

CORBEL TABLE—NOTLEY ABBEY.

This fragment of thirteenth century work is a wonderful relic of a building which has suffered severely at many dates since the dissolution of the monasteries drove Abbot Ridge from this home of the Augustine Canons. Where so much has perished it is interesting to find such carefully elaborate work still *in situ*; probably its height above the present ground-level (which is much below the level of the floor in the old Frater, as the "set-off" in the wall shows) helped to preserve it.

There is a familiar view of Notley by Buck¹ (1730) clearly indicating the corbel-table in its present position; at that time the roof was wanting, having been removed by the Berties, who then owned Notley, to another place of theirs at Chesterton, Oxon²; and it was consequently exposed to the weather. At some later date the Frater was made into a barn, and the fine carving was thus preserved. It is 21 feet in length, and the nine brackets are 2 feet 6 inches apart, while the extreme depth from the top moulding to the bottom of the brackets is 3 feet 2 inches. Lysons gives a very poor drawing of it³ in 1806; a much better one appears in Rickman,⁴ though not strictly correct in exact proportions. J. H. Parker speaks⁵ of the "reredos of an altar," for which he possibly mistook the corbel-table, as there is not, and was not then, anything more closely resembling a reredos.

The plan of Notley Abbey given in the report of the Historical Monuments Commissioners⁶ indicates the

¹ Reproduced in the "Records," Vol. X., p. 200

² Lipscomb's, Vol. I., p. 237.

³ To face p. 489.

⁴ "Styles of Architecture," 5th Edition, 1848, p. 116.

⁵ "Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of Bucks," 1849—a most unsatisfactory work, for instance, after speaking of the reredos in the text he quotes Lyson's view of the corbel-table in a note!

⁶ Vol. I., p. 245.

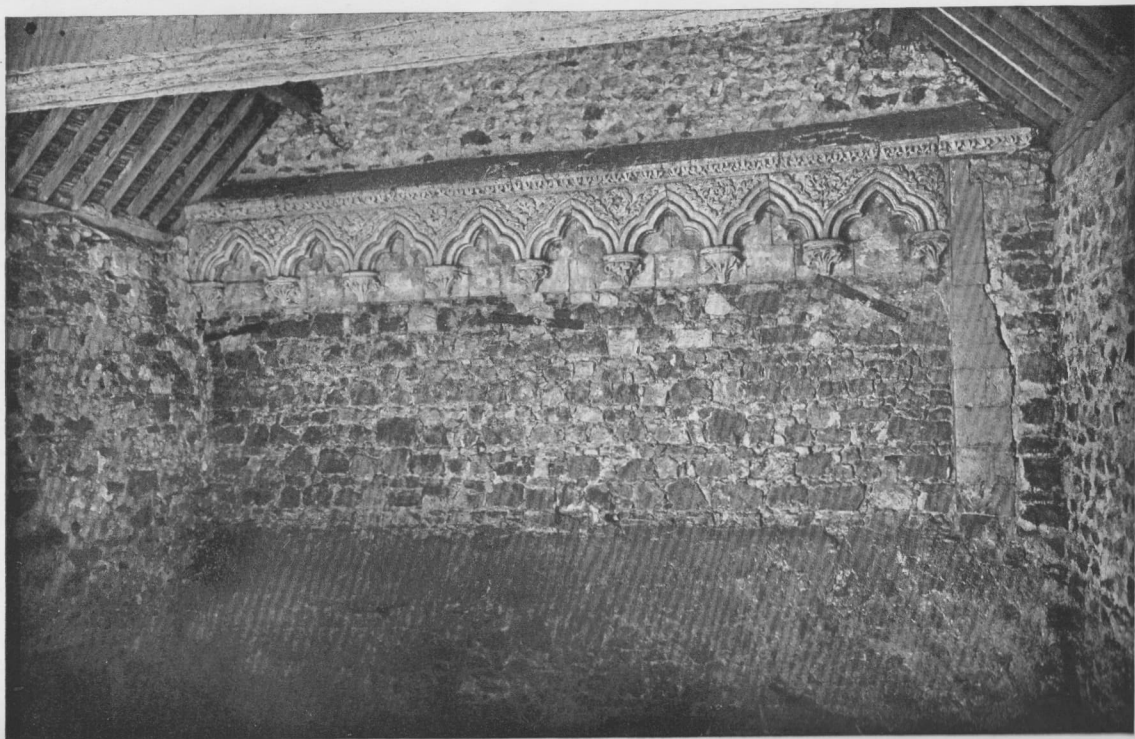


Photo by

CORBEL TABLE IN BARN (FORMERLY FRATER),
NOTLEY ABBEY—13TH CENTURY.

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extent of the thirteenth century work which remains round the cloister garth; the Frater, in the east wall of which the corbel-table stands, forms the southernmost of the buildings; it probably followed the usual plan in which "the warming-house was on the east, the frater in the middle, and the kitchen on the west, all entered from the cloister."⁷

The sincere thanks of the Society are due to Mr. Henry Reynolds, the present hospitable owner of Notley Abbey, for kindly allowing the accompanying photograph to be taken.

⁷ "English Monasteries," by A. Hamilton Thompson, 1913, p. 101.