



The following 'amusing poem' appeared in a local newspaper [no reference] just before the Butleigh Revel began.

### ODE TO ENDEAVOUR

[The editor is not responsible for any Anachronisms]

Butlesia! Butlesia! (1)

House of the youthful Muse, (2)

To think that minds historical

Thy legends could abuse!

●  
Butlesia! Butlesia!

Thy meadows fair I see

Covered with Benedictine Monks (3)

Employed in drinking tea!

●  
St. Dunstan and St. Joseph

Are standing in the van,

Conversing with Benignus-

A most superior man

●  
What matter, when the Muse is fair,

If history be unkind;

Such little things cannot upset

an educated mind.

●  
Methinks I see the proud array

Of Pageantry and Arms.

(Who can resist the blandishments

Of Woad seductive charms?) (4)

●  
The lists are full

Each gallant knight,

In shining armour girt,

(O tell me, gentle reader,

Did the Briton wear a shirt?).

●  
A herald sounds a trumpet,

Reads a challenge in blank verse,

Then thunder on the Celtic plain

Fitz-Hubert and Fitz-Urse. (5)

●  
Their impact makes the welkin ring,

Their gallant steeds recoil

And now with battle-axe they strive

Each other's blows to foil.

●  
"Far Splender Dex!" King Arthur cries (6),

'Vae Vietis! screams the crowd, (7)

As backwards o'er his saddle flies

Fitz-Urse the Over-proud.

●  
But now Sir Lancelot takes the field. (8)

A breathless silence reigns.

Who is the Strager Knight who e'en

Du Lake quite worthy deigns.

●  
Dark is his coal-black armour,

His gallant steed is white

A single 'Plume of Feathers'

Waves in the mid-day light.

Neither by shield or token

Can men tell who you are?

"O yentre sans gris," the Knight replies;

"I'm Henry of Navarre" (9)

●  
The Battle fiercely rages,  
The Lists are stained with blood,  
Both knights collapse together  
With a far resounding thud.

●  
"By the great Gods jujitsu, (10)  
O grant a stomach throw." (11)  
Then like a bullet from the sling (12)  
Du Lake doth hurtling go.

●  
"O Arnidieu!" King Arthur cries  
('Twas Valois' favourite oath); (13)  
I'm sure Sir Gorfell Barnes (14)  
To miss such prowess would be loath.

●  
But now the combat's over.  
Queen Gwenny dries her eyes, (15)  
To meet a Bourbon at the Court!  
Of Arthur's a surprise! (16)

●  
"O! Honi soit qui mal y pense!" (17)  
King Henry doth exclaim,  
As Lancelot consolation seeks  
With little Miss Elaine (18)

●  
The Tourney's gone. The distant moor  
Presents another scene  
St. Patrick .....  
A-wearing of the green (19)

●  
But gentle reader, pause awhile -  
Of Patricks there were two -  
Now, did the real St. Patrick  
Come to Avalon, think you?

●  
Benignus was an Irish monk, (20)  
Who died in Tipperary -  
Thus far we are historical;  
The rest is legendary.

●  
They brought a bone of St. Benen -  
The tibia for preference -  
And laid it in the Abbey here,  
With ritual and with reverence.

●  
St. Dunstan is another whom (21)  
Your poets much delight in;  
He looks a trifle awkward  
In the cope of Richard Whyting.

But, ladies fair, what matters  
 If the Revel gives you pleasure, (22)  
 Whether with Lady Guenevere  
 St. Dunstan treads a measure?  
 •  
 Whether King Arthur, who we know  
 Is nothing but Apollo,  
 A Brit-Welsh chieftain, can with ease  
 Anachronisms swallow? (23)  
 •  
 Whether King Henry of Navarre,  
 A character in Dumas,  
 Can with the science of Japan,  
 Make Lancelot feel a stumor. (24)  
 •  
 But lest we over-capricious seem, (25)  
 In this we make a stand,  
 To praise those who the White Rose wear,  
 "Thy subjects to Command"

TRISTRAM



#### Notes

- (1) Butlesia. Butleigh, a small village
- (2) Possibly means a local writer
- (3) Did not perform in the 6th century C.f. Fecamp
- (4) Woad a sort of purple chiffon, most effective for dress lengths
- (5) The names sound Norman. But what matter?
- (6) The remark would sound equally well from the lips of Saladin, William Rufus, or John Strange Winter
- (7) Vac Victis: a popular saying among the Roman youth: "Good-bye, little yellow bird".
- (8) Sir Lancelot du Lake, a portly middle-aged respectable ruffian; would have figured in the "People" had it been published.
- (9) Henry of Navarre, a character in fiction, C.f. Stanley Weyman
- (10) Jujutsu and Kenjitsu, two twin Bretheren. "But by the proud Eurotas Is our dear native home".
- (11) Painful in the extreme. Ch. 5, sec. 432. [Ed.]
- (12) This is a metaphor
- (13) Henry of Valois. Third Henry and last Valois sometime King of Poland.
- (14) The Di--, I mean Brighton Hotel Agency Court.
- (15) C.f. Tennyson
- (16) C.f. Mark Twain.
- (17) You see, French came easy to him.
- (18) A sort of "Country Girl" and "Lady Madcap" combined. All for Lancelot.
- (19) A celebrated naturalist
- (20) St. Benin a disciple of St. Patrick. Wm of Malmesbury makes Patrick come to Glastonbury. Legend of course suggests: Why should not Benin come too, and be made an Abbot? Nothing easier
- (21) St. Dunstan: for further information C.f. Ingolsby Legends. But who will be "Nick, in the guise of a damsel passing fair".
- (22) Please accept this, the only intimation.
- (23) We have no intention of apologising for the rhymes.
- (24) Stumor: It is rather hard to define this word.
- (25) The footnotes are most important, since the allusions are so fearfully obscure.

#### The Butleigh Revel – an appreciation

engraved above the fireplace in the entrance hall to Butleigh Court.

Another motto used by the Squire was "Ne vile Velis" - a pun on the name Neville - and it appeared on the ceiling of the Dining room - it means "nothing distasteful or vulgar" - the personal motto of Thomas Neville (1544-1614) Master of Trinity College, Cambridge and Dean of Canterbury Cathedral.

*The last line of the poem refers to the quotation from Shakespeare's Henry VI - 'the Neville's are thy subjects to command'. This motto is*

There follows various reports of the "Butleigh Revel" performances which appeared in the local and national press.

The Revel Performances and the sequel

The Butleigh Revel  
An Appreciation

Fair colours gleaming underneath the cedar spray,  
The joy of story and the charm of art,  
A thousand years frames in a single day.  
To wake the fancy and to move the heart;—  
These are the memories at Butleigh gained,  
While the kind sun shone with unceas'd glow,  
And your glad folk with happiness unfigured  
Hold the long sequence of your summer show.  
But more than these you give and we received,  
More than the varied scenes which met the eye;  
Your artists made us know that they believed  
The very truth that helps us from on high.  
They felt the grandeur of the Christian name,  
The perilous heights where mortals went to dwell  
The glory of iniquity and shame  
When the old Abbey with its children fell.

They fell,—you feel the unsurpassed delight  
Of kindly home, and kindly neighbourhood.—  
Each well known phrase, each long accustomed  
sight:—  
We love them, and we know that they are good—  
Good from the Hand of Him who shapes our ways  
By downy paths of years to mount on high,  
Who draws us evermore His Name to praise,  
His Wisdom and His love to glorify.

Pusey House. Oxford  
June 1906.

V. S. JC.

The final rehearsal on the Monday 18th of June took place on a fine sunny day and was attended by several thousand schoolchildren ferried in from Glastonbury Street and the immediate district together with their teachers plus members of various religious bodies - and the children were all given tea.

Tuesday saw the first performance, again on a generally sunny day, and attended by the fashionable end of society as well as local people. The newspapers reported that the roads were thronged with motor cars and vehicles of every description conveying people to and from Glastonbury and Charlton Mackrell stations and the surrounding towns and villages. In all around 1,800 people attended that performance which was very well received.

The second day of performance, Wednesday the 20th, saw an even larger gathering of around 2,000 people and the demand was such that it was decided to extend the Revel for a third day and, even without advance notice, an audience of just over 1,000 people attended. The final evening ended with a dance on the Court lawn in the evening.

"Butleigh went crazy with excitement on Wednesday evening. After tea a dance was held in the Court grounds, music being furnished by the Butleigh Band. About 9 o'clock a waggonette drawn by ropes and pulled by many willing hands of the performers in the Revel, who still wore their costumes, was drawn up at the Court entrance, and afterwards entered by the Squire (Mr. Neville Grenville), Miss Somerville, Miss Berkeley, Mr. D. Mildred, the Rev. G. W. Berkeley, the Rev. G. W. Saunders, and several other performers. A procession was formed, with the Butleigh Band leading and the remainder of the performers on foot behind, and the village was then paraded. It was rather more of a cheering crowd than a regular procession, and cheers were continuously given for Mr. Neville Grenville and Mr. D. Mildred, the latter being greeted with the singing of "

"He's a jolly good fellow." Miss Berkeley also came in for her share of the ovation. On returning to the Court there was more cheering for the organizers of the Revel, and Mr. Neville Grenville addressed a few words to the crowd.

The above 'appreciation' was written by the Rev. Vincent Stuckey Stratton-Coles (b. 27 Mar 1845 Shepton Beauchamp), hymn writer & Principal of Pusey House. From the 'Butleigh Revel' book of Mary Berkeley in the SRO.

Pusey House was the centre of the 'Oxford Movement' which was a High Church movement wishing to re-instate certain Catholic traditions into the Anglican church. Some became Catholics e.g. Cardinal J. H. Newman and Augustus Pugin, others were Tractarians such as William Ewart Gladstone.

## SONG OF ANCIENT AVALON

THE STORY OF THE BUTLEIGH REVEL JUNE 18, 19. 20 & 21 1906

### I

I had a dream of Avalon, a vision of the West;  
I stood on Inyswytryn's shore, the island, of the blest  
I heard sweet strains of music float across the faint, warm Breeze,  
And whisper strange old legends to the white acacia trees.

### II

'Twas Glwyd yr Hâf, the Summer-Land, where monk and Priest and king  
A careless hymn from out the grave to God their Maker sing.  
The high hills parted lovingly, and nestling in between  
Glistened the sweet, pale apple-flowers in orchards cool and Green.

### III

Lovely as jewels in the crown of some dark Eastern Queen;  
Grey with the crumbling touch of age, yet bright with flowery Sheen;  
White-starred with daisies in the grass that clothes her broken Floor;  
In desolation great and grand, St. Joseph's Church I saw.

### IV

From out all Brittia's treasure-house, God surely loves thee Best,  
Glaston for, tho' thy fall was great, how lovely is thy rest!  
Thou art most sacred to His Name, Who gave thee thy fair Form,  
Who guides thee thro' the circling years, in hurricane and Storm.

### V

For here it was that first of all the holy pilgrims knelt;  
And here beneath thy ruined walls St. Dunstan humbly dwelt  
And here the martyrs suffered wrong, and died for conscience Sake,  
Who would not bend to Henry's yoke nor false submission make

### VI

I saw across the sunlit lawn a long procession go,  
Of priests and kings and warriors from out the long-ago.  
The dead past with a living voice, was speaking, and my Eyes,  
Beheld strange scenes from other years - for good never dies.

### VII

I saw a saint whose name shall ring till Christendom's last Bound  
St. Joseph who in ages past first blessed this holy ground  
Who gave the flowering Staff and Thorn to blossom year By year  
To prove again to Christian men the faith they hold so dear

### VIII

He passed from sight. Four hundred circling years had rolled away;  
Yet still I dreamed of Avalon - methought 'twas New Years Day  
They bore King Arthur to his rest, with tears of grief and pain  
And laid him in the summer Land, thence to be King again

### IX

And still across the wooded plain the phantoms flitted by;  
And, changeful as a rainbow's hue, they passed before my eye.  
A thousand men I saw whose names are found on History's page  
In blazing golden characters- King, hero, monk, and sage.

### X

All, all were there!—King Alfred, in his glory and his might;  
Guthrum, the new-made Christian, in his gleaming armour Bright;  
Asser of Sherborne - but of all the greatest and the best,  
St. Dunstan, whose undying fame shall kindle thro' the West!

### XI.

He reared again the fallen Church, restored the ruined Shrine  
And raised from out the scattered stones a Sanctuary Divine.  
"Great was its height, and great its length," its sculptures rich And rare -  
A work of love unparalleled, a temple passing fair.

### XII.

Then thro' the trees full merrily a troop of dancers came  
And frolicked thro' the sunny hours, in laughter, song, and Game;  
Till that, too, passed; and then a solemn music smote the ear,  
Throbbing with pity, telling that a soul was passing near.

XIII

Yes, after long prosperity, and centuries of fame,  
The ancient Abbey now must bear her sorrow and her shame  
Her silver star is sinking in the heavy-clouded west,  
And loud and angry strife disturbs the sacred Isle of Rest.

XIV.

Glastonbury! Wondrous in thy might, and lovely in thy fall,  
Now silent are those cloistered walls which once; were Peopled all;  
Yet not deserted is thy church, for, see! a shadow grey  
Is flitting thro' thy solitudes, where once he used to pray.

XV

This is the Saint who ruled thy house in her disastrous day  
Who trusted in The Lord his God, tho' He hath power to slay;  
Who would not stoop to treachery to save his ebbing life,  
But won his Crown of Martyrdom, passing thro' mortal strife.

XVI.

So thro' the years the visions march; I see them one by one,  
All bright with blaze of colours fair, beneath the warm June Sun.  
Mine is the prayer that Whyting prayed beneath the gallows Tree:  
"May God protect thee, Avalon, thro' all the years to be"!

XVII

Thro' all the years to be, until the centuries are flown,  
Till Heaven and Earth shall pass away, God will protect His Own.  
New saints shall come to Avalon, new heroes shall arise,  
To sing the hymn of praise once more beneath those smiling skies

XVIII

And so thro' all the unborn years thy fame exulting rings,  
Thou Orchard-vale of Avalon, thou resting-place of Kings  
Thy hidden Valley still shall be the Island of the Blest,  
The Garden of the Martyrs, and the Summer-Land of Rest.

XIX

This was my dream of Glaston, my fair Vision of the West.  
This was my fancy - and its truth old records will attest  
Once more I pray for Glwyd yr Hâf, wrapped in its hazy sea;  
"May God protect thee, Avalon, thro' all the years to be!"

*A hand-written version is in the 'Butleigh Revel book', written by Mary Albinia Berkeley - Monks Horton Park, Kent Sept. 1906*

Newspaper 'clippings', printed articles and reports

Such an exciting event as the Butleigh Revel could hardly go unreported and not only the local but also the national papers sent along journalists and photographers to capture the atmosphere and comment upon the remarkable happenings that took place in what was otherwise a rural and unheard of part of the country. The following was printed after the first day of the Revel;

*The Daily Chronicle 19th June*

**Beautiful Old-World Scenes at Glastonbury.**

1000 YEARS' PANORAMA.

[From Our Special Correspondent.]

GLASTONBURY, Tuesday.

Nature herself offers a splendid day-long pageant just now in the fair West Country, and it was a happy thought to revive on one of her most beautiful stages a pageant of old and worthy memories and byegone splendour. This idea was fittingly realised yesterday at Butleigh Court, the residence of Mr. Neville-Grenville, near Glastonbury. England has no sweeter, no more alluring scene to offer the eye than this "the Island valley of Avilion".

Deep meadowed, happy, faire, with orchard lawns, and bowery hollows, crowned with summer sun, a land as rich in story as in loveliness, the home of hoary legend and inspiring traditions, where every gray stone tells of some stirring deeds and the very air is redolent of romance.

Far back in the past did Glastonbury take its place among the favoured cities; it claimed that the first Christian church erected in Britain was placed here.

Joseph of Arimathea - so the legend has it - came to this spot with his brethren, so long ago as 60 AD, and for a sign he struck his staff into the earth on Weary-all Hill, and there it, instantly took root and blossomed. This marvellous thorn, it is believed put forth its blossoms thereafter regularly at midnight on Christmas Eve.

Certain it is that a religious establishment in a good state of organisation existed in Glastonbury in the earliest centuries of the present era, and that the abbey occupied a position of the highest importance until the dissolution of the monasteries in the time of Henry VIII. Many saints were buried within its walls, and its ruins attest to this day the magnitude of its area and magnificence of its revenues.

#### A FITTING ENVIRONMENT

Here too, was the scene of some of the exploits of King Arthur and his knights and the Arthurian legend still clings to it. In Avalon he fought, to there he came to die. In Avalon he was laid to rest. Moreover, here also did Alfred wander when misfortune overtook his arms in the conflict with the Danes. In this region he took refuge with a swine-herd in the forest, and roused the anger of his hostess by his inattention to the cakes, while hard by at Wedmore he signed a peace with Guthrum, the Danish chief. Later on the countryside was stirred by Monmouth's rebellion, and men from Glastonbury and Butleigh followed the Duke to the disastrous battlefield of Sedgemoor, near at hand. Surely there could be no more fitting environment than this for a historic pageant picturing what is most notable in the past, calling up to our eyes the picturesque phases of the life which was once lived here, enacting over again the brave and tragic deeds with which these scenes must be for ever associated. This was what the people of Butleigh set themselves to do yesterday; how well they did it remains to be told.



St. Dunstan – Rev. George D'Angibau

colour, fragrant with the poetry of that age of romance and the glamour of its chivalry. Slowly the cavalcade wound out of the forest into the open, the queens arrayed in exquisite vestments beside the bier, and the wailing notes of grief floated on the air as the monks advanced to meet the mourners. Then, after a scene of great dignity and impressiveness the chieftain was borne to his long rest.

#### THROUGH THE AGES.

Thus we were carried down the ages. The spirit of humour has not declined since Alfred scorched the cakes, and as laughter is for all time, we received the old tale with unstinted merriment. We shared the pride with which the great golden-haired king released the captive Guthrum, a viking who seemed as though he had stepped straight from the prow of his galley, and signed with him the treaty

It is some miles from Glastonbury to Butleigh Court, and the white dusty road winds over a broad tract of what was once fen or marsh land. But high over all the hills keep watch and ward. Weary-all and Tor Hill, with its tower standing sentinel-like on the summit look down over miles of meadows golden and white, and innumerable trees in the richest verdure of June line the ways.

The lawn before the mansion at Butleigh Court provides a natural stage. The spacious sward and a background of stately trees and a magnificent cedar spreads its branches like a canopy. Beyond there are exquisite woodland vistas in which the hues of purple beech and light green elm mingle.

#### BACK IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

When the players wandered from behind the undergrowth into view it was as though we had been transported backward for a thousand years and had found ourselves in the forest confronting the Britons of another age. All that was modern was the stand on the terrace thronged: with ladies in the latest frocks, and now and then the toot of a distant motor-horn broke discordantly on the ear when the Queen was uttering passionate lamentations over Arthur's bier. But it was easy to forget this twentieth century and to go back again to the sixth with these magicians to guide us and in imagination we lived again with Alfred and Dunstan.

The herald opened the pageant with a fanfare and then the prologue was spoken, ere the player entered, by a graceful lady, who said:—

We by our magic now will conjure up  
The years long swallowed by Times restless waves;  
Show you great saints and heroes long since dead;  
Call to your minds the deeds and prayers those  
Who, raising Britia from the unknown duet,  
Have made our island what she is to-day.

The first act depicted the coming of St. Joseph, the worn old man who tottered in with his exhausted brethren, crying, "Weary all! Weary all!" and was hospitably received by Arviragus, the British king, who permitted him to found the first Christian Church. He planted his staff, which instantly broke forth in to blossom. It was all so simply and naturally done, it harmonised so exquisitely with the setting of woodland and mead, that admiration was unstinted.

The next act showed us the passing of Arthur, and this was indeed a very moving and beautiful pageant, rich in

of peace a Wedmore; we came to the later Saxons, and saw Edmund Ironsides bestow the Abbey of Glastonbury on St. Dunstan; we passed into Norman times and beheld Henry the First grant a charter to Glastonbury, a boon which led the people to hold a revel; we witnessed the arrest of Abbot Whyting, and the monks driven homeless and helpless into the world; we saw the abbot tied and dragged on a hurdle to the place of execution on Tor Hill.

Then, jumping over a century and a half, we saw the men of Butleigh join the banner of Monmouth, and the pageant was brought to a close with laughter by the discussion of the peasants, in good broad Somerset dialect, of the proposal to change the calendar, and their fears that the Thorn would not blossom if the date of Christmas Day were altered.

It is difficult to convey in mere words how wholly delightful and bewitching this pageant was. The scene itself was fairyland, and the episodes were woven so deftly, with such exquisite art into the picture that the illusion was perfect. There was completely harmonious accord between all the elements; the costumes reproduced with the closest accuracy, and when 300 people in quaint habits and gay colours were on the lawn, the spectacle was entrancing.

#### HOW THE PAGEANT IMPRESSED VISITORS

##### PURELY LOCAL TALENT

Moreover, the acting was admirable. Indeed, it were more truthful to say that few of the great company did act. There was no staginess or straining. They simply lived and spoke as though to the manor born. Still, this perfect simplicity as well as the skilful grouping were largely due to the really artistic stage management of Mr. Mildred, and it should be added that the "book" written by Miss Berkeley, the daughter of the vicar, gave the performers fine sonorous English to speak, and is distinguished by the true poetic gift.

Yet this memorable scene - and few who witnessed it will forget the whole-souled hilarity and enthusiasm of the Old English revels - is not the work of professional pageant-makers. It is entirely the fruit of amateur zeal, and is therefore all the more to be praised. The 300 performers are all local residents, most of them workers on farms and in a comparatively humble station. Little children and elderly men and women vied with each other for success, and everything was done locally, even to the making of the great array of costumes. They certainly achieved triumph, and they also made a definite contribution to the resources of those who are striving for the refinement and stimulation of rural life.

##### A "RISE" OUT OF BATH

A few enthusiastic citizens regret (says the "Bath Herald") that the little village of Butleigh should have been allowed to take a "rise" out of Bath by carrying through the first pageant in the county of Somerset. If Sherborne, Butleigh, and Warwick draw on their local history so effectively, how much more could Bath attract thousands with its historical facts and fancies!

The **fullest** account was given in the *Central Somerset Gazette* on June 23rd which also produced a souvenir booklet. Details of the actor/participants were included since they would be well known to the local readers. Some of the photographs interspersed with the text here come from that souvenir booklet or the postcards that the 'Gazette' issued from the same negatives, plus many taken by Mr. John Bradden, Mr. Tully and a few amateurs

*Central Somerset Gazette*-----June 23 1906

## BUTLEIGH REVEL A GRAND HISTORIC PAGEANT. STIRRING SCENES IN THE HISTORY OF GLASTONBURY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD RE-ENACTED. GRAND SPECTACULAR PANORAMA. THOUSANDS OF APPRECIATIVE VISITORS. A BRILLIANT SUCCESS

The old-world and picturesque village of Butleigh, pleasantly situated a few miles to the south of the historic town of Glastonbury, has been the centre of an altogether unprecedented and unwonted scene of life and movement during Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of this week. The occasion was the presentation of the "Revel", or historical pageant, the preparation for which has for the past few months absorbed and engrossed almost the entire thoughts of the community. It has been a stirring and notable time for the village; for practically all the inhabitants have taken some share in the great event, and they are deserving of the utmost praise for having risen so well to the occasion, and thus been the means of giving enjoyment to the thousands of visitors from far and near which have been attracted by the brilliant spectacle which it provided. The result is that Butleigh now enjoys a wider notoriety than it probably ever dreamt of. Sherborne leapt into fame through the instrumentality of Mr. Louis Parker and her great pageant, and since then many other towns have sought to rise into prominence by the same means; and surely no better way was ever discovered of reviving the grand and glorious history of our country. But Butleigh did not seek to out-rival Sherborne; indeed, it was impossible that she should do so, considering the smallness of the village and that, standing strictly on its own merits, it can lay claim to comparatively little history of any note. But, as in many other cases, greater things spring from small beginnings; and thus it was with the Butleigh Revel.

It is said that the idea first originated in a brief conversation which took place in Butleigh Schoolroom between two or three residents. Even then the idea was in a very embryo state; but, once started, it was not allowed to die out, and subsequently, at a public meeting, when the suggestion was put to the parishioners, it met with a very hearty reception; and from that time steady but sure progress was made towards the great consummation which has this week lifted Butleigh from insignificance to a place of

comparative importance. Among those who took up the matter warmly from the start were Mr. and Mrs. R. Neville Grenville, of Butleigh Court; the Vicar (the Rev. G. W. Berkeley) and Mrs. Berkeley; and Mr. J. Bradden (schoolmaster). One great step in the right direction was achieved when Mr. R. Neville Grenville so generously gave the use of the grounds of Butleigh Court for the performance of the Revel.

This in itself was no small thing, as the grounds at Butleigh Court are peculiarly adapted for such an al fresco event. In front of the house a great sweep of lawn loses itself finally amongst clumps of woodland and towering forest trees, which arrest the gaze, but yet convey the impression of immensity and that one is standing on the edge of some wide forest glade. Such sylvan beauty could not fail to provide the best of backgrounds for the many-changing scenes of the Revel ; whether merry or sad, the woodland setting always seemed to be in perfect accord.

But, though happy in the possession of such an admirable natural arena, there were other and most important requirements to be provided for. Butleigh, however, was equal to the demand, and a writer for the " book " was found in the person of Miss Berkeley, daughter of the Rev. G. W. Berkeley, vicar of the parish, and whose literary ability had already won some recognition. The compilation of the book, including the selection of the subjects, shows the authoress to be talented; and in several of the scenes the dialogue is singularly appropriate and good, while in all there is every evidence of the writer having a great love for, and studious acquaintance with, the history and associations of the neighbourhood, of which she is a native. The book itself deserves mention. On the cover is an original design by the authoress, emblematical of The Holy Thorn, while the Tor and Weary All Hill is seen in the background. Beneath is the motto "**Floreat Ecclesia Anglicana**," taken from the armorial bearings of Glastonbury. The whole book was admirably got up in colour and printed by the "Central Somerset Gazette" Co.

But, to return to the subject proper, when the Revel was first thought of, it is safe to say that it was not anticipated that it would assume such large proportions as it eventually did. This outcome was mainly due to the capable engineering of Mr. D. Mildred, of Cirencester, a nephew of Mrs. R. Neville Grenville, who, soon after the start, took the direction of affairs in hand, and who since then has had the whole of the management of the rehearsals and all other arrangements for this no mean undertaking. As a director, Mr. Mildred has dealt with the material at his disposal, in the shape of the villagers of Butleigh, the majority of whom were included in the list of performers, in an able way, and with much tact and judgment. Many of the principal characters were filled by ladies and gentlemen from the surrounding district, these including the Squire (Mr. R. Neville Grenville). Besides the training of the performers, there were multifarious other details connected with holding the Revel that called for a considerable talent for organising, and in all Mr. Mildred has not been found lacking, so that a large share of the praise on the success of the event must rest on his shoulders. Fortunately, interest in their work was not wanting on the part of the performers ; the people of Butleigh were especially keen in making themselves perfect in their parts and, considering that to many it came as something altogether out of their ken, their aptitude must be regarded as marvellous. As assistant, Mr. Mildred had excellent co-adjutants in the Rev. G. W. and Mrs. Berkeley, Mrs. R. Neville Grenville, the schoolmaster (Mr. J. Bradden) who was also responsible for the musical details and Mr. N. Haddock, who arranged the charming Morris and maypole dances.

Considerable ill-luck was experienced in the conducting of the earlier rehearsals, and indeed up to quite recently, on account of bad weather and much hard work had to be crammed into the last week or so. An unfortunate event also occurred in the recent decease of the Rev. G. Cartwright, who was filling the character of " St. Dunstan ". Happily, however, a substitute was able to be found. The work of designing and making the varied styles of costume necessary to the accurate rendering of the several scenes naturally called for a great deal of skill and labour, and as this was a work that absorbed a good deal of time several of the rehearsals were gone through before these could all be got ready. The costumes were all made locally, a great deal having been done by the younger people, sewing classes having been held at the Vicarage for this purpose, the ladies, as may be imagined, bearing the brunt of the work. As for the result, the word magnificent can be fitly applied, both as regards appropriateness of design and richness of material. With regard to this branch of the preliminary labour, mention must be made of Miss Kate Carpenter, of Butleigh, who showed great skill in the cutting out and making of the garments, while much was also done by Mr. G. C. Hill, of Glastonbury. A full-dress rehearsal should have taken place on Saturday last, but it was somewhat marred by the storm which passed over the locality, and, which, through fear of taking the lustre off their apparel, prevented many of the performers appearing in distinctive garb. The wigs and head-dresses were supplied by Waller, of City-road, London.

The Revel had been extensively advertised, and from the first it caught on well, and tickets sold rapidly ; so much so that no fear could be entertained with regard to non-success financially. The terrace in front of the Court was utilized on which to erect a huge covered stand capable of seating a thousand persons, and it speaks well for the generosity of Mr. Neville Grenville that the Court grounds were able to be used so unreservedly. The stand was erected under the superintendence of Mr. Chick, overseer of the Butleigh Court estate. The work of construction was carried out in a thorough manner, so that when finished the stands presented a very substantial appearance. The refreshment department was not neglected, the catering contract being secured by Mr. Pedwell, of Street ; and a large tent was erected in the grounds, where teas and luncheons could be obtained by visitors from a distance. For the convenience of the latter, special travelling facilities were afforded by the Great Western Railway, and also the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway, while there was a frequent brake and motor service both from Glastonbury and Charlton Mackerell stations.

By Tuesday everything was complete for the influx of a large number of spectators. The musical accompaniment to the pageant was supplied by the famous Street Brass and Reed Band (prize-winners at the Crystal Palace Championship contests). This band of thirty performers, under the conductorship of Mr. F. E. Huish, were specially engaged for the two days at a considerable cost. They ably performed their task, and, as is usually the case, won golden opinions from their hearers for their tuneful qualities and correct rendering of the accompanying music ; and, by the way, owing to the nature of the performance, their work was not easy. Of course, the inevitable picture postcard had to make its appearance, and on Saturday and at the Monday rehearsals quite a small army of photographers were busy snapshotting the different scenes. Many views and picture cards of individuals subjects and scenes in the Revel have been taken and sold or otherwise circulated by amateur and professional local photographers. A very attractive souvenir, consisting of pictures of several of the scenes, was got out by the "Central Somerset Gazette" Co., and sold from a stand in the grounds at the moderate price of 6d., and found a ready sale. This souvenir is already out of print, but picture postcards are in preparation and will be obtainable shortly at the " Gazette " Office, Glastonbury.



*Captain Daniel Mildred*



*Robert Neville-Grenville*



*Gertrude Agnes Neville-Grenville*

## THE PERFORMANCE.

The Revel opened with a herald, gorgeously attired in an emblazoned tabard, advancing to the centre of the arena and blowing a stirring fanfare on a trumpet. Then followed

## THE PROLOGUE

spoken by "Avalon," a young lady dressed in robes of delicate green, the tint of the apple-leaf, and wearing a wreath of apple-blossom crowning her head. Raising slightly her green wand, she faultlessly declaimed a lengthy prologue, claiming the attention and indulgence of the audience, while

" We, by our magic, now conjure up  
The years long swallowed by Times' restless  
waves! Show to you great saints and heroes long  
since dead ! Call to your minds the deeds and prayers of those  
Who, raising Brittia from the unknown dust,  
Have made our island what she is to-day ! "

The personification of "Avalon" was allotted, to Miss Somerville (of Dinder), and no better choice could have been made. She has made a great name for herself locally as an elocutionist and her impressive delivery of the prologue was loudly and deservedly applauded. She delivered an introductory verse before each succeeding scene. Her costume was happily chosen, being symbolical of the traditional Isle of Avalon, the "Island of Apples," as spoken of in the ancient ode : "O Isle of apples, truly fortunate, where unforced fruits and willing comforts meet. . . . And golden apples shine in every wood." The Island vale of Avalon is no more, but Glastonbury Stands in its place.

Following the prologue came a tableau :



**"THE PHOENICIAN TRADERS"**  
(after Lord Leighton's Picture in the Royal Exchange.)

Characters:—Messrs. Triffeck [Trippeck], Ryall, Little, and H. Trask, and Misses J. Allen, M. Bush, and L. Davis

A little description of this tableau is required, or otherwise it might be thought meaningless. It was introduced as typifying the first

step out of utter barbarism made by the people of Britain. These swart men of the East, who, long years before the coming of Christ, sailed the seas in ships, were the forerunners of the great mercantile trade of England. Fearless seamen and valiant in war, they penetrated to the uttermost ends of the earth, and trafficked with the natives of strange lands, giving them "purple and fine linen" in exchange for the products of the chase and native metals. Sometimes they made a permanent abiding-place with the people they thus visited. Undoubtedly they visited Britain and obtained tin from the mines in the West. They left their mark, too, not only in the attire of the people, who clothed themselves in the stuff they obtained by barter, but in many other ways. Whether they established any colonies or not is not definitely known, but at the Lake Village at Glastonbury have been found many evidences of ancient art and civilization, and who knows but that the seafaring spirit of Englishmen may not be in some measure owing to these rovers of old. The tableau was a splendid representation of these merchant sailors, and was brilliant as a spectacle. The next scene was;

#### "THE COMING OF ST. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA."

Scenes: The arrival at Weary-all Hill; the granting of the twelve Hides; and the Building of the Wattle Church.

Characters: St. Joseph, the Rev. G. W. Berkeley (Vicar of Butleigh); David, Mr. E. Gregory; King Arviragus, Mr. T. Carter; Catgur, Mr. J. Killen; the twelve Brethren (followers of St. Joseph), H. Bowditch, W. Dyer, E. Pike, Riggs, J. Bush, P. Oram, A. Little, and Dimmick; native Britons, etc. Date A.D. 63.

Slow music and the sound of solemn chanting heralded the appearance of St. Joseph, who, with David and the others of the twelve brethren, falteringly approach, chanting meanwhile, "Weary-all ! Weary-all !". "Joseph" wears a brown habit and a patriarchal beard, while the brethren are garbed in grey gowns. A host of skin clad natives hover around them, with arrows fitted to their bows, but seemingly more in wonderment than with hostile intent. Having reached the summit, presumably of Weary-all Hill, Joseph rests and gives thanks for the safe termination of their journey. Then followed the request of the brethren for a sign, that their faith may be strengthened, as they fear the land is "evil and haunted of wicked spirits."



The Rev. G. W. Berkeley as **St. Joseph** with hand resting on Ernest Gregory as **David**, plus the twelve brethren;  
A. Little, H. Moore, H. Bowditch, Sidney Oram, George Riggs, Wilfred Dyer, E. Pike, Bob Davis, Jesse Bush,  
Albert Masters, A. Sugg, W. Dimmick [not in order]

Joseph reproaches them for their lack of faith after having been so miraculously guided by angels to such a fair land, and then raises his staff and strikes it into the ground. The staff blossoms and changes to the "Holy Thorn," and the brethren exclaim "A miracle!" while Joseph prophesies that each year, at the feast of the Nativity, "shall it bear flowers as a token to Mankind of the coming of Christ."



**Kneeling and praying in thanks for a safe arrival**

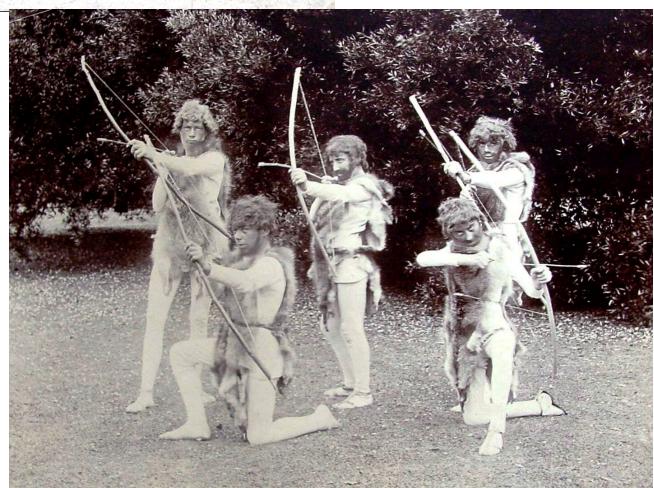
**Act I Scene I**

**St. Joseph and his followers**

**The Holy Thorn has blossomed!**

BUTLEIGH REVEL.—The coming of St. Joseph —“The Holy Thorn has Blossomed.”

**Act I Scene II**



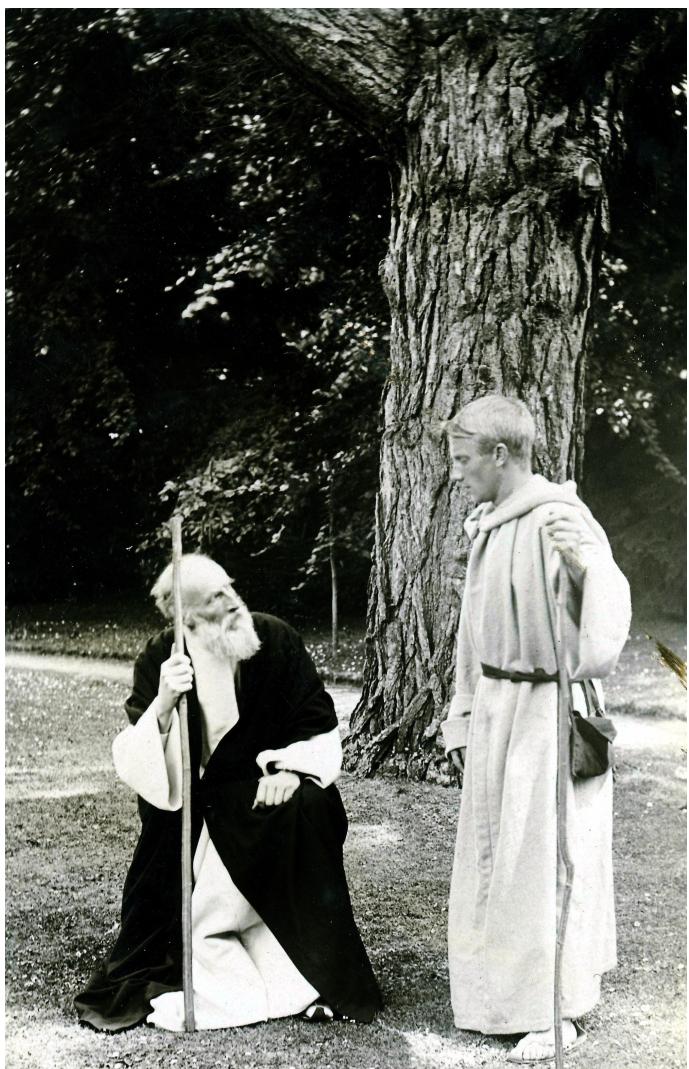
**The men of Arviragus**



### Act I Scene II

St. Joseph and his brethren meet King Arviragus and his men





Joseph reproaches them for their lack of faith after having been so miraculously guided by angels to such a fair land, and then raises his staff and strikes it into the ground. The staff blossoms and changes to the "Holy Thorn," and the brethren exclaim "A miracle!" while Joseph prophesies that each year, at the feast of the Nativity, "shall it bear flowers as a token to Mankind of the coming of Christ." Then enter the British King Arviragus, with six chieftains, and questions the strangers as to their errand. Joseph announces that they are servants of Christ, "come hither to proclaim His Gospel." Arviragus, pleased at their appearance, gives Joseph a portion of land, whereon to build a church, and twelve hides of land to the brethren. For this Joseph returns thanks and asks for the name of the fair isle whereon they have landed, and Arviragus tells him that it is "Yywswytryn, the Glassy Isle, the land of dead warriors and of chiefs — Avalon, the Island of Apples ! ". Joseph says that it shall no longer be the land of the dead, but of the living, and calls to the brethren, in the name of Christ, to commence building the first church in the land of Britain. Joseph and Arviragus depart together, to the accompaniment of sacred music, and the singing of psalm lxxxiv., "Quam Dilecta," by an invisible choir. The brethren set to work, and with timber and wattles begin to rear the first church, the veritable "vetusta ecclesia" of the ancients. The acting in this scene was really impressive, an exceedingly realistic representation of St. Joseph being given by the Rev. G. W. Berkeley; while Mr. Carter was an ideal British Chief.

The brethren, in their grey garb, the skin-clad natives, and women and children in gaudy robes made up a fine picture.

#### St. Joseph with David

St. Joseph and the brethren with the hermit







