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Carisbrooke castle, Isle of Wight.

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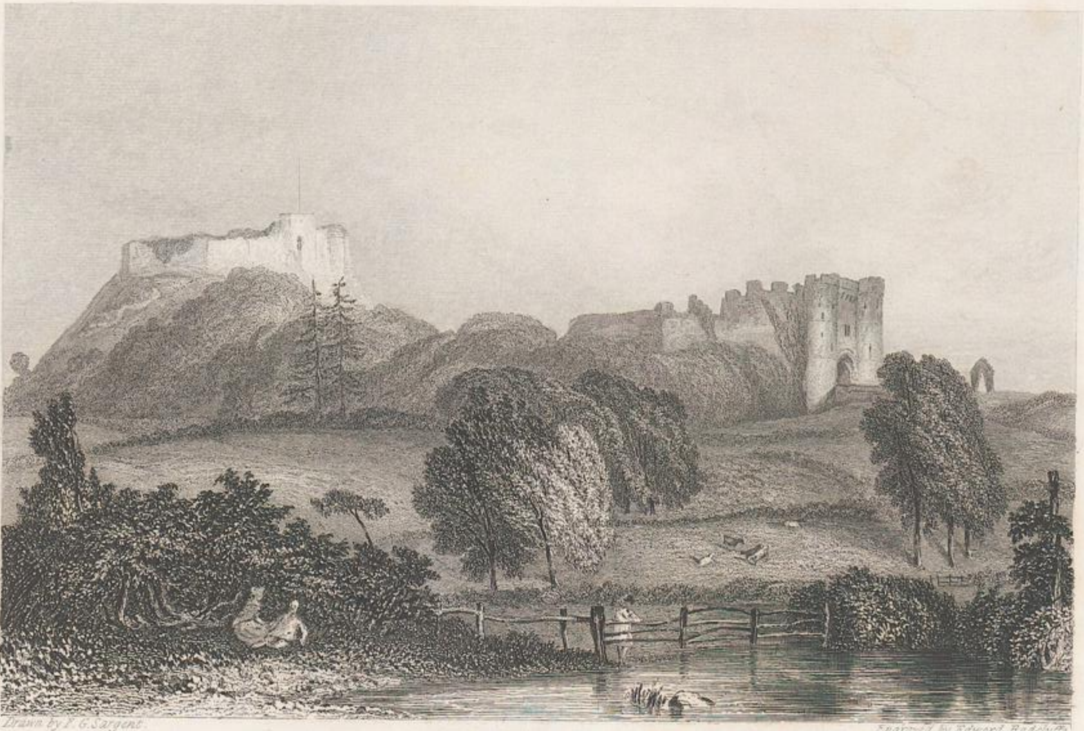


Drawn by F. G. Sargent. Engraved by Edward Radclyffe.

CARISBROOKE CASTLE,

ISLE OF WIGHT.

CARISBROOKE CASTLE,

Isle of Wight.

When as the pliant Muse, with plain and easy flight
Betwixt her silver wings is wafted to the Wight,
That isle which jutteth out into the sea so farre,
Her offspring traineth up in exercise of warre.
Of all the southern isles she holds the highest place,
And th' greatest coronal hath been in Britain's grace.—POLYOLBION.

AMONG the Anglo-Norman fortresses which so long upheld the feudal power, and maintained the independence of the British Islands, that of Carisbrooke holds a distinguished place. Crowning an elevated position near the centre of the island,—of which it has been for ages the ornament and safeguard,—and from its keep and battlements commanding every approach,

it had all the advantages which the necessities and warlike spirit of the times could demand. It appears to have been selected as a post of defence from the remotest period of the Saxon monarchy, of which it still retains many substantial vestiges; and although nothing has been discovered that connects it by positive evidence with the Roman epoch, there can be no reasonable doubt of its having been one of the numerous military stations occupied by that people for the vigorous maintenance of its power.

At last, after the lapse of four centuries, the sway of the Cæsars began to wax faint; and when the victorious legions were finally withdrawn from the British shores, the natives, taking advantage of the strong places which had previously kept them in awe, seized them to their own use, and over the Roman substruction erected, after their own manner, the bulwarks of native strength and independence. Of this the keep, or donjon, hereafter to be noticed, presents clear and distinct evidence; but whether comprised in the fifty castles reconstructed by Alfred—under the circumstances already stated in this work—remains uncertain. From the localities, however, and other particulars which distinguished the castles so built or repaired on Roman foundations, it appears highly probable that Carisbrooke owes its preservation to that wise and patriotic monarch. Continually harassed by foreign marauders who infested these narrow seas, he found no measure so effectual as that of erecting castles and garrisoned forts on all those points of the coast most exposed to their piratical fury. But after the death of this monarch, and the conflicting policy which, during a century and a half, prepared the way for Norman supremacy, the national bulwarks had suffered from neglect; they were mostly ungarrisoned, and nearly all so much dilapidated that they could offer no effectual resistance against an invading enemy—a fact which readily accounts for the easy conquest which awaited the Norman army on its first landing on the coast of Sussex.

After the battle of Hastings, the Conqueror, with that characteristic policy which marked his actions, adopted every measure for the consolidation of his authority, by portioning out to his martial followers the domestic strongholds and landed possessions of the vanquished and proscribed natives. Of the Norman barons who then shared the profuse liberality of their leader, we have mentioned several instances in the course of the present work. But among the chief men who owed him fealty, and whose friendship and faithful services it was important to conciliate by rewards for the past, and the prospect of others in future, none came in for a more enviable share of his favour than his near kinsman,

William Fitz-Osborne.—This warlike Norman had accompanied his Chief in the expedition to England; and, among the brilliant circle of martial

attendants who had espoused his cause, stood eminently distinguished for his talents and experience. He had the entire confidence of his sovereign; and at the battle of Hastings, where Roger Montgomery had also a high command, performed the honourable and arduous duties of marshal of the army. Recommended to the Conqueror by the ties of blood, as well as by the high military talents which he had displayed in the field, he receiving a grant of the Isle of Wight,—"Ita, Gulielmus Filius Osborni, Vectam Insulam conquisivit, primusque Vectæ Dominus erat." He was made constable of the newly-erected Castles of Winchester and York, and installed in the high office of Chief Justiciary for the King in the north.

In the exercise of his new authority as Lord of Wight, he appears to have acted towards the old inhabitants with a rigour and exclusiveness which strongly evinced his distrust of their professed attachment to the foreign dynasty. Proceeding to the very extreme of the feudal despotism with which he had been so recently invested, he expelled the native inhabitants, divided their possessions among his Norman followers and retainers, and, reconstructing the ancient fortress of Carisbrooke, surrounded himself with a host of martial adherents, who held their new possessions on condition of military service to the chief, wheresoever and whensoever it should be required.

Having had the first grant of the Isle of Wight from the Conqueror, "to be held as freely as he himself held the kingdom of England," Fitz-Osborne instituted the Knights' Court, which was one of the privileges enjoyed by him as lord of the island, namely, that of holding a judicial tribunal called "Curia Militum," from the judges being such as held a knight's fee from the lord of the island, who "gave judgment as courts of equity without a jury."

To this powerful Baron the whole of the Norman work now remaining in the Castle of Carisbrooke may be attributed. In Domesday Book he is

called William Fitz-Osborne, Earl of Hereford—a name familiar in the pages of our early history. But his enterprising career was cut short by the casualties of war, when he had been scarcely four years in possession of the island; for, being sent by the Queen to support Ernulf, Count of Hainault, who was then enforcing his family claim to the earldom of Flanders, both she and the count were slain in battle. Dugdale is of opinion that he adopted this quarrel from the relationship which subsisted between that nobleman and himself—he having married for his second wife Rechildis, the mother of Count Ernulf, the Queen's nephew. His remains were interred with great ceremony in the Abbey of Cormeilles, which he had founded, and in which one of his sons had previously become a monk. Bequeathing his Norman possessions to his second son, those of England, including the earldom of Hereford and lordship of the Isle of Wight, descended to his eldest son,

Roger de Bretteville—so named from the place of his birth.—Taking part with the turbulent spirits of his day, and highly irritated by the King's refusal to sanction the marriage of his sister Emma with Ralph de Waer, or Ralph de Guader, Earl of Norfolk, he took advantage of the King's absence in Normandy to have the union solemnized by a grand public festival, at which were present many of the great military tenants of the crown, who, readily entering into the rash views of Hereford, concerted measures for dethroning the King. The conspiracy, however, was divulged by Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland, who was nevertheless beheaded for his participation therein at Winchester. They were routed by the King's forces at a place called Fagadune; and the wreck of the insurgents escaping to Norwich, fortified themselves in the castle for a time, but were soon forced to surrender. Earl Roger made his escape to Hereford; but being apprehended and brought to trial, he was found guilty of levying war against his sovereign, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment and the loss of his estates. The rigours of confinement and confiscation, however, do not appear to have subdued his haughty spirit; for at the feast of Easter, when the King sent him a gracious present of certain costly robes—consisting of a royal mantle, an inner surcoat of silk, and an upper garment lined with precious furs, in remembrance of the station he once held in the King's favour—Earl Roger caused a fire to be lighted in his prison, and, throwing the royal present into it, stood by with a look of complaisance, and chafing his hands at the blaze, till the whole present was consumed. This insane and insolent act being immediately reported to the King, he swore his usual oath—"per splendorem Dei"—by the glory of God—that in future Earl Roger's only robe should be the roof of his prison! He kept his word: the Earl was

remanded to strict confinement, and died about six years afterwards, leaving two sons, Raynald and Roger, both excellent soldiers under King Henry I. Carisbrooke Castle and the honor attached now reverted to the crown, in which it continued till the next reign, when it was granted to—

Richard de Redvers, first of that name, being nephew to the late earl, and son of Baldwin de Brion. Remaining faithful to Henry in the contest which followed, he was rewarded by many additional marks of royal favour—the chief of which were those of Earl of Devon and Lord of the Isle of Wight. When Henry I. granted not only his lands, but also the dominion over the whole Isle of Wight to Richard de Redvers, to be held in *escuage* at fifteen knights' fees and a half, the crown had from that time no demand on the landholders of the island. The king received escuage, or scutage, from the lord of the island only, whose tenants were chargeable only in aid to him; they held their lands as "of the Castle of Carisbrooke," whence, in the Liber Fœdorum, it is styled the Honor of Carisbrooke. They were chargeable towards making the lord's eldest son a knight, and to the marrying of his daughter. All heirs under age were in the wardship of the lord of the island; the tenants were bound to defend the castle for forty days at their own charges whenever it should be attacked, and were also to attend the lord at his coming into, and at his leaving, the island. The lord had the return of the king's writs, he nominated his own bailiffs, and his constable was coroner within the island; he had a chase, now called the Forest of Parkhurst; and a fence month not only there, but in certain moors, with a free warren on the east side of the river Medina. He had also wrecks, waifs, and strays, with fairs and markets at Newport and Yarmouth.—Sir R. Worsley.

His great liberality to the church secured him the peaceable enjoyment of what he retained for his own use; and with the king's favour, and the monks' benison, he quietly put off this life in the first year of the reign of King Stephen, and was succeeded by his son,

Baldwin de Redvers, or Rivers.—In the contest between the Empress Maud and King Stephen—to which we have adverted at some length in our notice of Arundel—Baldwin espoused the cause of the lady; and putting Carisbrooke and the other assailable points of his insular lordship in a state of defence, placed them at her service. The policy and tactics of King Stephen, however, prevailed. The warlike engines which he had invented for the defence of his Castle, at "the expense of much treasure," proved of little avail, so that he was obliged to capitulate, and with his wife and family took refuge beyond sea. Matters, however, were afterwards so far accommodated, that he was again permitted to resume his hereditary station and dignities as "Lord of the Isle" and Earl of Devon. Among many pious works and benefactions, he founded the Cistercian Abbey of Quarr—the ruins of which still attract admiration in the neighbourhood; for it amounted to an article of faith in those times, that whoever should build a castle, was bound to erect and endow some convent, cloister, or priory in its vicinity, so that the military baron might thereby secure the prayers of the monks, and a family sepulchre.

Of this family and name were several other "Lords of the Isle," who held the Castle and Honor of Carisbrooke in succession, and who were distinguished in the history between the period just mentioned and the death of King John. Among these was—

William de 'Vernon'—from his having been educated in that place. He was one of the four nobles who supported the silken canopy over the head of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, at his second coronation at Winchester, after he had returned from the dungeon of Dürrenstein—an Austrian castle on the Danube. He also, as Earl of the Isle of Wight, united with the other barons in their successful resistance against the extortion and tyranny of King John, and was instrumental in wresting from him the grand bulwark of English liberty. (King John, it may be remembered, selected the Isle of Wight as a place of safe retreat; and here he lived for several months with a few members of his court, in expectation of subsidies from France.) William de Vernon resided mostly at his **Castle of Carisbrooke**, which, though far from being so extensive as many other fortresses of that day, was still a place of great strength, and had been successively repaired and embellished by the resident lords of the island. It commanded then, as it does in the present day, enchanting views of the intervening channel—the adjacent coast—

and of that inland scenery which is so justly admired, so eagerly studied and imitated on the canvas of the painter. In that remote period, however, the landscape had probably a much more forest-like appearance than at later periods; for the Norman fashion of appropriating large districts to the pleasures of the chase, which was considered an indispensable adjunct to martial training, had been long adopted in the Isle of Wight, where an extensive park, filled with game, surrounded the Castle, and threw open a vast field of amusement to the feudal lord and his retainers, several of whom attended him in the chase, as they were bound to do on the day of battle. We observe, in the later history of the island, that Edward III. imposed on John Maltravers, for certain lands held by him in the county of Dorset, the following service: That he "should attend the king at his Castle of Carisbrooke for one day at his own charge, both for himself and horse, and afterwards to remain during the king's pleasure; but both himself and horse in that case were to be maintained by the crown.

At the death of Earl Baldwin, the Castle of Carisbrooke was placed by King John under the sheriff of the county; the wardship of his son was given to Falk de Briant, (who had married the mother of the young count,) whom the historian of St. Alban's stigmatizes as an impious, ignoble, and base-conditioned man. For in noticing the death of this "Lady of the Isle," he characterizes her as "nobilis ac generosa domina quondam uxor Falcasii cruentissimi proditoris;" and adds—"Copulabatur tamen eidem ignobili nobilis; pia impio; turpi speciosa, invita et coacta; tradente eam Johanne tyranno. De qua copula quidam ait satis eleganter;

> "Lex connectit eos, amor, et concordia lecti.
> Sed lex qualis? amor qualis? concordia qualis?
> Lex exlex; amor exosus; concordia discors."

Our space, however, will not allow us to quote the frightful dream related by Father Matthew, which transformed this "wolf into a lamb," and sent him to prostrate himself before the Abbot of St. Alban's and his brethren, as the most abject of sinners.

Baldwin, the fifth of that name, who, along with the title of Earl of Devon,

had enjoyed the lordship of Carisbrooke, married a princess of Savoy, cousin of Queen Eleanor; and at the nuptials of the Duke of Brittany with Beatrice, the daughter of King Henry III., received the honour of knighthood. He gave the first charter of franchise to the town of Yarmouth, and obtained the grant of a fair and market to be held at Carisbrooke—a grant of great importance in those times. At an entertainment given about two years afterwards by his kinsman Peter, Count of Savoy, he, together with Richard, Earl of Gloucester, and others, is said to have been poisoned. But in those times any disease that powerfully affected the digestive organs was frequently construed as the result of poison. That such was in numerous instances the fact, is not to be denied; but that every death, preceded by symptoms like those that usually supervened on the employment of deleterious drugs, was an act of poisoning, is no more to be credited than that consumption, or marasmus, was, in later times, the effect of witchcraft. But when, in reality, the art of poisoning was both studied and practised, it was natural in the bystanders to explain the mystery of any peculiarly sudden and fatal disease by ascribing it to poison. The frequent recurrence of these facts or suspicions in the old chronicles, is a proof that the practice was universally admitted; and it is painful to observe the ingenious precautions adopted by persons of rank, in order to avert the danger to which they were daily exposed in the use of their domestic viands. But, reserving this curious subject for a more convenient season, we pass to the next lord of Carisbrooke; and the late Earl of Baldwin leaving no surviving issue, the honors and estates devolved on his sister,

Isabella de Fortibus, so named from her having married William de Fortibus, Earl of Albemarle.—This lady, after the death of her husband, took up her residence in Carisbrooke Castle, where she lived in great state, appeared much in public, and obtained great popularity as Lady of the Isle—**Domina Insulæ**—both from her attention to the general interests of the inhabitants, and her particular liberality to religious houses. She was not so blind, however, as to permit herself to be overreached by her monastic neighbour, the Abbot of Quarrera, by whom many grave complaints were lodged against her for having only scattered her pious liberalities with one hand, that she might levy contributions with the other. If in one instance she conferred a benefaction to the church, she withheld its lands on another; so that at last the murmurs of abbots and priors became so loud that they reached the king's ear, and produced an order for the sheriff of Hampshire to take the Abbey lands of Quarr under royal protection till matters between the countess and the convent could be adjusted. Our limits do not permit us to enlarge upon this lady's administration of her authority; but it is certain

that her residence at **Carisbrooke Castle** was highly beneficial to the island; and to her charter of franchise the beautiful town of Newport owes its foundation and subsequent prosperity. She had five children—three sons and two daughters, Hawise and Avelina; the youngest of whom surviving her brothers and sister, and inheriting the vast possessions of her family, married King Henry's son, Edmund Crouchback, but died without issue in her mother's lifetime.

On the demise of this countess, the will by which, within a few hours of her death, she had conveyed the Isle of Wight to Edward I., was disputed by the heir-at-law, Hugh Courtenay; but after much evidence produced on both sides, it became finally vested in the king, who retained it in his own hands during life. At the accession of the weak and unfortunate son who succeeded the magnanimous Edward, the lordship of Carisbrooke and of the Isle of Wight was bestowed on his unprincipled favourite—

Piers Gavestone.—But this grant having occasioned great disapprobation among the nobility, who now gave open expression to their sentiments, Gavestone held the lordship only twelve months, when it was bestowed by the King on his son Edward, Earl of Chester—the renowned Edward III., who also retained possession of it during his life, and conducted the affairs of the island by wardens selected from the resident gentlemen, and who, in right of office, had their residence in the Castle. The popularity of this sovereign was acknowledged by many acts of valour on the part of the inhabitants; who, on every instance of aggression from French or other hostile cruisers, repulsed the invaders, and preserved the enviable title of their "invincible island." In the reign of his grandson Richard II., the lordship of the Isle and Castle of Carisbrooke was granted to

William Montacute, son of the first earl of that name, who, for his service in apprehending Mortimer in the Queen's chamber—a scene immortalized by Drayton—was elevated to the earldom of Salisbury. This lord of the isle was a mirror of chivalry; had filled with honour the highest posts of the state, and in the body-guard of Edward III. had performed many gallant exploits, which still figure in the martial chronicles of the fourteenth century. He had the misfortune, however, amidst all his glory, to slay his only son in a grand tilting-match at Windsor. But we shall have to introduce this illustrious

family under another and more appropriate head of the work in hand. He died without issue; directing by will, that his body should be interred in the Conventual church of Bustleham, founded by his father; that every day, until his corpse should arrive at that place, seventy-five shillings should be distributed in alms to three hundred poor; that twenty-four poor persons, each dressed in a gown of black cloth with a red hood, should bear torches of eight pounds weight on the day of his funeral: also, that there should be nine wax lights and three 'mortars' of wax about his body, and banners of his arms placed on every pillar of the church; moreover, that thirty pounds should be given to the monks to sing trentals and pray for his soul; and lastly, that his executors should expend five hundred marks in finishing the sacred structure at Bustleham, and in erecting a tomb there for his father and mother; and another for himself and his son, who had married the daughter of Richard, Earl of Arundel, and was killed in the tilting-match already mentioned. The above ceremonial, as related by Dugdale, presents so striking a sketch of the manners of the time, and of the "pomp and circumstance" which this lord of the island had "willed" should commemorate his final departure, that we have inserted it by way of colouring to the general picture. The black gowns—scarlet hoods—lugubrious chant—blazing torches—waving banners—waxen tapers and mortars—all unite to form a spectacle that must have left a vivid impression on the minds of the spectators. The ceremony which attended the obsequies of his widow is no less curious as a picture of the times, and will be found in the same authority. It is supposed that this nobleman, during his lordship of the isle, contributed several important alterations and repairs to the castle; a circumstance which is rendered more probable by the arms of the family, consisting of three lozenges, being placed on a buttress at the corner of part of the governor's lodging. The next personage who figured as lord of Carisbrooke was

Edward, Earl of Rutland, son of Edmund de Langley, fifth son of Edward III., and Duke of Albemarle, whose numerous posts of high honour and public trust evince the entire confidence reposed in him by King Richard, who found him but too pliant an instrument in the execution of his atrocious designs, of which some notice has already been taken in our account of the "Fitzalan Conspiracy." The crimes, however, to which he was then accessary, and which, by the confiscations which ensued, added greatly to his possessions, brought at last the stroke of retribution; for on Bolingbroke's ascending the throne, he was degraded in rank. He then entered into a conspiracy to take away the King's life at Windsor; but confessing the treason, was pardoned, restored to honour and confidence, inherited his father's title as Duke of York, and, after having filled the high post of Lieutenant of the Duchy of Aquitaine,

fell at last in the battle of Agincourt. Leaving no family, he was succeeded in his rights to the castle and manor of Carisbrooke and the island, by his surviving duchess, Philippa, daughter of John, Lord de Mohun, Baron of Dunster. To this lady succeeded, in the seventeenth of Henry VI.,

Humphrey "the Good," Duke of Gloucester, whose character and death have been already detailed in our account of St. Albans. He appears to have been Seignior of Carisbrooke and the Isle of Wight during a period of eight years; and after his death the office of Constable of Carisbrooke was held by Henry Tranchard, in virtue of a royal grant. But the greatest event in the history of the castle and the island at this time, was the coronation of a King of the Isle of Wight in the person of

Henry Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick, son of Richard, Earl of Warwick, who had previously filled the high office of Regent of France. "Henricus Comes de Warwic a rege Henrico 6to. cui charissimus erat coronatus est in regem de Wight et postea nominatus primus comes totius Angliæ." At this august ceremony the king assisted in person, and with his own hands placed the crown on the head of his subject-monarch—but to whom the title of king conveyed no regal power, and invested him with no authority in the island; the lordship of which was still possessed by Duke Humphrey, who survived the new-made and short-lived king for some time. To this youthful sovereign—"cropt in the flower of his youth, and before his heroic virtues could be known," we have already alluded in the historical notice of Tewkesbury; and in that of Warwick will be found several interesting particulars of his family and political connexions. Subsequent to this period of its history, the lordship of the castle and island appears to have been successively enjoyed by Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York; Edmund, Duke of Somerset; Henry his son; Anthony, Earl Rivers; and Sir Edward Wydeville his brother, who was appointed to the Captaincy of the island immediately after the accession of Henry VII. Of Sir Edward, the following incidents are recorded by Holinshed, Dugdale, Worsley, and

others:—Three years after his appointment to the island, when the rupture between the Duke of Brittany and the King of France was at its height, Wydeville, or Woodville, presuming on the King's partiality to the Duke's cause, undertook to do what he conceived would prove highly acceptable to his royal master, and asked permission to take arms in the Duke's interest. His offer of service, however, being declined, he still indulged the belief that in secret the king was favourable to his design, and only withheld his approbation that he, who had undertaken the office of mediator between the parties, might not be supposed to violate the rules of strict neutrality. Stimulated by this persuasion, Wydeville set instantly to work, and assembling the islanders at Carisbrooke, addressed them in a powerful harangue, appealing to them as sons of the "invincible island," and urging them to take arms in a cause which the king had much at heart, and who would certainly acknowledge their loyal service in a manner which would secure blessings to themselves and their posterity. His eloquence, his political influence, and the well-known intrepidity of his character, had their due effect; and from all parts of the island, veterans and raw recruits flew to his standard. From the multitude assembled, he was enabled to select as fine a body of men as ever drew sword or bow; and hastening his preparations, a powerful force was speedily equipped and ready for action. They consisted, says Worsley, of "forty gentlemen, and four hundred common soldiers"—all men of stamp and martial courage—the flower of the island; and with these, dressed in white coats and red crosses, he embarked at the small port of St. Helen's in four vessels, and set sail for Brittany. The hour of his departure was anxiously watched by the assembled population, who crowded the shore—all anxious to take a last look of their fathers, sons, brothers, lovers, friends, and companions, who now, elated with hope and buoyed up with assurances of many brilliant rewards, felt like men who were only leaving penury and obscurity to reap an abundant harvest, and bask in the light of a victorious sun. From every religious house in the island, monks had arrived to consecrate the departing banners, and pronounce a blessing on the martial sons of the isle. But the scene was such as may be more easily imagined than described. There might be sorrow indeed, when a mother parted with her son—a maid with her lover—or when a Jew beheld his creditor on the point of escape! But the general expression was that of exultation. All predicted speedy triumphs and a safe return; but how different was the result!

Landed on the French shore, the islanders were joined by fifteen hundred of the Duke's forces, all dressed in the same uniform; and thus welcomed and encouraged, they longed ardently for battle. Their desire was soon

granted: meeting the King's army at St. Aubin, a sanguinary conflict ensued; but neither the unflinching gallantry of the islanders, nor the firm, intrepid example of their captain, could avert the terrible disaster which followed. The Duke's army was completely routed. The English, who had sworn either to keep the field as victors, or to cover it with their dead bodies, stood like a wall of brass around their leader, and again and again repulsed the iron columns that successively charged and recoiled before them. But, overwhelmed by numbers, and deserted by those whom they had come to serve, they fought with such desperation, that of the whole force only one man is said to have returned with the mournful tidings of the day.

The fate of this expedition threw the whole island into mourning: not a family but had lost some of its members or relatives; gloom and distraction were everywhere apparent; the Abbey of Quarr, priory, and chapel, resounded with solemn anthems and masses for the dead—masses which, whatever rest they procured for the slain, were dearly purchased by the survivors, many of whom spent their last penny in the purchase of a requiem. All that Scotland lost by the Field of Flodden, this island lost—only in a smaller degree—at the battle of St. Aubin—the flower of its chivalry, youth, and talent. With the exception of the grey veterans who still trod the battlements, or stood sentinel at the Wicket of Carisbrooke Castle, there was scarcely a man left fit to bear arms.

From the date of this ill-fated expedition, the lordship of Carisbrooke became part of the royal demesne, and has continued ever since annexed to the crown. Among the king's lieutenants and wardens who had successively command of the castle and military force of the island, between the reign of Edward IV. and that of Elizabeth, several names occur which held distinguished places in the history of their day; but however pleasing it might be to enrich our pages with traits of individual character, acts of public service, and instances of private worth, we must relinquish this task for the present; but with the history of the old baronial families, as we proceed, most of the traits and anecdotes here omitted will be found incorporated. It may be mentioned, however, in passing, that in the captainship of Richard Worsley the island was visited by Henry VIII., who, attended by his favourite, Lord Cromwell—then constable of the castle, and afterwards beheaded—partook of the various entertainments prepared for him at the Captain's seat of Appuldurcumbe. The object of the King's visit on this occasion, observes the historian, appears to have been "to amuse himself

with hawking, or some other species of chase," as he had some time previously, in a letter dated "at our man^{r} of Otland," given strict orders for the preservation of the game in the royal demesne.

We shall now pass on to a later epoch, in order to take a glance of the Castle of Carisbrooke, as it stood when garrisoned by the troops of Henry's magnanimous daughter, Queen Elizabeth. Hitherto the personal valour and independent spirit of the inhabitants had been sufficient to protect the Isle of Wight from the violence of enemies, to which, by its natural position, it was continually exposed. Now, however, it was deemed expedient by government to strengthen it by the construction of new forts, and the better appointment of those that had stood the waste of centuries. With this view, the master-fort of the island, the Castle of Carisbrooke, underwent a thorough change. What was old was repaired and accommodated to the modern art of war; extensive additions, barracks, arsenals, and outer works—as shown in the plan—were added; so that whatever was considered by the engineers of Elizabeth's reign as necessary for a military fortress, was carefully bestowed on that of Carisbrooke. The embrasures, in which rested the ponderous ordnance of modern warfare, contrasted strongly with the diminutive loopholes through which had glanced the feathered shafts of Fitz-Osborne; while the tramp of musketeers and troopers, who now paced its battlements and crowded its barracks, gave to the ancient precincts much of the stir and animation of a great citadel. But the "Invincible Armada," which had presented so many terrors—and for the effectual resistance of which so many preparations had been made—passed harmlessly by, to waste its strength in conflict with the waves. The castle at this time was under the command of Sir George Carey, "captain" or "governor" of the island,—whose Residence, with the barracks adjoining, forms a prominent feature in the castle. But in the absence of military events, the following anecdote, in proof of the peace and harmony which prevailed among the inhabitants at that time, occurs in the Memoirs of Sir John Oglander: "I have heard," says he, "and partly know it to be true, that not only heretofore there was no lawyer or attorney in our island; but that, in Sir George Carey's time, an attorney coming to settle in the island, he was, with a pound of candles dangling at his heels, lighted, with bells about his legs, and hunted out of the island;

insomuch as our ancestors lived here so quietly and securely, being neither troubled to go to London nor Winchester, so they seldom or never went out of the island—insomuch that when they went to London, thinking it an East India voyage, they always made their wills."—We now return to a survey of

The Castle—which has undergone little or no alteration since the above period—and glady avail ourselves of Sir Richard Worsley's authority as the ground-work of the short sketch which follows. Considering that the principal difference between a Saxon and Norman castle consisted in the former having built one regular entire fortification round, or as nearly so as the nature of the ground would admit; while the latter built theirs in two distinct fortifications—the keep, and the base-court; it has been concluded by Strutt and others, that the keep of Carisbrooke Castle is entirely of ancient British or Saxon workmanship, and that the base-court was added by the Normans. Of the original Saxon fortress, rebuilt by Fitz-Osborne, the walls enclose about an acre and a half, and in figure are nearly a rectangular parallelogram, having the angles rounded. The greatest space is from east to west. The old or Norman Castle is surrounded by a more modern fortification, faced with stone, of an irregular pentagonal form, defended by five bastions. These outworks, which are in circuit about three quarters of a mile and surrounded by a deep ditch, circumscribe in the whole about twenty acres. They were added in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and constructed by the Italian engineer Genebella, on the same plan as those of Antwerp. The work was undertaken at the representation of the governor, Sir George Carey, when the country was menaced by the Spanish Armada. In aid of the expenses, Queen Elizabeth gave four thousand pounds; the gentlemen of the island gave four hundred more, and the commonalty contributed their personal labour by digging the outward ditch gratis. For the following particulars the reader is referred to the Ground Plan at the close of the present subject..

On a small projecting stone on the north-east corner is carved the date M.D.XCVIII. The entrance is on the west side in the curtain, between two bastions through a small stone gateway; on the arch of which is the same date, with the initial letters E. R. (p. 296.) This gate leads to a second of much greater antiquity, machicolated, and flanked by two large round towers. It is supposed to have been built by Lord Woodville in the time of Edward IV., his arms being engraved on a stone at the top, and the Roses of York on each side. The old gate with its wicket (p. 293), of strong lattice-work, fastened with large nails at every crossing, is still remaining, and opens into the castle-yard. Entering the area on the right hand stands the chapel of St. Nicholas, with

its enclosed **Cemetery.** The present building was erected on the ruins of an ancient chapel endowed about the time that Domesday Book was compiled. Over the original chapel was an Armory, containing breast, back, and head pieces for two or three troops of horse; but when defensive armour went out of use, they were sold by order of Lord Cadogan, then governor. Over the door is carved G. II. 1738; and by a stone tablet at the east end, we are informed that it was rebuilt during the government of Lord Lymington. Farther towards the left are the ruins of some buildings, said to be those in which

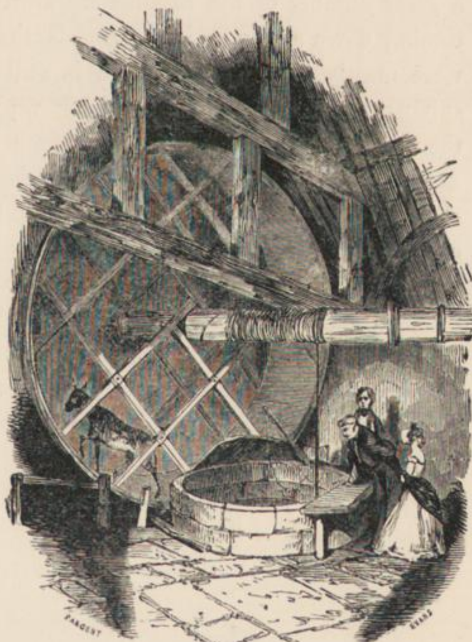
King Charles was confined; and a window is shown as that through which he attempted to escape. Beyond these are the barracks and governor's house, (see page 294,) which contain several good rooms with coved ceilings, and have been occasionally used for a military hospital; and certainly, with regard to air and situation, a more salubrious station could not have been selected. On a mount, raised considerably above the other buildings, stands

The Keep, or Donjon.—Its figure (as seen p. 281, 283, and in the plan) is an irregular polygon; the ascent to it is by seventy-two steps up the side of the mount, and there are more within—each step is about nine inches. This multangular tower bears evident marks of great antiquity: some of the angles are strengthened by walling of hewn stone, which was probably added under Edward IV. when the great gate was rebuilt. There is a well within this keep, said to be three hundred feet deep; but it has, like that in Arundel Castle, been partly filled up as useless and dangerous. The battlements command a most extensive and beautiful prospect, which is not confined to the island only, but takes in the New Forest and Portsdown, with the sea intervening at several points, and much picturesque scenery adjoining. At the south-east angle of the keep stands the remains of another tower, (cut p. 285,) called

Mountjoy's Tower, probably in honour of the nobleman of that name,

governor of Tourney in the time of Henry VIII. The walls of this tower are in some places eighteen feet thick, and still command a beautiful prospect, though less extensive than that from the keep. The ramparts between these towers is about twenty feet high and eight feet thick, including a parapet of two feet and a half, which was carried quite round the castle. Under a small building in the castle-yard, adjoining the governor's house, is

The Garrison Well, from which the water is drawn by means of a large windlass-wheel, turned by an ass. On a former occasion this duty was performed during a period of more than forty years by the same animal, which, on account of his services, was long one of the great curiosities of the place. Down the well it is usual to drop a nail, or even a pin, which, after a lapse of three seconds, produces a sound much greater than can be well conceived by those who have not actually heard it. Another experiment is often made in showing this well to strangers—namely, that of letting down, by means of a pulley, a lighted lamp in a wooden basin, which in descending occasions a loud noise, from the resistance of the air, like a hollow wind or distant thunder; and as the lamp floats upon the surface of the water, the compact masonry of the well—which is partly cut through the rock—is distinctly visible. The water furnished by the castle-well is remarkably pure and sparkling; and in instances where it has been carried to India and back, it has still retained its native purity.



The Governor's House (see p. 294) contains several spacious apartments, but now unfurnished, and only inhabited by the cicerone of the castle. Like the additions above mentioned, it is of the Elizabethan epoch, and externally has a rather picturesque appearance—its gables and tall chimneys much resembling buildings of similar date in the Netherlands. At the conclusion of the late war, the garrison consisted of a governor, a lieutenant-governor, a captain, a master gunner, and three assistants. The salary of the governor was twelve hundred pounds, and that of the lieutenant-governor three hundred and sixty-five pounds per annum.

The castle has been on various occasions attacked by hostile fleets and marauders, and as often to the loss and discomfiture of the assailants. Of these attacks several instances are related by the chief historian of the island —Sir Richard Worsley. The island, however, had continued comparatively unmolested till the reign of Richard II., at which time, says Stowe, "The French took that invincible isle, more by craft than force." In the preceding reign a landing having been effected by the French, the inhabitants fled for refuge to Carisbrooke Castle, then defended by Sir Hugh Tyrrill, who slew a great number of the assailants. During the siege a party of the intruders coming down a narrow lane towards the castle, fell into an ambuscade, and were mostly cut off. The lane is still called Deadman's Lane. Unable to subdue the castle, the French withdrew; but, before they re-embarked, obliged the natives to redeem their houses from being burnt by a heavy contribution. Again, in the reign of Henry V., a body of French adventurers arrived on the island, and boasted that they would keep their Christmas there. But as about a thousand of them were driving cattle towards their ships, they were suddenly attacked by the islanders, and obliged to leave not only their plunder, but many of their men behind them. On another occasion, when a French fleet had arrived, and demanded a subsidy, the islanders gave them a hardy denial; but told them that, if they had a mind to try their prowess, they should have full permission to land, with six hours to refresh themselves; after which the natives would meet them in the field. But the invitation was not accepted.—For other particulars, the reader is referred to Worsley's military history of the island.

Thus far our description has been confined to times and personages when Carisbrooke Castle was a fortress and palace; we now proceed to view it as the prison of King Charles I.—an event which excites more real interest than all the other circumstances in its history. At the time when the great question between the King and his Parliament agitated the whole country, Carisbrooke Castle was under the command of the Earl of Portland. This nobleman stood high in the estimation of the inhabitants; for, in a petition numerously signed and presented to Parliament in his behalf, they expressly mention him as "their noble, much honoured, and beloved captayne and governor." He was nevertheless superseded, and Colonel Brett appointed to the command. In the interim, the Countess of Portland and her five children, accompanied by her husband's brother and sister, took refuge in the castle. The desire of holding it for the king was by no means abandoned;

and by her presence in the fortress she hoped to exert some salutary influence over the minds of the populace, whose attachment to her husband and his family had been so publicly manifested on a late occasion. The proverbial fickleness of popular favour, however, was soon to be verified; for, instigated by the mayor of Newport, who represented that the island could not be safe so long as Colonel Brett and the Countess of Portland remained in Carisbrooke Castle, Parliament directed the captains of all ships stationed in the river to assist in any measures which the said mayor might deem necessary for securing the island. The Newport militia accordingly, with four hundred naval auxiliaries, were marched up to the walls of the castle, near **Elizabeth's Tower**, which at this time, says Worsley, "had not three days' provision for its slender garrison." The moment was critical; the assailants had every advantage, while the prospect of famine or surrender was all that could be expected by the besieged. The countess, too, had a young family around her; and it may be imagined with what feelings she beheld the planting of hostile ordnance, and anticipated the probable effusion of kindred blood. There was little time for reflection or hesitation. With the magnanimity of a Roman matron, she made her appearance on the platform with a lighted match in her hand, and there, raising her voice, so as to be distinctly heard by the mayor and his armed followers, told them, with an undaunted air and unfaltering accents, that unless honourable terms were granted to herself and the garrison—whom they had so unaccountably summoned to surrender—she would instantly, with her own hand, discharge the first cannon, and defend the walls to the last extremity. Struck with her dignified demeanour, and the determination to which she had just given utterance, the mayor paused in his operations, and, having consulted with his townsmen, all that the countess demanded was agreed to: she was allowed to retain possession of her apartments in the castle; Colonel Brett, his staff, and servants, who composed the garrison, were allowed the freedom of the island, but were restricted from going to

Portsmouth, then held for the king by Goring, and the castle was surrendered to Parliament. The countess, however, being represented as still firmly attached to the king's interest—consequently a dangerous inmate in the castle—an order was issued, that within two days after notice given, she should vacate both the castle and island. She did so, and was indebted to the humanity of a few generous fishermen for the means of conveying herself and family to Southampton.—See the political history of this period.

Passing over the governorship of the Earl of Pembroke, who next held command in this ancient fortress, we come to that of Colonel Hammond, who had the unenviable distinction of being captain of the fortress when, as already mentioned, it became the prison of the martyr-king.

Among the accounts handed down by Clarendon and other writers, who have severally treated of King Charles's confinement in this castle, there is considerable discrepancy; but the following particulars, condensed from other sources less accessible to general readers, seem best suited to the scope and limits of the present work. After effecting his escape from the palace of Hampton Court, in the manner described by Lord Clarendon, Charles threw himself into the Isle of Wight, of which Colonel Hammond was then governor. At first, and for a considerable time after his arrival in the island, he appears to have been well lodged, to have suffered neither humiliation nor outward restraint, but to have experienced, on the part of the civil and military authorities, every mark of respect and sympathy to which a good man and a great monarch, struggling with adversity, was so justly entitled. He was permitted to take exercise on horseback where he pleased, though his motions and actions were no doubt carefully observed; and as the Parliament had made him a grant at the rate of five thousand pounds per annum, he lived a few months in the state Apartments of the castle—still shown as King Charles's Rooms—with much of the external forms and appearance of royalty. This liberty, however, was soon abridged; and he was made to feel that he was no longer a potentate to be heard and obeyed, but a prisoner at the mercy of his subjects. His chaplains and faithful attendants were first removed; and shortly afterwards his intercourse was peremptorily restricted to certain persons, strangers to him, whom the Parliament had appointed to be about his person. He was no longer permitted to pass the gate of the castle, but mostly confined to his apartments—now reduced to masses of rubbish and fragments of ivy-covered walls. So solitary was his confinement during a great portion of his time, "that as he was standing one day near the gate of the castle, with Sir Philip Warwick, he pointed to a decrepit old man, and said—'That man is sent every morning to light my fire, and is the best companion I have had for many months.'" The king, however, submitted to all this severity with

Christian patience and equanimity, and endeavoured as much as possible to keep his mind employed. He had always had serious impressions of religion,

KING CHARLES'S ROOMS.

and these were neither shaken nor diminished, but strengthened and confirmed, by the harassing restraint under which he was now placed. Devotion, meditation, and reading the scriptures, were his greatest consolations. The few books which he had brought into the castle with him, were chiefly on religious subjects, or of a serious cast. Among these was Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity—a book which it is probable he had studied with great attention, as it related much to the national question so much agitated at that time, and in which no man was better versed. In his slender catalogue, we find also two books of amusement, Tasso's "Jerusalem," and Spenser's "Faëry Queen." His freedom, however, was more and more abridged. He was an excellent horseman, and fond of that exercise; but as this indulgence was denied, he spent two or three hours every morning in walking on the castle ramparts. There he enjoyed at least fresh air and an extensive prospect; although every object he beheld—the "flocks straying carelessly on one side, and the ships sailing freely on the other"—brought painfully to remembrance that liberty and enjoyment of life of which he was so cruelly deprived. Thus circumstanced, he became regardless of his dress; he allowed his beard to grow, lost much of his cheerfulness; and in the expression of his countenance betrayed the inward feelings of a patient but unhappy captive.

During his imprisonment in this castle, three several attempts appear to

have been made, and chiefly by the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, for his enlargement. These are severally mentioned by Clarendon, Gilpin, and the writers of the Worsley Papers, from which it appears, that by a correspondence privately settled with some gentlemen of the island, it was agreed that the king should let himself down from

A window of his apartment; a swift horse with a guide was to wait for him at the bottom of the ramparts, while a vessel in the offing was to be ready to convey him wherever he pleased. The chief difficulty was, how the King should get through the iron bars of his window: but Charles assured them that he had already made experiment of the passage, and had every reason to believe that it was sufficiently large to admit his person. All being ready—the night dark, the fortress quiet, and not a whisper of suspicion of what was going on—everything promised a successful issue. The signal was then made. Charles appeared at the window, and seeing his friends in attendance, signified his readiness to make the attempt at once. But what was his disappointment and the mortification of his friends, who stood watching him with unspeakable anxiety, when he found that, in his eagerness to lay hold of any rational means of escape, he had miscalculated the width of the aperture! Having protruded his head and shoulders, he could get no further; and what was worse, he could not draw himself back. His friends at the bottom of the wall heard him groan in distress, but durst neither relieve him by word nor act, without alarming the sentinels, and thus sacrificing their own lives. It was a moment of agonizing suspense. At length, after repeated exertions, the king succeeded in extricating himself from his perilous situation, and, waving his hand before the light as a signal, retired mournfully to his couch, there to brood over this fresh blow to his hopes, and the defeated loyalty of his friends.

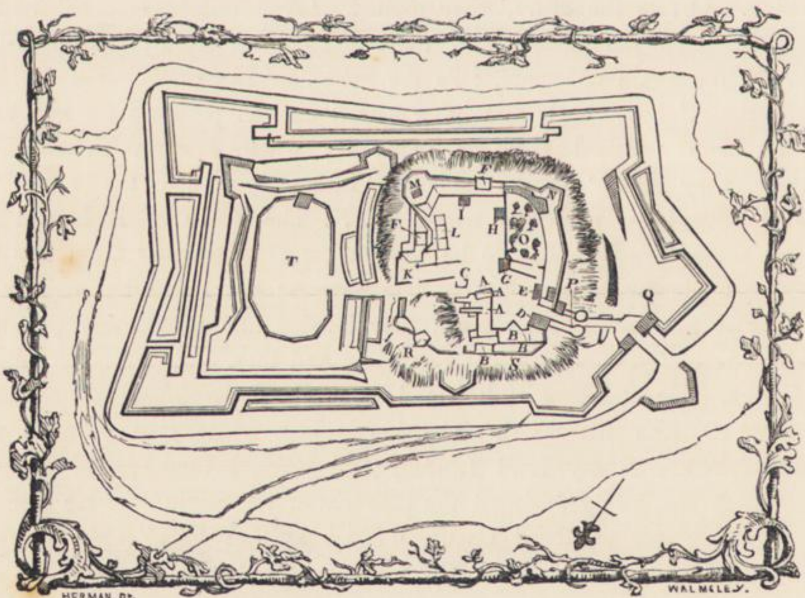
In the next plan laid for his escape, from the same window, implements having been secretly conveyed to him for that purpose, Charles contrived, by night-work and with "wonderful trouble," to saw the massive iron bar asunder, which had proved the great obstacle in his last attempt. But all these schemes were alike unsuccessful; and, until the treaty of Newport—of which some interesting particulars are related by Sir Richard Worsley—the king remained a close prisoner in the Castle of Carisbrooke. He was then seized by the army, and carried a prisoner to Hurst Castle. "Just at the break of day," says Worsley—in an extract from Colonel Cooke's 'Narrative'—"the king, hearing a loud knocking at his outer door, sent the

Duke of Richmond to learn the cause, who found there a person who said his name was Mildmay—a brother of Sir Henry Mildmay, and one of the servants placed by the Parliament about the king's person. On the duke's inquiring his business, he answered that there were several gentlemen from the army, who were very desirous to speak with the king. The duke carried in this message; but the knocking still increasing, the king gave orders for their admission. The doors were no sooner opened, than those officers rushed into the bed-chamber before the king could rise from his bed, and abruptly told him that they had orders for his removal. 'From whom?' inquired the king. 'From the army,' they replied. 'And to what place?' inquired the king. 'To the castle,' said they. 'To what castle?' demanded the king. They again answered, 'To the castle.'—'*The* castle,' said the king, 'is no castle;' but added, that he was well enough prepared for any castle, and therefore required them to name it; when, after a short whisper together, they said 'Hurst Castle.'—'Indeed!' replied the king, 'you could hardly have named a worse.' . . . . The Duke of Richmond then ordered the king's breakfast to be hastened, presuming that there was little provision made for him in that desolate fortress; but before his majesty was well ready, the horses being come, they hurried him away, only permitting the duke to attend him for about two miles, and then telling him he must go no further. He therefore took a sad farewell of the king, being scarcely permitted to kiss his hand. The king's last words to the duke were, 'Remember me to my Lord Lindsay and Colonel Cooke; and command Cooke from me, never to forget the passages of this night!'" He then proceeded a prisoner to Hurst Castle, "which at that time," says Warwick, "contained only a few dog-lodgings for soldiers."—In his way to that dismal receptacle, he accidentally met Mr. Worsley, one of the gentlemen who had so generously risked their lives for him in the above-mentioned attempts to escape. Charles wrung his hand with affection; and pulling the watch out of his pocket gave it to him, with these words—"Keep this in remembrance of me: it is all my gratitude has to give." This watch is still preserved in the Worsley family; it is of "silver, large and clumsy in its form; neatly ornamented in the case with filagree work; but the movements are of very ordinary workmanship, and are wound up with cat-gut." On his arrival within its walls, the "solitude and dreariness of the castle struck like a death-damp to the heart of Charles!" Never till this moment had he thought himself in danger: but now suspicions of secret assassination haunted his mind; and as he looked around him, and compared Hurst Castle with that which he had left—"Here," said he to himself, "were the place for

such a deed!"—But the events which followed the king's departure from the Isle of Wight require no further notice in this place.

With these brief notices of Carisbrooke Castle, and the chief personages and events with which it is connected, we close this portion of our subject; and for many interesting facts and persons which our limits will not permit us to detail, we refer, with every due acknowledgment, to the Authorities here annexed—particularly to that of the late Sir Richard Worsley.

Ground Plan of Carisbrooke Castle.



EXPLANATION OF Plan.—A A. Governor's apartments; B. The parts of it demolished; C. Well of the Garrison; D. The Gunner's House; E. Formerly a Guard House; F. Buildings demolished; G. Parish Church; H. Coach House; I. Powder Magazine; K. Store House; L. Stables, formerly Barracks; M. S.-East Platform; N. S.-West Ditto; O. Now a Garden; P. Gateway, with two Round Towers for Prisons; Q. Out Guard; R. Tower of Keep, with a Well 36 fathoms; S. Stone Wall, with its Parapet; T. Place of Arms.

AUTHORITIES:—Order. Vital. De Gul. Primo.—Gul. Cimitensis, De Ducib. Normannis, lib. vii. c. xv. —Dugd. Bar. and Monast.—Will. Malmsb.—Matt. Paris. — Holinshed. — Polyd. Virg. — Camden. — Froissart,—Sir Richard Worsley.—Cooke.—Lane.—Clarendon, Hist. Rebel. vol. iii. Part I.—Gilpin.—Monstrelet, vol. ii. 458.—Col. Cooke's Narrative, MSS. Harleian Collect.—Hist. of England, Civil and Milit. Transact., p. 298; for the event here noticed, see Monstrelet, vol. i. p. 32.—For Waltheof v. Ingulph. Selecta Monumento, p. 254. Note.—See also Append. to Orig. Extracts to this Volume.