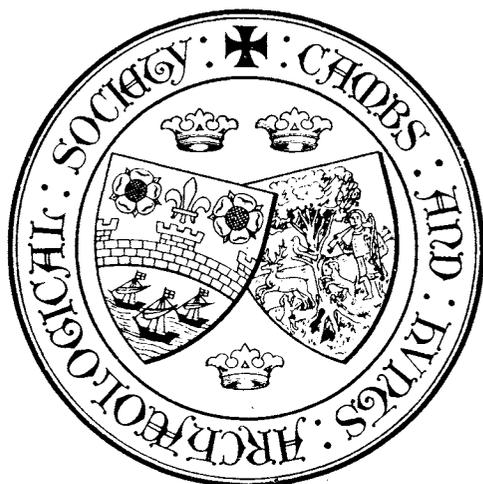


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EDITED BY THE REV. W. M. NOBLE, B.A.
RECTOR OF WISTOW, HUNTS. HON. CANON OF ELY.

Ely

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PRICE (NON-MEMBERS) TEN SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE



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G. H. Tyndall

THE PRIOR'S HOUSE, ELY.

SOUTH SIDE, SHEWING END OF HALL, AND PRIOR CRAUDEN'S CHAPEL.

THE PRIOR'S HOUSE, ELY.

BY THE REV. CANON KENNETT, D.D.

The House, occupied, since the foundation of the present Capitular body of Ely, by the holder of the eighth Canonry was originally the House of the Prior of the Monastery, and very considerable parts of the ancient building still remain.

The main body of the house, consisting originally of a large hall above a vaulted undercroft, was built, to judge from the architecture of the remaining portions, about the middle of the twelfth century. This undercroft, which had a simple groined vault supported on short cylindrical piers with scalloped capitals and circular abaci, occupied six bays from north to south, and two from east to west. In the second bay from the south there were doorways in both the western and eastern walls, the internal jambs of which are still visible. Externally the doors probably resembled the one which gives access to the King's School, opposite the west end of Prior Crauden's Chapel. There was a narrow circular headed doorway near the north end of the west wall, which for some reason was built rather to the east of the rest of the wall. This was demolished by Mr. Rowe in 1883.

Whether the hall above the undercroft originally possessed any chimney is doubtful. The fact, however, that the doorway, mentioned above, in the western wall of the undercroft is not quite in the centre of the bay which it occupies, is perhaps an indication that there was a Norman chimney occupying the same position as the chimney afterwards constructed by the fourteenth century builders. More probably, however, the hall was heated only by a brazier in the centre. Immediately to the north of the main building, on the ground floor, was the Prior's Kitchen, and it is probable that an external staircase was

built against, or partly against, the western wall of this building. We may suppose that in the twelfth century, as in the fourteenth, there were two doorways in the northern end of the hall, the eastern one giving access to the stairs which led down into the Prior's Kitchen, the western one giving access to the external staircase mentioned above, and, at a later date, communicating by means of a gallery with a large Guest-hall, now the Deanery.

Although not a vestige of the Norman Hall of the Prior's House now remains, it is possible to construct a mental picture of it from buildings of the same date still existing. We may assume that it was lighted by narrow round-headed windows deeply splayed on the inside, and perhaps descending to the floor. Similar windows are still visible externally in the upper storey of the eastern wall of the King's School. The hall was probably roofed with lead, the eastern and western walls terminating in a corbel table like that of which a small portion remains on the western side of the King's School. The undercroft was also lighted by narrow round-headed deeply splayed windows, the remains of which are still visible in the westernmost bay. Some time later, apparently during the thirteenth century, an outbuilding was attached to the house at the south-west angle, for what purpose is unknown. This building was at right angles to the main Hall, and was, roughly, thirty feet by fourteen. In the year 1324-1325 Prior Crauden erected the existing Chapel on the outbuilding; and to the north, above a building which was probably made into a sort of scullery and was connected with the Prior's Kitchen by a passage under the great staircase, he erected for a study a timber building with a fine stone fireplace at the eastern end, and square-headed windows with reticulated tracery. The dimensions of the Study were nearly the same as of the Chapel. It was entered not directly from the Great Hall, but by a passage on the south side which communicated with the Great Hall by the doorway removed by Mr. Rowe to the present entrance hall. From this passage a door near the western end opened into the

Study, and opposite this door was a gallery communicating with the Chapel'. It is somewhat surprising that the Convent should have consented to the erection of a new Chapel and Study for the Prior at a time when the building of the Lady Chapel and Octagon, as well as the three westernmost bays of the Choir was in progress; but an explanation of this may be found in the fact that Prior Fressingfield, who had been compelled to resign his post in May 1321, continued to reside in the Prior's House, so that his successor had no place where he could study or pray alone. The expense of the new Chapel and the room to the north of it for the Prior's study was defrayed by the Treasurer, not the Sacrist. [See *Chapman*², vol. 1, p. 61; see also p. 127 footnote].

The main entrance to the Hall at this time, as has been stated above was probably at its north-west corner by an external staircase, perhaps just north of the present house, in which case access to the house from it would be by the doorway mentioned above in the north wall. It is however possible that it was built slightly more to the south, and that it opened directly into the Great Hall, or in the fourteenth century into the ante-room or passage at the north end of the Great Hall. It may be conjectured that it was pulled down by Prior Stewart, who, since he retained not only the original Prior's Kitchen and the Chapel but also part of the kitchen offices under Prior Crauden's Study, would desire to get rid of a building which was of no use to him personally and could only be approached through a court which was now entirely appropriated by him.

In the year 1341 Alan of Walsingham was elected Prior, and three years later, October 31, 1344, an order was made that the Prior of Ely should provide a suitable

1. Another gallery of which a portion still remained in 1817 connected the Chapel with the Fair Hall, now the house of the Headmaster of the King's School, [see *Stephenson's* appendix p. 48]. This gallery, however, would appear to have been an afterthought, for the turret staircase still existing, was evidently designed without reference to such a building. In a little sketch dated 1816, there is shown a building immediately abutting on the turret staircase to the north of it and extending a few feet westward.

2. The Sacrist Rolls of Ely. Edited by the Rev. F. R. Chapman, M.A., two volumes, Cambridge University Press, 1907.

“house” for the safe custody of the tenths and fifteenths granted in the last Parliament. The Prior of Ely was responsible for the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon. [See *Chapman*, vol. 1, p. 81]. The account of the expense incurred in this building would presumably be found in the Treasurer's roll for the year 1345-1346. [See *Chapman*, vol 1, p. 79 footnote].

This “house” which is said to have been erected in the Priorate of Alan of Walsingham [see *Chapman*, vol. 1, p. 81 footnote] may reasonably be identified with the existing north-east wing of the Prior's House, the architectural features of which agree closely with those of the Painted Chamber attached to the Infirmary, which had been built by Alan of Walsingham, when Sacrist, ten years previously, namely in 1334-1335 [see *Chapman*, vol 1, pp. 138, 139].

A careful examination of the existing Hall of the Prior's House, (now cut up into several rooms) shows that it was built at the same time as the north-eastern wing¹. Apparently the walls of the southern half of the Norman Hall were bulging, and the vaulting in that portion was giving way. It was probably considered unsafe to leave the heavy Norman walls standing above the ground storey. The Norman vaulting of the northern half of the undercroft was left unchanged—perhaps this portion was better preserved through having been buttressed on the western side by the Prior's Study – but in the southern half new vaulting with brick ribs was constructed above the Norman piers. That this work was later than the building of the Chapel is shown by the fact that the vaulting under the latter, though somewhat similar in design, is of clunch, not brick. An examination of the arcading of the west wall of the north-east wing (i.e. the outer side of the east wall of the northern part of the Great Hall) shews that the north-east wing was originally planned to extend somewhat further to

1. The fact that the wooden braces under the purlins of the oak roof have been cut in the form of four-centred arches is no evidence against this early date, since four-centred arches are found in the inner tracery of the windows of the Octagon which was finished in 1328.

the south, viz. as far as the plain Norman buttress which still remains uncovered¹. As this would have left the northernmost bay of the Hall (exclusive of the ante-room²) altogether without a window, the south wall of the north-east wing was set back a few feet to the north so as to allow of the insertion of a narrow window.

The walls of the New Hall and the north-east wing were constructed as thin as possible, but sufficient stability was given to them by a mural arcade, the pilasters of which were strengthened by external buttresses. The windows of this New Hall, were probably identical in design with those in this wing; that is to say square-headed Decorated windows of two lights, with transoms but without hood-moulds, placed one in each bay of the mural arcade. The fireplace and chimney (demolished by Mr. Rowe in 1883) was not in the middle of the New Hall, but was nearer the southern end of the western side. Between this chimney and the chimney of the Prior's Study was a doorway (removed by Mr. Rowe in 1883 to the south-west corner of the present entrance hall) giving access to the Study from the Hall. This doorway was probably the one which had been constructed in 1324-25, since it differs from the two existing doorways in the ante-room and from those in the north-east wing, which are clearly of the same date as the Hall. At the south-east angle of the New Hall was a newel staircase giving access to the leads of the roof, very similar in character to the one attached to the Painted Chamber of the Infirmary.

The northernmost bay of the New Hall was partitioned off so as to form a passage or ante-room, and from this passage a door in the eastern wall opened into another smaller passage which gave access to the room in the north-east wing. Another door in the eastern corner of the north wall of the larger passage gave access to the

1. A Norman buttress is visible behind the fourteenth century buttress in the next bay, and perhaps another remains immediately to the south of the present front door. There is also one on the west wall of the house.

2. The timbers of the roof of the Hall are unworked in the northernmost bay, showing that this was screened off from the body of the Hall to form an ante-room or passage.

stairs leading down to the Prior's Kitchen, and a third in the same wall to the west, on a somewhat higher level, gave access to a passage communicating with the great Guest-hall now the Deanery. As stated above it is not certain whether the main external staircase opened directly from this passage at the north end of the Great Hall. The fireplace (which with its big chimney was demolished by Mr. Rowe in 1883) was on the west side of the Hall, rather to the south of the middle, its centre being in a line with the second pier from the south in the undercroft.

The Hall possessed, apparently, a curb roof covered with lead laid immediately upon the existing timbers. The roof of the north-east wing was nearly flat like that of the Painted Chamber of the Infirmary.

In order to raise the "house" provided for the custody of the tenths and fifteenths, the "Strong Room" as we may call it, above the ground it was constructed over a vaulted porch open at the eastern end, which allowed access to the thirteenth century building to the north, of which the doorway still remains. From this porch there was no direct access to the house, but between the west wall of the porch and the east wall of the house was a vaulted passage constructed with a door at its south end, opening into a small yard, and at its northern end a newel staircase communicating with a passage above on the level of the New Hall. From this upper passage a door opened into the ante-room or passage at the north end of the Hall, and at its south end a short flight of stone steps led to the double doors by which the strong-room was entered. The hinge-hooks of the double doors were laid bare in 1909, and at the same time the mural arcade with the carefully shuttered windows was uncovered. Each of these windows was divided into four lights by a mullion and a transom; the lights above the transom were closed by shutters hung on hooks in the side jambs; the lights below had sliding shutters running in grooves. The top groove was worked partly upon the inside of the stone transom, which was made wider than usual for the purpose, and partly upon a projecting stone string course

built into the wall on either side of the window. The lower groove would appear to have been worked in a wooden sill resting partly on the stone sill of the window and partly upon a projecting string course as before. The holes by which this wooden sill was affixed to the stonework may still be seen.

About the middle or end of the fifteenth century, (if we may judge from their similarity to the windows in Bishop Alcock's buildings in the palaces at Ely and Downham as compared with those in Bishop Goodrich's buildings) larger windows were inserted in the Hall, and at its southern end, which had originally been lighted by two windows¹ the outer jambs of which still remain, a large oriel window was inserted with a castellated parapet, very similar in character to the oriels at Queens' college and elsewhere. The insertion of this window apparently necessitated some alteration to the gable end of the roof, two rude brick arches being constructed on either side of the oriel, perhaps in order to carry a somewhat thicker wall.

About the same time a square stone building, containing a staircase with a door at the bottom opening into the small yard, was constructed at the southern end of the eastern side of the Prior's House. Probably there was a door into this staircase immediately from the Hall, as at present. It is likely that such a doorway would be a good sized one of stone (like the one remaining on the north side of the staircase building on the ground floor) and it perhaps remains behind the lath and plaster to this day, though the anti-Gothic rage of those who destroyed the southern oriel must be taken into consideration. At the top of this square building, that is to say above the staircase, was a small room to which access was given by means of a projecting staircase, supported by a buttress on the south side, somewhat similar to that in the President's lodge at Queens'. This square staircase was probably constructed as a means of access to

1. These windows were apparently identical in design with two in the side walls. It is noteworthy that in the eastern gable of the thirteenth century Hall of the Almonry there are also two windows.

the latrines in the little back yard¹. At the bottom of the small newel staircase at the south-east angle of the Hall there are the remains of what was apparently a garde-robe which was discarded in the fifteenth century. We can explain therefore why the square stone building did not become the front staircase till some time between 1541 and 1649.

What is now the front garden appears to have contained one or more small buildings, and was probably what would now be called a small back-yard. The east wall of the front garden (nearly parallel with the front of the house) incorporates a portion of a much older wall, and many stones of a demolished building have been dug up close by.

Apparently in 1541 the main approach to the Hall, now modified in order to form a Canon's residence, was at the north-east corner by the "Staircase built with stone" (see *Chapman*, vol. 1, p. 131) perhaps the staircase now demolished of which however some of the vaulting can still be seen in the little dressing room at the north-east corner of the main building.

The northern wall of the present dining room, to which the great chimney was perhaps a somewhat later addition, apparently belonged to some ancient building, later than the square staircase mentioned above, since it is built against the southern buttress of the latter building, but what the purpose of this building was, cannot be determined².

In 1541 the buildings of the Prior's House—exclusive of the Prior's Kitchen on the north, the westernmost portion of the scullery or kitchen underneath the Prior's Study, and the Prior's Chapel on the west—were allotted to the holder of the 8th stall, viz. John Ward. The

1. It is noteworthy that there was originally no connection between this staircase building and the vaulted undercroft which forms the present hall. It is therefore evident that the present hall had not yet become the regular approach.

2. The masonry of the lower part of the great chimney (i.e. up to the eaves) appears to be early, and probably not later than the fifteenth century. Since there appears to have been originally no connection between this building and the Prior's House, of which the Kitchen was far removed, it may be surmised that it was originally a kitchen or scullery belonging to one of the other houses, perhaps that of the sartorius or camerarius.



Photo by

G. H. Tyndall

THE PRIOR'S HOUSE, ELY.

EAST SIDE, SHEWING THE HALL AND THE KING'S TREASURY.

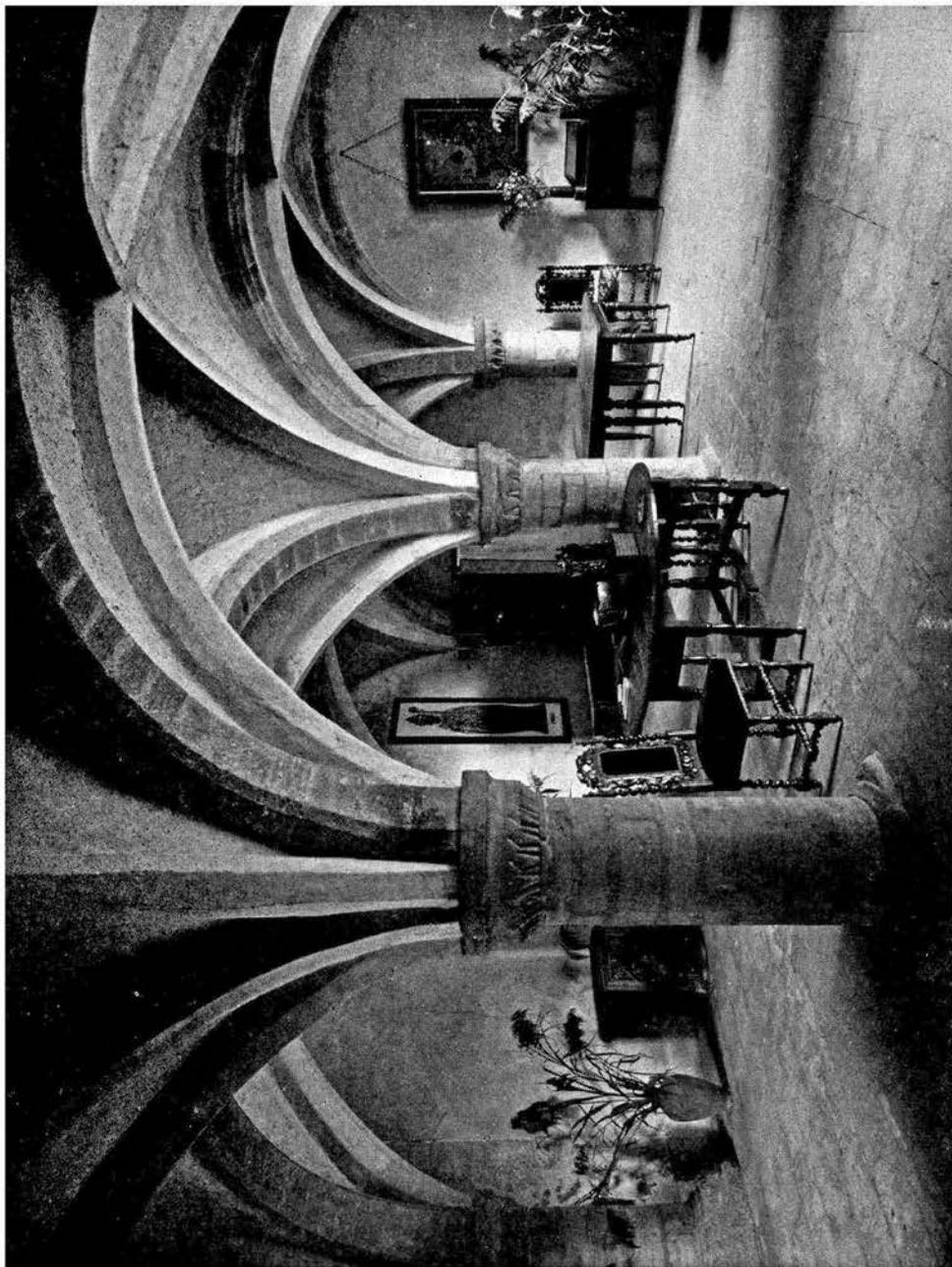


Photo by

THE PRIOR'S HOUSE, ELY.
THE UNDERCROFT OF THE HALL.

G. H. Tyndall

Prior's Study, called by the Commissioners "the Chapel Chamber" had been recently occupied by a Mr. Lee, perhaps a secretary called in to assist Prior Steward at the time of the Dissolution, perhaps the Prior's chaplain (*capellanus domini prioris* mentioned in a roll kept by the Prior's treasurer in the time of Henry VIII,—see *Stewart*¹, p. 263).

The Prior's House is described by Henry VIII's Commissioners as follows:—

"The New Hall with the audit chamber and the
 "Chapel chamber called Mr. Lee's chamber, with
 "the house and vaults thereabouts, with a little
 "garden and poultry yard and the ponds there² and
 "the Chapel chamber, and parts of the kitchen
 "underneath the same. The chamber at the hall
 "door to be for an audit chamber".

On the assumption that the main approach to the upper portion of the house at this time was by the stone staircase mentioned above, namely at the north-east corner of the Great Hall³, the description of the house is perfectly plain. The "New Hall" will be that which, about the year 1345, replaced the Norman Hall above the undercroft. The term "New Hall" may be due to the comparatively recent renovation which this hall had undergone by the insertion of new windows some forty or fifty years previously. But, as a matter of fact, of all the great halls within the Abbey, it would seem to be the last constructed with the exception of the Black Hostel. The "audit chamber" will be the chamber in the north-east wing constructed at the same time, above an open porch. The "Chapel Chamber" is clearly Prior Crauden's Study. The "audit chamber" which apparently is still to be

1. *The Architectural History of Ely Cathedral*. By the Rev. D. J. Stewart, M.A. Van Voorst, 1868.

2. This little garden with the poultry yard and ponds must have been on the south of the house. The foundations of a building parallel to the south end of the house were visible in the tennis lawn in the dry summer of 1911. This building was about 9 feet wide, and its northern wall about 15 feet from the south wall of the present dining room. Its western wall was opposite the door leading from the house into the garden.

3. The reason for making this somewhat narrow staircase the main approach to the house was, doubtless, the retention by Dean Stewart of the Prior's Kitchen as well as the Chapel.

applied to the same use, is said to be "at the hall door", a description which well suits the eastern wing on the assumption that the hall was entered from the north-east corner. The gallery from the Study to the Chapel was perhaps demolished at this time, since the Chapel itself was retained by the Dean.

Though the house thus divided off, perhaps suited the needs of a man who had been a monk, it was decidedly inconvenient as a dwelling house, since in addition to the Hall it contained only the Audit Room which was still to be devoted to its earlier purpose¹, the ante-room to the Hall, which was little better than a passage, the Prior's Study, and the little room over the square south-eastern staircase. Moreover since the Prior's Kitchen was retained by the Dean, there was no adequate kitchen accommodation; hence the northern half of the undercroft, which was connected with the little kitchen or scullery under the Prior's Study by the small Norman doorway mentioned above, was converted into a kitchen. The existing wall between the pantry and the present hall probably dates from this time. Under the dresser on the south side of the present pantry there are traces of a doorway. The reason for making the kitchen in the northern part of the undercroft was doubtless due to the fact that this was separated from the Prior's Kitchen only by a wall. Moreover a doorway led from it into the vaulted passage which had now become the main entrance. Perhaps until the pulling down of the Prior's Kitchen the staircase which had led from the latter building into the Hall may have been connected with the northern portion of the undercroft, for in the north-east corner of the present kitchen, under the modern window, are what appear to be steps leading into the Prior's Kitchen.

Probably at this time, when the partition wall was

1. "It is interesting to remark that the first holder of the 8th Canoury, John Ward, was immediately appointed Treasurer to the new Dean and Chapter, that the 'comptus' he then drew up was evidently modelled on the form used by the Prior and Convent, and that Ward was probably a man of experience and ability in finance. Is it not probable that we have here the reason why he was selected to occupy the house belonging to the Prior?"—*Chapman*, vol. I, p. 131.

built across the undercroft, the bases of the piers in the northern half were cut down into an octagonal shape in order to give more floor room. Since the capitals however in this northern portion are slightly more developed, the octagonal bases *may* be original. In order to provide the new kitchen with a fireplace, some stone projections, which carried the great wooden mantel-beam¹ were built on to two of the semi-piers on the west side.

Apparently both in 1541 and also in the latter half of the sixteenth century, or early in the seventeenth, when married Canons would be the rule, efforts were made to increase the accommodation of the house. The Hall was divided into two by a wall roughly in a line with the central buttress on the eastern side. The northern portion which seems to have been ceiled with a flat ceiling, was made into a parlour or dining-room; it was warmed by a fireplace constructed above the (new) kitchen fireplace and built partly against the great chimney of the Prior's Study. The stone or clunch arch of this fireplace still remains behind the modern grate. In the southern end of the chimney which projected into the room was a small cupboard which still remains. This cupboard, which was connected with the actual chimney just above the fire by holes pierced in the stone, seems to have been designed as a means of keeping the dinner warm. The approach to the passage giving access to the Prior's Study was by a stone doorway (removed by Mr. Rowe to the present entrance hall) which was situated between the new fireplace and the partition which separated the parlour from the rest of the Hall. Somewhat later, probably in the eighteenth century, the south-west corner of the parlour was altered as at present, so as to make a way into the Study directly from the Hall without going through the parlour.

At the same time that the Hall was divided into two the thin wooden partition which had separated it from the ante-room at its northern end gave place to a somewhat

1. This wooden mantel-beam was sawn through in the nineteenth century to allow of the insertion of a modern kitchen range. The northern end of it was found in 1911.

more solid partition of wood and plaster. This ante-room was also ceiled and divided into two by a partition (containing a door) running north and south in the very centre of the doorway which had formerly opened on to a staircase leading down into the Prior's Kitchen, and which was now disused¹: a small bedroom was thus formed to the north of the parlour. The remaining portion of the old ante-room to the east formed a small dark lobby, from which on the west side one door opened into the small bedroom just mentioned, one, in the south-east corner into the parlour, and the other, in the eastern wall (*viz.* the doorway which had been constructed in 1345) into the lofty passage communicating at its southern end with the audit room, and at its northern end with the stone staircase (leading down to the vaulted passage below) the door of which was in the corner between the eastern wing and the main body of the house. Perhaps about the same time, or more probably, between 1649 and 1660, the height of the lofty passage just mentioned was greatly diminished by the insertion of a floor, in order to make a little room above it. As this made it impossible to use the old approach to the audit room, a new doorway was cut in the north-east corner of the parlour, from which a few straight wooden steps led to the audit room door. Remains of the original stone winding staircase which gave access to the audit room door from the passage still remain under the present wooden steps, one of which can now be removed so as to allow the old stone steps below to be seen. The small room constructed above the passage (laid bare in 1909) had a door in its southern wall to which access then as now, could only be gained from these steps. It was lighted by an unglazed window opposite the window in the south wall of the building. It is noteworthy that the oak beams used in the construction of this little

1. This doorway had perhaps been blocked up in 1541, when the Prior's Kitchen was retained by the Dean and was therefore separated from the house. The Prior's Kitchen was demolished in 1649, and the stone staircase at the north-east corner of the house, which in 1541 formed the main approach to the upper floor, may have been destroyed at the same time. In 1649 the square south-eastern staircase had already become the main approach.

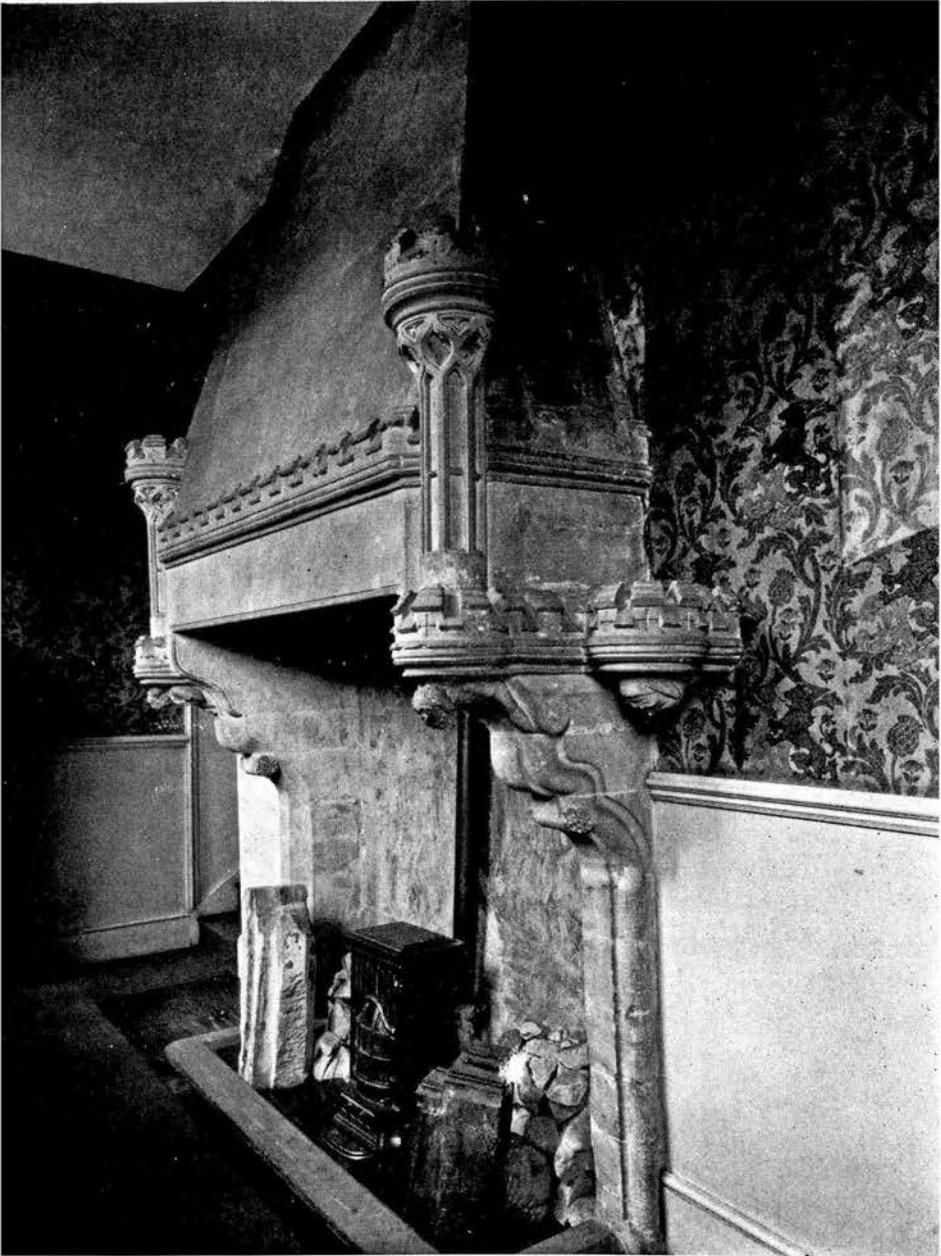


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G. H. Tyndall

THE PRIOR'S HOUSE, ELY.

THE CHIMNEY PIECE OF PRIOR CRAUDEN'S STUDY.

room had evidently been used before, and were probably taken from some of the recently demolished buildings of the monastery. There was evidently no second-hand door available suitable for the purpose and those who constructed the little room contented themselves with two deal boards roughly nailed together to form a door.

The accommodation of the house in spite of its size, was still altogether inadequate, and additional rooms were a necessity. The southern portion of the Hall with its fireplace remained unchanged, and open to the oak roof; but above the building (some 25 ft. by 12) already mentioned as existing at the south-east corner of the square staircase building, which had apparently been originally the kitchen or bakery of one of the other monastic houses, a timber building was constructed containing two rooms, one approximately twice the size of the other. This building was connected with the main part of the house by a sort of wooden porch, with a small lobby above its eastern half; from which lobby a door opened on to the square staircase. The small room appears to have been a little buttery; the larger room, as also the room above the staircase, was used as a servant's bedroom. An opening into the south wall of the square staircase building was made from the porch, but probably at a somewhat later date. From the survey of the house made in 1649 it is evident that the main approach to the first floor was no longer by the newel staircase at the north-east corner, as in 1541, but by the square staircase at the south-east, as at present.

Cromwell's commissioners describe the house as it would appear to one entering by the present drawing room door:—

“Over the arches a fair hall containing in latitude
“23 feet, in longitude 31 feet, covered with tyles,
“a little buttery with two small rooms for servants
“to lodge in, at the left hand going into the hall:
“and one fair chamber next the lane going into the
“court yard. A dyneing room adjoining to the hall
“(containing 19 feet wide) and two lodging rooms
“adjoining”.

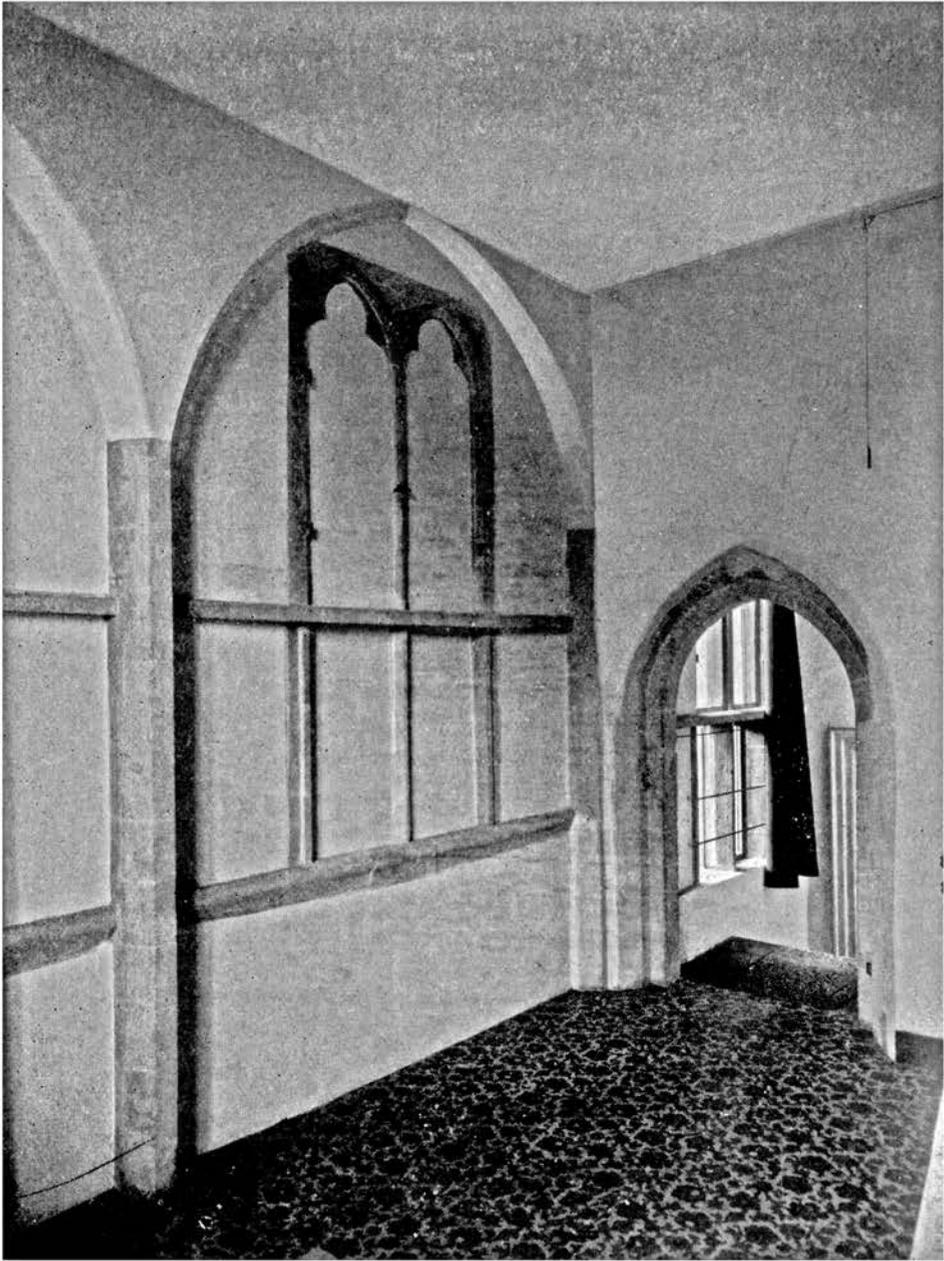


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THE PRIOR'S HOUSE, ELY.

INTERIOR OF THE KING'S TREASURY.

SHEWING WINDOW WITH HINGES FOR SHUTTERS ABOVE,
AND RUNNERS FOR SLIDING SHUTTERS BELOW.

The dimensions given to the hall exactly agree with those of the drawing-room and adjoining bedroom; while the "dyneing room" is clearly the present study together with the narrow passage on the north of it, which was partitioned off in 1883. The "fair chamber next the lane going into the court yard" is clearly Prior Crauden's Study.

Subsequently to 1660—to judge from the character of the woodwork and the brickwork, apparently in the last half of the eighteenth century—the Hall was converted into a drawing-room. The walls were covered with lath and plaster, hiding the mural arcade, and the room was ceiled at a considerably higher pitch than the old "dyneing room". The oriel window was replaced by a bow-window with sashes. Between the drawing-room and the old "dyneing room" was left a narrow passage. About the same time the ground floor of the building at the south-east, formerly the kitchen of another house (25 feet by 12 feet) was converted into a dining-room.

After 1649, but at what precise period is unknown, Prior Crauden's Study was divided into four. By that time the Chapel itself had probably been converted into a dwelling house. It was still a Chapel in 1649 (see *Stewart*, p. 245) and an order was then made for its demolition, the stone, timber, glass, iron and lead being valued at £33 17s. od.¹ It probably escaped destruction by being turned into a dwelling house. The undercroft was made into a kitchen, and a floor inserted in the Chapel itself so to convert it into two storeys (see *Wilkin's "Archæologia"* vol. xiv. 105, 111, 112; xix. 366, 368). The doorway was at the west end, and a lean-to porch was constructed between the buttresses to connect this with the turret staircase. At the top of this staircase there are traces of some sort of porch over the present door into the Chapel. There were two rooms and a passage on each floor; the staircase to the top storey

1. The Chapel in 1649 was covered with lead which, with the iron was valued at no less than £23 2s. od. It may be conjectured that the lead was removed as being the most valuable part of the fabric, and that the vaulting then became unsafe, and either fell in or was removed, a tiled roof being then put on when it was made into a dwelling house.

was at the west end of the south wall. At what time it was connected with the larger house is uncertain; in 1801 it was still a separate dwelling house and belonged to the Deanery. It was joined to the Prior's House by making a doorway in the south-west corner of the present drawing-room and removing the north-east window of the Chapel. In 1846 it was disconnected from the house and restored to its original use as a chapel. During the alteration of the house in 1882-3, several fragments of clunch images were found over the head of a doorway in the south-west corner of the then kitchen, *i.e.* opposite the present pantry door. That these images belonged to Prior Crauden's Chapel was proved by the present Dean, Dr. Kirkpatrick, who discovered that part of a human face exactly fitted a broken stone on the south side of the Chapel. It has been restored to its original position, but is clearly distinguished by its whiteness. Some of the passage which connected the Chapel with the Fair Hall—now the house of the Headmaster of the King's School—was still remaining in 1817.

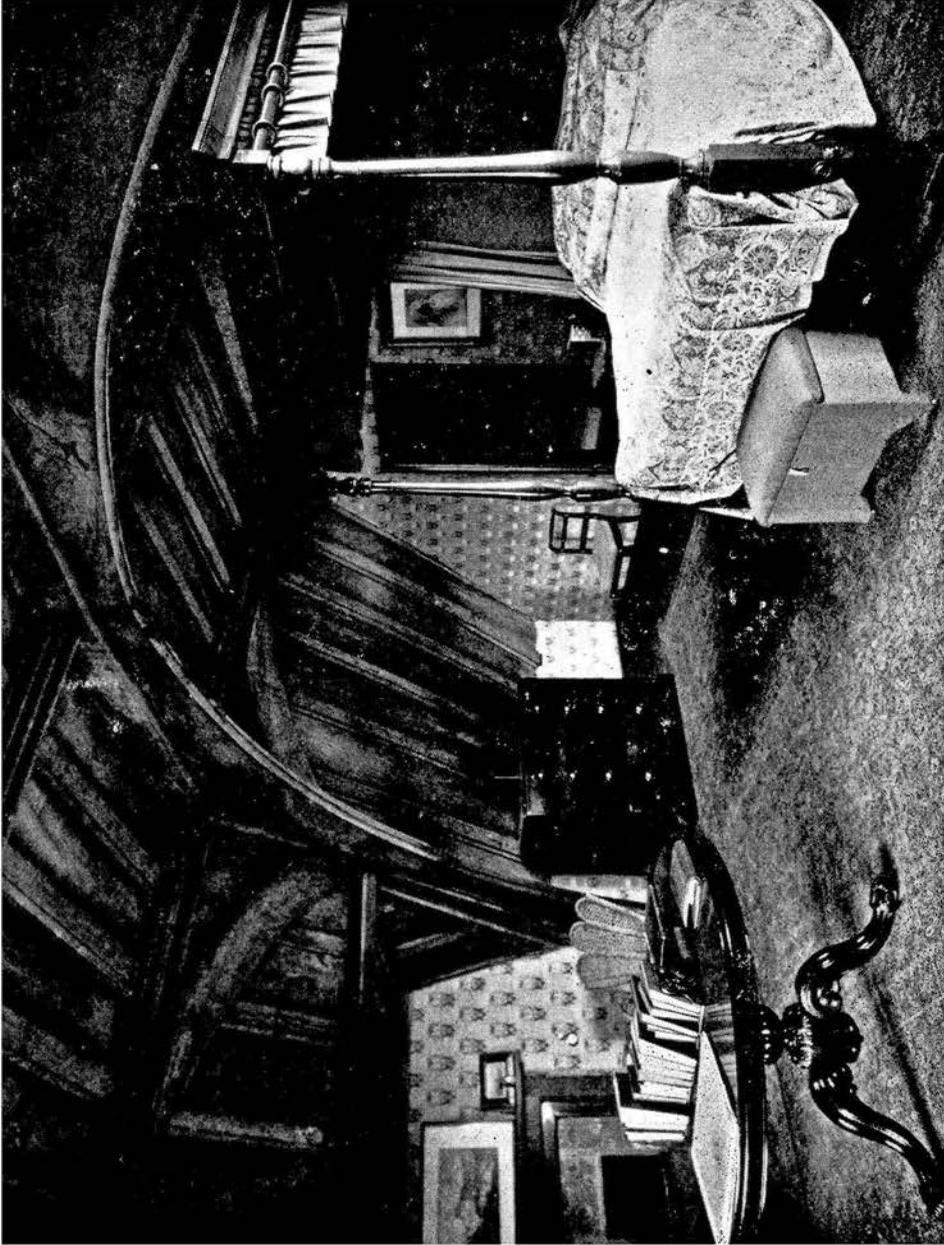
During the eighteenth century, apparently about the time that the southern portion of the original Hall was converted into a drawing-room, the roof of the north-east wing, or "Audit Room" to use the name of 1541, which was nearly flat, was renewed, and was given a slightly increased slope. The "Audit Room" itself was ceiled, and likewise the short staircase leading to it. The little room which had been inserted above the original passage was closed, and entirely hidden by plaster, the new ceiling of the short staircase being put at a level which would have partly blocked up the door, if it had still been used, and which did actually cover the top of the window in the outer wall. It is not improbable that the division of Prior Crauden's Study into four rooms was made at the same time, and that the room now used as a dining-room, which had been originally the kitchen or bakery of another house was then adapted to its present purpose. This room appears to have been lighted originally by two windows on the north, as well as by one or more on the south. Of the former, one was partly

blocked up by the construction of another fireplace to the west of the great chimney, the other being closed somewhat later, perhaps on account of the window tax. It is not improbable that the windows in the south wall of the bedroom in the north-east wing (i.e. the "Audit Room") were blocked up for the same reason, the walls of the room being afterwards covered with lath and plaster so as to hide all traces of the mural arcade¹. A wall was built across the undercroft so as to provide a pantry adjoining the kitchen; the southern portion of the undercroft which now became the entrance hall was thus reduced to a square with one pier in the centre. About the same time the square staircase appears to have been altered so as to make the approach to it from the porch or lobby connecting the dining-room with the vaulted undercroft.

Early in the nineteenth century extensive alterations seem to have been made in the present dining-room, a sort of alcove containing a window was built out on its south side; on its east side a small room was constructed between it and the garden wall, and adjoining this room, perhaps a little later, another small room was added on the south. The roof of the timber building above the dining-room (the little buttery and servants' bed-room of 1649) was brought down on the south side so as to roof the new addition to the dining-room. The original windows of the upper storey constructed beneath the eaves were thus blocked up.

No further alteration of any importance was made in the house till the death of Canon Jarrett in 1882, when much of the structure, especially Prior Crauden's Study, which was of timber, was found to be in a dilapidated condition. It was evident that the house could not be left as it was, and Mr. Reynolds Rowe, architect to the Dean and Chapter, was not unnaturally consulted about its restoration. Unfortunately Mr. Rowe was entirely destitute of any antiquarian feeling, and his recommend-

1. That the lath and plaster covering of the walls was later than the present ceiling is clear, since the ceiling from the first extended to the actual walls.



G. H. Tyndall

THE PRIOR'S HOUSE, ELY.
THE ROOF OF THE HALL.

Photo by

ations which were ultimately adopted were deplorable. Prior Crauden's Study was demolished altogether, with the exception of its splendid fireplace, for which Mr. Rowe could not find another place sufficiently large, and a hideous passage of white brick with a staircase like that of a sea-side lodging-house was constructed in its stead. The beautiful little doorway which had once given access to Prior Crauden's building and which might well have been left *in situ* was removed to the south-west corner of the present entrance hall; the big fourteenth century chimney was pulled down, and a Norman doorway in the kitchen which Mr. Rowe thought too narrow for modern requirements was utterly destroyed. Windows supposed to be of fourteenth century design were inserted, not only in the present hall, where there was some excuse for them since the vaulting was of fourteenth century date, but also in the kitchen and (present) pantry where there was nothing belonging to this period, and, as a crowning absurdity, in the north wall of the square staircase immediately above a Tudor arch. The old studded door gave place to one of quasi-ecclesiastical design, and the leaded windows gave place to plate-glass. The only good feature of the "Rowe storation" of the house, to quote a pun of Bishop Woodford's, was the removal of the pantry, by which the southern part of the undercroft was restored to the dimensions of 1541, and the opening up of the fine oak roof. In order to provide rooms to compensate for those which were pulled down, the pitch of the ceilings of the rooms on the first floor was altered, that of the drawing-room being considerably lowered, and that of the other room somewhat raised. The gable roof of the square staircase building which hitherto had been unconnected with the main roof was now continued westward in order to construct a staircase from the southernmost attic to the little room above the staircase. In pulling down Prior Crauden's Study the upper (traceryed) portion of the window in the western wall, *i.e.* opposite the great fireplace, was discovered; it is of oak, and is now preserved in the triforium of the

Cathedral. The tracery is of reticulated pattern and has a square head; the width of the frame from outside to outside is 6 feet 7 inches, and the height of the traceried part 4 feet 6 inches. The window was of three lights, each 1 foot 5 inches wide, but its original height is unknown since the mullions have not been preserved. In the south wall, a few feet from the west end, and like the window covered with lath and plaster, there was also found an oak doorway jointed into the framing of the partition. This doorway, which is also preserved in the triforium, is 8 feet 3 inches high, 5 feet 6 inches wide, from outside to outside, and 6 inches thick, the one side of it flat the other deeply moulded; the door opening is 7 feet 3 inches high and 3 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and has a pointed-arched head. It is evident that this doorway was constructed to give access to a gallery leading to the Chapel door. [See *Chapman* vol. I, p. 128].

The only changes since 1883 have been the bringing to light of ancient features concealed by plaster, namely a stone arch in the vaulted passage on the left-hand side of the door of the room in the ground floor of the north-eastern wing, and a semi-pier on the western side of the kitchen to which had been built a support of the great chimney beam mentioned above. These were laid bare in 1911. The lath and plaster covering the arcade in the "Audit Room" was removed in 1909, and the little room constructed above the passage was opened up at the same date. The little spiral staircase at the south-east corner of the present drawing-room was opened up in 1913, and the window on the north side of the dining-room was re-opened at the same time.

Portions of the original mural arcade of the Great Hall are concealed beneath the lath and plaster of the present drawing-room. It is to be hoped that it may be possible at some date to uncover these, and also to bring to light the original fireplace of the "dyneing room", the present study. In the wall-arch over the fireplace of the Great Hall remains of a fresco, described by Mr. Rowe as "two bishops, etc., under a canopy of fourteenth

century type " were discovered in 1882-3. The northern part of this fresco still remains in the little lobby immediately outside the present drawing-room door, but is almost obliterated.

Another improvement which could add greatly to the comfort and convenience of the house would be to restore the kitchen to the dimensions which it had in 1541, and to convert it to a dining-room. It is much to be hoped that the present passage on the west of the house may some day give place to a building more worthy of Prior Crauden's noble fireplace, and that the vaulted undercroft of Prior Crauden's Chapel may be restored and put to a more honourable use.

The present writer's indebtedness to earlier students of the architecture and history of the Prior's House, especially to Archdeacon Chapman, will be abundantly evident from the references to their works. He desires also to record his great obligation to Mr. S. Inskip Ladds who has not only read this article both in manuscript and in proof with the greatest care, but has also given no small amount of help in criticisms and suggestions.

Contents of Part 6, Vol. 4.

Papers.

	PAGE
THE CARTULARY OF THE PRIORY OF ST. MARY, HUNTINGDON, by <i>The Rev. Canon Noble</i>	217
THE PRIOR'S HOUSE, ELY, by <i>The Rev. Canon Kennett, D.D.</i>	233
BRONZE SPEARHEAD FOUND AT CONINGTON, HUNTS., by <i>Dr. J. R. Garrod</i>	252
REPORTS AND BALANCE SHEETS	253

Illustrations.

	PAGE
THE PRIOR'S HOUSE, ELY.	
SOUTH SIDE, SHEWING END OF HALL AND PRIOR CRAUDEN'S CHAPEL	<i>to face</i> 233
EAST SIDE, SHEWING THE HALL AND THE KING'S TREASURY	<i>to face</i> 240
THE UNDERCROFT OF THE HALL	<i>to face</i> 241
THE CHIMNEY PIECE OF PRIOR CRAUDEN'S STUDY	<i>to face</i> 244
INTERIOR OF THE KING'S TREASURY	<i>to face</i> 245
THE ROOF OF THE HALL	<i>to face</i> 248
PLAN OF UNDERCROFTS, &c.	<i>to face</i> 254
PLAN OF PRINCIPAL FLOOR	<i>to face</i> 254