

CORFE CASTLE.

DESCRIPTION.

CORFE CASTLE, visited by the Institute in August last, is one of the most noteworthy remains in Britain. The natural position is very striking, and not less so the manner in which it has been fortified by art. It is of high antiquity, associated from the times of the West Saxon princes to those of the Commonwealth with marked historical events; was the palace and the prison of kings and great nobles, and has been commanded by a long and well-preserved succession of powerful Norman Castellans.

The castle crowns an isolated hill, a part of the steep chalk ridge which, under the general name of the Purbeck Hills, with the subordinate elevations of Knowl Hill, and Ninebarrow and Ballard Downs, stretches twelve miles across the peninsula of Purbeck, from Warbarrow Bay and Flowerbarrow Camp on the west, to the foreland between the bays of Studland and Swanage on the east.

To the south, or sea-ward, is the bold coast line marked by the headlands of Peverel, Durlston, and St. Adhelm's. Landward, or to the north, is the depression occupied by Poole Harbour and its tributaries the Frome and Trent, or Piddle—waters whose fords are commanded by the grand earthworks at Wareham, which, placed astride upon the ridge terminating in the junction of the two, form the frontier and key of Purbeck, as does Corfe its citadel.

The castle ridge ranges with the Isle of Wight, and with it forms the southern margin of the well-known chalk basin, of which Dorchester and Beaminster mark the western limit, and Beer Regis, Salisbury, and Winchester that on the north.

The chalk at Corfe dips north at about 70°. It is hard, moderately durable, and thickly charged with flints, which are extensively used in the interior of the castle walls.

Below the chalk, and underlying the great gateway of the castle, is a narrow belt of the upper greensand, below which, in succession, are the three Purbeck beds, the Portland stone, and the Kimmeridge clay. The stone beds, here of a most durable character, are used for the ashlar and face-work of the castle.

To the north of and above the chalk are narrow and irregular beds of plastic and London clay, succeeded by a broad expanse of the lower Bagshot sands and clay, out of which the harbour of Poole has been eroded, and the latter of which is worked for the purposes of commerce.

A considerable fault runs along the chalk ridge close north of the castle hill, one of a parallel series traversing that part of the southern coast.

The physical aspect of Purbeck betrays, to a practised eye, its geological composition, and the wild rough moor and marshland about the harbour contrast strongly with the steep but rounded outline and green surface of the chalk, upon a summit of which stands the old Norman keep, predominating far and wide over the landscape.

The castle is naturally strong. It occupies the slope and summit of a hill, the base of which covers about fifteen acres, and which is placed in a gap or cutting in the ridge already described, of which position its name is said to be, in Saxon, descriptive.

South of the ridge, and close behind and covered by the castle, is the town of Corfe, from which the castle hill rises steeply, to descend almost vertically upon its east, west, and north sides. The northern, or highest point, is occupied by the keep and principal buildings of the castle.

The stream called by the Saxons the Wicken, and its tributary, the Byle brook, each turning a mill, flow from the south-west and south-east round either side of the town, and, girdling the base of the castle hill, unite just below St. Edward's bridge to form the Corfe river, which flows into Poole harbour. Between the town and the castle, where the two streams approach within a furlong of each other, a deep and bold though dry trench has been cut across the root of the peninsula, and thus forms the great outer ditch which divides the castle from the town.

The castle, in its present form, may be called concentric, but it has been constructed, if not designed, at three prin-

cial periods, having been originally a Saxon palace, then a Norman, and afterwards an Edwardian fortress.

It is composed generally of a keep standing in an inner ward, of a middle, and of an outer ward. The survey by Ralph Treswell, in 1586, of which a fac-simile on a reduced scale accompanies the preceding memoir, subdivides the inner ward into two, and shows a wall across the outer ward, which has disappeared, and was probably modern.

In plan it is an irregular triangle, the walls following the crest of the hill. The great gateway caps the southern or lowest angle; the Buttavant tower, the western; and the inner ward forms the obtuse, highest, or eastern angle. The south-west, the longest front, is concave. It extends 270 yards from the gatehouse to the Buttavant, and its lower two-thirds is the part of the enceinte most jealously defended, and upon the overthrow of which the destroyers have expended their greatest energies. The north, or upper front, too high for attack, measures about 200 yards, and the eastern front about the same.

The area within the walls is about $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres; but, from the excessive steepness of the ground, much of the outer and part of the middle ward could never have been turned to account. The lower part of the outer, the western portion of the middle, and the eastern part of the inner ward, are the only flat spaces.

The outer, by much the largest ward, is contained within the great gatehouse, the east curtain strengthened by the Horseshoe and Plukenet towers, and the west curtain, upon which are four mural towers. The steep, upper part of the ward rises to the wall of the inner, and the wall and gatehouse of the middle ward. It is traversed by a fosse, attributed to King John, which extends from the Plukenet tower to the front of the middle gatehouse, and is thence continued outside the works down the hill-side.

A permanent stone bridge, about 100 ft. long by 20 ft. broad, crosses the moat, and leads up to the great gateway. It is of four arches, springing from three solid piers, and the roadway, which has now no parapets, is about 30 ft. above the bottom of the moat. The masonry ceases about 18 ft. from the portal, and the interval, now filled with earth, was probably spanned by a drawbridge. The arches are about

one-third of a circle, and the voussoirs in two rings, without bond, 8 in. thick, and from 1 ft. to 3 ft. in length. The piers may be of Perpendicular date, but the arches are probably the work of Sir Christopher Hatton.

The gatehouse is composed of two drums, flanking the portal, and produced rearward into a rectangular building, now partially destroyed. The drums, about 20 ft. diameter, are solid to the base of the upper story, now wholly removed, but of which the lower ends of the loops remain.

The portal, 13 ft. wide, enters a vaulted passage, now 26 ft., and which may have been 36 ft. long. First is the portal, without jambs, and beneath a segmental arch, 4 ft. 11 in. broad. Then (as shown in the accompanying section Fig. I.) a chase, or single machicolation, 6 in. broad. Then a second arch, 3 ft. 9 in. broad. Then a chase, 5 in. broad, and a circular groove of 9 in. diameter, and 7 in. opening, at which the passage narrows by 20 in., being an opening of 11 ft. 4 in. Then follows an arch of 1' 6" breadth, and a chase of 16 in.

Next comes the gateway proper, the jambs of which, 2 ft. 4 in. in thickness, project inwards with a double chamfer, so as to reduce the actual entrance to 8 ft.

The door, the space for which shows it to have been of wood, and not above 4 in. thick, was of two valves, the arch behind being flat segmental, with a high springing and 4 ft. of breadth, to accommodate them when open. Two stones on each side, which probably carried the iron loops for the hinges, have been torn out. Between them, a central hole, 9 in. by 12 in., carried the wooden bar. Next is an arch, of which about 5 ft. only remain, but which probably completed the passage to its opening into the ward, and perhaps carried a portcullis groove.

Half the doorways into the lodges remain. The lodges themselves were barrel-vaulted, and the vault in the west lodge springs from the ordinary Norman string, composed of a flat abacus and chamfer, as though an older gatehouse had been cased. Instances of this string indeed have been pointed out by Mr. Bond in other and certainly later parts of the castle, and of course a plain string of this character may be of any age.

The several arches composing the entrance passage show, at their springings, about a dozen small holes, evidently to

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Lodge Door.

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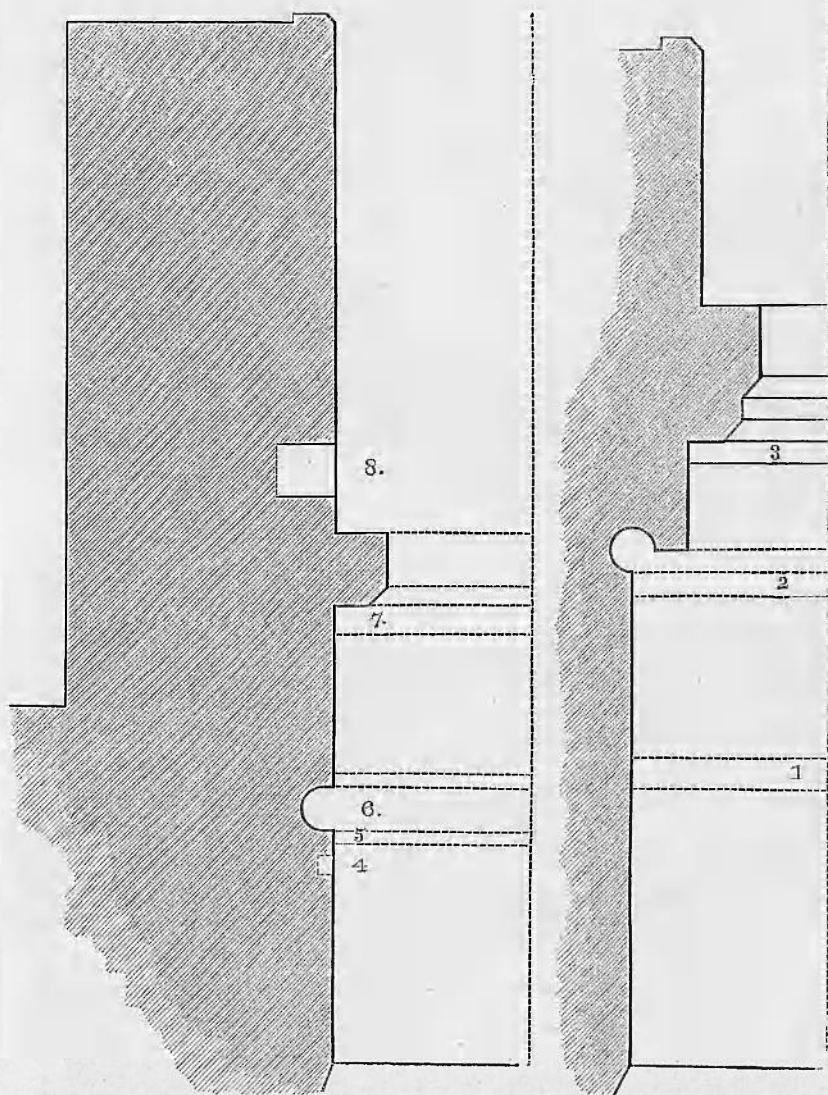


Fig. II.

(Exterior.)

Fig. I.

Fig. I.—Great Gatehouse: Entrance passage,—1, 2, 3, chases.

Fig. II.—Middle Gatehouse, Entrance passage,—4, Pivot hole; 5, Chase in vault; 6, Portcullis groove and chase; 7, Machicolation with five apertures; 8, Bar-hole.

carry the centring. Their small size indicates this to have been of iron. These holes are usual.

In the door jambs are cut six mortises, three on a side, the lowest 6 in. from the ground. They are each $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, 2 in. broad, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep. They must have been intended to hold boards, though the shallow depth would scarce allow of their insertion. These would indeed have been better suited to keep pigs in than warriors out, and perhaps were so used in times of peace. They can scarcely be original, but are probably earlier than the dismantling. The entrance passage falls gently from the interior, so as to give an advantage to the defenders in a contest.

It is difficult to understand the defences of this gateway in the absence of the upper story, from which most of them were worked. There is at present no trace of a drawbridge in the portal, unless indeed the pivot-holes on which it turned be concealed by the soil. If the cylindrical pipe, with the opening or slot in its side, contained a sash-weight, of what was it the counterpoise? Scarcely of the drawbridge, for which, even if of lead, unless of inconvenient length, the weight would be too light; and portcullis groove there is none. The 5 in. chase exactly in front of the pipe may have contained a portcullis, or a frame; but if so, the absence of lateral grooves must have left it very unsteady, except when down upon and fixed in the cill. No doubt a portcullis with crooked sides or ears might have worked in this tube, but that is scarcely probable. The other chases were no doubt intended for the passage of projectiles. They are, however, mere slits across the vault, unaccompanied by lateral grooves as when used for a portcullis, and they do not appear to have been divided by cross *septa*, as in regular machicolations; but this vault has been riven by an explosion, and restored in part in recent times, so that it is difficult to pronounce upon its details.

From each side of the gatehouse springs a short curtain, That to the east, from 10 ft. to 12 ft. thick, and about 20 ft. high, now mostly destroyed, terminates in the Horseshoe tower, a mere shell, about 20 ft. diameter, and 20 ft. high, open at the ground floor and across the gorge, and intended to be floored and bratticed with timber, as is

not infrequent with mural towers, to prevent their being used against the garrison. It is pierced by three loops on the ground floor. These are mere vertical slits, 7 ft. long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. broad, splayed deeply, and opening from recesses in the wall. The tower caps the south-east angle of the work, and the loops are directed upon the field, and along the two curtains. The removal of the talus outside shows this tower to stand upon a deep and solid foundation. At the junction of the gatehouse curtain with this tower, the former contains a mural chamber, 6 ft. broad, and roofed with five tiers of overhanging slabs.

The east curtain is for the most part a mere wall, 8 ft. to 10 ft. thick, and 10 ft. to 15 ft. high, exclusive of battlements, and more or less ruined. Loops are to be seen on its exterior, directed downwards so as to rake the scarp. Near the Horseshoe tower was formerly another mural chamber, called a stable, but more probably a garderobe, and beyond this is a large arch, now walled up, which may have been a postern, and commanded by the Plukenet tower.

This is a mere half-round mural tower, solid to the rampart height, and of no projection within.

Above the rampart it is hollowed into a chamber open behind, with three loops, each 5 ft. 6 in. long and 2 in. in the opening. In each of the recesses, on the right, is a small cupboard for the grease or tools needed by the archer. The tower and rampart were ascended by a well-stair on the north or upper side. The arrangements for allowing the archer to shoot downwards so as to rake the steep scarp are well seen here. This tower is named from a bold and well-preserved shield upon its outer face, charged with a bend fusilly, or five fusils conjoined in bend, and held up by two hands which emerge from holes in the stone. This is one of the well-known coats attributed to the Mareschals, Earls of Pembroke; but, as this family was extinct half a century before the date of this tower, and does not appear ever to have been connected with the castle, Mr. Bond has shown it to be more probable that the shield is intended to commemorate Alan Plukenet, constable of the castle in the 54th of Henry III., and a baron in the reign of Edward, his son, and whose arms were either a bend engrailed, or fusilly, represented anciently much in the same way, upon a field ermine, which

fur (as Mr. Bond suggests) may have been regarded as a tincture, and the spots omitted by the carver.

The curtain from this tower to the Gloriette angle of the inner ward is constructed of much larger stones than those employed lower down. They are as large as many of those in the Norman ashlar, but of ruder workmanship.

Returning to the gatehouse and following the west front, this commences with a short curtain, still standing, and connected with the first mural tower, a drum of rather above half-round projection, capping an angle. It is solid to the rampart level, and above this open at the gorge. Its single chamber has three loops, cruciform, and shorter, wider, and of coarser construction than those of the Horseshoe tower, though still of excellent ashlar. This tower having been riven by powder is seen to be ten yards in solid thickness. Its base is perforated by a rude rectangular drain, 18 in. by 12 in., joined by other drains of 9 in. by 9 in., all in the solid, and evidently descending from garderobes, one of which seems to have been placed in the curtain close north of this tower.

Next above this is the second or Well tower, so called from a small depression behind it, said to indicate a well. This tower resembles the last, was, like it, solid in the base, and had one chamber on the rampart open at the gorge and pierced by three loops.

Close south of it was a small doorway, leading either to a garderobe or a rampart stair. Of this, one jamb is alone seen.

Above the Well tower is the third, and above the third, and also connected with it by a short curtain, is the fourth of these mural towers. This, however, though a tower, is of the nature of an *épaulement*, or *redan*, and caps a projection or shoulder of the curtain. It has but two loops, longitudinal only, one towards the field and one raking the south wall. The former is divided into a short upper and long lower part by a narrow plate of stone, which projects inwards like a shelf.

The curtain from this Redan tower to the gateway of the middle ward is, I think, earlier than either, and is very lofty. It traverses King John's fosse. It is constructed of large stones, and resembles, in some respects, the curtain above the Plukenet tower, at the other end of the same fosse. Below

it is solid, above it is pierced by four rude loops, boldly splayed within, and which must have opened from a chamber, of which the curtain was the outer wall, or possibly from a wooden platform.

The fosse, attributed to King John, which traverses the outer ward, is about 20 ft. deep, with a vertical counterscarp cut in the chalk rock. The Plukenet tower and adjacent curtain cross its east end, but these stand upon a ridge of solid rock, showing that the ditch has never been continued into the front in this direction. At its west end the case is different. There it has been cut right into and down the slope, and the curtain crossing and stopping it is built actually in the ditch.

No doubt the present dressing of the counterscarp is due to whoever placed artillery upon its crest. Outside it, by way of glacis, is a level platform 30 ft. broad, known to have been defended by artillery, and in front of which are three steps or benches. The whole work forms a *fausse braie* at the foot of the glacis of the keep, and a strong defence in front of the gatehouse of the middle ward. A bridge of two arches, of the same age and fashion with that already described, traverses this fosse, here 50 ft. broad, and leads up to the middle gateway. A profile cut in one of the gate towers shows where the parapet abutted, which however was clearly not original. As in the lower bridge, a space of about 18 ft. next the portal, now filled with earth, was evidently intended to be spanned by the drawbridge.

The middle ward is also triangular. Its longer and about equal north and south sides are capped at the acute western angle by the Buttavant tower, and the base is formed by the middle gatehouse and curtain, and by the revetment wall and gate (now destroyed) of the inner ward.

The Gatehouse of the middle ward is a very fine structure. Like the lower gatehouse, which it resembles in general arrangements, it is composed of two drums flanking the entrance passage, and terminating square in the rear.

One, the north tower, rises direct from the fosse, without basement or set-off, and is connected with a short but very thick and lofty curtain, which ascends the steep ground to abut upon the keep. The tower is of bold projection, but flat towards the curtain. Within is a lodge with one cruciform loop to the front, and in rear traces of a stair which

led to the curtain, and thus by continued steps along its ramparts to the keep.

The other tower rises from the crest of the outer slope, where it appears as a mural defence, upon the west front. Within is a small lodge with three loops, one to the front, one on the flank towards the field, and one, now closed up, to the rear, into the middle ward.

The portal has no jambs, but is entered under a segmental arch, double chamfered. This recedes 4 ft. 1 in., and is succeeded by a rounded portcullis groove, 9 in. broad by 6 in. deep, but having, while within the arch, a flat margin of 3 in. on either side. These margins cease above the arch, and the chase is of the breadth of the groove only.

Behind the portcullis is a second arch, 2 ft. 9 in. broad, succeeded by a machicolation, 14 inches broad, and divided by four septa into five square holes. These are placed immediately before the jambs of the gate proper, where the passage is reduced by about 1 ft. 8 in.

Behind the jambs an arch of high spring and flat segmental curve accommodated the folding-doors, when open. These were of wood, and the bar-hole behind them is about 11 in. square. The hinges are gone. Behind this last arch the passage was roofed with wood, and is now open. In the rear are parts of the groove of a second portcullis—"altera securitas"—so that there was probably a stone face to the back front of the gatehouse, all now destroyed. The arrangements of this gateway are shown in the accompanying section. See woodcut, Fig. II.

In the wooden roofed space are the doors of the two lodges. The south is square-headed, with shoulders. The north, of the same shape, is protected by a semicircular relieving arch in the wall above. This arch, in design and material, has a very Norman aspect, and may have been preserved from an older work. There are no remains of battlements on this gateway, but on its front are stone corbels, probably intended to carry the hoarding, a feature of military architecture so well described by M. Viollet le Duc.¹

In the exterior portal, near the floor, and a few inches in front of the portcullis groove, is a round hole, 5 in. across and 3 in. deep, which seems to have carried the iron axle of

¹ Dictionnaire de l'Architecture, tom. VI. "Hourd."

the drawbridge. Above it is another similar hole, no doubt connected with the working of the same defence.

Entering the gateway the road rises rapidly. On the right is the exceedingly steep scarp, at the top of which is the bastion of the keep. On the left is the curtain of the west front. Higher up the way turns to the right, to reach the inner ward, and skirts on the left what seems to have been a formal garden, indicated by a level plot, some foundations of walls, and two alcoves, attributed to Sir John l'Anson, a rector of Corfe towards the end of the last century.

Westward of this the ward seems to have been used for offices and in part covered over. In the north curtain is a half round mural tower with four loops, and of one story, open at the gorge. The water table of a double-gable roof is seen within, and the central gutter projects as a spout outside. Further on is a blocked-up arch, probably an early postern, and, still further, the seat and drain of a large garderobe, beneath an arch in the wall, 8 ft. broad. Above is a plain corbel, hollowed to receive the wall-plate of a roof, and no doubt one of a series. The country people call it the gallows. A part of the south curtain of this ward is the most interesting feature of the whole structure.

First, ascending from the gate, upon the left, is the curtain. Then, upon it, a half round mural tower with three loops, but closed, since its construction, at the gorge by a wall, in which is a small door, which led into a contiguous building. From this tower, westward, the curtain is constructed of flat stones laid in a rude but distinctly herring-bone fashion. In it are three windows and the place of a fourth. These are round-headed, 2 ft. 4 in. diameter, and 3 ft. 6 in. deep, splayed to 12 in., when they terminate in a stone plate, out of which is cut a loop of 6 in. opening, and a rebate for a shutter. At present they are 3 ft. 6 in. to the springing, but a part may be buried. These apertures are closed by the exterior casing of the wall. This wall at its west end seems to have been returned inwards. Both this wall and these windows have been regarded as part of the old Saxon palace, and this may well be so. They certainly appear older than the Norman work of the keep.

Westward of this old part is a walled-up doorway, with a pointed arch springing from the usual Norman flat chamfered abacus. This looks like transition Norman work. Outside

it is masked by the facing. This door, the base of which is buried, seems to have been a postern, although, it must be confessed, in a most inconvenient position for such a means of egress.

The Buttavant tower, which caps the western angle of the ward, and is a marked object in the outline of the castle, seems to have been an octagon of 7 ft. in the side, internal measurement, and of considerable thickness. The casing of the lower part is gone. It had a sub-basement story, and two above this, all covered with wood. A well-stair near the gorge leads to the summit. The curtain from hence to the garderobe is destroyed.

The inner ward occupies the summit of the hill. It also is rudely triangular, the great bastion forming the apex to the west, the Gloriette bastion capping the angle to the south-east, and the obtuse angle to the north-east being formed by the curtain alone. Towards the outer and middle wards the wall is a strong revetment of masonry, crested by the curtain. Elsewhere the earth is only somewhat higher within than without the curtain.

This ward contained two gateways, the keep, the Queen's tower and offices, and a well.

The gateway from the middle ward abutted on the northern curtain. It was probably a mere aperture in a wall, without a regular gatehouse, else it could scarcely have disappeared so completely, even under the crushing weight of the fragments of the keep.

This gate opened into a small court, on the east side of which rose the keep. A second and higher gate seems to have led into the actual ward, and to have been placed close to the foot of the exterior staircase of the keep. This gate is also completely gone. The survey by Treswell in 1586 shows where it stood.

The Keep is a quadrangular tower, 60 ft. square and 80 ft. high, of pure Norman work. The east and west faces were strengthened with five flat pilaster strips, 5 ft. 4 in. broad, 18 in. projection, and 8 ft. 4 in. apart. On the north and south faces were four similar strips, placed at wider intervals. All rose from a common plinth, and died into the wall a short distance below the battlement, a small portion of which is still visible, not passing into it as at Chepstow and elsewhere, so as to panel the face.

The door of the ground-floor, apparently 4 ft. wide, and with very late dressings, is at present in the west wall, here 9 ft. thick, and may possibly have been always there, although certainly not in its present form. It was covered by the exterior stair. It is placed nearest to the south end, between the second and third pilasters.

The stair, 9 ft. broad, is built against the west face of the keep, without bond, and perhaps a later addition. Beneath it is a large open arch, round-headed, springing from flat pilaster jambs, which, continued above the string or cap, panel the soffit of the vault. This arch serves as a porch to the door of the basement of the keep.

The stair terminates in the staircase tower, a rectangular lean-to, or building appended to the keep, forming a vestibule to the main entrance, and said to have carried the stairs leading to the upper floor. It is about 19 ft. by 16 ft. within, and has a stone bench against its north wall. The door from the exterior stair in the north wall is round-headed, 6 ft. 6 in. wide, opening in a wall 6 ft. thick, the two other walls being 4 ft. The keep door, between the first and second pilasters, and therefore near the angle of the keep, has been 6 ft. broad, now enlarged to 9 ft. It has a flat top, with a semicircular arch of relief in the wall above, not intended to be seen. There was probably a door in the south wall of the vestibule opening upon the great bastion, and there are traces of a covered passage from it into the garderobe tower. This vestibule seems certainly to be of the age of the keep, and to have been occupied by a staircase to the principal floor.

The keep was divided into two great chambers by a wall 6 ft. thick. The basement was covered, and the first story floored by ten large whole-timber joists, the cavities for which remain in the south wall. The first floor probably contained a chamber, 42 ft. long by 28 ft. broad, and 24 ft. high, which, however, must have been very dark, since the north wall was interior, and the south without windows. Two small doors, probably of rather later construction, open through the south wall into the exterior gallery.

Above this room, forming the third story, was another, apparently of the same size and much more cheerful, and which may have been the hall. A well-stair led from this upwards, in the east wall, near its south end. The water-

tables within show a ridge and valley roof, as at Porchester, and probably there was originally nothing above this floor.

The battlements, with a slight exception, are gone, but in the east and west wall, just below the battlement line, are coupled Norman windows, of about 3 ft. opening, a pair between each pair of pilasters, thus forming a sort of arcade, not unlike the far later ones at Swansea and Llamfey, but much of which seems always to have been closed. It is remarkable that a building so massive and the walls of which are so thick, should have been without the usual galleries and mural chambers found in Norman keeps.

Mr. Bond, who is intimately acquainted with this castle, and has brought much critical knowledge to bear upon its details, is of opinion that the upper part of the wall of the keep shows evidence of having been an addition to the original structure, though at no very long interval of time.

Built against the exterior of the keep, on the south side, and projecting into the outer ward, is another lean-to, or appended tower, of about 30 ft. in breadth, and 20 ft. projection. Outside it has three pilaster strips and one on each flank, rising from a common base. At present it reaches only to the floor of the second story of the keep, but it seems to have been higher, and is said to have been lowered by Sir C. Hatton. It is a garderobe tower, and contains on each of its two floors two chambers of about 7 ft. by 9 ft. The upper are not accessible; but it is clear that a portion of the eastern lower chambers was bratticed off, to carry the refuse from the upper. In the western chamber is a stone arch, which may be taken to indicate the place of this brattice. The eastern is open on one side, and was evidently closed by a timber partition. These chambers terminate below in two square openings, on the face of the tower, and this supports the notion that the western as well as the eastern chamber was intended for a garderobe.

Between these chambers and the keep wall runs a vaulted gallery, into which they open, and from which two small doors, already mentioned, enter the first floor of the keep. Although the garderobe tower covers only half the face of the keep, this gallery is prolonged over the whole, being protected by a wall, looped. A door at its lower or east end led towards the kitchen, and one at the upper end opened on the great bastion, with access on the right to the

vestibule, and on the left to the curtain leading from the keep to the middle gatehouse. Two water-drains from the keep cross the gallery and discharge into the garderobes.

This tower, being built against and not bonded into the keep, is evidently later, but resembles it in general style, and must have been added within a very few years. The explosion which shattered the keep has made evident the complete want of bond between the two buildings.

East of the keep the ward is occupied by the remains of various offices, and by the ruins of the Queen's Hall or tower. This, with its contiguous buildings, was constructed upon crypts, some of which remain. One is round-headed, with a pointed doorway; another, which supported the Queen's Hall, seems to have had a very slightly pointed barrel-vault, divided by lateral narrower, but equally high, and therefore pointed, arches, into four bays, two of which contain lancet windows.

Some of the hall windows remain. They are pointed, with drop arch recesses, and stone side seats. The tracery is gone, but the exterior labels remain, terminating in knobs of foliage, and the arris or angle of each recess is occupied by a bead-and-scroll moulding.

North of this hall and placed across it, east and west, are the remains of what is regarded, with great probability, as the chapel. The west door and that of the hall are placed side by side, in a vestibule or porch, entered on the west side by a staircase.

The doors are pointed, with half-round bead labels, and a bead-and-scroll moulding running round the jambs and arch. Inside, the chapel door is richer, and has in the arch a double bead-and-scroll, divided by a hollow, and for the jambs the hollow has been occupied by a detached column of Purbeck marble, which material, though much decayed, is still seen to have formed the base and bell capital. The design, though not highly ornate, is excellent, as is the execution. The whole of this group appears to be early English, of the latter part of the reign of Henry III.

Close to the east of the hall, between it and the curtain, is a depression, said to mark the well. This must have been of great depth—probably to the level of the brook.

The tower spoken of as "La Gloriette" is probably gone, but near it is what may be called the Gloriette bastion, and

what seems to be the angular base of a tower capping the south-east angle of the ward, and intended to cover the junction of the wall with the curtain which comes up from the Plukenet tower. Near to it, westward, is a mural chamber in the curtain, which Treswell's plan shows as a garderobe, and beyond this an angular bastion, supposed to have been added by Lady Bankes, who seems to have placed a gun there.

The great bastion is a very peculiar work. It is of rounded outline, formed by a very thick and high wall of revetment, which caps the west end of the southern curtain, and projects into the middle ward. At the siege it carried five guns, and was called the New Bulwark. But although it may then have been widened to carry a battery, it was probably only an addition to the older Norman revetment wall supporting the staircase tower. The exterior, and therefore perhaps later, revetment has been injured at the base, and the heart of the work is exposed. It shows very rough filling up.

The south curtain of this ward is about twelve feet thick, but the north and east being less exposed and having no buildings to support, are much lighter, and present nothing of the strength considered necessary in the lower and more exposed portions of the fortress.

The present condition of the building is completely to be accounted for by the fact that Corfe Castle was "slighted" under a vote of the House of Commons, dated 4th of March, 1645, a period at which the orders of the Commons were not obeyed negligently.

In the outer gateway the drums are blown forwards, the vault split, and the rear of the lodges destroyed. All the upper story is removed.

Eastward the curtain is broken down, but the Horseshoe tower is not materially injured. The rest of the curtain to the Plukenet tower is broken down in parts only. That tower and the curtain up to the keep have not been dismantled, and but partially pulled down.

In this ward the main force of the destroyers has been spent upon the lower half of the west front, of which the curtains are lifted forwards, and the mural towers rent and shaken, vast fragments of both encumbering the slope. The Redan tower has escaped, as has the curtain which traverses King John's fosse.

The gateway of the middle ward presents a singular appearance. A mine has been excavated beneath the outer tower, which has sunk about 10 ft. and moved a little forward, splitting the entrance vault. This can hardly be the effect of powder, but is more probably due to a mine of the old sort, in which the earth was removed, and wooden props introduced, which were afterwards pulled away or burnt.

Of the Buttavant tower about two-thirds are gone, with part of the north curtain. The great curtain between the middle gatehouse and the keep is unshaken, only its steps and battlements are gone. It is one of the finest curtain walls in Britain, and almost equal to Cardiff.

In the inner ward the devastation has been severe. Of the keep, all the north and two-thirds of the adjacent west wall lie in enormous masses on the sward, and in their fall have utterly crushed the gateways of the ward, and their adjacent curtain. The east wall is destroyed at its two ends, but a strip of the central part remains unhurt to its summit, a marvel of Norman masonry, and is completely shrouded in ivy. The south wall and garderobe tower are but little injured. The staircase tower is destroyed, all but a part of the north wall. The broken-down walls of the keep are a sight to see, so vast is the mass of the fragments and so firm the cohesion of the material. They lie in the wildest confusion, and some considerable lumps have rolled down the slope, and bounding across road and brook, rest half buried in the turf beyond.

The Queen's tower and offices are destroyed, but, offering less resistance, have been broken up more in detail, and have no doubt been spoiled subsequently for the sake of the ashlar.

The destruction probably exceeds anything known elsewhere in England. The charges of powder, though skilfully disposed, seem to have been larger than was actually necessary; and certainly the place might have been rendered untenable with far less destruction of masonry. Even with such mortars as were used in the days of the Commonwealth, the castle could have been commanded from the loftier Challow hill, close to the east of it.

A few remarks naturally arise out of the above description.

The Saxon residence, of the existence of which there appears to be evidence in the latter part of the tenth cen-

tury, was no doubt also a place of strength. It is certain that it must have occupied the highest part of the hill, now the inner ward, and the wall remaining in the middle ward will probably be accepted as evidence that it extended over the area of this ward also.

The Normans probably made a clear sweep of any existing buildings in the inner ward, when they commenced the keep and its accessories, and, a little later, the garderobe tower. These are all built of large squared stones, with moderately open joints; thoroughly substantial, sound work, and all the more workmanlike and effective for a certain roughness and boldness in the finish. The ashlar, usually an indication of late work, was here close at hand in the Purbeck quarries, and the general absence of ornament in a royal residence, of vaulting, of triforial galleries or mural chambers, and, with one partial exception, of mural staircases, seem to indicate the work, if not of the Conqueror, of his more immediate successors. The garderobe tower, not particularly late Norman, but certainly subsequent to the keep, seems to strengthen this conclusion.

As the Norman buildings required to be included within an enceinte wall, which would naturally take the crest of this part of the hill, this would necessarily include or supersede the Saxon wall, which, for the same reason, would have followed the same limited outline. Probably, therefore, the curtains of the upper and middle ward contain traces of Saxon and a great deal of Norman masonry, and this applies also to the cross revetment wall between the inner and middle wards, which follows a natural division in the ground. The same natural cause would decide the position of the gates, where we now see them.

The original Norman castle has generally been supposed to have been restricted to the two upper wards, to which, according to Mr. Bond, King John added the defence of a deep fosse. It is singular, however, that this fosse, while cut right through to the western slope, should stop a little short of the eastern face. The narrow ridge thus left could scarcely have been intended for a passage, for the gateway of the upper ward must necessarily, from the disposition of the ground, always have been at the western or lower end of the fosse, and, had a ridge been left as an approach, it would certainly not have been one of almost inaccessible

steepness, much exposed to view and to attack, and not defensible by any special work.

The wall, from the Gloriette angle along the ridge, nearly to the Plukenet tower, has been observed to be of regular Norman work, and, according to Mr. Bond, to show evidence of having been returned inwards, as though it extended along the line of the later ditch. Thus it may be, that before King John's time the fortress occupied the present upper and middle wards, and a strip of the lower ward along the foot of the glacis of the keep. This is no doubt more probable than that it occupied the whole of the lower ward, covering the same area with the present works.

Mr. Bond has been able, by documentary evidence, to fix the date of the great curtain, which connects the later middle gate with the earlier keep tower, at 1236; as with such a curtain there must have been a tolerably strong gate, and as the present gate is some years later, this was no doubt Norman, though probably very late—say of the age of the curtain traversing King John's fosse at the lower end. Perhaps the pointed arch with Norman springing-course, in the wall next the Buttavant tower, may be of the same period—say the reign of Henry II., though the wall itself may be shown, by the evidence of records, to be later.

The lower ward, in its present state, was certainly enclosed towards the end of the reign of Henry III., and in that of Edward I. To this age may be attributed the outer and middle gatehouse, and the four mural towers of the outer ward, as well as the work of the Queen's tower, with its hall and chapel. The Plukenet tower may be assigned to the constableness of that baron, 54 Hen. III., or a little later.

To this period also is to be assigned the facing of the south wall of the middle ward. The ashlar of this age, though it has not the grand effective boldness of the Norman work, cannot be surpassed for closeness of jointing and general excellence of workmanship. The stones, from one to 2 ft. long, and 8 in. wide, are coursed and well bonded, and their angles are as fresh as when newly cut.

The excessive solidity of the mural towers upon the west front is very remarkable. Possibly this unusual strength was intended to counteract the danger of being mined, for which the soft chalk rock offered great facilities.