

LITTLE CROSBY VILLAGE CROSS AND WELL, 1821.

(From a drawing by *Edw. Jones.*)

## TRANSACTIONS.

### CROSBY HALL, LANCASHIRE.

By F. H. Cheetham, F.S.A.

Read 15 March, 1928.

CROSBY HALL, the seat of F. N. Blundell, Esquire, is situated at the south end of the township of Little Crosby, about two miles from the sea-coast, seven miles N.N.W. from Liverpool Town Hall, and the same distance south-west of Ormskirk. Little Crosby is one of the ten townships of the ancient parish of Sefton, forming with Great Crosby and Litherland farther south its western, or coast boundary. The Hall is two miles west of the parish church, but there was a chapel at Great Crosby, a mile away, the origin of which is unknown.<sup>1</sup> The house stands in a well-wooded park of irregular shape, about 2½ miles in circumference, but is not anywhere visible from the road or the surrounding country. The park is bounded on the west by the Liverpool to Southport road, along which the village of Little Crosby lies, and at its north end is the Roman Catholic church of St. Mary erected in 1847.

Several papers<sup>2</sup> dealing with the Blundells of Crosby,

<sup>1</sup> It is mentioned as a place of pilgrimage in 1532; *V.C.H. Lancs.*, iii, 94, quoting *Duchy Pleadings (Record Soc. Lancs. & Ches.*, 35, 4): "From its name it may be supposed that there had been a chapel at Great Crosby from an early time."

<sup>2</sup> *Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches.* (a) 31, 33. "A Century of Recusancy," by Rev. T. Ellison Gibson. Two papers read 20 March and 17 April, 1879; (b) 33, 1, "Some Old Country Sports," by the same. Read 2 December, 1880; (c) 36, 33, "Lancashire Mortuary Letters," 1666-72, by the same. Read 22 January, 1883. (Four letters from William Blundell, The Cavalier, to Laurence Ireland); (d) 43, 103, "Court Rolls of the Manor of Little Crosby," by

based on the MS. Note Books,<sup>1</sup> preserved at the Hall, have appeared in the *Transactions* of this Society, but as far as I am aware no attempt has been made, here or elsewhere, to describe the house or to disentangle its architectural history.<sup>2</sup> To try to do this is the object of the present paper.

The Blundells having been seated at Little Crosby from very remote times,<sup>3</sup> they must necessarily have had some kind of a dwelling-house there; but the earliest date on the present building is 1576, though it is doubtful whether any part of the fabric is so old. The general appearance of the house is that of an eighteenth-century building, added to and modernised in the succeeding century, though, as will be shown later, the main part of the structure is of seventeenth-century date, and some portion of the earlier house may possibly be incorporated in the north wing.<sup>4</sup> It is, however, probably by reason of its rather uninteresting appearance architecturally that

Augustine Watts. Read 22 January, 1891 (Court Roll of the Manor, 1628; Roll of the Court Baron, 1634); (e) 66, 261, "The Will of Nicholas Blundell," 1736, from the enrolment on the Close Roll of 7 George III. Some of the documents printed in the first of these papers were included in the volume of *Crosby Records* published by the *Chetham Society* (12 N.S.) in 1887. (f) A woodcut in Vol. 7, 179, shows "A West Prospect of Great Crosby" in 1716, from a painted plaque in Liverpool Delft Ware, now in the Liverpool Museum. But the prospect does not embrace Crosby Hall.

<sup>1</sup> The Note Books are those of (a) William Blundell, Popish recusant (1560-1638); (b) William Blundell (1620-98), grandson of the preceding, known as "The Cavalier"; (c) Nicholas Blundell (1669-1737), grandson of the Cavalier, whose Diary extends from 1702 to 1728, no single day having been left unnoticed. There are also ten to twelve volumes of diaries of William Blundell (d. 1854), and some twenty years of diaries of Colonel Nicholas Blundell (d. 1894). From the first three have been printed: (a) *Crosby Records: a Chapter of Lancashire Recusancy*, edited by Rev. T. Ellison Gibson (*Chetham Soc.*, 12 N.S., 1887); (b) *A Cavalier's Note Book, being Notes, Anecdotes and Observations of William Blundell*, edited by Rev. T. Ellison Gibson (Longmans, 1880); (c) *Blundell's Diary, comprising Selections from the Diary of Nicholas Blundell*, edited by Rev. T. Ellison Gibson (Liverpool, 1895).

<sup>2</sup> Two drawings, one of the heraldic panel in the front gable, and the other of the earliest dated stone, are however given in *Trans.*, 60, 157, drawn by W. F. Price, with notes by J. Paul Rylands, F.S.A., and the artist.

<sup>3</sup> Introduction to *Cavalier's Note Book*, 2. It is, of course, unnecessary to give any account of the family here.

<sup>4</sup> But see *infra*, p. 14.

Crosby Hall has hitherto received so little attention at the hands of local historians and descriptive writers.

The plan of the building and the various views from drawings and photographs here reproduced make a lengthy description of the appearance of the house unnecessary, but it may be stated that the principal front faces north-west<sup>1</sup> and has a total length of about 140 feet. Of this about 60 feet belongs to the middle block, or principal part of the house, the north wing being about 50 feet long, and the dining-room at the south end about 30 feet. The south-east, or garden front, is more broken in outline, and both elevations are much modernised. The dates of the nineteenth-century alterations and additions are given below.

The architectural history of the house is not easy to unravel and must unfortunately be based chiefly on the evidence of the building itself, supplemented by that of a certain number of old drawings and some more or less casual references in the three printed volumes of Crosby Records named above. It has not been found possible to examine carefully the original Diaries,<sup>2</sup> and further investigation may eventually bring to light fresh evidence necessitating a revision of some of the opinions put forward in this paper.

Before proceeding to discuss the problems presented by the fabric and the drawings it may be well to set down briefly what previous writers have said of Crosby Hall, or to note their silence.

Nothing is said about the house in Britton's *Lancashire* (1807), in Gregson's *Portfolio of Fragments* (1817), or in Baines's *History of Lancashire* (1836).

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter called the west front.

<sup>2</sup> In an early prospectus of *Blundell's Diary*, dated 4 November, 1881, it is stated that the editor "has omitted everything relating to household economics and the management of property." As printed the Diary is reduced to about one-sixth of the original. *A Cavalier's Note Book* also is not printed in full, but I have been enabled to make some further extracts.

In Twycross's *Mansions of England and Wales* (1847) is a view of Crosby Hall from the south-west, drawn and lithographed by C. J. Greenwood, with description as follows :

Crosby Hall is situated in the parish of Sefton, about 8 miles to the north of Liverpool. This mansion, which is the seat of William Blundell, esquire, stands near the sea-coast, but it is well sheltered. The grounds are laid out with great taste and are remarkable for the luxuriancy of fine laurel.<sup>1</sup>

In Mannex's *History, Topography and Directory for Mid-Lancashire* (1854), Crosby Hall, the residence of William Blundell, esquire, is described as

A pleasant mansion erected by his ancestors about the year 1500, since which time it has been several times enlarged and beautified, one portion bearing the date 1647 (*sic*). The hall stands in a finely wooded park of considerable extent.<sup>2</sup>

In Harland's edition of Baines's *Lancashire* (1870) a paragraph about the house is added, reading "Crosby Hall, built at a bad period of domestic architecture does not present any features worthy of note."

This paragraph is retained in Croston's edition of Baines (1893) with the emendation "Crosby Hall, a square stone building. . ."

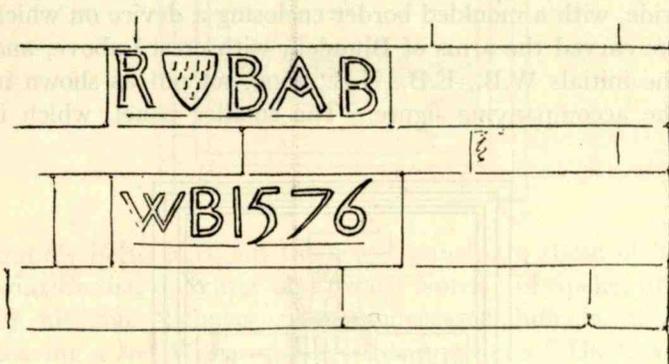
There is no description of the house in the *Victoria History of Lancashire*, vol. iii (1907).

The fewness and brevity of these references are sufficient indication of the small amount of attention that Crosby Hall has hitherto attracted, and it is to be regretted that Mannex, the one writer who ventured to assign a date to the building, did so apparently quite at random. He blundered, moreover, in stating that the date 1647 occurs on the house.

<sup>1</sup> Edward Twycross, *Mansions of England and Wales, Lancashire*, iii, 39. A paragraph about the manor of Little Crosby and its descent to the Blundells, with pedigree of the family, follows the description. The view shows the house the same as in 1821.

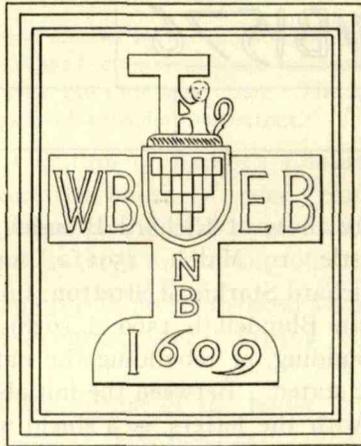
<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*, 658.

Of the several dated and inscribed stones, or panels which are found on different parts of the building, the earliest are two on the west front, high up on the face of the northern projecting portion of the middle block; on them are three sets of initials and the date 1576 set out thus—



The initials are those of Richard Blundell, who died in Lancaster Castle, 19 March, 1591/2, Anne his wife, daughter of Richard Starkie of Stretton, Co. Chester, and their son William Blundell (b. 1560, d. 1638), and probably record some building, or rebuilding the nature of which cannot now be stated. Between the initials R.B., and of height equal with the letters, is a shield with the Blundell arms (sable, ten billets, 4, 3, 2, 1 argent). In their present position these two stones—which may have originally formed a single panel—are separated by a course of ashlar and are themselves fashioned so as to range with the courses in which they are set. This portion of the house, as we shall see later, appears to have been largely refaced in ashlar in the eighteenth century and the projecting ends added. It would therefore seem that the 1576 panel was then moved from some other part of the building and cut into two pieces, which were set up in the position they still occupy.

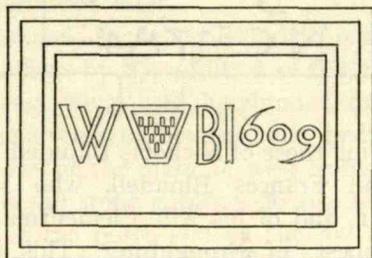
Next in chronological order are two separate heraldic panels, both dated 1609, but differing considerably in size and shape. The larger of these is situated on the return (north) end of the north-west wing above the window of the servants' hall at a considerable height above the ground. The panel is 3 feet 1 inch high by 2 feet 6 inches wide, with a moulded border enclosing a device on which are carved the arms of Blundell, with crest<sup>1</sup> above, and the initials W.B., E.B., N.B., 1609, set out as shown in the accompanying figure. The smaller panel, which is



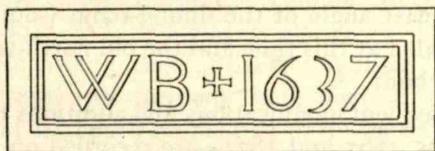
2 feet 6 inches long by 1 foot 9 inches high, is on the east, or garden front of the house, 9 feet 6 inches above the ground, on the outer wall of the kitchen; it has also a moulded border, but bears only the initials and date W.B. 1609, together with the Blundell arms, in a straightsided shield. The W.B. of both these panels was the William Blundell (1560-1638) whose

<sup>1</sup> A demi-lion rampant sable, supporting between his paws a cross tau erect argent. The device on which the initials are carved is a form of cross tau.

initials occur after those of his parents on the earlier stone, and who secured grants of the sequestered two-thirds of the estates from James I about this time (1607-10). The



initials E.B., N.B., on the larger panel, are those of his wife Emilia, daughter of Edward Norris<sup>1</sup> of Speke, and of his son Nicholas, who predeceased him in 1631, leaving a son William, afterwards known as "The Cavalier." The initials of this same William Blundell, with the date 1637,<sup>2</sup> also occur on the stables, though from an



entry in *A Cavalier's Note Book*<sup>3</sup> it is almost certain that the present stables were not erected till later in the century, and were subsequently altered.

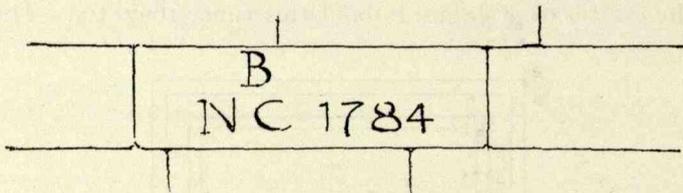
The initials of "The Cavalier" occur nowhere on the house or outbuildings.

<sup>1</sup> Son of Sir William Norris.

<sup>2</sup> This is the year before "The Cavalier" succeeded to the estates on the death of his grandfather. The panel is 3 feet long by 12 inches high and has a moulded border.

<sup>3</sup> See *infra*, p. 22.

Next in date on the house is a stone on the west front of the north-west wing<sup>1</sup> on which is incised



the initials being those of Nicholas Blundell, son of Henry Peppard<sup>2</sup> and Frances Blundell, who succeeded his father in 1771, and of his wife Clementina, daughter of Stephen Tempest, of Broughton.<sup>3</sup> This inscription is incised on one of the stones of the ashlar coursing, and seems to have been executed after the completion of the walling. In all probability it gives the date of the remodelling of the building and its alteration from a Jacobean gabled manor-house with mullioned windows to the Georgian mansion which has subsisted, with further modifications and additions, to the present day. The date 1784, with the same initials, occurs also on a spout head at the south-east angle of the dining-room (south) wing, which was added at this time and the old north-west wing apparently rebuilt.

Of the subsequent modifications and additions the dates of three—1815, 1867, and 1872—are recorded on different parts of the building.

The first of these, with the initials W<sup>C</sup>B. (for William Blundell<sup>4</sup> and Catharine Stanley, his wife) occurs on

<sup>1</sup> The inscription is between the first and second upper windows from the north end in the course of stones level with the sills of the windows.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Peppard married in 1733 Frances, younger daughter and eventually sole heiress of Nicholas Blundell, the diarist (d. 1737). Henry Peppard was in possession of the estates 1737-71: his son Nicholas took the name of Blundell, and died in 1795.

<sup>3</sup> She died in 1821.

<sup>4</sup> Son of Nicholas Blundell above named, whom he succeeded in 1795. He married Catharine, sister of Sir Thomas Stanley of Hooton, 9th Baronet, and died in 1854.

three spout heads at the north end of the house, and records the year in which considerable alterations were made to the building and new offices erected. These alterations, which included the formation of the present library, are described later.

In 1867 Colonel Nicholas Blundell remodelled and extended the offices by the addition of the existing three-storey north-east wing, and heightened the north-west wing by adding a series of men-servants' bedrooms lighted by three windows on the main, or west front, which break the roof with small stone gables; he also heightened the kitchen wing at the north end of the old east front by the addition of a storey, and erected the iron and glass porch and verandah to the central block, between its projecting ends. The new north-east wing has offices on the ground floor, with two series of bedrooms over and a bell-turret at the south-east angle. It bears a panel with the arms of Blundell impaling Smythe, and the initials M.B., A.M.B., 1867, for Nicholas Blundell and Agnes Mary Blundell his wife, daughter of Sir Edward Smythe, of Acton Burnell.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Nicholas Blundell died in 1894.

On the coming of age of his son William Joseph Blundell (b. 1851) the present ball-room, a single storey addition at the south-east corner of the house, was erected, the date of which (1872) is recorded on the spout heads.

No other dates or inscriptions occur on the house.

The earliest pictorial representation of the building is a pen-and-ink drawing entitled "Crosby Hall 1738," which, mounted on linen, has been inserted as a frontispiece to a MS. folio volume of William Blundell's (the Cavalier) Letters.<sup>2</sup> It was mounted after 1894, about which time Miss Josephine Blundell made from it the

<sup>1</sup> The initials N.B. and A.M.B. occur also on the two end bedroom gables of the heightened north-west wing, and the date 1867 on the spout heads.

<sup>2</sup> The volume is lettered on the spine "Letters 1672 to 1693."

woodcut which forms the frontispiece of *Blundell's Diary* (1895). In its present state the drawing measures  $12\frac{1}{4}$  inches by  $7\frac{5}{8}$  inches, but has been cut at one end. Whether it was actually made in 1738 is doubtful, the title and date being written at the bottom of the drawing, which itself is unsigned and undated. It may very well be a later copy of a drawing of 1738, now lost, but nothing seems to be known of its origin.

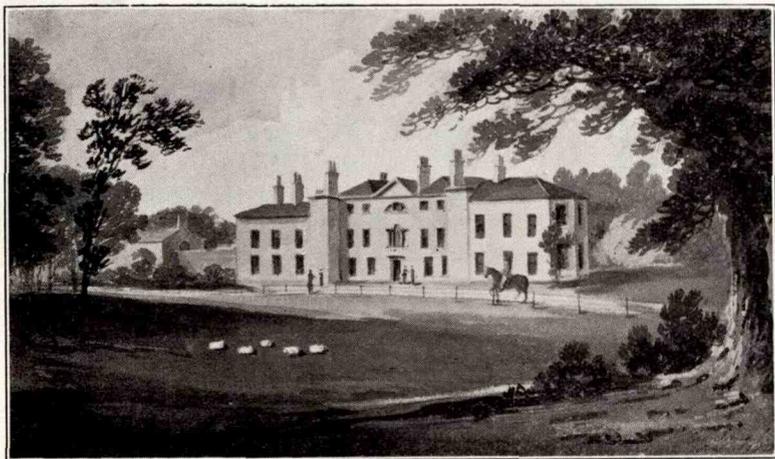
Of this or another similar drawing, there is what purports to be an "exact copy" inserted in a grangerised volume of Baines's *Lancashire* (1836), now in the possession of Mr. Godfrey W. Mathews, F.S.A. This is a line drawing on two pieces of paper pasted together, forming a sheet  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches by  $6\frac{3}{8}$  inches, made in December, 1812, by Michael Jones, brother of the Edward Jones whose drawing is next noticed and who was the original owner of the volume. Michael Jones evidently made this copy at Crosby Hall,<sup>1</sup> but whether the original from which he worked was the drawing described above now at the Hall is doubtful, for several features which occur in the latter, and in the woodcut, are omitted in Jones's "copy."

Before proceeding to describe in more detail the drawing of 1738, three other pictures of the house made during the early part of the nineteenth century should be mentioned.

Of these the earliest is a wash drawing in sepia, measuring 10 inches by 6 inches, by Edward Jones, dated 30 April, 1821, inserted in Mr. Mathews' copy of Baines and entitled "Little Crosby Hall, co. Lancashire, the seat of William Blundell, Esq." This is a careful drawing of the main front from the south-west, showing the return, or

<sup>1</sup> At the bottom is written in ink "Crosby Hall, Lancashire. Copied from a Drawing dated 1730. Michael Jones, Crosby, 2 Dec. 1812," and at the top of the sheet, in pencil, now very faint, "Exact copy of a Drawing old Crosby Hall dated 1730. Crosby, M.J." The date on the drawing now at the hall is 1738, but Jones may have misread the final numeral. Miss Josephine B undell read the date as 1736.

FIG. 1.

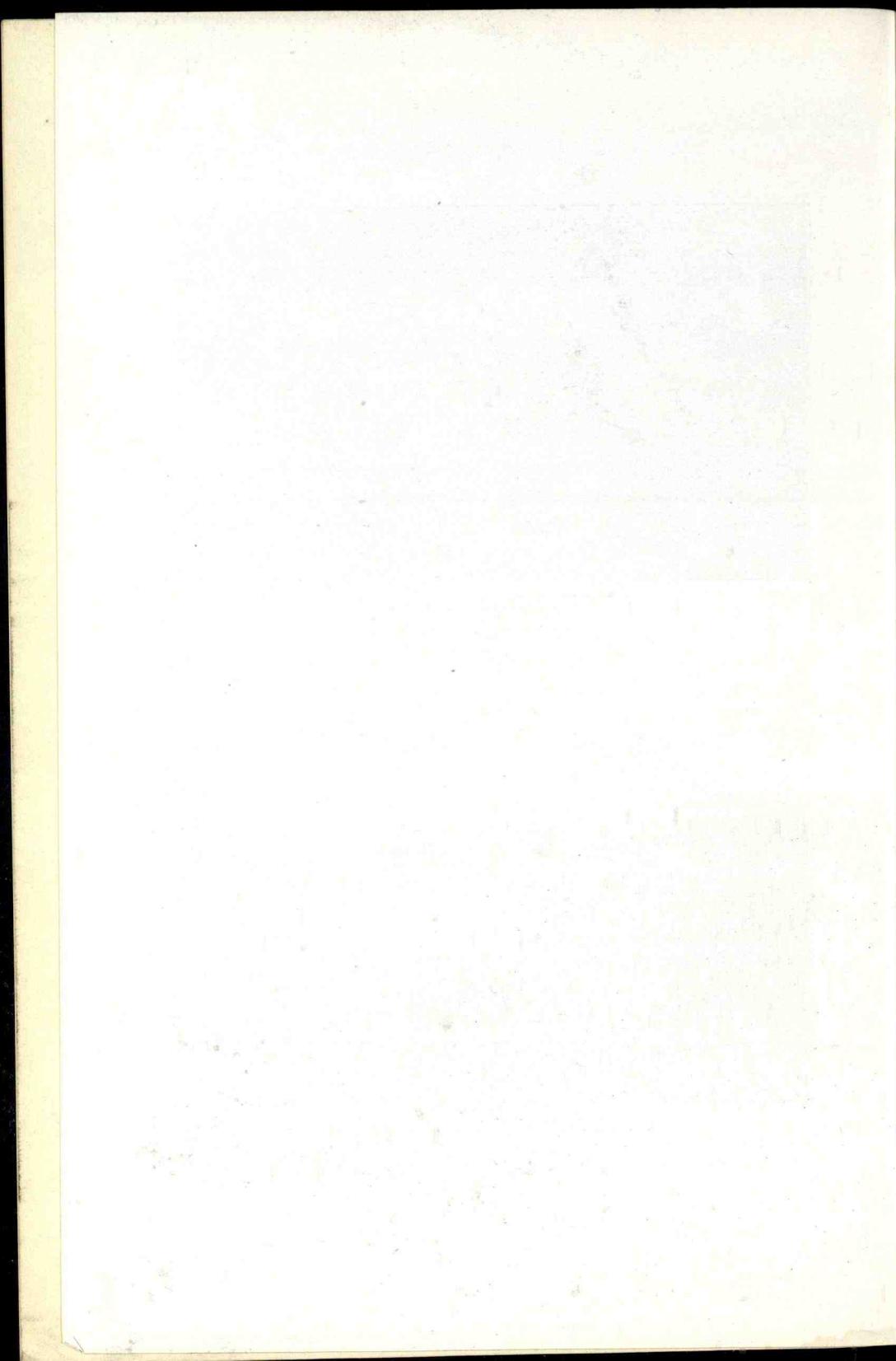


CROSBY HALL, 1821.  
(From a drawing by *Edw. Jones.*)

FIG. 2.



CROSBY HALL, E. FRONT, 1834.



south end of the dining-room wing with its great bow-window; there are trees and sheep in the foreground, and four standing figures and a man on horseback on the drive in front of the house.

The next is a pen-and-ink drawing of the same front from the north-west "taken by William Latham,<sup>1</sup> Nov. 6, 1824," now in the Latham Collection at the Public Reference Library, Manchester, which if not so good a "picture" as Jones's, being somewhat bare of foliage and accessories, is none the less valuable as a record of the appearance of the house before the Victorian alterations.<sup>2</sup>

The third drawing, also in Mr. Mathews's copy of Baines, is unsigned, but appears to be by either Edward or Michael Jones, probably the former. It is a wash drawing measuring  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches by 4 inches, dated 12 July, 1834, with the name "Crosby Hall" in the right-hand bottom corner. It shows the east, or garden front of the house, not very different from at present, but before the kitchen wing had been heightened and the north-east wing and ball-room built.

Comparison of these three early nineteenth-century drawings with the photographs of the house here reproduced will indicate better than a lengthy description the external character of the alterations and additions made to the building in 1867. It will be noted that in the 1834 drawing a small bell-turret is shown attached to the then two-storied kitchen wing.

The drawing of the Hall as it was in 1738 stands in a different category. It is a historical document of considerable value and provides architectural evidence of the highest importance. At first sight it appears to have little in common with the drawings made by the Joneses

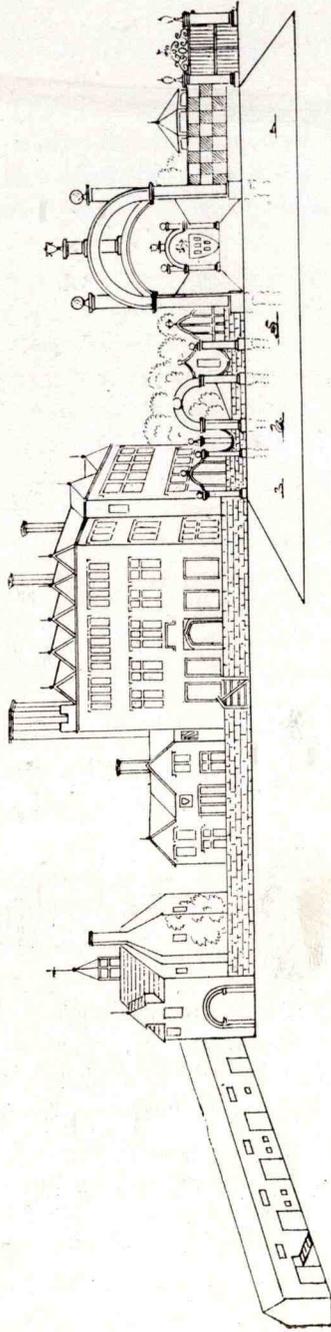
<sup>1</sup> For William Latham see Mr. C. R. Hand's paper on "Captain William Latham and the Calderstones" in *Transactions*, 67, 1. Latham died 19 July, 1826.

<sup>2</sup> The legend under Captain Latham's drawing is copied from the paragraph in Gregson's *Fragments* relating to the family of Blundell of Crosby.

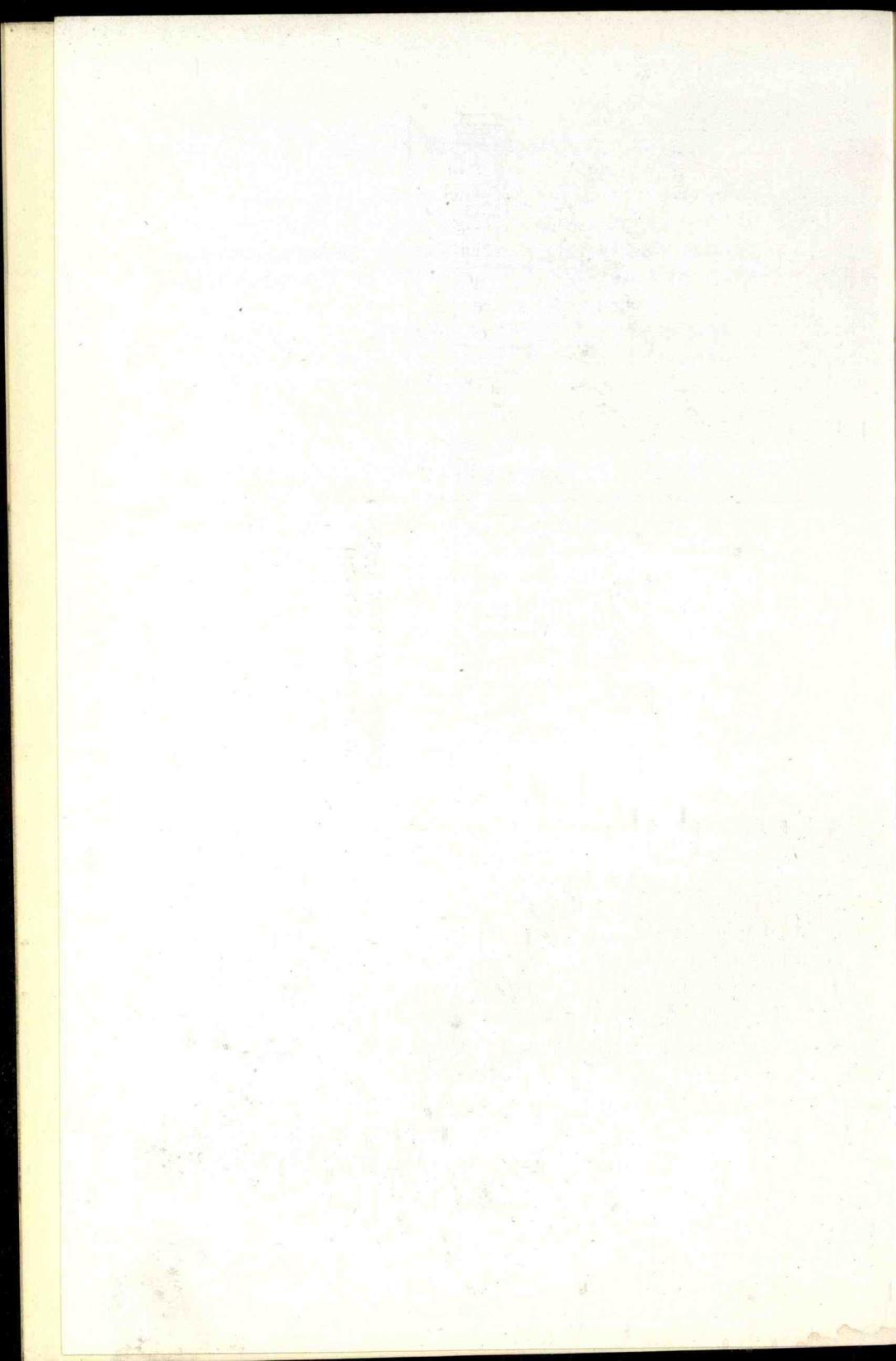
and Latham, but a closer examination shows quite clearly that the middle portion of the present building, with its cornice, pediment, lateral hipped roofs and sash windows, is none other than the many-gabled block of the early eighteenth-century drawing completely transformed. It is fortunate that somebody took the trouble to make a drawing of the house before 1784, for it seems pretty certain that in that year the building underwent alteration almost amounting to a rebuilding, in the course of which the older part, together with the gatehouse, was pulled down, and the seventeenth-century block modified so as to make it conform to the classic fashion of the day. By the alteration of windows and a change in the roofing from gables to hips and pediment a complete transformation was effected without the essential framework, or even the main lines of the structure being destroyed. The ground-floor windows, it would appear, had been altered before 1738.

The differences between Jones's "exact copy" and the drawing now at the Hall should first be noted. Apart from the difference in the matter of line and shading there are omissions in Jones's drawing which make it doubtful from what original he worked. In the drawing at the Hall the foreground of the picture is occupied by a coach and four, a man on horseback, and two walking figures, none of which appear in Jones's "copy," and he also omits the coat-of-arms and crest at the top of the sheet. On the other hand, Jones shows swans on the ornamental piece of water, or fishpond, which are not in the other drawing; and the end gable of the stable range, not included or cut off in the Hall drawing, is also shown. Whatever the explanation of these differences may be the claim that Jones's drawing is an "exact copy" of the other cannot be upheld. The question remains whether it was copied from some other drawing, now lost, from which the sketch in the Hall was also made.

FIG. 3.



CROSBY HALL IN 1738.  
(From a drawing made in 1834.)



In the main, however, the drawings are similar, and may be referred to as "the drawing of 1738." The house is shown from the south-west, with the gatehouse and stables at the north end, and the gardens at the south, fronting a small rectangular water-piece. The main portion of the building is a three-storey stone structure with five gables<sup>1</sup> on the principal, or west front, and two similar gables on a slightly advanced portion on the south side, the fenestration of which shows it to have been of two storeys only, ranging with the three elsewhere. The whole of this portion of the house has the appearance of a seventeenth-century building, but the actual period of its erection is not recorded: the dated stones already described, however, provide the basis for interesting speculations the nature of which is set out below.<sup>2</sup> The doorway is centrally placed, with two windows of equal height on each side, all apparently "modernised" by the removal of mullions and transoms. On the first floor are five transomed windows, the middle one over the doorway, of three lights, the others of two lights, whilst on the second or top floor are three long windows without transoms, of five and six lights, forming an almost continuous fenestration and suggesting something in the nature of a long gallery, as at Gawthorpe and Astley Hall. There is also a three-light window on each floor on the return wall at the south end.

Adjoining the main block and standing slightly in advance of it, but only about half its height, is a small two-storey gabled building, roughly of H type,<sup>3</sup> which appears to be at least a century older in date and which in all probability represents the original manor-house of Little Crosby, perhaps altered in the sixteenth century,

<sup>1</sup> The five gables do not extend the entire length of the front, stopping short of the north end, where the chimney causes a thickening of the wall, which here terminates in a short length of embattled parapet.

<sup>2</sup> *Infra*, pp. 17-22.

<sup>3</sup> The gabled ends, however, do not project on the west front.

to which the taller three-storey block was afterwards added. This building, whatever its date or origin, has disappeared, but its site is now occupied by the north-west wing, the outer (west) wall of which may have been built on the old foundation. Indeed, it was tempting to think that the existing north-west wing might incorporate some part of what I take to have been the oldest part of the house, the three windows more or less corresponding in position, but examination of the walling did not bear this out and I am somewhat reluctantly compelled to abandon the theory and assume that this low two-storey structure was pulled down sometime after 1738,<sup>1</sup> and rebuilt in its present form.<sup>2</sup> It had, however, evidently undergone some alteration before the drawing was made,<sup>3</sup> its doorway having been converted into a window of three lights, and the upper windows apparently modified.<sup>4</sup>

Opposite this presumably original part of the Hall stood the gatehouse, an imposing edifice of two storeys, with wide semicircular archway and chamber over, gable breaking the roof, large projecting chimney, and turret with weather vane. The gatehouse is mentioned more than once in Nicholas Blundell's Diary, but no vestige of it now remains. From it a low stone fence wall extended southward in front of the house, with a small wooden gate near its centre opposite the doorway of the main wing, the intervening space forming a kind of court.<sup>5</sup>

Beyond the gatehouse, to the left of the spectator, are shown the stables, in depicting which the draughtsman has taken certain liberties with the perspective so as to

<sup>1</sup> Probably when the house was remodelled in 1784.

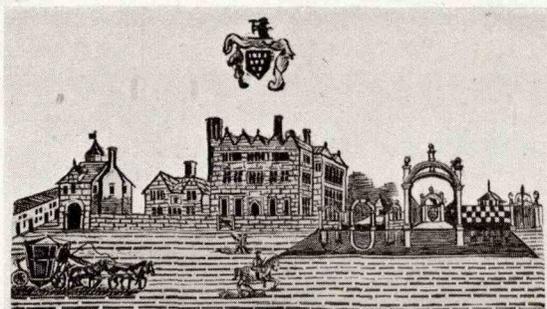
<sup>2</sup> That is to say, the form it retained till 1867.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps when the seventeenth-century addition was made, or later.

<sup>4</sup> Between the windows, above the doorway, was an armorial panel.

<sup>5</sup> "A strong walled court before the hall door" (1624): *Crosby Records* (*Chet. Soc.*, N.S. 12), 35.

FIG. 4.



CROSBY HALL, 1738.  
(From the woodcut by *Josephine Blundell*.)

FIG. 5.



*J. A. Waite*]

CROSBY HALL, W. FRONT.

[*Photo.*

1871

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

1871



bring them into the picture. The stables still stand to the north of the house, and are not very different in essentials from the building shown in the drawing.

The delineation of the gardens at the south end of the house is of exceptional interest, not merely because all vestige of this ornamental lay-out has disappeared, but on account of the light it sheds on two entries in Nicholas Blundell's Diary, the significance of which would otherwise not be plain. The main features of this garden lay-out are two large semicircular ornamental arches, one at each end of a long walk, or alley, which terminates in a large shield with the arms and crest of Blundell. There are smaller arches between the alley and the house, and on the other side a high wall with ornamental iron gate and gate-piers, behind which can be seen the roof of a summer-house. Fronting the garden, in the foreground of the picture, is the ornamental water-piece, or fishpond, already mentioned.

This lay-out at the south end of the house apparently dates from 1722, in which year Nicholas Blundell records :

*Jan. 23.* I helped John Voss to shape out my coat of arms with brick and to contrive how it is to be made at the higher end of the Gravel Walk.

*Feb. 10.* The punch bowl being fixed in the middle of the arch over my coat of arms and it and the two pine-apples being plastered, I gave the brickmen a drink upon the scaffold.

The great coat-of-arms seen in the drawing is no doubt that erected by Mr. Blundell at this time "at the higher end of the Gravel Walk," and the ornaments surmounting the arch are evidently meant to represent a punch-bowl and flanking pineapples.

Mr. Blundell further records on August 4, 1724, that "John Voce began to build the summer-house at the further corner of the new grounds," a position corresponding to that of the building shown in the drawing. The

summer-house was used for the first time on June 21, 1725.<sup>1</sup>

It is less easy to assign a date to any part of the house, neither *A Cavalier's Note Book* nor the eighteenth-century Diary affording anything in the nature of definite evidence. The Diary, indeed, covers a period (1702-28) when probably no structural additions or alterations of any importance were undertaken, Nicholas Blundell being apparently content to embellish the grounds. It was reserved for his grandson of the same name to make the striking changes which converted the house from a Jacobean to a Georgian dwelling, but by whom the Jacobean building was erected, and when, must, it is feared, remain a matter for speculation.

It is clear that work of some kind was carried out at the Hall by Richard Blundell in 1576, and by his son William thirty-three years later (1609), but unless, or until further documentary evidence comes to light anything more than a conjectural and tentative solution of the architectural problem is rendered impossible.

The date 1576 seems too early for the great three-storey gabled block shown in the 1738 drawing, though not impossible,<sup>2</sup> and it is more likely that it refers to some alteration to, or rebuilding of the older house which was subsequently destroyed or otherwise obliterated. The low two-storey wing of the drawing—what I have suggested was the old manor-house—has, on the other hand, the appearance of being rather older than 1576, though here again the question must be left an open one, the evidence of the eighteenth-century drawing being inconclusive.

The date 1609 would fit the main gabled block very

<sup>1</sup> "Parson Egerton, Parson Acton and his wife, Mr. Cottom, etc., dined here. After dinner we hansaled the new Summer House": *Blundell's Diary*, 207.

<sup>2</sup> Houghton Tower, a more purely Elizabethan building, dates in the main from 1562-5.

well from an architectural point of view,<sup>1</sup> and it is possible that it was erected in that year. It is not unlikely that the dated stone on the east side of the house is in its original position, and in the same portion of the building, on the upper floor of the south return of the old kitchen wing, is a small single-light window, apparently of the seventeenth century, which is the only architectural feature of that period now remaining in the fabric. It is unlikely that the larger 1609 panel, at the north end of the north-west wing, is in its original position.

But this type of massive stone gabled building subsisted throughout the seventeenth century,<sup>2</sup> and certain entries in *A Cavalier's Note Book*<sup>3</sup> would seem to imply that building of some nature was in progress, and indicate that considerable alterations and additions were made to the house between 1660 and 1667.

The first of these, dated 19 October, 1624, is before the time of the Cavalier and was probably copied by him from a memorandum of his grandfather's<sup>4</sup> steward or agent. It relates to the making of 160,000 bricks and was printed by Fr. Gibson "on account of its interest as regards the price of building material early in the seventeenth century. It points also," he added, "to the period when large additions were made to Crosby Hall, and when probably the older portions of the house were demolished."<sup>5</sup> That a considerable amount of building is implied by the making of such a large quantity of bricks goes without saying, always supposing that the bricks were actually made and that they were used at

<sup>1</sup> Gawthorpe Hall, near Padiham, was building in 1600-5; Hacking Hall, Billington, a solidly built gabled house of three storeys, in 1607; Clegg Hall, near Rochdale, another three-storey gabled stone house, was erected before 1622.

<sup>2</sup> Eyam Hall, Derbyshire, for example, dates from the latter half of the century, though it looks much older.

<sup>3</sup> The original is a small quarto book in the handwriting of William Blundell, the Cavalier.

<sup>4</sup> William Blundell, died 1638.

<sup>5</sup> *A Cavalier's Note Book*, p. 169.

Crosby Hall. There is, however, as far as I am aware, no statement of payment or any indication of how, or where the bricks were used. The memorandum is entitled "A speeche of bargain with Nichs. Hewett, brikeman, for the making of eight-schore thousand breekes," and reads as follows :

The claye must be feighed, upon my master's charges and a horse and carte fownde during the tyme of moulding ; a moulding boarde and three whyte barrows ; a bearing barrow and a bur-bette to keep water.

He must have 2s. 9d. for a thousand breeke. The breeke must be 10 in. long, 5 in. broade, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. thicke, which cometh to the sum of 22*l.* The payment of that he would have at three tymes viz. at the carting (which must be as soon as my master can be made ready for it) the sum of 5*l.* 10s. ; at the moulding 11*l.*, and at the burning 5*l.* 10s. Towards the burning there must be provided twenty tunne of coale and sixty tunne of slacke, ten loade of woode and three of turfe. He must have two beds found him, and housing fitting to lay his bed and dressing meat, and a cow grass during the tyme of moulding, which will be about Whitsuntide ; the tyme of burning must be abowte St. James' tide (July 25).<sup>1</sup>

The price of coal and slack, wood and turf, etc., not being stated the total cost of the bricks can only be surmised. If this bargain was concluded in October, 1624, there could be no beginning of building till late in the following summer, but no portion of the house bears the date 1625, and the only part where the elevation is of old brickwork is at the north end of the wing occupied by the offices (and bedrooms over) beyond the kitchen. The bricks here are approximately of the size mentioned, but they apparently belong to the 1815 reconstruction. There is no indication in the memorandum of the quality of these seventeenth-century bricks.

Coming to the Cavalier's own time we find him recording under the date 1661 :

<sup>1</sup> *A Cavalier's Note Book*, p. 168

No account was made by me by reason of my troubles upon my daughter Butler's<sup>1</sup> marriage this year, *ye building of my Hall dyning roome, staircase,*<sup>2</sup> etc and my going to London where I stayed 4 or 5 months upon my son Butler's occations.

And in a later note summarising the condition of his estate over a period of years, he writes :

So much of my Estate is decayed in y<sup>e</sup> space of 8 years, viz. from August 1659 to August 1667. Within w<sup>h</sup> tyme I have educated 7 of my children beyond y<sup>e</sup> seas, some of w<sup>h</sup> are there preferred. *I have made a large addition to my house in Building,* I have marled a considerable quantity of ground.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately no details of this large addition to the house, nor any particulars as to its cost are given. We are therefore left to surmise what the nature of the work was, and whether or not it consisted of the great gabled block. In the absence of other evidence it is impossible to arrive at a definite conclusion, but although a date about 1660-3 might well be considered for the major portion of the seventeenth-century house, I am inclined (for reasons given below) to believe that it was erected rather earlier and that the work done after the Restoration was an addition to it.

There is also a note of the Cavalier's made sometime in 1660, which reads as follows :

A mason will commonly demand for the getting, working and setting of such window-work as that in *my new building*, about 6*d.* the foot. How great their gain will be, we may judge by this. Daniel Sefton (as his prentice told me), doth work upon one day 12 feet of stanchions<sup>4</sup> for those windows, and that in November. It is true that it is the easiest sort of work in my windows, but the said prentice at the same time of the year did work, as he told me, 5 feet of jambs upon one day. And his

<sup>1</sup> His daughter Amelia was married in this year to Richard Butler, son of Edmund, Viscount Mountgarret.

<sup>2</sup> Italics mine, here and hereafter.

<sup>3</sup> He records that his estate was worse by £486 15*s.* in 1667 as against 1660.

<sup>4</sup> That is, mullions. "The whole house is of excellent good brick, the angles, courses and window stanchions and jawmes all of ashlers of free stone": Survey of the Manor of Wimbledon (*Archæologia*, x, 412).

master doubtless is able to work more than he can. But note, the said Daniel, when I hired him by days' wages, did usually work no more (and commonly not so much) than 6 feet of stanchions of the very same stone and the same mould.<sup>1</sup>

The new building in course of erection in 1660 had therefore mullioned windows. Whatever its nature, its internal fittings do not appear to have been nearing completion till early in 1663-4, to judge from an entry in the Note Book dated February 4 in that year referring to the panelling of the walls of the dining-room.<sup>2</sup> It reads as follows :

The wainscot for y<sup>e</sup> Dining Roome at Crosby is to be made all of well seasoned wood cleand as may be without knotts, and smoothly wrought. The Panell to be no more but 17 inches high within y<sup>e</sup> Joynt, and not exceeding 12 inches wide. All y<sup>e</sup> panell of chosen wood, each of the styles to be of one piece and y<sup>e</sup> said styles & rails and mountains<sup>3</sup> to be not less than 4 inches and to stand full and boldly out. The work to be as firme and all cleaned as may be without sap. The rate of y<sup>e</sup> work to be 3s. y<sup>e</sup> yard & to be set up before the 1 of May next & if the whole work be such as shall give good content to Mr. Blundell he will give for each yard of the same 2*d.* over and above y<sup>e</sup> said 3 shillings.

The work appears to have been finished to time, for under date May, 1664, is this further note :<sup>4</sup>

The wainscot of my dyning room being finished, we measured y<sup>e</sup> same, and found it, without y<sup>e</sup> chimney corner, to be 109 yards 2 foote, whereof y<sup>e</sup> 2 dores accounted measure & half measure. And y<sup>e</sup> lining of the great dore cheekes were (although playnd work) accounted as wainscot. The plane tier and y<sup>e</sup> crest were reckoned (measuring not perpendicular but slope-wise) to 7 inches high or broad. And the cartooses<sup>5</sup> (besydes y<sup>e</sup> raile on w<sup>ch</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Cavalier's Note Book*, 88.

<sup>2</sup> No doubt the "Hall dyning roome" mentioned in the Note of 1661 given above.

<sup>3</sup> Muntin, any upright piece in a framing : Parker's *Concise Glossary of Architecture*.

<sup>4</sup> *Cavalier's Note Book*, 200. But the original spelling is now followed and some lines, omitted in the printed version, restored.

<sup>5</sup> Cartouch, a term applied to modillions used under a cornice : Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*, i, 87.

they stand) were measured at 2 inches high. So y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> whole work (accounting as above) was measured to 11 foot 11 inches in height. My Bargain was to have all y<sup>e</sup> pannels cloven timber, except y<sup>e</sup> Frize & y<sup>e</sup> lowest course. But yet ther were (as I take it) 15 or 20 panellings of sawed wood contrary to bargain. I was to pay 3s. y<sup>e</sup> yeard for all, and if I lyked the worke 2*d*. more. The work I did lyke and payed for—

	£ s. d.
Y <sup>e</sup> 109 yards 2 foote	17 06

The man <sup>1</sup> w<sup>th</sup> whom I bargained, made y<sup>e</sup> pil-  
 assess <sup>2</sup> upon his own account over y<sup>t</sup> above  
 for w<sup>ch</sup> I gave him 4s. w<sup>ch</sup> 4s. he paid to y<sup>e</sup>  
 labourer (an honest good workman, who made  
 all w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> help of a boy or 2 in short tyme) 4

I gave to this labourer at several tymes 8s. and  
 to his sons 3s. 11

All y<sup>e</sup> nails w<sup>ch</sup> were used cost me about 3

I had a mason 3 dayes to make holes for the wood to be put unto which we pinned it. The joyner and his boy were working 7 dayes (or nere hand) in putting up y<sup>e</sup> wainscot. I only gave them meat, and y<sup>e</sup> wages were paid by y<sup>e</sup> m<sup>r</sup> workman. I take this wainscot to be y<sup>e</sup> cheapest great worke w<sup>ch</sup> I have don about my house, and I think it was y<sup>e</sup> only great thing in all my expense, full worke w<sup>ch</sup> did fall far short, in charge of my expectation. Note y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> windows are yet to be lyned, w<sup>ch</sup> I forbore to do because I had paid for y<sup>t</sup> straight work as deare as for y<sup>e</sup> best.

Of the position in the house of this new wainscoted dining-room we have no information. It was presumably on the ground floor, but it does not seem to have been either of the rooms flanking the entrance hall. With the exception of the library <sup>3</sup> all the rooms and places on the ground floor of the middle part of the house (which substantially represents the seventeenth-century main block) are considerably less in height than 11 feet 11 inches,<sup>4</sup> which was the height of the panelling in the dining-room. It would

<sup>1</sup> In the margin his name is given as William Denn.

<sup>2</sup> Pilasters.

<sup>3</sup> The library in its present form dates from 1815: it is 16 feet in height.

<sup>4</sup> Entrance hall and staircase, 8 feet 4½ inches; breakfast-room and house-keeper's-room, 8 feet 8 inches; study, 9 feet 1 inch. The landing and dressing-room on the first floor are 11 feet 11 inches, and the bedroom over the breakfast-room 11 feet 10 inches.

seem, therefore, that the room in question was in the two-storey projecting south-east part of the building facing on to the garden, now represented by the library and bedroom over. This, as the eighteenth-century drawing shows, had a lofty ground-floor room lighted by a large mullioned and transomed window, with a similar window to the room, or rooms above, and two gables facing south. This portion of the house best answers to the little we know of the new dining-room and may very well have been the "large addition" made by the Cavalier to the already existing three-storey gabled block erected earlier in the century. That the new dining-room was an apartment of some size and importance is evident from the measurement and description of its panelling: it was probably here that the dance was held mentioned in *Nicholas Blundell's Diary*, 29 July, 1726, when "we danced in the dining-room," and the country people in the hall. Allowing for windows, etc., the 109 yards of wainscot would conform approximately to a room of the size of the present library.

An inventory of 18 January, 1685,<sup>1</sup> mentions our Mother's chamber, the buttery chamber, the Blew chamber, the stair-head chamber, and the great dining-room. This dining-room contained, amongst other things, sixteen great chairs and four little chairs, all covered with red leather, and three leather carpets.

No other additions or alterations to the house appear to have been made by the Cavalier, but in 1672 he records:

I have spent since then (1671) much money in building my stable and raying y<sup>e</sup> cros building addioyning to it. It is now newly slated, and much money is yet to be spent about it. I guess y<sup>t</sup> in money and materials formerly valued I have spent already therein about 90*l.* beside new timber for Ditton.

<sup>1</sup> In an "account of some monie and goods belonging to our father W. Blundell Esq. as they were found by my sister Brigit and myself after y<sup>e</sup> death of our Dear Mother." The goods included feather beds, blankets and coverlets, linen, pewter, brass and "four Dutch jugs with other useful vessels."

FIG. 6.



*J. A. Waite*]

CROSBY HALL, FROM S.W.

[*Photo.*

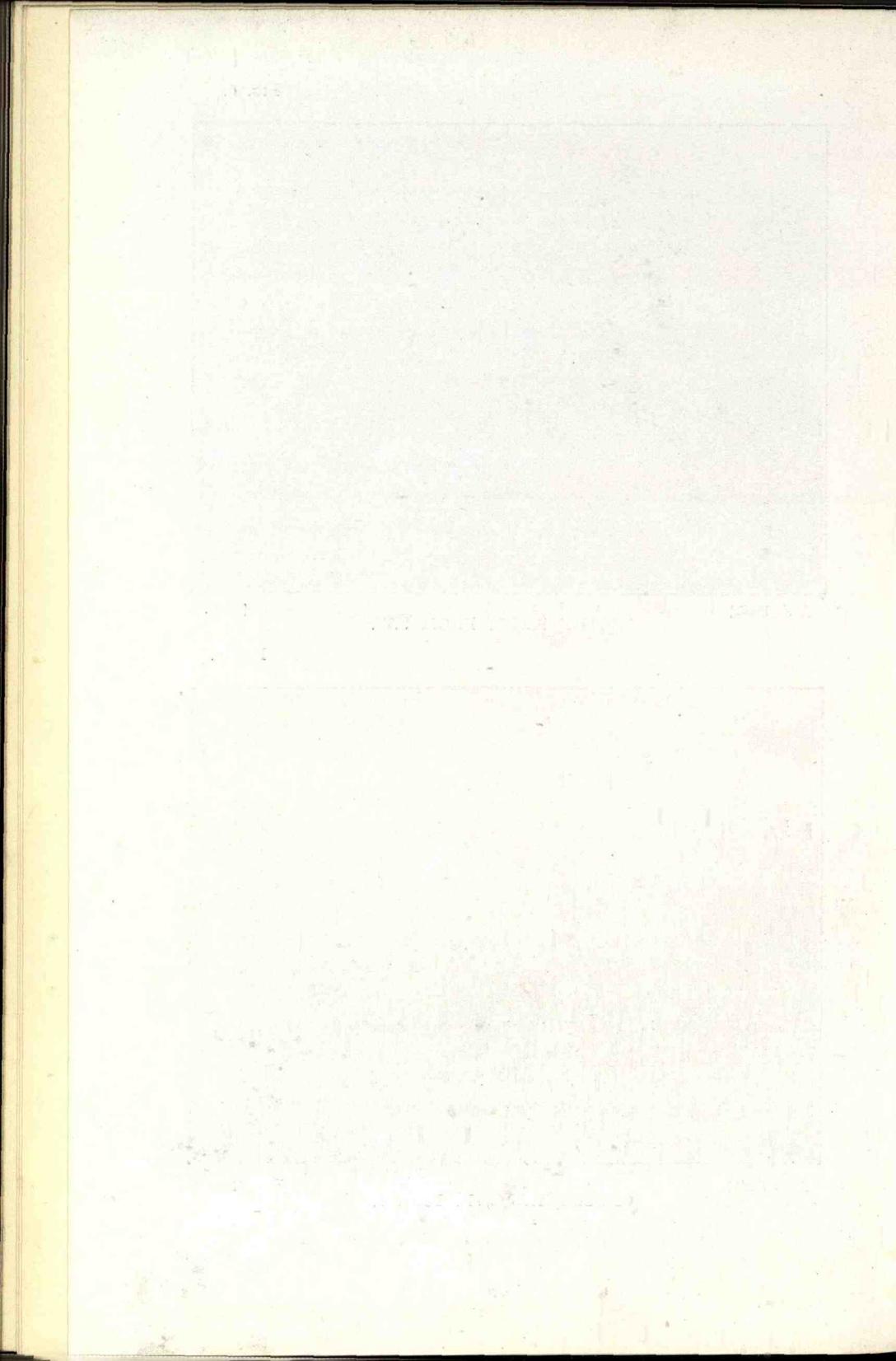
FIG. 7.



*J. A. Waite*]

CROSBY HALL, E. FRONT.

[*Photo.*



This would seem to imply that the stable was a new building, not the reconstruction of an old one, and if so, it follows that the panel dated 1637, at present in the main wall, belonged originally to some other portion of the house, or outbuildings. The stable as built by the Cavalier is shown in the eighteenth-century drawing with a series of large doorways and small upper windows and an outside stone staircase near its west end. It was much altered later in the eighteenth century, and only one of the original mullioned windows now remains, in the end gable. These alterations were probably carried out by Henry Peppard in 1757, which date with the initials H<sup>P</sup>F (for Henry and Frances Peppard) are on a keystone on the inside of one of the doorways. The "cross building" adjoining the stable, which the Cavalier raised (i.e. heightened) is the still existing older building, or barn, at its east end and at right angles to the stable, to which it is now joined. This, too, has been much modernised, but it still retains several original narrow loop windows, and may date from the fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

Whatever the extent or character of the additions in the second half of the seventeenth century, the house seems to have remained substantially unchanged until the great transformation effected by Nicholas Blundell about 1784-6. The gardens on the south side, as we have seen, were laid out in 1722 and therefore figure on the 1738 drawing, which, without them, would represent the house more or less as it existed from about 1664. It is not unlikely that one or other of the dated stones already described was originally on the gate-house.

A list of the rooms and places in old Crosby Hall, before the changes of the late eighteenth century, is contained in the Inventory made on 21 April, 1737, after the death of Nicholas Blundell, the diarist, in which the

contents of each room are recorded.<sup>1</sup> The Inventory appears to have been started on the top floor, the rooms and places being named in the following order :

The Arches. <sup>2</sup>	The Front Parlour.
The Yellow Room.	The Pantry.
The Old Room.	The Back Parlour.
The Blew Room.	Nicholas Blundell's Closet.
The Gallery.	The Kitchen.
The Garden Chamber.	The Larders.
The Kitchen Chamber. <sup>3</sup>	The Pastry.
The Dressing Room.	The Washhouse.
The Maids' Room.	The Brewhouse.
The Store Room.	The Milkhouse.
The Brewhouse Room.	The Cellar.
The Green Room.	The Upper Gallery.
The Passage.	The Gatehouse.
The Parlour Chamber.	The room over Stables.
The Dining Room.	The old room over Shippon.
The Hall.	The Cart House.

The order from top to bottom of the house seems to end, with the cellar,<sup>4</sup> the upper gallery having been left to the end, owing apparently to its having been used as a chapel. That, at any rate, is the inference to be drawn from the nature of its contents, which are set out as follows :

Two wind curtains, the altar and tabernacle, nine old candlesticks, two chalices and one pixis, two forms, seven cushions, one press, three painted pictures, seven printed pictures, an old thurible, two [?], a white vestment, stole, etc., a purple do., a red do., a black do., and a pair of reliquaries.

In the dining-room were five tables and two chairs, and there were beds in the following rooms : the arches,

<sup>1</sup> MS. at Crosby Hall.

<sup>2</sup> An upper room, or attic, under the "arches" of the roof.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. the room *over* the kitchen, and so *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> There are cellars below the servants' hall and butler's rooms in the north-west wing.

the yellow room, the old room, the blew room, the garden chamber, the kitchen chamber, the dressing-room, the maids' room, the brewhouse room, the green room, and the parlour chamber.

Many of these rooms, or places, are referred to under the same names in *Nicholas Blundell's Diary*, while others are probably the same rooms under different names. Thus, while the Inventory speaks of the Front and Back Parlours, the Diary has the Parlour and the Great Parlour. In the Diary there are also named—

The Boys' Chamber.	The Chapel Chamber.
The Old Kitchen.	The Gatehouse Chamber.
The Dairy.	The Gates.
The Bakehouse.	The Bleaching Yard.
The Barn.	The Dovecote.
The Chapel.	

There is also the well-known reference to the hiding-place, or "streat place for a fat man,"<sup>1</sup> in which Nicholas Blundell sat on 16-17 November, 1715, during the Jacobite Rebellion, when the house was visited and searched. The "false roof" is mentioned in 1708.<sup>2</sup> The "court gate" and the "oxhowse" are referred to in 1624.<sup>3</sup>

From Nicholas Blundell's Will (1736) we learn that the Higher Gallery was "adjoining the Blue Chamber."<sup>4</sup>

The following are some of the references<sup>5</sup> in the Diary to certain of the rooms:

#### THE HALL

1706, Dec. 11. We danced country dances in the Hall.

1707, Apr. 8. I put up some escutcheons in the Hall; Lord Mountgarret's was one of them.

<sup>1</sup> *Blundell's Diary*, 138. The insurgents had surrendered at Preston on 14 November.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 59. The house had been searched at that time also.

<sup>3</sup> *Crosby Records, Chetham Soc.*, N.S. xii, 35.

<sup>4</sup> The room over the breakfast-room is now known as the Blue Room.

<sup>5</sup> From the printed volume, but spelling modernised.

- 1708, Aug. 7. The Soldier's Fortune was acted in my Hall.  
 1709, May 27. The She Gallants was acted imperfectly in the Hall.  
 1712, Mar. 4. Several of the neighbours turned the pancakes here after supper and danced in the Hall.  
 1721, Jan. 2. I fixed up the jaw bone of a shark in the Hall.  
 1721, Nov. 26. Father Aldred perceived that the Hall chimney was on fire and came to tell us, but no damage was done.  
 1725, May 1. The young men of this town acted the comedy called The Taming of the Show <sup>1</sup> in my Hall.  
 1726, July 29. I had a merry night. We danced in the dining-room. The country people danced in the Hall.

#### THE PARLOURS

- 1706, Dec. 11. We dined in the Parlour, it being the first time it was used as a Parlour.  
 1722, Feb. 10. Mr. Dugdale and his son began to paint the Back Parlour : they did it over with clear-cole the first time.  
 1722, Dec. 8. I went to Liverpool and brought home a handsome grate for the Great Parlour which the German smith made me.

#### THE PARLOUR CHAMBER <sup>2</sup>

- 1707, Dec. 15. Took down the bed and most of the hangings in the Parlour Chamber : we looked about there for rats and killed two.

#### THE CLOSET (STUDY)

- 1720, Mar. 24. My closet being very unready I put it into better order.  
 1725, Jan. 2. Mr. Pursell helped me to clear and dry several of my books, which were damnified by the wet in my closet.

#### THE CHAPEL AND CHAPEL CHAMBER <sup>3</sup>

- 1710, Aug. 29. I began to pull down the end of the chapel in order to build it up with brick.  
 1711, July 27. Ned Hawkseye began to make a piece of a wall in the Harkerk of some of the Chapel Chamber stones.

<sup>1</sup> ? Shrew.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. the chamber over the Parlour.

<sup>3</sup> In *A Cavalier's Note Book* is this entry : " (1648-9, Lent.) We went down to the back porch where we saw the moon in a full clear orb over the chapel chamber chimney or thereabouts " : p. 116.

1726, Dec. 13. I began to lead the Chapel Chamber stones from the side of the Terrace and laid them in the burial place.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE GATEHOUSE

1713, Dec. 1. I found Mary Holme and Henry Bridge in the Gatehouse Chamber about four in the morning, for which I turned her out of my service.

1726, Oct. 28. I had seven lads of this town beaten at my gatehouse with a stirrup leather, some by their fathers, others by their masters and some by other persons, for stealing my apples and for other peevish tricks.

#### OFFICES, CELLARS ETC.

1708, Dec. 29. We drank the butler's health in my Seller.

1709, Oct. 21. I set up a good new Dial Post in the Bleaching Yard.

1710, Sept. 9. My ditchers found a basket hilted sword and a lock of a gun or pistol as they were ditching between the Long Garden and the Bleaching Yard.

1720, Dec. 7. I helped Arthur Wilson to remove the jack out of the Dairy into the old kitchen.

1720, Dec. 24. We found the turf stack in the Bakehouse on fire, which probably in a very little time would have set the house on fire.

1722, Sept. 1. I burned above one gross of pipes in the Wash-house grate.

#### THE BARN

1712, July 8 (at the flowering of the marl-pit).<sup>2</sup> The young women of this town, Morehouses, and Great Crosby dressed the garlands in my Barn. I taught my eight sword dancers their dance. They had music and danced it in my Barn.

July 9. At night they (the marlers) danced in the Barn.

July 23. We fetched home the may-pole from the pit, and had sword dancing and a merry night in the Hall and in the Barn.

#### THE DOVECOTE <sup>3</sup>

1709, Apr. 1. I counted the holes in the Dovecote : there were 689.

<sup>1</sup> The burial-place in the Harkirke at the south end of the park.

<sup>2</sup> The marling began on July 9 and ended on July 23.

<sup>3</sup> There is mention of the "dovecote croft" in 1648-9: *A Cavalier's Note Book*, 297.

(There are numerous entries recording presents of young pigeons to neighbours for the stocking of their dovecotes.)

## MISCELLANEOUS

1709, Aug. 23. Jo. Banister and I cleaned some of the windows with chalk, but it did not do well.

1719, May 25. I met Mr. Sheppard at the Hall of Sefton and bought some old wainscotting of him.

June 9. I fetched home from the Hall of Sefton the old glass as I had bought from Mr. Sheppard.

1726, Aug. 30. I fixed the House Bell better than it was, and put a new rope to it.

Nov. 9. Finch, a London chimney sweep, swept some of my chimneys.

If these extracts do not add to our knowledge of the positions of the rooms and places named they at least show to what uses the rooms were sometimes put.

We now come to the alterations and additions of 1784-6 which changed the outward appearance of the house so completely.

Unfortunately there appears to be no documentary evidence of the reconstruction then carried out, but the nature of the elevations and the general design of the new parts of the house conform with the date (1784) cut on the west front, and during the course of internal improvements in May, 1928, when the floor-boards were removed in the dining-room, a piece of lead was found below the floor on which was scratched "This Floor was lade by Thomas Spencer and John Rimmer and Thomas Hayes in the year of our Lord 1786 April 7."<sup>1</sup> From this it would appear that the work begun in 1784 was not finished till early in 1786, the house then assuming the appearance presented in the drawings by Edward Jones and

<sup>1</sup> This piece of lead, which measures 8½ inches by 6 inches, is in the possession of Mr. F. N. Blundell. On the underside of one of the floor-boards were scratched the initials and date "T.H. 1786" below which was written in pencil "John Rimmer lost a chisell under hear and those that findes shall be welcome to it I declare 1786." No chisel was found.

William Latham. The floor-boards of the breakfast-room were also removed in 1928, and an examination of the lower part of the walls showed what appeared to have been the stone foundations at the angle of the projecting portion of the south-east front of the house, which it has been suggested was the new dining-room added about 1662-3, and also the beginning of the foundation of the original south wall of the breakfast-room where it joined the present outer west wall. In other words, the end (south) wall of the present breakfast-room was originally some feet farther north, and not in line with the wall of the library as now, the room having been lengthened and the existing wall and fireplace built in 1784.<sup>1</sup> The dining-room is a large apartment measuring 33 feet by 28 feet, and appears from the first to have been lighted only by the existing great bow-window at its south end, the three "windows" shown in the early nineteenth-century drawings in the west wall, as well as those above them, being shams introduced for the sake of external effect.<sup>2</sup> The fireplace, too, has apparently always been in its present position in the middle of the west wall, its flue being carried along the wall to the north end of the room where it joined the new breakfast-room chimney, thus avoiding a chimney stack in the middle of the dining-room wing. The room<sup>3</sup> is 16 feet in height, or only some 3 feet or 4 feet less than the two storeys of the older part of the house to the north of it. The room over the dining-room is 9 feet 10 inches high. These two rooms remain substantially as when erected in 1786.

<sup>1</sup> Reference to the drawing of 1738 will show that the front window nearest the south end of the breakfast-room was originally much nearer the corner of the building than the corresponding window in the room to the north of the entrance hall, where the width of the chimney is included in the walling.

<sup>2</sup> They are so shown on the plan of 1813 mentioned below. The lower "windows" have since been entirely blocked with masonry, but their position can be traced from the sills: the frames and glazing of the upper sham windows remain.

<sup>3</sup> Called "Eating-room" on the plan of 1813

A comparison of the drawings of 1821 and 1824 with that of 1738 will explain the nature of the outward changes made in 1784-6 better than any lengthy description. Roughly it may be said that the low gabled north-west wing was pulled down and rebuilt in a plain, unadorned style, the gatehouse and fence wall removed, the main seventeenth-century block completely transformed, its south-east portion being rebuilt, or re-fashioned so as to provide a new room or rooms corresponding to the present library, and the dining-room added at the south end, balancing in some degree the new north-west wing.

The rebuilt north-west wing stands some 5 feet in front of the main block, as did its predecessor, and the new dining-room wing was advanced the same distance at the south end to correspond with it, the junction of both wings with the middle portion of the house being masked by plain turret-like projections <sup>1</sup> measuring about 8 feet 6 inches on the face, which terminate abruptly at cornice level. The new north-west wing being considerably higher than the one it displaced, and the dining-room wing being somewhat higher still,<sup>2</sup> the general effect of the change was to make the now recessed middle block appear reduced in height, and the whole proportion of the building different. All the mullioned windows disappeared, giving place to single-light, square-headed sashed openings spaced more or less as before, except on the top floor, where the almost continuous row of lights was done away with, along with the five gables, and the wall made to terminate in a dentilled cornice. The work is all of a very plain character, its more strictly architectural features being confined to the middle part of the main block, where, on both west and east fronts, there is a large window of Venetian type <sup>3</sup> on the first floor (that on the east

<sup>1</sup> It is on the northernmost of these that the earliest inscribed stones (1576) are set. It follows that they were placed here about 1784.

<sup>2</sup> See drawings of 1821 and 1824.

<sup>3</sup> The semicircular head of the wider middle light is solid.



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lighting the staircase and landing), and a wide segmental window, or lunette, of three lights and keystone, on the floor above. Over this is a stone pediment, or low gable, that on the principal or west front containing the shield and crest of Blundell of Crosby. The pediment is flanked by hipped roofs. The whole of the exterior facing is of ashlar.

Internally the work is of an equally plain description, the staircase being of little architectural interest, and if there was originally any structural ornament or decoration it has disappeared in the course of subsequent alterations.

There is no record of the name of the architect of the eighteenth-century rebuilding, and the authorship of the design must therefore be left an open question. No further alterations or additions to the house appear to have been made for a space of thirty years.

The nature of the work done by William Blundell in the year of Waterloo is thus briefly recorded in his Diary :

In 1815 built the new offices and altered the house by throwing out a bow-window so as to form the new library and room and dressing-room above, and made sundry other great changes in the house, by making Mrs. Blundell's dressing-room, plastering, etc., etc., and in the following two years painted and new furnished or altered the furniture throughout.

From plans<sup>1</sup> preserved at the Hall it would appear, however, that alterations and additions were contemplated early in 1813. A ground plan dated February 24 in that year shows proposed alterations and additions which were not carried out, and another dated April 13 shows a modification of these. Both schemes provide a somewhat extensive range of offices at the north end, in continuation of the kitchen, but neither seems to have been carried out in its entirety, if at all. The subsequent

<sup>1</sup> There are four plans, as follows : (1) Principal storey or ground plan, (2) chamber storey, (3) attic storey, all dated February 24, 1813, and (4) ground plan dated April 13, 1813. The plans are unsigned, and to a scale of 10 feet to one inch.

additions and alterations at this end of the house have obscured the exact nature of the work done in 1815, but it would appear to have been confined to the brick wing immediately adjoining the kitchen, consisting of four rooms and a passage on the ground floor. The scheme of 1813 was more extensive and different in character. It provided an open court between the new offices and the older north-west wing, and this feature, though less in extent, seems to have been part also of the plan actually carried out, the open space being later covered in and lighted from the top.

The alterations to the principal rooms in the main part of the building differ very slightly in the two schemes, but except for the dividing wall, with its two semicircular alcoves, between the vestibule or entrance-hall, and the main staircase, were not carried out. As then proposed the library (called on the plan "breakfast parlour and library") would have been much smaller<sup>1</sup> than at present, the present breakfast-room being extended eastward and converted into an ante-room to both library and dining-room. It was also proposed to erect a large drawing-room<sup>2</sup> in the position at present occupied by the ball-room, but this is shown on the second plan in dotted lines, and was eventually abandoned. The alterations of 1815 followed rather different lines as regards the library, which was made to occupy the whole space north of the breakfast-room, heightened to 16 feet by the removal of the floor above, and lighted by a new bow-window similar to that in the dining-room. The fire-place and the excellent mahogany doors and fittings belong to this period. There are two bedrooms over the library in the attic storey.

<sup>1</sup> It was intended to be 21 feet by 17 feet. No bow-window is shown on the plan. The present library is 26 feet 6 inches by 21 feet, exclusive of the window. It ranges in height with the eighteenth-century dining-room, occupying the space of two floors.

<sup>2</sup> In size 33 feet by 21 feet.

In 1857 Colonel Blundell records that he "built two new sunk fences in the shrubbery and took down the old ones which enlarged the shrubbery in front of the library considerably." In making the foundation for one of the walls on the west side "a very curious old glass bottle" with the family arms impressed upon it was discovered.<sup>1</sup>

A fire in 1866 was the immediate cause of the alterations and additions which were carried out in the year following from the designs of Messrs. Reade & Goodison, Architects, Liverpool.<sup>2</sup> The nature and extent of the work then done has already been stated.<sup>3</sup> The ball-room (1872) is about 30 feet long by 26 feet wide, and fills the angle made by the dining-room and library, at the south-east corner of the house.

A fire in 1887 caused much damage in the bedroom<sup>4</sup> over the breakfast-room and also in two rooms<sup>5</sup> on the floor above. As a result of the fire some tapestry was brought to light in one of these upper rooms, being found under thirteen layers of paper, but it was so much damaged that only a few fragments were saved.

In thus attempting to unravel the architectural history of Crosby Hall I have endeavoured as much as possible to distinguish between possibilities, probabilities and well-ascertained facts. The facts, unfortunately, are few, though it is possible that a systematic search through the large number of MS. diaries and other documents preserved at the Hall might add something to our knowledge. There appear to be no diaries, however, covering the seventeenth century, and the Note Book of William Blundell, the Cavalier, contains no properly chronological entries or any detailed records tending to throw much light on the history of the building. The Diary of Nicholas

<sup>1</sup> MS. Diary. The bottle appears to have been lost.

<sup>2</sup> The plans are dated October, 1866.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> The Blue Room.

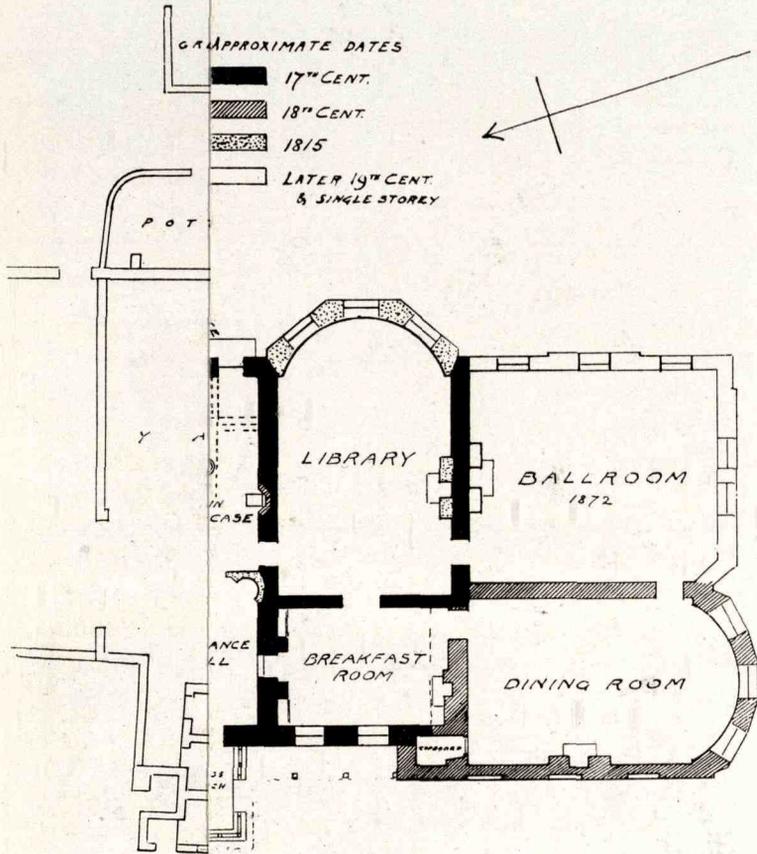
<sup>5</sup> The Oak Room and the Red Room. The tapestry was found in the Red Room. It was damaged by both fire and water.

Blundell (1702-28) covers a period when little or nothing was done in the way of building, and the history of the years 1784-6, when the remodelling of the house took place, appears nowhere to be recorded. The story, therefore, must remain an incomplete one, and the growth and development of the house from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century be to a large extent a matter of conjecture. It is for this reason impossible to date the accompanying plan with any degree of certainty, and its reproduction is meant rather as a help to the understanding of the nature of the architectural problem involved than as an illustration of its solution.

The interpretation attempted above leaves many points unsettled, notably the extent and position of the dwelling-house before the seventeenth century. That the low gabled north-west wing shown in the eighteenth-century drawing belonged to this older house is very probable, but of the nature of its plan nothing can be said. It is not unlikely that it had projecting wings at the back (east side), the space between which would form a courtyard. A proper understanding of the building on paper, however, is difficult, especially at its north end, with its different floor levels and numerous passages and can only be arrived at by personal inspection of the fabric supplemented by a study of measured drawings.

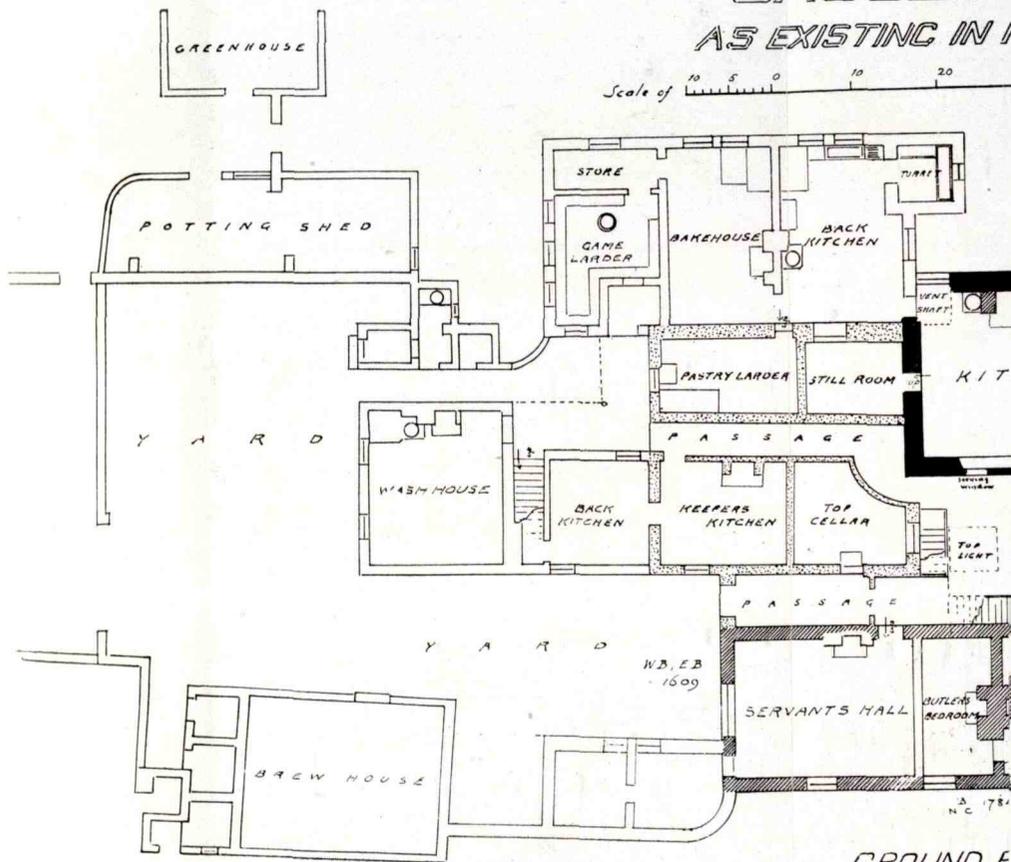
The preparation of this paper would have been impossible but for the kind interest of Mr. F. N. Blundell, by whose permission I have been enabled to examine the house without restriction of any kind, and to inspect certain of the manuscript diaries and other documents there preserved. My thanks are also due to Messrs. T. Mellard Reade & Son, Architects, Liverpool, for the use of plans and for information freely given; to Mr. Godfrey W. Mathews, F.S.A., for permission to reproduce the drawings of Edward and Michael Jones; to Mr. Cuthbert

FIG. 9.



# CROSBY AS EXISTING IN 1869

Scale of 10 5 0 10 20



GROUND F

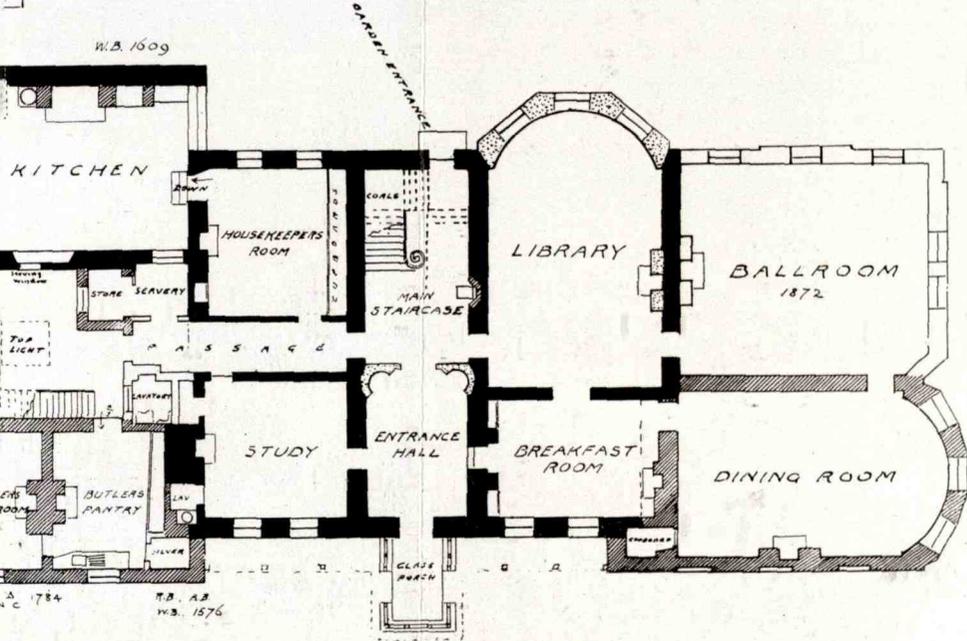
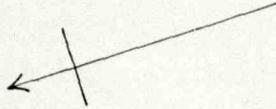
FIG. 9.

# RY HALL IN MARCH 1910

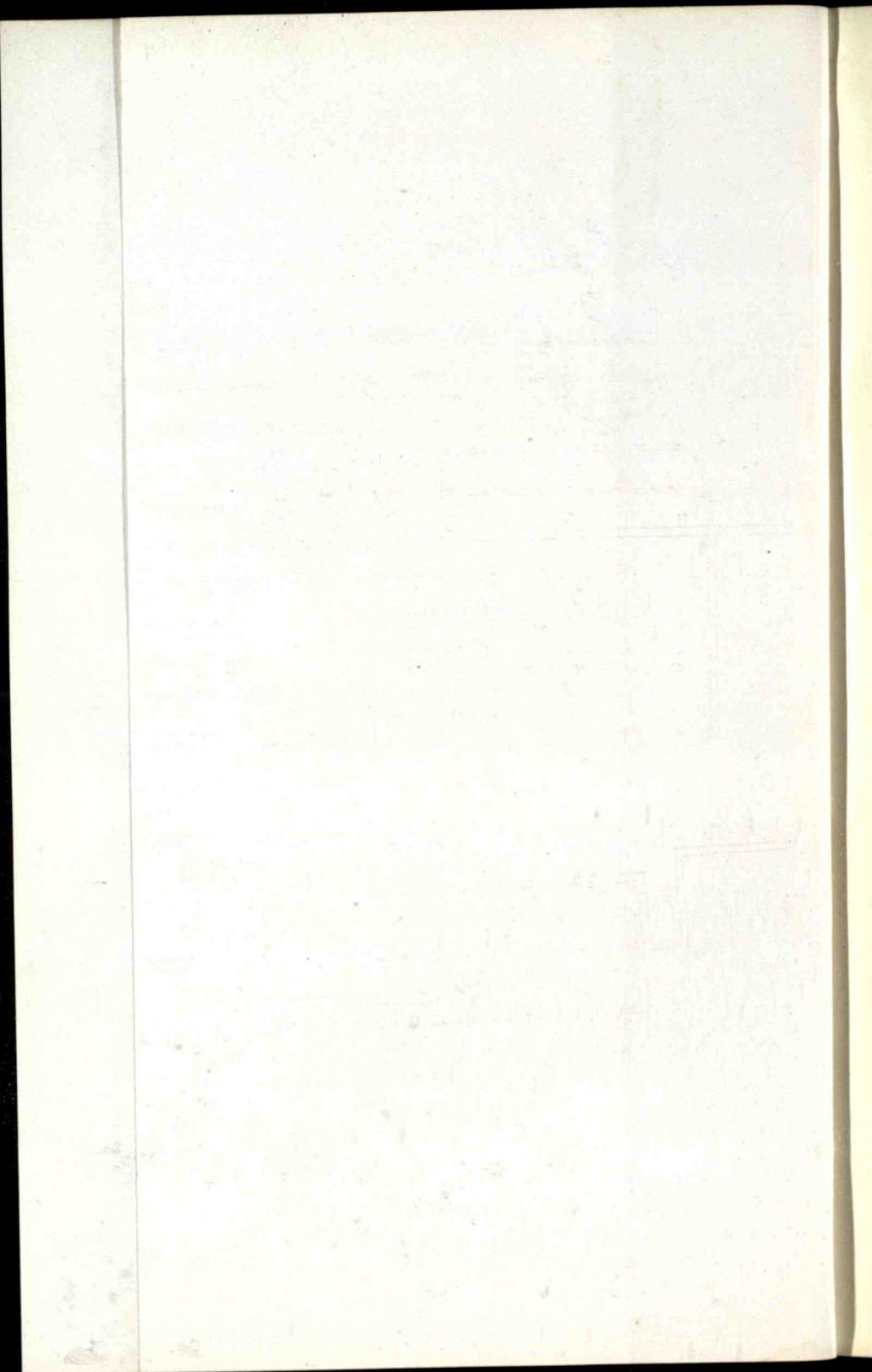
0 30 40 50 60 feet

APPROXIMATE DATES

-  17<sup>th</sup> CENT.
-  18<sup>th</sup> CENT.
-  1815
-  LATER 19<sup>th</sup> CENT.  
& SINGLE STOREY



FLOOR PLAN



Woods for photographing the drawings; to Mr. J. A. Waite for three photographs of the Hall; and to the Committee of the Manchester Reference Library for permission to use Captain Latham's sketches.

### THE CROSBY CROSSES.

Amongst the Latham Collection at the Manchester Reference Library are drawings of (a) the Village Cross and Well at Little Crosby, and (b) the Hightown Cross, at the north end of the township, and there is also a drawing of the Little Crosby Cross and Well by Edward Jones inserted in Mr. Godfrey Mathews's copy of Baines's *Lancashire*. These three drawings are here reproduced.

#### THE LITTLE CROSBY VILLAGE CROSS AND WELL.

The earliest of the three drawings is that of the Little Crosby Cross and Well signed "Edw. Jones, 30 April 1821." It is a sepia sketch, measuring 10 inches by 6½ inches, taken from the south-east, and shows the cross standing free on the grass by the roadside in front of a long thatched barn, which forms the background of the picture. The angles of the rectangular shaft are chamfered to within a few inches of the socket stone, which stands a considerable height above the ground on five plain steps. The second step on the north side forms the head of the well, which is sunk below the level of the road. The shaft is a monolith, but is prolonged by the lower limb of the head, the joint being strengthened by a metal clamp.<sup>1</sup>

Captain Latham's drawing is dated 5 November, 1824, and is taken from the north-east, thus showing the entrance to the well.

In Mr. Henry Taylor's *Ancient Crosses and Holy Wells of Lancashire* (1906) there is a photograph<sup>2</sup> of the same cross in its present condition, and then it is also figured

<sup>1</sup> See *Frontispiece*.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*, 165.

in *Blundell's Diary*<sup>1</sup> by a woodcut of Miss Josephine Blundell's. An entry in the Diary, August 23, 1710, records—

The stone cross in this town was set up unknown to me by the order chiefly of W<sup>m</sup> Gray, the overseer of the Highways.

This, however, as Fr. Gibson has pointed out,<sup>2</sup> must refer to a "setting up again," as the cross is much older than the reign of Queen Anne. It stands about 8 feet high, socketed into a 12-inch pedestal, but it has undergone many vicissitudes and the two lower steps now form the two upper courses of a stone wall about 3 feet high. Mr. Taylor wrote :

At the time of the 1848 Ordnance Survey the northerly part of the village consisted of a row of houses set back about 70 feet from the park wall, and the cottage doors opened on to a long village green, through which the high-road passed. The well and cross were thus quite in the open on the green. A flight of large steps led down to the well under the cross. . . . Some time between 1870 and 1880 a deep drain was laid in the road, and the well ran dry. At about the same time the green was enclosed by the building of the present stone wall in front of the cottages, the space so enclosed becoming gardens. The well and cross were then rebuilt as we find them now, the ingress to the well being abolished, one of the steps to it being placed as a seat in the small lay-bye then formed.<sup>3</sup>

The interest of the drawings of 1821 and 1824, here reproduced, is that they are contemporary records of the appearance of the cross and well before these later changes were made. The head of the cross has been renewed.

#### THE HIGHTOWN CROSS.

Hightown was a hamlet at the extreme north end of the township of Little Crosby. A cross formerly stood there, but according to Mr. Taylor it was destroyed by

<sup>1</sup> Page 144. The woodcut represents the cross and well as they were before the closing of the well: Taylor, *op. cit.*, 166.

<sup>2</sup> *Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches.*, 33, 18.

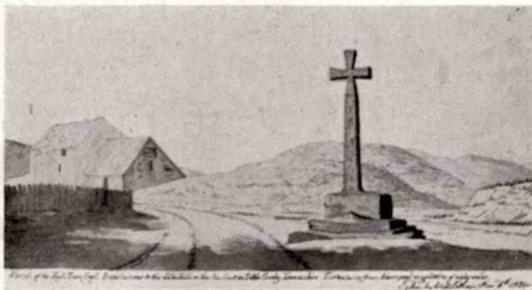
<sup>3</sup> Taylor, *op. cit.*, 165-6.

FIG. 10.

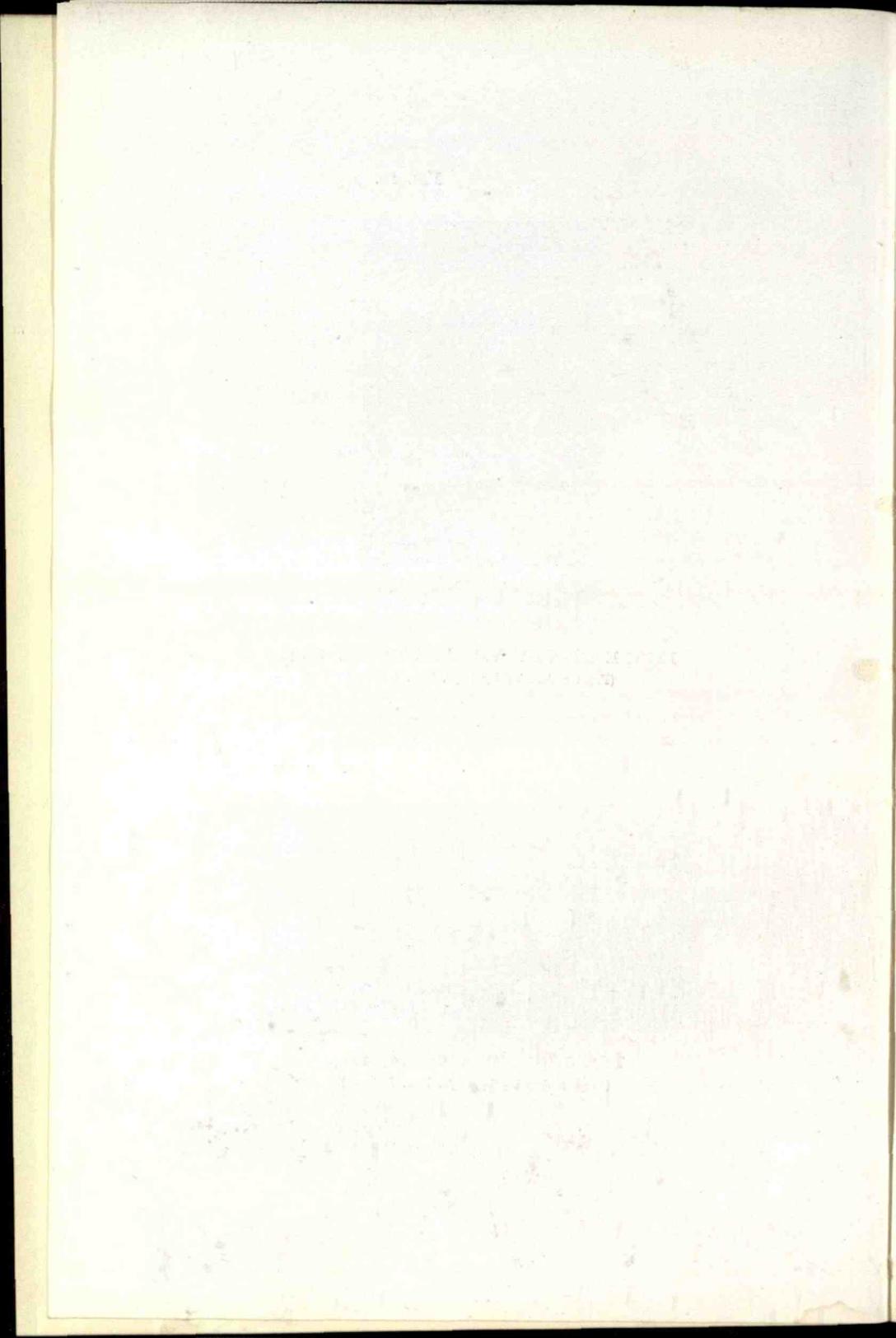


LITTLE CROSBY VILLAGE CROSS, 1824.  
(From a drawing by Capt. Wm. Latham.)

FIG. 11.



THE HIGHTOWN CROSS, 1824.  
(From a drawing by Capt. Wm. Latham.)



some drunken men,<sup>1</sup> the socket stone alone surviving. The present cross was placed in the old socket about 1880, but does not reproduce the design of the former one. It stands in a recess of a garden wall close to Hightown railway station, on the east side of the line.

Captain Latham's drawing of the Hightown Cross is dated 6 November, 1824, and shows it standing isolated amidst the sandhills, with a solitary building, apparently a barn, at some distance in the background. The shaft is socketed into a rectangular pedestal on two steps, the lower one partly covered with sand. Below the drawing is written "Sketch of the High Town Cross. It stands near to the Sand Hills on the Sea Coast in Little Crosby, Lancashire. The distance from Liverpool is upwards of eight miles."

As far as I am aware Latham's drawing is the only one depicting the old Hightown Cross.<sup>2</sup>

Three other crosses in Little Crosby—the Crosby Park Wall Cross, the Crosby Park Cross, and the Harkirke Cross—are all described in Mr. Taylor's book, where the Park Cross is figured.<sup>3</sup> There is an illustration of the Harkirke Cross in Gibson's *Crosby Records (Chetham Society, 1887)*.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 163. The date of its destruction is not stated.

<sup>2</sup> It is not figured in Taylor, *op. cit.*, nor is any description of the old cross given.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, 167. It is also figured in *Blundell's Diary*, 192.