The Building of the Tower of Five Orders in the Schools' Quadrangle at Oxford

By Catherine Cole

In the summer of 1612, John Chamberlain, the Tudor gossip writer, described, in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, a visit he had lately paid to Oxford, in the course of which he had viewed the three important buildings recently erected there. In an interesting passage he thus records his impressions:

'. . . Sir Thomas Bodley's addition to the library is a fair and substantial building, suitable on the outside to the Divinity Schools, Mrs. Wadham's new College would have been a fine handsome fabric, if it had been as well placed and contrived as it might easily have been, but the most pleasing thing I saw was the new quadrangle at Merton College, a graceful work and one that may stand for a second foundation . . .'[1]

Chamberlain had two old friends in Oxford, William Gent and Thomas Allen, both active members of the small committee set up by the University to oversee the progress of the library,[2] and both residents of Gloucester Hall, whose young principal, Dr. Hawley, was also one of Bodley's chief assistants. Dr. Hawley had lately been affronted by Mrs. Wadham's refusal to build her college on the site of Gloucester Hall and to make him its first Warden.[3] It therefore seems extremely probable that Chamberlain is here quoting the views and information imparted to him by these two friends, in whose company he doubtless viewed the buildings. If this is so, the statement that the addition to the library was suitable on the outside to the Divinity School, is of interest, since it implies a deliberate intention on Bodley's part to design his building in conformity with a Gothic predecessor.

Sir Thomas Jackson early commented on the fact that Bodley's library, though almost exactly contemporary with Wadham, was nevertheless, more archaic in style,[4] and later writers have also found the extremely 'Gothic' nature of the Bodleian architecture hard to understand. Fortunately Mr.

[1] N. E. McClure, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, Philadelphia, 1939. Letter dated 11 August 1612.
[2] Convocation Register K. 32.
[3] *Oxoniensia*, XXI (1956), 61 seq. and *V.C.H. Oxon.*, II, 279.
[4] T. G. Jackson, *Wadham College*, Oxford, 1893, 127 seq.

Eric Mercer has lately offered a welcome explanation of this difficulty.[5] He points out that to the Jacobeans, Gothic architecture was, as far as contemporaries knew, the only current style that was of native English growth and that to many ' treading a narrow path between Geneva on the one hand and Rome on the other, Gothic ornament had become the symbol of their national church '. Since a university library was still looked upon chiefly as a repository for sacred learning and had thus a markedly ecclesiastical character, any contemporary, holding Bodley's religious views, would undoubtedly have preferred the Gothic style for a building of this nature.

Sir Thomas Bodley made himself almost wholly responsible for the cost of building ' Arts End '. So great was the strain which this generosity imposed upon his private purse, that at one time he was forced to put his plate in pawn to raise sufficient money for the builders.[6] It was clear that in his lifetime he could do no more. Yet more was urgently required. To the east of his new building lay the ruinous little Schools, which had perforce to serve the University as lecture halls. The area around them was squalid and neglected and, beyond, the eye rested on the untidy backsides of the tenements in Catte Street. As one of the main approaches to a world famous library, this brought the University little credit, and much dissatisfaction had long been felt among senior members, though there seemed little prospect of obtaining sufficient funds to remedy the evil. An appeal to former Oxford men was under consideration when Sir Thomas solved the problem in a letter to the Vice-Chancellor dated 5 November 1611, in which he stated that he had conversed with his old friend Sir John Bennet, who had promised to be responsible for raising the money necessary for the new Schools, and ' . . . to take upon him to see the building itself duly performed '. During the following year the collection of subscriptions began, and the University bought up the houses on the site of the projected building. In April a delegacy was appointed to deliberate about the plans for building the Schools which were explained to them by Sir John Bennet and were approved in Convocation on 2 May 1612. Before the end of the year the form of the new building had been decided upon and proved generally acceptable. We know that a ' plot ' or sketch plan was then in existence and that it showed three sides of a two-storey quadrangle, the fourth side being filled by the east face of the new extension to the library.[7]

At this time Bodley was nearing the end of his life and we learn from the memorials of his step-son-in-law, Sir Ralph Winwood, that he had grown extremely testy and wayward and clearly was not easily to be crossed. We

5 Eric Mercer, *Oxford History of English Art*, 1553–1625, Oxford, 1962, 86 and references.
6 *Pietas Oxoniensis*, Oxford, 1902, 12.
7 A. Wood, *Annals of the University of Oxford*, ed. Gutch, Oxford, 1796, II, 787–8.

also know that he was held in singular veneration in University circles. We may consequently suspect that should any controversy have arisen, his wishes in regard to the quadrangle would have been paramount, even though Bennet was titular head of the undertaking. We may, therefore, assume that the Gothic style was again preferred for a building which was regarded as the ' propylium ' of the library,[8] and that, again, some neighbouring building was selected as a model. Though the surviving traces of this first design are now largely obscured, I would suggest that it was based upon the Founder's quadrangle at Magdalen, a not unnatural choice, since Sir Thomas must have known that quadrangle well as a Magdalen undergraduate.[9]

Two points about this early plot should be remembered. First, the comparative lowness of the projected ranges would add emphasis to the imposing flank of the existing library which would thus provide a sufficient focus of architectural interest in the quadrangle, and secondly, that in this setting, a four-storey gate-tower, modelled on the Founder's tower at Magdalen, would be adequate both in style and in dimensions (PLATE IX).

Sir Thomas Bodley died on 28 January 1612/13.[10] His body was embalmed and buried some two months later in Merton College chapel. On 30 March, the day following his funeral, the foundation stone of the new Schools was laid. The Mason-in-charge was again John Ackroyd, who had already built Merton quadrangle and the new extension to the library.

The terms of Bodley's will provoked criticism among his friends, but gave further gratification to the University. Sir Thomas bequeathed almost the whole of his remaining fortune for ' the addition of a third storey to the library, which should go in compasse round about the Schools and so meet at each end in two lobbies or passages, framed with some special comliness of workmanship, to make a fair entrance into the north and south corners of my new enlargement eastwards '; ' for the building of a fair staircase to make the ascent more easy to the first great library ', and the addition ' of some beautiful enlargement at the west end ', which would correspond with Arts End on the east.[11]

It is by no means certain that a plan embodying these proposals was thought necessary at the time; the problems involved by the addition of a third

[8] The Schools Tower is referred to as the ' Propylium ' of the Library in a letter from the University to the King after Bennet's fall. (Bod. lib. add: M.S.C. 206, p. 112.) Of course at this time there was no proper entrance from the Quadrangle to Arts End direct.

[9] In one of the Elegiac poems written on Bodley's death (*Justa Funebria Ptolemaei Oxoniensis* 105). Magdalen claims that, equally with Merton, she has a mother's rights in Bodley and, therefore, laments,

' Nempe animum Patrie, Mertonae corvas opesque dat matri.
At veteris nihil mihi nisi lachrymas.'

This poem shows that her claim to Bodley's affections was then well recognized even though regarded as inferior.

[10] Macray, *Annals of the Bodleian Library*, 2nd ed. Oxford, 1890, 46, gives this date correctly.

[11] Ibid., 402 seq.

storey being one which a resident Jacobean master-mason would be expected to solve as the work progressed. That this addition considerably altered the architectural relationship of the various elements which composed the quadrangle was possibly only fully appreciated when the actual building was in hand.

Another clause in Bodley's will also had its effect upon the early history of the Schools' quadrangle. By appointing Sir John Bennet his chief executor he ensured him virtual control of the administration of the two building funds and thus supreme authority in all matters connected with the building.

Sir John, a Christ Church man, had held minor office in the University before removing to Yorkshire to take up, in succession, distinguished posts both civil and ecclesiastical. While in Yorkshire he served as a member of the Council for the North. He was knighted in 1603 and was made a judge of the Prorogative Court of Canterbury and Chancellor to Queen Anne. He represented the University of Oxford in Parliament in 1614 and again in 1620. In 1620 he was impeached for taking bribes and his case was heard in the Star Chamber in 1621. Owing to his illness the sentences passed upon him were revoked with the exception of a heavy fine. Sir John died in 1627.

Bodley's choice of a successor, if not entirely successful, was a shrewd one. Sir John, a self-made man, was doubtless only too happy to succeed to so popular an undertaking and was well suited to head an appeal addressed at once to dignatories of the Church and State. His early training had rendered him conversant with University affairs, and his Yorkshire connections no doubt recommended him to the powerful Sir Henry Savile. That he would prove a dishonest steward clearly occurred to no one, though it was later suggested that his peculations from the building fund had begun early.[12]

We know that Sir Thomas Bodley probably died before his own extension to the library was entirely finished. He thus bequeathed to his successor a team of workmen conversant with the site, and trained in the style of architecture which he deemed desirable. He also left behind him a little circle of willing and experienced helpers in the University, though it was perhaps inevitable that this circle soon broke up. Bodley's old friend William Gent died in Gloucester Hall on the last day of April,[13] only a month after the foundation stone of the new quadrangle had been laid. Dr. Brent resigned his post as Paymaster to a kinsman of Sir John's,[14] and of these three only young John Hawley continued to take an active part in supervising the work. For this, as well as for his past services, he received a Doctorate of Civil Law in the autumn

[12] Reginald L. Pool, *A Lecture on the History of the University Archives*, Oxford, 1912, 16.
[13] Chamberlain's Letters, I, 6 May 1613.
[14] Recorded in the Register of Convocation.

of 1613.[15] Dr. Hawley's assistance was doubtless welcome, for it is plain that Sir John, a busy man, did not intend to devote so much of his time and energy to Oxford as Bodley had formerly done, and relied more on help from the University.[16] Nevertheless, it is clear that he took no small share in directing the progress of the new building and that he was in personal contact with the masons.[17] His connections with Christ Church increased the influence of that College upon the course of the building and perhaps caused him to favour the craftsmen who had been employed there.

The Schools' quadrangle was built between 1613 and 1624. Unfortunately, systematic accounts for its building do not appear to have been kept until 1621 when Sir John's irregularities had focussed attention on the inadequacy of the methods then employed.[18] As sponsor of the University appeal and as Bodley's executor Sir John had two separate funds at his disposal, one for the building of the two lower storeys of the Schools, the other for the third. The accounts for the University fund were apparently kept and presented to Convocation by Dr. Hawley, but these are now lost and the sole information which survives about the building of the two lower storeys before 1620 is contained in the Register of Convocation which states only the total sums expended on the work. Sir John's other accounts for the money derived from Bodley's estate, which he and his fellow executor, William Hakewell, rendered to the University, again through the good offices of Dr. Hawley, are entered in the Register in rather more detail. They contain useful information including the names of some leading craftsmen. The first of these accounts covers the period March 1613–November 1615, the second runs from November 1615–July 1619. In addition we have a page of accounts copied into the end of the Convocation Register and headed ' Moneys laid out by Sir John Bennet and not recorded in Dr. Hawley's accounts '. This appears to cover the whole period from the beginning of the work to Sir John's subsequent arrest. The entries are undated and not in strict chronological order. Among them are payments to individual workmen, including carvers, painters and plumbers. In the University archives are also preserved some bills presented by Slatford the smith, covering the work done by him during 1618–21. These bills were also partially recorded in the Vice-Chancellor's Account Book. They contain some useful data concerning the progress of the work.[19]

[15] Convocation Register N., 269.

[16] Laud afterwards blamed Hawley, not Bennet, for allowing bad work in the building. Laud, *Works*, Oxford, 1853, v, 195.

[17] Bennet's letters to the University and the building accounts for the Schools.

[18] *Oxoniensia*, XIII (1948), 40.

[19] Convocation Register N, 1–2 and 116. Sir John's private accounts are found on p. 269, and the accounts after 1621 in the Vice-Chancellor's Account Book for 1556–1666. Slatford's bills are in the University Archives (N.W., 3, 1, C.).

In the absence of proper accounts, we have little direct information about the workmen who built the Schools' quadrangle between the years 1613–20. It would probably be safe to infer that most of those named in the accounts after 1620, who were regular servants of the University, were also employed, as needed, before that date. In addition, some specially skilled craftsmen were called in from London, or elsewhere, as the work progressed. Each of these men, of course, brought his ' company ' or band of friends and apprentices with him, though their names are seldom recorded. It is clear, however, that John Ackroyd relied principally upon the team of experienced workmen which he had assembled for the building of Merton quadrangle and, doubtless, largely re-employed on the extension to the library.[20] In the early spring of 1613 he must have re-assembled this team quite easily since most of his men were probably still within recall, and indeed some had moved no further than Wadham where building was then drawing to a close.[21] Ackroyd may also have brought a few hands with him when he returned from Yorkshire at the end of March. With much of the tackle already upon the site and a team of skilled craftsmen so conveniently at hand, the building of the Schools' quadrangle should have progressed smoothly and speedily, had not death dogged the enterprise from the first.

John Ackroyd himself died on 13 August 1613, only some four months after building had started. It is clear from Bodley's letters that he relied greatly on Ackroyd's personal superintendence of the work-people, and his loss must have been a blow to his patrons.[22] Ackroyd's place was taken by his partner, John Bentley, but Bentley only survived him briefly, dying early in December 1615. His death meant that his brother, Michael Bentley, who was possibly the team's chief carver,[23] was called from his own work to superintend the building operations. He also died in July 1618, leaving Thomas Holt, the Yorkshire master-carpenter, to lay claim to being architect of the Schools, as sole survivor of the original band of leading craftsmen who had contracted for the Merton quadrangle.[24] At Michael Bentley's death much of the work on the tower was still unfinished and it was several years before the quadrangle was finally completed.

It is against this background of loss and change that we must reconstruct

[20] For information concerning the Yorkshire masons see T. W. Hanson, ' Halifax Builders in Oxford ', *Halifax Antiq. Soc.*, 1928, 253 seq.

[21] T. G. Jackson, *Wadham College*, index.

[22] G. W. Wheeler, *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Henry James*, Oxford, 1925, Letter 202.

[23] Payment for carving the Ionic pillars on the Tower was made to ' Michael Bentley ' out of the workmen, but this may mean simply that he was now mason-in-charge. Convocation Register N., 269.

[24] Hanson, *loc cit.*, quotes Holt's epitaph in which this claim is made.

the early history of the Schools quadrangle, and try to re-interpret its architectural inconsistencies.

We do not know exactly when it was decided to alter Sir Thomas Bodley's original plan, but it must early have been recognized that the increased height of the new ranges would necessitate a different architectural focus of interest in the quadrangle and that this could best be achieved by redesigning the Gate Tower on its inner face, while retaining the earlier scheme in a modified form on the side overlooking Catte Street. Bodley's Gothic angle turret and spirelet were, however, allowed to remain as somewhat incongruous features in what was to become an essentially classical facade.[25]

The Jacobean builder sought to achieve emphasis by applying lavish architectural ornamentation to an otherwise unemphatic surface, and this was the principle adopted by the Yorkshire masons and their patrons in redesigning the Schools tower.[26] That this ornamentation should follow the form of the much admired frontispiece at Merton was an obvious choice, since Bodley's personal scruples no longer prevailed against it and Sir Henry Savile's well-known love for the classical could thus be given rein. But in raising the tower by an extra storey and employing all five orders, builders and patrons alike were probably influenced by their desire to eclipse the recently erected frontispiece at Wadham, since much jealousy had been excited, both in University circles and among the workmen, during the building of that College.

In the early 17th century the conception of the Five Orders was a highly fashionable decorative device. It had been adopted as a theme by the city craftsmen who designed the triumphal arches for King James's State Entry into London, and in 1608, John Thorp, the King's Surveyor, had produced a translation of Hans Bloom's *Quinque Ordines Architecturae*, published in Leipzig in 1550, in the preface to which he recommends his book for the use ' as much of gentlemen as rich men ' and ' for master builders, carvers and all sorts of men that love beauty ', showing how widely this ornamental conceit was then valued.[27]

Scholars have at various times speculated upon the remoter ancestry of the Schools Tower and its predecessor at Merton. Sir John Summerson

[25] As Jackson points out, the cusped and transomed oriels and the rib and panel vaulting beneath the tower, with its bosses at the intersection of the ribs, are other Gothic details which were also retained. *Wadham College*, 126.

[26] J. Lees-Milne, *Tudor Renaissance*, 129. 'All that was done by (the) builders was to apply some extra classical details to an essentially Gothic background complete with perpendicular pinnacles and debased ornamentation.'

[27] Though Thorp's book was probably known to them, the Yorkshire masons certainly also used Sebastian Serlio's *Architectura* as a pattern book, since we know that they copied from Serlio a ceiling for one of the Tower chambers.

derives them via the gate of Honour at Caius College, Cambridge, from Somerset House and so, ultimately, from France, and Mr. Hussey, following Sir T. G. Jackson, has traced their descent more directly from the Chateau d'Amet and the illustrations of Philibert de L'Orme; but he has equally pointed out their close connection with the porches of Stoneyhurst and Browsholme, suggesting that this use of the classical orders was introduced to the south by Sir Henry Savile and his Yorkshire masons, and Mr. Trappes-Lomax has supported this view.[28]

It must be remembered, however, that such speculations cannot be pressed too far, since the builders did not adhere strictly even to their new plan for the Tower, and we have, therefore, no exact information as to how Sir John and his advisers intended to ornament the upper stages, within the framework of the superimposed orders, though it seems likely, on the analogy of Merton, that the royal arms, together with those of Bennet and of Bodley, would have formed some part of the decorative design.

By a careful study of the building accounts and other available evidence, it is possible to arrive at a fairly accurate understanding of the several phases in which the building of the Schools Tower was carried out and of the alterations which were made as the work progressed.

It was expressly stated in the Register of Convocation for 1615 that the lower ranges of the Schools were finished by November of that year and that the third storey was then almost completed, which implies that the Tower also had reached roof level. This is borne out by the accounts, which show that the two great windows which light this storey were already carved, and that £40 had been paid for the coupled Ionic pillars with their extended entablature which adorn its western face. Only a month after these accounts had been presented to Convocation, John Bentley died. It may have been for this reason that further work on the heightening of the Tower was now abandoned, but it is more likely that, for several years, all the available money from both funds was needed to meet the expense of roofing the building and of finishing the interior, in addition to the heavy cost of painting the gallery ceiling and frieze.[29] During this period work on the interior of the first three storeys of the Tower kept step with the rest of the building, but it was not until the summer of 1618 that anything more was done to the exterior. We first hear of this renewed activity in connection with the vault of the passage leading into Catte Street, but we find that before the end of the year Slatford, the smith, was busy

[28] J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 1530-1830, London, 1953, 109–10. C. Hussey, *Country Life*, LXXIII (1), 255 and LXXVIII (1), 42 and M. Trappes-Lomax, LXXXIV (1), 62.

[29] Convocation Register N. 116. For information on the painted ceiling and frieze see *Bodleian Library Record*, III, 82–91, 201–07; IV, 30–51; V, 290–308. This painting was not, of course, finished till *c.* 1620.

making casements for all the windows in the Schools including the Tower, but excluding the staircase turrets, and that, during the following summer, he fashioned pins to fasten the Tower pinnacles. Since Sir John finally discharged the masons working on the Schools in June 1619, we may conclude that by then the Tower stood its full five storeys high, and that its main outlines were now complete, though much of the detail was still unfinished.[30]

Slatford's bill gives us the first indication that the appearance of the Tower, then being built, was not altogether that which we know today.[31] For Slatford reckoned that the sum of all the casements in the Schools, excepting the turrets, was five score and twelve, that is, two less than the present total, and it was not until two years later, in 1620, that he submitted an item, '2 casements for the Tower', which perhaps accounts for these missing casements and suggests that they were then made for two windows, which must have been added in that year, as the result of some change of plan. Since it is unlikely that any of the principal windows remained unfinished till 1620, we must, I think, conclude that Slatford's bill refers to one of the pairs of north and south side windows in the upper stages of the Tower.[32]

It is to Mr. Hanson that we owe a further piece of corroborative evidence. In his paper on the Yorkshire masons he states that Sir Thomas Jackson, while carrying out repairs, found traces of a transomed window behind the statue of King James and if, as seems probable, Jackson interpreted the decaying stonework correctly, we have here another indication of alteration to the windows of the Tower.[33]

At Merton and at Wadham the royal arms adorn the highest stage of each frontispiece; and this, as I have said, was probably intended as the position for the coats of arms or other decoration upon the Schools Tower, where the great transomed windows themselves provided almost sufficient ornament, but would have been monotonous if carried through the whole five orders. In this arrangement, only one pair of side windows would have been needed, those which give light to the fifth storey. But if, before the work were finished, a grander scheme of decoration supervened, it would have been necessary to transfer the decoration from the fifth to the fourth storey of the Tower, as otherwise the composition would lack balance.[34] At the same time a new

[30] Convocation Register N., 116.

[31] University Archives, N.W.3. 1C.

[32] Slatford explicitly excluded the windows in the four staircase turrets which were not yet finished; without these the figures are: Schools 96, Angle Turret 7, Tower $9+2=11$.

[33] Hanson, op. cit., 297. Unfortunately Mr. Hanson omits a reference for this statement, which I cannot trace, but I see no reason to doubt it.

[34] The inscription to Bodley over the West doorway of the quadrangle is a later addition, so it is likely that his arms would have been represented somewhere on the Tower in the earlier plans.

pair of windows would have been needed to compensate for the blocking of the six-light transomed window on that storey.

The year 1620 was marked by an event which could account for all these changes and, in fact, must have brought about extensive alterations to the Tower.

This was the presentation to the University of the Latin edition of King James's works, then recently published. It was a great occasion in the history of the library. The book, bound in red velvet and heavily gilded, was received with fulsome gratitude and laid in a specially prepared repository, while the envoys who brought it were lavishly entertained. It is said that the King was all the more delighted with this reception because, in Cambridge, a similar gift had been treated rather coolly.[35]

Since the carvings for the two top storeys of the Tower were in all probability still unfinished at the time of the presentation, a rare opportunity was offered to any benefactor who sought to gain favour with the monarch, either for himself or for the University. It seems that this opportunity was eagerly seized, unhappily we do not know by whom,[36] all existing plans were cancelled and the fourth storey of the Tower adroitly adapted to accommodate a sculptured group representing His Majesty in the act of bestowing his book upon the University; his likeness, appropriately, being taken from the portrait with which he had adorned the royal *Works*.[36] It is perhaps significant that this group of statues was, on erection, painted double gilt, an extravagance so far beyond the usual careful parsimony of the University, that it may indicate a single wealthy donor,[37] and indeed may well represent a third and last attempt to attract the royal favour on the part of that indomitable old lawyer, Otho Nicholson, who had on two previous occasions shown himself a bountiful patron to Oxford in the hope of pleasing the King.[38] If so, success again eluded him, for Anthony Wood has given us, along with a detailed description of the carvings, the sad story of the shabby treatment which this magnificent spectacle received at the King's hands.[39] 'The effigies of King James' he

[35] Wood, *Annals*, I, 336. The Latin edition was first published in 1619. The library purchased an ordinary copy early in 1620. Can this have been with a view to the carvings?

To mark the renewed importance of the Tower and the founding of two new Professorships by Savile in that year, Sir Clement Edmonds, then M.P. for Oxford City, paid the University the happy compliment of presenting them with a mathematical pillar which, beside other uses, illustrated for learners the five orders of architecture. This is now in the History of Science Museum. This Presentation tends to show that the Tower was just then in the public eye again.

[36] This portrait is discussed by A. M. Hind in *Engraving in England*, Cambridge, 1953 II, 259. It was by a Dutchman, Simon van de Passe.

[37] It is to be noticed that after Bennet's first payment (see below) no bills for these carvings appear in the University accounts, which looks as if the benefactor paid them himself after Bennet's fall.

[38] At first the King intended to present his *Works* himself. Thus Nicholson may have been twice disappointed in confronting the King in Oxford with his benefactions on a ceremonial occasion.

[39] Wood, *Annals*, II, 793 seq.

writes ' was cut very curiously in stone, sitting in a throne and giving with his right hand a book to the picture or emblem of Fame, with this prescription on the cover: Haec habeo, quae scripsi ', with his left hand he reacheth out another book to our mother, the University of Oxford, represented in effigy kneeling to the King with this inscription ' Haec haebo quae dedi '. On the verge of the canopy over the throne and the King's head, which is also most admirably cut in stone, is his motto ' Beati pacifici ', over that also are the emblems of Justice, Peace and Plenty and underneath all this an inscription in golden letters: Regnante D. Jacobo, regum doctissimo, munificentissimo, optimo hae musis extractae moles, congesta bibliotheca et quaecumque adhuc deerant ad splendorem Academicae felicita tentata, coepta, absoluta, soli deo gloria, all which pictures and emblems were at first with great cost and splendour double gilt, but when King James came from Woodstock to see the quadrangular pile he commanded them (being so glorious and splendid that none, especially when the sun shined, could behold them) to be whitened over and adorned with ordinary colours, which hath since so continued '.[40]

It was indeed unfortunate that His Majesty first saw the statues in the dazzling brightness of an August afternoon, but it is doubtful if such gaudy city taste would have proved acceptable to him, even in more favourable circumstances, for John de Critz, the King's painter, had some years previously set on foot a fashion for the more sober hues which were then current in fashionable Court circles.[41]

By a happy accident we know the sculptor who carved these much admired, if ill-fated, statues on the Schools Tower, for Sir John Bennet has most conveniently supplied us with his name. Last on the list of the miscellaneous and undated entries which he added to his accounts we read: ' item paid by Sir John Bennet to John Clark when he began his work upon the King's statue . . . £5 '. We might indeed have guessed his identity ourselves, for the tower carvings bear a close resemblance to another famous Oxford monument, the Jacobean conduit case at Carfax, for which the same carver was responsible

John Ackroyd's will, drawn up shortly before he died, was witnessed by several of the craftsmen working on the Schools site. Among these witnesses was a certain John Clark, a Yorkshireman, who, I have suggested elsewhere, was probably Ackroyd's son-in-law. It appears that Clark had a London

[40] John Nichols in *The Progresses of King James*, London, 1828, IV, 1105, has assigned this undated anecdote of Wood's to the wrong year (i.e. 1614). The King must have passed through Oxford on his way from Woodstock in the summer of 1621, and it was possibly then that he paid an informal visit to the Tower. Nicols loc. cit. gives a rather fuller account of the Presentation than Wood.

There seems to be an oblique reference to this statue in Bod. Lib. add. M.S. C206, p. 112.

[41] *Archaeological Journal*, CX (1953), 162–3.

training, and like other carvers of his age, also served an apprenticeship as a painter-stainer. He probably first came to Oxford in 1610 to work on the repairs to the old library at Christ Church, which had been undertaken by Otho Nicholson. This contract included a handsome painted ceiling. In the summer of 1615 Nicholson again proposed to benefit the University and city by piping from Hinksey Hill an abundant supply of fresh water to a reservoir at Carfax. Over the reservoir a fine stone case was erected. This conduit case was finished in time for the opening of the water works in May 1617; it was a graceful monument, lavishly adorned with paint and gilt and was universally admired. Its carver was John Clark. In 1618–19 we learn from the surviving accounts for the third storey of the Schools, that John Clark and Thomas Knight, a well-known London painter-stainer, were paid large sums as contractors for the painting of the gallery roof and frieze. Also in 1618, perhaps on the personal recommendation of William Hakewell, Bodley's other executor, Clark was made mason-in-charge of the building of Lincoln's Inn chapel; Hakewell, himself, acting as treasurer to the building fund. In 1621 in spite of his London commitments, Clark undertook to build a part of the wall round the new Physic Garden in Oxford and, in the same year, he signed a contract together with James Partridge, for the building of an ornamental gateway leading to the Bodleian from Brasenose Lane. John Clark died in 1624 shortly after the chapel at Lincoln's Inn was finished.[42]

It is clear from this brief account of Clark's career, that he must have been one of the leading craftsmen working on the Schools site at this time, and that his connections with Christ Church would have recommended him to Sir John Bennet. It seems likely, therefore, that he was commissioned not only to cut the King's statue, but also to complete the whole of the unfinished carving on the west side of the Tower,[43] and this conclusion is supported by the slight change in style and in the decorative motives apparent in the work on the fourth and fifth storeys.[44] It is also probably significant that the name of an established London plumber, Jeremy Lawes, now appears in the accounts for the first

[42] *Oxoniensia*, XXVI–VII (1961/2), 229 seq. and XXIX–XXX (1964/5), 142. Some of the figures on the Tower carry metal insignia, as did those on the conduit. These were probably the work of the London plumber, Lawes.

[43] By the terms of Bodley's will the University was liable for the roof of the new Schools, and presumably, of the Tower, but it is not clear how the cost of the extra storey of the Tower was apportioned. By 1619 the pillars and entablature of the five orders were probably in position with the balustrade and pinnacles, and it looks as if the carvings for the vault had already been cut. These are therefore probably not Clark's work. It is noticeable that no bills for the decorative carving on the fourth and fifth storey survive, nor for those on the parapet. If these were cut *after* 1620, they should be in the University accounts unless they were paid for *in toto* by the donor of the statue.

[44] It is possible that Clark used Thorp's book, as he may have transposed a motif illustrated by Thorp for his decoration of the frieze on the fifth storey.

time, since, like James Partridge, he was probably one of the craftsmen belonging to Clark's own circle who was brought in to work with him on the Schools contract.

I have earlier stated that Sir Thomas Bodley's plan for the Tower, so drastically altered on its inner face, was treated more gently on the side overlooking Catte Street. Unfortunately no contemporary pictures of the Schools survive and we are, therefore, dependent on David Loggan's engravings, published in *Oxonia Illustrata* in 1675, to give us our earliest information as to its appearance before restoration (PLATE X). Loggan's engraving shows us that the Tower on this side and especially its oriel window has suffered considerable modification,[45] but on one point his drawing is perhaps not so informative as one taken in 1825 from the site of Hertford College.[46] In this we can see that the ornamentation around the sills of the double oriel, so reminiscent of the Founders Tower, if original, was likely to have been a part of the first design. Another 'Gothic' feature now lost was the fleurs-de-lys ornaments which crowned the parapet.[47]

We know that the stone used for the masonry of the Schools, as for Merton quadrangle and Bodley's extension to the library, came from the quarries on Headington Hill. It is extremely probable that this was also the stone which Clark used for his carvings, for we have some evidence that he had earlier selected it for his conduit monument, because it took a polish easily, and was therefore suitable for paint. The poor-wearing quality of this Headington stone must early have resulted in considerable decay; indeed John Jackson was called in to repair the royal arms upon the parapet as early as 1660,[48] and though the lower group of statues, being more sheltered, probably weathered rather less quickly, they must also have presented a decidedly dilapidated appearance by the early years of the 18th century. By this time too their paint, which was still fresh in Wood's day, would have lost its brilliance, and since this was a dying fashion, it is unlikely that it was renewed. Lacking their colour, Clark's statues lost an essential element in their composition, which is not always recognized. In the later 18th century the Tower and its decorations suffered further damage through extensive, and often clumsy, patching in the Roman cement then much in vogue,[49] and though a partial

[45] Unhappily, the scale of Loggan's drawing is too small to give full details.

[46] Bod. Lib. G.A. Oxon A. 44. This Bodleian picture book includes many useful pictures of both sides of the Tower, showing the progress of decay and the intermittent restoration.

[47] Another original detail which got lost from the east face of the Tower was the ornamental arcading at each corner where it left the roof. This is still preserved on the west side. It served to soften somewhat the bareness caused by the rejection of the Gothic niches which break the Tower face at Magdalen.

[48] Vice-Chancellor's accounts for that year.

[49] The Conduit carvings were also patched in Roman cement.

effort to repair some of the carvings was made in 1830 when Smirke carried out his restorations in the gallery and elsewhere,[50] it was not until the 1870s that the shocking decay of the stonework forced the authorities to take new and more drastic action. In his history of the Bodleian Library, Sir Edmund Craster has described the negotiations leading up to these repairs, which resulted in the appointment of Sir Thomas Jackson to carry out the work.[51]

Jackson's Reports make interesting reading, if only as justification for the extent to which he substituted entirely new work for the original carvings on the Schools. On 23 May 1876, he informed the Curators that accurate geometrical drawings of the Tower had been made and that its condition was then very bad, since a great part of what seemed to be sculpture from the ground was, in reality, Roman cement, including the statue of King James himself. In places the cement had fallen off and it was seldom firmly attached to the walls, the decay of masonry having continued behind it. Jackson asserted that the oriel towards Hertford and the parapets and pinnacles were a real danger to the public, and that one of the smaller statues, which had decayed till it was a mere shapeless mass, fell bodily down at a touch.

Though Jackson was careful to see that his carvers followed, whenever possible, ' the fine old examples remaining on the walls of the Schools and Library ', and though he himself endeavoured to reproduce the original detail as exactly as he could, he had often so little to guide him that he was bound to err in his interpretation. Some of these mistakes are now discernible, though many, no doubt, still escape us.[52]

Before making any judgment of the Schools Tower, we should therefore realize that what we are looking at has no longer any pretensions to being an original monument, and that it is impossible for us to savour the delicate and skilful cutting of Clark's own carvings which clearly won the admiration of his contemporaries in Oxford.[53] Like most of the leading workpeople employed at all periods by the universities, he was not in the first rank of his profession as a carver; nor did he ever, so far as we know, serve the Court and the great nobility. But it does appear that he had received his training at the hands of extremely proficient London craftsmen, and that he moved at least on the fringe of a circle which included Thomas Styles, and, probably, men like Robert Lyming, Isaac Jackson, Richard Butler and John Thorp's brother,

[50] Jackson says that Box ground stone was used for these repairs. It seems that he also found some Taynton stone had been used at some time on the parapet.

[51] Sir Edmund Craster, *History of the Bodleian Library*, 1845–1945, Oxford, 1926, 131 ff.

[52] For instance, Jackson obviously went wrong in repairing the top of the oriel on the east side of the Tower.

[53] His carving on the conduit, where preserved, is very delicate and skilful. His 17th century contemporaries described it as ' curiously cut ' and ' the like, except in London, not to be found in England '.

Thomas. Nor must it be forgotten that the fashionable throng which crowded to the opening of Lincoln's Inn chapel were well content with his handiwork.[54]

So far I have referred only briefly to John Ackroyd and his partner John Bentley,[55] but no discussion on the design and execution of the Tower of the Five Orders would be incomplete without some consideration of these two craftsmen.

It has long been accepted that Ackroyd was first summoned to Oxford because of an unusual dearth of skilled masons in the vicinity and of unrest in the local building trades, and the suspicion that he was thus selected *faut de mieux* has perhaps led us to underestimate his standing as a mason.

Sir John Summerson and Mr. Mark Girouard have lately described in great detail the working lives of men belonging to two distinguished family firms of Elizabethan builders.[56] Both of these families have left behind them a large collection of plans and drawings which have enabled us to interpret their work with some exactness; but there were of course many other family 'firms' at this period, each with their own repertoire of drawings, who are at best still only the most shadowy of figures. Such a firm, I believe, was the Ackroyds, of which two generations are known to us.

William Ackroyd was clearly a well established mason in and around Halifax, who, by the early 17th century, had been able to build up a business capable of supporting several sons and of attracting into partnership such an able young neighbour as John Bentley.

We do not know with certainty on what buildings William and John Ackroyd worked in Yorkshire or other adjacent counties, nor of any house for whose design they can be held responsible, but Mr. Hanson has suggested with probability, that John Ackroyd and his brothers were employed by the Saviles at Methley. There is also an interesting group of three other local houses with which I believe that they may possibly be linked and whose plans and elevations probably constituted part of the firm's repertoire of drawings. These three houses are Stonyhurst, Browshome[57] and Howley Hall, the seat of another branch of the Savile family (PLATE XIA). With Howley, indeed, they have a definite if slight connection.

[54] We should also remember that Clark's apprentice, Edward Marshall, was one of the most important statuaries of his day and that Hugh Davis who was probably trained by Clark, since he worked at Lincoln's Inn, became one of the leading craftsmen of the next generation in Oxford.

[55] Of Holt so little is known that it is not possible to determine how close his relations were with Ackroyd and Bentley in Yorkshire. His will mentions no relatives there and we do not know his exact place of origin. Moreover, his contacts with the Wadham workpeople perhaps indicate that his early training had been either in London or on buildings with which some of them were connected.

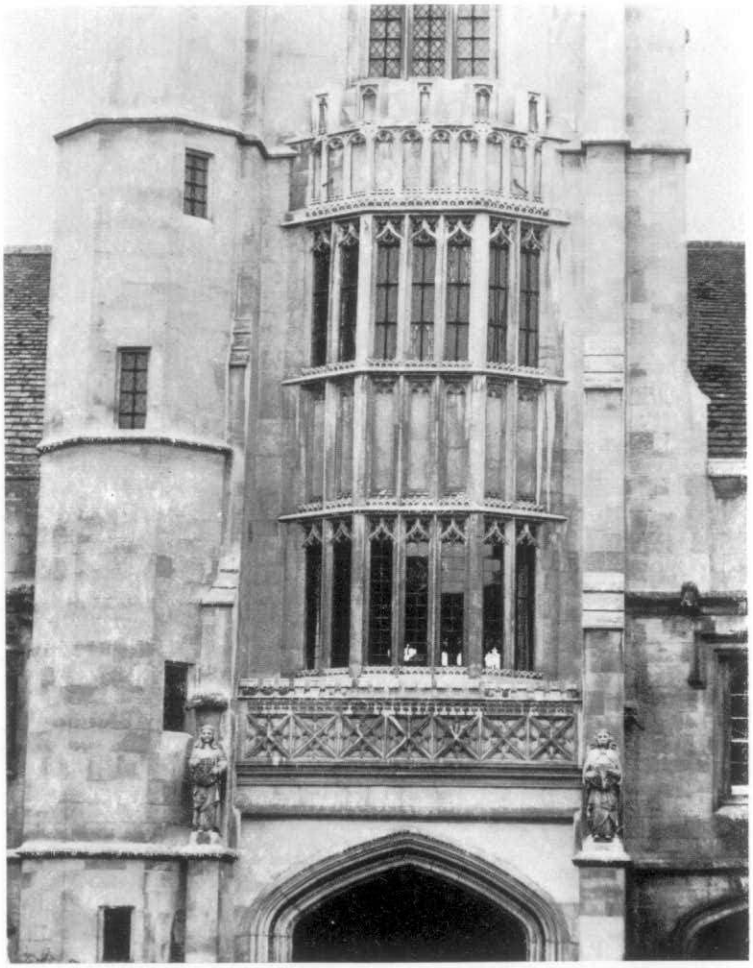
[56] Sir John Summerson, *The Book of Architecture of John Thorp*, *Walpole Society*, XL (1964). Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson* (*Country Life* publication), London, 1966.

[57] For illustrations of Stonyhurst see *Country Life*, LXXVIII (1), 40. The drawing of Browsholm (Plate XIB) was kindly given me by the owner. It shows the house before alteration.

THE BUILDING OF THE TOWER OF FIVE ORDERS

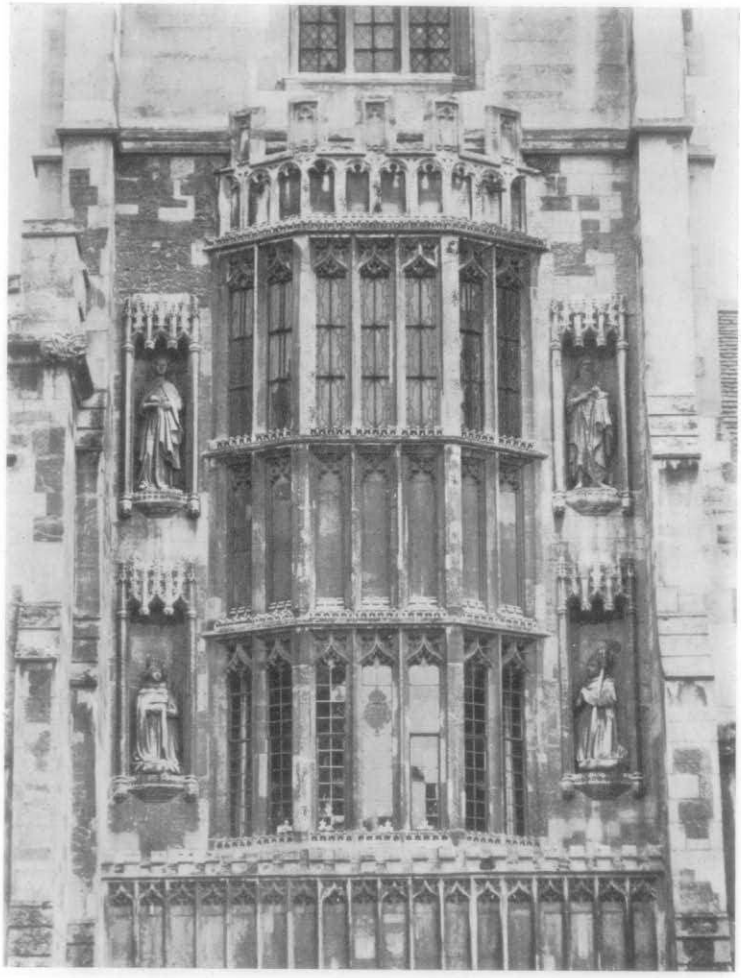
Contrive as he might, the plans of an Elizabethan patron had ultimately to be interpreted through the hands of his builder and must depend to a large extent on that builder's skills and his training. This would inevitably modify the original design and impose something of the craftsman's own spirit upon the finished creation. In considering the history of the Bodleian quadrangle and the Schools Tower, we must, therefore, give due weight to the part played by Ackroyd and his assistants. Indeed, we must realize that in this great architectural achievement we have a fusion of Bodley's Gothic with Sir Henry Savile's classicism, distilled through the minds of persons who were intimate with the great houses of the north, and finally crystallized by a group of masons trained in the local traditions of Elizabethan Yorkshire.

PLATE IX



A. MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD: FOUNDER'S TOWER FROM EAST.

Photo N.M.R. (*copyright P. S. Spokes*)

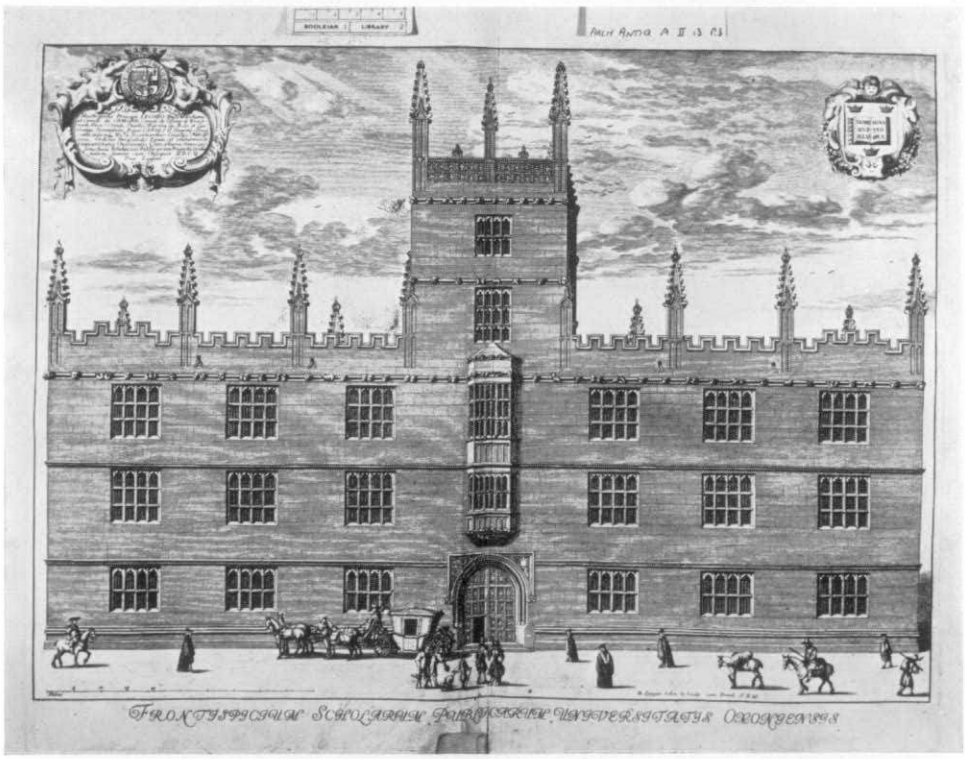


B. MAGDALEN COLLEGE: FOUNDER'S TOWER FROM WEST.

Photo N.M.R. (copyright P. S. Spokes)

A. THE SCHOOLS TOWER FROM THE WEST.

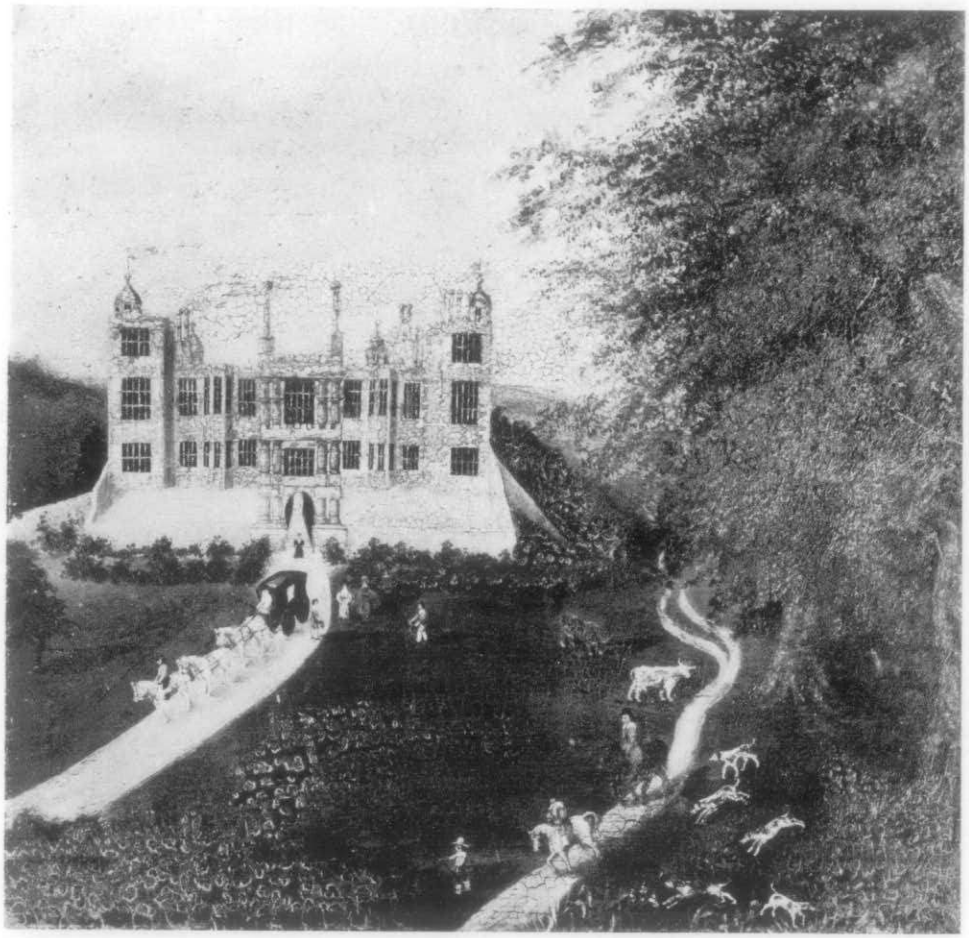
Loggan, Oxonia Illustrata



B. THE SCHOOLS TOWER FROM THE EAST.

Loggan, Oxonia Illustrata

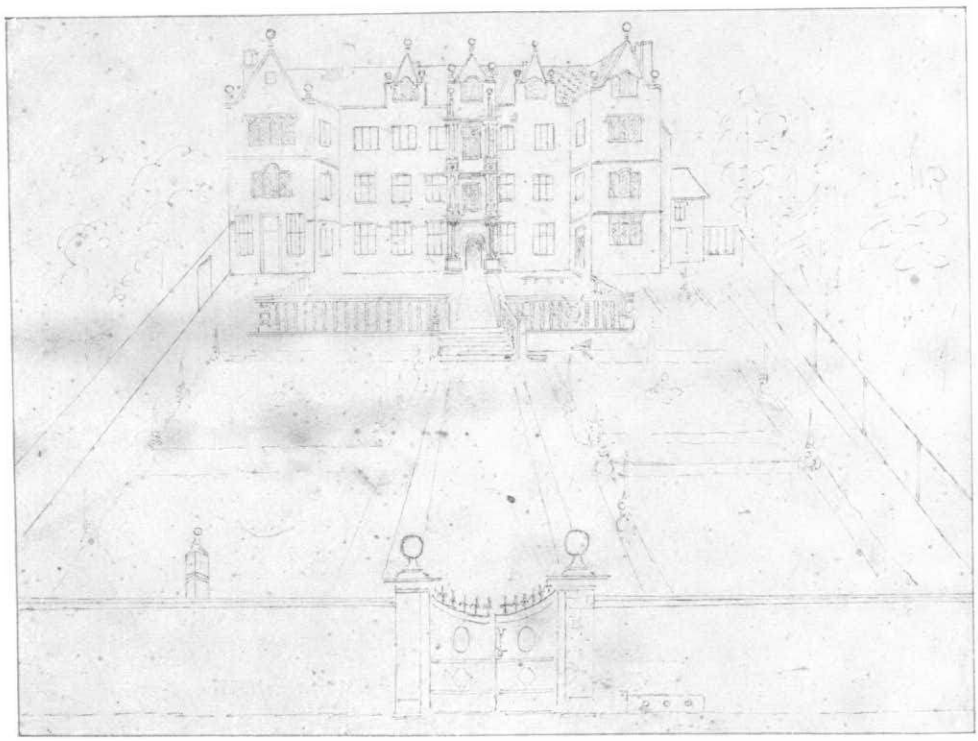
PLATE XI



A. HOWLEY HALL.

From a picture in the possession of Mrs. Muircroft, lent to Scarborough Museum

PLATE XI (*continued*)



B. BROWSHOLM HALL.

From a pencil sketch given by the owner, showing the house before alteration with 4 orders rather than 3 as at present