

DUNSTER CASTLE, SOMERSET.

THE ancient and picturesque village of Dunster, in Somerset, and the venerable castle which has looked over it for ages from the hill, constitute together one of the most interesting scenes which we could find in all the West of England. Here one of the most powerful comrades of the Conqueror, William de Moion, established himself, and became one of the greatest landowners in the West. His castle is mentioned in the Exchequer Domesday, and he is recorded to have held sixty-eight manors in Somerset, Devon, Dorset, and Wilts. His son William was one of the great nobles who espoused the cause of Queen Matilda, and in the "Gesta Stephani," which came from a hostile pen, it is recorded that he placed knights and foot soldiers in his impregnable stronghold by the seashore, whence he issued to roam over the country, "sweeping

it as with a whirlwind." After him came many other great men of his house, some of whom played a large part in our baronial history.

The castle of Dunster is of high antiquity, but the oldest existing part, so far as can be known, appears to date from about the time of Reginald de Moion, who died in 1257. The great entrance gateway, the series of projecting, semi-circular towers, and the thick curtain wall which connects them, probably are the work of this Reginald. It is not easy to say, however, why the lower ward of the Norman castle required rebuilding so soon. Reginald was succeeded by his grandson John, after whom, in regular descent, followed other Johns. One was an active warrior under Edward I., and greatly distinguished himself in the wars in Flanders and Scotland, and sat in



THE UPPER GATE OF THE KEEP.