

## II.—ON RECENT DISCOVERIES IN THE CHAPEL OF RABY CASTLE.

By J. P. PRITCHETT of Darlington.

[Read on the 27th November, 1901.]

Whilst recently engaged in decorating and re-arranging the fittings of the private chapel, at Raby castle, I was led to make investigations for hidden ancient features, consequent on remarks relating thereto, in the privately printed handbook to the castle, by the late duchess of Cleveland, and by statements of the rev. J. F. Hodgson in his exhaustive papers on the castle in the *Transactions of the Architectural, and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*.

As the history of Raby is well known to all northern archaeologists, I need not occupy time by going into that further than to say that the date of the chapel is fixed between 1362 and 1367. Mr. Hodgson points this out from the label terminations of the south windows, bearing what he considers portrait heads of lord John Nevill and his first wife Maud Percy, the latter of which bears the Percy crescent on a necklace.

For a long time previous to 1848, when Mr. Hodgson says he remembers it, the chapel was almost in ruins, with the windows boarded up, etc. In about 1848, duke Henry—the second duke—carried out extensive works of restoration, and, in the chapel, put on a nearly flat deal ceiling, reconstructed the stonework of windows, broke out modern doors, and stoothed and plastered the whole of the internal walls, lining them to imitate stone, the consequence being that all the ancient features, except four windows, were hidden. Having obtained lord Barnard's consent and instructions, and guided by the statements in the two works above named, I commenced to explore, and found the ancient features which are shewn on the drawings exhibited and here reproduced, and which I may describe as follows :

(A) The plain two-light window close to east end on south side was walled up with four and a half inches brick wall on the outside,

and lathed and plastered on the inside, so the opening, which disclosed jambs ten feet wide, was very soon made. You will observe that the sill has a very steep splay and the head is spanned by three plain cross arches in steps, like many other arched openings and corridors in the castle; and an extraordinary thing is, that it crosses over the side chamber hereafter named.

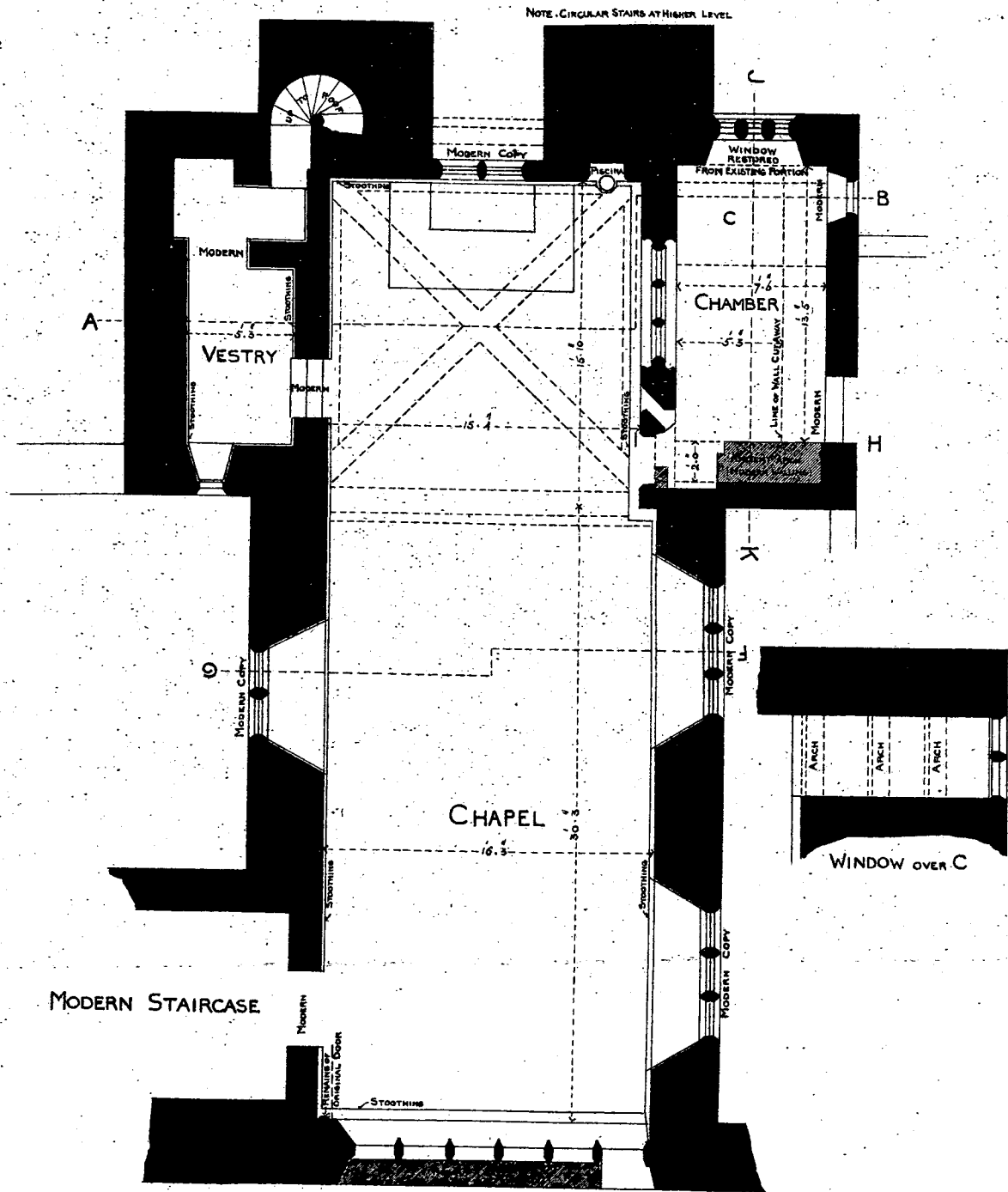
(B) The next feature explored, was the flat-headed six-light window or screen at the west end. The first idea was, that it had been an outside window opening on to the roof of the original lower hall before the upper or baron's hall was built over it; a close examination, however, shews that this was not the case; it never was glazed, though there are remains of saddle bars to form protection, and the detail shews the window to be coeval with the baron's hall; I think, therefore, it has been an open or screen-window opening from the chapel into the baron's hall to enable the members of the household who could not get into the chapel to hear and witness the service going on at the opposite end of the chapel.

(C) Close to the west end is part of one jamb and springer of arch of the original door into the chapel, which must have been very narrow, as it opened on to a narrow newel staircase which Mr. Hodgson remembers. The remains of the sill of this door, and of another at the south side, to be presently described, shew that the floor was in 1845 raised four feet four and a half inches to get the sham groining in the carriage way underneath, no doubt at the same time that the floor of the baron's hall was raised about eleven feet to make the under hall higher, and get the sham groining there. These levels show that originally the floor of the baron's hall was on the level that the chapel floor is now.

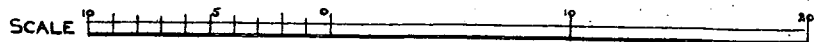
So far, all has been simple enough, but when we come to the discoveries near the east end, things are more complicated.

(D) We have there a piscina in the east wall, of the same date as the chapel, and exactly like one of the same date in the neighbouring church of Staindrop, just outside Raby park; but, whether it is *in situ*, or was moved from the usual position on the south side when the alterations hereafter to be described were made, it is impossible to say; I think the masonry shews indications of its being an insertion.

# CHAPEL IN RABY CASTLE.



PLAN



MORREY REID & CO. LD. 50, GREY ST. NEWCASTLE.

MEASURED AND DRAWN BY H.D. FRITCHETT DARLINGTON. 1901.

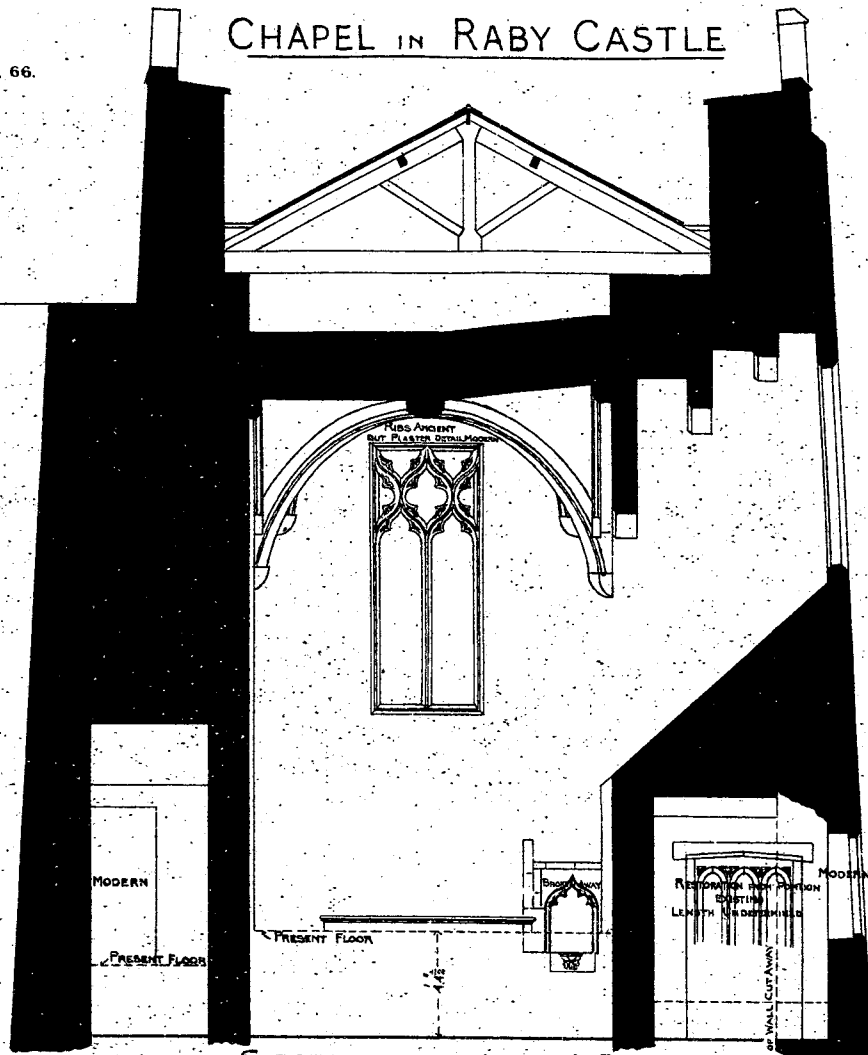




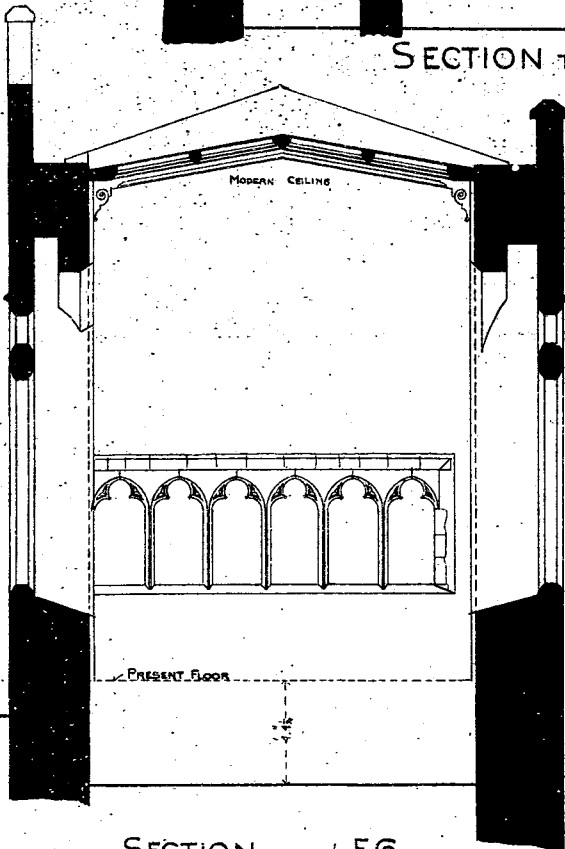


# CHAPEL IN RABY CASTLE

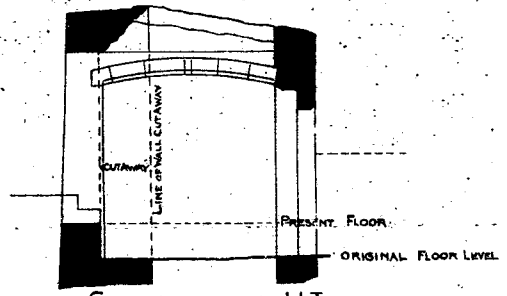
Roof



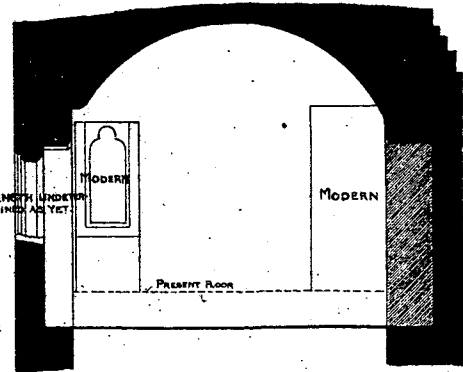
SECTION THRO' LINE A.B.



SECTION THRO' F.G.



SECTION THRO' H.I.



SECTION THRO' J.K.

SCALE 1" = 5'

MEASURED AND DRAWN BY H.D. PRITCHETT DARLINGTON 1901.





(E) On the south side is part of the original sedilia and a narrow ogee-headed door opening into a chamber which was originally thirteen feet six inches by five feet three inches, but subsequently widened to seven feet six inches by cutting away the inside of the outer wall, and leaving part of the rubble arch above hanging on nothing. I think this chamber has been twice altered; first about 1450, when an east window was cut out and the side wall cut away in the reckless way I have named, probably to transform the vestry or priest's room into a private chapel or oratory, and, I think the hagnoscope was cut through the sedilia, in the rough way shown, at the same time, but why this hagnoscope was cut so far west, and close to the door it is difficult to say, unless it was for attendants standing or kneeling behind the lord or lady, to see the altar of chapel. Then about 1530-1540, which would be in the time of the fourth earl of Westmorland (1530-1544), further alterations were made by the insertion of a three-light screen window with four-centred uncusped lights which have never been glazed; and meant no doubt, like the earlier six-light window at the west end to enable worshippers to join in the service being performed in the chapel.

The most extraordinary thing about this building is the fact, that the flat arch across the west end of the side chamber, which must have been turned after the room was widened by cutting away the wall, supports the vault, thirteen feet and a half span, of this chamber of earlier date, and how such a massive vault was supported whilst this arch was inserted at its springing is a complete mystery to me.

What we have done to make these newly discovered features presentable, is as follows: the west screen, south door, sedilia, and piscina, are merely cleared of mortar and pointed, the south screen is treated similarly, except that we have restored two pieces of the jambs that had been cut away for the insertion of joists, eleven inches by three inches, when the floor was raised four feet four and a half inches; and I have formed two trap doors in the floor, to shew when opened, the full height of the south door and screen.

The east window of the side chamber is to be restored and the vault made safe by inserting a girder under the part cut away.

It was found that although it would be practicable to remove the imitation groining over the carriage way below, and to lower the floor of the chapel to its original level, that such a proceeding would involve several problems which would require more time, inconvenience and trouble than could at that time be afforded. It is, however, to be hoped that on the first convenient occasion this work will be carried out.

I may say that lord and lady Barnard took great interest in the work, and invited to meet me, the rev. J. F. Hodgson, vicar of Witton, who knows the castle better than any one, and the rev. D. H. S. Cranage, University Extension lecturer on Architecture, and author of a book on the churches of Shropshire ; and I think I may say that we all fairly agreed on the above descriptions and dates.

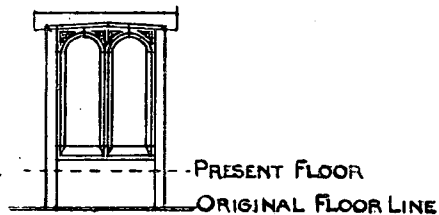
**NOTE.**—The drawings, reproduced in the plates facing p. 66, have been made by J. Pritchett & Son since the works of exploration and renovation were carried out. They show in detail the features described in the paper.



EARLY SUNDIALS IN ST. CUTHBERT'S CHURCH, DARLINGTON. (See p. xix.)

besieged in the destruction of military engines and movable towers, long after the introduction of cannon. The Sire de Joinville, describing its use in the *Hist. de St. Louys*, says "that in front it was of the bigness of a tun, and that the tail of it stood out 'comme un grant glaive.' It sounded like a thunderbolt, and looked like a great dragon." A treatise by MM. Reynaud and Favé, entitled *Du Feu Grégeois*, gives a recipe for its production, and other particulars; and in John Anderne's *Practica*, temp. Edward III., a clear distinction is made between 'Fewes Grégeois' and 'Fewe Volant,' showing that both descriptions were in use in that reign; the 'fewe volant' being gunpowder. Froissart tells us that Greek fire was employed at the battle of Breteuil in 1356, the besieged being provided with 'canons jetant feu.' With the rapid improvement of ordnance, and especially that in the impulsive force of gunpowder, brought about greatly by its granulation, Greek fire, as well as mechanical engines of war, and the various contrivances for attacking and defending a fortress, at length became obsolete.

FURTHER EXPLORATION SHOWS  
THIS TO HAVE BEEN THE DESIGN  
OF WINDOW AT END OF SIDE CHAMBER



PLAN

(See p. 65 et seq.)