

Castles in Britain

W Douglas Simpson

149824

More and more people are displaying an intelligent interest in the ancient castles of Great Britain and are anxious to obtain accurate information and guidance about them. This book aims at providing these by means of a short text accompanied by a full series of illustrations. The area covered is the whole of Great Britain and the subject is dealt with under the following heads: The Normans and their Castles; Round Donjons and Towered Curtains; The Parts of the Castle; Edwardian Castles; Later English Castles; Tower-houses of the North; The Scottish Castle in the later Middle Ages. The book aims throughout to describe the castles, not merely as empty ruins, but to portray the purposes, military and domestic, which they were designed to serve and to indicate the manner of life that was lived in them. In the social system of the Middle Ages the castle played a vital part and no one can understand this period in our country's history without having an intelligent conception of what the medieval castle signified in the life of all ranks of the people. A glossary and bibliography complete the usefulness of this informative guide to the Castles of Britain, written by Dr Simpson who is an authority on the subject.

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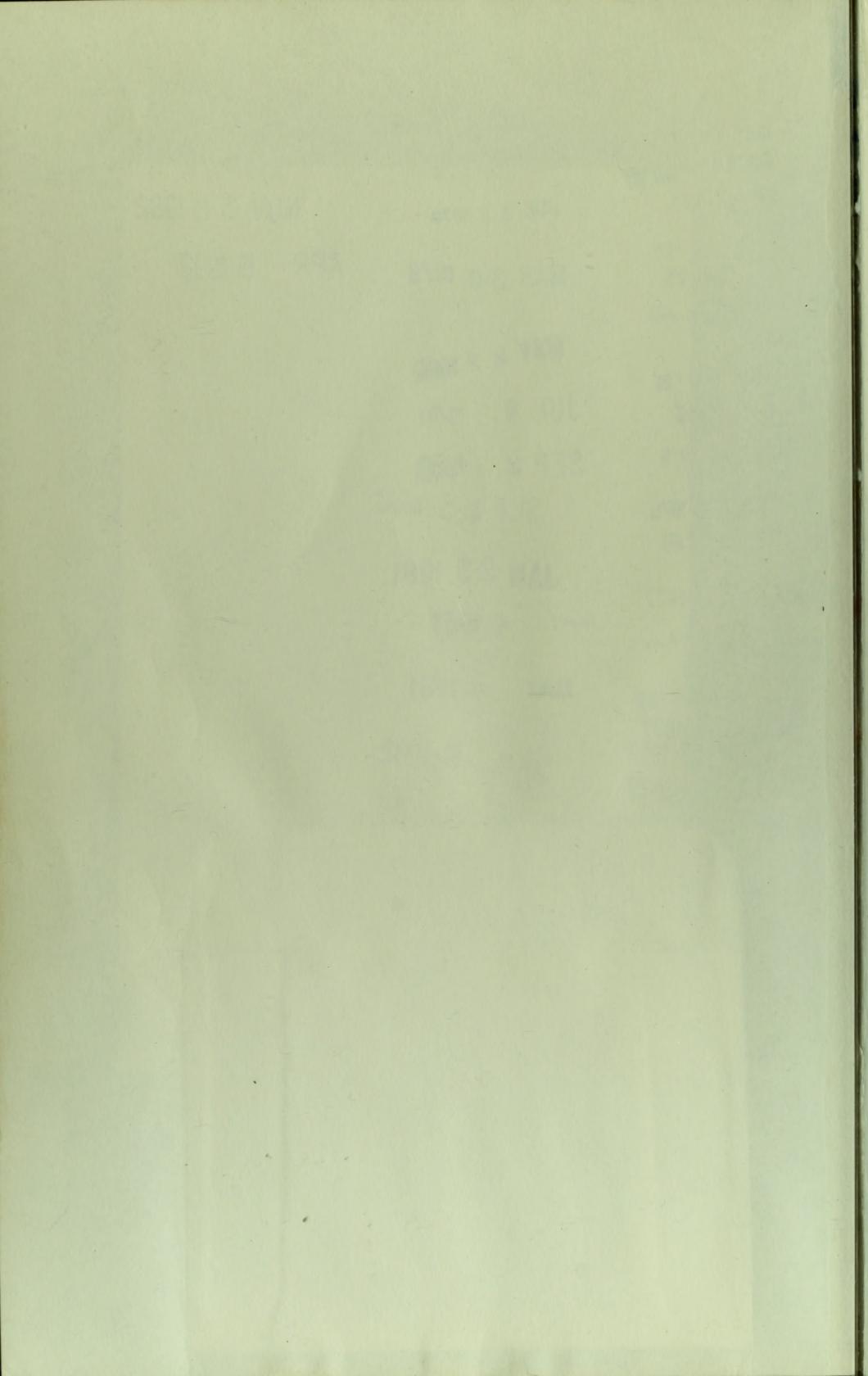
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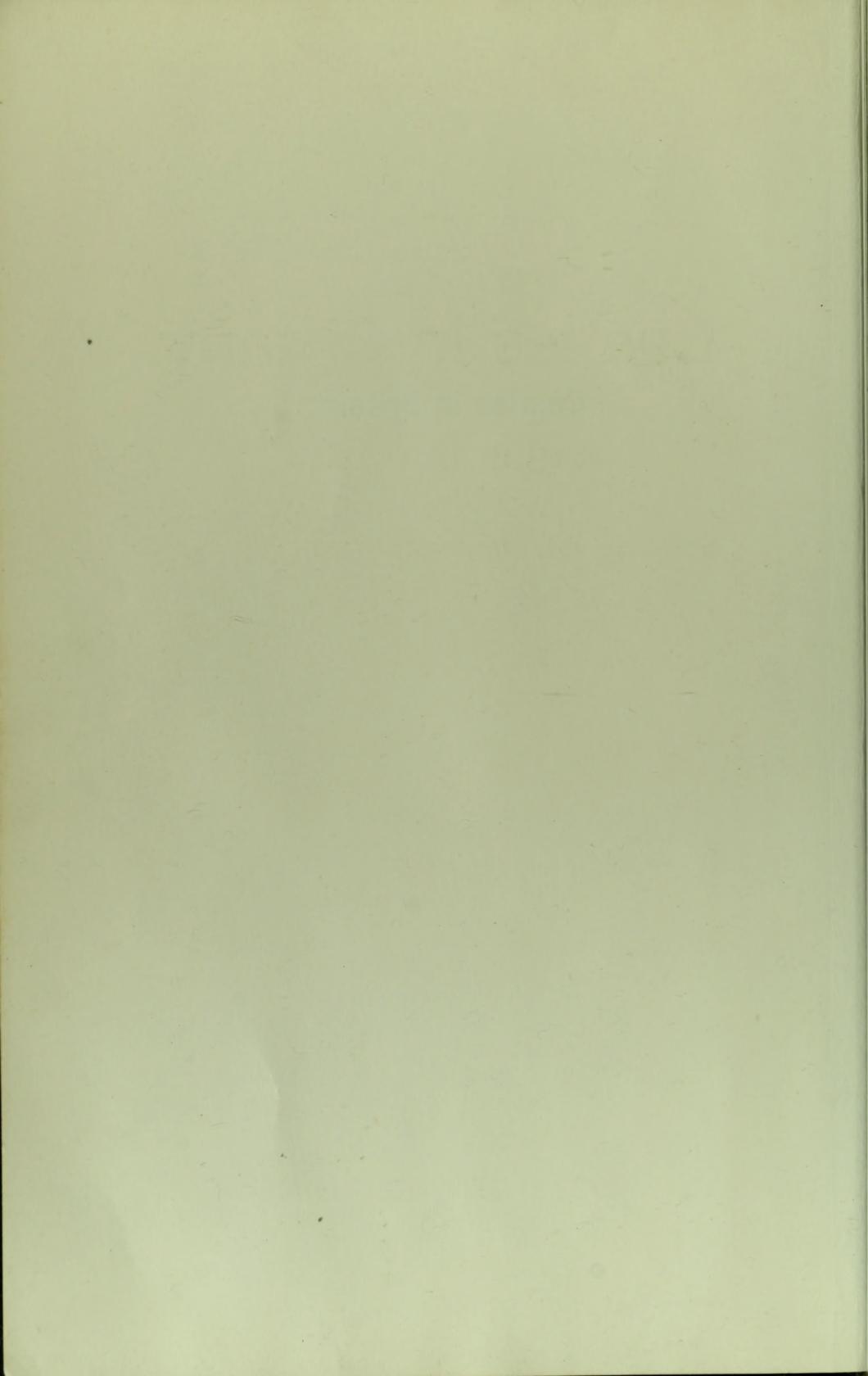
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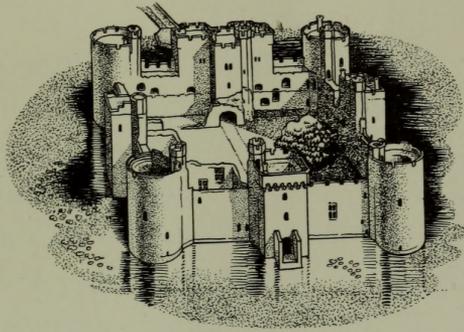
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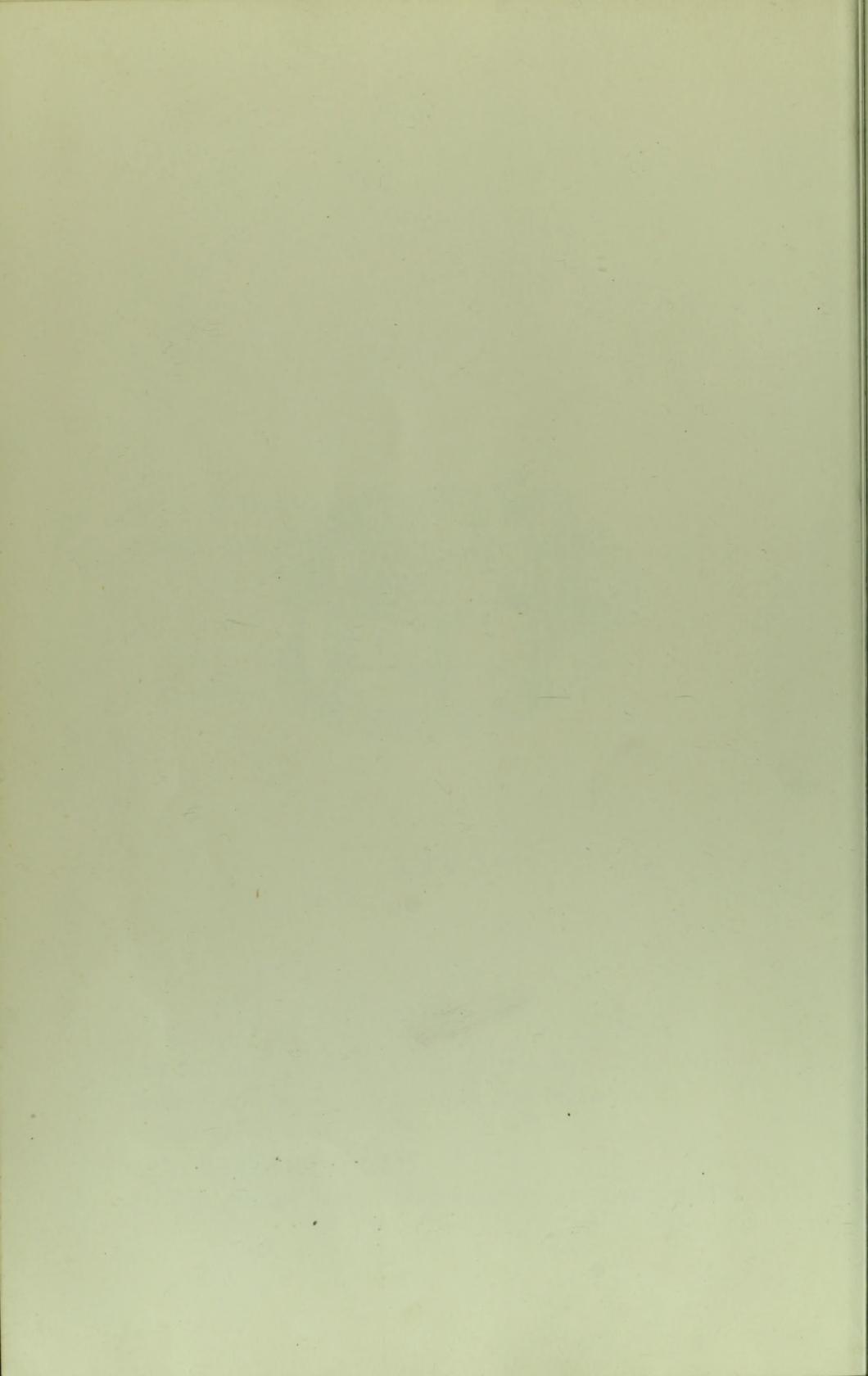
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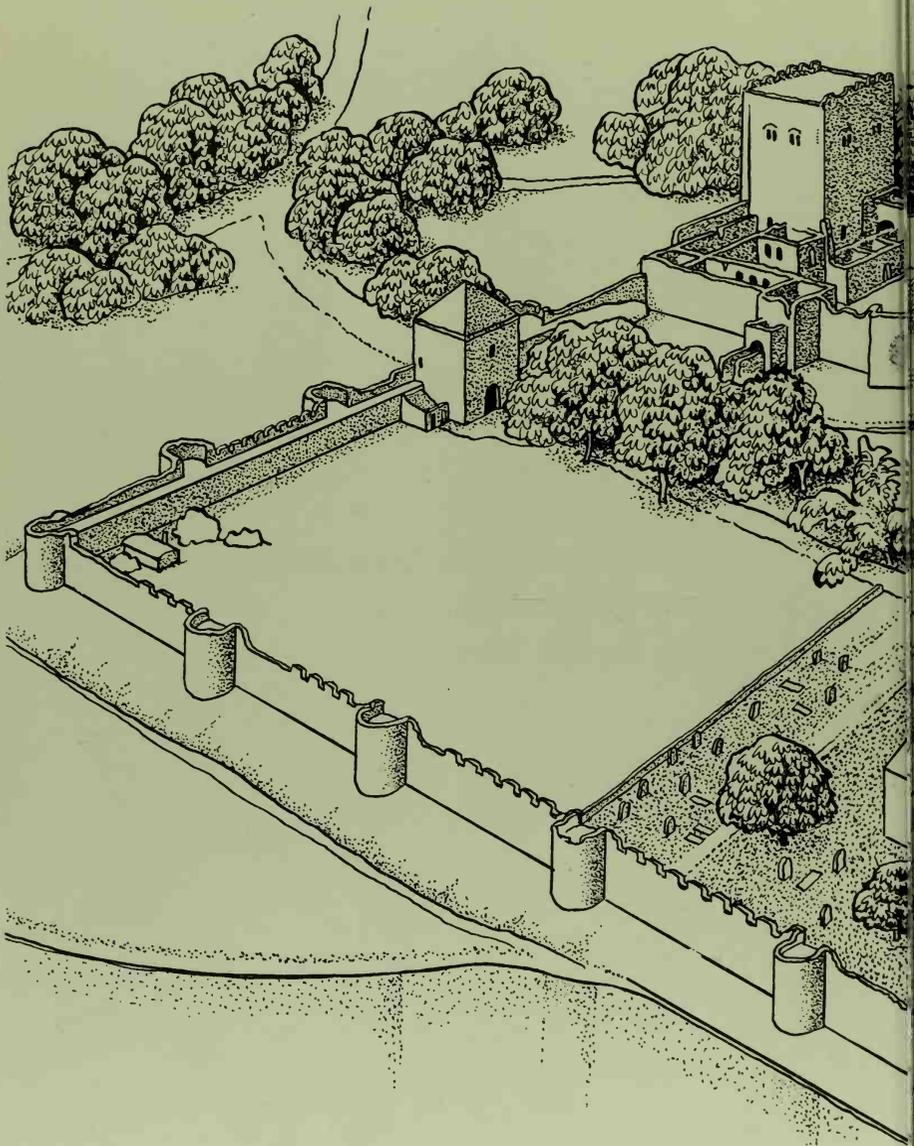
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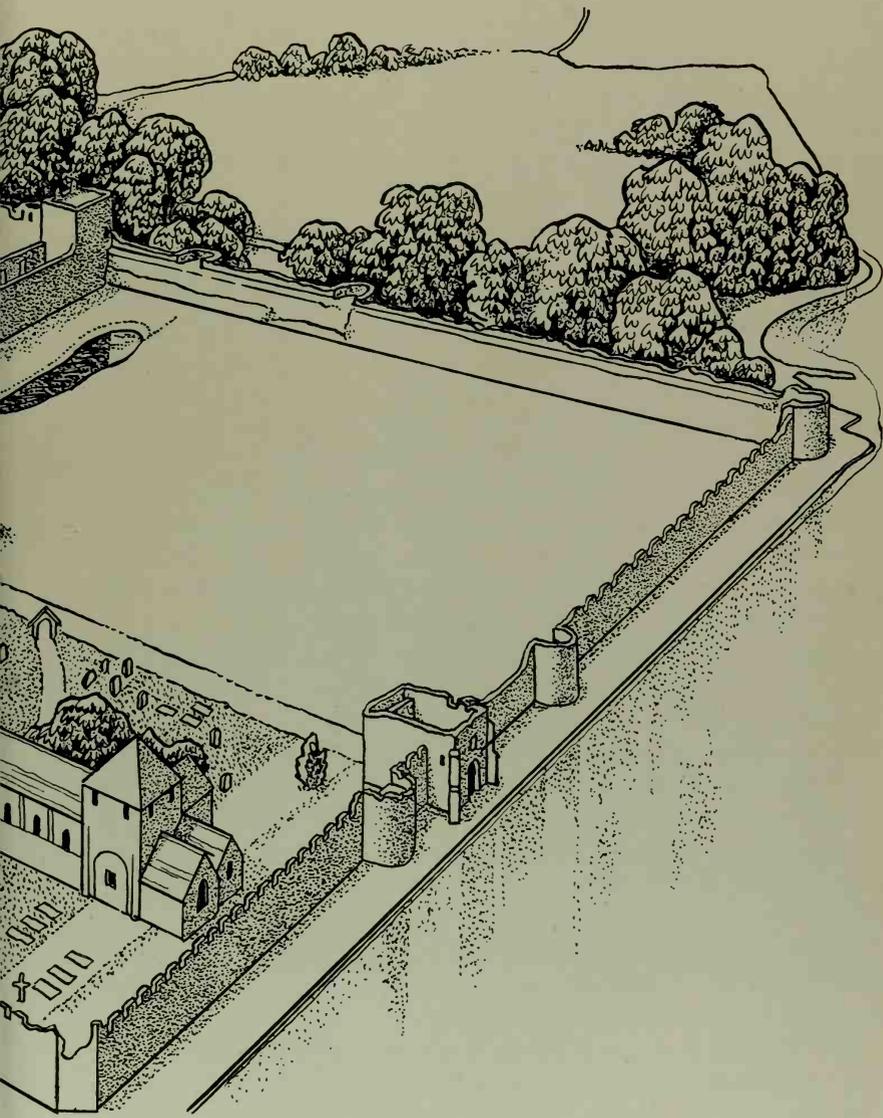


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1 Portchester Castle

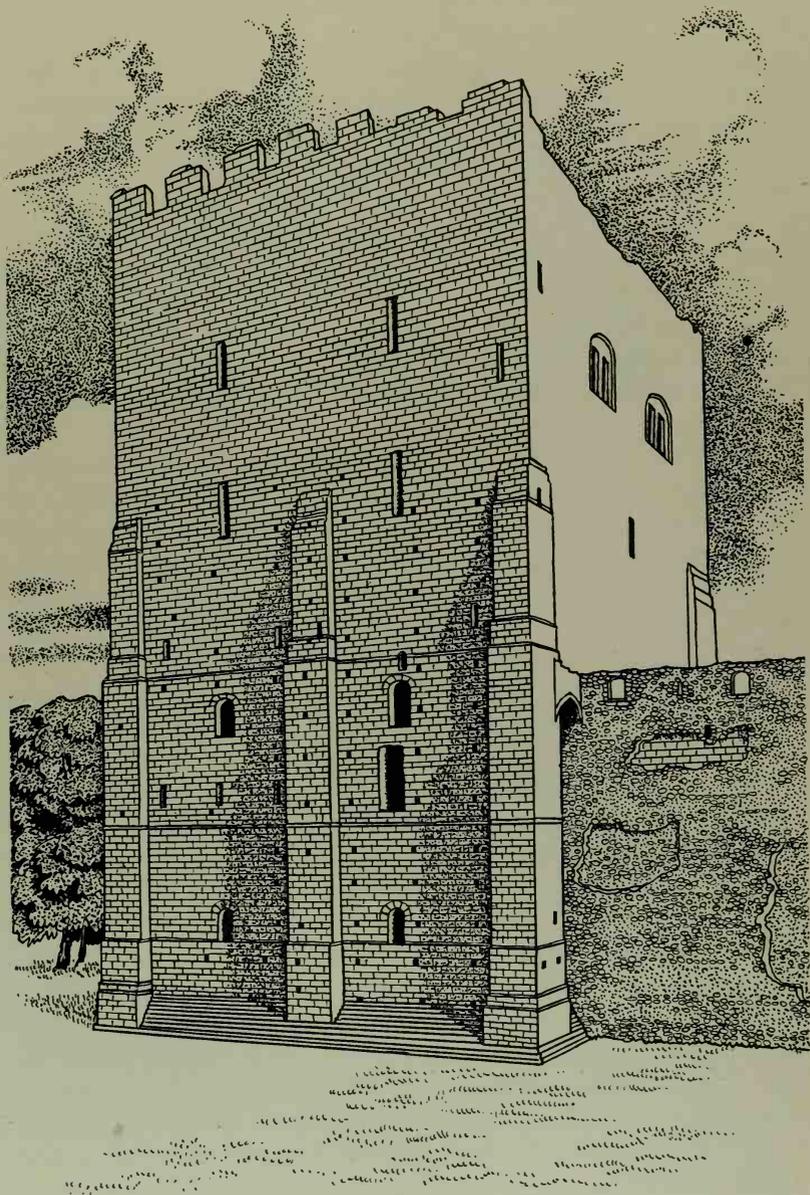


The Normans and their Castles

Let us imagine we are standing together outside the west front of Portchester Castle, near Portsmouth in Hampshire. We are facing what is beyond doubt the noblest combination of Roman and Norman masonry in Britain (1). The Roman fort forms a vast square, measuring about 200 yds each way, and covering no less than nine acres. Midway in the east and west sides are gateways, in each of the north and south sides is a postern, and the whole work was defended by twenty towers, rectangular but with rounded fronts. Of these towers fourteen remain. The masonry consists of a concrete core, faced with flints, with frequent bonding courses of red brick and stone. Coins found on the site show that this mighty fortress dates from about the end of the third century. It forms one of a chain of defensive works built by the Romans along what came to be called 'the Saxon Shore', to keep at bay the Teutonic pirates who even then were beginning to infest the Channel. In other words, Portchester is one of a series of forts erected to keep the English out of England.

At the north-west angle of the Roman fort there towers aloft a mighty Norman keep (2), rising to a height of 100 ft. This was built by Henry II (1154-89); but the uppermost of its four storeys is an addition. When we go inside the Roman fort, we find that the Norman keep forms the citadel of a medieval castle, occupying the north-western corner of the Saxon Shore fort; also that in the diagonally opposite corner of the latter there stands a beautiful Norman church—all that remains of a priory of Augustinian canons-regular founded by Henry I in 1133. When Henry II built his castle inside the old Roman fort, the canons seem to have found the proximity of its garrison uncomfortable: so they removed themselves to Southwick. But the priory church, surrounded by its God's acre, remains in use as the parish church of Portchester.

The Roman fort was a public work, part of a state system of coastal defence like the forts and batteries which today guard our ports and dockyards. But the castle is the private stronghold of a feudal landlord—though here at Portchester the feudal lord was the king. The difference is radical, and must be



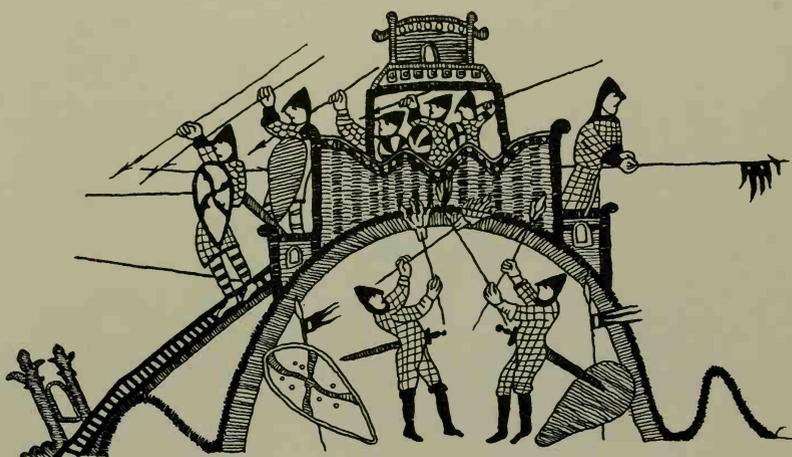
2 Portchester Keep

grasped at the outset by all who wish to understand the significance of castles in British history.

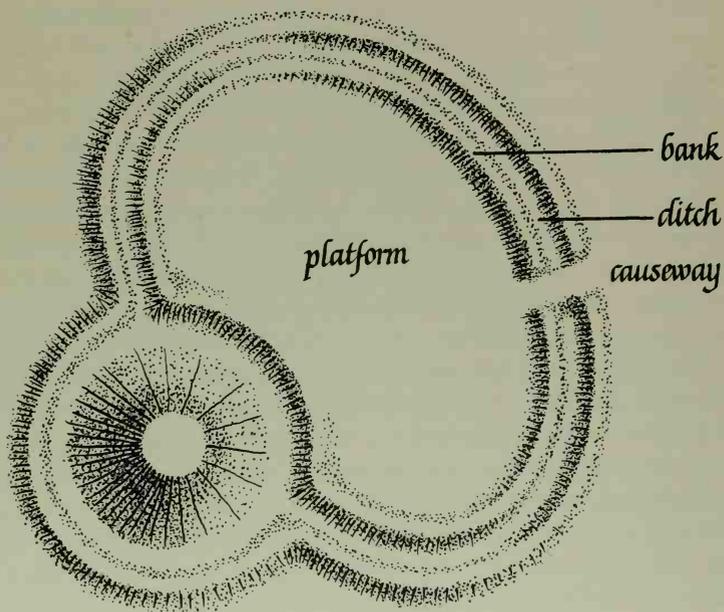
Under the feudal system, which in its full development was introduced into this country by the Normans, ownership of land went hand in hand with responsibility for local government. In his barony courts a landowner had to administer justice among his tenants, both in civil and in criminal cases; and in his castle garth the tenantry mustered to march under his banner to join the army of the king—or, all too frequently, to pursue their lord's private quarrels with his neighbours. Such a system, whereby great power was devolved into the hands of a turbulent landed aristocracy, led to the chronic internecine warfare which under a weak king—as in the anarchy during Stephen's reign (1135-54)—became the curse of feudalism. Hence every landowner's house had to be fortified according to his degree.

When we think of a Norman castle, there rises before our mind the image of a mighty stone tower, like this keep at Portchester. Yet the great majority of Norman castles were made not of stone and lime but of timbered earthwork. We may see pictures of them on the Bayeux Tapestry (3); and the remains of such earthworks are to be found in every part of Britain into which the Normans penetrated (4). A tall, conical, flat-topped mound of earth was surrounded at base by a wide and deep ditch, and on top by a stout palisade, within which rose a strongly framed wooden tower. Such a structure was termed a *motte*. Attached thereto, in the larger castles, was a *bailey*—that is, a base-court or subordinate enclosure, defended by a ditch and stockaded rampart, and sheltering the wooden subsidiary buildings of the lord's household: hall, chapel, stable, byre, smithy, dovecot and so forth. The wooden tower on the *motte* might be the lord's residence, or else could be reserved mainly for use in time of siege.

There are few more impressive sights in Britain than the earthworks of a major Norman castle. In England, Pickering and Tickhill in Yorkshire, Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire, Thetford in Norfolk (5), and Tonbridge in Kent may be quoted as notable examples: in Scotland, we may instance the Mote of Urr in Galloway, the Peel of Lumphanan and the Doune of Invernochty in Aberdeenshire, and Duffus Castle in Moray. The appearance of such castles, when crowned by their timber



3 *Dinan Castle, from the Bayeux Tapestry*



4 *Laughton-en-le-Morthen*

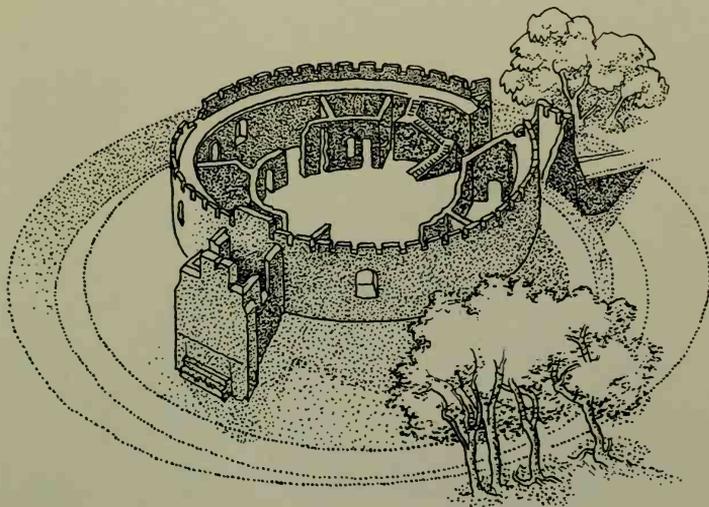


5 *Thetford Castle*

superstructure, must have been strikingly picturesque, particularly as all the woodwork was brightly painted.

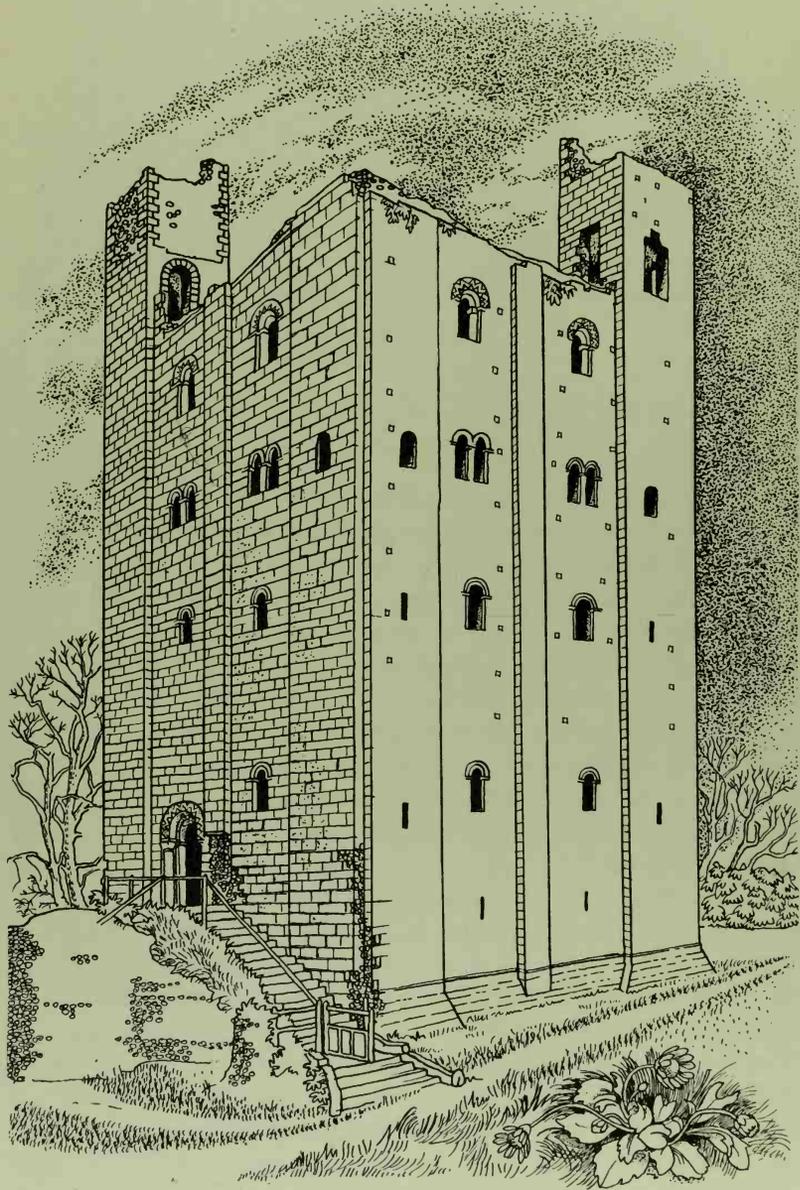
Before the twelfth century was out, it became the fashion to replace the palisade cresting the *motte* by a curtain wall of stone. Thus we have what is known as a 'shell-keep'. An impressive example is Restormel Castle in Cornwall (6). Likewise the bailey came to be walled around with stone, as can be seen at Caldicot in Monmouthshire and Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight.

Thus the square Norman keep is the exception rather than the rule. Moreover most of them, though built in what is usually termed the Norman style of architecture, belong not to the Norman but to the Angevin period. A Norman keep is usually recognised by its vertical pilaster-buttresses and square corner turrets, which generally contain the staircases. A fine example, distinguished by the beauty of its ashlar masonry, is Hedingham in Essex (7). This mighty tower rises from a bold outspreading plinth or apron, which serves the double purpose of thickening the wall at base, and of causing solid or liquid offensive materials, cast down from the wall tops, to ricochet or splash out laterally among the assailants swarming round the keep. At Hedingham the interior of the tower is spanned, on the two main floors, by a superb flying arch, each of which no doubt carried a timber partition in the storey above.

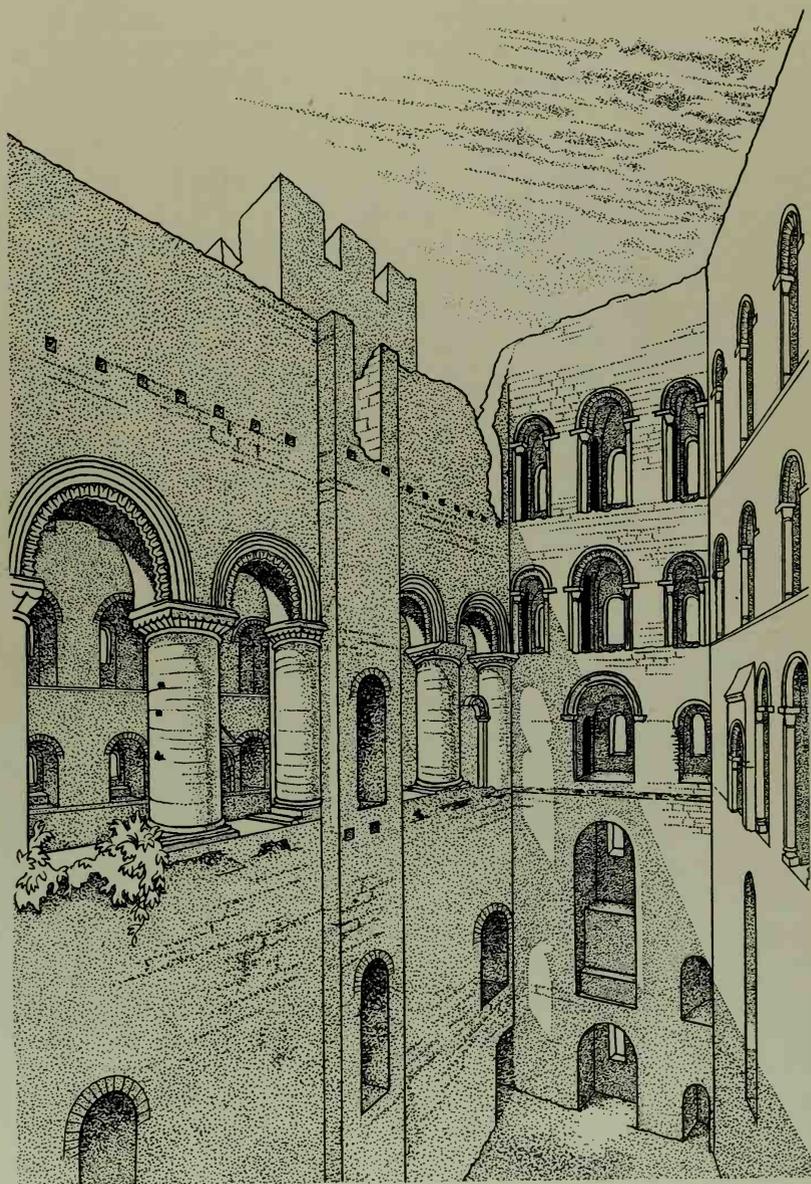


6 *Restormel Castle*

Let us look, in a little more detail, at Castle Rising, Norfolk, one of the finest Norman keeps in Britain (9). It stands within stupendous earthworks, which, Norman in origin and enlarged during the later Middle Ages, are now perhaps the most impressive of their kind to be seen on this side of the Channel. Once there was a curtain wall on the lip of the main ditch, as well as three towers, for each of which a vassal of the de Albinis, the Norman lords of the manor, had to provide the garrison under the tenure known as 'castle-guard'. Within the innermost rampart may be seen the foundations of a fine Norman castle chapel. The mighty keep now enclosed within these earthworks is one of the largest and most ornate in England. It dates from the early part of Henry II's reign. This keep belongs to a type, of which the best known is Colchester in Essex, in which the area is greater than the height. Over all, it measures about 99 ft by 68½ ft, including a forebuilding on the east side. At ground floor the outer walls are all but 9 ft thick. The forework contains a handsome, well-graded and strongly defended straight stair, rising to the first floor, where a vestibule or antechamber admits to the great hall (10). This occupies the northern half of the keep, being divided by a thick cross wall from the southern part, in which are the solar or withdrawing room, and beyond this the lord's private chamber,



7 Heddingham Keep



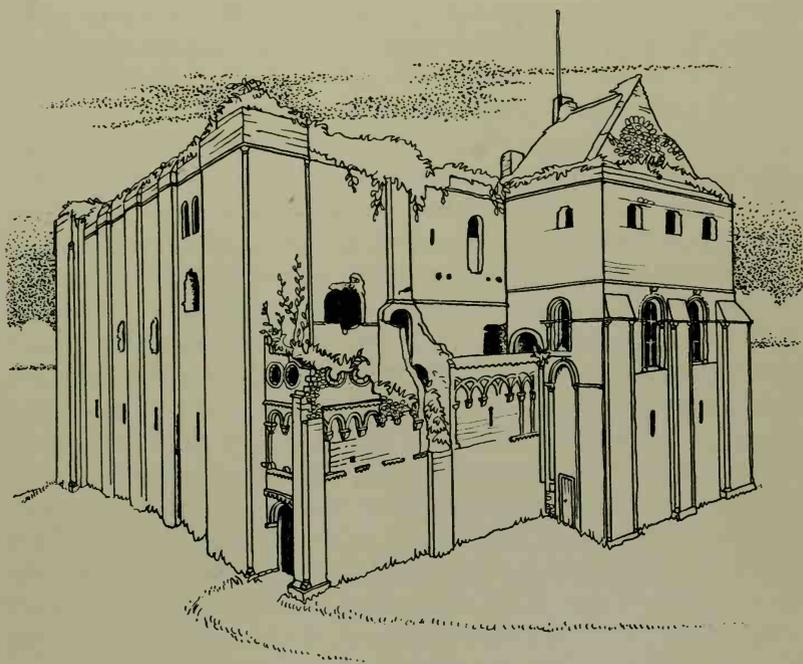
8 Rochester Keep, interior

from which a postern passage leads across the upper part of the forebuilding to a high door or emergency exit, doubtless served at need by a movable ladder. Underneath these state apartments are spacious cellars, and above certain parts of the keep was an upper storey of living rooms. Two spiral stairs, in diagonally opposite corners, connect the different floors. The thickness of the north wall, at main floor level, is traversed by a mural gallery, leading past the hall to closets and privy chambers at the west end. In the basement of the keep is a deep draw-well.

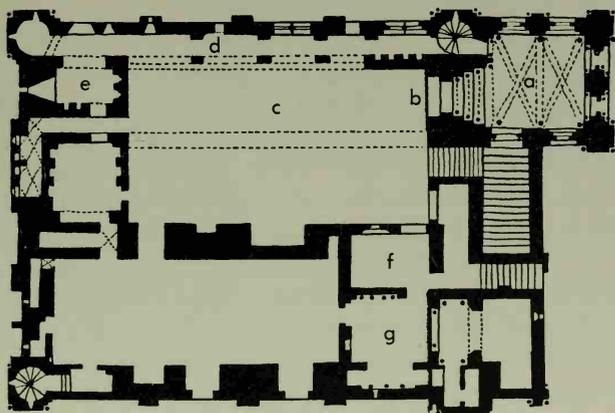
The most remarkable feature about Castle Rising is its rich decoration, both outside and inside. This is mostly in the late Norman style, but vaulting and other details were added in the Decorated period.

Although Castle Rising is now a mere hamlet, in the early Middle Ages it was a harbour town with its own mayor and twelve aldermen. Proof of this vanished importance survives in the elegant market cross; while the handsome parish church, in the same rich Norman style as the castle, reminds us of the wealth and munificence of the Norman lords of the manor. Hard by, the hospital of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, a pleasing specimen of seventeenth-century brick work, still serving its original purpose as an almshouse for old ladies, reminds us of the social nexus of which a feudal castle could become the centre. In the fourteenth century, Castle Rising was a royal demesne, and became famous as the prison, or rather the place of honourable confinement, of Edward II's guilty Queen, Isabella, the 'she-wolf of France'.

It must not be imagined that all Norman landowners dwelt in such imposing specimens of castellar construction. Many of the smaller gentry dwelt in timber homesteads whose only defences were a palisaded bank and ditch. Of course the woodwork has long since disappeared, but many of these 'homestead moats', as they are called, may still be seen up and down the country. In some cases such a manor-house could include a stone hall, quite large in scale and substantial in construction. A good example, enclosed within a homestead moat and now embodied in a quaint Tudor house of half-timber construction, can be seen at Hemingford Grey in Huntingdonshire. Here we have the substantial remains of a Norman stone hall, with coupled windows and an ornate fireplace which would have



9 Castle Rising



- a vestibule
- b entrance
- c hall
- d gallery
- e kitchen
- f ante-chapel
- g chapel

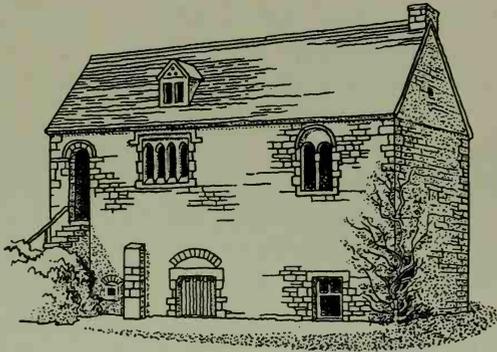
10 Castle Rising: Plan of first floor

done credit to a good-sized Norman keep. An even more complete example is at Boothby Pagnell in Lincolnshire (11); while the best-known instance of a Norman stone hall is that at Christchurch Castle in Hampshire.

Be they great or small, our Norman castles are now for the most part bare and windswept ruins—or, in some few cases, have been converted to public purposes. What picture can we form, in our mind's eye, of how they looked when inhabited by a Norman household? What sort of furniture and domestic utensils did they contain? Here the Bayeux Tapestry helps us a little in our imaginative endeavour to refurnish these long-deserted 'ghostly halls of grey renown'. We see the great folk feasting in a hall, which is on the first floor, above a vaulted arcade, and reached by a forestair. The food is laid out on a table, probably resting upon trestles. There is no indication of a tablecloth. Wine and beer are served in drinking horns and bowls; the company pledge each other in turns, drinking from the same cup. Persons of state sit upon cushioned thrones, the arms of which are carved with animals' heads; the feet of such magnates rest upon a stool, stepped, it would seem, according to their degree. An open-air cooking scene shows pots or cauldrons suspended upon forked sticks over an open fire: on a shelf behind are fowls and joints spitted ready for roasting. A baker, using a pair of tongs, extracts bread or pastry from an oven and arranges it on a large trencher. A blast on a horn announces that dinner is served: before the company fall to, a bishop says grace. Knives are used, but forks were as yet unknown, and one guest is shown pulling a fish to pieces with his fingers. Others pledge their neighbours' health in copious draughts. What is here depicted on the tapestry is a field kitchen and an *al-fresco* banquet during the Conqueror's march from Pevensey to Hastings. Nevertheless, so many Norman castles display no recognisable kitchen that it seems probable cooking was often carried out in the open air, in the castle courtyard, much as shown on the Tapestry.

From literary sources and manuscript illustrations we can eke out our picture of the furnishings and mode of life in a Norman castle. Ordinary folk sat at table upon benches or forms. Chairs were the perquisite of the higher ranks: their beds were often quite elaborate structures, sometimes with testers and hangings. They were furnished with quilts and

pillows both stuffed with feathers, linen sheets, and coverlets or fur rugs. Everybody went to bed stark naked; and night lights were in use to dispel evil spirits. Servants and lesser folk slept among the filthy straw which covered the floor of the hall, or huddled in bunks in the outhouses. In rooms of state cupboards, chests and coffers were common, and sometimes were richly ornamented, or inlaid with enamel or precious metals. But amid all the rude magnificence of a Norman castle the essentials of modern comfort were lacking. Often the fire burned on a central hearth, and the smoke, after eddying round the hall, escaped, as best it might, through a louver in the roof. Window glass was unknown. The window openings were shielded by cloth, or at best by horn. At night they were shuttered, and the only light was provided by smoky torches, lanterns and guttering candles. Sanitation was primitive, cleanliness little regarded. Stench, cold and draught would provide us with our first sensations if we could be transported backwards in time into the interior of a Norman castle.



11 *Boothby Pagnell*

Round Donjons and Towered Curtains

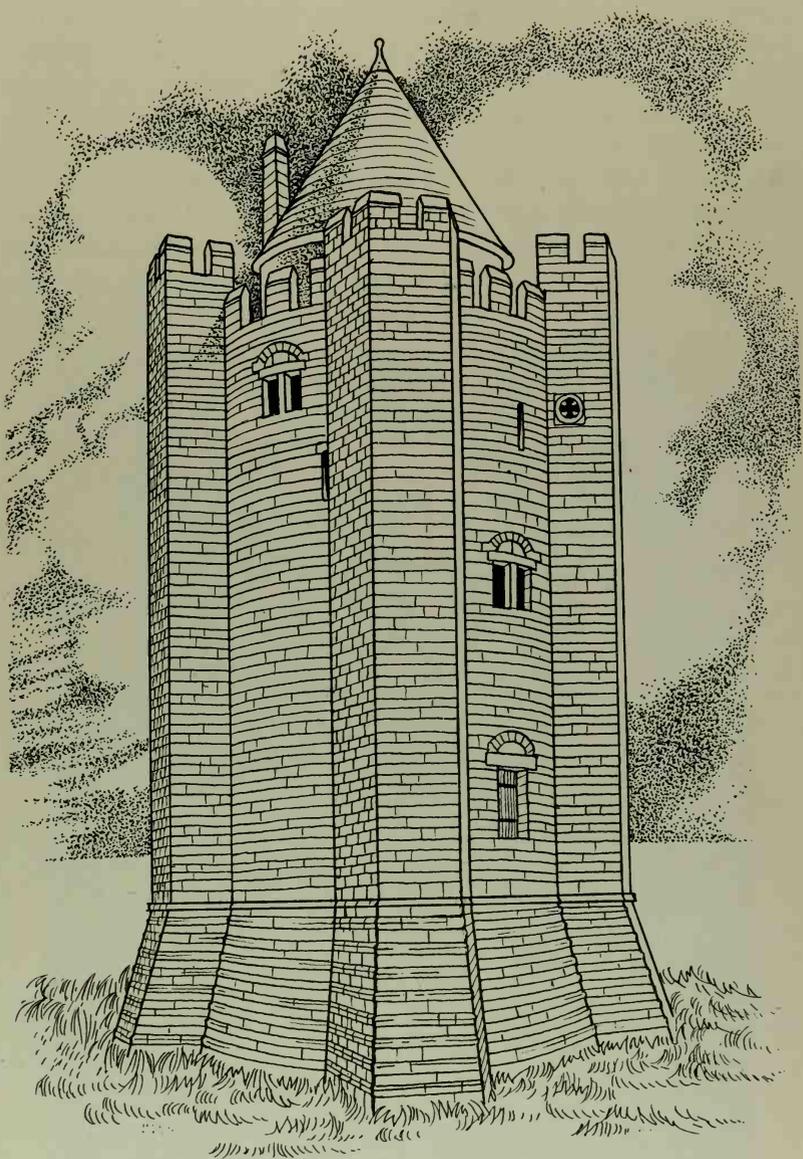
The word keep, nowadays regularly used to describe the 'great tower' of a castle, is no older than the sixteenth century. The name given to the principal tower in the Middle Ages was the donjon. This Chaucer writes of:

*The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeon.*

The word is the same as the modern word 'dungeon'; and the change in meaning is easily understood when we remember that the prison in an ancient castle was so often in the basement of the great tower or donjon.

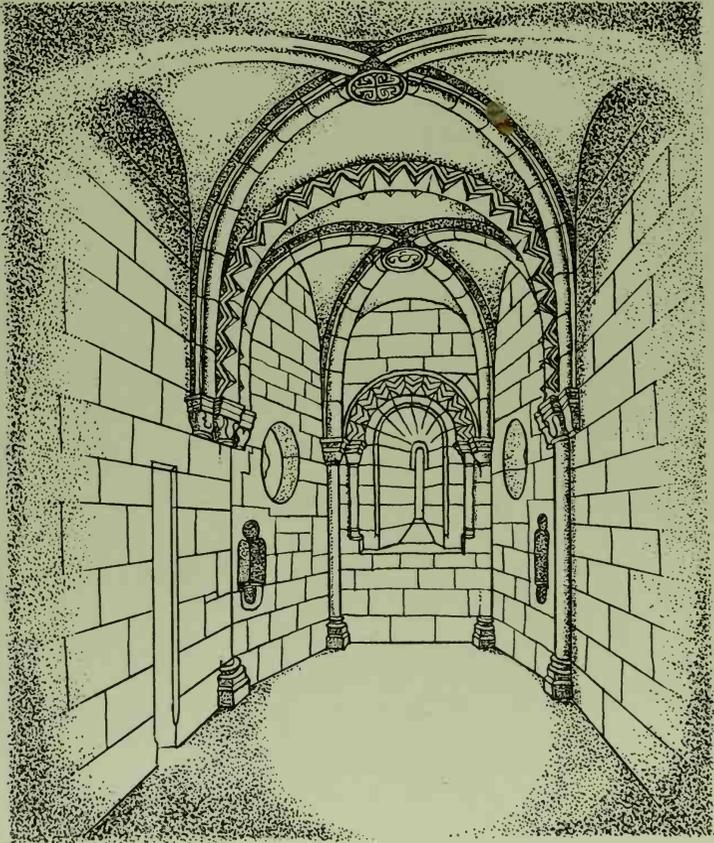
About the turn of the twelfth century important changes took place in the castle plan, which underwent a process of rapid development, due largely to the experience gained in the Crusades by western military engineers, who for the first time made close acquaintance with the mighty fortifications of the Byzantine Empire. The most important of these changes was the general discarding of the rectangular Norman keep for a circular or cylindrical plan. Over a square tower a round tower has four obvious advantages. In the first place, it has no corners—always a weak point, exposed to the battering ram or miner's pick. In the second place, outside each corner of a square tower there is always an area of 'dead ground', which it is difficult to command by flanking fire from the adjoining curtain walls. Outside a round tower there is no 'dead ground'. In the third place, a round tower lends itself readily to dome-vaulting on all, or at least on the principal floors, and thus can be made virtually fireproof. And lastly, space for space, a round tower is volumetrically more economical in masonry than a square one.

When once these advantages were realised, everywhere in western Europe castle builders started to erect towers round instead of square. In England, one of the earliest as well as one of the most splendid examples of the new fashion is the great donjon of Conisborough Castle in Yorkshire (12), celebrated in Scott's *Ivanhoe*. Faced entirely, inside and outside, with superb ashlar, this noble tower measures 50 ft in diameter above its



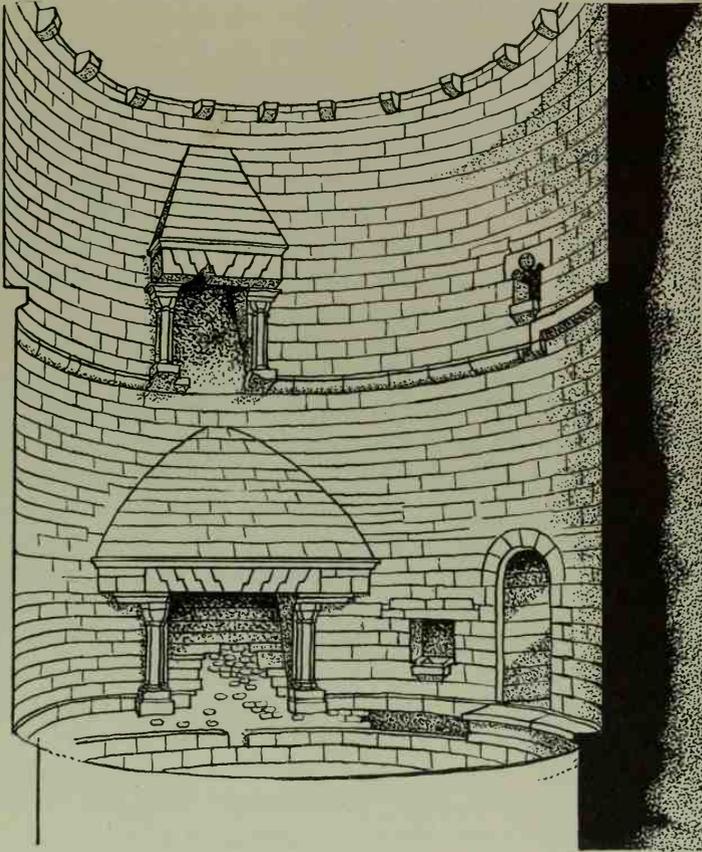
12 Conisborough Keep, a reconstruction

spreading base, and, still surviving almost intact to the wall-head, it is no less than 90 ft in height. A remarkable feature about the tower is that it is supported, throughout its height, by six massive buttresses—as if the designers had not shaken themselves free from a device more suited to a rectangular than a cylindrical tower. The donjon contained five storeys. Reckoning from above downwards, these served the purposes respectively of a fighting deck, the lord's private room, his hall, and two tiers of cellarage—the lowermost vaulted, and containing a draw-well. Off the lord's private room, one of the buttresses contains an exceedingly beautiful chapel (13). Communication between the storeys is obtained, not by the usual continuous spiral stairs, but by separate flights curving round the tower in the thickness of its walls. Each successive stair opens on the



13 The Chapel, Conisborough Castle

opposite side of the tower from the one below, so that anybody seeking the battlements had to traverse each room in turn. The security value of this ingenious device is obvious. While the large amount of storage, the draw-well, and the whole military character of the tower leaves us in no doubt that it was designed as the strong-point of the castle, the rich architectural detail of the chapel and the fireplaces (14) in the hall and lord's room, as well as the ample provision of latrines and other domestic fittings, make it equally clear that the tower was intended to be the regular dwelling place of the lord of the castle—an imposing residence for a powerful magnate. The late Norman detail indicates a date towards the end of the twelfth century, and the builder was doubtless Hamelin Plantagenet, Earl Warenne, a half-brother of Henry II.



14 Interior, The Keep, Conisborough Castle

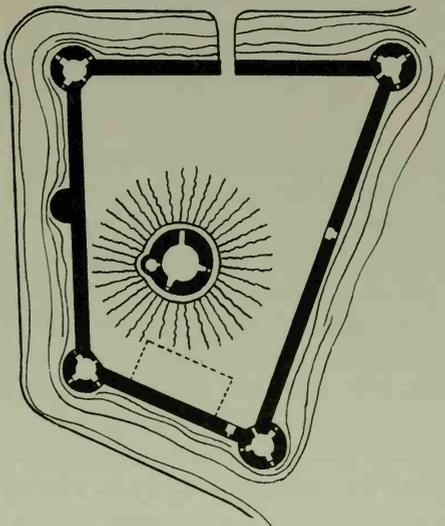
At Orford in Suffolk, King Henry himself, between 1165 and 1173, built another remarkable donjon, showing the change-over from the old square plan to a new and adventurous design. Though circular inside, the Orford donjon is multangular in external outline, but this is broken by three large rectangular projections—not mere buttresses like Conisborough, but wings devised to supply additional accommodation—two kitchens, a chapel, and a variety of ingeniously practised closets, opening off the large halls in the central structure. One of the wings is in fact a regularly designed forework, such as is commonly found in the rectangular keeps. Finally, about 1200, we have the completely cylindrical donjon of Pembroke, its stark, majestic simplicity unbroken by any salient feature. Here all the floors were wooden, but the roof is a dome of stone.

On the summit of William the Conqueror's *motte* in the royal castle of York, Henry of Reynes, the great master-mason to whom we owe the design of Westminster Abbey, built, after 1245, a most remarkable donjon in the form of a quatrefoil, like the donjons of Étampes and Ambleny in France. Here, as at Duffus Castle in Morayshire, we can see what might happen when a heavy stone tower was imposed upon an artificial mound. At Clifford's Tower the walls are badly fractured and displaced: at Duffus, the square tower has split into two, and part of it has slid, body-bulk, down the *motte*!

At the same time when the castle builders were experimenting with their donjons, and building them round, multangular, or even quadrilobed instead of square, they were devoting more and more attention to the curtain walls. For remember that every major castle, whether of earthwork or of stone, consisted of two parts, the *motte* or donjon, and the bailey or fenced enclosure, which might either be appended to the keep, or else might wholly enclose it. By the thirteenth century the bailey, now enclosed by massive curtain walls, flanked by towers either of the older rectangular or newer cylindrical pattern, and screening the domestic buildings—hall, chapel and the rest, now often monumentally built in stone—had grown in importance until it tended to become essentially the castle. The donjon was now reduced to the position of just one tower on the line of the curtain, larger and stronger than the rest, often vaulted on one or more floors, and provided with its own well, so that it could serve as the *dernier ressort* if the castle were

forced. In such castles, the donjon is usually sited as remotely as possible from the entrance, always the weak point in the defence. Great attention was now devoted to the strengthening of the entrance, which began to take the form of a regular gatehouse, the portal being recessed between two flanking towers, and secured by a drawbridge across the bridge, one or more portcullises and folding gates, and *meurtrières* or murder-holes in the vault or ceiling of the entrance passage. Curtains and towers alike were furnished with hoardings or timber over-sailing war-heads, the better to enable the defenders to command the bases of their walls.

Such a fortified enclosure is known as an *enceinte*, and castles of this type may thus be described as castles of *enceinte*. An early and interesting example of the new disposition may be seen at Skenfrith Castle, Monmouthshire, built in the early thirteenth century by no less a person than Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, the redoubtable Justiciar of England in the reigns of John and Henry II—the man who, it was said ‘restored England to the English’. At Skenfrith the great circular donjon occupies an archaic position, in the centre of the castle garth (15): in fact it stands on the cut-down stump of an older *motte*. A remarkable feature about this donjon is the spiral staircase, which forms a small semi-cylindrical projection, breaking the circular outline

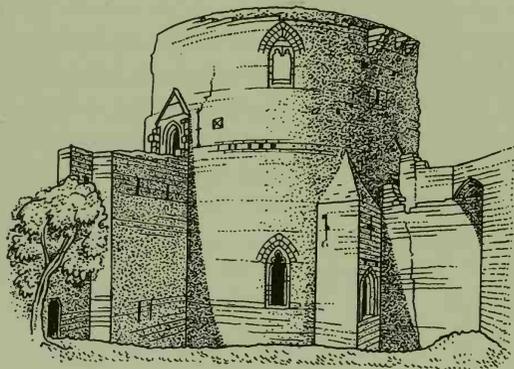


15 Skenfrith Castle

of the tower. The *enceinte* is trapezoidal, with a round tower at each corner, a fifth on the west flank, and a quite simple gatehouse. In the east curtain is a postern. In rear of the courtyard, against the south curtain wall, was the hall. Very remarkably, neither the donjon nor any of the other towers was vaulted.

In its fully developed form the new type of castle is well displayed at Penrice in Gower, where we have an *enceinte* of irregular plan, its contour adjusted to the ground. The massive curtain wall is fully defended by round towers, one of which is of great size and formed the donjon. Two of the towers are placed one on either side of the entrance, so as to provide a gatehouse.

In the thirteenth century the new fashion of cylindrical donjons spread northward into Scotland, where at Bothwell Castle on the Clyde (16) it gave us an example unsurpassed



16 The Donjon, Bothwell Castle

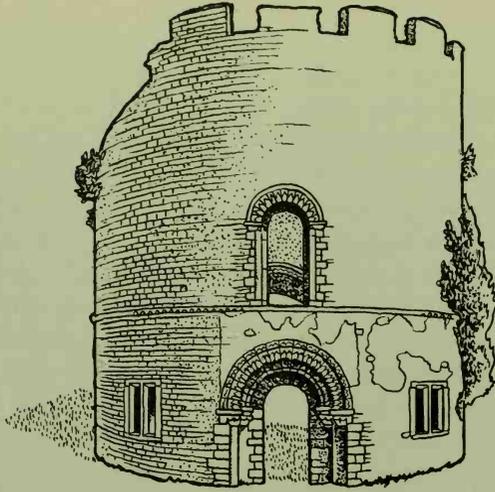
anywhere in Britain—not even by Conisborough. Unfortunately only half of this mighty donjon remains. The rest was cast into the Clyde by the owner of the castle, Sir Andrew de Moray, after he had recovered it from the English in 1337. This was in accordance with the national policy of destroying the fortresses and relying on a ‘scorched earth’ policy to defeat the invader. As originally planned, the Bothwell donjon was designed as part of a large castle of *enceinte*, from the courtyard of which it is sundered by its own moat. But this grand scheme was never completed, and the only portions carried out appear to have been the donjon itself and the wing walls closing in the ends of its moat. Thus at the outset was provided a strong, adequate and dignified residence for the lord and his family: for this great

donjon at Bothwell, like that of Conisborough, is emphatically a magnate's princely abode, a parade of pride in stone, emphasising his landed wealth and feudal power.

The donjon, built throughout of polished ashlar, was 65 ft in diameter and still survives to a height of 90 ft. Its circular front is broken by a great beak or angular construction, which turns the entrance away from the courtyard. On the entrance floor is the lord's hall, which once possessed a noble vault, resting on a stone central pier, in the manner of a chapter house. But the vault itself was not stone but wooden, after a fashion more common in the Middle Ages than is often imagined. Below the hall was a basement of storage, including (as at Conisborough) a well: above was the retainers' hall, then the lord's private room, and over all was the fighting deck. The architectural details of this peerless donjon are all in the fullest development of Early English Gothic.

Of the buildings within a castle of *enceinte* the most important were the hall and the chapel. By far the noblest medieval hall in Europe is Westminster Hall. Built by Rufus and remodelled by Richard II, this astounding structure measures internally no less than 239 ft 6 in. by 67 ft 6 in. Westminster Hall, however, must be reckoned as a royal palace, an independent structure in its own right, rather than a castle hall such as we are now considering. Of castle halls in the stricter sense, the grandest in Britain is unquestionably the great hall of Winchester Castle, built by Henry III between 1220 and 1236. This splendid stateroom measures internally 110 ft 10 in. by 56 ft 3 in. It is built after the fashion of a church, with a nave and aisles, separated by noble Early English arcades. Unhappily this marvellous building is at present cut up by temporary partitions, built to subserve its present purpose as a law-court.

Next in importance to the castle hall came the chapel. Norman keeps frequently have an oratory or chapel, as we have seen at Conisborough. In the inner courtyard of Ludlow Castle, Shropshire, is a remarkable, richly decorated late Norman chapel (17). The nave is circular, and once had a short, vaulted rectangular chancel, to which a semi-octagonal sanctuary was later added. In the larger castles of the thirteenth century the chapel came to be an outstanding feature. One of the most remarkable castle chapels in Britain may be seen at Kildrummy in Aberdeenshire. It forms a salient in the east



17 *The Chapel, Ludlow Castle*



18 *The Chapel, Kildrummy Castle*

front, and is swung round obliquely to the line of the curtain, in order as far as possible to secure correct orientation. Its three tall lancet windows, with a fourth, smaller one, in the apex of the gable, form a conspicuous feature in the ruins (18). The chapel belongs to the middle of the thirteenth century; and there is evidence that it was an afterthought, thrust out through an older curtain wall. At another Scottish castle of the thirteenth century, Dunstaffnage near Oban, the chapel, in a rich Early English style, stands outside the castle walls. Since the castle

occupies the whole area of a rock, with only a small courtyard inside, there was no room for a chapel within its walls.

Not every baron in the thirteenth century lived within a castle of *enceinte*, with its towered curtain wall. Many of the smaller landowners continued to inhabit moated homesteads, some of which by this time had become fortalices of considerable size and strength. One of the best known of this class, fortunately still in perfect preservation, is Stokesay Castle in Shropshire. Here within a wide moat, now dry, stands a noble mid-thirteenth-century hall. In 1291, the owner, Laurence de Ludlow, received a royal licence to 'crenellate' or fortify his castle. Forthwith he replaced the palisade of his homestead moat with a strong curtain wall, at one end of which he erected a massive keep of what may be described as a polygonal, heart-shaped design. Here, as at Conisborough, the stairs are in separate flights, and on each floor the interior of the tower has to be crossed in order to reach the next flight. A fine timbered gatehouse was added in Tudor times.

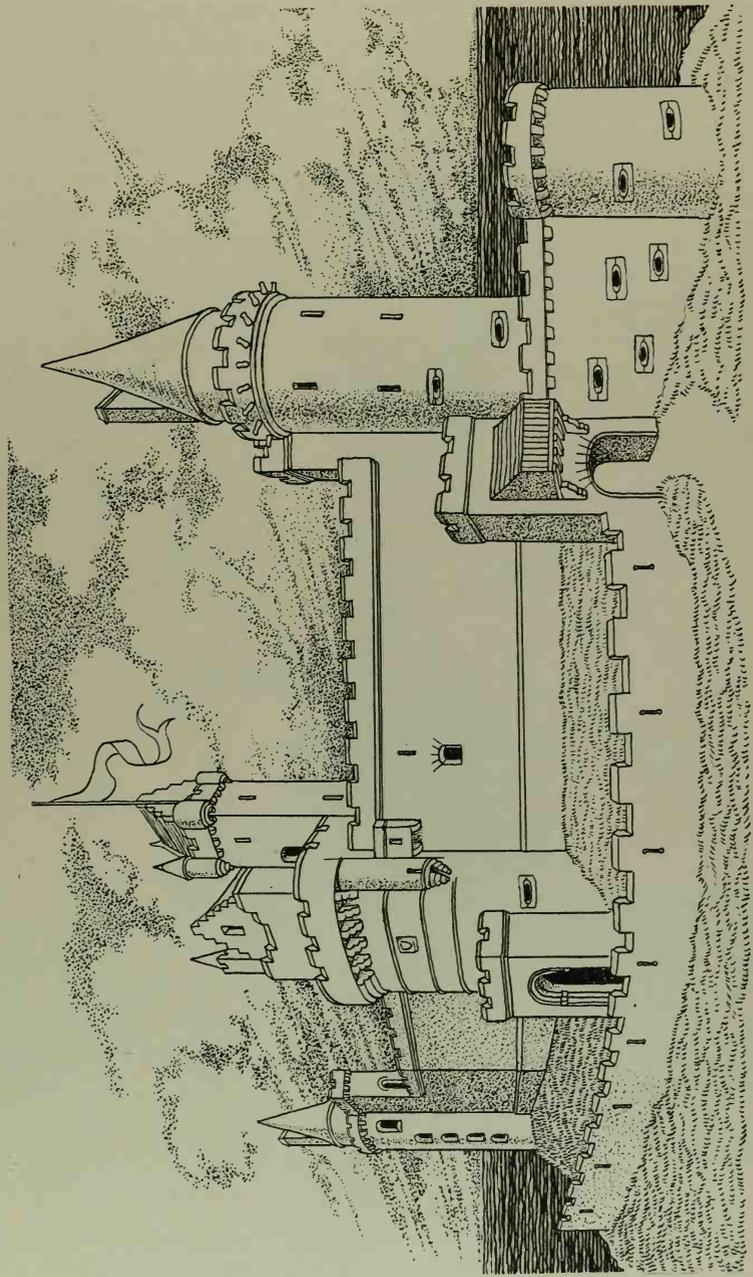
At Oakham, the county town of Rutland, we may still admire, in perfect preservation, a fine late-twelfth-century aisled hall, built in the Transitional style between Norman and Gothic. It stands within a ditched bank of earlier date, which, about the time when the hall was built, had its palisading replaced by a stone 'mantle wall'. The hall owes its survival to its use, like that at Winchester, for the county assizes.

In medieval parlance, to crenellate was to embattle, and a licence to crenellate thus meant permission to a landowner to fortify his dwelling. In theory, at least, no magnate could do so without the king's permission, hence the licence to crenellate Stokesay granted to its owner in 1291. It need hardly be said that such a regulation, in those times when the central government was always weak, was apt to be more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Particularly during the anarchy in Stephen's reign (1135-54), when the baronage did as they liked, hundreds of castles were erected without obtaining the royal permission. When Henry II restored order, most of these 'adulterine castles' as they were called, were destroyed. Probably the majority were timbered earthworks, and they may well be represented by the numerous unpedigreed *mottes* found up and down the country.

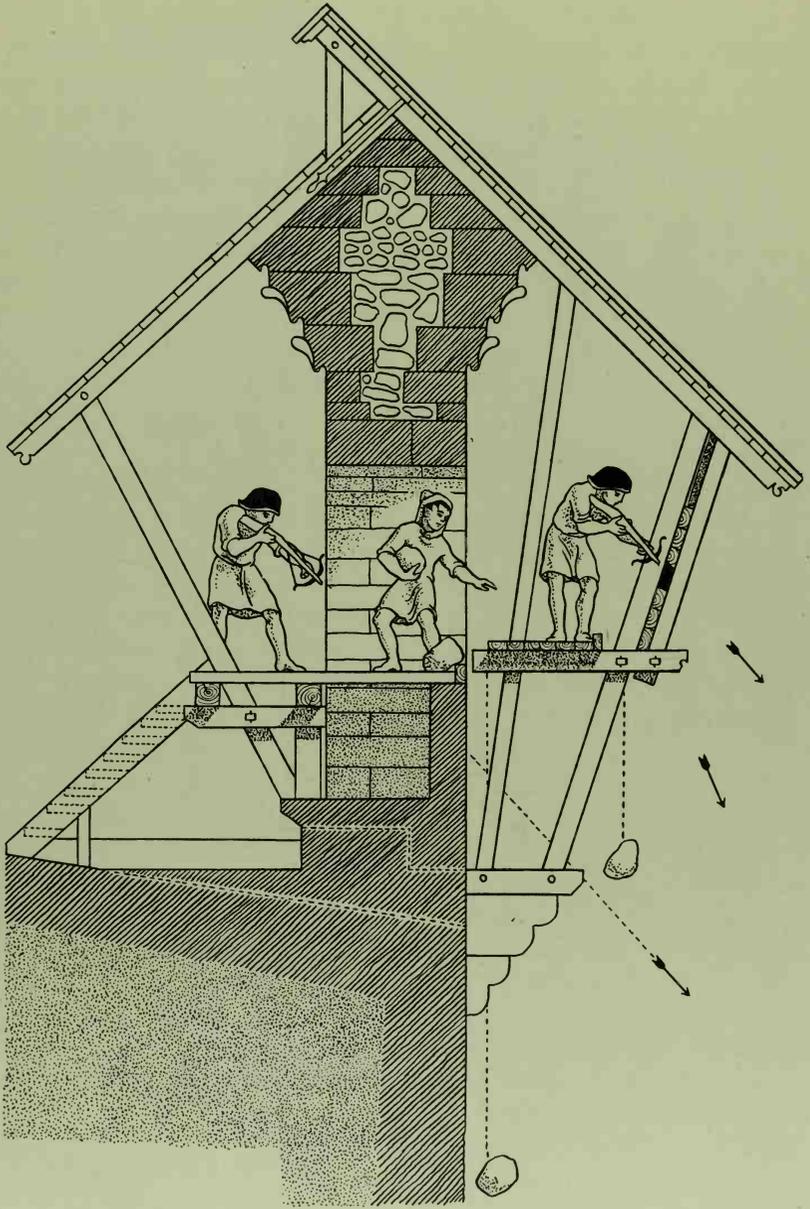
The Parts of the Castle

We have now gathered a clear general picture of the *enceinte* castles of the thirteenth century, with their high curtain walls and round flanking towers, all dominated by the mighty donjon, either in the centre of the courtyard or at its remotest corner. The weakness of such a scheme lay in the purely passive conception of defence for which it stood. In the last analysis, such castles proclaim the gospel of defeatism—the lurking conviction that in the long run the attack is superior to the defence, that the gateway will be forced or the curtain walls mined, breached, or escaladed; and that then the garrison, if they are lucky enough to escape into the donjon, will have nought to expect therein save the slow agony of starvation. So we shall see that in the 'Edwardian' castles the donjon is superseded by what may be termed the 'keep-gatehouse'. The lord of the castle comes forward from the retired position and jealous isolation of the old donjons. Instead, he assumes an 'action station' in the forefront of the defence, combining his residence and battle quarters in the gatehouse—always the weakest point in the defensive perimeter of a castle. The change was a radical one, transforming the entire castle theme. But before we consider it further, let us look rather more closely at the different parts of the *enceinte* castle.

And first as to the curtain walls. These are invariably very thick, sometimes as much as 9 or 10 ft, and may be 40 ft in height (19). Often they, and the towers by which they are commanded, are provided with a spreading plinth or apron-like base. The reason for this we have already noted in discussing Castle Hedingham (page 14). On top, the curtain walls carry an *allure* or parapet walk, screened by the battlements. These last consist of alternate solids and voids. The solid portions are known as *merlons*: behind them the archer shelters while re-loading his crossbow, and then shoots through the embrasure, or space between the merlons. Sometimes the embrasures were provided with shutters, hanging upon swivels in the merlon on either side. These could be pushed so far open when required as to allow the archer to command his target below, while the sloping shelter, like a miniature penthouse, would afford him overhead protection from a falling arrow or

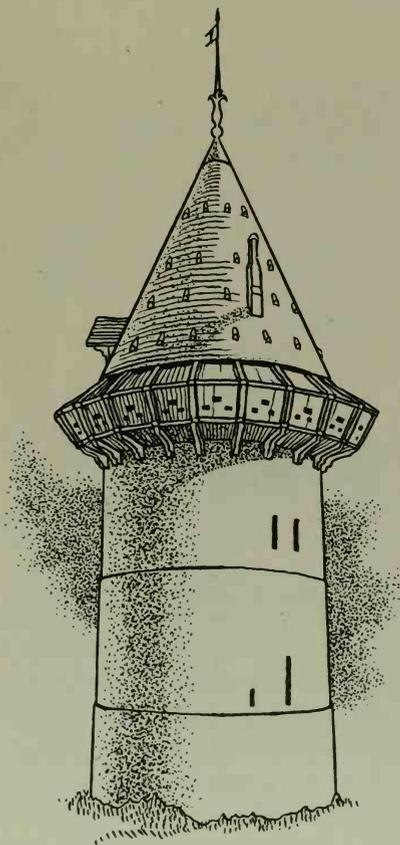


19 Taniallon Castle, a reconstruction



20 Hoarding in position

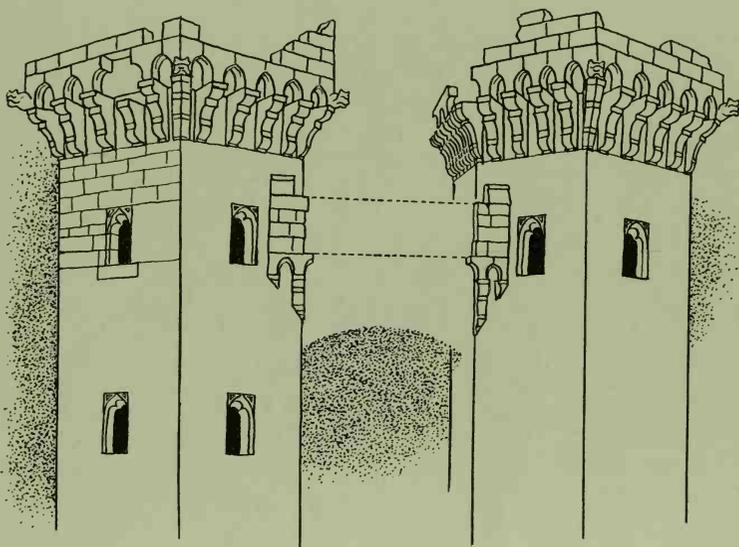
sling-bolt. Provision for these shutters can be seen in the embrasures of Caernarvon Castle. Here also, and likewise at Conway, the merlons are pierced with observation slits. Just below the battlements, will often be seen a row of 'weepers' or holes for carrying off the rainwater from the wall-walk. But also, at a lower level, there are often other holes, sometimes in two rows, running all along the curtain walls and round the towers. These are 'putlog holes' which supported the timber oversailing galleries, known as *hoardings* (20 and 21); which enabled the defenders the better to command the base of the walls and towers. Sometimes these war-heads were permanent fittings, in other cases they were erected in an emergency, the timber work being kept in store.



21 Tour de Jeanne d'Arc, Rouen

Towards the end of the thirteenth century these timber war-heads began to be replaced by projecting masonry parapets carried forward on great stone brackets, known as *corbels*. The space between each pair of corbels is open to the wall-walk, forming a *machicolation*, through which offensive materials could be cast down upon the besiegers. Thus originated those splendid machicolated parapets which proudly crown the towers of some of our great fourteenth- and fifteenth-century castles, such as Warwick, Raglan in Monmouthshire (22), or, in Scotland, Craigmillar near Edinburgh, and Caerlaverock in Dumfriesshire.

Not infrequently the allure has a rear- as well as a fore-parapet, so that the curtain wall could still be held even had an enemy obtained access to the courtyard.



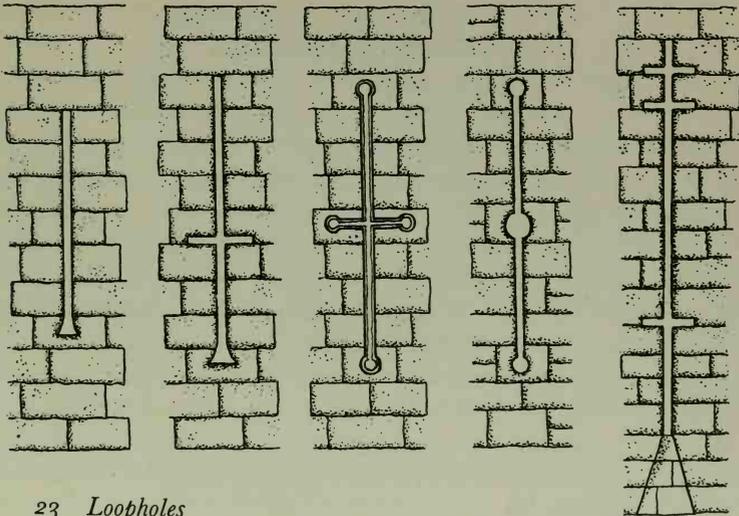
22 *Open machicolated parapets, Raglan Castle*

In addition to this defensive provision on the wall-heads, the curtains often, and the flanking towers always, are pierced with loopholes for shooting through (23). In its simplest form such a loophole is a long narrow vertical slit, perhaps 6 ft high. It may terminate below in a fish-tailed base, and this is often 'plunged', or sloped downward, the better to enable the archer to command the ground below. In other cases, the loophole ends below in a round hole or *oilette*, like an inverted key-hole.

Or there may be two *oilettes*, at top and bottom, in which case the loophole assumes a dumb-bell shape. Cruciform loopholes are common, and in these the terminations may be finished in fish-tail form, or with *oilettes*. At Warkworth Castle in Northumberland there are some extraordinary loopholes, which measure no less than 17 ft 7 in. long. They have plunged fish-tail lower terminations, 2 ft 7 in. broad at base and 3 ft 8 in. high, as well as three horizontal crosslets, two near the top and one a little above the fish-tailed base.

Usually such arrow-slits open inside into a mural chamber large enough to contain two persons, the crossbowman and a varlet or *garçon* loading a spare bow—in much the same way as in a modern grouse drive, when the birds are coming over thick and fast, the sportsman in his butt has beside him a loader with a second gun.

Throughout the thirteenth century the gatehouse of the castle was gaining in importance over the donjon. A thirteenth-century gatehouse is usually an imposing structure, and as the century draws to a close it becomes the dominant feature of the castle. The portal, usually a Gothic arch, is deeply recessed between two flanking towers, from which it is commanded by arrow-slits. Overhead, the portal is covered by a projecting timber *bretasche* or hoarding, or, in late examples, by a stone machicolated jutting. Stout wooden folding doors form the first



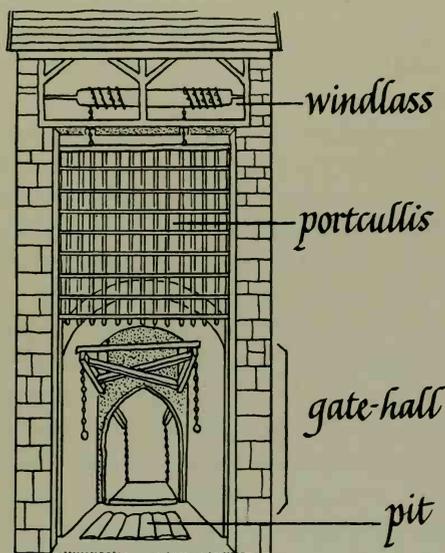
23 Loopholes

obstacle. Immediately behind is the portcullis, and since the folding doors open inwards, they cannot be opened until the portcullis is raised. The portcullis is a massive wooden grating, 4-6 in. thick, framed and shod with iron, which moves up and down in slots or chases in the side walls of the entrance passage, and is hoisted by a windlass in the portcullis chamber above. Usually these slots terminate a little above the causeway, the portcullis finishing below in a series of spikes. Behind this, the vaulted pend or wooden roof of the entrance passage is pierced by a series of *meurtrières* or 'murder holes', through which offensive materials may be cast down upon assailants who had penetrated thus far. On either side open guard chambers, from which the defender may sally forth upon such intruders. Finally, there may be a second portcullis and pair of folding gates at the inner end of the passage.

In addition to the main entrance, most large castles had at least one postern or side-gate, which in time of peace could be used without the need of putting into operation the complicated mechanism of the drawbridge and portcullis. Not infrequently the postern itself is defended by a portcullis and drawbridge. And all the main doors of the castle, not only those of the gateway and postern, but also those admitting from the courtyard to the mural towers and to the domestic buildings, were secured by draw-bars received into long oblong slots or 'bar-holes' in the side walls.

We have still to consider the drawbridge, the outermost defence of all. Most castles were enclosed by a moat or *fosse*. If this were wide, it was spanned by a timber bridge, resting on piers of wood or stone. This bridge did not, however, extend across the moat, but stopped short of the portal, from which it was reached by a drawbridge(24). In its simplest form this would be a wooden platform, pushed backwards and forwards horizontally upon rollers, or just manhandled into position. More elaborately, the drawbridge was raised by chains or cables, taken into the gatehouse through sloping holes, and wound upon a windlass. Still more elaborately, the drawbridge would be raised by cables or chains hung from a pair of *rainures* or *gaffs*, i.e. timber beams received back into long chases or slots in the gatehouse. If the castle ditch or moat is far out, the drawbridge may span a stone-lined or rock-cut pit immediately in front of the portal.

Whether raised by cables taken directly into the gatehouse, or by means of gaffs, such a lifting bridge could only be handled with much labour. So in the fourteenth century was devised the counterbalanced drawbridge, or 'turning bridge', as it is sometimes called. This spanned a carefully constructed stone pit, in the sides of which were sockets for the *trunnions* upon which the



24 *A fortified entry, from the inside*

drawbridge turned, more or less midway in its length. Each half counter-weighted the other, so that much less effort was needed to set the bridge in motion. When raised, the inner half was received into the pit, while the outer half fell back against the portal, to which it formed an extra barrier, while in front the pit yawned, impassable. One of the best-preserved examples of the provision for such a drawbridge may be seen at Kildrummy Castle, Aberdeenshire, in a forework added probably in the fifteenth century. Another good instance is in the Queen's Gate at Caernarvon Castle.

Beyond the drawbridge we may find a barbican—that is to say, a forework or outer defence on the far side of the moat.

Usually the barbican was made of timbered earthwork but sometimes of stone.

Let us suppose that, as friendly visitors to our castle, we have been admitted, through all these formidable obstacles, into the courtyard. What may we expect to find here?

In the early castles the hall, chapel, stables, and other domestic buildings are often placed at haphazard in the courtyard, just where the fancy took the lord to build them. The miscellaneous character of such buildings may be gathered from a list of the houses contained within the curtain wall at Oakham Castle (*page 31*). In 1340 these comprised: 'a hall, four chambers, a chapel, a kitchen, two stables, a grange for hay, a house for a prison, a chamber for the gatekeeper, and a drawbridge with iron chains'. By the time we have now reached, it was becoming the fashion to group such buildings together in an articulated scheme upon one side of the courtyard, often in its rear, as far as possible from the entrance. In the centre of such a group was the great hall (25), having at its lower end the kitchen, pantry and buttery, and at its upper end the private room or suite of the lord. The medieval 'buttery' had nothing to do with butter. The word is derived from the old French *bouteillerie*, the place for keeping bottles—in other words,



25 Great Hall, Stokesay Castle

the room from which wine and ale were issued. At the lower end of the hall was the screens, a narrow slip shut off from the body of the hall by a screen of carved woodwork, so as to provide a place where meat could be cut up and seasoned before serving in the hall. Above the screens was often a musicians' gallery; and behind the screens a passage, passing out between the buttery and pantry, led through to the kitchen. The main outer door to the hall was usually in the screens, so as to minimise draughts. At the upper end of the hall was a low-raised platform, the dais, upon which, at right angles to the axis of the hall, was the high table. Here the lord and his family and distinguished guests dined at a *table dormant*—i.e. a fixed table, in contrast to the trestle boards, set lengthwise down the body of the hall, at which sat upon benches the rank and file of the household. By this disposition (still to be seen in Oxford or Cambridge college halls) the lord could preside effectively over the banquet: while opposite to him, in their gallery at the lower end, the musicians played, mostly with harp, lute, viol or trumpet. Sometimes the high table was overhung by a tester or canopy.

At this period many halls still retained the primitive central hearth. In others, there was now a regular fireplace in the middle of one side, and sometimes a second on the dais. The kitchen, with its cavernous fireplace, sometimes more than one, ovens and water-supplying troughs, could now be quite an elaborate affair. Often the hall was placed upon the first floor, affording ample storage room beneath. The lord's private suite also was growing in complexity, including the great chamber, corresponding more or less to a modern drawing-room; the solar, or private room; and the bower for the ladies. The family bedrooms were usually above these private apartments: and it was now becoming the fashion to set aside a special quarter, sometimes in a tower, for guests. From the lord's private suite usually access could be got to the chapel. In earlier times the chaplain, as the only educated man in the household, would conduct the correspondence, accounts and other business transactions of the lord. For this purpose he had a private apartment, adjoining the chapel.

The foregoing account is of course a generalised one, since no two castles are exactly alike. But a disposition such as I have described may be seen in many castles, such as Warkworth,

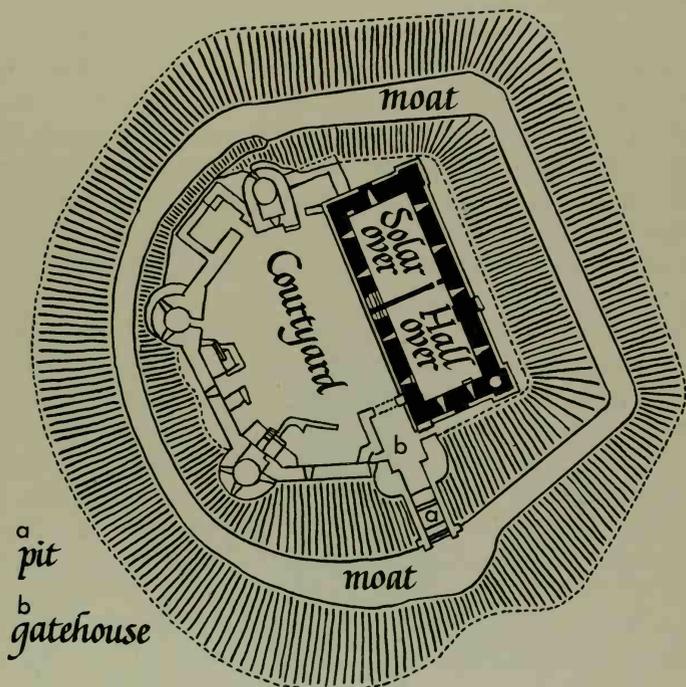
Northumberland; Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire; or Kildrummy, Aberdeenshire. It is of course seldom that the original lay-out has escaped alteration or expansion in later times. But the main disposition of a medieval dwelling house tended to remain in essence unchanged, until in Tudor times the custom of the entire household dining together in hall was discarded, with the result of radical changes in the house plan. These, however, lie beyond the scope of our survey.

By this time the living-rooms in an important castle were liberally provided with privies, often venting by shafts corbelled out on the wall outside. Sometimes arrangements are made for flushing out the bases of such shafts by rain water. In many cases, however, the privies have no drainage, and a night-stool or chamber-pot would then be used. Aumbries, that is, mural cupboards or keeping-holes for valuables, are frequently found in walls of living-rooms, for cabinets and chests of drawers were still uncommon. Goods in bulk were stored in trunks.

In Plantagenet times the furnishings of a castle could be quite elaborate. Tapestries, sometimes imported from Italy or the Levant, and stands of arms adorned the state rooms, or the walls and ceilings might be brightly painted with decorative patterns or figure subjects sacred or secular. Painted glass was now coming into use. Being a scarce commodity it was carried about from castle to castle as a great lord moved round among his manors, consuming his rents upon the spot and supervising the administration of his estates. Usually the glass occupied only the upper half of the window, the lower part being shuttered for ventilation. Rugs or skins would be spread upon the bedroom floors, but in the great hall the floor was covered with rushes or sweet-smelling herbs in summer and straw in winter. The chapel could be richly decorated: in 1250 that in the royal castle of Winchester was ordered to have its floor laid with tiles, while the walls were to be painted with the story of Joseph.

From the foregoing brief description of the parts of the castle, it will have been gathered that throughout the thirteenth century there was a growing rivalry between the keep and the gatehouse, until (as we shall see) in the Edwardian castles the gatehouse absorbed the keep. But we have also seen that a third

major element in the castle complex, the great hall, while usually considered as the principal apartment in the lord's suite, sometimes, as at Westminster and Winchester, emerges as a structure independent in its own right, a hall-house as we may call it. The medieval Latin term for such a hall-house was *palatium*, a word which in its origin conveys no necessary meaning of royal or episcopal dignity, like the modern English word 'palace' which derives from it. Such 'palaces' or monumental hall-houses are more common in France (where they

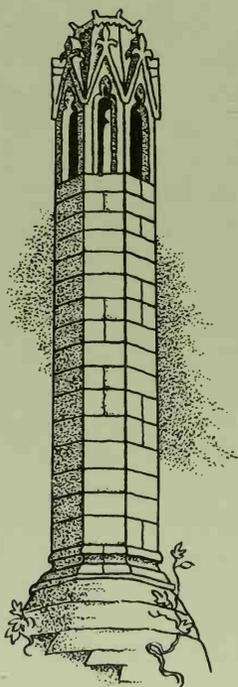


26 Grosmont Castle

are termed *palais*) and in Germany (where the word used for them is *Palast* or *Pfalz*). In Britain the type is much rarer. A remarkable example may be seen at Grosmont Castle, Monmouthshire (26), built by Hubert de Burgh, whom we have met already at Skenfrith. Grosmont Castle stands within a mighty D-shaped ditch, along the straight or rearward side of which is a noble 'palace' or hall-house, measuring 96 ft by 32 ft—standard dimensions for structures of this class, and derived perhaps from those of a Cistercian refectory. Massively built

and strongly buttressed almost in a Norman fashion, yet clearly dated by its architectural detail to the early thirteenth century, the hall was on the first floor, over two compartments, one of which was the kitchen. The enclosure within the ditch is completed by a curtain wall with two round towers and a simple gatehouse. Though somewhat later than the 'palace', this *enceinte* seems likewise to be the work of the great Justiciar. It is interesting to find the same powerful magnate building two castles upon such different plans as Skenfrith and Grosmont.

Some minor additions were made to Grosmont Castle about the year 1330. These include a most beautiful chimney (27)—a feature that has rarely survived in older castles. Rising from a delicately moulded base, the tall, octagonal chimney shaft terminates in a truncated spirelet surmounted by a crown. The base of the spirelet is surrounded by a series of gablets, one for each side of the octagon; and beneath these are trefoiled lancet openings to allow the smoke to escape. This is one of the most charming little pieces of Gothic work in all England.



27 The Chimney, Grosmont Castle

The Edwardian Castles

In the last section we read of Grosmont and Skenfrith Castles, and how they illustrate the rapidly changing conceptions of castellar design during the thirteenth century. Together with White Castle, the westmost and therefore most exposed of the group, they form the famous Monmouthshire 'trilateral', erected by the Anglo-Normans to secure their hold upon the Welsh lordship of Gwent. As we see it today, White Castle was drastically remodelled in the late thirteenth century. The date of the work can be narrowed down, on sound documentary evidence, to the years 1267-76. The original lay-out, lying behind formidable earthworks, can be ascribed, upon similar evidence, to the years 1184-6, when a total sum of £133 7s. 8d was spent upon the fabric, a large amount of money in those days. The castle then consisted of an oval stone curtain, unprovided with flanking towers, and having at its southern end a small but strong square keep, jutting forward from the line of the curtain. In the late-thirteenth-century reconstruction the keep was pulled down: the curtain wall was strengthened by four powerful round towers, and at its northern apex was built a formidable gatehouse, consisting of a portal deeply recessed between two round towers, with the usual defences of a portcullis and a drawbridge spanning a pit. Thus the Norman disposition of square keep and untowered curtain wall was converted into a keepless castle with round flanking towers and a gatehouse.

But this is not all. Under the new arrangements the entrance front of the castle is covered by an extensive and powerful outer defence. This is far too large to be described as a barbican: in fact it is a base-court or outer ward, covering an area considerably larger than that of the inner court. Moreover it is protected by formidable round towers and a gatehouse regularly defended. This gatehouse is placed not in line with the inner portal but on a flank, so as to check a direct rush upon the latter.

The provision of more than one ward, or successive line of defence, had long been a well-understood device in the planning of large castles. Thus at Château Gaillard, Richard the Lion-Heart's famous and gigantic stronghold in Normandy,

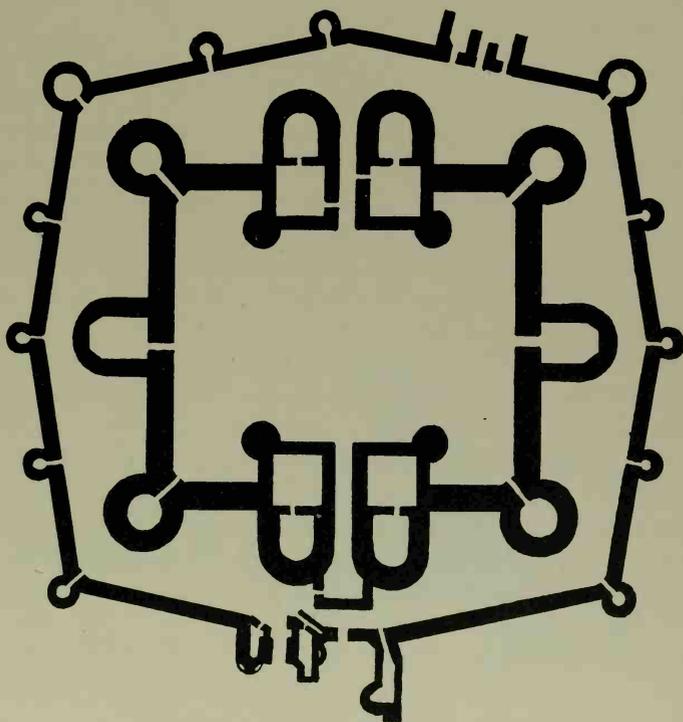
there are no less than three successive wards, each of which had to be reduced in turn before the donjon could be attacked. In the reconstruction of White Castle the donjon was removed, but an external line of defence was provided by the erection of the outer ward.

The next step in castellar development was to design the outer ward so as completely to enclose the inner, and to build it with low walls and towers, so that the archers on the inner ward could shoot out over the heads of their comrades on the outer. Thus both *enceintes* could be simultaneously in action, and a combined instead of a successive defence was opposed to the assailants. In this way originated what is known as the *concentric castle*. It seems to have been invented in the East: Krak des Chevaliers, the famous Crusading castle in Syria, thus became a concentric castle early in the thirteenth century. In England, the Tower of London, as enlarged by Henry III and Edward I, was converted into our finest specimen of a concentric castle—perhaps the grandest example of its kind in Europe.

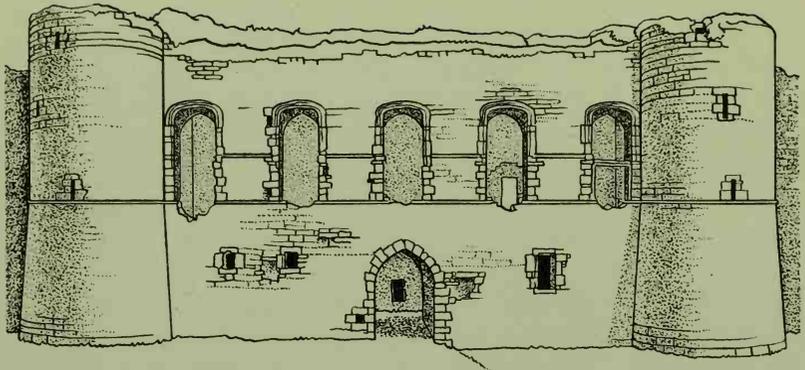
In the castles of the earlier part of the thirteenth century, as we have seen, the donjon or keep is usually at the back or remotest corner of the *enceinte*, as far removed from the point of greatest danger. Its power of resistance is in the main a passive one, in fact, it was conceived as a *dernier ressort*, into which the garrison might retire, if they could, should the rest of the castle be taken. By contrast, in the new device of the 'keep-gatehouse' (see page 32) the weight and mass of the castle is brought forward and concentrated frontally. The lord's or castellan's residence is combined with the gatehouse, in the forefront of the fight, and the commandant has the drawbridge, portcullises, and other defensive tackle of the entrance passage under his immediate personal control—an important safeguard at this period, when the feudal lords were relying less and less on their own vassals and more and more on paid retainers whose fidelity was often doubtful. Underlying the keep-gatehouse thesis, however, lurked a practical weakness—the difficulty in interpolating the drawbridges, portcullises, machicolations, murder-holes, and other paraphernalia of a defended entry, into the principal state rooms of the castle. Since the lifting mechanism of the drawbridge and portcullis, and the manning stances of the murder-holes, had of course to

be on the first floor, this perforce became a fighting deck; and the hall and state rooms had to be relegated, most inconveniently, to the second floor. Hence we find that, in the keep-gatehouses at Dunstanburgh, Northumberland; Llanstephan, Carmarthenshire; St Andrews, Fife; and Roscrea in Ireland, the keep-gatehouse was eventually given up as a house of entry: its trance was walled up frontally, and a new entrance opened in the curtain wall on a flank.

A remarkable feature in Edwardian concentric castles is the quest for symmetry. This is most fully illustrated in the astonishing castle of Beaumaris on Anglesey (28 and 29). Here we find a perfectly symmetrical disposition—a quadrangular inner ward, with round towers at the four corners and midway on each flank; (very remarkably) two keep-gatehouses, in front and rear; and a low multangular outer wall, garnished with no less than twelve small towers, two minor gatehouses, and a spur-work guarding the dock.

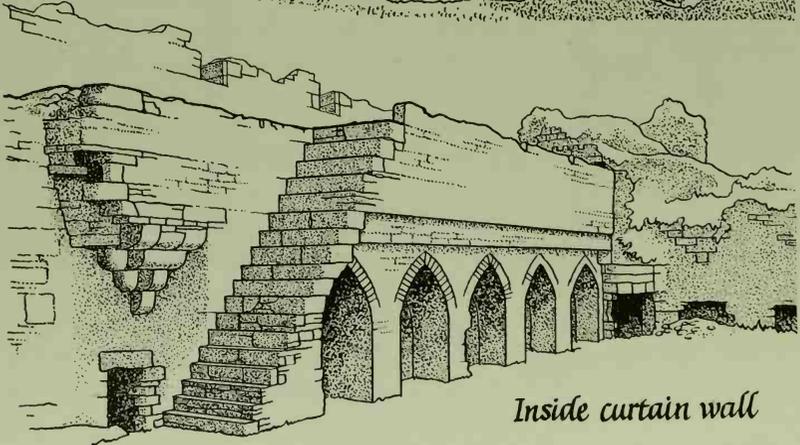
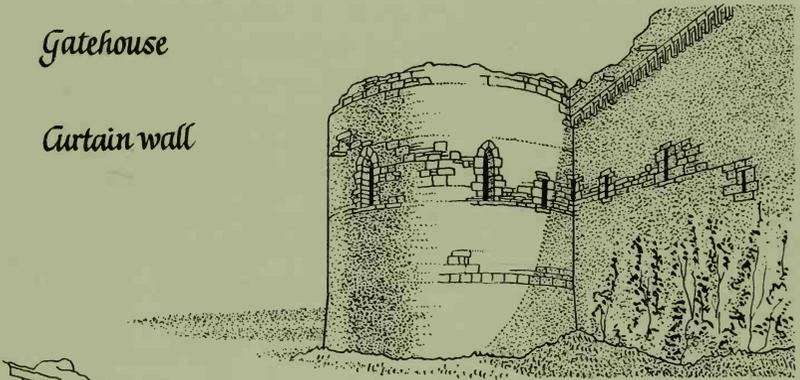


28 *Beaumaris Castle*



Gatehouse

Curtain wall

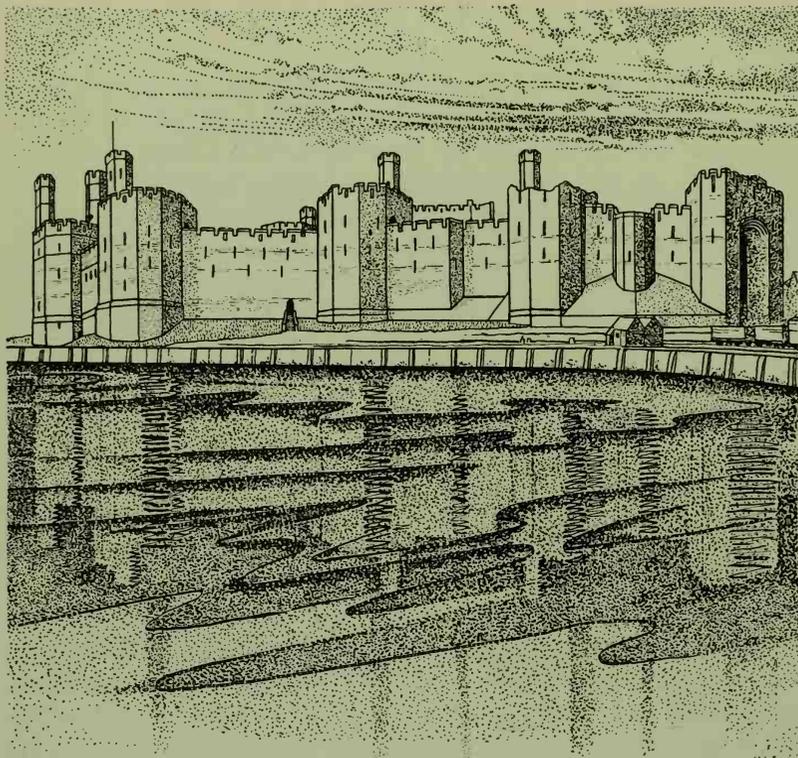


Inside curtain wall

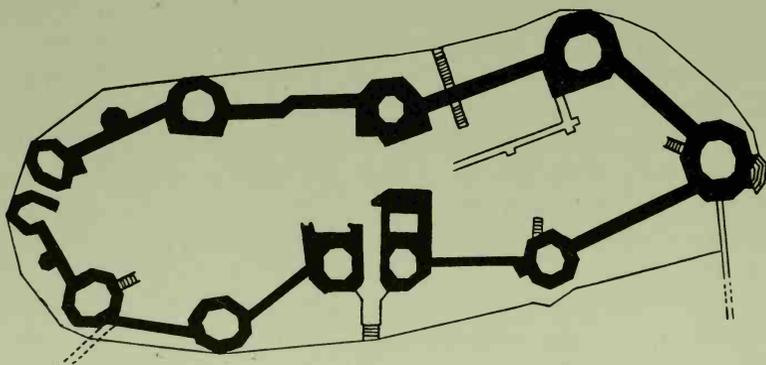
Not all the great castles built by Edward I to secure his conquest of Wales were concentric on plan. Nor did they all have keep-gatehouses. Conway and Caernarvon (30) are each a single vast enclosure of towered curtain wall, the outline of the former being dictated by the rock upon which it was built, while the outline of the latter follows the track of an older *motte* and bailey lay-out. At Conway the main entrance, though covered by a clever barbican, is simply a portal pierced in the fore-curtain. A cross-wall, with an equally simple entrance, divides the interior into an outer and an inner ward: in the back wall of the latter, a postern admits to a rear-barbican. Here therefore we have the old-fashioned alignment of successive wards: nothing else was possible on the narrow site. The plan of Caernarvon (31) is not dissimilar, though here, there are two powerful gatehouses, one of which, midway in the town front, though never completed, was devised as a keep-gatehouse, on a scale truly imperial. Both castles form a unity with their town walls, and at both places the latter survive, with their towers and gateways, in a state almost complete. Conway and Caernarvon, castles and town walls together, form incomparably the most magnificent examples of medieval military architecture extant in Britain.

Caernarvon Castle presents us with a further peculiarity in that it possesses, alongside a keep-gatehouse in the most up-to-date fashion, an archaic survival in the form of a donjon or keep, the splendid Eagle Tower: and this does not occupy the site (as might have been expected) of the former *motte* (now removed), but stands at the extreme opposite end of the castle. Another of Edward's North Welsh castles, Flint (the first to be built), likewise has a donjon, very remarkably designed, and placed in the forefront of the castle over against the town, like the great donjon of the Château de Coucy, destroyed by the Germans in 1917. Such variations in design among the Edwardian castles speak to us, in striking accents, about the state of rapid evolution and intense dynamism, through which castellar construction was passing at the turn of the thirteenth century.

Alike in the grandeur of its site and in the sheer formidable mass of its rock-like masonry, the most impressive of the North Welsh castles is beyond doubt Harlech. Around its mighty towers there clings a stern pathos that belongs alone to Harlech



30 *Caernarvon Castle*



31 *Plan of Caernarvon Castle*

as *par excellence* the Castle of Lost Causes. It saw the glories of Owen Glyndwr's court in the last struggle for Welsh independence, and made the most desperate and protracted resistance to his English conquerors. Equally heroic was the long defence that it offered against Yorkist power in the cause of the Red Rose. And it was the last strength in Britain to haul down the royal standard of Charles I. Surely no other British castle has witnessed such a generous and tragic spending of *Courage and Faith: vain Faith, and Courage vain.*

While the Tower of London, in the reconstruction completed by Edward I, became our largest and most perfect example of a concentric castle, the other great royal residence at Windsor retains to this day its original *motte* and bailey disposition. Only here the castle has two baileys, one on either side of the *motte*—like the wings on each side of a cherub's head in Renaissance decoration. Except on the Welsh borders, where the great 'marcher lords' exercised almost independent power, few castles were built in Britain, other than royal fortresses, under the strong rule of Edward I. In Scotland, financial and other troubles prevented the great king from carrying out anything like the astonishing programme of castle-building with which he secured his conquest of North Wales. Yet there is a typically Edwardian keep-gatehouse at Kildrummy; and the wholesale destruction of their castles by the Scots when they recovered them from the invader forbids us to assume that other substantial stone fortifications may not have been erected during the Plantagenet occupation. Nevertheless, record evidence shows that, upon the whole, Edward I had to rely mainly upon more old-fashioned materials in the garrison posts which he erected to secure his hold upon Scotland. For example, the famous 'Peel of Linlithgow', built by Edward in 1301-2, was, as its name indicates, a structure of timbered earthwork. At first stone gates and towers were planned, but in the end these were omitted, doubtless to save money. The word 'peel' is derived from the Latin *palus*, a stake, and a 'peel' originally was a fortalice made of such materials. Later on, a stone tower was often built within such a palisaded enclosure, hence the term 'peel' by an easy transition often came to be used of the tower itself. Upon the Peel of Linlithgow in November 1301 as many as 80 ditchers and 107 carpenters

were being employed. Even in the Second War of Independence, during the reign of Edward III, we find the English making extensive use of earthwork and timber in their military buildings in Scotland.

Among all the great British castles in private hands and still inhabited there is perhaps none which exceeds in grandeur Arundel in Sussex, the magnificent palace of the Duke of Norfolk, Hereditary Marshal of England. Despite the building and rebuilding of centuries, it still retains its original mount-and-bailey lay-out, with a double bailey, like Windsor. The shell-keep on the *motte* dates from the reign of Henry II, but most of the buildings in the bailey were remodelled in the beginning of last century. The castle stands on a commanding height overlooking the town. It has played a stormy part in English history from the reign of Henry I until the Civil War.

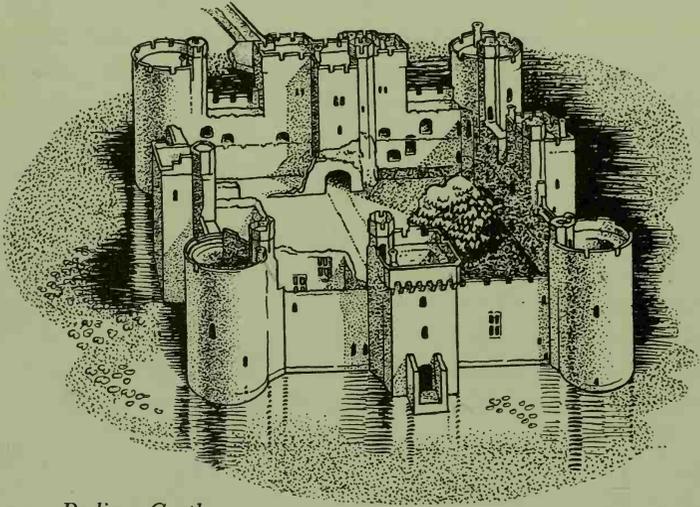
The English Castle in the Later Middle Ages

Broadly speaking, it may be said that by the fourteenth century the great period of castellar construction in England was over. The land was by now amply furnished with castles, and strong kings like the first and third Edwards did not encourage the building of more. For the most part, castle-building now took the form of additions and embellishments to existing structures. Nevertheless, the Hundred Years' War, with its accompanying danger of invasion upon the southern and eastern shores; the militarisation of baronial life which accompanied the prolonged struggle with France; the growing practice among the barons of retaining in their service mercenaries, often veterans of the continental war; and the failing vigour of the Plantagenet and Lancastrian monarchies, culminating in the Wars of the Roses—all these circumstances led to a certain revival of castle-building in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In these later castles, we observe a strong tendency to reduce the size of the building and to simplify its plan. Instead of large miscellaneous garrisons of half-trained feudal levies, called up to man their castles when danger threatened, the lords were now relying more and more on small permanent garrisons of professional soldiers. The rapid movement of these highly trained men around the walls in time of siege was hindered by the multiplication of defensive obstacles which the planners had hitherto favoured. A single rectangular enclosure of moderate size, well flanked by round or square towers, and a less complicated type of gatehouse, now came into fashion. The domestic buildings round the courtyard were now drawn into a compact and well-articulated quadrangle; and separate quarters are assigned to the lord and his *familia* or personal household, and to the standing garrison of paid retainers.

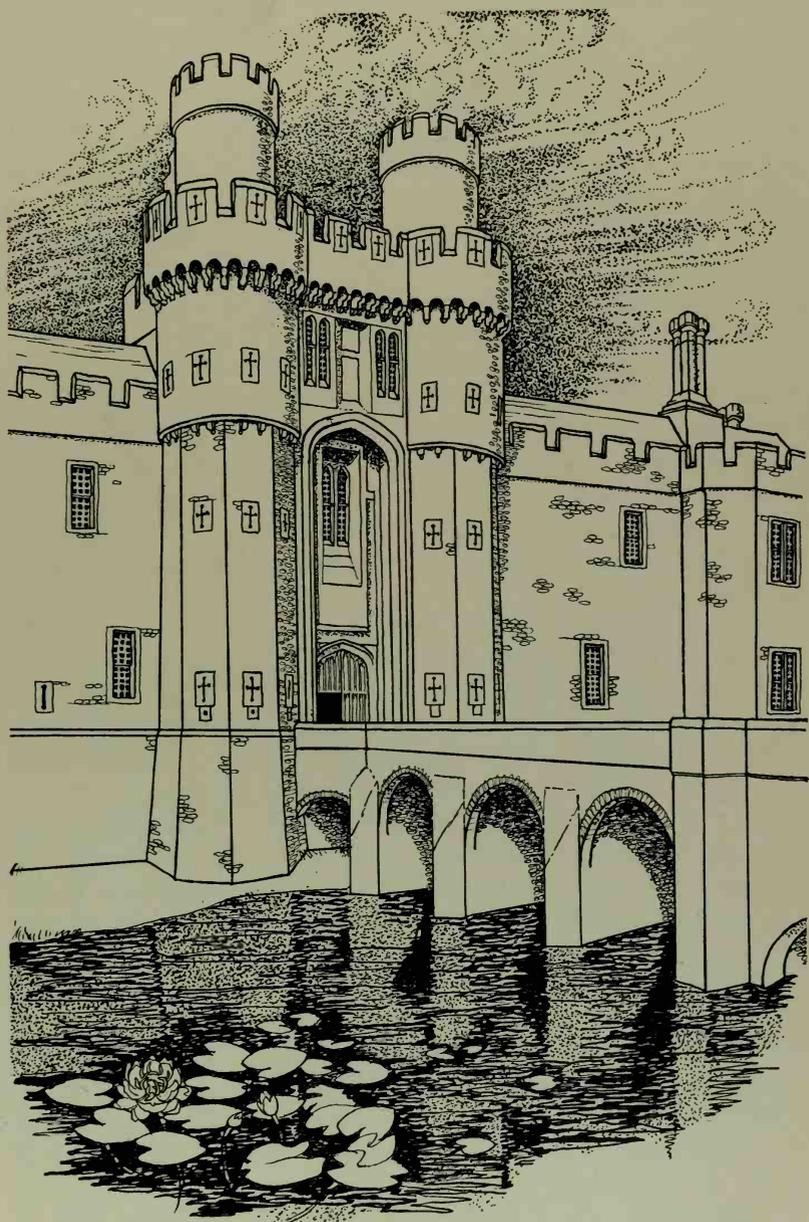
This new type of fortalice is splendidly illustrated in the lovely castle of Bodiam in Sussex (32), built in 1385 by a veteran of the third Edward's continental wars, expressly in terms of a royal licence as a defence of the southern coast against a French invasion. With its formidable array of walls and towers round or square, set within the cincture of a lily-decked artificial lake,

Bodiam was truly described by Lord Curzon, who bought, repaired and left it to the nation, as 'the most romantic and most fairy of English castles'. Up in Yorkshire, Bolton Castle in Wensleydale, built at the same time in the frontier now menaced by the Scots, shows very much the same plan: only here, as usual in the north, the towers are all square on plan.



32 *Bodiam Castle*

Like some others among its contemporaries, Bodiam Castle is provided with gunports, thus revealing the reaction of the castle builders to the new element in siege warfare, the battering power of ordnance which in the end was to sound the death-knell of the feudal fortalice. Another new feature, introduced about this time from the Low Countries, was the use of brick instead of stone. Thus the town of Hull, as fortified by Richard II, was provided with walls and towers of brick. The most splendid brick castle in England is Herstmonceux in Sussex (33), now the residence of the Astronomer-royal. Built by Sir Roger Fiennes pursuant to a royal licence granted in 1441, the castle was evidently intended, like Bodiam, to provide for defence of a threatened coast 'at a time when English influence in France was on the wane, and the defection of the Duke of Burgundy in 1435 made hostility from Flanders possible'. Nevertheless, in the main it must be regarded as a magnificent parade of feudal pride, erected at a time when the paraphernalia of defensive



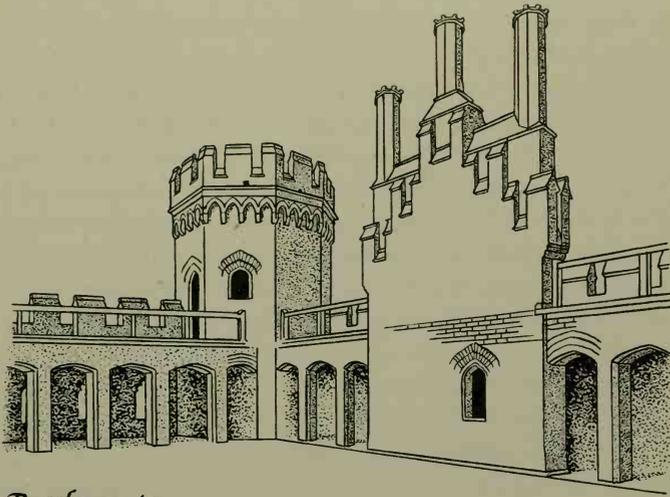
33 *Herstmonceux Castle*

architecture, while still to some extent functionally purposed, were employed more and more as an outward and visible symbol of seignory—a demonstration of arrogance on the part of a ruling class whose martial traditions required that they should house themselves in mansions where the semblance of armed defiance was preserved. The enormous four-square structure, with its seventeen multangular towers, now encloses a single courtyard, with a modern suite of buildings. But originally there were four internal courts, adapted to the numerous and highly organised household of a later medieval baron. On the east and north were the state rooms and guest apartments; on the west, offices; on the south, administrative rooms. The Green Court, around which were grouped the state rooms, has clearly been modelled on contemporary collegiate buildings, such as Eton or Queen's College, Cambridge. It is interesting to note that the highly specialised, rigidly disciplined household of a great fifteenth-century landlord was demanding the same standard accommodation which was being evolved in the contemporary collegiate foundations. A great baron's household in the later Middle Ages was in a very real sense a college.

In the gatehouse at Herstmonceux we find, side by side with the traditional machicolated parapets and crosslet loopholes, the new circular gunports (33).

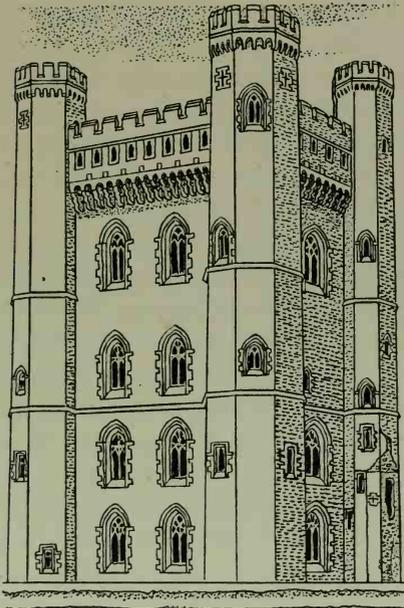
Another famous brick castle of the fifteenth century—though, alas! preserved but in a fragmentary state,—is Caister near Great Yarmouth. This was built in the fourteen-thirties by the famous warrior, Sir John Fastolf—the original of Shakespeare's Falstaff, but a very different character from the humorous creation of the dramatist's genius. The interesting thing about Caister is that it is an obvious copy of a Rhenish *Wasserburg*, such as Kempen or Krottorf.

By far the most spectacular of English castles in brickwork is the huge square machicolated tower added in 1434-46 by Ralph, Lord Cromwell, to his castle of Tattershall in Lincolnshire (35). Built as an addition to a pre-existing hall, this tower is clearly inspired by such contemporary European parallels as the great tower of the *Palais de Justice* at Poitiers, or the palace of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order at Marienburg. It is a mistake to regard such a tower as Tattershall as a kind of atavistic reversion to the idea of a 'Norman keep'. Large towers

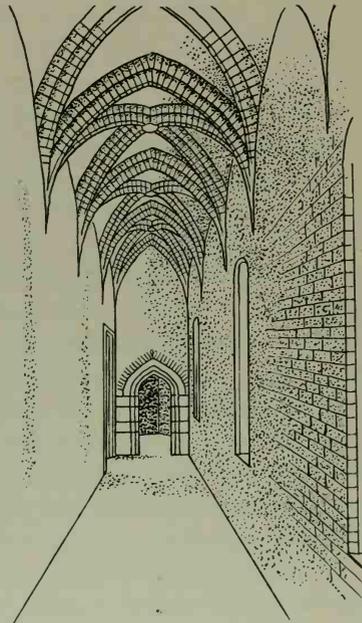


Battlements

34 *Tattershall Castle*



35 *The Tower*



36 *Gallery in Tower*

Tattershall Castle

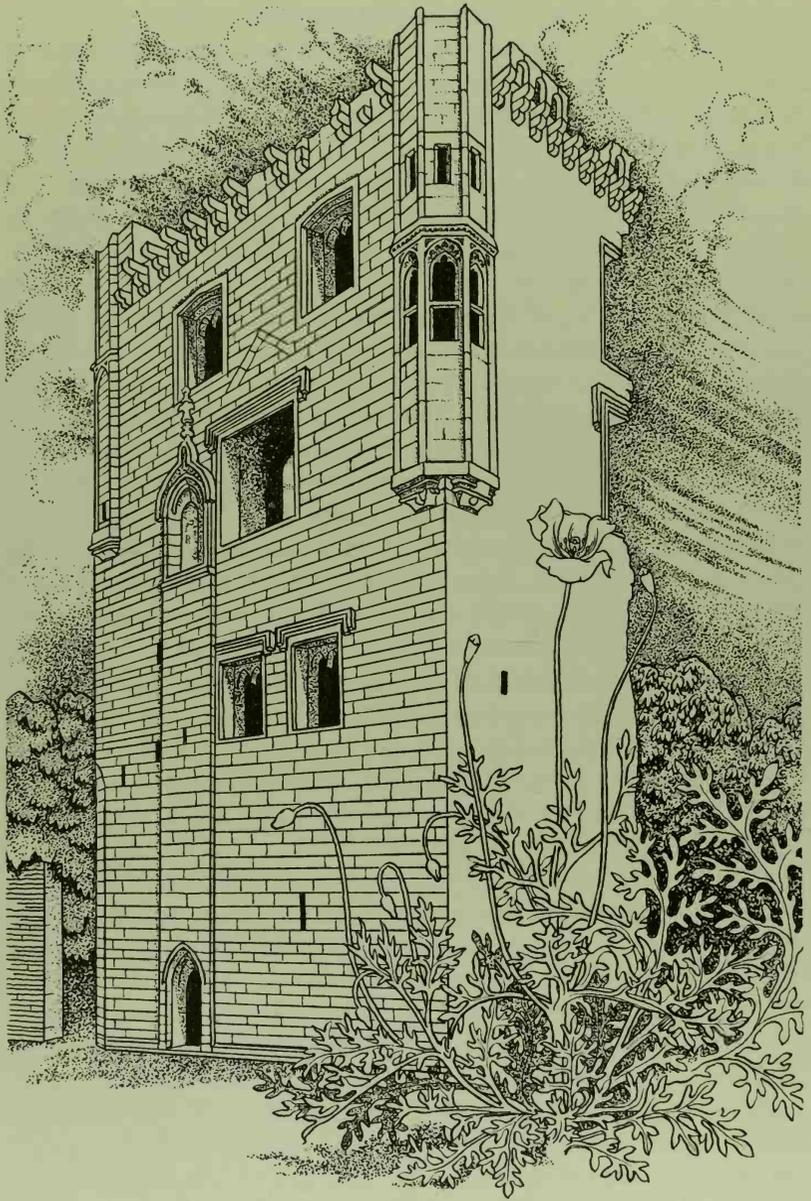
of this sort, forming an integral part of a great lord's castle, and specially apportioned as the private residence of himself, his family, and their personal household, were widely in vogue on the Continent from the latter part of the fourteenth century. While always in organic context with the other domestic buildings, the tower yet is isolated so as to conserve the lord's privacy. It is also carried out on a spectacular scale to emphasise his feudal pride and magnificence, and its lofty wall-heads are arrayed with all that *appareil féodal* of martial garniture in which the baronial architecture of the time delighted (34 to 36). Another English example, similar in conception though smaller in scale and simpler in treatment than Tattershall, is the fine brick tower added to his palace at Buckden, Huntingdonshire, by Thomas Rotherham, Bishop of Lincoln (1472-80).

The influence exerted upon the latest phase of English castle-building by revived anarchy in the fifteenth century, culminating in the Wars of the Roses, can be well studied in three notable examples: Raglan, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and Kirby Muxloe. At Raglan in Monmouthshire the most remarkable feature is the 'Yellow Tower of Gwent', built about 1430-45. This is a huge hexagonal free-standing donjon, quite different in basic conception from Lord Cromwell's contemporary brick addition to Tattershall. The tower at Raglan stands outside the *enceinte* within its own proper moat, and its basement has been thought to embody the core of a Norman *motte*. The tower is reached across a double drawbridge, one wide enough to admit a file of men, the other beside it being more in the fashion of a postern. The walls of this tower 'batter', or slope inwards throughout their height of splendid ashlar masonry, and once were crowned with a boldly oversailing machicolated parapet: but unfortunately these features disappeared when the castle was dismantled by the Roundheads during the Civil War. Round the Yellow Tower, on the scarp of its moat, is a low apron-wall with bastions. The rest of the castle, which includes much stately building of Tudor and Jacobean times, is notable for its fifteenth-century curtain walls, garnished by multangular towers having machicolated coronets—the most superb of their kind in all Britain (22). All these features are designed for serious defence. There can be no question here of a mere parade of pride in stone. Here again we find the

association of the traditional crosslet loopholes and the new-fangled gunports. How rich the furnishings of a major castle had become by the end of the fifteenth century may be understood from an inventory of the chapel, whose contents in 1507 included 'a vestment of violet velvet: two fronts of altars of crimson velvet with flowers of gold: a small front of cloth of gold: a little chalice of silver: a printed mass-book'. For if Raglan was designed as a strong fortalice, it was also a stately residence, enclosed in splendid grounds, which, in the words of a contemporary, included 'orchards full of apple trees and plums and figs, and cherries and grapes and French plums, and pears and nuts, and every fruit that is sweet and delicious'.

William, first Lord Hastings, was one of the principal actors on the Yorkist side in the tangled drama of the Wars of the Roses, and held numerous exalted posts at home and abroad. From his vast estates, the emoluments of his offices, and a substantial pension which he accepted from the King of France, he enjoyed enormous wealth. Like all the nobles of this turbulent period, he kept his private army. It is no matter of surprise that such a man, in the sumptuous scheme which he adopted for his reconstruction of his castle at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (37), should provide for himself a self-contained tower-house on a great scale—not out of any antiquarian hankering to imitate a twelfth-century keep, but simply to have in his castle a strong house where he could keep himself, his family, and his personal household apart from the crowd of armed retainers whose services he bought with his ample purse, and upon whom he rested the power that he brought to bear among the shifting politics of his unquiet time.

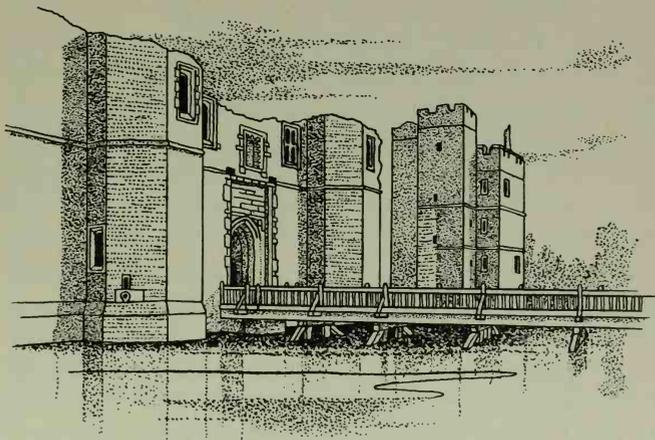
The licence to crenellate in respect of Ashby was issued to Lord Hastings on 17 April 1474. The manor-house which he found there comprised the normal lay-out of a large central hall, having buttery, pantry and kitchen at its lower end and at the upper end the solar, beyond which was a fine chapel. All these buildings were extensively reconstructed by Hastings, who formed them into the north side of a large courtyard, screened by a massive curtain wall, midway in the southern part of which he placed the mighty tower-house which, though partly demolished in the Civil War, remains the glory of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. About this grand tower there is nothing atavistic. We may be sure that Lord Hastings, a practical and



37 *Ashby-de-la-Zouch Castle*

up-to-date man of affairs, would have been quite unenthusiastic had his master-mason proposed 'to pay a tribute to the memory of the ancient keeps'. On the other hand, it is equally wide of the mark to compare it with Lord Cromwell's tower at Tattershall, which is simply a glorified solar block, attached to a pre-existing house. The great tower at Ashby forms a self-contained and isolated residence for the owner—even to the extent of possessing its own well: and, while it has plenty of the brow-beating pride of feudalism, it is yet strictly and formidably a military proposition, a true product of its times and of its owner's special needs. It was with no idle use of language that the Parliamentary commissioners in 1648 reported on 'the Great Tower of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, being a place of considerable strength'. They knew what they were talking about: because its capacity for resistance, even against an artillery such as Lord Hastings never feared, had just been proved in the stress and storm of siege.

At Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Lord Hastings built in fine ashlar from the local Carboniferous sandstone. At Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire (38), he chose brick. To supervise his undertaking he brought over from Tattershall the master-mason John Couper, whom records now available enable us to salute as one of the foremost English architects of the later Middle Ages. The building accounts of Kirby Muxloe, fortunately preserved in their entirety, show that work commenced on 23 April 1480, and ceased, with the castle half-built, on 6 December 1484—

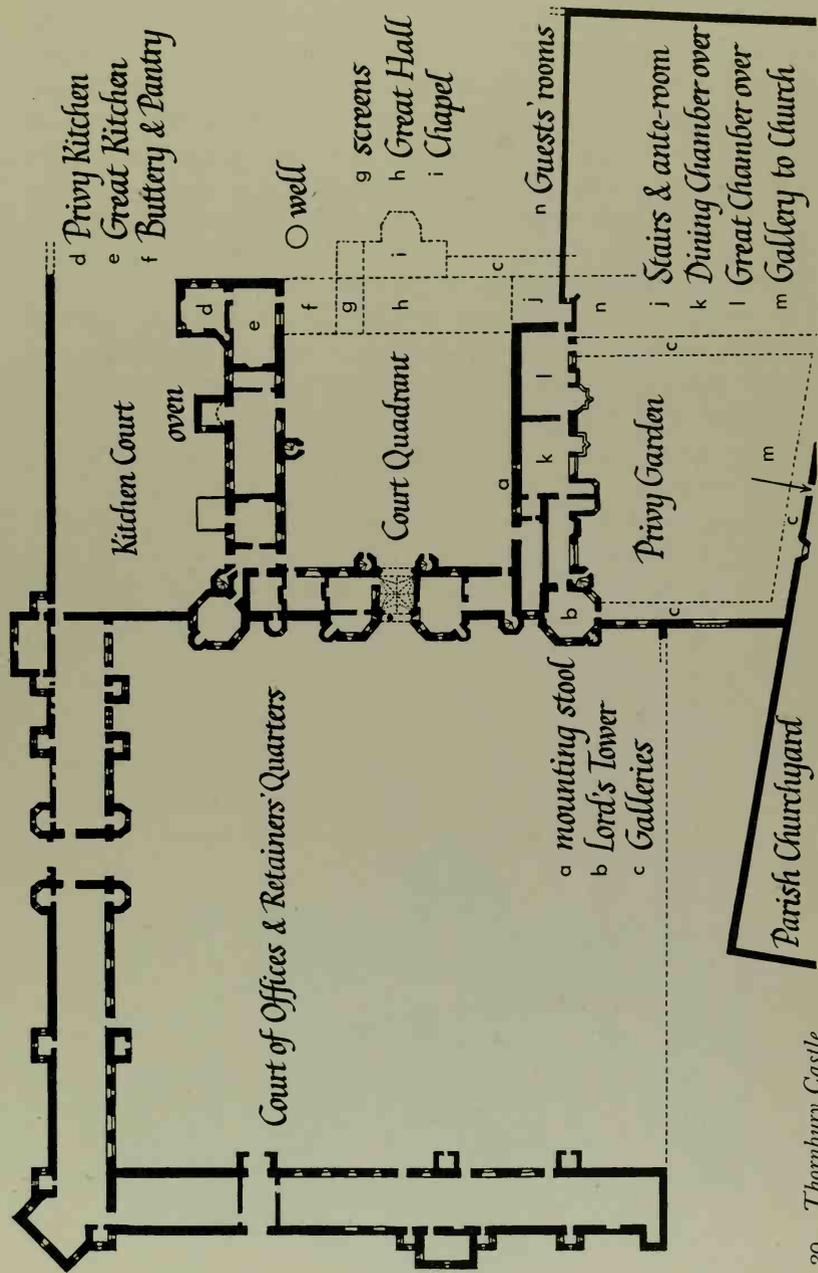


38 Kirby Muxloe Castle

no doubt as a result of Lord Hastings' summary execution in the previous year. At Kirby Muxloe, as at Ashby, an older house occupied the site. But this was almost swept away by John Couper, who on its stance built for his noble patron a fortified house which reproduced, though with towers square instead of round, the type of plan that had already been reached, a century previously, at Bodiam. At Bodiam, gunports for the new artillery had been provided only in the gatehouse; but at Kirby Muxloe the whole castle is furnished with embrasures for firearm defence. Indeed this castle seems to be the first example in England of a building systematically equipped for hand guns—though, to be sure, the provision made is (as at Raglan) from the standpoint of logic, sometimes naïve enough. Round the whole castle runs a broad, deep moat. Clearly Kirby Muxloe, like Ashby, was intended, neither by its ordainer nor its deviser, to be undervalued as a military potential.

With the restoration of public order under the strong government of the Tudor monarchy, the history of the English castle hurries to its close. Henceforth military building would be the concern not of feudal magnates but of the State—as illustrated by the remarkable coastal fortresses, provided for cannon, built along the Channel by Henry VIII. Yet the overmighty subject with his private army died hard. One of the last of the breed in England was Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham, who was executed by Henry VIII in 1521. Among the charges against him, it was alleged that he was recruiting a private army in Wales, just across the Severn from his castle of Thornbury in Gloucestershire (39), which he had begun to build in 1511. Colour is lent to this accusation by the colossal forecourt at Thornbury, a fortified enclosure containing ample barracks and stables, loopholed for artillery, and defended by a portcullised gatehouse: while the main castle, with its machicolated towers, portcullised entrance, arrow-slits, and gunloops, was certainly no mere show-piece of martial architecture. No wonder if bluff King Hal came to the conclusion that the overmighty Duke would be a safer subject minus his head!

By a whimsical contrast, it was Henry VIII himself who issued the last of the old-fashioned licences to crenellate. This was granted in 1533 to Sir William Fitzwilliam, afterwards first Earl of Southampton, whom the licence empowered, in the



archaic language of the Middle Ages, to 'embattle, fortify, crenellate and machicolate' his manor-house at Cowdray in Sussex. But the result of this martial phraseology was something quite different from Buckingham's unlicensed castle at Thornbury: for Cowdray, one of the most imposing Tudor ruins in England, is, for all its turrets and battlements, a castle only in make-belief, innocent of all defensive value.

With Cowdray, then, the history of castellar construction in England may be said to reach its end—but by no means the history of castles. For during the great Civil War of the next century the stout old walls and towers of many a baronial fortress, such as Ashby and Raglan, Corfe, Scarborough and Kenilworth, proved fully able to resist the heavy battering ordnance of the Roundheads.

The Tower-Houses of the North

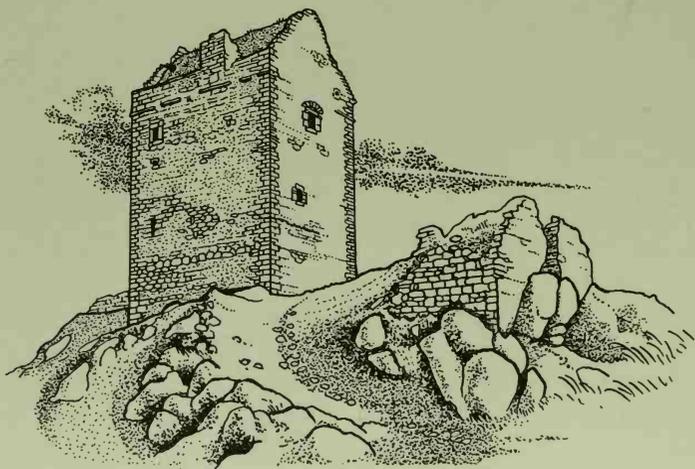
The disastrous outcome of Edward I's attempt to achieve by force the unity of Britain has left an indelible mark upon the domestic architecture of the northern English shires, and no less upon that of the Scotland which he strove so long and tenaciously to subdue. From the fourteenth century onwards, every lord's or squire's hall in the region north of Tees had perforce to be a strong fortalice. In the case of the smaller dwellings, the obvious solution to this problem was found in the tower-house. All over the northern shires they are found, ranging in size from such a complex and extraordinary structure as the great keep built by the Percies on top of the old Clavinging *motte* at Warkworth (40), to the numerous small 'peel' towers, as they came to be called, from the 'peel' or palisaded outer defence by which these towers were usually enclosed (page 51). The Warkworth tower-house must be regarded as a *tour de force*, not only by reason of its size but also because of the intricate ingenuity of its plan. Yet not a few of the other



40 Warkworth Castle

northern English tower-houses of the fourteenth century must be saluted as castles in their own right. Such are Belsay and Chipchase in Northumberland or Yanwath in Westmorland. Yanwath may serve as a specimen of its type. Standing on a bold wooded bluff overlooking the bonny Vale of Eamont, south of Penrith, it consists of a massive square tower, turreted and crenellated, built early in the fourteenth century, to which a hall-house has been added about fifty years later. A seventeenth-century writer fairly observes of this charming fortalice that it 'hath a delicate prospect when you are at it, and hath the grace of a little castle when you depart from it'.

Such a small, strongly fortified castelet as Yanwath illustrates, in startling fashion, the dire consequences of the Wars of Scottish Independence. As a result, in the north of England, over against the Scottish Border, warlike conditions persisted for another two hundred years. Here, therefore, the old Norman tradition of a square keep or tower-house was never forgotten. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we find numerous baron's houses, some large, some small, built on this plan. These northern tower-houses are not the great Crown fortresses or the strongholds of mighty feudal lords. They are the residences of the intermediate and minor landowners. The significant point about them is that they are entirely different in kind from the sort of dwelling in which these lesser gentry



41 *Smailholm Tower*

had been living before the Plantagenet onslaught upon Scotland. Previous to that unhappy venture, the country squires had dwelt in timber or stone halls, having at the upper end the *camera* or private rooms, and at the lower end the kitchen and offices. We can study at Aydon Castle, Northumberland, how such a peaceful establishment, in those iron years of war, had to be enclosed with a fortified curtain wall: and we have the proprietor's own word for it, in 1315—the year after Bannockburn—that 'he had lately fortified his dwelling house at Aydon with a wall of stone and lime against the King's enemies, the Scots'. Where a house was being erected *de novo*, it had perforce, under the new conditions, to be designed as a strong fortalice. For such requirements, in the case of a landowner of moderate resources, the scheme of a simple rectangular tower was obviously alike the most defensible and the most convenient.

For a similar reason, during those same centuries, the tower-house plan became exceedingly common throughout the disorderly realm of Scotland. Here it remained the characteristic pattern of a laird's 'house of fence' until far on into the seventeenth century (41). No other nation, in fact, has developed the tower-house theme to a greater extent, or rung the changes upon it in such a scintillating variety of designs. Yet the pedigree of the Scottish tower-houses remains an obscure one, for north of the Border there do not seem to have been many square stone keeps during the Norman period. Probably, therefore, the plain rectangular Scottish tower-houses of the fourteenth century, of which Threave Castle in Galloway may be cited as an impressive example, derive from those towers of timber or wattle and daub which we know were frequent in the thirteenth century and for long thereafter, though none have survived to teach us what they looked like. There is, however, clear evidence for the existence of stone tower-houses in Scotland before the War of Independence. So many castles north of the Tweed were demolished in the course of that desolating struggle that it is dangerous to be dogmatic upon the subject.

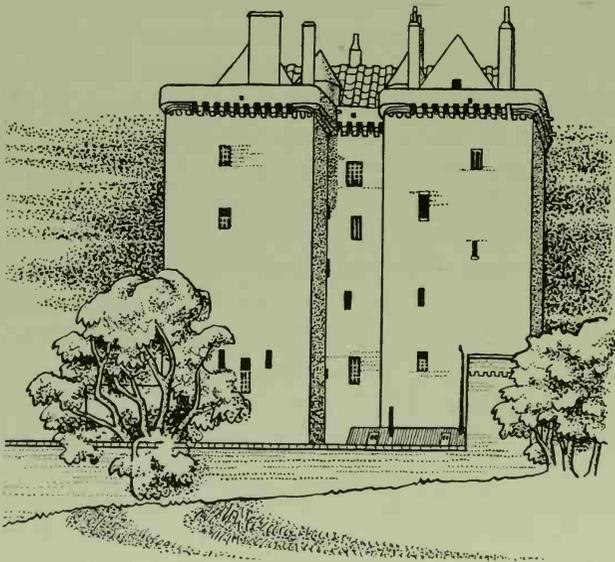
We have therefore to consider the existence, during the later Middle Ages in Britain, of a 'tower-house province' beyond the Tees, embracing all Scotland and the four northern English counties—Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland and Westmorland. In passing, it may be noted that Ireland forms a separate 'tower-house province'. Here also unsettled conditions,

persisting to an even greater degree, resulted in the erection of numerous structures of this type right down into the period of the Tudor and Stuart 'plantations'.

Of the northern English tower-houses the finest, beyond question, is Belsay in Northumberland. It consists of a rectangular main building, having on the west side two shallow projecting wings, which between them enfold the entrance, defended by a *bretasche* above. In this brief sketch we must concern ourselves only with the arrangements on the first floor. Here in the main building is the great hall; in the south wing we find the kitchen and main stair; while in the north wing is the solar or lord's private room. Thus on the first floor of this tower-house we find, conveniently restored to one flat, the normal medieval horizontal lay-out of a hall-house, the constituents of which, in a tower-house, were more usually piled inconveniently on top of each other. For the rest, Belsay Castle with its martial coronet of turrets and battlements, reminds us forcibly of Blind Harry's description of Ravensworth Castle in Yorkshire:

With turrettis fayr, and garrettis off gret prid.

From Belsay we pass north into Scotland at Borthwick in Midlothian (42), the noblest of British tower-houses. This



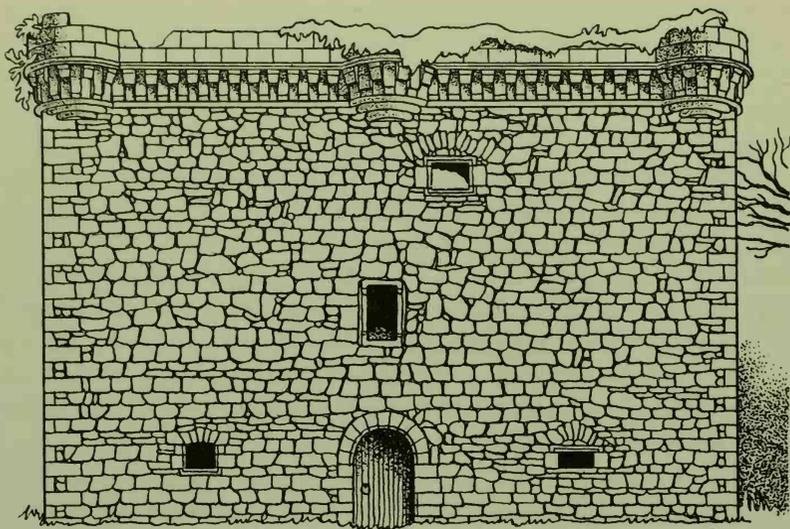
42 *Borthwick Castle*

stupendous castle was built pursuant to a royal licence to crenellate granted in 1430. Outside and inside, the tower is faced with hewn ashlar, of which it is calculated there are no less than 13,000 tons, while the weight of the entire building must be not less than 30,000 tons. Here, as at Belsay, we have a central block with two wings boldly projected on one side, so that the plan resembles the letter E with the middle bar struck out. Here again the first-floor plan supplies the key to the theme. As at Belsay, there is the same horizontal alignment of kitchen, hall and solar. But at Borthwick, an improvement on Belsay, the deep recess passes right back to the hall, and so contains a window, whereby the hall can enjoy the western sun. With its great height and heavy oversailing machicolated war-head, Borthwick Castle makes a most imposing appearance. Moreover it is almost fireproof, being stone-vaulted over all the principal rooms. The topmost vaults are pointed, and upon them rests the stone-slabbéd roof.

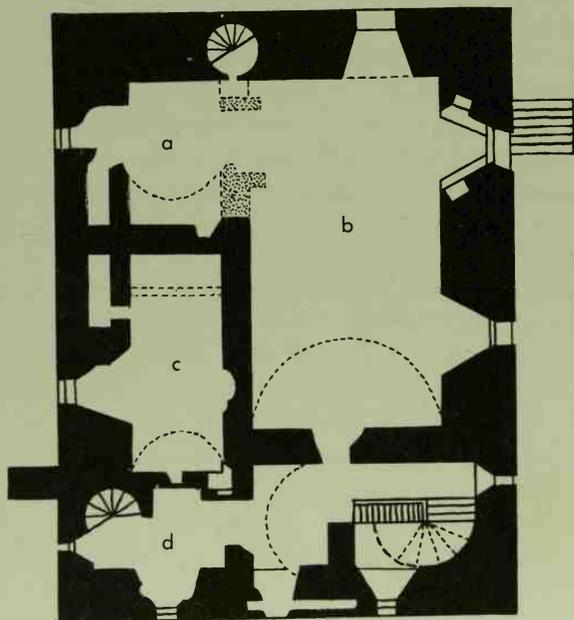
In Belsay and Borthwick we note the attempt to recover within the up-ended tower-house plan, the normal horizontal lay-out of kitchen and offices, hall and solar. The Scots are a logical race, and it is no matter of surprise that we find the Belsay/Borthwick theme pursued to its rational conclusion at Craignethan Castle in Lanarkshire (43 and 44)—the Tillietudlem of Scott's *Old Mortality*. The central tower-house of this romantic pile is devised on a plan which is probably unique in Britain.

Let us look again at the Borthwick plan, and imagine that in it the kitchen wing is turned or folded upwards at right angles, so as to bring it parallel with the hall, thus filling up the 're-entrant' or hollow between the two wings. So the normal horizontal sequence of kitchen, hall and private room is reassembled within the framework of a rectangular tower-house—the whole being articulated round a mid-rib or central diaphragm wall. The result inevitably is to produce a tower-house whose area bulks larger than its height. It is in fact a reversion to the broad and low type of Norman keep which we studied at Castle Rising (*page 15*).

In its present form Craignethan Castle, though embodying older building, is mainly the work of Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, executed by James V in 1540. A striking feature is the large retainers' forecourt, devised for barrack accommodation and loopholed for cannon and musketry. It reminds us



43 Craignethan Castle: West front of Keep



- a Private room
- b Hall
- c Kitchen
- d Guard room

44 Craignethan Castle: Plan of Keep

immediately of Thornbury; and it is curious to note the parallel careers and fates of those two contemporary overmighty subjects, in Scotland and England, Sir James Hamilton of Finnart and Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham.

Among the Scottish tower-houses an increasing conflict is apparent between the older and primary need for defence and the subsequent and secondary hankering after comfort. Defensive strength could not be maintained—for example, by building the walls of enormous thickness, with few and narrow windows, door on the first floor, and gloomy vaulted fireproof interiors—without entirely precluding comfort. On the other hand, if comfort were sought, by slapping out large windows conveniently disposed and by bringing the door to ground-level, the defensive strength of the tower-house was correspondingly weakened. Hence in the later Scottish tower-houses there emerges a state of tension between these two conflicting requirements; strength and convenience.

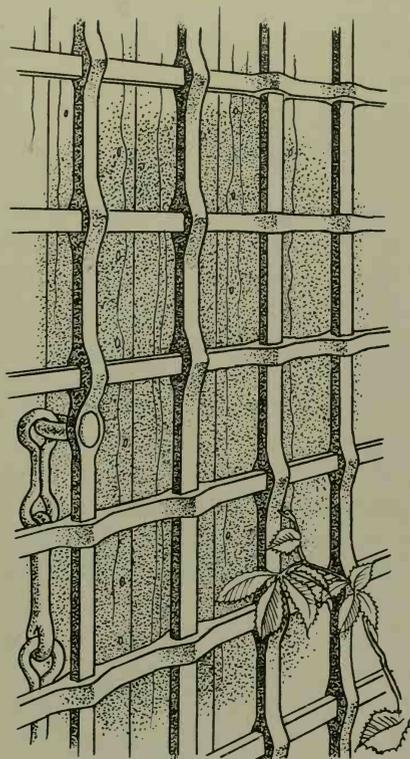
Hard upon this tension came another stress created by the new problems posed by firearm defence. Small arms—hand guns or arquebuses—such as could be used within the confines of a narrow building, came into general use about the middle of the sixteenth century. Previously, the tower-house had tended to grow to a height, and to present a tall, slender profile: for the double reason that the higher are the defenders on their wall-head, the more secure they are from the missiles shot up at them, while the smaller is the ground area of wall-face exposed to the sapper's tool. But with the introduction of firearms the axis of defence changes from the vertical to the horizontal. Instead of defending their tower from a war-head, the garrison defended it through gunloops provided in flanking towers or wings, usually echeloned at the angles of the central structure.

An interesting feature about these later fortified houses is that now comfort and defence are no longer in conflict. They act together. The flanking features, required to command the main structure with musketry, also provided extra private accommodation at a time when, with improved social standards, the old gregarious life in a house of superimposed halls was becoming distasteful. Moreover, as the flanking towers must be set out diagonally in order to cover the two adjoining sides

of the central building, they therefore interfered as little as possible with its lighting. Furthermore, the possibilities offered by flanking coverage at the upper levels of the structure led to the characteristic development of the open 'round' at the angles and its successor, the roofed-in turret with its pointed helmet, that forms so charming an element in the picturesque skyline of our later Scottish castellated mansions.

A very characteristic feature of the Scottish tower-houses, and one to which they owe much of their scenic charm, is the graceful 'batter' with which their walls are built. The profile is never vertical, but the wall-planes are ingathered as they rise, the intake being accentuated in the upper two-thirds of the structure. This mannerism has its origin in considerations both utilitarian and defensive. As the inside face of the wall is vertical, while the outside is intaken, economy of masonry is secured at the higher levels, where a great thickness of walling is no longer requisite for defensive purposes. Economy in masonry at the higher levels of course involves a corresponding saving in the labour of hoisting up the stones. Moreover, due relief is obtained for the oversailing parapet without giving the structure a top-heavy aspect; and the defenders above, owing to the outward slope of the wall below them, do not require to expose themselves so much in shooting arrows, discharging muskets or hurling down stones and other defensive materials against the attackers at the base.

Whether at ground-level or on the first floor, the entrance of a Scottish tower-house was always strongly defended. Often, as at Affleck Castle in Angus, there is a machicolated jutting on the wall-top overhead. The portal itself is secured by an outer wooden door and an inner iron gate, both held in position, when closed, by stout draw-bars. The iron gate is placed close behind the wooden door, so that the latter cannot be opened until the former has been swung back. If the door be burned or broken up, the iron gate behind it holds, and the defenders can shoot out between its bars. The wooden door is made up in two stout thicknesses, the front of vertical and the back of horizontal boards, all clinched together with strong iron nails. The iron gate—or 'yett' (45), to use the Scotch term—is constructed on a most ingenious plan, the mode of penetration of the intersecting bars being reversed in opposite quarters. Obviously this device



45 *A Scottish Castle 'yett'*

lends great strength to the gate. At the large castle of Doune in Perthshire, the iron 'yett', so constructed, is in two leaves, with a wicket for letting a single person out or in. All the windows in a Scottish castle were defended by 'grilles' or iron gratings constructed in the same clever fashion, and often projected in the form of a cage, for the better protection of the window. From the fifteenth century onwards, the Scottish practice was to provide the upper two-thirds, or thereby, with leaded glass, while the lower part was furnished with shutters opening inwards, for ventilation. Thus in the ruined structure it will be noticed that the groove and bat-holes for the glass are not carried down to the windowsill.

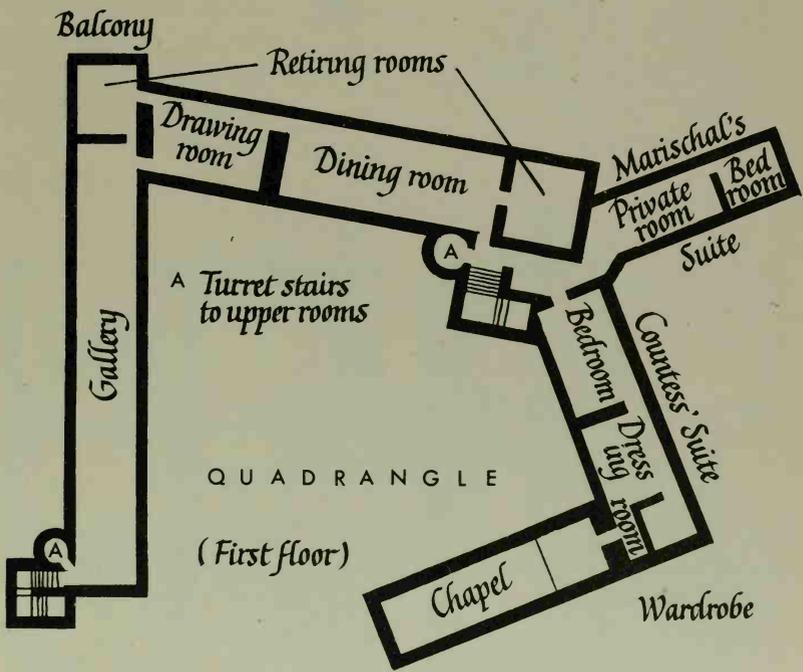
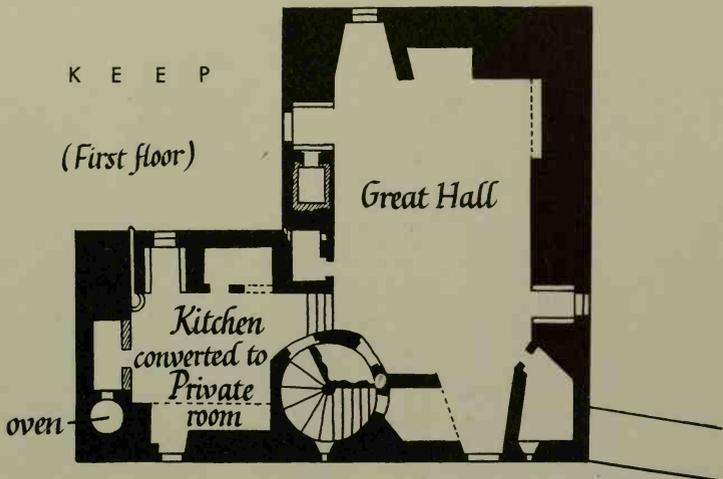
It is remarkable that the ingenious devising of the Scottish 'yetts' and 'grilles' was never copied south of the Border. In England, the practice was to make the vertical bars all pass in front of the horizontals, the whole being riveted or clasped

together and boarded up on both sides, in front with vertical and behind with horizontal boards.

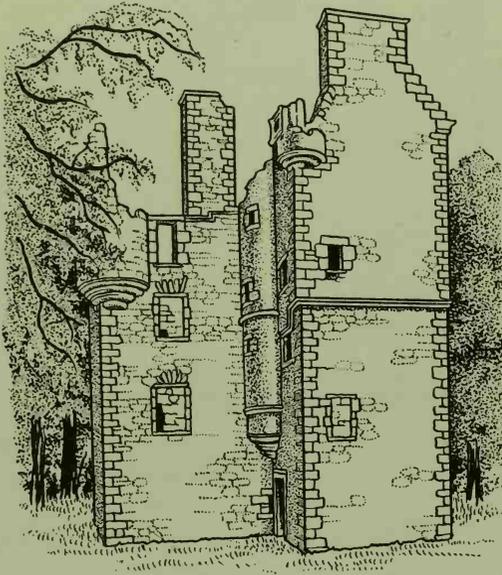
Usually a Scottish tower-house finishes above with an embattled wall-walk, within which rises a pack-saddled roof between crow-stepped gables. In some Border towers, one gable may carry a beacon stance, to give warning of an English raid. The most famous example of such a building is the mysteriously named 'Repentance Tower' on Trailtrow Hill in Annandale, concerning which it is specifically enacted in the Border Laws that the beacon on the tower-head 'be kept and never fail burning so long as the Englishman remain in Scotland, and with ane bell, to be at the head of the firepan, which shall ring whenever the fray is'.

Amid the almost infinite variety of the later Scottish tower-houses a number of types may be distinguished. Both the simple rectangle (as at Threave) and the L-plan, i.e., a rectangular tower with a wing attached at the end of one side (as at Affleck) continued in use until the latest period. Some of these differ little from their precursors of the fourteenth century, but others, while adhering to the ancestral design, exhibit a marked advance in comfort. In some castles the wing is set aside for the staircase, whereby a more convenient access is obtained to the main floors of the towers and the danger is avoided of weakening one of its angles by the well of the spiral stair. Another advantage of the L-plan is that it suggested a strong position for the door, which is placed in the re-entrant angle, protected by the limbs of the building. Hence in L-towers it is usually removed to the ground floor—a great advance in convenience. One of the earliest examples of an L-keep is David's Tower at Edinburgh Castle, commenced in 1367. Another good instance is the keep at Dunnottar in the Mearns (46), built shortly before 1394.

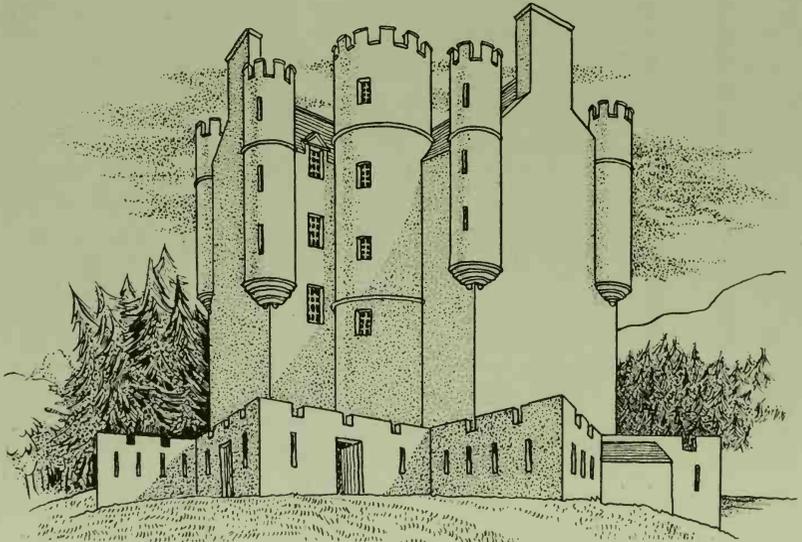
In later examples of this plan the wing is often used to contain the main stair up to the first floor, above which access is obtained by a smaller stair in a corbelled turret, the whole of the wing above the first floor being thus available for private rooms. Since such rooms in the wing did not require to be so lofty as the public halls in the main structure, three or four storeys of private apartments could be fitted into the wing, corresponding in level to the great hall and upper hall or solar



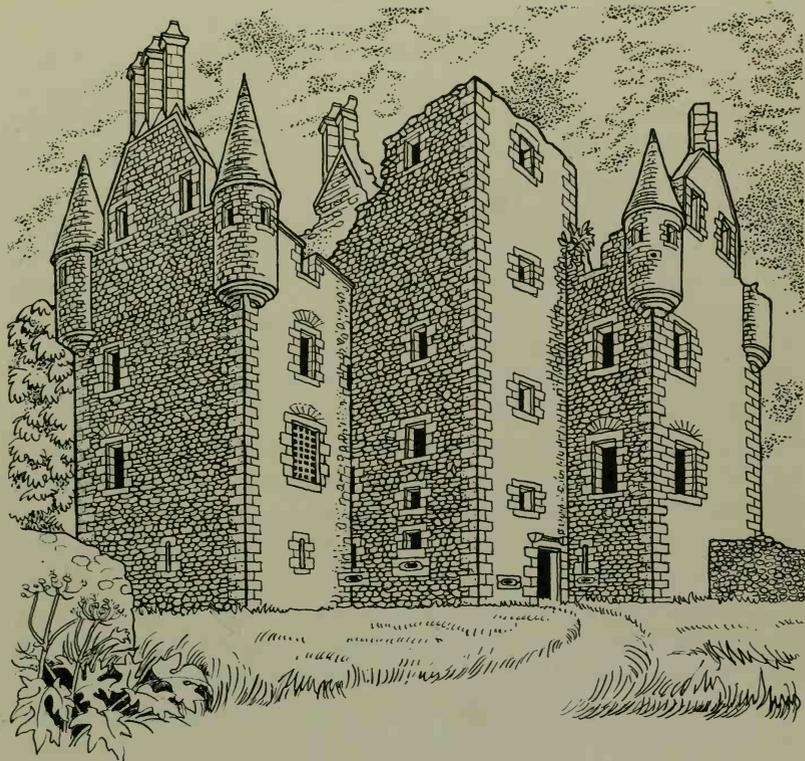
in the body of the tower-house. This arrangement is well seen in Greenknowe Tower, Berwickshire (47). Or a single stair, serving all floors, may be housed in a special tower, round or square, placed in the re-entrant angle (48). In the latest tower-houses on the L-plan (49 and 50), the traditional internal arrangement, recalling its evolution from the single tower, is often discarded, and instead of a single hall on each flat of the main building, and corresponding private rooms in the wing, the interiors are broken up into three or more rooms without reference to the original plan, whose outline alone is preserved.



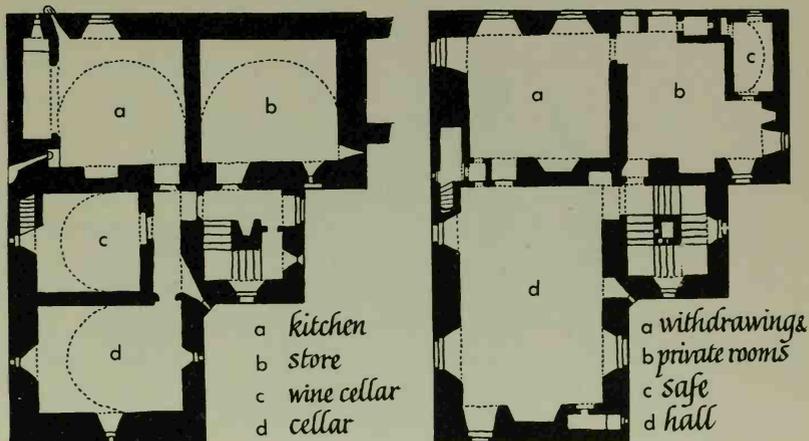
47 *Greenknowe Castle*



48 *Braemar Castle*



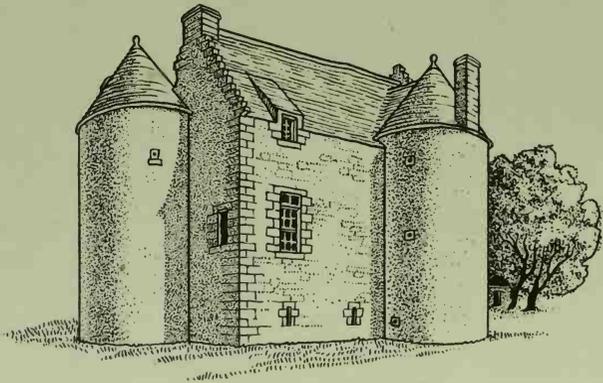
49 *Leslie Castle*



50 *Leslie Castle: Ground- and first-floor plans*

The Later Scottish Castles

In the course of the sixteenth century, as we have already learned, the theme of the Scottish 'house of fence' was radically altered by the introduction of musketry. As the possibility of flanking defence by gunloops on the ground floor is realised, the castle undergoes a process of lateral expansion, towers being run out *en échelon* to sweep the faces of the main house. Pushed to its logical conclusion, this process results in the characteristically Scottish 'Z-plan' (51). This consists of a rectangular main building with a tower attached diagonally at each of two opposite corners. Each tower flanks two sides of the main building, while the main building in its turn flanks the towers. Hence it is impossible to approach the castle from any quarter without coming under fire. 'Dead ground' (see page 22) outside the external angles of the flanking towers can be covered from above by corbelled turrets. Something no doubt in this clever and consistent device appealed to the logical mind of the Scot: but if the Scot is logical he is likewise economical; and we may well believe he was attracted by the canny device which made two towers do the work of four in flanking all four sides of his castle. Perhaps therefore it is not without significance that the greatest number of Z-castles is found in Aberdeenshire, the traditional home of frugality!

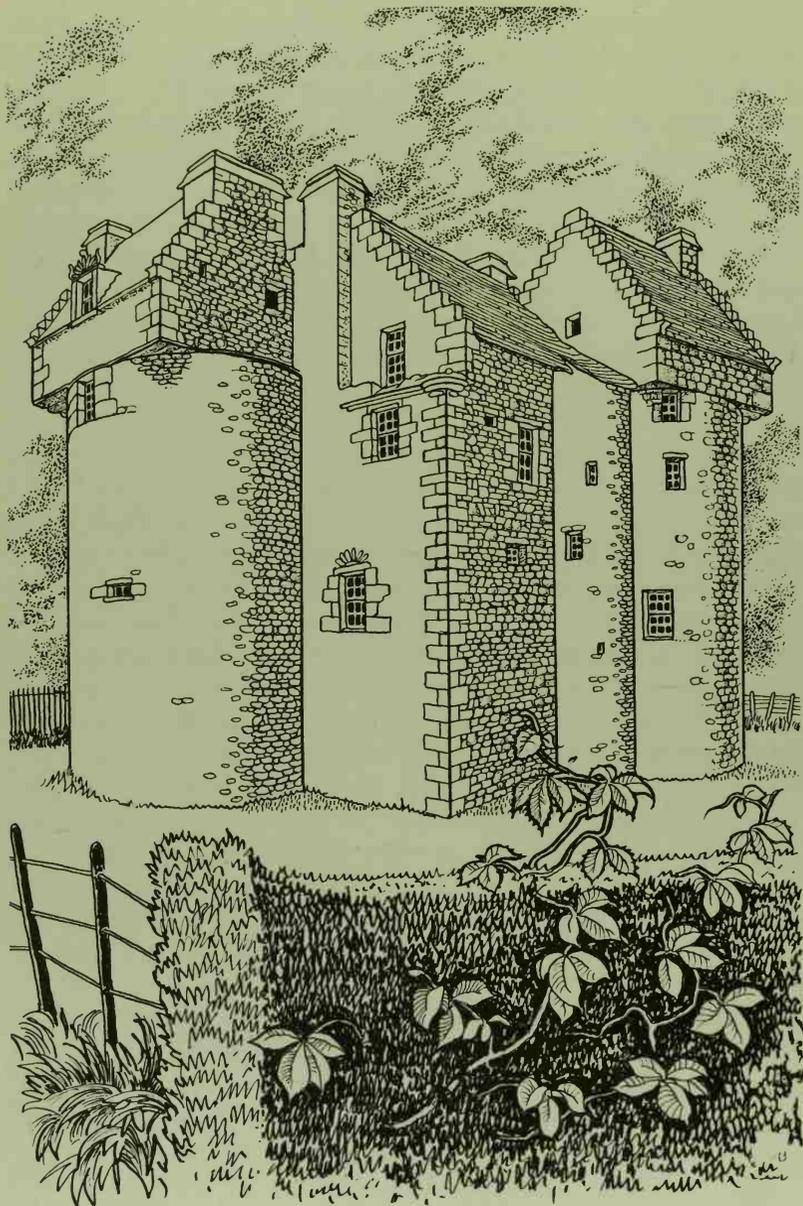


51 Terpersie Castle

These Z-castles make an indelible impression of sturdy and repelling strength. They face the foe like a boxer, with one arm on guard and the other withdrawn for a punch. In some cases both the flanking towers are square, as at Glenbuchat, Aberdeenshire. Elsewhere they are round, for example at the northernmost castle in Britain, Muness on the Isle of Unst. Or one tower may be square and the other round, as in one of the grandest of the later Scottish castellated mansions, Castle Fraser in Aberdeenshire. One of the most remarkable examples of a Z-castle is Claypotts (52) on the outskirts of Dundee, a residence of Grahame of Claverhouse. Here the flanking towers are round, but are corbelled out above into rectangular 'cap-houses' with crow-stepped gables and pack-saddle roofs, producing a skyline as fantastic as it is picturesque and aesthetically satisfying.

While the Z-plan, whether evolved from the older tower-house or hall-house, may be regarded as the logical and final development on Scottish castellar construction, castles of other types were also built, particularly by the kings and the greater nobles. A good example of the extended designs in vogue during the fifteenth century is the great castle of Dirleton in East Lothian. Inwrought with the fragments of a powerful fortress destroyed in the War of Independence, we have here a large and well-designed castle that exhibits in a striking way the new improved social standards. In the south front is a noble gatehouse, with a lofty pointed arch crowned by turrets. The chief mass of buildings on the east side contains a spacious hall, with a large kitchen at one end and the lord's suite at the other, all raised over vaulted offices. The hall has a service passage to the kitchen and a hatch to the bakery below. One of the lord's rooms is fitted up as a chapel. Beneath it are two gloomy prisons, the lower one partly rock-bound and entered by a trap door. In the sixteenth century, to this group of buildings was added a small self-contained house in an early Renaissance style. All these edifices, together with the towers, round and square, remaining from the early castle, are grouped irregularly round a small courtyard on the summit of the castle rock.

Castles designed round a courtyard, more or less symmetrical, continued to be in fashion, especially in larger buildings, such as the royal palaces of Edinburgh, Stirling, Linlithgow and



52 Claypotts Castle

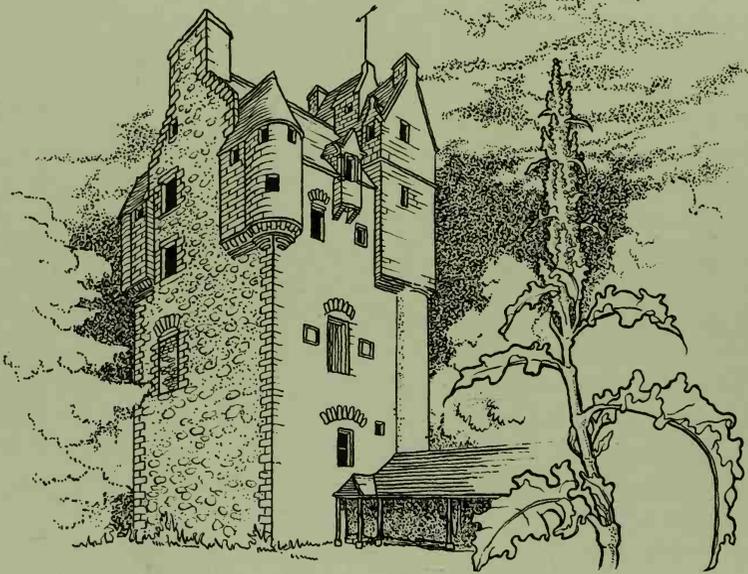
Falkland, and in residences of the higher nobility, like Roslin, Crichton, and Craigmillar in Midlothian, and Fyvie in Aberdeenshire. Some of these great courtyard castles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are combined with an older tower that forms the nucleus of the structure. The courtyard plan is also occasionally found in smaller castles, especially in the north. An interesting example is Tolquhon in Aberdeenshire. Here to a fifteenth-century tower was added in 1584-9 a courtyard mansion, to which the favourite Z-plan was applied, by attaching two towers, one round and the other square, at diagonally opposite corners.

A fine example of a late courtyard house on a large scale, dating from about 1600, is the quadrangle or 'palace' at Dunnottar. The basement contains kitchen, brewhouse, bakery and stores, with a range of guest rooms in the west wing. On the first floor are the dining-room, drawing-room and a long gallery (a feature now introduced under continental influence), with separate private suites for the lord and his lady (46).

Of the royal palaces, space can be found here only for a brief notice of Linlithgow, the most symmetrically planned of them all, and probably the ablest piece of medieval secular design in Scotland. This noble ruin, burnt by Hawley's dragoons in 1746, stands beautifully on a green brow overlooking Linlithgow Loch. The oldest part of the existing pile dates from soon after 1400, and the Palace reached its final form under James V, whose work shows the quaint mixture of Gothic and Renaissance detail characteristic of that reign. But the north wing of the Palace was reconstructed, in the then fashionable neo-classical style, between 1618 and 1633. The architecture of all periods is marked by exceptional richness and beauty.

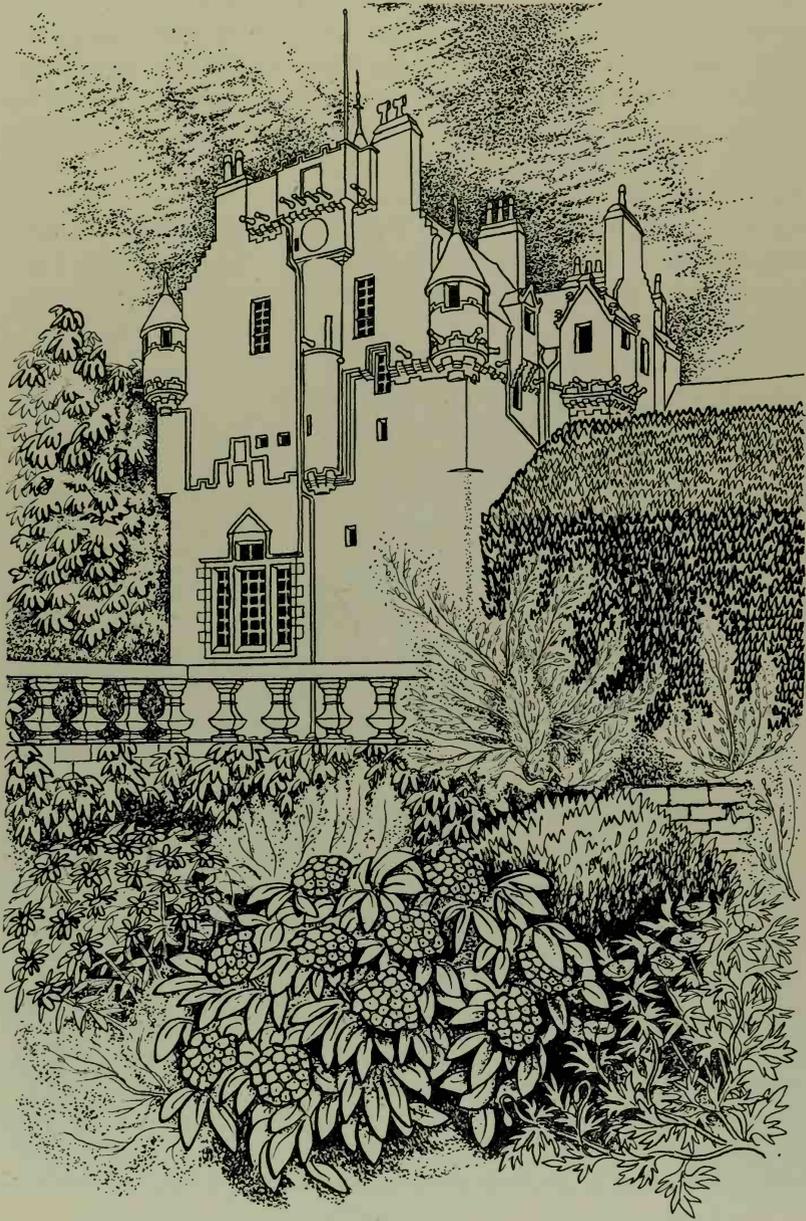
Coincident with the various modifications in plan, corresponding changes were being wrought in elevations and details. All these were by way of converting originally utilitarian or military features to domestic or aesthetic purposes. The old open parapet on the wall-heads was now omitted, and the pack-saddle roof, resting between picturesque crow-stepped gables, was lit on the flanks by quaintly wrought dormer windows. The simple corbel-course, formerly requisite to carry forward the parapet and leave the whole wall-head

free for the roundway, now developed into a highly ornate cornice. This enriched corbelling became one of the most striking features of the latest Scottish castles, introduced in riotous exuberance without reference to structural needs. The old open turrets for flanking defence were now roofed in with gabled or pointed roofs. The gargoyles, no longer required to drain a parapet, are retained, often in impossible positions, and sometimes carved as imitation cannon. In these latest castles there is a marked contrast between the unadorned severity of the lower portions and the flamboyant decoration above. This is well illustrated by Amisfield Tower, Dumfriesshire (53),



53 *Amisfield Tower*

built in 1600. Here the ground plan is still that of the primitive square keep, but by an effective use of corbelling the upper part is worked into an intricate skyline of gables, turrets and dormers. This last and richest development of castellated architecture in Britain is known as the Scottish Baronial style, and flourished especially at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The lairds were in funds, owing to spoliation of the Church's lands or participation in commerce; while the Union of the Crowns at long last gave the northern realm peace and prosperity favourable to an outburst of building (54). It is



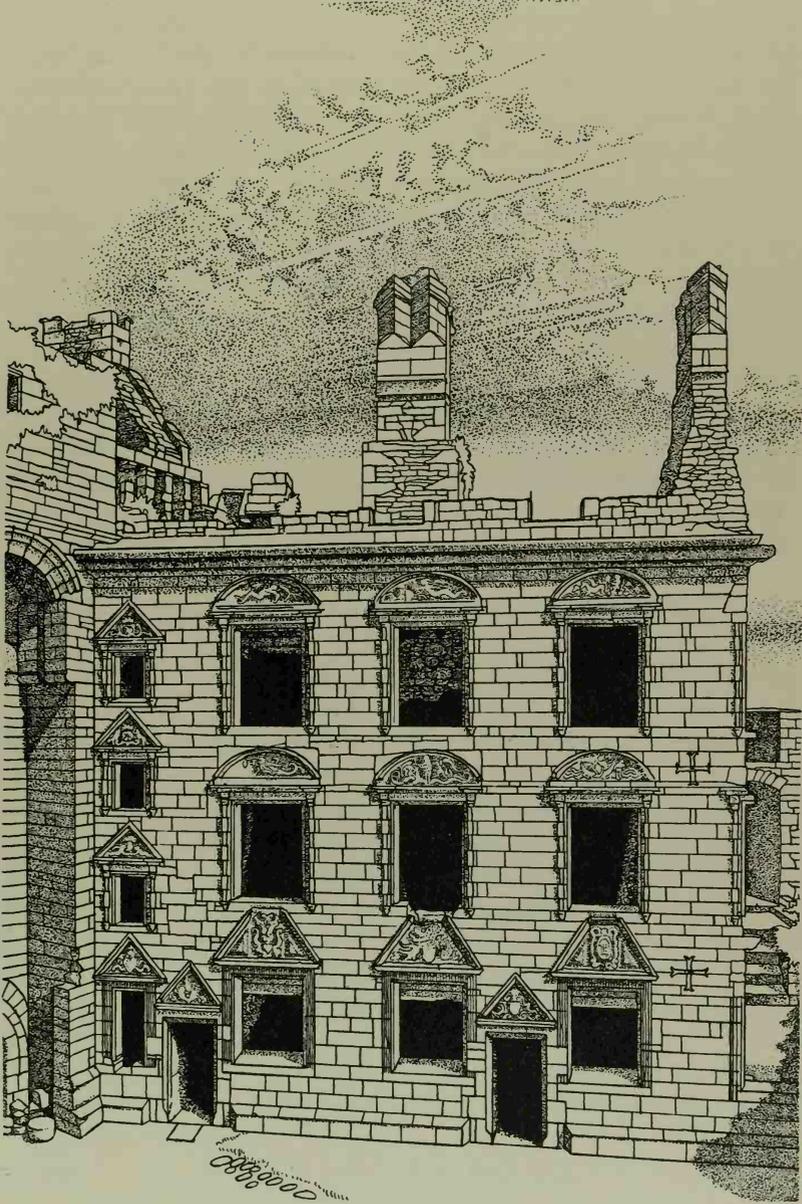
54 Crathes Castle

important to remember that all the main characteristics of this beautiful style are native in origin, being directly traceable back to practical features from which they have been aesthetically evolved by a logical development. There is no question of the style being imported ready-made from France, as has sometimes been asserted. Where foreign masons were employed, as in the royal palaces; or English plasterers as in Craigievar Castle, Aberdeenshire, and Muchalls in the Mearns; their work can easily be recognised. Nevertheless it is clear that the building magnates and their master-masons had attentively studied the contemporary architecture of France and the Low Countries. The influence of Blois, for example, is obvious in the stately row of oriel windows built in 1602 at Huntly Castle, Aberdeenshire. In the Earl's Palace at Kirkwall in the remote Orkneys we have what has justly been saluted as 'one of the most accomplished Renaissance buildings in Scotland'. Here again the influence of French design is manifest. Yet the ordainer of the Palace was Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, and its devisers were his master of works, Andrew Crawford, and his master-mason, John Ross. Their names leave us in no doubt as to their nationality.

So also in Aberdeenshire, the special home of the Scottish Baronial style, we can still admire the splendid castellated mansions erected, round about the turn of the sixteenth century, by two dynasties of native master-masons, the Bells and the Leipers.

In a category by itself is the 'dainty fabric' built in 1634 by the first Earl of Nithsdale at his stately castle of Caerlaverock in Dumfriesshire (55). It is a lovely essay in neo-classical Renaissance, virginal in purity and grace, to which there appears to be no parallel in Britain. Whoever was the designer, the building clearly owes much to Nithsdale himself, known to his contemporaries as 'the philosopher'. Doubtless it was he who prescribed the themes for the pediments of the doors and windows, carved with subjects either heraldic or culled from classical mythology. His glorious building, erected in the hopeful dawn of the seventeenth century, survives as a rare blossom of that early flowering of the New Humanism, which in Scotland was blighted by the chill blast of the Covenant.

Within its watery cincture, Caerlaverock Castle displays



55 *Caerlaverock Castle*

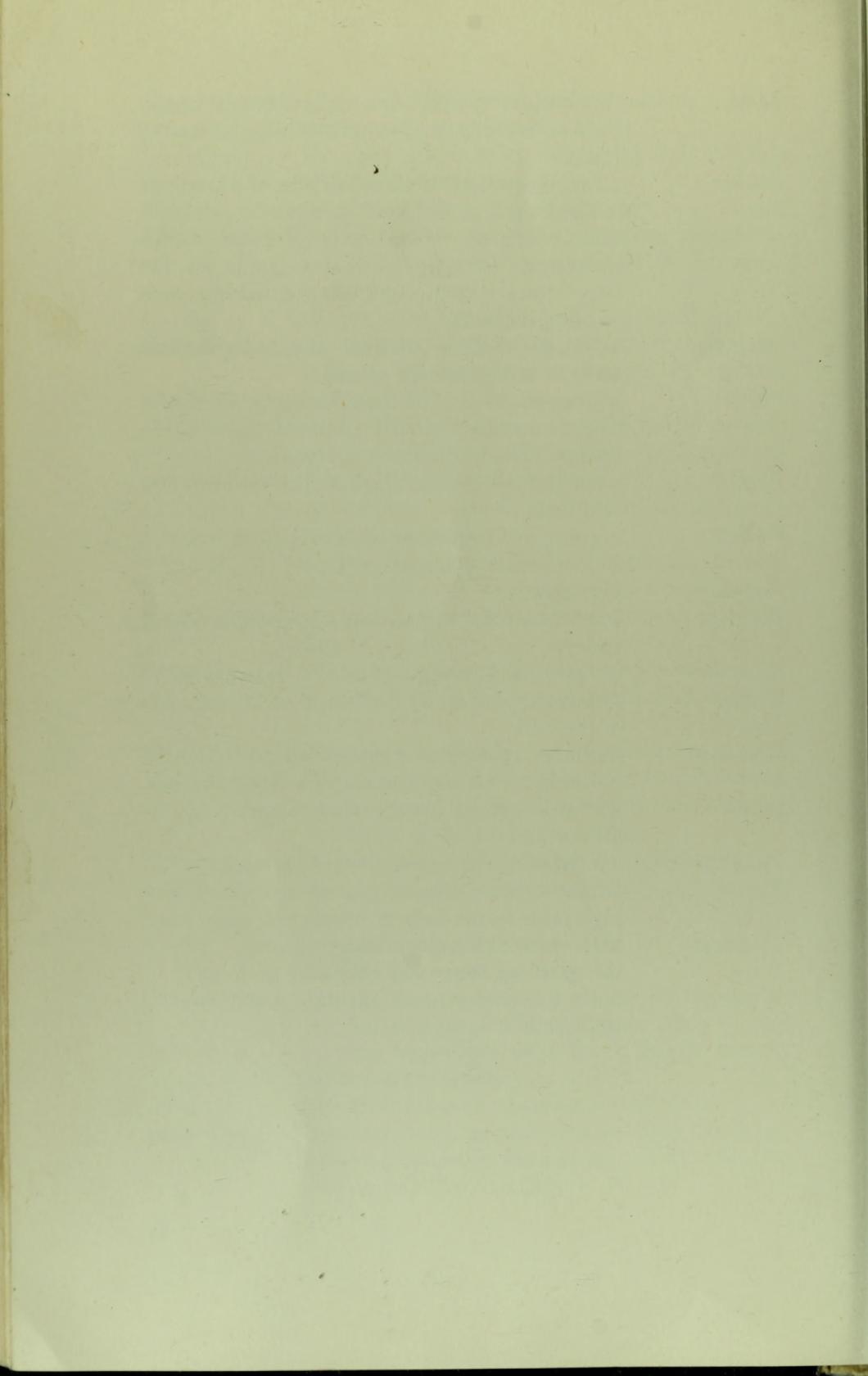
building work of every period from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. When after a long and gallant defence in the Royalist cause, it opened its gates to the Covenanters, it was plundered of everything it contained, in spite of the solemn promise given by the besieging commander. An inventory of the loot reveals to us how splendid was the furnishing of a Scottish nobleman's house in the time of Charles I. We read of canopied beds, some having curtains fringed with silk; of a 'falling bed', presumably like a modern bed-settee; of tables, of chairs and stools, the best of which had red velvet coverings fringed with crimson silk and studded with gilt nails; of other chairs and 'cutch'—i.e. uncanopied beds—all garnished with silk and silver; of five dozen tapestried chairs, while others were covered with brown silk embroidered in yellow, or red cloth embroidered in black, and hangings; of cupboards, trunks and chests, one of which was covered with gold lace; of a pair of virginals, of tablecloths, napkins, towels and sheets, the finer of which were made of damask; of velvet or satin suits; of family portraits; and last, but not least, of a library which had cost the then considerable sum of £200.

Glossary

- Adulterine castles:* castles erected without a royal licence
- Allure:* the wall-walk on top of a curtain
- Arquebus:* a primitive form of hand gun
- Ashlar:* masonry of squared and carefully dressed blocks
- Aumbry:* a mural cupboard
- Base-court:* the outer or lower ward of a castle
- Bretasche:* a hoarding (*q.v.*)
- Bailey:* the courtyard of a castle; usually applied to the earthwork enclosure attached to or surrounding a Norman *motte*
- Barbican:* a forework or external defence of a gateway: often on the far side of the ditch
- Bastion:* an open projecting work, angular or rounded, at the corner of a fortification
- Batter:* the inward and upward slope of an external wall-face
- Bower:* the lady's apartment, or suite
- Buttery:* the apartment where wine and ale were stored
- Buttress:* a deep pilaster or vertical strengthening mass, applied to a wall
- Corbels:* stone brackets for supporting a projecting battlement or turret
- Crenellate:* to fortify: *crenellations* are the battlements on top of a tower or curtain wall
- Crosslet:* a loophole arranged in the form of a cross
- Curtain:* the screen wall enclosing the courtyard of a stone castle
- Dais:* the raised platform for the 'high table', at the upper end of the hall
- Dernier ressort:* the last refuge in a fortress
- Donjon:* the keep or principal strong part of a castle
- Dormer:* a window partly in the wall and partly in the roof
- Doone:* a Celtic word (*dun*) meaning a fortress: sometimes used in the Highlands of Scotland to signify a Norman earthwork castle

- Drawbridge:* a movable or hoisting bridge spanning a pit or ditch at the entrance of a castle
- Embrasures:* the open spaces in an embattled wall through which the archer shoots
- Enceinte:* the fortified enclosure of a castle
- En échelon:* in fortification where a flanking feature is set out diagonally to the axis of the main structure
- Familia:* the personal household of a feudal lord
- Early English:* the term applied to the earliest or thirteenth-century phase ('first pointed') of Gothic architecture
- Forebuilding:* in a Norman keep, an external structure, usually lower than the main tower, and containing the defended entrance
- Forestair:* an external open stair, leading to the upper floor of a house
- Gargoyles:* spouts, often fancifully or grotesquely carved, for throwing off rain-water from a parapet
- Garth:* the courtyard or internal enclosure, open to the sky, of a castle
- Hoarding:* a timber oversailing structure erected on a wall-head to facilitate command of the ground below
- Keep:* the *donjon* or principal tower of a castle
- Keep-gatehouse:* the principal and frontal mass in an Edwardian castle, combining the fortified entrance with the residence of the lord or castellan
- Laird:* in Scotland, a minor baron or small landlord
- Loophole:* a vertical slit for air, light, or shooting through
- Lower:* an opening in the roof of a hall to let out the smoke from a central hearth
- Machicolations:* spaces left open between corbels for the downward discharge of offensive materials
- Mantle:* a term sometimes used for a simple curtain wall without towers
- Merlons:* the solid portions of an embattled wall
- Meurtrière:* 'murder hole', an aperture or void left in an entrance passage for casting down offensive materials on an assailant

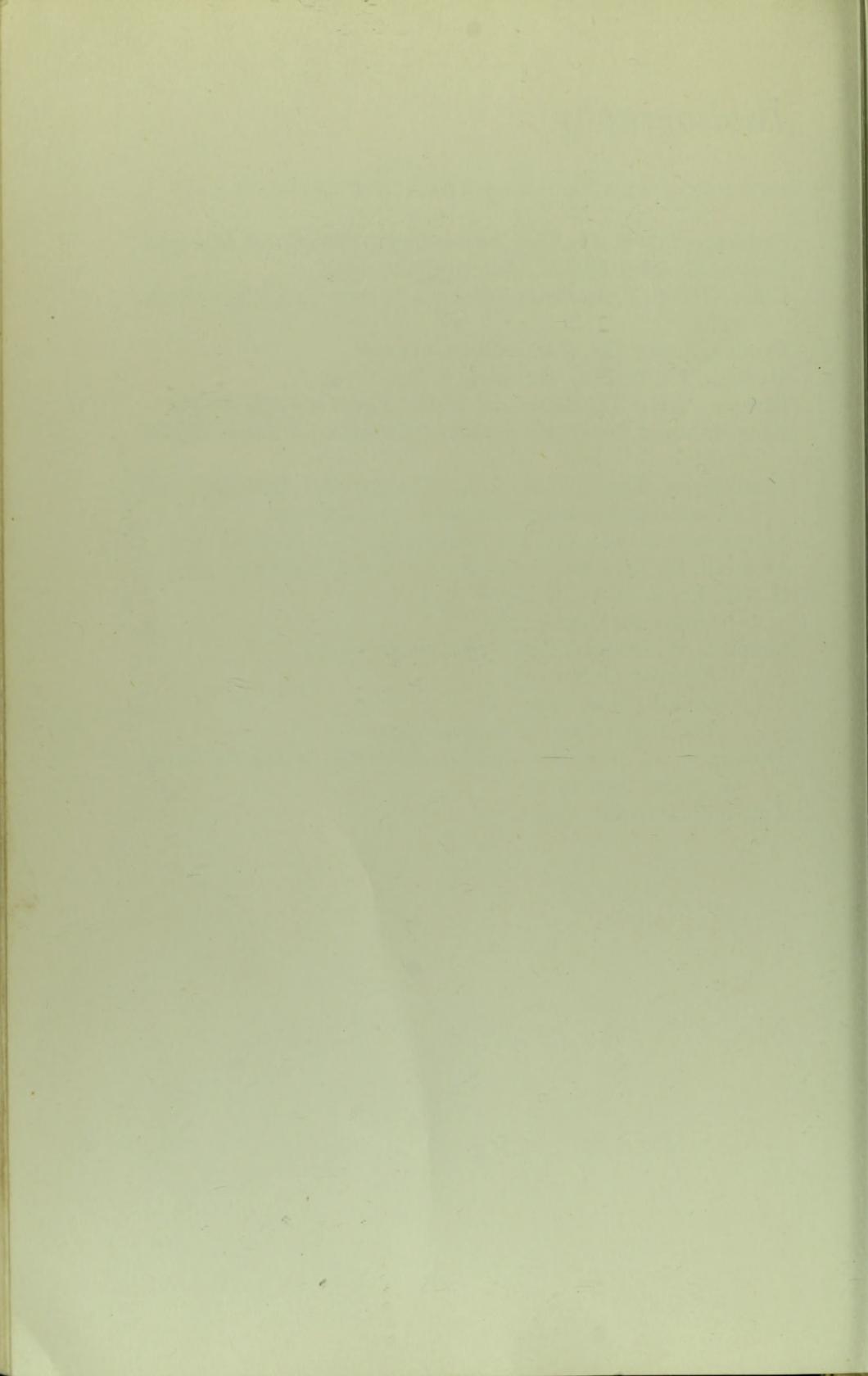
- Motte:* the earthen mound of an early Norman castle; once crowned by a palisade enclosing a wooden tower
- Oilette:* a round opening, often at the base of a loophole
- Peel:* a word used in Scotland to describe the palisaded defences of an early Norman castle. Sometimes wrongly used as a name for the stone towers frequently erected within such wooden defences
- Pilaster:* a broad shallow vertical strip, or shallow buttress strengthening a wall
- Pit:* a stone-lined or rock-cut opening in front of a castle entrance, usually spanned by a drawbridge: also, in Scotland, a dungeon
- Plinth:* a spreading or sloped base at the external foot of a wall
- Portcullis:* a grating of iron or wood, dropped in a slot so as to close an entrance passage
- Postern:* a side-gate
- Putlogs:* short beams for supporting a projecting timber gallery
- Rainures:* the gaffs or hoisting beams of a drawbridge
- Screens:* a narrow passage at the lower or kitchen end of the hall
- Shell-keep:* the term applied to a stone wall replacing the palisade round the summit of a Norman *motte*
- Solar:* the lord's private room or suite, opening usually off the hall
- Table dormant:* a fixed table, in contrast to trestle boards
- Tester:* a fixed canopy, usually placed over the dais or high table in the hall, or over a four-poster bed
- Trunnions:* axles on which a drawbridge turned
- Ward:* the garth or courtyard enclosure of a castle
- Weepers:* holes for carrying off the rain-water from a wall-walk



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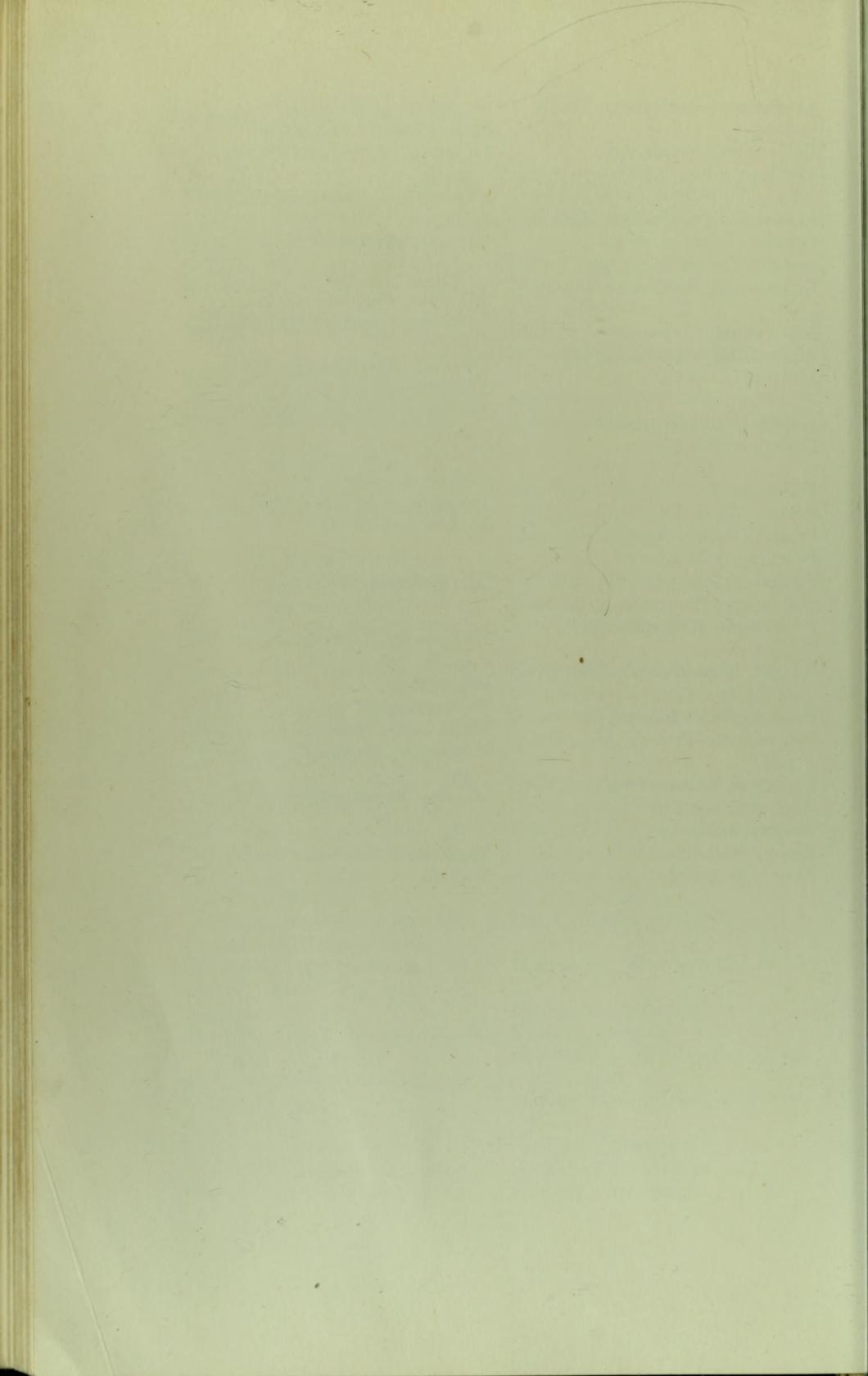


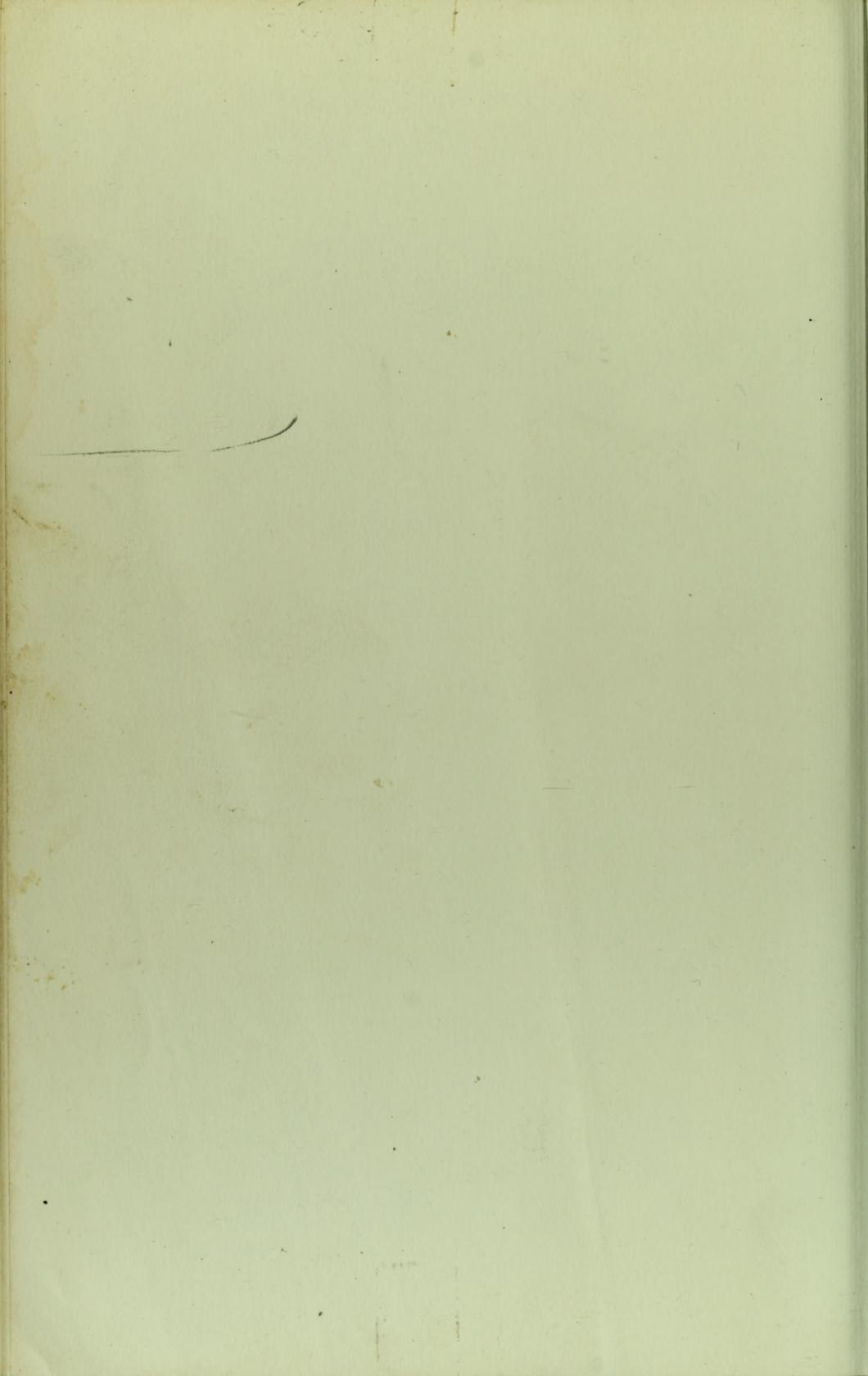
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