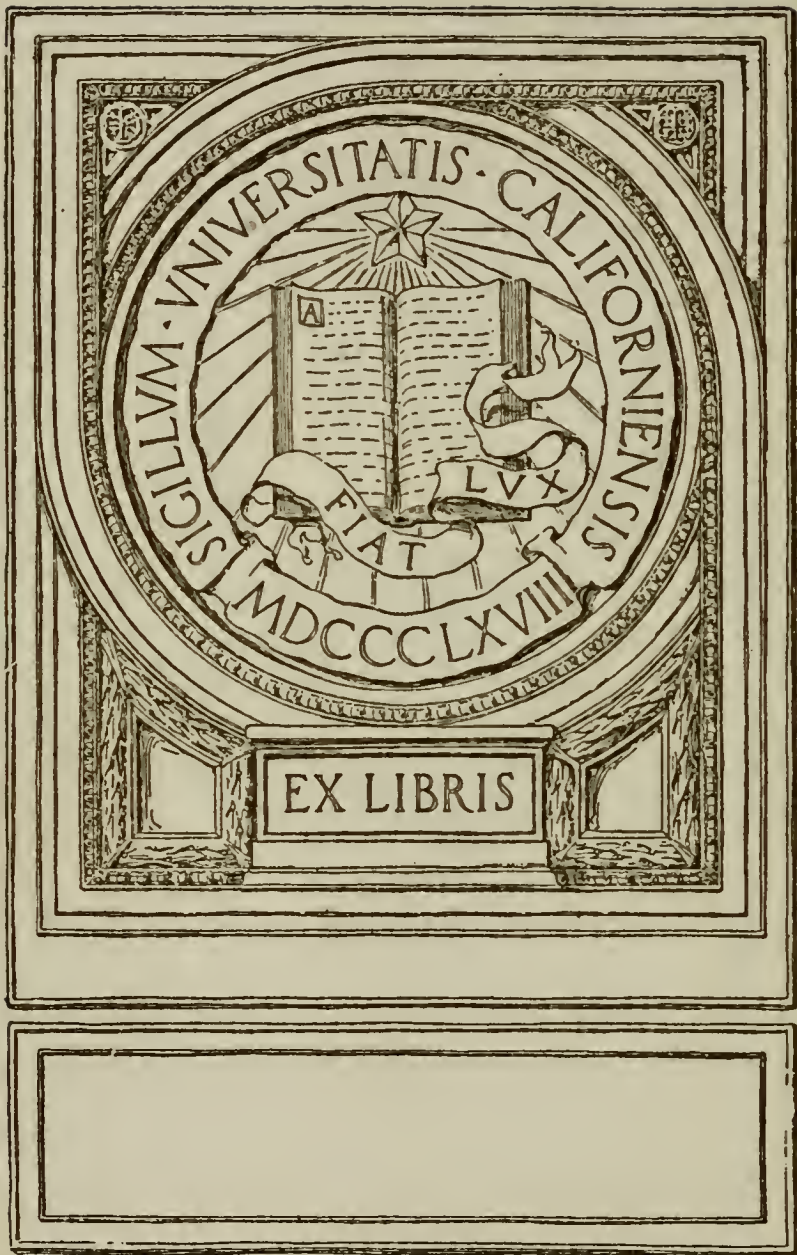


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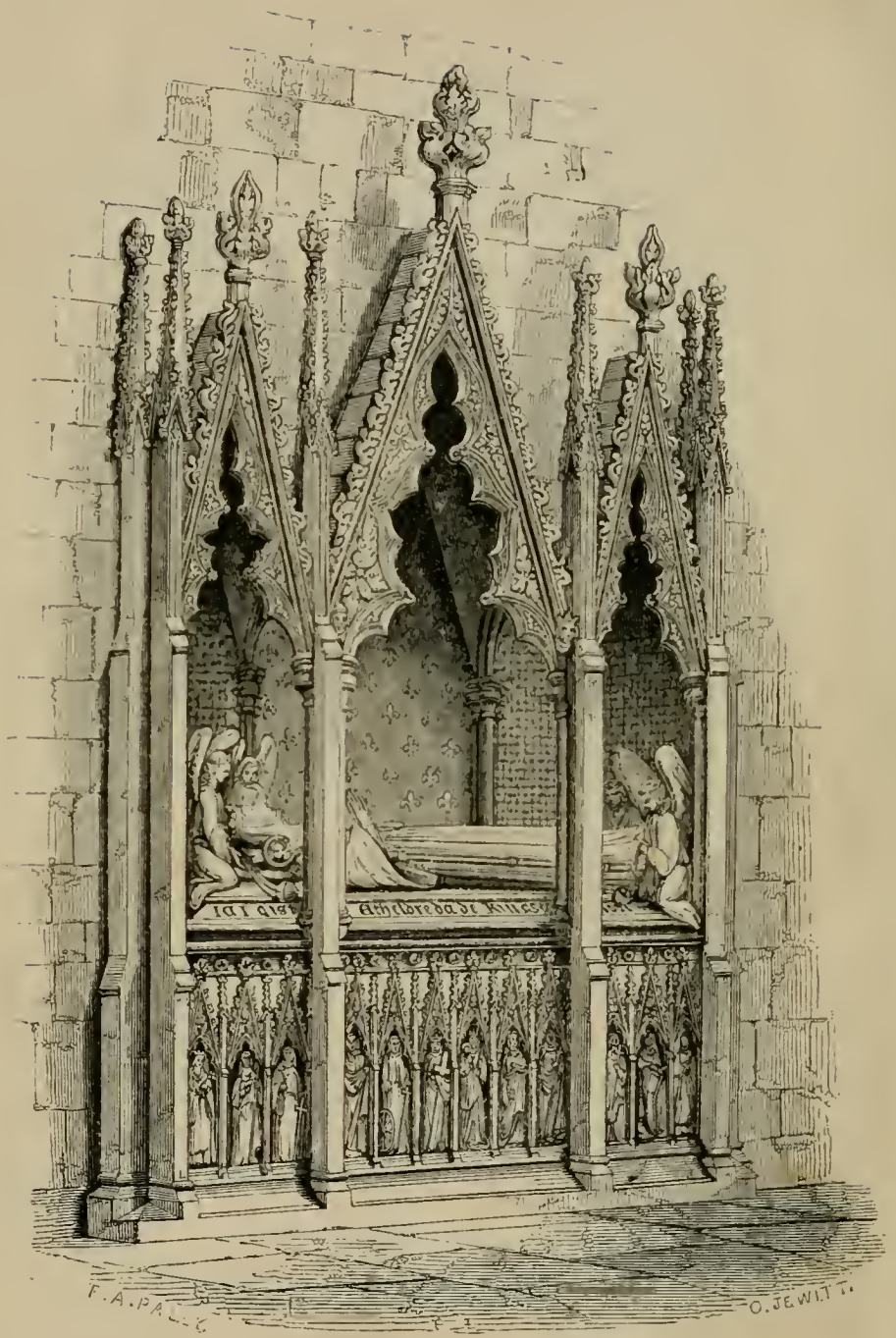


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# THE CHURCH RESTORERS:

A TALE,

TREATING OF ANCIENT AND MODERN  
ARCHITECTURE AND CHURCH DECORATIONS.

BY F. A. PALEY, M.A.

HONORARY SECRETARY TO THE CAMBRIDGE CAMDEN SOCIETY.

LONDON:

JOHN VAN VOORST, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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MDCCCXLIV.



TO

ANTHONY SALVIN, Esq.

ARCHITECT

TO

*The Restoration of S. Sepulchre's Church, Cambridge,*

THIS SMALL TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM

FOR HIS PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH THE REGARDS AND WELL-WISHES

OF

THE AUTHOR.

749230





## PREFACE.

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It is very possible, and somewhat to be feared, that the following tale, if it attracts any notice at all, will excite the wrath of one party, the ridicule of another, and the suspicions of a third. By all three it will probably be called popish, superstitious, flippant, satirical, and a great many other hard names of the like kind.

Now it is clear, that a book must be very bad indeed to deserve all this ; and an author must either have some sinister end in view, or entertain an overweening opinion of its merits or usefulness, to risk the danger of such abuse. It is right, therefore, that his real motive in publishing it should be clearly and honestly expressed.

That a contrast is drawn between the mediæval and the reformed Church, unfavourable to the latter in respect not only of church architecture

but of faith, devotion, and discipline, is not denied. If the author's view be altogether erroneous of the latter Christian qualities, there can be no just cause for indignation at the expression of mistaken sentiments. But for the first, with which he is more immediately concerned, it is impossible to deny that the practice of the art is now (with, of course, not a few honourable exceptions,) so degraded, as fully to deserve the severest animadversion from all who are really interested in its improvement. Irreverent and ridiculous usages should be placed in their true light, without disguise or concealment. Thus only will people learn that they are really so, or desire to amend them. Apathy and indifference are to be dealt with by stirring and wounding weapons. These only become wrong when wielded by malice, or envenomed by bitterness of spirit. The author is well aware how ungracious a task this is, and how liable to misconception. But to expose in bold and strong language does not necessarily imply a delight in doing it, as some persons groundlessly and uncharitably suppose.

Of course, the events and characters of the narrative, both ancient and modern, are entirely

fictitious. A class has been described, but no real person in any instance portrayed. The modern architects, and the apathetic and church-destroying clergy of the last century, who may seem to have been severely and satirically handled, are, in fact, strictly and faithfully drawn, and not in the least overwrought. They represent, unhappily, a great body, who form the rule, and not the exception. And for the desecrations and profanities of Protestantism, a great deal more might have been said of much sterner and darker reality. Some years spent in the study of church architecture have convinced the author that this part of the subject can hardly have any limits assigned to it.

As a *story*, the work claims no merit whatever. It will at once be seen that this style is adopted but as a medium for illustrating in a less technical and tedious form the general character and principles of mediæval and protestant church architecture. Neither subject is indeed now new to the reader ; yet perhaps a sketch of their respective peculiarities, professedly authentic, as far as can be ascertained by the author's own research and observation, and not, intentionally at

least, exaggerated on either side, may be interesting to some. In writing of mediæval times and events the faith of the period in Miracles has been freely embodied in the narrative. Without expressing any opinion as to their truth or falsehood, the author thinks it fair to make use of a belief universally prevalent in the Church at the time, and unnecessary to omit so remarkable and interesting a characteristic merely to suit modern prejudice. He only hopes that the adaptation of recorded Miracles to a tale of mere fiction may not be deemed derogatory to a very serious and solemn subject.

It only remains to observe, that neither his Publisher nor the Society with which he is connected can be in the remotest degree responsible for any opinions expressed by the author in the narrative.

The reader is requested to omit the word "Sire" in the epitaph of Sir Aubrey de Kynastone, in pp. 31 and 37. It is manifestly erroneous, and was inserted by mistake.

St. John's College, Cambridge,  
August, 1844.

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A MANUAL OF GOTHIC MOULDINGS,  
with many Illustrations; in which the progressive development is traced, and rules given for determining the styles,  
by Mr. PALEY, is in preparation.

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# THE CHURCH RESTORERS.

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## CHAPTER I.—THE SAXON CHURCH.

IN the midst of a bare and hilly tract of country on the eastern side of England, far away from the noise of cities, lies a romantic village, which from its own exceeding beauty, as well as from the cheering contrast presented by the sudden and unexpected change in the scenery, seldom fails to strike the traveller with wonder and delight. It is a charming prospect, that quiet valley, on a bright and silent summer's eve. On all sides it is inclosed by sloping verdant hills, partly clothed with wood, partly occupied by scattered sheep and cattle, which are resting from the heat of the day, and seem musingly to enjoy, as they recline on the sunny turf, the undisturbed tranquillity of their domain. The village is small, and the cottages very humble; but they are clean and decently kept, so that the outward aspect of rural peace and contentment is not accompanied with the idea of hidden distress, nor saddened by the

contemplation of squalid poverty. Perfect seclusion and retirement from the busy world seem here, if anywhere, attainable. Not that it is shut out from the converse of mankind; for several roads converge to a point in the valley, and may be seen from the heights winding in chalky white streaks over the distant hills in as many different directions: but they seem rather to suggest access from without to a paradise of peace, than to tempt the favoured inhabitants to stray in search of happiness beyond the narrow limits of its own proper abode.

Through the heart of the village of Letherton runs a clear stream, which issues from under a rock in a shady grove at the southern extremity. So cold are the waters of the never-failing spring, that the hand almost immediately becomes numb and chill by immersion in its source; so clear, that its rippling motion alone betrays the transparent covering of the shining pebbles below. Hard by stands the village church, a most ancient structure, the erection of which carries us back to the time of the Saxon kings, though portions of various styles shew the many additions and alterations of succeeding ages. Such are the actual features at the present day of a village, which we shall leave those who may be interested in the discovery to identify for themselves; since much of what we shall relate of its early history is but



legendary, and will doubtless seem absurd and impossible to those who have no knowledge of nor sympathy with the great and glorious ages of the Church, the "Ages of Faith," as they are rightly called. Therefore we decline to attach to a real name a narrative which we cannot prove to be true.

Reader, if you are content to follow the history of a Saxon Church through all its fortunes, its foundation, enlargements, reconstruction, and successive decorations; to view the dismal scenes of its plunder, desecration, and neglect, till the time of its complete restoration in these latter days, you shall learn therein somewhat of a sacred art as it was of old, and contrast it with what it is now. While others investigate the causes, you shall consider only the effects respectively produced; and so you may be enabled to draw some conclusions bearing directly on the architectural practice of the present day. And if you find in the course of the tale less disparagement of these "dark" ages than is quite orthodox, you must bear in mind that the subject of it is one which, as all allow, places *them* in as favourable as it does protestantism in a mean and disadvantageous light; namely, the science of Church-building. Much as we are apt to boast of the wisdom, learning, taste, enlightened piety and happy freedom from superstition of the present day, it is to be feared that the unreformed Church must, in this one

point at least, be acknowledged pre-eminent : it must be conceded that Art, as the handmaid of Religion, was hers, and hers alone.

In the year 870 a band of persecuted Christians was flying from the pursuit of the murderous Danes, by whom their settlement and little wooden church in a remote part of Lincolnshire had been disturbed and overthrown. Their lives, and the sacred relics of their plundered altar, were all that had escaped the spoilers' violence ; and happy in the possession of these they wandered wearily in search of a new abode, which should be less exposed to the assaults of a relentless foe. Arriving at Letherton, after a hot and toilsome day's journey, they rested for the night under shelter of a rock in the hidden recess of a leafy grove. But vain was their anxious search for a spring of water, of which they were in urgent need. The old priest Aedbert, the leader of the company, and a man of great sanctity, placed the relics on the ground, and devoutly prayed that God would be pleased for the merits of His holy Saint and Martyr, Winifride, of whose precious body they bore with them a part, to relieve them in their present distress. In the course of the night a gurgling sound was heard in the bowels of the earth ; and a copious stream suddenly spouted forth from under the very stone on which the relics had been deposited. That stream it is

which still fertilizes the valley of Letherton ; nor has it ever been known to fail or diminish in the longest and severest season of drought. To commemorate so signal a deliverance, a little church was erected near the spot in the year 950, and dedicated to God in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holy Saint Winifride. To this day the old tower stands, as the spring still flows, in testimony of the event. The villagers believe the tale, and are considered superstitious. What worse are they, and why should the legend be the less true for the scoffs of modern philosophy, or the ridicule of modern unbelief?

That Saxon churches were of very simple construction is now known to most. The church at Letherton had only a chancel and a nave, and a short square tower. The entrance was through a low semicircular arch at the west end, composed of rough blocks of stone hewn from the rock at the miraculous spring, and put together with coarse cement and smaller rubble at the sides and in the interstices. The tower was divided into two stages by a square-edged string-course, on which stood the belfry windows, each of two lights separated by a balustre shaft, and arched above the impost by a single stone. The roof was a conical capping, like a low pyramid, covered with shingles and thick pieces of oak bark disposed in the manner of large scales ; and no other architectural feature

did this simple structure possess to adorn or relieve its plain bare walls. The nave was built of the same coarse stone, with large blocks or quoins at the angles, and thatched with reeds. The windows were small and few, somewhat lanciform in shape, and splayed from both sides to a point in the middle. They were latticed with wood, the east window alone being filled with glass. No ornamental detail could they boast; they were only apertures left in the masonry, and gathered in at the heads by irregular rubble arches. Internally, the rough walls were covered with a coarse and durable cement; but the timbers of the roof, and even the thatch, were exposed to view. No seats of any kind, save a few wooden stools placed apart in one corner, encumbered the area of the nave; but a low stone bench ran round three sides of the wall, leaving in the middle a clear level surface of beaten clay, indurated by an admixture of lime, and strewed with rushes. The chancel arch was a perfectly plain square-edged opening in the wall, rather resembling the entrance to a dungeon or a cave, than the elaborately carved and shafted archways of the Norman architects, who were so soon destined to succeed. The belfry arch was similar, but higher, and had projecting imposts formed by single blocks of stone. The chancel floor was slightly raised, and paved with stone. From a low platform or ambo, on the north side, the priest,

dressed in albe, stole, and chasuble, and holding the maniple in his left hand, offered the prayers, attended by a deacon, habited in a dalmatic and stole thrown over the left shoulder. Here too he duly delivered his brief address to the people. A stone font was placed in the church,—a rude, tub-like vessel, supported on a circular stem : but the office of Baptism was generally performed in the open air by immersion in the pure water of the sacred spring. The wooden altar, which stood in a semicircular apse, was erected over the grave of old Aedbert,—an honourable memorial of his fate. He had been overtaken by the Danes and cruelly martyred for the faith, shortly after his departure from Letherton. His mangled body was brought by a few faithful followers to the scene of his miraculous intercession, and laid, in the dead of the night, in the green sward, with a lowly cross of wood to mark the spot. What better site than a martyr's grave could be found for a church? The perishable cross had long crumbled away when the building was afterwards commenced ; but one of stone was then built into the wall, with this inscription in rude Roman and Anglo-Saxon characters on the base :

✠ Hanc ecclesiam in honore sancte Winifride et sancte Marie Virginis construxit Earnulphus cementarius, dedicavit dominus Leovinus Episco-

pus Dorcestriensis tertio non. Maii A. S. D. CCCCL.  
quo loco olim sepultus est Aedbertus presbyter et  
martyr. ✠ Tempore Edredi Regis.

For many years did the few and poor, but happy and religious, inhabitants of Letherton, assemble in their little church, standing and kneeling on the cold floor, bowing reverently as they entered, and crossing themselves ever as they approached, the House of God. Truly they loved and venerated that house, plain and humble as it was. But it was the best they could provide ; for they had no money, and few tools ; and it was entirely the unpaid work of their own hands, under the direction of the deacon and mason Earnulphus.

In that early age you might have heard a bell sounding from the steeple, and seen a cock surmounting the tower roof, and admired the native ingenuity of the twisted iron hinges on the doors. We have early pictures of Saxon churches, as well as early accounts, from which our description is derived ; and enough of Saxon work remains to this day to verify the features there represented.

In 1130, the chancel and nave were rebuilt in plain Norman style, with the addition of a north aisle for the increased number of villagers. The little colony had prospered in its quiet and unpretending course of daily devotions ; and the tithes

cheerfully and thankfully paid to their good priest from the produce of the soil seemed to bring a blessing on their agricultural labours. Little alteration was made in the internal arrangements of the church, beyond a few occasional gifts of more seemly decoration. A quaintly-carved representation in stone of the Virgin and Child within a Vesica Piscis was placed over the doorway in the south wall of the nave, and figures of the Crucifixion and of several saints were built into the chancel-wall. A new altar of stone, marked with five crosses, and with the characteristic Norman ornaments, was erected and consecrated with due form. A screen of wood was placed in the chancel arch to divide the people from the Throne of the adorable Mysteries.

## CHAPTER II.—THE MONASTERY.

IN the year of Grace 1235, Sir Aubrey de Kynastone, a renowned warrior, and a confidential counsellor of King Henry III., was presented by his Sovereign, for his service in the wars, with a mighty lordship, comprising Letherton and all the surrounding domain as far as the eye could reach. It was then a wild uncultivated tract of forest and fen, producing little beyond noble timber trees, and pasturage for deer, cattle, and abundance of game. There were, however, in these wild woodlands, which were seldom penetrated by the foot of man, a large Abbey, and more than one dependent priory, or smaller religious house, each maintaining around its walls a colony of agriculturists and foresters, the vassals of the monks and their superiors, whose lands, possessions, and rights were preserved strictly inviolate in the King's grant to Sir Aubrey. The Abbey was even then of very great antiquity ; but it had been destroyed by the Danes, and entirely refounded towards the close of the eleventh century, so that no part of the original building remained. Though the new lord of



the manor had no power to interfere with or in any way molest the Religious within his vast domain, yet, as it was manifestly to their interest to find in him a kind patron and protector against aggressions from other quarters, they naturally awaited with some anxiety the development of his feelings and disposition towards them. Happily they had no cause for apprehension. Sir Aubrey, though a stern old baron, whose hands and sword had been imbrued in many a hard-fought battle, and who had borne the fatigues of the long and laborious third Crusade, was a strict and conscientious churchman, far more desirous to benefit than to molest any ecclesiastical institution. At the age of sixty-five, when he first bethought himself of repose from a life of turmoil and danger, he had placed himself entirely under the spiritual governance of his venerable *capellanus*, who had held a chantry endowed by the Kynastone family, and now desired to follow his lord to his new place of abode. Gulielmus de Bardwell was the name of this priest; and the first step taken by Sir Aubrey was to send his chaplain to have an interview with the Lord Abbat of Wardley, in whose patronage was vested the church at Lether-ton, though the tithes were not impropriated, as in other cases, to the monastery, with the condition that it should provide a priest at a certain annual stipend. It was Sir Aubrey's wish to have

his own chaplain appointed to the rectory on the first vacancy ; for, as he observed, the then rector, John de Beauchamp, was getting an old and infirm man ; though in truth there was very little difference in age between the baron and the priest.

So William de Bardwell departed on his mission a few weeks before the arrival of Sir Aubrey at Letherton, to negotiate some preliminary matters respecting tithe and vassalage, as well as to convey the professions of duty and respect from his lord. He travelled on a mule, attended by a guide and three stout servants of Sir Aubrey's household ; and he arrived at Wardley on the night of the fifth day. The monastery was about a day's journey to the south of Letherton ; so he had resolved to sojourn with the monks till he had transacted his business.

It was a glorious sight, on emerging from a forest-path on the brow of a hill, to look down on that grey abbey. The moon shone clear and bright upon the dense mass of foliage which filled the valley beneath, and embosomed the monastery in its peaceful seclusion. The lofty towers of the church, with their tall wooden spires, covered with leaden plates, glistened in the pale light, and reflected back the beam as it played and lingered on the hallowed walls. The great bell Gabriel, brought from over the seas by a benefactor of the abbey, and consecrated by the hand of Pope

Innocent III., was tolling for matins, or midnight prayers ; and softly did its silver sound steal over the entranced ear of the watchful and timid inhabitants of the vale. For the lonely forest glades had an ill name among the simple and credulous people ; but the deep tone of that mighty bell was well known to all as a charm against storms and lightnings, conflagrations, meteors, and every evil influence of the powers of the air. No one failed to cross himself and say Pater noster at its heavenly note. It was the consolation and assurance against the perils of the night. How beautiful, how holy was the scene, and how unlike anything that we now behold ! The shadowy buttress and spiry pinnacle stood forth in dark relief as the light of the tapers within the church streamed through the stained windows of the choir. Soon there came forth from the cloister a long procession of vested monks, headed by the Abbat, with torches and a fair silver cross. As they slowly ascended a pathway to the door of the church, their voices could faintly be heard chaunting a Latin hymn. The priest proceeded to the gate of the abbey, when the service had commenced, in which he had arrived too late to join, and was admitted with much respect and a hearty " Save your reverence," by the keeper of the portal. Refreshments and lodgings for the night were most freely and kindly bestowed ; nor did the

Abbat retire to rest before invoking with uplifted hand a blessing on the heads of the sleeping and unconscious travellers, whose names he had never asked, and whose business and professions were alike unknown to him.

The next morning after Terce William de Bardwell was introduced to the Abbat. He sate in a small vaulted room, adjoining his private oratory, and commanding a view, from its narrow lancet lights, of the sunny woods and streams, and of a richly-carved stone cross, with curiously floriated arms and stem of saintly imagery, which stood in the centre of the abbey-garth. The cell was furnished only with a massive oaken table, a lettern desk, with parchments and writing implements, a cresset in a niche, a large chest, with ramifying hinges and locks, and several heavy and quaintly-carved chairs. It was the favourite scriptory of the Abbat; and the many precious volumes which lay open on the table and were disposed in rows on shelves seemed to show that theological literature occupied much of his attention. Here there was a folio copy of the Gospels, written on vellum, and displaying the most gorgeous illuminations. The binding was of wood, decorated with bosses of silver, some of which inclosed holy relics, and were studded with gems. There was the Sarum Missal, or office of the Church of Salisbury, which had been compiled about a cen-

ture and a half ago, and was now in general use in the church ; the history of the venerable Bede ; the Lives of various Saints ; a martyrology, and many classical and ecclesiastical authors. The groined ribs of the vault were coloured with vermilion, azure, and gold ; and the bosses at the crown were carved with deeply-cut foliage, inclosing various devices and monograms ; I H C ; a crowned M ; the Holy Lamb ; S. Oswald ; our Saviour in a Vesica Piscis ; and the arms of the abbey, Gules, a cross pattee between four lions combatant Or. On a chair by the table sat the Abbat reading, in the plain and severe undress of the Benedictine order. He rose with much courtesy at the lowly bow of the priest, but resumed his seat immediately, while the visitor stood in his presence.

“The right honourable Baron, most reverend Father,” said the priest, “my lord Sir Aubrey de Kynastone, consiliarius of late to our most gracious Sovereign King Henry, to whom his Majesty hath, as is known to your holiness, presented in perpetuity the manor and lordship of Letherton, sendeth greeting by me to the Abbat of this goodly church and monastery. He beseeches your holiness’s constant prayers and blessing for himself and his family, and desires you to accept, for the honour and benefit of this church, this small parcel of the True Wood of the most blessed Cross, the which he obtained by great favour and

privilege in foreign parts, and of the verity of which he is most assured by the miraculous cures it hath to his own certain knowledge wrought on the afflicted persons of several of the faithful; the truth whereof I can of my own sight and observance freely attest, most reverend Father, by the cure of a lame and palsied hand on the reception into the palm thereof of this blessed and salutary relick. Wherefore my lord entreats you will accept of the same in the crystal cross in which he hath caused it to be inclosed, and to place it reverently among the goodly treasures of this church. And Sir Aubrey doth venture to prefer a request, (not in any way of bribe or purchase, but as a gift of courtesy in return,) that your servant, William de Bardwell, priest, his lordship's chaplain, whom you now see before you the bearer of this petition, may be preferred on the decease of John de Beauchamp to the rectory of Letherton, where his lordship doth intend forthwith to build him a castle. Furthermore—

“Your good lord hath freely the presentation of the said rectory from us, good brother, for yourself to hold, or whomsoever his lordship shall care to appoint to the same. And for the other matters, it were well to consult on them with our brethren in the chapter-house after vespers this day, and to append our sigillum to the needful instruments and agreements between us and the

Lord Kynastone. For the present we would gladly shew you our poor hospitality, and exhibit our church and furnitures, which have a good report among such of the Regulars as from time to time visit our house."

The Abbat forthwith summoned the sacristan, and conducted the priest through a private door into the choir of the great church. They entered with a lowly bow, having first crossed themselves with the holy water in a benatura on the right side, from which the Abbat sprinkled his guest. It was a most splendid building, and had been in great part rebuilt about thirty years before. The style was the early pointed, which was in use about the year 1200; not exuberant in ornamental detail, nor very light and graceful in its proportions, but displaying a medium between massive Norman grandeur and the airy ascendancy of the more fully developed Early English compositions. The windows of the aisles and clerestory were filled with stained glass of the richest hues, mostly of mosaic pattern, having foliage and geometric devices hatched in strong black lines on a ground of a greenish colour. Various-shaped medallions of gold, ruby, and azure were intermixed, in which were pictured the lives and miracles of many holy saints, with a legend below each in Lombardic characters. The eastern triplet of lancets was a gorgeous work. It was one vast

blaze of glorious portraiture, executed at a great cost, and yet glowing with the undimmed brightness which we cannot now observe in windows some hundred years old. The subjects were, the five Joyful, the five Dolorous, and the five Glorious Mysteries, in successive medallions on a diapered ground. The roof was groined in stone, and curiously painted in divers brilliant colours. The high altar was raised on many steps; it was of stone, supported on gilt pillars, and had a rich cloth of golden tissue hanging partly over the front, where it was met by a frontal of crimson embroidery, and nearly to the ground on each side. Curtains of baudekin (a rich stuff of silk and gold thread) were suspended from the ciborium, or canopy above. At the back of the altar was a rare painting of our Saviour rising, in a *Vesica Piscis*, adoring Angels on either side extending their wings and heads over a reliquary. Above, and on each side, were foliage and flowers carved in the stone, all gilded and coloured. On the altar stood a large golden cross, sparkling with rubies and emeralds inlaid, a tabernacle of gold and crystal for the reception of the Host, and two mighty candlesticks of solid silver, with waxen tapers upon the prickets. The floor was paved throughout with tiles, alternately bearing a fleur-de-lis, and the arms of the abbey and of the founder. There were no carved stalls, such as we



see in cathedral choirs of later date ; but low wooden frames, elaborately decorated with arcades and carved foliage, extended along each side within the range of the piers ; a more elevated throne being erected for the Abbat towards the east end. Five stone sedilia, of rich design, with moulded arches and shafts of polished Purbeck marble, were constructed in the south wall next the altar, for the use of the priests at high Mass and great festivals. There were several aumbryes or closets in the walls, with oaken doors, and floriated iron hinges. These were opened in succession by the sacristan at the command of the Abbat, and the splendid jewelled chalices, crosses, thuribles, pyxes, and tabernacles, were displayed before the admiring eyes of the priest. Then the Abbat proceeded to the revestry, where the sacristan unlocked a huge circular cedar chest, clamped with iron-work, which ramified in scrolls and fleurs-de-lis over every part, and unrolled the priestly vestments used on the high festivals. Here was a chasuble of the deepest crimson velvet, diapered and embroidered with gold thread, and bearing the monogram IHC in countless quatrefoiled circles all over the exterior surface. Here was a blue, here a green vestment, sewn with seed pearls on gold thread ; here one of white silk, with lilies and spread eaglets, worked in alternate patterns. There was a rich cope, there a stole ; all were ex-

quisite as they were varied in device. Some costly specimens of embroidery were produced, worked by the fair hands of the ladies De Lacy, relations of a former benefactor, Hugh de Lacy. One large piece of tapestry, inwoven with passages from the life and passion of S. Catherine, was the result of six years' unwearied labour, early and late, for the honour of the church. In the midst of the pavement the convent had laid down a huge brass effigy, six feet in length, in memory of the said Hugh, their illustrious patron; a kind of monument then but recently introduced. He was represented in full armour, in mailed hauberk drawn over his head like a hood, surcoat, baudrick, shield, and prick-spurs. The shield and surcoat were charged with his arms, the hands were clasped over the breast, the sheathed sword lay by his side, and his feet rested on a couchant lion. The legend was cut in Lombardic characters round the edge of the marble slab, in which the effigy was infixed. Every letter was inlaid with brass, and the inscription ran thus :

✠ Hic jacet Hugo de Lacy, miles, qui hanc ecclesiam denuo ædificari fecit. Cujus animæ propicietur Deus. Amen.

Under a low arch in the north wall lay a recumbent effigy of Galfridus de Rocheford, a former Abbat of the church, and a man of noted piety and

mortification. The figure was of Purbeck marble, exquisitely wrought and highly polished. The pastoral staff was held in the right hand : the lower end inserted in the mouth of a dragon, typifying Sin subdued by the power of the Church. The left hand held a clasped book. The head lay within a trefoiled canopy of the most delicate foliage, which blended with the long curling hair, and extended in clusters down each of the sides, thus beautifully symbolizing the evergreen life of the Resurrection. The pastoral staff was adorned with real gems ; and the orphrey, or border of the chasuble, which was diapered all over in low relief, was richly coloured with effigies of saints. Several plain coped coffin-lids, and sepulchral floor crosses, each with a brief inscription specifying the name of the deceased, but without date, were laid down in various parts of the church. There was one touching memorial to a Lady de Lacy, who had died in childbirth, and been allowed sepulture in the church as akin to a benefactor. It was a thick slab inserted in the pavement, at the top of which, in a sunken quatrefoil, a female head and wimpled neck lay peacefully inclosed a little below the level of the surface. About the waist, a trefoil of smaller dimensions revealed the form of a newly-born child. Both mother and baby had clasped hands and closed eyes ; and the device was affectingly beautiful. For the soul of each

and every of the sleeping saints the priest failed not to utter a prayer, knowing that they had departed in the Faith, and that the whole Church, visible and invisible, is One, and for that One it became every Christian, especially every priest, continually to pray. In truth, even the tombs and effigies of the deceased seemed to the brotherhood of the abbey still the familiar companions of the living. A temporary separation was all that they saw in death: the same daily prayers and hymns, and the same Mass in which they had joined when alive, were said over the graves of the departed. They were still one in the communion of Spirits.

And now a costly and most precious reliquary, or portable shrine, was drawn from beneath the high altar, and reverently and breathlessly opened. It was a chest of wood, inlaid with ivory and silver, having a candlestick at every corner of its ridge or roof-like cover. It was finely gilt and diapered, and had hinges, lock, and handles, of elaborate scroll-work or filigree. It contained several relics of great value and reputed virtue; amongst which, as not the least in esteem, was now deposited by the hands of the Abbat himself the crystal cross of the Lord Kynastone, with great reverence and joy.

The church, the library, the cloisters, the dormitory, and the various offices and treasures of the

monastery having been visited, William de Bardwell entered the refectory about noon to partake of the ordinary daily fare with the brethren, having declined the hospitality of the Abbat's private table. It was a noble room, a hundred feet in length, vaulted with stone internally, and covered outside with a high-pitched roof of timber and lead. It was lighted on each side by couplets of lancet-windows, between tall and massive buttresses. Below them, both within and without, a string-course was carried round ; immediately under which, internally, a trefoil-headed arcade arose on detached marble shafts from a low stone base or podium, about two feet above the level of the floor, so as to form a seat under every arch. The walls were four feet in thickness, and the gay sunbeam which struggled through the stained glass was reflected on the heavy internal splays and frescoed walls with the finest effect. A great picture of the Crucifixion adorned one end of the room. The Abbat himself dined there that day, and presided at the meal. Not less than one hundred brethren dined at once in this noble frater-house. There was neither luxury nor superfluity of provision. Bread, cheese, fish, eggs, and dried venison, with ale and cider, was the repast. Grace was said by a novice, followed by a benediction from the Abbat. During the meal, passages from the Scriptures were read by a monk from a stone pulpit

in one angle of the building. Afterwards the brethren retired to the cloisters : the priest returned to transact further business with the Abbat.

## CHAPTER III.—THE NEW CHURCH.

EARLY on the third morning William de Bardwell was on his route towards Letherton, whither the Lord Kynastone was himself expected to arrive in a very few days. He was the bearer of a broad parchment, signed by the Abbat, and having appended to it, by a strip of the same material, an impression in wax of the great seal of the abbey. The shape of the seal was a pointed oval. On one side was King Oswald, seated on a throne with triple canopy, holding a sceptre in his hand. Round the margin were the letters SIGILLUM SANCTI OSWALDI GLORIOSI REGIS ET MARTYRIS DE WARDLEY. Below were the arms of the abbey. On the reverse were SS. Peter and Paul standing under similar canopies ; the legend was s. COMUNE ABBATIS ET CONVENTUS MON. APOSTOLORUM PETRI ET PAVLI. In the lower part, a half figure of an Abbat with a pastoral staff. The ground on each side was richly diapered, and the canopies crocketed in the usual Early English style. The first care of the priest on his return was to inspect the condition and present appurtenances of

the church at Letherton, which he did in company with the rector, John de Beauchamp. For the Lord Kynastone had made this the first and special object of inquiry ; secretly resolving that he would fully adorn, endow, and furnish the church, to the very best of his means, before he came to reside in the castle at Letherton. When, therefore, a report was duly sent by his chaplain, setting forth the mean and unworthy condition (so he termed it, though it would have put to shame most modern churches,) of the sacred fabric, and adding a humble but earnest request from the rector, that his lord would be pleased to execute certain necessary repairs and improvements forthwith, that he might see the church which he loved before all earthly things renovated and beautified, and then lay his bones in peace by the side of the altar ; some surprise and disappointment were felt by the old incumbent, on receiving a short and seemingly discourteous refusal of what he considered a duty in the new lord, and, therefore, a most reasonable request. But the chaplain well knew the humour of the baron ; nor did he share in the rector's amazement at the arrival in a very short time of a company of freemasons, and the speedy demolition of the old church, of which nothing was suffered to stand except the Saxon tower, as a memorial of its first origin and foundation. For this



procedure the baron had privately obtained the necessary permission.

Active preparation was now made for the erection of an entirely new chancel, nave, and aisles, on a large and costly scale. The masons, possessing the secrets of that extraordinary craft, by which they erected in the conventional style of the day, and without the smallest departure from rule in the carvings, mouldings, and details, every ecclesiastical building throughout the kingdom, worked rather by oral direction, than by regular plans and elevations. The director of the men merely pointed out the place for a door, or a window, or a column, and sketched roughly on a board, or on the stone itself, the section of a moulding, or the plan of an arch, and the design was unerringly executed by them without further difficulty or delay. Little attention was paid to the accurate measurement of every line ; general proportions, rather than close coincidence of parts, seemed to be the care of the builders. Frequently the chief *cementarius* would come and survey the work, as the walls rose gradually in height, and, scanning with intelligent eye the different points of perspective and effect, would order this arch to be more acute, this to be more obtuse ; one window to be a little shorter and wider in the splay, one to be divided by a mullion, one to have a trefoiled head, and so on. He seldom placed the windows

precisely opposite to each other, so as to produce a cross light ; but he so disposed them that dark and light should as much as possible alternate and relieve each other by contrast from opposite sides. The stones used in the work were all of small size, and the walls were not carried up very high ; for they had not the tackle and scaffolding which we are accustomed to use. They were content with boughs and timbers procured on the spot ; the long and light poles which we consider indispensable were not easily procured in every locality, and the expense of their conveyance was out of the question. Meanwhile a noble roof of oak had been framed on the ground, and awaited the completion and proper settlement of the walls. It would have seemed to us very tall for a wooden roof, being of nearly the same height as the walls themselves, so that it formed a very acute angle at the ridge. The construction was simple, but scientific and secure. A series of upright rafters, set closely together, sloped to a point at the ridge ; and every two such beams were secured from spreading apart by a collar, or horizontal bar extended across about midway ; and these again were connected with the feet of the rafters by slanting braces fastened with wooden pins. Then the whole frame was boarded outside with stout oak planks, which held every part firmly together ; and so it was covered at a great expense with

thick sheets of lead. While the roof was being fixed on the church, a number of men were engaged in working out the hollow mouldings, the projecting ornament which we call *dog-tooth*, and the foliated capitals: for most of these had been left in the block, that is, in solid stone, till the fabric was reared. It was surprising to observe how perfectly the masons appeared to understand their business without either drawings or a word of instruction. You might see a shapeless lump of stone left at the top of a column gradually expand under the magic touch of the artist's chisel into the most exquisite bunches of flowers, which seemed to start into life from out the solid mass, and to curl and creep and cluster in a thousand fantastic knots and interlacing excrescences. Then the doorways were amazing to behold. The highest powers of a never-failing genius seemed to be exerted in their design and enrichment. They freely invented; in fact, scarcely any two details were actually the same; yet all were perfectly consistent in general appearance and contour. The recessed and retiring arches were filled with rows of dog-tooth and nail-head inserted between groups of deep hollow mouldings. Some were almost hidden, and seemed to peer forth from their channelled nooks: but they were not the less carefully cut for all that; for nothing inferior was permitted in building a

House of God. The shafts which supported each group on either side were of bright polished marble, and stood detached from the jambs, so that you could insert your hand behind them, which gave a deep shadowy effect, and implied constructive utility rather than a merely ornamental arrangement. The doors were of solid oak, framed with stout cross-bars internally, with planks nailed over them on the outside. The whole surfaces were covered by the iron hinges, which were curiously hammered out into the most graceful curves and scroll patterns; thus at once clamping together the different planks, and relieving the unsightly appearance of a heavy iron bar. Round the edge of the south door was carved in the oak : JOHANNES . DE . BEAUCHAMP . RECTOR . ECCLESIE . DE . LETHERTON . HANC . JANUAM . EX . SUO . SUMPTU . FIERI . FECIT. This was the worthy present of the old man to his own parish church; and if the reader has been to Castor, near Peterborough, he may have observed a similar donation of an oak door, a hundred years older than the days of John de Beauchamp.

The floor of the church was laid down with highly-glazed square tiles, in each of which a little ornament was impressed. Those of the chancel were arranged in various geometric devices, by means of circular, square, or triangular pieces. Near the altar they were all encaustic,

or inlaid with patterns of a different colour. In the chancel wall, to the north of the altar, was constructed a beautiful trefoil-arched recess, within which was an oblong mass of masonry, raised about a foot above the ground, and surmounted by a slab of dark marble. Upon it was sculptured in relief a cross pattée, with tender leaves sprouting forth at intervals from the stem. Around the margin the following legend was incised :

✠ Hic jacet ~~Sine~~ Aubrey de Kynastone, miles, hujus eccl'ie novator. Cujus animæ propicietur Deus. Amen.

And the old baron often delighted to point out to his guests the simple and unostentatious monument he had prepared during his lifetime for the privileged sepulture which he hoped to obtain under the chancel wall.

There was at that time a far-famed manufactory for stained glass established at York, the wonderful works of which may yet be traced (alas ! how mutilated their remains !) in the cathedral and parish churches of that city. Thither Sir Aubrey dispatched an order for the immediate preparation of seventeen lancet windows for the new church. The subjects were selected and specified in detail by members of Sir Aubrey's family. To the eldest daughter and heir-

ess, the Lady Etheldreda de Kynastone, was entrusted the choice of a convenient imagery to adorn the three great altar windows. For the central light, which was fifteen feet high by one and a half wide, the following designs were wrought. In the middle was a large Vesica Piscis, in which, on a clear deep azure ground, was depicted with great majesty the Saviour, holding in one hand a globe, and raising the other in benediction. Round the head was a golden nimbus, or glory, quartered with a cross pattée. The robe was of the deepest ruby, all diapered in curious patterns; and in the clear blue twinkled the golden stars of night. Above was the Resurrection; below, the Crucifixion; each in a medallion enclosed by a circlet of ruby. The ground was of very thick white glass arranged in mosaic panes; a vine-tree with its leaves and tendrils seemed to climb over every part, and blend its clear black lines with the deep colouring of the medallions and border. The side lancet on the right contained the Annunciation and the Assumption of our Lady; St. Anne teaching our Lady to read; the holy Mother and Child, the former with triple crown, the latter with nimbus as before. The window to the left contained passages from the life of S. Etheldreda, the tutelary saint of the Lady de Kynastone. Under each device was written in characters of gold colour,

*Sancta Etheldritha* : and at the lower part of the window was *Orate pro bono statu Etheldrithe de Kynastone que hanc fenestram fieri fecit*. The side windows of the church contained pictures of the martyrdoms of Aedbert and S. Winifride; the invention, by their mutual intercession, of the miraculous spring; the passion of S. Catharine; the first Abbat of Wardley; the founder, Gislibertus de Gaunt, Earl of Lincoln; S. Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury; Our Saviour delivering the keys to S. Peter; S. John Baptist; S. Benedict, with staff, chasuble, and mitre; S. Nicolas; and other holy saints and personages, whose lives and actions, set forth in lively portraiture, might inspire the hearts of all beholders to follow their blessed example. The interior of the roof was painted in various patterns with foliage and sacred emblems. The tower contained a tunable ring of eight new bells, each having a legend and the name of a saint.

On the internal walls of the church were depicted in fresco many Scripture subjects. The stem of Jesse; the martyrdom of S. Stephen: the Doom, on the west side of the chancel arch, above the crown of which appeared the Saviour sitting on a rainbow, attended by our Lady and S. John Baptist; while on the right and the left was the resurrection of the just and the unjust. All the people of the earth, kings, bishops, priests,

knights, were rising from the grave ; naked, for they brought nothing into this world ; and each with his badge of dignity, shewing that *all* must one day there appear. Opposite the south doorway was S. Christopher, a giant eight feet high, bearing the infant Saviour on his shoulders. He was walking with an uprooted tree through a stream of water, in which many fishes were seen to play in sportive shoals around the feet of the Saint. All round the cornice of the nave roof ran a legend in bold characters : *Domine dilexi decorem domus tue*. In the chancel : *Sanguis meus novi Testamenti pro multis effunditur in remissionem peccatorum*. Below, and extending round the arches, and partly down the jambs of the lancet windows, curled foliage was painted in gold, azure, and vermilion, most beautiful to behold ; for it harmonized with the glowing windows and pavement, and rendered all one richly toned and subdued effulgence of celestial brightness. A chantry chapel with an altar was erected by Sir Aubrey, that after his departure masses might be said daily for the weal of his soul ; a most rich and costly building, separated by a screen of carved oak from the east end of the north aisle. Here, on a bracket in the wall, was a silver image of the Blessed Virgin ; and a *corona lucis*, or chandelier, hung from the roof, which threw its faint light through a hagnoscope



upon the founder's tomb by the altar side. The pavement was of tiles, charged with the Kynastone arms indented in the surface of each ; and a brave silken banner, with the same bearings, a sword, spurs, and hauberk, all which Sir Aubrey had worn in many a battle, were suspended against the wall, in token that he had resigned war for the repose of domestic life, and danger and strife for the consolations and discipline of the Church. It was a solemn scene to enter the holy doors by the light of the moon, where all within was still and awful, and a holy Presence seemed to sanctify the repose around. Sir Aubrey visited the church in the late evening, when the work was completed and ready for consecration, attended by the old rector. He saw a tear on that ancient man's cheek, as he left it in silence, scarcely able to articulate the words : "I had not hoped to live to see this."

## CHAPTER IV.—THE CASTLE.

ON the lordship of Letherton stood a large Norman castle. It had been built by a former possessor of the estate ; and had lately been forfeited to the crown by a rebellious descendant bearing arms against his sovereign. While the church was rebuilding, not less extensive had been the work of improvement and enlargement at the castle. The moat was cleared and deepened ; the portcullis newly shod with pointed iron ; the keep, which had been much injured in a desperate siege, repaired and strengthened ; the drawbridge hung anew ; the mighty dining-hall restored, roofed, and hung with banners, arms, hunting implements, and trophies of the chase. The dais was loaded by a mighty table of carved black oak ; the fire-place, huge and vast, encircled with brilliant heraldries, and filled with great andirons, or fire-dogs, seemed prepared for the reception and speedy consumption of logs of timber of a size unknown to the forestless estates of modern days. New turrets of great size were raised high above the embrasures of the

flanking walls; for the domestic rather than the military conveniences were the baron's chief care in the work, and he had to provide for the maintenance of a large and powerful baronial retinue. The castle was built on a hill overlooking the vale and village of Letherton. The approach was all but impregnable from the ingenious disposition and great strength of the outworks. The path which led to the barbican was very steep and narrow: the portal itself, under a dark lowering archway, lay between two large circular towers, and was guarded by a portcullis. Immediately behind it was the door, of solid oak, framed with immense timbers a foot in thickness, and clamped with iron bolts. Both the portcullis and the outside of the door were covered with iron plates to resist the effects of fire. Within the soffit of the arch were three large holes, by means of which great stones, scalding water, and molten lead, could be poured from the battlements with fatal precision on the assailants below. Beside this, the projecting parapets of the two flanking towers were machicolated for the same purpose. Two narrow loopholes, or balistraria, opened transversely in the side of the towers, from which a shower of arrows and bolts could be discharged by crossbowmen safely ensconced within, so close that the aim was certain and the effect inevitable upon the enemy,

while they were themselves protected from harm by the peculiar conformation of the internal splay. Thus the drawbridge and moat being passed amidst a storm of arrows from the battlements above and sally-port below, the steep pathway must be climbed in the face of the same missiles, ground must be maintained between the towers in front of the portal, in defiance of hot lead from above and bolts from either side, whilst first a portcullis, then a door, which neither axe could cleave nor fire could burn, was fruitlessly assailed. If these were at length overcome by dauntless bravery and perseverance, there still remained the great square keep in the centre of the inclosure, with solid walls twelve feet in thickness, to capture or demolish. Surely human means of preservation could scarcely go beyond this. Yet craft was superadded to strength. More than one other portal, of precisely similar appearance, but presenting a much more favourable point for attack, were so constructed as to induce the enemy to begin the siege and expend their strength on the most hopeless, because, in reality, the strongest, part in the whole building. In fact, these gateways were mere deceptions; the towers being solid, and the wall behind the portcullis impenetrable. Sir Aubrey was still the old soldier by habit and natural predilection, and he would descant by the hour upon the for-

tifications of his castle with little less pleasure than upon the splendours of his new church.

Early on a morning of May, A.D. 1238, the inhabitants of the castle were awakened by a shrill blast from the warder's trumpet on the outer walls. A train of domestics, headed by the senechal, forthwith issued from the castle-gates: the drawbridge was let down, and with bare heads the band of menials awaited the approach of a goodly company of ecclesiastics whom the sentinel had descried wending their way to the castle. It was Robert Grostête, Bishop of Lincoln, accompanied by the Abbat of Wardley, with their respective attendants. The object of the Bishop's visit was the consecration of the new church of Letherton, on his route to which place he had spent a night at the abbey, and brought with him the Abbat, who was desirous of paying his respects in person to his good friend and patron the powerful baron of Letherton. The Bishop and Abbat rode side by side on their palfreys, preceded by two clerics, one bearing the pastoral staff, the other a silver cross with a silken *vexillum*, or flag. "Peace be to this honourable household!" said the Bishop, raising his right hand in benediction, while each head bowed lowly at his approach. Several of the retainers of the castle kneeled to receive individually the blessing which was freely bestowed upon all.

“Is the good lord of the castle within, with whom we would fain speak?” The seneschal replied with a lowly obeisance, and retired. Presently was seen advancing from the inner *ballium* the Lord Kynastone himself, who with much courtesy and reverential demeanour escorted the guests into the interior of the castle. The morning meal of bread, eggs, fish, game, and venison, with milk, wine, mead, and strong ale, was offered to the illustrious visitors, who partook sparingly of the viands before them, though they heartily praised the hospitality of the host, and greatly admired the furniture and arrangements of his hall. At the request of the Abbat, they were afterwards conducted over the principal parts of the vast building: the dungeon, a long and dark room, vaulted with ribbed arches of stone, and entered only by a small door at one end, and from above by a deep dry well of smooth masonry, by which prisoners were let down; the keep, the chapel, the warder’s tower, the walls. In the centre of the keep was a well of fearful depth. It had been sunk by the builder of the castle, and descended full three hundred feet through the solid limestone rock. The whiteness of the sides could be faintly discerned for a few fathoms below the surface; all beyond was lost in profound darkness. A pebble dropped into the middle was heard again and again to rebound

with sullen clang against the sides, till in about half a minute the faint sound became inaudible, and the distant plash of deep water alone reached the ear. Tradition said, that about halfway down this well was the mouth of a subterranean passage extending to the church ; but no one was found hardy enough to descend, for it was reported that about a hundred years ago the attempt had been made, when suddenly, and without the least noise of any fall, the rope to which the adventurer was attached was released, and drawn up disengaged from its burden ; nor had he ever been heard of since. But no one would draw water from that well alone at night ; for fearful tales were whispered of strange appearances on the spot.

Ascending a steep staircase through a low Norman arch, and between narrow walls, the Lord Kynastone knocked softly at a small door. It was opened by a female servant ; and the Bishop and the Abbat found themselves unexpectedly in the presence of the Lady Etheldreda. She was young, and very fair ; but an air of placid melancholy, and perhaps ill health, or the effects of protracted study, sate upon her brow. She received the guests with that respectful courtesy and affectionate regard which is felt by a devoted daughter of the Church towards its saintly ministers. As she knelt to receive their united blessing, her eye was instinctively turned towards a

small silver crucifix which stood upon a stone bracket in the wall : and the good Bishop failed not to note that the ground before it was worn by the knees of this holy maid. She was pleased, she said, that they had condescended to visit her little oriel, which she had not hoped ever to see thus highly honoured ; but it would be yet dearer to her from that day. Yet to view such a bower and such an inhabitant might angels have come ; as, perhaps, they often did. It was a quaint little apartment, vaulted with stone, and dimly lighted by a stained window, which looked from a height over the pleasant country, and the little herbary or garden of simples and medicinal plants which she reared for the use of the castle and the neighbourhood. The floor was paved with beautiful encaustic tiles, over a part of which was thrown a warm woollen carpet of heraldic device, the work of her own hands ; and on a fawn-skin by the fire reclined in amicable companionship a favourite lapdog and a little kid. The bare walls of smooth masonry were covered with tapestry, representing the miraculous events in the life of S. Etheldreda : her marriage and subsequent virginity ; her preservation from pursuit ; the flowering staff ; her inthronization as Abbess by S. Wilfrid ; her death, appearance, and disinterment. On the table lay open an illuminated breviary, which she was painting with great pains



and the most exquisite skill for the use of the new church. The Abbat wrote with his own hand, in a style which shewed his perfect knowledge of the art, two or three lines from an open copy, and sketched out the form of an initial letter containing, among its minute ornaments, as a memento of his brief visit, the words *Johann. Abbas de Wardley*. She stood looking over his shoulder as he wrote, pleased and flattered at the compliment from so great a man, and perhaps thinking to derive instruction in an art which none knew better than herself. The old baron shewed the greatest affection for his daughter, to whose apartment he used regularly to repair twice each day; for she liked not the noise and confusion of the castle, and seldom joined the family in the great hall, but remained apart in the seclusion of the little cell which had been assigned for her use. Here she would spend the long days in quiet meditation, sometimes with the old chaplain, her confessor, sometimes with her maid, a humble orphan, yet a friend. Sometimes, in the silent evening, she might be seen gliding along the old avenues, or walking in the herbarry: often she used to sit under the green yew in the churchyard, and look now at the half-built church, now at the old grey cross, now at the lowly graves, till her eyes filled with tears. Some people said that she was distraught; others

that she had been deceived : some that a gay lover had been slain beyond seas. But it was not so. It was not earthly love that she desired. One fair sister lay dead near that cross in a far distant churchyard ; and the peace of the Church was all she sought, till the souls that were never parted below should be united in heaven.

“ You have chosen a good part, my daughter,” said the Bishop ; “ but how brooks my lord your father this seclusion from the hall which you should adorn and the pageant you were born to grace ? Hath the dance and the blithe woods, the falconrie and the course, no charms for thee ? Thou art young ; but there is a blight on that brow : doth no worldly care disturb thy thoughts, no disappointment rankle in thy breast ? Why this cloud upon thy gentle countenance ? for truly the stain of sin is not on such as thou, nor is penance, and the grace of Absolution committed to us by the Church, for a conscience as free from guile as thine : else methinks my good lord Abbat should e’en be thy confessor, and my willing office would it be to confer on thee the blessing of the Church, of which thou art the most dutiful and affectionate daughter.” So saying, he laid his left hand on her fair hair, and raising three fingers of his right he solemnly pronounced the Apostolic Benediction.

The Lady Etheldreda crossed herself, and

pointing to two small silver images of the saint her namesake and the blessed Virgin, she said, "These, my lord, are goodly subjects for my poor thoughts, as their blessed deeds are for the portraiture of my poor hands,—*hand*, I should say," she added, smiling, and at the same time withdrawing from a black riband the fingers of her left, which were terribly withered, and had been crippled from her birth.

"My poor Ethel," said her father, embracing her tenderly, "therein is my thorn, yet perchance thy blessing. By my sword, none shall ever molest thee, nor thwart thine own choice! Fare thee well, my Ethel; and forget not to be present betimes on the morrow at the consecration of the church, which thou hast seen finished at length, and knowest to be a right goodly structure, after thine own heart's desire and thy old father's best means." So saying, the baron and his guests left the lady's bower.

## CHAPTER V.—THE CONSECRATION.

EARLY the next morning a concourse of people had assembled at the church of Letherton, awaiting the arrival of the party from the castle. At the time appointed the Bishop and the Abbat, attended by several priests and deacons, both secular and regular, were seen to approach. A splendid processional cross of silver was carried before them. The Bishop held his pastoral staff in his left hand; it was made of a reddish wood, shaped like a ram's head at the top, with the inscription on a brass plate below the neck: *Per. baculi. formam. prelati. discite. normam.* After the body of the ecclesiastics came the Lord Kynastone, leading his daughter Etheldreda on his arm, and escorting the members of his family and the several guests who had been invited to attend the ceremony. When all had taken their places near the church, preparations were made for opening the grave of the Martyr Aedbert, who had lain buried on the site of the old church nearly four centuries. This preliminary was necessary, because no altar could be duly conse-

crated without holy relics : it being requisite to deposit some portion of the body, vesture, bones, or blood, of a saint or martyr in a cavity called the *sigillum* beneath the altar-stone. The exact place had ever been carefully marked, and facilities afforded by the builders of the new church for opening the grave. Removing the soil to the depth of four feet, they came to a rude vault of large sandstones, with a cross, and the figure of a lance, the instrument of the martyrdom, incised on the lid which covered the body. The lid was raised, while each one pressed anxiously to view the bones of the holy man who had died manfully for the Faith. But neither bones nor dust did they behold. To the joyful surprise of all, there lay the body, fresh and fair as if it had just departed. It was not discoloured, nor tainted by corruption, nor even rigid and immoveable in death. The very wounds appeared as if recently inflicted, and the blood seemed yet to exude from the gaping flesh.

The Bishop raised his hand, and with a countenance lighted by undoubting faith, turned to the Lady Etheldreda, and said, " Step forward, my daughter, and lay thine hand on the relics of this holy man." Then he prayed with a loud voice, " We beseech Thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe to us a sign and token that Thou dost graciously accept the death of this Martyr for the Faith

of Thy Holy Church ; and grant that for JESUS' sake we may be strengthened to follow the good example of Thy blessed saints, Amen." Immediately the crippled hand was restored to its full vigour, the arm strengthened, and the joint relaxed : and the people who all witnessed the miracle, raised a shout of joy and thanksgiving. A small portion of the martyr's vest, moistened with the blood, was removed and placed in a recess under the altar-stone ; the coffin-lid was then replaced and the grave closed.

After this the Bishop proceeded with the ceremony of consecration. First he walked thrice round the outside of the church, followed by the priests and people, and sprinkling the walls with holy water from a branch of hyssop. As he passed the south door each time, he struck it with his staff, and said, " Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." A deacon within the church each time responded, " Who is the King of Glory?" and the third time the deacon opened the door and the Bishop entered alone, the people answering, " The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory." The Bishop on entering said, " Peace be to this house." After that the Litany was sung, and a cross made on the pavement by the Bishop, who then proceeded to the altar, and walking round it seven times,

touched with the hyssop the crosses cut upon the upper surface of the slab, and anointed them with chrism. He next anointed in the same manner the twelve dedication crosses marked upon the outer walls, before each of which a lighted candle was placed. Then the whole church was sprinkled and censed, till it was filled with a cloud of perfumes : lastly, the deed of endowment, by which Sir Aubrey annexed for ever certain lands of the lordship to the Rectory of Letherton, was read, and deposited, with the Bishop's written document of consecration, beneath the high altar. The people were then dismissed with the Bishop's benediction, and the whole company, including guests, retainers, and parishioners, returned to a great feast at the castle. Ethel retired to her bower, and offered her thanksgivings to God for the signal mercy she had that day experienced.

Forty years afterwards, a fair canopied monument was erected in the chantry of Letherton church. The wall behind and underneath was powdered with gold fleurs de lis on a blue ground ; the crockets and sculptured ornaments of the cusps and spandrils were richly gilt. On each side of the canopy arose elegant groups of buttressed pinnacles. On a marble slab reclined a female effigy in Caen stone, in the garb of an Abbess ; the staff or crook was supported by the

left arm : the hands were clasped in prayer over the breast. The wimple covered the neck and chin, and the modest drapery which enveloped the spare frame was disposed with touching simplicity and exquisite effect. At the head, which lay on a double cushion, two kneeling angels with outspread wings were represented with censers, censuring the deceased. The front of the high tomb upon which the figure lay was divided by crocketed canopies and delicate shafts into twelve compartments, containing effigies in stone of as many saints ; among whom S. Etheldreda holding a lily in her hand, and our blessed Lady, were conspicuous. A short inscription round the edge of the marble stated in French that Etheldreda de Kynastone died Abbess of the Convent of S. Marie Overie at C——.



## CHAPTER VI.—THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

TIME had long laid the bones of Sir Aubrey in the grave which he had prepared for their reception. For many a year cressets were kept burning night and day over his tomb and that of the Abbess his daughter ; and daily Mass was said by a priest for the repose of their souls. At all hours the doors of the church were kept open ; so that the people might have free access to the house of prayer. Often you might have seen a solitary form kneeling on the floor of the nave (for none but the clergy might enter the chancel) or pacing the dim aisle, now paved with many a Lombardic coffin-stone, and inlaid with many a shining brass. A hundred years had passed since the consecration of the church ; but they had not brought either neglect or decay : on the contrary, each possessor of the castle seemed to think it his duty to make some improvement, or add some enrichment to his parish church. In place of the old chancel screen, a magnificent new work, with the proper appurtenances of Rood and Rood-loft, was erected. The former partition was only an ar-

cade on banded shafts, rising about nine feet from the floor: the new one displayed all the elaborate device of the fully developed Decorated or Edwardian period. It consisted of a central entrance, under a cinquefoiled arch, with doors opening inwards to the chancel, and five narrower compartments on each side. A spider's web carved in wood could scarcely surpass the airy texture of the spandril traceries; it was a wondrous piece of art, presented to the church by Sir John de Kynastone and the Lady Dorothy as a thank-offering on the birth of their son and heir. Over each compartment was a beautiful canopy, of acute triangular form, crocketed and finialed, and enriched with creeping vine-leaves, birds, and clustering foliage. The lower part of the screen was filled up with solid panels, on each of which was a costly painting, on a gold diaper ground, of a Saint with his appropriate symbol, done in lively colours. The mullions and spaces around the panels were powdered with cinquefoils, ermines, fleurs de lis, and cross crosslets of azure and vermilion. Above was reared high aloft, the devotion and humble adoration of all worshippers, the great Rood or Crucifix, filling the space of the chancel arch nearly to the crown. It was of dark oak, richly carved, and bearing at the extremities of the arms the Evangelistic symbols. Upon the carved pedestals on each side

of the foot were smaller figures of our Lady and S. John. An ascent to the Rood-loft in which it was placed was formed by the addition of a turret at the north-west angle of the chancel, containing a circular stone staircase, and a fine convenience above for stepping through the upper door into the loft. A second chantry altar was erected and endowed at the east end of the south aisle, which was screened off with carved wood-work on the north and west sides. Elaborate niches, brackets, piscina, and aumbry were added as the usual appurtenances. A new Decorated window of two lights was inserted in place of the original single lancet, and filled with stained glass.

This was the glorious age of Church architecture. It was the climax beyond which Christian art was never carried. Though all that riches, devoted piety, and sublime talents could effect was done to sustain its consummate excellence, it followed the universal law, and, having once reached perfection, began gradually to decline. We, who see nothing around us but the wrecks of ancient art, have some difficulty in forming an accurate idea of the extreme architectural and decorative magnificence which prevailed at this period. It may however be fearlessly asserted, that not only were the Abbey and the Cathedral of gorgeous beauty and wealth incalculable, but every parish

church was proportionately adorned. Let us step, for an example of the former class of sacred edifices, into the Lady Chapel at Ely, a place which now exhibits the desolation of Protestantism perhaps more painfully than any building in the kingdom. Examine any one of its hundred canopied *sedilia*; but your enraptured gaze must dwell for an hour upon it, before you can comprehend its beauties, or your eye can scan the whole of its exuberant details. Look first at the exquisite mouldings and panellings of the polished Purbeck shafts and buttresses below; then admire the minute images, the crisp bunches of hollow foliage, carved like ivory balls with almost microscopic nicety. Lastly, see the thick flakes of gold which overlay them, and the bright, varied colouring which may yet be traced under the coats of modern whitewash. Then view the spangled vault, once glowing with stars and golden bosses; the windows, which were filled with the richest stained glass, as their scanty and obliterated fragments still attest; observe the countless compartments of tracery within tracery, and canopy above canopy, which climb even to the ceiling. You must not think of the walls as they are now, encrusted with patches of marble, and monumental tablets of every conceivable pagan device; nor of the floor as it is now, partitioned into a crowded heap of square deal pues. The vestiges of ancient work-

manship which have not been hewn away by the axe and the chisel, must be minutely observed, if the mind would truly realize the splendour which the eye now desiderates. Again, imagine Lincoln or Westminster in its glory. There are many parts of these, and indeed of every Cathedral, where a single square yard of sculptured detail exhibits the labour of months ; where a niche, or a canopy, or a moulded base, must have been the task of many a long and toilsome week. The aggregate cost of any one such building would now be almost incredible. Take the first of that long series of high tombs, with its panellings, its canopies, its effigies : the jewelled mitre and ring, the painted orphrey, the gilded crocket : look up under the dark canopy : there is gold and colour and intricate groining, though man's eye was never likely to behold it. The pavement was once of coloured tiles, or mosaics, in which an hundred latten effigies and crosses shone resplendent. You may still see the marble slabs, reft of their metal : the boss faint with its faded gold ; the canopy deprived of its silver Saint ; the window without its ancient hues. Go again to the village-church. In the time of the Edwards alone thousands of these were built throughout the land. It is certain, and may be proved by actual examination in numberless instances, that even these, however remote, generally possessed the

most exquisite decorations. The art of painting, whether in oil on wood, in distemper on walls, or encaustic on glass, was then carried to very great perfection, and was quite common in every church. In most cases, perhaps, the internal walls were coloured either with patterns or pictorial subjects; such as the Crucifixion, the Doom, S. Christopher, Our Lady, the passion of S. Catherine, the Stem of Jesse, the lives and miracles of various Saints. A great number of these remain; more are being daily discovered. The designs are often excellent as paintings; though the mediæval artists seldom attained either in painting or sculpture the power of perfectly representing the human form. It is probable, indeed, that a certain conventional method was observed in this, as in every other department of art. The positions of the hands, of the head, of the drapery, are usually executed according to a certain rule, which unquestionably imparts a remarkable and characteristic grace, though the outlines are quaint, and, in a certain sense, stiff and unnatural. This is especially evident in ancient stained glass, and is generally observable also in distemper or fresco paintings. The *celestiality* of countenance has never been equalled in modern times. Lines, few and hard, yet true and clear, produced unrivalled effects. To harmonize with the glowing walls and windows, not only the rood-screens but the roofs

were almost always painted, as we may fairly infer from the great number of existing examples. The gorgeous ceiling in Peterborough Cathedral is of early Decorated work. A common design, especially in the cradle roofs, was an azure sky with gilt spangles for stars. Moulded timbers were usually adorned with twisted spiral lines of black, white, and red, like the strands of a rope. The prodigious quantity of stained glass destroyed at and since the Reformation would almost pass the belief of those who have not cared to investigate the subject. Of the manufactures, the artists, the cost, of this, nothing whatever is known. But the latter was, of course, much less than in modern times. The metal was usually extremely thick and heavy ; an advantage seldom available in our times, from the onerous duty on the material. The dense and semiopaque quality of the old glass imparted to it a rich hue, and an imperviousness to bright light, which we with difficulty attain by artificial means. The ancients knew how to produce the best effects with comparatively little colour ; and they almost always intermixed a large proportion of white glass even in their richest designs. It is a grievous mistake of modern artists to fill up entirely with colour.

The carving of this period, whether in wood or stone, as it fell to the department of a different class of artists, exhibits peculiarities of its own.

To judge by the fallible test of existing remains, (in which the relative durability of material must be taken into account,) we should infer that wood carving was but scantily practised before the Decorated period. We have very little early English woodwork of any kind, beyond a few doors, (as that at the great western entrance at Peterborough, which has the tooth-moulding,) here and there a portion of a screen, and some roofs. There are no carved seats or stalls existing of this age. Probably indeed the area of churches was generally free and open till the fifteenth century.

If we have dwelt tediously on our accounts of ancient churches, and gone somewhat minutely into detail, it has been from an earnest desire to set forth in its true and proper light the condition of the arts in those ages, which by contrast with our own we call Dark. Hereafter we shall examine the probable causes of modern degeneracy in that study, which once attained such an extraordinary ascendancy over men's minds, and became so powerful an instrument of religious impression.

But we have wandered somewhat from the course of our history. Many additions were made to the parish church of Letherton in the fifteenth century. The aisles were partly rebuilt in the style then prevalent, and the large windows entirely filled with painted glass of a different kind.



The ground was formed by diamond panes, each with a yellow flower in the centre : amidst which large figures of symbolized Saints and mitred Bishops stood beneath goodly canopies like so many tutelary powers, the heavenly sentinels of the holy mansions within. A costly pulpit of carved oak was erected : a new font of Caen stone presented, containing sculptured representations of the Seven Sacraments; several new brasses, sepulchral crosses, paintings, vestments, and images were added. The old roofs were taken down ; not so much from decay, but because they were not deemed sufficiently beautiful. A new and higher clerestory was now raised above the nave arches, and covered with a noble oak roof which far surpassed the former in richness and elaborate design. It was divided by principal rafters into five bays or partitions ; at the end of every hammerbeam were carved and painted angels with expanded wings : all the spandrils were of pierced tracery, and the ridge, purlins, and common rafters elaborately moulded. The cornice was fringed with Tudor flower ; and representations of men and animals, trees, fishes, and birds, were chiselled in the solid wood in a long pictorial series round the walls of the church. There were also hammerbeams in long perspective rows midway up the dark valley of this fine structure, with struts and carved braces at once decorated and secured. At the ends of

these, smaller angels with various musical instruments seemed to play celestial music to the sound of the psalms and catholic hymns sung by the earthly worshippers below.

All the area of the nave was now filled with fixed open seats of massive carved oak, well adorned with tracery, poppy-heads, and the conventional emblems of the Church. They were all turned towards the East: so that every worshipper faced the altar and the great rood, to which they bowed, and not, as now, to one another. There was no confusion, no idle lounging, no refusal to kneel or stand at the offices of prayer or praise. No one had a particular place assigned him; yet by a kind of tacit agreement each generally occupied the same seat. On the north side sate the women, on the south the men. No one struggled and quarrelled to sit under the preacher, nor complained of draughts and damps; for in those days doors were whole, and pavements were dry, and windows all tightly glazed with massive stained glass an eighth of an inch in thickness, and more. The dense ruby chasuble of a Saint did not let in rain and frost and cold as the flimsy and shattered old church windows we now see generally do; and the incense and the lighted tapers, the daily service and the constant Mass, made the church so warm and so comfortable that there was no need of large iron stoves and smoky coal fires.

But such good order was not destined to last long in the Church. She had become venal and corrupt and careless of her charge, and the blessing of peace was taken from her. The iron reign of Henry VIII. had long threatened her amiable dwellings and her holy things; and at length the first blow fell in the appointment of the Commissioners to inquire into the condition and revenues of the monastic houses. The most lying charges and scandalous inventions were got up by these unscrupulous visitors to palliate the robbery that was intended from the first. One by one the ancient abbeys were seized, their churches unroofed and plundered, their lands and revenues confiscated, and the aged monks made to wander houseless and penniless over the land, amidst the execrations of the poor whom they had maintained upon the head of their tyrannical and sacrilegious King. But England was filled with monastic establishments; many hundreds of religious houses of all sizes and professions were scattered over the country: scarcely thirty miles could anywhere be passed without coming in sight of some splendid pile with its lofty spires and glorious roofs, and portals ever open to the call of the stranger and the wants of the poor. A mighty sum did the wicked King derive from these: for not one was spared; and for two whole years the work of plunder continued, by which 330,000*l.* were

brought into the royal treasury, and immediately lavished upon infidel and abandoned courtiers. And the voice of prayer which had hourly ascended from the churches for many hundreds of years was suddenly hushed; the owl and the jack-daw alone were heard within the deserted walls. Even yet we view with indifference the sad scenes of this fearful havoc, and talk about the "glorious Reformation." Perhaps we never think that a curse can have attended such worse than heathen impieties.

The Abbey of Wardley fell among the first. The Abbat was an infirm man, and distracted with the troublous times and the internal dissensions of the brethren. A stipend was promised him for his life; and he resigned his charge into the hands of the plunderers. The hell-hounds of destruction were let loose; the church, the library, the altars, the costly plate, the jewelled shrines, were all ransacked; and their hallowed contents scattered to the winds. The lead was stripped from the roofs, and the naked timbers sawn asunder or set on fire. The stained windows were demolished, and the walls defaced with iron bars and hammers; the very graves were rifled of their dead. Scarcely more complete or more dreadful was the havoc which the pagan Danes had made six hundred years before. In two short days that ancient Ab-

bey was reduced from a home of piety and peace to a shattered and smoking ruin.

Little cared the godless possessors of the Church's lands for the solemn anathema which She had pronounced of old on the heads of the spoilers. But the judgment came, and fearfully and visibly it fell. Great families one by one became rapidly extinct. Awful deaths, grievous visitations, fruitless marriages, were the penalties which attended sacrilegious wealth. Property passed from hand to hand, but remained with none. The finger of God was manifested against the deeds of that day ; but man in his blindness saw it not.

## CHAPTER VII.—THE REFORMATION.

THOUGH much less of wanton mischief and destruction was committed on the cathedrals and parish churches of the land than on the unhappy monasteries, yet there also the consequences of the Reformation were instantly and severely felt. The energies of the church-builders, which had never ceased for many hundreds of years to erect and adorn God's holy temples, were paralysed, because their efforts were blighted and their means withdrawn. Many noble buildings were in progress of erection when the blow fell : and they never were completed. Architecture and the fine arts, as the handmaids of the Church, by which they had been fostered and patronised, from that moment lost their vitality, and rapidly became secularized, degraded, and neglected. Nothing was done to recover the art during the remainder of that century ; in fact scarcely a single new church seems to have been erected in the land in the whole of that time. Orders had been issued, at the instigation of the Reformers, for the destruction of the Roods and Rood-lofts, the demolition of stone Al-

tars, and the removal of pictures, images, and relics ; the first of which at least was performed with such rigid fidelity and exactitude that not even the most remote and distant village churches were exempted from this cruel visitation. At Letherton the injunction was carried out to the utmost. The altars were torn down, broken to pieces, and trampled under foot. The great Rood was burnt in the churchyard, and the royal arms were set up as if in mockery in the place where it stood. The old cross was mutilated and defaced ; several windows destroyed ; the whole of the plate carried off ; the Office-books, (among them the Missal illuminated by the hands of the Abbess Etheldreda,) and the more costly of the priestly vestments, were sold for paltry sums to profane and ignorant purchasers. The church was now served by a priest who received a small annual stipend from the Crown ; for the destruction of the monasteries and the dispersion of the brethren had rendered it difficult to procure the services of any competent minister of religion. He was a man of little education, and a zealous adherent to the new learning, so that little care was taken by him to retain anything that savoured of the ancient "superstitions." Nevertheless, here, as in most churches, candlesticks were yet placed on the altar ; copes and vestments were still worn ; incense was still used at festivals ; and in many

particulars which have now been long lost sight of from neglect or distaste, the old ceremonies and arrangements were retained. The prayers were still offered from the priest's stall in the chancel ; the lessons still read from the carved wooden lectern or brazen eagle : the windows yet glowed with stained glass, and the beautiful old monuments and brasses still pictured the floor with their prayerful and instructive legends. The reformation we have chosen to follow, in practice at least if not in spirit, was yet to be brought about by Cromwell and his infatuated crew.

The feeble attempts of Queen Mary to stem the tide of protestant fury, and restore the churches to their former condition, had produced but little effect in so remote a place as Letherton. It was soon discovered that it is easier to destroy than to amend ; and the terrible events of that awful time unsettled and distracted the whole state of the Church. The restoration therefore of the old rites and arrangements was as partial as it was imperfect. A large mass of the people would have no popery ; how should they, when the fires of the martyrs in every direction at once confirmed their dislike of the old and their belief in the truth of the new religion ? A terrible time it was, when persecution and terror usurped the place of gentleness and peace : and was not a terrible scourge to be looked for after the dreadful



sacrileges and cruelties of the Reformation? Queen Elizabeth, though she was no violent reformer, was urged onwards by her Bishops and councillors to sanction and acquiesce in their wishes. The reign of King James brought little into the Church but pagan statuary and clumsy marble monuments; pews, reading-desks, and Venetian windows. The Kynastone Chantry was encumbered by an immense oaken structure with a canopy over it in the fashion of a bedstead, to which indeed it bore a very close affinity in its use. It was an early specimen of a *family pew*. It bore the date 1615, and the following inscription in large letters round the rim: "Istec est sedes Annæ, dominæ uxoris Johannis Smithi, ecclesiæ Lethertonensis patroni." This was a sad example of affected grandeur and pride in the House where every worshipper should be equal. But it did not long remain in solitary magnificence. Other small landholders endeavoured to rival the great family of the Smiths, who had purchased the manor and what remained of the old castle from the last of the Kynastones. That ancient house had adhered to the unreformed Faith, and suffered in consequence the most relentless persecution from the protestant faction under Elizabeth. The castle had been in great part demolished during the wars of the Roses, and the estates had gradually diminished in extent and

importance ; so that Master John Smith, a wealthy merchant of London, had succeeded in making a very advantageous purchase of the whole. The parishioners of Letherton could never regard him with the attachment they had ever shewn to the ancient lords ; they considered themselves as good as he, if not so wealthy ; so they would not be behind him in setting up each for himself a large square pue. Thus the poor, on whose rights they encroached, were shut out from their favourite and long-accustomed seats ; the congregation was soon reduced to half its number ; and perpetual discontentment and jealousies were entertained among those who should have been an example of forbearance, forgiveness, and peace.

In the month of June, 1643, two horsemen were seen advancing at a round trot towards the village of Letherton. One was a tall gaunt-looking man, with a drawling and lispng tone of voice, and a turned-up eye, which argued something of either affected sanctity or religious fanaticism. His dress was soiled and disordered, and his grey cloak seemed smeared with lime and dust. The other carried a book, and a roll of paper which he ostentatiously displayed—a warrant from the Earl of Manchester for visiting and purifying from popish abominations the reformed protestant churches. The production of the warrant procured the key from the alarmed

and reluctant rector ; and armed with authority which few dared to oppose, the strangers at once proceeded to the church. The sight of the cross on the gable seemed to cause considerable offence, for both raised their hands and shook their heads at it in the most feeling manner. They had not been long within the church when three more persons, similarly attired, rode up to the village inn. They alighted at the little hostelrie, and consigned their horses to the care of the landlord.

“I marvel, good Master Peter,” observed one, “that the holy man hath not yet arrived. Doubtless he hath had a longer task to perform this morning than he is wont ; for he did by special injunction appoint us to meet here at noon for the cleansing of yon sink of popery ; and who hath ever known Master Dowsing to be slack in the service of the Lord ? Verily, if he cometh not, we will e’en have a blow at the Whore of our own good will and pleasure. But it bethinketh me the godly man may be tarrying for us at the church : let us see whether it be so, that we delay not unwittingly the blessed work.”

“Ah ! good Masters,” said Will Dowsing, for it was he, “ye come well : fearful are the abominations of this temple of Belial ; there is enough of superstition here to destroy the souls of ten such villages as this. Go, Master Woollard, get axe and

bar, and let us proceed to remove from the sight of these benighted people the accursed images and the idolatrous pictures of the Antichrist.”

So the pious Master Woollard, nothing loath, brought sundry implements of destruction, and to work they went right zealously. First they demolished the whole of the stained windows that remained entire ; for those only had been broken by injunction of Edward VI. which contained “feigned miracles, idolatry, and superstition.” The pictures of S. Winifride and Aedbert the Martyrs had been destroyed, with portions of some others ; but a proclamation had been put forth by Elizabeth strictly forbidding glass windows to be broken or defaced ; so that much yet remained at Letherton to glut the fury of the Puritan visitors. They beat down the glorious windows in the aisles and at the east end with poles and hammers, and trode the fragments to atoms on the pavement. Next they defaced the fresco paintings and inscriptions on the walls, both of which, it is needless to say, they were quite unable to understand. Then they ripped off four or five brasses ; levelled the chancel steps ; took away a cross and the candlesticks from the altar, and broke the effigies and monumental slabs, Dowsing all the while taking account in his book with the utmost coolness of the details of the havoc he had directed and superintended. The ancient and still magni-

ficient tomb of Etheldreda de Kynastone, with the calm and touchingly beautiful effigy as it lay in the stillness of Christian sleep under its gorgeous canopy, almost moved Master Peter to spare it. Unfortunately however the figures of the blessed S. Etheldreda and our Lady caught the eye of Woollard. "Down with the old Jezebel!" said he, dealing a fierce blow with a crowbar across the breast of the Abbess, and dislodging from the marble slab the fragments into which he had shattered the frail form. A stroke from the axe decapitated the image of S. Etheldreda, and another broke in pieces that of our Lady. A parting blow, by way of goodwill, curtailed the canopy of its finial; and so they left it. Outside of the church they pulled down the gable crosses, and overthrew the effigy of the patron Saint from its niche above the archway of the porch.

"A mighty goodly work, Master Dowsing," said Woollard, as they left the despoiled and desecrated church. "Hitherto the Lord hath prospered our labours in the righteous cause. Let me see, there be six brass orate pro animabus, forty-three superstitious pictures on the walls, twelve great windows, the Jezebel on the painted tomb, the steps levelled, the crucifix and candles removed, diverse crosses effaced—truly we have cleansed the mass-house of some popish filth."

"Ye should have seen, Master Peter," said

Dowsing, "how at B—— I did break down with mine own hand ten mighty great angels in glass, and a hundred pictures superstitious, and how we consumed Mary and eighteen cherubims in wood ; insomuch that ye see I rade with speed to be with ye at Letherton by noon. The parson is an ungodly man, and did rail at us and the parliament."

"Saw ye," said Woollard, "how the malignant, he at the Rectory, stood and wept at the door of the porch as we brake the pictures? Marry, he shall pray for the King but a while longer at Letherton. The host at the inn hath told us that he keepeth all the mummery of the Mass, the bowings and the east-worship, and prayeth not for the parliament : whereof my good lord of Manchester must be duly certified. But we have work enough yet before us for this day, so let us e'en hasten on our way."

With this they rode off to purify the next church. Shortly afterwards, articles were exhibited against the Rector as a malignant and a papist, &c., &c., for which he was of course ejected and sequestrated without the least regard to his old age. He did not long survive this cruel and unjust treatment, but died almost in want of the common necessaries of life, in the farm-house of one of his parishioners, though his daughter worked with her own hands in the fields early and late to maintain him.

The ensuing century was a dreary one for the Church. The minds of the people, which had long inclined to the ancient Faith, while the remembrance of it was yet recent among them, were by this time thoroughly protestantised, and not a vestige of the old Catholic spirit remained. The power of the Church seemed to lie dormant, while frigid moralists preached and learned disputants wrote controversies on doctrinal subjects. Dissent had long been spreading its baneful and disloyal poison throughout the land, and the affections of the people were alienated from the Church of their forefathers by the apathy and total want of vitality which it seemed to present, to say nothing of the glaring and scandalous abuses which were felt to sully the boasted purity of the Reformation. Architecture was now utterly degraded, and the national taste so strangely perverted, that the finest buildings of mediæval art were almost daily destroyed to make room for pagan temples or mongrel Italian edifices. Everybody who professed taste in the fine arts was a follower of Wren, and scarcely a church was built in any other style but that which his great talents unhappily introduced and for a time almost naturalized in England.

## CHAPTER VIII.—THE LATTER DAYS.

PARSON JOLIFFE was considered the keenest fox-hunter within a circle of twenty miles round Letherton, though the neighbourhood in 1770 could produce several first-rate specimens of clerical sportsmen. He had been presented to the living on the illegal and simoniacal stipulation of paying annually to the patron a fifth part of the proceeds of the tithes : but enough remained to keep a couple of hunters and a good cellar ; so he made himself as comfortable as possible on the remainder. In addition to his celebrity in field-sports, he was reckoned a great patron and excellent judge of the fine arts. He established this fame by having a large hunting-piece executed, containing a portrait of himself in red coat and top-boots, just as he appeared to the life bestriding his favourite mare, and cheering on the hounds cap in hand. He was also a collector of paintings, and sometimes gave a round price for a work that particularly pleased his fancy. On one occasion he purchased a full-length picture of a protestant Archbishop of Canterbury in a full-bottomed



wig ; and shortly afterwards meeting with an obliterated portraiture of Sir Roger de Coverley at a sale, he immediately bought it, and altering his hat into a mitre, and elongating his walking cane into the dignity of a crozier, he affixed the two on each side of the Grecian altar screen, under the conventional titles of Moses and Aaron. Unfortunately, however, the light was a bad one for displaying their beauties ; so he judiciously blocked up the east window with boards and mortar, thereby darkening the chancel very considerably, and nearly restoring the sombre effect produced by the ancient stained glass. The aisle windows on the south side having become very dilapidated under the incumbency of this rector, he had them wholly removed, and neat Venetian casements inserted in their places : for which improvement the parishioners had a very heavy rate to pay. He likewise removed the old font to his farm-yard, where it served for many years as a watering trough for his hunters, and substituted a Roman urn of red earthenware, being in fact a wine-cooler discarded from his service by the accidental defalcation of a handle : though, as the butler justly observed, it might do well enough in a church where it could hardly appear with decency on a gentleman's table. He also built a Grecian gallery at the west end ; and had a flat plaister ceiling put up under the carved oak roof,

which he deemed both neater and warmer than the old one. To defray the expense of this undertaking, he stripped the roofs of their ancient leaden covering, and substituted blue slates. He also caused the piers and arches to be painted a marble colour and the walls to be yellow-washed. After holding the living thirty years, he died at an advanced age from a fall received in hunting, and was buried in the chancel. A large white marble monument was erected against the wall, and thrown into strong relief by a deep border of lamp-black carried round. The design was neat and significant. Two corpulent cherubs with unfledged wings presided at a kind of urn something like a soup tureen; each had a fist thrust into an eye in token of grief, and each bore an inverted torch; while in the back-ground a broken column seemed arrested in its descent upon the tureen, and fixed in mid air exactly at the right moment to prevent a serious accident either to it or one of the officiating cherubs. The meaning of the column was obvious. It typified a pillar of the Church suddenly cut off in the middle of his career of usefulness. Below were three medallions, bearing portraits of the rector and his two wives; between which, and immediately under the urn, was a death's head and cross-bones. The epitaph was as follows :

NEAR THIS PLACE IS INTERRED  
 IN SURE HOPE OF A JOYFUL RESURRECTION  
 THE REV. WILLIAM JOLIFFE, B. D.  
 THIRTY YEARS RECTOR OF THIS PARISH.  
 IN WHICH BY HIS UNPARALLELED URBANITY,  
 CHARITABLE AND CHRISTIAN DISPOSITION,  
 AND VIRTUOUS LIFE AND CONDUCT  
 AS A DEVOTED MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL,  
 HE ENDEARED HIMSELF TO ALL WHO KNEW HIM,  
 AND DIED UNIVERSALLY LAMENTED.  
 AFTER A SHORT BUT SEVERE ILLNESS,  
 CAUSED BY A FALL FROM HIS HORSE,  
 HE DEPARTED TO THE REWARD OF THE JUST,  
 IN THE SEVENTIETH YEAR OF HIS AGE,  
 ANNO DOMINI, 1801,  
 LEAVING FIVE SONS AND TWELVE DAUGHTERS TO  
 BEWAIL HIS LOSS.

This elegant and veracious tablet was enclosed in a substructure resembling a miniature heathen temple, which was based upon the chancel floor, and so placed as to cover an ancient brass all but one corner, where the words *on whoos sowle Jhesu have mercy* might be traced. None noticed the contrast: for none could so much as read the old ecclesiastical character.

The Reverend Mr. Holdworthy was next inducted to the living. He was considered a very spiritual and evangelical clergyman, and greatly esteemed as a popular preacher. He was particularly distinguished for his untiring zeal against Popery and Papists. He removed and broke up

the beautiful old rood screen, which still retained the paintings of Saints on its lower panels, and boarded off the chancel with a lath and plaister partition, leaving only an entrance by a small door, so as to form at once a commodious vestry, a school-room, and a depository for rubbish. He caused two new tables of commandments and a painting of the royal arms to be affixed in the vacant space above the arch, which gave a very gay and lively appearance to the church. He sold the tenor bell because it bore the superstitious inscription *Sancta Katarina ora pro nobis* ; and he removed the remains of stained glass that had escaped destruction, because he was told by an antiquarian friend (he knew nothing of such subjects himself) that they contained objectionable representations of the Virgin Mary. A large floriated cross, inlaid with brass, of the fourteenth century, which had been overlooked by Dowsing, and was the only ancient monument to be seen in the church, he took up and placed in his barn to make room for the capacious tombstone of the Squire's lady. It was never heard of afterwards ; and was supposed to have been ripped off and sold to the plumbers. He erected a lofty and capacious pulpit at the west end of the church, the ascent to which was by a staircase extending halfway up the nave towards the east. So greatly admired were his discourses,

that galleries were soon erected within the arches on each side of the nave, intercepting and blocking up the upper half of the aisle windows. To compensate for this deficiency, a skylight was opened in the roof and ceiling immediately above the pulpit. The erection of the galleries caused the final mutilation of the piers; the foliage of the capitals interfered with the beams, so it was chiselled clean away, and some ornaments in Roman cement stuck upon the only part which was not concealed by the boarding of the gallery floor.

But the church had not yet reached the lowest point of degradation. The successor of this incumbent, in commemoration of whose virtues another and still larger mural monument was erected, cared little and understood less of church architecture. His great object was to make the church *comfortable*. To this end he introduced a black cast-iron stove, of Birmingham-gothic design, close under the pulpit, so as to warm himself particularly and the congregation generally by the genial influence of its sulphurous exhalations. The flue extended above the line of piers the whole length of both nave and chancel, and found its exit at the east window, across the tracery of which it was carried, and made to disembogue its filthy volumes of smoke from a cement chimney moulded in the form of a plain gable cross. The

old doors of the chancel and aisles being much decayed, the pavement damp and broken, and the walls green with dank slime, several reluctant church-goers caught imaginary colds : so a square wooden box, fitted with a green-baize door resplendent with brass nails, was erected over each doorway inside, at more than twice the cost of entirely new oak doors. The most remarkable feature in the church was the Squire's new pue. It gave the idea of comfort concentrated in the midst of a general blight of human health and happiness. It was a very large enclosure, occupying a space fully capable of accommodating at least twenty-five persons on open seats. It was carpeted, curtained round, and furnished with a mahogany drawing-room table and a set of cane chairs. There were two easy chairs, with footstools, placed by a small brazen stove on one side, which was duly furnished with fire-irons, grate, and coal-scuttle. Elegantly bound bibles and prayer-books lay upon the table, and costly velvet cushions with fringes and tassels lay on the ground for the use of the occupants if at any time disposed to kneel. When this great improvement had been completed, the rest of the pues were lined, painted, and raised to the same standard height, which was five feet four inches. This was exceedingly convenient on many accounts. No one was obliged to kneel

out of mere decency and for the sake of example ; for the congregation could not see the position of the *worshipper* within. No one, for the same reason, was bound to keep awake, or say the responses, or in any way comply with the orders of the Church. But every one was perfectly satisfied ; which was all that could possibly be desired ; and the Rector never had a thought beyond this. The altar (a discarded dressing-table belonging to the Rectory, and covered with a piece of coarse baize,) was enclosed by a flimsy railing of deal, the handywork of the village carpenter, who took the old oaken table of 1610 as his perquisite in lieu of payment, and sold it, to furnish the hall of a neighbouring house. In this state the church continued for some years, until suddenly the chancel roof fell in ; when the eastern gable and part of the window were removed, and a flat roof and ceiling erected instead. The incumbent died suddenly, leaving his church in a condition more resembling a stable or an old-store house than a temple of God ; when an eventful period of our little history commences, to which we must proceed to introduce the reader.

## CHAPTER IX.—THE ECCLESIOLOGIST.

THE new Rector was as worthy and well-meaning a man as the parishioners of Letherton could wish ; and great was their satisfaction at his appointment to the living. His zeal indeed in the cause of Church restoration was not great, neither was his knowledge of the subject very extensive ; but he was too good a man to acquiesce in the beggarly and neglected state of a place solemnly consecrated to the worship of God. He had some old-fashioned ideas about the “simplicity of Protestant worship,” and the “neatness” of churches ; which made him desire to see the windows glazed and the pews painted and the ceiling whitewashed : but of the *splendour* of the ancient churches he had not the least idea ; or, if he had, he regarded their furnitures and costly decorations but as part of the superstitious observances from which the Church had been happily freed at the Reformation. Hence he was not at all surprised, nor perhaps shocked, at the miserable state of Letherton Church on his first visit to the parish. His eye was familiar to such scenes



of desolation ; in fact he had scarcely seen any country church much better in this respect. He thought it was a pity, especially as it would involve some considerable expense ; but he meditated nothing beyond necessary repairs and a little fresh whitewash and paint. The Rector had however a son at Oxford who had learned to entertain very different views on the subject. Church architecture had long been his most favourite pursuit ; and he had been indefatigable in acquiring by patient labour and industrious research an accurate knowledge of the science. Indeed so far did he carry his fondness for this study, that some of his friends considered him as little short of a downright fanatic. For he had often been found sketching or rubbing brasses alone in a village church, when everybody else was dressing or dining or visiting or driving out ; often too he would go out early in the morning and come home quite late, tired and hungry, with merely a few notes or drawings to shew for his trouble ; so that he was pronounced a harmless good-natured young man, but very extraordinary in his taste and habits. They acknowledged indeed that he was *rather* clever in his way, when he could read off an old half-effaced inscription, and tell them both its date and meaning ; or explain the pictures in stained glass, or tell all about a cathedral or ruined abbey ; its Bishops,

Abbats, and benefactors, its tombs, effigies, sculptures, and arrangements. Sometimes he could do this when very great people were present, who were generally considered to know everything: and all admitted on these occasions that he could explain the old armour of a knight, or the dress of a priest, or the heraldry in the windows, a great deal better than they. Besides this, he exhibited great enthusiasm when they shewed great apathy; and this seldom fails to confer considerable advantage on the active and interested party. He had a vast collection of paper rolls, each containing the coal-black effigy of some grim old fellow he had found in some remote village church, which nobody had ever heard of. They were very ugly indeed, and seemed very much alike in that and in other respects; yet he could tell exactly the date of every brass from which he had taken the impression, and could point out the difference in the head-dresses, the armour, nay the very shoes, which no one else in the world would have thought of observing.

No one exactly knew *why* this was his pleasure and delight. Most persons thought it a mere antiquarian pursuit, and therefore natural enough. One very evangelical clergyman, the neglected and almost desecrated state of whose church he had exposed, used to shake his head, and say he feared he was a worldly young man who cared for little

beyond ceremonies and external things. But he had motives for the study which lay far deeper than his friends surmised. He did not care for the old churches merely because they were ancient, and contained beautiful or curious things, but because he was deeply interested in the noble works of the great days of the Church, and mourned over the heartless apathy with which the pious gifts and most honourable exertions of the ancient men for the glory of God were viewed by their descendants in the present generation. He could trace in every work of their hands a refined piety and a fervent faith which delighted him the more he unfolded the pages of antiquity, and learnt to decypher the hidden lore which is to be read within the walls of every ancient church. His sensitive mind could look with a melancholy affection at the vestiges of ancient splendour which lingered on the broken walls of a village-church as well as of a ruined abbey or a protestantised cathedral. He knew what it must once have been, and he longed to see it in part at least brought back again to the Church, and the niggardly irreverent expedients of modern usage more generally reprobated and condemned. In a word, he looked on architecture as a thing of religion, and he loved it because, however degraded it might now be, it was essentially the offspring of the Church. Shortly after he had commenced his residence at

Oxford, he had become a member of the Society established in that University for promoting the study of Gothic architecture, and had actively and energetically co-operated with its executive in forwarding its excellent objects. Here he found many congenial minds who could view his favourite study in its proper light ; and it was a very great pleasure to him to know that such available means were afforded for uniting the efforts of many in one cause. For he saw that what a thousand could not effect individually, a much smaller body might collectively achieve. He observed too that the taste spread as fast as the knowledge of this long-forgotten subject ; many of the clergy now actively promoted and personally directed the repairs of the churches under their charge ; at the risk indeed of some mistakes on their parts as well as some abuse and many hinderances on the part of others : yet still on the whole with eminent success. The attention of the poor was directed to the beauties of architecture which had been hitherto concealed from them ; the rich began to take pride and pleasure in giving costly gifts for the service of the Temple and the Altar ; and though in numberless instances their zeal outstripped their judgment, the principle was equally good, and a cheering sign of improvement. Above all, he felt that attachment to the Church and respect for her ordinances were

incalculably increased by the revival of care for her holy edifices ; and this satisfied him that the study was one of the deepest importance to all.

One morning our youthful ecclesiologist received the following letter from his father :—

“Letherton, September, 18—.

“MY DEAR FRANCIS,

“YOU will be glad to hear of our intended plans respecting my new church, the present condition of which you recollect reprobating in no very measured terms when we inspected it together last July. By the advice of the Rural Dean I have engaged the services of a Mr. Carter, who I hear is a most excellent architect, to draw out plans for the restoration ; and he has sent me a series of designs which I think are exactly what we want. The chancel, as you know, is at present in a wretched state—anything but neat and comfortable ; indeed it is so damp and disagreeable that it is impossible at present to have the school children sit there during service, which is greatly to be regretted. The east window is quite shut up with boards and the Grecian screen in front of the Communion table. I fear it can hardly be opened the entire length without sacrificing the screen, which is very handsome, and Mr. Carter says it would be a pity to remove it. The stove is to be moved from the side of the Communion

rails to the middle of the chancel, so that the pipe can go out of the north window without any difficulty. At present you recollect it is carried through the ceiling, which it has blackened a good deal ; besides, the wet comes through in that part, and rusts the stove so much that the clerk says it is quite impossible to make it look bright and clean, which is a great pity. The outside of the walls looks very ragged and rough ; and Mr. C. proposes to cover them entirely with patent cement, which will look, he assures me, just as well as stone. The roof must be altogether new ; it will be rather low, and very plain ; I believe of deal, to be grained like oak. The outer covering will be of blue slate ; but very little of that will be visible, as a parapet is to be added, which will hide all but the very top. We are to have two new windows ; and the other two, which I think you called lancets, are to be blocked up, as there is quite enough light without them. This will I hope make the chancel respectable as well as weather-proof—for I must admit that my worthy predecessor seems to have left it neither one thing nor the other. A handsome new pulpit is to be erected in front of the chancel arch. I think it rather high, but Mr. Carter assures me the people can both see and hear all the better. The reading desk is on the west side of it, so that I face the whole congregation very conveniently. We must

have the gallery newly painted and repaired ; and some of the old pues should be a little renewed in the same way, or I am sure no one will ever come into them. There are five large pues in the nave which are scarcely ever used ; I wish I could get them for the poor people, who are wretchedly accommodated at the west end, under the gallery : but I really do not see how we can interfere with the private rights of families. The great pue in the side chapel, near the old monument you so much admired, is a sad eyesore. I hope to persuade the Squire to alter it, or even pull it down, as his family never sit there at church. The nave roof is probably pretty good ; but I think the skylight over the present pulpit is neither necessary nor elegant ; what is your opinion ? The windows all want glazing ; there are a good many old bits of coloured glass, which Mr. Carter says are of no use at all ; but he thinks perhaps the glazier might make a trifling allowance for them. A few old oak seats in the aisles must come down, to make room for new pues, which will assort better with the present appearance of the church, to say nothing of the altered state of society, which seems to me to make pues very desirable. We have some thoughts of throwing out a south transept for additional accommodation.

“I do not know whether we shall get enough

money for all this ; but the parishioners are quite willing to make a rate which will raise 300*l.* ; I shall give 200*l.* myself ; Lady W. promises 50*l.* ; and several of our old friends at B—— have professed their willingness to subscribe something handsome. Then the Squire can hardly give us less than 50*l.* ; so I hope to make up 700*l.* without much difficulty. I think you will give us a donation out of your aunt's legacy of 400*l.*, which will be paid this autumn. I am sure, in asking this, I am but suggesting the way in which above all others you delight to spend your money. I think of commencing immediately, as Mr. Carter says no time should be lost now the autumn is coming on. I forgot to mention that Mr. Carter has lately restored a great many of the churches in the neighbourhood. Indeed he has an immense business. Only last week he was engaged to build the new town-hall at M—— after the model of the Parthenon, and I am told it will completely establish his fame.

“ Yours, my dear Francis,

“ E. R——.”

Not a little surprised and dismayed was the good Rector at receiving by return of post the following answer :—



“—— Coll. Oxford, the Feast of S. Matthew.

“ MY DEAR FATHER,

“ I MOST earnestly beseech you to suspend the works you purpose at the parish church till I come down next month. It will only cause three weeks' delay, and I have the most urgent reasons for making the request.

“ Your affectionate son,

“ Francis R——.”

He felt sure that such unusually strong entreaties must have something of reason in them; though he was at a loss to comprehend what grounds his antiquarian son could have for wishing the suspension of the work till his arrival. However, the delay was not great, and as several preliminaries had to be adjusted before he commenced the restoration, he consented to wait for the time specified. Mr. Carter could not comprehend the case at all; but he had heard and read some rather strong abuse of certain architectural societies, and rather more than suspected that objections to his design were in store for him. He could not but feel conscious that he had bestowed very little pains in examining the ancient structure, which abounded with beautiful features and curious detail; in fact he had preferred random conjecture to laborious investigation, and swept away half the ancient work to make room for original designs of his own.

## CHAPTER X.—THE ARCHITECT.

OUR student's first care on his arrival from Oxford was to examine leisurely and minutely the old parish church, and to acquaint himself with its original condition by a careful induction founded upon the existing details. He saw at once that the chancel roof was modern, and he could trace the exact height of the ancient timbers, which was about that of an equilateral triangle, on the gable of the nave. The windows had been so much altered at various periods, that it was extremely difficult to ascertain their original forms; but by removing some portions of the internal plaister he discovered evidences of the north aisle having been pierced with two light Early English windows, the position and proportions of one of which he was enabled to obtain. Underneath it there was a string-course of the same date, which was also continued round the south aisle, where Parson Holdworthy's Venetian casements still maintained their position; this therefore satisfactorily proved that both aisles were coeval with the rest of the church, and that

the walls had only been partly rebuilt above the string for the insertion of the perpendicular windows. Now Mr. Carter had not observed these facts ; and had sent drawings of large square windows of late and very poor description, and all precisely of the same size and shape. Similar experiments upon the chancel walls proved eminently successful. Two most beautiful single lancet lights were found completely blocked and plastered over. Inside they had jamb-shafts with floriated capitals, and a bold roll-moulding carried over the arch. Leave was readily obtained from the Rector to open them ; and from seven in the morning till three in the afternoon did our student work with his own hands in removing the stones and rubbish with hammer and pick, and in scraping and cleaning the splays and jambs. And well was he rewarded for his pains. Large portions of the ancient painting still adorned the shafts, mouldings, and interior splays ; the masonry of the latter was smooth ashlar, *semée* with cinquefoils and fleurs-de-lis in distemper colouring, of which amply sufficient was laid bare to render its perfect restoration an easy matter. A blow of the hammer in removing some of the loose rubble which blocked the northern lancet disclosed, to Francis' great delight, a considerable piece of the early mosaic glass yet remaining in the aperture, and tolerably perfect. It was very thick, and al-

most opaque from corrosion ; the lines were bold and strongly-marked, and rather coarse in detail ; but the original pattern was ascertained, and this was most satisfactory. The blocked east window proved to be a fine Decorated one ; and though traces of the jambs of a triplet of lancets were distinctly visible, he pronounced their restoration unadvisable at the sacrifice of a good and perfect work of the succeeding century. Having completed his survey, he made accurate drawings of all the windows as he conceived they had been in their most perfect state, and quietly awaited Mr. Carter's arrival, who had been summoned by the Rector to a conference in presence of his son.

The architect was a bustling little man, very full of his own opinion, and very confident in the correctness of his own judgment, with a proportionate contempt for what he called "amateur interference." He had been brought up as a builder ; but having at the age of twenty-five perpetrated a Roman cement school-house in the Palladian style, and the street front of an hotel in no style at all, he had dubbed himself architect, and contrived, by the assumption of that more dignified title, to establish a pretty lucrative business under the joint conduct and liabilities of Carter and Crampwell. Crampwell was a young man who had been sent to Greece to sketch and measure the Parthenon and the Erechtheum, and of course

returned full of pediments and pilasters from the beautiful idol-houses erected by the pagans of old. Of *national* architecture neither knew one tittle. There was but little demand for it in the trade ; so cathedrals and parish churches they looked at only now and then in books, when they were in want of a few Gothic details, as in the present instance ; but Grecian was all the fashion for the style, and patent cement for the material ; so with these essentials for a stock in trade Carter and Crampwell had succeeded in making some noise in the world. They were not particular what they built ; and their performances had indeed been rather of a miscellaneous kind. They had erected a Gothic water-mill for a neighbouring squire of picturesque taste ; a dissenting conventicle, two union workhouses, an Egyptian cemetery chapel, two town-halls in the Grecian style, a skew-bridge for a railway (which afterwards fell down, for they were poor hands at engineering,) several Grecian porticos and street fronts, an Italian music-room, a Moorish structure intended for a park lodge, and a Swiss villa. Unfortunately, they had lately undertaken church building and restoration, and had erected one ugly modern, and spoiled several very fine old churches in consequence.

In his native town Mr. Carter was considered immensely clever ; for by talking a great deal, and now and then insanely rushing through the

streets with a large roll of paper in his hand, he had acquired the reputation of a first-rate professional man, who was in constant employ, and would only undertake a small work as a special favour to some distinguished patron. He used to boast that he had run in cement from the same moulds (original designs by Crampwell) thirteen shop fronts, nine bow windows, and eighteen doorways, besides chimneys innumerable and Grecian cornices positively without limit. Indeed so large was his trade in the cement line, that he had composed a church porch entirely of this material, which might have been seen for three or four years after its erection, till one unusually wet season it melted imperceptibly away. Such a man was not to be thwarted by the crude ideas of a mere amateur, and that a student in the university, where nobody learnt anything but Greek and Latin; so Mr. Carter met our ecclesiologist with something of arrogant confidence lurking on his face. He was however a little disarmed by the mild and courteous manner of the young student; and the plans being unrolled before the Rector, he submitted with a tolerably good grace to their joint criticisms.

“It seems to me,” said Francis, “that Mr. Carter’s roof is somewhat too low. The chancel is clearly of the thirteenth century; and certainly buildings of that date had usually very high

pitched roofs ; to say nothing, in the present case, of the mark of the old one being visible on the nave gable, which seems to me conclusive. But perhaps Mr. Carter has some constructive reason to allege against restoring the former pitch, which may not be familiar to me, who am not a professional man."

"I assure you, gentlemen," said Mr. Carter, wiping his face and adjusting his spectacles, "modern practice is entirely against high roofs. We consider them a great waste of timber, to say nothing of the weight. A good framing, sir, of Memel timber, rising about five feet in the ridge, and covered with blue slates, has a very neat appearance, and will last longer than any of our lives."

"Six hundred years to wit," said Francis.

"Why," said Mr. Carter, "you are rather hard upon us there, my dear sir. The fact is, dry rot makes sad havoc of our timber, and I shouldn't like to guarantee my roof to stand *quite* so long. But the waste of money on lead and timber in the old times, sir, was very prodigious, I do assure you. Quite amazing must have been the ignorance of economy in the dark ages, especially in church-building, sir."

"I believe it was little understood," observed Francis. "But what do you think would be the extra cost of a chancel roof as high as the old one?"

“Sixty pounds, sir, at the very least, would be the difference. I could make you a neat design for that sum extra. The cornices and bosses may be run in plaister of Paris, and painted oak ; and, if the mouldings could be clapped on afterwards, it would diminish the expense. Do we say a high roof, sir?”

“Not on those conditions, I trust,” said Francis. “I should beg to omit the bosses, cornices, and mouldings. Something in this way,” added he, drawing a sketch of a plain collar-tied and braced pair of principals. “Let the timbers be *lofty*, and *open*, and *real*—the three essentials of a good church roof,—no painting like oak, no plaister of Paris ornaments,—and the effect will take care of itself.”

“I protest,” said the Rector, “I like the idea, and the sketch is excellent. A high roof we will have, Mr. Carter, since it certainly was so originally, and the additional expense we must try to provide. But what do you propose to cover it with outside?”

“Lead,” said Francis.

The architect held up his hands in amazement. “An hundred and fifty pounds extra at the least,” said he.

“I will guarantee the difference myself, on condition that you will agree to a similar covering for the nave, which I suspect has a very noble



oak roof under the present flat ceiling. At least let us commence by ascertaining what *ought* to be done, and making our estimates of the cost. Perhaps money may not be wanting in the end, if we engage in the work in faith, and with the full intention of doing the very best in our power."

"Well," said the Rector, "there can be no harm in that. Put down in the estimate a high roof to the chancel, and a covering of lead for both that and the nave."

The architect complied, with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "And omit the external coating of cement and the parapets," said Francis. "We can point up the good rough old masonry at very small cost, and the roof can have dropping eaves."

"Now for the windows," said Francis, producing his drawings, which were not a little different from the Carter and Crampwell plans. "You will observe that my windows are much smaller than yours, and still less expensive, being either single lancets or plain two-light windows with trefoiled heads and a circle above. These two alone have a little more work ; but I do not think they will be very costly."

"But, my dear sir," said Mr. Carter, "you observe your windows are of different shapes and sizes, and not set in the wall alike on both sides,

which is quite contrary to practice, I do assure you. Besides, your designs are quite out of style, the aisles being altogether late" (this, by the way, was quite a guess) "in their details. I assure you, gentlemen, it is quite impossible that the church ever should have had such windows as these."

"If you will step with me to the church," said Francis, "I will shew you the data I have followed in my plan for the restoration. You may trace clearly in this place," continued he, when they had entered the church, "the remains of the original jambs and cill, where the old window was blocked up to make room for this Venetian affair; and here again you see distinctly part of a mullion and the original tracery. And if I mistake not, the old windows will be found entire if you remove the bricks and plaister at the west end of the aisles. I endeavoured to open them, but could not succeed without the aid of a workman."

By Mr. Carter's assistance part of the wall was taken out, and it was even as Francis had predicted; both windows remained quite perfect under the coating of plaister which had been laid over the blocking masonry. That on the north side was a delicate little triplet of lancets, richly adorned with the tooth-moulding: the other a two-light window with a trefoiled circle in the

head. "You see," said Francis, "that the windows were not *always* the same on both sides."

On removing the plaister internally, more distemper colouring was revealed, in a very perfect state. Mr. Carter observed it was "merely a bit of the old Popish paintings."

"The whole walls have been thus decorated," said Francis; "and my researches have led me to the conclusion that even the smallest and humblest village churches were very often, if not usually, so adorned. In fact, painting on the walls seems to have been thought almost as essential as stained glass to the windows."

Mr. Carter's plan for the new pues was next examined. "This pue," said he, "will hold eight—four on the north, two on the east, and two on the west, so as to face the pulpit,—"

"And turn their backs to the altar," said Francis.

The Rector held up a finger deprecatory of untoward interruption.

"On the side next the Squire's great pue I place an embattled back, six feet seven in height from the ground, which will at once keep the cold out and prevent inquisitive neighbours from looking in. On the other side I suspend a curtain on a neat brass rod. The old pues under the gallery will do for the poor people very well if repaired; or deal forms on a brick floor would come

in very reasonably. The school-children will find room in the chancel near the stove. The benches are just far enough to prevent the little boys roasting apples on the bars. The two square pews in the chancel want new doors and new green-baize linings; but perhaps that may be done by the occupants. The galleries are in very good condition, and handsome, though perhaps a thought too low. New cast-iron pillars and a trifle additional height to the west would be an improvement; and the tower arch should be newly boarded up to prevent draughts, and make all tight and comfortable for the singers."

"What do you think of the present pews?" asked the Rector of his son. "The arrangement seems to me very inconvenient, and I fear a great deal of room is lost. Shall we adopt Mr. Carter's plan? This row of seven new deal pews in the aisles, with brass handles and locks to the doors, and the name and number in a quatrefoil panel, seems very neat and convenient."

"You well know my own opinion is entirely in favour of open seats. And I have great hopes, if you will allow me to point out to such of your parishioners as may object to try them, their manifest advantages in appearance, comfort, and convenience over modern pews, the more reasonable at least will be inclined to comply with my proposal."

“Well,” said the Rector, “we will not determine this till we have consulted further about it. But let us see how Mr. Carter proposes to find me a vestry and a Rector’s pue.”

“The vestry,” said Mr. Carter, “might come behind the Communion table, which could be moved forward a yard or two, and an eight-foot screen erected about where the present rails are. We could easily gothicise this Grecian screen ; and I should say the tables of Commandments might be made to open by way of a door, so that you could come out through the Creed on the other side, which would have a striking effect. In fact the people could hear and see a great deal better if the chancel was a little curtailed. The length of the old chancels is exceedingly inconvenient ; indeed we generally omit them in our practice, though some of the clergy of late have insisted on having them retained. I should have recommended pulling down the chancel and building a small apse with the materials, which would have been cheaper than the new roof and pavement. But perhaps you might wish to leave it as it is, considering the new prejudice in favour of chancels.”

“I am not sure,” said the Rector, “that I differ very far from Mr. Carter on this point. The long chancels are certainly inconsistent with the simplicity and purity of Protestant worship.

I cannot see that we are bound to retain any of the arrangements of Popery at the present day. Certainly, if I were building a new church, I should not have such a chancel as this, unless indeed it were for the purpose of holding more people. But when church accommodation is so urgently wanted, and money is so difficult to raise, to waste hundreds of pounds in building a large empty chancel for mere show, does seem to me actually wrong."

"My dear sir," said Francis warmly, "on what principle and on what authority can you presume, on the mere weak and worthless grounds of expediency, to set aside the *universal practice of the English Church for at least a thousand years?* the practice too of the *Reformed Church*, as exemplified in every building that I am acquainted with, or have ever heard of, until the last half-century, when the wretched effects of economy, ignorance, and contempt for Catholic usage and precedent have set at defiance all established rule, and made our new churches in no respect better than conventicles. You will admit that 'the novelties of Popery' could not much affect England in the Saxon times; yet Saxon churches built long before the Conquest have chancels exactly the same as this. And considerable as is the difference in some points between the fully developed Christian style and

the earliest Basilican churches, this fact is quite certain, that the latter are altogether against the modern notion of *omitting chancels*. Recollect too the absolute injunction of our Rubric, that ‘chancels shall remain as in times past;’ that is, as before the Reformation. But to take the highest grounds: does the chancel convey to a religious mind no esoteric meaning? Is it a mere oblong projection of the nave towards the east? Do we not instinctively feel that while the nave is, as it were, the vestibule, the chancel is the palace of the Great King? Can we see its solemn screen—its most ancient *cancelli* across the entrance arch,—without hearing the Church say to the careless intruder, *thus far shalt thou come and no further?* The use of the chancel is just the same to us as it was before the Reformation; namely, to receive the clergy as distinct from the laity; the communicants from the non-communicants; the priest who offers prayer, from the people who follow and join in it. The chancel is the choir of the angels; the Church triumphant; the Holy of Holies. It is the feature which essentially distinguishes the form and character of a church from a secular building. It holds apart from the vulgar gaze the seat of the blessed Mysteries; and by the superior sanctity shewn by its screened partition and vacant space, it suggests greater awe and reverence in approaching that heavenly

throne. Granting that in its present degraded and desecrated condition, a chancel is little calculated to inspire such feelings of awe and devotion — as accordingly, and in consequence, we find they do not exist in ordinary minds — we surely do wrong in abolishing as useless that very feature, whose reverent use would go far to bring back the lost feeling of a holy Presence in a church.”

“Well, well,” said the Rector, smiling rather incredulously, “it is a pretty theory, and a harmless, perhaps. However, we will let our chancel stand, and with your high leaden roof too, as I hope. The vestry can be added, as I think you once suggested, on the north side of the chancel.”

“That is unquestionably the most correct position,” said Francis. “I wish you could see the exquisite Decorated revestry at Willingham, near Cambridge. The roof is of stone, of extremely acute pitch, and of singular timber-like construction internally, such as I remember to have seen in the porches of Careby and Benington, Lincolnshire. Why so few of these sacristies remain, especially of early date, seems to me difficult to explain. You may frequently trace the marks of such buildings, long demolished, at the north-east of the chancel. But I do not think they occur in parish churches, unless very rarely, be-



fore the fourteenth century, and I have often been puzzled to know how they contrived to do without a building which we are apt to consider at least as essential as the chancel itself."

"I built a beautiful vestry," said Mr. Carter, "at the new church lately erected from my designs at C——. A beautiful vestry it was, gentlemen, though I say it; and I flatter myself a neater church would not easily be found to match it. We placed it just behind the Communion table; a square embattled turret running up behind the nave; above, the organ; below, the vestry. We had chairs, tables, closets, looking-glasses, sofa, everything completely comfortable for an elegant preacher. I do assure you, gentlemen, it was *the* sweetest thing I ever turned out of my office; and I am happy to add it was very highly approved;—in fact, it was preferred to a design with a chancel as long as the nave. The committee wanted more of ornament, and less of chancel; and Mr. Crampwell's cement pinnacles stood them in very reasonably. The pulpit and desk were on each side of the Communion rails, so that both singers and preacher were in one place, and faced the people: an improved arrangement which I have the honour to have first introduced. In the vestry, immediately behind the Communion, was a commodious water—"

"Where was the font?" interrupted Francis.

“ The font, sir, was inserted in a lower panel of the pulpit, (quite a new idea, I assure you,) so as to waste no room by being placed on the floor. Allow me, gentlemen, just to draw you a slight sketch of that church. Here, you see, is the nave, sixty by sixty ; the very best form for hearing the preacher. Tower with four large clock-faces, and four octagonal pinnacles, one a chimney. Windows, early English ; twenty feet high by three wide, giving sufficient light both above and below the commodious galleries. I do assure you the whole thing is a perfect model of a——”

“ Protestant preaching-house,” again interposed Francis, losing all patience. “ Pray, Mr. Carter, can you give me any information about this stone staircase in the turret close to the chancel arch?”

“ That, sir,” answered the Architect, “ doubtless led to the galleries in the times of Popery.”

Francis looked at his father significantly. “ I observe,” said he, “ a small doorway in the north wall of the chancel. Do you suppose there was any building on this side which has since been demolished?”

“ No doubt the confessional, sir,” replied Mr. Carter, not exactly perceiving the object of these questions. “ The old monks used to get the nuns into the churches, and make ’em confess

their sins. Dark ages, sir, very dark indeed, in the times of Popery." At which Mr. Carter complacently took snuff, and then wiped his spectacles, as if to see as far into the darkness as possible.

"Very enlightened at present," retorted Francis, who never could bear the absurd expression "dark ages," "when we can first misrepresent and then despise the rites and the religion, to say nothing of the glorious buildings of our forefathers. I only wish we would try to imitate their numerous excellences, their beautiful faith, and their boundless liberality in the service of God and the Church. Who, for instance, would give money enough in our days to build such a church as this, in a remote village?"

"Superstition, sir," said Mr. Carter, with a theological air, "did this and a great deal more. When the old priests made people give all their property to the Church to buy forgiveness of their sins, it was no wonder at all."

"There are," said Francis, "hundreds of parish churches, ay, *village* churches, which would now cost from twenty to fifty thousand pounds to build and furnish in their ancient style: and I say this advisedly. Now, do you suppose that you could raise such a sum in this place by making the parishioners and landowners believe the doctrine you assert?"

Mr. Carter was of opinion that it might not be easy to raise fifty pounds amongst them by such means, unless the Squire were to give up his estates.

“And supposing he did,” rejoined Francis, “what would his descendants do? The family would necessarily be impoverished, and perhaps soon forgotten or extinct. Depend upon it, there were other means of raising these amazing structures,—amazing in their ruin, desecration, and decay,—for what they must have once been I cannot realise to my mind without a feeling of unbounded admiration. Death-bed extortion is little more than a fable of modern days to account for the vastly superior liberality of the ancient. I do not defend all the ways and means formerly adopted to raise money for building churches and other religious purposes. Pardons and indulgences, and offerings to relics, often procured great wealth, and by methods by no means creditable in all cases. But there must have been a noble spirit among the wealthy of old in offering the best of their substance, and the first-fruits of all their successes, to the glory of God. In times when estates were many times as large as they are now, and when building was done gradually, or at least very much slower than at present, I can conceive the noble owner of a great lordship giving a large annual sum, with

unlimited supplies of stone and timber, for building churches in every village not yet provided with them, which was comprised within the wide circuit of the manor. Labour was probably cheap; perhaps very often in such a cause entirely gratuitous; but of this we know little, and still less about the craft and hire of the Freemasons. I have often amused myself with the problem, who built the church of St. Andrew Heckington, in Lincolnshire. It is a small village, and has, to my mind, *the* finest parochial church in England. And scarcely two miles from it is another church at Ewerby, only inferior to it in the richness of its details. Perhaps some great family then resident near the spot, now long forgotten—on earth. I dare say this very church was built at the cost of the owner of the great castle in the reign of Henry III.”

“Well,” said the Rector, “Mr. Carter will probably thank you as little for your conjectures on the subject, as for your long oration on the excellence of ancient churches, the merits of which I believe he has no desire to dispute. We must now spare Mr. Carter, whom we have detained a very long time; and we will very shortly let him know the result of our consultations.”

“My dear sir,” said Francis, when the Architect had made his bow; “one thing is perfectly clear to me at least; and I felt sure of it from

the moment I had read your letter. We must give up this Mr. Carter, or we shall throw away a thousand pounds on as bad a piece of patchwork as has been perpetrated even in these very tasteless days. Though you do not perhaps enter into the subject as warmly as myself, I feel sure you would wish everything to be done *well*; indeed you engaged Mr. Carter, as your letter informed me, under the full conviction of his competency; a point which I boldly impugn, and assert that he is not the man to be entrusted with a single detail of church architecture."

"I confess," said the Rector, "I cannot understand how you, a mere amateur, can be qualified to decide on the merits of a man who has certainly spent his life in the profession, and who *must* know the practical part of his business much better than you can teach him. You must convince me of this before I commit myself to a step which, from its uncourteousness as well as inconvenience, I am very reluctant to take."

"Of the *practical* part," answered Francis, "meaning the building, stone-cutting, masonry, calculations, estimates, working drawings, and general office business, I of course know little compared with any experienced architect. But of the spirit of ancient design, of symbolism and ritualism, no unimportant though greatly neglected branches of the science; in a word, of its principles,

I conceive that I may claim some knowledge, independently of mechanical or professional skill. A church architect ought surely to know the original meaning and use of the parts he copies ; he should understand fully the requirements of rubric and canons ; he should be thoroughly aware of what the Reformers allowed and what they intended to forbid ; what is due to authority and what to mere caprice and laxity of usage. Again, I believe that my actual research has been much greater, and I am sure my interest is much deeper, in the study than Mr. Carter's. He evidently views the art according to his very narrow and prejudiced notions, which he has no desire to alter, because he has no heart whatever in the profession, no care beyond that of personal profit. He regards it with the cold matter-of-fact eye which has the same pleasure in viewing a theatre as a church ; a Grecian pediment as a Decorated spire. He does not delight in architecture as a churchman. Is there nothing in this ? Should not there be a feeling of deep interest and devotion in a man who enjoys the high privilege of designing an earthly House for his God ; and should not the reflection call forth the highest energies of his mind ? Yet there is surprisingly little of this natural and essential train of thought to be traced either in the works or the conversation of most modern architects ;

and certainly none whatever manifests itself in your friend Mr. Carter.”

“It is certainly true,” said the Rector, “that modern architects are deficient in something, the want of which affects the character of their works. But I am hardly satisfied with the reasons generally alleged to account for the fact.”

“Listen, then,” said Francis. “I assign the acknowledged inferiority of modern architecture (to speak generally) to three principal causes: the depraved taste of the day; the exclusively secular character of the science; and the want of *heart*, that is, energy and enthusiasm, in the generality of its professors. Now a few words on each of these heads will suffice. Must you not expect an architect to devote his time and attention to that branch of his profession which is the most lucrative to himself? It is not a high motive, I admit, but it is a natural and generally a necessary one. Now, if public taste is distracted from the due appreciation of any one consistent and national style of art, such as once prevailed exclusively in this land, and is led by habit and the force of example to view Grecian, Moorish, Romanesque, Italian, Gothic, Rustic, Egyptian, merely as so many legitimate varieties, having equal merit and therefore equal claim to attention, out of which all are free to choose what they like best and think the prettiest for church, factory,



or village ; is it not inevitable, first, that they can understand none, and secondly, that competing and rival architects will be tempted to pander to their ignorant fancies in the design and erection of every possible absurdity ? Anciently, the greatest architects knew only one style : I do not mean only Gothic, but only one kind or modification of Gothic, the particular variety prevalent in their time. *They could not know or study any other.* And the advantage of this exclusive practice is seen in their glorious works. Yet there are persons who gravely maintain that what they call a *comprehensive* knowledge of the true theory of architecture can only be acquired by an enlarged view of the science in all its branches and boundless varieties. Now observe the consequence of the comprehensive system ; the practical, if not the necessary, result of designing a Grecian portico one day, a Gothic steeple the next, and an Egyptian cemetery the third. All are bad—absolutely bad and execrable designs. It is clear the said system does not enlarge ; it only confuses the ideas and corrupts the taste. I do not hesitate to declare my conviction that it is *impossible* to be great at once in two such opposite and conflicting styles as Grecian and Gothic. Very few moderns indeed have shewn themselves tolerable in either. There is a spirit in both—in Gothic at least I can answer for it—which requires for its full compre-

hension long and painful thought and observation ; a religious view of the science ; a sincere admiration for its ancient professors, and not a scoffing contempt for their holy Faith ; an humble teachable inclination to follow rather than to invent. The restrictions of modern caprice are also fatal to a correct system of architectural practice. An approved architect, who understands his profession and can be trusted, is insulted by the alterations made in his design by a church-building committee of tradesmen and country gentlemen. Such an architect, once nominated, should be allowed to have his way in carrying out unmolested the instructions he may have received.

“Secondly, I say that architecture is secularized. I mean it is no longer, as a science, regarded as a thing of religion and of the Church. The same man who builds a gin-palace for Evil builds a temple for Religion : and this is universal. I doubt whether many persons consider the designing of the one in any different light from the other. They are both ‘jobs.’ Who would now believe that fasting and prayer, confession and meditation, and the holy Eucharist, were the preparations of the ancient builders for commencing a church ? I delight in believing that Angels themselves dictated the designs of the great cathedrals and abbeys ; that their builders obtained inspiration and immediate influences which are not vouch-

safed to us. O the dulness and blindness of those who cannot feel these palpable causes of ancient superiority: who in ignorance presume to speak disparagingly of the 'dark ages!' We must have, as they had, *church* architects, either exclusively so, or men at least capable of drawing a wide distinction between the purpose and the character of sacred and secular buildings, and of treating each accordingly.

“Lastly, want of zeal and real love for the science is a very common fault. Some few architects indeed pay a visit to Greece and Rome; but where is the man who devotes either time or money to journey through his native land for the purposes of research and improvement? Those who *do*, know well what a quantity of enlarged notions, how many novel details and combinations might be thus added to the stale and very limited ideas of most modern builders. A church architect should ever be learning, ever searching, ever examining, sketching, measuring, analysing ancient examples. Yet how few modern architects, once settled in their offices, care to add to their small stock of Gothic by the painful collection of new examples! A few conventional mannerisms culled from books, often destitute, in their application, of ordinary correctness, form the capital and resource of half our celebrated builders.

“Protestantism in truth is a very hopeless school for the revival of Church architecture. Much as our ritual allows us, prejudice and apathy will never delight in carrying out its intentions by what we call superfluous decoration of churches. Cheapness, convenience, and simplicity—that is, meanness, bodily comfort, and naked meagreness—are the three requisites for modern churches. The privilege of giving largely to such purposes is felt by very few; and the recognised principle of providing all at once a vast amount of church accommodation for our neglected millions must for a time render a return to ancient ways positively impracticable. In some few instances, where very noble sums have been contributed, and the best and highest intentions evinced, the work has unfortunately fallen into the hands of bad architects, who have erected the most costly churches in the worst possible taste, and completely at variance with ancient precedent. Some recent examples of devotion and munificence would have done honour to any age, and perhaps the architects employed have not been wanting in zeal and energy; they have failed through the fault of the time, and from their mistaken notions of ritualism and catholic authority. On the other hand, there are architects living, who, I believe, could achieve almost anything, if their genius had but scope for

display. It is consoling to hope that the class of architects to which Mr. Carter belongs is now fast becoming extinct, and that men of real taste and genius are everywhere rising around us."

"And you really believe," said the Rector, who had listened with attention, "that I have been mistaken in this Mr. Carter, and that it is advisable to cancel the engagement in the best manner I can?"

"I think it is a positive duty to yourself and the Church to do so," answered his son. "Let me beg you to grant me this favour; to nominate an architect of my own choice, and to get rid of Mr. Carter at once by a brief and straightforward discharge."

"I think you are right," said the Rector after a little thought. "We shall have something to pay for these plans and drawings; but we had better sacrifice that, and obtain the assistance of some architect who perhaps will cause us less expense in the end."

Permission once granted, Francis lost no time in informing Mr. Carter that his father had resolved upon a more extensive and entirely different plan of restoring the parish church of Letherton, for which his drawings would not be available. He regretted that Mr. Carter's further services must necessarily be dispensed with, and expressed his readiness to discharge all the costs

that had been incurred. Having done this, he dispatched a letter to a young architect with whom he had some acquaintance. In two days he arrived at Letherton.

Mr. Wilkinson was a graduate of Oxford, where Francis had first seen him. He had relinquished the study of the law, which his great talents well qualified him to prosecute with success, for that of an architect. An early love for the Church and reverence for her holy things had become deeply rooted in his mind by the writings and conversation of more than one excellent divine whom he had the happiness to know during his residence at the University. No contrast could be more marked than that between him and Mr. Carter. The one was all reverence, humility, distrustfulness of his own talent and worthiness; the other careless, boastful, and ignorant. Mr. Wilkinson had not had so much professional experience; but his thoughtful and minute attention had for years been devoted to Church architecture, and his refined taste enabled him deeply to appreciate the excellences of the ancient artists. The Rector at once perceived and remarked to his son this difference of character.

“Mr. Carter,” he said, “was whistling with his hat on in the chancel; Mr. Wilkinson I saw, when I entered without his knowledge, kneeling on the ground before the altar.”

“The right spirit in which to commence Church Restoration,” thought Francis.

Mr. Carter’s drawings were shewn to his successor in the work. He could not help smiling.

“These windows,” said he, “are the very same that Carter placed in one of his union work-houses, and I suspect copied from the same working drawing.”

“Then I think,” said Francis, “that we may venture to consign them to the flames. They will be sent, if we return them, to some other church which this gentleman is allowed to spoil.”

Mr. Wilkinson entirely approved of Francis’ suggestions respecting the roofs and windows. The first great object, he said, in restoring a church was to ascertain its original condition, and the next to replace exactly every feature and detail. “I never try to *improve*,” he observed; “I would much rather retain a plain early window than insert a rich one of my own. Every old feature we sacrifice, however plain it may be, we obliterate somewhat of those glorious works which were bequeathed to us to preserve and perpetuate, and which now form our models for imitation.

## CHAPTER XI.—THE SQUIRE.

THE family of the Merchant Smiths had in their turn resigned the manor of Lether-ton to a new possessor. The grandson of the last purchaser of the estate, Mr. Merton, was the present Squire. He lived in a large new-fashioned mansion, erected by his father on the site of the ancient castle, which had been so completely razed to the ground, and carried away piece-meal for mending roads and for building-materials, that not a vestige now remained except a sloping terrace in front of the hall, formerly part of the moat. Mr. Merton's income was very large, and for the most part expended liberally and usefully on his own estate, where he constantly resided. Unfortunately the great object of his life was *self*. His sole ambition was to be a great man, and to maintain a more luxurious and splendid establishment than any family in the neighbourhood. With this engrossing care he could not be a highly religious man ; but he called himself a churchman, because he was somehow attached to "the establishment" by a kind of hereditary feeling, or political bias, or



natural inclination ; perhaps he hardly knew from which of these motives, for he was extremely ill-informed, and full of prejudice, though his good-nature and readiness to conciliate made him less obstinate in maintaining his opinions than many persons of the same class. He was on the most friendly terms with the Rector, and the members of their respective families were not less kindly disposed towards each other ; so that in a very short time an intimacy was established between them.

Mr. Merton was walking in the garden one morning when the Rector was announced, accompanied by his son and Mr. Wilkinson the architect. "I called," said the Rector, "to consult with you about our parish church, in which, as you are aware, I contemplate extensive repairs, and I think my son and my architect are in league together to run me into expenses in the process which we shall be very ill able to meet without your most liberal aid."

Francis had but just arrived from Oxford, and had not seen the Squire before. "The architectural gentleman, I presume," said the latter, bowing, "who prefers cold churches to hot dinners ; a gentleman, I may venture to add, of very singular and incomprehensible taste. I assure you, Mr. Frank, I have heard of you and your society at Oxford. My wife is quite afraid of Popery, and

she hears that you are going to put up stone altars and images and painted windows and crosses and what not, in the old parish church. Now, sir, what are we to say of you when such things are reported? I am half afraid of you myself, though I profess high-church principles. I always suspect Oxford men. Depend upon it, sir, their real attachment to the Protestant establishment is more than questionable.”

Having delivered himself of this sagacious remark, (which he had read in the newspaper that very morning,) the Squire folded his arms and waited calmly for an answer to the charge.

Francis admitted that he meditated considerable alterations in the church, if he could persuade his father to carry them into effect, and obtain sufficient funds. “And first,” said he, “I intend that you and your family shall give up to me your great pue in the chancel, and sit on open seats in the nave, without any embellishment of crimson linings or stuffed seats or luxurious cushions; in short, without any mark of distinction whatever from those of the poorest parishioners.”

The Squire smiled, and said really it was an excellent idea.

“Secondly,” continued Francis, “Mrs. Merton is to give a stained window. Thirdly, the Miss Mertons are to exercise their acknowledged skill

in needle-work and embroidery on some patterns with which I will furnish them for the use of the church. Fourthly, you are to supply us with funds. Lastly, you are heartily to approve of the work in the end, and confess you do not repent of having followed my advice."

This was said so gravely that the Squire did not know what to think of his new friend ; so he made no direct answer, and merely inquired what was going to be done at the church.

"I will tell you at once how the chancel is to be finished," said Francis. "A new roof, covered with lead, all the windows filled with stained glass, pavement laid with coloured tiles, altar of stone, with new plate, candlesticks, and drapery ; the steps raised, the pews, panels, and marble monuments cleared away, and carved oaken stalls placed along the wall on each side, and a screen in the chancel arch. This we calculate will cost about six hundred pounds. Now the whole amount we can raise will be scarcely eight hundred ; so my father intends, I know, to ask you plainly to afford us liberal help. We hope to make Letherton church the most perfect model of correct and beautiful decoration in the diocese. We cannot, I fear, inspire you at once with that fine old English spirit—call it chivalrous, religious, or superstitious, as you will—which induced the lord of the manor of olden times to

regard with such love and reverence his parish church ; but we hope to convert you to our ideas on the duty and necessity of giving to the glory of God. They were great days, truly, when the ivy-clad grey tower and embowered roofs were everywhere seen nestling under the wing of the old hall, with its high irregular gables, its prim terraces, and its long avenues of oak and chesnut. That fine old hall—with its great blazing hearths and hospitable tables, ever open to the poor ; that glorious old park of five hundred years' growth ; the woods around, the rippling river below ; the church-spire overlooking them all ; quiet, secluded, beautiful in its peace : where the old banners wave over the knightly effigies of ancestral tombs ; where the old family scutcheons grow dim and moulder on the wall ; where sleep the dead as they have passed in their turn out of the mansion—the cradle of their youth and the placid abode of their old age — to the green church-yard, their long home. I do believe that the first object of care and pride to these fine old gentry was their church. How could it be otherwise with such associations ? They adorned, endowed, and beautified it with a zeal befitting the object on which it was bestowed ; and they showed a finer and more catholic feeling for their religion than we often meet with now-a-days. This is the character I do long to see again ; for I fear it is now

well nigh extinct. Our modern Italian villas and selfish luxuries, our gilded drawing-rooms but ruinous churches, argue little indeed of the ancient spirit. You must pardon me if I speak freely on a subject which I have so much at heart."

"I hope," said the Squire, "you will not suppose we poor moderns are entirely destitute of correct feelings. My attachment to the establishment, sir, is warm and sincere; and though, perhaps, I do not quite realize your idea of the fine old English gentleman, at least I will give you a proof of my sincerity by promising two hundred pounds towards the repairs of my parish church."

Before the Rector could express his thanks for so unexpected a donation, Mrs. Merton came up and joined the party. She was glad to hear the church was to be made comfortable, but she ventured to hope there would be no crosses nor pictures of saints in the windows.

The Rector thought it not unlikely there might be both, as their object was to restore the church as nearly as they could to its ancient appearance—consistently, of course, with the simplicity of protestant worship.

"I hope," said his lady, "Mr. Merton will not sanction any such thing. I cannot understand the use of wasting large sums on making old churches as fine as theatres. The worship of the heart, and not of the eye, is what we want. You

will never make people religious by your altars and candlesticks and painted glass."

"I am no advocate," said the Rector, "for the captivating splendours of the Romish Church ; but I do think people are never likely to feel any religious or devotional emotions—to say nothing of ordinary reverence or respect—while churches remain in their present state. My own experience inclines me to believe that the Church Service but rarely produces any deep sensations of humility or devotion in ordinary minds while performed in the slovenly way and in the dirty and desecrated churches we too commonly see. The mind *must* be acted on by the senses. It is a necessary condition of our being. Religion *must* be æsthetic. Where you see before you neglect, indifference, irreverence the most startling, dirt, dilapidation and decay around the very altar of God, the feelings are too often frozen and blighted by the miserable spectacle. A sad consciousness of something like hypocrisy comes over my mind when I hear of persons professing to pray earnestly in such places. To beg of God a blessing on ourselves and on our own homes while we outrage common decency and respect to His House and His Sacraments, can hardly, I fear, be anything else."

"Well," said Mrs. Merton, "you will allow the early Church had no such aids to devotion. They had nothing but common rooms or perhaps wooden

sheds for their worship. Yet they could pray at least as well as we can in the finest cathedrals."

"They had the very best they could possibly procure," said the Rector, "and they knew it. Why do not we carry out the same principle, and give to God the very best we can procure? This is all I ask. But we give the very worst, and we know and feel all the time that it is the very worst; and herein lies the difference between the two cases."

"But do you not think so much of cold ceremony and external form is incompatible with true spiritual piety?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"That is a conclusion," answered the Rector, "which cannot logically be drawn: indeed there is no conceivable reason why both should not exist together. On the contrary, the one will spring out of the other—if by 'cold ceremony' you mean the decencies of Christian worship. If there were more of 'true spiritual piety' you would probably see a great deal more of such decencies than we now possess. Beautiful churches, I grant, will not alone produce religion; it is religion which must produce beautiful churches. If the alternative were ceremony *or* vital religion, no one could hesitate which to choose. The saying of the saintly Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester at the time of the Conquest, is much to the point. He feared that the one was giving way to the other, and well

remarked that ‘the good old time was, when men knew not how to build magnificent piles, but thought any roof good enough, if under it they could offer themselves a willing sacrifice to God. It is a miserable change if we neglect the souls of men and pile together stones.’”

“I am glad,” said Mrs. Merton, “you admit so much. I have heard the high-church Oxford clergymen are trying to restore all the formality and strict observances of Popery in the churches under their care; and I rather fear Mr. Francis has some such design at Letherton.”

“I faithfully promise you,” said he, “that, as far as I have any voice in the restoration, not one ornament shall appear which was condemned by the Reformers, or is forbidden by our rubric and canons.”

“But why,” asked Mrs. Merton, “should you set up your crosses and altars to offend conscientious people who dislike such things?”

“Of *conscientious dislike to the holy cross*,” said Francis, “I have heard a good deal, but believe very little. At least I can neither understand nor sympathize with the religion of such persons. No true Christian can be scandalized at the emblem of his redemption; no one can turn away from it in anger or contempt, without turning from that which he feels to be none of his.”

“But,” said Mrs. Merton, “you at once intro-



duce images to worship and adore, and bring in all sorts of novelties which have long ago been condemned as vain superstitions by the more pure and enlightened piety of modern times. I am sure I cannot bear to see the clergy bowing and even crossing themselves, and turning to the east, and preaching in their surplices."

"Perhaps," said Francis, "you confound the cross with the crucifix. And for the latter, it is very inconsistent to reject *sculptures* and retain *paintings* of the Crucifixion, which we so often see as altar-pieces in churches. For my own part, I can see nothing objectionable in either; nor do I think the Reformers were justified in destroying the great Roods or wooden crucifixes which formerly stood under the chancel arch of every church."

"A proof," said Mrs. Merton, "that fine architecture and beautiful sculptures have no effect in producing devotion, may be drawn from our Cathedral churches. These are the finest places of worship we have, but still fewer worshipers frequent them than may often be seen in the humblest church. I am sure a good preacher might ensure a better congregation in a barn than all the music and grandeur of Cathedral service."

"A great many causes might be alleged for this," answered the Rector. "Custom is unhappily altogether against the daily Church service,

and therefore against attending Cathedral worship as a practice. The example too of our clergy and dignitaries is lamentably on the side of neglect and omission of this great privilege and Christian duty.”

“ I have often thought,” observed Mr. Wilkinson, “ that the real spirit of modern protestantism is more clearly and unanswerably set forth by this than by any other of its unfavourable characteristics. It is a fact that in cities of from five to fifty thousand inhabitants not ten can anywhere be found who regularly attend the Cathedral ; and perhaps not one hundred who attend it at all. Yet we believe ourselves to be very religious and ‘ spiritually ’ disposed. I fear we must be tested after all by our practice.”

“ Were I,” said Francis, “ to enjoy the high privilege of a fixed residence in a city, I would try some such plan as the following. I would endeavour to unite myself with a body of perhaps twenty of the wealthier inhabitants, and as many more as could be relied upon, who should engage as a solemn duty to attend the Cathedral service twice every day throughout the year, if not prevented by illness or unavoidable absence. This simple and I trust unobjectionable compact would have the inestimable advantages of at once setting an example to others and of supplying a regular congregation to offer those constant prayers for the

Church and the city, which their self-styled 'spiritual' brethren think it unnecessary to do, as well as of removing the painful disgrace of empty seats and silent walls from the house of God. But my society should do more. Every member should agree to give or get by the willing contributions of friends, a certain annual sum, say ten guineas, (and there are few who might not by a little sacrifice or exertion give a great deal more,) for the decoration of the Cathedral under the sanction of the Dean. Only think what two hundred guineas expended yearly in filling the windows with the stained glass which once adorned them would effect in time! How many would be likely to add their unsolicited mite to so noble and interesting a work, I cannot undertake to say: but I think that some good donations might come in after the result of the first year's subscriptions was seen and admired. By such means too the ancient brasses and monuments might gradually be restored and replaced."

"I am sure I would not be one of your society, Mr. Francis," said Mrs. Merton, "nor help to fill our Cathedrals with the Popery from which they have been freed."

"Do you know who freed them?" asked Francis. "*The Puritans!* Cromwell and his gang of rebels: the murderers of their king and overthrowers of their Church! I wish people would

only consider the source from which their favourite 'protestant simplicity' first emanated. Few seem to be aware that all the ancient ecclesiastical ornaments, copes and vestments, mitres and pastoral staffs, processions, incense, paintings, and other such decorations and usages, were for the most part retained by the Reformers, till they were without either right or authority abolished by the Puritan faction."

As Mrs. Merton could not controvert this disagreeable fact, she dropped the conversation, and the visitors took their leave, highly pleased with the unexpected success of their mission.

## CHAPTER XII.—THE RESTORATION.

THE work of restoration now began in earnest. The flat roof was taken off the chancel, the windows were opened and the shattered glass removed ; the Grecian screen pulled down ; the altar and altar rails, with some wooden panelling on each side of it, cleared away, the pews destroyed, and the whole area left bare and unincumbered. The pavement was taken up, and the floor raised by a bed of concrete to its original height. It was quite refreshing to see the great waggon arrive with huge wooden cases of Messrs. Chamberlains' best encaustic tiles, from their porcelain works at Worcester, ready to be laid down in place of the old shattered flags and tomb-stones, which were piled up in a great heap in one corner of the church-yard. Several features which were quite new to the Rector were laid open to view by clearing the interior. Immediately behind the altar was a square recess in the thickness of the wall, with a narrow opening spreading inwards to the north and south. "This," said Francis, "is the ancient reliquary ; and a rare and interesting dis-

covery it is. I can recollect finding but three such in my researches. One is at Ewerby, in Lincolnshire, another at Harlton, Cambridgeshire, the third at Tinwell, Rutlandshire, which last has never been opened, so that I only judge from its exterior resemblance to the small stone chests which remain at Yaxley, Hunts, and Brixworth, Northampton. At Wratting, in Suffolk, is a very remarkable recess, like a large double piscina, behind the altar, which may possibly be another example. In these the altar relics seem to have been deposited, and hence they were probably sometimes removed for processions or for exhibition to the faithful. This piscina, you may observe, proves not only the original height, but the date also of the chancel ; for double piscinæ scarcely, if ever, occur later than 1250, about which time, or perhaps a little earlier, I should say this was erected.”

“ Here is a singular-looking square stone with a hole in it on the ground just below the piscina,” said the Rector ; “ what can this have been ? ”

Neither Francis nor Mr. Wilkinson had observed it. The former was completely puzzled, for he had never met with anything like it before. “ If I am not mistaken,” said the Architect, “ this is even a more interesting discovery than the reliquary. In some early Constitutions a ground-drain is ordered where there is no piscina. I have

seen them at Utterby, near Louth, and little Casterton, Rutlandshire, but they are excessively rare, and therefore very curious. But I really cannot account for the fact that in each instance the usual piscina exists besides. But probably they are of different dates. These three sedilia are very perfect, and should of course be preserved. They are surely much more appropriate and becoming seats for priests than the wooden chairs we generally see on each side of the altar."

"This, I suppose," said the Rector, "is the founder's tomb, which was only this morning discovered behind the panels. Well, they have at least saved it from the mutilating hands of my worthy predecessor. Can you make anything out of these early letters?"

Francis knelt close to it, and began scraping the dirt from the half obliterated inscription with his knife. "Kynastone is the name," said he; "no doubt one of the family who possessed the great castle which tradition says formerly stood on the hill-side. Let me see: I have it now. *Hic jacet ~~Sine~~ Aubrey de Kynastone, miles, hujus ecclesie novator. Cujus animae propitietur Deus. Amen. Amen!*" added he. "I suspect this tomb had once the privilege of being used for the Easter Sepulchre. You recollect the mutilated sculpture of the Resurrection at Lincoln Cathedral? That also is thought to be the tomb of an early Bishop.

Very rich representations of a similar character occur at Patrington, Yorkshire, Hawton, Notts, Heckington, Lincolnshire. At Ewerby and Little Bytham, in the same county, are plainer examples. At Exton, Rutland, Milton, Little Shelford, and Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire, and Long Melford, Suffolk, are high-tombs which appear to have been used for the same purpose. Of this use of tombs there can be no doubt, because some early wills are extant where the provision is expressly made. What a splendid and awful ceremony must the *Resurrection* have been in the dead of the night preceding Easter-day! It is beautifully described in the *Antiquities of Durham Abbey*. Such didactic representations, appealing directly and forcibly to the senses, must have deeply impressed upon the minds of the people the reality and importance of such an event. On the same principle we attach stories and pictures to the letters of the alphabet, to impress the senses where the understanding is yet weak. I can fully feel the *effect* such a church as this must once have had, when the windows and walls everywhere set forth in vivid colours the miracles and passion of the Saviour, and the deeds of the holy Saints. To us indeed, who are dead to the glories of Church arts, and ignorant of the histories of the greatest of the Saints,—to whom, I fear, the very name is too often an abomination,—perhaps these things



would look 'pretty,' and nothing more. But I should like to see the experiment tried, even in our day. Would that Letherton church could be numbered among the first-fruits of that exertion in the cause, of which the restoration of the Temple church, London, and that of the holy Sepulchre at Cambridge, are such beautiful results!"

"A wish," said the Rector, "that it is manifestly vain to entertain, with our limited means, even supposing it altogether desirable to carry mere decoration so far, which I am by no means disposed to concede, in the present case at least."

"The chancel," said Francis, "is your own. It is possible to make this a perfect specimen of correct arrangement and detail. Now that we are happily rid of our friend Mr. Carter, we have an opportunity which may not again occur of shewing the clergy of this neighbourhood what a reverent and becoming chancel really is. I am sorry to say such an example is most urgently needed: for the scenes of wilful and profane desecration everywhere to be witnessed are fearful to contemplate. Let us spare no cost in doing this: and trust me the nave will follow. Do only what is necessary there at present, and effect all that is proper here at once. Give me a little time, and I intend to convert all your parishioners to my doctrine of open seats."

The Rector said nothing: but his son knew

how much his views had been altered by conversing with him on these points, and he saw that the favourite theory about "protestant simplicity" was rapidly giving way.

"Look here," he said, turning aside, "at this singular little window in the south wall, near the west end of the chancel, with open iron bars, like a prison grating. Can you explain its use?"

"I am unable to do so satisfactorily," rejoined Francis. "The name of *lychnoscope* has been given to it, and seems generally received, though I fear the origin of the name has nothing to do with its real use. It is sometimes barred, as at Rampton, Cambridge, Whitwell, Rutland, and Little Welnetham, near Bury S. Edmund's. A wooden shutter seems usually to have filled the aperture instead of glass. Perhaps the window was in some way connected with the Rood. Some have thought it intended for a confessional, which is altogether improbable. Others suppose it intended to command a view of the altar from without, which however it seldom does. I remember a passage in the History of Prince Arthur, in chapter lxiii., where allusion may possibly be made to this kind of window, though I rather think it refers to the oblique aperture you see on the other side opening into the chantry, called by some a *hagioscope*. The passage is this, if I remember rightly: 'Then he armed him,

and took his horse, and as he rode that way he saw a chapel where was a recluse, which had a window that he might see up to the altar.'—But what is this stone which they have removed from the pavement, where it has lain perhaps since Dowsing's days broken and turned upside down? See, here is the other half. It appears very legible. I think it is as early as the middle of the thirteenth century.

✠ ici gist Wilhelm de Bardwell di ki alme dieu  
eit merci. Amen.

“This chalice sculptured on one side of the stone shews that he was a priest; a former rector of Letherton, there can be little doubt. What a simple and beautiful monument, and how appropriate an emblem of the priestly office! I have seen the chalice alone, both in brass and sculptured on a slab, and both with and without the Host. A very large one remains in Lincoln Cathedral, on a grave-stone. It is seventeen inches high by twelve wide, and has the Wafer. Perhaps a careful search among this heap of broken stones and rubbish may lead to the discovery of other remains of equal interest. Let us examine them more attentively while we have so favourable an opportunity.”

Moving the fragments of the pavement which lay in a heap outside, they came to the head and

shoulders of a female effigy of beautiful and delicate workmanship. A further search discovered the remaining portion, in a mutilated state, yet not so far injured as to prevent the parts being united and restored. The figure had evidently been shattered by a violent blow across the middle, and the fragments had at some later period been thrown into a grave made in the chancel floor, either by way of filling it up or making away with what was considered useless rubbish.

“Depend upon it,” said Francis, “this is the very figure which belonged to the canopied monument in the chantry. Let us try whether the pieces appear to fit the high-tomb beneath it, which fortunately yet remains.” They brought the heavy fragments into the church one by one, and placed them together. They fitted exactly. “This must and shall be restored,” said Francis, “if I have to live on bread and water for six months for it.”

“That shall be done without any such unnecessary penance,” said his father. “But I fear we shall have great trouble with the monuments generally. Look at this immense marble structure against the chancel wall. How can we hope to remove it? Yet what restoration can ever be effectual while it remains to disfigure and encumber the walls?”

“I could almost, methinks, treat it as Crom-

well's people served the figure of my sleeping nun, were it not unworthy as well as inconsistent to give way to the same feeling against protestant deformities, which they entertained against what they called popish superstitions. Yet I do feel somewhat indignant to see every church and every Cathedral spoilt and degraded by these frightful piles of naked pagan statuary. Utterly dead as were the people of the last century to any appreciation of catholic art, I should have thought that the mere consideration of comparative cost would have prevented the general adoption of such burlesque absurdities to the rejection of the chaste and beautiful ancient models. We cannot help feeling it was to gratify pride rather than to adorn the church or to invite the sympathies of the living, that these marble mountains were piled up against wall, window, and pillar. The same spirit which induces a squire to have the largest and best pue in the church, makes his surviving friends erect to his memory a marble of the greatest pomp and pretension. The humility, the devotion, the catholic faith and hope, and the prayerful appeal, are all utterly lost in these unsightly monumental excrescences. And if we may judge of the feelings which suggested and designed such memorials by the result, it is to be feared that these fall as far below the ancient principle as do the designs themselves. I do not

mean that the depth of natural affection is less pointedly and feelingly manifested in the modern, but that the absorbing principle of self-abasement is wholly lost sight of. I really do not recollect a single ancient monument in which the latter does not entirely predominate over the former. I read nothing of ‘affectionate wife,’ ‘beloved child,’ ‘tender and attached husband,’ &c., on ancient tombs. I only perceive that a cross is laid upon their graves, and that for the best and most saintly of the ancient dead (and I say this with a deep conviction that the Ages of Faith numbered indeed many such) there is a prayer for forgiveness and acceptance : that their failings alone are set forth, their merits recorded only in Heaven and in the minds of those who knew them. How brief and simple is the meed of human praise bestowed on the character of a heavenly-minded sister, once of the convent of S. Rhadegund, now long departed, but yet lying in the Chapel of Jesus College, Cambridge. On the lid of the stone coffin which holds her remains is inscribed in very early characters :

“ ✠ MORIBUS ORNATA JACET HIC BONA BERTHA  
ROSATA.

“ *The good Bertha !* A tribute of esteem so rare in those times, feelingly bespeaks the love of the

holy sisterhood for a dear and valued friend. But is it not sad to think that we daily see and tread on these ancient tombs, thoughtless of those whose bones they cover, and regardless of the appeal ‘Of your charite pray,’ &c. All in vain is the most pathetic petition. No responsive sympathy is awakened by that call from the grave. Distrustful of a doctrine held by the Early Church but rejected by modern fanatics, we dare not comply. The request is unheeded, and we pass on.”

“We are entering upon ground that must be tenderly trodden,” said Mr. Wilkinson; “yet I cannot withhold my own entire concurrence with your feelings on this subject. I do think however that there are yet *some* to whom these mute appeals are not dead letters—or worse, subjects of contemptuous reproach, or proud self-congratulation. The improvement of church monuments generally is one of vast importance. I believe it would be impossible to go beyond the height of absurdity and deformity to which modern designs have now been carried. Their cost too is often something enormous when compared with the simple and appropriate devices which better taste and higher feeling would have suggested. An ugly white mural marble, with a pot and a cherub, will cost fifty or sixty pounds: a beautiful floriated brass cross, with effigy in the centre and inscription, twenty-five. A statue in

the Grecian style, on an *inappropriate* pedestal, from two hundred to a thousand guineas : a canopied high-tomb, with effigy, angels, saints, emblems, like the exquisite example our church possesses, from one hundred and fifty to five hundred. The most splendid full-sized brass, with Evangelistic symbols, rich canopies, and marginal legend, can now be executed in a style quite equal to the best ancient specimens for about one hundred guineas : and I am certain this pagan affair to the memory of the Rev. William Joliffe would cost twice that sum.

“ It may be remarked that the ancient monuments exhibit few and definite varieties in kind, while the modern are countless. The former may all be classed under six heads : recumbent effigies ; brasses ; engraved slabs ; sunken half-figures ; coped coffins ; floor-crosses : the first three of which are often raised on high-tombs or placed under canopies. Now with respect to the first kind, which will be the most difficult to revive, though more than one attempt has been very successfully made of late years, we may notice this important peculiarity, that the figure is always represented lifeless, while modern statuary aims at positions significant of energetic action, or at least of vitality. I would rather call the ancient figures *dormant* ; for the clasped or raised hands imply only a torpid state of devotional



repose, a transitional slumber, and never portray the relaxed nerveless prostration of death. How perfectly this embodies the Catholic idea of departure in the Faith : how exquisitely symbolical is the dormant and prayerful attitude of Christian sleep ! How much more consoling to behold, than to view some snowy philosopher in an imaginary arm-chair, perusing attentively one of his own works, or a toga-clad statesman making a voiceless speech, or a brave general pointing an inexplosive gun ! Brasses may and ought to be generally revived. They are extremely beautiful, not very expensive, are no encumbrance, are full of didactic emblem and touching portraiture. Mr. Pugin has satisfactorily shewn that modern dresses may be readily adapted for the folding drapery which adds such a charm to the ancient figures. It is impossible to conceive any reason, except extreme bigotry or ignorance, against their general revival. Many hundreds of the most magnificent examples still remain in England, from which designs of all kinds and sizes could readily be taken : and the general demand would at once supply artists able to execute them. Engraved slabs of alabaster, marble, or free-stone, often occur. They answer the same end as brasses, and are made in precisely the same way ; but they are of course much more liable to wear. A most elaborate and

beautiful monument to a priest, bearing the date 1349, remains in the chancel at Middleton, near Sudbury. The figure is clad in the Eucharistic vestments, and bears a chalice. Above the head is a canopy. The features appear formerly to have stood out in relief; the only example with this peculiarity with which I am acquainted. The sunken figure is to my mind one of the most beautiful of all monuments. The bust or head of the deceased, and sometimes the feet, is seen within a circle or foliated aperture, as through the lid of the coffin. Very fine examples remain at Careby, Normanby, Utterby, and Howell, Lincolnshire; and a founder's tomb of this kind I remember to have seen at Gilling, Yorkshire. How much superior these, which admit of the whole face and the clasped hands, to the modern medallions *en profil*! Floor-crosses are very simple devices. A flat slab incised in strong lines with the arms and stem of a cross, and with a marginal legend, costs about ten pounds. The stem should stand on a *calvary*, or mount of graduated steps at the lower part. One of the most exquisite and perfect examples I have seen is at Scothern, Lincolnshire. This is at the west end (a position sometimes chosen from motives of humility), and is sculptured in relief on a raised tomb. Sometimes the cross is sunk, sometimes merely marked in shallow lines. Many very lovely designs may

yet be seen, probably in their original places, at Tintern Abbey. I do not recollect having met with more than one *plain* floor-cross ; and this I think was in Llandaff Cathedral. The arms and stem were almost invariably floriated. I cannot see what objection, except the infidel dislike to the symbol of the Cross, can be raised against the general adoption of these. An almost boundless variety of most beautiful ancient forms might easily be collected. I do not hesitate to say I have myself seen hundreds.

“ Both sepulchral slabs with marginal legends and coped coffins were used long after the Reformation. I have seen examples at Peterborough and at Kirton, near Sleaford. Instead of the ancient cross, we now generally see the arms of the deceased, and some laudatory epitaph arranged, for the sake of reading it with less trouble, in lines one below the other. Coped coffins are peculiarly appropriate for churchyards ; floor-crosses for the interior of churches. The ridge-like shape of the former is meant to throw off the rain. Their size is not greater than the usual mounds of turf, and of course their use would render our forests of upright stones of all shapes and sizes quite unnecessary. How different must have been the aspect of an ancient churchyard, with its old yew-trees, its grey stone cross, rising high above the lowly graves, and protecting them with its arms, its

long lines of coffin-stones, all pointing eastward, with here and there perhaps a head-stone of oak or stone worked in a beautiful heraldic cross. I have no doubt that such was generally the ancient appearance. I have seen some churchyards where the coping of the wall was formed entirely of stone coffin-crosses. Now and then you may find one still remaining in the churchyard, as at Cotterstock, Northamptonshire, and Aylmerton, Norfolk. But the turf has grown and the soil has risen so as long ago to cover the few that have escaped the cross-destroyers and the village road-makers, who between them have broken up and abolished all they could find.

“I cannot speak of the churchyard cross without entreating you to restore this mutilated stem which yet remains on its three steps to the south of the church. So far as I am aware, no order was ever issued by authority for the demolition of these graceful structures: and their use was certainly universal from the time of the Conquest to the Reformation. Beautiful they are to the eyes of him who loves to meditate among the tombs: beautiful in their moonlight loneliness, beautiful in their sun-lit brightness as they peer through the foliage of the green trees. Is there now not one who cares to plant that standard where the rank grass grows and the dew sparkles over those that sleep below?—to kneel at its base—to gaze

on its tutelary arms? Shall we not restore to the ancient dead the saving symbol which they surely prized, and little thought ever to have torn down from over their graves? You might once have seen them nestling under yon fretted stem, as though it were safer and better to lie buried there. And we should respect a feeling which was unlawfully outraged by apostate hands.

“Few churchyard crosses now remain. I have seen but three or four which are quite perfect: at Somersby, Bradley, and Great Grimsby, all in Lincolnshire, and at Pitcombe, Somerset, very fine specimens exist. That at Grimsby is Early English, and highly interesting from its great antiquity and the beauty of its design.”

“In this churchyard a cross would look extremely cheering and beautiful among the green trees. I wish,” said Francis, “you would give us a design for the restoration of the venerable old stem.”

“With the Rector’s kind permission,” said the Architect, “which I think I shall obtain from one who has engaged with such spirit in a work like this, the churchyard cross shall be my own peculiar care. I mean that I shall hope to be allowed the pleasure of restoring it at my own cost. I never undertake any church-building engagement without leaving some little gift of my own as a thank-offering for the privilege I have enjoyed.

So small a sum as will suffice for this little work I trust I may freely bestow."

Delighted at the excellent and catholic feeling exhibited by our new friend, the Rector cordially complied. He felt sure that no one in the village would object; and the Squire's lady might learn by a more frequent sight of it to feel less shocked at the "innovation."

In a fortnight's time a comely new cross of stone was erected near the south porch on the ancient base. It was a slender octagonal stem tapering to a point, with a square crocketed head, containing in a niche on each side a symbol of an Evangelist. At the top of all was placed a wheel cross-moline, which stood sixteen feet above the ground.

The works at the church made rapid advancement. The chancel roof was put on and covered with lead; the windows all restored, the pavement of encaustic tiles laid down, a stone altar erected, the Founder's tomb, the piscina, and the sedilia, cleaned and polished, and all the walls scraped within and pointed without. The fresco-colour found on the jamb of the north lancet was carefully restored and extended to the rest; the window arches were also correspondingly embellished with heraldic ornaments supplied by Mr. Wilkinson. The ceiling was removed from the nave, and the magnificent old oak roof exposed to view. It

was not much damaged by the exclusion of the air, so that little cost was necessary in cleaning and varnishing it, and restoring the angels' wings. A great many pews were destroyed, and good stout open seats of English oak placed in their stead. For this purpose the Squire had given an unlimited supply of timber from his estate. Some of the farmers stood out stoutly for what they called their rights in retaining pews ; but the Rector as resolutely insisted that they had no rights at all in the matter, since pews were all positively illegal, as well as selfish, ugly, and inconvenient. He adopted a method which had great success with even the most obstinate. He removed his own pew, and substituted three rows of handsome open seats with richly-carved poppy-heads. As they stood in juxta-position with a monster enclosure of deal, above five feet high, the contrast of effect was sufficiently striking ; and when the objectors were persuaded to sit and kneel in each successively by way of trial, they were compelled to admit that the open seats were much more comfortable and convenient. Thus he gained over the whole parish, the Squire himself included, except four or five, who with a very bad grace retained their favourite pin-folds in solitary exclusiveness for a little time, till at last they were fairly ashamed of them, and fell in with the good old uniform open benches.

All the modern monuments were placed in the new vestry, which was made large enough for their convenient reception. The monument of the Abbess Etheldreda was entirely restored. The mutilated effigy, the angels, the figures, even the painting and gilding, were replaced. And when, to the Rector's surprise, a huge wooden case, labelled "stained glass," arrived from London, containing a magnificent new window, the gift of Francis to the church, and the deep glowing tints shone resplendent from the east end, and illuminated the mellow pavement and carved altar; not even Mrs. Merton herself could resist the donation of a side lancet light, on the strict condition that it should not contain the painting of a saint. Numbers of friends and visitors came to see the splendours of the restored church, and other stained windows and various liberal donations followed each other in quick succession. The result of the experiment was triumphant; all acknowledged its beneficial influence and longed to follow the example.



## CHAPTER XIII.—THE PIC-NIC PARTY.

It was a warm and lovely day in the month of June. The ruined abbey of Wardley lay in its deserted grandeur, embosomed amidst the trees that had overgrown its once stately walls. The wild rose and the honeysuckle entwined their branches in luxuriant festoons over the bare and blighted pile; the moss and the fern sprouted from every crevice and crested every point; only here and there the grey ashlar shone in the sun-beam as it found its way through the thick foliage. Nature had thrown a verdant front over the Church's shame, and had laboured to hide the devastations of infatuated man. The doorways, yet rich in the multiplicity of receding mouldings and flowered shafts, remained nearly as they were built; time-worn indeed and venerable in their old age, but entire, and exquisitely graceful, though but little heeded by modern eye. Here was part of a wall, there an arch, there a window. Here a mound of green sward, on which, amidst the wild thyme and the harebell, many a shapely stone protruded its bare white form from the

mass below, shewing the vast accumulation of ruined magnificence which lay buried beneath. Here was a corbel, quaint and grim, with the cross-springer of some broken vault scarcely balanced on its own failing support. There a great boss, like a complex nest of intricate ramified foliage, lay all bleached and broken on the ground. In many parts the mantling ivy clung in overhanging bowers from the gable and lofty arch, its gnarled and curling grey stem binding and girding together the stones which its own tendrils had dislodged from their ancient bed. All was still and bright on that lonely spot. The birds twittered from the roofless clerestory ; the fly and the bee filled the sultry air with their drowsy hum. As of old, the place seemed scarce the abode of busy man. There was but a little village under the abbey walls, built chiefly out of its ruins, as was evident from the many carved stones and curious mouldings and ornaments which might be seen imbedded in the masonry of every cottage and shed. The little garden-plots were glowing with the flowers of summer. Nature's incense was rife around the sacred spot. The yellow stone-crop and the house-leek bloomed on the walls and thatched roofs ; and the thin grey smoke of the fragrant turf fire on the cottager's hearth issued here and there from a chimney amid the trees. The whole scene was of that entrancing

meditative kind which makes the traveller desire to be alone, that he may recall for a space the visions of by-gone days.

So thought Mr. Wilkinson, as he wandered among the noble ruins of Wardley Abbey, whither he had come on his return from the last professional visit to the church at Letherton. He delighted to be alone. It was the very place for solitary enjoyment, and he could sketch, and measure, and think, and weep, just as he pleased, unmolested by any intruder. But he was very disagreeably startled from his dreamy wanderings among the "ages of faith," by a loud laughing, the drawing of corks, and the clattering of glasses, which portended a noisy pic-nic in the immediate neighbourhood. Coming suddenly to a breach in the wall, he found himself in sight of a large party of ladies and gentlemen, who were sitting in the ruined choir, just on the spot where once the high altar stood. A table-cloth was spread on the ground before them, well furnished with hampers of substantial provisions, and with wine, cakes, and fruit, for the refreshment of the visitors. On the inverted fragment of a stone coffin sate a young man with long hair and mustachios, and a great many gold chains and rings, who was addressed by Squire Merton as Mr. Tómpkins. The Squire himself, with his coat off, and a silk handkerchief tied round his head to keep

off the sun, looked very warm and uncomfortable. Mrs. Merton and the Miss Mertons and a good many others were there, all talking, eating, and laughing, with equal avidity.

“Well, I declare,” exclaimed Mrs. Merton, as the young Architect shewed himself to the party, from which he had now no fair chance of escape, “there is that Mr. Wilkinson. Why in the world has the man got his hat off, just as if he was in church? I do call that such affectation. I declare he looks as if he had been crying, instead of amusing himself in this delightful spot.”

“I’m sure,” said Miss Merton, “there can be little to cry about here. Perhaps the poor man has fallen down and hurt himself. I heard a great crash a little while ago, like a heavy fall of stones.”

“That,” said Mr. Tompkins, “was only Dick and I knocking a loose stone out of an old arch-way over head. It did come down with a precious noise, and brought three feet of the wall below along with it in its descent. Lucky some of the old monks’ hard heads were not beneath: the stones would certainly have been broken across them.” At this he put his glass to his eye, and laughed immoderately.

By this time Mr. Wilkinson had approached, and expressed the surprise (he did not say “unexpected pleasure”) which he felt at meeting Mrs.

Merton's party in a place where he least thought to see them. But he was aware, he said, that ruined abbeys were favourite places of resort for parties of pleasure, and certainly the weather was highly favourable for the present expedition.

"I dare say," said Mrs. Merton, "Mr. Wilkinson will be so good as to tell us something about the abbey. We cannot make out the different parts at all; the refectory where the monks slept, and the dormitory where they dined, and the church and the cloisters. There seems nothing but a heap of confused arches and doorways wherever we turn."

"The largest and best room was for eating, the next for sleeping, and the smallest and worst for praying, you may depend upon it," said Mr. Tompkins. Whereupon he poured out a glass of champagne, and forthwith commenced an appropriate song, containing certain popular balderdash on the subject of fat monks in connexion with venison pasties. This not proving very amusing to the company, he placed his hat on the head of a mutilated stone effigy which lay propped against a pier, and a cigar in its mouth; then he retired backwards a few paces, and burst into a loud fit of laughter, declaring it was "a capital idea."

Indignant at such miserable levity, Mr. Wilkinson sternly and boldly rebuked him. "Do

you know," said he, "that you are within the consecrated walls of a church? Can the work of unholy destroyers render it less sacred? Let me entreat you to have some regard to the feelings of others, to which such conduct is indescribably painful."

Mr. Tompkins begged pardon with rather a sulky air, and sate down somewhat disconcerted with the result of his experiment.

As Mr. Wilkinson could not refuse the request, he endeavoured to explain to the party the arrangements of the abbey as far as he could make them out. He shewed them the refectory, of which only part of the lower walls, with their internal arcade, now remained. The ground-plan of the church he defined and drew out on paper, shewing the position of the altar, and venturing to express a belief that they would have dined elsewhere had they known the ancient sanctity of the spot which they had unwittingly selected. And he took the opportunity of pointing out the feelings of reverence and religious interest with which such melancholy wrecks of ancient grandeur should be visited, and of reprobating the too common custom of making ruined abbeys the resort of thoughtless parties of gaiety, which he said greatly tended to blind us in our prejudices, and harden us in the delusions of popular protestantism.

The great kitchen, part of the cloisters, the gate-house, were yet distinctly to be traced. But several smaller buildings of irregular projection Mr. Wilkinson could not certainly explain. The great abbeys, he said, sometimes covered several acres of ground with their buildings and dependencies, and so little was known about them that much remained for conjecture. A great deal of general information, however, he gave them about abbeys and the various orders of religious : so that he was unanimously considered a most agreeable and fortunate acquisition to the party. Poor Mr. Tompkins could only smoke cigars and whistle Italian airs ; so that for the present he found himself, to his great mortification, completely eclipsed by his more intelligent rival the Architect.

In one place there was a deep descent over loose piles of broken stones into a narrow square building. The sky above was almost shut out from view by umbrageous shrubs and trees which had taken root on the soil and mortar at the top. Mr. Wilkinson offered his arm to Miss Merton to descend. At the bottom was a small low arch, leading to a clear cold well about three feet deep. " This reminds me," said he, " of St. Joseph's Well at Glastonbury, which is in a very similar position. I have little doubt that miraculous virtues were attributed to this spring."

“ But you do not believe,” said Miss Merton, “ that miraculous cures were really ever performed by such means ?”

“ I should be sorry to say that I disbelieved it,” answered he, “ when the Protestant Bishop Hall himself attests an instance. I cannot tell whether springs derive their healing properties from passing over mineral beds of medicinal virtue, or over the buried relics of a Saint. But there is undoubted testimony to many cures having been effected, even in modern times. The Holy Wells of Ireland are to this day frequented by thousands : and we must ask of this, as of the mediæval miracles, how it is credible that such a reputation could ever be obtained, except by many instances of signal and notorious relief. From the miraculous pool of Bethesda down to our own times, a strange virtue seems to be inherent in some springs, as if they were given for special instruments of cure. A remarkable case occurred to my own knowledge very recently at the Holy Well of St. Winifride, near Chester. At least I had the details of the case from one resident on the spot, who himself daily watched the progress of the cure.”

“ I should like to hear it,” said Miss Merton.

“ A young Irish lad was grievously afflicted with that almost incurable disease, a white swelling in the knee-joint. He was brought, truly



in faith, from a very great distance to St. Winifride's well. The bone, I believe, was quite diseased ; at least the pain and suffering were so severe that the poor lad could only bear to sit at the well and pour the blessed water with his hand over the joint. In a week he could walk : in a month he was *perfectly* recovered by these means alone. People said cold water must be a specific for white swellings ; and perhaps, if they had said the cold water of St. Winifride's well, they would have been right."

"Very extraordinary indeed," said Miss Merton. "Do you see this dark niche in the wall here? Do you think some poor nun was ever immured within it, as Sir Walter Scott describes in *Marmion*? That was very horrible, was it not?"

"I know of no positive evidence whatever," said Mr. Wilkinson, "of such dreadful proceedings. Here it certainly could not have occurred, because this was an establishment for monks alone. But if the tale be true, you must view it in its fair light. The Church held that bodily suffering would in part atone for sins committed on earth. On this principle they thought to save the soul of a fallen sister, by the infliction of severe and protracted pains on the unhappy offender. I will not allow that they were either cruel or inconsistent in this. But I do hope and believe the whole legend is without foundation."

“ Well,” said Miss Merton, “ it certainly is a very horrible belief, that about penance, and purgatory, and that sort of thing.”

Mr. Wilkinson made no answer, not wishing to discuss the question with one who seemed to have thought very little about it. They rejoined the party, Miss Merton declaring her fixed intention of never becoming a Nun.

## CHAPTER XIV.—THE CHURCH IN HER INFLUENCE.

JUST before the completion of the work of restoration at Letherton Church, the Rural Dean made a visit to the Rectory. He had heard much of the new decorations and the stained windows ; so, having a secret dread of such things, he came to admonish and expostulate, not, of course, in an official capacity, but only as a neighbour and a friend.

On entering the church the first object which met his eye was the stone altar. It was handsomely but simply designed, and chaste and inoffensive in its construction and ornaments. It stood upon six pillars, the front being left open. Upon it were standing two silver candlesticks of antique ecclesiastical design, which had just arrived from Birmingham.

Mr. Montague looked very grave and shook his head when he saw this. It was not only directly contrary to the canons, but it tacitly recognised the most corrupt of all the popish heresies. Stone Altars were both idolatrous and heretical, and they were sure to prove an abomination in the eyes of the parishioners, as they certainly did in

his own. For his part, he said, he would rather die than consent to use them for the celebration of the Sacrament.

The Rural Dean expressed himself with so much warmth and vehemence, that the Rector was by no means favourably impressed with the reverence or the sincerity of his friend. He could not help thinking that such language was but an ebullition of party feeling; and well knowing how prone the best of us are to be hot and violent on subjects the most solemn, and how angrily we contend in defence of what we call our deep religious convictions—as if religion depended in the least upon men's notions—he wisely surmised that there was more of impulse and prejudice than of deliberation in the objection. He answered, therefore, that he had not erected the stone table without mature consideration, and was fully prepared to contest the point with him as a matter of argument and fair controversy. He freely confessed that he had himself thought somewhat differently on the subject six months ago; but the absence of prejudice, and attention to the importance and proprieties of church arrangements, had convinced him of his former error.

“And first,” said he, “let me explain the reasons which induced me to take a step which appears to you so objectionable.

“My principal motive was *reverence*. Wooden

tables have been tried, and have failed to secure proper respect. It has been found impossible to preserve from general abuse and desecration the mean and unsightly wooden frames which have been used in the Church since the Reformation. Vestry meetings are held upon them, carpenters use them as work-benches, schoolmasters as desks, workmen sit upon them with their hats on ; nay, any village idler will lean against them unconcerned while he smokes his pipe. So rapidly did this feeling increase, that rails were found absolutely necessary, in less than a hundred years, to secure the table from actual profanation. In fact, so complete and so obvious is the association in the thoughtless mind between the sight of an ordinary table and the idea of its secular use, that I have known the parishioners make a general practice of sitting within the rails on chairs and forms, and jangle over it about a church-rate. I have seen it used as a scaffold in whitewashing a church ; I have seen it turned up on end to assist in climbing up to a window-cill ; I have found it used as a hall table in a rectory-house ; ejected and put to some ignominious use in a damp and dirty corner of the church. Many and many a time have I seen coarse and rough pieces of deal hammered together and covered with a soiled and torn rag of green baize ; broken and dusty boards, not fit to place in a cottage, are perhaps the ordi-

nary altars of Protestant churches. Now I do maintain that a stone table never could be liable to such desecration : and the reasons are, first, because it is fixed, (by its own weight at least,) secondly, that it cannot be viewed in the same light as a mere piece of domestic furniture. The conditions of the canon are, I conceive, satisfied, if a stone table is so far moveable, that it is not built into the solid masonry of the wall. For no one will ever be able to shew that the word "table" implies of necessity some particular material. The ancient altars, with their anointed crosses, their various decorations of painting, drapery, and sculpture, their relics, and what was considered their superstitious consecration, having been removed (though I find that a large number certainly remained till Cromwell's time),—and removed, I conceive, much more from these reasons than simply because they were of stone,—“tables” were ordered to be used, without specifying the material at all, which it is really incredible that the canon should have failed to specify, if the sole ground of objection lay in their being of stone. Whether the adoption of the word “table” in the Rubric was merely to satisfy the prejudice of parties, and the canon intentionally compiled with a view to a restoration of the more Catholic usage in a less critical period, it is for more learned ritualists than myself to determine.

“To the remote antiquity of stone Altars (the reign of Constantine, if not earlier,) may be added the constant use of the term *Altar* in all ages of the Church, and its common acceptation in the present ; by which the other objection, in itself a frivolous one, that it implies a Romish doctrine, falls to the ground : for the idea and the name are so familiar to us all, that it is quite impossible the material used in any particular case should make it more or less so. Again, as the nature of a Sacrament cannot possibly be altered by the kind of table used in its administration, so the indifferent use of both terms and both materials, so far from unsettling men’s minds, ought only to prove to them how little any doctrinal question is really involved.”

“You cannot defend the erection of a fixed stone Altar,” said Mr. Montague, “when, first, all stone Altars were expressly ordered to be pulled down, and, secondly, it is implied, if not directly stated, that the table should be moveable.”

“For the first,” answered the Rector, “though the intrigues of the Genevan party succeeded in getting the Altars removed by royal injunction in the third year of Edward VI., still after that storm was passed, the Rubrics of Elizabeth and Charles II. deliberately ordered that the ornaments of churches were to remain the same as in the *second* year of Edward VI. It is most unreasonable to insist on

the moveableness of tables, when rails were universally used in the time of Charles II., by which the permanent position of the table at the east end was of course determined. But after all, the sanction of so many living prelates, who have consecrated churches with stone tables in them, is a sufficient proof of their legitimate use in the Anglican Church. You may perhaps be surprised to learn that probably not less than three hundred are now in use in protestant English churches."

The Dean did not discuss the question further, feeling that he had very weak grounds for his position. He turned to the new Rood-screen, which was of very rich carved oak, coloured and gilded in the tracery and lower panels exactly in the ancient fashion. He said he was sorry to see such a melancholy revival of not only useless, but highly objectionable popish furniture.

"This screen," said the Rector, "will ever be endeared to me by the most interesting associations. An aged parishioner, who has ever been a devout and sincere churchman, came to me with tears in his eyes, and after expressing his heartfelt joy at having seen the church in which he and his fathers had knelt for ages at length restored to its ancient beauty, he desired to place in my hands fifty pounds for procuring some ornament which might attest his gratitude. My son, I believe, suggested to him that it might be well devoted to the purchase



of a chancel screen. For its strict propriety as a part of the furniture of a church, Francis can supply abundant proofs."

"Till the time of James I.," said Francis, "and generally, I think, till Charles II., rood-screens were erected in new churches, or where the old screens had been destroyed or removed. The number of Jacobean or debased screens I have met with is a very interesting token to the general recognition of this Catholic practice by the Reformed Church. And in several instances I have seen Jacobean doors added to ancient screens. Even Wren's churches always had screens; in truth, till the last hundred years, I suspect they were scarcely ever omitted."

Again baffled in his objections, Mr. Montague did not know what to say. He had not the least idea of these facts, and was merely a follower of the popular "no popery" cry, without having taken the smallest trouble to investigate the real truth of the subject.

"This arrangement," he said, "is clearly intended unduly to exalt the Sacraments and the clergy, and can be productive of no good to the Church."

"The first allegation," said the Rector, "I am willing to believe you would not seriously make on calmly considering the present state of opinion on the subject. For the second, a screen, I grant,

is intended to *separate* the clergy ; but does it follow that it *exalts* them ? And are they not already separated by their office from the laity ? Why then refuse the visible distinction of that office in the place where they exercise its functions ? I recollect that Hooker (I think in his fifth book) remarks that in his time the admission of the laity into the chancel was only beginning to be allowed."

" Well," said the Rural Dean, " the next thing will be to place crosses and roods above your screens. The restoration of the latter is only the first step."

" You may see them already in more churches than one," said Francis. " A large carved cross has been in several recent instances placed under the chancel-arch, and I have not heard that it has produced any evil consequences."

" You may rely upon it, sir, that one innovation will lead to another. We shall soon see the result of all this. You will not be satisfied, I dare say, till you bring back copes and vestments."

" Certainly not," said Francis, " since they are ordered by the Rubric, and were long used by the Reformed Church."

" I see no reading-desk in your church," said Mr. Montague. " What new-fangled contrivance have we here for the purpose ?"

A carved oak lectern with a revolving triangular head stood on one side of the chancel-arch, near the pulpit. A beautiful Bible, bound in the antique style, was fastened to it by a silver chain. "This," said the Rector, "is for reading the Lessons; and very convenient and suitable I find it. The Prayers I offer from a stall in the chancel, just behind the Rood-screen. This, Francis assures me was the custom of the Church till the time of James I., when the clumsy and unwieldy reading-pues first came into fashion. I believe I ought to have a Litany-stool in front of the chancel-arch, such as is used in cathedrals and colleges: but for this I must wait a little yet. You see I have let my son arrange the church entirely for me. I have been shamefully neglectful and ignorant of these subjects myself, though I now perceive their importance. However, I have been fortunate in the direction of one, on whose knowledge and good taste I can so confidently rely."

"Your nave," said the Rural Dean, "is really beautiful. The dark oak roof, the open benches, the flowered capitals of the piers, which are most skilfully restored, and the elaborate Font-cover, are all admirable, I must freely admit. When I was here before, there was only a red earthenware vase for a Font."

"This very fine sculptured bason we found in

one of my fields, where it had long been used as a trough. We had it conveyed hither, and restored it at considerable expense. You may readily suppose all this has not been done for nothing."

"May I ask what is the total sum expended?" said the Dean.

"Not less than seventeen hundred pounds," answered the Rector, "of which nearly two hundred and fifty have been appropriated to the purchase of stained glass, exclusive of the east window, which was a present. When we commenced, we had little more than half that sum. But our friends have taken an extraordinary interest in our work, and have been truly liberal. And though a considerable debt remains to be paid off by annual instalments, never shall I regret having entered upon my duties at Letherton with a work which will always afford me heartfelt gratification for the rest of my life. I am proud of my church, and I have good cause for being so. And I think I can now comprehend the reason why so few of the clergy ever enter the walls of their own churches except, as it were, by compulsion, and why not one in twenty so much as possesses a church-key. They are ashamed at the wretched condition to which they have been suffered to fall."

The Dean himself took his leave half a convert to the new theory of Church restoration. With

such an example before his eyes, he could not suppress a secret sense of the high prerogative of the Church in thus enlisting Art into the service of Religion.

The parishioners were delighted beyond measure with their church. It was always left open in the day, and they used to go and look at the stained windows, and the pavement of the chancel shining through the open rood-screen. They were not allowed to enter the chancel ; but they would rest in the porch, while their children sate on the turf by the churchyard cross to hear the curfew-bell, and learnt to love the spot, as their grandsires did of old before them.

Mr. Thompson's Baptist meeting-house, an ungainly square brick building with round-headed windows, erected during Mr. Holdworthy's incumbency, now began to prove a fast failing concern. One by one the deluded people left their false teacher, attracted at once by their own beautiful and solemn church, and the kind but earnest tone of their excellent Rector. In vain were bible-meetings, prayer-meetings, and tea-meetings ; in vain the declamation and vehemence of the Reverend Thomas Thompson, the minister of the New Connexion Baptist Church at Letherton, for so he was wont to style himself. His influence was gone ; so he was fain at last to leave the parish altogether, after a parting sermon, in which

he solemnly warned the people that the Anti-christ was at work in the parish, and more than hinted that a certain state-parson was no true preacher of the Gospel. But there were few present to hear his denunciation; so the Baptist interest was effectually subdued by its own weakness and the Church's strength in the parish of Letherton. The conventicle was soon after sold and turned into a school-room.

It was easy for such a man as their Rector to gain the entire affections of the people. The daily service, the constant attention to their wants, and the liberal yet judicious charity, convinced them that he was really their friend. He did not drive about the country in a smart carriage with livery footmen; nor was the Rectory a fine modern house, with costly carpets and gilded cornices and resplendent mirrors and pictures, such as the poor hardly dare to enter, from a feeling that the place is not for such as they. It was an ancient plain building, with thatched roofs and high gables, and here and there an irregular buttress propping the low and massive walls. All around it were thick shrubs and trees, reaching down the verdant lawn to S. Winifride's stream, to which the tame cows in the Rectory-garth would come for drink, and stand lowing and ruminating half the day long before the parlour windows. Then there were a great many blooming honeysuckles round the

door, and a great many bee-hives in the garden and a fence of fragrant roses which seemed only to invite, not to forbid access. It was quite impossible to pass that spot, and see the good Rector seated under a tree reading, and his daughters working in the sunny flower-beds, without thinking it a perfect specimen of a good and happy country parsonage. Often and often Squire Merton used to say that he thought it a much more agreeable residence than Letherton Hall.

And so the "Church in her influence" dispenses her blessings on the parish of Letherton: the happy, the beautiful, the secluded Letherton. Dispenses, did we say? Alas, alas! that our village should exist in all the luxury of nature's best gifts; alas! that the stream should flow and the trees should wave in the sunny vale, even as we have described them; but that our Church and our Rectory, our castle and our hall, our restoration and our worthy churchmen, should be but ideal creations! We had almost written ourselves into the belief that all was reality, till the unwonted use of the present tense recalled to our minds that we professed from the first to be writing fiction. It was at Letherton that our little book was conceived. We sate on a green bank by the limpid spring, one bright summer's day, and fell into a dreamy train of thought on the changes which that lovely village must have

seen ; for when we viewed the church with its grey and time-worn Saxon tower, we knew that for a thousand years man must have colonized the place, remote from his fellow-men, and undisturbed by the world's agitating cares and ceaseless commotions. Then we thought that surely there was of old some special cause for building the sacred edifice on the knoll hard by the spring, and so we bethought ourselves of Saxon Saints, and martyrs, and miracles, till we conjured up the scenes we have described, and the story we have told. And then we went on and on, never stopping in the thread of our narrative, but restoring, and spending, and manufacturing imaginary stained windows, and drawing forth bright encaustic tiles from visionary kilns to adorn our renovated structure, never thinking that we had brought our events up to the present day, and must no longer talk of the past. We quite forgot, meanwhile, that Letherton church is *really* a poor neglected little place, as shabbily furnished and as meanly repaired as other country churches are in the nineteenth century. In truth, of the parish and its management for good or for ill we know nothing whatever ; for as travellers on an architectural tour we left such questions of internal economy unasked and uninvestigated.

Reader, if you have patiently followed this little tale from the first, and borne with its dulness,



its errors, and it may be its extravagances, you will have perceived our end and object in writing it. We have given a sketch of what we would fain hope may yet be done in reality in many a village of Old England. We have been for years wanderers over her fair land, and seen cause to mourn over the sad tokens of a fallen Church. We have witnessed her ruined walls, her desecrated Altars, her alienated people. We have lamented, but not wondered, that dissent is rife ; that reverence, teachableness, and obedience, have almost fled the land ; that the villages themselves are often an assemblage of squalid decayed cottages, where dirt and wretchedness are alone to be seen in place of the blithe and happy homesteads of ancient days. We have grieved to see that, where once stood the village Cross, where every head would bow and many a knee would bend, even before the eye of man and in open day, now stands the village *cage*, that hideous prison with its barred doors and stancheoned windows, and its detestable display of fetters and handcuffs, to scare men from sin, instead of winning them to religion. We believe that the bane began with the degradation and desolation of the Church, and that it can never be remedied till the day of her servitude is overpast, and she reappears in all her wonted strength and glory. We cannot yet get back our monasteries and the many great churches that

have long been laid in the dust. They have passed away with the Age of Saints ; and it may be we shall never know them again. But we can all in our own little way turn Church Restorers. The labour is sweet, and the task a delightful one. May the work prosper, as the cause is good and the necessity urgent !



## NOTES.

## PAGE 21.

The effigy of a Benedictine Abbat at Peterborough has the staff in the *right* hand : it was usually held in the left. It is difficult from existing examples of these beautiful monuments to verify the remark of Durandus, that Bishops have the staff turned *outwards*, Abbats *inwards*.

## PAGE 23.

The economy of monastic Refectories very closely resembled in all respects that of a College Hall ; indeed they are in effect identical. The account of this, and of the other features and decorations of the Abbey, is compiled from authentic sources, and may be considered as giving a tolerably correct (though indeed a very feeble and imperfect) idea of the ancient condition of these splendid and wealthy establishments. The particular house alluded to under the name of *Wardley Abbey* will easily be recognised by the arms and sigillum, p. 25.

## PAGE 26.

It may seem improbable that a large costly church should be erected without rebuilding the plain and rude Saxon tower : but this has been done at Barnack, which is one of the most extensive and elaborate of village churches.

## PAGE 31.

The ancient system of sepulture in Chancels is curious. Priests were buried within it, certainly soon after the commencement of the thirteenth century, if not before. Laics, especially Founders and Benefac-

tors, were laid in stone coffins exactly under the walls, which were sometimes subsequently erected upon them, so as to fix them immoveably, as at Castor near Peterborough, and Bottisham, Cambridge ; sometimes a recess was constructed below the foundation for the future reception of the body, which was thus, as it were, laid neither within nor without the Church. That this was considered a privilege there can be no doubt.

## PAGE 37.

The details of the Castle of Letherton are such as characterised the military strong-holds in the Norman period, and in the time of our narrative. There is an example of a great portal, fortified in the manner described, at Chepstow. The wretched taste of building such edifices *now* cannot too strongly be reprobated. There is a melancholy specimen to be seen of a sham gateway of this sort in York Castle. Strict consistency of *style with use* ought to be a leading canon with every architect.

## PAGE 42.

The general description of this Oriel, or Lady's Bower, is taken from a very interesting one at Castle Rising.

## PAGE 46.

This pastoral Staff was found on opening the grave of Bishop Grostête some years ago.

## PAGE 47.

It must be confessed that it is taking a great liberty with the character of this illustrious Prelate to attribute to him an event which is not expressly recorded of him. The apparent improbability of the miracle will perhaps strike most readers : but in reality there is no cause for doubting its possibility. A great many equally astonishing cures are recorded to have happened in the Church by the virtue of holy relics in ages later than this. Of course it would be useless to argue upon the *truth* of the universal tradition of the incorruptibility of the

bodies of Saints and Martyrs : but a few examples shall be cited in proof of the *belief*, which is all that the author is bound to defend.

Bede, Ecclesiastical History, Chapter xix. Book iii.—Fursius, a holy man, having built a noble monastery, “not long after, departed this life. The same Erconvald took his body, and deposited it in the porch of a church he was building in his town of Perron, or Person, till the Church itself should be dedicated. This happened twenty-seven years after, and the body being taken from the porch to be reburied near the Altar was found *as entire as if he had just then died.*”

Again, Chap. xix. Book iv. of the Blessed S. Etheldreda Bede says, “as I was informed by Bishop Wilfrid, *of whom I inquired, because some questioned the truth thereof.*” He relates, that at the Translation of that holy Body, after it had been buried sixteen years, the grave being opened, “it was found as free from corruption as if she had died and been buried on that very day, *as the aforesaid Bishop Wilfrid, and many others that know it, can testify.*” The physician Cinfrid, who was present at the interment, found the body undecayed, and an incision which he had himself made in life-time, healed, so that “*to my great astonishment, (he says) there appeared only an extraordinarily slender scar.*”

S. Cuthbert’s Body remained incorrupt till the Reformation, in which state it was found by the profane Commissioners whose testimony to the fact is recorded in detail in the Antiquities of Durham Abbey. The Body was on several occasions disinterred. It is first mentioned by Bede, Chapter xxx. Book iv. “When he had been buried eleven years, Divine Providence put it into the minds of the brethren to take up his bones, expecting, as is usual with dead bodies, to find all the flesh consumed and reduced to ashes, and the rest dried up. . . . On opening the grave, they found all the body whole, as if it had been alive, *and the joints pliable*, more like one asleep than a dead person.”

In the Description of the County of Durham, annexed to the Antiquities of Durham Abbey, is the following

account: "Four hundred and eighteen years after the decease of holy S. Cuthbert, upon account of a dispute that happened among certain Prelates, some *doubting or denying* that the corpse of S. Cuthbert could continue uncorrupted for so many years, others affirming and avouching its incorruption, . . . the holy sepulchre was opened by a select number (above ten) of reverend monks, and the holy body, with all things about it, found whole, sound, uncorrupted, *and flexible*, having its natural weight, and *full substance of flesh, blood, and bones*. A most heavenly fragrant smell proceeded from it, and it was brought forth and strictly examined, and exposed to the view of above forty in all, of noblemen and others of the clergy and laity, such as were deemed worthy and fit to be eye-witnesses of such a rare and reverend spectacle." This was in the year 1109, in the prelacy of Ranulphus, eighth Bishop of the See. (Appendix, p. 125.) The discovery of the Body by the Commissioners is deeply interesting, though a sad tale of irreverence and profanity. "The sacred shrine of holy S. Cuthbert was defaced at the visitation held at Durham for demolishing such monuments, by Dr. Lee, Dr. Henley, and Mr. Blithman, in King Henry the Eighth's reign, at his suppression of religious houses. . . . After the spoil of his ornaments and jewels, they approached near to his body, expecting nothing but dust and ashes: but perceiving the chest he lay in strongly bound with iron, the goldsmith with a smith's great forge-hammer broke it open, when they found him lying whole, uncorrupt, with his face bare, and his beard as of a fortnight's growth, and all the vestments about him, as he was accustomed to say mass, and his metwand of gold lying by him. When the goldsmith perceived he had broken one of his legs, in breaking open the chest, he was sore troubled at it, and cried, 'Alas! I have broken one of his legs.' Which Dr. Henley hearing, called to him, and bade him cast down his bones. The other answered he could not get them asunder, (i. e. the fractured limb,) for the sinews and skin held them so that

they would not separate. Then Dr. Lee stepped up to see if it were so, and turning about, spake in Latin to Dr. Henley, that he was entire, though Dr. Henley not believing his words, called again to have his bones cast down. Dr. Lee answered, 'If you will not believe me, come up yourself and see him.' Then Dr. Henley stepped up to him, and handled him, and found he lay whole. Then he commanded them to take him down; and so it happened, contrary to their expectation, that not only his body was whole and uncorrupted, but the vestments wherein his body lay, and wherein he was accustomed to say mass, were fresh, safe, and not consumed." The Body was afterwards buried by the Convent, and the secret of the spot where he was laid confided in perpetuity to three persons only. The account published a few years ago of the disinterment of an ancient bishop, supposed by some to be the Body of Bede, assumes a fact which it is quite unable to prove, and we believe to be erroneously stated.

One of the most authentic and detailed accounts of this miraculous incorruptibility is given in the Chronicles of Jocelin of Brakelond, a monk of Bury S. Edmund's, who wrote at the time of the occurrence. The narrative of the opening the shrine of the Saint (S. Edmund) is too minute to transcribe at length. After a terrible fire in the choir of the great church, in which the shrine was miraculously preserved unhurt in the very midst of the flames, though an iron grating on the spot was at a white heat, it was resolved by the Abbat to examine the Body. This was done in presence of twelve monks, whose names and offices are specified. "Now the coffin was so filled with the sacred body, both in length and width, that even a needle could hardly be put between the head and the wood, or between the feet and the wood, and the head *lay united to the body*, somewhat raised by a small pillow. The Abbat, looking attentively, next found a silk cloth, and after that another small and very fine silken cloth, . . . and lastly, they discovered the body, wound round with a linen cloth, and then it was that the lineaments

of the Saint's Body were laid open to view. At this point the Abbat stopped, saying he durst not proceed further, or view the holy body naked. . . . Proceeding, he touched the eyes, and the nose, which was very massive and prominent, and then he touched the breast and arms, and *raising the left arm* (it was therefore flexible, and could not have been embalmed or preserved artificially) he touched the fingers, and placed his own fingers between the fingers of the Saint, and proceeding, he found the feet standing up stiff, like the feet of a man who had died to-day, and he touched the toes, and in touching, counted them." This was in the year 1198. Afterwards many brethren were called in to witness the miraculous preservation of one who had not been "suffered to see corruption." The passage is extracted from Mr. Tomlins' Translation, 1844.

To pursue this subject a little further for its own intrinsic interest, rather than for the purpose of convincing those who treat with scoffing contempt the very idea of a mediæval miracle, and who of course regard the belief in them as a melancholy and fatal infatuation; we may adduce an instance of the incorruptible body of a Saint even at the present day. Mr. Alban Butler (*Lives of the Saints*, September 5,) makes the following statement respecting S. Rosa of Viterbo: "She was refused admittance in the Franciscan nunnery in Viterbo; therefore led a solitary life in a cottage adjoining, in the most austere penitential practices, and in assiduous contemplation and prayer. She died about the year 1252. Her body is shewn enshrined in the church of this nunnery *entirely incorrupt*; her face appears full of flesh, and as if the corpse was just dead."

The testimony of S. Austin is appealed to by Protestants of all sects, when it suits their purpose; we may therefore be allowed to cite the same writer in defence of our fictitious illustration of the virtue of holy relics. We have the express assurance of this illustrious Bishop, that he was *eye-witness* to *many* of the miracles wrought by the relics of S. Stephen the proto-



martyr. These, with a great many others, are given at length in Mr. Butler's Life of S. Stephen, (August 3,) to which the reader is referred, as it would be impossible to recount them here in the words of the writer. Among these miracles S. Austin mentions three persons raised from the dead. The celebrated story of the relics of SS. Gervasius and Protasius is too well known to need repetition.

It will perhaps be said that the faith which would *pray* for a miracle, and expect its fulfilment, is something greater than we can realize, or than we can suppose Bishop Grosstête to have possessed. Of the latter we cannot now fairly judge: but we have no reason to think that he should have *less* faith in miracles than was generally held by the Church. We know that S. Walburga calmed the winds and the waves by the prayer of faith; and other instances are on record of similar occurrences. Indeed the ceremony of the "Healing," by the king's touch, set forth by royal proclamation in 1662, most distinctly recognises the belief in miraculous cures in the following prayer (see *Hierurgia Anglicana*, p. 204.) "O Almighty God, who art the giver of all health, and the aid of them that seek to Thee for succour, we call upon Thee for thy help and goodness mercifully to be shewed unto these thy servants, that they, *being healed of their infirmities*, may give thanks unto Thee in thy holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

PAGE 61.

Every one knows what a blessing monasteries were to the poor, and how Christian and charitable was their system of relief compared with the truly heathen cruelties of modern poor-laws and work-houses. In the very interesting series of letters relating to the dissolution of Monasteries, lately published by the Camden Society, the following testimony of the Commissioners themselves occurs among many others: "The howse (Woolstrobe, near Grantham) without any scelandre or evyll ffame, and stonds in a wast grownde vercy solitarie,

kepyng suche hospitalite that except by synguler good provision itt cowlde natt be meynteined with halfe so mucche landes more as they may spend, suche a nombre of the powre inhabitantes nye therunto dayly relevyd, that we have nott sene the like." (p. 137.)

Of the lying charges brought by the Commissioners against the Monasteries the following are specimens, from the same work: "Yesterday I lernede many enormouse thynges againste Bisshope (a Confessor). . . . that Bisshope wolde have persuadyt one of his lay brederen, a smyth, to have made a key for the dore, to have in the nyght tyme receeyvide in wenches for hym and his felowe, and specially a wiffe of Uxbrige. . . . . The saide Bisshope also persuadyt a nune, to whom he was Confessor," &c. &c. &c. (p. 47.) "The Prior of Maden Bradeley — thanks Gode a never medelet with marytt women, but all with madens the faireste cowlde be gottyn," &c. (p. 58.) "In the tyme of *Lent* past your contynuell oratour John Bartelot, with other to the number of v personez of good conversacion, ffound the Prior of the Crossid Fryers in London at that tyme beyng in bedde with his hoore——*upon a Fryday*." (p. 60.) This veracious person tries to prove rather too much to gain credence. It is a curious and suspicious fact, that the letters of one Dr. Layton almost always contain some atrocious charges against the abbeys visited by him, while very few of the other numerous correspondents mention anything of the kind. This wholesale fabricator of scandal writes to Cromwell, (p. 100,) that "thabbot of Fontance (Fountains) notoriously kepyth *vi hoorres*" (!). That such stuff as this should gain belief at the present day is more melancholy than surprising.

#### PAGE 62.

The following account of the demolition of Lewes Priory is extracted from the Letters just mentioned (p. 180). "My Lord, I humbly commend my selfe unto your lordshyp. The laste I wrote unto your lordshyp was the *xxth* daye of thys present monith by the handes

of Mr. Wyliamson, by the which I advertised your lordshyp of the lengthe and greateness of thys church, and how we had begon to pull the hole down to the ground, and what maner and fashion they used in pulling it down. I told your lordshyp of a vaute on the ryghte syde of the hyghe altare, that was borne up with fower greate pillars, having about it v chappelles, whych be compased in with the walles ccx fete of length. All thys is down a Thursday & Fryday last. Now we ar pluckyng down an higher vaute, borne up by fower thicke & grose pillars, xiiij. fete fro syde to syde, abowt in circumference xlv fete. Thys shall downe for our second worke. As it goth forward I woll advise your lordshyp from tyme to tyme, & that your lordshyp may knowe with how many men we have don thys, we browght from London xvij persons, 3 carpentars, 2 smythes, 2 plummars, and on that kepith the fornace. Every of these attendith to hys own office: x of them hewed the walles abowte, amonge the whych ther were 3 carpentars: thiese made proctes to undersette wher the other cutte away, thother brake and cutte the waules. Thiese ar men exercised moch better then the men that we fynd here in the contrey. Wherfor we must both have mo men, and other thinges also, that we have nede of, all the whych I woll within thys ij or thre dayes tell your lordshyp by mouthe. A Tuesday they began to cast the ledde, & it shalbe don with such diligence and savyng as may be, so that our trust is your lordshyp shall be moch satisfied with that we do, unto whom I most humbly commend my self, moch desiringe God to mainteyn your helth, your honour, your harte's ease.

“ At Lewes, the xxiiij. of March, 1537.

“ Your lordshyp's servant,

“ Johan Portinari.”

(Supposed to be Richard Moryson).

PAGE 67.

In the church at Thoresby, Lincolnshire, is a curious specimen of an early family pue. It is very large, and the sides sufficiently high. Round the upper part is

carved in large letters the following inscription : “ Iste est sedes Annæ Awldbeii dñæ uxoris Tristrami Smithi Thoresbeicensis Eccl’iæ patroni.” The date is 1630. In this church all the open seats are of post-reformation date. Each standard, or bench-end, has the initials, apparently of the owner, or rather the usual occupant, carved upon it : which might perhaps be adopted with advantage at the present day. The date 1614 is attached to a piece of wood which appears coeval. At S. Mary’s Wiggshall, near Lynn, is another very singular manor pue of early date.

PAGE 115.

As many persons ask *why* Grecian, and other antique styles, may not be used at least for modern secular purposes, we will endeavour briefly to answer them. All architecture whatsoever is in its origin and consistent development *the expression and the type of the purpose of its use*. That is to say, the architecture of every age and every nation owed its existence and formation to the requirements of the religion, or other objects for which it was intended. Thus, a Grecian temple contained arrangements adapted to the worship of a heathen deity, or the reception of the worshippers, and ornaments and members possessing manifest fitness as parts of a whole ; material, climate, mechanical skill, and other subordinate influences being taken into consideration. In Christian architecture, in which this principle was invariably carried out to the fullest extent, we find in the same manner a definite use for every single part of a secular as well as of a religious edifice. Now the question is this : *can we retain the form irrespective of the use, without violating the fundamental principles of architecture?* Clearly we cannot. If we alter or curtail the form, we lose the true proportions and effect, and thus travestie, not imitate. If we retain it, and copy exactly the ancient temples, we waste money and space on mere show. One or the other of these alternatives *must* attend the practice of modern architects ; and an examination of any pseudo-

Grecian building in the kingdom will readily prove this. The style is manifestly unfit for us. The middle ages had in most respects the same requirements as ours : vast halls, great houses, places for worship, business, and amusement, were as much wanted then as now. But would the builders of that time (had they known them) have copied pagan temples, retaining expensive and perfectly useless parts merely to keep up the necessary effect ? Would they have added an imposing stone portico, of no manner of use in the world, to a clumsy square body made up principally of brick, cast-iron, and plaister of Paris, merely to make a street elevation, as we have done in the new Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge ? Certainly not : instead of adopting such palpably false principles, they built naturally and consistently in their national style, which would adapt itself equally well to every possible want, and they therefore worked free from the restrictions which the imitation of uncongenial styles necessarily imposes. Adapted designs will always prove more or less absurd, in proportion as the purposes for which they are intended differ more or less from the original uses. Let us take the case of an English college. What person in his senses would import a temple from Greece or Rome, and build it twice over precisely of the same size and shape, with porticos exactly facing each other, and deformed by *half-hidden sash windows under the pediments*, and then add to each of them a row of heavy, flat, dull, tasteless walls, with low slated roofs and cumbrous cornices, relieved only by square holes for sash windows, and a set of uniform Grecian doorways ? Yet this has actually been done at Downing College, Cambridge—a design so thoroughly bad, and so utterly devoid of ordinary taste, to say nothing of genius, that almost any child who could wield a pencil might produce a better thing from an instinctive notion of effect and propriety. For *less money* a whole square might have been built, with low buttressed walls, high roofs with dormer windows, hall with open roof, stained windows, and louvre spire, and, above all, a correct

chapel, not vaulted and richly paneled in cement, like that of Corpus Christi College, nor tricked out with plaister of Paris frippery, like other college chapels in the same University, but real, dignified, and imposing. Again, for the sum expended on the nondescript and singularly ugly wing of the new library, two sides at least of the proposed square might very easily have been erected in the Christian and national style, harmonizing with King's College Chapel, and accordant with ancient associations. It is probable that the eyes of all, both architects and employers, will soon be opened to the truth of these facts, and that pagan architecture in England must shortly "die the death;" but an immensity of opposition, bigotry, and abuse, must first be encountered in effecting its overthrow.

## PAGE 116.

It is the misfortune rather than the fault of architects that their business comprehends such a heterogeneous mixture of styles and kinds, that few indeed can give their undivided attention to *church* architecture. That the same man should erect a rail-road bridge or station, a prison, a conventicle, a church, is degrading to the sublimest of all sciences. But the greatest evil of all, perhaps, is that no definite course of education, no *diploma*, is requisite in this, as in every other profession. Hence mere builders and cement-men often carry on a business which they have no right whatever to have.

## PAGE 118.

An important fact shews the mistaken practice of building, for a very inadequate sum, a great square brick edifice, with an apse and an ugly tower, to hold 1000 or 1500 people, in a long neglected parish of perhaps five times that number of inhabitants. These churches are often *not half filled* on any Sunday in the year. The right way, undoubtedly, is to make small and gradual, but sound and substantial beginnings. A beautiful and really correct church, to hold two or three hundred, in which the offices and sacraments could be

properly and strikingly performed, without that leaven of conventicular impropriety and contempt of Catholic precedent which so often obtains, would be sure to produce another such, as soon as the first congregation had become really impressed with its value and necessity. It requires some credulity to believe that five hundred people perched aloft in a gallery round a central pulpit can be very devotionally disposed, or very seriously impressed with the solemn nature of the Church's Prayers and Sacraments.

## PAGE 162.

The following miraculous cures performed at Guthurin, Shropshire, and Holywell, are given in Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints, under the Life of S. Wenefride (November 3). "Sir Roger Bodenham, Knight of the Bath, after he was abandoned by the ablest physicians and the most famous colleges of that faculty, was cured of a terrible leprosy by bathing in this miraculous fountain in 1606 ; upon which he became himself a Catholic, and gave an ample certificate of his wonderful cure, signed by many others. Mrs. Jane Wakeman, of Sussex, in 1630, brought to the last extremity by a terrible ulcerated breast, was perfectly healed in one night by bathing thrice in that well, as she and her husband attested. A poor widow of Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, had been long lame and bed-ridden, when she sent a single penny to Holy Well, to be given to the first poor body the person should meet with there ; and at the very time it was given at Holy Well, the patient arose in perfect health at Kidderminster. This fact was examined and juridically attested by Mr. James Bridges, who was afterwards Sheriff of Worcester, in 1651. Mrs. Mary Newman had been reduced to a skeleton, and to such a decrepit state and lameness, that for eighteen years she had not been able to point or set her foot on the ground. She tried all helps in England, France, and Portugal, but in vain. At last she was perfectly cured in the very well whilst she was bathing herself the fifth time. Roger Whetstone, a Quaker,

near Bromsgrove, by bathing in Holy Well was cured of an inveterate lameness and palsy, by which he was converted to the Catholic Faith." The cure mentioned by Bishop Hall is given also by Alban Butler, vol. i. p. 637, (Ed. 1838,) and the reference to the Prelate's account (Invisible World, book i. sec. 8).

## PAGE 167.

The objectors to the word "Altar" should consider well the facts conveyed in the following extract from Wheatley on the Common Prayer. "Altar was the name by which the holy board was constantly distinguished for the first 300 years after Christ; during all which time it does not appear that it was above once called *table*, and that was in a letter of (S.) Dionysius of Alexandria to (S.) Zystus of Rome. And when in the fourth century (S.) Athanasius called it a *table*, he thought himself obliged to explain the word, and to let the reader know that by *table* he meant Altar, that being then the constant and familiar name."

On the subject of the Anglican use of *Altar*, name and thing, the following remarks of Bishop Overall in Nicholls' Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer, (p. 37, *additional notes*, Ed. 1712, Fol.) are curious and important. "In King Edward's first Service-Book the word Altar was permitted to stand, as being the name that Christians for many hundred years had been acquainted withal. Therefore when there was such pulling down of Altars, and setting up of Tables at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, she was fain to make an injunction to restrain such ungodly fury (for which S. Chrysostom says the Christians would have stoned a man to death that should but have laid his hands on an Altar to destroy it, Hom. liii.) and appointed decent and comely tables covered to be set up again, in the same place where the Altars stood, thereby giving an interpretation of this clause in our Communion Book. For the word Table here stands not exclusively, as if it might not be called an Altar, but to shew the indifferency and liberty of the name; as of old it was called



*mensa Domini*, the one having reference to the participation, the other to the Oblation of the Eucharist. There are who contend now, it was the intent and purpose of our Church at this Reformation to pull down and wholly extinguish the very name of an Altar; *but all their reason being only the matter of fact, that Altars were then pulled down, and this place of the Liturgy, that here it is called a Table.* We answer, that the matter of fact proves nothing, being rather the zeal of the people that were newly come out of the tyranny that was used in Queen Mary's time. But if this were [not\*] by order of the Church, or according to the intent and meaning of the Church and state at the Reformation, how came it to pass then, that from that day to this the Altars have continued in the King's and Queen's households after the same manner as they did before? They never dreamt there of setting up any tables instead of them. And likewise *in most Cathedrals how was it that all things remained as they did before? . . .* And it will be worthy the noting, that *no Cathedral Church had any pulling down, removing, or changing the Altar into a table, no more than in the court, but in such places only, where Deans and Bishops and Prebends were preferred, that suffered themselves more to be led by the fashions which they had seen at Strasburg, Geneva, and Zurick, than by the orders of the Church of England established, and continued in her Majesty's family, the likeliest to understand the meaning of the Church and state of any other place."*

## PAGE 172.

For an accurate knowledge of the rites, ornaments, and usages of all kinds which continued and were generally observed in the Church from the Reformation till the Commonwealth, and even after it, though now entirely obsolete, the reader is referred to the "*Hierurgia Anglicana*," edited by members of the Cambridge Camden Society. If the perusal of this work, which is un-

\* This word must be expunged, or the sense is illogical.

answerable because it is merely a collection of facts from contemporary authorities, does not confound the objections of the ultra-protestants of the nineteenth century, there is little hope of truth ever prevailing over prejudice.

PAGE 173.

It is certain that what we call reading-pues were not introduced till 1600. A singular fact, which seems to demand further investigation, is that so large a proportion of pulpits are of this date, (from 1600 to 1640,) while so few are found older than the Reformation, that it is impossible to suppose their use was general before that period. The earliest wooden pulpit with which the author is acquainted is at Fulbourne, near Cambridge, which dates about 1330. It is highly probable that the rood-lofts were used for the ordinary purposes of pulpits; and again, ancient pulpits were perhaps used for reading the lessons as well as for general exhortations.

THE END.

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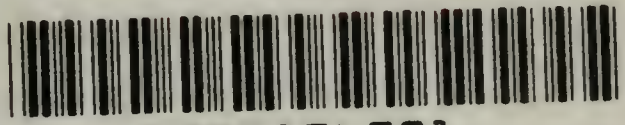
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