THE CASTLES OF DUDLEY AND ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH

By W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in north-western Europe saw the climax of medieval civilisation in its characteristic expression, feudalism. Of feudalism the outward and visible sign was the castle. It embodied the architectural manifestation of three main purposes :—(1) the desire for domestic accommodation suitable to a lord and his household ; (2) the need for defence ; and (3) the material expression of the pride and pomp of a ruling class. Properly considered, therefore, the medieval castle is far more than merely ' military architecture.' It is the characteristic product of a political organisation and a social system, both now extinct, that flourished in a particular area of Europe at a definite stage in its development. In a sense it is an architecture militant rather than military, because it represents the *format* given to their abodes by the tastes and necessities of a high-spirited and martial aristocracy. But the abode remains the essence of the castle, and its defensive features are superimposed by the needs and spirit of the time. In this respect the castle, as a private, fortified, manorial residence, differs radically from the public defence works of the Roman Empire or of modern states, where the end is national and the function purely military, without the admixture of any domestic element.

As feudalism reached its climax during the period under review, so also the feudal castle then achieved its highest development and splendour. Feudalism as we know it originated in France, and was introduced into Britain by the Norman Conquest. With feudalism the castle appeared upon our soil, but once planted here it proceeded to develop along somewhat different lines. In both countries, the earliest castles consisted of earthen mounds crowned with a timber tower, and having, as a rule, an attached courtyard defended by a

ditched and palisaded bank, which sheltered wooden domestic buildings. Later a stone tower superseded the mound with its wooden superstructure, and the fenced bank was replaced by a stone curtain. Thus was evolved the characteristic *enceinte* castle of the thirteenth century, with its high and massive curtain walls, defended by flanking towers, of which one is larger and stronger than the rest and forms the donjon or keep, while other two are set on either hand of the gatehouse.

So far, English and French development have proceeded along parallel lines. But from about the middle of the century a divergence occurs. The French engineers continued to regard the donjon as the most important part of the castle. In their hands it was developed more and more, until in the fourteenth century it assumes enormous and sometimes very complex forms, as in such castles as Pierrefonds or Vincennes or Beaucaire. But proud and splendid as is the aspect of such donjons, and greatly though we must admire the ingenuity manifested in their construction, in the last analysis they stand for a gospel of ' defeatism.' They are an admission by the defence that in the long run the attack will prevail—that the time will come when, with the curtain breached or mined or scaled, or the gatehouse rushed, the garrison will have to withdraw themselves, *if they can*, into the purely passive defence of the donjon, wherein, sooner or later, they will be starved into surrender.

The English engineers refused to accept this postulate, and took higher ground. For the reasons stated, the keep is given up, and from about the middle of the thirteenth century it becomes an obsolescent feature in an English castle. Instead, the engineers of the great fortresses erected in the newly conquered territory of Wales, during the reign of Edward I, began to devote more and more attention to the gatehouse. For the entrance was always the weak spot in a castle. However carefully it might be protected, the chances of battering it in were greater than the chances of overthrowing the thick and lofty curtain walls. Recognition of this fact led to an extraordinary develop-

ment of the gatehouse in these Edwardian castles. Instead of a mere portal between two towers, the entry now takes the form of a long trance pierced through an imposing building with two great frontal towers, between which the portal is deeply recessed. This trance is defended by one or more portcullises and pairs of folding gates, as well as by holes in the vaulting through which missiles and burning materials can be hurled down. On the upper floors of the gatehouse building are important and spacious halls and private rooms, often including a chapel. These rooms provide living apartments for the lord or governor and his family and their personal suite, as distinct from the quarters of the general household and retainers, who were accommodated in the great hall and its attendant buildings that lay along one or more sides of the courtyard. Thus the gatehouse succeeds the keep as the most important single building in the castle. Like the old keeps, also, it is planned as a single defensive unit, in which the lord could live in isolation in time of peace, and which in case of siege might be held independently of whatever fate overtook the rest of the castle. Sometimes there are two such gatehouses, one in front and one in rear of the main enclosure.

Along with this new type of gatehouse, the Edwardian castles show for the first time recognition of the possibilities of systematically planned concentric lines of defence. There are now not one but two, sometimes even three, successive envelopes, so managed that the inner is always more lofty and commands the outer. Hence even if the latter be captured it is difficult for the besieging host to convert it into a new parallel against the defence. For the same reason, in the outer or subordinate envelope the towers are open at the gorge, so that after this envelope has fallen the defenders can shoot into their interiors and make them untenable by the attack. This arrangement is in marked contrast to the older castles, where each tower was considered as a separate post and is closed against the courtyard, so that the towers may continue to resist even after the courtyard has been occupied by the assailants. Experience had shown that this

multiplication of obstacles, by impeding the free movement of the garrison from point to point, was apt to become a danger rather than an advantage, for it exposed the defenders to be trapped and cut off in detail. Hence in the Edwardian castles the utmost accessibility is usually provided along the parapet walks and sometimes also by mural galleries all round the castle, so that the defenders could move freely about the *enceinte* and concentrate themselves rapidly upon whatever point might be threatened. It was thus possible to reduce the number of soldiers ; and instead of large miscellaneous garrisons of half-trained and ill-equipped feudal levies, whose cohesion and fighting value were doubtful, and whose numbers soon consumed the resources of the place, defence was now conducted by small bodies of expert men, each of whom knew his own special job, while all were disciplined and trained to co-operate in the common task. And the fact that in an Edwardian castle the inner envelope overlooked the outer enabled both to be in action against the assailants at once. A combined rather than a successive resistance was offered, and so the whole force of the garrison was brought into simultaneous play.[1]

This change in the character of the garrisons employed in defence of castles is part of a general transformation that was coming over the whole art of war in the later Middle Ages. Warfare was now becoming a highly specialised and scientific thing, in which the old tumultuary feudal levies, bound only to serve for short periods at a time, were little use. More and more, therefore, the Kings in their national quarrels, and the great barons in their incessant private feuds with each other, came to rely upon mercenary soldiers whom they held in their pay. Quarters for these professionals had to be available, and this meant standing garrisons in each castle. Whereas in former days the castle, during times of peace, would contain only the lord's *familia* or household, it must now provide accommodation for a compact body of mercenary troops. The neighbourhood of these hard-

[1] The weakness of a merely successive defence had been strikingly revealed at the siege of Chateau Gaillard in 1204.

boiled *lanzknechts* would always be inconvenient and often dangerous, as they did not owe the natural allegiance of vassals and were at all times liable to be tampered with by their employer's enemies. Hence, for reasons both of privacy and safety, the great lords of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries took care to provide their castles with self-contained residences for their families and personal retainers.

In France, where the principle of the donjon was still maintained, it was this part of the castle which was extended and transformed in order to meet the new need. So, in such a masterpiece as Pierrefonds, what is called the donjon has become a great complex of massive building, forming a complete and carefully isolated dwelling for the lord, while the retainers or mercenary garrison have separate quarters elsewhere. In the words of Viollet-le-Duc[1] :—

> *'Le donjon du château peut être completement isolé des autres défenses . . . . . Le donjon était l'habitation specialement reservée au seigneur et comprenant tous les services nécessaires : caves, cuisines, offices, chambres, garderobes, salons et salles du réception.'*

In England, where the donjon idea had been given up, and where attention was now being focussed on the gatehouse, it was the latter building which was converted into the lord's or governor's residence. The dwelling house, so to speak, is concentrated over the entry, and the task of warding it is entrusted to the servants of his own household rather than to the mercenaries who were lodged in the other towers.

But this was not the end of the special developments in England.

Attention has often been called to the fact that, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, at a number of the more important English castles, very large and imposing structures were built in the form of a tower-house. In every case these great towers are added to an older domestic lay-out : but whereas in some examples, as at Tattershall and Buckden, the tower-house stands in organic connexion with a hall-block,

[1] *Description du Chateau de Pierrefonds*, 4th ed., p. 15 ; *Dictionnaire d'Architecture*, vol. iii, p. 153.

for which it provides the solar or private apartments; in others, such as Dudley and Warkworth and Ashby, the tower-house forms a complete self-contained structure, wholly isolated from the rest of the castle, and containing within itself the entire accommodation requisite for the lord and his family and their personal staff.

These late tower-houses are surprising things, and their meaning has given rise to much discussion. It has been usual to regard them as the product of a kind of architectural atavism—a deliberate return to the Norman keeps of the twelfth century. But such conscious antiquarianism would be entirely foreign to the spirit of the Middle Ages; and I have elsewhere shown[1] that, so far from being an effort to imitate the obsolete form of a bygone era, these strong tower-houses of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were in fact the most up-to-date thing which the development of feudalism in its latest phase evolved in the realm of domestic architecture. We have already, in the present enquiry, realised something of the significance of this development, and the effect which it exercised on the castle fabric. In olden times, a baron would maintain his quarrels and defend his residence with his own vassals, dwelling around him. All that he required, therefore, was a towered curtain wall to fence his house. In time of siege, the tenants whom he called up for garrison purposes would be lodged in the towers. But all this was changed by the advent of mercenary warfare, and we have seen how in France, where mercenaries played so great a part in the long agony of the Hundred Years' War, the new conditions profoundly altered the castle plan, as shown at Pierrefonds. In England a precisely similar development took place during the same period. Every student of the time is aware how serious an evil the armed retainers of the powerful lords had become, and how energetically the Tudor monarchs grappled with it in their statutes against 'livery' and 'maintenance.'

[1] See *Journal Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, new ser., vol. xl, pp. 177–92; 3rd ser., vol. ii, pp. 121–32; *Archaeol. Aeliana*, 4th ser., vol. xv, pp. 115–36; *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxii, pp. 73–83.

The mischief had already begun in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and the first act passed against 'livery and maintenance' dates from 1390. In the overseas wars the English barons had only too aptly learned their lesson from their French antagonists. Instead of vassals they now surrounded themselves with armed retainers, each wearing his lord's livery and bound to fight for him in all his quarrels; while the lord on his part pledged himself to 'maintain' them against all legal consequences of their ill-doing, which he did either by suborning or coercing juries, or by still more violent measures. Matters drifted from bad to worse after the English were turned out of France, and large numbers of unemployed ex-service men, habituated to violence, were only too glad to accept the livery of a powerful patron. 'Great land-owners, who had crowds of armed retainers in their service, bribed and bullied juries till the administration of the law became a farce, and on the rare occasions when this course failed, they knew how to vindicate their claims by maiming or assassinating their opponents, or by laying siege to houses the possession of which they coveted.'[1]

Of such conditions—'this revival of anarchy in a civilised society'[2]—the late tower-houses of England are a product. They are identical in principle and function, though not in form nor in scale, with the donjon at Pierrefonds. They are no unintelligent reversion to an obsolete idea, nor are we right in explaining them away as a 'tribute paid to the memory of the ancient keeps.'[3] There is nothing pious about them. Quite on the contrary, for the special needs of their time they are the most up-to-date and apposite thing that their builders could have devised.

DUDLEY CASTLE

Probably the earliest of these tower-houses is that which, still grand in its shattered ruins, crowns the

[1] S. R. Gardiner, *Introduction to English History*, p. 98.
[2] G. M. Trevelyan, *History of England*, p. 259.
[3] H. Braun, *The English Castle*, p. 56.

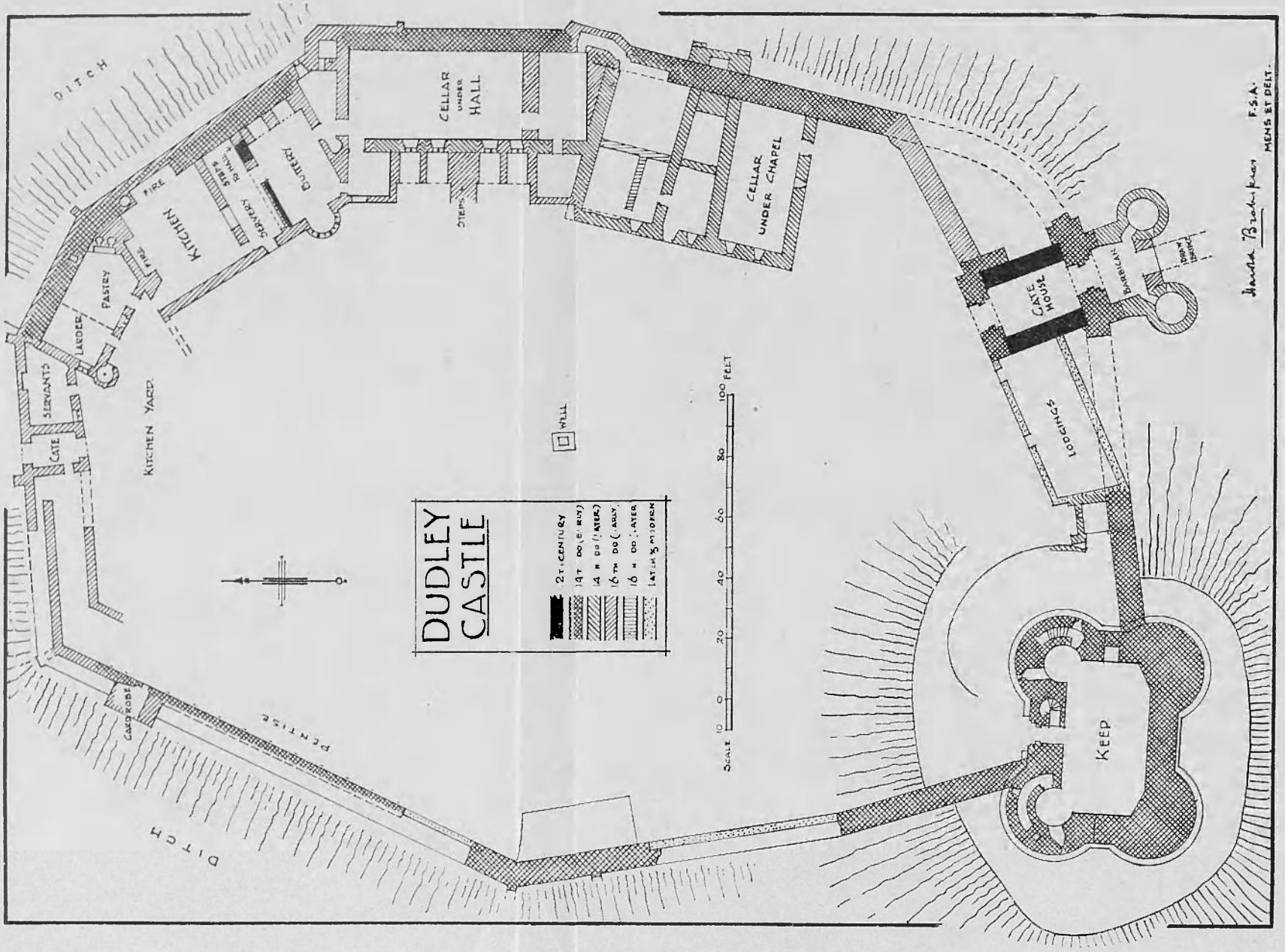

FIG. 1. DUDLEY CASTLE: GENERAL PLAN

mighty Norman mound that overlooks the town of Dudley. Here the *ensemble* of castle, church and town is in not a few respects remarkable, and has points of close resemblance with Warkworth—a resemblance revived in the later medieval remodelling of the castle.

The site of Dudley Castle (Fig. 1) is one of noble majesty. It crowns the highest or southern point of a long limestone hill, rising from 120 to 150 feet above the adjoining level, having the town of Dudley extended over a ridge which prolongs the castle site to the south, while northwards is spread a broad expanse of plain land, once a smiling agricultural and forest country, and even now wonderfully beautiful in spite of all that coal and iron have done to mar its countenance. The actual site of the castle has been organised by banking and ditching into a mount and bailey plan,[1] consisting of an oval bailey, about 340 feet in length from north to south, and 265 feet in greatest breadth. This bailey is enclosed by a formidable ditch quarried in the limestone, 50 to 60 feet in width and still about 15 feet deep, outside of which is a substantial counterscarp mound, with terracing to the north, east, and west, and on the last-named side a second ditch. On the south side, towards the town, where the scarp of the hill falls steeply, the ditch is discontinued. The mount is at the south-west corner, dominating the town. It is roughly circular, about 110 feet in diameter, and rises about 20 feet above the bailey, from which it does not seem to have been isolated by a ditch. On a level terrace at the foot of the mount, outside, room is found for a small forecourt, latterly walled, so as to keep the town at arm's length from the castle precinct. Near the gate of this forecourt is St. Edmund's, the original Parish Church, whence Castle Street extends south westward to the spacious Market Place in which stood the Town Cross, first mentioned in 1339. Beyond this, High Street continues the axial line of the ancient borough as far as the present Parish Church of St. Thomas, which occupies a prominent site on an

[1] Plan and sections of the earthworks in *Victoria County History, Stafford*, vol. i, p. 354. The castle buildings are fully described in *Arch. Journ.*, vol. lxxi, pp. 1–24; also in *V.C.H., Worcester*, vol. iii, pp. 90–98.

eminence overlooking the southern part of the town. Neither of these two churches, in its present form, is ancient,[1] and there are no very old buildings now left in the borough. West and north of the castle extends the .once finely timbered Priory Park (now being developed as a housing estate), in which are the ruins of Dudley Priory, a Cluniac house, subordinate to Wenlock, having the claustral buildings, very unusually, on its northern side.

The disposition of the castle, with its mount towards the town and the bailey extended behind, corresponds to that of Warkworth. In each case the reason doubtless is the same, namely, that the town was there before the castle. But whereas at Warkworth the entrance is on the far side of the bailey, and therefore at the end remotest from the town—upon which the castle thus turns its back—at Dudley the gatehouse fronts the town, and is directly under the control of the mount. There is also a rearward gate, in the sixteenth century buildings, but whether this corresponds to an original arrangement we do not know.

For the most part the timber defences of mount and bailey seem to have remained in use until the fourteenth century, so there is nothing at Dudley corresponding to the noble scheme of early walling that was carried out at Warkworth. But a Norman gatehouse is englobed in the present gatehouse and barbican, a composite structure of the fourteenth century; and there certainly were Norman domestic buildings, for one or two fragments still survive in the Plantagenet and Tudor edifices that have replaced them.[2] A licence to crenellate in stone and lime was issued for Dudley in 1263, but it seems clear that the existing curtain wall and the tower-house are not earlier than the fourteenth century.

Of Sir John de Somery, who held the lordship of Dudley from 1300 to 1321, we are fortunate in having

[1] St. Edmund's, however, is a singularly dignified and charming brick edifice of 1724. Alike externally and inside, it is one of the most attractive churches of its period that I have seen.

[2] It is likely that a good deal more Norman walling remains than is now distinctly traceable (as shown in Sir Harold Brakespear's plan).

a distinct account. In a complaint under date 1311,[1] it is stated that ' he has obtained such mastery in the county of Stafford that no one can obtain law or justice therein ; that he has made himself more than a king there : that no one can dwell there unless he buys protection from him either by money or by assisting him in building his castles, and that he attacks people in their own houses with the intention of killing them unless they make fine for his protection.'

From this interesting document we learn two things relevant to our inquiry. In the first place we may infer that building was still going on at Dudley. And in the second place we have the authentic portrait of a baronial thug, of the type that was to become increasingly common as the fourteenth century grew older. Here in Sir John de Somery's case we see that the ' revival of anarchy in a civilised society,' usually regarded as a consequence of the Hundred Years' War, had already made itself apparent during the weak government of Edward II—as a result, no doubt, of the exhaustion and demoralisation caused by the long effort to subdue Scotland. Truly Plantagenet imperialism was putting forth evil fruits. Sir John de Somery, terrorising a countryside with his armed hirelings, was the very man to build himself, for his mere safety, a self-contained tower-house in which, within his own castle, he could dwell apart from the garrison of armed cut-throats that he maintained to enforce his will upon his victims and further his nefarious schemes.

His tower-house is a most remarkable structure, and its partial demolition in the Civil War is greatly to be regretted. It is oblong in plan, measuring 70 feet in length by 48 in breadth, over walls 10 feet thick, except on the north side, where the wall containing the entrance and stairs attains a thickness of 11 feet 6 inches. At all four corners are stout half-round towers, 31 feet in diameter. The building contained two floors, the upper one resting on an offset, and its roof on corbels. In the middle of the north front, at basement level, is the entrance, which had a portcullis.

[1] *Cal. Patent Rolls*, Edw. ii, 1307–13, p. 369.

On its east side opens a newel stair leading to the upper floor. In each of the two northern round towers is an alcove, the western one having a garderobe and the eastern one a service stair, circling up in the circumference of the tower to the hall on the main floor. The two southern towers are wholly destroyed, but were solid at ground level. The first floor contained a well furnished hall, with screens at the east end and dais chambers in the western towers. From this level a second newel stair, close east of the first, also conducted to the wall-walk. This seems to be the result of an early alteration, probably during the construction of the tower-house ; and when it was made the first stair was blocked in ashlar work where the second one starts. The wall-walk ran all round the building, outside the low-pitched roof, and was screened by a parapet with narrow embrasures and tall merlons pierced by trefoiled loops, the central foil being pointed, and each loop being plunged, and provided for a hanging shutter. The north-west tower has a similar parapet, at a higher level,[1] but the battlements appear to have been largely restored. The north-west tower is greatly ruined. The tower-house has a battered plinth and is built of coursed limestone rubble, with freestone dressings. Its architectural detail is of a highly finished order, Early Decorated in character, and this and the style of the battlements point to a date in the first quarter of the fourteenth century.

The character and *raison d'être* of this tower-house are well set forth by Sir Harold Brakespear, who writes as follows :—

> ' The whole arrangement of this keep was of a small manor-house : the hall on the first floor with

[1] Two of the merlon loopholes are crosslets similar to those in the wing wall which runs down the *motte* to the gatehouse. These loopholes are of an interesting pattern. The cross bar is very long, the three upper extremities are rounded, and the lower terminates in a large oilette. The length is four feet and the breadth, over cross bar, two feet.

The heads of the larger arched openings in the tower-house are contrived in a rather curious manner. The arch is cut in a single stone, with a flat head on which rest two other stones each wrought as half an arch, forming together a solid plate or tympanum under a relieving arch.

The shouldered lintel construction, so typical of early fourteenth-century work, is sometimes used in the lesser voids throughout the building.

two chambers at the west end, the screens at the east end with the pantry and buttery in the eastern drums, and a serving stair to the ground floor, which was probably used for kitchen and servants' quarters.'

About the same time when the tower-house was built on the mount the bailey was now massively walled in, and along its eastern side a complete suite of domestic apartments was erected, the old Norman buildings, of whatever kind they were, being almost entirely swept away. The new buildings comprised the usual accommodation of kitchen, hall, great chamber, and chapel, with ample cellarage and offices. The fact that these buildings were erected at the same time as the tower-house clearly brings out the significance of the latter as a residence apart for the lord and his family, into which they could, when they wished, withdraw themselves from the rest of the household. This is a radically different state of affairs than took place where a twelfth-century keep fell into disuse and was replaced by domestic buildings in the courtyard. It is noteworthy that at Warkworth also, at the time when the tower-house was built on the mount, the older domestic buildings in the bailey were drastically reorganised.

These courtyard buildings at Dudley were twice remodelled in Tudor times, and as we now have them they exhibit many features of high architectural merit and interest: but they lie outside the scope of our present enquiry.

The nearest parallel to the Dudley tower-house appears to be the very remarkable tower-house at Nunney, erected pursuant to a royal licence in 1373.[1] The significance of Nunney has been obscured by the fact that it now stands alone, whereas it is known to have once had a walled courtyard, long since abolished.[2] The general plan of the tower-house is the same as at Dudley, an oblong building with large drum towers at all four corners, and the internal dispositions have many points in common; but Nunney is four

[1] See *Nunney Castle, Official Guide* (H.M.O.W.).

[2] Leland's *Itinerary*, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, vol. v, p. 97.

storeys in height, and otherwise more elaborate in its arrangements. The later date is seen in its architectural detail and particularly in the heavy oversailing machicolated parapet. As this tower-house was built on a new site, instead of on a Norman mount like Dudley, it was provided with its own moat. In each case the thesis of the building is the same, and is characteristically English of its time. There is, therefore, no need whatever to look in France for a prototype, as Mr. Hugh Braun wishes to do in the case of Nunney.[1]

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH CASTLE[2]

William, first Lord Hastings, to whom we owe Ashby Castle in its present form, was in every way a far more magnificent person than Sir John de Somery of Dudley. He was one of the principal actors on the Yorkist side in the tangled drama of the Wars of the Roses, and held numerous exalted posts at home and abroad, including those of High Chamberlain of the Royal Household, Receiver of the Duchy of Cornwall, Master of the Mint, Chamberlain of North Wales, Lieutenant of Calais, and Ambassador, on various occasions, to Scotland, France, Brittany and Burgundy. From his vast estates, the emoluments of his offices, and a substantial pension which he accepted from the King of France, he enjoyed enormous wealth, and was one of the foremost builders of his time. In addition to his palatial reconstruction of Ashby, he erected the very interesting brick castle of Kirby Muxloe—one of the first English castles systematically planned for defence by firearms. Like all the nobles of this turbulent period, he kept his private army, and in 1474 we find him entering into a bond with two lords, nine knights, and forty-eight esquires, who pledge themselves to aid him against all persons within the Kingdom, and to raise as many men as they can, to be armed at his expense.[3] It is no matter for surprise

[1] *The English Castle*, p. 107.

[2] For a full description, see *Associated Architectural Societies, Reports and Papers*, 1911, vol. xxxi, Pt. i, pp. 181–224.

[3] Dugdale, *Baronage of England*, vol. i, p. 580.

that such a man, in the sumptuous scheme which he adopted for his reconstruction of his castle at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, should provide for himself a self-contained tower-house on a great scale—not out of any antiquarian hankering to imitate a twelfth-century keep, but simply to have in his castle a strong house where he could keep himself, his family and his personal household apart from the crowd of armed retainers whose services he bought with his ample purse, and

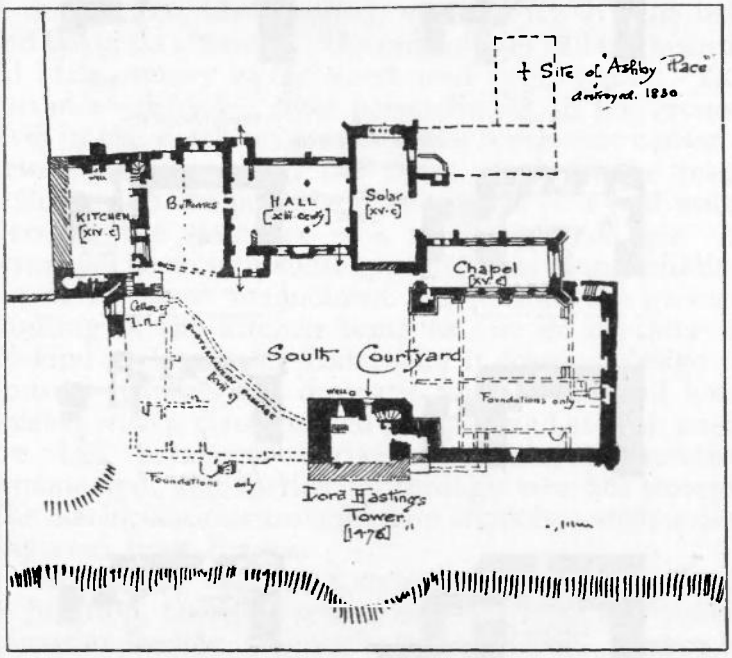

FIG. 2. ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH CASTLE: GENERAL PLAN

upon whom he rested the power that he brought to bear amid the shifting politics of his time.

The licence to crenellate in respect of Ashby was issued to Lord Hastings on 17th April, 1474. The manor-house which he found there (Fig. 2) dated mostly from the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, and comprised the normal lay-out of a large central hall, on the basilican plan, with nave and side aisles, having buttery, pantry, and kitchen at its lower end and at

its upper end the solar, beyond which was a fine chapel. All these buildings were extensively reconstructed by Lord Hastings, who formed them into the northern side of a large courtyard enclosure, screened by a massive curtain wall, midway in the southern front of

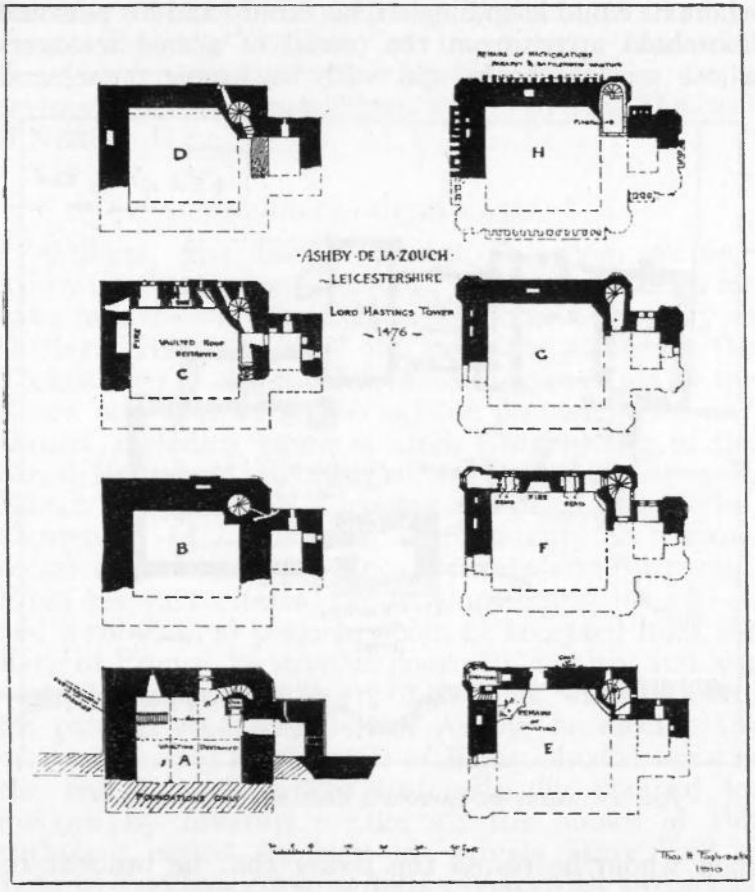

FIG. 3. ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH CASTLE: PLANS OF TOWER-HOUSE

which he placed the mighty tower-house that is the glory of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and the structure with which we are at present primarily concerned.

Beautifully built of the finest ashlar, the tower (Fig. 3) measures 48 feet by 41 feet, over walls 8 feet

7 inches thick, and when it stood entire reached a height of fully 90 feet. Midway in its east front projects a square 'jamb' or wing, which is carried to the full height of the main building—an unusual design, paralleled, however, at Dunvegan Castle in the Isle of Skye. The main building contains four storeys, and there are seven rooms, one above the other, in the jamb, the lowest room being vaulted. In the basement of the main building is a vaulted store, on the first floor is the kitchen, also vaulted, while above are the hall and the great chamber. Opening off the hall is a beautiful little oratory in the north-west angle turret. The entrance—defended by a portcullis—is on the ground level in the north wall, and at the north-east corner a newel stair serves all the floors, both in the main building and the jamb, and terminates in a wall-walk. Beneath the stair-foot is a small vaulted 'pit' or prison. The architectural appointments of the building are of the most magnificent description, the groined vaulting of the kitchen being as fine as anything of its kind in England. Externally it forms a design of unusual richness and dramatic force. The wall head finishes with a machicolated parapet, and at each angle are tall octagonal corbelled turrets, elaborately ornamented, and carried up through two full storeys. The machicolations are united by archlets, a mannerism imported from France.

Here, then, we have a structure not differing at all in function, though varying in form, from the tower-houses at Dudley, Nunney and Warkworth. And as in their case, there is nothing atavistic about it. We may be sure that Lord Hastings, a practical man of affairs, would have been quite unenthusiastic had his master mason told him that he proposed to 'pay a tribute to the memory of the ancient keeps.' On the other hand, it is equally wide of the mark to compare it with the tower at Tattershall.[1] Lord Cromwell's tower there does not form a complete house by itself, but is simply a glorified solar block, attached to a pre-existing house. Moreover, its martial garniture is

[1] Professor Hamilton Thomson in *Tattershall Castle*, by Lord Curzon and Mr. H. A. Tipping, p. 182.

largely for appearance' sake: it is mere *appareil feodal*, put there to portray the pomp and pride of a great lord. In marked contrast to all this, the tower at Ashby forms a self-contained and isolated residence for the owner, and, while it has plenty of the pride and pomp of feudalism, it is yet strictly and formidably a military proposition, a true product of its times and of its builder's special needs. It was with no idle use of language that the Parliamentary commissioners of 1648 reported on 'the Great Tower of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, being a place of considerable strength.' They knew what they were talking about: because its capacity for resistance, even in the days of an artillery such as Lord Hastings never feared, had recently been proved in the stress and storm of siege.

These two great castles of the western Midlands, therefore, are historical documents of much importance, for they show us how serious were the social consequences of the political evil summed up in the phrase 'livery and maintenance.' In the thirteenth century the lord came down from his tall keep and joined his household in more spacious quarters in the courtyard of his castle. In the fifteenth century, under the pressure of a 'revival of anarchy in a civilised society' he was driven back once more into isolation, and from the menace or the nuisance of his own armed hirelings he sought safety and privacy for himself and his immediate dependants within the shelter of those great self-contained tower-houses of which the two castles that we have been studying afford such splendid examples.

NOTE.—The block for Fig. 1 is kindly lent by Messrs. E. Blocksidge, Dudley, and those for Figs. 2 and 3 by Messrs. Methuen and Co., London. I have to acknowledge that this paper has been prepared as part of a scheme of research supported by a grant from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland.