

## FRESTON TOWER.

Freston Tower, is a striking and pleasing feature in the picturesque scenery of the Orwell.

It is built of red brick, is quadrangular in form, and in plan about 10 feet by 12, and is crowned by an open arcaded parapet having a small polygonal finial at each angle. It is six stories high, and has as many rooms, one on each story; the communication therewith being by a winding staircase occupying the east or principal face of the tower. The principal room was on the fifth story. It is loftier than the lower ones, and appears to have been hung with tapestry; the small nails that attached it to the framework still remaining. Some fragments of the coloured decorations of the rooms and staircase may also be seen. The windows are square with pointed pediments, and are very small, except in the state chamber, which has three windows of three lights each. The ascent to the leads is by an elegant turret at one of the angles. There is but one fireplace on the second floor, but this has no chimney, and appears to have been a later construction.

It is not easy to say for what purpose, nor is it generally known at what period this tower was built. The Rev. Richard Cobbold, in the preface to his novel of *Freston Tower*, says:—

“Thousands of conjectures have been formed as to its origin and use. After many years of promised hope to unravel the mystery, the present work will afford an entertaining and instructive record of its origin. It will be found connected with the history of one of the most learned youths of his age, even with that of the Boy-Bachelor of Oxford; with the stirring events of the Reformation; with the pride and the downfall of the proudest Chancellor England ever knew; and will afford a lesson to readers of both sexes of the punishment of haughtiness, and the reward of true nobility and patience even in their present existence.”

And then the writer proceeds to narrate that the tower was built in the 15th century by a Lord de Freston, a distant relation and the first patron of the Boy-Bachelor, at the suggestion and from the designs of another young kinsman, named William Latimer, as a place of study and recreation for the Lord's only daughter, the youthful learned Ellen de Freston. Every room was dedicated to a different occupation, which claimed its

separate hour for work. Thus the lower room was devoted to charity in the reception and relief of the poor; the second to tapestry-working; the third to music; the fourth to painting; the fifth to literature; and the sixth to astronomy, the instruments necessary for which study were fixed upon the turret. It was frequently visited by Wolsey when a boy; and had been completed only two years when Wolsey was sent to college by Lord de Freston.

However ingenious and pretty this history may be—and it has doubtless done much to increase the interest of the public in this curious remain of domestic architecture—there is, unhappily, no foundation for it in history. There is no authority for assigning it to a period so early as the 15th century; or in any way connecting it with the early history of Cardinal Wolsey. Independent of the style of architecture, which indicates a date full half a century later, it is certain, as Kirby himself has declared, that the tower is unnoticed in a very extensive plan and description of the Manor-house, with its offices and outbuildings in the time of Henry the Seventh; that the Wolferstons, and not the Frestons, resided here at the period laid in the novel; that the Latimers did not become connected with Freston till some years later; and that in a note in some MS. collections for Suffolk, dated in 1565, it is referred to as “part of a house lately built.” But Mr. Fitch, who has kindly permitted me to have free access to his valuable collection of Suffolk documents, informs me that there is still stronger evidence against the novelist’s “history” in a Visitation Book of 1561, where the tower is described as “being built within twelve years,” of that date, or twenty years after the death of the Cardinal. It is therefore conjectured that the tower was built by Edmund Latymer, about the year 1549, as a quiet retreat, or “pleasaunce tower,” for the better enjoyment of the extensive and charming views which are to be obtained from it.

Freston Tower was used as a receptacle for persons afflicted with the small pox from 1772 to 1779, by Mr. Buck, an eminent surgeon at Ipswich. It used to be regularly advertised in the newspapers, with, in some instances, the terms of admission.

SAMUEL TYMMS.

*Reyce*  
1632?