

English Sculpture in some Berkshire Churches.

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PART III.

READING.

IT is only honest to admit that the churches of Reading are disappointing, probably because we expect magnificence in a town of the size, and forget that its vast growth is of the nineteenth century. If we look on it as the little place it was till recently, we shall be less inclined to complain.

ST. LAURENCE.

- I. The Lydall (?) family (c. 1610 ?), large double arched monument of local workmanship, representing the family kneeling ; below the work is much damaged, and the whole badly needs cleaning. The details are difficult to make out, but careful washing with Castile soap and water would improve it greatly.
2. John Blagrave (*d.* 1611), undated, an extremely interesting work, showing the astrologer as a half-figure leaning on a globe, flanked by allegorical figures standing respectively on a tetragrammaton and cube ; on the soffit are clouds and stars ; the broken pediment bears other allegorical figures with octahedron and dodekahedron flanking a figure of Death ; below is a pretty band, and inside the niche are indecipheral reliefs. It is worth remembering that one of Blagrave's claims was to have cast out a dumb devil from a maid at Basingstoke by invoking the name of the Tetragrammaton and that of the Blessed Trinity ; he may have designed his own monument at " my house called Copt Hall, upon the seven bridges in Reading," from which he dates his Supplement to Culpeper's *English Physitian* (1674) ; if not, it was certainly designed by one who understood and sympathised with his studies. The author was probably Gerard Christmas, whom we shall meet with at Hurst.
3. William Douglas (1732), urn on pedestal, signed by Peter Scheemaker ; the especial interest of this work is that it is a copy of that designed by Wren and carved by Joshua Marshall for the bones of the Princes in the Tower in Westminster Abbey, erected by express command of Charles II, with which Scheemaker, several of whose works are in the Abbey, must have been familiar.

4. Anne Maydon (1747), also by Scheemaker, a curious and interesting work reviving the Elizabethan tradition of a kneeling figure at a desk under a pediment adorned with shield and swags, surmounted by an urn; an attractive and interesting work.

ST. MARY BUTTS.

1. William Kendrick (1635), an interesting work, very large, showing kneeling figures under a double arch and a broken pediment with an elaborate escutcheon surmounted by three skulls; on the base is an inscription tablet flanked by skulls over curtains. This may well be by John and Matthias Christmas, the sons of Gerard Christmas and his successors as Carvers to the Navy as well as to the yard in Cripplegate from which he turned out many important alabaster monuments; we shall meet all three at Hurst.
2. John Monk (*d.* 1800), mural monument of Greek type, representing Religion raising the dying man with one hand, and pointing to Heaven with the other; this looks like the later work of Thomas Banks, R.A.
3. Charles Taylor (1808), an unimportant tablet by Bacon Junior.

ST. GILES'S.

It was a very dark day when I visited Reading, and in St. Giles's this was especially unfortunate, since the two earlier monuments to be described were wholly illegible.

1. Fine mural monument with curved broken pediment and laureate inscription panel, *c.* 1680-90, suggesting in its good proportions and detail the work of William Stanton (see Hurst).
2. Large marble monument, only the date 1710 legible when I saw it, with volutes at the sides of the inscription panel and an interesting base panel carved with the Angel of the Resurrection, cherub heads, skulls and crossbones.
3. S. Wellington (1757), a good architectural mural monument with rococo shield of arms under arch, and gadroon base with rich scrollwork; this is almost certainly by Sir Robert Taylor.
4. Plain pedimented tablet to Joseph Baylis (1775), signed in yellow paint "Loscombe," probably a local mason, who has nevertheless a sense of proportion not always present in his kind.

HURST.

This interesting church contains some extremely interesting and important monuments, which are not only fine in themselves but which illustrate the astounding change that came over London sculpture of the seventeenth century in little over thirty years.

1. Monument to Richard Warde and his wife Colubra (1574). This interesting work has a canopy with fine Perpendicular cresting over an altar tomb; there are brasses of husband,

wife, eight sons and eight daughters, still largely adorned with the original rich enamels; the lettering is a very difficult Gothic script. (*Berks. Bucks and Oxon. Arch. Journ.* XXV (1920), Fig. 43.)

2. Lady Savile (d. 1631). This monument needs so much explanation that a summary of the epitaph is essential to the understanding of the composition.

"Lady Mary Savile Daughter to George Dacre Esquire. She had three husbands George Garrard sone of Will: Garrard Knt. sometime Lord Mayor of London, the second John Smith Esq. in the County of Essex (*sic*), the third a most faire Knight, Sir Henry Savile, Provost of Merton College, and after Provost of Eton. She erected this monument while she was yet living for herself being desirous to deposite her Body in ye Place where liveinge she had found soe much Content and so sweet Repose of her age. She was borne at Cheshunt in Hertfordshire, shee dyed A° Dom 1631 Aetatis suae 73."

She had three daughters by her first husband, Lady Anne Carleton, a child who died in infancy, and Frances Lady Harrison, whom we shall see again; by Sir Henry Savile she had three sons and a daughter, Elizabeth, who became the mother of Sir Charles Sedley.

Under a broken pediment with rich volutes is the inscription *Memoriae Sacrum*; to right and left are armorial shields surmounted by urns; below the cornice is a great fringed curtain held back by angels; on the pillar in the centre is a winged skull, below it a desk at which kneels a pair of figures representing herself and Sir Henry Savile; to right and left kneel smaller figures evidently representing her two daughters by her first marriage and their husbands, the Carletons and Harrisons, that is; on the base below is another group of five, her children by Sir Henry.

The author of this remarkable monument, erected between Sir Henry's death in 1622 and Lady Savile's in 1631, was certainly Gerard Christmas of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, Carver to the Navy, who not only designed a long series of Lord Mayors' Pageants but executed several documented monuments; his style is therefore well established, and his sons, who succeeded him in his official position, worked in much the same style, alabaster being the usual material of all three. This monument is one of the most notable works of art in the county. It should be added that the fine early 17th century screens are almost certainly by the same hand; the escutcheon over one bears a Garter enclosing the Prince of Wales's feathers held by angels, and angel supporters appear on Christmas's documented Drury tomb at Hawstead, Suffolk, the other is adorned with a frieze of Royal flowers, roses and fleurs-de-lys, and cherub heads, and the pyramids which surmount the escutcheon are entirely in Christmas's manner. (*Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Arch. Journ.* XXV (1920), Fig. 44.)

3. Henry Barker of Hurst (*d.* 1651), very fine mural monument representing Barker recumbent in his shroud between two figures; at his head is a quaint and enchanting child figure seated, holding three books in her lap, at the feet Death as a skeleton, holding an orb to show his universal sway. The setting is a fine and dignified one, the cornice with broken pediment enclosing an escutcheon; cherub heads adorn the capitals of the pillars, and the whole is a characteristic work of John and Matthias Christmas, Carvers to the Navy and successors of their father Gerard in the Cripplegate yard.
4. Brick altar tomb to Sir R. Bigg (*d.* 1677), grandson of James, Earl of Marlborough; his arms are carved in an exceptionally large and handsome black marble ledger stone which forms the top of the tomb.
5. Sir Richard Harrison (*d.* 1683), his wife and son, signed by William Stanton of Holborn (1636-1705). The setting, with its Ionic pillars, curved pediment and scheme of black and white marble, is typical of the sculptor, and indeed of three generations of the family from 1645 onwards, but the arrangement of the figures, two kneeling at a desk, one in a niche behind with his arms crossed on his breast, is a curious return to Elizabethan tradition represented in the terms of an almost French elegance in one figure, made the more noteworthy by the arrangement of three shallow curved pediments to form a triple arch, thus giving an odd effect of a Gothic triple-headed arch. The figure of Sir Richard, seen almost full faced, is somewhat grotesque, but that of the son has some impressiveness, since the eyes are cast up and the hands crossed on his breast; that of Lady Harrison is exquisite, a *profil perdu*, leaning on her hand, the left toying with the cord of her robe; it is far more like fine eighteenth century work, and was obviously carved by William Stanton himself, whereas Sir Richard, with his over thin arms and over large head, is by a workman of Stanton's whose bad sense of proportion spoils more than one other of his works. The ugly foot of the desk, with its clumsy bulb and mouldings, is a sad falling-off from the elegance of the earlier priedieu, but is of interest as proving that Stanton is the author of the huge monument to John and Dorothy Wolstenholme at Great Stanmore, Middlesex, with fine Stantonesque effigies under a vast canopy, the ledger, resting on four pillars identical in type with that supporting the desk. The Harrisons' is perhaps the largest mural monument in England. (For the Stantons, see Esdaile in *Arch. Journ.* LXXXV (1930), 149 ff.).
6. In a very different style is the pretty tablet to Robert Palmer (1787) signed "C. Harris Fecit London." Charles Harris, who worked in the Strand, executed a very large number of similar works, with urns and a mass of delicate Greek detail;

his work may be seen from Lincolnshire to Chichester and far to the West, and once, at Edenham, he executed a monument on a great scale, to the third Duke of Ancaster, as fine in its way as his graceful tablets in theirs.

WHITE WALTHAM.

This fine church contains some interesting monuments.

1. Sir Constantine Phipps (*d.* 1723) educated at the free school of Reading, became Lord Chancellor of Ireland in consequence of his defence of Sacheverell in 1720, but the Whiggish tendencies of Dublin at the time made him very unpopular, and on the death of Queen Anne he was removed from office, returned to his chambers in the Middle Temple, and there died; it is perhaps significant that his monument was not erected till 1728, when a new reign had begun. The work is a fine one, consisting of a sarcophagus surmounted by pediment, shield on urn, the whole set on enormous volutes resting on a large base. Palmer's work is not common; his yard was in Gray's Inn Lane, in which his sculptor son Benjamin succeeded him; but he had worked as a young man in Rome under Pierre Monnot of Besançon, whose vast monument to Lord Exeter (*d.* 1700) at St. Martin's, Stamford, he brought to England, being entrusted with cutting the inscription; his monument to the Hon. Margaret Watson at Rockingham and the monumental bust of Anne Crispe at Birchington show how fine an artist he was when the opportunity was given him.
2. Thomas Cheeve (1739), wreathed urn against pyramidal background; school of Scheemaker.
3. A Bacon-like work to Sir B. Thomas (*d.* 1790), with a mourner and urn against pyramidal background.
4. Pleasant modern tablet to Tom Hearne the antiquary, "baptised in this church 11th July, 1678."
5. There is also an exceedingly fine cartouche tablet of the best London type of the 1680's; unfortunately it proved illegible.

WALTHAM ST. LAURENCE.

When we have finished admiring the magnificent pulpit¹ dated 1619 and signed P.F., complete with sounding board, shields and angel caryatids, we shall notice first the joint monument to

1. Sir Henry Neville (1593), his wife Elizabeth (*d.* 1573), daughter and "sole heyre to Sir John Gresham," their son Sir Henry (*d.* 1616) and his wife Anne (Killegrew), an excellent example of the mural monument with kneeling figures of the Southwark school with cornice bearing escutcheon and strapwork borne on three columns above twin arches. Under one kneels the

¹ *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Arch. Journ.* XXV (1920), Fig. 39.

elder Sir Henry, his wife and daughter, an inscription panel below, under the other the younger Sir Henry and his wife; the inscription panel below them is blank. Brackets with scale ornament divide these panels, and below is a richly carved strapwork base. It seems clear that the younger Sir Henry, the friend of Essex and Shakespeare's Southampton, erected the work, and that the date of his own death was intended to be added at a later time. (*Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Arch. Journ.* XXV (1920), Fig. 33; *Berks. Arch. Journ.* XL (1936), 178).

2. Cathrine Thomas (*sic*), daughter of Sir Anthony Thomas, Kt. (*d.* 1638). This singular monument represents an urn set in a niche above a column; a curious and rather smudgy work, probably by a minor London hand; the rounded finial on which the column stands is found in the works of the Christmases.
3. Dorothy Lewis and Mrs. Margaret Banister, sisters (*d.* 1667, 81), an exquisite cartouche tablet, probably by John Nost of Hyde Park Corner; the wreaths of flowers are incomparably delicate, and the whole is an outstanding example of its class.

(*To be continued.*)