

SEQUEL TO THE  
OBSERVATIONS ON ANCIENT CASTLES  
BY EDWARD KING

1782

Edited by David Trutt

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section on  
CASTELLATED HOUSES:  
HADDON HOUSE

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The detailed description of Haddon Hall's interior contained in Edward King's book may be the first by an outside visitor. He appears to have visited every room, an experience which is denied to today's tourist. It is unlikely that the charismatic caretaker who held sway from about 1790 to 1840 would have shown King around, since King's observations are devoid of any anecdotal reference. The portion referring to Dorothy and John does not contain any hint of an elopement.

It is apparent that Rayner has leaned heavily on King's descriptions for use in his [Rayner's] book *The History and Antiquities of Haddon Hall*. Rayner's major contribution was bringing interest in Haddon Hall to a wider audience through his artful illustrations. In addition Rayner was instrumental in incorporating King's descriptions into the newly created legendary status of Haddon Hall and its inhabitants.

From an obituary of Edward King (1725-1807)

Edward King was buried April 25, 1807. This learned writer was a native of Norfolk, and educated at Clare-Hall in Cambridge; he was bred to the bar, went the Norfolk circuit for a time, and was recorder of King's Lynn. He was a distinguished member of the Society of Antiquaries, into which body he was elected in 1770. On the death of Dean Milles in 1784, he was elected president of the society, which honourable situation he relinquished at the ensuing anniversary. During the short time Mr. King continued president, he was indefatigable in his exertions for the benefit of the society, having not only projected, but carried into effect, various salutary regulations, chiefly respecting its finances. Mr. King communicated several papers to the society, which are published in the *Archæologia*; the most important are those which contain his *Observations on Ancient Castles*. His more enlarged work upon this subject, being his principal antiquarian publication, displays much erudition and research; it is entitled *Munimenta Antiqua or Observations on Ancient Castles, including Remarks on the Whole Progress of Architecture in Great Britain*, in four volumes folio, the first of which was published in 1799, the last after his death. Mr. King had for several years a country seat at Beckenham, now the residence of his widow. He was buried in the church-yard at this place, where is a handsome monument of freestone to his memory, on which is placed a sarcophagus. On the sides are marble tablets, on one of which, at the west end is inscribed, "Sacred to the memory of Edward King Esq., who died April 16th, 1807, aged 72." On the tablet at the east end is inscribed the following quotation from Scripture, placed there at his own request: "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

CASTELLATED HOUSES: HADDON HOUSE

To the venerable castles succeeded the *Castellated Houses*: Mansions adorned with turrets and battlements; but utterly incapable of defence, except against a rude mob, armed with clubs and staves, on whom the gates might be shut; yet still mansions almost quite devoid of all real elegance or comfortable convenience, and fitted only to entertain an *herd of retainers*, wallowing in licentiousness. At the same time, however, they discover marks of economy and good management, which enabled their hospitable lords to support such rude revels, and to keep up their state, even better than many of their more refined successors.

Of these buildings, one of the most perfect and most curious, now remaining, is Haddon House, in Derbyshire, belonging to his Grace the Duke of Rutland: castellated and embattled, in all the apparent forms of regular defence; but yet really without the least means of resistance, even in its original construction.

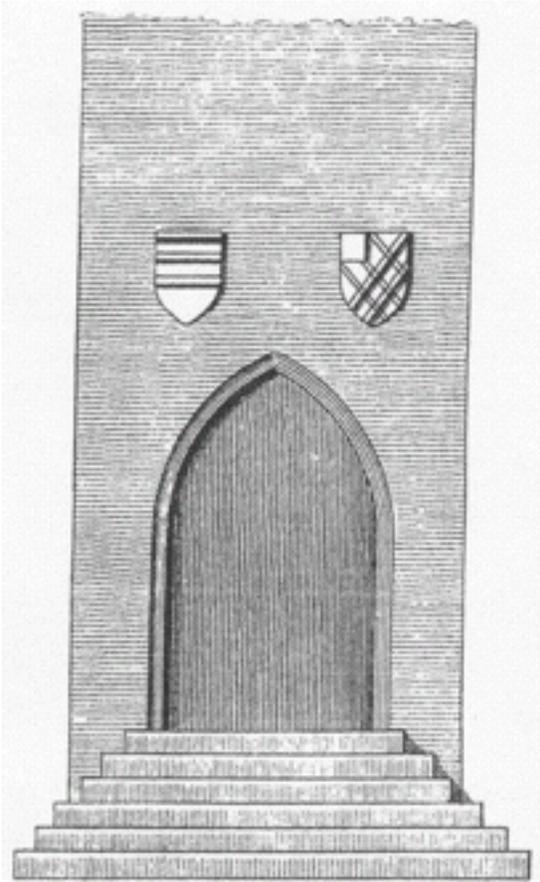
It was formerly the seat of the Vernons; who, Camden says, were not only an ancient, but a very famous family in those parts; insomuch that Sir George Vernon knight (living in Camden's time) for his magnificence, for his kind reception of all good men, and for his great hospitality, gained the name of *King of Peak*, among the vulgar. By his second daughter, *Dorothy*, married in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, to Sir John Manners, second son of Thomas the first Earl of Rutland, the great inheritance of this family came into that of *Manners*; and, in 1641, was at last united with the [Rutland] Earldom.

The high turrets of this mansion stand proudly towering on a rock, in the midst of thick woods, and in a most beautiful situation, looking down upon the river *Wye*, which winds along the valley, at a great depth beneath. It has undergone fewer alterations, and retains more curious vestiges of the residence of an old English Baron, and exhibits more manifest indications of the ancient mode of life, than any building I ever saw.

At the first approach, you ascend a steep hill, which an horse can hardly climb, and which continues quite to the great arched gate-way that forms the entrance; this is directly under an high tower, and seems originally to have had double gates.

From hence you pass into a large square court, entirely surrounded by the apartments, and paved with flat stones; but you ascend it, at the corner, by a flight of angular steps, just within the gate, in such a manner, that it is impossible to have admittance otherwise than on foot; and no horse or carriage could ever approach the door of the house.

After crossing this court, you come to a second flight of steps; which lead up directly to the great porch, under a small tower, on passing through which; you find yourself, behind the screen of the great [banqueting] hall. A room, that most undoubtedly was originally considered as the only *public dining room*, for the lord and his guests; and indeed (after them), for the whole family: for, in tracing the ancient apartments, there appears manifestly to have been none beside of sufficient magnitude for either the one purpose or the other.



The door of the great porch, leading into the hall; with two shields of arms over it, carved in stone. The one containing those of Vernon (which are *fretty*), and the other those of Fulco de Pembridge, Lord of Tong in Shropshire, whose daughter and heiress Isabel married Sir Richard Vernon, and brought a great additional estate into the family; these properly, are *Barry of six, Or and Azure*.

The provision made, in the adjoining offices, for the convenience, and attendance, of the several servants of the household, is very curious. On the left hand of the great door of entrance, directly behind the hall screen, are four large door ways, with high pointed arches; extending in a row, the whole breadth of the hall; and facing the upper end.

The first of these, still retains its ancient door of strong oak; with a little *wicket* in the middle, just big enough to put a trencher in or out; and was clearly the butler's station: for the room within it still retains, a vast old chest of oak, with divisions for bread; a large old cupboard, for cheese; and a number of shelves, for butter.

Besides, out of this apartment (which is itself spacious, and separate from all the rest of the house); is a passage, down steps, to a large vaulted room, arched with stone, and supported by pillars, like the crypt of a church; which, though very light and airy, was cool, and manifestly designed for the beer cellar; there being still remains of a raised, low benching, of stonework all around, sufficient to hold a prodigious number of casks; and a neat stone drain, all along before it, underneath, to carry away any droppings.

Through this great arched room, is also another passage, to what was obviously the brew-house, and bake-house; where are remains of the places for vast coppers, coolers, and ovens.

Near adjoining are store-rooms for corn and malt; and a communication, from thence, with the outside of the building, for bringing in of stores. But in all other respects, this whole suite of offices was quite unconnected with the other offices; and had no kind of communication either with them, or with the rest of the mansion, except by the door of entrance, near the hall, in which is the little wicket.

The second pointed arch, next to the buttery, and facing the hall in like manner, is the entrance of a long narrow passage, leading with a continued descent, to the great kitchen; and having, in the mid-way, an half-door, or *hatch*, with a broad shelf on the top of it, whereupon to place dishes; to which, and no further, the servants in waiting were to have access.

In the kitchen, are still remaining two vast fire places, with irons for a prodigious number of spits; stoves; great double ranges of dressers; large chopping blocks; and a massy wooden table, hollowed out into a sort of basins, by way of kneading troughs for pastry. In the floor are several great iron rings, by which large stones were lifted up, that gave entrance to the drains. And adjoining the kitchen, are numerous apartments (far more than I am able to specify with sufficient accuracy in the plan), by way of larders &c; all kept as distinctly annexed to this part of the offices, as those belonging to the buttery were to it.

The next (being the third of the great pointed arches, behind the screen, at the bottom of the hall), opens merely into one very small, vaulted room, unconnected with any other; that was clearly the wine cellar: which (according to the frugality and ideas of early times, when wine was considered mostly as a cordial, and dram), needed to be but small.

The fourth great arch is at the bottom of a great steep stair-case, quite distinct from the grand stair-case of the house; and leading up to a prodigious variety of small apartments; which, both from their number and situation, seem to have been designed for the reception of guests, and numerous retainers: there being others, of a still inferior sort, in the rest of the house, for servants; especially in the range of building opposite to the great door of the hall.

Such was the use of these four great arches behind the hall screen. And, if it may be allowed to indulge a little extent of imagination, we may with great propriety conceive, that they were the stations of the Butler, the Clerk of the kitchen, the Cellarer, and the Chamberlain or Steward of the household, of this great family.

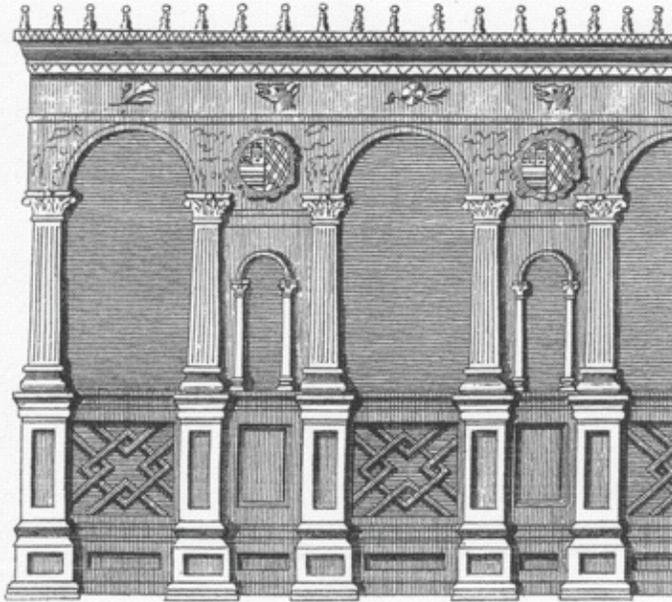
The provision for the officers and attendants being so great, we shall yet find here, as in all very ancient mansions, that the apartments of the Lord of the castle (or what we should now call the state apartments) were very few in number, and little adequate to the rest, according to our modern and more refined ideas. The great hall of entrance, just described, was the only large apartment for dining. At the upper end remains the raised floor, where the table for the lord and his principal guests was placed: and along all one side of the hall, and also over the screen at the lower end, is a gallery, supported by pillars; from whence (when the lord and his company had retired to the apartments above, and the inferior part of the family supplied their places), the courtly guests and their hospitable hosts occasionally beheld the revels; and might survey the jovial crew below; who according to the old distich [two line verse]:

Made it merry in the hall,  
When beards wagged all.

From this great hall, at the upper end, in the corner, on the left hand, are two passages: one opening upon the terraces in the garden, inviting the guests to refresh themselves; and the other leading to the grand staircase, and the principal apartments above.

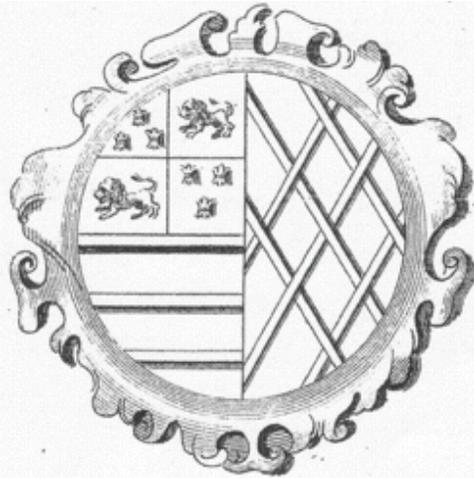
This staircase is formed of large blocks of stone; which can hardly be said to be either jointed, or joined; and from the top of it, on the right, you enter what we should now call a drawing room, hung with arras, and having a large bow window as the only light to it, at one corner; and a little door, at another, behind the arras, leading into the gallery just mentioned, which goes round two sides of the hall. This room however (whatever name we might now give it) was called the *dining room*, and probably had that appellation, because the Lord of the Mansion did, even originally, on some particular occasions, *here* entertain a few of his Visitors of high dignity and rank; and because afterwards, in latter ages, it became more commonly appropriated to that purpose, when a greater distinction was ordinarily made between the guests.

On the left of the passage, at the head of the great stairs, you ascend again by five or six enormous semicircular steps (framed of solid masses of timber, as ill joined as the stone steps) to a fine long gallery, 110 feet in length, and 17 [feet] in width; which is now all wainscotted, in a curious manner, with fine oak, the frieze being adorned with *boars heads, thistles, and roses*. This wainscoting, though modern in comparison of the Antiquity of the house, is yet become, in these days, very-ancient; and conveys an excellent idea of the magnificence of the intermediate ages. There is a great square recess, in the midst of the gallery, of 15 feet by 12; besides several great bow windows: and the whole puts one very much in mind of the galleries, in the old palaces in France, so often mentioned by Sully, and the French historians.



The design of the old wainscoting of oak, in the long gallery. The arms and devices of which, prove that it was put up *after* the house came into the possession of Sir John Manners; and before the title of Earl of Rutland descended to that branch of the family.

An enlarged view of the arms are shown on the next page.



Enlarged view of the arms shown on the wainscoting of the long gallery on the previous page.

From this gallery, towards the further end, is a short passage, with an ascent of four or five awkward steps, leading to what might be called *my lord's parlour*; it having been obviously a sort of private apartment, destined to his use; from whence is a passage, behind the arras, through large, ill-framed folding doors, to a flight of stone steps [Dorothy Vernon's Steps], that lead down to the chief terrace in the garden. The frieze and cornice of this room are stately, but very rude; formed of plaster, and adorned with peacocks, and boars heads, alternately.

From this room you pass forward into a second; which seems, from its ornaments, and the whole disposition of it, to have been originally a sort of private dining room; or keeping room; but it was not large enough to entertain a number of guests. It may possibly, however, in latter ages, have been used as a bed chamber: and therefore I will not presume to decide any thing positively with regard to it. The frieze of this, like the former, is of plaster, not deserving the name of stucco; and is adorned with coats of arms, and with the two crests, peacocks and boars heads: and over the chimney, by way of ornament, is an enormous large bas-relief, of the same clumsy composition, representing Orpheus charming the beasts.

Through this room is one other, which seems to have been a bed chamber; out of which is a small winding staircase, in a turret, going up to the garrets, and down to the ground.

All these rooms, except the [long] gallery, were hung with loose arras, a great part of which still remains: and the doors were concealed, every where, behind the hangings; so that the tapestry was to be lifted up, to pass in or out; only for convenience, there were great iron hooks (many of which are still in their places), by means whereof it might occasionally be held back. The doors being thus concealed, nothing can be conceived more ill fashioned than their workmanship: few of them sit at all close; and wooden bolts, rude bars, and iron hasps, are in general their best and only fastenings.

Besides the [long] gallery, the dining room, and these three apartments, there were only *two* others; and those but small ones; which could be said to belong at all to the principal suite. These two were entered, through a sort of closet, at the further corner of the dining room (or *drawing room*), and at the end of the furthest of them was a flight of narrow, steep, stone steps, leading down into the great court, near a low arched vault that forms the entrance to the chapel.

One of these apartments, however, is very remarkable; having an odd cornice, with a deep quadruple frieze, three or four feet in depth, if not more, formed of plaster, and adorned with a running foliage of leaves and flowers, in four compartments, like bands, or fillets, one above another. The room is hung with arras, as the others are; but, from a quaint sort of neatness, appearing in the whole of it, more than in them, I am much inclined to call it *my lady's chamber*. There is, *behind the tapestry*, the door I mentioned, leading to the steep flight of narrow steps, which descend into the great court, not far from the arch belonging to the chapel, and which gave her an opportunity of going thither, rather a nearer way than the rest of the family, and without crossing so much of the great court.

All the rest of this great pile of building (containing another large square court, besides that we have been speaking of) is filled with small, trifling apartments, not one of which deserves description; but which form a labyrinth, almost as inextricable as that of Crete; and which could be of no use, but to lodge a vast *host* of dependants, retainers, and servants.

Come we now to the Chapel, which is not less curious than the rest. Its entrance is from the first great court, under a low, sharp-pointed arch, looking more like the entrance of a cellar than that of a place of worship, and leading to a sort of ante-chapel, very low in height, and that has not a much better appearance. To this was no approach by any covered passage; nor was there any such approach to any gallery in it; no not even for the lord or lady; but, according to the rough hardiness of the times, and climate, they were all to trudge, in fair weather or foul, through the open court; only the lady had, as just described, a nearer way of going than the rest.

The chapel itself, has, at the entrance, two side aisles, divided from the body by pillars and pointed arches, like a church: and in one of them are many long oaken benches, for the domestics; the other side aisle being taken up, with the pulpit, the desk, the ancient organ loft, and the stairs leading to them. The organ is now removed; but the wainscotting of the loft, all edged with burnished gold, like that of the pulpit, and desk, and seats for the family, still remain. (Note: I call it the organ; but most probably it was rather originally here what should properly be called *a pair of Rigols, or Regals.*)

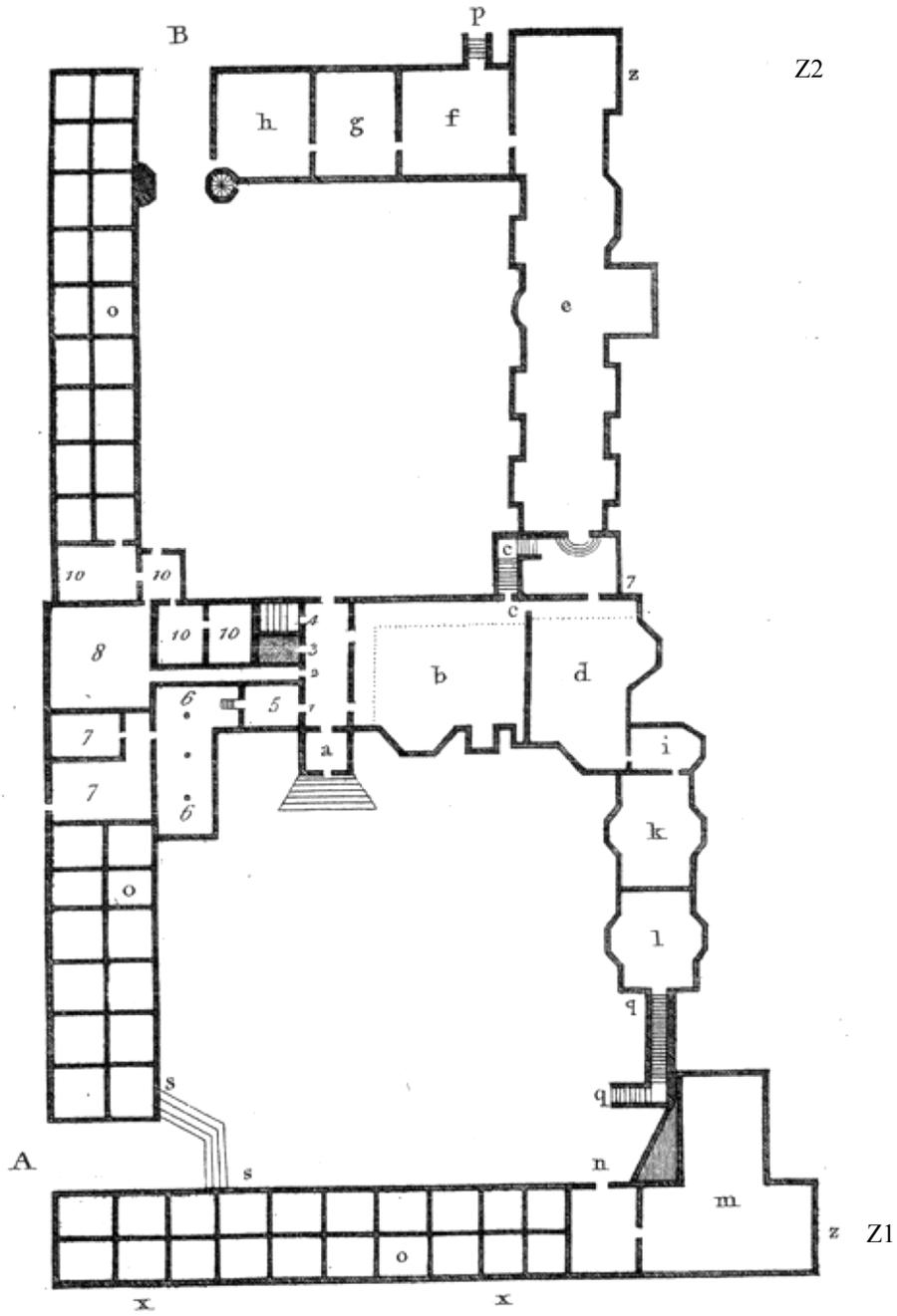
These seats for the family, consisted of two large high pews, on each side the body of the chapel, reaching from the middle nearly as far as the altar; and were large enough to hold many guests. In the great windows, over the altar, and on each side, are some good remains of painted glass. And in this chapel (which I never saw in any private chapel before) is an old stone *Font*, indicating the numerous tribe of dependants once here resident; and inducing one to conclude, that the extraordinary privilege of having the solemn rite of baptism administered, was for special reasons indulged, by the ordinary, in very early times, to this private chapel. There remains also a niche, and basin for holy water, by the side of the altar. (Note: The rite of administering baptism, was esteemed so sacred by the ancient Ritual, that it was, together with that of burial, the distinctive mark, in general, of a Church fully consecrated: insomuch that lord Coke informs us that when the question at law was, whether such a sacred building were a *church*, or a *chapel* belonging to the mother church; *the issue* to be tried was, merely whether it had a *font*, and burying place; for if it had the administration of sacraments, and sepulture, it was judged in law *a church.*)

I have already observed, that this great house contains two large courts. Both of them are embattled, and surrounded with many turrets, and projecting bows: and they have a communication with each other, by means of the passage behind the hall screen. The second court has also another great arched gateway, as well as the first; but not much less difficult of access to any carriage or beast.

Having hitherto carefully forbore to refer to any plan, to avoid as much as possible all perplexity and interruption, in the description of this curious remain of antiquity; I shall now, in order to be better understood, subjoin the best I can devise, to illustrate what has been said. It is not indeed quite so exact as I could wish, being drawn only from the eye, and in some degree from memory; but is particular enough, in all the most material parts, to convey a true idea of the whole design, and arrangement of this ancient structure. And although the measures of the several rooms are not perfectly true, yet they are near enough to the real proportions, in all the principal apartments, to answer to the appearance which they make.

As to the others (which, as I before observed, form a perfect labyrinth), they are by far too numerous, too perplexed, and too small, to afford an opportunity of making any exact plan, without such vast labour bestowed, as would be to little purpose; since, after all, no useful information could be derived from a more perfect knowledge of their awkward confused proportions and disposition. On this account therefore, I have moreover, in order to illustrate, with the less trouble, what has been said, in one and the same plan, in some parts (which will be sufficiently distinguished), confined the representation to the apartments *on the ground*; and in others, to *those above*; knowing there can be no loss of information, in consequence of my so doing; for those left undescribed, either above or below, are such little nests of rooms, as not to be worth the least notice. [Plan is on the next page.]

- A** Shows the place of the great arched gate way, under an high tower; forming the first entrance; on the brow of a steep hill.
- ss** The angular steps, at the corner; by which you ascend into the great court.
- a** The second flight of steps, and the porch of the house, under another tower.
- b** The great [banqueting] hall; having no rooms either above it, or underneath. The dotted line represents the situation of the gallery, and screen: and at the lower end, are the four great pointed stone arches, marked **1**, **2**, **3**, and **4**.
- 1** Leads to the buttery **5**, having a door with a small wicket window.
- 66** Is the great cellar.
- 77** The offices for brewing and baking.
- 2** Leads to the great kitchen at **8**. **10-10-10-10** are offices belonging to it; but having more divisions than can be here represented.
- 3** Leads to the small insulated wine cellar.
- Note All these Apartments are either upon the ground, or partly under it; and above them are the numerous small rooms for retainers, to which the staircase leads from the great arch at **4**, and of which it would be almost impossible to give any plan.
- Note At the other end of the great hall, near the corner, at **c**, are the principal stairs, leading to the grand apartments; just by the entrance to which, is a passage leading straight forwards to the terrace **zz**. On ascending this staircase on the right hand, is the Dining room **d**; (or, as we should now call it, the drawing room); having only one bow window in a corner.
- e** On the left hand, is the Great [Long] Gallery.
- f** The parlour : from whence is a short flight of steps, down to the terrace, at **p**.
- g** The second private apartment, which may have been used, in different ages, for various purposes; and **h** was another chamber.



- Note** Rooms **e**, **f**, **g**, **h**, are ascended to by the great stairs; but have no chambers over them, except mere garrets in the roof; nor any apartments, except vaults, under them, on account of the continual and quick rising of the hill, from **Z1** to **Z2**.
- i** A closet, out of the dining room.
- k & l** Are what I call the Lady's apartments; from whence is the steep stair-case, at **q**, near the arch leading to the chapel at **n**.
- m** Shows the situation of the chapel.
- o-o-o** A number of offices, and small rooms; to which there are various distinct stair-cases from the court.
- B** The great arched gate way, belonging to the second court.
- Note** The ancient garden of this great house is but small; consisting entirely of terraces, placed one above another: each having a sort of stone balustrade. At the end of one of these terraces is an arbour; upon another a sort of small bowling-green; and from the lowermost, which runs along the side of the house, **xx**, is a steep descent, of some hundred steps, down to the river. The highest terrace runs from **z** exactly parallel with the lowest.
- Note** There was another great bowling green, far above the house, at a distance in the park; and a third still more modern one, has been formed, higher up the hill, supported by walls, built round it, like a sort of hanging garden, and having a large summer-house adjoining: but neither of these are worth giving any particular account of. The prospect from thence is indeed fine: but they have nothing to recommend them as objects of attention to the curious, in any other respect. The great park that belonged to this house has been destroyed, and the land has been ploughed up, within these twelve years.

Such was Haddon house, with its environs. And much it is to be wished, by every lover of antiquities, that this princely habitation may never come so far into favor, as to be modernized: lest the traces of ancient times and manners, which are now so rarely preserved in this country, any where, should be utterly lost also here.

Nothing can convey a more complete idea of ancient modes of living, than is to be obtained on this spot. Many great dwellings, which formerly helped to preserve the same ideas, are now quite razed, and gone: and others are only heaps of ruins; so far maimed, that it requires much attention to make out or comprehend, what they once in any degree were, or to understand any thing of their original plan.