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A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW BY MR. FRANK BRANGWYN, R.A.

Plate I. August 1921.

STUDY FOR DESIGN OF CENTRAL FIGURES.

A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW

by

Mr. Frank Brangwyn, R.A.

ART has been somewhat loosely defined as an improvement on Nature; but in the form of the stained-glass window it is Nature that improves Art. That is one of its fascinations. In no other branch has Nature been so completely enlisted as an ally; yet there is none from which the natural is more completely divorced. Of necessity it is highly conventional. Its limitations are severe—both of medium and of tradition.

But, all this notwithstanding, in no other kind of art is Nature more truly the co-artist. The radiant sun and the lowering sky both lend their happy aid. Here Art and Nature meet and become one. The human hand weaves the pattern and mixes the colours. Nature does the rest. Who that has seen the glorious rose window of Notre Dame lit up by the midday sun can forget the magic of its beauty? Who that has seen it will deny that this in very deed is highest art? And to those who dream and draw in marble and in stone, whose art gives to mankind its palaces and its cathedrals, the stained-glass window must make a special appeal. Undoubtedly it does; but the pity is that it has not to-day the importance it once enjoyed. The fact that it suffers in common with the equally delightful art of mural decoration is no real consolation. Both are intimately linked with architecture, but that has not saved them.

There are still left a few craftsmen who struggle to carry on the ancient tradition, but there is only too good reason to fear that with them will die out the secrets of this fine craft. Those secrets are mainly concerned with the making of the rich glowing colours on which the art almost wholly depends. The colouring of glass is a delicate matter. There is much more in it than meets the eye; the faithful reproduction of the artist's design is not a mere mechanical process. It is a matter of high skill, loving thought, delicate and devoted craftsmanship; and if the craftsman goes, the art goes too.

That is why it is welcome news that a new war memorial window has just been completed to the design of Mr. Frank Brangwyn, R.A. It is welcome because artists of his standing are rarely employed in such work. It is welcome because it may perchance lead to a revival of the art; and we are sure we shall not be misunderstood if we add a word of congratulation on the fact that the window has been placed in a Congregational church—Abington Avenue, Northampton. It is twenty-four feet or so high, and about ten feet across, and there are four main lights. The artist has taken as his subject the Crucifixion scene, and has chosen the moment when the body of Christ is being removed for burial. The colours are rich and low in tone, and the whole effect is austerely impressive. The design has been admirably reproduced by Messrs. P. Turpin & Co., of Berners Street, W.C. The head of it is Mr. Paul Turpin, who has carried out many important decorative schemes under Mr. Brangwyn's supervision.

There is a strength about this memorial window which compels attention, but the most striking note is that of a deep reverence. The composition is skilful and sure. The symbolism is introduced quietly and naturally. The two thieves are one on either side, both facing the Cross that represents the hope of mankind. In the background is Jerusalem, and behind the Cross a crowd of spectators. The familiar figures of those who mourned Christ occupy the foreground, all subordinated to the Saviour, whose noble face, serene in death, has a compelling dignity. His right arm touches some flowers which, with the splendid robe of the man on the right, give a high decorative value to the lower part of the window. In the midst of the flowers lies a skull, while on the left a young girl looks down upon the glowing blossoms. Above, a choir of cherubim acclaim the Saviour of Men. It is all, of course, an allegory. Christ is dead—dead for mankind. But He will rise again. The skull tells of the grave. The flowers speak of resurrection. The child is the spirit of youth. So the artist has in poetic symbolism suggested the real meaning of the sacrifice these young men made that the world might be free; and he has, with fine instinct, made his memorial a message of hope rather than a dirge of despair.

It is an epic in stained glass—a song of hope; an inspiring psalm, not of death, but of life.

CROSSLEY DAVIES.

CARTOON SHOWING THE GENERAL SUBJECT.

A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW BY MR. FRANK BRANGWYN, R.A.

Plate II. August 1921

CARTOON FOR THE FOUR MAIN LIGHTS.

A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW BY MR. FRANK BRANGWYN, R.A.

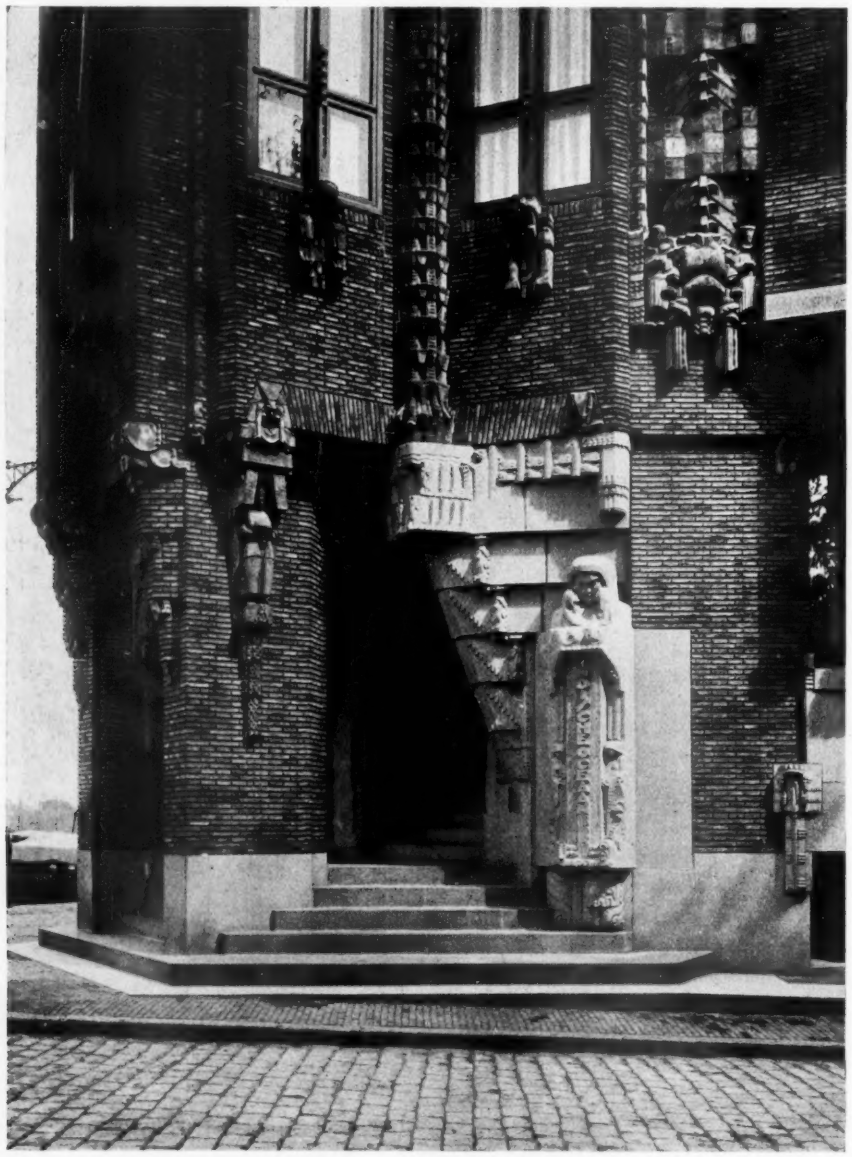
STUDIES FOR DETAIL.

The Rococo of To-day.

Marine Hotel, Amsterdam.

Von der Mey, Architect.

THE characteristic of early rococo work was its unconscionable light-heartedness. One might almost call it unprincipled. Materials were denied their structural rights. The artist seemed to aim at provoking a start and a smile from the beholder: familiar shapes were impressed for strange purposes, and unexpected features—like the open-mouthed yawn of a lion's mask, forming the enclosure of a window—were tributes to the ingenious fancies of the modeller. It never had much of a footing in England, but it flourished in the Low Countries and Germany more than it did in Italy, although the "grotesques" made their first appearance there. An underlying vein of seriousness is discernible there, in the breezy statues of Bernini and the great scenic frontispieces of the Roman fountains. In the great men's country-villas the hydraulic engineer was the master, and controlled the fashion of the waterworks, directing the extravagancies of the mason and the sculptor, since the success of his effects was at stake. It is true that the Farnese Theatre at Parma—*teste* Guardi at the National Gallery—anticipates somewhat the exuberance of the nineteenth-century treatment, but on the whole the setting is gravely and carefully archæological, to the best knowledge of what the classical theatre (as regards its scenery) may have looked like. But the English people had no use—in their homes—for the gaiety that was in Venice, and were fearful lest it should get a footing there. The plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford, and Webster—although the scene is laid in Italy and the *dramatis personæ* bear Italian names—reflect the poets' and spectators' horror of the dissolute Court of James I. Hamlet and Prospero had little to say in favour of Court life, so different from that pictured in "Love's Labour Lost"; and Jacobean architecture, whilst it reflects the vanities of the Masques, and the childishness of much of the aims in vogue,



THE MAIN ENTRANCE.

MARINE HOTEL, AMSTERDAM: GENERAL VIEW.

Von Der Mey, Architect.

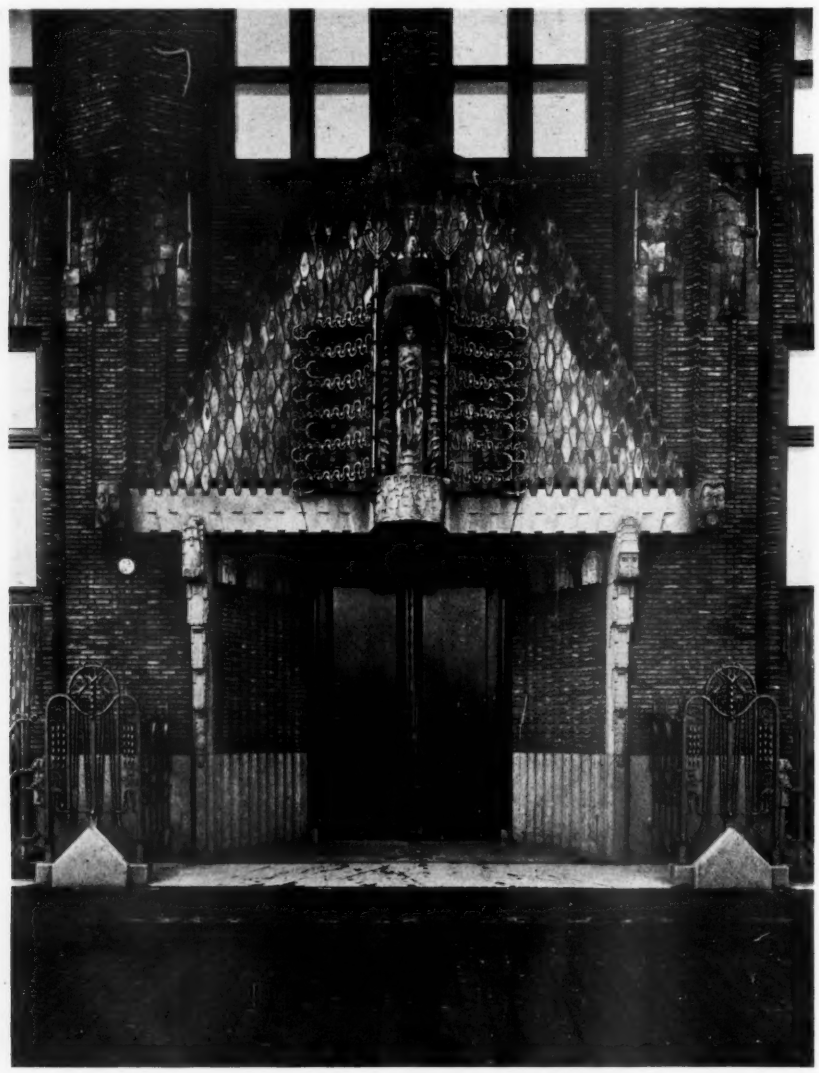
remains, at any rate, clean. No doubt the impurity in high places was checked, to a very considerable extent, by the growing strength of Puritanism, which even in the days of the Restoration formed really the backbone of English opinion.

The position of Court favourites was too precarious to justify their expenditure in architectural magnificence or adventure: the fate of Lord Clarendon's house was sufficiently dramatic as a warning. It was left to quiet retired moderate men like John Evelyn to carry on the tradition of domestic architecture.

That the temper of the English people was serious is shown by the public buildings—Greenwich Hospital for instance, and the rebuilt city churches and St. Paul's after the disastrous fire in London.

Playfulness in stone or stucco has never been a part of our national characteristic—sly hits at ecclesiastical and political failings excepted—and it is fair to state, in general terms, that after the time of Henry VII such instances of whimsical delineation as are extant are the work of foreign craftsmen. Even in the time of the Restoration drama the theatres were austere in their façades and decoration: it was not till the nineteenth century that idle decoration was plastered over their insides, and a display of meaningless ornament was held to be the proper treatment for our places of amusement.

One of the pernicious effects of this heartless ornament is that no one can be bothered to look at it. Its absence possibly might be felt as suggesting that the bareness was indicative of an unfair parsimony towards its patrons. I don't know how it may be in Holland, but here, in any of our large mercantile cities, such a building as the Marine Hotel here illustrated would invite little more than a passing attention. Traffic considerations, one must admit, often interfere with a careful examination of what the architect has tried to tell us; but we can't plead the hurry and stress on our pavements as a complete justification. However, in this particular case we have the illustrations to consult at our leisure; and truly we must spare some of this last commodity to appreciate the fare that is set before us.



DETAIL OF A DOORWAY.

The building is a Marine Hotel, and the architect has been in most deadly earnest: not for a moment can you forget the sensations of men "who go down to the sea in ships" and the attributes of the ships themselves. Every feature contributes to the salt-sea harmony: the smooth ripple of the wavelets on the sandy shore in the terminal gable; the boisterous cascades of water raised by the wind; the cork jacket that is to buoy the shipwrecked mariner against death. Nothing that the artist touches but what is redolent of the sea, whether it be marble, brick, or metal. The immensities and wonder of travel

are figured in the statues of the Indian and Atlantic Ocean standing at the entrance, and drawn on the panes of the glass lantern. The signs of the Zodiac (I could wish that a crab rather than a lobster was given for Cancer as more familiar) accentuate the length of the voyage and the guidance of the stars, and everywhere there is a tangle of ropes and cordage. Rudders, homeward bent, jut out from the hotel promontories—fishermen, sailors, captains (I miss Vanderdecken !), sea-dogs, and pirates maybe—help to consolidate the building. It would take a Dutchman to do justice to all the imagery, and even he, I suspect, would have to be something of an historian. The walls are saturated with it—they drip sheaves, blocks, tackle, belts, without stint. Lanterns for the ship's stern emerge from the brickwork. It would seem as if the chandler's shop had been rifled and all the marine stores overhauled.

The result, it must be owned, is over-busy; but then the architect is a young man, and he has designed an hotel, not a residence. One would not wish to live in such a world of allusion, nor is one asked to; on the other hand, it is delightful to find, wherever the eye lights, such evidences of care and design. His hand is patent everywhere, and it is the hand of a poet. Call it dithyrambic if you will, there is room for this on the quayside. If the occupants of the hotel are landlubbers and affect, in their superiority of taste, "the cold hand of that friend (Palladio) of virtuous poverty in architecture," the sailors of the shipping near by will be more sympathetic. The visitors will inspect the model of the ocean liner (not quite at home in its surroundings), questioning the position of the berths they have engaged, the saloon accommodation, and the provision for "wireless"; to the crew there are matters of far more serious import, and it warms the hearts to see that they have been recognized, and treated with the consideration that they deserve. I must suppose that the street boy of Amsterdam is better taught than the gamin of our streets, for there is much sculptured decoration within his reach, capable of being touched up, if not improved; and though, in the pictures, it is looking all so new, there has been time for some puerile additions and subtractions, the guardians of public security notwithstanding.

DETAIL OF A WINDOW.

A word must be said about the entrepreneurs of this building: it must have required some courage to sanction and undertake so unusual a design. No paper elevation could do justice to the conception, so much depended on the way it was carried out, and it implied a confidence that is as touching as it is rare. One may cordially wish them prosperity in their adventure, as one can unreservedly applaud the result of their undertaking.

HALSEY RICARDO.

The Châteaux of the Loire.

By H. Elrington.

THE Châteaux of the Loire are so famous that most educated people have some idea about them, more or less formulated. They " beckon " with their deathless charm even those whose interest in and knowledge of architecture is of the slightest. It scarcely needs education to appreciate the obvious beauty of such places as Chenonceaux and Azay-le-Rideau, the broad and stately Loire, or the no less delightful Indre; and sunset over the Landes of Charlemagne may have power to witch the eye of one absolutely ignorant of the history of that momentous battle-field. But if even the uninitiated are able to appreciate something of the attraction of that district of old Touraine which now is known by the name of its two principal rivers as the Department of Indre et Loire, it is difficult to over-estimate its interest for the student of history and archæology. To English people it has, moreover, the attraction that our own Angevin kings have left the impress of their personality so strongly on its architecture that in Touraine they still speak of the " Plantagenet style."

Roughly speaking, there are three types of châteaux in Touraine: 1. Those that are solely Mediæval in their architecture and associations. 2. Those in which Mediæval architecture joins hands with that of the early Renaissance. 3. Those which may be reckoned as purely Renaissance.

In the Mediæval period we find characteristics of Romanesque and Norman work first, and after that Gothic; but the particular type of early Gothic called " Plantagenet " is more clearly expressed in the ecclesiastical than the secular buildings.

In the second period Gothic merges into early Renaissance, but here also it must be remembered that the variations of Gothic are not likely to be as clearly expressed in Domestic as in Church architecture.

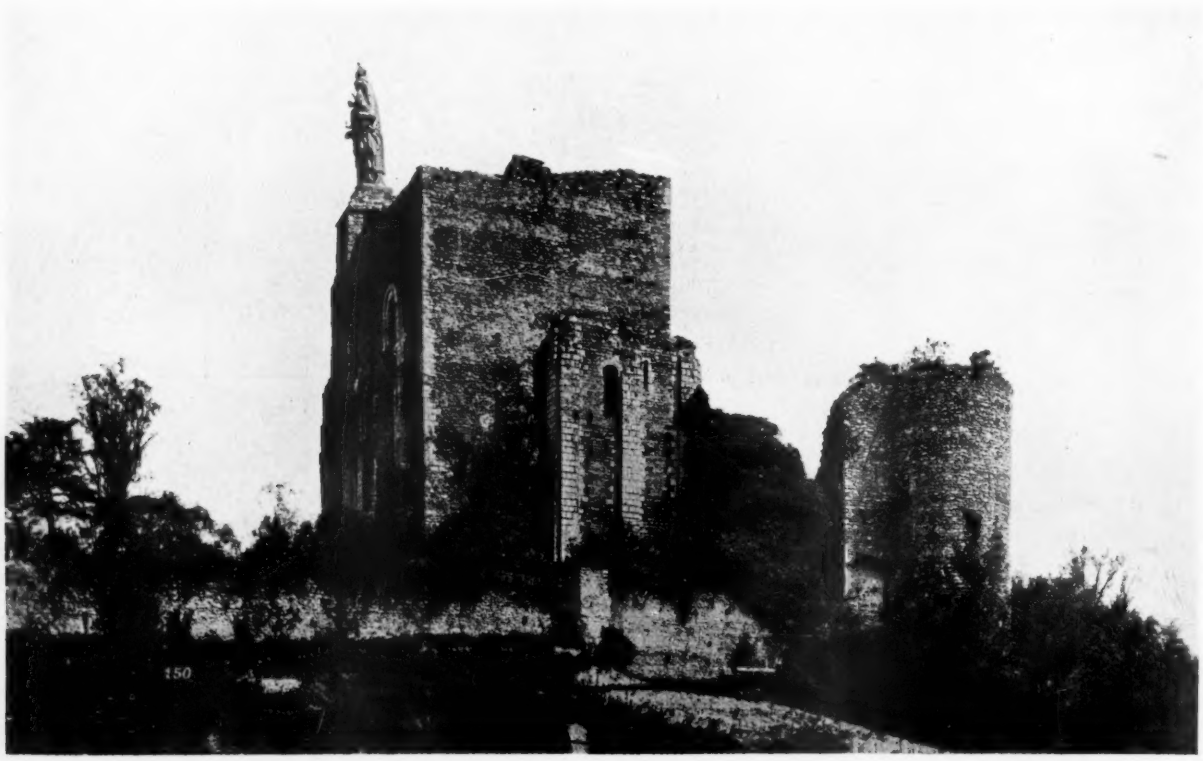
As one wanders through Touraine, one sees here and there a lone square tower, somewhat sinister of aspect, standing up against the sky. Such towers belong to the early part of the first period. They take us back to the days when the ancestors of our Plantagenet kings—the Counts of Anjou—struggled with the Counts of Blois for the supremacy of Touraine. Such towers are generally to be found not far off from some ancient highway which indeed they were built to dominate.

Fulke Nerra, Count of Anjou and ancestor of Geoffrey Plantagenet, was not only a great builder, but a great strategist, and he sought to hold his rival the Count of Blois in check by means of a chain of forts which commanded the principal roads. The tower of Montbazon (see illustration) is a good specimen of these towers, which though built for strength, not beauty, have yet a rude grandeur of their own. The figure of our Lady on the top of one of the corners is modern.

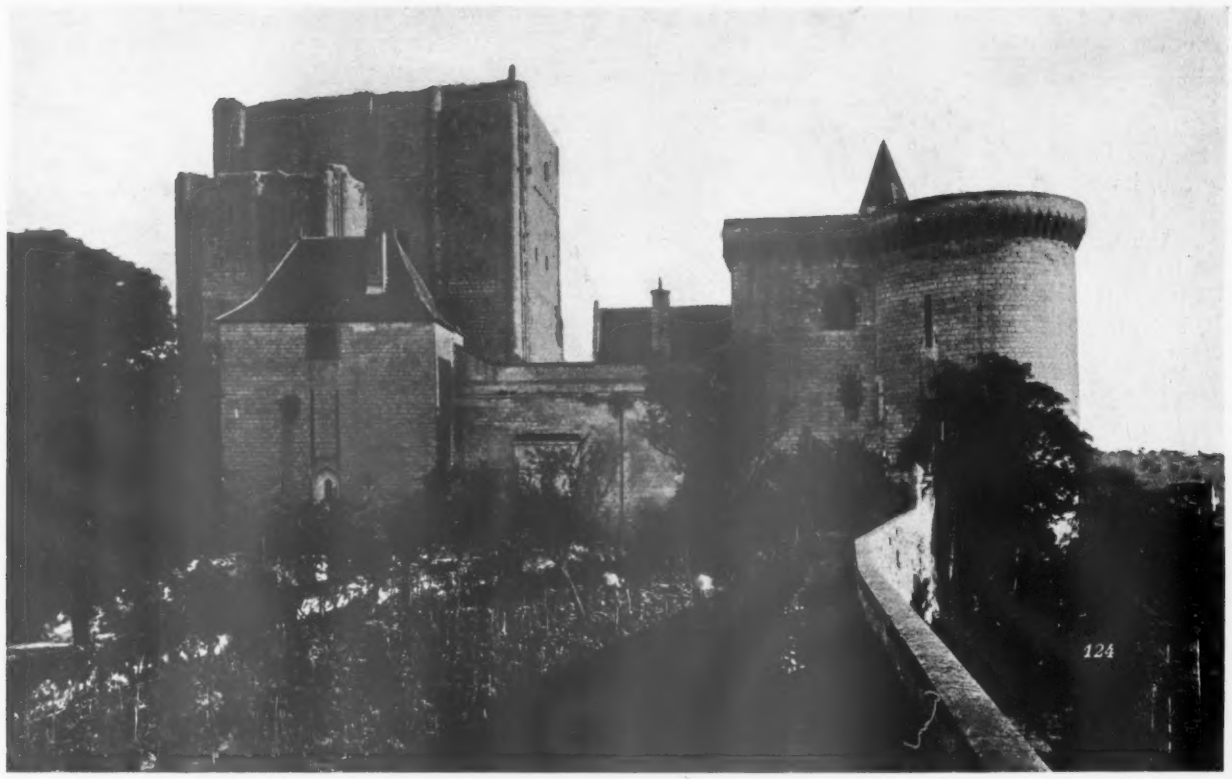
Montbazon (Voie de Châteroux) at first sight appears to have little to distinguish it from one of our own Norman keeps. It is square, a pattern adhered to later on when the Kings of England occupied Touraine, whereas the donjons of purely French origin are round. Whenever in Touraine one sees a square tower, one may take it for granted that it belongs either to the days of English occupation, or to a still earlier period, as in the case of Montbazon.

The round-arched windows and flat buttresses of Montbazon are characteristically Norman; but in the rubble masonry, and in the construction of the shallow, slightly pointed arch in the front of the bastion, there is a suggestion of Irish Romanesque. From a castle of this type the black falcon, as men called Fulke Nerra, was wont to swoop down upon his prey.

The ideal way to study the châteaux would be to follow their architectural sequence, and beginning at these towers either actually built by Fulke Nerra or showing his influence,



RUINS OF THE CHATEAU DE MONTBAZON.



LOCHES: THE DONJON AND THE TOWER.

work one's way on through the different periods until one reaches such a perfect specimen of Renaissance architecture as Azay-le-Rideau. The ordinary tourist, however, is often hampered—especially at the present time—by difficulties of locomotion, and has therefore in his sight-seeing to jumble his periods.

The writer, however, is not hampered in this way, so I pass on from Montbazon to those castles which are typical of the second period without taking into account their topographical connection, beyond the name of the voie or route on which they are to be found.

The Donjon of Loches (Voie de Châteroux) (see illustration) is perhaps as good an example as one can have of the earlier part of the second period. It is attributed to Fulke Nerra and the first year of the eleventh century, but it is apparent that it differs greatly from the older type, both in the character of the squared and dressed stones of its masonry, and in its buttresses, which instead of being flat are shaped like pilasters; also in the clearly marked stringcourse round the upper story. This tower was a bone of contention between Richard Cœur de Lion and John Lackland, the latter having possessed himself of it during his brother's captivity.

In 1204 it was fortified by Robert de Turnham and Girard d'Athée, and under them resisted for a year Philip Augustus. It appears to me that though the original building may be of the date of Fulke Nerra, its present general aspect may be due rather to the restorers of 1204.

As a fortress the strength of Loches is remarkable, which is not surprising if one bears in mind that military architecture is said to have reached its height in the donjons and keeps of Loches, Chinon, and Montrichard. A relic of the sieges of Loches remains in the Porte de Sortie; it was by means of an underground passage leading to this—the entrance to which is still visible—that the castle was revictualled in time of siege.

The effect of enormous strength in the walls and fortifications of Loches is enhanced by the height of its position. In its general appearance it has much in common with our own Edwardian castles. Characteristic of itself, however, and worthy of special note is the Tour à la Becque, which lies to one's left as one stands on the battlements overlooking the town.

To the right in illustration is seen the Tour de Martelet, which is obviously of later date than the donjon, probably fifteenth century.

The castle of Loches is connected in somewhat grisly fashion with the memory of Louis XI, who used its towers as state prisons. Here, amongst others, was imprisoned Philippe de Commines, the famous historian and personal friend of the king. Ludovic Sforza (il Moro) was imprisoned in a lower cell than Commines, and is said to have died of joy when released. The tower contains a terrible type of *oubliette*. In the round tower was the cage in which Cardinal Balue was shut up.

The Château Royal, a substantial but unpretentious building with stepped gables and tourelles at the angles, may be reckoned a fifteenth-century building. It is distinguished by the steepness of its site. In front of it is a long terrace which dominates the town. Charles VII at one time occupied the Château Royal, in the precincts of which is the tomb of Agnes Sorrel, a woman who deserved a better fate than to be a king's mistress. The château is also connected with the memory of Anne of Bretagne, who married first Charles VIII, and had for her second husband Louis XII. Her oratory is also within the precincts of the château. The two columns of the altar suggest Cosmati influence. Under the richly cusped Gothic arches of the reredos is carved the knotted rope, and on the walls to the right and left the ermine, both badges of Anne of Bretagne. On one of the walls is shown an inscription scratched on the stone by one of the Scotch Guard, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Langeais (Voie D'Angers) was in its origin, like Montbazon and Loches, one of the châteaux forts of the days of Fulke Nerra, but the actual château as one sees it to-day

belongs to the end of the fifteenth century and Louis XI. The only traces of the purpose for which it was built are to be found in the steepness of its site and in the square keep standing in a remote corner of the enclosure. This tower belongs rather to the type of Montbazon than Loches.

It has been well said that Langeais," with its grey girdle of machicolations, its towers octagonal and round, and its three corps de logis which look down on the town and command in the distance the winding course of the Loire, its buildings, at once slender and strong, where the necessities of defence are blended without collision or abruptness to that art, childish sometimes, but always graceful, which preceded the Renaissance, offers an extremely remarkable type of the seignorial dwellings of the Middle Ages."

The three tiers of corps de logis referred to are very apparent in the photograph (see above.) It should be noticed that the machicolations are very marked and characteristic.

Of somewhat the same type as Langeais is Luynes (Environs de Tours) (see illustration, p. 37.) Its foundation goes back to feudal times, but it was reconstructed in the fifteenth century, the sign-manual of which period it exhibits. It, like Langeais and the other castles which may be reckoned fortresses, occupies a very strong position dominating completely the picturesque little town at its feet. It also resembles Langeais in its pilasterlike towers, at once slender and strong, with their conical coverings, and the arrangement and character of the windows is somewhat similar. It is apparent that these two castles mark an epoch in building and that, with the exception of their capacity for defence, they show distinctly different characteristics from those of the earlier period. The square tower of Fulke Nerra at Langeais serves but to emphasize this difference, for though within the enclosure it stands apart from the more modern buildings. His tower is essentially mediæval and international; it would not look more out of place anywhere in England or Italy, or on some lonely Irish hill-side, than it does in France, whereas the fifteenth-century buildings of Langeais and Luynes are absolutely French in design, and if we find buildings like them elsewhere it is only in some place where French influence has been strong, as at Holyrood.

LANGEAIS—ENTRANCE TO THE CHATEAU.

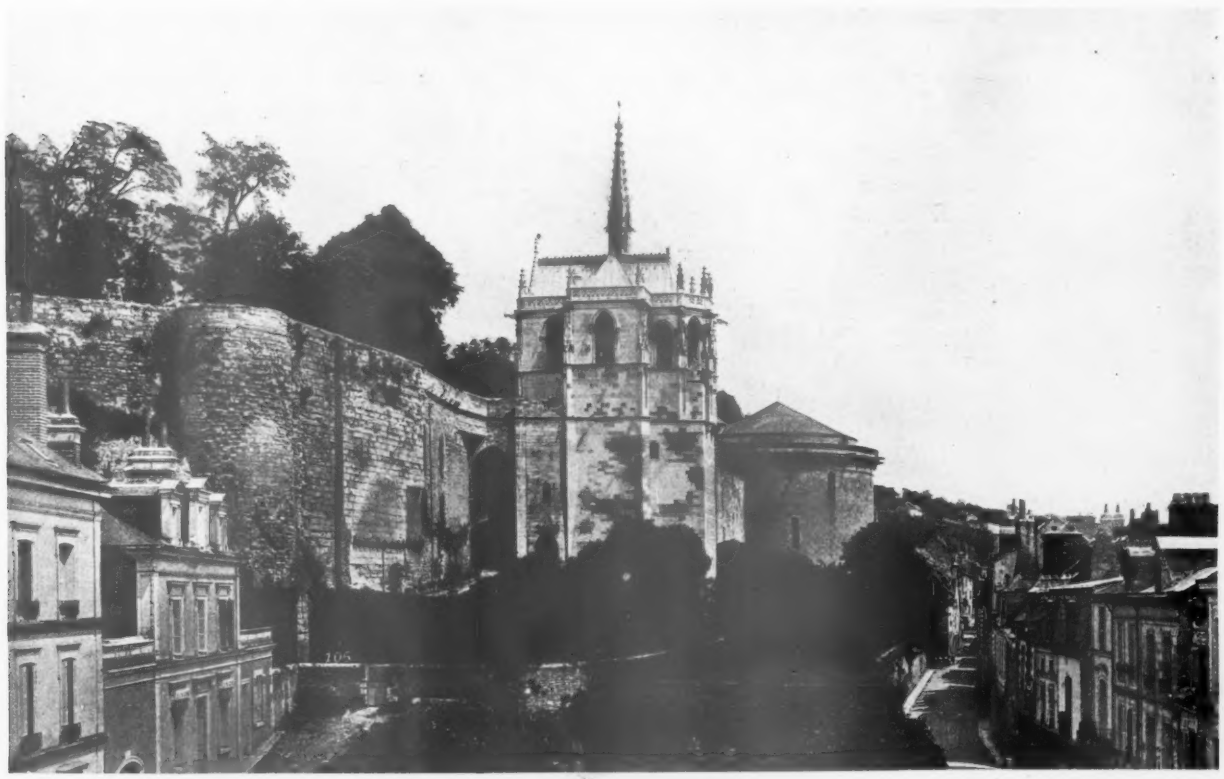
Next to these in succession comes Amboise (Voie de Blois) (see illustration, p. 37). It, like Langeais, is truly a castle of the Loire, whereas Montbazon and Loches are on the Indre. The town lies in the valley of the Loire, but the fortress rises on a hill which was in turn " Oppidum " Gaulois, and " Castrum " Romanum.

To come to later times, several kings have had a hand in the making of Amboise, since it was built by Louis XI, restored and enlarged by Charles VIII and Louis XII. Francis I. continued their work. The porcupine—badge of Louis XII—

CHATEAU DE LUYNES.

may be seen over the door, passing under which Charles VIII received the blow which caused his death. The castle forms an immense trapezium, of which only a part remains. To the time of Charles and Anne of Bretagne belongs the exquisite Chapel of St. Blaise, with frieze of St. Hubert, and the superb tower, the staircase of which was made of such a gentle slope that horses and carriages could ascend. The novel-reader will probably remember that in "The Lightning Conductor" this staircase is made the scene of an ascent in a car.

Amboise is reckoned the cradle of the Renaissance, and it



CHATEAU D'AMBOISE—SHOWING CHAPEL OF ANNE OF BRITTANY.

CHENONCEAUX: WEST FAÇADE.

is here one seems to part with the Middle Ages, for at Chenonceaux, Azay-le-Rideau, and Chambord they may be said, with the exception of the old Tour de Marques at the former, to be left behind, and we find ourselves face to face with the French Renaissance in its glory. Chenonceaux (Voie de Vierzon) comes naturally first of the three, not so much on account of the Tour de Marques, as because the form of its staircase marks the beginning of a period. Chenonceaux was the first place in France where the winding circular mediæval pattern was abandoned for the Italian plan. Chenonceaux has been called, of the "jewel case that is Touraine, the most pure, the most harmonious, the most artistic jewel—if one considers its marvellous situation it is left without a rival." It stands (see illustration) literally in the Cher, the foundations of the kitchens and cellars resting on the rocks of the river. The great five-arched bridge which connects it with one bank is reckoned the *chef d'œuvre* of Philip de L'Orme. The great gallery on it was due to the initiative of Catherine de Médicis.

Chenonceaux was built by Thomas Bohier, who being much with his master Charles VIII in Italy, has caused it to be closely connected with the Italian Renaissance. It passed from the hands of the Bohiers to the Crown, and Henri II gave it to Diane de Poictiers; but Catherine de Médicis, on the death of Henri, effected a somewhat forcible exchange of castles with Diane, and took Chenonceaux for herself, devoting much of her energies to its improvement.

Essentially French as the *tout ensemble* of the château is, the details of the somewhat top-heavy capitals of the entrance are a little suggestive of English work of the Georgian period.

A French writer has said of Chenonceaux: "There can be nothing more charming than the site, the river, the gardens, the chapel, the grand-salles—in one word, the details and the ensemble, which one may call a fairy-like creation."

Side by side with the above may be put the same writer's description of Azay-le-Rideau (Voie des Sables) (see illustration, p. 39), which can scarcely be bettered, it is such a faithful picture of this, perhaps the most perfect, specimen of Renaissance work in Touraine. This treasure of the Indre stands "in the midst of a smiling valley, wrapped in the arms of the Indre; in its sovereign grace one might call it a dream of the 'thousand and one nights,' or of an ideal princess of the Renaissance."

The façade of the entrance is "decorated with a fine lacework of sculpture, whilst that of the opposite façade preserves a graver aspect, as does also the façade du nord."

The decoration of Azay is pure Renaissance, never florid, outside or in.

Like Chenonceaux, Azay-le-Rideau belongs to the first half of the sixteenth century; in the beauty of its site and grace of its architecture it may be said to rival it, but it cannot compete with it in historical interest, except that the salamander sculptured on its decorations reminds one of Francis I.

For beauty Chenonceaux and Azay are unrivalled, but for boldness of design and originality of plan and general magnificence one must go to Chambord. Unlike those castles on which different sovereigns have impressed their cachet, Chambord belongs wholly to the Renaissance and Francis I, and in its almost arrogant size seems to be curiously characteristic of that somewhat flamboyant monarch. Eighteen hundred workmen are said to have been employed on it, and nearly fifteen millions expended. It contains four hundred bedrooms and sixty-three staircases.

Chambord stands in the middle of a flat, wide-spreading country, and its position suggests one of the reasons why Francis I chose the site to build on—that the country about was a good hunting ground. Its aspect owes nothing to its site, for the river Cusson, on the banks of which it stands, is a humble little river, in no way rivalling the Loire, Indre, or even the Cher.

CHATEAU D'AZAY-LE-RIDEAU: SOUTHERN FAÇADE.

The castle, flanked by four huge towers (see illustration below), encloses a rectangle, inside which rises another building also rectangular, flanked by towers similar to the others. The decoration of the lower part of the château is simple to severity, but the upper part, with the chimneys, exhibits a more florid type.

The principal staircase of Chambord is an architectural curiosity. By the disposition of its double flights of steps in spirals, it is rendered possible for one person to mount and another to descend without meeting. Though various architects were employed in the building of Chambord, its initiative may be said to be altogether due to Francis I, as the slight alterations made in the seventeenth century scarcely call for comment.

Molière presented "The Bourgeois Gentilhomme" for the first time at Chambord, on which occasion Louis XIV witnessed the performance. The king's logis was on the great staircase, the piece being performed in one of the Salles des Gardes.

CHATEAU DE CHAMBORD.

Norbury Park, Dorking, Surrey.

Alterations by Messrs. Mewès and Davis, Architects.

A GLANCE at the history of the Norbury Park estate will fitly introduce the dwelling it surrounds. This house occupies a dominating position to the west of the Leatherhead-Dorking road, and commands some of the finest views in the delightful county of Surrey. The estate is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, when it belonged to Richard Tonbridge, son of Earl Gilbert; the tenant at that time being one Oswald, who had been already in possession in the time of Edward the Confessor. The overlordship of the manor then passed through the hands of the De Clares, Earls of Gloucester, to the Despencers. In the fifteenth century it was vested in Isobel, Countess of Warwick, and from her it passed to Anne Beauchamp, wife of Warwick the Kingmaker. At her death the property reverted to the Crown.

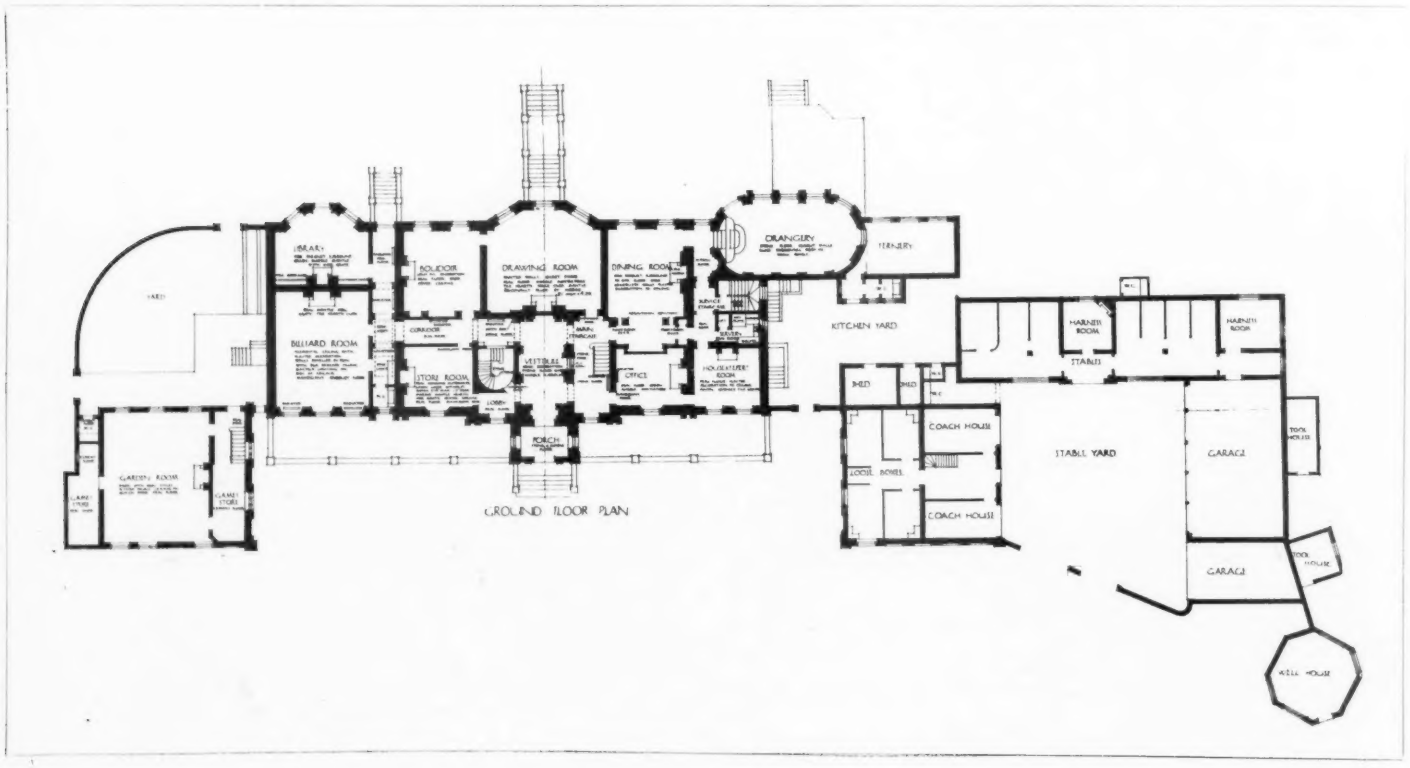
The next tenants were the Dammartins, from whom the land passed to the Husees, the latter holding the manor for several centuries, until, through male heirs failing, it was on three occasions acquired through marriage, with consequent change in the names of the owners. For several generations —until 1676—Norbury remained in the hands of the Stydolfs. The estate next passed by marriage into the hands of the Tryons, with whom it remained until 1766, when the long chain of family descent was definitely broken.

The further history of the manor is that of successive sales. The builder of the present house was Mr. William Lock, who bought the property in 1774. The house therefore was planned in Late Georgian times, the elevations of the two flanking wings bearing testimony to the excellence of the design. The reproduction from an old print shows the house as it appeared about the end of the eighteenth century. The main building was, however, refronted and altered about 1860, though, fortunately, the fenestration was not greatly changed.

The brickwork of the north front was covered with a plaster decoration typical of a Victorian rendering of the Elizabethan style. This had deteriorated, owing to the effect of the weather on the inferior materials used, combined with the growth of ivy which had destroyed the mortar. The architects decided to adopt a treatment which lent itself to the formal spacing in the English Renaissance style, the whole being surrounded by a rich main cornice and balustrade.

Flooring, roof levels, and windows were in no way disturbed, and the existing porch was retained on plan, the front wall being rebuilt in Portland stone, with twin columns and a large arched doorway between them.

The remainder of the north façade was carried out in cement with false joints and rusticated quoins. The design of the existing wings was retained, and these were merely renovated. Several alterations, however, were made to the internal decorations of the hall, dining, and drawing rooms. The



PLAN.

AN OLD PRINT OF THE HOUSE.

drawing-room is the most famous feature of the old house, being the "Picture Room," as Fanny Burney called it, and containing paintings on hard and durable stucco by Barret, Cipriani, Gilpin, and Pastorini.

The landscape in the paintings on the walls, showing views of Cumberland scenery, is reputed to be the work of Barret, the figures being painted by Cipriani, the cattle by Gilpin, whilst the ceiling and sky are by Pastorini.

The dining-room has been redecorated in a scheme of green and white, but no structural alterations were made, the existing columns and pilasters being retained. A new chimney-piece has been chosen, and an overmantel has been designed to form a frame for an existing picture by Rosa Bonheur. The room, which is one of the best in the house, commands a magnificent view of typical Surrey scenery.

Originally the two pedestal vases in front of the porch were unsuitably placed on the south front, and accordingly have been moved to their present position.

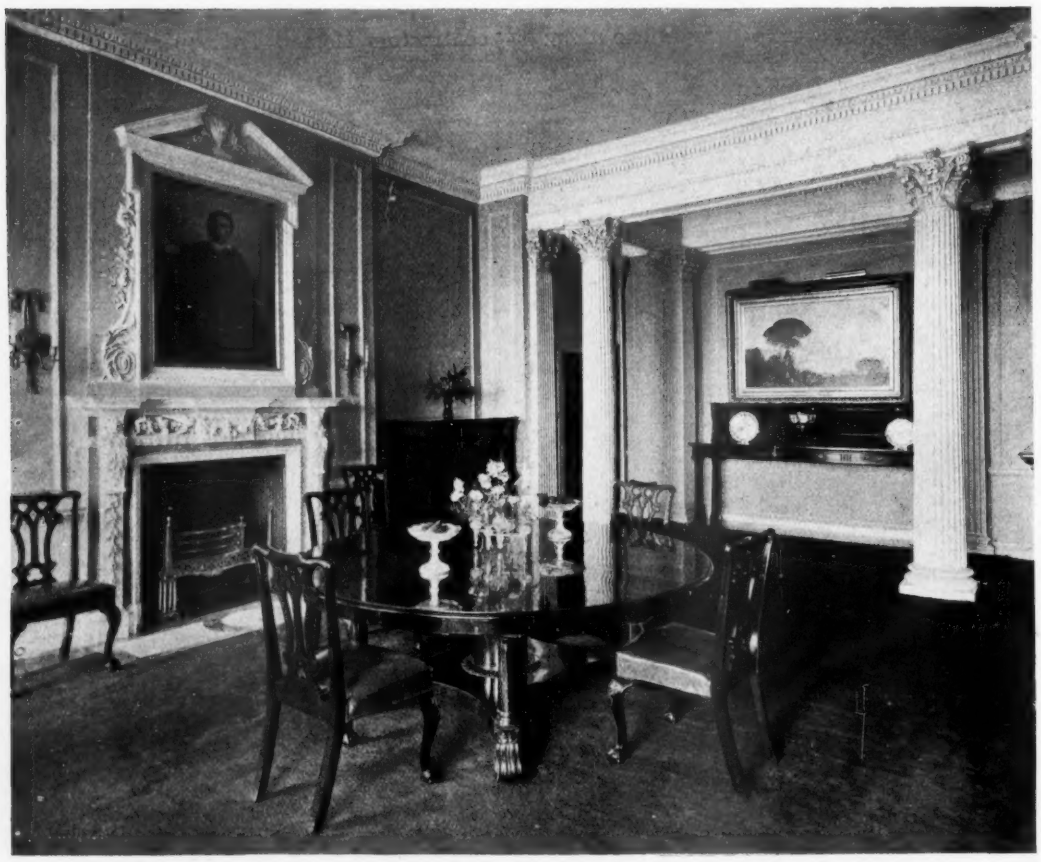
The most notable feature in the surrounding woodlands is the Druids' Grove, where are some of the finest and oldest yews in England, reputed on good authority to be in some cases two thousand years old.

Sir William Corry, Bart., is the present owner of the property, and in his keeping its historic interests will be safeguarded.

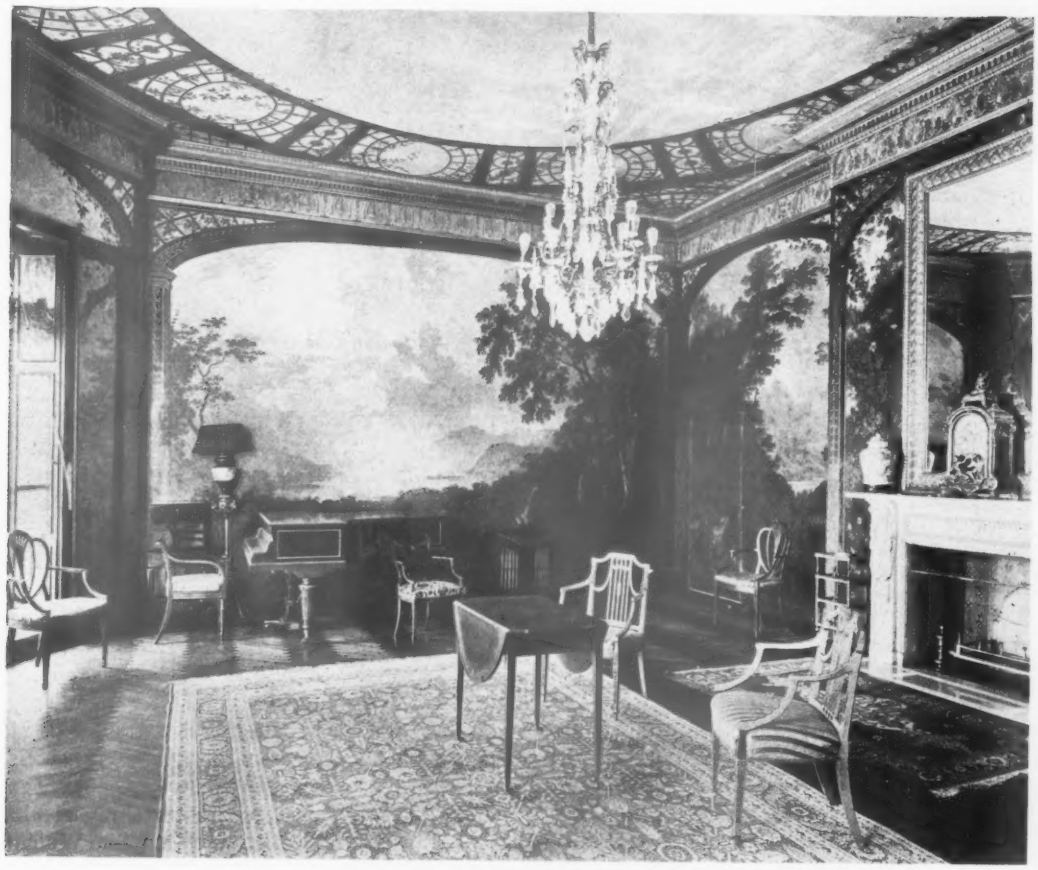
The architects were Messrs. Mewès and Davis, and the contractors Messrs. Trollope and Colls, London.

A LATER PHASE.

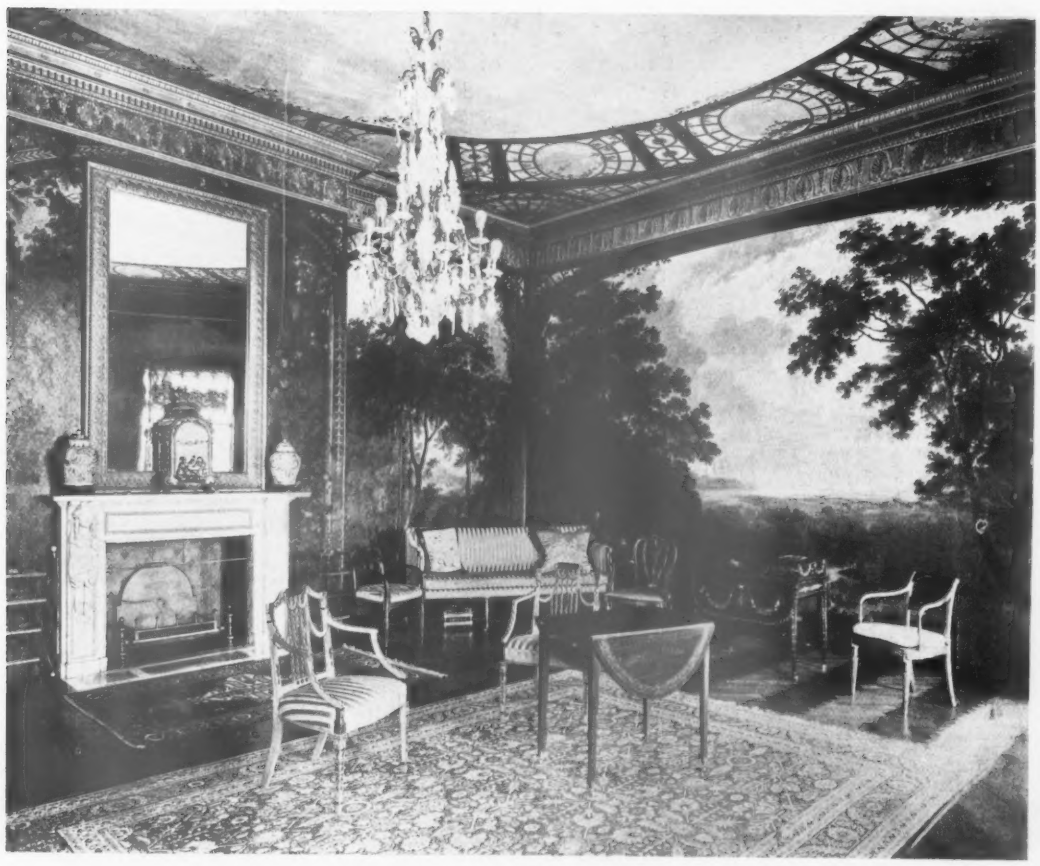
ELEVATION AS ALTERED BY MESSRS. MEWÈS AND DAVIS.



THE DINING-ROOM.



THE DRAWING-ROOM.



THE DRAWING-ROOM.

The Charm of the Country Town.

VI.—Ampthill, Bedfordshire. (Part II.)

By A. E. Richardson, F.R.I.B.A.

FROM careful investigations it can be stated that Houghton Towers, planned in 1615, followed the usual disposition of rooms arranged by John Thorpe on Du Cerceau patternings. Tradition states the mansion to be the work of Inigo Jones; the fabric, however, is more probably the outcome of the labours of John Thorpe, who was employed at Toddington Manor, and also to prepare the plans for the remodelling of Ampthill Castle as a residence for James the First. Inigo Jones was evidently called upon to finish Thorpe's work and to build the loggias in classic taste as well as to complete the internal decorations. It will be of interest to know that a straight joint exists in each case between the loggias on the north and west fronts and the main walls of the building. The mansion was projected as a residence for the noble Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, who took over the interest of the park from Sir Edmund Conquest in 1615 and began building operations in the same year. Scarcely was the house completed and work begun on the stables, where a few stalls from the pencil of Inigo can still be seen, when, in 1621, the countess died; but she had lived to see the building of the house beautiful of her dreams, and had entertained King James the First beneath the roof a few months before her death.

In the year 1623 the estate was surrendered to the king by the younger son of the countess, Philip, Earl of Montgomery, and it was then granted to Thomas Lord Bruce, and it remained in the family until it was purchased in 1738 by John Duke of Bedford. Some eighteen years later the building was repaired, and alterations made in the west wing under the direction of Sir William Chambers to fit Houghton as a residence for the Marquis of Tavistock. The marquis, however, did not long enjoy the demesne, for he met with a fatal accident while out with the Redbourne Hunt, and died from the injuries he sustained on 13 March 1767. The house was deserted for some little time, and then became the temporary residence of the Earl of Upper Ossory. Finally history takes us to the year 1794, when the house was dismantled and unroofed. At this date the rebuilding of the Swan Hotel at Bedford was determined upon, and, judging from the style of the work, it is evident that Henry Holland was the architect. Many of the fittings from Houghton Towers were taken to Bedford to be re-used in the building of the inn. The main staircase is a noteworthy example of this regard for the use of existing material. This late seventeenth-century staircase had been inserted as an additional means of access to the upper floors of Houghton Towers in the time of the Bruces; its position in relation to the Jacobean staircase can still be traced on the plaster finishings in the ruined mansion. It is more than likely that many of the fire-places designed by Sir William Chambers for the Marquis of Tavistock were purchased locally, together with other internal fitments, and used to enrich houses in the town of Ampthill. In no other way is it possible to account for the architectural character of many features now extant in houses comparatively small which were building in the town at the time the great house was dismantled. In addition, many of these features reveal characteristics associated with the early work of Sir William Chambers, the king's architect.

Regretfully we turn away from the ruins of the once stately mansion, picturesque in its decay, shamefully neglected, enmeshed with ivy, and with full-grown trees between its walls. Once strong, it is now a frail shell. Gone are the majority of the trees that formed the great avenue down the slope over the vale of Bedford; vanished are the pleasure gardens, the terraces, and the lawns. There are no traces of the enclosing garden

HOUGHTON TOWERS, AMPTHILL.

VASE ON POST FORMERLY AT HOUGHTON TOWERS.

walls of brick, the wrought-iron gates, or the cool retreats. Save for some venerable yews, a few ancient hollies, and some fir trees, there is little to recall the early seventeenth-century pleasance. Making our way back to Ampthill, we encounter on the right-hand side of the Shefford Road, at the eastern entrance to the town, the grounds of Ampthill House, now the seat of Mr. Anthony Wingfield. On a site near the entrance to this estate stood, until the early part of the last century, the seventeenth-century house of the Nicolls family, who acted as keepers of the parks under the Bruces. Robert Nicolls, the Governor of Long Island, was born here. He was killed in action with the Dutch in a fight for New York in the year 1672, as is recorded on a monument, together with the cannon ball that caused his death, standing in the chancel of the parish church. Some distance from the site of this dwelling the new house was built in 1829, probably from the design of William Kendall, who at that date prepared many plans for Messrs. Cubitt, the builders who carried out the work for a member of the Morris family. The front of this house shows all the features of the Greek taste of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The planning is simple and direct, the staircase imposing and restrained, while the umbrella skylight over recalls the work of Sir John Soane and Basevi. We are learning to appreciate the fact that the building traditions of the eighteenth lingered on well into the nineteenth century, and we are thankful in these modern times to encounter houses with features of Quaker immobility.

So far we have made a survey of Ampthill from the outside; we have studied its environs rather than its centre; we have found it to be a place of early origin set jewel-like amidst natural parks of unsurpassed beauty. Our investigations have led us to study the great families whose activities helped the town's prosperity and aided its traditions. From the architectural standpoint we have discovered it to have been the experimental ground for some of the best work of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. How many towns of the same size can boast of the names of such famous architects as John Thorpe, Inigo Jones, Sir William Chambers, and Henry Holland? Small wonder is it that past writers on architectural matters, without going deeply into the subject, have always ceded to the town some tribute of architectural attainment.

In the early eighteenth century the town, in imitation of the London fashion, began to assume a new mantle of brick to face its mediæval body. In the year 1725 Sir Simon Urlin built Pauncefort Lodge, now known as Dynevor House, and proceeded to lay out the park-like gardens and plant a stately avenue of elms. This three-storied house expresses the better type of Georgian residence of the day—the rubbed brick cornice frames the tier of windows with well-intentioned discipline. Many of the rooms are panelled, and the moulded work of the staircase, with the shaped curtail and heavy balusters, appears as a woodcut from a contemporary builder's guide. Foulislea, another distinguished house, stands on the south side of Church Street. This house belongs to the middle period of the eighteenth century, and contains a representative oak staircase. Some alterations were carried out at the close

GATES FORMERLY AT HOUGHTON TOWERS.

WOBURN ROAD, AMPTHILL.

of the eighteenth century, when the windows were resashed and a drawing-room added on the first floor at the back. Foulislea is built of the local orange-coloured brick; it is three stories in height, with a square bay carried up over the highly Ionic porch as though the designer wished to emulate in miniature the stately entrance to Houghton Towers. Having glanced at these important bastions to the town, and having noticed that Foulislea has been repaired and loaned to serve as a hostel for ex-Service men, we can once again turn to the church of St. Andrew, note Brandreth House, which may well have been built by John Wing of Bedford, and also the small Georgian house on the south side of the road finished with dove-grey paint. From thence we proceed along Church Street to enjoy a perspective that has changed but little since the prosperous days of the eighteenth century.

A hundred and fifty years ago Ampthill was sufficiently attractive to the eyes of our Georgian ancestors to receive especial attention in contemporary guide-books, British gazetteers and directories. The "Directory for Bedfordshire," published in the year 1785, describes it as follows: "A small town, but the most pleasant and nearest (to Bedford) in the country, being agreeably situated on a loomy hill, and pitched with pebbles. The houses in general are well built, with a few handsome, whence the prospects are extensive. The town is rendered lively by a brisk trade and good markets, and contains besides the church a Quaker's meeting, and one of Anabaptists." That it was a prosperous place can be gauged from the following: There were two attorneys in the town, George Hooper and George Woodward. John Morris, the brewer, who indulged in building in imitation of the Earl of Upper Ossory, was in partnership with J. Humphrey and R. Kent. There were two bricklayers, namely William Flowers and John Flowers; and the independent carpenters consisted of William Hensman, James Hart, and John Travell. There were three surgeons in the town; and the surveyor and schoolmaster, Henry Hurst, was evidently consulted by all and sundry in connexion with the attorneys for the measuring and conveyancing of land.

Most country towns have produced at some period or the other a master clockmaker. Ampthill, in this regard, can boast of the prowess of Ebenezer Hanscombe, who, in addition to making watches and selling books, turned out some highly respectable grandfather clocks, and a few of the bracket variety. It is interesting to learn that many of Hanscombe's

WOBURN STREET, AMPTHILL.

Plate III. August 1921.

FOULISLEA HOUSE, AMPTHILL, BEDFORDSHIRE.

(From a drawing by Hanslip Fletcher.)

clocks still measure the hours under the tiled roofs of the town. In 1785 the principal inns were: "The White Hart," landlord Thomas Cooke; "The King's Arms," William Davi; "The Queen's Head," Humph. Cart; "The Cross Keys," Widow Rees. The market was held on Thursdays. Fairs on 4 May and 30 November.

As our tour of inspection has brought us to Church Street, and as a glance at the fronts of the houses tells us that little has been changed since those days, save that the pebbles have been covered with tar, and that a particularly gloomy court-house stands on the left-hand side of the street, we can conjure up in our minds a picture of the town as it formerly appeared, and the excitement of the townspeople each Thursday and Sunday when the stage wagon from Ampthill to "The Windmill," St. John Street, Clerkenwell, set forth with its adventurous passengers.

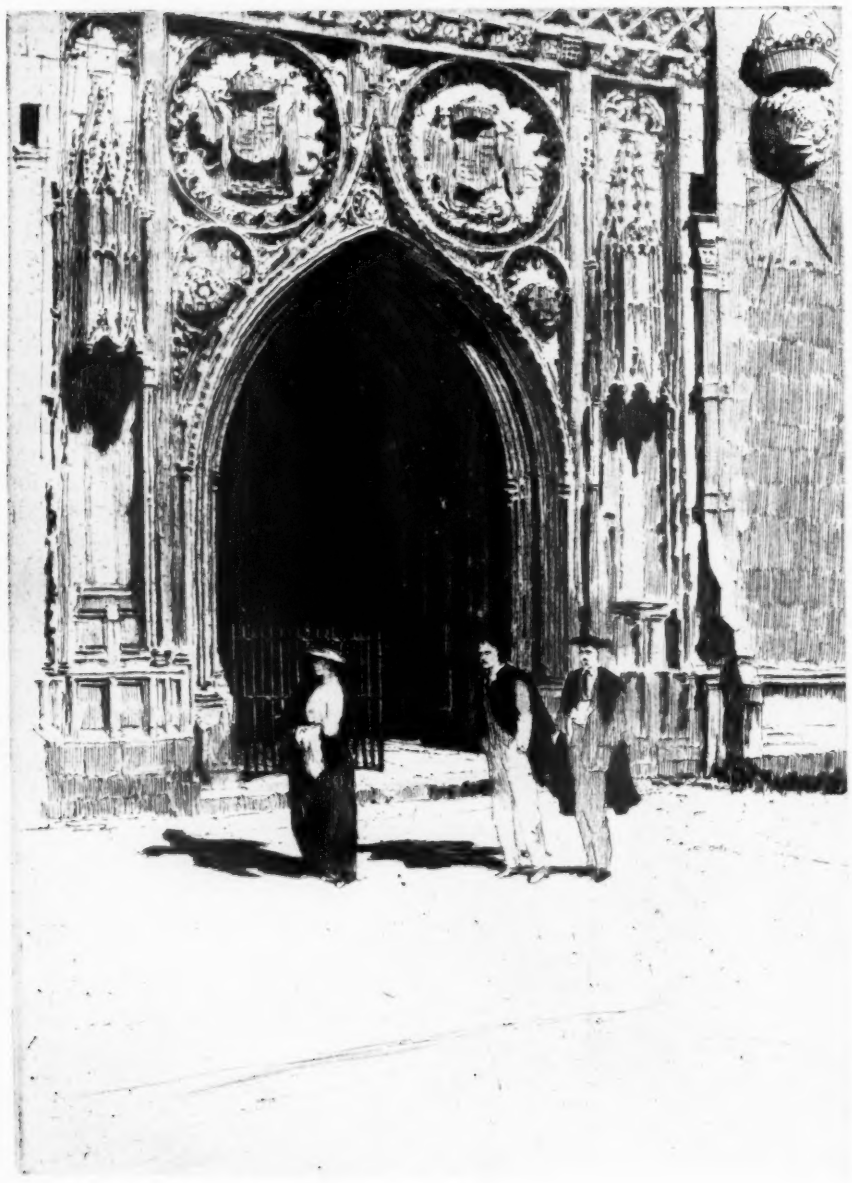
In those days many inns were used as "Post and Excise Offices." At Ampthill "The King's Arms" served this purpose. The post arrived at one o'clock, and set off again at four in the afternoon. Finally we come to the period when coaching reached its zenith, and when at least four coaches daily clattered through the streets of the town. At a later period—to be exact, when the London and Birmingham Railway had penetrated into the Midlands as far as "Denbigh Hall"—the mails were brought from the train at Leighton Buzzard through Woburn, a practice that to some extent survives to this day, for residents not infrequently receive letters bearing the cryptic legend, "Holyhead Night Down Mail."

Before examining the town houses and cottages in detail the inns shall receive attention. "The King's Arms" is of interest not only because it was at one time the post office, but on account of the fact that the early Georgian front of purple-coloured brick, with red brick dressings, masks a mediæval building. In the parlour can be seen some fragments of oak panelling dating from the spacious days of Elizabeth. The eighteenth-century open staircase is eloquent of local craftsmanship, especially the turned balusters. In the yard at the side, formerly the posting yard, from whence rumbled stage wagon, perched chaise, and Felton's improved travelling carriages, can be seen a plaster panel on the wall bearing the date 1677, a raised fleur-de-lis occurring between the six and the seven; over the date are the initials "W. H." separated by a small crown. It is probable that this yard, in the late seventeenth century, formed part of "The White Hart" premises, and that the panel with its initials and date refers to that hostelry. The Georgian front of "The White Hart" is Hogarthian in its amplitude; its brickwork, no less than the lacing of its sashed windows, is suggestive of gargantuan feasts, old ales, good wines, comfortable beds, and all that one associates with the real enjoyments of other days. This spacious inn, with its skeleton geometrical staircase of the late period, its welcoming bay in the bar snuggery, and the movable plaster ornaments and busts that greet the traveller in the hall, has an atmosphere of welcome foreign to the splendour of modern inns. Of the other inns of the town "The King's Head," formerly "The Queen's Head," adjoins the site of the Moot Hall in Woburn Street, and, as already mentioned, includes some fragments of the wall to the original castle lodge. In Bedford Street are two inns of moderate size, the architecture of which belongs to the humbler traditions of the middle of the eighteenth century. The first, "The Crown and Sceptre," adjoins the famous Ampthill Brewery, while "The Prince of Wales" stands on a partially open site on the opposite side of the street near to the schools. There are also a few alehouses, erected at the close of the eighteenth century, which recall types made familiar by George Morland. For close on a century and a half Ampthill Brewery has provided employment for many of the townspeople. John Morris, who founded the brewery in connexion with John Humphrey and R. Kent, was a Quaker whose ambition it was to improve and embellish the streets of his native town. He derived his chief income from the brewery, but he was not above opening an ironmonger's shop in which brass locks from Birmingham, candlesticks from Soho, garden implements of every description, lanterns and saucepans, were exposed for sale for the convenience of the good townsfolk, as well as for the needs of Park House, Southill, and Woburn Abbey.

(*To be concluded.*)

THATCHED COTTAGE AT AMPTHILL.

Etchings by Walter M. Keesey, A.R.E.



KING'S, CAMBRIDGE.

Plate IV. August 1921.

ST. ETIENNE, CAEN.

Plate V. August 1921.

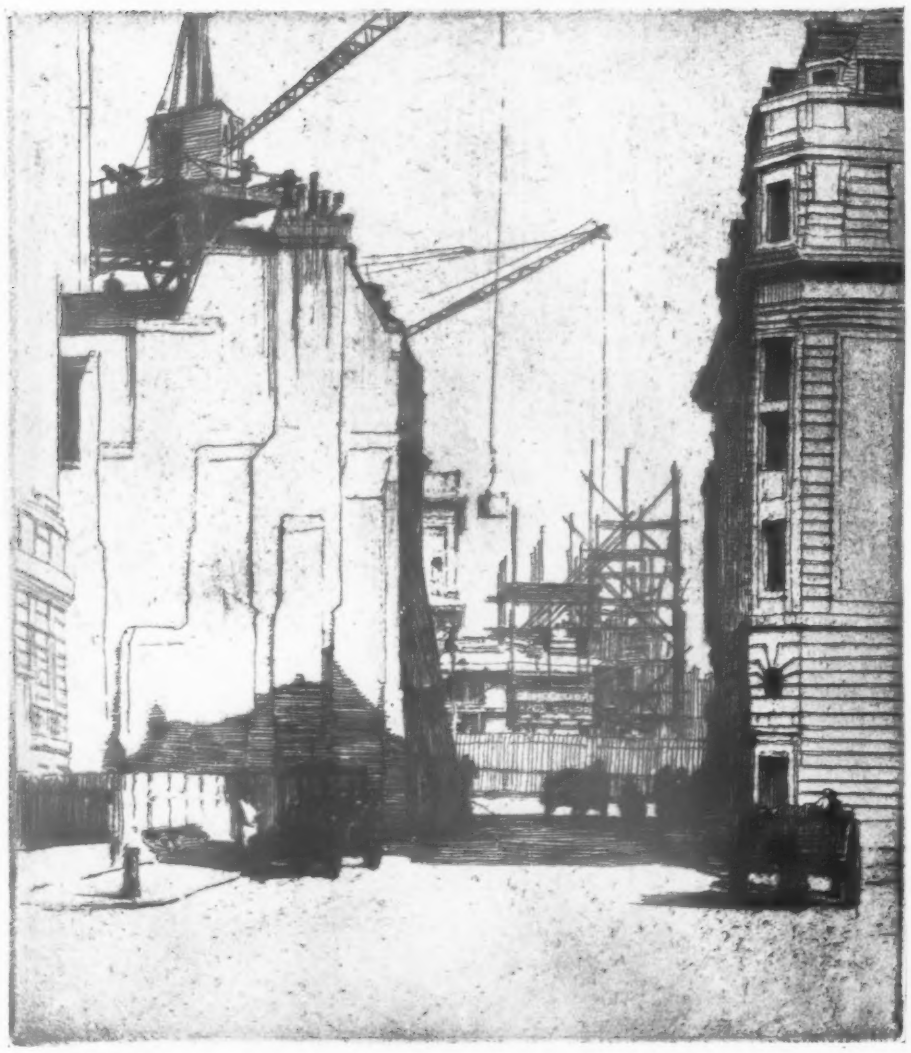
ARRAS CATHEDRAL, 1917.

ETCHINGS BY WALTER M. KEESEY, A.R.E.

Plate VI. August 1921.

PARK LANE, W.

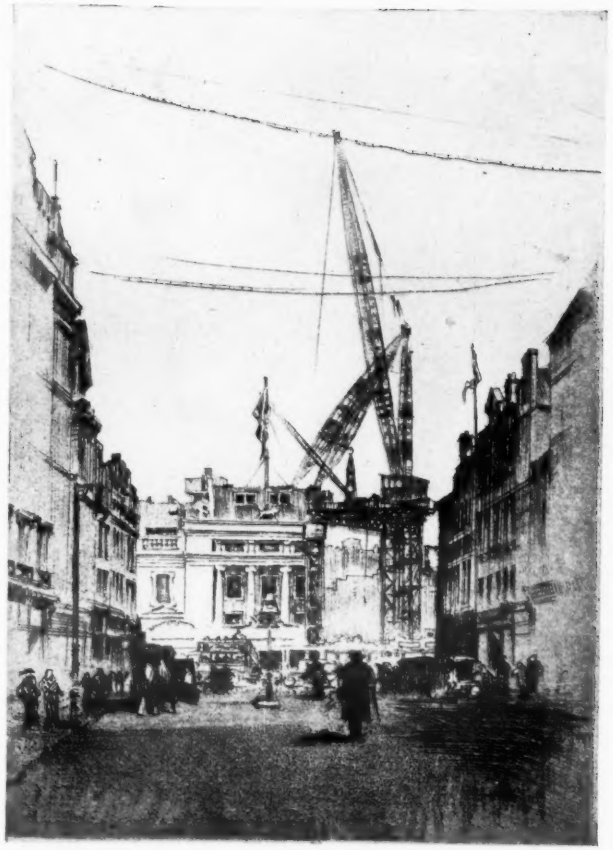
ETCHINGS BY WALTER M. KEESEY, A.R.E.



WESTMINSTER.

ETCHINGS BY WALTER M. KEESEY, A.R.E.

KING WILLIAM STREET, E.C.



DICKINS AND JONES.