

## 203. STOWE.

(O.S. 6 in. xiii. N.W.)

**Roman:—**

(1). TESSELLATED PAVEMENT, in the 'Queens Temple' at Stowe Park, was removed from the dwelling-house discovered at Foscott in 1839-40 (see p. 115). It is 8 ft. square, showing a geometrical pattern in the usual red, white and blue-grey tesserae.

The pavement is especially interesting as it is the only visible survival of Roman structural work in the county.

Condition—Good.

**Ecclesiastical:—**

(2). PARISH CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, stands in a churchyard surrounded by the grounds of Stowe House; the walls are covered with roughcast, except the third stage of the tower, which is of stone. The roofs are covered with copper. The original church consisted apparently of a chancel and an aisleless *Nave*, to which the *North Aisle* was added late in the 13th century; the *West Tower* was built c. 1330, and c. 1350 the *Chancel* was rebuilt and enlarged; later in the 14th century the *South Aisle* was added, and at the end of the 15th century the clearstorey was constructed, the aisles were possibly rebuilt, and the *South Porch* was added. The *North Chapel* was built in the first half of the 16th century. The third stage of the tower was rebuilt, and the whole church restored in the 19th century.

The niche with a carved crucifix and figures of c. 1330, over the W. doorway (see Plate, p. 22), and the 17th-century effigy in the N. chapel are especially interesting.

Architectural Description—The *Chancel* (29 ft. by 15½ ft.) has a mid 14th-century E. window of three trefoiled lights with tracery in a pointed head. In the N. wall, opening into the N. chapel, is a 16th-century arcade of two bays with four-centred arches; the soffits and jambs are continuously panelled, and set with small shields. In the S. wall are two modern windows. The mid 14th-century chancel arch is two-centred, and of three orders; the two outer orders are hollow-chamfered, the third order is chamfered; both the inner orders die into the responds; a rough mortice at the apex of the arch possibly indicates the socket of the former rood-beam. The *North Chapel* (27 ft. by

14½ ft.) has, in the E. wall, a modern doorway, below a 16th-century window of three uncusped lights under a four-centred head. In the N. wall are four windows, similar to that in the E. wall. In the W. wall, opening into the N. aisle, is a 16th-century arch, four-centred and crudely moulded, with moulded capitals at the springing line, and chamfered jambs. The *Nave* (39 ft. by 19 ft.) has a late 13th-century N. arcade of three bays; the two-centred arches are of two chamfered orders, with a chamfered label on the S. side; the octagonal pillars and semi-octagonal responds have moulded capitals and bases. The S. arcade is of three bays, similar to those of the N. arcade, but the capitals and bases are slightly different, and of late 14th-century date. The clearstorey has, on each side, six windows, all of late 15th or early 16th-century date, with four-centred heads; they were formerly each of three lights, but the mullions, etc., have been cut away. The *North Aisle* (9 ft. wide) has, in the N. wall, two windows; the eastern is of late 15th-century date, with a four-centred head, and was probably originally of three lights; the western window is of the 15th century, with a two-centred head, and was originally of two lights; both windows are now without mullions and tracery: between them is the 15th-century N. doorway, with continuously moulded jambs and two-centred head. The *South Aisle* (8½ ft. wide) has, in the E. wall, a late 14th-century window, of three trefoiled lights with quatrefoils in a pointed head. In the S. wall are two windows similar to those in the N. aisle; between them is the 16th-century S. doorway, which has continuously moulded jambs and square head. The *West Tower* (10 ft. square) is of three stages, marked by chamfered offsets, and has a plain parapet, and diagonal W. buttresses; the large sloping buttresses at the W. end were added at an uncertain date. The two lower stages of the tower are of c. 1330, the third stage was rebuilt in the 19th century. The two-centred tower arch is low, and of three chamfered orders; the innermost order is carried on semi-octagonal pilasters with moulded capitals; the arch is partly blocked and partly covered by a 19th-century gallery. The W. doorway has jambs and two-centred head of three continuously moulded orders, and a moulded label with head-stops; above the doorway is a niche (see *Fittings*). The N. and S. walls of the second stage have each a small square-headed window. The *South Porch* (8 ft. by 7½ ft.) has a 15th-century entrance archway of two moulded orders, the inner order three-centred, the outer order square.

*Fittings*—*Bells*: five; 1st, 3rd, 4th, by James Keene, 1654; 2nd, by Richard Keene, 1660; 5th, by Richard Keene, 1665. *Brackets*: (see *Niches*).

*Brasses*: In chancel—(1) of Alice Saundres, 146(?1), figure of woman in high head-dress, inscription-plate broken; (2) to John, son of Thomas Temple, 1592. *Images*: (see *Niches*). *Monuments and Floor-slabs*. *Monuments*: In N. chapel—at W. end, (1) of Martha, daughter of Sir Thomas Temple, wife of Sir Thomas Penyston, baronet, 1619, moulded pedestal of black marble, recumbent effigy clothed and shrouded, of white marble; at feet, on small plinth, effigy of infant daughter; lozenges with arms, much defaced. E. of S. porch—outside, (2) upright effigy of civilian, in long robe, 14th-century, much defaced. *Floor-slab*: In N. chapel—near tomb, of Hester, infant daughter of Sir Thomas Peniston, 1617, figure of child, on slab of slate inlaid with marble, inscription, blank shield and shield with three Cornish choughs. *Niches*: Tower—over W. doorway, outside, with pinnacled buttress on each side, trefoiled crocketed canopy with spire and vaulted soffit; at the back three moulded brackets for images, above them carved crucifix with figures of St. Mary and St. John, c. 1330. *Painting*: On N. arcade—traces of colour. *Piscinae*: In S. aisle—at E. end, with trefoiled head, late 14th-century. In N. aisle—at E. end, similar to piscina in S. aisle. *Miscellanea*: In chancel—*reredos*, apparently originally over-mantel, with two semi-circular niches, grotesque caryatides, embattled parapet, Ionic pilasters, in the middle crowned shield with Stuart Royal Arms, early 17th-century, altered and restored, parapet added at later date.

Condition—Good.