ART. XXXIV.—*Naworth Castle.* By C. J. FERGUSON, F.S.A.

Read at Naworth, August 27th, 1879.

ON leaving the railway station the visitor to Naworth Castle descends the declivity of a hill which slopes towards the valley of the Irthing. Within the Park Gates to his right, occupying the summit of the hill, is a circular ring of earth, about fifty yards in diameter, which probably protected a settlement of Neolithic men, while immediately before him, the towers of the Castle rise high above the trees, which, until nearer approach, conceal the main part of the building.

The Castle itself stands on a triangular tongue of land formed by the Castle beck on the north and a little rivulet on the south which unite and flow into the Irthing. "The banks of these streams," writes Mr. Ornsby, "as they approach the point of junction become exceedingly steep and precipitous, and the walls of the Castle rise from the summit of a natural escarpment of rock and cliff, formed by the sides of the ravine down which their waters flow."* The site of the Castle was thus naturally protected on three sides, and required only an artificial barrier to the east, facing that gentle declivity down which the Castle is approached.

Both Carlisle and Cockermouth Castles stand on similarly situated sites, namely, a promontory between two rivers, and in that interesting monograph, the History of a Fortress, by Mons. Viollet de Duc, we read how his ideal fortress was planted on such an ideal promontory. When the science of artillery was unknown, or in its infancy, the occupier of the site selected for Naworth Castle was in a good position to bid defiance to an enemy who

* Lord William Howard's Household Books, Surtees Society, Vol 68, p. lxv.

attempted

attempted to ford those streams, and climb those steep banks which surround the Castle on all sides but the east.

The earliest documentary information we have about the Castle is the license to crenellate,* which was granted in the 9th of Edward III., 1335, to Ranulph de Dacre. who had, in 1313, married Margaret de Multon, and with her acquired the great inheritance of Gilsland. The question at once arises, whether the date of the licence to crenellate is the date of the building, or merely of the sanction given to a previous unauthorised crenellation or fortification. The paper immediately preceding this suggests one or two reflections bearing on this point and worth consideration, before we turn to the evidence of the Castle itself.

First, we know that in 1280 the *caput baroniæ*, or chief mansion house of the Barony, was at Irthington, and we know that the Multons, who held the Barony until 1313, resided mainly on their Lincolnshire estates. They were hardly likely to have done much building in the north. In 1323, a treaty was made between England and Scotland, one of whose articles was that no fortresses were to be erected or repaired in Cumberland, except those already made or making, and of this treaty Ranulph de Dacre was appointed a Conservator. In 1332, occurred the great raid in which Lord Archibald Douglas spread desolation over Gilsland for thirty miles. No mention is made of his attacking any fortress in the district: the reason probably was that Irthington was in decay, and else there was none other beyond mere pele towers: this raid, and the others that followed, would be reason sufficent to induce Ranulph de Dacre to apply for the license to crenellate, with the intention of erecting a strong fortress in his Barony. This was granted to him in 1335.† That

* Printed in the Newcastle Volumes, Arch. Inst., Vol. II., pp. 94, 95.

† The name Naworth, Naward, (the new work) does not occur in either the Chronicle or Chartulary of Lanercost that I am aware of.

 date

date we may take as the date of the Castle: but those of us, who have followed the wanderings of this Society, know that the earliest habitations we find in Cumberland and Westmorland, after the intrusion of the Normans, took the form of a small fortified tower, called a pele tower, and that a pele tower forms the germ from which almost every important house in the two counties has grown. We may presume that some such building did exist before the license to crenellate, in 1335. On making a careful examination of the Carlisle or Old Tower at Naworth I find that the lower part of it, and of the southern curtain wall, is not later than the tenth century, and that it has formed the original pele tower from which this great castle grew. It is 29 feet square,—almost identical in size with the Strickland tower at Rose Castle, the lower portion of which was erected by Bishop Halton, who came to the see in 1292. It is curious that in this case also, the license to crenellate was not obtained either by him or his immediate successor, but by John Kirby in the year following the date of the one for Naworth, viz., 1336. From the position this tower occupies, I think it was the intention of the first builder to form a large enclosure, or bailey, and that that was done by erecting across the eastern unprotected front of the site, a curtain wall similar to that now existing on the southern side of the Castle, but occupying the position of the present eastern face of the Castle.*

In front of this eastern face, the defences would be completed by a deep moat, stretching nearly from stream to stream, but stopped at each end, and crossed by a wooden drawbridge.

* The face of the Castle towards the railway station is certainly the eastern front and is so called by Messrs. Buck in their view. But Mr. Ornsby calls it the southern. This error is shared by most people, and arises from a notion that the railway runs east and west, which it does not do. He calls its flanking towers the "south-west" and "south-east" towers. His "south-west" tower is called in the Household Books the "Old Tower," the "Carlisle, Carle, Carliol Tower." It has been called the Chancellor's Tower.—See Household Books, p. lxvii. It might well be called the Dacre tower, from the arms on its parapet. His "south-east" tower is known as "Lord William Howard's," or "Belted Will's Tower." I am obliged to be particular, as the mistake has caused much confusion.

An

An examination of the Dacre tower shows that it consists, on the ground-floor, of the vault, which possesses a narrow single-light window, and that a staircase in the thickness of the wall gives access to the chamber on the first floor. It is evident that the boldly ribbed vaulting is a later addition, because, first, it is superior in construction to the wall from which it springs and into which it is inserted, and not worked as part of the wall; secondly, because no provision is made in it for the window; and thirdly, because the doorways on the floor above shew that they have been constructed for a floor at a lower level. I take it, therefore, that Ranulph de Dacre, when he obtained license to crenellate, found this tower, either not entirely completed or in ruins, and that he completed this tower and battlemented it and the walls of the bailey, and that he formed the gateway to the castle on its southern side, towards the beck, and built, probably, sundry offices under the protection of the curtain wall.

The next documentary evidence we have about the Castle is written in the heraldic devices of the great builder of the family, Thomas Lord Dacre, whose handiwork is to be found at Askerton, Kirkoswald, Dacre, and Drumburgh Castles, as well as here. I take it that in his time the Castle had fallen into bad repair; and that he repaired the existing buildings and made considerable additions to them. He rebuilt the upper part of the Dacre tower, as may be seen by his initials on the battlements, and in my opinion he entirely rebuilt Lord William Howard's Tower. This tower possesses great peculiarities: it has evidently been an after thought, and has been constructed at a more recent period than the external walls of the quadrangle, which at this point form a very acute angle. Lord William's tower consists only of the upper stories, which rise above the battlemented walls of the main building. They are carried upon a deeply ribbed series of arches spanning the angles between the walls of the quadrangle,—a most daring and ingenious piece

piece of construction. It may be noticed that on the outside, on the northern face, a deep recess is formed in the wall, and that above this recess are a series of machicolations, that is to say, a series of corbels projected from the face of the wall, with spaces between them so constructed that hot water or hot lead might be showered on any unwelcome visitor. I am inclined to think that a gate existed here, which would account for the machicolations and for the necessity of the superstructure being carried on an arch.* It is probable that in the earlier building the gateway between the battlements was carried across this void by a wooden bridge, which, in case of any part of this defence being taken by an enemy, could be cut down so as to isolate the remainder. Be that as it may, for some sufficient reason, the Howard tower is carried in mid air by an arch, and for all the support they give it the lower staircases and walls below it, towards the courtyard, might be cleared away. In the unfortunate fire which took place in 1843 this actually occurred.

By the kindness of Mr. George Howard I have here a tracing taken by him from a drawing made by the late Mrs. Johnson of Castlesteads, clearly showing the tower and the flying arch on which it stands. This fire-proof arch saved the tower from destruction, but the outer arch was much injured, for from the style of the masonry I cannot but think that the outer rib is modern. An ancient rib must, however, have existed, as it carries above it ancient work.

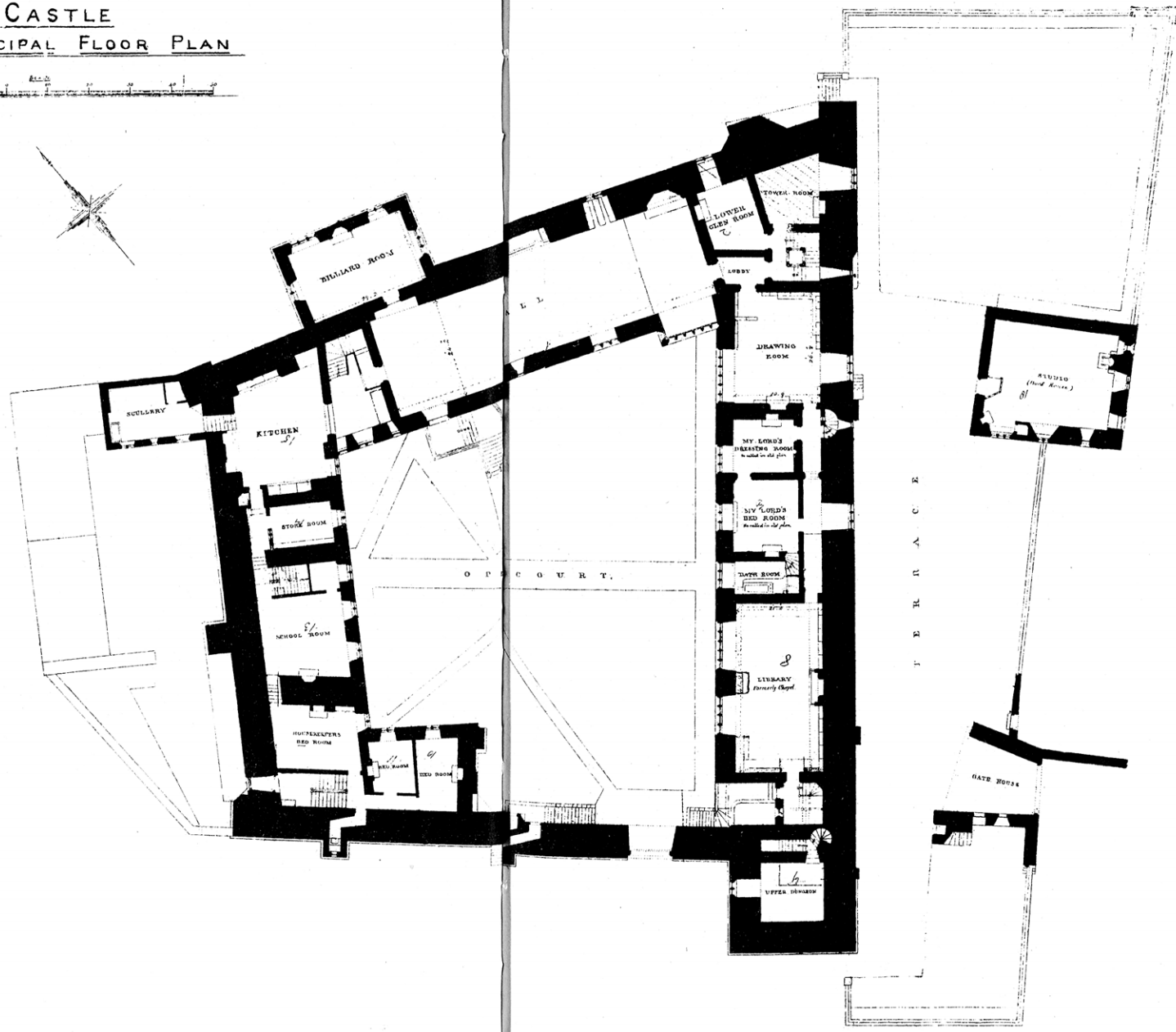
At the time this aerial tower was built, viz., the early part of the sixteenth century, the institution of the "Hall" had arrived at its greatest perfection, and Lord Thomas

* *Note by the Editor.* I hesitate to subscribe to my brother's idea that the recess on the northern face was ever a gateway. I believe it to have been contrived, (i,) to buttress the flying arches that carry the tower; (ii,) to make the rooms on the upper stories less awkward shaped,—less acute angled than they would otherwise have been. The first object was obtained by building a buttress on the northern face, a few feet from the northern angle of the building; the second by throwing an arch from the top of this buttress to the angle. The machicolations seem to me false.

built

NAWORTH CASTLE

PRINCIPAL FLOOR PLAN



built himself a hall, substantially the one that we are now assembled in. He built the gate-house, the boat-house,* and other offices, and thus formed an outer bailey or court-yard. I have always been somewhat surprised that this outer courtyard should have been so small in comparison with the inner bailey or courtyard proper. It was, as at Carlisle and Rose Castle, generally much larger than the inner courtyard. I conclude that Lord Thomas Dacre was confined by some already existing works,—most probably the moat,—and this is further confirmed by the fact that the gate-house is irregular in plan, being considerably wider at its inner end, as if it had been built to cover a cramped space. The shell of this gate-house now only remains, and all traces have been obliterated of the draw-bridge, chains, portcullis, or other devices for the repulse of an attack.

The boat-house consisted of a detached tower, with an entrance at its lowest story to the moat; on it are the initials "T. D.," the Dacre scallop, and "E. D."

Other buildings existed which connected the boat-house with the gate-house, and beyond the gate-house again was the guard-room. These buildings were taken down after the fire in 1844. Various views of them by Buck, Sparrow, &c., show that they had been much tampered with,—their parapets and battlements removed, and gable roofs substituted. Lord Thomas Dacre, however, left the character of the building unaltered: he left Naworth, as he found it, a feudal fortress. His successors would seem to have had no great affection for the place: they seemed to have resided, as they certainly died, at Kirkoswald, and they were buried in Carlisle Cathedral, though Lord Thomas and his father lay in Lanercost. The Dacre successors of Lord Thomas probably did little to Naworth,

* *Note by the Editor.* Why so called is unknown: may it not be the *bote* house, where was kept the *house bote*, or *fire-bote*, *i.e.*, the wood for fuel. (Confer Jacob's Law Dictionary, *bote*) The upper part would probably be a barn, or hayloft.

and

and during the troubles that followed the death of the little Lord George, Naworth was left to take care of itself, and is said to have been unoccupied for thirty years. I am not, therefore, surprised to learn that in an inquisition taken in the 31st of Elizabeth the condition of Naworth is described as under: —

"There is situate within this manor a faire Castle called Nawarde Castle, it is of good strength and built four square with a gate house to the same.

"One of the squares thereof hath never been finished further than the walls thereof, of two or three stories high.

"It is all covered with lead and the said Castle is situate about seven miles from Scotland, it is now in very great decay in all parts and the outhouses and other houses and offices are utterlie decayed."*

To Lord William Howard then we must attribute the domestic character that the Castle bears. He effected the repairs of Lord Thomas Dacre's work, as shown by various coats of arms and initials To him we must assign the rebuilding of the upper portion of the tower, which bears his name, the construction of the gallery along the eastern face of the Castle, and the decorating and beautifying of the whole structure. His Household Books, so admirably edited by the Rev. George Ornsby, show that if the first Dacre built a fortress, the first Howard made it into a complete house of the Jacobæan character. Mr. Ornsby states

"That the year in which Lord William actually made Naworth Castle his residence cannot be fixed with absolute precision, but in 1604 we find him taking a note of the heraldic bearings, and inscriptions around them, which then adorned an armorial window in the ancient fortress of the Dacres at Kirkoswald, and he was possibly even then making arrangements for the transference of its stained glass to Naworth Castle. In 1604 he gave a silver mace to the Corporation of Morpeth and he was certainly living here in 1607."

A leaden spout on the south front of the Castle bears

* Printed in Hutchinson's Cumberland, Vol. I, p. 123.

the

the initials $\frac{1602}{W.H.}$ and thus proves that Lord William was at Naworth earlier than Mr. Ornsby conjectures. Spouting the roof would be the first repair almost that he would undertake.†

It is, as Mr. Ornsby states, to be regretted that no Household Book is extant previous to 1612: it would have been interesting to have traced from its commencement the work which Lord William carried on at Naworth, both as regards the restoration of the Castle and the alterations made in it, as well as the improvements of the wide domain which surrounded it. We do, however, learn something:

In 1619 the Carlisle Tower was repaired.

In 1620 two sundials were got.

In 1622 the roof of the chapel at Kirkoswald was taken down and put up at Naworth. A picture, in glass possibly, for the chapel is mentioned.

In 1624 the Abbey bridge over the Irthing was built. In the same year a representation of the Crucifix in stained glass, and some old arms (no doubt releaded,) were inserted in the chapel windows.

In 1626 another Crucifix of glass was got.

In 1628 new windows for the parlour and chamber above, and a great window in the gallery are mentioned; and later there are various tradesmen's accounts for work done at Naworth,—among them an item for "plastering the new gallerie."

From Gibson's Camden we learn that the first Earl of Carlisle "repaired the Castle and made it fit for the reception of a family." He died in 1684. The third Earl of Carlisle probably did some more in that way. He built Castle Howard, and he employed his architect, Vanburgh,

* During the Society's visit a suggestion was made that this date was 1662. Mr. George Howard afterwards examined it, and it is clearly 1602. As the point has been raised as to whether this spout existed before the fire of 1844, it is as well to say that it did. It is mentioned, and the date of 1602 given in Jefferson's Guide to Naworth, published 1839.

to

to put a music gallery and screen in the hall at Naworth.

The fire of 1844 necessitated a remodelling which was carried out by Mr. Salvin. The exterior happily preserves its ancient face much as left by Lord William. The interior was almost gutted at the time of the fire.

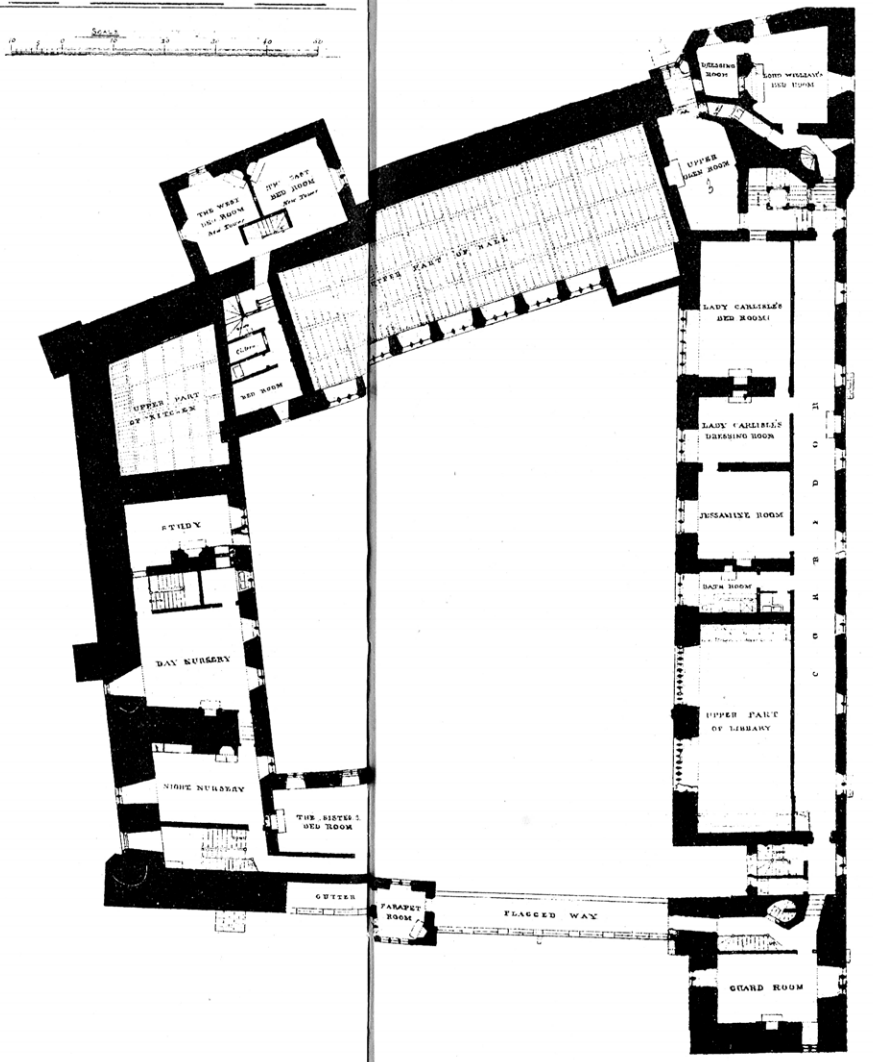
Commencing with the outworks on the eastern face of the Castle, the only side which would be exposed to attack, we find, first, well defined traces of a moat running through the garden. This moat must have been crossed by a drawbridge, all trace of which has now gone. The gate-house shows two eras in its history, the white stone in the lower story and the red in the upper,—the works repectively of Lords Thomas Dacre and William Howard. The boat-house I have already referred to.

The long lines of the eastern face, flanked by the Dacre and Howard Towers, are, I conjecture, the work of Lord Thomas Dacre, but I think that in them Lord William made considerable alterations. He formed the gallery which gives access to the rooms facing the quadrangle,—a fashion that only came in in Queen Elizabeth's time,—and I think that he did this by taking down the upper portion of the external wall and rebuilding it with the facing stones only, thus reducing it to the moderate thickness of two feet, whilst that below it is about seven. In the Howard Tower, the upper story of which he rebuilt, he formed his library and oratory. At the foot of the circular stairs still remains the iron door which closed the access to it. The roof of the library is extremely beautiful; the timbers, which are of oak, stout and substantial, are richly moulded with characteristic fourteenth century mouldings,—the panels between being filled with richly wrought tracery. This roof is said not to fit the room, and to have been brought from Kirkoswald. But to me it appears to fit.

The low-browed door in the eastern face gives access to the inner quadrangle, which is accessible also on the south by a large archway in the southern curtain. This entrance

NAWORTH CASTLE

BED CHAMBER PLAN



trance was, prior to the fire of 1844, filled by a block of buildings now taken down, but which were, I fancy, erected by Lord William Howard to complete "one of the squares thereof never finished further than the walls thereof."

The west side is occupied by kitchen offices, which appear of eighteenth century work, and were probably remodelled by Vanburgh, by the direction of the Earl, who built Castle Howard.

The hall occupies the northern side. It was formerly roofed with some of the spoil from Kirkoswald, and in the panels of the ceiling were painted the portraiture of "King Brute and all his successors, Kings of England portraited to their waists, their visage, hats, feathers, garbs, and habits." In Lord William's time a drawing room, then a modern luxury, had been partitioned off the high end of the hall, and at the low end, taking the place of a more ancient screen and music gallery, stood Vanburgh's classical gallery, and in front of it stood the four monsters so familiar to every visitor to Naworth.

Since the fire the hall has been wisely restored to its old proportions by the throwing again into it the dais, which constituted Lord William's drawing-room.

The east side of the court is occupied by the living rooms and the long gallery. The arrangements will be best understood by reference to the plan. The library was formerly the chapel. Prior to the fire of 1844 it contained some painted glass and coats of arms, described in Vol. I., Hutchinson's Cumberland, p. 135-6.
