

a credit to the age, and that future chroniclers of the art may have something more to record than that the English glass painters of the nineteenth century were only remarkable for their subservient and undeviating practice of copying the works of past ages; that they had not sufficient courage or skill to break through the bonds imposed upon them by custom, or by those either regardless or ignorant of purposes of art,—that we shall see designs carried out which, while retaining all the good points of the ancients (and they abound in glorious effects of colour and adaptation) shall keep pace with the impetuous superiority of high and decorative art, compared with the period when the works referred to were executed, always bearing in mind to preserve the character of the building, and endeavour to carry out upon the glass the feeling and design of the architect. The glass should appear a natural portion of the decorations, without destroying the harmony of the whole, as is unavoidably the case if the windows are left plain, as may be seen in St. Paul's Cathedral, where the observer is continually disappointed and annoyed by the glare of light from the windows, and thus prevented from discerning many of the beauties of the building.

A new era in thought was about to commence in the fine arts of this country, since the prince consort and the Government had decided to give their attention and patronage to them, which will open a vast field for the display of talent, and if a just and liberal spirit seconded the appeal, we might rest assured the result would be such as to do honour to our age and country.

IMPROVEMENTS IN DWELLING-HOUSES.

Str.—Understanding from the press that it is in contemplation to amend the Metropolitan Buildings Act, I beg your perusal of the following suggestions:—

1st. That in arching all coal cellars, the hoie be made as near the curb-stone as possible, thereby allowing more room for the public to pass during the process of shovelling coals into the cellars, besides obviating the necessity of carrying them from the wagon; further, they would fall off the back of the cellar, whereas now it is compulsory to have a man below to throw them there.

2nd. That all rain-water pipes be carried to the bottom of the house to the drain, thereby avoiding the overflowing of the footpath.

3rd. That in all future new buildings and alterations, it shall be compulsory on the builder to make an ornamental ventilation in the ceiling of every room.

4th. That every builder be compelled to build a brick, or fix a stone, iron, or other substantial basin to every water-closet, which, besides being a very important desideratum towards public health, will prevent the drains from being so frequently stopped up.

5th. I would suggest that all water-cisterns for domestic purposes be abandoned, and that there should be a continual supply of water by a water-cock, placed on every floor in the house, thereby affording also a purer supply than has heretofore been had; as I know that cisterns are not often cleaned out. There should be no stint in the supply of this most useful article. Under the present system there is much waste; many houses have no ball-cock fixed to the supply pipe.

6th. That it shall be compulsory on every landlord to fix a bell in every room in the house, all communicating with one handle at the street door; to have engraved thereon, "alarm bell," so that in case of fire it would afford an effective mode of arousing all the inmates at one and the same time, to a sense of their danger; and that there be a punishment for any person wilfully ringing the bell without just cause.

I beg to subscribe myself, your humble servant,
C. DUNFORD.

36, Brownlow-street, Drury-lane.
As hints to builders and others, these suggestions (not now made for the first time) deserve consideration; but we are not prepared to recommend that even the best of them should be enforced by Act of Parliament.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS.—A notice has been issued that all works intended for the ensuing exhibition must be sent in on Monday, the 6th, or Tuesday, the 7th of April next.

THORNTON ABBEY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

By the kindness of Mr. J. H. Parker, we are enabled to transfer to our pages, from "The Archaeological Journal,"* the following illustrated account of Thornton Abbey, Lincolnshire, written by him. The building, as will be seen, has some remarkable features, and the account will be read with interest, especially by those who are seeking to learn with accuracy, the precise date of the various changes which took place in the pointed style of architecture.

In that essentially church building age, the twelfth century, William le Gros, Earl of Albemarle and Lord of Holderness, grandson of Odo, Earl of Champagne, one of the followers of the Conqueror, was distinguished among the Anglo-Norman barons for his liberality towards the religious orders. Besides the house of Albemarle in Normandy, three stately foundations in England—the Cistercian Abbots of Vaudey, or de Valle Dei, at Edenham, in Lincolnshire, and of Meox, in Yorkshire, and the Augustinian Monastery of Thornton-upon-Humber, acknowledged him as their founder. He died in 1180, and is recorded by the grateful chronicler of Thornton as "an eminent founder of monasteries."†

Thornton Abbey was the first in point of date of his establishments in England. It was founded on the feast of St. Hilary A.D. 1139, the fourth year of King Stephen. In the following year and on the same feast of St. Hilary, which fell on a Sunday, Walthof, a kinsman of William le Gros and prior of Kirkham in Yorkshire, went to Thornton, taking with him twelve canons of Kirkham, whom he established in the new monastery, constituting one of them named Richard, the first prior. He was afterwards made abbot by a bull of Pope Eugenius the Third.

It seems probable that at this early period and for many subsequent years, the buildings were merely of a temporary nature. We learn from the chronological history of the abbey, a valuable manuscript to which reference will be made hereafter, that the stone for the great altar was purchased in 1262, in which year the dormitory was roofed. In 1263 the foundations of the body of the church were laid, and it was still building in 1282, when the chapter-house was begun. The choir of the church appears to have been covered in by the year 1315, when certain payments were made for painting the roof; and the chapter-house, which was commenced in 1232, was paved in 1303. In the year 1323 a new cloister and kitchen were built; the former was roofed in 1325, in which year we find an entry of payments for the foundations of the columns of the church, possibly of the nave. The presbytery in the choir was built between 1443 and 1473.

Thus it appears that the church alone was in progress during a period of nearly two centuries: and perhaps no better materials are extant for illustrating the gradual advance of a great monastic edifice than those collected by the curious, but nameless, monk of Thornton, who, in the early part of the sixteenth century, when the abbey was yet flourishing, and all its monuments were in existence, applied himself to collect the names of the "masters of the fabric," and to discover the dates of the several parts of the building.

After increasing in wealth and power under a succession of twenty-three abbots during a period of 402 years, the community of Thornton was suppressed in 1541, and a portion of its revenues applied to the endowment of a college, consisting of a dean and prebendaries, dedicated to the Holy Trinity. This establishment lingered till the accession of Edward the Sixth, when it shared the fate of the abbey.

A curious discovery was made more than a century ago during some excavations near the chapter-house. It was first mentioned by Stukeley,‡ who visited the ruins in 1722; he says, "that upon taking down an old wall there, they found a man with a candlestick, table,

and book, who was supposed to have been immured." Tradition has always asserted that it was an abbot who suffered this punishment, and it may be worth while to inquire how far popular belief is in this case correct. Two of the abbots of Thornton were persons of doubtful reputation. Thomas Gretham, the fourteenth abbot, was deposed in 1393. The author of the MS. history gave him so bad a character, that a possessor of the work in the last century tore out a leaf containing the account of his abbacy "to prevent," says Tanner, in a note to the volume, "scandal to the Church;" thus in the absence of this leaf we are compelled to rely upon the next suspicious entry in the book. Speaking of Walter Multon, eighteenth abbot, the writer says, under the year 1443, "he died, but in what manner or by what death I know not. He had no obit, as the other abbots have, and the place of his burial hath not been found." It is almost impossible to doubt that this significant passage has allusion to the fate of Walter Multon, who expiated his unrecorded offences by suffering that dire punishment, which we have reason to believe the secret and irresponsible monastic tribunals of the middle ages, occasionally inflicted upon their erring brethren.*

The only part of the buildings of this abbey which remains at all in a perfect state is the entrance gatehouse. This is one of the finest existing in any part of England, and presents some remarkable features. It is of the perpendicular style, and was built soon after the sixth year of Richard the Second, A.D. 1382, the date of the license to crenellate it. Many of its details are extremely beautiful (see engravings). The approach on the exterior is over a bridge across the moat, protected on both sides by massive brick walls, with an arcade of pointed arches on the inside, supporting a wall or alure behind a parapet, and a dwarf round tower at the end of each. These were evidently adapted for defence, and are of a later character than the gatehouse itself, perhaps as late as Henry the Eighth; but there is the groove of the portcullis in the jamba of the outer gateway a, fig. 3, as if it had always been intended for defence; the disturbed state of the country, or the dread of invasion, it being near the mouth of the Humber, probably rendered the additional outworks necessary at a subsequent period.

The gatehouse itself is built chiefly of brick, cased with stone; the outer face, or west front, is partly of brick, with stone dressings, the design being very rich and elegant; the entrance gateway is ornamented with three shafts in each of the jamba; its pointed arch is richly moulded, with flowers in one of the hollow mouldings; over this is a segmental arch, with hanging foliations; the side arches are partly concealed by later brickwork, but do not appear to have ever been open.

This west front of the gatehouse is divided by four octagonal turrets into three compartments; in the centre are three elegant niches, with the figures remaining in them, and rich canopies; in each of the side compartments is a similar niche, one of which also retains a figure. The archway is groined, and has finely sculptured bosses and moulded ribs springing from good corbels, panelled in the lower part. The upper part ornamented with foliage like the capital of a pillar. The manner in which the mouldings of the ribs are made to intersect each other at their springing is very clever and interesting (fig. 7). The whole of the mouldings of this gateway are remarkably bold and good early perpendicular, built soon after 1382.

The east front or inner face of the gatehouse has also four octagonal turrets, but is of plainer character than the outer face. Over the gateway is a very elegant oriel window of bold projection, springing from a corbel, with a stone roof, and pinnacles at the angles; the lights are divided by transoms; over this is another window of four lights with a flat arch. The turrets have all lost their original terminations, and it is difficult now to say in what manner they were finished, but probably by a battlement, as Mr. Mackenzie has conjectured.

The rooms over the gateway, lighted by the oriel window, is of considerable size; it is approached by a winding stair in one of the turrets, the top of which has a very good

* Longman, London; Parker, Oxford.

† "Præclarus comes, et ceteris monasteriorum fundator." MS. Tanner, No. 166, Bibl. Bod.

‡ Walthof's name does not occur among the priors of Kirkham in the last edition of Hasted's Monasticon.

§ Fundamentum ecclesie corporis.

¶ At the Dissolution it consisted of six monks, with the following servants:—a larderer and pottager; 3 chaucer cooks, with three boys; a cowherd and two boys; 140 ewe-herds; a carter and postholder; three gardeners and their boys; a curer of herms; the sub-cellarer's boy; a messenger, and a keeper of ducks or wild fowl.

¶ Itinerarium Curiosum.

* The skeleton of a man thus immured was found some years ago at Gillingham Abbey. Another instance, was recently discovered at Temple Bruer, in Lincolnshire.