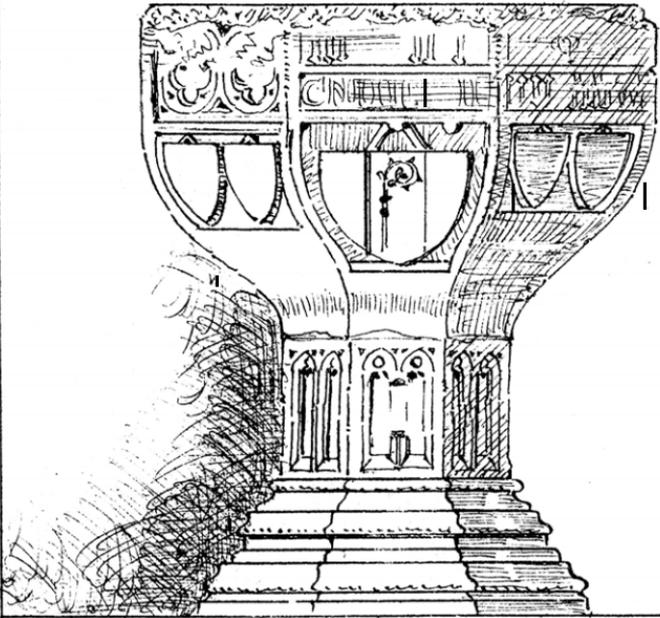


ART. XIII.—*Notes on the Parish Church of Dalton-in-Furness, North Lancashire.* By JOHN FELL, Dane Ghyll. Communicated at Seascale, September 25th, 1884.

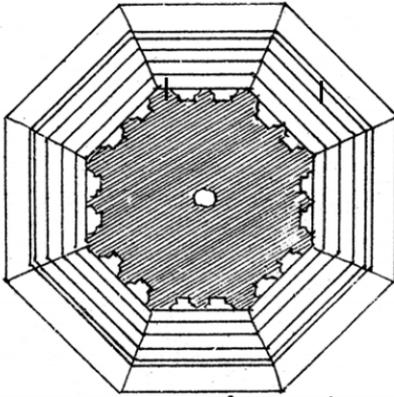
THE year of 1883 witnessed the entire removal of the Church at Dalton-in-Furness. The structure had become dilapidated and required substantial repair, and it was deemed wisest to make an effort to build a new church if the necessary funds could be obtained. Generous donors have provided the means, and among them may be specially noted the present lay rector, the Duke of Devonshire. An indifferent ecclesiastical edifice has now been replaced by a noble church from the designs of Messrs. Paley and Austin.

The church which has been pulled down, was in the main a modern structure and possessed no architectural merit; with the exception of the font and some small relics of ancient stained glass, probably no portion dated beyond the 16th century. The font is of the 14th century. It is of red sandstone, which has been much injured by lengthened exposure at some time or other to the weather, so much so that all the carving of the upper part has perished. It is octagonal in form, and on seven sides of the octagon there are two small shields on each face, and upon the eighth, a large shield filling the whole space. Upon this shield are carved the original arms of Furness Abbey, which are—*sable, on a pale argent a crozier of the first.* The tower, which was considerably older than any other part of the church, possessed no distinguishing feature to enable its date to be fixed, but it is worthy of note, that it was not battlemented until within the present century; a few ancient pews remained, none of a remarkable character, but the rest of the church had

St. Mary's Church: Dalton-in-Furness:



The Font. Inch Scale ↓



Section ↓

E.G. Palzy

had from time to time been so altered and modernized, that its principal features could not claim a higher antiquity than fifty to sixty years. The large gallery however of the west end had been built in 1767, and affords evidence of the growing want of church accommodation for the population at that date. The cost of this structure amounted to no more than £52 10s., yet it is rather remarkable that the builders came from Lancaster, indicating that there were no persons in the locality at the time capable of executing such a work. A faculty had been obtained for this gallery, and as was not exceptional in that degenerate period of our church history, the pews it contained were sold, and realized £104 7s., leaving a substantial profit on the operation. In 1788 there still remained in use a number of open-backed and open-ended seats of oak, grown black with age, and at that period the railings enclosing the communion table were also of ancient oak. I am informed that, until 1825, the floor of the church was simply of earth, and that it was the custom to have it covered once a year with the long white bent grass, which is common on the neighbouring sandhills of Roanhead and Sandscale. Possibly in primitive times a ceremony analogous to the rush-bearing at Ambleside and elsewhere took place, when this simple cover to the rude floor of earth was renewed; of this however there is no record.

In 1788, the church consisted of a nave and south aisle only, which was quaintly described as the "Knave Row."

In 1789, several additional pews were constructed in the place of the old open seats, and in this year a subscription was entered into "for the purpose of purchasing a barrel organ to be set up in the church." It contained three barrels with ten tunes in each, and a fourth was subsequently added. The cost was as follows:—

Organ

	£	s.	d.
Organ - - - -	84	0	0
Extra barrel - - -	10	10	6
Gallery - - - -	12	0	0
Sundries - - - -	5	1	11
	<hr/>		
	£111	12	5

There are some entries at this date in the parish accounts, which may not be uninteresting;

	£	s.	d.
Rec <sup>d</sup> for a Burial within Church -	0	7	6
18 Quindams* at £1 4s. 6d. each -	22	1	0
The Parishing Rents† - - -	2	11	6

*Payments :—*

Ringer's Salary and taking up Bells	1	16	0
Singers' Salary - - - -	0	10	0
Organist Do. $\frac{1}{2}$ year - - -	0	10	6
Sexton - - - -	1	10	0
Cleaning Church - - - -	0	10	6
6 Strange Ministers - - -	0	6	0
Killing 1 old Fox and 3 young ones	0	5	6
Washing Church Linen - - -	0	8	0

In the following year, 1790, which seems to close a period of active revival among the parishioners of Dalton, a "Ring of Bells" was purchased, which was the "ring of three," remaining until they were superseded by the peal of six bells in 1865.

Nothing of importance appears to have occurred in the history of Dalton Church, until Mr. Michaelson, the owner of Old Barrow Island, obtained in 1815 a faculty, which enabled him to build an offset to the church on the north side, and place two or three pews in it for the con-

\* Quindam, *i. e.*, quindecim, a fifteenth. This is one of the oldest taxes of Furness. The poor rate was laid by it in the last century.

† I have endeavoured to ascertain what this term "Parishing Rents" applied to. It is supposed they were rents collected on the church account for the use of some open spaces within the parish. The Duke of Buccleuch as Lord of the Manor of Dalton collects some similar rents. Houses had been built on portions of these open spaces and a species of ground rent was paid which entered into the Parishing Rents. Some spaces remained open till recently, but the collection of these rents has ceased for a considerable period, and all rights in connexion with them are probably lost.

venience

venience of his family and tenants. This extension was followed by and absorbed in an enlargement of the whole of the north side of the church, by the erection in 1825 of a north aisle, with pews and a vestry, at a cost of £1500. The sale of the new pews proved ample to cover the expenditure upon this enlargement. At this date all the open-backed oak seats were finally discarded, and the earthen floor which had been hitherto covered with bent grass was replaced by a suitable new floor, partly flagged and partly boarded. In 1833, the south aisle received a new roof, and in 1865 a new organ was purchased.\* At a more recent date the church was further improved by the whole of the south aisle windows being renewed in stone work, of good design, with stained glass, the gift of Mr. Baldwin of Dalton, the Duke of Devonshire, and the parishioners. The east window was also rebuilt, and filled with stained glass by Mr. Schneider.

Improved even as it had been, the Parish Church of Dalton remained a poor ecclesiastical edifice, and it may be regarded as a satisfactory feature of the present age, that the means have been provided to rebuild it entirely, and to erect a structure which is worthy of the site. This remarkable position seemed to demand such an effort, and as it is the site of an ancient Christian church, it may not be unacceptable to gather together for these notes, such facts as survive the lapse of time.

Mr. West, in his *Antiquities of Furness*, of which rich district Dalton claims to be the ancient capital, says :

It is but reasonable to conclude that Agricola acted upon the same principle in Furness as in other parts of Lancashire, and for its security erected a castellum at Dalton the same year that he conquered or received the surrender of its inhabitants. The area of the castellum has probably been all the churchyard, the ground on which the present castle stands, and from that to the precipice on the

---

\* In this year also the "Ring of Bells" of 1790 gave way to a fine peal of six.  
western

western side \* \* \* Steep rocks on the south and a precipice on the western side, with a rampart\* and ditch on the east secured the fort from surprise; and a brook, which flows in the valley below, provided the garrison with plenty of water.†

Upon the southern portion of this remarkable and picturesque position a Christian church has stood from a very remote period. It is somewhat remarkable that Stephen Count of Boulogne and Mortaigne, afterwards king of England, makes two grants of Furness to the Cistercians. The first in 1126, by which he gave "to God, Saint Mary of Furness, and the Abbots of this house" (Furness Abbey), the Furness district. The second grant is dated A.D. 1127, and Mr. Beck, in his *Annals of Furness*, claims to be the first person to publish it. Dalton is specially mentioned in both the grants, and in the following terms in the second:

Reddo dono et concedo Deo Omnipotenti et Sanctæ Trinitati de Savignao et abbati illius loci totam forestam meam de Fudernesio et Wagneia cum omne venatione quæ in eis est—et Daltonam—et omne dominicum meum infra Fudernesium.‡

To many readers of this paper it is probably necessary to explain that Dalton is distant about a mile from Furness Abbey. The beautiful valley of Nightshade in which the abbey lies, is divided about half a mile to the north of it, one fork proceeding in a northerly direction towards the estuary of the Duddon, and the other in an easterly direction. This branch of the valley passes beneath the bold escarpment of limestone rock, upon which, according to Mr. West, Agricola's castellum was probably built, and upon a portion of which the Parish Church of Dalton

\* The present vicar of Dalton, the Rev. J. M. Morgan, informs me, upon a tradition going back about 75 years, that in altering and levelling the vicarage garden which is adjacent to the church-yard, it is believed that a portion of the ramparts of the Roman Camp at Dalton was discovered, but in the carelessness of the period every trace was removed to carry out and complete the improvement of the garden.

† West's *Antiquities of Furness*, second edition, 1804, p. 11.

‡ It may not be uninteresting to note that in 1134, when Calder Abbey was founded, among the twelve companions selected from the monks of Furness to accompany the first abbot, the name of Theodoric of Dalton occurs.

stood

stood anciently and now stands. The first direct allusions I find to Dalton again in the authorities to which I have access, is in the Bull of Pope Eugenius III., A.D. 1153. It is quoted by Beck, and mentions Dalton in the following terms :

*Daltonam cum omni dominico ejus infra Furnesium et omnibus pertinenciis suis.*

But although Dalton is mentioned in these ancient documents, I can find no allusion in any of them to its church at this period. It undoubtedly existed, for in the grant of lands made by Waltheof Fitz-Edmond, in Yorkshire, to the Abbey of Furness, in the latter half of the 12th century, the name "Gilberto persona de Dalton" appears as one of the witnesses to the charter. Somewhere about this period the contentions commenced between the abbot and the parson of Dalton, for the surrender to the former, of the entire ecclesiastical patronage and control of the parishes of Dalton and Urswick, which are adjacent to each other. According to the Bull of Pope Celestine III., A.D. 1194, both these parishes are handed over by the papal authority to the abbot, and in the following terms :

*Et ecclesias de Dalton et de Urswic cum capellis et omnibus pertinenciis earum et libertatibus cum decimis et obventionibus ad domus vestre paupertatem relevenandam et conventum in servitio Dei perpetuo sustendandum vobis auctoritate apostolica confirmamus, etc.*

This Bull does not however appear to have given to the abbot the absolute control, which its language implies. There seems to be no record of any appeal against it, and yet I am inclined to think there must have been something of the kind, as in A.D. 1200, its action and power was evidently not absolute, inasmuch as Honorius, then Arch-deacon of Richmond, intervenes and sanctions a special deprivation of part of the stipends of the rectors or vicars of Dalton and Urswick, upon the plea, that there was a  
lack

lack of grain for the brethren at the abbey,\* as if, says Beck,

The incumbents of these churches would not suffer equally with others in times of scarcity.

The Archdeacon of Richmond in his mandate has the following somewhat singular passage :

Cum ab antiquis temporibus Ecclesiæ de Dalton et de Urswic ad monasterium de Furnesio noscuntur pertinere.

According to Mr. West, who cites as his authority the Archiepiscopal Register of York, it was not until the month of May, A.D. 1228, that the entire patronage and absolute control of the church of Dalton was finally handed over to the monastery of Furness. In the previous year some direct communication had taken place with the papal authorities, for in a Bull of Pope Honorius III., A.D. 1227, the vicar of Dalton is exempted from the payment of procuration money to the diocesan and his officials, if they failed to visit his church. Even in the settlement of 1228, the rights of "William, the vicar" of Dalton are guarded by a reservation, whereby he and his successors have forty marks per annum secured to them as a stipend. Apart from other questions affecting this large and important parish, these relics of information prove, that up to the early part of the 13th century, the vicar of Dalton occupied an independent and important position.

Among the contentions connected with the efforts to absorb Dalton in the ecclesiastical properties of the Abbey of Furness, that of the area of the parish seems to have been prominent. There was undoubtedly good reason to promote some division, as the parish up to A.D. 1219, was unwieldy and comprised the greater part of Lonsdale north of Sands, excepting the Cartmel district. In this

---

\* Beck, p. 166.

year the abbot succeeded in breaking it up, diminishing the ancient parochial boundaries, by detaching from them the large district which formed, anciently, the chapelry of Hawkshead, but which has now been much divided by the creation of the extensive chapelry of Colton and other minor chapelries. Still it seems quite clear from the following letter which Mr. Beck quotes, addressed by Roger Pele, the last abbot of Furness, to Thomas Cromwell, that even up to the dissolution of the monasteries, Hawkshead was only a chapel of ease of Dalton.

Sir in most hertye and humble wyse I desyre you to be mine especialle goode master as ye ever have bene a certifying unto you that ye said Hawkshed never was any personage nor benefice butt of long tyme haith bene one chapelle of ease within the parochene of Daltone.

The abbot had strong reasons for promoting the division of this great parish. The conveyance of the dead alone from such remote districts as the confines of Langdale, a distance of about 25 miles, to be interred at Dalton, involved a most serious and objectionable undertaking. To anyone familiar with the hilly and mountainous portions of Lonsdale North of the Sands, it seems almost incredible how the dead could be conveyed such distances in an age which was destitute of roads and bridges. It is said that this formidable difficulty of distance and transport over a rugged country, was overcome by the corpse being deposited in a wicker basket, which was slung from two horses, and carried between them. But we who live in an age of convenient churchyards and cemeteries, can with difficulty imagine the proceedings of a funeral in those primitive times. Whether the body of a deceased person came with attendants merely, and without the escort of relations and friends for its interment, may remain possibly in final obscurity, but if accompanied by those who, of old as now, were attached to each other, the conveyance of the dead for interment at Dalton, from the Hawkshead district,

district, must have been both a difficult and painful undertaking.\* The vicar of Dalton for a time resisted the division of his parish, and appealed to the papal authority against the proposed action of the abbot in diminishing it, and it was not until after formal enquiry in the 13th century, that this terrible hardship was finally overcome, and the parish actually divided for ecclesiastical purposes.

In 1291, the crusade of Edward I. led to a tax on the church property to make provision for the cost. The tenths of England, Scotland, and Wales were granted by Pope Nicholas IV. for this purpose, and there is an entry in the "Taxacio bonorum spiritualium," showing that the Church of Dalton bore its share.

Ecclesia de Dalton. xij marcas decima sexdecim solidos.

In the reign of Edward II., A.D. 1316, Furness seems to have suffered heavily from a devastating invasion of the Scots, and Dalton is called upon as a contributor to aid in repairing the damages caused by it. An entry occurs in

---

\* The custom of holding an "Arvel" at funerals prevailed at Dalton till quite recent times. Brockett, in his Glossary of North Country Words, says, in speaking of an Arvel, "With us it was anciently a solemn festival made at the time of publicly exposing the corpse to exculpate the heir and those entitled to the effects from fines and mulcts and from accusations of having used violence." In Dalton the custom of the arvel was for the persons attending a funeral to divide themselves into parties of four each. The parish clerk having given notice in the churchyard at what hour and place the arvel would be given, the guests then assembled in their respective parties, a cake of the same description as that known now as a fair cake, but called the arvel cake, was given to each person, and a quart of ale was provided for the four. It was however by custom incumbent upon each party at the arvel festival to order another quart of ale to be paid for by the four to recompense the innkeeper for the use of the room, fire, or stabling provided for the convenience of the mourners or guests at the funeral. Before the days of hearses and mourning coaches the coffin was carried to within a mile or two of the church in a long cart; it was then taken out and borne on the shoulders of friends of the decease for some distance to the church. I am inclined to think the festival of the arvel arose out of the long distance over which the dead were transported and the necessity of refreshment. It is somewhat difficult for a local person to understand why the dead were conveyed beyond Ulverston from Hawkshead. A church existed there in the 11th century, if not earlier, and it would have saved five miles in distance. No doubt Hawkshead was not within the parish of Ulverston, but the convenience of the burying ground is so obvious in comparison with that of Dalton, that there must have existed very strong and ancient ties from a very remote period bringing the Hawkshead parishioners to their old parish and its burying ground, until the action of the Abbot of Furness in 1219 effected ecclesiastical severance.

the

the levy made by the abbot, showing the contribution claimed from Dalton :

Ecclesia de Dalton ad. xl. s

Decima. iiij. s

A transaction of an important character, affecting the possessions of the vicars of Dalton is recorded by Beck to have taken place in the reign of Edward III., and it implies a large surrender of land. In 1331, it appears that permission was asked to carry out the transaction, and a license was granted to William Cockerham, the vicar, to make over to the abbey one messuage, forty acres of land, three acres of meadow, two acres of wood, and one hundred acres of heath in Broughton and Little Marten.

For the purpose of providing a lamp to burn for ever before the high altar (Furness Abbey) at high mass.

So far as I can learn there is no knowledge now of the precise portions of land which were embraced in this endowment, but it would seem to involve a considerable impoverishment of the benefice of Dalton-in-Furness.

From this period, and for nearly a century, I find in the authorities I have had the opportunity to examine, no mention of nor incident connected with the Church of Dalton or its vicars. But further dissensions appear to have arisen between the abbots of Furness and vicars of Dalton, as to their respective rights to the greater and smaller tithes arising out of the parish. In A.D. 1423, this dispute was referred by Robert, abbot of Furness, and Richard Spoforth, vicar of Dalton, to Bowet, arch-deacon of Richmond, for arbitration, and his award is published at length by Mr. West and by Mr. Beck. Extracts from this document may not be uninteresting in connexion with this account of Dalton Church. The parties to the award are thus described :

Robert Abbot and the Convent of the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Furness regularly possessing the parsonage or rectory of  
Dalton

Dalton to their own proper use, with all its rights and appurtenances whatsoever, with the rights of presenting to the vicarage of Dalton, and

the discreet man Richard Spoforth perpetual vicar in the Church of Dalton aforesaid.

The award then proceeds to confirm to the abbot all the tithes and emoluments of the living,

except such gifts and legacies as shall hereafter be left to the said vicar or his successors in personal legacies. The mansion house with appurtenances shall be repaired by the said vicar and his successors, perpetual vicars, reserving also the accustomed tithes of bread and ale in the town of Dalton with candles that hereafter shall be offered in the Church of Dalton at the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the said vicar and his successors forever. And the Abbot and his successors and convent shall pay and cause to be paid for the time to come yearly forever by equal payments, as a total and sufficient endowment indemnification allowance and appointment for the said perpetual vicar over and above the aforesaid premises limited as aforesaid to the said present vicar and his successors for the time being the yearly pension of twenty six marks of good and lawful money of England in the aforesaid Church of Dalton at the Feasts of the Nativity of our Lord, Easter, St. John the Baptist and St. Michael the Archangel.

This award may be regarded as the final settlement between the abbot of Furness and the vicar of Dalton of contentions and struggles extending over 200 years. It is remarkable that no allusion is made in this document in fixing the stipend of the vicar, to the prior settlement of 1228, by which William, the vicar, was to receive an annual payment of forty marks. How long this ancient arrangement continued is unknown, but the award of the Archdeacon of Richmond in 1423 was, according to Mr. West, made in the reign of Elizabeth, "the rule for endowing the vicarage."

In the survey, taken under an Act of Parliament (26 Henry VIII), of the possessions of the Abbey of Furness, under the heading "Ecclesiastical Rents of Lancashire," the rectory of Dalton is valued as follows :

*Tithe*

*Tithes of the Rectory of Dalton.*

Of Barley and Oats - - -	13 <i>l.</i> 18 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>
Of Lambs - - - - -	3 <i>l.</i> 0 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>
Of Wool - - - - -	2 <i>l.</i> 13 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>
Lent oblations and fines -	13 <i>l.</i> 6 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>
In all - - - - -	33 <i>l.</i> 19 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>

According to Mr. West, the final agreement as to the stipend of the perpetual vicar of Dalton, was settled in 1577, in the nineteenth year of the reign of Elizabeth. He writes :

upon this agreement the stipend for the perpetual vicar of Dalton was regulated to be paid out of the issues and profits of the rectory of Dalton, which the said rectors in the rectory house have and now do pay.

A later survey taken by Parliament, in 1649, has the following entry :

*Rectory of Dalton.*

The Rectory of Dalton is per annum £31 9*s.* 2*d.*

*Memorandum.*—The said Rectory is in fee farm to Sir John Preston, of the Abbey of Furness, as we are certified, but no such grant was produced to us, though desired.

Upon a stone in the church an augmentation of the living is recorded in 1760.

A.D. 1760.

This V. of Dalton was augmend  
 And A D 1764 lands purchas<sup>d</sup> with £400  
 Whereof given by  
 Q<sup>n</sup> Anne,s Bounty - - - 200  
 By L<sup>d</sup> Cha<sup>s</sup> Cavendish - - 100  
 By Exec<sup>tes</sup> of W<sup>m</sup> Stratford, LLD. 100

After the dissolution of the monasteries, Roger Pele, the last abbot of Furness, was presented to the rectory of Dalton, and a touching letter written by him to Cromwell has been preserved. The poor abbot prays to be permitted to retain his living in peace, for he pleads,

I have nothinge elles for my whole lyvyng.

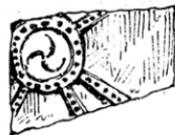
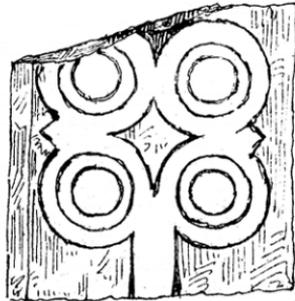
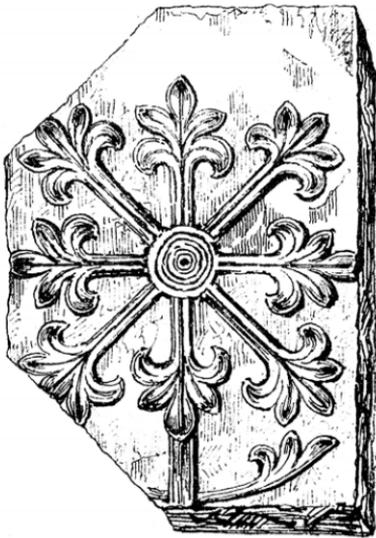
He

He further says he has sent

unto your Lordship for a smalle token fforty shillings in golde and that it may pleas your goodness that I may have ffavourable lettres to be in quiett and peas wyth my saide benefice wythout ffurther suete for the same to be made.

So ended the connexion between the abbots of Furness and the Church of Dalton. The patronage of the living was vested in the crown, the lay rectory remaining in the hands of the family of Preston, to whom the Abbey of Furness was granted after the dissolution, and eventually passing to the Duke of Devonshire, with the estates of the Prestons of Holker Hall. The lay rector has still ancient customs to fulfil, for he is bound to provide the wine for sacramental use at Easter. The vicar of Dalton has also to provide for the old chapelries of Walney, Ireleth, and Rampside, the wine for the Easter communion.

Since the dissolution of the monasteries, the history of Dalton Church has been comparatively uneventful. The parish registers date from May, 1565, or about that period. They may be a little older, but a portion of them has at some time been injured by fire, and it is not possible to determine the earliest date in consequence. As is usual, the earlier registers are on vellum. The original parish of Dalton was much reduced by the severance of Hawkshead, and the large district attached to that ancient chapel of ease has been gradually subdivided by the construction of the chapelry of Colton, and the minor chapelries within it, of Finsthwaite, Rusland, and Haverthwaite, while the parish of Hawkshead after this reduction has been further eased by the formation of the chapelry of Satterthwaite, and the erection of churches at Sawrey, Low Wray, and Brathay. Dalton parish, as defined after the separation of Hawkshead, has been further transformed. Although the churches of Rampside, Walney, and Ireleth are modern, or comparatively so, they were ancient chapels  
of



Antient Fragments

St Mary's Church: Dalton in Furness.

I. G. Paley.

of ease, of the Low Furness portion of Dalton parish. An abnormal development of population by the rapid rise of Barrow-in-Furness, has compelled the church to make further subdivisions of the portion of Dalton Parish, within which the borough of Barrow is situated, in order to cope with the spiritual wants of the people, and the Low Furness portion of the old parish of Dalton possesses now no fewer than twelve churches, while two large cemeteries provide for the dead. In all, the original parish of Dalton, as constituted prior A.D. 1228, can boast of twenty one churches in 1884, chiefly built by the liberality of a few laymen and at a recent date.

With so much local activity and so much wealth, created out of the rich mineral resources of the parish, it was not unnatural, that some dissatisfaction should prevail as to the condition of the mother church. The present vicar, the Rev. J. M. Morgan, has energetically applied himself to the remedy. The poor ecclesiastical structure, which occupied the site of the ancient church has been removed, and a church is now approaching completion, which is worthy of the ancient parish. For generations to come it will supply the wants of a portion of the population of the town of Dalton, and to them the facts collected in these brief notes may not prove unacceptable as time wears onward.

A list of vicars is appended, whose names have been preserved :—

1181-1185.	Gilbert parsona de Dalton.
1198.	William de Horthampt.
1330.	William Cockerham.
1423.	Richard Spoforth.
1473.	Robert Hartington.
1547.	Roger Pyle or Pele, last abbot of Furness.
	Roland Wright.
	Thomas Besbrowne.
1573	James Lees
	Richard Gardiner

1617.

1617.	William Bowett
1631.	Richard Tomlinson.
1662.	Thomas Whitehead.
1671.	Anthony Turner. William Lodge.
1756.	John Walker.
1772.	Christopher Couperthwaite. Joseph Thomson, Kirkbank.

James Morrison Morgan, present vicar, and last vicar of the Low Furness portion of the ancient parish of Dalton.