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The Architectural History of Tintern Abbey

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THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF TINTERN ABBEY.

By THOMAS BLASHILL.

THE materials for a history of this, the most picturesque of our abbeys are to be found chiefly in its ruins. We have, indeed, some particulars of its charters, a few references to it in wills and chronicles, some scanty, but interesting, records of visits to the establishment, and the usual valuations of its assets. We can fix, as it happens, the day when it became a Cistercian Monastery; the October morning, a century-and-a-half afterwards, when the first mass was celebrated in the bright new Choir, and the date of its dissolution as a religious house. But there remains no chronicle, or more general history,—such as was usually compiled in a monastery—to shew its growth and varying fortunes, its line of Abbots, with the characters of its inmates, and to reflect the dim lights and feeble echoes from the outer world, that pierced the seclusion of this spot.

As it is essential to the proper study of these buildings that we understand something of the constitution of the Cistercian Order, we are fortunate in being able to refer to the paper prepared by the Right Rev. Bishop Twells, which clearly shows its origin, its relation to other religious orders, and some of its peculiar rules as to sites, buildings, and the routine of worship and duty.

The Cistercian Order, having been founded in 1098, and introduced into England at the latest in 1128, Walter de Clare, who was the third son of Richard de Bienfait (a relative and companion of the Conqueror, and founder of the powerful family of Clare), was minded to found a monastery in the part of Monmouthshire of which he had lately obtained violent possession. He chose, not unnaturally, the new and popular order which sprang from Citeaux, and Tintern is reckoned as the third Cistercian Abbey in

this country, dating from the seventh of the ides of May (May 9th), 1131, the thirty-first year of Henry 1st. The precise mode of its institution is unknown. The French Abbey of l'Aumone was its mother house—possibly sending some of its own members to plant the new religious colony; possibly taking into its community two or three English monks, and teaching them the new monastic rule.

No site could better fit the Cistercian ideal. Their houses are remote from towns, and secluded from society, usually in valleys, by rivers, where moist meadows are hemmed in by rough wooded hills. Urban sites would have been difficult to obtain, and the choicest of such spots had long been occupied by the older Benedictines; but such sites as this were unoccupied, and a vigorous government had but lately made them reasonably safe. Their agricultural value, yet dormant, was waiting to be aroused by such manual labour as was exacted by the Cistercian rule. As a matter of convenience the Cloister and domestic buildings had in this case to be placed on the north side of the church, that side being away from such traffic as passed along the valley, and also enabling the drainage to be carried direct into the river. They are so placed at Gloucester and Canterbury, though the sunny south side was the most usual and the best.

Of the original buildings at Tintern no trace remains, unless we can discover evidence of them in their influence in the existing arrangements. We know, from many examples, what they would be like, and how they would differ from the old Benedictine Monasteries. In the 12th century the favourite plan for a monastic church was cruciform, with Aisles to both Nave and Choir, the east end being of semi-circular form (apsidal), with three small projecting chapels, of which the central chapel was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, hence called the Lady Chapel. Two small chapels were projected eastward from the Transept, making five chapels in all. In the Cistercian plan there was a small, square-ended Choir, without aisles or chapels; two square chapels (rarely three), projected eastward from each arm of the transept, but there was no separate Lady Chapel. Instead of the magnificence of the Bene-

dictine churches, theirs were rigidly plain. The four walls over the crossing of Nave and Transepts were carried up so as just to clear the ridges of the roofs, as we see at Kirkstall, and also at Buildwas, which abbey, being only four years later than Tintern, may be taken to illustrate its early form.

By the middle of the 13th century, the energy of the Cistercians in founding new monasteries was spent, or the need for them had ceased. Netley, founded in 1237 or 1239, and Hailes in 1247, were almost the last on their list. It was then that Tintern came to be rebuilt, its new founder being Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, who had inherited the lands acquired by Walter de Clare. The recorded date of the commencement of the "Nova Ecclesia" is 1269, and the evidence of style and workmanship shews that the church was built *after* the rest of the buildings, the whole belonging to the latter half of the 13th century. The monk, William of Worcester, notes that service was first held in it in 1287, and that the choir was entered and Mass celebrated at the high Altar on the 5th October, 1288. Thus, although it was almost the oldest of our Cistercian monasteries, it is the last tolerably complete example of their architecture, marking their progress—careful and self-restraining as it was—during their existence, up to that time, of more than a century and a half. An examination of the buildings in detail will shew what their requirements then were, and how they were carried out.

The Church.—Comparing the plan of the new church with the original Cistercian plan, we find that the four transeptal chapels are reproduced, but, instead of being built out from the east side of the Transept, they are simply formed by screens built across the eastern Aisle with which the Transept is furnished. The Choir is greatly developed, being now of four bays, with Aisles, in which two additional chapels are formed, making seven in all. The Cistercians had, long before, shewn their anxiety for more spacious Choirs, with additional Chapels and Altars. The new Choir and eastern Transept at Fountains—c. 1205, the enormously long Choir of seven bays, at Rievaulx—c. 1240, the eastern Choir and Aisles at Byland and Dore Abbeys, and the almost unique case of

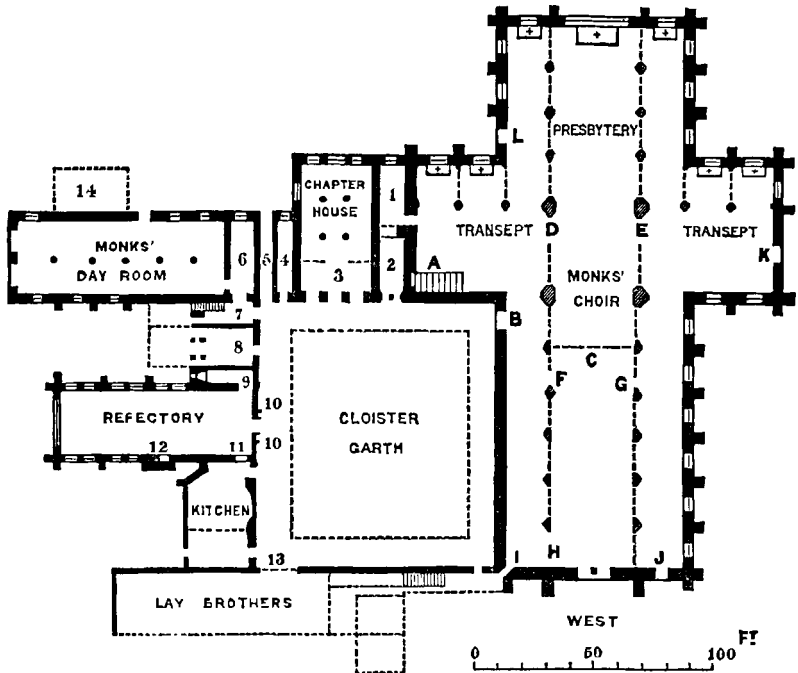
Croxden, which had five radiating apsidal chapels, are cases in point. But Tintern did not attempt these extravagancies, thus following the example of Netley, which, in many respects, it resembles.

The Nave is of six bays only, the shortest in proportion that I can call to mind. Netley had eight, a usual number, which rose in the case of Byland to twelve. I think the shortness of the Nave, which brings the visitor on his entrance into close view of the Choir and Transepts, is one cause of the striking effect of the architecture, when first seen from the great west door ; and, standing on the top of the steps by which one has to *descend* from this door into the Nave, one is reminded of the fine effect of certain churches, chiefly continental, which are entered in that uncommon way.

The plan shews how the Choir and Nave were parted from their Aisles by screen walls, such as separate the transeptal chapels, thus permitting the separate parts of the Church to be used by distinct classes of persons, or for different purposes. There are indications of such divisions at Fountains and at Buildwas, but Tintern is the only place where they can be seen tolerably complete.

The worshippers in such a church were usually of four classes :
1. The Monks, who were persons of superior position, some few of them being priests. They kept up the services in the church, observing the Canonical Hours, by night and by day. 2. The Lay-Brothers, or *Conversi*, illiterate men of the working class, who had taken the vows, but were dispensed from church services, except at morning and night, their duty being to do the ordinary work of the establishment. 3. The Guests, who might be poor people, asking lodging at the gate, or travellers of any degree resting there, because there was no inn ; a Guest-hall, or more than one, being always provided, according to the ability of the monastery, and the wants of the locality. 4. The neighbours and outdoor workpeople, for whom the Abbey Church might be the only place for worship. Provision was commonly made for such persons in some part of an Abbey Church, or, if they were numerous, in a small church built close at hand.

The screen-wall, which ran from east to west between the piers of the north nave arcade, was interrupted by an opening at F, (see *Plan, fig. 2*) and again by one at H, which extended the whole width of the western arch. There was, no doubt, a screen of greater importance across the Nave, at C. Many years since I examined some irregular fragments, then piled up there, without much success, but Potter's plan, published in 1847, shews a massive screen, with a central doorway and a staircase. This is the usual position for



Ground Plan of Buildings (Fig. 2).

a Choir screen, the stalls for the monks at their services being fixed against the flat screen walls provided for them, which extend from that screen east-ward, nearly as far as the great piers beyond the Transept. At this spot, two openings, D and E, were left. Beyond this spot, and occupying the whole of what is usually called the Choir, was the Presbytery, the high altar being at or near the east end. For the purpose of this description, I apply the word Choir to the eastern arm of the church.

At A is the staircase, with a doorway above, by which the monks came down from their Dormitory to the midnight services, and afterwards returned; coming and going again in the early morning, till the hour when they retired by the doorway B, which was their ordinary entrance from the cloisters by day. Thus they had access to the whole of the North Transept, and the structural Choir and North Choir Aisle.

There is, I think, now no doubt that the *Conversi*, or Lay-Brothers, of a monastery occupied the building on the west side of the cloister, and near to the west end of the church. Their entrance would be at I, where is a curious angular passage, the idea of which, though not the exact plan, was copied from that at Netley. By this route, these working brethren could enter to their place in the Nave, where the flat surfaces of the side screens seem to have been specially provided for stalls or seats. They would also have access to the North Aisle of Nave, and perhaps to the Altars in the North Chancel Aisle and North Transept, and the opening F in the screen on north side of Nave would give ready access for priests or others to the part of the Nave west of the Choir Screen.

The South Transept and the South Aisles of Nave and Choir were closely shut off from the rest of the Church except at the opening E, which would give access for the clergy, the opening G in the Nave being closed by a door. It is likely that persons not members of the monastery had such use as was necessary of this part of the church. The guests might be admitted by the door J, and other persons by the door K, in the South Transept, to which access might be had without passing through any part of the precinct used by the members of the establishment.

There remains the great double doorway D in the west front, for use only on occasions of high ceremony. At such times the approach up the Nave, and through the opening in the Choir Screen to the crossing of the four arms of the Church, where the great east window shone over the High Altar, though lacking the grandeur and variety of many of our larger churches, would give an effect of perfect proportion, graceful lightness, and quiet beauty of detail, that could hardly be exceeded elsewhere.

It was, indeed, designed in a happy moment. The year of its foundation was that in which the Choir and Transepts of Westminster Abbey, carried on by Henry III. from 1245 to 1269 were finished. That work contains the earliest English examples of the geometrical window tracery, which, with some modifications, became so marked a characteristic of early 14th century architecture. The work at Tintern takes up and carries on this idea, and, retaining in its general design the purity of detail which marks the style of the 13th century, seems to grasp all that is really admirable in the style of the forthcoming age.

The general idea in the mind of the architect may be easily understood. Four windows having a grandeur of dimensions, that was then novel, were to fill the ends of the four great arms of the cruciform church, and ranges of two-light windows were to light the Aisles and Clerestories. Of these the great eastern and southern windows, with most of the smaller ones, were completely realized, the others having been modified, as we shall see. The great east window was of eight lights, the head being filled with circles. There are windows of about the same date in other churches which, more or less, resemble this, but it is acknowledged to have been the most perfect of its class, and, indeed, the finest Gothic window that was ever produced in this country. Its great age has led to its delapidation, in spite of the strength which was given to its construction. I could not believe, without actual measurement, that the central mullion, which now stands alone, measures six feet round. This solitary shaft, carrying its scanty remains of tracery, is the admiration of all. On clear nights, when the full moon rises from beyond the wooded hill to the east, some hundreds of visitors bear witness to its loveliness, and to the enhanced beauty of the ruin, when seen under such conditions.

Another important feature was the use of small detached shafts round the great piers of the arcades, and in the jambs of doorways and windows. All who have seen Salisbury Cathedral, which was built half a century earlier, will remember the striking effect of the slender shafts of purbeck marble, tied in with metal rings, with which it is profusely ornamented. For structural purposes they

were generally useless. So far as they added to the apparent mass of the piers, they gave a confidence which was delusive, while the graceful effect which was meant to be produced is carried to the limits of weakness and evident fragility. The ingenious devices used for strengthening the piers, and the way in which many of them bend under their load, gives one an idea of the ruin which early threatened such structures, and justifies the abandonment of this mode about the end of the 13th century. At Westminster the Choir and Transepts of Henry III., built a few years later than Salisbury, are largely, though rather less profusely, decorated with shafts; in the work of Edward I., contemporary with Tintern, they are used more sparingly, and in the later work in the Nave, while great pains have been taken to produce the same general effect, all the shafts are joined to, and form part of, the piers. We shall see the same history repeated in the construction of this Church.

A third idea of the architect of Tintern grew out of an old principle of the Cistercian Order, for this Church is remarkable for the small quantity of its carved ornament, even when the cost of the plain moulded work actually used must have been quite as great. The carving is limited to some small knots of foliage on the corbels of the vaulting shafts, and to the bosses which were necessary to hide the intersection of the vaulting ribs. The only evidence of a statue inserted in the fabric is in the vesica-shaped space, in the head of the great west doorway, which has besides some bits of the beautiful diaper work that enriches the wall surfaces in the 13th century work at Westminster.

The last point in the general design that calls for notice may seem surprising, but it is clear that the interior of the church was plastered and originally intended to be so treated. The general wall surfaces are of rather rough masonry, finished with a fairly true face, so that a very thin coat of plaster laid over it could be neatly stopped against the quoins, and other wrought stone work. There remain several patches of this plaster, decorated with a simple pattern in red lines, imitating courses of masonry.

In determining the order in which the several parts of the new Church were built, it will be useful to remember that the general

practice in such cases was to begin at the east and proceed westward by stages, retaining as much as possible of the condemned fabric for use, until the new work could take its place. At Westminster, the work proceeded slowly westward, in this way, from the 13th century. As late as the 15th, the Norman Nave was still standing; and, indeed, the west end was still incomplete when Henry VII. began again at the east, and, taking down the original Lady Chapel, began his magnificent new Lady Chapel, now called after himself, in its place.

At Tintern, the evidence of style shews that the work first undertaken comprised the Choir, the South Transept, the North Transept, except its north-eastern part, and also a short length of the Nave and South Aisle. I have ventured to indicate on a sketch-plan, (*Pl. III*), the probable size and position of the original Church, against which the present domestic buildings had then lately been erected. This will show how they might, and probably did, retain the use of the old Nave, until some portions of the new work were ready to take their place, and this view is confirmed by the appearance of the new work.

Let us look first at the use of detached shafts, which I have noted as a sign of early work, and a favourite idea of the architect who designed this building. In the Choir and South Transept the piers of the Arcades are cruciform in plan, and had, originally, four detached shafts in the hollows, which the plan provides. These shafts were not merely decorative, but formed a part of the solid construction, although we now see that they could be spared. At mid-height they were tied into the piers by strong moulded stones, which we call "bands." Now, the piers in the North Transept, which I conclude to be of later construction, are treated in the same general way; but, in them, the moulded ties at mid-height were hollowed out, so that the lower part of each shaft ran through them, making them real bands. There is a tradition, of what antiquity I know not, that these shafts were of marble. They may possibly have been of purbeck stone, as was usual, and I do not see why the great violence which was necessary to tear them all away should have been used, unless they were of some

value. But there are small pieces of ordinary stone among the ruins that may have formed parts of these shafts. Again, in all the windows of the Choir and Transepts, except the two windows nearest the junction of the North Transept and North Choir Aisle, small detached shafts, of merely Decorative character, are freely used. They are also used in the doorways of the South Transept and the west end of the Nave. But in the last named windows there are no detached shafts, their places being taken by smaller roll-mouldings forming parts of the jambs. Also, in the Nave, the roll-mouldings take the place of shafts in the western-most windows of South Clerestory, in two windows *and-a-half* of the South Aisle nearest the west end, and in all the windows of North Aisle.

It is clear also that the same change took place at some point in the North Clerestory, now destroyed, and probably at the same point as in the opposite Clerestory. The great windows in the west end of the Nave, and in the North Transept, are without detached shafts and the same is the case with the doorways in the North Transept, and in that which leads to the Cloister at B. Besides this the doorway at B was very profusely ornamented with carved dog-tooth ornament, and in other ways not easy to ascertain, owing to wanton defacement. The doorway of the Sacristy, was similarly, though less richly, decorated, and these appear to be not only later in date, but by a different hand.

There are two very curious places, where we seem to catch the very moment of this change of construction. In the third window of the South Aisle, counting from the west end, the eastern jamb has a detached shaft, but the western jamb has only the roll moulding, from which we may safely infer that the work had stopped at the eastern jamb, and that by the time it was again taken up, the new mode had been adopted. The other case is still more significant. The inner jambs of the great west doorway were intended to be ornamented with detached shafts. There are the bases on which they were to stand, and the hollows running up the angles in which they were to rest. Unquestionably it must have been intended to provide these shafts with capitals, and to

carry some slight moulding round the arch. But neither the capitals nor the mouldings were ever put, the hollows being finished at the top with a "stop" that got over the difficulty rather cleverly. From this, and from some appearances in the external masonry, not easy to describe, I conclude that the architect of the Choir, and the work contemporary with it, put in also the plinths and lower part of the walls of the west end and South Aisle so as to fix the general design of the west doorway, and that, before these doorways came to be finished, detached shafts had fallen into disfavour, and, where possible, were dispensed with.

As regards the design of the window tracery, the great east and south windows (the former of eight lights, the latter of six) had beautiful combinations of cusped circles; but in the great west window, the circles are of less importance, and the design of the tracery in the head of each light is of a more elaborate kind. In the two-light windows of the Clerestory and Aisles, the general rule is that those which have detached shafts have a beautiful six-foiled circle in the head, while those of the North Aisle, and the the two western-most windows of the South Aisle, built after the shafts had been abandoned, have quatrefoils, and are so inferior in design that it looks like the whim of one who had grown tired of the perfection of the earlier work.

In the earlier windows the glass was *always* fixed against mere recesses, or rebates, worked on the outer side of the stonework. In the later windows it was *the rule* to fix the glass much more securely in grooves, as is the modern practice. There are some exceptions to this, the earlier mode being copied in a few windows, evidently later in design.

In the earlier windows, again, the cusps which form such a beautiful feature in the tracery, are a modification of the kind called "soffit cusps," which spring from the plain face of the tracery in which the glass is usually set. In the later windows of the Nave Aisles there are no cusps, an effect, somewhat similar, but much poorer, being got by the outline of the tracery itself. In the great west window this idea is applied to most of the openings below the circles, and there are even examples of the

modern form of cusps, which grow out of the splay of the tracery. This last form appears even more clearly in the great north window, giving its tracery a very late character, although it was designed with circles, to accord with the great east and south windows.

There are in the church six three-light windows, those at the east ends of the Chancel Aisles and of the four transeptal Chapels. It is odd that even where these seem to be original, the geometrical tracery, as used in all the other early windows, was not adopted. Instead of it, a much plainer design was used. But it is in the two windows of the North Transept Chapels, and in the work near to them, that we find the strongest evidence of later construction. They are of a design much more elaborate than the others, and later in idea. There are rolls instead of detached shafts to the inner jambs (which applies also to the nearest window of the adjoining Choir Aisle), and the mouldings of their inner jambs are of complete 14th century character, instead of the good 13th century mouldings, used all over the church. The buttresses nearest to these North Transept Aisle windows, as well as those which stand beyond and above them, in the Clerestory, are also quite different from all the other buttresses. They were united by flying buttresses, which were used nowhere else in the Abbey.

We may now bring together the result of all these dry details, so as to shew their bearing and effect.

I think it is highly probable that, the church having been designed as a whole in the new manner then being introduced at Westminster, the South Transept, and part of the Nave of the old church were taken down, and the corresponding parts of the new building, with the Choir, were put in hand, together with the foundations of the South Aisle, and West Front. This would enable the monks to carry on their services in the old Choir and the North Transept till the new Choir was built, while the old Nave would be used by the other members of the community and their guests. When the new Choir, South Transept, and eastern part of the Nave were ready the old Nave was taken down, and the now work completed; and lastly, when the whole building, other-

wise, was finished, and the monks had the new Choir and four new Chapels for their use, the north-eastern angle of the Transept and parts adjacent were taken down and re-built. There is, on the north wall of this Transept, a distinct mark of the junction of this last part of the work with the older portion, and, upon the whole, I think there is sufficient evidence to justify the sketch plan (*PLIII*), which I give as an approximation to the order in which the work was actually executed.

The Church contains but very slight remains of those fittings which were of an architectural character. There is, at the eastern end of the South Choir Aisle, a ruined Piscina, with seats for the clergy; it had been partly re-built once, if not twice. The Altars have been destroyed, but amongst the vast accumulation of beautiful details of masonry that still exists, much that is of value might doubtless be found.

The Conventual Buildings.—Passing through the doorway, at B on the plan, we enter the Cloister Garth. The covered walks which once went round it have disappeared, but we can see that they had wooden roofs, and had been, at least partly, re-built at a date much later than that of the church. In 1469, William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, left by his will one hundred tons of stone for building the Cloister here, and we find traces of this late work extending from the doorway B as far as the Chapter House. Probably much of the late carved and moulded work, now lying in the Church, belongs to this new Cloister, which, except as stated, has disappeared, like all the Cloisters of English Cistercian Houses.

The first doorway in the east walk is of beautiful design; it leads to the small room numbered 2, which had a plain barrel vault, and was without light, unless it received some little through the open tracery above the doors. The use of this room is very uncertain. There was, in nearly all monasteries, a narrow room, of some kind, at this spot, between the Transept and the Chapter House. Some have thought that a room, so placed, was used as the treasury, or the mortuary, or library, or parlour (where the monks might, if necessary, speak to each other, silence being the rule in Cloister), or the exchange, or the penitentiary. This latter

was an idea of the late Mr. Edmund Sharpe, whose works on the Cistercian monasteries are well known. But it is clear that there could be no fixed usage in this respect, for these rooms are sometimes dark, and sometimes have windows. They are often without doors, as at the Augustinian priory of Llanthony, in this county, where there is a fine vaulted room. Sometimes they have a door at each end, and in some places they were used as Sacristies. I think it was found convenient to separate the Chapter House from the Church by an interval of a few feet, in order to obtain light for the side window, which looked towards the Transept, and that the room so obtained was used for whatever purpose might seem most fitting. At Tintern, this room, and the sacristy beyond it, No. 1, were built when the North Transept was finished. We can see the imperfect junction of the new work to the old on the left side of the doorway, on entering from the Cloister (*PLIII.*). It is clear also that this handsome Sacristy was built against the south wall of the Chapter House, blocking up its south window.

In the Chapter House we see at once that the work is earlier, being of pure 13th century character. The three archways by which it is entered, and which it was the practice to leave open towards the Cloister, had an arrangement of detached shafts, which, doubtless, carried handsome arches. The mouldings generally are of earlier character than those in the Church, some capitals now on the ground, mark out, imperfectly, the plan, which was of three Aisles. The seats for the abbot and monks at and near to the east end may still be traced. Potter's plan shews the three windows, which we should expect to find at the east end, but which are not now visible. The dimensions were accurately recorded by the monk, William of Worcester, at his visit. The narrow apartment No. 4 had a handsome archway, which matched those of the Chapter House, except that it had a door. Beyond it is another narrow place, No. 5, now used as a passage, but Potter shews the former as a passage and this last as a cell. Either arrangement would be consistent with other examples. Possibly the narrow room may have been the parlour, as to which, with others of the minor apartments known to have existed in monasteries, we have no very clear information. My friend, Mr. Gordon M. Hills has

pointed out to me an ancient Ritual of the order in which an " Auditorium " is mentioned. There the monks destined for labour in the grounds were to go at once each morning, after quitting the Chapter, to receive from the prior their working tools. Their work is to last till the convent bell sounds for terce, when they are at once to return to the Auditorium, and put the tools down there, that the superior may put them away.

The passage way led to the open space to the east, in which would be situate the infirmary, usually a large Hall, having a projecting Chapel. It was the place to which aged and infirm monks retired, when they were no longer equal to the austerity of the monastic life, to end their days in comfort, tended by the younger monks, who were to give them all suitable indulgences, and were not to worry them with the troubles of the community. At Lanthony the room which I have no doubt was the infirmary remains to the south of the priory, and is now the parish church. Its projecting Chapel, once shut off by doors, forms the Chancel. The Tintern infirmary has been destroyed, but the dimensions are recorded by William of Worcester.

The first arch in the north walk opened into the lobby marked 7, where was the staircase used by day for access to the Dormitory, which was over the day room, and to the other apartments, extending southward, as far as the Transept. The Cistercians were not much given to books, but the space over the Chapter House, &c., was the usual place for a library and scriptorium. Under the staircase is a doorway, with a recess, carefully made, into which the door might fold back, as if it led to a room of some importance.

The second lobby, 6, led to the day room. Potter shews the opening at the east end as a doorway.

The *Day-Room* was of six bays, with plain vaults springing from octagonal columns, and from wall corbels. Its windows were unglazed, but those which have not been destroyed were rebated for wooden shutters. This room is often described as "cellarage," perhaps because it was vaulted, and was a little below the level of the Cloister, as were some other rooms, and even the Refectory. There is no doubt that the monks spent here the little time during

the day, when they were not in Church, or in Cloister, or in the fields. It is sometimes called the Fraternity, and in the earlier Cistercian Houses, the arches at the further end, and perhaps at the sides near thereto, were usually made larger, so as to admit the weather. There was then no fireplace, but there are instances in which such openings have been afterwards built up, and fireplaces provided. In this case the right archway at the end had square jambs; that to the left was splayed. There may have been a fireplace here, but the luxuriant growth of shrubs, which, until recently, encumbered this part, destroyed so much of the walling that many valuable details are now lost. A doorway in the east side led to the latrines, marked 14, under which ran a sewer, that came from the kitchen, in a slanting direction, under the Refectory, and went towards the river.

The room 8 had a door at its entrance; it is vaulted from good corbels, and was plastered, like the Church, and as we may conclude all the best parts of the monastery were. This was evidently a room of some consequence, and it certainly extended beyond the Arches that now terminate it, but which were, perhaps, in about the middle of its length. The centre arch had a square flue, or chimney, over it, so that a fire might be kindled below, on the open hearth; the narrow side Arches communicating between the two parts of the room. I am somewhat surprised that Mr. Sharpe, in his "Cistercian Architecture," should call this the kitchen, because it is less suitable for such a purpose than is usual with the rooms that are so placed, and which are, as I think wrongly, called kitchens. I believe this was the *Calefactory*, or *Chauffoir*, where the monks were allowed the indulgence of a fire, when the weather rendered it absolutely necessary. The old habit of having a fire in the centre of a room survived after the introduction of stone chimneys, which in such a case had to be, in some way, brought over the fire, but so as to admit of persons standing round it. I know of no other case like this, and its present appearance is so peculiar that it has been called a gateway from the river: possibly it may have been used as a cart-shed since the dissolution, for there are a couple of spur-stones against its piers.

Above this last room is a chamber that was entered from the dormitory. It had north and south windows, and a narrow room opens out of it, the windows of which were very strongly secured with iron bars. Late in the 15th century a third story was added over these rooms, as we may judge by the style of the windows. At this time the chimney of the fireplace below was blocked up possibly because they had then the privilege of a fire in the day room. These apartments, the vaulting of which springs from carved corbels, may have been occupied by the prior, who was bound to sleep in the monks dormitory. The abbot was to live in the western part of the buildings where he could supervise everything, both within and without.

We now come to some mutilated recesses, which once had detached shafts and arches, marked 10 on plan. They formed the *Lavatory*, where the monks washed before entering the Refectory. Troughs for water ran along the larger recesses, and close to the refectory door were narrower recesses for hanging towels. No part of a monastery is more remarkable for the care bestowed upon it than the *Lavatory*. Some one has called this the "Almonry," but that department was always placed away from the Cloister, and near to the entrance gateway of the precinct.

The *Refectory* was entered by folding doors, and was a little below the level of the Cloister. It was an exceedingly handsome apartment, with a wooden roof, and with an elegant arrangement of windows, profusely decorated with detached shafts. Its style is about the middle of the 13th century, a few years earlier than that of the Church. On the left hand is an arched recess, partly built up. I think it was not the pulpit, but the entrance to the staircase, which led up to a pulpit, now destroyed. At meals the monks sat against the walls, with narrow tables in front of them, and one of them read aloud from the pulpit, while the rest dined or supped. Near the south-west angle is a very perfect hatch, through which the food was passed from the kitchen, and near it, in the south wall, is a very curious arrangement for a hinged flap, or slab of wood, or *tabula*, that could be used for holding the dishes passed from the kitchen, and could be turned up into a sunk

panel, when not in use. On the right of the entrance are two recesses, one being a closet, with a shelf closed by a door, the other an open recess that seems to have had a trough, in which the monk in charge of the Refectory might wash his hands.

The narrow room, 9 on plan, was vaulted on carved corbels, and had a large locker. It was plastered, and would be used in connection with the service of meals.

The *Kitchen* had a handsome doorway. It has been much altered, but a wall seems to have divided it from a narrow room, or passage, beyond it, which had a plain doorway, opening from the Cloister.

The long range of buildings which extended along the west side of the Cloister, and much further to the north was occupied by the *Conversi*, or *Lay-Brethren*. At the south end of it is the staircase, by which they descended from their dormitory to the angular passage, which opened into the Church. Close to the staircase is a part of the building, altered in the 14th century, and since modernised, to adapt it for the residence of the custodian of the Abbey. It may have been the abbots' house, though it is small, but if we are to take the opinion of John Russell, in his "Boke of Nurture," the Abbot of Tintern was, in dignity, the smallest of abbots.

There are, besides, some slight remains of old walling between the abbey and the river, and there is the residence called St. Ann's, which commands a charming view of the abbey. This was, perhaps, the Almonry, for it is close to the ancient road from Chepstow to Monmouth, which ran along the great boundary wall of the monastery. Some portions of this wall still exist; it is said to have enclosed precincts measuring 34 acres, which would include the barns, storehouses, workshops, guest-hall, and other buildings of the establishment. An idea of their outlying property in farms and lands can be gathered from the few charters that have been preserved. As to the main body of their records, it is supposed that they were destroyed in the civil war, together with the important library at Raglan Castle.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate III.—PLAN OF THE CHURCH.

I have indicated on this plan, as nearly as can be ascertained, the stages in which the work was carried on. The small plan shown by dotted lines occupies the position in which the original church must have stood. It is similar to the plan of Buildwas Abbey Church, built four years after that at Tintern, and is the common Cistercian plan. It may not be possible to ascertain the precise order in which the different parts of the west and north walls of the north Transept were built, but the east wall of that Transept contains the latest work in the church.

Plate IV.—DETAILS SHEWING CHANGE OF DESIGN.

The sketches from the west doorway show that a detached angle column or shaft was provided for in the first instance, and that this shaft was never used, the hollow at the angle having been finished with an ornamental "stop," instead of the capital which would have been placed on a shaft.

The drawings of piers shew that, in the early work, the bands which tie in the small shafts are made solid, while in the later work they are perforated, so that the shafts pass through them.

In the first stage of the work the aisle windows of the Nave have foliated circles in the head, but in the second stage, which includes the windows in north Aisle, and the two westernmost windows of south Aisle, simple quatrefoils are used.

The sketches of mullions and copings require no explanation.

Plate V.—NAVE LOOKING SOUTH.

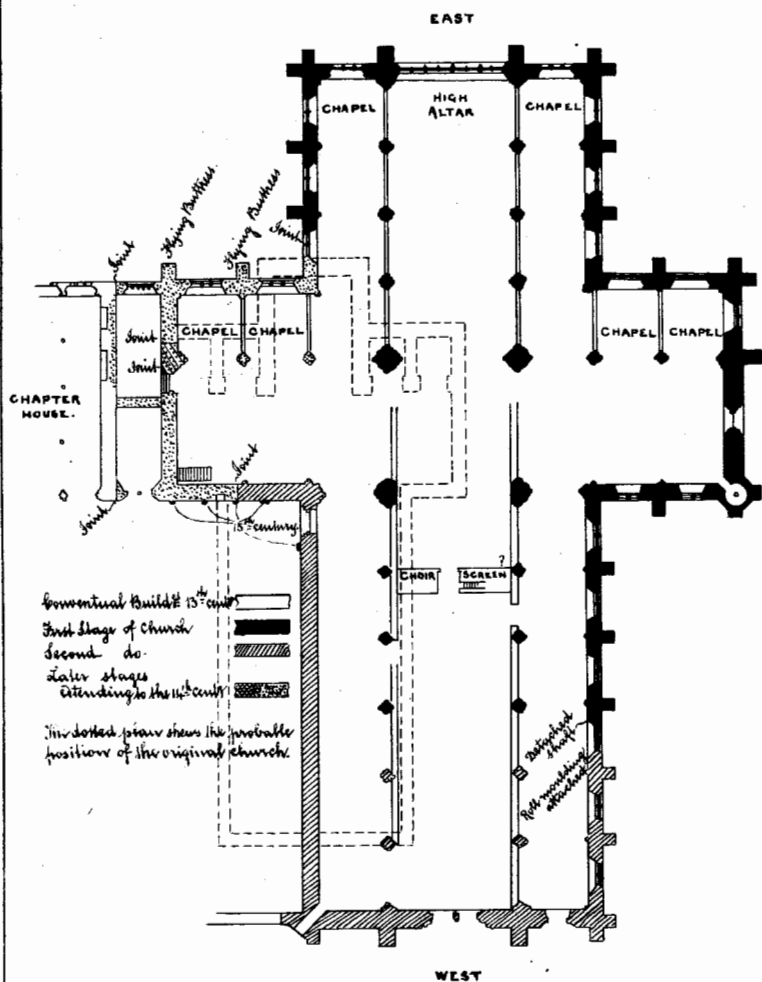
I have here shewn (I believe for the first time) how the stone screens were actually built; Mr. Edmund Skarpe's illustration of this part having shewn only a portion of the Nave, from which the screen is omitted.

Plate VI.—NORTH-EAST VIEW.

On this sketch I have shewn, by dotted lines, the original forms of the tracery in the great east window and other windows. Also the flying buttresses that were put to the north Transept.

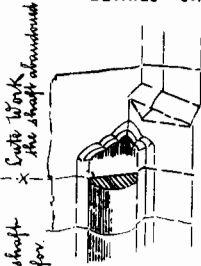
TINTERN ABBEY.

PLAN OF CHURCH.

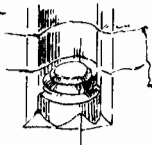


TINTERN ABBEY.

DETAILS SHEWING CHANGE OF DESIGN.



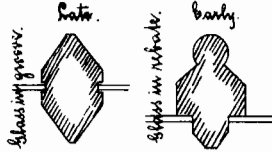
Early Work - a small shaft prepared for.



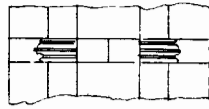
WEST DOORWAY.
INNER JAMB - SOUTH SIDE.



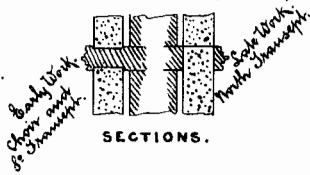
COPINGS of SCREENS



MULLI
or
WINDOWS



ELEVATION (at bands)

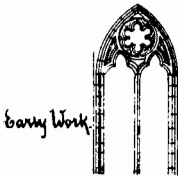


SECTIONS.

PIERS
WITH
SHAFTS & BANDS.



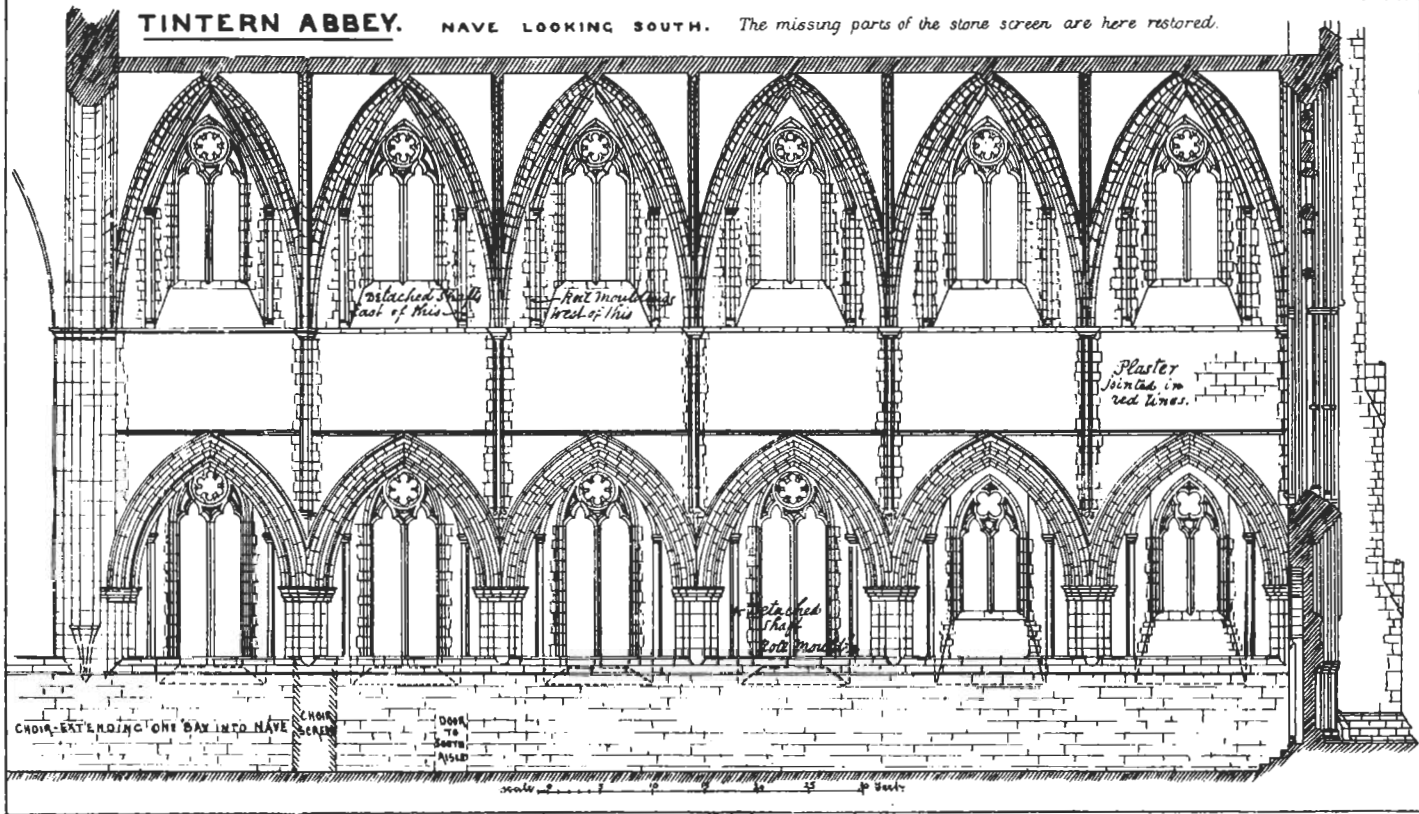
PLAN



AISLE WINDOWS - NAVE.

TINTERN ABBEY.

NAVE LOOKING SOUTH. *The missing parts of the stone screen are here restored.*



TINTERN ABBEY.

NORTH-EAST VIEW.

PL. VI.

The missing parts of flying buttresses and eastern windows are restored in dotted lines.

