
On the Old Porch=House at Potterne.

By the Rev. A. C. SMITH, M.A.



Woodburytype.

THE PORCH HOUSE, POTTERNE, WILTS,
AS RESTORED 1875.

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BEFORE I enter upon a short account of the old Porch=House at Potterne, it may perhaps serve to open up the subject and facilitate my description and prepare in some degree for a better examination of this most interesting specimen of domestic architecture of a bygone age, if I make a few preliminary observations on timber buildings in England generally, and touch upon the more common arrangement and detail of an English house from three to four hundred years ago.

I do not think it is sufficiently considered that up to a comparatively late period (say within the last two hundred years) most of our houses were built of timber. But I will go farther than that, and say that up to the period of the Norman Conquest, the great majority even of our Churches were built of timber. Why is it that instances of Saxon Churches are so extremely rare with us, while specimens of Norman work are so abundant? This is not, I will venture to say, solely due to the inferior, and therefore less durable, character, of Saxon work and Saxon materials; for the thickness of Saxon walls (where a specimen exists,) is remarkable. But it is because, when the country was in great measure covered with forests and marshes, and roads of communication were few and often impassable, the carriage of stone was too formidable and too costly a business, while the supply of timber was so ample and so ready at hand, that Churches, as well as less important buildings, were generally made of wood: as for the same causes they are to this day in Norway, where I have seen specimens of wooden Churches bearing a

* The writer of the following paper desires to express his personal obligations to the spirited owner of the Old Porch House, at Potterne, (George Richmond, Esq., R.A.,) not only for his courtesy in pointing out all the principal points of interest in the building, but also for supplying the details, to which this imperfect sketch owes any direct interest it may possess.

recognized date of no less than five or six, and in one instance seven, centuries.

It was these wooden Churches of our forefathers which, the Saxon Chronicles so often tell us, were burnt by the Danes; and it would seem that it was not until after their repeated demolition by fire, that our ancestors awoke to the fact that it was advisable to employ a more durable, if more expensive, material for their chief buildings. As a notorious exception to this, doubtless the very perfect Saxon Church of Bradford rises before our minds, which dating back (as is believed on good authority) from the eighth century, seems to contradict the statement I have just made. But if we remember that Bradford is situated in the heart of some of the best stone-quarries in England, we shall understand that stone would, in that particular district, be as well the *more natural* as the *cheaper* material for building; and the "Ecclesiola" of Bradford, as it has been happily called, would be an exceptional case among its own contemporary Churches: and on that account I claim for it now an additional title, to the respect and reverence (and let me add contribution towards its preservation) of all true archæologists, in that it is not only an almost unique specimen of its age which remains to us, but that it probably never had many compeers of its time of like build and material.

I crave the indulgence of my readers for this digression on stone Churches, to which I have been led by the few remarks I have made on timber Churches; and I return to the timber houses of which I was speaking.

Long after ecclesiastical buildings began, in the words of an old writer, to "become petrified," and even after they had attained perfection, those of a secular character continued to be formed of wood. Indeed I may say that for the several succeeding centuries, (even up to two hundred years ago,) timber was the material *generally* adopted, not only for the cottage of the peasant, but for the hall of the knight or noble. Doubtless this was in great degree owing to the causes I have already mentioned, the profusion of timber and the difficulty of carting stone. To some extent also it may be attributed to fashion, and the reluctance to change, which seems to have been as natural

to our forefathers as it is unnatural to us: but perhaps more than all (in the better examples at least) to the desire of obtaining many beautiful features which were peculiar to the timber edifices, and which could be produced by this material alone: "projecting stories, windows with delicate tracery, elegant oriels, carved gable boards, pendants, and so forth. These, together with a profusion of enrichment on their chequered walls, impart to these buildings a charm which cannot be surpassed by any other style."¹

"These timber buildings of England were generally constructed of oak, possessing extreme durability; the superiority of which over that procured at present is said to arise from the trees having been felled in winter, and not in spring, as at present, for the sake of the bark."² There was no stint of timber employed: massive beams were used in every part of the construction: indeed it has repeatedly been urged that there has been an unnecessary consumption of wood in these buildings; but this objection does not appear to be well substantiated; for any excess of strength in the first instance has been more than amply repaid by the additional number of years they have lasted: their existence for three or four centuries in a sound state being one of the best proofs of the skill displayed in their construction. The walls were generally formed of timbers disposed in various patterns, though sometimes simple squares, and were filled in with plaster set in stout oak laths: this plaster was a mud-clay well mixed with straw, which was afterwards whitewashed,³ and was a material resembling the Devonshire *cob* of the present time. The principal timbers of the roof were generally built up in squares in the same manner as the walls, and were covered with stone tiles.

¹ "Ancient timber edifices of England," by John Clayton, Architect, 1846.

² Clayton's "Ancient timber edifices of England."

³ In London, the citizens were compelled to whitewash even the thatch of their houses, as a precaution against fire, and so the "Londoners objected to sea-borne coal for fuel, that the smoke from it blackened the white walls of their buildings. The appearance of the city presented the aspect of a mass of low whitewashed tenements."—Hudson Turner's *Domestic Architecture of England from the Conquest to the end of the thirteenth century*, vol. ii., p. 26, and vol. i., p. 115.

These roofs of open timber-work were often richly ornamented, and sometimes pierced wood-work resembling the tracery of windows was introduced under the arches. King-posts and tie-beams were also characteristic features of these massive roofs. The foundations were generally of stone, as were the fire-places and chimney shafts, where they existed. The construction of the projecting stories and several other portions displayed great ingenuity: these overhanging upper stories were generally carried on corbels: the timbers in front were often ornamented with panelling, either entirely carved on wood, or the spaces between the timbers were filled with plaster, and the timbers were left projecting. Moreover it would seem probable, from the appearance of the timbers in many of these buildings, that their surfaces were originally protected by a description of paint of a rich brown colour: it is however extremely uncertain whether the practice of blackening them, as is usually done in the present day, can be traced to an ancient origin.

As regards the interiors of these timber houses, perhaps we of his more luxurious age should scarcely be satisfied with the accommodation which met all the requirements of our ancestors, and we might pronounce the rooms they generally contained, few in number, and diminutive in size. Neither should we be content to dwell in a hall without a chimney, and with windows guiltless of glass, but which ably fulfilled their duties of letting in the air, and letting out the smoke. Yet such were the simple manners of the good old times that these arrangements were universally adopted. Moreover the majority of houses consisted of no more than a ground floor, and of this the "*hall*" was the chief apartment; the general living room of the family; into which the principal door opened; which in the case of the less pretentious dwellings, served for cooking, eating, receiving visitors, and in short for almost all the ordinary usages of domestic life. Adjacent to this, and oftentimes on the same level, was the "*chamber*," the family bedroom, which was also the private apartment of the lord and his family, and the resort of the female part of the household by day. In addition to this were the "*cellar*," and on the side opposite the chamber, the "*stable*," which was considered a necessary appendage, because at this period

householders were in the habit of giving lodgings to travellers, who generally came on horseback.¹

This was the ordinary arrangement of apartments in the house of a gentleman of moderate fortune during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and the dwellings of the more wealthy differed only in having an upper floor, called the "*soler*,"² which could only be entered by one door, and was therefore more easily defended, and so was considered the place of greater security; a "*chapel*" of very small dimensions, and a "*kitchen*," detached from the rest of the buildings, generally vaulted and open to the roof, and as distinct as possible from the rest of the house, as a security against fire.

And such continued to be the general style of domestic architecture in England until the sixteenth century, by which time it may be said to have reached its highest degree of perfection, combining (as it then did) much internal comfort and convenience, with very considerable external beauty of decoration. At this period, the interiors of the better-class houses presented many peculiar and attractive features, both with regard to arrangement and decoration. They were often lined with panelled wainscoting, had carved chimney pieces of an elaborate character, and even emblazoned windows. Moreover, in addition to the principal apartments mentioned above, there was sometimes added a state bedroom, and sometimes even a drawing room.

At this period which has been called "the truly Augustan age of Elizabeth," the science of construction of timber-framed houses was thoroughly understood; and as the supply of material seemed still

¹ "Everybody who could afford it, travelled on horseback. There were companies of hackney men who provided horses for travellers at a fixed rate per stage, and cooks accompanied them who provided for the culinary necessities of wayfarers." In the middle of the fifteenth century, "hackneys were usually hired at four-pence a day, equal to about seven shillings of our money,

"for cariage the porter hors schall hyre
ffoure pens a pece withinne the shyre."

[Turner's Domestic Architecture, vol. iii., p. 47"]

² *Solarium*, probably from *sol*. There was also sometimes, above the gateway, a little room, called the *soleret*, the diminutive of *soler*; a term still retained in France in the suite of rooms just above the ground floor, universally known as the *entre-sol*.

abundant and almost inexhaustible, possibly the prevailing fashion of wooden houses might have been prolonged to a much later date, had not the Great Fire of London¹ in 1666 (of which the well-known Monument is the memorial) put a sudden stop to the practice, and caused the substitution of a less perishable material: for immediately after the Fire of London a proclamation² (which by many was deemed arbitrary and unjustifiable) was made, enjoining the Lord Mayor and other city magistrates to take care that no houses of timber should be erected for the future.³ And this new, though enforced, fashion of stone and brick houses in London very soon spread through the country, to the utter abandonment of the mode of building, which, till then, had monopolized the attention of architects and builders.

With these preliminary remarks on the general subject of timber houses in England, and wherein I have gleaned from the writings of some of our best archæologists, to wit, Mr Hudson Turner, Mr. John Henry Parker, Mr. Albert Way, Mr. Clayton and others; I come now the more readily to the very excellent specimen of an old timber house in our own county, which it is my present purpose to describe.

In the parish of Potterne, and in the very middle of the village, abutting on the main street, stands an old old house, which, though it has long attracted the notice of the archæologist and the

¹ As some slight precaution against fire, so deservedly dreaded by those who dwelt in streets of wooden houses, an old law had long since enacted that "before every house there should be a tub full of water, either of wood or stone;" the like of which may be seen, rigidly enforced at the present day, in the towns of Bergen, Trondhjem, &c., in Norway, where the majority of houses are of timber.

² Long before this, even in the reign of King John, a decree was made that every alderman should, under penalty of fine, provide himself with a hook and cord, whereby to demolish the wooden houses of the citizens in case of fire, and nothing can give us a better notion what mean and flimsy hovels the citizens of London were then contented with, if a hook and cord were implements sufficient for pulling them down.

³ Hallam's History of England, vol. iii., p. 6.

artist, has been, for some generations at least, passed by the many without admiration or remark. Now and then its timbered walls, its old-fashioned windows, and its overhanging roof might have arrested the momentary notice of the traveller, as he wended his way through the village street, but it was forgotten almost as soon as seen.¹ Occasionally its picturesque outline might have tempted the sketcher's pencil, or invited the photographer to halt; but by the great majority of passers by, I will venture to say, it was wholly unnoticed.

And yet on examination this was no ordinary house, such as the other houses all around it were. Its formation, its material, its open porch, its gables, its bay window, its barge boards, its projecting story, all proclaimed it the work of a former age: while if one entered it and peeped behind the plaster and ceilings which concealed them, beautiful tracery of windows and fine open roofs rewarded the zeal of the curious, and invited to further research.

And thus unheeded, or at least unrecognized, it might have remained to this moment, gradually succumbing to neglect and the wear and tear of ages, had it not attracted the artistic eye of a gentleman, to whom to see was to admire, and to admire was to purchase, with a view to its restoration: and to whose loving carefulness and reverent regard for antiquity, scrupulous adherence to the most rigid laws of preservation, and determination to admit of no renovation, which was not (presumptively at least) warranted by precedent; we of this county and neighbourhood, and above all the Members of the Wiltshire Archæological Society, are indebted for the very interesting specimen which we may now see, of a timber house, whose antiquity we may safely estimate at three hundred, and not improbably at near four hundred years, or perhaps more.

Waiving however for the moment the important question whether it may fairly lay claim to date from the sixteenth or from the fifteenth century, let us proceed to examine its more modern history and its

¹ An excellent illustration of the Old House, as it stood about eight years ago, may be seen in the frontispiece of the eleventh volume of the Magazine.

actual condition as it appeared two years ago. As regards its occupation during the years of its decline, it has suffered almost more than the wonted vicissitudes of old houses, and has indeed been put to strange uses; for it seems to have served successively as a brewery, as a bakehouse, as a barrack, as a public-house (bearing the sign of the "Pack-horse"); and finally, and only too fatally to many portions of it, it was divided into four or five tenements. To fit it for these several uses, and especially for its last unfortunate occupation as the abode of several families, it was deemed necessary to make many disastrous alterations. Thus the fine old porch, which has given its name to the house, was stopped up in front, and opened at the sides: two new doors were made and opened to the street: at the back two new doors were made opening into the hall: windows were blocked up with wattle and plaster: others were opened: three or four staircases were made: small rooms were made less by means of thin partitions: fire-places were constructed where none had previously existed: and ceilings everywhere hid the fine open roofs, and the oak joists, on which the original flooring rested. One huge chimney, having two flues in it, and of about two hundred years' standing, took up a great part of the hall, and in great degree spoilt its proportions. While more recently the pendants from the roof with tracery were ruthlessly cut away to make head room for the upper floor: indeed one of the workmen, now engaged in the restoration, who lived in these rooms for several years, acknowledges that he assisted in cutting away the grand old pendants and tracery, which he says reached down to within two or three feet of the upper floor, so that they must have lost 2 feet 6 inches or 3 feet in length by the operation.

Notwithstanding however all these destructive alterations, and that considerable injuries were done, under the plea of restoration, the structure itself happily remains, and pretty much the same in general aspect as it was several centuries ago.

Let me now pass on to mention shortly how the work of restoration has been conducted, and what has been done. In the first place it was felt that where a single mistake might be fatal, and one false move, through lack of the required care and caution, might ruin

everything, it was absolutely essential to secure success that the work should be placed in the hands of a competent architect, one whose discretion and carefulness, as well as knowledge and experience could be relied upon: and who more fitting than the well-known Mr. Christian, who chanced to be engaged in restoring Potterne Church at the time? To him therefore, and to his head assistant, Mr. Purday, who devoted much attention to the work, are we indebted, next to the owner, for the admirable manner in which this restoration has been conducted. Possibly some few mistakes may have been made, but these are comparatively trifling, and may be attributed, partly to the unavoidable absence of the owner, for when able to spare the time, he not only superintended the progress of the work himself, but assisted the workmen in no slight degree with his own hands; and partly to the prolonged illness of Mr. Christian, who was thus hindered from giving it that constant personal attention which so tender a patient required. I repeat, however, that so far as I can form an opinion, the mistakes are few and trifling, while the restoration is thoroughly successful, as it is likely to be, and as it certainly deserves to be, when conducted on such admirable principles (which cannot be too highly commended by antiquarians) of extreme care and even horror of demolishing anything that is old, and an equal shrinking from the introduction of anything that is new, for which there is no absolute warrant of precedent.

Carried out on these principles, the restoration of the old Porch-House at Potterne has been most carefully conducted. Wherever oak was originally used, there oak has again been supplied: elm has been used for elm: and there is no pine in the building. There was but one chimney, the massive one alluded to just now, and but one fire-place, in the north parlour: these however formed no part of the original buildings, but were added about the time of Charles II. It was found to be absolutely impossible to retain the large chimney, for it completely blocked up the hall, though it was removed with reluctance. When pulling it down, it was found to be composed of oak and wattle, a material which was discovered to be fire-proof by those who built it two hundred years ago, but a piece of practical knowledge which had been lost to us from that period.

The porch door, remembered by many old inhabitants, with its wicket, is described as covered with iron, like a prison door; and it is not a little remarkable that the present owner, with a firm presentiment that it must be in existence somewhere, and with a no less confident persuasion that it would be found (if at all) in a pig-sty, offered a reward for its recovery; and sure enough, before long, half of the identical wicket, with some of the iron fittings upon it, was discovered doing duty as a part of the floor of a pig-sty, at a mile's distance. It will, I am sure, rejoice the heart of every true archaeologist to learn that the wood of the wicket having proved to be still sound, only somewhat richly pickled, it is to be worked up again into the door, and restored to its former position. Besides this, no other original door remains: the only one of any antiquity, which may be a sixteenth century door, is now placed in the end building at the north-east.

It has been suggested that perhaps the hall itself is of elder date than the other buildings on either side of it, and that it was removed from its original site and rebuilt here, when possibly the porch may have been added.¹ Certain it is that nothing would have been easier than to do this, for the whole framework of the building is mortised together, and fixed by oak pegs through the tenons, and all the uprights are numbered for their respective places, i., ii., iii., iv., v., vi., and so on, as any one may still see for himself. It should however be remembered that this argument for its easy removal is by no means conclusive; for the practice of putting together timber framework by means of pegs, prior to its permanent erection, was not only a general custom of builders then, but is still the time-honoured practice of carpenters: indeed roofs of barns and farm buildings are generally so constructed on the ground previous to erection. Between the oak uprights, short thick horizontal oak laths fit into grooves, and these formed the foundation for the plaster, but in the larger spaces wattle was used instead of laths.

Of the two quaint windows on the east wall of the hall, the

¹ If however the porch was an addition, Mr. Purday gives it as his decided opinion, based on structural details, that it was an addition made immediately after the hall had been placed here.

southernmost alone remained; though the other has been opened in the restoration. There was no evidence that these windows have ever been glazed, but there were indications of shutters, and these indications remain. It is presumed that (as in other old houses of similar construction and date) they were for the admission of air, and for the exit of smoke, for as there was originally no fire-place in the hall, a fire must have been kindled upon the floor, and the smoke must have found its way out as it could: and indeed that this was the case, the blackening of the purlines and rafters, is corroborative, if not (as I almost venture to say) conclusive. Those purlines and rafters are of elm, but the framing of the roofs is wholly of oak, as are all the uprights throughout the whole group of buildings, which, though apparently one, are in fact *four*.

Of the three upper windows looking towards the street, one only with transomes may be of the time of James I., but it has been thought advisable that these should be carefully repaired and retained, although there is evidence that the original windows were different to these, and probably carried tracery: no portion however of these remains for an example; and with a wise discretion, which we shall appreciate and applaud, no conjectural restoration of them was to be entertained for a moment.

As regards the pavement, the oldest portion was composed of unequal-sized flag-stones, but they were certainly not original, nor have we any trace of the materials of which the floor was composed. In general however it was nothing more than the natural soil well rammed down, and upon this was strewn the dried rushes in winter, and the green leaves in summer, which did duty for carpets.¹

I should mention here that very lovely tracery was found in a little blocked-up window in the upper room of the North wing, and also fragments of tracery in the oriel window, and that from these patterns all the restorations have been made. In the same upper room of the north wing, there is a round hole through one of the upright timbers, directed downwards, which it is surmised may have

¹ Every traveller in Scandinavia will recollect the juniper and pine branches, with which the floors of the rooms are very generally strewn at this day.

been intended to facilitate the throwing down stones or other missiles on the heads of assailants, in case of attack; or perhaps more probably for the pouring of water on the faggots, if they attempted to set fire to the building. Whether such was the object of this perforation I cannot say, though the provision of such holes and for such purposes was well understood by our forefathers. In Ireland, such an opening was appropriately called "the murdering hole."

During the progress of the work the following objects of interest were discovered. Of *coins*, many half-pence of the Georges; two of William and Mary; one of George and Caroline; and one of Washington. Three tradesmens' tokens, one of them German; one Roman coin of Constantine, cast at Treves; and best of all, in a mortice hole of the northern wing, three golden *écus* of France, wrapped in a small portion of fine linen: two of these are of Louis XI., the other of Charles VIII., of France. They appear to have been placed in the hole for security, and then it seems they dropped down out of reach; but how these foreign coins came to be deposited there, and what was the story of their being so concealed and then abandoned, notwithstanding their value, are interesting speculations, on which we may weave what romances we please, and which none can dispute, for we shall never know the truth of the story, conjecture and search as we may. In the roof were found one or two leathern articles, a coin of George I., and a tiler's measure; while the great chimney yielded up a portion of a carved stone, and a fowl, prepared without doubt for dinner, but somehow forgotten and left a mummy!

And now I come to the critical question as to the *probable date* of this interesting old building. I am happy to say that we are not without documentary evidence with regard to a very old manor house at Potterne: for as in those lawless days, when roving thieves lurked in the forests, and plundered where they could find booty; every manor house and every knight's house was protected by *crenellated* or embattled inclosure walls (indeed it was contrary to law in those disturbed times to build any house of any size or importance without some such fortification); and as no one was allowed to put battlements (*crenelles*) on his house without a license from the

crown,¹ we have most valuable testimony regarding the houses which were so crenellated, and which must have included all the principal houses in the land, in the catalogues of licences granted for the purpose during the reigns of the several sovereigns of that period. A complete list of these licenses to crenellate was printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1856 in chronological order, carefully extracted from the Rolls themselves, under the direction of Mr. Duffus Hardy, the Assistant Keeper of the Rolls : and I have the authority of the author of the "Glossary of Architecture," for saying that "the licenses to *crenellate* or fortify a mansion may generally be relied on as fixing the date of it, because every house of any importance was obliged to be fortified;" and in another part of his book he says in still more distinct terms, "the licenses to crenellate give us the exact date of each house within a very few years."

Now in the list of licenses for the eleventh year of Edward III. (A.D. 1338) we find licenses granted to Robert Bishop of Salisbury to crenellate his manor houses at Poterne, Wilts, Cannynges, Wilts, and at Remmesbury, Wilts.² For some reasons which we cannot explain, though it was by no means an uncommon occurrence, these licenses were not immediately acted on; and consequently at the beginning of the next reign, the first of Richard II. (A.D. 1377) we find a ratification of the licenses formerly granted in the eleventh of the Edward III., under the Privy Seal; viz. to Ralph, the then Bishop of Salisbury, and his successors to crenellate his several manor houses of Poterne, Canynge, and Remmesbury aforesaid;³

¹ "Some curious instances occur of pardons granted to persons for having ventured to fortify their houses without a licence, and others of licences renewed at the beginning of a new reign, where the original intention had not been carried out. These exceptional cases would suffice to clearly prove the general custom and law upon the subject, if there were any doubt about it."—Turner's *Domestic Architecture in England*, vol. iv., p. 201.

² "Anno Regni Edw: III., 11. Robertus Episcopus Sarum *possit kernellare mansum manerii*. . . . Poterne, Wilts. . . . *mansum manerii*.
. . . . Cannyngg, Wilts. . . . *mansum manerii*. . . .
Remmesbury, Wilts."

³ "Anno Regni Rich: II., 1. Radulphus Episcopus Saresburiensis, et successores sui *manerium* Potterne,
manerium Canynge *manerium Rammesbury*."

and we may conclude, as the licenses were not again ratified in the succeeding reign, that they were then acted upon.

That the Porch-House at Potterne is that identical manor house, for the fortification of which a license was finally granted by the crown in 1377, I do not think any one is rash enough to conjecture. That episcopal residence in all probability soon fell into decay; for it appears that the bishops' ancient manor house ceased to be kept up *circa* 1450; though that it was at times at least occupied by the Lord Bishop of Salisbury in person while it existed, we have evidence, in that Bishop Richard Mitford (or Metford) died at Potterne in 1407.

That however this fine old timber house, of too noble a character to be an ordinary residence, might have been one of the many ecclesiastical residences, after the Bishop ceased to keep up his own manor house, for either the person renting the titles and manor, as agent for the Bishop, or as Vicar for the time being, is a suggestion which has been put forward with no little show of probability. That such may have been the case is by no means unlikely, but in the absence of any proof in support of it, the archæologist can only look upon it as conjecture. Others have broached the opinion that it was a Church house, where Church ales were held, and other business or festivities in connection with the Church were carried on: but here again we are simply hazarding a guess, for which we have no positive foundation, while the superior character and elaborate details of the building seem, in my judgment at least, to militate against such a supposition.

With regard to the actual date of the building, there is the internal evidence of construction and detail, and the external evidence of style; and some of our best architects have given it as their opinion that it may be attributed to the close of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth centuries, from 1490 to 1510, or during the reign of Henry VII., while others again affirm it to be Elizabethan, and this is the view taken by the author of the "Glossary of Architecture," who says, "Nothing remains at Potterne earlier than the time of Elizabeth, of which period there is a very good and picturesque timber house with carved barge-boards and panelling, and

the projecting upper story." On this point however let everyone use his own judgment, after due examination: for myself, though I scarcely venture to offer any opinion, I incline to the earlier date, to which I am led not only by many of the details given above, but still more by the authority of those in whose judgment I am inclined to place confidence. It is however a question open to opinion, and may well exercise the careful consideration of those who are most conversant with such matters. But certain I am, that when thus carefully examined, whether it be pronounced fifteenth, sixteenth, or even seventeenth century work, all will unite in one voice of admiration at the beauty of the building, and in no less hearty a tribute of gratitude to the worthy owner, who is carrying out the work of restoration in so reverent, so careful, so truly archæological, a spirit, and who has done his utmost to preserve in its integrity so fine a specimen of the old timber houses of England.