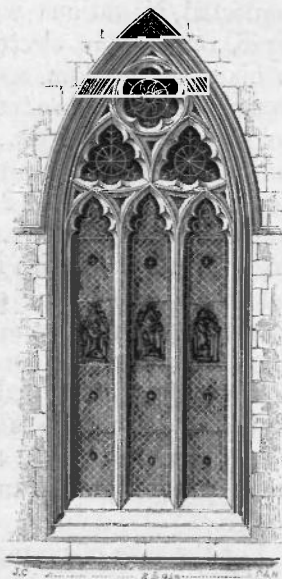


# THE DATE OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DECORATED STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE INTO ENGLAND.

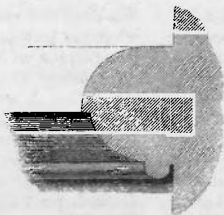
ILLUSTRATED BY EXTRACTS FROM THE BURSAR'S ACCOUNTS OF MERTON  
COLLEGE, OXFORD, FROM 1277 TO 1310.

THE following particulars extracted from the bursar's accounts, which comprise expenses incurred during the building of various parts of Merton college, have been kindly furnished by the Rev. E. Hobhouse, fellow of that college, and relate to the chapel or church of St. John the Baptist. The first extract records the dedication of the high Altar in the year 1277, proving that the work was then sufficiently advanced to allow of the services of the church being performed, although subsequent entries shew that it was not completed. The date thus verified is of considerable interest and importance, being one of the turning points in the history of Architecture in this country. The same date was assigned to this building several years ago, in the Glossary of Architecture: the conclusion then drawn from other considerations, has been much disputed, but is now confirmed by the discovery of this document in the archives of the college.

The building is in the early Decorated style, with geometrical tracery in the windows, which is commonly said to have been introduced into England after the commencement of the fourteenth century, although examples are known on the continent twenty or thirty years earlier. It now appears certain that it was adopted in England in the very beginning of the



Window of Chapel, A.D. 1277



String in the Choir.



Plan of Window.

reign of Edward I., and was therefore *contemporaneous* with the erection of similar buildings in other parts of Europe. The same will frequently be found to be the case where opportunity is afforded to verify the dates; foreign antiquaries having been much in the habit of assigning earlier dates to buildings than they can verify. This document also establishes the fact that the building was commenced in the lifetime of Walter de Merton, who died a few months only after the dedication, and it is possible that the design was given by him.

Walter de Merton was the favourite of Richard, king of the Romans, brother of Henry III., and makes especial mention of him in the statutes of the college. Richard was considered the wealthiest man in Europe<sup>a</sup> of his day, and was connected in various ways with Conrad, archbishop of Cologne, one of the electors, who came over to conduct him to his new kingdom, and crowned him. He may also fairly be supposed to have contributed largely to the building of Cologne cathedral, the great work which Archbishop Conrad was then straining every nerve to carry on: it is recorded that he gave 12,000 marks (£8000, a very large sum in those days) to the archbishop in 1256<sup>b</sup>, and in 1257 the work was renewed with increased vigour under Master Gerard, but from the gigantic scale of the building its progress was necessarily slow, and the choir was not consecrated until 1327. From these circumstances it seems probable that Walter de Merton was acquainted with the design of Cologne cathedral, and his chapel is in a style very similar, though somewhat later in detail, and on comparatively a very small scale; the original plan has never been completed in either edifice.

For the sake of persons not acquainted with Oxford, it may

<sup>a</sup> Matthew Paris, p. 942, says, that his treasure was computed in 1257, and he was found able to spend one hundred marks a-day for ten years, independently of his standing revenues in England and Germany. If this computation is reduced to its equivalent value in our money, his property will appear to have been equal to that of the late Marquis of Westminster.

<sup>b</sup> Matthew Paris considers this and other presents made by Richard on this occasion as bribes; considering the parties to whom they were given and the spirit of the age

this does not seem very probable, but for whatever purpose the money was given, the coincidence of date and the character of Archbishop Conrad makes it highly probable that it was spent on the cathedral. Richard resided chiefly at Beckley, near Oxford. A concise account of his life will be found in the Guide to the Architectural Antiquities in the Neighbourhood of Oxford, pp. 212, 213. See also the Chron. Tho. Wikes, sub anno: Annal. Mon. Burton, p. 376: Kennett's Parochial Antiquities sub annis; and Sandford, 95.

be well to observe that the only part of Merton chapel here referred to is the choir; the transept, or ante-chapel, having been added in 1424, with the exception of the noble arches supporting the tower, which are part of the original work. The style of this work is pure Decorated, as will be seen by the sections of the mouldings, and the tracery of the windows. The date assigned by Mr. Rickman as the commencement of the Decorated style, is 1307, or the beginning of the reign of Edward II.; and this opinion is maintained by some of the highest living authorities, whose conclusions being generally formed with much caution are entitled to great consideration and respect. It is therefore the more necessary to examine carefully the evidence in support of the date of this building, and to compare it with some others of the reign of Edward I., to shew that the Decorated style really was in use in England at that period. The parish church of St. John the Baptist, in Oxford, was given by the abbey of Reading to Walter de Merton in 1265; confirmed by the charter of Henry III., and ratified by the bishop of Lincoln; and it was afterwards appropriated to the college on condition that they "should provide a chaplain to perform all those offices to the parish, as the rector before used to do," "and was called the collegiate parish church of St. John de Merton," as it still continues. Those who contend that the style of the architecture is not consistent with so early a date, assume that the church was rebuilt by the college about thirty years afterwards; but the bursar's rolls are extant throughout that period, and nearly in unbroken succession to the present time: they have been carefully examined, and though many other parts of the college were then building, it appears clear that the church was partly erected in the lifetime of the founder before these documents begin. The frequent mention of small expenses connected with the church, and of receipts from the parish, shew that it was in constant use throughout the period during which it has been supposed to have been rebuilt. Had this supposition been correct, there must also have been a subsequent dedication, but no trace of one can be found between 1277 and 1424, when the transept was dedicated.

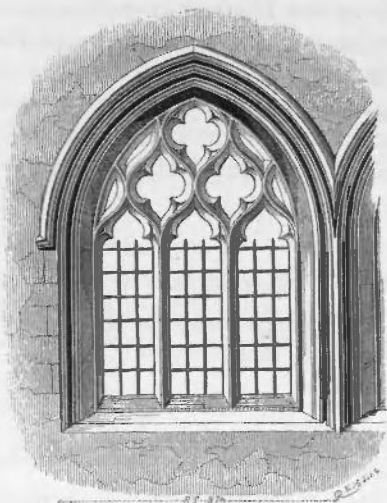
If the present building were an entirely unique example of the use of the Decorated style in England at that period, perhaps all this documentary evidence would be insufficient

to establish the fact in a satisfactory manner; but so many other instances may be referred to, that it seems more reasonable to conclude that Mr. Rickman was wrong in this one particular, notwithstanding his general care and accuracy, than that all these buildings were rebuilt twenty or thirty years after the time of their erection.

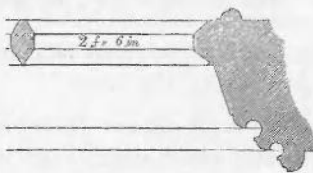
The Eleanor crosses are in the Decorated style, of rather later character than Merton chapel; that they were erected between 1290 and 1300, and were the work of English architects and sculptors, has been demonstrated by the valuable collection of records relating to them, edited by Mr. Hudson Turner, and presented to the Roxburghe Club by Beriah Botfield, Esq. Acton Burnell castle, Shropshire, built by Bishop Burnell in 1274—92, is of Decorated character, though early in the style; St. Ethelbert's gate-house at Norwich, and those parts of the cathedral that were repaired after the riots in 1275, and re-consecrated by Bishop Middleton in 1278, are also of early Decorated work. The parts of Exeter cathedral built by Bishop Quivil in 1279—91, nearly every stone of which may be identified by the valuable and copious fabric rolls of that interesting edifice, are of the same character: all of these have geometrical tracery in the windows, with mouldings and details, very similar to those of Merton. The nave of York, commenced in 1291; the chapter-house of Wells, built in the time of Bishop William de Marchia, 1292—1302; the monuments of Queen Eleanor, in Westminster abbey; Archbishop Peckham, at Canterbury; Edmund Crouchback, at Westminster; and numerous others, all agree in the same general features and details. This list of authorities might be considerably enlarged, but these are probably sufficient to establish the introduction of the Decorated style into England as taking place in the reign of Edward I. rather than in that of his successor, and consequently to throw back the Transition buildings generally to the latter part of the reign of Henry III. This is, however, contrary to the received theory, and even Mr. Paley, in his recent valuable work on Gothic mouldings, has classed those of Transition character as belonging to the time of Edward I.

The latest extract we have selected from the rolls proves that the vestry was building in 1310. An examination of this structure, which is situated on the south side of the altar end of the chapel, shews that it was an addition to the original

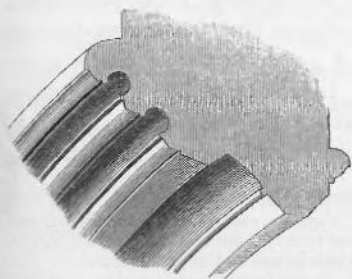
fabric, being built against the buttresses in such a manner as could not have been done if they had not been previously erected. The windows of the vestry have tracery in flowing lines, and of somewhat later character than those of the choir, though the mouldings are almost identical. The doorway which led from the chapel into the vestry is immediately connected with the remains of the sedilia, which have been partly cut away to make room for the monument of Sir Henry Saville. The mouldings of this doorway are very rich, and of somewhat later character than those of the window arches, having the fillets rounded instead of square, and not so bold, and the hollows not so deep. The window-arches of the vestry appear to have been worked from the same moulds with those of the choir itself, there being no perceptible difference between them.



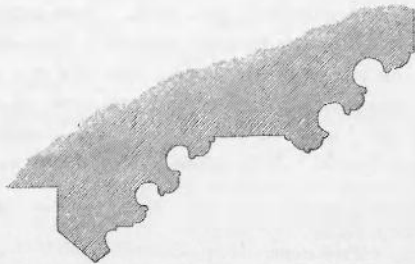
Window of Vestry, A.D. 1310



Plan of Window.



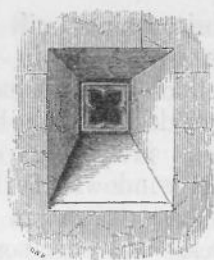
Mouldings of Window-arch of Vestry.



Section of Arch of Doorway into Vestry.

There has been an opening made through the wall for the purpose of looking from the vestry to the high Altar ;

this is now blocked up within, but it is very distinct on the outside towards the vestry ; it belongs to the same class as the openings so frequently found by the side of the chancel-arch, formerly called squints, and of late named Hagioscopes.



*Extracts from the Bursar's Rolls of Merton College.*

[1277.] Item (computat lib.) Domino Roberto Capellano xiiij.s ix.d pro dedicacione summi altaris. Item lib. eidem viij.d pro superaltari benedicendo.

[1278.] Item, de ij.s ix.d pro ligatione quinque librorum, qui erant de dono Magistri Ricardi de Clyf. Item, de viij.d pro pergamenis pro predictis libris.

Item de viij.d liberatis cuidam reparanti stillicidia<sup>1</sup> Ecclesie, per duas vices. Item de xiiij.d iij.q<sup>a</sup>. pro stagno<sup>2</sup> ejusdem operis.

Then follow various payments for building a new kitchen, and furnishing the same.

Id. comput. iiij.s liberat. Nicholao Pret. pro viij magnis franc.<sup>3</sup> lapidibus, qui vocantur sules<sup>4</sup>, emptis apud Watel<sup>5</sup>. Item comput. iiij.s ij.d liberat. eidem pro centum pedibus de curstable<sup>6</sup>, emptis ab eodem. Item iiij.s iiij.d liberat. eidem pro vij lapidibus emptis ab eodem, qui vocantur lyntel. Item comput. vj.s iij.d pro xv franc. lapidibus, qui vocantur scwes<sup>7</sup>, emptis ab eodem. Item xxj.d liberat. pro iij lapidibus emptis apud Teynton<sup>8</sup> cum cariagio. Item ij.s v.d liberat. predicto Nicholao pro xij pedibus de pynun<sup>9</sup> table, pret. ped. ij.d q. Item v.d liberat. eidem pro ij magnis lapidibus qui vocantur ragghes<sup>10</sup>. Item vij.d liberat. eidem pro j franc. lapide habente in longitudinem iiij ped. et di. Item comput. xiiij.s liberat. eidem pro ducent. lapidibus qui vocantur talston<sup>11</sup>. Item eid. alia vice liberat. xiiij.s pro ducentis de talston. Item eidem alia vice x.s vj.d pro j cent. de talston et quinquagint. empt. ab eodem. pret. cent. vij.s. Item comput. vij.s liberat. eidem pro j cent. de talston. It. ix.d liberat. eidem pro duabus columpnis<sup>12</sup> in fenestris. Item eidem iij.s iiij.d pro xx pedibus in longitudine de quibus-

<sup>1</sup> Gutters.

<sup>2</sup> Solder.

<sup>3</sup> Free-stone.

<sup>4</sup> Sills, from the French *seuil*.

<sup>5</sup> Wheatley, about five miles from Oxford: these quarries are still in use.

<sup>6</sup> Strings, or string-courses.

<sup>7</sup> Skews, stones cut askew, or sloping. Skew? a sloping face. Willis's Nomencl., p. 30. The word is written in the roll of

the year 1288 "scyues."

<sup>8</sup> Taynton, two miles from Burford, and about twenty from Oxford; these quarries are still in use and in good repute.

<sup>9</sup> Probably the coping stones of the gable, from the French *pignon*.

<sup>10</sup> Ragstone, a term still in use.

<sup>11</sup> Talstone, probably cut stone, from the French *pierre de taille*.

<sup>12</sup> Mullions. Willis's Nomencl., p. 47.



dam lapidibus qui vocantur scuwes<sup>7</sup> et ponuntur in opere in tecto parve domus retro coquinam. Item xvij.d liberat. eidem pro viij pedibus de pynun<sup>9</sup> table. Item eidem ij.s vii.d ob. pro xiiij pedibus de pynun<sup>9</sup> table pret. ij.d q<sup>a</sup>. Item comput. vj.s viij.d liberat. Payn le quareour de Teynton in partem solucionis pro franc. lapidibus ad novam coquinam, per unam dividendam, in qua patet de conventionem inter Custodem et predictum Payn. Summa iiij.lib. iiij.s iiij.d ob.

[1286.] *Recepta.* Item de Ecclesia Sancti Johannis in Oxon, xxx.s.

[1288.] *Expense in Ecclesia Sci. Johis.* In Consuetudinario<sup>13</sup> empt. xj.d. Item in Prefacionibus scriptis de novo iiij.s. Item pro illuminatione, xij.d. Item pro ligatura Missalis, xij.d. Item in cera empta, vj.s ij.d q<sup>a</sup>. Item in lampadibus et oleo ix.d ob. Item in incenso, iv.d. Item in vino vij.d ob. Item in stramine per tres vices, viij.d ob.

*Expense Straminis et aliorum in Ecclesia.* Item in stramine ad Ecclesiam in vigilia Sancti Nicholai, iiij.d. Item in cendiapilo<sup>14</sup> empto ad tergendas calices, iii.d ob. Item in emendacione j. seruri ad hostium vestiarii, j.d. Item in j corda ad velum quadragesimale, j. d. Item in anul' empt' ad idem, ij.d. It in stramine empto quando missa deberet celebrari pro Magistro I. de Cytenesvale, iiij.d ob. &c. &c. It in ij cordis emptis ad campanas, xv.d ob. q<sup>a</sup>. Item in stipendio ij operariorum ad preparanda scanna<sup>15</sup> ante crucem, iiij.d. Summa vj. s. viij.d. q<sup>a</sup>.

It' in emend' j. serure in port' anachor'<sup>16</sup> et j. clau' ad hostium aule Custodis, ij.d. It' in emendacione host' predicti, j.d. It' in stipendiis ij. carpen' per vj. dies ad reparand' coopertor' fornac' et j. spure<sup>17</sup> in celar', iiij.s vij.d q<sup>a</sup>. Item in stipen' ij. homin' qui fecerunt mur' anachor' per iiij. dies et di', ad tax' xij.d. Item in stramin' emp' ad cooperiend' predictum mur' xj.d ob. Item in stipendio j sclatt' et j operarii per ij dies super Ecclesiam, xj.d.

*Liberatio Petri empta ad Ecclesiam.* Item in lxx ped' de vousur'<sup>18</sup> emptos, v.s, precium pedis, j.d. Item in xl. ped' de egivs<sup>19</sup> empt' iiij.s ii.d, precium pedis, j.d q<sup>a</sup>. It in xvij ped' de skyues<sup>7</sup> empt' xvij.d, precium pedis, j.d. Item in xij ped' de Moynes<sup>12</sup> empt' xii.d. Item in x sumers<sup>20</sup> de Walaffard<sup>21</sup> empt' v.s. Item in cariagio, iiij.s ix.d. It in c ped' de Chaumbrances<sup>22</sup> empt' iiij.s, pretium ped' ob.

*Expense Orogii.* Item liberat. Domino G. Capellano ad opus orologii, iiij.s iiij.d.

<sup>13</sup> Rituale.

<sup>14</sup> A kind of silken tissue. See Ducange, v. Sendapillum.

<sup>15</sup> Scanna, the seats.

<sup>16</sup> Anachorite, the cell of an Anchorite.

<sup>17</sup> Probably sper, a partition.

<sup>18</sup> *Voussoirs* are the wedge-shaped stones of which arches are constituted. See Professor Willis's remarks on the word "voussoirs," Archit. Nomenclature, p. 42.

<sup>19</sup> This word is written in the roll

"egius," probably for ogivs, or "oggifs," as written in the Ely Sacrist's roll, 31 Edw. III., implying ogee mouldings. Willis's Nomencl., p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Great beams, from the French *sommier*, which is rendered by Cotgrave, "the summer, or great master beame in building."

<sup>21</sup> Wallingford, Berks, about twelve miles from Oxford. The Roll reads also Wallafford.

<sup>22</sup> Probably jamb-pieces.



[1304.] *Expense.* It. in stipendio duorum Carpentariorum qui fecerunt Campanarium, et emendationem Ecclesie ubi celebramus, et emendacionem graduum aule, per duodecim dies, ix.s ij.d, per diem quilibet eorum, iv.d iij q<sup>a</sup>. Item in virgis emptis ad Campanarium, iij.d. Item in stipulo empt. ad idem, v.d. Item in stipendio duorum operariorum ad plastrandum circa gradus aule contra hostium coquine per quatuor dies, xvij.d, &c. Item in stipulo empt. ad cooperturam Campanarii, ij.s iij.d.o. It. in virgis emptis ad idem, vj.d.

It. die sabbati, in vigilia Sci' Luc. Evangeliste in stipend' duorum cementariorum ad faciendum unum altare et alia necessaria, per duos dies, xiiij.d, quilibet eorum per diem, iij.d q<sup>a</sup>. Item in bordis empt. qui sunt circa predictum altare et ad fenestras que sunt in choro, ij.s. Item in stipendio unius Carpentarii qui fecit tabulas circa eundem altare, per quatuor dies xvij.d, per diem, iij.d ob.

[1306.] Among various payments on the bursar's roll of this year for the new chambers ("pro novis cameris") is the following entry :—Item pro iij lapidibus marmoreis ad altare iv.s vj.d.

[1310.] Item Die sabbati proxima post festum Sancti Gregorii in uno batello conducto de Eynesham usque ad Oxoniam, per viij. dies ij.s viij.d. Item in stipendio duorum sarratorum per sex dies iij.s vj.d. Item in stipendio v operariorum per v dies iij.s iij.d, videlicet ad fodiendum fundamentum vestiarii. Item in stipendio unius operarii vj.d. Item in stipendio fabri pro duobus centen. ferri fabricat.<sup>23</sup> ad vestiarium xv.s.

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## NOTICES OF ANCIENT ORNAMENTS, VESTMENTS, AND APPLIANCES OF SACRED USE.

### THE PAX, TABULA PACIS, OSCULATORIUM, OR PORTE-PAIX.

THE student of mediæval antiquities is frequently embarrassed in the course of his enquiries by the want of systematically arranged information regarding the details of sacred, personal, or social usages of former times, especially in our own country. The most minute circumstances connected with the manners and customs of Pagan times have been fully

<sup>23</sup> Wrought iron.