

ART. VIII.—*Acorn Bank, Temple Sowerby.* By H.
HOWARD BATTEN.

Read at Acorn Bank, September 10th, 1908.

TEMPLE SOWERBY originally was Sowerby only, but soon after the manor came into the hands of the Knights Templars it became Temple Sowerby, to differentiate it from Brough Sowerby and the other Sowerbys in the north. So far I have found no evidence to show how the manor of Temple Sowerby came into the possession of the Knights Templars; it was theirs in 1228, and probably before that date. Possibly it was a grant from the Vetripont family, who at that time were the great people of these parts.

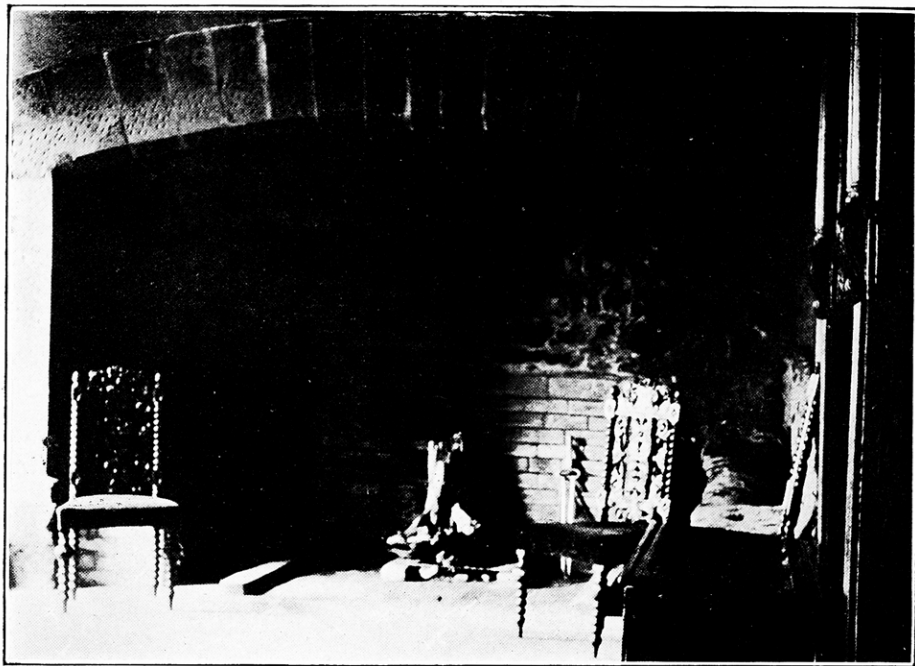
It is a matter of history that the Knights Templars were suppressed by Clement V. in 1312, and the manor then came into the hands of Robert de Clifford, and in 1323 passed by Act of Parliament to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, an early instance of the great doctrine of "cy-pres." Amongst other possessions of the manor at that date was the watermill, which is still in existence, and which you passed between the gates and this house. The mill was then valued at £4 a year. Whether it was compulsory on the tenants of the manor to have their grain ground at this mill I cannot say. The Knights of St. John held the manor until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII., when it was acquired by Thomas Dalston, a member of the great Cumberland family of the Dalstons of Dalston. Nine members of this family held the manor in turn, and the last of them was Sir William Dalston, who died in the middle of the eighteenth century. I find in *The Beauties of England and Wales* (1814), vol. xv., the following statement:—"Sir

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William Dalston was succeeded by his sister Mary, wife of William Norton, whose daughter married . . . Hodgson, and their daughter Mary married John Boazman, Esq., of Ayliffe, the present proprietor of this sweet domain." The manor still remains in the Boazman family.

The oldest portion of the house is, I think, the western portion of the west wing, and two rooms at the back of the house. The eastern wing is of comparatively recent date, and was added by John Dalston early in the eighteenth century. When the eastern wing was added, a front of similar design was added to the western wing; in one part of the western wing the old wall, with a modern front, can be distinctly traced. The only sign of antiquity in the exterior of the western wing is a corbel about twenty feet above the ground; it is evidently a human head, and I make it out to be that of a knight or soldier with a helmet of the fourteenth century. Nearly the whole of the upper part of the western wing is one long room, sixty feet by twenty feet, with a spiral staircase, and chimney in the middle. I find that this room has for a long time been called the chapel, and that the side room at the southern end, which is two feet lower, has been known as the inner sanctuary. The windows on the old (west) side are all blocked up, but I think from the stone work they are earlier than Tudor. The two windows in this "inner sanctuary" are blocked up, and at present it looks more like a dungeon than a portion of a chapel; but at one time it must have been well lit, and portions of the walls and ceiling show it has been used for some purpose not unworthy of decoration. There are remains of rough fresco work with a pattern of stars two or three inches apart, and under this pattern I have found remains of another pattern, which must have been in existence before the stars.

There are two principal staircases in the house—one of wood, which dates from 1656, and another comparatively modern one of stone. The wooden staircase has gates at



THE FIREPLACE IN THE HALL ; ACORN BANK
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the bottom, which I take to be dog-gates, to prevent dogs having the run of the upper floors. The central window on the half landing has three interesting medallions of painted glass containing the armorial bearings of the Dalstons quartered, I take it, with the arms of families with whom they are connected—such as Hutton, Crackanthorpe of Newbiggin, Carleton of Carleton, Lowther of Lowther, Nevinson of Newby, Fletcher of Hutton, and Fallowfield of Strickland. On the outside wall is a carved stone of charming design; on the top is a “D,” with an acorn inside, below are the initials “I” and “L,” united with a lover’s knot, and below on a raised panel is the date 1656. The “I” is for John Dalston (born, 1605; died, 1692), and the “L” represents his wife Lucie, daughter and heiress of Richard Fallowfield of Melkinthorpe. The stone staircase is evidently of a much more recent date; it is a handsome one of its kind; the decorations were carried out by Italian workmen.

The large open fireplace in the hall is interesting. In many of the stones the symbol adopted by the individual mason is clear.* There is a similar fireplace in the kitchen, but the stones have been painted so often that it is impossible to discover the mason’s mark. The study of the marks of masons is interesting; it is a sort of by-product in archæology. The chief drawback to it is the paucity of designs, the mason being naturally limited to straight lines, and few of them. The hall fireplace was built up, and a breast with an ordinary grate occupied the centre of it, a deep cupboard being left on each side. A year ago I obtained the consent of Mrs. Boazman to take away the breast, and I found, as I had expected, the arch behind. The oak panels in the hall were at the same time put up. With the exception of the large

* The marks in this chimney I have observed at Aigues Mortes, west of the delta of the Rhone, where nearly every stone in the remarkable walls, about fifty feet high and a mile in circumference, is marked. Aigues Mortes was the starting part for many of the crusades, and was built about 1200.

carved piece with the Dalston and other coats of arms the oak is very indifferent ; it all came from other parts of the house, chiefly from a servants' bedroom. In the north-west corner of the kitchen is a spiral staircase, which runs to the top of the house. Many of the stones are wanting in the lower part, and have been replaced by wooden ones. All the rooms on the ground and first floor have well-carved wood mantelpieces and doors. I think these carvings date from 1740, when the house was altered by John Dalston, and when the stone staircase was erected. There is a tradition that the carvers were eleven years in the house engaged in their work. There were at one time many pictures in the house. *The Beauties of England and Wales*, dated 1814, states "this mansion contains many excellent paintings." One of the few remaining is a portrait of one of Christopher Dalston's sons, who became an Irish bishop. The panel on which it is painted is let into the wall, and this saved it from being carried off with the others during a minority of one of the owners. The tapestries in the dining room and the stone staircase have been unfortunately cut in many cases. I am inclined to think they may be Flemish.

In front of the east wing is a sun-dial ; it consists of an oval stone table bearing a square stone, on which stands the stone bearing the dial. The stone is engraved on two sides with the arms of Dalston and Fallowfield, with the initials "J. D." and "H. F." I can find no record of any marriage which these initials suit. The other two sides of the stone bear inscriptions. On the west side the Dial speaks—"Staie, Passenger, tell me my name and thy nature." The Passenger replies—"Thy name is Dieall, I a mortal creature." On the east side the Dial again speaks, and says :—

Since my name and thy nature soe agree,
Think of thyself when thou looks upon me.

The dial was at Millrigg, the old house on the Cumber-



CARVED PANELLING IN THE HALL ; ACORN BANK.

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land side of the Crowdundale, about a quarter of mile further down the beck below the gates. Millrigg was often occupied by members of the Dalston family either as a dower house or a residence for one of the sons.

The tenants of the manor for many years claimed to enjoy the privileges of the two great semi-religious bodies who so long held the manor, especially in being exempted from tolls, on the ground that "they are free wherever the King is free." In conclusion, I should like to say that the name of the house, "Acorn Bank," which sounds so very modern, has, I know, been in existence from Tudor times. Nicolson and Burn in 1777 suggest that it arose from the number of ancient oak trees, which run along the bank for nearly a mile.