the thin walls and large windows are, evidently, Tudor work, executed with old materials, and faced with the original blocks of ashlar.

The keep had a first floor, reached by a curved staircase in the north wall, the door at the head of which was exactly above that with the basement. It seems to have contained one room, 23 feet broad, and about 48 feet long. As the walls continue to be 9 feet thick, it is probable that this first floor also was vaulted, and, it may be, with one span. In the east wall a passage of 3 feet 6 inches broad leads into the turret, and on its left, down a few steps, is a small mural wardrobe chamber, 3 feet broad. The turret, which within is 10 feet by 12 feet, seems to have been, as at Kenilworth, a wardrobe pit, or, possibly, a prison, with a trap-door in the vault above ; a moderate excavation would decide which. It is clear

that this large first floor was altered at the south end into a light bay window of Tudor fashion, to support which was the main cause of the alterations below.

The level of this floor is indicated outside the east wall by a chamfered string, having a chevron moulding in relief upon the chamfer.

Probably there was a second floor, part of the turret still rising to that height, though too much shrouded with ivy to be examined.

The south face and south-east angle of this inner ward are gone, but there remain buildings against the east and north walls. Against the north wall is a spacious chamber, 69 feet by 18 feet 6 inches, of two stages, the basement being vaulted, the eastern two-thirds in three bays, the western remainder by a barrel vault. Probably a cross wall divided these on each floor. The basement, no doubt, was for stores. There are traces of loops in the north wall, and there is also a door. The superstructure was lofty, and the eastern part over the bay vaulting was the chapel. There remains part of a small, Norman east window, the exterior jamb of which is worked in a bold chevron pattern; and below this, within, are traces of a Norman arcade, of four arches, in the wall. Also, in the north wall, close to the east end, there still remains a small Norman window of exceeding beauty, having reduplicated bands of the chevron moulding. Opposite, outside the south wall, a mural stair ascends, and seems to have opened into the chapel close to the altar, where the piscina should be. This is unusual, but it is possible that this stair may not have entered the chapel at all, but have been intended to give access to a room to its south. Against the south wall of the preceding building, and, therefore, within the court, a weather



moulding at the first floor level shews that there was a lean-to, like a cloister ; and above the moulding are some arches of an intersecting arcade, one of which is pierced for a window, and to the east of this is a second window, also opening from the chapel.

Another room, also of two stages, is placed against the east wall, at right angles to the chapel. It was 16 feet 6 inches broad, and what remains is 48 feet long. The basement was barrel-vaulted, with lateral loops for air. The upper floor is too dilapidated to allow of sound speculation, but it may very probably have been the hall.

No kitchens have been identified.

Outside the curtain, towards the north, are the remains of what is described as an archway leading to the meadows. This seems to have been a spur-work, a long hollow wall descending from the curtain into the ditch, covering a deep hollow way on its east side, which is likely enough to have led to a postern, and probably afforded a communication by a water gate with the marsh. Nothing now remains but some vaults, and a fragment of overthrown wall.

There are some fragments of wall to the south-west of the Castle, remaining on the outer or lower face of the dam, which seem of the date of the walls generally, and which were probably intended to guard the dam, and especially the sluice.

Whatever may be the age of the earthworks of this Castle, it is clear that nearly the whole of the masonry is of one date, and of the Norman period. The great thickness of the wall, its rough but sound workmanship, and the absence of either portcullis or pointed arch, look early, while the fine-jointed ashlar, and the ornate character of the remaining windows, seem late in the style, and more

like the reign of the second than of the first Henry. There is no early pointed arch in the adjacent Minster, and the tall, stilted heads of the arches opening from the transepts into its central towers, shew that it was not employed by Bishop Roger, even where there seems most occasion for it. On the whole, besides, the historical evidence in favour of the Castle having been built in the first quarter of the 12th century is strong, and this conclusion, no doubt, is correct. It would seem that Bishop Roger, like some other great architects, was considerably in advance of his age, and produced a castle, which, in the hands of a lay baron at that period, would have been of a much more rude and less advanced description.

Sherborne, both town and Castle, are of pure English origin. There are British camps upon the hills around, and names, vocal in the British tongue, still cling to many of the distinctive features of the district, but of the Britons Sherborne itself bears no trace.

Sherborne, already an ecclesiastical foundation, became the seat of the bishoprick of that name during the reign of King Ine, early in the 8th century ; and Adhelm, who died in 735, a kinsman to the King, was the first bishop. The circumstances of the west, then and long afterwards, made a secure dwelling a necessary of life ; and the site of the Castle was, no doubt, selected for the episcopal dwelling, and, probably, by degrees fortified. The earth-works might well have been the work of Æthelstan, the seventh bishop, about 818, who took an active part in the wars against the Danes ; and is said himself to have been a leader in the bloody, but successful, combat with that people on the Parret, in 845. He died 867. Eadmund, his successor, was forced to continue in the same course, as did Werstan, the fourteenth bishop, who, as well as

Eadmund, fell in battle. The Minster was founded in 998, by Bishop Wesin ; who, by consent of King Æthelred, for the then existing canons substituted Benedictine monks. On every account a local residence and a strong one must have been necessary.

The Manor and Hundred of Sherborne seem from the earliest periods to have been vested in the bishops. At Domesday the Bishop of Scireburne held Scireburne, and Queen Edith had held it, but before her Bishop Alwold.

For a time, from 1048, the see was called of Wiltshire, Ramsbury being then its seat, but its final translation was to Salisbury under Bishop Hermann, a German ecclesiastic, once Chaplain to the Confessor, who was Bishop before the Conquest, and held his seat till 1078. But he and his successor, Osmund de Seez, the first Norman bishop, though called of Sarum, retained their residence at Sherborne.

But whatever may have been the strength of the Sherborne Palace, it owes its reputation as a Norman stronghold to Bishop Roger who held the see from 1103 to 1139, was Lord Chief Justice, Lord Treasurer, and the trusted adviser of Henry I. Bishop Roger's character and actions as a statesman belong to English history. All that it is here necessary to say is that he was the builder of the strong Castles of Devizes, Malmesbury, and Sherborne, and at one time had charge of that of Old Sarum. Malmesbury he built in the cemetery of the monastery in despite of the monks, it was therefore probably wholly new ; but Devizes and Sherborne, like old Sarum, were older sites, though they do not seem to have been previously fortified in the Norman manner.

Places so strong were naturally regarded with great jealousy by the Crown, and Malmesbury, Sherborne, and

Devizes, the Bishop's three castles, were besieged by Stephen in 1139, and fell after a severe siege. Once taken they continued to be vested in the Crown, and were held by various great lords as Constables during pleasure, and among them Bishop Poer condescended so to hold it in 1217-24.

In 1337, Edward III alienated Sherborne to Montacute Earl of Salisbury, but the usurpation borne from the sovereign was resisted from a subject, and Bishop Wyvil, emulous perhaps of his predecessors, Æthelstan, Eadmund, and Werstan, went so far as to challenge the Earl to a wager of battle, to be fought out by their champions. These were actually appointed and a day fixed, when a compromise was brought about. The Bishop paid 2,500 marks, and he recovered, and in 1375 died at the Castle. With the Castle he no doubt regained also the demesne park which covered the ascending slopes to the south, and the tract known locally as Gainsborough.

From the time of Bishop Wyvil his successors held Sherborne undisturbed till the Reformation, when the Castle was granted, first to the Paulets by Edward VI, and afterwards by Elizabeth to Sir Walter Raleigh, who built the adjacent house, and probably fitted up the Castle itself for a residence in the meantime. The estate was wrenched by chicane by James I from the son of Sir Walter, and finally it came to Digby Earl of Bristol, by whose collateral descendants in the female title it is still held.

Sherborne Castle had its full share of the troubles of the great rebellion. In 1642 it was held by the Marquis of Hertford for Charles I, and besieged by the Earl of Bedford for the Parliament, whose works were constructed against the north front.

In 1645 it was again attacked, and the wall was mined and breached. Sir Lewis Dives, who commanded for the King, made a gallant defence, but was forced finally to surrender, when the place was dismantled by the Parliament, and has since remained a ruin.

Mr. Clark's explanation was given at the different points which he described, and the effect was that no one present could fail to gain the clearest possible insight into the uses and history of the various ruins and earthworks which in different ages formed parts of the fortifications.

The PRESIDENT expressed the thanks of the Society to Mr. Clark for his most interesting address.

The PRESIDENT then called upon Mr. Freeman to say something concerning Bishop Roger.

Mr. FREEMAN said that he would first tell the story of how Bishop Roger first gained promotion in the Church. When Henry, the English-born son of the Conqueror, before he was King, was marching about in Normandy with no very great train, he went to hear mass in a chapel in the suburbs of Caen. The poor clerk who was officiating saw the Ætheling come in, and he watched his opportunity, and got over the mass so quickly that Henry's followers hardly knew that he had begun before he had ended. Henry said that he was the fittest chaplain for soldiers that he had ever seen, and at once took him into his favour. Those who have read the Constitutional History of Professor Stubbs will have seen what a man Roger was, and how much he had to do in the working out the system of administration begun by Henry I, and which was carried on by Henry II. Perhaps he was not in all points exactly a model Bishop. But, whatever he was in any other way, he was a very great minister and

a very great architect. His architectural works are specially commented on by William of Malmesbury, a man who had a keen eye for architectural matters. He marked the introduction of a new style of architecture by the Confessor, and he also marked Bishop Roger as bringing in something like a new style. He calls attention to the splendour of his work, and especially to the beauty of its masonry, "masonry so accurately laid that you would think the whole building was one stone." Now, if this company will look at the work here, they will see that it is all fine work; it is quite different from the earliest Norman work; there are finer joints and far more elaborate ornaments. William of St. Carilef at Durham and Roger at Sherborne and elsewhere exercised a powerful influence on the architecture of their time. With regard to Norman architecture, it is a mistake always to suppose that the richest work is always the latest. A great deal depended on the man who built it. If you go to Durham and look at the eastern limb of the church and the transepts, any one would think that the transept was by far the older. It is really several years later. William of St. Carilef began the church; and after his death the monks carried it on in a style utterly inferior. Any one who walked in here, not knowing anything about the place, would think that this fine Norman work was later than the time of Roger. But it must have been built between 1109 and 1138. For 1138 was the time when Stephen seized Roger and his nephew the Bishop of Ely, and kept them fast until they gave up their castles. But, simply from the work itself, one would have thought that it belonged to the time of Henry II, rather than Henry I. This shows how far great architects like William and Roger were in advance of their times, and how long it

took smaller men to come up to them. In looking at these buildings, you should remember also that Roger built them in a time of profound peace. All the time of Henry I was a time of peace in England, and so men who had the will and the means could build freely without any great fear that what they built would be soon upset. What you see here is something more than a castle, something more than a place run up for defence only; it is a fortified palace. Directly after Roger was seized came the time of confusion, "the nineteen years that we tholed for our sins." During that time men built up all those castles which were pulled down again as soon as Henry II came to the throne, because they had been set up without the King's leave. This castle was seized by the King, but it was not pulled down. There was no temptation to any one to destroy such a building as this was; and, like Roger's other works, it remained as a model of style for later builders.

Mr. J. H. PARKER, C.B., said that the Gate-house had originally a gabled roof, with four angle turrets; and that, in the time of Elizabeth, the chimney was made out of one of these turrets. The long building he believed to be the Hall and Chapel combined. They had the same thing at Conway. It was not an uncommon thing for the chapel to be in a bay at the end of the hall, and screened off from it. As regards the rich window of the Chapel, Mr. Parker observed that the shaft and capital seemed to him to be of a date later than the time of Bishop Roger. There was something in what Mr. Freeman said about the genius of Bishop Roger being in advance of his time, but this seemed to him to be of a different character altogether, and he thought that it must be a somewhat later alteration.



The Society, by the kind permission of Mr. G. D. Wingfield Digby, then visited Sherborne Park and Lodge.

The Rev. R. DIGBY conducted the party through the house, and pointed out, and commented on, many of the valuable pictures which it contains. The most remarkable is the Procession of Queen Elizabeth, by Mark Gerrard, of Bruges. The figures are all likenesses, and those of Leicester, Lord Cobham, Lord Howard of Effingham, and many more may easily be made out. Mr. Digby said that there was an old dispute as to this picture and the one on the same subject at Melbury, which was the original, and which the replica, or copy. There was proof, however, that the Sherborne picture had been in the house before the Melbury picture had taken up its present place. In the same room there are portraits of Lady Southampton, and of John, Earl of Digby, who tried hard to bring about the Spanish match; he was made a dupe by Buckingham, but King James rewarded him by allowing him to buy Sherborne Castle in fee for a small sum. The library, Mr. Digby said, was fitted up by Horace Walpole. It contains a portrait of Kenelm Digby, by Vandyke. The books were chiefly collected by the last Earl of Bristol; of whom, it was said that, on the eve of true philosophy he chose astrology. The green drawing-room contains many pictures of the Digby family. The floor of the dairy is formed of a Roman tessellated pavement, which was discovered on Lenthay Common.

A large number of ladies and gentlemen dined together at 6.30, at the Digby Hotel. After dinner a few toasts were given.

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At eight o'clock an

## Evening Meeting

was held in the Town Hall, and was well attended.

Mr. FREEMAN read a paper on "King Ine," which continued the paper which he read at Taunton, in 1872, and which is printed in Vol. XVIII of the Society's Journal. Mr. Freeman received the hearty thanks of the Society for this exhaustive paper. It will be found in Part II of this volume.

The Rev. W. BARNES next read a paper on "Bishop Ealdhelm," which is also printed in Part II. It is to be regretted that the lateness of the hour prevented any discussion on the moot points brought forward in this paper. As soon as the President had expressed the thanks of the Society to Mr. Barnes, the meeting broke up.

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