

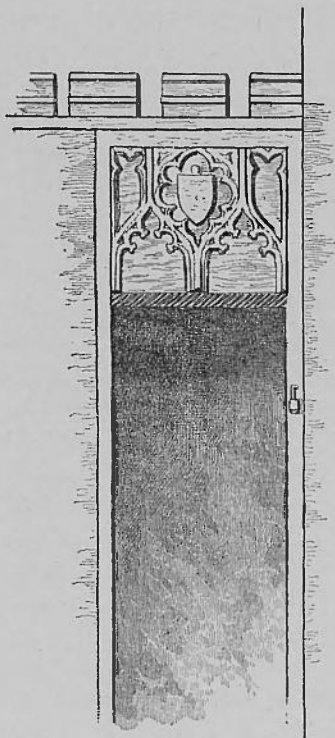
LOCKERS FOR THE PROCESSIONAL CROSS.

By the Rev. C. R. MANNING. M.A.

I produce a few examples of an arrangement found in some churches, of which I have met with scarcely any notice in print. It consists of a lofty narrow niche, aumbry, or wall closet, seven or eight to twelve or more feet in height, and only a foot or eighteen inches wide, and a foot in depth; usually towards the west end of the building. The irons on which the hinges of a door hung are generally in the jamb; and in some cases the aperture extends upwards in the wall, above the external top. I know of no authority, or documentary evidence, of the use of these aumbries or lockers, but it is reasonable to suppose, from their shape and position, that they were intended for the safe keeping of the Processional Cross of the parish. Aumbries or almeries, of smaller size and square form, are to be found in almost every old church, often with wooden shelves remaining, and always having had doors to lock up. These may be presumed to have served purposes according to the part of the building in which they are. Those at the east end would have held books, cloths, cruets, or plate, and other requisites of the altar service; similar would be the use of those found in chapels, and near side altars. Those near the font would have held the articles specially required for the baptismal service. Accordingly, when they are found near a door leading to the churchyard, and of sufficient dimensions, (or, in conventual churches, near the cloisters and cemetery), it is likely that they would be intended for the Processional Cross, and perhaps also for banners, or other tall objects. It is corroborative of this view, that at New College chapel, Oxford, the well-known pastoral staff of bishop William of Wykeham is kept in a locker or wall closet contrived for the purpose; but which, I am informed, is not the original one, although it may represent it.

It would seem that aumbries were even used for the reservation of the Host; as in the "Fardle of Facions," printed in 1555, and quoted in the "Glossary of Architecture," (*Art. Almery*), it is said, "Upon the righte hande of the highe Aulter, that ther should be an *Almorie*, either cutte into the wall, or framed upon it: in the which thei would have the sacrament of the Lordes Bodye, the holy oyle for the sicke, and Chrismatorye alwaie to be locked." There is frequent mention also in the "Antient Rites of Durham" of aumbries for various purposes. I have not found much notice of Processional Crosses in old inventories of church goods: but I presume that each church had one or more, as processions were customary on so many occasions, as at funerals, consecrations, perambulations, Palm Sunday and Corpus Christi ceremonies, etc. For these it would be necessary to have some place of safe keeping, and it is rather surprising that the lockers for them are so rare. They may, of course, have been often kept in framed wooden closets, and not in the wall; and possibly where we find the few examples remaining which I have to notice, it was because the crosses of those churches were of special value from their material and workmanship, like the crystal cross, with silver at every joint, "ordained for processions" in the inventory of the goods of old St. Paul's cathedral church. There is frequent mention of crosses of silver, or copper gilt, or crystal, and jewelled, in inventories, but these, when not directly stated to be for processions, were probably altar crosses. In a letter on the subject with which I have been favoured by Mr. Micklethwaite, he observes that "the use of the cross no doubt varied, as many other things did, according to the customs of different churches, but the Salisbury *Processionale* shows that it was used at every Sunday procession. It was also of course used at the greater occasional processions, and at funerals; and it was carried before the priest when he took the Sacrament to any in the parish. A wooden cross was used for processions in Lent, and a special one, perhaps the same, at funerals." Mr. Micklethwaite has also furnished me with several tracings of his drawings of examples that he has met with.

My attention was called to the subject by finding that



Scale— $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to a foot.

Locker for Processional Cross.
Lowestoft, S. Margaret.

in the neighbourhood of Lowestoft, Suffolk, there are no less than six churches, within a short distance of each other, in which these lockers occur. It is not at all improbable that there may be others in the same district which have not been noticed. I can only account for this by supposing that a local *fashion* was set, and extended round the neighbourhood:—as we certainly find many traces of local usage in different districts, *e.g.* in the execution of brasses, in fonts, towers, window tracery, slabs, screen carving and painting, etc.

First at LOWESTOFT, in the fine old church of St. Margaret, is a very good example (See Plate I). It is placed in the west wall of the nave, which is the east wall of the tower, to the north of the belfry arch, and abutting against the angle of the nave arcade. I was not able to get the exact measurement, but it is the largest I have seen, and about twelve or fourteen feet high. It has an ornamental heading of two cinquefoiled arches, the space between being filled with a double quatrefoil, enclosing a blank shield. Above this is part of a battlemented cornice. It appears to be of the date of the rest of the nave, about 1400, or shortly before. The recess begins at about two feet from the floor.

Next, at GISLEHAM, about four miles from Lowestoft, is another of these lockers. This is inside the tower, which is at the west end of the nave, and in its south wall. It is seven feet high from its present base at one foot nine inches from the floor to the arched head; but the aperture runs up in the wall nearly two feet higher, and the wall at the foot is built up in brick, the stone edge extending to the ground, so that the whole height from the floor line is ten feet seven inches. It is one foot six inches wide, and one foot four inches deep. At about four and a half feet from the ground on the west side, is an inner aumbry, or pocket, of somewhat irregular shape, about one foot six inches high, one foot deep, and ten inches wide. I am not aware that this curious arrangement is found in any other example. Mr. W. H. St. John Hope suggests it may have been for a lantern.

Next, at BARNBY, near Beccles, about six miles from Lowestoft, is another, and it is the only one I know of that retains its original oak door. The church is without aisles, and the position of the locker is in the south wall

of the nave, at some little distance from the west end. It is six feet eight inches in height, eleven inches wide, and one foot in depth. The head is square, and without ornament. The wooden door, which is rather elaborately pierced with narrow lights and foliations, seems to have been turned upside down at some time, and replaced with modern hinges. There is a quatrefoil in what is now the lower part, and the upper part has diminutive window tracery, now appearing reversed (See Plate II). The wall is early, and the locker is no doubt a Perpendicular insertion.

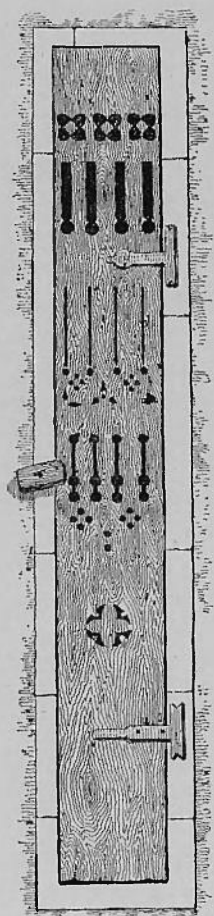
About two miles from Barnby, at RUSHMERE, is a fourth. It is in the south wall of the nave, about one foot from the west end. It is twelve feet in height, sixteen inches wide, and one foot from the ground. The head is pointed; the arch being slightly trefoiled on the western side. The hinge pivots for a door remain.

Again, about two miles further, at HENSTEAD, is a fifth. This is placed in the south wall of the nave, at the extreme west end, adjoining the tower. It rises from the floor, and has a pointed head, but is without ornament.

Then again, at SHADINGFIELD, about five miles further, is a sixth. In this case, the north wall of the church, which is without aisles, is connected with the tower by a small piece of diagonal wall, and in this is placed the locker. It is ten feet high, and two feet from the ground. The plan of the recess is an irregular square, one foot wide in front, and sixteen inches at the back. There is a groove for a door.

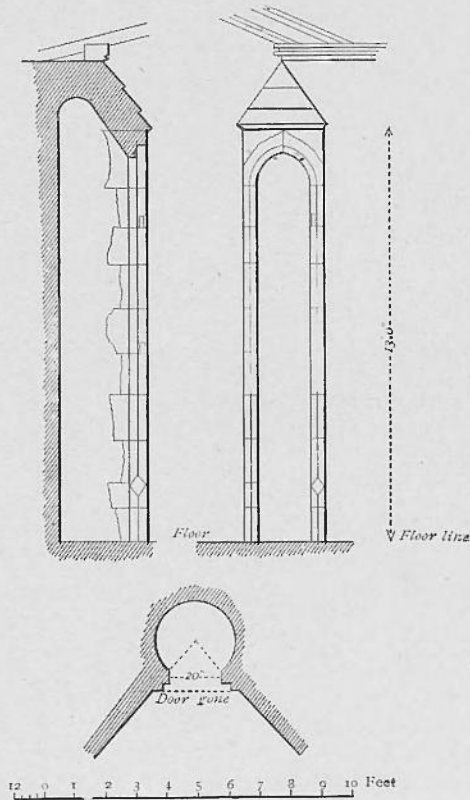
At KELSHALL, Hertfordshire, is another fine example, of which I give an illustration from Mr. Micklethwaite's drawing (See Plate III). Its position is *in the angle* at the north-west corner of the north aisle. It is thirteen feet high, and the plan of the recess is circular. The opening is arched at the top, and the head is protected by a triangular set off, like that of a buttress: and it extends below to the floor line.

At EARL'S BARTON, Northants, is a locker of a similar character, but in a different position in the church. It is in the wall of the north aisle, opposite the first pillar from the east. It is six feet high externally, but eight feet internally, the aperture rising inside the wall for the head of the cross; and its base is one and a half foot from the



Scale— $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to a foot.

Locker for Processional Cross.
Barnby, Suffolk.



Locker for Processional Cross.
Kelshall, Herts.

ground. It is without ornament. It is possible that in this case the locker may have been intended, not for the Processional Cross proper, but for another belonging to a guild or fraternity founded in that part of the church.

At St. Sepulchre's, NORTHAMPTON, the round church, is another, at the south-east side of the aisle of the round nave, and near a door. This is a tall one, with an arched head, like that already mentioned at Kelshall.

The sacristy of BRISTOL CATHEDRAL CHURCH, which is a vestibule to the Berkeley chapel, on the south side of the choir, contains another example. It is in the north wall of the sacristy, between the doorway into the church and a niche in the angle of the east wall. It is a plain rectangular recess, 7 ft. 9 in. in height, 13 in. in width, and $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep. It is fitted with a modern door and is used by the vergers as a closet for his silver mace. Sketches of the interior of the sacristy, showing the locker, were published in the *Builder* of August 8th, 1885.

I have reference also to others at St. Giles's, Northampton, in the south wall,¹ and at Nuneaton abbey church, on the east side of the north respond of the eastern tower arch. The late Mr. Mackenzie Walcott mentions another² in Chichester cathedral church; but it appears, from information kindly communicated by Mr. Gordon Hills, that he must have referred to an ancient moveable wooden closet, now in the south transept.

¹ *Ecclesiologist*, xiv. 297.

² *Sacred Archaeology*, p. 477.