

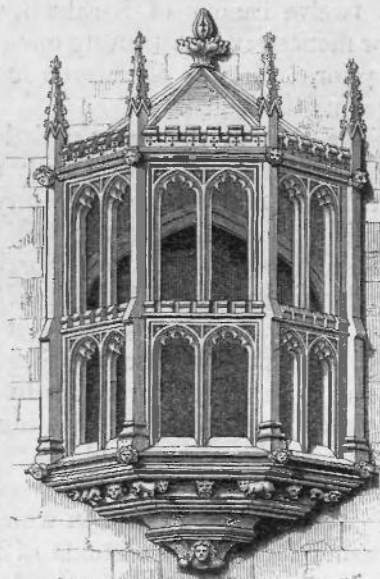


EX. 26

THE GREAT MOSQUE

SYRIA - 1907

THORNTON ABBEY, LINCOLNSHIRE.



Oriel Window in Gatehouse. circa 1392.

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 abbeys of Vaudey, or de Valle Dei, at Edenham in Lincolnshire, and of Meux 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^a.”

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.

^a “Præclarus comes, et eximius monasteriorum fundator.” MS. Tanner. No. 166, Bibl. Bod.

In the following year and on the same feast of St. Hilary, which fell on a Sunday, Waltheof^b, 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^c, 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 1282 was paved in 1308. 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 muniments 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^d 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

^b Wallevus: his name does not occur among the priors of Kirkham in the last edition of Dugdale's Monasticon.

^c *Fundamentum ecclesiæ corporis.*

^d At the Dissolution it consisted of six monks, with the following servants:—a

larderer and potager; a master cook, with three boys; a cow-herd and two boys; two swine-herds; a carter and poulterer; three gardeners and their boy; a curer of herrings; the sub-cellerer's boy; a messenger, and a keeper of ducks or wild fowl.

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^e, 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 hath 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^f.

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. 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

^e *Itinerarium Curiosum*.

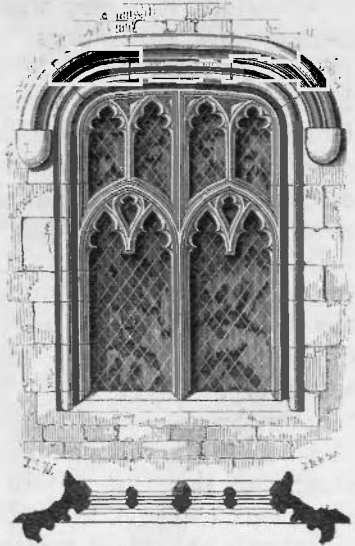
^f The skeleton of a nun thus immured was found some years ago at Coldingham

abbey. Another instance was recently discovered at Temple-Bruer, in Lincolnshire.

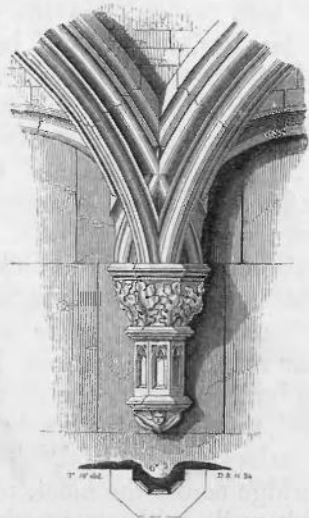
round tower at the end of each. These were evidently adapted for defence, and are of a later character than the gatehouse itself, perhaps as late as Henry VIII. : but there is the groove of a portcullis in the jambs of the outer gateway *a*, as if it had always been intended for defence; the disturbed 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 jambs: 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.

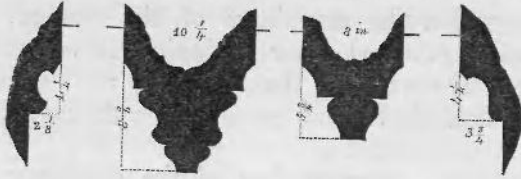
This west front of the gatehouse is divided by four octagonal turrets into three compartments; in the centre are three elegant niches, with the figures remaining in them, and rich canopies: in each of the side compartments is a similar niche, one of which also retains a figure. The archway is groined, 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



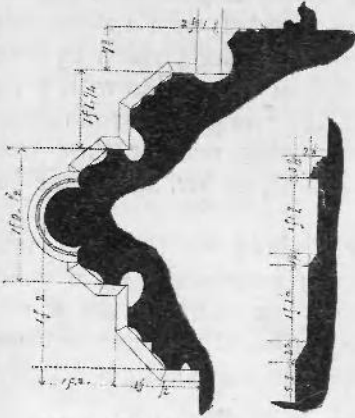
Window of Second Floor. East front of Gateway.



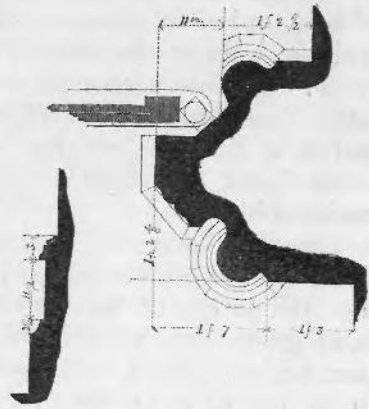
Corbel showing Springing of Rib between Gate-arch and East Archway.



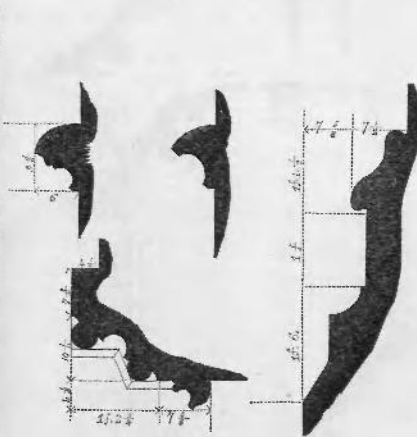
Detail of Gromting of Gatehouse.



Jamb of East front of Gatehouse.



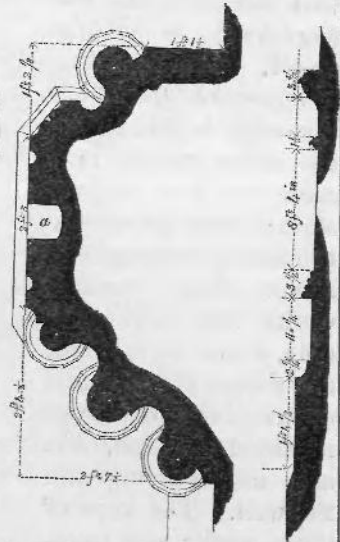
Jamb of Archway on which the Doors are hung
Arch moulds the same.



Jamb of Door South side.

Base Mould of West front.

String of Purret of East front



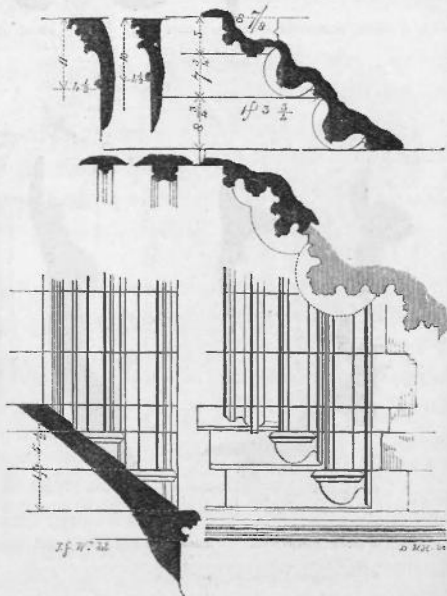
Jamb of entrance to Gatehouse, North front.

manner in which the mouldings of the ribs are made to intersect each other at their springing is very clever and interesting. 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 octangular 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.

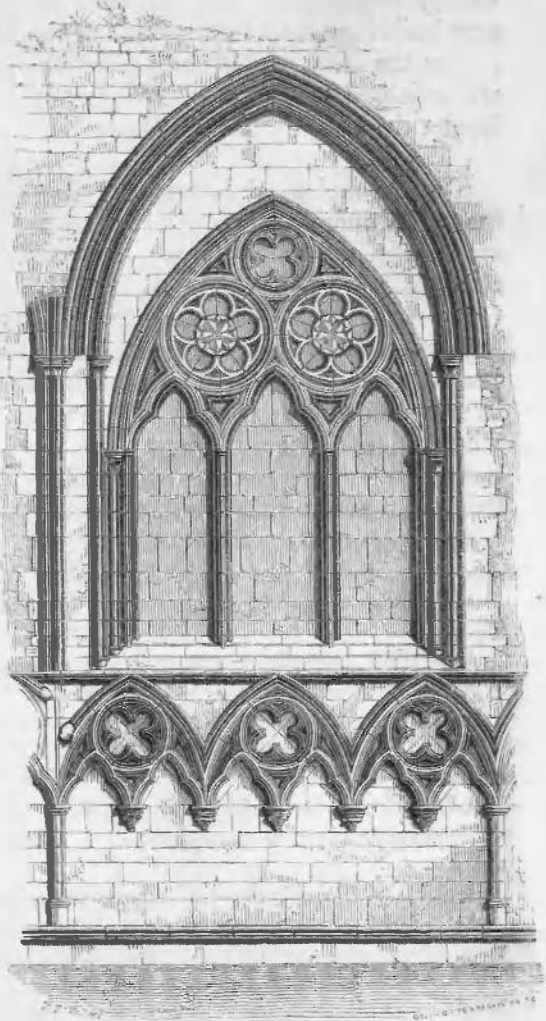
The room over the gateway, lighted by the oriel window, is of considerable size; it is approached by a winding stair in one of the turrets, the top of which has a very good groined vault, with foliated ribs of singular but elegant design. From its large size, and the buildings attached to it on either side, it appears probable that this gatehouse was the residence of the abbot.

Some of the other domestic buildings of the abbey remain in a more or less ruinous state; they are of the thirteenth century, and retain their groined vaults with arch ribs only, which spring from the walls without shafts or capitals, or even moulded imposts, the arch merely dying into the wall. The keys of these vaults are ornamented with bold and good Early English bosses, the sculpture of which is very free and characteristic.



Details of Window of Chapter House. A D 1292.

Of the chapter-house two sides are tolerably perfect, ornamented with paneling, in imitation of a window of three lights, with foliated circles in the head, and an arcade under it, the whole of very good Early English work, beautifully moulded, the date of it being, as already stated, circa 1282, early in the reign of Edward the First. Some small portions of the church remain, and belong to nearly the same period. One aisle of a transept has its vault and arcades on each side of very singular Early English work, with corbels in the place of capitals. There is one window, or rather panel, of three divisions, with three foliated circles in the head, filled up with a sort of fleur-de-lis; under this is an Early English piscina.



Elevation of North east Bay of Chapter house. circa 1283.

The mouldings of this work are very good, as will be seen by their sections on the opposite page. They are Early English, but late in the style, approaching to the Decorated. A comparison of these remains, with the choir of Merton college chapel, Oxford, described at p. 137 of this volume, and there shewn to have been built at the same period, will go far to prove that in the beginning of the reign of Edward the First

the change of style was in rapid progress, and that works previously commenced were finished in the earlier style, while new buildings then begun were in the later.

For the drawings of details which illustrate this article we are indebted to Mr. T. J. Willson, of Lincoln. The plate is from a drawing by Mr. Mackenzie.

I. H. P.

The chronological history of Thornton abbey is preserved among Tanner's manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. It is a small folio, written on paper, and was probably compiled between the years 1500 and 1536. Two leaves in different parts of the book, relating to the abbacy of Thomas Gretham, have been torn out for the reason already assigned, although Tanner's note applies only to one of them. From the accounts at the end of the volume, which seem to be imperfect, the following extracts referring to the works of the church have been selected as affording useful dates. It may be remarked that the manuscript is very inaccurately written.

A.D. 1262^g. In uno lapide ad magnum altare. viiiij. s. In coopertorio dormitorii v. s. In xliiiij. cimentariis. In fractione Mcccc. lapid. xix. s. viij. d.

A.D. 1263—1264. In xij. operariis circa fundamentum ecclesie. xlj. s. viij. d.

A.D. 1265. operariis circa fundamentum ecclesie iij. li. iiij. s.

A.D. 1295 Carpentariis circa tesaurariam.

A.D. 1308. Cimentariis circa pavimentum capituli.

A.D. 1313. In ij. carectariis terre de Ledes^h pro tegula ecclesie coloranda. x. s. iiij. d.

A.D. 1315. In Dccc. foliis auri. vj.^c. foliis argenti. xij. li. plumbi rubei. xl. li. plumbi albi pro celatura chori. l. s. ij. d. Pictori chori xlvj. Sept.^l iij. li. xvj. d.

A.D. 1325. In fundamento columnarum ecclesie. vij. s. vij. d.

A.D. 1328. In stipendio pictoris pro choro, coloribus et aliis necessariis circa deping'. x. li. precium pictoris. x. li. xij. s. ij. d.

A.D. 1391. Willelmo Carpentario de Riping in partem volte ecclesie x. li. Magistro Willelmo Rypon Carpentario in plenam solutionem et ultimam pro celatura^k corporis ecclesie. x. li.

A.D. 1393. Item solutum tegulatoribus facientibus tegulas pro pavimento ecclesie. lx. s. Item ij. M. tegulis pro pavimento ecclesie. c. s.

A.D. 1492—1517. Abbot John Lowthe "fecit voltum que est sub campanile. . . Et due Crosyles^l ex utraque parte campanile et tres partes claustrii fecit cooperire cum plumbo.

^g At this period Walter Hotoft, afterwards abbot, was "master of the fabric."

^h Earth from Leeds in Yorkshire.

^l For 46 weeks.

^k Apparently the wooden roof.

^l The transepts.