

## A FEW NOTES ON SOME CHURCHES NEAR WARWICK,

BY EDWARD W. GODWIN, F.S.A.

TOWARDS the end of our last congress I received an invitation from Mr. John Fetherston, jun., to accompany him on a visit to some village churches north of Warwick. The arrangements at the Warwick meeting for inspecting buildings of this class, which on some previous occasions proved peculiarly attractive, seemed to be very limited, and I gladly accepted the kind offer of the Honorary Curator of the local Archæological Society. The results of this day's excursion I have here related, so that others may share in the pleasure and instruction which I thence derived.

The churches visited were those of Haseley, Baddesley Clinton, Rowington, Lapworth, Packwood, and Knowle. All these are built on the ship type, which appears to have largely obtained throughout the county. The churches of Haseley, Baddesley Clinton, and Packwood are small, each being composed of nave, chancel, and western tower. At Knowle there is a very large development of the same simple arrangement, with north and south aisles and two chancels, one east of the other. The church of Lapworth has aisles of four bays, but the tower is on the north side and detached. Lastly, that of Rowington possesses a central tower with *quasi* transepts, better described as recesses, a nave with aisles of two bays, two chancels as at Knowle, and a late north aisle to the chancel and tower; the latter has consequently lost its north recess on the ground plan.

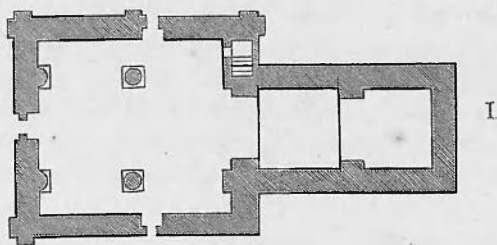
It will be seen from this slight general sketch, that the churches at Rowington and Lapworth are of an unusual and interesting character. Through the kindness of the vicar, the Rev. P. B. Brodie, Honorary Secretary of the Warwickshire Archæological Society, I have been furnished with a carefully measured ground-plan of his church at Rowington.<sup>1</sup> I

<sup>1</sup> A ground-plan, south-east view, interior view, with some details of this church, have been given in the Notices of Churches in the Deanery of Warwick,

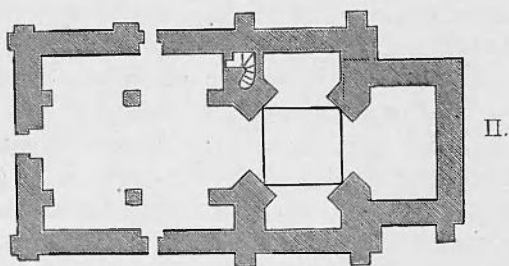
published in 1858, by the Warwickshire Nat. Hist. and Arch. Society, vol. ii. p. 67.

have added other plans, showing the growth or overgrowth of the building, from the twelfth century to the sixteenth. Of the Norman church there are scarcely any visible remains. A flat pilaster buttress against the north wall and possibly the stoup are as early as the twelfth century ; but, although nearly all the Norman work has given place to Early Decorated, the proportions of the latter style as here exhibited, taken in conjunction with other features, seem to indicate a pre-existing Norman arrangement, very similar to that of the present church, and I have little doubt that the walls of the nave, aisles, and tower, stand upon Norman foundations. Thus, for instance, the walls are between 3 ft. and 4 ft. thick, while the nave is only 14 ft. wide, and the aisles not even so much as 5 ft. wide. The length of the nave is 31 ft., but the west wall is wholly late Perpendicular, as if the builders in the Decorated period had left untouched the Norman façade, which was, as a rule, the best part of a Norman church. For we can scarcely suppose that the west wall was ever Decorated, inasmuch as the Middle-Pointed work throughout the church is admirably executed, and the builders of the Perpendicular period would hardly have pulled down a good west wall, unless for the purpose of re-modeling the church, a purpose which they evidently did not entertain, if we may judge from their work, which is suited and fitted to the earlier work in a spirit of modesty by no means common to the time. Turning now to the Decorated period we have north and south doorways, low and broad, with very elegantly proportioned arches continuous, of two orders chamfered. These doorways are opposite to one another, and in the easternmost bays. To the east of the south door is a bold three-light window, with uncusped tracery of the form known as reticulated ; a similar window occurs in the tower-recess. The nave-arches are of two orders, chamfered, and surmounted by hood-moldings of a peculiar form. The eastern responds are of considerable depth, and serve as buttresses to the lateral arches of the tower. In the erection of this tower every precaution seems to have been taken to strengthen piers which in themselves appear to be of excessive strength. To such an extent were these precautions carried, that we find solid walls where we usually see arches, viz., between the aisles and transepts, or recesses. The tower arches are

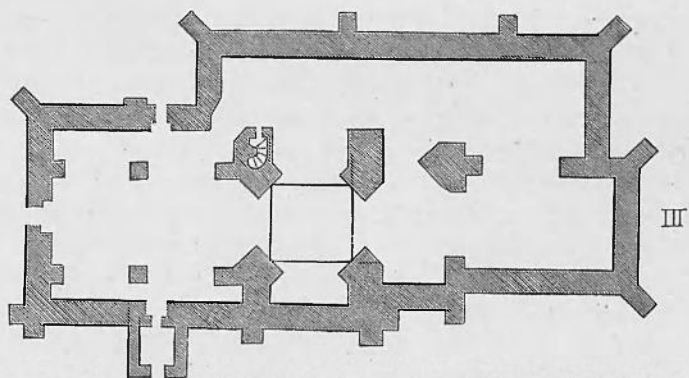
NOTES ON CHURCHES NEAR WARWICK.



A.D. 1100.



A.D. 1300.



Rowington Church,  
Ground plan.

very bold and thick, of five chamfered orders, the superior orders within the tower interpenetrating. This exhibition of unnecessary strength appears as if it had been the result of a warning such as would be occasioned by the fall of a Norman tower; it might, however, be suggested that this great strength was planned for the purpose of erecting a spire, but I have failed to find any indication in the upper part of the tower which would lead to the conclusion that a spire was intended. The original chancel extends one bay eastward of the tower; the old east wall is pierced by a Perpendicular arch leading to the second chancel. In the east wall there is a Decorated window which appears to have been reset, and might therefore have been removed from the east end of the Decorated church, which only extended as far as the site of the Perpendicular chancel-arch. In this church are an early fourteenth century chest; a monumental incised slab, dated 1558, with the figures of John Oldnall, bailiff of Rowington, and his wife "Isbell;" an altar-slab, measuring 6 ft. 9 in. by 2 ft. 6 in.; a few decorative pavement tiles; some open seats; some pieces of thirteenth century glass; and a fragment of oak screen-work. The tower rises one stage above the roof-ridge, and is capped with a battlemented parapet.

The church of Lapworth<sup>2</sup> is planned with nave and aisles of four bays, a chancel of two bays, and a north chapel of one bay. The whole fabric appears to have been rebuilt soon after it came into the final possession of Merton College (1276); its style is Early Decorated. A great part of the body of the church has been rebuilt in the Perpendicular period, to which also belong a detached tower and spire on the north side, and a singular two-storied structure, possibly a relic-house, attached to the west end. The early work of the nave appears in three trefoliated lancets of equal height in the west wall, the central and the south light having, however, been blocked up by the supposed relic-house. In the north wall of the chancel is a single lancet of the same design as those in the west end, but with an additional jamb molding; in the south wall are a square

<sup>2</sup> An account of Lapworth Church is given in the *Notices of the Churches of Warwickshire* before cited, vol. ii. p. 14. A ground-plan, south view, and a west view showing the exterior of the curious

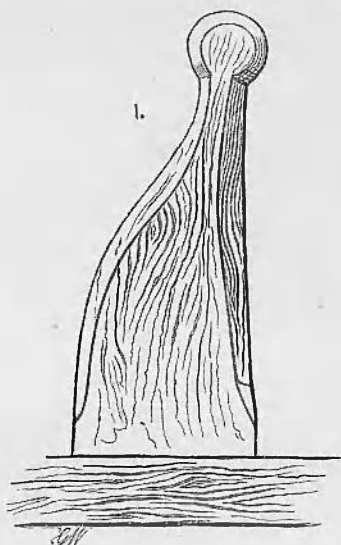
"relic-house" above described, may there be found. That remarkable structure is there designated a "West Porch and Chapel."

low-side window and two broad three-light windows, peculiarly interesting, as exhibiting two developments of tracery on one design, viz. three lights under one arch pierced in the spandrels. I have given sketches of these windows (see woodcuts, figures III., IV.). The wall of the south aisle of the nave, from the eastern jamb of the doorway westward, is thicker than any other part of that wall. The doorway itself, and two blocked up low lancet-lights westward, show that this thicker wall belongs to the thirteenth century church. The arches of the north chapel and the priest's door in the south wall of the chancel are of the same early character. The difference of masonry visible over the chancel arch marks the pitch of the Early English roof, and shows that the Early English church had no clerestory, and that the roofs of the nave and aisles were continuous or very nearly so. The Perpendicular work is extremely rich for village work; the hoodmoldings of many of the windows are crocketed and finialed, and have very large sculptured terminations. The clerestory windows are of the square-headed form so common in Warwickshire, the greatest development of which is met with at Coventry. The tower is very plain, but finely proportioned, if we shut out the buttresses, which rather interfere with its gradation. The great feature of the church, however, is the small two-storied Perpendicular structure attached to the west end of the nave, called by some antiquaries a "chantry-chapel," a chantry being recorded in Pat. 47 Edw. III. to have been founded in a certain chapel adjoining the church by Richard de Montfort and others, as hereafter mentioned.<sup>3</sup> The lower story of this possibly unique edifice is nothing more than a vaulted passage,<sup>4</sup> 6 feet 2 inches wide and about 9 feet 3 inches long,

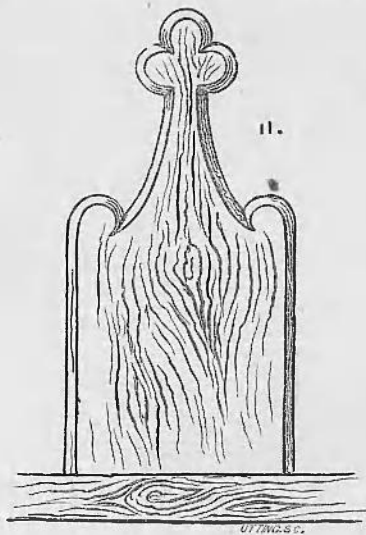
<sup>3</sup> Dugdale has printed the long list of persons enumerated in the endowment, for whose welfare daily mass was to be said in honor of the Blessed Virgin, St. Thomas the Martyr, and All Saints. The chapel is described in another document as the Chapel of Our Lady and St. Thomas; the first chantry-priest was appointed 49 Edw. III. The lands and rents with which it was endowed by various persons were considerable. See Dugdale's account of Lapworth, and the Notices of Churches of Warwickshire before cited, p. 16. It must be observed

that the chapel on the north side of the chancel may have been that of Our Lady; it is so described by Dr. Thomas, in his edition of Dugdale, vol. ii. p. 791, where he notices a supposed contrivance in the loft above, whereby a person concealed might give movement to the image of the Blessed Virgin placed in a niche below. Two brackets for images against the east wall of this north chapel are figured in the Notices of Churches, *ut supra*, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> The groining does not now exist, the springing stones only remain.

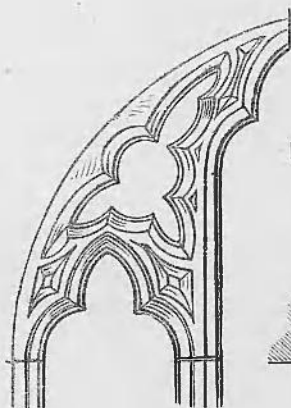
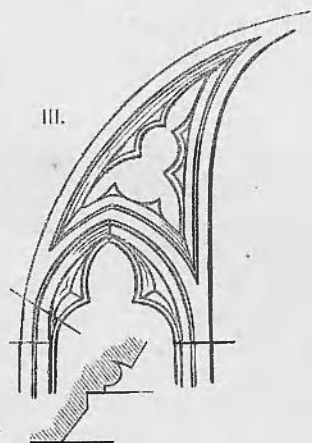


Packwood, height 3 ft.

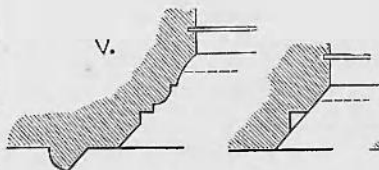


Bench-ends.

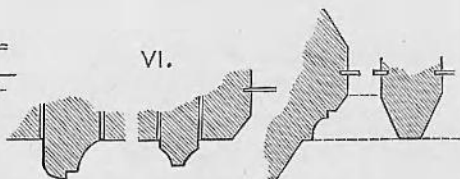
Eaddesley Clinton.



Chancel Windows.  
Lapworth Church.



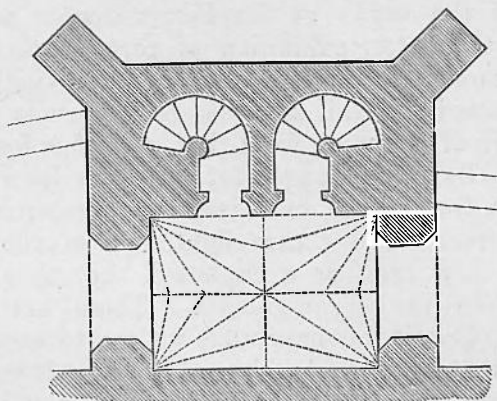
Lapworth Church.



Packwood Church.



with open archways north and south ; on the west in this passage are two doorways, and two newel staircases lead from the



Western Porch or Vaulted Passage leading N. and S., Lapworth Church.

lower or ground floor to the upper story. The juxtaposition of these two staircases, the position of their doorways, the vaulted passage-way, and the small size of the chamber above it, all indicate that the place must have been designed with a view to facilitate the ingress and egress of a number of persons. The purpose of this building, and the peculiarly low position of the blocked-up lancet windows westward of the south door of the south aisle, may perhaps be explained by the gift of Ivo Pipard (6th Edward I.) of a messuage and lands and 24 pence per annum, for the maintenance of two wax candles, one to burn before the altar of St. James, the other "to burn before the reliques."<sup>5</sup> The low lancet-windows, possibly, were designed for the exhibition of these "reliques," in the general rebuilding of the church, which may have taken place during the reign of Edward I., and probably between 1276 and 1280. In 1374, Richard de Montfort founded a chantry here ; and, throughout the fifteenth century, lamps and candles were bequeathed to the church by various persons, to burn before the Rood, the altar of the Blessed Mary in the chancel, and the altar of St. James. In 1467, an indulgence of forty days was granted to all who should attend mass at the altar of St. Katharine. These facts, taken in connection with the rich character of the later portions of the building, are evidences

<sup>5</sup> Dugdale's Hist. of Warwickshire, Dr. Thomas's edit., p. 791.

of the growing importance of the church at Lapworth during the fifteenth century, and lead us to the conclusion that the building at the west end of the nave may have been one of the first of the works in the Perpendicular period, and devised for the better exhibition of certain relics, and the better accommodation of those who came to visit them. It should be noted that this supposed relic-house is not placed in the centre of the west front, but some few feet south of the centre. By this arrangement only two lancet-windows of the west front were enclosed, the northernmost light being left free. The centre light, one of the two thus enclosed, is now used as a cupboard, the other serves as a doorway to the organ-gallery. These are so much modernized, that it was impossible for me to ascertain how they were treated by the builders of the relic-house.

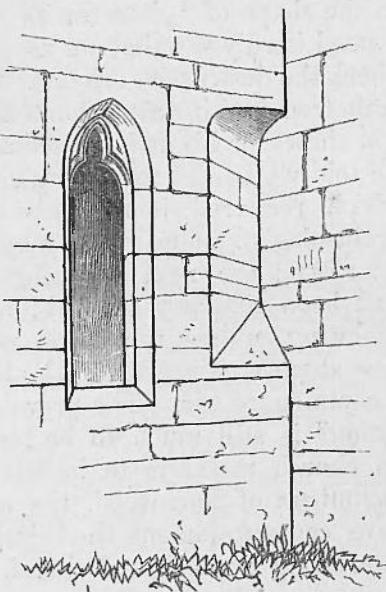
The church at Haseley lies a little off the main road. The nave, chancel, and south porch are modernized; there is a plain early Perpendicular tower at the west end, and some well-preserved painted glass in the west window. Some of the merlons of the parapet are decorated as at Rowington with escutcheons; a practice which seems to have obtained favor with the later tower builders in this locality.

At Baddesley-Clinton there is no early work of interest. There is a plain tower of the latter part of the fifteenth century, of the same design as the neighbouring tower at Packwood, and a chancel of the time of Charles I. The chancel screen is of the same period, and on the rood beam is the following inscription:—"Hic quærite regna Dei :: 1634. Procvl hinc procvl este Prophani." Over this are the words:—"Memor esto brevis ævi." On the wall over the screen are the royal arms, with the letters C. R. and the date 1662. There are some bench ends of good simple fashion. (See woodcuts, fig. II.)

Packwood Church is a late thirteenth century building with a fifteenth century tower, and an ugly modern excrescence on the north side of the nave. Beginning at the west end of the nave, we have first a trefoil-headed lancet north and south, north and south doorways, with a wooden porch to the latter, and at the eastern end of the south wall a two-light window and a piscina. The chancel arch is of two chamfered orders, the inner one resting on molded



corbels. Inside the arch are lancet-windows north and south, trefoiled within the soffit-cusp, with hooks for shutters, and oak lintels inside instead of scotches. There is a priest's door in the south wall with a singular hood-molding, and then a two-light window, and a similar one exactly opposite, having very wide rear vaults. There is an east window of three lights, and a trefoiled piscina. In the chancel windows are considerable remains of pattern lead-work and of grisaille glass; in the nave are some very solid benches, possibly as old as the church. (See woodcuts of bench ends, fig. I.) There is a singular arrangement of masonry at the exterior north-west angle of the chancel, of which I have given a sketch. (See woodcut.)



Knowle Church is the largest of the group. It consists of a west tower, a spacious nave, and aisles of four bays, and a chancel of two bays of Early Perpendicular work of the close of the fourteenth century (about 1392); to this has been added, about 1530, a chancel of two bays, the old chancel being divided, and the western half given up to the nave, so that the later rood-screen comes close to the early sedilia. The late chancel has a semiapsidal character from the contraction of the side walls, and its architecture is of the same style as the Coventry churches. The aisles, which are of earlier and bolder architecture, have been spoilt by the battlemented parapets, gargoyles, and pinnacles set up by the chancel-builders. The roof of the nave is of a very low pitch; it has been painted red, and the ground powdered with metal stars. The rood-screen and loft has been a very rich piece of work; I am obliged thus to speak of it, because some person from Coventry has lately "restored" it. Against the east and south wall of the south aisle are eleven

stall seats and misereres, moved from their proper place, I believe, by the "restorer," or destroyer, of the screen.

It only remains to record the danger which threatened the interesting church of Rowington at the time of our visit, in the shape of "plans for its enlargement and restoration." I need hardly say that we used every argument which might check the destructive scheme. On the other hand, I cannot refrain from inviting attention to the care which the Rev. R. Johnson shows for his little church at Packwood. Year by year, as he told us, he did something to the church—a "something" which rendered it not less but more interesting to the archæologist. One year by opening the blocked-up priest's doorway; the next by bringing to light a window which had been similarly treated; no "cleaning down," and no renewing, unless the fabric was in danger, and then the new stone was inserted with all the undisguised frankness of a common repair. The prevalent mania for church "restoration" is still much to be regretted. If we could prevail on church restorers to imitate the laudable example of the incumbent of Packwood, the archæologist would no longer have cause to lament the injuries too frequently inflicted on interesting examples of church architecture throughout the country.