

Excavations

MADE IN THE

GARDENS OF THE BISHOP'S PALACE, NORWICH,

APRIL, 1859.

COMMUNICATED BY

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HAVING, by the permission of the Bishop, had an opportunity of making some excavations in the Palace Garden, with a view of ascertaining more exactly than was previously known, so much of the history of the buildings as could be obtained from existing foundations, and your committee having requested me to furnish my fellow-members of the Archaeological Society with some account of the results of my search, I will now give a short statement of them.

It seems to me that my simplest plan will be to refer, in the first place, to what exists above ground, and so lead up to what the excavations disclose.

Bishop Herbert, it is said, having built his cathedral about 1101, proceeded to build his palace on the north side of it, and Blomefield is incorrect (as he frequently is in dealing with such matters) in saying that Bishop Herbert's work was wholly pulled down and re-built by Bishop Salmon. So far from this being the case, considerable portions of Herbert's work are to be found, and traces of additions and alterations by one or two succeeding bishops before Bishop Salmon's extensive alterations.

Beginning at the south-west angle, where the walls of the palace (until within the last six months) joined the north aisle of the cathedral nave, we find an arched Norman vault, and traces of windows in the walls above, coeval with the cathedral; and the massive walls of the square vault recently used as the palace kitchen, although the present vaulting and shaft were constructed in Salmon's time, seem to be of the same date as the adjoining building. In the east wall of the room above the kitchen is a plain Early English window, and other Early English work may also be observed in the same wall near the north-west angle.

In the court, east of this large vault or kitchen, the workmen recently found some Early English stone-work, which seems to me to have been a part of a window, and the corner shaft of a cloistered court; but nothing else having been found, it is rather difficult to say for what purpose it was intended. The interior of the kitchen seems to have been adapted to that purpose in the latter part of the fifteenth century, or even later. At the same time the three-light Perpendicular windows would have been inserted in the room above; one of these has a transom in the lower part of it, beneath which the window was probably unglazed, and closed with shutters, for which bricks are now substituted.

Although the walls of the buildings at the north-west corner, in the western side of which were the hall and entrance to the late palace, are much of them massive and old, they have been too much pulled about to afford any information as to their original appropriation; but the building running eastward from them contains too many traces of Bishop Salmon's time, in the windows, shaft, and vaulting, for us to doubt that, for a large portion at least of this work, we are indebted to him; but here again Norman work is discoverable on the south side, where an arched door led from the court into the vault, and shows that, however much Salmon may have altered and improved it, part of it

certainly was of Herbert's time, or of that of his immediate successors.

The present east wall of this building is new, but replaced an older one, which was not however the original one, as the vaulting of Salmon's time certainly extended further east; but at this point some work recently existed in excellent preservation, which I cannot but feel very sorry should have been removed. It was a piece of destruction nothing but the extremest necessity could justify. The space between this east wall and a line running from the west end of the chapel southward, was occupied by two vaulted apartments, the southern one much damaged, but the north one in very good order. From corbels at the four corners, low arches sprang, and at the intersection in the centre of the roof, the arms and supporters of Bishop Lyhart, by whom the room was erected, well carved, and painted and gilt. As he entertained King Henry VI. here in 1449, this was probably one of the alterations made prior to the king's visit. The stone-work has been preserved, and may be hashed up hereafter into a summer-house! One can hardly imagine an architect of eminence counselling such spoliation as this.

I now come to the part of the site immediately adjacent to the excavations. The chapel was built after the Rebellion, by Bishop Reynolds, out of the remains of the older chapel, but not on the same site; for the south wall of the chapel is built on the south end of the old great hall, and from this part everything, to the north of a line drawn from east to west of the palace grounds, is of Salmon's time, or later. We have documentary evidence of this, for on the Patent Rolls of the 12th of Edward II. (1318), is the patent to him for enlarging the site of his palace by the addition of certain pieces, containing altogether in length, 47 perches and 4 feet, and 23 perches and 12 feet in breadth, a copy of which I subjoin:—

[*Patent Roll*, 12 Edw. 2. p. 1. m. 1.

p Johe Norwyceñ ep̄o. { R. om̄ib; ad quos &c. Saltm̄
 Sciat̄is q̄d de g^acia n̄ra sp̄ali
 concessimus ē licenciam dedimus p nobis ē heredib; n̄ris
 q^antum in nobis est Veñabili patri Johi Norwiceñ ep̄o q̄d
 ip̄e quasdam placeas continentes in se quadraginta ē septem
 pticatas ē quatuor pedes t̄re in longitudine ē viginti ē tres
 pticatas ē duodecim pedes t̄re in latitudine palacio ip̄ius
 Ep̄i infra civitatem Norwici contiguas tam de feodo n̄ro q^am
 alioꝝ ad elargac̄oem palacii sui p̄dci acquirere possit, Hēnd
 ē tenend sibi ē successorib; suis Ep̄is loci illius ad elarga-
 c̄oem palacii illius ut p̄dcm̄ est imp̄petuū. Statuto de t̄ris ē
 teñ ad manū mortuam non ponend edito non obstante. Dum-
 tamen p̄ inquisic̄oes inde in forma debita faciend ē in Can-
 cellariā n̄ra vel heredum n̄roz rite retornand̄ comptum sit q̄d
 id fieri pot̄it absq; dampno ē p̄judicio n̄ri ē alius ejuscumq;. In
 cuj^o e^o. T. ut s^a. T. R. apud Eboꝝ t̄cio die Feb̄ 7.
 p̄ ip̄m R.]

All the land, therefore, northward of the strong red line I have marked on my plan, must have been then acquired, and no buildings on it can be of an earlier period. And so in 1318 or 1319 he must have built the magnificent hall of which the few traces left appear on the plan, and which I will now endeavour to describe.

Of these the most important is the porch, now the solitary ivy-clad ruin standing in the centre of the garden, which, although much injured and defaced, contains many beautiful points, and is well worthy the careful study of the architect and antiquary. This porch was long known as "Bishop Salmon's Gateway."

There is a staircase with a doorway from the great hall which leads to a room over the porch, the old door of which, with its beautiful iron-work, and the windows with their original shutters, and with no trace of ever having been

glazed, were frequently pointed out by the lamented Bishop Stanley to his archaeological friends. The newel staircase also led to a large apartment over the butteries, probably pertaining to the cellarer. The windows of it existed in Kirkpatrick's time; for in the curious sketch he has left, of which a copy is here engraved, they are seen in the fragment of the wall to the right of the ruin. Unfortunately Kirkpatrick was a very poor draughtsman; and, therefore, not entirely to be depended on. It seems hardly possible to compress the two large windows he has represented into a little over twenty feet, the actual length of the wall. And again, I cannot but think he has drawn on his imagination for the figures in the niches of the buttresses of the porch. Those in the niches right and left of the door remain, although much mutilated; but those on the buttresses, I suspect, represent what he *thought* were originally there, rather than what he saw before him. The high-pitched roof of the porch, as represented in both his sketches, is a curious feature, hardly, I should think, an original one.

Entering this porch, we have before us the elegant deeply recessed doorway to the hall, a fine example of Early Decorated work. The head of the arch was filled with bold and elegant cuspings, which have been cut away, but still can be easily traced. Over-head the vaulting and bosses are extremely bold and good, and the sharp-pointed arches, two on either side, give a wonderful lightness to the whole interior. Mutilated as this porch has been, it is even now an architectural gem. Each of these four side arches was filled with tracery. Entering the area by this porch, nothing is to be observed above ground, but the excavations disclosed a line of foundations immediately to the right, which were those of the north end of the hall; and immediately opposite the porch door is a corresponding door in the west wall.

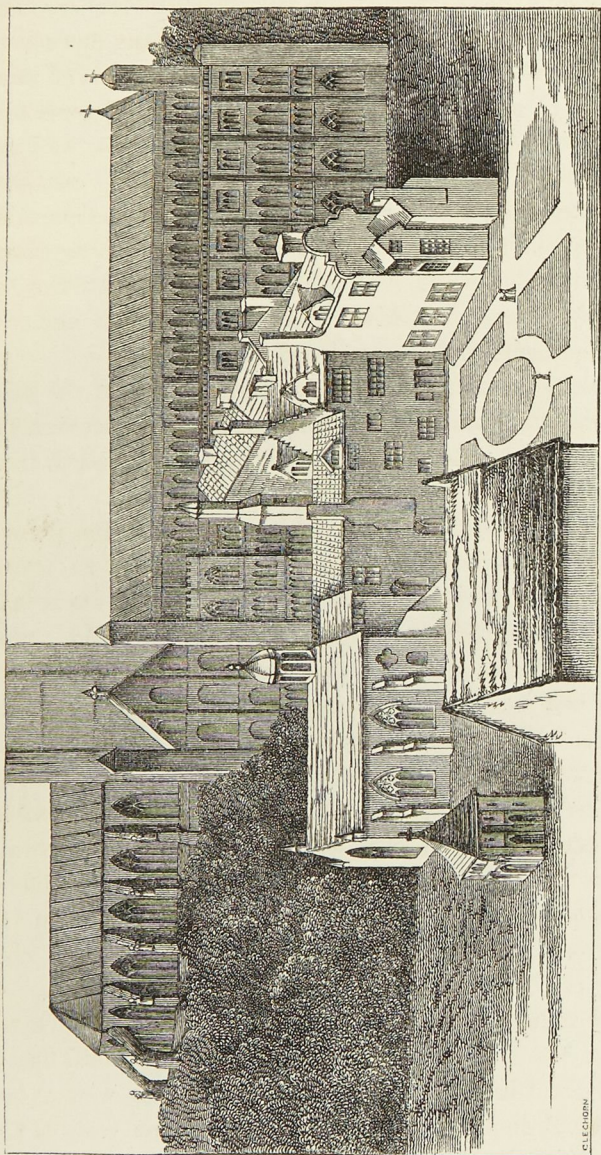
The north wall had three doorways: the largest in the centre, being eight feet wide, and having been furnished

with double doors, led into a passage opening into the kitchen; the smaller doors, right and left, led into pantry and buttery. The front of these doors, towards the hall, shows that they were of similar architectural character to those of the porch. The passage into the kitchen widened as it receded from the hall, and the walls of it terminate at about twenty-one feet with the bases of two piers, on which rested an arch made in the thickness of the massive four-foot wall, at the north end of the butteries.

The kitchen was generally in these places, detached from other buildings; and among the mass of rubbish existing beyond the bases I have mentioned, I could only find one fragment, some thirty feet from them, which seemed to belong to the kitchen. It may be, that the building appearing in the foreground of the second sketch by Kirkpatrick, of which an engraving is here inserted, may have stood on the site of it. One thing is certain, I could find no more of it, except by going much deeper and extending my excavations much more than the Bishop would have approved, or than I could have undertaken to do had I had his permission.

The ground-plan engraved in the Lincoln volume of the Institute of the Bishop's Palace there, the great hall of which was erected some sixty or seventy years before the Norwich one, presents very much the same arrangements of hall, butteries, and kitchen, but the hall was smaller.

Returning to the foundations on the north side of the hall, a base will be seen projecting into it on the west side of the third doorway. On finding this, I immediately concluded it was the respond of a line of arches which extended along the western side of the hall, and that there had been a central and two side aisles. On looking about for a convenient spot to test this without interfering with workmen, I caused an excavation to be made fifteen feet from the east wall of the hall, and about eight feet from the chapel, and



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BISHOP'S PALACE AND CHAPEL, NORWICH,
From a Sketch by Kirkpatrick, about 1720, in the possession of R. Fitch, Esq., F.S.A., &c.

had the satisfaction of clearing the base of one of the massive columns that supported the eastern line of arches. But here my success ended. In other places I went down very much deeper than the floor, only to find every trace of them removed. I at last dug up the roadway at the north-east angle of the hall, and close to the porch, and there, as I expected, found the respond of the last arch of the east line. I excavated sufficient of the east and west walls to determine their position, and that of the buttresses supporting them. Instead of the length of the hall being but 110 feet, as stated by Blomefield, it was 120, and its south end was where the south wall of the chapel now stands.

On the exterior of the south-east corner is one of the bases of an archway, showing that there was a passage between the hall and chapel, from the cloistered court by the north transept, to the garden east of the hall.

On the west side of the hall, by the end of the present chapel, the workmen discovered the foundation of a staircase which led into the hall from the private apartments, and which is seen in Kirkpatrick's sketch; and I should, therefore, be inclined to believe the noble room, formerly the dining-room, and now re-fitting for the same purpose, was the great chamber of the palace. In the plan of Lincoln, the gentleman who prepared it placed the great chamber there over the butteries and kitchen passage, to which access was obtained there, as here, by a newel stair at the corner next the porch. But from what I have seen of mediæval arrangements, I should appropriate that apartment to the cellarer or some other of the officers having charge of what we may call the "provisional government."

After Salmon's time, the palace was almost always too large for the Bishop, and was constantly falling into decay, and the great hall, buttery, pantry, and kitchen, were at last leased by Bishop Nix, in 1535, for eighty-nine years to the corporation, to hold their guild-feasts in. In the Rebellion,

the hall was used as a meeting-house, and at last its lead was taken off, and a great part of it pulled down. A portion of the west wall remained to Bishop Bathurst's time, and formed the east wall of an out-house. It will be observed adjoining the chapel in both the sketches of Kirkpatrick.

The gate-house was entirely rebuilt by Bishop Alnwick, although the doors are Bishop Lyhart's work, and were doubtless some of the new works executed prior to the coming of King Henry VI., on his visit in 1449.

I now come to the last point to which I have to refer—about which the excavations have furnished me with a very interesting fact—I mean with regard to the old chapel.

In Blomefield's account of it, in the second part of the History of Norwich, he says, "*at first*, Jesus chapel in the cathedral was the Bishop's private chapel, but that being inconvenient by reason of its distance, Bishop Salmon, at his coming to the see about the year 1300, having agreed with the prior and chapter for the piece of land lying between the church and the palace, on the east side of the way leading from the church to the palace, for an annual pension of £4, built a chapel thereon, and dedicated it to the honour of the Virgin Mary. It stood *near the place* where the present chapel stands, about ten or twelve yards more south, and was 30 feet broad and 130 feet long. There were many plain monuments, under which it was thought some of the bishops were buried, and Bishop Salmon, the founder, is said to be interred in the midst of it before the high altar."

The note he quotes from Browne's account, in support of part of this statement, adds that the chapel was covered with lead which was sold in the rebellious times, and the fabric, growing ruinous, was taken down, and the stones partly made use of for this that is now standing. The old chapel certainly did stand near the place where the new chapel stands, but not above five or six yards from it; and the new staircase on the east side of the way from the chapel

door to the north transept, about 15 feet from the chapel south door, led from the cloister communicating with the private apartments of the Bishop into the chapel.

The width of this old chapel was about 28 feet, and its length 132; and an examination of the windows of the new chapel, and a comparison with a portion of a window jamb which remained until the garden wall was recently pulled down, confirms Browne's statement, that the windows of the present chapel were taken from the old one, and that they are of Early Decorated work, coeval with the ruined porch of the hall.

But in another respect, the account given by Blomefield is proved by these excavations to have been clearly wrong, the fact of the land on which the chapel stood having been acquired from the prior and chapter in 1300, by Bishop Salmon. He was led to that conclusion by a certain controversy which occurred after Bishop Goldwell's death, when, it having appeared he had during his life omitted to pay the annual pension of £4, Bishop Nix arbitrated upon it, and the executors were compelled to pay all arrears, and the rent continued to be paid till Michaelmas, 1642, and then the Bishop went to the dean and prebends in chapter, and said that he conceived the chapel was theirs, and they might take it into their hands, for he would pay the annual rent of £4. no longer; upon which they declared, that though the pension was due for it, yet it was not theirs, but the chapel of the Bishop, and had been so reputed, taken, and used time out of mind: but from this time the rent quite ceased. It is, undoubtedly, true that Salmon built the chapel here, and I have traced much of the wall of his time, including the square east end, with the angular buttress on the north-east corner. But what I further found there confirmed the statement of the prior and chapter, that the chapel had been the Bishop's chapel time out of mind; and also furnished me with an explanation of an entry I had found in the third

volume of the Diocesan Institution Book, and in relation to which I had searched records and Bishop's garden without success to that time. At the end of the book is inserted a copy of what is called an "Act of Court," on a complaint by the incumbent of "Lodne," against the private chaplain of Sir Roger de Hales, for celebrating mass in the chapel of St. Andrew, within Sir Roger's manor, called Wrantishaghe, in the parish of Lodne. These "Acts" are therein stated to have been had before the Bishop (Skerning, the third bishop before Salmon), on the Monday after the feast of the Holy Trinity, 1277, in the *old* chapel of the Bishop of Norwich. And again, statutes of Ralph de Walpole, made 13th of the kalends of Dec., 1294, are dated in "our *old* chapel." Now it is quite certain they would not speak of Jesus' chapel in the cathedral so, and I have looked over the ground with much interest, in the hope of finding some trace of this old chapel. After I had nearly given over hope, something in the appearance of the east end of Salmon's chapel induced me to clear deeper than I had previously done, and there, beneath the foundation of his chapel, was the massive apse of one of Bishop Herbert's time. Here, then, we had the "old" chapel of the Bishop of Norwich, and the chapter of 1642 were right in their conclusion, that it was anciently the Bishop's, and not theirs.

The east end of Salmon's chapel is so constructed as to place the altar in the same spot as that occupied by the altar of the older chapel.

Bishop Ayrmine founded a chantry in it of three priests, and their names regularly occur in the Bishop's Institution Book on their collation to the office, until Bishop Lyhart's time, when he made arrangements for getting rid of them.

Blomefield adds, that in 1619, the Bishop licensed the Walloon congregation to use it; and that Bishop Hall, in his *Hard Measure* (p. 15) states thus:—"That Sheriff Tofts and Alderman Lindsey, attended with many zealous followers

(during the rebellion), came into my chapel to look for superstitious pictures and relics of idolatry, and sent for me to let me know they found these windows full of images, which was very offensive, and must be demolished. I told them they were the pictures of some ancient and worthy bishops, as St. Ambrose, St. Austin, &c. It was answered me, they were so many popes; and one younger man among the rest (Townsend, as I perceived afterwards) would take upon him to defend that every diocesan bishop was a pope. I answered him with scorn, and obtained leave that I might, with the least loss and defacing of the windows, give order for taking off that offence, which I did by causing the heads of these pictures to be taken off, since I knew the bodies could not offend."

But all would not do, for, after all, the windows were broken, the lead sold off the roof, and Bishop Reynolds, as I have said, was obliged, after the Restoration, to pull it down entirely, when he built the present chapel in its stead.

I have now told the chief results of my search, which might have been a more extensive and successful one had the time and means been at my disposal; and it must be borne in mind by those who might wish that more had been done, that my residence is twelve miles from the scene of operations, and that had I not undertaken the cost and the trouble of it, it would not have been undertaken at all.

It only remains for me to thank the Bishop for the permission he gave me to excavate the ground, and Messrs. Brooks and Wiseman, the contractors, for the ready help they gave me on all occasions.