

## THE EARTHWORKS OF THE WILTSHIRE AVON.

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### OLD SARUM AND DOWNTON.

THE Wiltshire Avon, which shares that well-known name with her Somersetshire sister, and rises in part from the same ground: that "Eastern Avon," which

"—— vaunts, and doth upon her take  
To be the only child of shadeful Savernake."

is one of the coldest and clearest streams in the south. Whether its source be taken from the high land of the Devizes or from the skirts of Savernake, it runs about fifty miles to the sea at Christchurch, and, in that distance, itself, or by its immediate tributaries, traverses a tract very rich in sylvan beauty, and crowded with material traces of the old inhabitants of the land, and of their severe struggle in the sixth century with the fiery deluge by which they were at last swept away, but which brought with it those seeds of civilization which have nowhere grown more abundant fruit than along the banks of this celebrated stream.

Much of the upper course of the Avon lies across Salisbury Plain, where it cleaves that table-land of the chalk by a valley full of sudden but not ungraceful bends and secluded nooks, each bright and rich with vegetation, and in almost every bend a village and its church, there being twenty of the latter in the same number of miles between the entrance of the Avon into the chalk at Beaching-Stoke and the expansion of its ravine at Salisbury. The lower valley is broad and flat, and the waters flow freely in many inosculating channels. The lowlands are laid out as rich water meadows, the uplands studded with masses of oak, elm, and beach, the skirts of the adjacent New Forest. Nothing can be more wild, more natural, or yet be more indebted to the labour and taste of man.

For antiquities, every part of the broad plain of the chalk is dotted over with marks of human habitation, warfare, or sepulture. Almost every headland is crowned by a camp recognized as British by its outline following the irregularities of the ground. Upon its northern frontier may be seen Easton and Pewsey, Lidbury, Sidbury, Chisenbury, Casterley, Broadbury and Bratton; and on the southern, Durrington, Amesbury, Quarley, Ogbury, Winterbourne, Grovely, Belbury, and Old Sarum, a few only, though the most considerable of the defensive earthworks. Lower down the valley and nearer to the sea, the ground is rather less strong, and the earthworks of the British age perhaps less numerous, but there are not wanting examples of large area and great strength, such as Clearbury, Whichbury, Chiselbury, Tisbury, Winkelbury, and still further south, Dudsbury, Badbury, and Spettisbury, which remain but little altered. Stonehenge, the grandest of British antiquities, and probably the only one in this immediate district neither military nor sepulchral, stands on the right bank of the Avon, scarce a mile from its waters, and only six from the fortress of Old Sarum.

The Roman remains of the district are considerable, and characteristic of the people. They consist almost wholly of roads. Old Sarum, though certainly of British origin, is the centre of several great roads, which radiated from it towards the Roman settlements at Bath, Marlborough, Winchester, Silchester, Ilchester, and Dorchester, and upon these and between them are various works of the same people, though their camps, being rarely defended by formidable works in earth, and being usually on low and accessible ground, have very frequently disappeared before the ploughshare.

The English, the scourge of the later Britons, and their successors by the right of many a hard-won contest, in the Wiltshire territory, notwithstanding their pagan ferocity, have left traces which speak but of law and order. Their dragon's teeth have grown up, not, as might have been expected, in armed men, but in waving corn-fields, enclosed pastures, parochial boundaries, and those various subdivisions of the land the very existence of which implies peace and private property. To these later invaders may be attributed such earthworks as Downton, the Devizes, and Ludgershal, and such ecclesiastical foundations as Wimborne and Christchurch. The Norman remains in and about the valley of the Avon differ in no material

respect from those in other parts of England, being grafted, where circumstances admitted of it, upon the existing works. Thus the grand earthworks at the Devizes, at Marlborough, at Ludgershal, at Twynham, all probably of English origin, were crowned with Keeps of masonry, as was the central mound at Old Sarum, and on the borders of the district the very curious work at Wareham, and the natural, but early occupied hill, at Corfe.

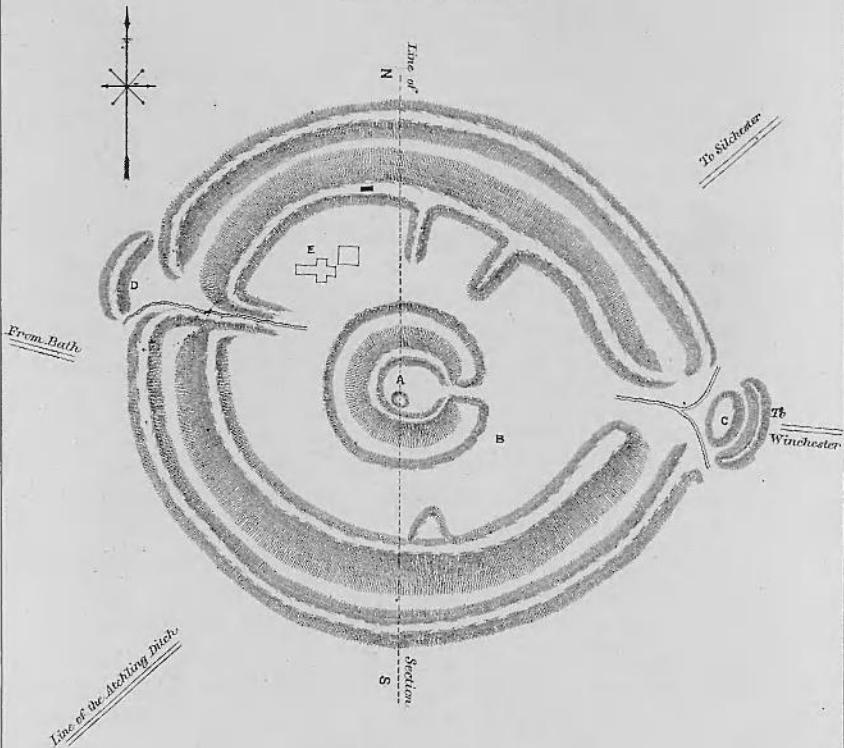
The two earthworks selected as the subjects of the present memoir represent the British and the English types; Old Sarum being for the most part of the former, and Downton wholly of the latter class; the one thrown up probably to protect a petty kingdom, and afford refuge to a tribe when attacked; the other as the chief seat of some great English leader, recently won by the sword and held by his followers, to be the centre of a large private estate, and also to serve as the base for further acquisitions while aught remained unconquered within its reach.

#### SORBIODUNUM, SEORESBYRIG, OR OLD SARUM.

This is a very noteworthy place; in some respects the most noteworthy in Britain. Selected at some remote period and fortified with appliances of a simple character, it is the principal stronghold of a district very rich in military earthworks, and which at one time was the resort of inhabitants whose huts and wigwams, and the monuments of their superstition, covered the adjacent downs, and whose sepulchral monuments, ascending to the stone age, point, by their contents, to an early, and by their number, to a long-continued population. The earlier and later Britons, Celtic or Belgic tribes, the Romans and the English, have each here left traces of their rule; the Celt, partly in the fragments of an ancient nomenclature, but chiefly in mere material works, curious, indeed, and grand, but which are in no way connected with the later inhabitants of the country; the Romans, in those marvellous public ways, many of which are still in use, and the English in those names, boundaries, and customs, which are associated with our religion and our civilization.

Nevertheless, the mound of Old Sarum is a spot on which the descendant of the Welsh-speaking Britons has a right to feel pride. All around it savours of the remote antiquity of his

# OLD SARUM.



- A. *Keep or Inner Ward.*
- B. *Outer Ward.*
- C. *Main Gate.*
- D. *West Gate.*
- E. *Cathedral and Cloisters.*



SECTION NORTH & SOUTH, (dotted line on Plan.)

race. The Norman fortress, the city, the cathedral church, have all vanished ; their very ruins have perished, and the knowledge of their arrangements has only been recovered by the accident of a rainless summer. Even the traces of Roman and English residence within the vast inclosure are uncertain and obscure. The seats of spiritual and civil authority were removed in the 13th century, and the military sway did not long survive. Political power, indeed, by a strange anomaly, lingered there until our own day, and is redeemed from oblivion only by its accidental connection with the name of the elder Pitt. But this also has departed. The bare and gaunt banks and mounds, the skeleton of the past life, are all that is left, and here, as at Stonehenge, the memory of the Briton is once more predominant.

Old Sarum is a rudely circular and concentric earthwork, of unusual height and area, and of more historic celebrity than is attached to any other mere bank of earth in Britain, however stupendous. Moreover, though really as much a natural knoll of chalk as Windsor, its sharp outline and obviously artificial finish invest it, to the ordinary observer, with the character of a work of man, and thus prodigiously enhance the admiration with which it is wont to be regarded. Old Sarum is really a knoll of the lower and flint-bearing chalk series, of which advantage has been taken to scarp and elevate the highest and central part into a steep flat-topped mound, round which is excavated a formidable ditch, very broad and very deep. Beyond the ditch is a broad and comparatively level annular area, sloping slightly from the centre, and in its turn girdled by a second and still more formidable ditch. Of this the counterscarp is a steep bank, outside of and beyond which is the natural slope of the base of the hill, forming what, in military phrase, would be the glacis of the place, and which on three sides descends into the ordinary valleys of the district, but to the west is continued downwards until it dies into the meads of Stratford, rendered bright and well wooded by the fertilizing waters of the Avon. The whole height of the knoll above the river may be 300 ft., and perhaps 200 ft. above the other valleys, and the fortified area is above 27 acres, so that the fortress is one of great strength and magnitude.

Commencing with the interior, the central mound is, at

its top, about 500 ft. across. The sides are as steep as the rubbly chalk soil will well admit of, and the material, removed in scarping, seems to have been in part placed on the crest of the scarp so as to raise the edge of the mound by an artificial bank, about 20 ft. above the central platform. This bank or parapet, now crowned with thorn bushes, is about 100 ft. above the bottom of the ditch, and about half that height above the level of the counterscarp. The ditch is about, at its broadest, 150 ft. This ditch was the inner fosse of the fortress, and surrounded its Keep or Inner Ward, or the castle proper.

The annular space beyond formed the Outer Ward, the girth of which was about 1,500 yards, and within which were the city and the cathedral. This ward is not quite circular, but measuring from the inner to the outer ditch, averages about 370 ft. It is parted nearly equally on the north side by a bank, and on the south by a bank and ditch, the former being on the eastern side. These run as radial lines, but do not reach the interior ditch, neither does the cross ditch communicate with the exterior one. In fact the cross ditch, in its breadth, depth and irregularity, much resembles a quarry, and very probably was opened to supply material for the hearting or substance of the castle walls. Besides these is another bank, pointing to the south-east, so that the whole area is divided into three sections, of which two lie in the eastern half. Of course, the object of these banks was to shut in the church, and to prevent the whole Outer Ward being taken by a *coup de main*. They are all evidently additions to the circular works, and probably of the Norman period. With these exceptions the surface of this ward is nearly level, but round its outer edge runs a low bank, and in places, in its rear, a slight ditch, no doubt caused by the removal of the wall.

Outside this ward is the outer ditch, about 106 ft. deep from the crest, and about 150 ft. broad. The bank, which forms the outer edge of this ditch, was evidently formed from its contents. It is about 40 ft. above the bottom of the ditch, and about 15 ft. above the level outside, and it is very steep. This forms the outer line of defence, and in modern warfare would be considered a weakness, as affording cover to the assailants. Thus the fortress is composed of an Inner or castle ward, and an Outer or city ward, with a bank and

ditch defending each, and a third bank beyond and on the edge of the outer ditch. The outer ditch and bank are those attributed to Alfred. The diameter of the whole place is a mean of 1,700 ft. These defences are much stronger than those of the adjacent camps; Yarnbury and Amesbury banks, for example, are about half their strength. The earth-work most worthy to be compared with Old Sarum is Badbury, in Dorset.

There are two entrances into the outer ward from the E.S.E. and W.N.W., nearly opposite. These are formed by a direct cross-cut through the outer bank, and the filling up the ditch so as to carry a road-way, which enters the outer ward in a cutting, as a hollow way. At the eastern or main entrance this way is shallow, and speedily dies out, but at the western, called the Postern entrance, though narrow, the road-way is much deeper, and runs far into the ward. In each case the way forks at the outer bank, and in the angle is placed a barbican of earth, a sort of cavalier, commanding both branches of the road as well as their combination. The eastern work is nearly rectangular, sharply defined, and has an independent ditch of its own towards the field. It is probably, in its present form, Norman. The original entrances seem to have been here, but the present arrangement is evidently late, and possibly altogether Norman.

The Inner Ward has but one, an eastern, entrance, opposite to that of the Outer Ward. This also is formed by a notch cut in the scarp, the ditch being filled up to carry a foot-way. This must always have been very steep. It was evidently always the entrance, the bank elsewhere being uncut. Fragments of masonry show it, in its present form, a bridge being substituted for the causeway, to have been the entrance to the Norman Castle.

Besides these earthworks are certain remains of masonry, parts evidently of very extensive and solid works, due to the Norman period.

At the entrance to the Inner Ward, on the scarp, are two masses of chalk-flint rubble, with occasional blocks or lumps of sarsden stone, evidently the core of a gate-house and contiguous curtain once faced with ashlar. The enceinte wall seems to have crested the mound all round, the present bank forming a ramp behind it. In the enclosure, on the north side, are lines of foundation, obviously those of the principal

buildings, and opposite is a bold depression in the soil, no doubt marking the place of the well, which must have been deep, and was possibly large. The filling up of the ditch at the entrance is clearly modern. This central mound may be original, but it is rather more probable that the British work resembled Badbury, which has no central citadel, and that this latter was added, and the ditch excavated in the eighth or ninth century, to make a fortified residence for the English Lord. This, however, must always be a mere speculation. By whomsoever made, the Normans found the mound here, and built upon it a shell, of which the ditch was the defence, and the interior bank the camp. If the whole area be regarded as a castle, this was the Keep, but if, as is more probable, the outer area represented the city, then the interior would be the castle, which in that case must be held to have had no Keep. It is a question of names only.

The other lump of masonry is on the line of the wall of the city ward, towards the north-east. This is part of the curtain wall of the city, about 10 ft. thick and 12 ft. high, and 25 ft. long. It is pierced by two holes 18 ins. high by 12 ins. broad, placed about 6 ft. apart and 8 ft. from the ground. They seem to have carried two beams, for what purpose it is vain to conjecture. The fragment is of chalk-flint rubble, with occasional chain courses of sarsden stone rudely dressed. The inner face of the wall retains its original facing of dressed sarsden ashlar. Though placed, as indeed, with such a weight, was prudent, 3 or 4 ft. within the edge of the ditch, it was evidently a part of the general enceinte wall, described as having been 12 ft. thick, and strengthened with twelve towers. This could not have been less than 20 ft. high, and about 1,566 yards long, a prodigious work, even without considering the radial walls dividing the city from the cathedral. Unfortunately these walls have all been removed down to and in most places somewhat below the level of the soil, the materials having been needed for the new city.

Besides these works, there was discovered, in 1795, a curious subterranean passage, which passed from the north-west quarter of the Outer Ward, outwards, towards the eastern ditch. It was cut in the chalk 7 ft. broad and from 7 to 10 ft. high, bearing marks of the tool. The entrance had columns and door-jambs, evidently Norman ;



and the roof was round-headed, probably artificial, as it is described as being only about two feet below the surface. There were steps cut in the chalk, and but little worn. It was followed 114 ft., and there found to be choked up with rubbish. It was closed by the farmer whose land was trespassed upon, and is probably still intact. No doubt this was a private postern, opening on the glacis or in the ditch, such as exist at Windsor and in other fortresses on the chalk, and of a more complicated character at Dover and Arques. They are all probably of Norman date.

It may be observed, with respect to the outer defences which have been attributed to Alfred, that they have the peculiarity of a high bank outside the ditch, very unusual in Celtic camps. Probably all Alfred did was to deepen this ditch, and throw up the outer bank; and probably also all the ditches were again scarped and deepened when the Norman city wall was built.

During the long drought of 1834 a very interesting discovery was here made. The Outer Ward was at that time laid down in turf, and upon this was seen in brown outline the plan of the old cathedral. It was placed in the north-west quarter between the secret passage and the west gate. The plan was a plain cross, 270 ft. long by 150 ft. broad, with a flat east end; and the chapter-house was formed by an additional bay at the north end of the north transept. There were double aisles to nave, choir, and transepts. On removing the soil the foundations were seen, and in them a cavity, probably the grave of Bishop Osmund, the founder. On the north side of the choir was a square of 140 ft., the site of the cloisters. Here were found also burial-grounds for clergy and laity.

It is certain that the greater part of these earthworks are of præ-Roman origin, and that *Sorbiodunum* is the Latinized form of the British name,—“*dun*” or “*duunum*,” denoting an eminence. The figure which like *Badbury*, has been called a regular circle, scarcely deserves that name, the regularity, such as it is, being evidently caused by the natural outline of the hill; nor are the banks and ditches in either work laid down according to any rules of castrametation. The district is crowded with works, many of which are certainly præ-Roman, and of the places around, a few, such as *Wilton*, *Durrington*, *Verwood*, *Amesbury*, and the *Avon*, retain a

British element in their names. Most of these being constructed upon hills of irregular outline are themselves very irregular, so that by comparison Old Sarum and Badbury appear as regular circles. The fact is that all follow the contour of the ground.

That the fortress on this spot was held by the Romans, and is the *Sorbiodunum* of Antoninus, is very probable indeed. It has been described as the centre of six Roman roads, radiating towards Dorchester, Ilchester, Silchester, Winchester, Cunetio by Marlborough, and *Aquæ Solis* or Bath. Of these the two from Winchester and Silchester have been traced up to the east gate of the fortress; and as much may perhaps be said for that from Cunetio. Dr. Guest, however, lays down but four roads—to Winchester, to Silchester, a western road to the Severn traversing the great ridge wood, and that called Achling Ditch, which leads direct to Badbury rings near Wimborne. Even this restricted view shows *Sorbiodunum* to have been an important Roman station, and there are not wanting in its neighbourhood earthworks, such as Rollestone and Bury Hill, of a rectangular plan, although being on low ground and but slight, they are not all shown in the Ordnance Survey of 1817 as they would be in a map of the present day. The Romans trusted rather to discipline and palisades than to heavy earthworks: hence their traces are but slight, and are often overlooked, and disappear before the plough. It is, however, very curious that, notwithstanding all these indications of Roman sway, there should be so very few remains of Roman habitation. Nothing whatever has been found within the fortress, and but very little in its suburbs.

What the Belgæ did with *Sorbiodunum* during the century and a half of their occupation, is unknown. This period of the history of our island is obscure, and yet to it has been attributed by Mr. Fergusson the adjacent monument of Stonehenge; the work, at least in its present form, of a people accustomed to the use of tools of metal, and with some notion of construction and of architectural effect.

*Sorbiodunum*, recorded as *Seoresbyrig*, or *Searbyrig*, which Sir R. Hoare rather happily suggests, may mean "the dry," or "waterless city," played a part in the Belgic and Saxon struggles. In 552 Cynric, king of Wessex, no inconsiderable leader of the "*aspera gens Saxo*," here conquered the Britons and probably established himself on their territory. Ine

A.D. 688-725, gave certain lands to the church of St. James in Salisbury, as did Æthelburh, his queen, to that of St. Mary. According to a statement in "Ancient Wilts," Alfred directed Leofric Earl of Wilts to add to the fortress a ditch to be defended with palisades, at which all who lived within the castle, and those outside, were to give aid. In 960 Ædgar held a Council here to devise means for keeping off the Danes: a not uncalled-for step, since in 1003 Svein, after burning and plundering Wilton, committed like ravages at Seoresbyrig in his way thence to his ships. Finally, the place seems to have become a royal demesne of the Confessor, being so recorded in Domesday. Sir R. Hoare also cites a coin of that king, claiming to have been struck by Godred at Sarum.

The Norman history of Old Sarum is an occupation of the older fortress, and the foundation of the early city. The invaders disturbed as little as possible the existing tenures and boundaries; they placed themselves in the English seats of property, and from them administered the old estates. The defences alone were often changed. To walls of wattle or rude masonry and stockades of timber succeeded works in substantial masonry, and all the newly invented appliances of a Norman fortress. At the time of Domesday the Conqueror held some rents here; but the manor, a large one, was in the Bishop, a very important person. To the five sees created in the West Saxon kingdom, A.D. 905-9, a sixth, that of Wilton or Wiltshire, was shortly afterwards added, the episcopal seat of which was at Ramsbury. After an ineffectual attempt in 1055 to remove this to Malmsbury, Bishop Herman, the Lotharingian, in 1075-8, with the consent of the King, combined Ramsbury with Sherborne, and translated the seat to Sarum. Here, in the Outer Ward, Herman in 1078 laid the foundation of the cathedral, which was completed or nearly so by his successor, Osmund de Seez, Earl of Dorset and Lord Chancellor, who being a wealthy baron in England and Normandy, endowed it richly by charter in 1091, the year before its consecration. Part of the land is described as "*ante portam castelli seriberiensis terram ex utraque parte viæ in ortorum domorumque canonicorum necessitate.*" The gate referred to is of the Inner Ward, the canons' houses having been on the outer. There was thus a castle twenty-five years after the Conquest; but whether it was a Norman structure or that

left by the English is uncertain, probably something of both. Here also Bishop Osmund arranged the celebrated ordinary for "the use" of Sarum. Roger, his successor, Justiciary of England and Treasurer, is said to have walled in the outer enclosure between 1102 and 1139.

Concurrently with the cathedral, and probably by the Bishop, was constructed the Norman castle. William was here in 1086 in person, and at Lammastide met his Witan in the celebrated gemote which has been described in glowing terms by the great master of topographical history. Here in the vast open plain about the fortress assembled a host reputed at 60,000 men, composed of "all the landowners who were of account over all England, be they the men of what man they might, and they all submitted to him, and were his men, and swore to him oaths of fealty, that they would be faithful to him against all other men," an oath by which the great King broke down the intermediate power of the nobles, and with that sagacity which in him was intuitive avoided the rock on which the two great monarchies of the continent were destined to make shipwreck.

We may suppose that during this meeting William dwelt on the central mound, where no doubt the walls of the castle within rose at an equal rate with those of the cathedral without. But whether he was harboured in the unaltered English residence, or in the rising Norman fortress, whether the host was Edward de Sarisburie, the Sheriff of Wilts and a great man in that county, and ancestor of the Earls of Salisbury, or whether Bishop Osmund acted as the castellan, here William was present, and here he transacted his first and most important business, face to face with his new subjects.

William Rufus was here in 1096 to meet his Council, and decide upon the celebrated wager of battle in which William Earl of Eu was worsted and tortured to death. Henry I. was here in 1106 and 1116, when his nobles swore to recognise Prince William as his successor. The Pipe roll of this reign, 1130-1, records a charge of 20s. "in ostio faciendo ad cellariam turris Sarum," so that the place was then in the King's hands.

Bishop Roger, who held the see from 1102 to 1139, and crowned the mighty mound of the Devizes and the strong knoll of Sherborne with their celebrated works in masonry,

is likely enough to have completed the inner shell above as well as the city wall below. He is further said to have walled in the borough and extra-parochial district outside the city, covering, with it, above 72 acres. He at first supported Stephen, but had to surrender the castle, which was taken and retaken, and finally much injured. Maud created Patrick, son of Edward de Sarisburie, Earl of Salisbury, and probably invested him with the government of the castle. He died 1167. In 1154, when the castle was held by Henry II., it was in ruins. Henry, in the early years of his reign, authorized payment (as appears in the Pipe roll) for the constable, porters, and watchmen of the castle, and for buildings at the prison; and in 23 Hen. II., 61*l.* was spent in repairs there. In 1164-5, when the Liber Niger of the Exchequer was compiled, the Bishop was lord of the manor, and under him were thirty-three knights under the old feoffment, and three under the new. Earl Patrick held two knight fees, and a third by the tenure of guarding the castle.

So long as the Bishops held the castle, either independently or for the Crown, the position of the cathedral was sufficiently secure, but when lay castellans took their place, and were men powerful enough to ill-treat their neighbours, the clergy began to suffer, and to make the most of the natural disadvantage of so high and exposed a situation. They suffered "*ob insolentiam militis et ob penuriam aquæ.*" Peter of Blois, himself a canon, says, "*est ibi defectus aquæ.*" The wind was high, water was dear, and the soldiery held the gates even of the city ward, and went so far as to threaten the buildings from their ramparts above, and even to shut out the ecclesiastics when returning in procession to their homes. The church was "*Castro comitis vicina,*" and the vicinity was unpleasant.

Under Bishop Herbert le Poer, who succeeded in 1194, these disputes reached their height, and he decided to remove the cathedral to a spot of ground near the confluence of the Wily and the Nadder with the Avon, rather above a mile distant. Merefield, a marshy spot but with an excellent foundation, was granted by Richard I. for the site of the new church. Bishop Herbert died in 1219, but his successor and natural (germanus) brother, Richard le Poer, obtained from Honorius III. the Bull necessary for the

translation, in which the causes for it are set forth. They are the dangerous position, as regarded the castle, of the houses of the clergy; the exposure, the wind being at times so high that the clergy could not hear one another's voices in the choir, and which produced continual need for repairs; and finally the scarcity of water, only to be obtained at a great cost and with the castellan's leave. This latter objection may have been exaggerated, for besides the well in the castle, there were, says Leland, four wells in the Outer Ward, and at this time there are two not very deep wells in gardens not very much below the cathedral level. No doubt, however, the removal was called for

“ Quid domini domus in castro, nisi fœderis arca  
In templa Baalim? Carcer uterque locus.  
Est ibi defectus aquæ, sed copia cretæ,  
Sævitur ibi ventus, sed philomela silet.”

Early in 1219 the new cathedral was founded. It was forty years building, and was consecrated in 1258.

“ Rex largitur opes, fere præsul opem, lapicidæ  
Dant operam; tribus hic est opus, at stet opus.”

And finally Henry III. in 1227, confirmed the “*translatio de castro nostro Særisberię ad locum inferiorem*,” and declared the city “*quæ dicitur nova Sarisbiria, sit libera civitas*.” The city had thus followed in the train of the cathedral. The taxation accounts of the reigns of Richard and John show it to have been but moderately populous, but it probably took some time to remove, for it was 44 Hen. III., 1260, before the new city was granted by the King to the Bishop “*in capite*,” as parcel of the temporalities of the see, the citizens being the demesne men of the Bishop.

All parties gained greatly by the change. The new church was constructed at one period, and in a very pure style, and has ever since been regarded as the pride of the Western counties. The citizens exchanged an arid and stormy position for one sheltered and fertile, watered by the confluence of three streams, and shaded by forest trees of uncommon grandeur. The lords of the castle had no longer a cause for their perpetual disputes with the clergy and the burghers, and held their watch and ward undisturbed by chaunts and processions. Circumstances, however, rendered the castle,

as a military post, of less importance than heretofore, and though the powerful Earls who bore its title were even more distinguished than their predecessors, their distinction was but little associated with their castle, which fell gradually into disuse. The Montacutes, indeed, continued to possess it, but the Nevills concentrated their power on the Midland and Northern counties, and Warwick, Raby, and Middleham were to them what Sarum had been to their precursors in the title. Finally, when arms yielded to the gown, and the great minister of the great Queen chose under her successor Salisbury for his title of honour, he had more regard to the thriving city than to the ruined fortress, of which he was not even the possessor.

Considering the importance of the castle, and the power of those who bore its name, it is surprising that so little should be known of its history. Mr. Nichols, in an excellent paper printed in our volume for Salisbury in 1851, enters upon the history of the Earldom, and shows that, beginning with the Conqueror's Sheriff, who must have taken his name from the place, there was a second Edward de Salisbury, whose successor was Walter, a Baron under King Stephen, the father of Patric, the first Earl, whose son, William, the second Earl, was father of the celebrated Countess Ela. All these Lords seem to have held the castle under the Crown, themselves appointing castellans.

Ela, the heiress of William of Salisbury, the second Earl, laid the fifth stone of the new cathedral. She married William with the Long Sword, son of Henry II., who became Earl in her right, and held the castle. He was much abroad, and the castellan, his deputy, resided. This officer, in King John's time, was Robert de Vipont, and Irish prisoners were kept here. In 1208 the sheriff of Wilts was to repair the bridge, the ditch, and the houses in the castle. In 1266 the King addressed the Earl as his brother on matters relating to the castle; and in the reigns of Richard and John occasional payments were made for repairs, and for the sustenance of the soldiery there. The King's houses in the castle are mentioned, and wine stored there is issued to Gloucester and Bristol, treasure was sent thence to Southampton, and plate to Westminster for the Coronation. King John had a balistarius in pay there at 9*d.* a day, 100 hogs were supplied to Vipont, and in 3 John, the Earl gave thirty marcs to have the county, town,

and custody of the castle ; and Walter, the son of Albreda, gave 76s. 8d. for the charge of the prison. The Earl (William) was then Sheriff, and was allowed for 29l. 6s. 8d. spent by the king's order in work at the castle.

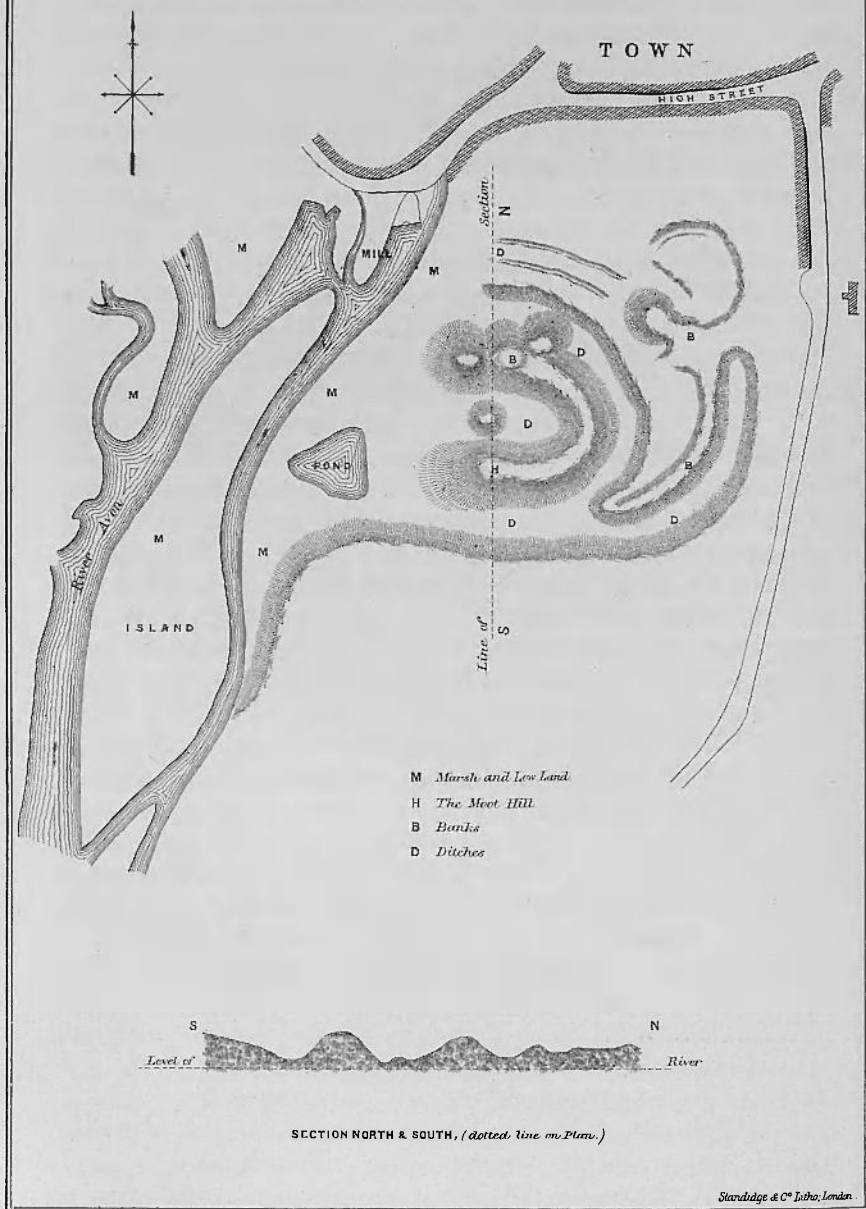
Earl William died in the castle in 1226, when Ela, his widow, had custody of it. Her son and grandson seem to have claimed, but never to have obtained, the Earldom, though, when the latter died in 1256, his daughter Margaret, who married Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, was known as Countess of Salisbury, probably on the death of Countess Ela in 1261. In the 39 Hen. III., 1254, an Inquisition declares that no fiefs are held by castle guard of the castle ; and in 52 Hen. III., the bridge within the castle was under repair, and that and the gate were reparable by the Abbess of Shaftesbury. In 3 Edw. I., the castle and manor were in the Crown, and two years later mention is made of the mill near the castle, no doubt the same that is entered in Domesday, and still remains at Stratford.

In 5 Edw. III., 1332, the King granted licence to the Bishop, dean, and chapter of Sarum to remove the walls of the cathedral and canonical houses within his castle of Old Sarum, and to employ them in the repairs of the church and close of New Sarum. No doubt, under this licence the whole material was removed down to the ground level or even below it, and probably the licence was held to include the outer wall also. At the same time, the Bishop, etc., had leave to rebuild a certain chantry on a part of the old cathedral, and to use it.

In 1337 Edward's son-in-law, William Montacute, was created Earl of Salisbury, and 15 Edw. III., 1341-2, an Inquisition was taken as to whether the Earls were seized in demesne as in fee of the castle and vill of Old Sarum, and how they lost it. Probably this was connected with a suit brought by Bishop Wyvil against the Earl on a writ of right as to his title to the castle. In this Inquisition we find the seizure of the castle, &c., by King Henry III. from Earl William, the son of the Countess Ela, thus described : "*Et Juratores dicunt quod tempore ipsius Willielmi junioris, propter diversas discenciones motas inter Henricum Regem Anglie tercium proavum domini Regis nunc et predictum Willielmum juniorem, maxime pro eo quod idem Willielmus contra defensionem dicti Regis Henrici exivit regnum Anglie licencia Domini Regis non optenta, Dominus Rex Henricus*



# DOWNTON MOOT HILL.



*seisire fecit in manum suam dicta castra villam et officium et ea in manum suam retinuit.*" The matter was at first to have been tried by battle, and each party named a champion ; but finally it was settled by a compromise, the Bishop paying 2,500 marcs, and the Earl quitting the castle to the See for ever. This probably severed the connection between the Earls and the Earldom in the feudal sense.

When the castle proper was dismantled has not been discovered. The views occasionally exhibited of it seem taken from the representation of Sherborne upon Bishop Wyvil's brass in the cathedral. In Leland's time the ruins were considerable ; there was a Lady chapel, part of the old cathedral, the parish church of Holy Rood, and the remains of a chapel over the east gate. Also in the east suburb, outside the gate, stood a chapel, the remains of the parish church of St. John, and dotted about were a sufficient number of wells of sweet water to throw a doubt upon the validity of a part of the alleged grievance of the ecclesiastics. Probably as the new city expanded the value of the old material rose, and the destruction went forward with accelerated speed. It seems probable that, with a very little labour, the foundations of the Inner Ward could be cleared, and the well opened. It is also much to be regretted that the Outer Ward should be under the plough. The loss upon laying it down in turf would be trifling, and it is not too late to preserve the remaining inequalities of the surface.

#### DOWNTON.

The town and once parliamentary borough of Downton stands about a mile within the southern boundary of the county of Wilts, in which it is a parish, and gives name to a hundred. The town is astride upon the Avon, though mainly upon its left or east bank. The character of this river from Salisbury to the sea at Christchurch is that of a gentle and very winding stream, flowing freely and at will across a plain of gravel, subject to broad but shallow floods. At Ringwood, where the stream divides into a net-work of six or eight channels, there is a great tendency to degenerate into a marsh, and this is, in some degree, the case at Downton, eleven miles higher up, where the flat is near half a mile broad, and traversed by two main streams and several subordinate water-courses. Hence Downton, on the east

bank of the river, is protected by what in early times must have been an almost impregnable frontier from the west, and the higher ground descending to the margin of the water afforded great facilities for the construction of such a stronghold as it was the custom of the founders of the English nation to throw up.

The position, being low and upon the margin of a river, differs from those of the early British camps, of which there are many in the district, and of which Clearbury and Whichbury, only two and three miles beyond the river, are good examples. The nearest Roman remain is probably the Achling Ditch, a road running between Badbury rings and Old Sarum, and which passes nine miles west of the Avon at this point. There are, however, in the same direction, the traces of two boundaries, bearing the common name of Grimsdyke, one of which seems to have connected Whichbury and Clearbury, while the other extends west from Clearbury, and is lost in Cranbourne Chase. There is also another ancient boundary, Bokerley Ditch, which ran from near Ringwood north-westwards, crossing both the Achling and Grimsdyke. Bokerley is said to be broken by the dyke, and therefore to be the later of the two. These works are probably all British. Dr. Guest regarded Grimsdyke as a work of the Belgæ, and therefore not much earlier if not later than the Roman invasion. It is remarkable that the ditch attendant upon this bank is upon its south side—a very unusual position in South Britain, where the boundaries were usually thrown up by the more aggressive and southern tribes.

Downton belongs to a later age, and at the earliest to a period when the Belgæ were no longer invaders, but had become amalgamated with their British kinsmen, and stood at bay in defence of their territory against a more terrible foe than even the Romans. Thus the works belong to the class of moated mounds, but are unusually complex in their arrangement, and have been rendered still more so by certain horticultural operations which were effected at a heavy outlay in the last century, and which render their examination unsatisfactory, even with the aid of the excellent ground plan lately executed by the Ordnance surveyors.

The mound stands about 60 yards from the river, the space between, naturally marshy, being now laid out as a large pond. This flat, the river, and a wide and deep mill-

leat are the only but very sufficient defences on this side, for the banks and ditches cease when they reach the flat, and are not continued across it to the river. The mound is of large dimensions, about 70 ft. high, with a flat top about 20 yards across. The three sides upon and adjacent to the river have steep slopes, but the fourth or east side is prolonged, giving the mound a tail like a pear or a Rupert's drop, the slopes of which are more gradual, and along the ridge of which was the way up. This stalk curves to the north as it descends, and finally, when about 30 ft. above the level of the river it turns completely to the west, rises and becomes broader, and between itself and the mound includes a sort of deep cul-de-sac or bay, beyond which it forms a bank, north of and in advance of the mound. The bay widens towards the river, and in it is a small detached monticule. Upon the bank are three small mounts, one, at its west end, being 50 ft. above, and about 40 yards from the river. Thus the core of the earthwork is a horseshoe bank, with its concavity towards the river; upon its southern arm a large, and upon its northern a smaller mound, besides two monticules on its northern limb.

This inner work is protected, on its convex face, by an exterior ditch, also horseshoe-shaped, the ends running out on the river flat. If measured from the river this ditch would be 370 yards long, but its actual length is 250 yards. It is deep, and in parts broad, and may have been wet. Beyond this ditch, at its south end, is the outer bank, but about 160 yards from the river, between the two, commences the second or middle bank, which forms the counterscarp of the ditch, from its south-east quarter round to its north end. This bank is of lunated or falciform figure, sharp at its south, and narrow at its north end, but, at its eastern part or centre, 50 yards broad. This unusual breadth is occupied by a platform, outside of which the bank has a raised sharp edge, which has been narrowed and defined by a modern retaining wall of brick. Upon this bank, near its north-eastern quarter, is a small knoll, on which has been built a small tower, modern.

Finally, outside this bank, and forming the exterior defence of the place, is the outer ditch, the counterscarp of which is the natural soil, cut through where the ground begins to rise, and about 30 ft. above the river. This cut surface

commenced upon the river to the south, and envelops the whole work, ending again upon the river about 200 yards above its commencement, opposite to the water mill. The girth of the whole work from the termination of each end upon the river is about 600 yards, or, including the river front, 800 yards. Not only has the outline of the work been much defaced by the cutting of walks, making of basins, building of walls, bridges, and summer-houses, and planting of trees and shrubs, but the north-east quarter of the outer ditch has been converted into a croquet ground, and the northern end absorbed into shrubberies and a kitchen garden.

Downton has no very well recorded history, but its earthworks have always borne the name of the "Moot-hill," showing that they have been employed as a place of assembly or moot. That they were also calculated for defence is evident from their structure. This part of the Avon was the scene of the great contest between Cerdic and the Britons early in the 6th century, in which, after much severe fighting, he established his Jutish nephews Stuff and Wightgar in the Island of Wight, and founded for himself and Cynric his son the West Saxon Kingdom. Clearbury and Figbury are reputed to have been the advanced posts of the British, and Chardford (Cerdicsford), a little below Downton, still, by its name, makes memorable the spot where Cerdic crossed the river. It is stated, upon the authority of certain documents preserved formerly in St. Swithun's Abbey, at Winchester, that the church of Downton was founded by Cynegils, the fourth from Cerdic, and further endowed by Cenweah his son, having been consecrated by Birinus, in 638. The manor was probably always in the Bishop of Winchester, from whom Canute took by force five hides of land here in 1036. The Bishop's residence is thought to have been at Old Court on the west bank of the Avon, from an early period down to the 13th century. The Bishop was lord when Domesday was compiled, but there is there no mention of the Moot, which was never a Norman seat, and very certainly was never defended by works in masonry.

Old Court is often called King John's palace, and probably was the resting-place of that sovereign when at Downton, in 1206-7-9, and 1215, he being in that case the guest of the Bishop. The Bishop continued to be lord

of the manor down to the present century, and the tenure by borough English still obtains there. Estates there were held for many generations by the descendants of Sir Walter Raleigh, and there also, in the Moot-house, resided the family of Shuckburgh, who at that time were owners of the earthworks.