ARCHITECTURAL MUSEUM, BROMPTON.

Feb. 10. A lecture on the Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages was delivered by Mr. John Henry Parker, F.S.A., who commenced by stating that the existing remains of the dwellings of our ancestors were few and far between, and were daily disappearing before our eyes, so that if some attempt was not made to preserve a record of them, we shall soon find it too late. The architecture of remote periods has been aptly called "history written in stone," and those who have once mastered the simple key to this history, find it quite as interesting as any other history written on paper or parchment. If this is the case with architecture in general—the greater part of which belongs to churches, and is, therefore, in some degree monotonous, or at least presents less variety—it is still more the case in the architecture of dwelling-houses, which present an endless variety of plan and arrangement, and are intimately connected with the habits and customs of the people who built them and inhabited them.

Mr. Parker next described the different plans of houses, and by the aid of some very carefully prepared plans and drawings, shewed the gradual development, from the Norman Keep down to the complete house of the fifteenth century. He referred to numerous examples, the dates of which were in many cases known from documentary evidence, exhibiting in order the various additions which from time to time were made as civilisation increased, and the fear of attack less felt. As some of the most perfect instances of the internal arrangement in Keep-towers, he referred to Dacre, Bamborough, and the Pele-tower of Corbridge; and to shew to how late a period they were used, he noticed Brougham Castle, the keep of which had been refitted in the fourteenth century; and Kenilworth keep, which had been adapted for habitation as late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth. His examples of Baileys were chiefly taken from the Border and Welsh castles of Edward I. With regard to town houses, he said—

"Before we enter upon the general domestic arrangements, it may be useful to remind you that throughout the middle ages, both in town and country, it was very common to build the house upon a vaulted substructure, containing cellars or store-rooms half underground. These were very strongly and substantially built, for security against fire; and these vaulted chambers were common alike in all descriptions of houses, whether fortified or not, in monasteries as well as in secular buildings. This vaulted basement story frequently remains where all the superstructure has disappeared, for the upper part was often of wood only: for this reason, the substructure is often of much earlier date than the rest, the wooden house having been replaced by one of stone or brick at a later period. In many towns, a great part of the modern houses are built upon these ancient vaulted chambers. This is especially the case at Chester and Winchelsea; and in London itself there are many remaining, though the most perfect example, known by the name of Gerard's-hall Crypt, has recently been destroyed. The Guildhall stands upon a crypt of this kind. In castles and in country-houses they are equally common. This substructure does not affect the general plan of the house, which is the same whether it stands upon the ground or upon a series of vaults,—excepting in a few rare instances, where the kitchen and offices have been made in these vaulted chambers. The best example of this is in Warwick Castle, where the lower story is, however, only partially underground, and contains a fine suite of servants' offices, very perfect, and nearly in their original state, though all the upper part of the house has been much modernised."

He then went on to describe the Manor-house, explaining the objects and uses of the various chambers which we find in those examples which remain to us. He shewed that the hall was the most important feature in the building during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and early part of the fifteenth century.

In the latter part of the fifteenth century, the lord's chamber and the other family apartments became much more important in proportion to the hall: there are often two good rooms, one over the other, and called the dining-room and drawing-room. In the Bishop's Palace at St. David's these apartments must have been of considerable size, and encroached considerably upon the hall. In some of the late Tudor buildings, and in Elizabethan houses, the lofty hall frequently disappears altogether, its place being supplied by the dining-room and drawing-room, two large but low rooms, one over the other; and in many instances this alteration has been made in later times, the roof of the hall being often preserved, but the space divided by a floor and ceilings, in order to adapt the house to modern usages—as at Charney, Berkshire; Yan-

wath, Westmoreland; Place-house, Tisbury, and very many other instances.

The chapel, also, was carefully described, not only as to the position which it generally occupied, but also as to the form and arrangement. He also gave instances of the use of oriels, or upper-chambered chapels, in the fifteenth century—a feature which had been already fully described in the volume of "Domestic Architecture of the Fourteenth Century."

After the chapel he referred to the usual position of the kitchen, bringing forward a large number of instances. Also to the beer and wine-cellar, the buttery, scullery, bakehouse, brewhouse, and the other offices.

The bakehouse was an important office, and often remains perfect, being commonly taken for a second kitchen. The ovens not unfrequently remain still in use. They remain perfect at Fawsley, Hurstmonceux, Haddon-hall, and very many other places. The salting-house and the drying-house were also important offices in the larger establishments, as at Durham and Chepstow, and in most of the Benedictine abbeys. The laundry also frequently remains in use, as at Fawsley. Over these various offices there are frequently apartments of considerable size and importance, as at Great Chalfield and Fawsley, the use of which is not always clear, as they seem too good to have been only servants' apartments In some instances the oriel is mentioned in such a manner as to shew that it was the upper chamber over the pantry and buttery, and behind the music-gallery; but in these cases it is probable that it was also the chapel or oratory, as at South Wingfield.

From these he passed on to the external features of the house—the porch, the moat, &c. He also mentioned the dovecot, the earlier examples of which are generally round; and there are examples of these remaining as early as the thirteenth century, as at Llantwit in Glamorganshire, Garvey in Herefordshire, and several others. The later ones are more frequently square, and often built of brick. Examples of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are very numerous, and they were a customary appendage to the manor-house of the time of Elizabeth and James I. Sometimes it was not considered necessary or convenient to make a separate structure for this purpose, and a part of some other building was fitted up and used.

He reviewed also the varieties of type which may be found in the timber houses of the fifteenth century: but this subject will be more fully treated in the third volume of his work on Domestic Architecture, which will shortly make its appearance.

In conclusion, the lecturer said—"I am perhaps departing from the strict letter of the subject in saying anything about furniture, but as the bare walls of a modern house give a very inadequate and uncomfortable idea of a modern dwelling, so is this equally the case with a dwelling-house of the middle ages; and yet most people form their ideas of these from the bare walls only, and come to the conclusion that they must have been very wretched, uncomfortable places, which I believe to be very far from the truth.

"To begin with the hall, as the principal dwelling apartment, where large parties were assembled. The walls were hung with tapestry to the height of eight or ten feet from the ground; above this the walls were painted with foliage and figures, often with subjects taken from the popular romances of the day, or hunting scenes, or sometimes legendary or Scripture subjects: similar subjects were worked upon the tapestry, so that when the colours were all fresh there was little distinction between those parts of the walls which were hung with tapestry and those which were not. The windows also were filled with painted glass, containing similar subjects, and forming a continuation of the paintings on the walls, or the work of the needle in imitation of paintings. The best example we have remaining of this arrangement is in St. Mary's Hall, Coventry, where the tapestry and the painted window over it at the high end of the hall, behind the dais, remain perfect, though faded. They are of the time of Henry VI., and record a visit of that monarch to Coventry. In several other instances the gables at each end of the hall are filled with windows, the buildings attached being considerably lower than the hall.

"To provide for sufficient warmth, I have mentioned that a large fire of logs of wood was made in the middle of the hall, on a brazier with fire-dogs, around which forty or fifty people might be assembled and yet feel the benefit of the warmth: the smoke, escaping from the louvre in the roof, passed above the heads of the people. This custom was continued in the hall of Westminster School until a very recent period, having only been altered by Dean Buckland. It was also continued in the hall of Lincoln College, Oxford, within the memory of some of the present Fellows, and the smoke-louvre in the roof still remains. I believe it is also still the custom in the hall of St. John's College, Cambridge.

"But as the smoke must have frequently been injurious to the paintings, we commonly find in the richer halls of the fifteenth century fireplaces introduced—sometimes only one, as at Haddon-hall, Wanswell-court, and very many others; often two, and these placed usually on the same side of the hall, as at Kenilworth, and numerous others: sometimes there were more than two, as at Conway; though it is difficult there to tell exactly how far the great hall extended, and where the partition-screen of the chapel was placed which formed one end of it. At Linlithgow there are two large fireplaces close together at one end of the hall, behind the dais, probably because the climate was cold and damp (and perhaps because the Princess, afterwards known as Mary Queen of Scots, whose father built this palace, was a delicate child, and required more than usual care). The fireplaces in Scotland are generally large and fine, and resemble the French flamboyant fireplaces with their magnificent hoods.

"The tables—both the high-table on the dais and the side-tables in the body of the hall—were long and narrow, being merely boards placed on tressels, and removed when not required for use. The word 'table' properly signifies the same as the Latin word *tabula*, a board, and does not include the tressels, or the legs, or framework on which the table rests. These tables appear to have been generally used on one side only, the people in the body of the hall sitting on benches, the grandees at the high-table on chairs, and the lord in the centre, on a sort of throne, or chair of state, with a canopy over it—at least, if we may trust the illuminations in manuscripts of the period, as I believe we may, though some persons consider them so entirely conventional that no reliance at all is to be placed upon them. A few of these state chairs have come down to us: perhaps the Coronation-chair in Westminster Abbey is the most beautiful, and although it is in a shamefully neglected and mutilated state, having been evidently used merely to nail the velvet coverings upon, yet the original carving and gilding, and painting, with the diaper-work, can still be made out with care.

"In the recess of the bay-window at the end of the dais was the sideboard, or cupboard, on which the plate and china were displayed on shelves. The dais itself was often covered with a carpet, and the chairs had cushions on the seats, and dorsars at the back;—these seem to have been thin cushions or pads hanging over the back of the chair. The table was covered with a linen cloth, and napkins were provided for each guest. Water was brought round before and after meals to those at the high-table in lavatories, which were small basins of silver or metal richly enamelled, about the size and depth of a soup-plate, but with a spout to pour out of, and which were often filled with rose-water; those in the body of the hall were expected to wash their hands at the lavatory provided for that purpose behind the screen at the lower end of the hall. The dais was commonly boarded, but the floor of the body of the hall was covered with tiles, or sometimes paved; or earth only, and was strewed with rushes, which were frequently renewed. At the lower end of the hall, over the screens, was the music-gallery, which was occupied by the minstrels during meals; and from this there was often a door to a room at the back. The bed-rooms were well furnished with bedsteads and bedding, as is proved by the numerous inventories of furniture which we have remaining, as well as by the illuminations. The bedsteads had testers at the head, the four-post bedsteads were not introduced before the sixteenth century, and are not often earlier than the seventeenth. We find mention of silk curtains, feather beds, mattresses, and flat cushions to be placed against the wall at the back of the bed. The bedstead served as a couch during the day to sit or lounge upon, the same chamber serving its occupant both for bed-room and sitting-room, as is still the custom in France. The floor was usually covered with tiles, or with a kind of mastic, as at Bolton-castle, Yorkshire, which is not cold or uncomfortable to the feet.

"Small carpets, like what we now use as bedside carpets, were in common use, and the quilt or covering of the bed was often a richly-worked piece of tapestry or needlework. But chairs appear to have been scarce articles, as we read frequently of people sitting together on the sides of the bed. In the place of our chest of drawers there was a chest of a different description, often richly ornamented both with painting and with well-wrought ironwork. There was also a shelf to put books upon, or for any other purpose. In each bedroom there was a fireplace, and attached to each was a garderobe, either in a turret or in the thickness of the wall, with a passage leading to it.

"In the kitchen and offices there was no lack of the utensils necessary for carrying on the work there required. The inventories of the period enumerate all sorts of conveniences,—boilers and kettles, and stewpans and fryingpans, and gridirons, tubs, vats, barrels, and everything wanted

for the bakehouse, the brewhouse, the salting house, and other offices.

"Thus it will be found, upon careful investigation, that with all our boasted improvements and advances in the march of civilisation, so far as comfort is concerned, the country house of the middle ages presented as many luxuries to those who inhabited it as a modern house does to ourselves, making some allowance for the wants of a less effeminate age, which did not require all the little delicacies and refinements of modern usage. We are often too ready to look back upon the dark ages, as we love to call them, and fancy that because we do not at first sight find proofs to the contrary, men must have lived like cattle. If, however, with the evidence we have collected, we can look back in imagination, and transport ourselves, for instance, into one of those old halls at Christmastime, with the yule-log blazing on the hearth, sounds of music pouring forth from the minstrels' gallery, of merry laughter from the vicinity of the jester, and dancing with thorough good-will in another part, we should see a scene of warmth and comfort which may well bear comparison with the refinements and the stiffness which civilisation often imposes on our modern drawing-rooms. It is too much the fashion to despise our ancestors for what they had not, instead of taking the trouble to examine what they had. We are often too conceited to copy or to learn from past ages, but seek after some new and taking invention, which, after all, perhaps, if we had searched diligently, is no invention at all, but something which was common in those ages which we call dark, but which will be found not unworthy of the attention of an age which prides itself on the advanced state of its arts and sciences."

CORRESPONDENCE OF SYLVANUS URBAN.

COATS OF ARMS IN ESSEX CHURCHES.

UTTLESFORD HUNDRED.—No. VI.

Stanstead Montfitchet.—Takeley.—Widdington.—Wimbish.—Wenden-Lofts.—Wendens-Ambo.—Wickham Bonhunt.

Stanstead Montfitchet.—On a sumptuous monument of alabaster, with recumbent effigies to *Sir Thomas Middleton, Knt.*, Lord Mayor of London, who died Aug. 12, 1631, aged 81, these arms:—

1. *Middleton*, quarterly of 9—3, 3, 3.
   1. *Middleton*, Arg., on bend vert 3 wolves' heads erased of the field.
   2. *Middleton*, another coat, Vert, a chevron between 3 wolves' heads erased arg.
   3. —— a lion pass.
   4. —— Gu., on bend or 3 lions pass. sab.
   5. —— Arg., 2 crows in pale sab., beaked and legged gu.
   6. —— Per pale arg., sab., a lion ramp. countercharged.
   7. —— Vert, 3 cocks arg., 2, 1, combed and wattled gu.
   8. *Prescott*, Sab., a chevron between 3 owls arg.
   9. *Ednowain*, Gu., 3 snakes embowed arg.

At the sides are the arms of his four wives:—

1. *Middleton*, impaling gu., a chevron between 3 mullets or.
2. *Middleton*, impaling vert, a chevron between 3 garbs or.
3. *Middleton*, impaling or, a bend between 2 eagles displayed sab.
4. *Middleton*, impaling gu., on chevron arg. a lion ramp. sab.

In the spandrils of the arch are the arms of the *City of London* and the *Grocers' Company*.

On an altar-tomb, with recumbent effigy to *Esther*, daughter of *Sir Thomas Middleton*, and wife of *Henry Salisbury*, of Llewenny, co. Denbigh, Esq., 1604:—

1. *Salisbury*, quarterly of 16—4, 4, 4—impaling Middleton quarterly of 6.
   1. *Salisbury*, Gu., lion ramp. arg. between 3 crescents or.
   2. *Vaughan*, Quarterly arg., sab., 4 lions ramp. countercharged.
   3. —— Az., lion pass. arg.
   4. —— Gu., 3 lions pass. in pale arg.
   5. —— Arg., 2 bars az., on each 3 martlets of the field.
   6. —— Vert, a stag standing arg., attired or.
   7. —— Az., a bend arg.
   8. *Middleton*.
   9. —— The other coat.