

ART. XII.—*Gleaston Castle*. By W. B. KENDALL, C.E.
Read at Gleaston, June 30th, 1905.

SIR JOHN HARRINGTON, first baron of Aldingham, was a much more wealthy and important personage than any of his predecessors at Aldingham had been, and to him must be ascribed the credit of founding the castle of Gleaston, the remains of which now claim our attention.*

The castle consisted of a quadrilateral enclosure, surrounded by massive walls nine feet in thickness, with a strong square tower at each angle. There is no trace of a central tower or keep, and the large size of the angle towers—especially the one at the north-west corner—indicates that a central keep was never contemplated by the builders. The enclosed area was evidently kept clear for the accommodation of the cattle and sheep of the manor, which would naturally be driven there for shelter when any marauding bands were in the neighbourhood.

The castle stands near the centre of the manor, on the highway between the villages of Gleaston and Scales. Its position is somewhat secluded, standing as it does in a valley surrounded by high ground on all sides. The hill to the eastward, known as the "Beacon Hill," rises nearly 220 feet above the level of the castle yard.

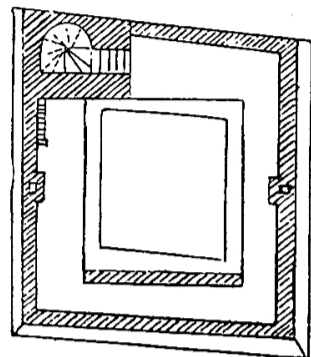
The material used in the construction of the castle was limestone, obtained from a quarry in close proximity to the site, and there are a few door and window heads and quoins of red sandstone, which may have been dressed out of boulders found on the beach about two miles away. There is no quarry of red sandstone within the manor.

* See also a paper on this subject by Mr. H. S. Cowper, F.S.A., in these *Transactions*, vol. xiii., art. iv.

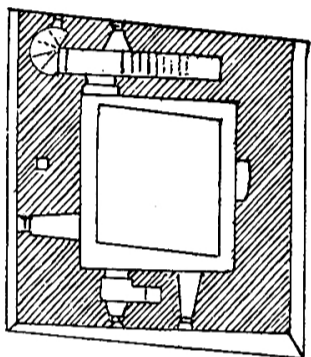
GLEASTON CASTLE.

LANCASHIRE.

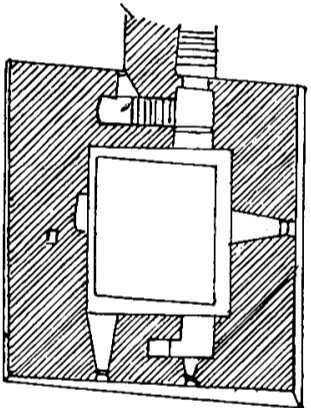
SOUTH-WESTERN TOWER.



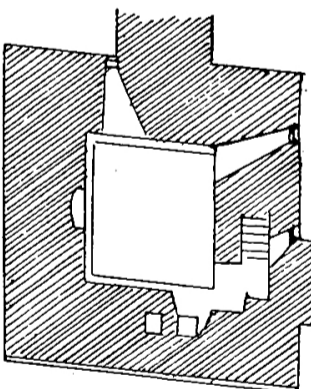
BATTEMENTS.
at 42' 6"



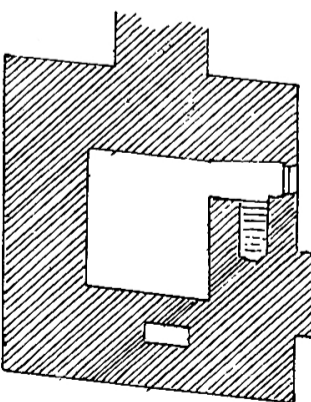
3RD FLOOR.
at 30' 0"



2ND FLOOR.
at 18' 6"

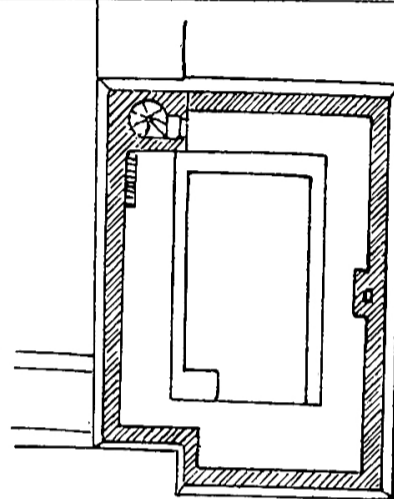


1ST FLOOR.
at 8' 6"

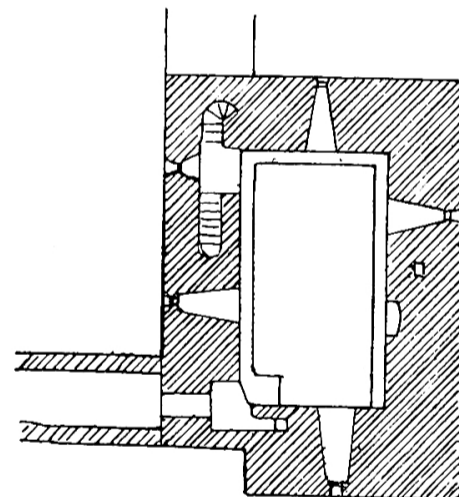


GROUND FLOOR.

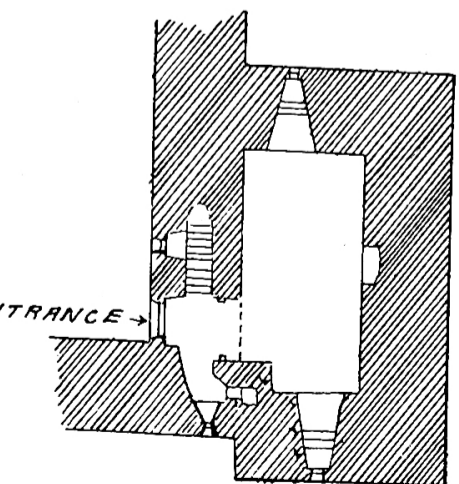
SOUTH-EASTERN TOWER.



BATTEMENTS.
at 29' 0"



FIRST FLOOR.
at 12' 0"

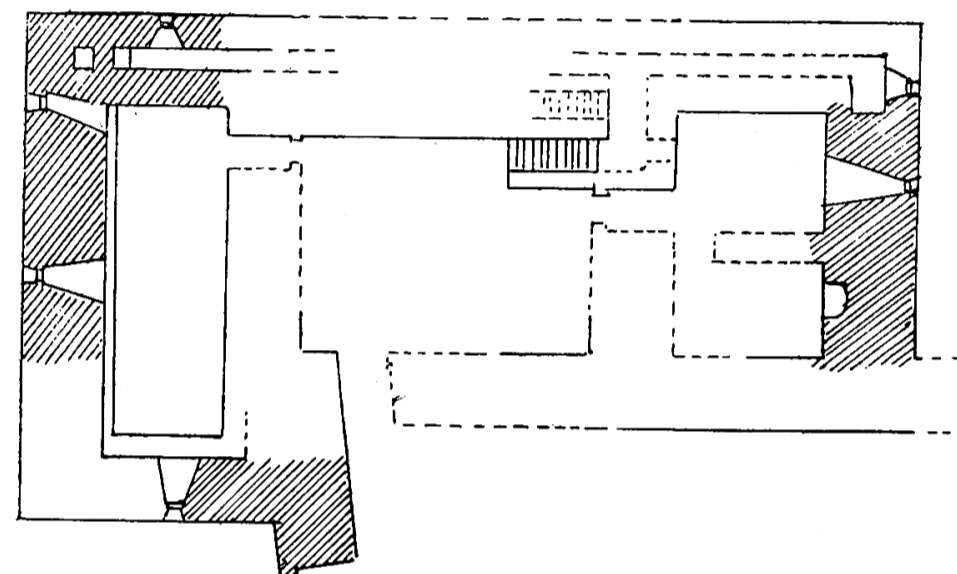


GROUND FLOOR

SCALE.

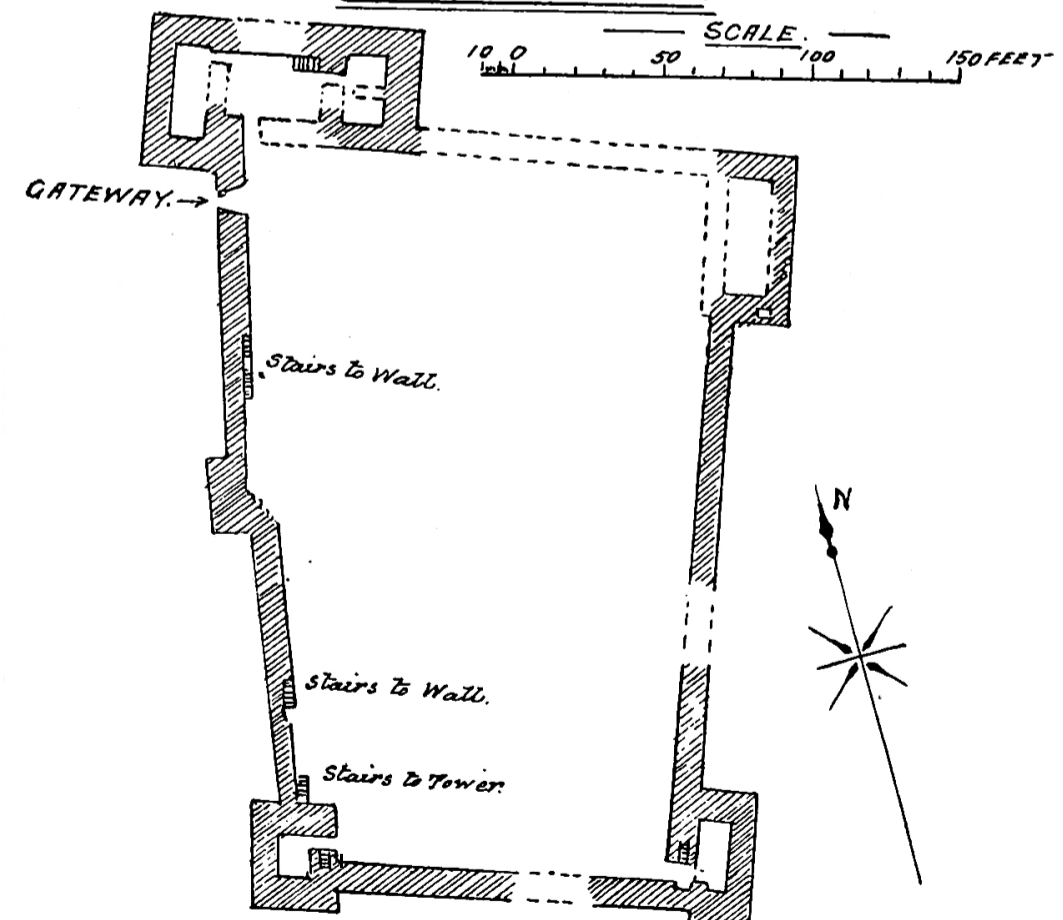
10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 FEET.

NORTH-WESTERN TOWER.



GATEWAY.

GENERAL PLAN.



W. B. Kendall, Delt.
TO FACE P. 184.

The mortar used has been of excellent quality, and seems to have been formed of Stainton lime mixed with sand and shells from Roosebeck. In part of the work at the south-west corner, however, mortar has been dispensed with in the centre of the wall and clay substituted, the face-stones only being set in mortar. The limestone has been roughly squared, but not dressed; and the whole of the work, though strong, is exceedingly rude and plain.

It is extremely improbable that any of the Flemings could have commenced the erection of so extensive a work. The south-western tower, if standing alone, might have been erected by the son or grandson of the first William de Furness, but the general character of the masonry corresponds so closely with that of the south-eastern tower, which is early fourteenth century work, that no great space of time can have elapsed between the dates of their construction.

Tradition tells us that the first Michael Fleming made Aldingham his residence, but owing to the encroachments of the sea he or one of his successors moved to Gleaston, and there built a castle or manor house. Encroachments of the sea alone would not necessitate a removal so far inland, but liability to attack from sea rovers might cause a change of residence to be desirable. Northmen were devastating the shores of the Irish Sea so late as the close of the eleventh century, and during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries their descendants from the Inner Hebrides and the south-west of Scotland often attacked the English coast—especially when the two countries were at war; and the establishment of the “sea wake” in West Cumberland and Furness shows that these attacks were of a serious character. They were most frequent and formidable during Stephen’s reign, and Michael Fleming would then find Aldingham so open to a nocturnal surprise that his removal to Gleaston would be only natural. Assuming tradition to be right, the original castle or house at Gleaston was probably built

near the centre of the existing castle yard, with an enclosure for cattle on the south side, and possibly was irreparably damaged by the Scots in 1316.

No formal permission to erect a castle at Gleaston has been discovered; but under Stephen permission would not be asked, and the orders of his successor to demolish all castles so erected may not, in this case, have been attended to by Stephen's son, who succeeded his father as chief lord, even if we suppose that the assumed building was strong enough to be designated a castle, which is doubtful.

The difficulty of assigning any of the present remains of the castle of Gleaston to the Flemings also applies equally to the Cancefields. When Sir John de Harrington (the first baron) came of age, A.D. 1297, war with Scotland, after a long peace, had broken out afresh, and border raids were to be expected. The first portion of his work was the south-western tower, a part of the south wall, and 100 feet of the clay-hearted east wall extending northward as far as a square solid block of masonry, marking what was probably at first intended as the north-west corner of the castle yard. On the completion of this part of the work some modification of the plan is evident. The area intended to be enclosed is increased, and the foundations of the south-east and north-east towers are laid on an enlarged scale. This would be about the time when the great Scottish raids of 1316 and 1322 swept through Furness, and no doubt affected the design of the castle. The south-eastern tower was duly carried up to its full height, but the north-eastern tower was only built as high as the curtain walls, and there seems to have stopped. The south and east curtain walls were erected, and then the north-western tower was taken in hand. This is the largest of the towers, and was probably completed after 1340, when the possessions of the family had still further increased. The remainder of the east wall was built, but it is doubtful if more than the foundations of the north

wall were got out. Assuming the north wall was constructed, it seems to have been razed about the end of the fourteenth century, when what was probably a pleasure garden was added to the north side of the ward.

In 1458 the castle ceased to be a manorial residence, was dismantled, and speedily fell to decay. The dismantling therefore took place when the towers were comparatively new buildings, and indeed the castle was obsolete before it was finished, and was never fully completed according to the original design. The ward measures internally 240 feet long from north to south, and is 150 feet wide, excluding the north-east tower at the northern end, and 120 feet at the southern end. No traces of moat or ditch are to be seen, and probably none were ever excavated—certainly not on the northern and weakest face. No well has been found within the enclosure, but water from the neighbouring copious spring, which flowed past the southern end of the castle, was probably led through a culvert into a cistern near the south-eastern tower.

We may now proceed to consider the towers in detail.

The south-western tower is both the smallest in area and, at the same time, the highest of the four angle towers. It contains four storeys, each of a single room. The three upper floors have each a small closet built in the thickness of the south wall, and all the closets communicate with a vertical shaft situated near the centre of the wall. In ground plan this tower is not quite rectangular (the outer angle is $96^{\circ} 46'$), but it twists into an approximately square form as it rises. The outside base measures 33 feet 2 inches by 31 feet 2 inches. The room on the ground floor measures 14 feet 7 inches by 12 feet 11 inches inside, and is entered on the level from the castle yard. It is provided with no other opening of any kind except the door, which is 3 feet 7 inches wide. The first floor, reached by a stone staircase in the east wall, is provided with a fireplace and a couple of small narrow windows.

The room measures 16 feet 3 inches by 13 feet 10 inches, and possibly accommodated constables or officers of the manor, the dungeon below being a prison or a store. The second floor has no connection internally with the first floor, but is reached by an exterior flight of stone steps on the north side, with entrance door 2 feet 10 inches wide, having a pointed arch of red sandstone. The room measures 17 feet 6 inches by 14 feet 10 inches, and is provided with a fireplace and two windows.

The third floor 17 feet 6 inches by 16 feet 2 inches is similar to the room immediately below. The battlements are reached by means of a winding staircase in the north-west angle, surmounted by a small watch turret. The total height is 49 feet. Piel Castle is visible from the top.

The south wall of the castle yard is not "covered" (in a military sense) by any window in this tower, so it is possible there may have been a wide moat (now filled up) fed from the neighbouring spring protecting this south wall. The masonry of the interior of the two lower storeys is much rougher than that above, but there is nothing externally to mark any break in the construction of the tower.

The south-eastern tower is a two-storey building, 43 feet by 31 feet. The entrance is by a doorway, 3 feet 10 inches wide, in the west wall, having a pointed arch with a weather moulding above. There is a hole in the wall for the sliding bar that secured the door. The basement measures 25 feet 5 inches by 12 feet 9 inches, and the room above 26 feet 6 inches by 15 feet 6 inches. A small closet in the thickness of the wall adjoins each room, and from the upper closet a doorway leads out on to the south wall of the castle ward. This is the only instance of direct communication between tower and curtain wall. Each closet communicates with a vertical shaft in the wall on the same principle as in the south-western tower. There is a fireplace and two windows

on the ground floor, and a fireplace and four windows on the first floor. The fireplaces in all the towers have the flues carried up to the battlements. Access to the first floor is by a staircase (2 feet 11 inches wide) in the west wall, and there is a spiral stair to the battlements, surmounted by a watch-turret, as in the case of the south-western tower. The height to the top of the turret is 40 feet.

There has probably been a cellar under the ground floor, which has been filled in with rubbish, access to it being by trap-door in floor.

The north-eastern tower was rather larger on plan than the last one, but it was built in the same style, with a shaft near the north-eastern corner. As already stated, this tower was never carried higher than the curtain wall on the east side of the ward, and this probably only on the north, east, and south faces of the tower.

The north-western tower stands on ground about 30 feet higher than the level of the south end of the castle yard; that is to say, on the highest ground within the area of the castle, and it is the largest of the set (92 feet by 53 feet 3 inches along the west face and 42 feet 7 inches along the east face). It was evidently built to serve as the baronial residence. The entrance on the south side led into a spacious hall (30 feet by 22 feet), lighted on the south, and flanked on either side by dungeons. Stone stairways led up to the living rooms, occupying the first and second floors, four apartments on each floor. Not much of this upper work, however, remains standing. A long passage in the north wall on the first floor communicates with a vertical shaft in the northern angle of the tower, which connects with the second floor by an arrangement somewhat similar to that adopted in the two southern towers. The windows in this tower are narrow, but their sandstone quoins and heads have been more elaborately carved than the ashlar work in the older portions of the castle.

Close to this tower, in the west curtain wall, is the

gateway leading into the castle yard. It is extremely simple in construction, being without portcullis or barbican ; its proximity to the great north-west tower seems to have been considered a sufficient protection. The weakness of this entrance and the absence of a ditch round this angle of the castle (clearly its most vulnerable point) seems to shew that when the work was executed in the middle of the fourteenth century all apprehension of a serious attack had passed away.
