



Wroxton Abbey as 'completed'. An early 20th century Warwick Hunt meet.
(courtesy of the Oxfordshire Museum Service, TP 367).

Gibson's work left the house looking complete. We have no direct knowledge of whether the Norths approved of it or not, but there is still one more piece of unexplained business, so to speak. On the garden side of the house is a single-storeyed block, certainly built in the nineteenth century. A few years after the building of the south range, the Reverend Francis Morris published *County Seats of Great Britain and Ireland*, in six volumes. Volume III contains a view of Wroxton, showing John Gibson's newly completed south wing, and with a page of description of the house and its owners. Morris, who would have relied on North for his information, says nothing of Gibson, yet he does say that 'a library has lately been added after a plan by Mr. Smirke.' This must be the single storeyed block in question, and Mr. Smirke must be Sydney Smirke, brother of the more famous Sir Robert Smirke who designed the British Museum (and who had designed Putney Hill House for the dowager Countess of Guilford in 1828).⁵¹ But why did Francis Morris, who must have got his information from North, say nothing about the work recently done at Wroxton by John Gibson? Was his information out of date (even though the picture must have been drawn since

⁵¹ F.O. Morris, *A Series of Picturesque Views of the Seats ... of Great Britain and Ireland*, n.d. (c.1870), III, 43.