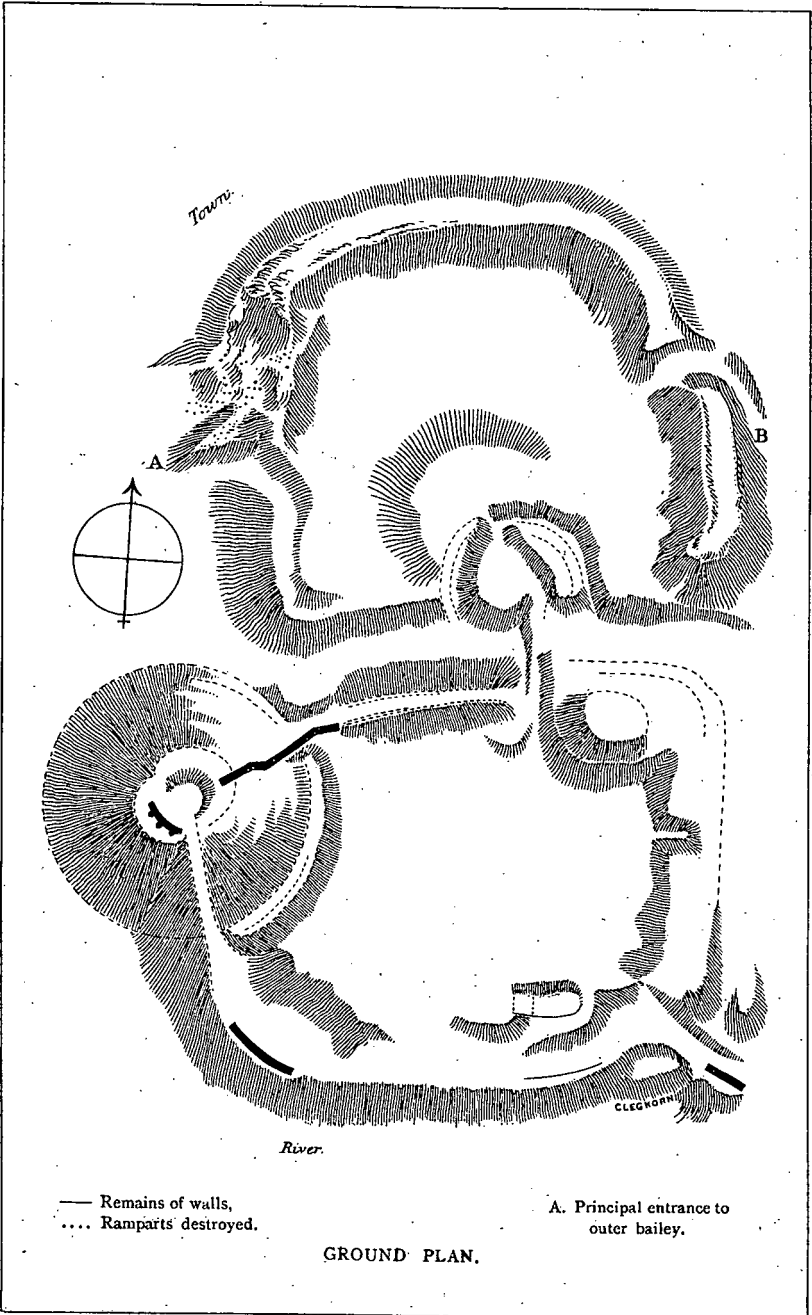


CLARE CASTLE.—I.



PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Bury & West Suffolk Archaeological Institute.

SEPTEMBER, 1849.

CLARE CASTLE.

[READ SEPTEMBER 14, 1848.]

There appears to have been a Castle, or principal residence, at Clare, in the Saxon times; but the earliest record of it is in Domesday Book, where it is thus mentioned:

Terræ Ricardi filii Comitis Gisleberti.—Claram tenuit Aluricus pro Manerio xxiiij car. terræ tempore Regis Edwardi....Semper unum mercatum modo xliij burgenses. Hoc manerium dedit Aluricus filius Wisgari Sancto Iohanni tempore regis Edwardi, concedente filio suo, et quendam sacerdotem Ledmarum et alios cum illo imposuit. Facta etiam carta, ecclesiam & omnem locum Levestano Abbati* ad custodiendum commisit, et in custodiam Wisgari filii sui. Clerici vero hanc terram nec dare vel forisfacere a sancto Iohanne poterant. Postquam autem Rex Willelmus advenit, saisivit eam in manu sua.

Earl Aluric, who had the custody, for Queen Emma, the mother of King Edward the Confessor, of the franchise of the eight hundreds and a half in Suffolk, since known as the Liberty of St. Edmund, placed in his Collegiate Church of St. John seven secular canons or prebendaries. William the Conqueror gave Clare, with other large possessions, to his kinsman, Richard Fitz Gilbert, son of Gilbert, Earl of Briant in Normandy, who gave the lordship to his son Gilbert, who took the name of De Clare, and was afterwards created Earl of Hertford. The younger Gilbert was probably the builder of the Castle of Clare; at least, in his time there was a castle on the present site; for the deed giving Aluric's college to the Benedictine

* Abbot of St. Edmund's Monastery, from 1044 to 1065.

Abbey of St. Mary at Bec, in Normandy, was tested at the Castle of Clare.

In a confirmation (without date) by Thos. Archbishop of Canterbury (no doubt, Thomas a' Beckett, who was Archbishop from 1162 to 1170) of divers donations to the Priory of Stoke by Clare, a grant by Gilbert de Clare in 1090 is recited, and he is stated to have given (among other things) the fishing of the whole river from Sturmer "usque ad castellum de Clara." And, in 1124, his son Richard is stated to have transferred the monks "de castello Claræ" to Stoke; and a certain exchange is mentioned, for the purpose of enabling the monks to found at Stoke a church of St. John, and to dwell there with all the rents, privileges, &c., and prebends, which the church of St. John, situate "in castello Claræ," possessed*.

In another confirmation, by the same Archbishop, also without date, Gilbert de Clare, son of Richard Fitz Gilbert, is recited to have given, in 1090, to the church of St. Mary of Bec, the church of St. John of Clare, for (among others) the Soul of his Brother Godefred, "qui cimiterio Sancti Iohannis de Clara sepultus requiescit:" and it is added, "Hæc donatio facta est apud castrum quod vocatur Clara." In the same confirmation, mention is made of an exchange by Richard, son of Gilbert, of the church of St. Augustin, at Stoke, and certain lands, &c., for the church of St. Paul, at Clare, and certain lands, &c.; that the monks might found (constituerent) at Stoke a church of St. John, and dwell there, with all the privileges, &c., which the church of St. John, situate "in castello Claræ," possessed†.

It is probable that, at this time, the church and monastic buildings were taken down, to admit of an extension of the castellar buildings; but we have little positive information, and, when we consider the high position of the family, and the troublous times in which they enacted so distinguished a part, it is surprising that the notices of Clare are so scanty, and of such little interest in comparison with those connected with the other residences of this great baronial family.

In the *Calendar of the Inquisitiones post mortem*, the first that was taken after the death of a de Clare appears to have

* Dugd. Mon. VI: p. 1659.

† Ib. pp. 1660-1.

been in 47th Henry III., on the death of Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, and there occurs "*Clare Burg' Maner'*." The next is the 24th Edwd. I., on the death of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, where we have "*Clare Maner' Extent' & Villa.*" Thus far there is no notice of the Castle. The next is in 35th Edwd. I., on the death of Joanna, late wife of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, &c. (Joanna of Acre), where we find "*Clare Castrum Honor,*" and "*Clare Maner' & Villa Extent'.*" After this, the Castle is often mentioned, and is termed *Castrum*, and not *Castellum* as, with one exception, it is in the documents previously referred to; but, probably, those words were used with little, if any, difference of meaning*.

In 1292, the then Earl, with his Countess, kept his Christmas in it, with great magnificence.

In 1307, Edward 2nd, and most of the Nobility of England, were present at the funeral of Joanna of Acre, daughter of Edward 1st, buried in the church of the Priory.

After this it is mentioned that Philippa, daughter of Lionel, first Duke of Clarence (who had married the great granddaughter of Gilbert de Clare and Joanna of Acre), brought this Castle to Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, whose grandson, on coming of age, in 1412, found it in good repair, and well stocked with rich furniture. At his death, without issue, in 1425, the Castle, town, and barony devolved to his nephew, Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward 4th, by whose accession to the throne, these possessions became, for the first time, vested in the Crown, and remained so throughout the reigns of Edward IVth, Vth, and Richard IIIrd. By an Act of Parliament, 11th Henry VII, they were confirmed to the King, and were not again alienated till the 6th of Edward the Sixth, when they were granted to his Tutor, the celebrated scholar, Sir John Cheeke; but were resumed by Queen Mary, in the first year of her reign; and the Honor

* *Castellum* is, of course, (the Rev. J. W. Donaldson obligingly informs me) a diminutive of *castrum*, which is a barbarous substitute for the classical *castra*. As *castrum* was generally used to signify a walled town ("*castrum vero, singulariter, oppidum*").—Papias ad *Isidori Origines*, IX, c.

3), whereas *castellum* meant only a *fort*, which might be included within a town ("*castellum ex vallo et muro turrique conficitur.*")—Guibertus Abbas Novigenti de Laude B. Mariæ, c. 7), it is probable that *Clare castrum* means the town which grew up around the old *castellum*.

of Clare was annexed by her to the Duchy of Lancaster. The Castle and Bailey afterwards became vested in the Barnardiston family; and, in the reign of Charles 2nd, passed to Sir Gervase Elwes, Bart., of Stoke College, in whose family they continued till 1825, when they were purchased by the late John Barker, Esq., of Clare Priory, and are still in the possession of his heirs.

The Castle occupies the angle formed by the junction of the Chilton river or brook with the Stour*. The remaining works consist of a high conical mound of earth, such as French antiquaries call *La Motte*, and two baileys or courts, enclosed by ramparts of earth, with some indications of there having been an outer ditch surrounding the whole; and portions of the walls are still standing on the earth works. The chief entrance appears to have been on the Western side of the outer bailey, (A on the plan†) immediately in a line with the Stoke road; as, notwithstanding the entire removal of the rampart on this side‡, with parts of those on the N. and S. sides, aged persons recollect, and early plans indicate the spot, where was the passage between the ramparts, which were here rounded off within the enclosure. The ramparts, formed after the Saxon manner by throwing the contents of a ditch inwards, were probably surmounted by a palisade, no traces of foundations of a wall having been met with. A wide and deep ditch, part of which remains, separated the outer from the inner bailey; the entrance to the latter being near the middle of the South side of the former, where it appears to have been defended by a barbican of two demi-bastions of earth, around which the ditch was continued. In all probability a causeway and a drawbridge led to a corresponding opening in the enceinte of the inner court, defended by two towers, one on each side of the entrance§, and protected from within by

* To avoid misapprehension it is necessary to mention that the present channel of the river Stour, which separates the Castle from the Priory, is comparatively modern. The ancient course of the river ran southward of the Priory as well as of the Castle, and is now known as the Old River.

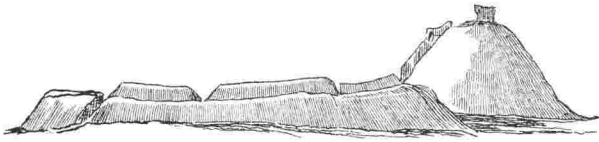
† The annexed plan and views are copied from very nicely sketched pen and ink drawings made by the late Mr.

Kerrich, in 1735, and now preserved in the British Museum, Addl. MSS. 6735. The quadrangular building at the base of the hill in the south view has been inserted to mark the presumed site of the Castle.

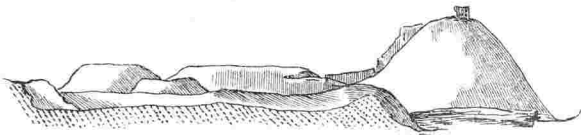
‡ Removed about 35 years since for material to repair the roads.

§ A very perfect base of a Norman buttress, remaining on the Western side of this entrance, is figured in Pl. IV. It was found during some excavations made

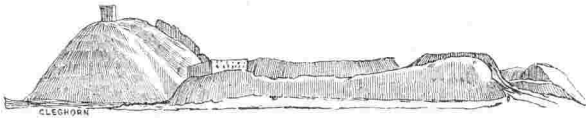
CLARE CASTLE. — II.



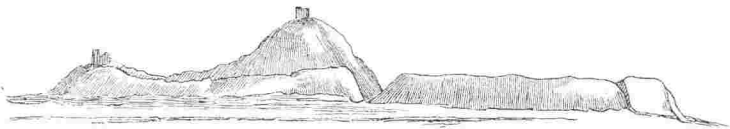
NORTH VIEW.



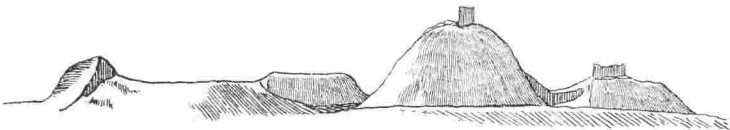
SECTION THROUGH OUTER ENCLOSURE FROM E. TO W.
Marked A B on Plan.



SOUTH VIEW.



EAST VIEW.



WEST VIEW.

two demi-bastions, projecting inwards, which were on the opposite side of this bailey, small portions of which still remain. The inner bailey was bounded beyond the ditch by the low grounds of the Stour on the South side, and inclosed by a wall, on the summit of the earthworks. This wall, between 20 and 30 feet in height, defended by bastions and demi-bastions, was continued up the Motte on two sides to the donjon or keep. Portions of this wall remain on the N. and S. ramparts, and on the East side of the mound; and its foundations are traceable on the South and East sides*.

The Motte is situated on the N. W. side of this bailey, and forms part of the inclosure. It is 850 feet in circumference at the base—of which 600 feet are without the enclosure—and 270 feet in diameter at the base. Portions of a ditch remain which surrounded it, except where the ramparts join it. The height of the mound is 53 feet, and its inclination 27° .† It was crowned by an embattled cylindrical keep, built of flints and rubble, and strengthened by fourteen external buttresses on a triangular plan, faced with freestone‡, the distance between the salient angles being five yards.

The keep within was 52 feet in diameter, and without 64; or, including the projection of the buttresses, 70 feet. The wall is 25 feet high and only six feet in thickness, and the depth of the foundations, as ascertained by recent excavation, is six feet below the level of the ground floor§. From these facts it seems probable that the keep was never a place of great strength, like those Norman keeps of very massive masonry which have been carried through

in September, 1848, by permission of the Rev. S. Jenner, and under the superintendence of Mr. J. B. Armstead, of Clare; to whose zealous exertions the Institute is much indebted, and to whom the inhabitants of Clare owe the convenient pathway to the top of the mound which now forms their favorite promenade.

* This portion of the wall was removed about 130 years since for the double purpose of employing the poor and repairing the roads.

† These measurements were carefully made in September, 1848, by a gentleman of Clare. Mr. Kerrich says that "the hill is 194 yards round at the bottom behind

from wall to wall; 64 yards round it (between the two walls) next the Court; the whole circumference at bottom being 258 yards. The height of the hill is less than half its diameter at the bottom of the ditch. The Round keep about 15 yards within."

‡ These are evidently of a later date, parts of an Edwardian repair. Only three buttresses remain.

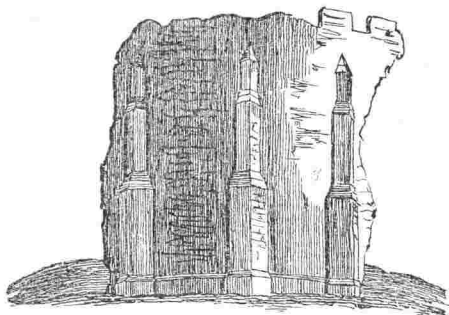
§ The foundations are $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick, and about 5 feet in depth, resting on a firm bed of blue clay. Their footings project three feet within and one and a half without the wall.

the mound to the natural level of the ground, or have had the mound thrown up around the structure. From the gradual sinking of the top it was supposed that there might be a subterranean chamber, but on digging and boring to a depth of 24 feet, there were no traces of any such place. Nor was there found an interior circle such as is sometimes observable in Norman keeps, nor indeed masonry of any kind. There are no loop-lights in the remaining piece of wall, which measures 44 feet, or any indications of its having been a building of several stories. The small holes shewn in the accompanying view of the interior are the putlock holes whence the builders' scaffold-timbers were withdrawn, and were either not filled up or have been re-opened by the action of the weather. It was probably not roofed over, or so roofed as to leave an open court in the centre. Nothing now remains to show in what way the keep was entered; but it was probably approached only from the inner bailey, by a staircase in an attached turret, the walls not allowing of a staircase to curve up within their thickness, as at Launceston, and Coningsburgh, where the walls are from 15 to 16 feet thick.

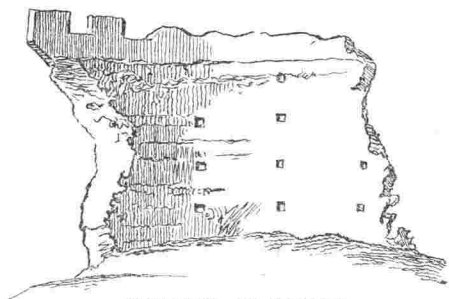
The curtain wall leading to the keep, and the walls of the enceinte, appear to be of a different period from the wall of the keep; being, though of flints and rubble, very regular in the masonry, and well finished in courses of small dimensions. The employment in the keep wall of materials of various kinds, flat stones, tiles, bricks, &c., that had evidently been used before, would lead to the inference that it was erected after the removal of the college of St. John to Stoke, and with the materials of the demolished buildings. The presence of tiles and bricks has led to the belief that a Roman work was originally on this spot, but there is nothing in their form or material to indicate a Roman origin. The fact of keep-mounds being Norman is proved by their number in Normandy, and by many authentic specimens in our own country. Within a radius of 20 leagues of Caen, there are sixty castles with similar mounds; and nearly thirty remain in England and Wales.

SAMUEL TYMMS.

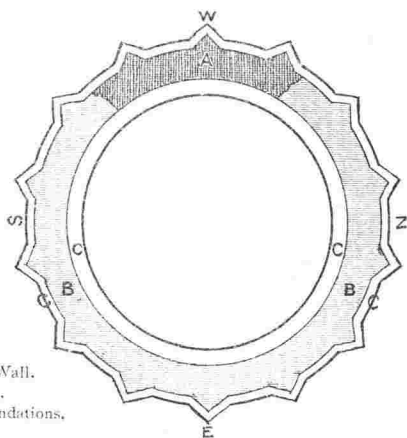
CLARE CASTLE. — III.



EXTERIOR OF CORONA.



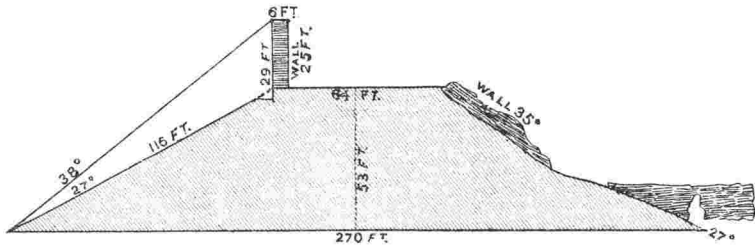
INTERIOR OF CORONA.



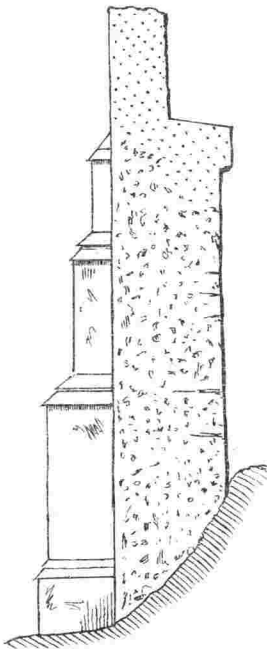
- A. Remains of Wall.
- B. Line of Wall.
- C. Lines of Foundations.

GROUND PLAN OF CORONA.

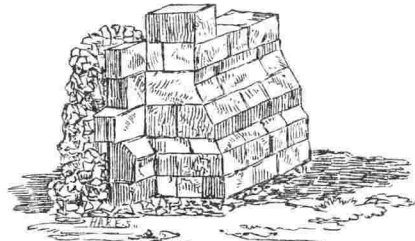
CLARE CASTLE.—IV.



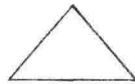
VERTICAL SECTION OF CORONA



SECTION OF WALL OF CORONA WITH A BUTTRESS.



BUTTRESS AT S. W. SIDE OF ENTRANCE INTO INNER BAILEY.



PLAN OF CORONA BUTTRESS.