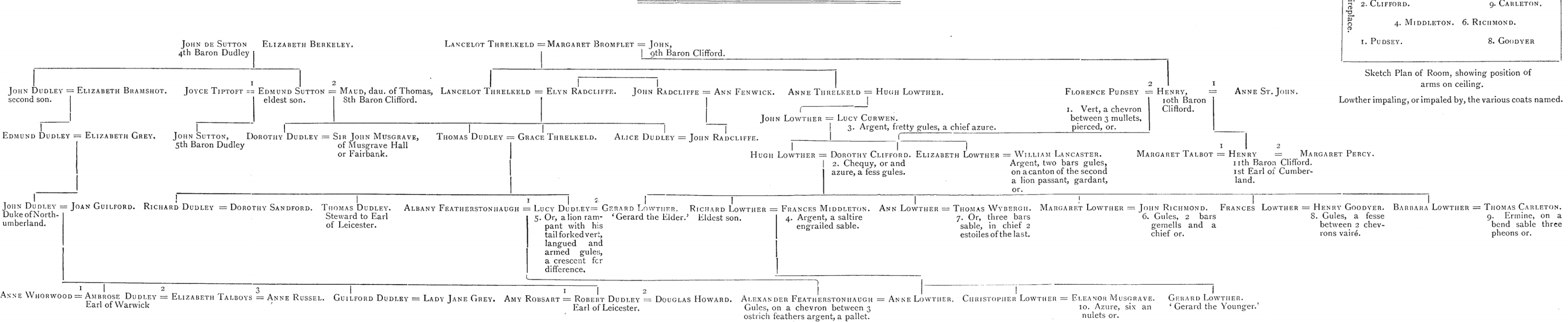


ART. XXIX.—*Gerard Lowther's House in Penrith, with some particulars of his life.* By WILLIAM JACKSON, F.S.A.  
*Read at Penrith, July 11th, 1879.*

IT is rather singular that our two meetings this year should be so arranged as to bring us to two houses belonging to individuals who, during the latter part of their lives, regarded each other with the bitterest hatred. Expressions of this feeling towards two leading members of the Lowther family have been recorded by Lord William Howard, and I have no doubt it was reciprocal. We find ourselves in the house of a Gerard Lowther, respecting whom great perplexity has arisen, he having been confounded with his nephew of the same name, and even with other Gerards who were contemporary; and I am yet in doubt as to some wives of Gerards, the only solution that as yet presents itself being that Gerard, the nephew, was married four times, and lived to the age of nearly one hundred years, both suppositions being improbable. I will endeavour to supply, from trustworthy sources, outlines of some of the principal events in the life of the builder and original inhabitant of this dwelling, and you will I think conclude that it was a scheming head that plotted during waking hours and rested at night in this ancient abode.

Gerard Lowther was brought up to the study of law, and was entered at Gray's Inn. He was a younger brother of Richard Lowther, so well known as having, in virtue of his office of Sheriff of Cumberland, in 1568 taken in charge or received to hospitality! Mary, Queen of Scots, after her flight from Langside. The Lowther family were then, principally through their two Clifford alliances, rising into more than local importance, and were pushing their way amongst the greater actors, most of whom were actuated  
 by

Genealogical Sketch showing alliances of Lowthers, Dudleys, Cliffords, Threlkelds, Pudseys, Radcliffes, &c., and indicating the respective shields of arms, and their owners, in Gerard Lowther's House at Penrith, now known as "The Two Lions Hotel."



by the most selfish motives, little in accordance with the overwhelming importance to all future ages of the momentous era in which they lived. Although the marriage of Richard's and Gerard's father, Hugh Lowther, with Dorothy, the daughter of Henry, Lord Clifford, the shepherd Lord of Wordsworth's beautiful poem, was a great alliance; he in some way, now entirely unknown, became alienated from his father, Sir John, and we find record of the unhappy dissension in the will of the latter, dated February 3, 1552, in which he is disinherited in the following words: "I wyll that all my landes shall dyscend to Richard Lowther according to a fine levied at London, paying to his father foure scoore markes yerelye. Also I wyll yt Jarrard Lowther shall have Soulbie and Settbarre during his lyffe natural, and after his decease to return to the right heres of me, sayd the Sir John Lowther;" and further on, as if Richard were not altogether in his good graces, he says, "Also I wyll Henrye Lowther and Rychard Lowther shall nothing at doo with any goodes of myn."

A blank to us, but which was no doubt a very busy period in the lives of the two brothers, who were apparently always associated in the most fraternal concord, occurs from this period to November 13, 1569, at which date I find a letter, given in the State Papers, written by one of the brothers, probably Richard, in which, however, Gerard is alluded to, addressed to the Earl of Westmorland, indicating how deeply they were concerned in the machinations of that date, "up to the very hilt in treason," for the scheme they were to carry out was to release Queen Mary, and to place her at the head of the "Rising of the North." "I was to make my immediate repair, according to your letter, but being taken by Sir Geo. Bowes, and losing my horse, I am stopped at Barnard Castle. I learn by the sight of Sussex's letters, that they rest only on commission from the Queen for the apprehending of the Earl of Northumberland and you. Sussex writes that the news  
of

of France has so amazed them at court, that they can give him no direction, but refer him to confer with the Marshal of Berwick, which he says, he cannot now do, as the Earl of Northumberland has stopped all passage, and stays all advertisements. He also writes that he has despatched the post with advertisement "that the Earl of Northumberland took up Topcliffe Bridge, and rang the bells backwards, and that Holland, his man, gave evil words to the messenger." "You write that the enterprise of the chief purpose is resolutely upon the Earl of Northumberland to be attempted, and that the enterprisers desire my company. This I offer, seeing my stay hinders present conference. Appoint me one day and I will meet with four good horses, either at Derby, Burton, or Tutbury, there to perform with the foremost man or die. To the furtherance thereof Lord Wharton and my brother will join. But coming to you upon one hour's warning, with their whole power, is not possible; their strength lies so far distant in the country, and all passages are stopped: but they will not fail to meet you in passing through Lancashire. Let nothing persuade you to the contrary, but that Lord Wharton and Richard Lowther are, and always will be, your own, and join with you until death." On the next day, Nov. 14th, the Earls made their famous triumphant entry into Durham, and it was not until the 23rd that Mary was taken away further south, out of the reach of the plotters. On the 28th of January following, Sir Frances Leek writes from Newark Castle to Cecil: "Before receipt of yours for apprehension of Gerard Lowther, Richard Clyburne, of Clyburne, gentleman, Thomas Turner and Lawrence Busher, servants of the Duke of Norfolk, and Thomas Clyburne and John Craggs, servants of Richard Lowther, came to this town, and brought three of their master's geldings. I have examined them, and Turner showed me protests against the Dacres and others, and a letter of attorney from the Duke of Norfolk. Turner confesses that Lowther came with them to Royston

Royston on the 25th, but left at 4 a.m. next morning, saying he was riding to speak with a friend, but would meet them at Huntingdon, and they have not seen or heard of him since. His own servants deny all this. I hear of a marriage concluded between Lord Wharton's daughter and Richard Lowther's son. I send this letter "for life" that order may be taken for Lowther before he has fled far; he is not well horsed." On the 31st of the same month, Henry Lord Scrope, Lord Warden of the West Marshes, writes to Cecil:—"In your letters, I understand that it is Her Majesty's pleasure to have Gerard brother of Richard Lowther apprehended. Accordingly I have caused secret watch to be laid for his coming into this country, and written to Richard Dudley, a gentleman of good credit and secrecy, who dwells within two miles of his brother's house, by all secret means to learn of his repair thither, or to Mr. Middleton's, the father-in-law of Richard Lowther, to one of which he will most likely resort if he comes in these parts, and to apprehend and bring him safely to me. I have also appointed Christopher Dacre to cause the like to be done about Mr. Duckate, his brother-in-law's house, within three miles of Middleton's. I have in like manner authorised Dacre for his apprehension, who can both wisely and secretly go about the same." I would draw your attention to the fact that the Richard Dudley named here is the Lord of Yanwath, who subsequently became Gerard's brother-in-law. On the 6th of February, Scrope again writes to the minister—"I trust shortly you shall hear what has become of Leonard Dacre, as my Lord Lieutenant has sent Lord Hunsdon and Mr. John Forster instructions for his apprehension. I have caused a strict watch to be kept for the apprehension of Gerard Lowther, but he is very likely to have fled, as it is reported he came as far as Royston, but made an errand by the way, and has not since been heard of.

I have not found in the State Papers any further record  
relating

relating to the brothers at this critical period, but in autumn, 1571, a plot, in which the Duke of Norfolk was a principal, and in which the Lowthers were to have taken part, was detected, which led to the execution of that weak nobleman. The duke sent six hundred pounds in a bag to his agent in Shropshire, with instructions in cypher to the following effect: — You shall receive, sealed up in a bag, by this bearer, Mr. Brown, of Shrewsbury, £600 in gold, which must be presently sent to Lowther to be conveyed into Scotland, to the Lord Herries, to be sent to him forthwith to Liddington and Grange. This money is shifted for at this present only to relieve their friends, which otherwise for want of money are like enough to revolt: and therefore, the more speed must be used therein, which I pray you do by all possible means." On June 2nd, 1572, the Duke of Norfolk was executed, and his ambitious schemes came to an end, but how the Lowthers extricated themselves is to me a mystery. Apart from any participation with the Duke of Norfolk in his treasonable schemes, it would seem that Gerard Lowther had been the duke's counsel, and instrumental in prosecuting the claim of the heirs general to the Dacre estates, that is, the claim of the duke's own sons (whose wives the heiresses had become) against the male Dacres; and this Gerard continued to do in a most protracted litigation extending over many years, as we learn from a statement drawn up by Lord William Howard, given in the appendix to his *Household Books*, ably edited by the Rev. George Ornsby, lately published by the Surtees Society. For some cause, Gerard saw reason to take an opposing course, and ultimately became advocate for the Queen: and for doing so, he and his brother Richard are loaded with the most vituperative epithets, and their actions ascribed to the basest motives. I know not, and probably no one will ever unravel the complications of this quarrel, but it is a fact, that at that period the descent of great honours and large estates was  
greatly

greatly influenced by the personal feelings of the monarch towards each of the claimants ; and if it was right on the part of the Howards to prosecute their claim, a similar course was open to others.

It was about this time that Gerard Lowther married Lucy Dudley, the widow of Albany Featherstonhaugh ; she was second cousin, once removed, to the Queen's favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. One of her brothers was his steward, and the eldest of the family, the possessor of Yanwath, was receiver for the Queen's mines at Keswick. Alice Dudley, of the preceding generation, had married a Radcliffe of the Isle ; and the heir general of that family, Dorothy, had then become the wife of Francis, the then heir male of the Dacres ; and as a curious proof of the very unsettled state of descents at this period, I may mention that whilst Francis was unsuccessful in his litigation as male heir of the Dacres, his wife was unable to establish her rights as heir general of the Radcliffes. Thus, about this period, Gerard became associated with a party, who had views with regard to the Dacre estates opposed to those entertained by the Howards, and we know how powerfully the sentiments of the wife influence the actions of the husband. In 1589, we find in the State Papers a record of a petition of Richard Lowther, Gerard Lowther the elder, and Gerard Lowther the younger, for the lease of certain lands in Westmorland, promised to them by the Earl of Leicester for their services. How it fared with them I cannot tell, but Leonard Lowther, otherwise Hudson, enjoyed the Rectories of Bowness and Greystoke by the presentation, or interest, of Richard Lowther about this period, and I suppose they did not go without their reward for their services to the Queen, who, however, whether the prize was a wide spreading Barony, or a Spanish Galleon, always took the lion's share first.

In 1585 Gerard erected this mansion, one inducement  
 Z Z to

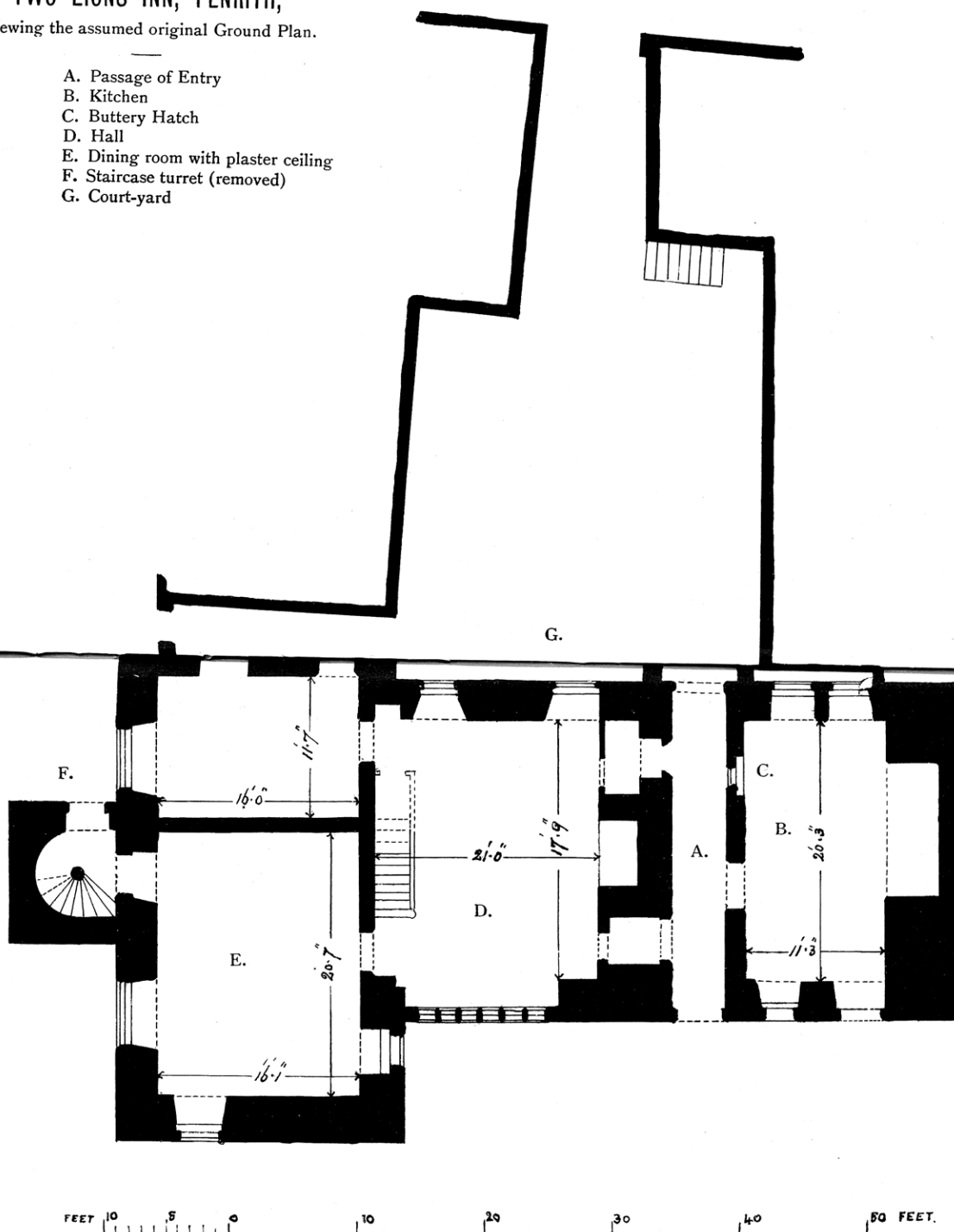
to which might be that his wife's aunt Dorothy, the wife of John Musgrave, was residing at Musgrave Hall. In 1594 he was sheriff of Cumberland. I do not at present know the date of his death, but it was very near that of his wife, who, I am informed by a friend who has afforded me other valuable assistance, was buried at Penrith, Dec. 30, 1596. The arms given on ceilings in different parts of the house, are explained in the Genealogical Sketch I lay before you, and are those of Gerard's relations and connections. Curiously the artist, in place of carving his coat reversed on the mould, has, in many cases, executed it correctly, the result being in such cases an impression which is not correct, wherein the lady's coat impales that of her husband, or the bend is transformed into a bend sinister; and these are errors not unfrequently committed by an unskilful engraver.

All, with the exception of the Featherstonhaugh coat, are found on the ceiling of the room now used as a billiard room, together with the date 1585. On the lintel of the fireplace in the hall are three shields of arms, the central one being Lowther impaling Clifford, the one on the right Lowther impaling Middleton, and that on the left Lowther impaling Dudley, with an annulet. On the ceiling of the hall are several arrangements of shields. In one part a shield bearing Lowther impaling Clifford forms a centre, round which, in a circle, are shields bearing Lowther combined with Middleton, Dudley, Richmond, Wybergh, Goodyer, and Carleton; in another part a shield bearing Lowther impaling Dudley, with an annulet and the letters G. L.; and in a third part of the same apartment, the arms of Featherstonhaugh. On the ceiling of a room over the billiard room are the arms of Lowther impaling Dudley, with a crescent, the letters <sup>G.L.</sup><sub>L.</sub> for Gerard and Lucy Lowther, and the date 1586, all within a circle. The same arms have been repeated over and over again, for many loose shields are preserved in the house, which  
owes



# **TWO LIONS INN, PENRITH,** Shewing the assumed original Ground Plan.

- A. Passage of Entry
- B. Kitchen
- C. Buttery Hatch
- D. Hall
- E. Dining room with plaster ceiling
- F. Staircase turret (removed)
- G. Court-yard



owes its name of the "Two Lions" Inn to two shields bearing the Dudley arms which once existed on the outside of the building.

How the house descended after Gerard's death, I am unable to say, but I presume it passed into the hands of Gerard the younger, his nephew, who also died childless, when his possessions were distributed among his relations.

I must acknowledge my obligation to our late esteemed and much regretted member, Professor Harkness, for having drawn my attention to this house.

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## APPENDIX.

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### GERARD LOWTHER'S HOUSE, OR THE TWO LIONS INN, PENRITH.

BY MICHAEL W. TAYLOR, M.D.

The old mansion house of Gerard Lowther stands at one angle of the open area known as Great Dockray, which space is one of those large triangular-shaped market-places which are found to exist in some of our shire capitals and market towns. It was here that the bull ring formerly had its station. Abutting on this locality there are two fifteenth century mansion houses which still present some of their original features, and possess some historical interest: one of these is Dockwray Hall, now an Inn,—the Gloucester Arms,—and the other is Gerard Lowther's House, or the Two Lions Inn, or the Bowling Green Inn.

In connection with, and supplementary to, the interesting historical narrative of Mr. Jackson, and his commentary on the heraldry of the house, it may be of advantage to give a short account of the structure. However, the building has been so cut and modernized, that, externally, but little remains to elucidate its ancient character, but our member, Mr. Hippolyte Blanc, of Edinburgh, has kindly executed a ground-plan to scale, in which he has been at pains to shew the assumed original arrangement of the mansion, and he has also given a drawing of the elaborate plaster work ceiling, with its heraldic shields, which have been distinguished by Mr. Jackson. The following description will therefore be limited to a notice of such of the ancient details as may be found remaining.

Some

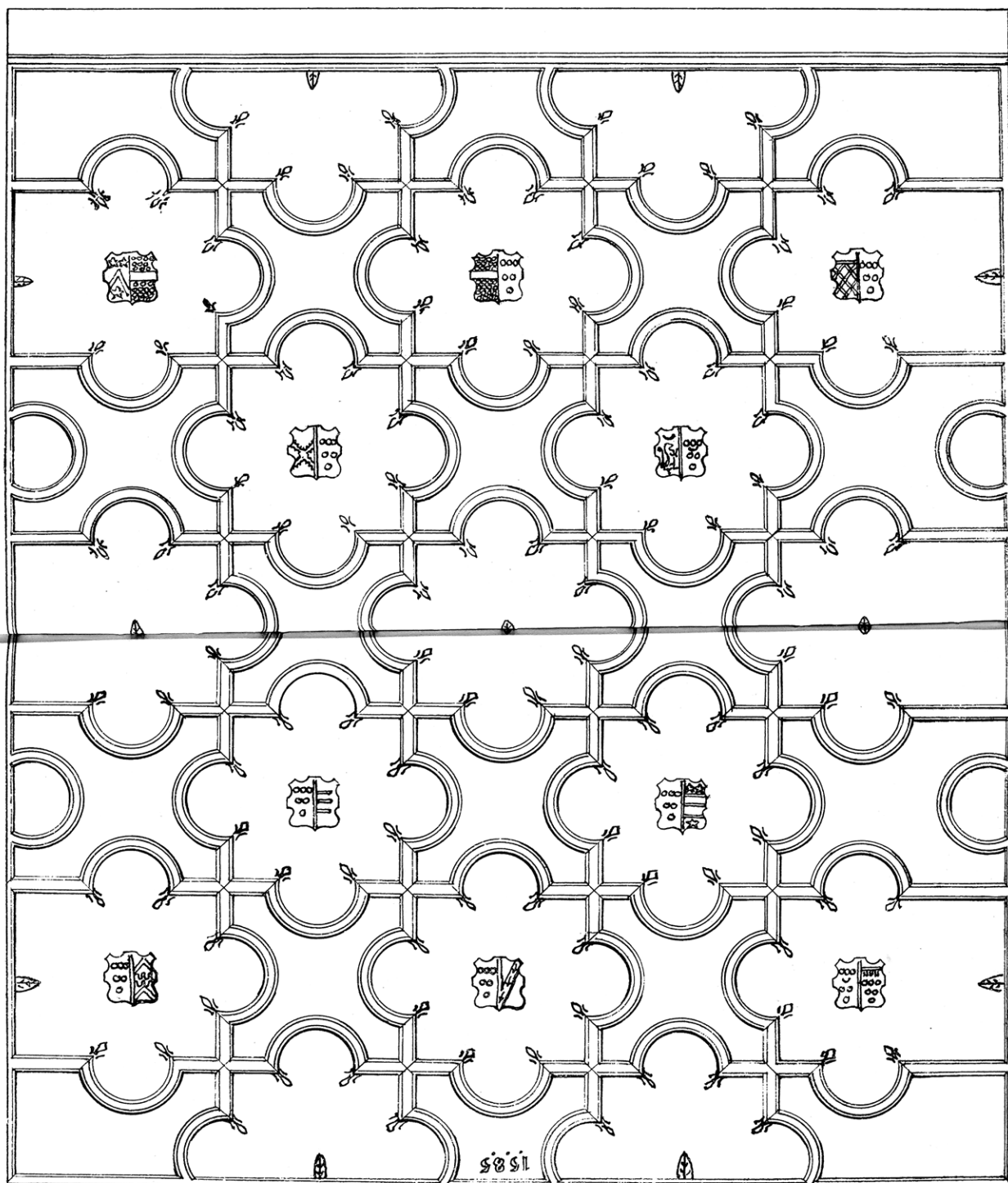
Some portion of this building belongs probably to about the period of Henry VII., and the subsequent date of 1585, which we see inscribed on the plaster-work of the ceiling in two or three places, marks the period when these decorative arrangements and certain alterations were undertaken by Gerard Lowther.

The house stands back from the street, from which it is separated by a front court-yard, formerly closed by a gateway, by the sides of which I have learnt there anciently stood two gate lodges built of clay and cobbles.

Facing the court-yard is the range of the main part of the house, which consisted of a long two-storied building with attics. An open porch was formerly projected before the main entrance. The doorway has a pointed elliptic head. The fine old massive door still remains; it is doubly and transversely planked with hewn oaken boards, studded with heavy-headed iron nails set in diagonal rows and clenched behind; the iron bands, terminating in crosslet ends, go across the whole breadth of it, and the old lock is still attached; the head is arched to fit the lintel. A ponderous oak draw-bar,  $7\frac{3}{4}$  by 6 inches thick, lies in its tunnel in the substance of the wall. On the right hand of the passage of entry is the hall, and on the left was the kitchen, now an out-house and stable. A doorway from the back part of the kitchen opened into the passage, and on the opposite side, there were, as was not unusual, two doorways opening into the hall at the screens—one on each side of the fireplace. Opposite to one of the doorways into the hall, near the main entrance, we have an arched opening in the kitchen wall affording a good example of a buttery hatch,—an arrangement such as is usual in old colleges, but which is not often found existing in domestic remains in the north.

Through this hatch provisions and supplies were doled to retainers and passed to the diners in the hall, directly from the kitchen and pantries. The opening is 1 foot 6 inches in length, and 1 foot 4 inches in height, and is formed of an ogee-headed arch, with a round and hollow moulding set in a square frame widely splayed. The kitchen chimney-piece still remains; it is worked in masonry into a segmental arch of about 11 feet span, with the edge plainly chamfered. The principal light to the kitchen was from the court-yard, by a square-headed mullioned window of two lights, with segmental heads. It has been cut to form a doorway.

The annexed plan gives what are supposed to have been the dimensions of the original dining hall, and the position of the main window looking out into the gardens behind. This window has been removed, and is now found built into an addition at the back of the house; it has been a fine long low window of six lights, with segmental-arched  
been



TWO LIONS INN, PENRITH, PLASTER CEILING.

heads, which with the mullions are moulded in cavetto, and it has been surmounted by a similarly moulded square hood label. Though now out of place, and appearing as an insertion, it is evident from the return of the walling, and from other circumstances, that these remnants have formed the big window of the dais of this little hall, as is evolved in Mr. Blanc's plan. The large window of the dais is always an important feature in all the fifteenth and sixteenth century halls which we have visited in this neighbourhood. It is seen in the beautiful bay at Yanwath, which belongs to the Transitional, between the Decorated and the Perpendicular periods; it also occurs in the later halls of Barton Kirke, and in a modified form at Hornby Hall. It is the type which is preserved in examples of these centuries still remaining to us in many of the central and western shires of England, and most gloriously in those old college halls of Oxford and Cambridge, which have been best kept up and preserved. And it is remarkable that here in this market town in the north, in this little inn, we should find elaborated, the same domestic arrangements, and relative position of the kitchen and buttery hatch, and the screens and the dais window, which prevailed in the spacious colleges and castellated halls of the fifteenth century. Moreover, on referring to the plan, it will be seen that the similitude to college halls is perfected still further, for in these it is almost invariable to find one or two doors of exit behind the dais to a private apartment or retiring parlour beyond. The same arrangement obtains here; the position of the dais was opposite the fireplace and screens, and behind the dais, were two doorways leading to a parlour and the lord's dining-room.

This latter apartment is well worthy of inspection, on account of the ceiling in plaster work so richly ornamented in geometric designs, and with coats of arms. This work is of about the same date as that of the similar ceilings of Hornby Hall and Barton Kirke, described elsewhere in this part of the Transactions. Mr. Blanc's drawing, and Mr. Jackson's discriminative commentary on the arms, illustrate the subject so completely that further description is unnecessary.

A turret, now removed, formerly abutted on this part of the building behind, and it contained a newel stone staircase, which gave access to the upper rooms. These latter have been so modernized as to present nothing of particular notice, and the wooden panelling, of which this house at one time possessed a large quantity, is now almost all removed. A few heraldic escutcheons, charged with the same arms as those depicted in the lord's dining-room, occur in several of the rooms and passages. The pleasure and the grounds behind the house have been used for several generations as a well-kept public bowling-green.