GLASTONBURY ABBEY

RECENT DISCOVERIES:

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXCAVATIONS UNDERTAKEN

:: BY ::

MR. F. BLIGH BOND, F.R.I.B.A., WITH HIS NOTES AND DISCOVERIES.

WITH PLAN OF ABBEY AND EXCAVATIONS.

TOGETHER WITH A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ABBEY.

By GEORGE E. MANTLE.

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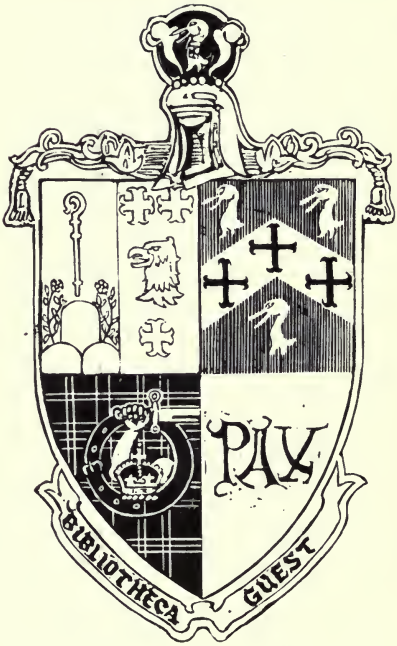
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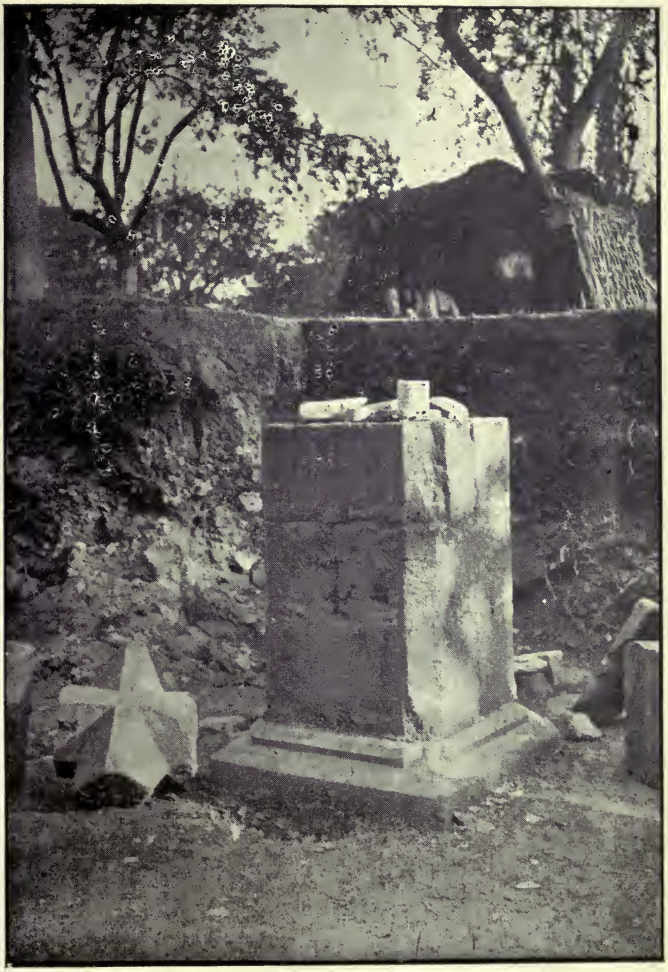


ONE OF THE CENTRAL PIERS

Supporting the Groined Roof of the Refectory Vault. (Page 28.)

RECENT DISCOVERIES

:: AT ::

GLASTONBURY ABBEY.

An Account of the Excavations

Undertaken by Mr. F. Bligh Bond, F.R.I.B.A., with his Notes upon the Discoveries, ...

Together with a Short History of the Abbey.

BY GEORGE E. MANTLE.

PREFACE.

THIS BOOKLET is intended to present a narrative, as complete as possible up to the date of issue, of the result of the researches within the Abbey enclosure made by Mr. Bligh Bond, who in 1908 commenced the work of exploration, under the auspices of the Somerset Archæological Society. The reason for it being undertaken was the considerable confusion of ideas as to the exact plan of the Abbey in its missing parts, such plans as had been published being of a contradictory nature. Therefore, the details of the remarkable discoveries that have been made, and the description of the remains, are of the greatest interest and value, both to the student and the casual visitor to the Abbey. The various reports concerning the discoveries that have appeared from time to time have been incorporated into the booklet and, for the benefit of the uninitiated, headed with a brief sketch of the Abbey history.

G.E.M.

For a fuller and more technical description of the architecture of the Abbey, with illustrations of several parts, readers are referred to Mr. Bond's "Architectural Handbook of Glastonbury Abbey."

CHAPTER I.

GLASTONBURY ABBEY: ITS FOUNDATION AND DISSOLUTION.

THE RUINS of the renounced Abbey at Glastonbury, beautiful in their desolation, mark the site of Christian temples which go back, as legend would have us believe, to the very days of the Apostles. The glory and repute of the Glastonbury of the Middle Ages led its faithful monks to make far-reaching claims as to the antiquity of their abbey, and in consequence it is difficult to separate fact from fancy in the mass of tradition in the writings of the monkish chroniclers, furnished by them, with much labour and devotion, for the information and guidance of succeeding generations.

The beginnings of Glastonbury Abbey, in point of fact, are lost in the realms of legend; but, although Glastonbury is not mentioned either by Bede or by the authors of the Saxon Chronicle as one of the early foundations, its existence is proved by the authority of the letters of St. Boniface. Professor Freeman has left it on record that Glastonbury is, "on any showing, a tie between the Briton and the Englishman, between the older Christianity of our island and the newer—the one Church of the first rank which lived through the storm of English conquest, which passed into the hands of our victorious fathers as a trophy of victory undestroyed and unplundered."

The tradition which ascribes to Joseph of Arimathea and his companions the building of the first little church of wattlework is a familiar one. The story is that Joseph,

the companion of St. Philip, together with eleven other disciples of that apostle, introduced the Christian religion in this country at Glastonbury circa 63 A.D., and obtained permission to settle there from the British king Arviragus, who gave them each a " hide " of land, the whole forming the district known as the " Twelve Hides of Glaston."

Mention must be made of the charming story of the Holy Thorn, which sprang from Joseph's staff on being stuck into the ground on his landing on Weary-all Hill—the eminence to the south-west of the Abbey Ruins—and ever the sacred tree and its descendants have blossomed on Christmas Day, mindful of the birth of our Lord. Upon the land given them, Joseph and his companions settled, and here they built the little church of wattle, afterwards known as the " Vetusta Ecclesia " —the forerunner of the Great Abbey. Here, also, was Joseph buried, but not until he had, according to local tradition, deposited for safe keeping, in a hiding-place in one of the hills adjacent to the town, the sacred Cup from which our Lord drank at His Last Supper—the mystic " Holy Grail," venerated and extolled in story and poem.

With regard to this traditional early settlement, it would be well to quote the words of one of the ancient writers, who, referring to Joseph and his land, says: " We know not whether they really repose here, although we have read that they sojourned in the place for nine years; but here dwelt assuredly many of their disciples, ever twelve in number, who, in imitation of them, led a hermit's life until unto them came St. Patrick, the great apostle of the Irish, and first abbot of the hallowed spot."

At Glastonbury, also, according to the same pious writer, there rested St. Benen, the disciple of St. Patrick; St. Gildas, the historian of the British; St. David, Bishop of Menevia; and " the holy hermit Indractus, with his seven companions, all sprung from the royal race." Here, also, were " the relics of a band of holy Irish pilgrims, who, returning from a visit to the shrines of Rome, turned aside to Glastonbury out of love to St. Patrick's memory, and were martyred."

Of the very early settlement of Glastonbury, evidence is furnished by St. Patrick himself, who leaves an account of how he, in company with a brother named Wellias, with great difficulty, owing to the thick growth of the woods, ascended Tor Hill, where, on reaching the summit, they found an old temple, wellnigh destroyed, yet available for Christian worship." By further search through the place they " found a book in which were written the acts of the Apostles; likewise the Acts and Doings of the holy men Phaganus and Diruvianus; but for the most part obliterated." To St. Patrick is also accorded the credit of having raised Glastonbury into a regular community.

William of Malmesbury tells us that a second church was built to the eastward of the first by St. David, Bishop of Menevia (died 546); and a third—the work of twelve holy men, anchorites from the north of Britain—which also stood to the east of the " Vetusta Ecclesia." That which has been considered as the earliest piece of real history is the grant of Gwrgan, the King of Damnonia, in 601 A.D., who gave the land of Ynyswitrin to the " Old Church " in the time of the Abbot Worgret. " Ynyswitrin " is an early name for Glastonbury, stated to be more ancient than the name of " Avalon," by which Glastonbury was known in the time of the great British hero Arthur.

Following the conquest of the Britons by the Saxons, no less veneration was accorded to the church and its precincts under Saxon Christianity, for we read that early in the seventh century Paulinus, Archbishop of York, viewed the church as a sacred object, and protected it by an external roofing of lead and casing of boards.

There is evidence of the existence of the wattle church early in the eighth century in the Charter of Ine, King of Wessex, which is dated as having been signed in the " Lignea Basilica" or " wooden church," A.D. 725. The alleged charter of Ine, the authority of which was subsequently disputed, exempted the Church of Glastonbury and its belongings from all outside jurisdiction, ecclesiastical or royal, and especially from the control of the local Bishops. At the time the traditional origin of Glastonbury was fully credited, for upon St. Joseph's

Chapel. King Ine lavished his wealth to such an extent as to garnish it all over with gold and silver, and filled it with the most costly vessels and ornaments. He also built a new church in honour of our Lord and the Apostles Peter and Paul. The existence of the old wooden church in the eleventh century is shown by the Charter of King Cnut, A.D. 1032, also signed within its walls.

Following, we come to the period of Dunstan, who at one time was Abbot of Glastonbury—a fact which greatly adds to its reputation. He was born at Baltonsborough, a village within a few miles of Glastonbury Abbey, and consequently was well acquainted with all its beautiful legends, and formed a personal attachment to the monastery long before ambition could have led him to connect its advancement with his own. Later he became acquainted with the Court of Athelstan, but afterwards returned and built himself a hermitage in or near the Abbey of Glastonbury, and buried himself in privacy. It was here, too, that Dunstan held that meeting with the Evil One which has redounded so greatly to his fame, when the Devil is reputed to have appeared and tempted him in the form of a handsome woman.

Under Dunstan, who was subsequently made Abbot, and introduced the rules of that order into England, Glastonbury became a Benedictine monastery. By him, with the help of Kings Edmund and Edgar, the monastery and church were greatly restored and extended, for, according to William of Malmesbury, Dunstan completed a great church and set of monastic offices. The benefactions to the Abbey on the part of King Edgar " the Peaceable " were great, and Dunstan exercised great influence over that monarch. He was crowned by Dunstan at Bath Abbey, and erected a palace on the borders of the " twelve hides of Glaston." To the last the Abbots and monks venerated King Edgar, and a glorious chapel was built to receive his remains, which had been enshrined in the Abbey ever since his death, A.D. 975. The old church also undoubtedly contained the tombs of King Edmund (died 946 A.D.), who was buried under the tower of the Abbey Church on the south side, and King Edmund

Ironside (died 1016 A.D.), whose body rested before the altar. The burial and tomb of Dunstan will be referred to in a later chapter, when dealing with the excavations.

After the Norman Conquest, Turstin was made Abbot in succession to the Saxon abbot Ailnoth; but with English monks and a foreign ruler dissensions arose. Turstin desired to introduce several innovations which the monks resented. A hot dispute occurred over the use of the Gregorian chant by the Abbey choristers, and Turstin called in the Norman soldiers to enforce his rules and punish the monks. And almost like legendary lore, with its crash of arms, and groans and shrieks of the wounded and dying, is the veracious account in the Saxon Chronicle of the bloody affray which then ensued in the Abbey. The brief, but vivid, description of the fight given in the "Chrinicle" runs thus: "This year (1083) arose the tumult at Glastonbury betwixt the Abbot Thurstan and his monks. . . . A rueful thing happened on that day. The French broke into the choir, and hurled their weapons at the altar, where the monks were; and some of the knights went upon the upper floor, and shot their arrows down incessantly towards the sanctuary; so that on the crucifix that stood upon the altar they struck many arrows. And the wretched monks lay about the altar, and some crept under, and earnestly called upon God, imploring his mercy, since they could not obtain any at the hands of men. What can we say, but that they continued to shoot their arrows, whilst the others broke down the doors, and came in, and slew some of the monks to death, and wounded many therein, so that the blood came from the altar upon the steps, and from the steps on the floor. Three there were slain to death and eighteen wounded." This is a vivid account of what happened so many centuries ago.

Because of his treatment of the monks, Turstin was banished to Normandy by William the Conqueror; but subsequently, by payment of a sum of money, Turstin secured his re-appointment to the Abbey of Glastonbury. During his time he commenced to build a church, but this, and doubtless also the church built by Dunstan, were

pulled down by Turstin's successor, Herlewin (Abbot 1101 to 1120), who replaced them with a much more magnificent building.

Another Abbot did much building in the period before the building of the last great Abbey Church. This was Henry of Blois, of whom it is written that " he built from the foundations a bell tower, chapter-house, cloister, lavatory, refectory, dormitory, and infirmary, with its chapel; a beautiful and ample palace ; a handsome exterior gateway of squared stones; a large brewhouse; many stables for horses; and other works; besides giving various ornaments to the church.

On May 25, 1184, a great fire occurred, which swept away all the churches (including the venerable " Vetusta Ecclesia ") and monastic buildings, save the bell-tower built by the Abbot Henry of Blois; a chamber; and a chapel built by Abbot Robert.

In addition to the three kings previously mentioned, it is believed that the Abbey Church contained the tombs of some five or six abbots, while besides the shrine of St. Joseph it is recorded that the " Vetusta Ecclesia " contained the bodies of SS. Gildas, Patrick, Indractus, and others. It is also said that St. Bridget was attracted by the reputed virtue of St. Patrick, and that she and St. Columba were buried with him in one tomb.

One of the great fascinations of Glastonbury is its associations with the great British hero Arthur, and its repute as his place of burial. The story of the alleged discovery of his place of interment comes just before the great fire.

The history of King Arthur is shrouded in mystery of the most romantic character. It is difficult to distinguish, through the mists of thirteen centuries, the boundaries between fact and myth. At the same time there is scarcely any doubt as to the part of his history relating to Glastonbury. It is believed that he died in the battle of Camlan, in Cornwall, in 542, and was conveyed by sea to Glastonbury, and there buried. The actual spot seems, in course of time, to have been quite forgotten, but was later discovered in a somewhat remarkable way. When

Henry II. was passing through Wales, the Welsh people, full of enthusiasm, wished him all the prosperity that had attended their favourite King Arthur, whose exploits were sung to him by one of the native bards as he dined. In the song mention was made of King Arthur's burial place, "between two pyramids in the churchyards at Glastonbury." On his return to England, Henry told the Abbot what he had heard, and a search was instituted. Fortunately one of our chroniclers, Giraldus Cambrensis, was an eye-witness of this most interesting event. Seven feet below the ground the surface of a huge broad stone was found, with a small thin plate of lead in the form of a cross, bearing, in rude letters and barbarous style, the Latin inscription: "Hic Jacet Sepultus Inclytus Rex Arturius in Insula Avalonia." Nine feet deeper they found the remains of Arthur himself in the trunk of a tree, and by his side lay those of his wife, Guinever. The bones of the King were of extraordinary size. The skull was covered with wounds, ten distinct fractures being counted. One in particular was of great size, apparently the effect of the fatal blow. The Queen's body was strangely whole and perfect, the hair being the colour of burnished gold. This remarkable discovery afterwards attracted Edward I. and his Queen to see the remains themselves, and the skulls were set up in the Treasury, while the rest of the bodies were enclosed and returned to their places of deposit. A stately monument was erected over Arthur and Guinever, but this was subsequently destroyed.

King Henry II., having custody of the Abbey at the time of the great fire, at once inaugurated a great scheme of rebuilding, and it is the remains of this work which are now to be seen. The superintendence of the rebuilding was given to Radulphus Fitz Stephen, the King's Chamberlain. The chapel of St. Mary (or St. Joseph) was the first to be built on the site of the old wooden church, and is said to have been finished and dedicated in 1186. The chapel was originally a detached rectangular building, subsequently linked to the great church by a continuation known as the "Galilee." The building of the great Abbey Church, or "Ecclesia Major," was commenced about the

same time as that of the chapel, and for five years the work, under the control of Radulphus and with Royal support, made great progress.

Unfortunately Henry II. died in 1189, and during the reigns of his immediate successors the Abbey received no support from the Throne, and in addition it was involved in disputes with Wells, which led to the loss of considerable property, so that funds were not available for building. With the accession of Henry III., matters improved, but as space is limited for this history of the Abbey, which is only intended to be brief, the subsequent building operations undertaken by succeeding Abbots cannot be minutely described. It can be stated, however, that in 1235 Michael of Ambresbury was elected, and during his eighteen years of rule he brought prosperity to the Abbey and erected some hundred buildings within and without the monastery walls. Geoffrey Fromond, who became Abbot in 1303, erected the great hall and made the chapter-house of the Abbey; and his successor, Walter de Taunton, erected the great choir screen. John Chinnock built the cloister, dormitory, and fratery, and perfected the great hall and chapter-house; for fifty years he continued abbot, and during his lengthened abbacy was continually adding to the beauty and vastness of the buildings. He died, and was buried in the chapter-house, A.D. 1420.

Richard Beere built new lodgings for the secular priests; also the King's lodgings in the gallery. He arched the aisles of the great church, strengthened the steeple, made a rich altar of silver-gilt, and erected a chapel to our Lady of Loretto, adjoining the north side of the body of the church. He also founded almshouses, with a chapel, for poor women, which are still in existence by the entrance to the Abbey. He also commenced the chapel of King Edgar at the east end of the great church.

Richard Whiting, "the last Abbot of Glastonbury," elected 1524, finished the Edgar Chapel and built the Abbey Kitchen. Despite the fact that he had proclaimed himself a patriotic English Churchman by signing the deed which proclaimed King Henry VIII. "Supreme Head

of the Church," Abbot Whiting yet fell a victim to the Royal displeasure, in that he refused to surrender his monastery and yield up its accumulated wealth. He was therefore imprisoned, tried, and executed on November 15, 1539, together with his treasurer, Roger Jacob, and his sub-treasurer, John Thorn, both monks of the Abbey, the execution taking place on a hill within sight of the monastery. His head was placed over the Abbey gate, and his quartered body distributed to Wells, Bath, Ilchester, and Bridgwater. The Abbey was forfeited to the King, who sold the lands and divided the property. The buildings were given over to pillage and destruction, and the grand library scattered. The monastery had an historic existence of 938 years, but of course tradition carries it back a great deal further.

Since the dissolution, the Ruins have had a chequered existence, weakened by the devastating influence of time, weather, and storms, and ruthlessly pillaged by vandal owners, who uprooted and carted off whole portions of the stonework to be utilised as building-material. Much that was left standing at the time of the dissolution has now disappeared, save the most meagre traces, in the shape of foundations, which have recently been brought to light in the course of the excavations.

With regard to owners of the Abbey site in later years, Edward VI. granted the Abbey buildings, lands, and orchards to Edward, Duke of Somerset, who at one time endeavoured to establish a colony of Flemish weavers in the Abbey enclosure; but the venture did not prove a success. When the Duke was attainted for treason, the property again reverted to the Crown. In June, 1559, Queen Elizabeth granted the site to Sir Peter Carew, and on his death it was granted to Thomas, Earl of Sussex. His heir and brother, Henry, fifth Earl of Sussex, sold the site to William Stone, who in 1596 conveyed it to William, Earl of Devonshire. In 1733 it passed from the hands of the Devonshire family into those of Thomas Bladen, of Middlesex, who settled the estate upon his daughters. Subsequently it passed from their ownership, and after several changes became the property, in 1806, of Mr. G.

Cox, who disposed of the Abbey estates to Mr. John Down. Later on it became the property of Mr. James Austin, and was by him bequeathed to his son, Mr. Stanley Austin.

In 1907 it was announced that Mr. Stanley Austin intended to sell the Ruins by public auction. Public interest was immediately aroused in the event, and the fate of the Abbey became practically a matter of national importance.

On June 6, 1907, the sale took place in a marquee erected in the grounds of the Abbey House, when, the bidding having reached the sum of £30,000, the auctioneer, Mr. Robert Bowring, declared the purchaser to be Mr. Ernest Jardine, of Nottingham. The same day it was rumoured locally, and shortly afterwards it was officially announced by the Bishop of Bath and Wells (Dr. Kennion), that the purchase had been effected by Mr. Jardine (by arrangement with himself) with a view to the Ruins and site being acquired by the Church of England.

Almost immediately afterwards the Bishop of Bath and Wells made an urgent appeal to the general public for assistance in raising the £30,000 purchase-money. There was a ready response, among the generous subscribers being the King and Queen, and the Prince of Wales, and by October, 1908, the whole of the amount required, which with interest and other expenses had increased to close upon £31,000, had been raised, and the Ruins and site had become the absolute property of the Church of England.

The property is now vested in the Bath and Wells Diocesan Trust, and is governed by trustees, the head of the controlling body being, of course, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Much has been done in preserving and strengthening the Ruins, the work having been carried out under the superintendance of Mr. Carõe, the architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The two remaining piers of the central tower of the great church have been repaired and shored, and the south-western turret and eastern archway of St. Joseph's Chapel have been rebuilt, this work being necessary for the permanent protection of the Ruins. In addition, other portions of the ruins have

been repaired and strengthened, and much debris, climbing plants, etc., which assisted decay, have been cleared away,

Other work is the restoration of the original entrance in Magdalene Street, and for this purpose the Red Lion Inn, in which the old gateway was incorporated, was acquired, and the old work remaining was carefully restored. A new road running past the Almshouses of St. Mary Magdalene leads into the Abbey enclosure, and the whole forms a great improvement upon the former entrance from Glastonbury High Street, besides being a return to the original style. Money for this work has been raised by a Restoration Fund.

On June 22, 1909, there was a special function at Glastonbury Abbey, when the trust-deeds were handed over to the Archbishop of Canterbury in keeping for the Church of England, the occasion being honoured by the attendance of Royalty in the persons of the Prince and Princess of Wales (now King and Queen). This event, it was considered, was a fitting climax to the great efforts that had been put forth to secure the Abbey as a national heritage.

A summary of the remains of the Abbey now standing may be given as follows: The walls of St. Mary's Chapel (usually known as St. Joseph's Chapel) at the west end. Visitors should particularly note the carving of the north doorway.

The Galilee, a continuation of St. Mary's Chapel to the east, connecting it with the great church.

Of the Great Church the following remains are visible: A portion of the south aisle wall of the nave, on the outer side of which the cloisters formerly ran. Marks of the junction of the cloisters can still be detected on the south side of the wall.

The Two Eastern Piers of the four which formerly supported the four aisles under the great central tower. A portion of the arch, which united them, can still be seen. Portions of the walls of the north and south transepts are still connected with the piers. Half-way up the piers may be noticed the remains of the curious stone galleries, above the triforium, which led around the church through the massive walls.

Adjoining the south-east pier, in the angle formed by the south transept and choir, are the ruins of a CHAPEL, and in the north-east angle is another chapel which remains fairly whole. This chapel is stated to be dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury.

The remains of THE CHOIR, eastward of the central tower, include the south aisle wall, and a portion of the north-east corner.

THE ABBEY KITCHEN, in a small enclosure to the south of St. Mary's Chapel, remains practically intact, and near by is a fragment of walling containing a staircase, usually considered to be part of the almonry.

What has been revealed as the results of the excavations will now be dealt with.

SUB-VAULT OF REFECTORY,
Partly excavated in the summer of 1910. (Page 27.)

Fragments recovered from Refectory Excavations. (Page 29.)

CHAPTER II.

THE EXCAVATIONS: KING EDGAR CHAPEL UNEARTHED.

THE OBJECT of the excavations, which were commenced in 1908, was to determine, if possible, the plan of the Abbey, in certain parts now missing; besides which there was the hope that probably digging might bring to light matters of architectural detail or relics which might help to throw light upon the past history of this famous old monastery. The Somerset Archæological Society having applied to the Abbey Trustees for permission for Mr. Bligh Bond to undertake the work of exploration, this was readily given, and an early start was made. It must be added that the work has been carried out by Mr. Bond in a thoroughly scientific manner. An archæologist and practising architect, Mr. Bond is an expert on matters of ecclesiastical architecture, and all the attempts made by him to locate the foundations of missing portions of the Abbey have been incited by previous deductions and close study of his subject. In consequence, the results have been exceedingly good; but as the excavations have now been in progress for some considerable while, and a mass of information has been collected, it is impossible in a booklet of this description to give the whole of the details, but an endeavour will be made to include what may be termed the gems of the collection.

The results of the first attempt revealed the value of Mr. Bond's deductions and reasoning. The contradictory nature of existing plans of the Abbey has been previously mentioned, and this was particularly the case with regard to the east end of the Great Church, about which a variety of suggestions had been made. According to Professor Willis, there were five chapels in a row, terminating the

choir; but in 1904 Mr. St. John Hope published in the "Archæological Journal" a plan showing four chapels, and gave his reasons for believing that these chapels formed the eastward termination of the church and that there was nothing beyond. According to certain authorities, the King Edgar Chapel to the east of the Choir was commenced by Abbot Bere, who became Abbot in 1493, and was finished by his successor, the unfortunate Abbot Whiting. All outward trace of this chapel had disappeared, and some antiquaries had therefore come to doubt its existence. According to a survey of the Abbey in the time of Elizabeth, the chronicler, in the quaint spelling of the time, says: "The great Church in the Aby wase in length 594 foott as followeth:—The Chapter house in length 70 foott, 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."

Although the excavations undertaken in 1904 had revealed nothing, Mr. Bond, after considering the matter in all its bearings, came to the conclusion that an extension of building would be found beyond the eastern Choir wall, as he believed that the term "Chapter-house" as used by the writer of the inventory was a mistake for "St. Edgar's Chapel." Therefore he set to work to the east of the Choir wall.

The first object was to ascertain whether Prof. Willis's plan of the five chapels was correct, and this was completely established by the discovery of the "footings" of the missing division-walls of the chapels. It was next found that the central chapel had been elongated (as Willis shows), and its walls were traced outwards to the east until at about seven feet beyond the east wall of the Abbey they were found to intersect with a very massive foundation, still retaining a large quantity of its original stonework. This proved to be the western wall of a large rectangular chapel, furnished with a symmetrical range of buttresses on either side, and giving every indication of having once supported a very lofty and important superstructure. The trenches yielded a large quantity of interesting fragments of sixteenth-

century stonework, glass, and tile, all of which were strongly corroborative of the theory that this was indeed the site of Abbot Bere's Chapel. The plan as now revealed brings the total length of the Abbey buildings, from extreme west to extreme east, to 580ft. or thereabouts.

The chapel was originally rectangular, but there are two additions, probably by Abbot Whiting, one of which takes the form of a small polygonal apse, and the other a shallow sacristy on the south side of it.

The foundations laid down by Abbot Bere are very massive, the side walls being 6ft. 6in., and the end walls 4ft. 6in., thick. The junction walls to the Choir are thicker again, but these are probably the older walls, and they, together with the west end of the Edgar Chapel, lie at a much deeper level than the rest. A channel for the drainage of surface-water is formed in the walls around the whole circuit of the chapel, and is connected with drains running through the Abbey grounds westwards. Three inspection holes have been formed in the footings in which these channels may be seen.

The buttress footings are very massive, and project about five feet, showing that a roof of heavy construction was supported. Two of the most important fragments of stonework found were from the vaulted roof. One is a section of the vaulting showing the panelled fanwork of the period; and the other a heavy carved boss or apex stone, displaying the intersection of twelve moulded ribs. These indicate a roof of the nature of that in the chapel of King Henry VII. at Westminster, though of course hardly so elaborate.

The apse foundations are shallow, and commence at a level some 6ft. above the rest. The east wall is missing, which makes it difficult to arrive at the exact form and length. This was, however, determined in 1910, when an eighteenth-century manuscript, discovered in a private collection, was found to give the length of "King Edgar's Chapel" as 87ft. beyond the Choir. This gives the Abbey, from west to east, a clear internal length of 580ft., agreeing with the statements of the more reliable of the older writers, and making it the longest ecclesiastical building

known in England, with one exception, that being Old St. Paul's, stated to have been something like 600ft. in length.

The true position of the footings of the King Edgar Chapel having been ascertained, it was decided, with the concurrence of the Abbey Trustees, that the whole plan should be permanently recorded, and rendered intelligible to all persons concerned, by the laying out of the line of the foundations at a convenient level above the surface of the grass. This was accordingly done, the remains being encased with stonework and raised or levelled where required, the result being the uniform plan now to be seen by visitors, and which gives a good idea of the termination of the Abbey to the east.

With respect to relics found in the course of the excavations, many of the fragments of stonework discovered in the trenches were sufficiently perfect to give a very fair idea of the general nature of the mouldings and of the form of some of the principal architectural features. A quantity of the mouldings were painted with vermilion or black and gilt. Stained glass, encaustic tiles, etc., have also been met with.

In the course of the work, the mark of an old trench or depression was cut through. This was full of refuse, and was found to contain remains of bones, pottery, and fragments of stakes or hurdles, thoroughly blackened and bearing traces of vivianite—pointing to the fact that a settlement must have existed here some centuries before the chapel was built.

The remains in this excavation were seen by Mr. Arthur Bulleid, F.S.A., but no definite conclusion could be arrived at concerning their origin. The fragments of pottery were sent to Mr. H. St. George Gray, of Taunton, for examination, and in his report Mr. Gray says: "They consist of a rude, brittle, hard-baked quality of earthenware containing a large percentage of small grains of quartz, and typical of late Norman or mediæval times. The fragments are of quite similar character to mediæval pottery which I found at Castle Neroche, near Taunton,

in 1903, and in the mediæval deposits of silting in the great fosse at Avebury, North Wilts; and similar also to fragments which I have examined from Castle Orchard, Pen Pits, Somerset; from Downend, near Bridgwater; from Maddington Church, Wilts; etc."

CHAPTER III.

THE EXCAVATIONS: FOUNDATIONS OF EARLY CHURCHES. A SACRED MEDALLION. CELTIC CROSS. ROMAN RELICS. ANCIENT BURIAL CUSTOM.

IN the course of the excavations made during the autumn of 1908 at the west end of the nave of the Abbey Church, a massive foundation, 5ft. in width, was found running parallel with the existing west wall and immediately in contact with it. This foundation turns eastward at a point a few feet north of the respond at the northern extremity of the existing fragment of the west wall, which indicates the position of the old arcade on the north side of the present nave, and it has been traced eastward for some 20ft. It lies at a depth of no less than 9ft. below the grass of the nave, and measures several feet in width by 2ft. or more in depth. Upon it may be seen standing a piece of masonry of very different character, and probably of later date, showing a number of rectangular set-offs. This appears to constitute the north-west angle of one of the older churches —probably Herlewin's—whilst there is nothing unreasonable in supposing that the foundation below may be a relic of Dunstan's, or even of Ine's, church, although more likely to be the former. The angle of masonry resting upon it contains fragments of dressed stone, apparently parts of some massive cylindrical piers. One shows the head of a small niche, or recess, sunk into the masonry. These would be suggestive of fragments of Dunstan's church used up by Herlewin (Abbot 1101 to 1120).

The debris with which these footings was covered yielded some interesting fragments, including a small medallion of red terra-cotta very finely embossed, bearing

the date 1105 (M.C.V.) on one side, with stars over the initial and terminal figures, and above these a representation of a hand held out horizontally in blessing (the first and second fingers extended) and exhibiting the sacred wound. This is formed in a manner suggestive of its having been a setting for a jewel—probably a ruby—as it is not a mere indentation but a carefully formed cavity. On the other side of the medallion, the greater part of which has unfortunately scaled off or been chipped away, is seen the foot of a foliated cross and sacred monogram, but so little is left of the letters that their precise form must remain a matter of conjecture. The medallion is furnished with a rim or flange, which would make it appear that it had at one time been encircled by a ring of metal, to enable it, perhaps, to be suspended by a chain or ribbon. The presence of the date suggests that it may be some commemorative token, and it is quite conceivable that it may be in some way connected with the foundation of Herlewin's building, since his work would have begun at that date. The medallion is circular, and measures exactly one and three-sixteenths of an inch across. It is discoloured by fire, and part of it has turned from red to grey.

The attractive suggestion has been made that this medallion and imprint may have some connection with an old legend, which is to the effect that St. David was deputed to consecrate the Abbey buildings, but on his way thither he, in a vision, was met by Christ, Who told him that He (Christ) had already consecrated the Abbey. Whereupon David asked for a sign that he had met and talked with Christ, Who, in answer, pierced St. David's hand, so that he might show the mark of the wound as a proof of his wonderful interview.

The discovery was also made of a portion of the arm of a Celtic Cross, sculptured possibly in the eighth century. On one side it has the twisted-rope pattern associated with Celtic art, and on the other, in a medallion, what apparently is a representation of a winged death.

While working from the south-western pier diagonally towards the centre of the crossing a portion of a very

ancient pavement was laid bare at a low level, and from the form and its position it is conjectured that the apse of the original Norman church may have terminated at this point. The remains of a stone coffin were found at a deep level close by the pavement referred to, but it had been rifled of its contents. About half the coffin has been recovered.

In order to ascertain the correctness of the theory that there were two large western towers as a part of the Abbey buildings, a careful examination was made of the footings at the south-west extremity of the nave, and this revealed the fact that the external wall was broadened to the south, having been brought out beyond the line of the nave wall to a projection of about 2ft. This, coupled with the fact that the western bay of the nave is broader (east and west) than the rest by 4ft., is fairly conclusive evidence of the former existence of a tower at the spot. The footings of the stair-turret at the south-west angle of the nave—of about equal size to that on the north—were found, and the foundations also of a massive buttress on the west face of the south-west tower were revealed. It stood half-way between the angle of the Galilee wall and the outer angle of the nave, and its presence here was corroborative of the existence of a heavy tower at the south-west angle of the nave, and of the assumption that a similar one existed on the north side.

It was whilst digging here that there came to light close against the south wall of the nave, in the nook between the angle of the tower and the old cloister wall (which originally abutted against the nave wall on the south), a curious interment. There in the clay was the perfect skeleton of an elderly man of exceptional height, with the head towards the west. When the clay was removed it was noticed that there was a freestone ring, which encircled the head, giving it complete protection round the sides. The ring was not carved, but it was carefully curved to admit of the neck. The skeleton was of a man 6ft. 3in. in height, with a very finely-developed cranium; the right wrist had been fractured and badly set; the teeth in the upper jaw were intact, but those in the lower jaw missing. There were large stones in between

the bones, but the skeleton was perfect. No trace of a coffin could be discovered; in fact there was no room for one, as the shoulder of the skeleton came almost against the footing of the twelfth-century wall. After measurements had been made the remains were carefully re-interred. The remains were discovered about 3ft. under the ground, though there is reason to believe that the earth here was formerly at least a foot higher. No inscription was found, and no satisfactory conjecture has been forthcoming for the reason of the stone ring around the head. The theory has been put forth that the personage may have been one of high intellectual attainments, and the ring was placed in that position to show honour to the head and to protect it. Its date is probably about the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and signs of pressure down the sides of the skeleton may suggest that a heavy monumental stone once covered it. Another theory thrown out is that the man was buried alive, with his head left free; but this is open to doubt.

Yet another theory is that, as Roman remains interred in similar fashion have been found at Lansdown, Bath, the Glastonbury interment is of greater age than was at first supposed. What helps to support the conjecture that an ancient burial-place exists at the spot is that traces of interments of still greater age have also been found close at hand.

The area of the High Altar of the Choir, as extended by Abbot Monington, was excavated in 1909, and the altar platform was discovered and proved to be a rectangle 20ft. north and south, by 12ft. east and west. To the eastward of it were foundations suggestive of a reredos wall contained in a triple arcade, similar to that which now terminates the sanctuary at Wells Cathedral. Running diagonally past the south-west corner of the altar platform in a north-westward direction a deep channel, presumably for running water, was discovered, and this was traced from the south aisle wall as far as the centre of the Choir. While the work was in progress marks of another interment were found, the remains having been enclosed in an oak coffin. This burial, however, was considered to be of a much later date.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXCAVATIONS: THE MONASTIC BUILDINGS. RELICS OF FLEMISH WEAVERS' OCCUPATION.

SOME of the most interesting results of the explorations have been with regard to the monastic buildings. Hitherto no attempt had been made to locate their exact site, and very little had been known of them, as the only plans extant are of a most indefinite nature. It was known, however, that the buildings lay on the south side of the great church, as was customary with Benedictine Abbeys, and Dr. Stukely has preserved for us the knowledge that the great hall or refectory lay alongside the southern walk of the monks' cloister, which occupied a square of something well over 100ft. in the angle of the nave and the south transept. The site of the Chapter-house was also known, and was in the customary position, but for generations past nothing has been left above ground to indicate its form and structure.

Those who have previously visited the Abbey will remember that an orchard extends along the south side of the ruins, and no trace could be seen whatever of ancient walls except the beautiful Abbots' Kitchen, which has been preserved almost perfect, and a small fragment of masonry adjoining it, believed to be an angle of the almonry.

In the summer of 1910 excavation was begun at the angle of the nave and south transept, and the workers were almost immediately rewarded by the discovery of three or four isolated fragments of the missing walls near the junction of those two parts of the church. The walls were found to retain a portion of the original freestone facing, which was carried down to a level of about 5ft. below that of the nave floor. It therefore appeared that the cloister floor was to this extent lower than that of the

church. A trench was cut southwards in continuation of the line of the south transept and practically the whole of the wall which bounded the cloister on the east side was laid bare. Much of this was in an unexpectedly good state, and in one place the stone bench table, which ran the whole length, is still visible. There are several portals clearly visible in this wall — the first a narrow one, presumably leading to the "slype" or passage between the Chapter-house and the transept; the next a broad opening with a projecting step, which appears to be that of the Chapter-house.

Further on, and approaching the south-east angle of the cloister, is evidence of a large double opening, originally divided by a moulded pier; this, it is supposed, gave access to the dormitory staircase on the one hand, and to the monks' parlour or "calefactory" on the other. The return of the cloister is marked by the presence of a broad wall running due east and west, and of this only a little of the original stonework is preserved, except on the southern face, where at a still lower level the freestone work is carried down, indicating the presence of a large vault or crypt.

For months the workmen were busily engaged in clearing out this crypt, which has now been proved to extend for a breadth of some 40ft., measuring north and south, and is, in fact, the sub-vault of the refectory. The whole of the east wall of the vault has been exposed and has quite a substantial appearance, being in some places 6ft. or 7ft. high. At the north-east corner a portion of the original vault, consisting of the "springers" of three vaulting ribs, still remain, and indicates with a fair amount of certainty the form of the original roof. Parts of the pavement of this part of the vault are still in position, and there is a square water-cistern, into which spring water is carried by a small channel cut through the wall in the angle of the building. The water is still running freely. All down the centre of the vault, from east to west, are visible a series of moulded bases which once supported the central columns carrying the vaulted roof and floor of the refectory above. Of these, the whole

series has now been exposed, and the clearance of the site has verified the old statement that the original length of the great hall was about 110ft. In a description of the Abbey buildings of the time of Queen Elizabeth the length is given as 111ft. and the breadth 51ft., and the latter measurement about corresponds with the extreme breadth, including the walls. The extreme eastern section of the vault, which is of a rather higher level than the rest, and is divided from the other part by a substantial cross-wall, is the portion which lay beneath the broad passage running southwards from the south-east angle of the cloister (as seen in the plan of the Abbey buildings at Westminster) and giving access to the rear part of the domestic buildings. Sufficient of the architectural detail remains to give a fair idea of the date of the various parts of the fabric.

It is recorded that the great hall was begun by Abbot Fromond—between the year 1303 and 1322. Some of the detail is undoubtedly Early English in character. This is the case with the " responds," which mark the position of the different compartments of the vaulting and take the form of small double shafts engaged with the masonry of the walls of the larger vault. But the isolated bases of the central piers, which are situated at intervals of about 11ft. 6in. down the centre of the area, are more characteristic of fourteenth-century work. The detail of the lesser vault, which occupies the narrow section of the east end, is also in the main of fourteenth-century character. But a certain amount of earlier masonry has here been employed in constructing the supports of the vaulting in the shape of upright sections of circular shafting with a " keel " worked upon it exactly as it is found in the Abbey Church, where it dates from the end of the twelfth century.

A good many fragments of much architectural interest have come to light in the course of excavation. These include numerous sections of window-tracery, wall-panelling, and cornice-work, some of the last-named being enriched with a very beautiful ornament of Tudor roses connected with a winding stem. The origin of this particular feature cannot be regarded as certain at present. It cannot be part of the original design of the great hall,

although it may represent some later ornament. On the whole, perhaps, it is more probable that it came from the cloisters, which were the work of Abbot John Chinnock and were built about the year 1400. A good deal of the window-tracery discovered is almost certainly such that some of the cloister-lights and sections of vaulting which have been found were undoubtedly parts of the cloister roof. They have a refined early-Perpendicular character, and indicate that there was a very strong similarity between Chinnock's cloisters and those of Wells Cathedral in the matter of design.

Abundant remains of encaustic pavement tiles and of stained glass have been discovered at every stage of the operations. The tiles are mostly broken, but a great variety of designs can be made out. There are a large number of heraldic patterns, shields with bars, chevrons, and chequers, with the three leopards of England and a single lion or leopard rampant. Also several foliated designs, and another which is very characteristic of monastic houses in the neighbourhood—namely, two birds pecking at a fruit-tree. This is recognised to be a symbol of the Tree of life. There is a two-headed eagle, and one or two specimens of very interesting tile showing a three-towered church, possibly intended as a conventional representation of the great Abbey church.

Of the stained glass, little can be said, as it is largely disintegrated by contact with chemicals in the soil, but a small quantity of transparent blue glass very beautifully painted in scroll-work of the thirteenth-century character has resisted decay, and even in its fragmentary state is an object of great interest.

Lying on the floor of the refectory vault were found portions of mutilated statuary—the remains of seated figures of ecclesiastics. These are very finely cut, and show the different vestments of high church dignitaries. Fragments of a stone shield recently found give the arms of St. Edmund of Canterbury, and among the other relics is a small boss with the initials "J. S.," apparently those of Abbot John Selwood, 1459 to 1493. The exhumation of the remainder of the great hall was completed at the

commencement of 1911, and so vast is the area of the other buildings that there is probably six or seven years' work at least to be done before the whole plan can be revealed.

It must not be overlooked that there was found a furnace with a seat for a boiler built into the south-east angle, evidently at a later date. It is on record that the Flemish weavers installed here in the time of Edward VI. had their dyeworks in the Abbey, and in this furnace we may probably see a relic of their occupation.

CHAPTER V.

THE EXCAVATIONS: REMINDER OF A MEDIÆVAL CONTROVERSY. ST. DUNSTAN'S CHAPEL LOCATED.

THE Dunstan Chapel at Glastonbury Abbey echoes a notable controversy. Prominent amongst the great men whose memory is revered at Glastonbury is Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury A.D. 940 to 962, and Archbishop of Canterbury. Few men have left a greater mark on the annals of English churchmanship, both as a notable ecclesiastic and a statesman, and his name will always be remembered. As the founder of the Benedictine House, he gave Glastonbury the distinction of being the mother house of the order in this country. Dunstan was held in the highest veneration by all who came after him, and it was over the possession of his relics that one of the most bitter and stubbornly contested feuds raged long through the mediæval period, between Glastonbury and Canterbury, both of which churches claimed to be their custodian.

In the Chronicle of Malmesbury we find an interpolation by a later writer, of which the following is a summary: When the great King Edmund Ironside, after the Danish trouble, came to Glastonbury and told the Abbot and the brethren of the loss that he had sustained and the destruction of the metropolitan church, and also spoke of the excellent virtues of his spiritual father Dunstan, who had loved Glastonbury so well, the monks prayed the King that he would cause the relics of this glorious man to be transferred to the district which was his own early home; and it is stated that the King met their desires, and decreed that what they asked for should be promptly carried out. The Abbot then charged four of his comrades

to hasten to Canterbury for this purpose, the monks being the same who had served St. Dunstan when in the flesh, and who had committed his body to its resting-place at Canterbury. The chronicler gives the names of these brethren as follows: Sebricht, Ethelbricht, Bursius, and Adelworde. Arriving at Canterbury, they found the place desolate, and going straight to the sepulchre they opened it and found the bones of St. Dunstan reposing upon gold and precious tapestry. They recognised also the ring that had been placed upon the saint's finger when he was borne to burial. The monks then returned to Glastonbury with the precious relics, the translation being effected in the twenty-fourth year after S. Dunstan's death.

The account further states that on their return to Glastonbury two of the same brethren were deputed to hide the most holy bones in a secret spot, and they were further commanded to impart the knowledge of the hiding-place to none until they themselves were about to die, when the secret was to be handed on to other trustworthy monks in a similar manner. Accordingly, it is said, they took a little wooden receptacle prepared for the purpose and painted with the initials of the saint, and they hid this under a stone taken out for the purpose in the great church near the holy-water stoup on the right-hand side of the great entrance-door.

Professor Willis, whose work on the architectural history of Glastonbury Abbey has been the foundation of all subsequent studies, devotes some attention to the matter of these relics, to the effect that about a century after the first translation recorded in Malmesbury's Chronicle the monks of Glastonbury began to boast that the relics of Dunstan were in their possession, and immediately a strong letter was written from Canterbury by Edmer, reproaching them for their dishonesty and ridiculing their pretensions, on the ground that, fifty years before, he himself had witnessed the translation of Dunstan's coffin inviolate upon the occasion of the building of Lanfranc's cathedral.

Harking back to the narrative of the removal of the relics from Canterbury to Glastonbury, the church at

Remains of Kiln or Oven in the Vault of the Refectory. (Page 30.)

ST. MARY'S (OR ST. JOSEPH'S) CHAPEL.

View from the South-east, with part of Galilee on right. Stairs to Holy Well are beneath the small Portal. **(Page 46.)**

Glastonbury spoken of was burnt down in 1184, in a great fire that burned the buildings and destroyed the greater part of the relics; but it is said that the relics of St. Dunstan were re-discovered, and the case which contained them opened by the Prior in the presence of the whole brotherhood. They were then gathered up and placed in a richly-decorated shrine.

With the sacred bones fittingly enshrined in the new church of Glastonbury, it was claimed that great miracles and cures were wrought among the worshippers, and until the Reformation the repute of St. Dunstan's shrine remained great. In the early years of the sixteenth century there took place a further correspondence between Canterbury and Glastonbury upon this subject, and in 1508 a formal scrutiny of the shrine of St. Dunstan at Canterbury took place in the presence of Archbishop Warham and Prior Goldston. They reported to the Abbot of Glastonbury that the shrine contained all the principal bones and a leaden plate of identification. The Archbishop therefore requested the Abbot and his monks to abandon their pretensions; but the Abbot of Glastonbury (Richard Beere) in his reply claimed that if any bones remained at Canterbury they must have been left behind by those who removed the relics to Glastonbury, and he declared that for more than 200 years the shrine of their patron St. Dunstan had been set up in the church under the authority of the Bishop of the Diocese, with power to remove it from place to place.

An inventory of the bones in the possession of Glastonbury is in the Cotton M.S., and is printed by the historian Hearne.

We have thus a record of a shrine to St. Dunstan within the great church at Glastonbury, but of the building of a separate chapel to his honour the evidence is not so clear. Our authority is John of Glastonbury, who carried on the Chronicle of the Abbey under Adam de Domersham. From him we learn that: Abbot Michael de Ambresbury (Abbot 1236 to 1255) caused the head of St. Dunstan to be incased in a very costly and splendid manner (caput sancti Dunstani honestissime ac sumptuose fecit incassari);

also that he caused to be made and gave towards the making of a "feretory" or shrine forty gold pieces (besants), and all oblations offered to the same relic (et ad ejus feretrum faciendum dedit quadraginta bisancias et omnes oblaciones ad item caput proveniences). We learn also that Abbot Michael was responsible for the erection of no less than 100 buildings within and without the monastery wall, and that he did much towards the completion of the church. Following him come two Abbots of whom no building work is recorded—namely, Roger Ford (Abbot from 1255 to 1260) and Robert Petherton (Abbot from 1260 to 1274). Next in succession comes John of Taunton (Abbot from 1274 to 1291), in whose time a large amount of building was again done. This Abbot completed the west end of the nave and the galilee or western porch of the church. In his time comes an interesting entry in John of Glaston's Chronicle, to the effect that Adam de Eyr de Sowy gave by deed to the Abbey of Glastonbury certain sums of money for the maintenance of lights in the chapels of St. John, St. Benignus (or Benedict), and St. Dunstan's. Now, St. John's is the parish church of Glastonbury, and what was formerly the chapel of St. Benignus is now a parish church. It is perhaps a reasonable inference that the chapel of St. Dunstan named in the deed was also an independent building, and perhaps it is not going too far to consider that a building in process of adornment would be one of comparatively recent foundation at the time of the gifts. Nothing further is told by John of Glastonbury about this chapel until the time of Abbot Adam de Sodbury (from 1323 to 1334). This Abbot made a substantial endowment to St. Dunstan's chapel or shrine (feretrum), and his successor (Abbot de Breynton) completed his work by contributing further monies to the treasury of the St. Dunstan shrine.

Neither Hearne nor the other antiquaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries give us any light on the subject. Local tradition seems to have preserved some faint memory of a chapel dedicated to St. Dunstan, and the name has survived in connection with a house built upon

land at the west end of St. Mary's (commonly known as St. Joseph's) Chapel.

During the summer of 1910 there came to light in the manuscript diary of John Cannon, a local schoolmaster, born at Meare, near Glastonbury, in 1684, a mention of St. Dunstan's Chapel of an incidental nature. Cannon was speaking of the total length of the Abbey ruins, which he said were at one time 638ft. long, including the chapels of St. Joseph and St. Dunstan. This would suggest that the missing chapel of St. Dunstan was in line with the other buildings, and probably adjoining that of St. Joseph, at the west end.

Mr. Bligh Bond has based some of his latest work undertaken during the early part of 1911 upon the information contained in the sum total of the details given above, and met with considerable success. A measurement was taken and the ground opened at the prescribed distance west of St. Joseph's Chapel (i.e., St. Mary's), and at the exact point the angle of a stone foundation was exposed. This now turns out to be the western extremity of a buttress, and the actual west wall of the building discovered is about 5ft. further east. The whole of this wall has been excavated, together with the return walls on the north and south for the whole distance, and they show the remains of a rectangular building lying on the main axis of the Abbey ruins and having an internal measurement of about 20ft. by 16ft. There are buttress projections both at the east and west extremities, those on the west being longer than the others. The most considerable remains of walling are on the north side; the east wall has been almost entirely cleared away, but sufficient is left to mark quite clearly its position. There are practically no remains of architectural features, as it is evident that the ground has been violently disturbed and much of the original soil removed in part for the construction of a roadway which traversed the site from north to south. There are many evidences of fire.

But in spite of the wholesale clearance of dressed stonework, and the lack of any real architectural traces, there remains two objects of peculiar interest—one a more

ancient wall at a lower depth than the chapel footings, built of more perfectly squared stone and containing a well-formed drainage-channel. The other—a part of the footings themselves—consists of two large blocks of Doulting freestone, roughly squared and lying side by side across the breadth of the west wall and almost exactly in the centre of its length. Each stone is 3ft. long and 18in. wide, or thereabouts. Each is flattened on the top, and contains a rectangular groove 6in. wide and 2in. deep. These grooves start about 4in. from the eastern end of the stones, and run the whole lengh of them westwards. From their position and character, they cannot be regarded as architectural features, as they must most assuredly have been covered, and probably below ground. What can they be ? These shallow grooves have all the appearance of receptacles, and the conjecture naturally arises: Can they have been repositories for relics ? Their shape and size would suggest that they would most conveniently hold leg- or arm-bones, and one wonders whether the relics of the great Dunstan (reputed or real) may have not found a secure hiding-place in these narrow chambers, below the massive wall of the chapel. There they would have been safe from all interference so long as the chapel was standing, although as the grooves ran out to the western face of the wall they might be accessible to those who knew the secret, and at the same time be securely stopped in from the end, and thus preserved from all contact with the destructive forces of air and moisture.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EXCAVATIONS: SITE OF THE NORTH PORCH. FOUNDATIONS DISCOVERED. ANCIENT RECORD VERIFIED.

DURING the progress of the excavations, very extraordinary has been the way in which the writings of early chroniclers have been verified by some of the remains discovered. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the spring of 1911; and whilst it sustains in detail the description of an ancient writer, it entirely rebuts the theory of a modern archæologist.

Professor Willis, in his "Architectural History," quotes William Wyrcestre, a fifteenth-century writer, as speaking of a porch of large dimensions—larger, indeed, by a half than that at Wells Cathedral. This porch Willis supposed to have been placed in a position similar to that at Wells, although further westward than was indicated on the plan he adopted in his book, the plan in question being drawn from other sources. He considered that it was most likely to have been placed opposite a broad pathway leading to the great gate—shown by Hollar to the north of the Abbey enclosure—in a line with St. John's Church.

In contrast to Professor Willis' suggestions, we have the opinion of Mr. W. H. St. John Hope, late secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, who in 1904 visited Glastonbury and inquired into this particular question. He dug various trenches about the north part of the nave, with the object of finding this porch, but his researches proved vain, and in his monograph on the Abbey he adds the following comment: "I find it hard to believe that a porch of such dimensions would have been attached to an aisle of which the bays were only 20ft. long and the interval between the buttresses barely 14ft.; and I would

suggest that the porch to which William Wyrcestre refers was actually at the west end of the church, between the nave and the Lady Chapel (Mr. Hope here refers to the Galilee). Its width is exactly 24ft. and its length 21½ft." The porch described by William Wyrcestre is 45ft. by 24ft., but the Galilee is 51½ft. long, and Mr. Hope accounts for the difference by the suggestion that a part of it may have been occupied by the reredos and vestry of the Lady Chapel.

In March, 1911, a trial excavation was made, with the object of removing any further doubt as to the existence of a north porch; and the point selected for first investigation was a little over 60ft. from the west wall of the nave —that is to say, at the junction of the third and fourth bays eastward. Upon sinking over the line of the missing north aisle wall, the foundation of the wall was discovered at a considerable depth, and in conjunction with it the trench of a large wall running northward, from which the stone had been almost entirely removed. This proved to be about 8ft. in width, and was soon identified as the site of the eastern wall of a presumed north porch. It was traced further out for perhaps half its length, and the site of a large square buttress footing was uncovered, whilst the appearance of a second and similar projection appeared a few feet further on. In order to test William Wyrcestre's account of the length, a distance of 45ft. was measured out northwards, and a deep hole sunk in the ground at this distance in a line with the first excavation, and this revealed what was undoubtedly the north-eastern extremity of the building, with an unexpected feature—namely, the trace of a large angle-buttress.

An attempt was then made to verify the width of 24ft. given by William Wyrcestre. For this purpose a shallow trench was cut in a westerly direction across the middle of the site, and almost exactly at the anticipated distance the west footing wall of the porch was encountered in so perfect a state as to cause no little astonishment, since its upper surface was barely a foot below the grass.

This wall has since been cleared for the greater part of its length, and proves to be an extremely massive piece

of work. The platforms of two heavy buttresses are to be seen on the westward side, and are placed rather near together, at about the centre of the building in its length. They correspond in position with those traced on the east side. The large angle buttress on the north-western extremity remains in excellent condition, and is of great thickness—namely, about 11ft. broad. It has a hexagonal end, and looks as though it had been intended to support a staircase turret. The depth of the footings at this point is remarkable. A shaft has been sunk to about 10ft. below the grass alongside the northern face of the angle-buttress, without revealing the bottom.

Work was next pursued southward along the line of the west wall of the porch, and the massive work was found to break off in a very curious manner just south of the second square buttress platform. On excavating below, the masonry was found to overhang a hollow space, and this phenomenon was difficult to account for, save by supposing that there were originally two sections of walling of different date and consistency; the earlier being that nearest the nave and representing an original porch of moderate dimensions. The foundations of this would have been of a looser consistency, and if in agreement with that of the nave wall may have been nothing better than unmortared rubble; hence, it would be an easy matter to withdraw this stone during the various stages of destruction of the Abbey buildings and to leave the more solid masonry of the northern portion untouched.

Various architectural fragments, some of considerable interest, have been removed from these trenches, and they again clearly point to a difference in date. Those found in the southern portion are mainly twelfth-century in character, whereas those removed from the north end are clearly and definitely fourteenth-century work.

To sum up, the indications are that at the time the early church was laid down a North Porch of comparatively shallow depth covered the third bay of the nave and provided a doorway exactly opposite to that which, in its broken condition, is seen over on the south side of the nave, and which formerly gave access to the west alley

of the cloister. To this twelfth-century porch was added, perhaps 150 years later, an enormously massive continuation, making a total internal length of 45ft. as given by William Wyrcestre. From the great solidity of the late work, which forms roughly a square on plan, it may be assumed to have taken the form of a tower of considerable height, with angular turrets.

The situation of the Bell Tower of Glastonbury Abbey has always been a matter of conjecture, there being no definite traditions on the point. It is known that, in addition to the great bell-tower over the crossing, there was a campanile, containing five bells. Was this campanile over the north porch ? There is abundant precedent for a north-westerly position for such a tower, and we have in Somerset an instance of a tower actually over a north porch. This is the case in the parish church of Bruton—a town famous for the possession of a magnificent Abbey Church, near enough to Glastonbury for either to have been influenced by the architecture of the other.

During the month of May, 1911, the footings of the extreme north-west angle of the nave have, to a large extent, been opened up, and have revealed features of singular interest and importance. A buttress foundation no less than 9ft. in width was uncovered on May 10, and at its western end was found to be faced with finely-cut freestone having a well-formed plinth. Beyond this the wall continued, and showed in addition the slope of a surface similar to that met with in the Galilee. Measurement has proved them identical, yet they are both different in depth from that which was used on the twelfth-century walls. Hence it is safe to assume that the western end of the nave was of later date than the twelfth-century foundation. This accords with the indications of style still visible in the remains of the west wall.

The dressed freestone in this trench seems to have been always protected and not exposed to the weather, as it is quite fresh and unstained. It is also unfinished in the angle, and this again is evidence that it never was exposed. The probability is that shortly after this section of walling was built some change either in the thickness

of the wall or in the level of the ground to the north of this point was decided upon, with the result that the work was built in.

Mr. Bligh Bond has always been convinced of the existence of two large towers at the western extremity of the nave, as his diagrams in the " Architectural Handbook " bear witness; and it is satisfactory to learn that the most recent excavations have revealed undoubted traces of a substantial tower at the north-west angle, its great buttresses projecting far to the westward of the gable wall dividing the nave from the Galilee, and stretching out northward beyond the line of the north aisle. Here again a kind fate has reserved for the explorers a single fragment of dressed plinth, small indeed in itself, but all-sufficient as an indication of the original limits of the work.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EXCAVATIONS: SECRET PASSAGES. ROMANTIC TALES AND DISCOVERIES. A QUAINT DOCUMENT. TREASURE-SEEKING IN THE ABBEY GROUNDS.

AMONG the many legendary ideas which habitually attach to our ancient towns and buildings, none perhaps is more frequently met with than the story of the existence of underground passages as a means of communication in mediæval or later days from point to point, and these are often reported as traversing considerable distances.

The reason for their existence is little understood, save perhaps where some famous monastery or group of religious houses has once stood, and in such cases the suggestion is too often made of a reason which should certainly not be adopted or even considered without very substantial evidence in its support. In a few cases, doubtless, where monasteries and nunneries co-existed at points not far remote, as at St. Albans, evidence in support of this particular theory may be found, but happily there is no reason to think that the religious life of England was ever to any great extent tarnished by illicit loves between monk and nun, and more especially that such conduct could have been condoned by Abbots or Priors.

In the old town of Shrewsbury the tradition of secret passages is a very strong one, and indicates that these passages furnished a means of communication from within the city walls to some well-concealed point beyond. Now there seems every probability that during the period when fortifications were the rule for cities and isolated dwellings, some means of communication from the heart

of the fortified town or house with the outside world in times of trouble or political stress must have been not only desirable, but also necessary; and in the case of any large community, whether civic or ecclesiastical, involved in constant diplomatic relations with the several powers of the state or church, it is likely that there would have been at all times a need of such avenues of communication hidden from the public eye, so that confidential messengers could go to and fro and carry out their errands immune from observation or attack.

At Glastonbury, once one of the most important centres of ecclesiastical life in England, abundant tradition of such secret thoroughfares still survive among the townspeople, but they have come down to us distorted and doubtless exaggerated by the medium of the passing centuries, so that occasionally they are almost grotesque in their impossibility. Nevertheless, there remains the strong likelihood of a sub-stratum of truth in some of the stories, and it may be that in the course of the excavations now taking place within the Abbey precincts some evidence of their existence may come to light.

One favourite legend in Glastonbury is to the effect that an underground passage was carried from the Abbey to Tor Hill (where stand the remains of the church and monastery of St. Michael), a distance of about a mile, but, apart from the improbability of a tunnel having been carried to so remote and so elevated a point, it seems doubtful what particular purpose such a passage could have served.

Another favourite story is to the effect that there was a passage from the Abbey running under the High Street to the cellars of the George Hotel (the famous Pilgrim's Inn), and Warner, who wrote a history of the town and Abbey early in the 19th century, advances a suggestion in a manner not greatly to his credit, since he makes the story the subject of an unworthy and unjustifiable slur upon the morals of the Abbots of Glastonbury. As a matter of fact, the vaults underneath the 15th-century Pilgrim's Inn are very remarkable, and at one point have an appearance very suggestive of a small blind passage in

the west side; but, although the cellars have often been examined, no trace of an actual underground passage was found, and the only reason for the existence of the small orifice referred to seemed to be that it was formerly an exit to the upper storey.

In June, 1911, Mr. Bligh Bond noticed in an old antiquarian journal an entry having reference to the Pilgrim's Inn. This speaks of the George Hotel as a hospital for the entertainment of pilgrims resorting to the shrine of St. Joseph of Armiathea and those other religious relics which then drew such a number of itinerant devotees to this hallowed spot, and also states that the house, in 1490, was, with two closes of land on the north side, given by Abbot Selwood to the then chamberlain of the Abbey. The writer then proceeds to state: "Under the house is a vault which leads into the Abbey, so low that a man must crawl on his knees to pass it; but there are benches, or little narrow places, to rest the elbows on in order to ease the knees. It comes out into a large vaulted place, used for a cellar, and, after about five or six paces, turns aside to the right into another passage, high enough for a man to walk upright. This passage is about five or six paces long, and leads to a flight of steps which conducted privately to the Abbot's chamber."

With the proprietor's kind permission, an investigation was made on June 8, at a point in the end wall of the cellar, under the pavement of the High Street, where, after minute examination, some faint traces of a filled-up archway of low proportions seemed apparent. Some of the masonry was removed, and a hollow space within was revealed. On clearing away the rubbish, a small arched tunnel was seen stretching away south-west in the direction of the Abbey gates, and this was precisely of the form described in the old journal.

A workman went down, but reported it blocked at about 20ft. distance by a brick wall, and so far it has been impossible to continue the investigation. There is, however, great reason to suppose that this is a portion of a passage, the discovery of which will now be described.

The Abbey was encircled by a strong defensive wall

with great gates, one on the north side opposite St. John's Church and one on the west near the north-west corner facing the market-square and cross. Close to this one and adjoining it on the south side is a house built on the site of some of the ancient monastic offices and now known as "St. Dunstan's." There seems to be an impression that an underground passage led into the Abbey somewhere between this point and the Abbot's gateway adjoining. Some few years ago the then owner of St. Dunstan's was having some alterations made in the basement of the house, probably for the construction of a drain, when the workmen broke into a large dark place which had all the appearance of an underground passage. This was examined for a short distance and was found to be empty, save for a few small objects which were found upon the floor, amongst these being an ancient lamp. On a report of this discovery being made to the proprietor of the house, she gave orders that it must be immediately sealed up, and this was accordingly done before anyone possessing antiquarian knowledge had any chance of investigating it. As the house stands in large private grounds there is at present no possibility of any further effective search being made from the Abbey side owing to the uncertainty of the direction in which it may run.

Traditions of secret passages within the great walls of the Abbey are many, but they are for the most part somewhat vague, and there is at present very little to go upon in prosecuting any search upon definite lines. The most precise of these statements that has been collected has reference to a supposed passage leading from the crypt of St. Mary's Chapel (otherwise St. Joseph's) to some outside point, and some of the older writers have recorded the local opinion that this passage led from one of the eastern angles of the crypt to Tor Hill. Now the ground outside the north-east angle of the crypt has been excavated, and although a large rough arch in the footings of the masonry of the north wall of the Galilee porch, which forms the eastward extension of the chapel, was revealed, it was obvious that this work had a use and a

meaning quite other than that which the legend would suggest. It was, in fact, a relieving arch built for the purpose of sustaining the rather delicate masonry of the Galilee at its junction with the huge and massive west wall of the nave and its great north-west tower or turret; the difference in mass being sufficient to cause apprehension of serious settlements had not some sort of precaution been taken.

Further, it may be said that the ground underneath the east end of the Galilee has been plumbed to a very great depth and proved to be a mass of soft blue clay, suggesting that in ancient times a natural gully or water-course intercepted the site at this point, falling in a south-west direction.

On the south side of St. Mary's Chapel is a short passage running from the crypt to a small chamber covering the holy well or St. Dunstan's Well, which connects by a stone stair-case with the ground outside the chapel. This well, which had been blocked up for centuries, was re-discovered about the time that Warner wrote his book, and having been cleared out it lay open to inspection both from within and without the chapel wall.

The late Mr. Campbell, who was so many years the curator of the local museum, possessed a memory stored with quaint traditions, and was fond of retailing a more elaborate version of the above story. According to his account the passage led from a corner of the crypt beneath St. Mary's Chapel, and had been traced by some venture-some persons for a long distance. It contained rooms, in one of which was a secret store of Abbey treasure. The secret of this treasure was known only to three monks, and on the death of either was revealed to but one other.

Somewhere beneath the soil of the Abbey lie hidden, according to local belief, the golden gates of the old sanctuary of the Abbey, and this legend was another favourite topic of the old curator.

Various old people in the town have been asked to state what they know of another story to the effect that the underground passage ran from a point close by the Well, away in a more or less southerly direction, and three

or four of them have concurred in saying that they recollected the time when the end of the passage was open and could be entered. An aged woman living in the Almshouses said that she was employed as a girl to attend to sheep grazing in the Abbey enclosure, and that she had been down the passage for some distance and remembered that it was a stone passage of a good height with iron brackets in the walls which she thought were candle brackets. Others also said that they had been down the passage for some distance, and added that the passage was subsequently built up by order of the owner of the Abbey, on account of the danger to the lambs, which fell in and were unable to get out again.

Those circumstantial reports seemed to justify some special effort being made to locate the passage. Nothing in the way of a built-up opening was visible in the interior of the well chamber, and it was undesirable that any break should be made in the wall at this point. Accordingly, a deep trench was cut right across the outside of the chamber and parallel to it at a point some 15ft. or 20ft. away to the south, and this was continued round the south-west to within a few feet of the chapel wall, so that if there had been any remains of such a passage existing at or near the depth of the well chamber it must have been intercepted. The ground on the east side of the chamber had already been excavated with no result.

But although this trench was carried to a depth of nearly 10ft. for the distance described, no trace of any such passage was encountered, nor was there any evidence of stone-work visible at any part in its length.

One feature, however, must be noted for what it is worth. At the point of origin the trench showed in the sectional surface of the ground cut into a distinct break of continuity in the character of the soil encountered. This was at a point almost exactly southward of the well chamber and for a space of some feet in length the soil removed was found to be a compact and homogeneous clay. This ended rather abruptly in a roughly vertical line and the continuation was mostly of rubble mixed with clay and debris of freestone. From this, the conclusion

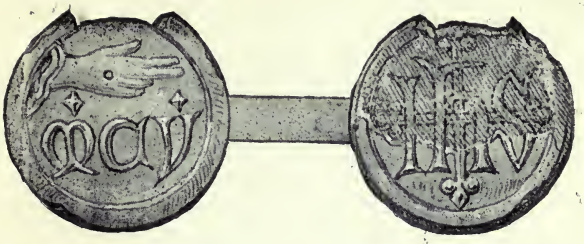
might be drawn that a passage had once existed and had been completely eradicated and the whole space filled up with stiff clay. The theory, however, is a rather improbable one.

There is one explanation of the old peoples' story, and it is a very simple one. Many years ago when the well chamber was re-discovered, the walls were in a half-ruined state, and there was very little or nothing left of the vaulted covering which it is supposed once closed it in. Consequently a large gap in the ground would have existed at this point. This gap was vaulted over with brick at a subsequent date, and it is probable that what the old people recalled was the descent into the well chamber in the days before the brick vault was built to protect and cover it. Entering from the crypt the narrow and dark passage ending with the well recess might readily suggest to them a secret passage of unknown extent, and in repeating the story imagination would supply further details of a romantic order.

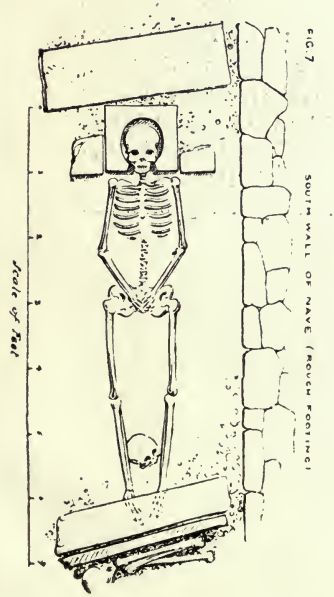
Another very definite statement as to a secret passage was made by an old workman who said that he had many years ago assisted Mr. Austin, the then owner of the Abbey, in excavating and afterwards filling up a short section of a well - built subterranean passage discovered at a point south of the choir of the great church and a little way east of the site of the chapter-house. When taken to this part of the ground he was unable to show with precision where the discovery had been made, as he said (quite truly) that the fences had been removed and that it confused him. He described the passage as being substantially built of stone, rectangualar in shape, about 7ft. in depth, and 4ft. in width; with a roof of stout flag-stones such as exist in abundance in the neighbourhood, and are of very large size. He also said that several feet of the passage were uncovered, and the owner had the flag-stones removed for his own use, and then caused the passage to be filled with earth. This man's statement is probably correct, and there is some reason to hope that the passage in question may be re-discovered before long.

Rumour has also spoken of a similar passage leading

General View of Glastonbury Abbey, looking west.
Choir of Great Church, with Piers of Central Tower in foreground.



Terra-cotta, Medallion, believed to commemorate the Foundation of Herlewin's Church (Abbot 1101-1120). (Page 22.)



Drawing
of the mysterious
interment found under
the south wall of the Nave.
Note the shaped stone about
the head, and the remains
of other interments
at the feet.
(Page 24.)

The illustrations on the cover represent a leaden "BULLA" or Seal of a Papal document, found at Glastonbury Abbey by Mr. F. Bligh Bond, during the course of the excavations in the summer of 1911. The two faces are shown. On one are the Roman characters "CALISTVS. PP. III." (Calistus III, Pope,) and on the reverse the heads of S.S. Peter and Paul, designated by the letters "S.P.A., S.P E." The relic has been indentified as the seal of a "Bull" issued by Pope Alphonsus Borgia (1455-58). The seal was attached to the document by a tag, of which traces still adhere to the lead.

from the great house (the Abbey House) at the top of the grounds westward towards the Abbey Ruins. This house was built in 1827 or thereabouts, and there is a story to the effect that one such passage was cut into when the basement was formed and was stopped off by a wall; but it may have been nothing more than a stone conduit or watercourse, of which a number are known to exist—some of quite large size.

During the excavations about the Abbey and monastic buildings (1908-11) a great many square stone water-channels have been laid bare. One of these crossed the Abbey in front of the recently-discovered north porch, and measured more than a foot in width and 18in. in height. In this direction there was the appearance of a passage leading down to a considerable depth and choked with large stones. After all, this proved to be only an appearance, as it stopped short finally. The pit, for that is what it seemed to be, had apparently been open for upwards of 100 years past and had been used as a refuse heap and receptacle for broken earthen-ware. Some of the fragments recovered were interesting, and had they been more complete would have been of some value, including, as they did, quaint varieties of early willow pattern china, Spode and Wedgwood vessels, and specimens of bronze and silver lustre-ware.

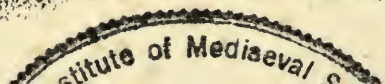
One fragment possessed a very peculiar interest, as it exhibited on an embossed medallion the head of His Majesty King George III., but scarcely in a position of honour, having regard to the office for which the utensil in question was evidently designed. The suggestion has been made that the work embodied the contempt of an ardent Jacobite manufacturer. Failing this, may we look for an explanation to mine ancient host of the George Inn, and say that it was his lordly custom to have even the meanest crockery in his establishment embossed with his Royal trade-mark ?

Harking back to the subject of secret passages, it can be added that at a point to the south-west of the principal monastic buildings the great drain of the Abbey is said to emerge, and some investigations have been made at the

spot, but the stone-covers were found to have been removed and the ground filled in. The area is of large dimensions and will, no doubt, repay further investigation in an abundant degree when the time comes for a research at that part of the site.

Evidence of the existence of secret places within the church and monastery is to be found in a report of the Commissioners sent to inquire into the state of the monastery previous to its dissolution. In the quaint wording of the report we find the Commsisioners, Richard Pollard, Thomas Royle, and Ralph Layton, saying: " We have dayle founde and tryde oute bothe money and plate, hyde and muryde up in wallis, vaultis, and other secrette placis, as well by the Abbotte as other in the convent, and also convaide to divers placis in the countrye. . . And emonge other petty briberies we have founde the twoo thresorers of the churche monkis with the 2 clarkis of the vestry temporall men in so arraunte and manifest a robery, and we have commytide the same to the jayle."

Although the commissioners and others did take and send away a great deal of treasure from the Abbey, it has always been an open question whether they did find the whole of the " secrette placis " and despoil them of their contents. According to local belief—a deeply-rooted belief that has been handed down from generation to generation —they did not, and evidence of this supposition is found in the fact that in the search for Abbey treasure, carried on through the centuries that have elapsed since the downfall of the monastery, the site of the buildings have been so thoroughly dug over in every direction that all that is left consists of architectural fragments worthless to the treasure-seeker, whilst anything in the shape of valuable metal has disappeared; nothing, save one or two bronze tokens and fragments of other base metal, has been left, and even these are of the most minor character The very window-glass has been burnt in masses in order to melt out the lead framing, and every coffin has had its shell taken out and the bones it enclosed hopelessly scattered. The uses for which material from the Abbey were put to were manifold, and one instance is cited by



Dr. Robinson (1826), who in an account of the Abbey says that coffins from the crypt were being "used as cisterns in the town."

With respect to the actual discovery of Abbey treasure we have very little record. One instance, however, can be quoted from an old antiquarian journal, the description in which reads as follows:

"In the place of the porter's lodge was erected a good dwelling-house, the owner of which, in the last century, pulled down an old mantlepiece and placed it in the street, where it lay for several years. He was once offered three shillings for it, but, his price being three and fourpence, the bargain was declined; at length his daughter, having occasion to build a small chamber, directed the mantlepiece to be sawed into pieces for stairs; when, in a private hole which had been purposely made in it, was found near a hundred pieces of gold of the time of Richard II. and Edward III., of the value of eleven shillings each."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXCAVATIONS: CARE OF THE RELICS CONCLUSION

THE EXCAVATIONS that have been described were commenced in 1908, and have thus extended over a considerable period. Although prolific in results, much yet remains uncovered, and it is no extravagant statement if it be said that there lies beneath the soil within the Abbey enclosure material sufficient to keep explorers busy for twenty years to come. Even Hollar (1655), in whose day vastly more of the ruins was still standing, says that but one-tenth of the former buildings then remained.

Two problems confront the excavators and the Abbey Trustees, in whose charge the results of the researches will ultimately rest. There are, first, the disposal of the superfluous earth and rubble which overlies the original level to so great a depth that its ultimate removal is greatly to be desired. The second and most difficult problem is concerned with the care and maintenance of the parts and fragments discovered. When ancient foundations are laid bare, the stonework, being saturated by underground moisture, is too often ready to disintegrate. When the clay trenches which once held foundations are exposed, they, too, have but a short life in the open, and from their very nature cannot be maintained, but are apt to crumble and lose their precision of line very soon after exposure.

Now, the question is how should these features be treated in order to obtain a permanent and faithful record and without destroying the time-worn and venerable aspect of the old stones in their setting? Antiquaries are far from being agreed on the matter; there is one school, and a leading one at the moment, who are strongly in favour of leaving everything severely alone. They say:

"Make a record on paper, and then either cover in your results again, or let them stay as they are and take their chance."

Is this a practicable method to adopt in a place of national resort like Glastonbury Abbey? Take the suggestion of covering in. There is the option of obliterating all marks upon the site, and thereby causing extreme disappointment to visitors, and of depriving them of a legitimate source of interest and instruction. On the other hand, after covering in, the next proceeding might be to mark out on the surface of the ground, in some superficial manner, the lines of the missing walls.

But this is clearly not always practicable. Take the instance of the Edgar Chapel. Here a great depth of soil had to be removed and a steeply-sloping bank cleared away before the footings could be sufficiently revealed, and from the varying depth of the remains of walling it was not possible to give any uniform and satisfactory treatment of this kind, or to construct a new level which would enable the site to be laid out in its true dimensions on the surface. Hence a compromise was arrived at, and the levels were brought up by raising new work of unmistakably modern character upon those portions which were deeply hidden, whilst the parts of the ancient work which projected high above the ground were capped by a protective layer in order to enable them to resist the disintegration to which they would have otherwise speedily succumbed. This treatment of the walls was the result of a conference between Mr. Bond and the trustees' architect, and a precisely similar treatment on a more limited scale has been accorded to a portion of the walling of the east cloister alley. This was undertaken principally for the reason that what remained had been demolished to a level lower than that of the cloister floor, and to prevent the crumbling and disappearance of the floor-level itself, and the complete obliteration of a record of the highest value to posterity, the support in question had to be given by the addition of a course of masonry laid faithfully over the old work.

The new appearance, however, does not commend

itself to some of the critics, who might, on the other hand, be also inclined to quarrel with any attempted imitation of the old material or workmanship.

The action of frost on fragments of carved and moulded freestone necessitates a certain amount of careful mending if these valuable records are to be preserved for the benefit of later generations.

The excavations are undertaken by the Somerset Archæological Society, who hold a licence for this purpose from the Abbey Trustees, but they do not participate in the takings at the Abbey gate, and are dependent entirely upon donations and subscriptions from visitors and others. A box is kept in the Abbey grounds for contributions to the fund, but this yields barely sufficient to keep one man employed. It is to be hoped that increased publicity may have the effect of stimulating public spirit, so that the work may be continued hereafter on a more extended scale.

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