ART. XXXV.—Colton Church. By the REV. A. A. WIL- LIAMS, the Vicar.

Read at that Place, June 14, 1894.

THE first thing that you will have noticed on strolling up the little hill on which our church is situated will be an ancient well, of red Furness sandstone, or freestone, about half way up the ascent.

It appears to be made of the same kind of stone as our ancient font, and some other work which I have noticed in the east wall of the church, and my theory is that it was made at the Abbey and carried here, so that water might be forthcoming for the services of the sanctuary in pre-Reformation days. The spring is a good one, and rarely, if ever, fails.

On reaching the churchyard you will have noticed an old sundial in the south-west corner of the old yard. When the wall round the old churchyard was taken down in 1886, for the purpose of adding an acre of new ground to it, I discovered the upper portion of the pedestal (bearing a date 1674) built in, as an ordinary stone, at the foundation of the wall, and took care of it. A friend, when looking about, found the other and lower half amongst the coal refuse at the bottom of the tower; and on putting a short notice of this in the Westmorland Gazette, I received very shortly afterwards a letter from a gentleman at Wray, saying that he remembered the old dial standing on the top of the churchyard wall (in the south-west corner) and that if I looked in a certain ditch in the valley below (near the present Vicarage) I should find the circular base on which it used to stand. The pedestal being broken, he says that the lads of his day set off the round base from the top of the hill and rolled it to the bottom
bottom. This also I secured, and the three are now re-united and serving their ancient use.

The church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, consists of an embattled tower, a nave, north transept, and a chancel. The first mention of any church in the parish is in 1531, when there was an "unconsecrated chapel" existing, probably built in the Tudor period, though there appears to have been an ancient building, on the same site, of smaller dimensions. My reason for mentioning this is, that when the church was dismantled in 1890, at its restoration, I noticed what appeared to be the foundation of a substantial wall running parallel to the present east wall, but a little west of the pulpit, and as this is the oldest part of the church, I take it that there was an older and smaller building here prior to the existing edifice.

From a document in the Parish Chest, we gather that this

Parochial Chappell of Colton was consecrated by Edwin Sands, Archbishop of Yorke, ye last day of August, A.D. 1578, and in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} year of the said Abp's consecration.

It is stated in the pedigree of the Rawlinsons, of Greenhead, that William Rawlinson, Esq.,

Rebuilt the Parochial Chappell of Coulton upon the common belonging to his family before the year 1603,

the tower being added at this date. The latter contains an ancient pre-Reformation bell, bearing the inscription:

"CAMPANA BEATI JOHANNES APPLI."

The church was restored in 1710-11-12, at a cost of £45 10s. 9d., by assessment, and an interesting balance-sheet (containing some highly amusing entries) is kept in the Parish Chest.
In 1721 the north transept was added after much dispute, certain parties pulling it down by moonlight as soon as it was ready for the roof; they were finally caught, excommunicated, and sent to Lancaster Gaol.

In the year 1840 the church was reseated at a cost of £216 17s. 6d., and having again, in lapse of time, fallen into bad repair, it was restored in 1890 at a cost of £900. The old walls were left exactly as they were before; but the floor was levelled. Many lead coffins, and hundreds of others were noticed in the body of the church. The old windows were left in their irregular positions, except that stone was substituted for wood in some cases, and new tracery windows were placed in the east wall and north transept, and filled with stained glass.

On the first day of the dismantling of the church, in 1889, we discovered an ancient font turned upside down, and used as a base for a more modern font, which had been in use since 1718, bearing the initials:

J. P. J. R. C. T. F. C.

referring to the four wardens who were in office in 1717-18. This stood in a pew near the pulpit, but the ancient font has been restored to its original use, and placed near the door.

There is an Elizabethan chalice with cover paten (bearing date 1571) supposed to have been presented by Archbishop Sandys, whose relatives lived at Old Hall, in this parish. The Old Hall pew was of oak, and is now placed round the vestry walls as wainscoting; the two old dates, "1688" and "1712," having been cut out and placed in the woodwork of a pew as nearly as possible in the identical spot in which we found them. It is about the fourth pew west of the pulpit. The old black oak altar rails were taken care of at the restoration, and replaced in the position they now occupy.

The Registers commence in 1623; but are in a bad state
state. They were transcribed and published in 1891, two or three copies only being left. There are some interesting documents in the Parish Chest; amongst them three letters from Bishop Pearson, the author of an "Exposition on the Creed."

On the north-east there used to stand an old charnel house, which has now been levelled with the ground, and its contents interred in the new ground. It was erected in 1764, at a cost of £2 6s. 4d.

The present vestry was built in 1762, at a cost of £23 1s. 3½d.; whilst just outside the churchyard railings is an old horsing stone, built in 1767, at a cost of 12s., and recently repaired. This was doubtless useful in olden days, when people rode to church, and turned their horses into the peat-house underneath the school opposite, whilst they repaired to worship in the church, and to an "ordinary," held at Greenhead, between the services.

I must not omit to mention that the old gallery, which extended right across the west end of the church, was removed in 1890, being in a very shaky condition. The old clock, which used to be on the wall close alongside the pulpit [as a check, one supposes, against long-winded preachers,] was removed to the west wall, as was an escutcheon of George III's time. Some quaint old texts used to be seen on the walls, with older texts still underneath the whitewash, and some old inscriptions. These latter have been carefully transcribed on to a board over the font. It is curious to add that one of these inscriptions was an error. It ran formerly:—"Government grant in 1816—£200." On writing to the Bounty Office I found (as expected) that it was a grant from Queen's Anne's Bounty, and the mistake was corrected on the new board.