IX.—FINCHALE PRIORY.

By C. R. Peers, C.B.E., F.B.A., Dir.S.A., Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

[Read on 27th April, 1927.]

The story of St. Godric, hermit of Finchale, has been told too often to need repetition here, except for its bearing on the history of the Benedictine Priory, whose ruins to-day mark the site of his hermitage.

The works of repair which have been carried out in the last few years by the Commissioners of Works, while not materially increasing our knowledge with regard to the monastic buildings laid out in the thirteenth century, have thrown some degree of light on what I must call the transition period from hermitage to monastery, and more than this, have revealed to us the remains of a building which can be no other than that in which St. Godric himself died and was buried.

We must turn to the *Life* written by Reginald of Durham for such records of his inhabitation of Finchale as are relevant to the present inquiry. On his first coming to lead a hermit's life in the valley of the Wear, St. Godric settled at a place on the bank of the stream about a mile above Finchale, by permission of bishop Ranulf Flambard of Durham. This seems to have been about 1110, when, according to the accepted chronology, he was some forty-five years old. He built himself some sort of a dwelling, and cleared and cultivated the ground near by. After about five years he moved to the site which we know to-day, *planities non modica, situ et visu ad inhabitandum accommoda.* But if we may believe his biographer, it had

then few of the charms which it now possesses. It was wild and overgrown and liable to floods, and particularly noted for the numbers of poisonous snakes which infested it. Here the hermit lived at first in a dwelling which was little better than a pit, with a roof of turf carried on a beam, in the company of the snakes. They seem to have behaved in an unexceptionable manner, keeping to one side of his fire while the hermit occupied the other, and eventually quitting the hut altogether at his orders.

After a time he built a *modica casa* of unshaped timber and brushwood, calling it the chapel of St. Mary, and adjoining it to the west a somewhat larger structure as a dwelling-house for himself. Here he kept his few tools and possessions, and set up a pair of millstones for grinding the corn which he grew. In the north-west angle of the chapel he sank a great earthenware vessel in the floor, and filling it with water would immerse himself in it as a penance.

The fame of his sanctity drew many visitors to Finchale, and eventually, but not for a good many years after his first occupation of the site, the devotion of the faithful built him a second chapel. This was a stone building, larger than St. Mary's chapel, and was dedicated in honour of St. John Baptist. He seems from thenceforward to have used both chapels for his devotions, building between them a covered passage, made of branches and thatched, so that he could pass under cover from one to the other. It ran between the door of St. Mary's chapel and the entrance to St. John's chapel, but the account does not give any indication of the relative position of the two chapels. Beyond this we are only told that he made a wooden hut, divided into two rooms, against the south wall of St. John's chapel, keeping his food and other belongings there. To the south of the hut was another, rather larger, and roofed with thatch.

So he lived, in great austerity, clad in a hair shirt and a coat of mail, and his biographer spares us no detail of his self-imposed horrors. Though of small stature he was of exceptional vigour, and not till he had completed sixty

years of retirement from the world did he die, on the 21st of May, 1170, at the age, it would seem, of a hundred and five years. In his last illness his bed was laid in the chapel of St. John, and when his death approached he was stretched on the floor in front of the altar, and as the sun's rays on a cloudless morning struck through the east window he died. He was buried in a stone coffin near the north wall of the chapel, where his bed had been, "close to the lowest step of those which are situated before the altar of St. John Baptist." The stone covering his grave was level with the floor of his chapel, and in the grave was placed, after the usual custom, a plate of lead with an inscription giving the date of his death.

In pursuance of the arrangement made by bishop Flambard, the site of his hermitage, with its buildings and the fishery in the Wear, came into the hands of the Prior and Convent of Durham.

Two monks of Durham, Reginald[1] and Henry, were sent to take possession, and bishop Hugh Puiset confirmed the grant of his predecessor, giving certain revenues for their support, and for those whom the Prior of Durham might in the future send to Finchale. It would appear that the two monks were intended to act rather as successors to St. Godric than as the nucleus of a small monastic house.

But this arrangement was in any case not of long duration. Towards the end of the twelfth century Henry Puiset, one of the three sons of bishop Hugh, founded a monastery at Haswell, near Durham, for Black Canons, as a daughter house of Guisbrough in the North Riding of Yorkshire. The site was, however, soon changed, and the new house was set up on the little river Browney at a place called Baxtanford, under the name of the New Place upon the Brun. It received several grants of land, but was much too near Durham to be tolerated by the larger house, and in the end Henry Puiset had to abandon his foundation, and an agreement was made by which in return for

[1] It has been conjectured that he was no other than the historian, Reginald of Durham.

a grant of the church of Finchale he should transfer all the possessions of the New Place to Finchale. He then made a grant of Finchale to the monks of Durham, terming it *Monasterium de Finkhale, quod perpetuis temporibus Conventuale esse statui,* and by another charter granted the right to elect the Prior of Finchale to the Prior and Convent of Durham, so long as a fitting person was so appointed. The date of these grants is about 1196, and in that year, Thomas, sacrist of Durham, was appointed to be the first prior of Finchale.

The new foundation grew and prospered, the tomb of St. Godric being, as usual in such cases, a very profitable possession, and the provision of new and larger buildings must soon have been contemplated. With regard to the number of monks, it may perhaps be assumed that after the transference of the endowments of the New Place to Finchale, and its definite establishment as a monastic house, the normal complement of twelve monks and a prior existed there. Some evidence as to numbers is to be deduced from two documents, both printed in Vol. VI of the Surtees Society's publications.[2] The first of these (p. 103) is an agreement between Thomas, prior of Durham (1233-44), and Walter de Audre, that in consideration of certain benefactions by the latter, two monks additional to the existing number shall be placed in Finchale Priory. The second (p. 148) is a grant by Robert, bishop of Durham, dated 1278, of the appropriation of the church of Middleham to Finchale Priory, in order that there may always be fifteen monks there. It is expressly said that the grant is made in order to support an increase of five monks, showing that only ten existed at the time, and the reason for the grant is that the expenses of providing for the many guests and poor people who visit Finchale are too heavy a burden for the revenues of the priory.

It is an interesting commentary on the extent of the claustral buildings, which by 1278 had been developed into

[2] The Charters of Endowment, Inventories, and Account Rolls of the Priory of Finchale. (1837.)

their present plan, allowing for subsequent rebuildings and alterations.

The priory was throughout its history treated as a dependency of Durham, *cella et filia*, and all its acts strictly supervised, so that we may be sure that its buildings would represent what was thought fitting by the mother house for the subordinate community. It is not quite clear from the documents at what date the practice began of sending the Durham monks to Finchale *spaciandi causa*, that is to say on holiday leave, but a reference of 1346 shows the custom then well established. In 1408 John, prior of Durham, drew up precise regulations for these visits (Surtees Soc., Vol. VI, p. 30), by which the number of monks at Finchale was fixed at nine—that is to say, the Prior and four monks in constant residence, and four other monks from Durham *illuc ad spaciandum accedentes*. These latter were to be at Finchale for three weeks, then returning to Durham and being replaced by another four, and so on in succession. Special regulations were made for the four visiting monks and their attendance at services. They were to sleep in the monastic dorter, but were to be allowed a special day-room with a fire and other necessaries, and a servant to wait on them. Two of them were to keep the usual round of services, while the other two, except for attendance at mass and vespers, had leave to walk "religiously and honestly" in the fields, and on occasion might be excused any attendance in church. This arrangement was for alternate days, so that those who had kept the round of services one day, might on the morrow have their "day off." The privilege must have been much appreciated, and one cannot help wondering whether the religious and honest walks, in view of certain references to the unlawful keeping of sporting dogs by the monks of Finchale, and their attendance at meets—*venationes*—may not sometimes have developed into something more attractive than the rules contemplated. One wonders also whether the depraved habit, so contrary to the teaching of the Fathers, of wearing linen shirts—a habit which seems to have been rife in

the cells of Durham in the fifteenth century—ever infected those on leave from the mother house during their stay.

When, at the death of St. Godric in 1170, his hermitage came into the hands of the Prior and Convent of Durham, the buildings on the site consisted of two chapels, of St. John Baptist and St. Mary, some wooden domestic buildings attached to both chapels, and probably others not precisely specified. It may be considered probable that these buildings, such as they were, continued to serve their purpose so long as Finchale was only inhabited by the two monks from Durham. But after 1196, when the word *monasterium* begins to be applied to Finchale, the number of inmates must have increased, possibly, as I have suggested, to the customary number of thirteen, and for these the domestic buildings at least would have needed some enlargement.

In this connection reference may be made to the exact wording of the agreement made between 1233 and 1244 between Thomas (Melsonby), prior of Durham, and Walter de Audre, to maintain two monks at Finchale, with the special duty of praying for Walter and his wife Constance. *Ita quod, si aliquando ibi sit Conventus, sint duo de numero eorum ad perficiendum numerum Conventus, et si pauciores ibi fuerint, qualiscumque fuerit numerus, citra numerum Conventus semper duo pro eo et pro suis de incremento eis addantur.* That is to say that when the number of monks at Finchale reaches the customary thirteen, two of them shall be deputed to pray for Walter and his wife: but that if there are less than thirteen, two more monks shall be added to the number, whatever it may be, and these two shall pray for them. It may be held that the words *si aliquando* imply that at the time of the grant there was not in fact a full *Conventus* at Finchale: but this is by no means certain, and it may be merely a provision against a decline in numbers, such as we know to have taken place by 1278, from the terms of bishop Robert's grant of that year.

With regard to the ecclesiastical buildings, i.e., the two chapels of St. John Baptist and St. Mary, it must be

noted that an agreement made by Prior Thomas of Durham (1233-44) to maintain a secular chaplain to celebrate mass for ever in the chapel of St. Mary *in domo de Fynchall*, for the souls of Geoffrey fitz Hugh of Yarm and his wife, is entitled *Fundacio cantariae ad portam de Fynchall*. But this title is of later date than the agreement, and cannot be taken as first-hand evidence, though the wording of the document seems to imply a separate building and not a chapel forming part of the monastic church.

The site of the chapel of St. John Baptist is fortunately not in doubt. During the recent repairs the lower parts of the walls of a rectangular building fifteen feet six inches wide and thirty-three feet six inches long within the walls were found within the eastern arm of the existing church. The south wall of this little building partly underlies the south wall of the later presbytery and quire, but its east and north walls are well inside their lines, showing that the earlier chapel had been left standing while the new church was built round it, and was only destroyed when the latter was far enough advanced to be fit for service. The base of a locker in its north wall shows twelfth century tooling on its ashlar work. Its west wall had been destroyed when the new quire-stalls were set up, but the core of the foundation remains. This evidence of continuous use shows that the old building was one of importance, and it can hardly have been other than the chapel of St. John Baptist which the present church replaced.

The evidence for the inception of the existing cruciform church must now be considered. There are a series of indulgences issued from 1239 onwards, the first in point of date being a record of the consecration by Gilbert, bishop of Whithorn, on May 31st, 1239, of "the altars of the church of Fynchal, that is to say, the *majus altare* in honour of St. John Baptist, another in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and a third in honour of the blessed bishop Cuthbert." The bishop grants to the fabric of the church twenty shillings yearly for the term of his life,

and forty days' indulgence for those who contribute to the building, or visit Finchale on St. John's Day and its octave, or on the day of dedication and its octave.

Next comes a grant of thirty days' indulgence by Walter, archbishop of York, dated January, 1241. In this the prior and monks of Finchale are said to be "laudably proposing to build a certain church at Finchal in honour of St. Godric."

In June, 1242, W., bishop of Glasgow,[3] grants twenty days' indulgence: "the monks of Fynchall have begun to build a new church there in honour of God and Saint John Baptist and Saint Godric," and in the same year, D.,[4] bishop of St. Andrew's, grants twenty days. In October, 1245, because the resources of the monastery are not sufficient to provide funds for the fabric of the church of St. John Baptist and Saint Godric of Finchale, Gilbert, bishop of Whithorn, grants a further forty days' indulgence.

In 1246 the same prelate grants forty days' indulgence towards the upkeep of St. Mary's light in the church of Finchale, and to the same year belong two grants by Thomas,[5] bishop of Annaghdown, for the upkeep of the fabric and of St. Mary's light.

A grant of 1248 by Albinus, bishop of Brechin, uses the formula that the monks of Finchale have begun to build anew their church, and that their own resources are not sufficient for the work.

In 1260 the same wording is still used in a grant by bishop Henry of Whithorn, who in 1263 makes a further grant of forty days in aid of the building funds. The tomb of St. Godric is mentioned in a grant of 1260 by Robert,[6] bishop of Dunblane, and in 1266 Archibald, bishop of Moray, refers to the light and ornaments of the chapel of St. Godric of Fynkehal, the making of a window on the east side of the said chapel, and to

[3] William of Bondington, 1233-58.
[4] David, 1234-53.
[5] Thomas O'Meallaidh, *c.* 1240-50.
[6] Robert "de Prebenda," *c.* 1258-84.

all windows to be made there in the future. In 1275 Robert del' Isle, bishop of Durham, speaks of the altar of St. Mary made anew in the church of Finchale, and the same phrase is used by archbishop Walter of York in 1276 and bishop Henry of Whithorn in 1277. In 1276, in a grant by William,[7] bishop of St. Andrews, the word *reparacio* (fitting up or furnishing) occurs for the first time, and it is repeated in grants of 1277 by Robert, bishop of Dunblane, and Walter,[8] bishop of Rochester. The latest indulgence is by Alan, bishop of Caithness, in 1288, and mentions the newly-constructed altar of St. Mary in the church of St. John Baptist at Finchale.

The series, it will be seen, extends over half a century, and while in 1241 the monks are laudably proposing to build a church, in 1242 they are said to have begun to build it. This would suggest 1242 as the year in which a start was made, but since it is hardly possible to suppose that the three altars consecrated in 1239 were in a church which was about to be superseded by a new one, we must assume that by that year enough progress had already been made to allow of services at these altars in the new building. The *majus altare* of St. John Baptist can hardly be other than the high altar of the church, in the east end of the presbytery, and the other two altars may have been placed at the east ends of the aisles of the presbytery. This would imply that the presbytery was practically complete by 1239, throwing back the beginning of the building of the new church to 1237 at latest. With regard to St. Mary's altar, for which a place must have been necessary from the first, the supposition that it occupied at first a temporary site is strengthened by the references to its " making anew " in the church from 1275 onwards, as if it had by then been set up in the place destined for it, and at length ready to receive it.[9]

[7] William Wishart, 1272-9.

[8] Walter of Merton.

[9] Mr. Clapham suggests to me that it may at this date have been in the old chapel of St. Mary. See below, p. 207

The *tumba* of St. Godric is mentioned in 1260, and in 1266 his chapel received a new east window. The date of the completion of the church may be deduced from the mention of *reparacio* in 1276 and 1277, this word being used in mediæval Latin in the sense of fitting up, and constantly applied to new buildings which could not be in need of "repair."

Although nothing is said of buildings other than the church in these documents, it is evident from their details that the cloister, chapter-house, dorter, etc., were under construction at the same time. Doubtless a frater and kitchen were also built at this time, but the frater was rebuilt in a more costly manner early in the fourteenth century.

The group of buildings south of the church and east of the chapter-house and dorter, occupying the normal position of the monastic infirmary, also contains work of the late thirteenth century, and is of particular interest, as I shall attempt to show when describing these buildings, on account of the special development of Finchale from the fourteenth century onwards. To the east of the church and north-east of the group just mentioned are the remains of yet other buildings only cleared within the last few years. That they are of earlier date than the "infirmary" group is demonstrable, since part of them underlies the north-east wing of the latter, and their levels and the angle at which they are set point to the fact that they were laid out before the monastic church was begun about 1237. I do not think we can be wrong in assuming that they are the buildings occupied by the prior and monks of Finchale between the foundation of the priory in 1196 and the building of the thirteenth century cloister.

Description of the Buildings.

The church and cloister stand on an artificially levelled site, the natural fall of the ground being northwards and eastwards towards the River Wear. Thus while to the south of the frater a retaining wall is necessary to hold

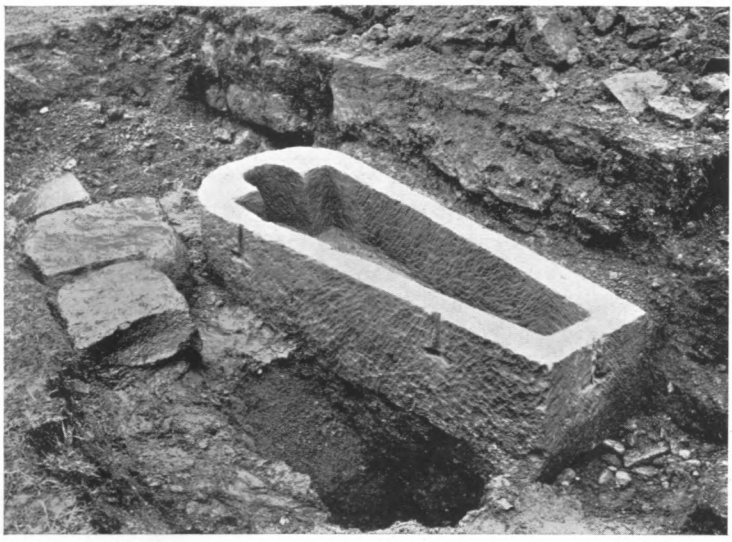
back the ground, the floor-levels of the eastern arm of the church are considerably above that of the early chapel whose remains it encloses. The church is cruciform, measuring internally one hundred and ninety-four feet four inches from east to west and ninety-nine feet across the transepts. As originally built, it had north and south aisles of three bays in the eastern arm, and of four bays in the nave; there was also an eastern chapel to the north transept, but chapel and aisles were entirely removed in the fourteenth century, and the arches opening to them walled up, windows being inserted in the walling. The south aisle of the nave, being next to the cloister, was indeed retained, but transformed into the north walk of the cloister, while the original north walk was pulled down and its area thrown into the cloister garth. At this time, and indeed during its whole existence, the church was far larger than necessary for so small a monastery, and it is probable that some need for repair suggested the expedient of diminishing the area of the church to save cost of maintenance. The work seems to have been begun in 1364, when there are payments to masons and carpenters working on the church, and for glass, ironwork and slates. In 1365-6 are similar entries, and in 1366-7 John "blumber," *cum altero Johanni blumber*, is working on the roof of the quire of the church. In the same year a fee is paid to the suffragan *pro reconsiliacione ecclesiae nostrae*, which suggests that the work was then finished, and owing to its drastic nature had made a reconsecration necessary.[10]

The eastern arm of the church looks disproportionately long on the plan, the reason being that it was from the first designed to contain the whole of the monastic quire, with the pulpitum in the eastern arch of the crossing. The pits for the quire-stalls remain, and show that the stalls extended twenty-six feet east of the crossing.

[10] Professor Hamilton Thompson points out that this reconciliation must mean more than the reconsecration in the usual way, as it implies that the church had been polluted, ordinarily by bloodshed. There may have been a quarrel among the workmen, or an accident.

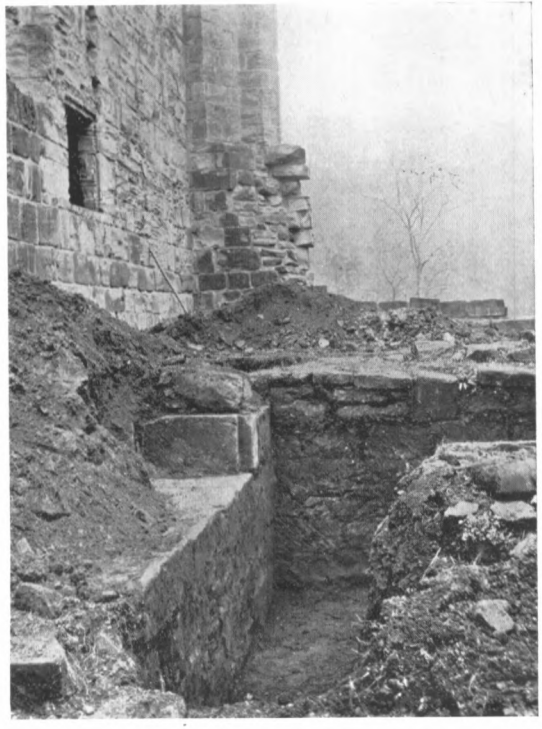
Twenty-eight feet eastward is the socket for the lectern, close to a foundation which runs across the presbytery marking the start of a flight of five steps leading up to the altar platform, which was two feet six inches above the level of the quire. From the top step to the east wall is thirty-one feet, and the base of the high altar, that of St. John the Baptist, is twelve feet six inches from the east wall. The mention in 1463-4 of a "creste" above the high altar shows that the altar stood against a wooden screen, the chases for which remain in the north and south walls, and the space between the screen and the east wall may have served as a vestry.

I have already referred to the foundation of an earlier building within the lines of the thirteenth century presbytery. Its relation to the thirteenth century work suggests that it was standing while the latter was being built, after the usual mediæval fashion, and in view of the recorded history of the site, its identification with the chapel of St. John Baptist, built for St. Godric a good many years after his first arrival in Finchale, is practically certain. Beyond the lower parts of its north and east walls little remains, but an external chamfered plinth and the base of a locker in its north wall shows tooling which is characteristic of the middle of the twelfth century, and this is a very likely date for the building of St. John's chapel. (Plates XLI, XLII.) Reginald of Durham says that the saint was buried in a stone coffin near the north wall of the chapel, where his bed had been placed during his last illness, "close to the lowest step of those which are situated before the altar of St. John Baptist." Excavation has shown no evidence of steps on the floor of the older chapel, but the phrase is exactly appropriate to the arrangements of the existing building, where a flight of five steps led up to the platform of the high altar of St. John Baptist. But since this altar was only hallowed in 1239, and its construction can date from little earlier, the phrase cannot have been written by Reginald, who must have been born not later than 1130, but must be an addition by someone who was acquainted with the thirteenth century presbytery.

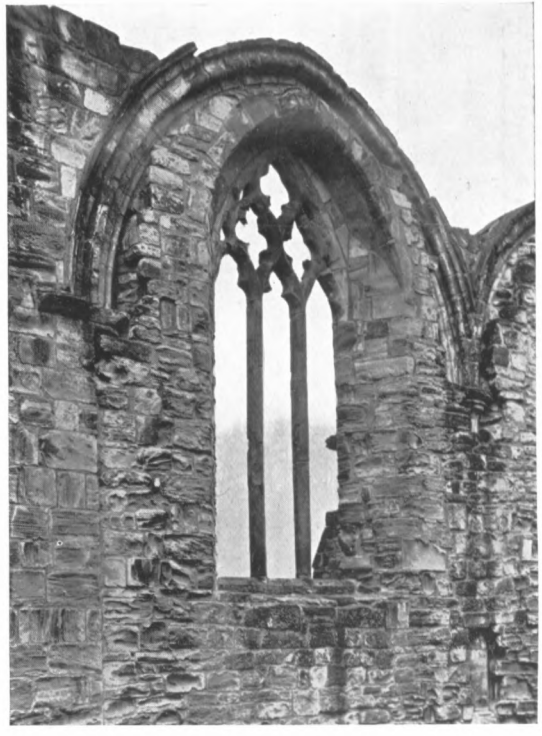


ST. GODRIC'S COFFIN.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST'S CHAPEL—East Wall, with Plinth.



ST. JOHN BAPTIST'S CHAPEL—N.E. Internal Angle.



WINDOW OF 1364 ON SOUTH OF QUIRE.

And this implies that the tomb (*tumba*) of St. Godric was not moved at the rebuilding, but remained in its original position. The *tumba*, "within the church of Finchale," is several times referred to in the late thirteenth century indulgences already mentioned, but with no indication of its position. But indulgences were promised to those who visited the *tumba*, and this can only imply that at the time it still contained the body of the saint. And two hundred years later an inventory of 1481 mentions an image of Saint Mary standing on the *tumba* of St. Godric, in a connection which shows that it was near the high altar. To test this evidence, excavations have been made at the point indicated in the *Life*, i.e., against the north wall of the old chapel, close to the lowest of the five altar steps. The result has been of the greatest interest. The remains of a rectangular grave, with sides of rough masonry, appeared, set against the north wall of the chapel, and bonding into the older stonework. In the grave was a coffin, cut out of a single stone, rounded at the head and square at the foot, and shaped for the head and shoulders of the buried person. (Plate XLI.) It was only five feet two inches long inside, and sixteen inches wide at the shoulder, tapering to seven inches at the foot. The lid was gone, but in the sides of the coffin were four T-shaped sinkings for iron cramps, by which the lid had been secured, and in one of these part of the cramp, with its lead running, still remained. The coffin contained nothing but earth and mortar rubbish, with a few rough stones and one piece of highly polished Frosterley marble, the angle of a rectangular slab. If this be indeed St. Godric's coffin—and it seems not unreasonable to think that it is—the story seems to be both simple and natural. At the rebuilding in 1237-9 the coffin was raised from its place in the floor of the old chapel to the equivalent level in the new church, without altering its position, and over it was built a *tumba*, rising perhaps a foot or so above the pavement level, and having a slab of Frosterley marble on it. In this *tumba*, it would seem, the body of St. Godric remained, never being translated

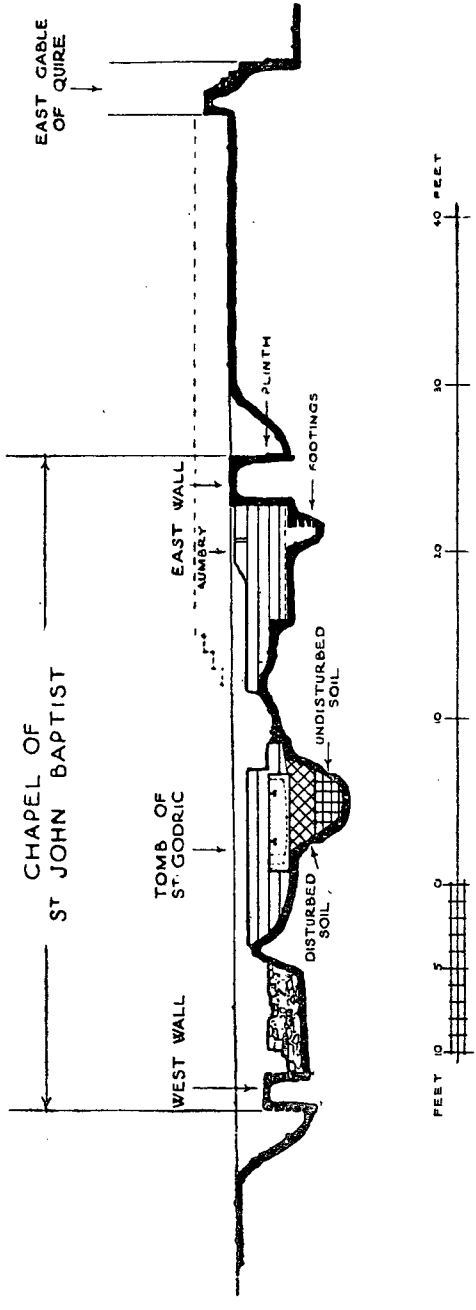
to a shrine like his greater neighbour at Durham. At the suppression his relics disappeared, leaving the empty coffin in the place it had occupied since 1170, and still occupies. (Plate XLIII.)

Below the coffin the ground seemed disturbed for some two feet downwards, the natural soil occurring at this level. This evidence is compatible with the record that the stone laid down in 1170 was level with the floor of the old chapel; the bottom of the grave would then be some two feet three inches below the floor level. The iron cramps, to secure the lid, may have been added in 1239, when the coffin was moved and perhaps opened. The account of the inscription on the lead plate may date from this time.

The mention in the indulgence of 1266, granted by Archibald, bishop of Moray, of St. Godric's chapel may conveniently be considered here.

The chapel was clearly a structural building. Its light and ornaments are mentioned, its east window was being made in 1266, and it was contemplated that other windows should be made there in future. Now it has hitherto been assumed that the large window in the east wall of the south transept is that referred to in 1266, and that therefore the south transept was the chapel of St. Godric. But it would be impossible to make any other windows in this chapel, except in the west wall of the transept above the cloister roof, a very unlikely position. Moreover, the window has an original glass-groove, and from this and the character of the tracery and mouldings cannot be earlier than the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century. Further, we have direct evidence that in 1469 the altar of St. Mary, with a window over it, was in the south part of the church. This, after the demolition of the aisles in the fourteenth century, can only refer to the south transept.

There can be no reasonable doubt, then, that the south transept is the chapel of St. Mary and not of St. Godric. And the only part of the church which seems to fit the terms of the indulgence is the chapel which


EAST GABLE OF QUIRE
CHAPEL OF ST JOHN BAPTIST
TOMB OF ST. GODRIC
EAST WALL
WEST WALL
PLINTH
FOOTINGS
UNDISTURBED SOIL
DISTURBED SOIL
FEET
40 FEET
30
20
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0
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formerly stood to the east of the north transept. It was of rectangular plan, twenty-seven feet by fourteen feet, and opened to the transept by an arch of two orders, now blocked by a fourteenth century wall. It may have had two north and two south windows, in addition to the east window. The foundations, as recently exposed, show that the chapel, as first built, did not join the transept, and was set at a different angle to it. That is to say, we have here the remains of a rectangular stone building older than the transept and existing here before the lines of the church were set out. Does this represent St. Godric's chapel of St. Mary? If so, the chapel, which was of wood, must have been rebuilt in stone between his death and the building of the present church, an event of which no record exists.

The reference to a chapel of St. Mary *in domo de Fynchall,* already quoted (p. 201), may perhaps be thus understood. This building, whatever it was, was lengthened westwards when the transept was built, opening to it by the arch still to be seen in the east wall of the transept. It is worth noting that the masonry of the transept shows a break, indicating that the southern part of the transept was first built, and that then after an interval the rest of the transept was completed. This probably means no more than that the southern parts of the church, being next the cloister, were carried to completion before the north transept, which could remain unfinished without inconvenience to the monks. Excavations within the north transept showed the start of a wall continuing the line of the north wall of the presbytery aisle; as if a temporary wall on this line had existed, closing in the unfinished transept.

On the evidence already given, I must assume that the altar of St. Mary was set up about 1239 somewhere in the new presbytery, and afterwards transferred to the south transept, and that the chapel now under notice contained the altar of St. Godric, enclosing no doubt some relic of the saint, and St. Godric's light and also his *cista* or chest in which the offerings made to him were kept. When the

chapel was pulled down in the fourteenth century the altar was set up against the wall, blocking the arch which formerly opened to the chapel, where its remains are still to be seen.

Returning to the presbytery, its eastern bay, projecting beyond the east ends of the original aisles, was lighted from the east by three lancet windows, and had single lancets in the north and south walls. The glass of these windows was fixed in wooden frames set in rebates, after the fashion of the time, but when in 1488 the three east windows received new glass made by Robert Pety, glazier of York, a glass groove still to be seen was cut in the old jambs. In the fourteenth century a two-story building, entered from the north-east and having no communication with the presbytery, was built against its north wall, extending from the east wall of the presbytery to the line of the east wall of the original north aisle. It would have entirely blocked the lancet window in the north wall of the presbytery, and to make up for this loss of light the lancet in the south wall was replaced by a three-light window. To make room for this window two of the sedilia in the south wall were destroyed and built up, leaving two only of the original four arches. The present ground level in the presbytery is two feet below its old level, and the sedilia and piscina look unduly high in the wall. The piscina has two circular drains, set in a double arched recess with shafted jambs and foliate capitals. The sedilia, in their mutilated state, show two seats under moulded arches, the western of the two being very shallow, to avoid weakening the abutment of the south arcade. In the north wall of the presbytery is a square lintelled locker, which is not original but inserted in the wall; it has a groove for a wooden shelf and a rebate for doors.

The arcades formerly opening from the quire to the aisles are of three bays with circular columns and moulded arches of two orders with labels. The capitals are bell-shaped, and those of the eastern responds, and of the first

column from the east in the north arcade, are carved with foliage and fruit of rare grace and distinction. The other capitals are plain, and the contrast between the rich details of the eastern part of the church and the simplicity of all the rest of the thirteenth century work is a lasting illustration of the oft-repeated statement in the episcopal grants that the monks of Finchale *ecclesiam construere inceperunt de novo, nec ad ejus fabricam propriae suppetunt facultates*. Each arch is now walled up, with a three-light window with net tracery in the walling, interesting as being dated to 1364 and the next few years. The columns were entirely hidden by the blocking, with the result not only that the carved capitals have been protected from the weather, but that on the west respond and west column in the south arcade the geometrical ornament painted in red, yellow and black has been very well preserved, and incidentally gives evidence of a coped perpent wall running between the columns as a backing to the quire stalls.

There is no evidence of a stone pulpitum at the west of the stalls; but chases in the base of the eastern crossing piers witness to the former existence of a wooden screen at this point.

The north transept, as first built, had three lancet windows in its north wall and two on the west. The latter still remain, but the north wall, except for its angle buttresses, is ruined to below the level of the windowsills. An entry in 1476-7 of the glazing of one window in the north gable of the church may point to the replacement of the three lancets by a single window of several lights, as in the previous year (1475-6) £11 were paid for mason's work to one window in the church. On the east side of the transept the arches—formerly opening to St. Godric's chapel and the north aisle of the quire respectively, are blocked with fourteenth century masonry, with two-light windows in the blocking. Beneath these windows are remains of altars: of these the northern is, presumably, that of St. Godric, while the other may be St. Cuthbert's altar. In the wall between the two altars

is a small fourteenth century doorway, leading to the monastic cemetery.

The four piers of the central tower are plain cylinders eight feet in diameter, with octagonal capitals and bases; the north-west pier contains a newel stair, entered from the north side. The western pair of piers were originally designed to stand free, the eastern arches of the nave arcades springing directly from them; but this arrangement was altered during the progress of the work, the responds of the nave arcades being set some twelve feet west of the tower piers, with a length of solid wall between. The tower, as shown in old engravings, rose one stage above the roof of the church, and carried a spire. There was a stone vault over the crossing, the only one in the church, but it and the four crossing arches have now fallen.

The south transept has in its east wall the large four-light window already referred to as an insertion of *c.* 1300. Beneath it is the block of an altar, which may be identified as St. Mary's altar, and to the south of it is a piscina in the block of masonry which once carried the night stair to the dorter. In the south-east angle of the transept are two lockers which must have been blocked up when the masonry of the stair was added. In the west wall, above the level of the cloister roof, is a single light window. The door opening from the dorter to the night stair was at the south-east, but at some later time was built up and a doorway made in the middle of the south wall of the transept. This seems to have given access to a wooden gallery across the end of the transept, and in the south-west corner of the transept a square-headed doorway has been inserted, leading to the cloister. In view of the fact, referred to below, that the original day stair from the dorter seems to have been disused in monastic times, it is possible that the night stair was, after a time, made to serve as a day stair also, being given direct access from the cloister.

The chapel of St. Mary seems to have occupied the whole area of the transept, and to have had its floor one

step above that of the crossing; but when the south aisles of quire and nave were destroyed, a second altar was set against the wall blocking the arch to the quire aisle. An image bracket and a piscina connected with this altar remain, but its dedication is uncertain, the only altar mentioned in the inventories, beside those already noted, being that of the Rood, which would normally be set against the west side of a screen one bay west of the pulpitum, that is to say at Finchale in the west arch of the crossing. A piscina in the required position, i.e., in the respond wall east of the south arcade of the nave, exists, but is at a level which implies that the altar it served was set on a platform raised some two feet at least above the nave floor, and this can hardly have been the case if there were a rood altar in the usual position, set against the middle of the west face of the rood screen. Indeed, such a platform would imply the existence of a screen with a central doorway like a pulpitum, and not two side doorways like a monastic rood screen. The remains of such a screen may be seen at Rievaulx, dating from the rearrangement of the church in the fourteenth century. The nave has arcades of four bays, of similar detail to those of the quire, and similarly blocked with fourteenth century masonry containing traceried windows. It has a west doorway with three lancet windows over it, and there may have been a doorway in the blocking of the west bay of the north arcade. No traces of ritual arrangements remain, beyond those already described. Its south aisle, converted into the north walk of the cloister, remains in part, and shows that there were half-round responds in each bay opposite the columns of the arcades. The aisle windows were, presumably, single lancets, but were replaced by three-light windows when the aisle became part of the cloister.

The cloister as at first set out was a square of seventy-five feet, with open arcades towards the garth standing on twin shafts. Some of the bases of these shafts remain in the south walk, but the north walk was destroyed and its area thrown into the garth in the fourteenth century, and

in the east and probably the west walks the arcades gave place to buttressed walls with traceried windows in each bay. Work on the cloister windows was going on as late as 1495-6, and at this date the roofs seem to have been covered with slates.

The chapter-house directly adjoins the south transept, and is rectangular, twenty-one feet by twenty-three feet, not projecting beyond the line of the eastern range. It has a plain west doorway between two arched openings, the detail suggesting a date in the second half of the thirteenth century. In the east wall there were originally three lancet windows, but the middle lancet, behind the prior's seat, was blocked up and two-light windows substituted for the other two in the fifteenth century. The stone seats remain on north, south and east, and the prior's seat in the middle of the east side is marked out by stone arms on either side.

The rest of the ground story of the eastern range has been so altered in the later years of the priory's history that it is best described with the group of buildings adjoining on the east, which contain the prior's hall and chambers. The upper story of the eastern range contained the monastic dorter, which must have been more than ample for the small community, extending some eighty feet southwards from the transept. At the south end its walls are sufficiently preserved to show a window in the gable, a doorway with a corbelled lintel opening eastwards to the rere dorter, and a blocked doorway in the west wall which led to a day stair which seems to have been taken down during the monastic period. I have suggested that the entrance from cloister to night stair may have been made to serve in its stead. The roof of the dorter was renewed in 1490, and covered with lead, and a mention of new coping to the gables may imply that the old pitch was then lowered to that which is now to be seen.

The rere dorter, thirty feet by fourteen feet, opened from the south-east of the dorter, and seems not to have had any arrangement for flushing with water, but

to have been treated as a privy, with a clearance arch at the east. Its floor is the natural rock, roughly levelled.

The monastic frater occupies the south side of the cloister, with a narrow passage between it and the dorter. It is of later date than the eastern range, *c.* 1320, and is raised above the cloister level on a vaulted crypt, entered from the east side. This can only have served as a cellar, and is lighted from the south side, with only one opening towards the cloister. The frater itself shows evidence of an added upper story over its whole length. It is approached by a flight of steps from the cloister, through a doorway at the north-west, which opens into a lobby, bounded on the east by a solid stone screen wall in which is a newel-stair once leading to the upper floor. The frater proper is forty feet long by twenty-three feet wide, and has had wooden posts down the middle carrying the beams of the upper floor. At the south-west corner is a room with a fireplace, and above it a larger room, the full width of the frater, formerly reached by the stair in the screens. This room had a hooded fireplace in its west wall, the chimney of which partly blocks a three-light window in the west gable. It seems doubtful whether in so small a monastery the frater was ever in daily use, and the upper chamber at the west may have served, like the " loft " in a similar position at the west of the frater at Durham, for the meals of the brethren. But in the later days of Finchale it is probable that all meals were taken in the prior's hall, and that the frater ceased to fulfil its original purpose in any way. There are no signs of a kitchen to the west of it, though there is a door in its west wall, and probably the prior's kitchen east of the dorter range served for all purposes from the fifteenth century onwards.

The cloister is bounded on the west by a blank wall, and there is no western range of buildings, except that at the north end, and overlapping the church by the width of the original south aisle of the nave, is a square building of mid-fourteenth century date, having a vaulted ground story and over it a large chamber reached by a stair at the south-east. It may have been a guest-house, or the

cellarer's office, but is too ruined to give definite evidence of its arrangements. There is, however, evidence that other buildings adjoined it on the south, as if a western range to the cloister had formerly existed.

South of the church and east of the dorter is a group of buildings of particular interest in the story of Finchale. They are of two stories, the ground story being in the nature of a basement and store-rooms, while the upper rooms were the living-rooms of the prior and his household. As first built at the end of the thirteenth century they consisted of a range one hundred feet long by twenty-seven feet wide running east and west, with the prior's chapel at the south-east, and other buildings running southwards from the chapel. In the fourteenth century a block was added at the north-east, and domestic offices, including kitchen, larder, buttery, and pantry, at the west.

From several inventories which are printed in the Surtees Society's volume, the uses of the various rooms can be defined with fair certainty. The inventory of 1397 begins with the "small chapel next the great chamber," and continues with the *camera*, which contained six beds, and the *magna camera*. Then comes the *studium*, then the hall, and there follow the pantry and buttery, the kitchen, larder, bakehouse and *pandoxatorium*. In 1411 the list begins with the chapel next the chamber of the lord prior, then follow the *camera*, with beds in it, and the *camera prioris*, in which, owing to the age and infirmity of the prior, his bed had been placed. The inventory includes two fire-tongs—one for the *camera domini*, and one for the *camera ludencium*, and a *cathedra de eese pro infirmis juxta latrinam*. Next comes the *studium prioris*, and the lower study—then the hall, with the pantry, buttery and kitchen, the larder, poultry, bakehouse and *pandoxatorium*. From this it may be deduced that the great chamber, otherwise called the prior's chamber, is the large room forty-eight feet by twenty feet, adjoining the north side of the chapel. The *camera* containing beds is presumably the room on

the south side of the chapel. The prior's study is the upper room at the north-east of the great chamber, and its first floor story the lower study. The hall is the room, forty-four feet by twenty feet, west of the great chamber, and between its west wall and the east wall of the dorter range are the pantry, buttery, and kitchen. The larder and poultry probably occupied the rebuilt part of the ground floor of the eastern range, but the site of the *pandoxatorium* is more doubtful. The word means a brewhouse, but since mediæval hostelries brewed their own beer, it is also used for a place where beer is sold, and indeed etymologically this is nearer to its original meaning, deriving as it does from *πανδοχεῖον*, a hostelry for travellers. From the place it occupies in the inventories, it might be the westernmost of the buildings, as the list goes from east to west, but there is nothing in such a position which could have served the purpose. To the east of the prior's house, however, there is a fifteenth century building, of which only part of the ground story remains, which from its arrangements would well suit the context, and may be considered as bakehouse and brewhouse.

In an inventory of 1465, unfortunately incomplete, there is a mention of a room called the Player chamber, which is, from the context, in the eastern part of the range. And in the accounts for 1464-5 there is an entry *pro nova tectura unius camerae vocatae le Player chambre.* This is evidently the English name for the *camera ludencium* of 1411, a phrase which makes it evident that it has nothing to do with acting, but is the holiday chamber for the Durham monks on leave, as provided by the regulations of prior John of Durham in 1408. They were to have a fire, and the 1411 inventory mentions the fire-irons in the *camera ludencium.* Another *camera* is called the Douglas Tower—this was being re-roofed in 1460, being coupled with the prior's chamber in the accounts, and in 1467-8 a wooden pentice was made *ad cameram vocatam Dwglestour*, and *le ywnning in dicta camera.*

In 1466-7 the east side of the *camera Hospitii*, the guest-house chamber, is mentioned as being pointed, together with the north wall of the Hall and the south side of the prior's chamber. This would suggest that the guest-house stood north and south.

But beyond the presumption that all these three *camerae*, the Player chamber, the Douglas Tower, and the guest-house chamber, were part of or adjoined the prior's building, their precise position must remain doubtful. It may be suggested that the Douglas Tower *camera* is the same thing as the upper study. An outer stair leading to this chamber was made in the fifteenth century, and at the same time the newel stair leading from the lower to the upper story was blocked up. A wooden pentice might very likely be constructed over the outer stair.

The vaults of the ground story having fallen, except those under the eastern half of the prior's great chamber, the upper story or chamber floor is only partly accessible, but its general arrangements are still to be recognized. Under the hall and the western half of the great chamber there were quadripartite groined vaults springing from round columns and half-round responds; the space under the eastern half of the great chamber is roofed with a barrel vault of later date, springing from stone piers, and still existing; it is probably of the fifteenth century, at which date many alterations were made in the range.

The prior's chapel, twenty-six feet by ten feet, has a three-light fifteenth century east window, and single windows at north-east and south-east. It is entered from the prior's chamber by a fifteenth century doorway, replacing an earlier doorway which was farther to the east. Opposite to it in the south wall is a second doorway, leading to a chamber now destroyed. At the west of the chapel was a gallery, reached by a stair in the north-west angle. The chamber south of the chapel appears to be that which contained the beds mentioned in the inventories. In 1465 " blue beds " are specified, a phrase recalling the passage in *Rites of Durham*, which speaks of the blue

beds of the monks of Durham. Nothing can be said of the arrangements of this chamber, as it is completely ruined.

The great chamber of the prior was a fine room opening westwards to the hall, and having a stair at the north-east, giving access to the ground story. This is, however, a fifteenth century addition, and it is not clear whether before that time there was any other approach than through the hall. The original fireplace was in the south wall, but in the fifteenth century it was walled up and three two-light windows inserted in this part of the chamber, while a new fireplace was set in the north wall. At the same time a bay window was made to the west of the new fireplace, and new tracery and outer arch put in the east window of the chamber. In the north wall, adjoining the fireplace to the east, wooden panelling has at some time been fixed, perhaps a canopied seat by the fire.

From the great chamber a small doorway opens northwards to the lower study, a room twenty-seven feet long by thirteen feet wide, with a fireplace in the west wall, and a newel stair, which must have led to the upper study, at the south-west corner. There are remains of an external stair, against the north wall of the great chamber, which must have superseded the newel stair, so that the upper study could only be reached from outside the building. At the north-east corner is a garde-robe, and in the north wall of the upper chamber an oriel window, a fifteenth century addition, which must have added greatly to the charm of the room, and have commanded a delightful view of the river and its steep wooded bank.

The vaulted room on the ground floor, a somewhat gloomy apartment, seems to have served as cellarage. It contains nothing of interest now, and was entered from the south by a doorway opening to the passage which separates it from the subvault of the great chamber.

The hall, which probably had an open fire on a hearth at first, was in 1459-60 provided with a large fireplace in the north wall, and a bay window to the east of it. At

the same time three windows were made in the south wall and two buttresses added, and a new set of hangings was bought in Newcastle. The entrances at the lower end of the hall, opening to the screens, were approached by external steps, but in 1464 a new doorway and entry were built at the north-west, the original north-west doorway being blocked and a new entrance made in the west wall. From this entrance a passage ran westwards to the cloister, but this arrangement probably existed before the alterations of 1464.

At the south-west of the hall, and extending into the eastern range of the claustral buildings, are the kitchen offices, with a lobby and serving hatch and remains of several fireplaces and ovens. The crosswalls of the eastern range appear to be of fifteenth century date, and the barrel-vaulted room next to the passage to the cloister probably served as a cellar or larder.

From all this it will be seen that this group of buildings is in essence a mediæval house of the better class and of moderate size, with hall, chapel, chambers, and the necessary offices. The detached building to the east, with its fireplaces, ovens and seatings for cauldrons, seems to have served as bakehouse and brewhouse, and in the unexcavated site to the south the remains of other offices are doubtless to be found.

It remains to examine the group of buildings east of the church. In the first place, it is clear that part of the group, and not improbably the whole of it, was pulled down and the site levelled over in monastic times.

Three dates of work can be distinguished, but it is quite likely that the intervals between them are not considerable. The earliest part is at the west, and exhibits the plan of a normal domestic house of the better class, with a hall about forty feet by twenty-five feet, having at its north end a two-story building, which, on the analogy of other houses of this type, has consisted of a solar over a cellar. The hall shows remains of its hearth and stone bases on either side on which stood wooden posts

carrying the superstructure; part of the west door into the screens remains at the lower end of the hall, but the rest, including the domestic offices which normally occupy such a position, has been destroyed at the building of the north-east wing of the prior's quarters.

To this simple rectangular building has been added a large room to the north forty-six feet by twenty feet, with a fireplace in its east wall, and along its south side a corridor lighted from the south by small splayed windows, leading to a large garde-robe pit at the east. Against the south side of the garde-robe building there is built a rectangular room entered from the north-west, showing remains of similar windows, and having along its west side a covered walk, which may be of later date. Both the garde-robe and the room south of it have been enlarged eastwards, and though no evidence of a stair remains, it seems probable that these buildings had an upper story. Southward from here there exists a short length of foundation which seems to be of the same period, and suggests the former existence of another room.

I have already expressed the opinion that these buildings are those occupied by the prior and monks of Finchale from 1196 till the completion of the existing monastic buildings. Their lay-out bears no resemblance to the normal plan of a monastery, but seems to be a temporary expedient to give enough accommodation till more ample buildings were ready. As such they are of exceptional interest. From the Chronicle of Meaux it seems that some equally abnormal building sheltered the monks there in the first years of the monastery, but it would be hard to point to any remains of temporary accommodation of this sort anywhere but at Finchale. The hall between solar and kitchen is a purely domestic plan, but the additions to it betoken the presence of something more than a single household. It may be supposed that the upper story of the eastern block, next to the garde-robe, supplied the place of the dorter; the hall would serve for meals, and the large north room for the daily *labor et lectio*. Equally the ground floor of the

eastern block would serve as chapter-house, and the chapel of St. John Baptist as the monastic church.

When found, these buildings were encumbered by blockings of rough masonry, probably of comparatively modern date, and did not reveal their true character till these were removed.

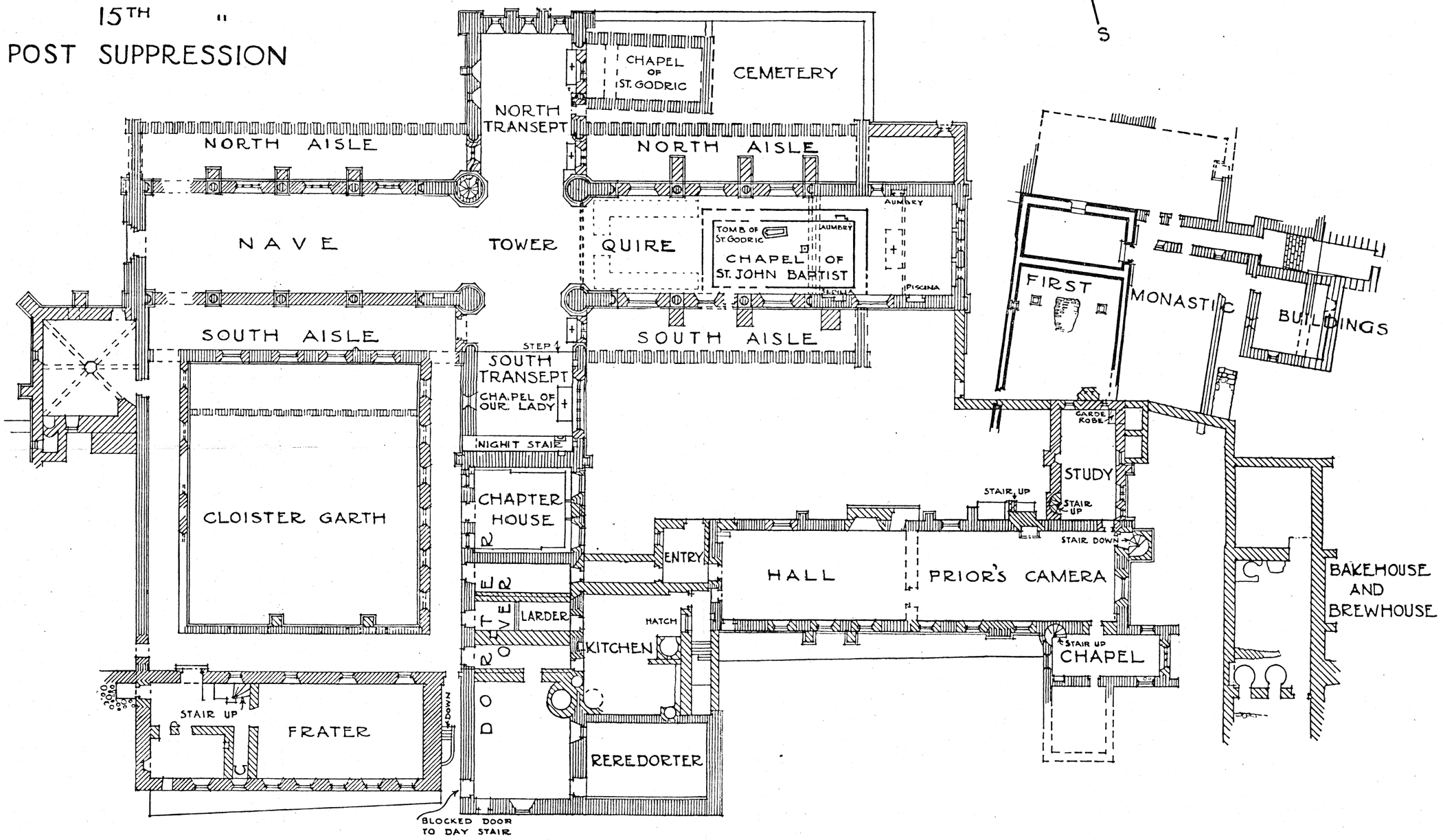
One other building, which in origin at least must go back to the earliest days of the site, is mentioned in the accounts for 1490-1, when Leonard Hall (carpenter) and his workmen were making anew the *domus Beati Godrici*. This is a renewal, doubtless not for the first time, of a wooden building purporting to be the dwelling-place of the hermit, much as the wooden building at Walsingham, which so moved the scorn of Erasmus, was shown to the pilgrims as having been miraculously transported thither many centuries before, although its timbers were obviously quite recent. The site of St. Godric's house must, I fear, remain conjectural.

The subsidiary buildings of the monastery, the mills, barns, storehouses, etc., in the outer court have not come under examination in the course of the repairs, and I can say nothing of them here, although much of interest might doubtless be found among them. There is room for a much more detailed history of Finchale than the circumstances of my work there have allowed me to write.

I am greatly indebted to my friends, Professor Hamilton Thompson and Mr. A. W. Clapham, for reading my proofs and for many valuable comments.

FINCHALE PRIORY DURHAM

LATE 12TH CENTURY
13TH "
LATE 13TH "
14TH "
15TH "
POST SUPPRESSION



GROUND PLAN

FEET 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 FEET

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ANCIENT MONUMENTS DEPT.
1927.

FINCHALE PRIORY DURHAM

13TH "
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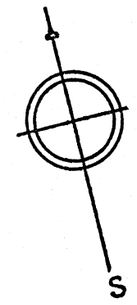

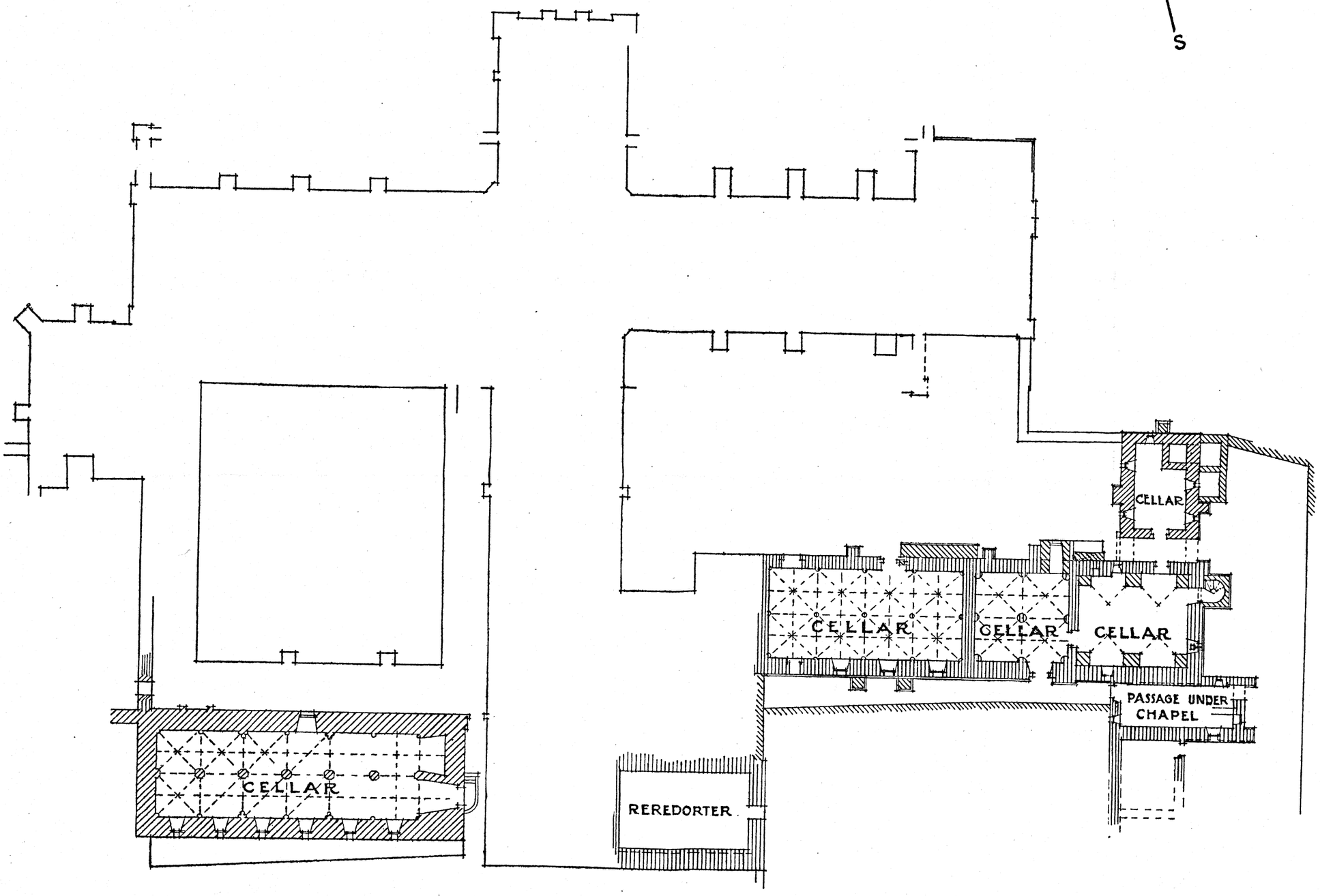

BASEMENT PLAN

FEET 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 FEET

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