

WOLLATON HALL. NORTH FRONT.
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WOLLATON HALL

By J. HOLLAND WALKER

WOLLATON Hall was commenced by Sir Francis Willoughby in 1580 and completed by him in 1588, so that during its erection the international complications which culminated in the attempted invasion of England by the Spanish Armada were working themselves out ; Mary Queen of Scots was tried and was executed at Fotheringhay Castle, and Shakespeare was an actor in London.

At the time of the inception of this building scheme Sir Francis was living in the Willoughby mansion in Wollaton village whither the family had migrated about 1450 from the ancient home at Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, which they had occupied since 1240 or thereabouts. Between 1324 and 1362 Sir Richard de Willoughby married Isabella, sister and heiress of William Morteyn of Cossall and Wollaton, and it was through this marriage that the Wollaton estates came into the Willoughby family. In 1352 Sir Richard established a chantry of two priests celebrating at the altar of St. Anthony in Wollaton Church, so obviously by that date the Wollaton estates were in the hands of the Willoughby family. But for some reason or other they did not at once desert their ancient home, and they continued to use St. Nicholas Chapel at Willoughby as a dormitory. Richard Willoughby who died in 1471 is the first Willoughby to be buried in Wollaton Church.

Little or nothing remains of the old house at Willoughby. It was situated on the south side of the churchyard and its site is now occupied by some brick cottages of 17th or 18th century date. They are interesting, but appear to have nothing to do with the Willoughby house, and in the present state of our knowledge nothing further can be said about it.

At Wollaton the site of the Willoughby house is accurately marked by the old rectory, and considerable remains of it were discovered by Mr. A. N. Radford when he modernised the rectory house in 1934. From his investigations it seems that a house—probably fortified—about 45 feet square was built sometime between 1250 and 1350. This was enlarged, possibly when the family migrated here in 1450, and was abandoned and destroyed after the erection of the present Hall. The important farm house which was built on the site about 1600 was pulled down and a bigger one erected in its place in 1710.

Sir Francis Willoughby was a strange, and in a way, a rather pathetic character. He was a member of a family who have held the Willoughby estates since 1240, each generation of which, with the exception of Sir Francis himself, was conspicuous for its public spirit and common sense. Without being exactly a black sheep Sir Francis was cursed by an ostentatious and quarrelsome character, with the result that he very nearly wrecked the family fortunes. Perhaps the kindest view is that Sir Francis was a younger son who was not

expected to inherit the family fortune and who, in consequence, received no training to prepare him to manage great wealth and position. His brother Thomas, who succeeded to the estates in 1550, was happily married and there seemed every prospect of a family. But he caught a chill while hunting, from the effects of which he died, leaving no children, and so Sir Francis, with his difficult character, came into great wealth and power for the management of which he was totally unprepared. Moreover his domestic life was most unhappy. He married twice; his first wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Littleton, by whom he had a family of daughters, but no son. Lady Elizabeth was a difficult woman for not only did she defy her husband and render his life unhappy in every way, but she treated her daughters in such a tyrannical manner that they were glad to escape into matrimony. After her death in 1594 one of them wrote to a sister calling upon her to "join with her to thank God for their happy deliverance from all their troubles." To the sordid story of Sir Francis' unhappy domestic squabbles must be added the accounts of his quarrels with his relatives and neighbours, many of which are recorded in the Wollaton manuscripts, and of his financial difficulties. Indeed, during Sir Francis' time Wollaton must have been a very unpleasant place of residence.

But he desired an heir, and after Lady Elizabeth's death in 1594, although then an elderly man, he ventured upon a second marriage. His new wife presented him with another daughter, but failed to produce the desired heir. In character she was even worse than the Lady Elizabeth. Her name was Dorothy Coleby, widow of John Tamworth. She was a youngish woman and a mere adventuress. Thoroton says of her that she "made her advantage of the declining years of her husband and his great estate." She pressed him into making a will leaving her the greater part of his estate, and the disputes so created led to much litigation and expenses which seriously crippled the Willoughby family for some time. However, he did leave Wollaton to his eldest daughter Bridget, who was happily married to her kinsman, Percival Willoughby D'Eresby, at that time living in Kent.

Sir Francis brought his unhappy life to an end, not without suspicion of poison, in lodgings in London during November 1596, and was buried in St. Giles, Cripplegate. It is truly said of him that he lived just a year too long. He left his family hopelessly divided and his finances much embarrassed.

But Sir Francis built Wollaton Hall. The old house in Wollaton village was not good enough to satisfy his ambition. He decided to build a stately mansion as a memorial to himself. He was a man of great wealth; writing to him in 1575, George Willoughby said that "his estate is very well known to both Her Majesty and the whole court to be nothing inferior to the best." The result was Wollaton Hall, of which Camden says "it was built by Sir Francis in a foolish display of his wealth." The true reason of the building is set forth in the *cri de coeur* carved on the date-stone over the south door:

'En has Francisci Willoughbensci aedes rara arte extractas Willoughbacis relictas.' "Behold the house of Francis Willoughby built with rare skill and left to succeeding Willoughbys." It is a message from an unhappy, heirless, but ambitious man.

It seems remarkable that at a time of such national peril Sir Francis should feel at liberty to undertake so elaborate and costly a scheme as the building of Wollaton Hall. But he was not alone in his undertaking, for the country is thickly strewn with houses of varying size dating from the reign of Elizabeth, and amongst these are some of the most costly and elaborate houses ever built in the land. There was almost a competition amongst wealthy men of the period to outvie each other in the magnificence of their mansions, and Sir Francis entered into it with enthusiasm. Holdenby, commenced by Sir Christopher Hatton 1580; Kirby Hall (1570) also by Sir Christopher Hatton; Apethorpe (1580) by Sir Walter Mildmay; Burghley (1577-1587) by Lord Burghley; and Hardwick (1590) by the Countess of Shrewsbury, to mention only a few, were all roughly contemporary with Wollaton and give some idea of the scale of building operations during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign.

There seems an urge to build in the English character. During the middle ages the wealthy aristocracy were content to found and build monasteries, churches and chantries which, under the thin disguise of being dedicated to the glory of God, were none the less memorials to the glory of their founders. But this aristocracy, whose position was based on feudalism, committed suicide in the wars of the roses, and with the advent of the Tudors a new aristocracy arose whose wealth was based on expanding trade and which was further increased by the pillage of the monasteries. These new men had different ideals from their predecessors. For one thing their minds did not turn, naturally, to the church. Perhaps they were in doubt as to whether the Roman or the Protestant faith represented the true church. Perhaps the events leading to the Reformation had shaken their faith in the stability of organized religion, or it may be that the horrors of the black death and the wars of the roses, together with the free thought of the Reformation had destroyed their religious balance and even their faith. Whatever be the reason, the fact remains that very few ecclesiastical buildings were erected during Tudor days, and the tremendous building activity of the time was directed into domestic channels.

Sir Francis decided to build himself a house which he might consider suitable to his position and his wealth. In addition to the value of the Ancaster stone of which the house was built, which may have been obtained without cash payment by the barter of coal from Wollaton pits, the cost of the fabric of the Hall was approximately £80,000, which is probably worth half a million of our money. That Sir Francis should undertake this enormous expense in addition to sustaining the normal burden of his great household, is indicative of his great wealth and his great ostentation. He was, indeed, a very wealthy man, for in addition to the income from their widespread estates the Willoughby family were deeply interested in the iron and

the coal trade. It is worth remembering that the Cossall pits which belonged to the Willoughbys were working in 1348 and that the Wollaton pits were in full production before 1549.

There is a tendency to question the accuracy of the tradition that the stone of which the house is built was obtained by barter and that pack-horses brought it from Ancaster and returned laden with Wollaton coal. The basis of this tradition is Camden's record: "Wollaton is rich in seams of coal, where Sir Francis Willoughby, Knight, nobly descended from the Greys, Marquises of Dorset, in our days built out of the ground with great charges (yet for the most part levied out of the coal pits) a stately house with artificial workmanship, standing bleakly, but offering a goodly prospect to beholders far and near."

Sir Henry Willoughby, who died in 1528, was great-great-grandfather to Sir Francis, and was married to Margaret Markham of Sidebrook in the parish of Ancaster, and this connection may possibly account for the stone being procured from Ancaster. If the pack-horses were to keep up a steady supply of stone at Wollaton, it is obvious that they must have gone straight back to Ancaster and not have taken their supposed loads of coal to a more useful market. The result would be a huge dump of coal at Ancaster, the value of which at such a place and at such a time is not obvious. The record may mean this, but it seems much more likely to mean that Sir Francis set aside the profits of his coal mines to pay for the stone and that the tradition is a picturesque growth of later years.

Sir Francis first intended to build his palace at Middleton, near Tamworth, one of his many estates, and foundations, traces of which still remain, were prepared there. But for some reason he changed his mind and selected the admirable site of the present Wollaton Hall. As Camden says, the site offers "a goodly prospect to beholders far and near." Possibly the view from the house did not interest Sir Francis greatly, but its conspicuousness would no doubt have its appeal to the ostentatious side of his character.

The selection of this site opens up certain antiquarian problems which have not yet attracted sufficient attention to produce reasonable solutions. Camden says that it is "A stately house standing bleakly" so that the present well-wooded condition of the neighbourhood would appear to date from times after the Hall was built. Indeed, a certain Miss Silvia Pebbleflint who was looked upon as an expert in arboriculture by our grandfathers, states that in her opinion the oaks flanking the vista to Wollaton village were grown from acorns sown about 1660, while it is widely believed that the cedars at Wollaton Hall, Wollaton village and Strelley all date from about 1650.

The history of the Park presents greater difficulties. As we have seen Wollaton was brought into the Willoughby family by Isabella, sister and heiress of William Morteyn of Cossall and Wollaton, who married Sir Richard Willoughby, better known as Judge Willoughby. The date of this marriage is not known, but as Judge Willoughby founded a chantry of two chaplains to celebrate at the altar of St.

Anthony and St. Nicholas, Wollaton in 1352, it seems probable that he was then in possession of the Wollaton estates. The Willoughbys moved to Wollaton about 1450, and Mr. Radford's investigations have proved that the site of their house was north-east of the church with an ancient public road separating it, and whatever enclosures may have been attached to it, from the present park. There was a village of the name of Sutton Passeys standing, roughly, where the modern housing estate has sprung up. Thoroton tells us that this village had disappeared completely by his time (1677). It was a place of importance of which frequent mention is made in records and it had a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin after whom the present church of St. Mary, Wollaton Park, is named. Although Sutton Passeys is mentioned in 1558, yet there is an agreement dated 10th May 1545 between Sir John Willoughby and his cousin Henry Willoughby in which the "pale of Wollourton Parke" is mentioned as a boundary. Where this park was and what was its relation to the village of Sutton Passeys is a mystery as yet unsolved, but in considering it it is well to bear in mind the Elizabethan enclosures.

In the present state of our knowledge we must leave these problems, and content ourselves by saying that the park covers 802 acres, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. Mr. T. M. Blagg states that wild cattle were indigenous to Sherwood Forest. They naturally belonged to the king. At an early date—possibly by 1334—they were coralled in a great enclosure by 3,700 acres (nearly six square miles) at Bestwood. From a document preserved at Belvoir dated 4th August 1669, Mr. Blagg has discovered that Lord Chaworth obtained the herd of wild cattle which he owned at Annesley from Bestwood, and as there was also a herd at Wollaton it seems likely that they, too, were obtained from the ancient stock at Bestwood.

The park is surrounded by a brick wall reputed to be seven miles long, about which various stories are current. One is that it took seven men and seven boys seven years to build it. Another is that a bricklayer learnt his trade on it as an apprentice and yet remained working on it during the whole of his life. But the most curious is given by Mr. Whitaker in his "Dovecotes of Notts." The wall was built sufficiently high to prevent anybody looking over it, but one day Lord Middleton was in the park and to his disgust found that he could watch the head of a passer-by as he walked along the public road. He immediately had the wall raised by several courses to maintain his privacy and after going to that expense discovered that the head he had seen was that of a giant over seven feet high who was on exhibition in a show in Nottingham.

The date of this wall is obscure and can only be arrived at by very dubious reasoning. Manifestly it is of the 18th century and its bricks and workmanship match those displayed in the ruined boathouse. What is left of the architectural enrichment of this boathouse show it to be of the same date as the principal facade of the stables built in 1774 by the fourth Baron Middleton, who as Mr. Thomas Willoughby was present at the Star and Garter Tavern when Lord Byron killed Mr. Chaworth.

The lake presents another difficulty for it has no apparent feed or outflow. It is in fact fed from the old fishpond, sometimes known as Martin's pond, to the north of the Wollaton by-pass. The water is piped all the way to the lake which it enters near the island at the north east corner. The outflow is piped off near the modern boat-house and forms a stream running through Thompson's Wood which in its turn is piped into the Tottle Brook and so helps to form the lake in University Park. The whole water arrangements of Wollaton are curious and do not seem to have been thought of in the original design. Later, water was pumped from wells which still exist close to the Wollaton Saw Mills, and forced through pipes to a variety of places including Wollaton Hall.

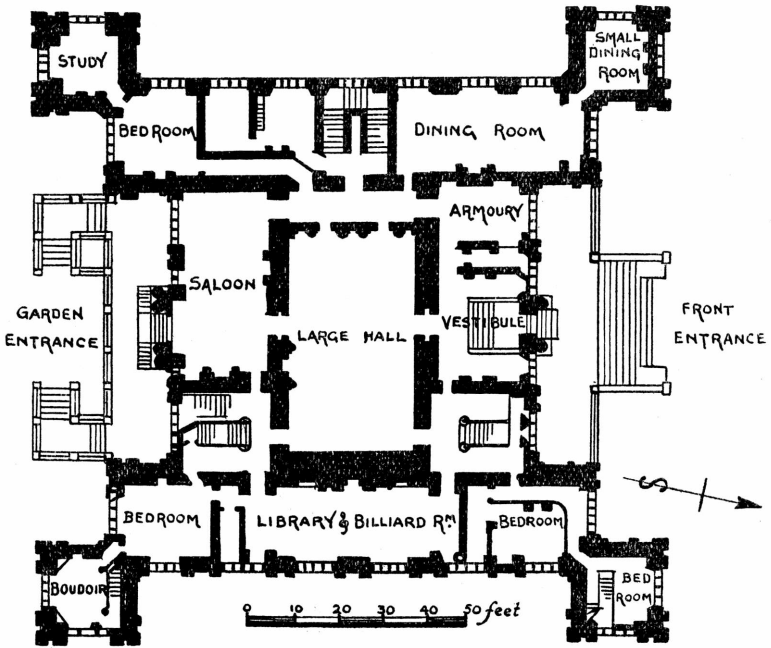
The question of the authorship of the design of Wollaton Hall has been settled by the late Mr. J. A. Gotch, in a paper which he published in vol. lxxvii of the *Archaeological Journal*. He states that the design was made by John Thorpe, the busiest architect of his day, a collection of whose drawings, including a design for Wollaton Hall, are preserved in the Soane Museum. The details were worked out by Henry Smythson who is described on his monument in Wollaton Church as "Architector and Surveyor unto the most worthy house at Wollaton" or, as we should say, the clerk of the works.

Cassandra Willoughby, great-granddaughter of Sir Francis, compiled, in 1702, a valuable history of the family in which she incorporated copies of many documents and letters. Commenting upon one of these written by Lady Arundell to Sir Francis about 1585, Cassandra Willoughby says "the master workmen which built the house he sent for out of Italy" which may mean that he had one or more Italian foremen over his English masons.

It is usual to speak of the design of Wollaton Hall as being a complete break with the past, but a study of the plan would seem to show that as far as the plan, at any rate, is concerned, it can be argued that it is a logical development. The construction of fortified dwellings passed through many stages in England, and by the 15th century it had reached what may be called the "laager" plan in which the buildings, whether military or domestic, were ranged round an open courtyard. The outer wall was continuous and pierced only by small windows: light, air and internal traffic was provided by the courtyard, and frequently the whole complex was reinforced by a moat. Kirby Muxloe, commenced by Lord Hastings in 1472, is an excellent example of this type of fortified house. Amongst the most important of the domestic apartments of a mediaeval house was the great hall which formed the general meeting place and refectory for the whole household. The strength of the Tudor rule reduced the importance of the military buildings of a mediaeval house but the pre-eminence of the great hall continued, and it is arguable that the great hall was the forerunner of the long gallery which is so marked a feature of many Tudor and Jacobite houses.

At Wollaton, Thorpe retained the laager plan, shorn of all its military characteristics; pierced his outer walls freely by great

PLAN OF
WOLLATON HALL



S.G.W.

windows ; and provided a great hall by roofing over the inner courtyard. The development of this idea may be seen in Barlborough Hall which was built in 1583. This house was built round a very small central courtyard which is now filled by a wide modern staircase. But Thorpe had to get light into the hall at Wollaton and he did this by carrying up the walls above the surrounding buildings and forming a clerestory with excellent results. Not content with this, he carried up his walls still higher and provided the Prospect Chamber which must have been an extremely pleasant apartment. The effect of all this was to provide an impressive tower-house surrounded by a range of two-storied buildings and flanked by four pavilions, one at each corner. Further, if the plan be carefully studied, it will be seen that the north and south fronts are based upon the well-known E-plan, so typical of Elizabethan days.

The ideals of the Renaissance, under which Wollaton was built, were based upon the classics, and one of the fundamentals of the classics is logic, whose architectural manifestation is symmetry. If one considers a mediaeval house, such as Stokesay, which dates in part from the 13th century, one is struck by the complete absence of symmetry. The whole design is governed entirely by the site and, of course, the need for defence. The result is a picturesque jumble of roofs, gables, chimneys and towers which are in no way related to or balanced by each other but which seem to fit naturally into the landscape. But symmetry was the keynote of these great Renaissance houses. Wing must be matched by wing and window by window. Convenience in plan was sacrificed to symmetry, and in later days ridiculous results ensued as at Blenheim, commenced by Vanbrugh in 1705, or Castle Howard, also by Vanbrugh 1701, where the kitchens are situate remote from the dining room ! At Wollaton everything has been subordinated to the provision of symmetrical facades facing the four cardinal points. So important was this that, although the park measures 800 acres, no room was provided on the ground level for the kitchen and service, and these essential offices were forced underground into a semi-basement. The labour involved in carrying supplies up and down stairs is evidence of the cheapness of service in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

It is no good trying to appreciate Wollaton Hall from a modern point of view ; if we do, we shall be disappointed, for its superabundance of enrichment is distasteful to modern ideas. But it is a first-class building of its period, and in order to appreciate it it is necessary to make some effort to recover the artistic viewpoint of John Thorpe, Sir Francis Willoughby and their contemporaries. "*Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis*" is strangely true in matters of artistic taste. What our fathers and grandfathers admired, we consider ugly and no doubt our opinions will be held in similar dis-esteem by our successors. This mutability leads to changes in taste and style, and so it depends upon the viewpoint of the spectator whether a building is admired or condemned.

At the time when Wollaton Hall was built the Renaissance had taken root in England but had not yet flowered. In all spheres

men had broken, or were breaking, with old traditions. In architecture the ancient methods were looked upon as effete, barbarous and "Gothic," while the newly re-discovered beauties of classic architecture were admired, copied and completely misunderstood. The first serious attempt to deal with architecture from an English Renaissance point of view was in 1563 when John Shute published his "First and Chief Grounds of Architecture." But all the plates, treatises and pattern books that followed merely led to confusion worse confounded, for the fundamentals of classic architecture were not yet recovered, and it was only after the return of Inigo Jones from Italy in 1614 that the problem of adapting classical ideals to English conditions was solved and the foundations laid upon which Wren and his successors could build.

The English architectural ideal was freedom and fancy, and this led to the production of such wonderfully picturesque and irregular buildings as Compton Winyates. The classical ideal was restraint, symmetry and perfection by purity. By trial and error the Greek architects worked out with all the certainty of mathematics the proportions of their three orders. Doric, Ionic and Corinthian, whose perfection of form have given us the wonders of Greek architecture. But having reached perfection in these orders no further progress was possible, and there was nothing left to do except to ring the changes on their three orders and vary the size of their temples. It followed, therefore, that there was no room in classical architecture, for the freedom and fancy and irregularity which was the essence of later English mediaeval architecture. It was Inigo Jones' great work to discover the common denominator and to make further architectural progress possible.

But all this was unknown to Sir Francis Willoughby. He had no son, and he wanted to build a magnificent palace to perpetuate his memory and to blazon forth his wealth and position, and to do this it must be in the latest fashion. He had heard of classical architectural forms and he gave instructions that these forms should be used at Wollaton. The result is extraordinary. Why for example, introduce stone gondola rings as a decoration to a house built on a hill a long distance from water ?

Without labouring the point, we may observe Sir Francis's treatment of the Doric and Ionic pilasters which adorn the facades of Wollaton. The Greeks had reduced these orders to perfection of form and proportion, but Sir Francis took these perfected orders and "improved" them by altering their proportions and by adding strange enrichment until, to our eyes, the result is a fantastic variation on the classical theme. But only to our eyes. Sir Francis and many of his successors regarded these variants as improvements. The root of their trouble was that they confused enrichment with ornament, showing thereby that they had not discovered the viewpoint of the classical artists who produced ornament by giving beautiful shapes to essentials and never introduced a useless feature merely to produce decoration. Sir Francis and his fellows enjoyed

enrichment and went to extraordinary lengths to get it. They had heard of the classical orders but misunderstood their finality and significance, so they used them merely as a new fashioned enrichment. All the same, they could not entirely abandon mediaeval tradition as is seen, for example, in the retention of stone mullions and transoms in the windows.

Having discovered Sir Francis's point of view, we shall be able to appreciate the beauty and the interest of Wollaton which is, indeed, an extremely fine building. The fussiness and vulgar display will take its proper place and will become an added interest.

The ensemble of the building is somewhat marred by the fact that it is badly overloaded by the huge central block whose style is in marked contrast to the two-storied house with its pavilions that surround it. It will be as well to consider this two-storied house first and then see how cleverly it is dovetailed in to the central block.

In the first place, we find that, although classical forms are everywhere in evidence, there is still much that points to mediaevalism. The emphasis of the perpendicular line which is so very marked a feature is a relic of the final phase of Gothic architecture, and here, at Wollaton, it is an artistic necessity, for the huge square of the plan is in reality somewhat sprawling and some strong features are necessary to counteract the long, tedious horizontal lines of the entablature and parapet. To a certain extent the corner pavilions are useful for this purpose, but the principal duty in this respect falls on the mullions and other strong perpendicular lines. What windows were made to open were casements, for the sash was not introduced until the second half of 17th century. We may admire the beautiful proportions of the windows and the delightful relation between voids and solids that these windows provide, and contrast them with the almost contemporary work at Hardwick, which in this respect is a complete failure. The sprawl of the plan is corrected by the emphasis on the entablature and parapet which act as string courses and bind the composition together most effectively.

The design of the central block is so different from the rest of the building that at one time it was believed that the upper storey, at any rate, was a later addition. But this is not so, for Thorpe's original drawing shows this part of the composition pretty much as we now see it.

The windows in this part of the building exhibit curvilinear tracery of a debased style which is probably a reminiscence of the old flat-faced tracery of which there is so good an example in St. Nicholas Chapel at Willoughby-on-the-Wolds. The merging of these curves with the rectangularity of the rest of the building has been so cleverly managed that it forms a positive delight to the student.

If we allow our eye to wander up one of the corner pavilions we shall note that there are no curves in the lowest storey. In the second storey, niches with curved heads appear and these are repeated in the third storey where the impression is emphasized by curved gables with the intricate, interlaced strap-ornament characteristic of

the period. Curves have now triumphed over rectangles, but their preponderance is corrected by the statues and pinnacles which once more introduce the perpendicular line.

The treatment of the chimneys above these pavilions is very interesting for they have been twisted so as to form a sort of crown rather reminiscent of the spire on St. Giles', Edinburgh or St. Nicholas, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The crown is very charming, but the chimneys must be very difficult to clean.

The result of all this is that the conspicuous curves in the tracery of the central block become part and parcel of the perpendicular design of the rest of the building and the domes which crown the bartizans are a logical development of the design. The many empty niches were to have been filled by marble statues and busts. Cassandra Willoughby tells us that these were actually carved, but the ship bringing them from Italy was wrecked and they were lost. The present busts and roundels were substituted. Plato and Aristotle are marked on the north facade and Virgil on the south. The others are anonymous and none of them is particularly interesting. The curious thing about them all is that they are strongly reminiscent of Palmyrine figures executed during the third century.

Ranged on the terrace before the north door of the Hall stand five brass four-pound guns inscribed " F. Kinman 1812 " which were captured by the Sailor Lord on a privateer which had just plundered an English ship laden with Jamaica coffee. The prize was brought into Southampton and the guns eventually found their way to Wollaton where, in 1831, they were prepared for action against the reform bill rioters, but fortunately had not to be used.

The interior of the house is somewhat disappointing for it has been denuded of most of its historical contents and now houses a valuable collection of natural history specimens. Remembering that Francis Willoughby, the philosopher, who died in 1672, was at one time the owner of the estates and that he was the father of modern natural history, there is a certain fitness in the fact that his study, where so much of his work was done in conjunction with John Ray, should be used for the exhibition of specimens representing the science virtually founded by him.

The north and south staircases are remarkable and seem completely out of character with the date of the house, for their handrails are supported by delicate ironwork which is reminiscent of the Regency rather than of Elizabethan times. Their ceilings and the walls of the north, or principal, staircase are covered by paintings attributed to Verrio or his pupil Laguerre. Antonio Verrio (1639-1707) was invited to England by Charles II in an endeavour to revive the famous tapestry works at Mortlake which had been ruined by the civil war. Once here he was employed in decorating the ceilings at Windsor Castle and for his services there was paid £7,000. His work is also to be found at Hampton Court, Burleigh, Chatsworth and elsewhere. Laguerre (1663-1721) was assistant to Verrio, and the well-known work at St. Bartholomew's Hospital is mainly his handiwork.

The paintings at Wollaton, now out of fashion and heavily restored about 1830 and retouched about 1930, are not without interest for their subjects, if not for their art. The ceiling of the principal staircase represents Prometheus stealing the sacred fire from the midst of a general assembly of the gods. Prometheus is difficult to discover, but he will be found bearing the vital spark towards the south-west corner of the composition. The crowd of figures on the south wall of the staircase represents a sacrifice to Apollo and is interesting for the fact that the two juvenile figures at the bottom left-hand corner are portraits of Francis and Thomas Willoughby, sons of the philosopher who died in 1672. On the east wall of the staircase is represented the punishment of Prometheus and on the west wall is the effect of the vital spark upon a dying youth. Over the south staircase is a mass of figures which seems to represent a conference of the gods. It is, perhaps, interesting to remember that these paintings were executed during the later years of James II's reign and just before the revolution which set William and Mary on the throne in 1688.

The place of the long gallery, so usual a feature in houses of this period, is to some extent taken by the prospect chamber over the great hall. Access is difficult and awkward, but when once reached this apartment must have been a delightful place for indoor exercise. On the way to it is passed a room adorned by an elaborate glass chandelier which cannot be very old, for it is fitted for gas. Gas was first used in Nottingham in 1807 but it was long before it came into general use.

Undoubtedly the main feature of the interior of the house is the great hall with its minstrel gallery and its pseudo-hammer-beam roof richly decorated with heraldry. The great hall is splendidly lighted by windows placed so high that no outlook is obtainable, so that it must have been a dull place of residence. It does not seem likely that it was ever meant for anything except a crush hall, for the study, saloon and large and small dining rooms were placed round it with windows overlooking the park. High up on the east wall of the great hall is a clock with a handsome face, while at the west end of the great hall occurs an elaborate and meaningless screen heavily decorated with strap work and having two doorways instead of the usual single aperture as was the mediaeval custom. It supports a minstrel gallery on which is placed a small organ in a very decorative case, surmounted by an owl, the Willoughby badge.

Below stairs the premises have been so much altered as to be labyrinthine and uninteresting. The ceilings are vaulted, which would make the kitchens fireproof, and there is no substructure to the great hall which is apparently built on virgin ground. The arrangements for supplying water are primitive. The sole supply for this great household was obtained from a spring deep underground and every drop had to be carried hither and thither from this remote source. The overflow from this spring was conducted by means of a brick conduit through the great underground beer-cellar to a

subterranean reservoir, known as the "Admiral's Bath" from the tradition that Admiral Rodney, while a guest at Wollaton, used it as a swimming bath.

Take it for all in all, the interior of Wollaton Hall is very disappointing and there is only one fire-place of any interest.

The Lenton and Beeston gateways to the park were built about 1804 from designs by Geoffrey Wyattville and were much admired by our forefathers. The Beeston lodge was attacked by the reform bill rioters on 11th October 1831 but they were repulsed by the Wollaton troop of yeomanry and a number of their leaders taken prisoners.

The Camellia house in the garden is dated 1823 and is an early attempt at a greenhouse, while hard by may be seen a game larder and a garden house of the normal 18th century type.