



ORMSHED CHURCH.

(TO FACE P. 155.)

ART. XIII.—*Ormshed and its Church.* By the REV. J. BRUNSKILL, Rector of Ormshed.

Communicated at Carlisle, June 20th, 1900.

ORMSHEVED or Ormshed is a peculiar place-name, meaning the head or home of Orm. "Ormside" is an error, which diverts letters, railway passengers, &c., to the larger town of Arnside. The earliest written history of this country was dated the century before Christ, and the book tells that our forefathers "for the most grew no corn but lived on milk and flesh and clothed themselves with skins of their flocks and herds." Until recent times each writer appears to have copied his predecessor; but in modern history the spade is superseding the pen. As we observe and excavate, the old buildings and towns of Britain prove to be a vast museum out of which more certain history is gathered; but the small area of a country parish has been less studied for chronicles of historic interest. Yet from our ancient roads, rivers, and language we may learn something of the migrations and struggles in rural life. Cæsar wrote that the natives he found in Britain did not grow corn; but when I find a Celtic quern or millstone near the mounds remaining of a British village now partly effaced by the Rectory garden, I prefer our spades to the Roman General's pen. And why did the Romans during their occupation of Plumpton import from Andernach on the Rhine lava millstones rather than corn? The ruined Roman town of Voreda in Plumpton, rushed by a Northern raid and buried by Nature's greenery in the then desolate Inglewood Forest, remains an historic mine still awaiting reverent excavation. Near it we have found several lava mills, Roman money and

altars, round stones for the balista, and many of the chequered stones which adorned their luxurious villas. Also at Plumpton, in the short road leading to the church, there remains a perfect example of their solid maiden way. With reference to Cæsar's report that the people of Britain clothed themselves with skins, Canon Greenwell has found some evidence in the round barrows that the corpses had been wrapped in a woollen shroud woven by a kind of plaiting process. These grave-memorials he assigns to tribes who inhabited Yorkshire previous to the Roman Invasion.

Then as to language, modern scholars have found in our place-names and talk evidence of Norse settlers hereabouts. There was dug up from the Ormsled Churchyard in 1823 a cup of singularly fine Anglo-Saxon workmanship. This precious relic of an interment made a thousand years since was fortunately put for safe keeping in York Museum. In 1899 the grave of a Danish warrior was unintentionally disturbed. He had probably been buried with his armour on where he fell, at the scarp guarding the wath. Our sadly missed leader, the late Chancellor Ferguson, kindly took the sword and remains of the shield to the Tower of London, where experts pronounced the armour to be of Danish workmanship. It is now preserved in the Carlisle Museum, and the "find" is described by the Chancellor in our *Transactions*, vol. xv., part 2. We all know that outside the south-east window of the nave there is a "kist vaen" or stone box containing several doubled up skeletons. Thus from the earliest times we have evidence that this sacred mound has been a sleeping place or cemetery for our dead when the living assembled for worship at the Cross long before the first sheltering building of wattle and daub.

The Saxons and Normans built in stone, and their work remains in the venerable Parish Church, for centuries the only witness to social and national changes.

Such an antiquity has been called "an historical document written in stone," and was probably better read by our forefathers on their way to or from wading the ford through the river Eden than it is now by the travellers who rush past on the Midland Railway. Ormsled was then situated on a British highway which was a main road two thousand years ago. This road is not straight, as the streets afterwards made by the Romans between their camps; but takes a wandering line generally between townships, and by the sides of the valleys.

Approaching from the south and fording Cold-wath, we enter this narrow and now deep lane. We have the grand old trees of Little Ormsled Lodge on the left, including beautiful specimens of native and silver fir, elm, birch, and lime, with a flowering *Amelanchier Canadensis* in the front garden. Also a large cedar, said to have been brought from Lebanon by a General Whitehead, growing in his hat, and on the long voyage sharing his daily allowance of one pint of water. From this Lodge on the 20th February, 1812, rode out Miss Jane Whitehead to be married at the Parish Church to Edward Hasell, Esq., of Dalemain.

On the other side of this decayed village there survives an unspoiled example of a Roman-English house on a plan almost universal in domestic architecture fifty years ago. Was the evolution from the earlier huts taught by the veteran soldiers discharged from the Roman Legions? The raised carving on the lintel 1WO68MO6 is a singular mixture of figures and letters; these last probably being for "William and Mary Outhwaite."

Towards the east we have an extensive view of the Pennine Mountains, covered with trees six hundred years ago, with Roughman Fell and Brackenber Moor opposite. On this common there is a large circle or British village. The muster for the Pilgrimage of Grace was hereabouts, and many other honourable "risings." For our freeholding forefathers showed themselves readier than the

Southerns to maintain their "estates of inheritance" and struggle for their conscious religion and the monumental treasures of their churches.

It was hereabouts that what were often the losing causes found their staunchest defenders, whether Saxon, Lancastrian, or Jacobite. Before the Pilgrimage of Grace there had been the unfortunate rising in the North against the plundering agents of Papal and Royal greed. After a peaceful protest against state robbery of village chantries, poor men's clubs, and shelters such as were at Coupland Beck, Sandford, and Stainmore, seventy of the best men in Westmorland were hanged, generally before their own door. And the two out of the three Commissioners who condemned these martyrs to the gallows were Bishops! Who will find some local record of this? One unfortunate clergyman at Windsor was put to death as a traitor because when he heard of the plunder of the monasteries he had remarked that the King had brought his hogs to a bad market. John Hilton, an ex-Mayor of Appleby (possibly a relative of the family at Ormshed Hall), was in 1634 held to bond in £1000 by the Archbishop of York to appear in London before the Lords of the notorious Star Chamber. Mr. Hilton was accused of high treason as having spoken against the King to John Thwaites, then Mayor of Appleby, and John Atkinson, the Coroner, when they argued that he might not again stand for Mayor because his wife and children were recusants; and Mr. Hilton had answered, "Are there not many magistrates and lords of the council whose wives are recusants?" Mr. Hilton denied having referred to the Queen, and in the end "these presumptuous speeches of Hilton were remitted by his Majesty the King." Thus this good citizen escaped being hung, drawn, and quartered alive on our blood-stained gallows hill, like the last victim to that barbarous fate, the brave Captain Atkinson of Mallerstang. I can remember seeing the rude "gallows"

with ropes still dangling, and in this my ministerial jubilee I may mention that I have talked with one who saw Prince Charlie's men in the rebellion of 1745.

Our Moot Cross shows the iconoclastic wrecking by dissenting axes and hammers, of which the great Countess of Pembroke complains when she had to lodge the rebels quartered in Appleby Castle, and Cromwell's troopers lay about Ormsled. Many of the steps had been pulled away by the late tenant at the Hall, who also carried off the socket of the Churchyard Cross. His son, who remembered the vandalism, survived to help in 1897 at the restoration of both. That farmer was also permitted to convey the village green surrounding the Calvary, and, for the fencing of this enclosure, the stones from the tithebarn of the non-resident Rector. A brave old parishioner was wont to tell the writer how Cyprian Hilton about 1690 had planted the beautiful sycamore now growing from the Calvary, and probably the fruit trees formerly enjoyed in common. The new stable and other encroachments obstruct the view and access to the church.

In repairing these steps no carved stones were found, as by the Rev. W. S. Calverley at Bromfield. He considered that the stone in which the sundial had been set in the churchyard was the gable of this village cross. Has the red sandstone deeply sunk on the south side of the steps carried an earlier cross? It has been reckoned that before the Great Rebellion five thousand of these wayside crosses serving as market place and sanctuary adorned our towns and villages. Even of the twelve Queen Eleanor crosses only three remain. And of these Christian monuments where were their natural guardians? Seven thousand clergymen, by furious fanatics, were "rabbed" from their parishes, murdered, or died of hunger, in prison, and foreign slavery, so that at the King's Restoration only six hundred survived to resume their livings.

The Parish Registers date from 1560, and the list of Rectors includes :—

- 1231, John de Morland, collated by Bishop Halton.
- 1290, William de Gosford, collated by Bishop Halton.
- 1564, Sir Christopher Parker.
- 1854, Christopher Parker, collated by Bishop Percy.
- 1893, Joseph Brunskill, collated by Bishop Bardsley.

In 1578 there appears to be buried "John Edgdell, wedman." I gather by aid of Mr. Rennison that a wedman was the man set apart to see fair play in games and combats, and to take care of the clothes of the combatants; these garments being laid in heaps were called "weds," especially noted in the game called "Scotch and English."

1781. Entry in Parish Register :—"General Chapter, Appleby, 20 July, Richd. Burn, LL.D., Chanc."

1787 . . . "6 June by Revd. Wm. Paley, M.A., when in his excellent charge he recommended afternoon Lectures to the Clergy."

1783 . . . "July 3. Visitation at Appleby by Bp. of Clonfert" (native of Kendal).

1783 . . . "Oct. 26. Christenings. Ann, daughter of William Sedgwick of Helm, and Ann, his wife. N.B.—This is the first christening taxed 3d."

Among the church plate, without claiming the famous "Ormside Cup" now in York Museum, we have one large pewter flagon; one silver chalice and one silver paten, inscribed "Ex dono M. H. in memoriam of His Son Cypriani Hilton nat. 7 Augt. 1700, Obijt 16 Augt. 1712. To ye church of Ormside. Also gave the Interest of Ten Pounds to the Poor of Ormside for ever."

The wall enclosing the "church hill" is headed up in dotes or short lengths, each identified with certain lands in the parish. But most of these estates have been sold, and are now laid to Appleby Castle estate.

Now that we approach St. James' Church a word may be said about the benefice. In 1156 the Church of



INTERIOR OF ORMSHED CHURCH.

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Ormsheved was granted to the Abbot of St. Mary, York ; but in 1248 the advowson came to the Bishop of Carlisle, who has ever since been patron. The tithes were commuted in 1846 for a rent charge of £78 16s. 4d. In 1900 this has fallen to £53. The rent of the glebe is £95, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners pay £5 5s. It is believed that endowment for religion has come down since the "keeping of hills," ages before the conquering cross was planted on this "esker." These mounds of sand and gravel have been the burial places of men who knew not the use of metal, living hereabouts thousands of years before not only the Norsemen, but also what some call the Ancient Britons. These eskers, whether wholly or in part artificial, resemble irregular barrows, and occur in nearly all countries that have been much glaciated.

Bishop Nicolson records that the Visitation in 1703 :—

The altar in the quire here stands east and west. There are no rails, but the Rector has provided them at his own charge, and wants an injunction to the churchwardens to see them set up at the expense of the parish.

From the Hill MSS. we copy a "Note to Lady Pembroke's will by the Rev. Jas. Raine, Principal of Neville Hall, Newcastle" :—

Found Sunday, 2nd of Nov., 1689, behind Ormside Church, in ye river Eden on ye side next ye church.

- (A) Thuribulum or censor. This censor has 3 holes at the sides, evidently to put ye cords through. It was 3 inches high, in diameter above 5. It was of brass gilded.
- (B) An Ewer of brass 7 inches high, 3 inches wide at ye mouth, 13 inches in circumference at ye widest part.
- (C) A brazen mortar.
- (D) A pewter bason 3 inches deep, 8 in diameter.
- (E) A pewter flower pot 6 inches high, circum. at belly 10 inch.
- (F) A cullender of pewter.

A case of brazen weights and two brazen candlesticks of different sizes, 2 pewter candlesticks, a less and a greater, two pewter flaggons, a less and greater, several plates of pewter and a small

lead for boiling meat, which weighed 2 stone 10 pounds, on the great flaggon handle F.D., *i.e.*, Franccs Dudley.*

It is probable that the hoard was buried during the Civil Wars. Churchyards were privileged by the canons, and persons in turbulent times carried their property to them for safety. This treasure trove was carried off to Appleby Castle by the great Countess, and is now unknown. A jetton or counter was found in Ormside Churchyard, February, 1850.

At the restoration of the church in 1885-6, upon which £743 was expended, the learned architects, in submitting plans, referred to its history, the several stages it had passed through, with the antiquity and interest of the fragments that remain. Mr. Charles J. Ferguson, F.S.A., said :—

Pavement exists on the mound to the north of the church, and there may yet be found traces of buildings earlier than we now see. The Saxons probably erected a church here.† But of the present fabric there are remains of a church built about fifty years after the Norman Conquest, and its plan can be traced. It consisted of a nave about twice as long as its breadth, with chancel of slight projection, and a transept or chapel to the north. Parts of this early church are still visible in the massive portion of the north wall of the chancel, and the round-headed archway therein, which has a slightly recessed order on the face to the chancel and a chamfered abacus moulding at the impost. In later Norman times the nave was nearly doubled by a north aisle parallel to it, and connected with the nave by two massive arches which still remain. The chancel also was lengthened (as was done about the same time at Torpenhow), and in the north wall of the lengthened portion a hagioscope was constructed, so that the high altar should still be visible from the side chapel.

It was, however, in the 17th century that one of the greatest changes took place, for then the chancel was enlarged—I may almost say rebuilt, for all the walls seem to have been taken down except the north, that to the south being put up some 4 feet further southwards, so as to widen the chancel, which has the curious effect of making the chancel not coincide centrally with the nave—

* She married 1st John Dudley of Dufton, 2nd Cyprian Hilton, who died 1693.

† And the west wall may be remains of their solid work.—Note by J. B.



EARLY MASONRY OF ORMSHED CHURCH.

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(compare, for an instance of this, Carlisle Cathedral);—and the chancel is further remarkable for the introduction of a piscina, aumbreys, and a priest's doorway.

The roof is of oak, with moulded tie beams and curved braces springing from stone corbels. Since this careful addition and repair of the 17th century, much mischief has been done. The chancel arch has been removed; the original aisle and transept have been cleared away; the roof and parapet to the tower have been taken down, and replaced by unsightly slates. The roof of the nave has been taken down, and a modern one of low pitch substituted. The church has been ceiled and coated over and over again with whitewash. The seats have gradually been replaced by incongruous pews and benches facing in different directions.

In 1875, and previous to Mr. Ferguson's inspection, there was published

A LAMENT OF ORMSIDE CHURCH.

Pity the sorrows of a poor old church,
Whose walls have stood for many a century past.
* * * * *

But now, alas! a change has o'er me come,
And "Non sum qualis eram" is my wail,
For all who venture now within my doors
My ruined state observe with faces pale.

With sheer old age my walls are crumbling fast,
My ceiling falls in fragments to the floor,
Which, damp and cold, presents a woful sight;
The tottering pulpit stands—minus the door.

My pews are all worm-eaten through and through,
The crazy seats bend down beneath the weight
Of those who venture in to worship there,
Who dread meanwhile a worse impending fate.

For, hanging ominously overhead,
Long strips of lath and plaster creak and bend,
My walls, too, bending inwards threaten oft
Upon the trembling people to descend.

Two bells I have, but one, alas! is cracked!
The other's voice I very seldom hear.
And why? because I now can no one find
To come and ring, for each one quakes with fear.

This scandal continued for ten years longer, till that zealous ecclesiologist, Bishop Harvey Goodwin, interfered, arranged for a skilled architect, and led the way to raise money for the restoration. Happily, the tower escaped "restoration." I think its lower portion was an original peel tower for sheltering the legionary soldiers, and its walling is singular. No level "footing," "binding," or "courses" are shown, and it well corresponds with the Roman walling uncovered at Hardknott Camp. In 1893 there were few slates on the roof, and no glass in its windows. Local subscriptions could not be had, and even the Diocesan Church Extension Society refused help. However, the tower is now weather-tight, and long may the fortress brave the Helm.

Outside the new wall of the vestry is a small coped gravestone with the ritualistic shears of an archdeacon; also a broken cross of white sandstone, which Mr. Calverley thought might have been a gable. (About such white stones he writes much in our *Transactions*). The present east window has replaced a higher one.

Notice the old yew tree, and the worn step at the priest's door, probably caused by the clogs of scholars who for immemorial generations had to cross to the school kept in the north aisle. And this education continued somewhere in the parish until 1852, when, twenty years before School Boardism, churchfolk voluntarily built the present sufficient schoolroom. In 1897, as a Jubilee Memorial, a new cross was reverently lowered into the original socket. The figures "1643" show the date when the Calvinistic Boers last resolved upon the destruction of crosses. What was the purpose of the square window in the vestry above the door? A similar opening has lately been uncovered in Bradford Parish Church.

Bells were neglected after the Reformation, and many like the two fifteenth century bells at Ormsled were cracked by careless ringing or boyish vandalism. King

Henry VIII. sold away one hundred thousand pounds of bells for the sum of £900. One of our broken bells is an "Ave Maria," and the other still hanging in the tower has lettering, probably "Robertus Harding," of which the Rev. H. Whitehead within his last week was asking for a better rubbing. Mr. Whitehead advised that these cracked bells should be preserved as historic. The little bell now rung was lately given by John Brunskill, Holliwell, Asby.

As a lintel to the new south-east window, the restorers have desecrated a knightly tomb, and there is another in the transept, into which three mean brasses have been intruded, with the following inscriptions:—

Loe here interr'd lyes underneath this stone
True Wisdome, Virtue, Justice, all in one,

Sir Christopher Pickering, Knt., who after he had been 5 times High Sheriffe of Cumberlande dyed ye 14th. of Jan: An Dni 1620 Ætatis suæ 76.

Interred within this could urne heare lyes
This country's loss: but heaven's æternall prise
Cyprian Hilton of Ormeside; for renowned fame
He may be justly stiled the glorie of his name.
He was pious, prudent, charitable, and just.
And trewly valiant to: now hear he's clad in dust,

Deceased the 22nd of December
In the year of our Lord God, 1652.

Here lies interr'd the body of Cyprian Hilton, Esq., of an ancient family; whose Loyalty to his Prince, zeal for the Established Church, Love to his wife and children, and kindness to the Tenants, are a lasting Monument to his Memory. He left behinde him his dear Consort Mrs. Abigail Hilton, and by her a numerous offspring viz.: four sons and five daughters; all now living, and he in them. He dyed the 27th. day of December, An: Dom: 1693 in the year of his age xxxiiii and is here entomed in hopes of a blessed Resurrection.

The Hatchment above in the north wall bears the date 1723 and the Hilton arms.

I have already mentioned the finding of the famous Ormshed Cup and the pieces of Danish armour. In 1900 a small mortar was recovered. The stone was probably used to powder incense for the Thuribulum, and for safe keeping is now offered to the society. (For note and illustration of a Bronze Palstave found by J. B. exhibited 1882, see these *Transactions*, vol. vi., page 510).
