

### III.—FEATHERSTONE CASTLE, NORTHUMBER- LAND

BY JOHN GIBSON, F.S.A.

[Read on 28th October, 1925.]

The castle of Featherstone is situated in South Tindale, three miles south-west of Haltwhistle, in a secluded position, on one of the most picturesque stretches of the South Tyne. A large haugh which fringes the stream on three sides of the building constitutes the park, while to the east are extensive woodlands.

The territory comprising Cumberland and part of Northumberland was ceded by king Stephen to David, king of Scotland, but reverted to English rule in 1156 in the time of Henry II. Tindale was again granted to William the Lion, king of Scotland, in 1159, and remained part of Scotland during the reigns of Alexander II and III and Margaret, until 1293 when Edward I resumed the sovereignty. The first owner of the manor of Featherstone recorded in history was Helias de Featherstonehaugh, a nephew of Adam de Tindale, baron of Langley, who was residing there prior to 1212. The manor was then a member of this important barony, which at that time was under Scottish rule, Helias having made a gift to the prior and convent of Hexham of lands in his free fee of Featherstonehaugh, in consideration of the canons taking him and his heir into their fraternity. Thomas de Featherstonehaugh, who was bailiff of Tindale and steward of the barony of Langley, in the reign of Henry III also gave lands to the prior and convent of Hexham. He, and his son of the same name, were con-

servators of the truce between England and Scotland in 1327. In this year Edward II made the younger Thomas keeper of the pele of Staworth (Staward), and in obedience to the king's command he took four hundred oaks from the manor of Bywell to rebuild Staward pele. He was also given the custody of the manor of Wark, in North Tindale, for life, and to him was assigned the duty of selecting fit men for military service in the liberties of Hexham, Wark in Tindale and the barony of Tindale. Eight years later, in 1335, he received a mandate to array all the men-at-arms in South Tindale, which proves that at this time he and his family were possessed of power and affluence.

His brother Alexander, next in entail, succeeded to the Wydon portion of the estates. Thomas had a son named after himself, and on the death of the latter without issue, Alexander his cousin, the son of the former Alexander, in 1374 succeeded to the manor. In the same year he made a settlement before the sheriff, prior to his proceeding abroad on military service. In 1539, *temp.* Henry VIII, Alexander Featherstonehaugh, great-grandson of the last mentioned, was in possession, and in the survey of 1542, his "toure of Featherstonehaugh was in good reparations."

His brother Richard Featherstonehaugh, D.D., was chaplain to queen Catherine of Aragon, and championed her cause with great zeal. He suffered death on 30th July, 1540, for refusing to acknowledge the king's supremacy.

Albany, the son and successor of Alexander, received in 1553 from Edward VI a grant of the property of the nunnery of Lambley, and his son Alexander, in the time of queen Elizabeth, held lands at Hartleyburn, previously possessed by the prior and convent of Hexham.

James I appointed Henry Featherstonehaugh, brother of the last named Alexander, Receiver-General of all the royal revenues in Cumberland and Westmorland. During the Civil Wars his son, Timothy Featherstonehaugh, raised at his own expense a troop of horse and received as a reward the honour of knighthood. He was

captured at the battle of Worcester, and was beheaded at Bolton, Lancashire, in 1651. The manor was sold by Parliament to the earl of Carlisle, from whom Matthew Featherstonehaugh, mayor of Newcastle upon Tyne, acquired the castle and estate in 1711. His son, Sir Matthew Featherstonehaugh, Bart., sold the castle and estate to James Wallace, Attorney-General, and father of Thomas, baron Wallace of Knaresdale. Lord Wallace, in 1814, married Lady Jane Hope, daughter of John, second earl of Hopetown, and widow of viscount Melville. His successor was the honourable James Hope, second son of the famous earl of Hopetown who took command at Corunna after Sir John Moore fell. He assumed the arms of Wallace, and the final surname, and dying in 1854, was succeeded by his son, John George Frederick Hope-Wallace, who, on attaining his majority in 1860, made considerable alterations to the grounds and precincts of the castle. He died on the 14th July, 1900, being succeeded by his son, Lieutenant James Hope-Wallace, 4th Northumberland Fusiliers, who was killed in action on the 15th September, 1917. Mr. James Hope-Wallace married in November, 1909, the Hon. Ursula Addington, daughter of Lord Sidmouth, who, with two daughters, survives him.<sup>1</sup>

The castle of Featherstone, judging by its architectural details, contains four distinct periods of building, reconstruction or extension, namely, the first of late twelfth or early thirteenth century, the second of early fourteenth century, the third of early seventeenth century, and the fourth of early nineteenth century.

The earliest architectural feature is the pointed doorway leading to the courtyard, in the east wall of the main building north of the tower. (Plate XI.) The date of this is not later than the year 1200, and it is undoubtedly a portion of the original structure of the first building period. Evidence in support of this can be seen by an examination of the thirteenth century buttress which

<sup>1</sup> The writer desires to thank the Hon. Mrs. Hope-Wallace for permission to examine the castle and for much help received.

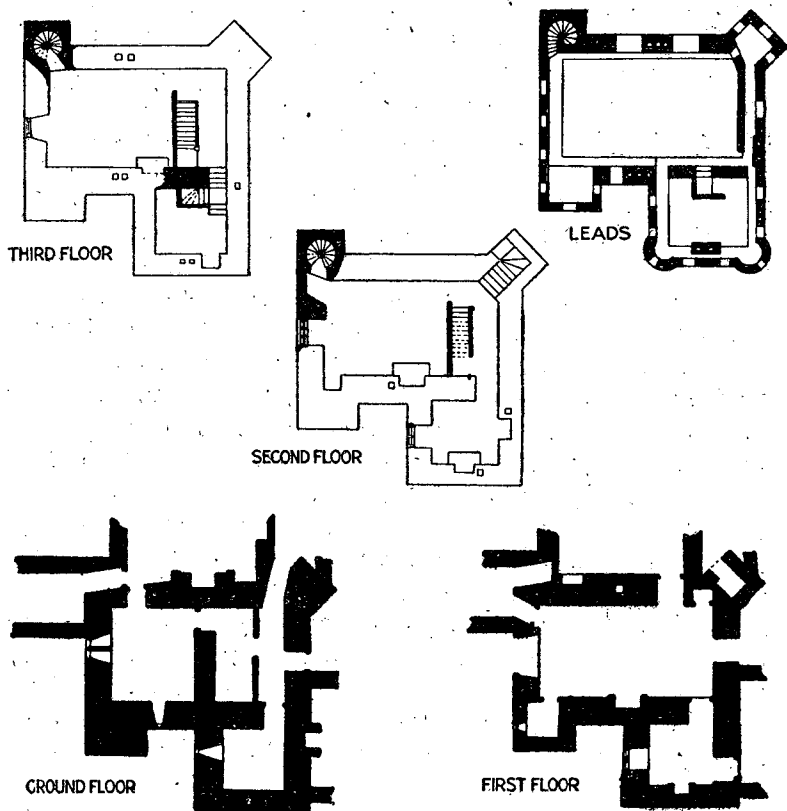
encloses the north-west angle of this north wing. This buttress is in three stages with broad chamfered set-offs. It is of the same character and date as the buttresses of Haltwhistle church, which, like it, exhibit distinct characteristics of Scottish craftsmanship not to be found elsewhere in England during the early English period. The positions of the buttress on the north-west angle and of the doorway on the east wall of the north range prove that this area formed the main portion of the first castle.

Commencing at the buttress just mentioned, the west wall of the earliest building can be traced only in the lower courses of the masonry, but nearer to the Jacobean doorway in the western face there is a vertical joint in the masonry, and the earliest work is carried upwards several courses above the level of the ground. South of this doorway the ancient masonry continues until it reaches the fourteenth century tower. It is noticeable at this part of the wall, that the original ashlar work remains, but has architectural details of various dates inserted. The east wall of the north wing appears to have been largely rebuilt, and the early pointed doorway is probably in its original position.

The ground east of the doorway is higher than the doorway itself, which makes it impossible, without excavation, to determine whether or not the bases of the shafts are still retained in the structure. The doorway has an opening of four feet and a chamfered inner order with a richly moulded outer order and a deeply cut hood-mould with the carved termination existing on the south side. The arch rises from carved capitals with incipient foliage of very early type. The abacus moulding of the capitals is continued round the inner order and returned across the soffits; the shafts are missing and the bases are hidden or destroyed. The outer order of the jamb has a bold bead on the angles, two and a half inches across, with two quirks.

Before leaving the northern range of the castle, attention should be given to two windows of the early half of the fourteenth century, *circa* 1330. One is on the ground

floor between the west doorway of the north range and the tower and the other inserted above the main entrance to the castle, being the work of lord Wallace. As the whole of the masonry on the east and west sides of the tower is of early nineteenth century build, it is obvious that these windows were taken from the great hall of the tower, being



The Tower, Featherstone Castle, Northumberland.

the east and west windows which lighted that chamber. They are two-light tracieried windows with trefoil heads and ogee heads to the mullions; the eyes are solid. There is a transom just below mid-height and a jamb and head of two chamfered orders. The hood-mould on the window nearer the ground is modern and does not

resemble the original section. Internally both windows retain their crooks for the shutters, and a section of the mullion is rebated to receive them. The original iron grille remains.

The second period of building is clearly of the time of Thomas de Featherstonehaugh the younger, who was, as already stated, guardian of the liberties of Hexham, Wark in Tindale and the barony of Tindale and keeper of the pele of Staworth, and who, in 1335, received a royal mandate to array all the men-at-arms in South Tindale. The tower as it now stands is chiefly early fourteenth century work, but reconstruction took place in the south and east faces in the third building period, early in the seventeenth century. The tower is of three stages, which recede as they rise by sloping set-offs. In the second stage on the south face is a small built-up window which has an elliptical head. There are one or two square-headed loops with chamfered angles. The whole is surmounted by a bold and handsome battlement, with bartizans at the angles, corbelled over the walls in four courses of projection. The upper course is carried along the walls as a cornice and is supported by a line of corbels, some of which are carved. Immediately above this cornice is a series of stone spouts, those at the angles projecting diagonally. The battlement is of considerable altitude. There is an embrasure over each angle (two on the south face and two on the east). The merlons on these two faces are ornamented with a pierced quatrefoil. The lower stage of the tower is vaulted in two spans with a flat continuous wagon vault, quite plain, and of elliptical section.

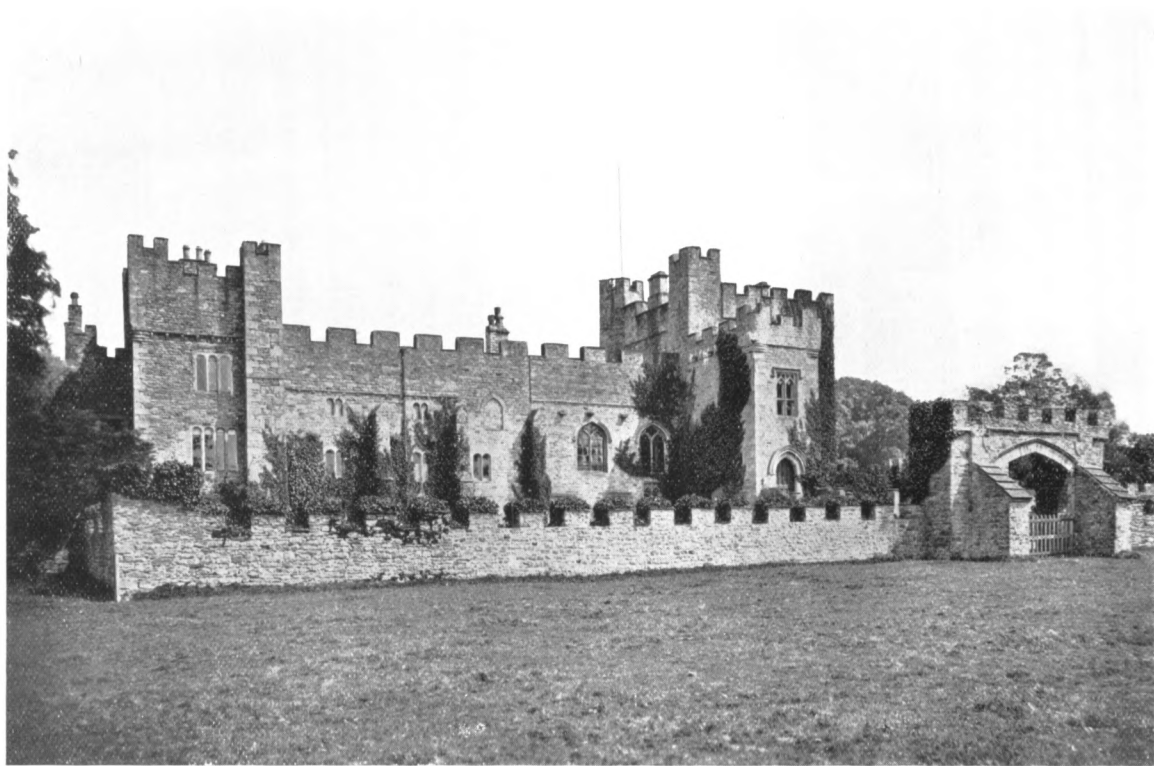
A buttress embraces the north-east angle of the tower, in the east face of which, in the upper storey, may be seen a fourteenth century single light window with an ogee head, identical in date with the two transomed windows already described. The newel staircase is placed in the north-west angle of the tower, but, owing to alterations at various dates, only the upper portions of it remain.

The reconstruction of the south and east faces of the

tower carried out during the third building period in the Jacobean style of architecture, was probably executed during the reign of James I, when Henry Featherstonehaugh was appointed Receiver-General of all the king's revenues in Cumberland and Westmorland. The character of the architecture is distinctly Scottish, and as the two countries were then no longer at enmity, this is easily accounted for. The range of thirteenth century buildings north of the tower, which had probably fallen into decay, were also reconstructed in the Jacobean style. The north gable is practically intact. The west doorway in this range, which has a very flat ogee and square hood moulding, is the most interesting architectural detail of this period surviving in its entirety. (Plate XI.)

In the fourth building period the north wing was again reconstructed (*circa* 1828) by lord Wallace, who also added the buttresses and battlements, and inserted new windows to light the dining-room. This handsome room has a timbered roof adorned with heraldry and contains many notable family portraits, which, with other works of art in other parts of the building, decorate the interior of the castle. Lord Wallace's portrait hangs above the fireplace in the north wall of the dining-room, and facing it is some beautiful fifteenth century wood-work, which has been reconstructed after removal from the choir of the cathedral church of Carlisle.<sup>2</sup> This was done in the early part of last century. The handsome wing erected in the castellated style of architecture east of the tower, and the porch adjoining the latter on the west (the work of lord Wallace in the early part of the nineteenth century), have added to the scale and beauty of the castle. A close inspection is necessary to be able to differentiate between the old work and the new, so harmonious is the combination.

<sup>2</sup> See *Illustrations of Gothic Geometric Panelling from the Cathedral Church of Carlisle*, by R. W. Billings, p. 3, and Plates XV, XVI and XVII. (London, 1842.)



FEATHERSTONE CASTLE FROM THE NORTH WEST.

*Facing p. 150.*



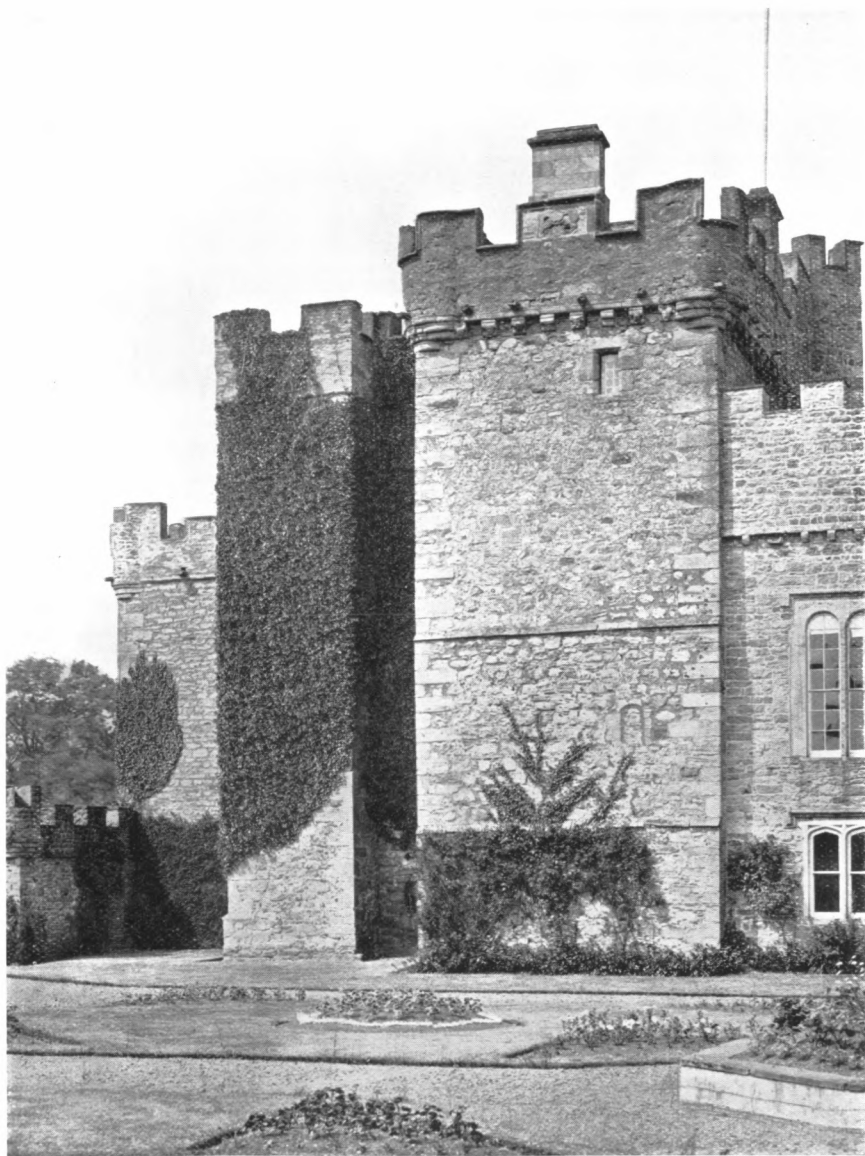






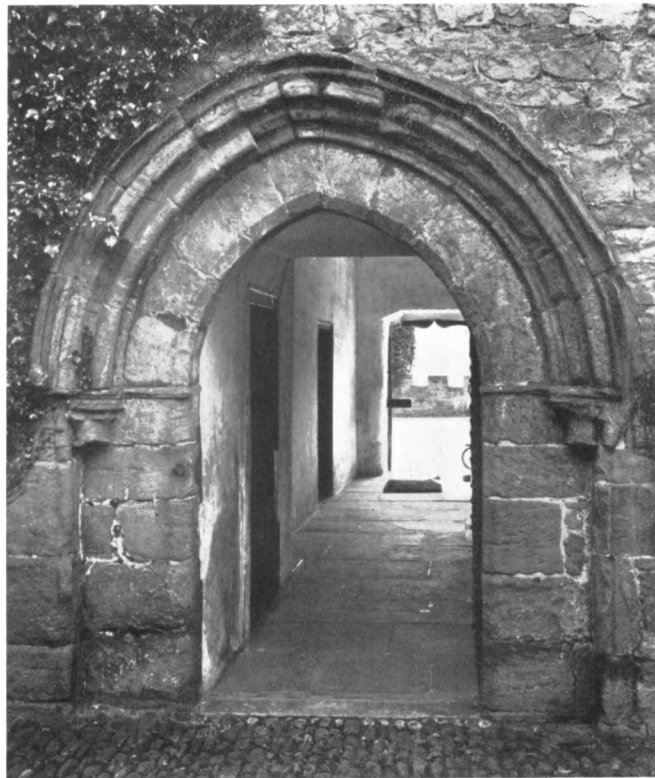
FEATHERSTONE CASTLE FROM THE SOUTH EAST.



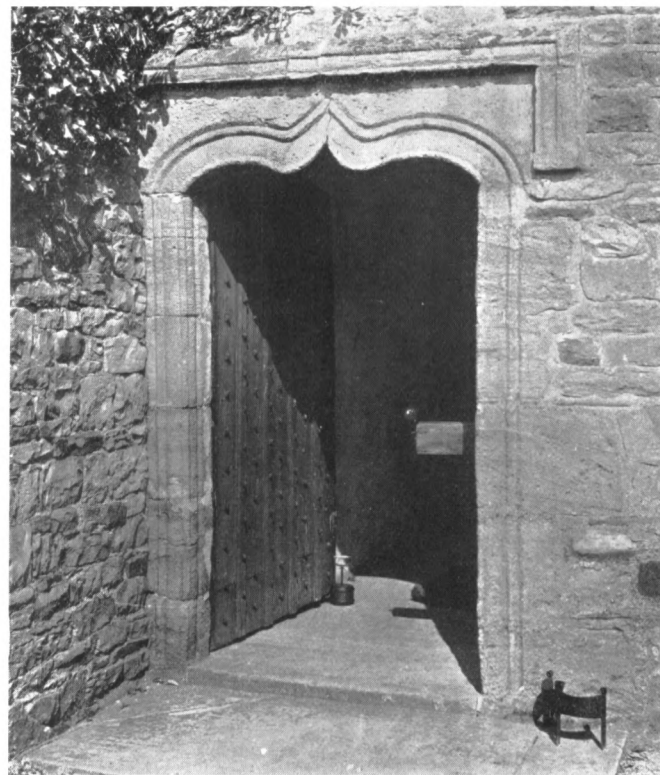


THE TOWER, FEATHERSTONE CASTLE, FROM THE SOUTH EAST.





THIRTEENTH CENTURY DOORWAY  
FEATHERSTONE CASTLE.



SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DOORWAY,  
FEATHERSTONE CASTLE.

