# ARCHITECTURAL NOTES ON ST. AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE, CANTERBURY.

BY A. J. B. BERESFORD HOPE.

THE range of buildings now known as "The Missionary College of St. Augustine, Canterbury," consists partly of mediæval constructions, which have remained comparatively speaking intact, partly of restorations from sufficient data, and partly of new work carefully designed in conformity with the old portions, but not intended to replace or reproduce any particular ancient features. It stands to reason, therefore, that the building may in future generations prove a pitfall to architectural antiquarians, unless some one who was privy to its transmutation should take the trouble of analysing and recording its component elements.

The basis of operations was a portion of the precinct of the old mitred Abbey of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Augustine (commonly called St. Augustine's Abbey), Canterbury, founded by St. Augustine as the burial-place of the Kings of Kent and of the Archbishops, and the first of rank of the English Abbeys until Pope Nicholas Breakspeare gave precedence to his own house of St. Alban's. This precinct, like that of other similar foundations, covered a large space of ground (sixteen acres), and included various courts and many buildings. The principal court included, among other buildings, the

principal gate, the great refectory, and the north-west angle of the Abbey church. Upon the dissolution of the Abbey its site and ruins came into possession of the Crown, passing into private hands in the middle of the seventeenth century. A spacious mansion termed the Palace had meanwhile been made up out of the old structure, and here it was that Charles I. first met Henrietta Maria, to whom he had already been married by proxy.

From the family of Wotton the palace passed into that of Hales, and then fell into the hands of small proprietors; and the ruins, as might be supposed, became more and more squalid and neglected. The aspect which they presented in 1845, was as follows:—

The great gateway, a work of the latter half of the fourteenth century, stood perfect though dilapidated, looking upon a neglected space, called "Lady Wotton's Green." The main reason why this gateway continued *in statu quo* was, that it had been discovered that the large room within it, neatly cemented, formed an admirable vat for a brewery which was carried on there by a tradesman bearing the appropriate name of Beer. To the right lay a ragged and disreputable public-house of apparently eighteenth century date, joined on to a ruined gable, showing traces of an Early Pointed triplet. Inside, a tangled tea-garden and skittle-ground extended as far as certain grotto-like recesses, of ancient date, dubbed cloisters; while at the upper corner, to the right hand, a high piece of wall, painted black for target-practice, stood adjacent to the ruined foundation of Ethelbert's Romanesque tower (the north-west tower of the great church), of which a large fragment that still existed had been wantonly and purposely pulled down within the present century, the whole tower having been intact until a date deep in the Georgian era.

This property happened at that date to come to the hammer, and it was shortly afterwards surrendered by

its purchaser for the use of that Missionary College for the behoof of the Colonial Church, in behalf of which the energetic Mr. Edward Coleridge was stirring up the hearts of English Churchmen. The property had become so much dispersed since it passed out of the hands of the Hales family, that it required three separate private Acts of Parliament to acquire the fee-simple of those few acres. The very long lease which had been purchased was not sufficient for the charter of incorporation or for the consecration of the chapel. Mr. Butterfield was called in to restore, remodel, and build, and so to convert this portion of the old ante-reformational Abbey of St. Augustine into a College of St. Augustine, for the use of the Reformed Church. The institution was then incorporated by Royal Charter on the 28th of June, 1848, and it was then solemnly inaugurated by the consecration of the Chapel on the following day, being the Feast of St. Peter. The late Archbishop of Canterbury officiated, his predecessor, Archbishop Howley, who had taken the greatest interest in the work, having deceased a few months previously.

The present aspect of the building, described in the same order as that in which I have endeavoured to reconstruct the series of brewery, tower, and tea-garden, is as follows:—

The great gate stands as before, though no longer a brewer's vat. To the right, *i.e.* southward, extends a college hall with kitchen underneath. The hall stands upon the first floor, at the top of a steep and narrow stone staircase, to the right hand, while to the left another door leads into a chapel projecting into the court at right angles to the hall, with its west gable to the road outside and its eastern to the court. Adjacent to this chapel are situated the warden's lodge and the fellows' rooms; and still further on stands another set of rooms, recently erected and intended primarily for native stu-

dents, extending beyond the garden wall which forms the southern limit of the court. To the left of the great gate, at right angles to and touching it, is a long low two-storied building outwardly remarkable for the expanse of its tiled roof. This exhibits, on the ground-floor, an open ambulatory, with traceried openings forming the vestibule to a single range of students' rooms, which look northward into the open country. Access to the upper story is obtained by two winding staircases, contained in turrets, themselves externally ornamental features. This, the upper, floor is laid out in a panelled passage of between two and three hundred feet in length, opening into students' rooms on either side. Facing the entrance where the so-called "cloisters" used to be, is the high-roofed college library, raised upon an undercroft which is vaulted with stone ribs and brick fillings, and entered by a detached staircase of stone to the south. The students' buildings and the library stand on a terrace extending southward, partly bounded by low walls and partly by grass slopes. In the middle of the court a stone conduit is placed. On the terrace level the fragments of the great church, *i.e.* the ruins of a chapel which used to adjoin the north side of the nave, and those of Ethelbert's tower, remain *in statu quo.* The material of the great gateway and of the west gable of the chapel is Caen stone, of the library Kentish rag, of the remaining buildings flint, the natural product of the chalk soil around Canterbury. Except the west front of the chapel, which displays a triplet of the First Pointed period, and the mutilated Romanesque tower, the style of the entire building, old and new, is of the Middle Pointed age.

From these comparative descriptions it might be inferred that very little of the college was, properly speaking, a restoration. Such, however, is not the case. The gateway is so completely a relic of the fourteenth

century, that the original traceried wooden gates exist (though considerably repaired) with the sliding shutter for the porter to peep through. The mass of building to the right of this gateway, once the pothouse and the brewer's premises, now the hall and chapel, are however that part of the college which is most emphatically neither preserved nor built anew, but conservatively restored from sure archæological data. When the public-house was stripped, previous to being dismantled, it was found to have been originally a large hall on the first floor, with a kitchen beneath. It was also discovered that the chapel, of which, as I have said, the mutilated west end was traceable, stood on the same level as this hall, both of them being at once approached and divided by a common stair of stone, running straight up from the inner court of the abbey. This chapel was raised upon a vaulted undercroft, divided crossways by a solid stone wall, of which the outer portion formed an open porch. Fragments of the original windows of the hall were revealed, and the old open wooden roof was found to be perfect, though much of the timber was hopelessly unsound. Architectural features were also found on the building communicating with the gateway, including a curious trefoiled parapet; and the foundation also of the large kitchen chimney existed under the hall. The destination of these buildings seemed self-evident. The hall was not the large refectory of the abbey, for that was known to exist elsewhere; but it was a hall in close proximity to the abbey entrance, and a chapel adjoined it to the right, while in or close to the gateway were ample means of lodging, according to the habits of those days. All these facts established the reasonable presumption that this was the portion of the abbey devoted to guests, and that the large apartment was the "Guesten Hall." The proof that such a feature was a usual appendage to large monastic houses, was (as elsewhere) to

be found at Worcester, until the barbarous destruction, within this very season, of the Guesten Hall belonging to that Cathedral. It followed that the chapel was the Guesten Chapel. Such as they were, the hall was admirably suited to be restored as the college hall (with kitchen beneath), while except for its shortness, the chapel was well adapted to become the college chapel. That adaptation was accordingly made, with the addition of about half as much again to its length westward, and with a similar prolongation of the vaulted undercroft, the additions being carried out in the Middle Pointed style, while the original First Pointed west end was restored and capped with a new bell-gable. Irrespective of the prolongation of the chapel, which was an alteration imperatively needed, this portion of the building has approximately resumed its old physiognomy; and its peculiar plan of a hall and a chapel, branching off right and left from a common stair, renders it worthy of archæological notice.

The buildings which continue the range to the south, viz. the warden's lodge, the fellows' rooms, and the new students' building, are entirely modern, and planned to meet the convenience of the college.

Returning to the gateway, we find the long range of the students' building running east and west. This is also quite modern, but there is no doubt that there were formerly buildings in that direction, though standing a little more to the north, and therefore outside the actual college property. We now come to the great library, with its undercroft. Those odd recesses which used to be shown in the tea-garden, were in fact the window recesses upon the east (*i.e.* the far) side of this undercroft, and a judicious excavation revealed the bases of its pillars and its whole general plan, so that its restoration became a matter of plain architectural induction. The only deviation from what must have been the ori-

ginal aspect of this undercroft is one of material. While the ribs are of stone, the filling is of warm red brick. As soon as its plan had been ascertained, the area of the apartment above became a matter of simple induction. This was known by historical evidence to have been the great refectory of the abbey. To have rebuilt it for a similar purpose would have been out of the question, when a sufficient college hall had already been provided. So it was determined to raise a college library of the dimensions and general aspect which the refectory might once have exhibited. For the sake of greater dignity rag-stone and not flint was chosen as the material; and as the details of the original pile were wholly lost, Mr. Butterfield sought an appropriate type of two-light semi-domestic windows of the fourteenth century, from the neighbouring county of Sussex, in the ruins of the noble hall of the Archiepiscopal Palace of Mayfield. The two-light windows of a rather earlier type of the Middle style, on the staircase, were copied from the porch of Howden collegiate church.

Fragments of an interesting encaustic tile pavement, including a pattern of birds pecking at berries, were found in the undercroft, and reproduced by Mr. Minton in the ambulatory of the students' building. The partial terracing of the college court is due to various circumstances. It was convenient to reduce the soil to its original level at the western range of buildings, and to keep it at the new elevation for the students' range; while at the library the two levels were accommodated by fixing the ground-level at the base of the windows of the undercroft. The retention of some flourishing trees was reason for not interfering with the level of the south-east angle of the court. The central conduit is purely a modern addition, and the idea of it was first conceived as the result of a munificent present from Mr. J. C. Sharpe, to be devoted to some special object.

I do not pretend to describe the other remains of the abbey. I may, however, mention that a portion of the north aisle wall of the great church, of Romanesque date, exists, of which the internal pilasters, which supported the vaulting, were rather ingeniously converted into external buttresses, in the "palace" days, by the superposition of brick "sets-off." These remains have been cleared out since they came into the hands of the college, and the original pavement is opened out. Unfortunately the greater portion of the nave is within the grounds of the county hospital, but at the time of the building of the college Mr. Butterfield obtained leave to excavate, and was able to make a plan indicating the positions of the piers. We were not allowed to excavate on the site of the choir. But the expert archæologist may easily figure to himself the proportions of the archway by consulting the plan of that portion of the church given in the manuscript history of St. Augustine's Abbey (returnable to its "monks" on their restoration) now in Trinity Hall Library, Cambridge, and published (but not very accurately) in Somner and Hasted, which has been omitted in the lamented Archdeacon Hardwick's edition of the work, which he fathers on Thomas of Elmham, at the commencement of the fifteenth century. St. Pancras Chapel, traditionally supposed to stand on the site of Queen Bertha's British Church, is a ruin too well known to require description. It now stands in a field to the east of the College. Another of the abbey gateways, the cemetery gateway, smaller and less ornate than the great one, is still in existence to the south of the college buildings, though in a sadly modernized condition, having been converted into a dwelling-house, and restored in cockney gothic. It is now the property of the college, but it is still occupied by a tenant, and is therefore only available as an investment.

I have not attempted in these few remarks to give the

accurate description of any portion of the buildings either ancient or modern. I leave this work for Professor Willis, or for some one who can work in his spirit, simply indicating the extreme interest and importance of such a publication. My sole object has been to lighten the task of the future archæologist, by indicating what is absolutely old, what is absolutely new, and what is restored; knowing, as I do, that Mr. Butterfield has been sufficiently successful to make such indications needful. At the same time, it was the desire of all who interested themselves in the work not to allow archæology to interfere with practical utility. As it happened, the parts of the building which are more or less restorations are the public apartments for praying, reading, and dining in common, all of them characteristic of communities of a religious nature, and therefore, *mutatis mutandis*, common to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The constructions which are wholly new are those intended as the habitations of the various members of the body, who, of course, with the growth of civilization, require very different accommodation from that which would have been sufficient for their predecessors of five centuries ago. But I must be allowed to offer one or two remarks upon a feature in the college which has not unfrequently been the subject of comment, the size and position of the chapel. Those who are accustomed to the collegiate architecture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, at Oxford and Cambridge, are generally accustomed to see the chapel lining one side of the court, not projecting into it. But in this case the chapel at St. Augustine's was an old one, of the thirteenth century, merely lengthened, and so its position was a *datum*. The objection which may be raised to its size in comparison with that of the library falls through when it is recollected that those who built that library on the site of the refectory, and who lengthened

the guest-chapel for the use of the college, contemplated the possibility of some future day when the institution might both require and have the opportunity of constructing a larger and more ornate fane. When that day arrives convenience may dictate and interest recommend the reconstruction on the old foundations, of at least the choir of the old abbey church. Its entire rebuilding, in its old cathedral-like dignity, with nave and towers, would not comport with the present uses of St. Augustine's College, nor with the actual English ritual. But the choir merely, with or without the transepts, would not transcend the dimensions of a first-class college chapel. So soon, accordingly, as the college attains such a size as to make the actual chapel inconveniently small, the institution may legitimately propose to itself to raise again the walls of the ancient minster. In the meanwhile, it would have been very impolitic to have provided a chapel in disproportion to the numbers of the body who have to fill it. It may be that its area is already very scant. So much the better. The great and important task was accomplished when the college was planted on the site of the abbey. The difficulties attendant on future enlargement ought only to be questions of pecuniary possibility.