

NOTICE OF A DECORATIVE PAVEMENT IN HACCOMBE CHURCH, DEVONSHIRE.

THE accompanying engraving represents a portion of the small fragment which is apparently all that remains of the original pavement of Haccombe church, Devonshire: it is interesting from its being an instance of arrangement of an uncommon character, inasmuch as it is totally independent of plain tiles, whether square or oblong.

It seems probable that the whole chancel was at one time paved with decorative tiles: soon after the year 1759 the greater part were removed, and the various brasses and slabs, now occupying its centre, were placed in their present position. In laying down these all the tiles seem to have been taken up except three rows to the east, immediately beneath the steps leading up to the Communion-table: for those forming borders on the other sides, namely, two rows to the north and south, and four to the west, as well as four to the east, retain no satisfactory traces of arrangement. Of the tiles thus removed, those most worn were placed in the north aisle: and those less so, form a very handsome slab of pavement in the passage through the principal aisle to the chancel. They are arranged thus: marigold windows are placed down the centre, with spaces of the width of a tile between; the other tiles are arranged in pairs in this space, and right and left; and another row on each side completes the design.

The pattern, of which a representation is here given, is that mentioned as remaining below the steps to the altar. It extends in an almost perfect state from the right hand side to the length of twenty-one tiles. On the extreme right a sort of finish is given by bringing the last coats of arms, wheel-window, and coats of arms close together, and arranging the shields points outwards: then follow three lions, and the pattern as engraved. A curious variation is introduced, for the tile which occupies the alternate places in the upper row, after thus extending to the length of fourteen tiles, (7 feet,) is replaced throughout the other seven by one which appears in the engraving above the right hand coat of arms, this latter being changed for one with flowers, &c., in a battlemented

border (see below, No. 12.) The sameness, to which a pavement of this kind is liable, is also partly removed by the indiscriminate use of the armorial tiles; this, however, is perhaps accidental^a.

The patterns of the tiles, which measure six inches square, are as follows:

1. Within a circle, a lion rampant, the corners filled with a rudely designed foliated ornament.

A lion rampant occurs in the arms of many of the Devonshire families, as Redvers, Nonant, Pomeray, &c.; here however it was probably merely ornamental, as is frequently the case with heraldic animals introduced in pavements, *ex. gr.*, those at Winchester, where there are no coats of arms, or other devices that can *only* be heraldic.

2. The arms of England, placed diagonally, with monstrous animals, filling the sides and top.

3. The arms of Haccombe, (argent, 3 bends, sable,) similarly arranged, and with the same animals filling the sides and top.

4. The arms of Haccombe, as before; the sides and top filled with foliage.

5. A shield bearing 3 chevrons, each surmounted by a zig-zag line; the top of the shield dancetté. Filled up at the corners, &c., with small lions, their backs turned towards the shield. (Compare Nichols' Specimens of Tiles, No. 82.)

6. A shield: the arms possibly meant for semé of fleur-de-lis, two bars embattled, or two bars embattled between seven fleurs-de-lis, 3, 3, 1. This tile is even more coarsely executed than the others, and I cannot find any clue to the coat intended.

From the arms, 3, 4, 5, the date of the tiles can be determined to be about the middle of the fourteenth century. That in No. 5 is no doubt intended for the arms of Ercedechne, (ar. 3 chevrons sa.,) the zig-zag line merely representing a diaper, and the top being similarly formed for the same purpose of ornament. Now Sir John Ercedechne (or Archdeacon) a great benefactor of Haccombe church, where also he founded an arch-presbytery, about A.D. 1342, was the first of that name who held the estate, having inherited it in right of his wife Cecily, daughter of Sir Aubin de Haccombe:

^a Might not the Royal Arms be most effectively introduced into modern pavements, by placing "England," "Scot-

land," and "Ireland" on separate shields, and arranging them together?



TILE 3, FROM HACOMBE, DEVONSHIRE.

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11. 11. 11. 11. 11. 11.

and his granddaughter Philippa brought it to Sir Nicholas Carew, who deceased in 1404, aged 69, as appears from the elegant brass to his memory in the chancel. It is clear that the tiles, even if they were laid down by Sir Warren Archdeacon, could not have been designed much later than 1370, but they were probably twenty years earlier.

7. Within a circle, two birds seated back to back, looking at each other: between them a plant, possibly intended for some sort of dead nettle. The corners are filled, apparently with a quarter of a circle, and another figure adapted in form to the circles on each side of it.

This is not an uncommon ornament. An example occurs in the vestry of Bristol cathedral; and I have seen a drawing of a similar tile at Tintern abbey. The more common arrangement, however, is with the whole placed diagonally, and the birds seated on branches of the plant, which has usually trefoils at its upper extremity. This occurs at Winchester, Exeter, Bristol, and Salisbury^b. And a similar but simpler form exists at Hereford.

8. A circle, the corners being filled with foliage growing from it, and having a sort of diamond formed within it by circles sprung from the corners as centres. This diamond is filled by a cross and four squares, and the four spaces formed by the intersecting circles have fish in them.

On the authority of this tile we might arrange those containing fish (*ex. gr.* Nichols, p. vi.) in squares, head to head, and tail to tail, as well as heads inwards, of which examples exist in the Exchequer chamber, Exeter cathedral; in which case they resemble another not uncommon tile. Indeed some faint traces of the arrangement here suggested, exist in St. James' chapel, in the same cathedral.

9. A diamond, formed similarly to that in the centre of the last described tile, and is filled with a row of spots and a flower of eight petals, both adapted to the space. The four corners contain coarsely designed fleurs-de-lis, pointing outwards.

A somewhat different tile, to which the above description would apply, occurs in St. Michael's chapel, Exeter cathedral.

10. This tile is divided into nine spaces by narrow strips

^b Nichols' No. 98 seems to be a fragment of a tile of this sort.

of yellow, having the effect of coarsely drawn circles, sprung from the centres of these spaces, and nowhere continued so as to intersect.

11. This tile is divided by continuous yellow lines into sixteen squares, each containing a square with its sides hollowed out.

12. Within a border, embattled externally, are nine six-petalled flowers, their petals formed like those of primroses. They are divided into three rows by wavy lines.

13. A Catharine-wheel window, (four tiles completing the pattern,) the capitals of the shafts marked. The corners are filled with parts of a circle and a quatrefoil.

This is a very common pattern. It occurs in fragments at Ipplepen, Devon; at Exeter cathedral: and at Winchester it is largely used in the Lady Chapel. The Hacombe example is, like most of the other tiles at the same place, very carelessly executed; in fact there is not one tile with the shafts proceeding straight from the centre, though several moulds were employed, as appears from the number of these shafts, varying from nine to eleven.

The number of existing examples of the original arrangement of pavements of decorative tiles is now so small, that any authentic evidence, such as the remains which have been described, deserves attention. It is chiefly owing to the neglect of such authorities, that the pavements which of late years have been so much in vogue, as accessories to architectural decoration, have for the most part so unsatisfactory an appearance, and harmonize so little with the structures which they are destined to adorn.

ALWYNE COMPTON.