

Barrington Court.

BY THOMAS BOND.

BARRINGTON Court, four miles from Ilminster, is one of the best specimens of domestic architecture of the early Tudor period in this county; and though it has long been converted into a farm house, it remains, externally, in a fair state of preservation. Built on a ground-plan in the form of an E, which was so much the fashion in this century, its material is well wrought and closely fitted ashlar, from the neighbouring quarries of Ham Hill; and the stone having acquired by age a rich and mellow hue, the structure has a venerable appearance. With but little of ornamental detail, (though what there is is very good), the loftiness, and general proportions of the building—its extent, and solidity of masonry, and the taste and care with which every part has been designed and carried out by the architect, give it an air of dignity and importance.

The angles, both of the wings and porch, are supported by diagonal buttresses of two stages, from the summit of which spring fluted octagonal angle-shafts, supporting twisted pinnacles with scaled ogee caps, surmounted by finials. The points of the great gables have similar pinnacles, which are repeated both at the springs and points of the dormers. Those at the springs have the fluted octagonal angle-shafts; but having no buttresses to support them, they are merely sustained by corbels. The construction is faulty, as is manifest from some of the pinnacles having given way from want of adequate support. On either side of each of the pinnacles which spring from the points of the great gables, is a twisted octagonal chimney shaft with embattled top.

The porch is eccentric, being so placed in order to give more space for the great hall. Its doorway has a fore-centred arch, with bold Gothic mouldings, but no label or hood-moulding. The porch is carried up to the roof of the house, and has a projecting chimney on each side, supported by corbelled masonry.

At the angles, formed by the junction of the wings with the central block of the building, there are rectangular projections, or counter angles, with windows, forming kind of two-sided oriels, which serve for passages, through which access is obtained to the apartments in the wings, without interfering with the intermediate rooms. These projections reach the roof, and terminate in dormers.

The windows of the house are large, and have generally four arch-headed lights, divided by transoms similarly arched. The windows at the ends of the wings have five lights each.

The great hall is more lofty than the other rooms, and in order to accommodate this arrangement the windows of the apartments above it are shorter than the others in the same range. The mullions of the hall windows have been removed, and replaced by sashes, to the great detriment of the general appearance of the façade.

Nearly all the internal fittings have been destroyed, leaving little besides a small portion of oak wainscot in one of the rooms, and a stone chimney-piece in the drawing room. The latter dates, apparently, from the 17th century, and is decorated with the arms and quarterings of the Strode family, who owned the place at that period. In the bedrooms are some contemporary stone chimney-pieces.

The back and sides of the house are worthy of notice. They have bold projecting chimneys, and the back presents some examples of mullioned windows, which in shape and proportions are well suited for modern requirements. All the chimney shafts are octagonal and twisted, with embattled tops; and when looked at in conjunction with the numerous pinnacles, the whole presents a rich and dressy appearance.

The characteristic features of the architecture are those which prevailed during the reign of Henry VIII ; and the taste and dignity of the design (simple though it is), together with the solidity of its execution, seem to point out that some person of wealth and importance must have been the founder of this noble mansion. Such a person is found to have been owner of the property at the period in question, for the estate belonged during nearly the whole of the reign of Henry VIII to Henry Lord Daubeney, created Earl of Bridgwater. We can scarcely err, therefore, in assuming that the house was erected under his auspices. Though placed in a low situation, it is said to be neither damp nor unhealthy. A park anciently surrounded it, for which the natural configuration of the ground is not ill adapted, and which in the hands of a skilful landscape gardener might be successfully restored.

Barrington belonged from an early period to the baronial family of De Albeniaco or Daubeney ; Radulphus de Albeniaco held it, together with South Petherton, 20th Edward I. Elias Daubeney was summoned to Parliament as a baron from 23rd to 53rd Edward I inclusive, and died about the latter year. In 1st Richard III this manor was in the crown, probably on account of a forfeiture arising out of the civil wars immediately preceding, for on 19th December in the same year, William Bracher, one of the yeomen of the crown to the King, was appointed bailiff or lessee of the manor for his life, with 4d. per diem, and £40 per annum out of the profits. But on the 25th March following, the manor, described as late belonging to Sir Giles Daubeney, was granted by the crown to Ralph Lord Nevile. In 5th Henry VIII, George Nevile, Lord Bergavenny, sold it to Henry Lord Daubeney (son of Sir Giles), who was created Earl of Bridgwater in 30th Henry VIII. The latter died without issue, 2nd Edward VI, and seems to have settled this estate on his wife for life, with remainder to Sir Thomas Arundel (a relation on his mother's side) in fee. On the attainder of the Countess of Bridgwater and Sir Thomas Arundel,

Barrington again fell to the crown. In 6th Edward VI, it was granted to Henry, Duke of Suffolk (father of the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey), who the same year sold it to William Clifton. Sir John Clifton, Knt., died at Barrington, 25th May, 35th Elizabeth, seized of the capital messuage and park of Barrington, and Gervease Clifton was his son and heir, 23 years old, and more. Gervease Clifton afterwards became a knight, and sold this manor, 1st December, 3rd James I (1605), to Sir Thos. Phillipps, Knt., eldest son of Thomas Phellips of Montacute, and brother of Sir Edward Phillips,¹ Master of the Rolls. He died in 1618, and Thomas Phillips, his son and heir, was created a baronet, by the title of Sir Thomas Phillips of Barrington, 16th February, 1619. The latter was in possession of this estate in February, 18th James I (1621), when he mortgaged it to Arthur Farwle, Esq., and it very soon after (apparently before 1623) passed by purchase to the Strode family. William Strode of Barrington and of Shepton Mallet, Esq., made his will in 1745, and dying without issue, this manor passed to his sister, and heir-at-law, Jane, wife of Robert Austin of Tenterden, county Kent. Their eldest surviving son and heir, Sir Edward Austin of Barley Abbey, in Bexley, in the same county, Bart., sold it to Thomas Harvard of Thorney, in the parish of Muchelney, county Somerset, Gent., 17th September, 1755; but the conveyance was not completed till 6th April following. Mr. Harvard's only surviving child married Mr. John Hanning, father of Mr. William Hanning, whose son and heir, John Lee Hanning, Esq., assumed the name of Lee, and sold this property to Mr. J. W. Peters of South Petherton. The latter gave it by will to his nephew, Mr. William Parsons, who has taken the name of Peters, and is the present owner.

(1). The name is thus variously spelt in contemporary documents. It was anciently sometimes written without the final *s*.
