THE CISTERCIANS
AND
FOUNTAINS ABBEY.

By J. Arthur Reeve.

A Paper read before the Society, Thursday, January 20th, 1880.

WHEN I was asked some months ago by my friend Mr. Barham Johnson to give a lecture to you on some archæological subject before the end of January, I replied that I should be happy to do so; there then seemed plenty of time for me to get up my subject and to prepare some diagrams; however, I am sorry to say that having met with a succession of hindrances since I took the work in hand, I now come before you by no means properly prepared to speak to you, and what I chiefly regret is, that the only illustrations I have been able to bring down are so small and inadequate for a public lecture; but should any of you care to look at them closely, you will, I think, find that they throw some light on the subject upon which I am going to speak.

This subject, viz.: the religious order of the Middle Ages, known as the Cistercian, is a large one, and of course I can give you the merest sketch of it in the course of a short lecture; but as I happen to have made a very careful study of the largest and best preserved abbey built by this order in England, I have thought that by giving you a description of this abbey with explanations of the characteristics of its various parts by reference to such documents as have been at my disposal, I may be able to give you some little idea of the grandeur of this noble order, and of the good work which it must have done during the rough times in which it prospered.

I should say here that the late Mr. Edmund Sharpe's work on Cistercian Architecture has been of the greatest service to me in preparing this lecture; indeed, he went so carefully into the subject, that as far as the central buildings of a Cistercian abbey are concerned there is little new to be said.

As no doubt many of you know the Cistercian order was a reformed branch of the Benedictine, and it was naturally in many respects exceedingly like its parent, but as at the Reformation the founders of the English Church put away all those practices which appeared to them to detract from the grandeur and to sully the purity of the Western Church, while they retained most carefully all that seemed good, so did the promoters of reform in the Benedictine order about 400 years previously, adhere to all which was worthy of

GROUND PLAN OF
FOUNTAINS ABBEY,

PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION

OF THE LATE

JOHN RICHARD WALBRAN, F. S. A.,

WITH CORRECTIONS BY

EDMUND SHARPE, M. A., F. R. I. B. A.

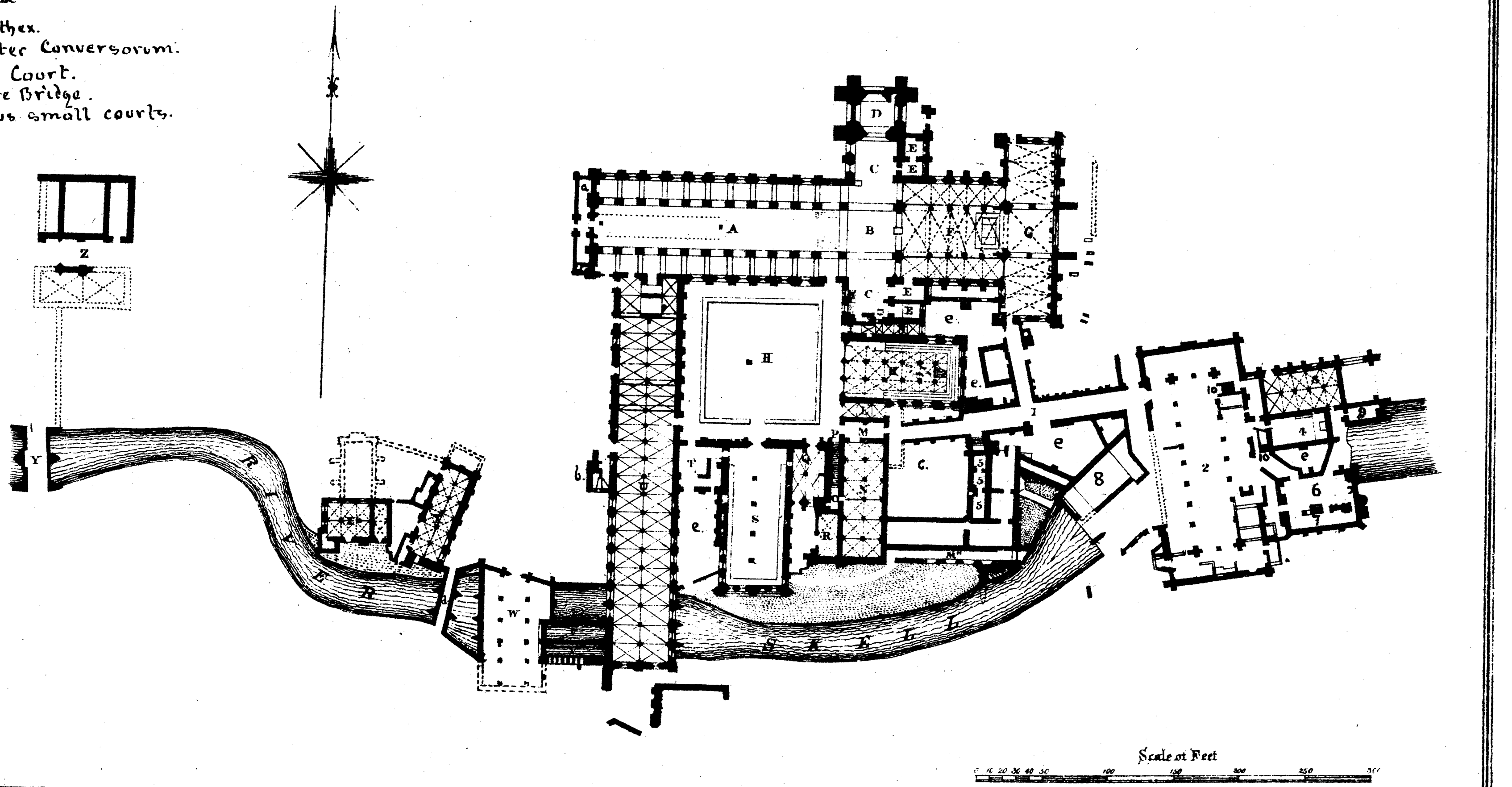
THE ABBEY.

A. The Nave of the Conventual Church.
B. The Crossing.
C. N. and S. Transepts.
D. The Tower.
E. Transeptal Chapels.
F. The Choir.
G. ~~Lady~~ Chapel of the Nine Altars.
H. Cloister Court.
I. Penitential Cell.
J. Sacristy.
K. Chapter House.
L. Passage. — Probably The Locutorium.
M. (Passage) — Mᵗ Gardrobes Monachorum.
N. Fratry.
O. Closet.
P. Staircase.
Q. Kitchen and
R. its Appurtenances.
S. Refectory.
T. Buttery.
U. Domus Conversorum.
V. Gardrobes. Conversorum.
The Hospitium { W. Infirmary.
X. ~~Buildings, the destination of which is uncertain.~~ Houses for Strangers
Y. Mill Bridge.
Z. Gate House

a. The Narthex.
b. Magister Conversorum.
c. Base Court.
d. Private Bridge.
e. various small courts.

THE ABBOT'S BUILDINGS

1. Passage from the Cloister Court.
2. The Great Hall.
3. Abbot's ~~Kitchen, &~~ Residence above
4. Abbot's Chapel.
5. Prisons.
6. Abbot's Kitchen.
7. Scullery.
8. Probably a Private Refectory.
9. Gardrobe.
10. Stairs.



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reverence in the order of St. Benedict, whilst they threw away all those corruptions which in the course of many centuries had grown up within it.

The foundation of this reformed order took place in the year of our Lord 1098; in that year certain monks belonging to the Benedictine Monastery at Molesme in Burgundy, among whom was a certain Englishman, Stephen Harding, who seems to have been the leader of the movement, applied to their metropolitan, the Archbishop of Lyons, for leave to quit their convent, and in a more retired spot to live a life of greater severity and devotion. The Archbishop granted their request, and these earnest men having obtained the protection of the Duke of Burgundy, took up their abode in a wild forest in the diocese of Chalons, where they founded the Abbey of Cisteaux; from this first abbey the order took its name. Here for some years they lived with extreme austerity, and many joined them seeing their zeal for religion, but in the year 1112 or 1113 a member was added to the community who was destined to raise the new order to the highest pitch of renown; he was admitted under the name of Bernard, and became in a few years not only the great apostle of the Cistercians, but of the whole Christian world.

For six or seven years he remained at Cisteaux, and during that period gained for himself such a character for sanctity, that in 1119 it becoming necessary to found a new monastery, he was appointed its abbot, and taking with him twelve other monks, he settled at Clairvaux. However, time will not permit me to give you a sketch of his life; suffice it to say that he ruled at Clairvaux until the year 1153, that he won by his zeal the honour of the whole Church, and soon after his death in the year 1174, was canonized by the Pope.

Of course the influence of such a man as St. Bernard had a wonderful effect in spreading the fame of the new Cistercian order; we therefore find that large numbers of abbeys were either founded by Cistercians, or from belonging to some other order, adopted the Cistercian rule during the lifetime of the saint, and the order continued to be exceedingly popular until the end of the 13th century; then, like all former monastic orders, it began to grow corrupt, and about two hundred years later, when the dissolution of the monasteries took place under Henry VIII., houses belonging to this order were found to be in as evil condition as most other convents unfortunately then were; but although such was the case, it appears to me ungenerous to overlook, as one is too apt to do, the immense good which these grand institutions had done by keeping alive not only the Christian faith, but also a love of literature which was to a great extent the germ of all our modern learning. Great good must also have been done by working communities like the Cistercians in the matter of cultivation of land; some of the larger monasteries possessing really vast territories, of which probably barely a tithe would have been cultivated but for them.

We fortunately still possess several authentic records of the acts of the Cistercians and of the early history of the order; the earliest of

them is known as the "Magnum Exordium Cisterciense," of which the exact date of compilation is uncertain, but as the second record, called the "Parvum Exordium" was written in the year 1120, the other was probably compiled during the first decade of the 12th century.

The statutes of the order seem to have been first committed to writing by Alberic, second Abbot of Cisteaux, in the year 1101; they were enlarged by Stephen, his successor, who afterwards compiled the Code of Statutes, called the "Charta Caritatis;" this is in fact the most important of all the codes, and bound all the then existing and future Cistercian abbeys under laws of such a strict and minute nature, that unanimity was insured throughout the whole community as long as the order continued in a state of purity. This remarkable code was published in the year 1119.

Revisions of the institutions took place at several subsequent periods, and in the year 1134 a republication of the whole of the precepts and observances of the order took place probably under the direct supervision of St. Bernard himself. In the year 1257 also a further code of rules was published, from which I shall make one or two quotations this evening. These rules are exceedingly interesting, some from an architectural point of view, but mostly on account of the insight they give into the manners and customs of a monastery in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The particular abbey of which I shall now proceed to give you a short description, is that called Fountains, in Yorkshire; it lies four miles to the west of Ripon, in the deep and narrow Valley of the Skell, and both on account of the beauty of its position and of its architecture, is acknowledged by all to be one of the most interesting relics of the Middle Ages which has come down to us. It was founded in the year 1132.

On first catching sight of the abbey in the distance, the seclusion of its situation is perhaps the chief thing which strikes one, and on comparing it with other Cistercian abbeys, we shall find that in this respect they all agree. The cause of this is found on reference to the rules which I have already mentioned; for the first paragraph of the constitutions issued in 1257 begins thus:—"No monasteries of our order may be constructed in cities, fortresses, or villages, but let them be built in places far removed from the conversation of men." In the present day we find seeming exceptions to this rule, as at Kirkstall, near Leeds; but under such circumstances, we may be quite certain that if the abbey dates from the 12th century, the town at that time either had no existence whatever or else was merely a small hamlet.

However, this similarity of position is by no means the most striking point of resemblance between different abbeys belonging to this order, for on making a careful comparison of many Cistercian monasteries, we find that the general disposition of all the main buildings, namely, those surrounding the cloister court, is almost identical in every case, so much so, in fact, that it is possible, as Mr. Sharpe has shewn, to

give a typical ground plan which shall be a fairly true representation of the Cistercian abbeys built before the year 1200.

This early arrangement of the buildings is still almost perfect at Fountains, the only alteration which has been made being in the choir of the church, which, during the first half of the 13th century, was reconstructed on a very grand scale. During some excavations, however, which were made about thirty years ago, the foundations of the original choir were found, which shew that when first built Fountains was no exception to the rule then generally obtaining throughout the Cistercian order.

The ground plan of this splendid abbey is hanging up on the wall yonder, and if you can see it, will help you to understand this peculiar disposition: you will see that the cloister court forms almost a perfect square in the centre, and round this are placed most conveniently the various buildings in the following order:—

The whole of the north side is occupied by part of the nave of the church, which also extends westwards beyond the domus conversorum.

The east walk is formed by the west wall of the south transept, the chapter-house, and a small portion of the fratry. On this side we also find a sacristy between the church and the chapter-house, and a passage between the latter and the fratry; these are generally to be found, more or less, in these positions respectively.

On the south side are the kitchen, refectory, and buttery, and at the eastern end, between the fratry and the kitchen, is placed the staircase leading to the monks' dormitory, scriptorium, etc., on the first floor.

The west walk of the cloister is flanked by the northern part of the great building destined for the use of the conversi or lower order of monks, who, like their superiors, had a large day room on the ground floor and as large a dormitory above.

Of these several buildings, the church and the chapter-house run east and west, and the fratry, refectory, and the domus conversorum run north and south, as at Cisteaux, but this arrangement was not universally adopted.

I will now proceed to give a short description of these buildings in the order in which they have been mentioned.

The original church at Fountains before it was altered was a good type of the earlier form of Cistercian churches, describing on plan the shape of a true Latin cross; the nave is long, and the chancel and north and south arms of the transept are all short and of about equal lengths; the nave had aisles which open into the transept, but these aisles were not extended to the choir; the transept, however, is provided with chapels projecting from its eastern wall which flank the choir for about half its length, but do not communicate with it. At Kirkstall there are, and at Fountains there were, six of these chapels, three in each arm of the transept; but in France there seem usually to have been only two, partly because not infrequently the French choirs had aisles even in the earliest abbeys founded by this order.

The choir itself, and all of these transeptal chapels are square ended, as at the Mother Abbey of Cisteaux. That the square form should obtain in England is of course by no means strange, it having been the almost universal practice of English Mediæval architects to adopt the square east end, but that it should have been used at Cisteaux and several of the other early Cistercian churches in France, is, I think, exceedingly interesting. At the date of which I am speaking, almost all choirs in France were built with circular, octagonal, or polygonal apses, with ambulatories and radiating chapels. It was therefore a very marked departure from precedent when the monks of Cisteaux built their church with a square east end; and one cannot help recollecting in connection with this fact, that the prime mover of the reform was an Englishman. May it not have been that this austere man, retaining a predilection for the square ended churches of his mother country, induced his followers to adopt this sterner form when they founded with him a new monastic order of such severity as the Cistercian? It is certainly the case that when a body of men or a nation or a race have been possessed very strongly with one idea, they have always expressed this idea in their architecture; and I am much inclined to believe that this square ended church was to the Frenchmen of that day a very definite external sign of the severe life of self-abnegation and fasting which they were desirous of living.

Before quitting this part of my subject, it would perhaps be well for me to give translations of one or two of the rules which bear most directly on the construction and decoration of their churches, to shew you that this subtle connection between their architecture and their lives did not altogether escape their notice.

Here is a rule which immediately stamps a peculiar character upon all early Cistercian churches:—"Let not stone towers for bells be built, nor wooden ones of immoderate height, for they detract from the simplicity of the order."

I believe many of the French Cistercian churches shew signs of having originally possessed these wooden bell turrets, but as I have not seen any Cistercian work abroad, I cannot speak from experience on this point. In England, however, even from the earliest times, this rule seems to have been neglected, for at Kirkstall, founded in the year 1145, the lower storey of the tower over the crossing is of the same date as the rest of the church, and at Fountains there are evident signs of the same sort of low 12th century stone tower having once existed (see sketch).

Next as to the bells themselves, it was thus ordered:—"Let the bells of our order be so managed that one only shall be struck at a time, never two together;" thus preventing the introduction of anything approaching a joyous peal.

But it was with regard to the interior arrangements and decoration of their churches that their rules are most explicit. Take the following, for instance:—"We forbid sculptures or pictures to be executed in our churches or in any of the offices of the monastery: because,

whilst by such things is intended the exercise of good meditation or the ordering of a religious gravity, these are too often neglected; but painted crosses which are of wood we may have."

Again. "Superfluities and remarkable curiosities in sculptures, paintings, buildings, pavements, and other such like things, which sully the antient purity of the order, and do not agree with our poverty, we forbid to be made; also pictures, except the likeness of the Saviour. Let the father abbots diligently enquire into all these matters in their visitations and cause them to be observed."

They also forbade the use of stained glass in the following words :— "Let white glass only be used, excepting in abbeys which formerly belonged to another order; these may retain what they had before the time of their conversion."

It is also clear from the following that they restricted the number of candles to be used in their churches :—"When the feast of any saint shall occur, it is lawful to burn the light of a lamp or of a candle at the altar chiefly consecrated in his honour."

There is also a rule forbidding that any but kings, queens, or bishops should be buried in their larger churches; abbots and those who died after having been called to the Abbacy might be buried in the chapter-house, and the common monks were interred in the cloister quadrangle; the conversi and people who died in the hospitium were, no doubt, buried in the large graveyard in the immediate neighbourhood of the abbey.

Now all of these rules which I have enumerated, and many others which I cannot now give you, point most clearly to the strong desire which these old Cistercians had to keep out of their churches and monasteries everything which could hinder them from living what they considered a holy life; and it is interesting to notice in how many respects they objected to just those things which the reformers of the 16th century also waged war against :—stained glass, sculptures, paintings, and superfluities of all sorts. It would have been well for us archæologists if the great 16th century Reformation had been carried on in the same charitable spirit as its less stirring prototype in the 12th century was effected; the latter, instead of causing the destruction of hundreds of ancient monuments, and the mutilation of nearly all, had on the contrary the effect of raising up one of the grandest styles of architecture which the North and West of Europe can boast. A style, which depending as it did, entirely upon breadth of design and nobility of proportion for its beauty, was always productive of buildings of the first order; take for example the Abbeys of Rievaulx, Fountains, Byland, Kirkstall, Furness, and Tintern, all of which, with about one hundred others, were built by the Cistercians in England.

As I said just now, the choir of an early Cistercian church is always short, and I think we have now seen enough of the simplicity of the order to account for this; it was no doubt because they admitted only a very plain ceremonial at the altar, which would better accord with the general simplicity of their life; but in the 13th

century, a little more than 100 years after the foundation of the order, they got tired of this restriction, and in England as well as in other countries we find Cistercian choirs of very considerable proportions of this date.

Look at the plan of Fountains for example, and you will see that the area of the choir with its eastern transept, called the chapel of the nine altars, as reconstructed during the first 25 years of the 13th century, amounts almost to two-thirds of the area of the nave and transept; this late choir also is provided with north and south aisles, one of the original transeptal chapels on each side having been destroyed to admit of this; of course in some ways this extension of the choir must be looked upon as an improvement—it was in itself very fine; but I think anyone who has seen the original 12th century choir at Kirkstall must have been immensely impressed with its solemn grandeur, which to me always seems to harmonise better with the rest of the abbey than does the extensive choir of Fountains.

There are two sketches hung up yonder, one shewing my idea of the exterior of the original choir of Fountains Abbey with the central tower and north transept, and the other shewing the interior of the existing choir restored; they are both the result of a considerable amount of study, and are not simply the wild imaginings of an over-heated architectural brain.

The exterior design of the nave is very similar to that of the north transept in the above sketch, it consists merely of a row of semi-circular-headed clerestory windows above, and a row of similar aisle windows below divided from one another by the rather shallow aisle roof. Pilasters of slight projection divide both clerestory and aisle into bays. The interior of the nave is not less severe than the exterior; the nave arches, moulded in the simplest manner possible, are supported on plain cylindrical columns, with shallow capitals and bases, and between the arcade and the clerestory there is merely a piece of blank wall surmounted by a plain bull-nosed string course, upon which the jambs of the inner arches of the clerestory windows rest; yet every one must acknowledge that it is a first-rate piece of architecture, notwithstanding this almost childish simplicity. It seems probable that the nave and transept were covered by means of semi-circular wooden ceilings, but the original choir was probably vaulted in stone, as at Kirkstall; the nave aisles had stone roofs of a very peculiar character, transverse semi-circular arches springing from corbels inserted about two-thirds up the nave piers, and at a similar height on the aisle walls, supported transverse pointed barrel vaults, which followed the line of the main nave arches; it was in fact little more than a prolongation of the nave arch to the aisle wall.

In addition to this extreme simplicity of form in the plan and elevations of the church, we find that the interior decoration of the building was equally simple; it so happens at Fountains Abbey, that notwithstanding more than three hundred years of exposure to all the inclemency of a Yorkshire climate, much of the mural decoration of the church still exists; it is of the plainest description, merely consisting

of red joint lines on a white ground; with these red lines the whole surface of the walls, piers, and arches seem to have been covered, and it is interesting to note that some of this jointing belongs evidently to the 12th century, while some of it must have been done quite 300 years later, shewing that the ancient rule in the matter of painting did exercise considerable repression even to the last days of the order. In the whole abbey of Fountains I only discovered the remains of one small fresco; it is on one of the piers on the south side of the nave, and probably formed part of an altar piece; it appears to have been executed in monochrome.

At the west end of Cistercian churches there is often found a portico or narthex extending along the whole length of the western façade; its primary use is doubtful, but it was used at Fountains, and I don't doubt elsewhere also, as a place of sepulture; I should think very likely for noble personages of the laity wishing to be buried near the church, within which the strict laws of the order would not admit their bodies.

It may be well to mention here, as a termination to my remarks upon the church, that the Cistercians were among the first to make use of the pointed arch, and it is particularly worthy of note, that they used it first, not for the more decorative features, such as windows, doors, and arcadings, but without exception for the main arches of construction, such as the arches of the nave arcade, the great arches at the crossing, and for the transverse ribs of vaulting. This seems to me to be a conclusive argument against the theory that the pointed arch was discovered by the chance intersection of two semi-circular arches in Norman arcading; I believe, on the contrary, it was adopted on constructional motives from the recognition of the fact that a semi-circular arch without a key-stone is inclined to be weak, while with a keystone it necessitates a different mode of treatment from what our 11th and 12th century ancestors were willing to adopt.

I must now say a few words about the other main conventual buildings at Fountains Abbey, all of which are in a wonderful state of preservation.

On leaving the church by the cloister door and walking south, we first come to what now looks like a vaulted passage; this was originally divided into two separate apartments, of which the eastern one was the sacristy with a private entrance into the south transept of the church, and the western one seems likely to have been a cell in which the monks may perhaps have expiated their minor offences. In after years it came to be used as a charnel house, and no less than 500 nearly perfect skeletons were found carefully packed in this small space when the ruins were first put in order some 30 years ago.

Next comes the chapter-house, which, like most chapter-houses of this order, is a long parallelogram divided into three aisles by two rows of pillars running from east to west. This was a very elaborate piece of architecture; it was vaulted throughout with rich stone vaulting, supported on corbels against the walls and the columns before named; these latter with their caps and bases were of polished

marble. The chapter-house was entered by three great archways leading directly into it from the cloister, and as these archways never had doors and the cloister was not glazed, the chapter-house was virtually open to the outer air. The memorial slabs of several of the abbots remain in the chapter-house and also the bases of three tiers of stone seats running round the walls; as the remains of these seats are interrupted at the east end of the centre aisle, I am inclined to think that the abbot's chair stood in this position and that it was of wood.

Next to the chapter-house is a richly vaulted passage which leads directly to the abbot's house, and various other buildings to the south-east of the central block, of which I shall not have time to speak to-night.

Then follows the fratry, a long, low, and inexpressibly dismal building running north and south; the Northernmost bay which overlaps the cloister was divided off from the rest of the apartment, and had a doorway at each end, one communicating with the cloister court and the other with the base court; the part thus cut off from the monks' day-room may perhaps have been a locutorium; the wall which originally separated this apartment from the fratry is now demolished, but it is plain that it once existed; at Fountains this locutorium was evidently an afterthought, but it generally forms one of the separate rooms in a Cistercian abbey. Sometimes this and the passage mentioned above are transposed, but traces of both are almost always found.

The fratry itself is a low vaulted room, divided into two aisles by a row of columns down the centre; it was lighted, or rather its extreme gloominess was made manifest, by two windows at the south end—there was no other natural light, but possibly lamps were kept burning at the northern end of the apartment.

Above this day-room was the monks' dormitory, which was reached by a flight of stairs, still existing between the fratry and the kitchen; from this dormitory there was a passage leading directly into the south transept of the church, which enabled the monks to attend the midnight services with greater ease.

The scriptorium also was reached by this passage; it was situated above the four eastern bays of the chapter-house, and must have been a very spacious apartment, but now only the three outer walls remain, and these are in a very ruinous condition; the height of the roof over all of these buildings is given by the line cut in the face of the south transept to receive the flashing; strangely enough, although the chapter-house and fratry are only two or three years later in date than the nave and transept of the church, and must have formed part of the original design, this roof line was allowed to cut in the most careless manner across the windows of the transept.

We now come to the buildings on the south side of the cloister court, of which the kitchen comes first: this is a very fine lofty room, oblong in shape, vaulted and divided into two bays each way, with a massive pier supporting the ribs in the centre; in the eastern wall

there are two great fire-places, the openings occupying the whole width of one bay each; they are more than 16-ft. wide by 6-ft. 6-in. high, and are square headed, the lintels being formed by flat arches composed of joggled stones 4-ft. 9-in. deep; the kitchen was lighted by two large windows in the south wall, and there was also a doorway in this wall giving access to certain buildings lying between the fratry and refectory, which were probably sculleries, fuel houses, etc.; in the west wall of the kitchen are two openings cut after the completion of the buildings to form hatchways into the refectory; in the north wall there is only the doorway leading into the cloister court.

In the centre of the south walk of the cloister stands the noblest of all the conventual buildings, namely, the refectory: this must have been a superb room when in a perfect state; it is 109-ft. long by 46-ft. wide, and was divided into two aisles by a row of marble columns down the centre; unlike all the other buildings in the abbey this room was not vaulted, it seems to have had two parallel wooden ceilings, arched in form and very lofty, as suggested in the rough pencil sketch on the wall. The seats and tables were arranged round the east, south, and west walls of the building, there being apparently a somewhat higher table along the south end than elsewhere. The seats were of stone, and the tables had stone uprights, but no doubt the flat part of the table was of wood. The remains of these stone fittings exist in a sufficiently perfect condition to enable one to restore the interior of the refectory with a very considerable amount of accuracy. The pulpit, which I believe is almost invariably found in the refectory of a large abbey, is clearly traceable at Fountains on the west side of the building; the doorway and flight of stairs leading to it in the thickness of the wall are quite perfect, and just inside the doorway is the locker in which the books were kept. Quite at the north end of the west wall there is a doorway with curved sides leading into the buttery; this is very interesting, as shewing that here stood a turn-table, from which, no doubt, each monk took his rations as he entered the refectory.

The buttery is the last building on the south side of the cloister, and of this there is little to be said beyond what I have just mentioned concerning the turn-table. Owing to various alterations which have been made in it from time to time it is a most puzzling ruin to decipher, and one which hardly repays one for the trouble it gives. The only point of real interest about it which remains to be noted, is that part of a stone sink exists in it to which a considerable length of lead piping is still attached.

I must not omit to mention that there are the remains of the lavatory along this south wall of the cloister on each side of the refectory doorway; its form is a long trough, one half of the whole length of which still remains. It is evident by the deposit of lime still adhering to it that this trough was always kept full of water; the holes for the serving pipes and waste pipes are in existence. There is a ledge running all along behind the trough, upon which in all probability small brass reservoirs with taps were placed, for our forefathers were in the habit of washing their hands *over* a basin rather than *in* it.

The last building to be mentioned is the "domus conversorum." I think there can be very little doubt that Mr. Sharpe was right when he came to the conclusion that the long low building which is generally found on the western side of the cloister court in Cistercian abbeys was the house inhabited by the conversi. In design it follows very much the lines of the fratry, that is to say, it consists of a long low vaulted day-room below with a large dormitory above; but as the number of conversi was very much greater than that of the monks, their house is very much larger. At Fountains it is no less than 300 feet long by 41 feet wide; it was probably originally divided into at least two parts, although there is now no sign of a partition: at all events the southern end, from the number and size of the windows, has evidently been used as a workshop, while the northern end was merely a kind of lobby in which those conversi mustered who went out of the abbey to work in the fields, stables, etc. It is thought by some people, too, that the eastern aisle of this northern part was used as a store-house; for my part, I am inclined to think that, considering the immense number of conversi, the whole of the space is likely to have been wanted to accommodate them during the winter evenings after work was over. There are four large doorways in the western wall of this northern portion of the day-room and two small ones, evidently to allow the crowd of conversi to get rapidly out of the house on leaving the church after attending the early service, at which they were all bound to be present. At the north end of the west aisle there is a large door leading directly into the south aisle of the church.

On the western side of this great building, and about in the centre of it, there is a little room with a fire-place in it, over which are the steps leading to the dormitory. This room was inhabited no doubt by the magister conversorum, who was responsible for the good behaviour of this large body of servants, for such they might almost be called.

There is nothing much worthy of note in the dormitory itself; it is as large as the day-room below, and was lighted by narrow round-headed windows throughout its length on each side; a flight of steps at the northern end leads down to the south aisle of the church: shewing that, although the conversi did not attend the midnight services, they went straight to the church from their beds before leaving the abbey for their various daily duties. The dormitory was not vaulted; there were, therefore, no columns down the centre; it is even probable that there were no partitions; the long, unbroken lines of sleeping conversi must therefore have presented a most strange, even weird, appearance to the eye of anyone who could have seen them: they slept in their ordinary clothing without extra covering.

Of the other buildings connected with the abbey, besides those of which I have now given you a rough sketch, the chief are—the abbot's house, the hospitium with the infirmary, the gatehouse, and the mill, all of which still exist in a more or less perfect condition at Foun-

tains. The mill is even yet in constant use. In addition to these there are also many mounds and portions of decaying walls in the neighbourhood of the abbey, which no doubt mark the positions of stables, granaries, etc. The reservoirs and stew ponds are also in existence on the side of the hill to the south of the abbey, and it is clear besides that the subject of drainage received their careful attention; but although all of these remains are very instructive and picturesque on the spot, I fancy it would be even more difficult to make them interesting at a distance, than those parts of the abbey which I have touched upon to-night.

The thanks of the Society are due to the Yorkshire Archæological and Topographical Association for permission to make use of the Plan of Fountains Abbey which illustrates this paper.