

Byland Abbey Exploration.

WHEN the Royal Archæological Institute visited Byland Abbey, in 1874, during the Ripon Meeting, a general wish was expressed that some efforts should be made to remove the fallen rubbish by which the remains are encumbered, and thus disclose the original plan and arrangement of the Church and Conventual buildings. The Council of the Yorkshire Archæological Association lost no time in communicating with Major Stapylton, the owner of the ruins, who most readily entertained the suggestion that a thorough and scientific examination and exploration of the Abbey should be made under the direction of Mr. Edmund Sharpe, M.A., of Lancaster. Having thus secured the cordial support and co-operation of the owner, Mr. Sharpe was applied to, and most kindly consented to advise the Council as to the best method to be adopted in pursuing the proposed investigation, and, after meeting a deputation at Byland, he has prepared the Report which is given below. From this and from the account of the Abbey by which it is followed, a general idea of the magnitude and importance of the scheme can be obtained.

What the Council seeks is, to do for Byland what the noble owners of Fountains Abbey and Jervaulx Abbey have at great cost already effected in those important ruins, and they appeal with confidence, not only to the members of their Association and to Yorkshiremen generally, but also to all antiquaries, archæologists, architects, and others, who may appreciate the value and importance of the object in view, to support them by contributing liberally to a special fund to be devoted to this purpose.

This 'Special Fund' will be wholly distinct from the general funds of the Association, and the Council in undertaking its administration will hope to have the assistance and co-operation of a committee of subscribers to be nominated when a sufficient response to this appeal has been made to justify a commencement of operations. Substantial

donations have been already promised, and a list of subscribers will from time to time be issued, together with reports of the work as it proceeds.

The Council feels that the present opportunity of making a considerable and important addition to the materials available for the history of Cistercian abbeys under Mr. Sharpe's direction, ought to be eagerly accepted and at once, and hopes that any one into whose hands this appeal may come will consider it favourably, and by a prompt and liberal reply enable the Council to commence the work as early as possible in the Spring of 1876.

Cheques and Post-office orders may be sent to either of the undersigned, at their addresses given below, or may be paid direct to the "Byland Abbey account," at the West Riding Union Bank, Huddersfield.

By order of the Council,

<i>Hon. Secs.</i>	{	FAIRLESS BARBER,
		Castle Hill, Rastrick, Brighouse.
		GEO. W. TOMLINSON,
		24, Queen Street, Huddersfield.

December 31st, 1875.

MR. SHARPE'S REPORT.

Byland Abbey.

To the Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Council of the Yorkshire Archæological and Topographical Association.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN :

I have much pleasure in forwarding to you, according to the request of your Secretary, Mr. Fairless Barber, the conclusions at which I have arrived since I met him and Mr. Thomas Brooke as a deputation from your Council in August last at the ruins of Byland Abbey, as to the manner in which the project for the excavation of these ruins should be carried into effect.

The first point to be determined was the site to which the useless rubbish should be removed ; this was fixed to the entire satisfaction of Major Stapylton's agent, Mr. Munby, on the ground, at the time of our visit. The site chosen presents the following advantages : it lies within the grounds of the Abbey and on the south side of the ruins, and, although within easy reach of the parts to be excavated, the heap will be so hidden as to present no eye-sore from any point in the general view :—it can be approached in a straight line from the central point of the excavations, and with a uniformly falling gradient.

I propose that the first point of attack be the nave of the church, and that a tramway either of planks or rails be laid from a point in the wall of the south aisle, in a straight line to the site of the rubbish heap, through the Refectory ; and that the whole of the rubbish that covers the floor of the nave be first removed ;—the squared un moulded stone and large rubble being left, where found, for Major Stapylton's use, and for immediate removal ; and all carved or moulded stone-work being also left where found for future classification and arrangement.

The nave of the church being thus cleared down to the level of its original floor, I propose that the operations, if so far successful, should be then extended to the Crossing, the Transepts, and the Choir.

The floor of the entire church being thus cleared down to its original level, I believe it will be found that the Bases of the whole of the Piers, and probably portions of the Piers themselves, will be met with standing *in situ* ; and that sufficient of the moulded and carved work will be discovered in the course of the excavations, to enable us to determine the form and character of the Pier-capitals, the Pier-arches, and of the Blind-story, and Clere-story openings. It is also possible that sufficient traces may be left to indicate to us the manner in which the different parts of the Church were divided from one another, screened off, and occupied respectively by the Monks, the Conversi, and the Public ; the remains of the Altars may be found also *in situ*.

I propose that the whole of this work be done by contract and tender, under a specification that I shall be glad to draw up when the proper moment arrives. This contract may be divided into two parts, the first applying to the

Nave of the Church only, and the second to the rest of the Church.

Should the results of this work be encouraging, I should then propose to carry out similar works in those portions of the Conventual Buildings, where we may meet with carved or moulded work of such a character as to render such work fruitful in results. As this is most likely to be the case with those buildings that, after the Church, usually received the most ornamental treatment, I should propose to commence with those situated on the east side of the Cloister Quadrangle, and first with the Sacristy and Chapter House. It will be interesting to ascertain whether these both exist in their normal situations ; whether there are any traces of the Penitential Cell adjoining the South transept, or to the west of the Sacristy ; whether the series of triple arch-ways existed on the Chapter House front, and what their character, date, and ornamentation may have been ; whether the Chapter House was divided, as at Furness and Jervaulx, into four compartments longitudinally, and into three latitudinally ; whether the usual passage out of the cloisters from West to East adjoined the Chapter House ; and whether there still exists in the floor of the Chapter House any of the monumental slabs of the abbots that were buried there.

Without having attempted to form anything like an exact estimate of these works, I am of opinion that seven or eight hundred pounds will be found amply sufficient to carry out all that is above described : and that the subscription of half that amount would justify your taking the necessary steps, for offering the first work, that of the nave, to public tender.

As soon, therefore, as you consider that the Society is in a condition to take this first step, I will, on receiving an intimation from you to that effect, send a surveyor over to make an accurate plan of the parts to be excavated, with cross sections in both directions, and correct measurements of the work to be executed ; and I shall be glad then to draw up a specification of this work, detailing the conditions and manner in which it is to be carried out.

I enclose a proof copy of my description of Byland Abbey, as it will appear in the second part of my Paper on *Cistercian Architecture*, to be published in the second number of my *Illustrated Papers on Church Architecture*, now in the Press,

in the hope that it may be useful to you in the appeal you may make to those likely to be interested in this work, and with liberty to use it in whatever way you please.

I am, My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

EDMD. SHARPE.

QUARRY HILL, LANCASTER,
November 14th, 1875.

DESCRIPTION OF BYLAND ABBEY.

BYLAND.—BELLA LANDA.

THIS Abbey lies in a broad valley about two miles North-East of the village of Coxwold in Yorkshire, and eight miles East of Thirsk.

It was an affiliation of Furness. Its early history was written by Philip, the third Abbot, in the year 1197, in the second year of his Abbacy; this history is given entire by Dugdale in his notice of Byland Abbey;¹ but although it gives an interesting account of the troubles and wanderings of the twelve Furness monks with their principal, who colonized Byland, and whose names are all handed down in this Chronicle, it is only indirectly that we derive from it any knowledge of the year in which the Abbey Church, the magnificence of which is attested by the remains that still exist, was commenced.

It appears that the colony left Furness in the year 1134: that they first went to Calder; but driven out there, they fled into Yorkshire, where they were hospitably entertained by the mother of Roger de Mowbray, who became ultimately their chief benefactor, and settled them first at a place called Hood, in the parish of Hovingham, where they remained four years; afterwards at Byland on the Moor, or old Byland,—four miles north of the former place; and subsequently at a place called Stockyng, where, Abbot Philip tells us, they built a stone church, a cloister, and other edifices. They remained there thirty years, during which time their possessions so greatly increased that they determined to commence,

¹ Dugdale's *Monasticon*, vol. v. p. 349; Num. vii.

on a fresh site, which had previously been given to them by Sir Thomas de Colvil, a church that should surpass in size and in its general character all existing churches of the order, with conventual buildings on a proportionate scale.

That this church was not commenced until some time after the year 1150, when Roger de Mowbray obtained from Roger, Bishop of York, the promise to take the Abbey under his protection, on its freedom from the persecution and claims of the Abbots of Furness and Savigny, is obvious from Abbot Philip's detailed account of the pains taken by the monks, subsequent to this date, to clear of timber, and to drain the land, where they intended to place their new Convent. That it must have been commenced and advanced to the point which enabled them to hold their services in it before A.D. 1177 is also certain from the fact, that, on the 31st of October in that year, the monks migrated from Stockyng to the new site, which is very accurately described in Abbot Philip's account as lying between Whiteker and the foot of the mountain of Cambe, close to Burtoft and Berselyva. That it was moreover finished, so far as the structure itself was concerned, before 1197, the year in which Abbot Philip wrote, is also evident from the terms in which he refers to it.² Had I to attach a date to this Church, judging from the internal evidence of the character of the work alone, I should be disposed to fix upon 1170 as

² "Cum ergo dominus Rogerus Mowbray fundator noster audisset et vidisset multas calumpnias graves et injustas super domum et monachos suos de Bella Lauda maliciose de die in diem et vehementer agitari, cogitavit apud se quomodo incommotis obviare et monachis tranquillitatem posset conferre: insuper et qualiter dona sua et Gundræ matris suæ, quæ eisdem monachis per vices ante dederant, valebant firmius et securius tueri, et illibato custodiri, perrexerit cum militibus suis idem R. Mowbray ad dominium Rogerum nobilem virum tunc Archiepiscopum Eboraci et ad capitulum Sancti Petri ibidem, humiliter et devote eisdem supplicans, ut dona sua elemosinaria, necnon et matris suæ scripto suo autentico protegere dignarentur et conservare. Unde dictus archiepiscopus et capitulum petitionibus tam magni viri et mulieris consensum et assensum præbuerunt, eadem dona scriptis suis autenticis roboraverunt eo libentius quo noverunt servos Christi a tanto viro devotius visi-

tari: et sic idem archiepiscopus suscepti in protectionem beati Petri et suam domum Bellande anno pontificatus sui secundo; scilicet anno Domini MCLV. — Cum vero dictus Abbas R. cum suis monachis in occidentali parte territorii de Cukwold, ut supradictum est, mansissent, viriliter extirpare cœperunt de nemore, et per fossas longas et latas magnas aquas de paludibus extrahere: ac postquam apparuit solida terra paraverunt sibi locum latum, ydoneum et honestum in orientali parte ejusdem territorii inter Whiteker et pedem montis Cambe, scilicet juxta Burtoft et Berselyvam ubi de novo ecclesiam suam pulchram et magnam construxerunt, *sicut patet in præsentî*, quam consummet altissimus et conservet in secula seculorum. Et sic de Stockyng se illic transtulerunt, in vigilia Omnium Sanctorum, anno Incarnationis Dominicæ MC septuagesimo septimo, ubi, Domino annuente, feliciter manebunt in æternum."—Dugdale's *Monasticon*, vol. v, p. 353.

the probable date of the design, a date, which judging from the external evidence afforded by Abbot Philip's history, must, at all events, be the latest that it is possible to assign to it.

Thus fixed as to the period of its construction, this building becomes, with certain qualifications due to its Cistercian origin, one of the most valuable landmarks in the History of our National Architecture. It was the largest Church of the Order built from one design; for although FOUNTAINS and RIEVAULX Abbey Churches in their present condition are both larger than that of BYLAND, they were not so, as originally constructed; their increased length being due to the reconstruction of their Choirs in the 13th Century. It was the first, and I believe the only church of the Order in which the Piers and Arches of the Ground-story were carried round the whole structure; for not only had the Nave and Transepts side-aisles, the former North and South, and the latter East and West, but the Choir had an Eastern aisle, as well as a North and South Aisle.

It is also the first Cistercian structure in which the pointed arch makes its appearance in arches of Decoration; for although it is certain that the whole of the lower windows, and probably the whole of the doorways, except those on the West Front, were circular-headed, yet the pointed arch occurs in the Blind-story arcade, and probably in the Clere-story, whilst the three great Windows of the West Front and two of its Doorways were pointed.

The only Pier Capitals that remain are those of the Respond Piers of the South Transept, which probably represent the type of those of the whole Church: they carry the Transitional Volute on all their faces, and were constructed exactly at the time when this short-lived ornament was most in vogue.³

The only portions of the Church left standing are the walls of the North aisle of the Nave, and portions of the North Transept and East end up to the same height, the greater part of the West Front, and the South East corner of the South Transept.

The West Front bears evident marks of having been covered, in its lower part, by a lean-to Narthex, or West Portico, as at FOUNTAINS and FONTENAY.

³ They are given in *The Ornamentation of the Transitional Period*.

The Foundations of the Piers have been sufficiently traced to enable us to recover the entire plan of the church ; but the whole of the Cloisters and Conventual buildings have been completely demolished. A project is entertained, with the sanction of the proprietor, of laying bare the floor of the church by the removal of the mounds of rubbish which now cover it ; should this be carried into effect, and extended to the site of the Conventual buildings, much interesting information cannot fail to be obtained, and probably many valuable fragments of the moulded work of those parts of the building of which we have at present no certain knowledge.

Illustrations of this Abbey Church are given in my *Architectural Parallels*, and of many of its details in *The Mouldings of the Six Periods of English Architecture*.

Of the Conventual buildings, the outlines only can be traced in the heaps of rubbish, which are to be seen on the south side of the Church ; it is probable, however, should the project of a careful examination of these remains be carried into effect, that portions of the lower parts of the walls of most of the domestic buildings will be discovered, and probably those of the entrance to the Chapter House, as well as carved and moulded detail of some importance.

Of the walls of the Domus Conversorum parts are left, and sufficient remains of a wall to the East of the latter building, to lead us to suppose that there existed here, as at CLERVAUX and BEAULIEU, the same broad passage between the Cloister and the Domus Conversorum, of which we have indications at KIRKSTALL, and which formed an independent means of approach to the South Aisle of the Church near its West end.

E. S.



Twenty-second subject in third window, Trinity Chapel. "The cure of a Physician of Perigord at the Tomb of St. Thomas." Shows the original tomb, with relics.