

ART. XIV.—*Chrim Crosses, St. Kentigern's Church, Crosthwaite, Keswick.* By the REV. CANON RAWNSLEY, M.A.

*Read at Crosthwaite, September 12th, 1913.*

THE most interesting objects of the Church of St. Kentigern, Crosthwaite, which was enlarged and partly rebuilt in the first or second year of Queen Mary, are the chrim or consecration crosses (cross patée in circle) which are to be found to the number of six on the outside jambs of the windows in the south aisle. In the opinion of a great authority on these consecration crosses, the Rev. Edward S. Dewick, whose interesting article appears in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. lxx., No. 527, if they belong, as we believe they do belong, to the church which was consecrated in the second year, 1554, of Queen Mary, they are the only known example that can be assigned to that reign, and there is a further interest attaching to them that it shows that notwithstanding the reaction of her reign to Roman usage, the old English tradition of anointing crosses on the external wall was followed.

This cleaving to English use of using chrim crosses on external walls is the more remarkable because the population of the parish, as Whellan in his *History of Cumberland* (p. 334) tells us, "continued attached to the Catholic religion long after the inhabitants of the southern counties had embraced Protestantism, and so late as the thirteenth year of Elizabeth's reign, 1571, we find that the services of the ancient church were celebrated here and attended by the people."

This habit of anointing with oil the walls of the church by the dipping of the Bishop's thumb in chrim is first

made known to us in the English Pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York, A.D. 732-766. But the anointing with chrism of the outside walls on the consecration day is not mentioned until the Pontifical of Archbishop Robert of Winchester, written at the end of the tenth century. Speaking briefly, with the exception of Archbishop Robert's Pontifical, there appears to have been no ordering up to the eleventh century of anointing of any but the inside walls. But from the end of the eleventh century the English Pontificals order external as well as internal anointings and in each case the anointing is to be in twelve places.

In the thirteenth century we find mention of the painting of crosses on the walls as a necessary preliminary for the consecration. A little later the crosses are ordered to be painted red, and placed in circles with branches for candles above them. In the British Museum (I am quoting from Mr. Dewick's monograph) there is an MS. Lansdowne, 451, which was originally written for the Bishop of London at the end of the fourteenth century, and this MS. describes two modes of consecrating the church, the Roman and the Anglican, and shows us that the Roman use was content to have twelve red crosses painted on the four internal walls of the church at equal distances with twelve branches of iron for twelve large candles. But on the other hand for the English manner it was required that in addition to the twelve internal consecration, there should be twelve painted crosses on the outside as well. These crosses were all ordered to be 10 palms, that is about 7 feet 6 inches, above the ground, and a ladder was provided for the use of the Bishop when he performed the act of chrism. There is an admirably illuminated illustration of a Bishop in the act of anointing the consecration crosses in the British Museum (Add. MS. 18, 143, fo: 55b).

We learn from Caxton's translation of the Golden

Legend, that these crosses were placed upon the walls of the churches, first,

to fere ye devyll . . . for they doubtte and drede moche ye syne of ye crosse; secondly, fer to shewe ye syne of ye victories of Ihesu cryst . . . to shewe yt ye place diuine subget to god: Thyrdly, for to represent thapostles it is used for to set up xii lyghtes: tofore the crosse for to represent ye xii apostles whyche by ye fayth of god crucefyed they enlumined all ye worlde.

In these consecration or chrisms crosses we have a second bond with Salisbury Cathedral, the first of which is the fact that Dame Alice de Radcliffe, whose memorial brass is in this church, lies buried there: for eight crosses enclosed in quatrefoil circles of stone in relief are found on the outside of the quire and transept at Salisbury, and the same number inside.

Of the twelve crosses which, probably painted red, were within the walls, only one remains in the splay of a window in the north aisle.