Notices of Archaeological Publications.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF GLASTONBURY ABBEY. By the Rev. Robert Willis, M.A., F.R.S. Read at the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute at Dorchester, August 4, 1865. Cambridge: Deighton and Bell. London: Bell and Daldy. 1866.

The Archæological world has often found occasion to thank Professor Willis for continuing the series of architectural histories of our cathedrals and conventual churches. The lot has fallen last upon Glastonbury. Of course, by this time we all know what to expect from the learned Professor, and what not to expect.

Thus any student who might be desirous of learning all about the doorways of St. Joseph's chapel in the Abbey under consideration, would be disappointed if he expected to find any notice either of the iconography, or the way of arranging the figures with regard to the place or the effects of light and shade; but, on the other hand, the student of architecture in a scientifically archæological point of view will find knotty points as to dates of erection, rebuilding, &c., most cleverly and satisfactorily unravelled. For Professor Willis is not the man to view architecture as if it were subject to the same laws as geology, and to believe that the lowest part of a building must of necessity be the oldest. On the contrary, he subjects both the actual edifices, or rather their remains, as well as the statements of contemporary writers, to the strictest investigation, and the results not unfrequently overthrow the commonly received views of the subject. Thus it was generally believed, up to the time of Professor Willis's investigations at Glastonbury, that the crypt of the chapel of St. Joseph was at least contemporary with the parts above ground, and, in the words of an eminent antiquary, "naturally the most antient part built differs from the superstructure only so much as the subterranean part usually does from the upper part."

Now the present book tells us that so far from this being the case, this crypt is clearly, from its architectural features, of fifteenth century work, and not only of fifteenth century work, but of two distinct periods. It was probably constructed to afford increased means of burial in consequence, as the author tells us, of the revival of the tradition of St. Joseph in the 14th century.

The history of the chapel itself may be told in a few words. In the year 63, according to the legends, St. Philip sent twelve of his disciples, with Joseph of Arimathea at their head, to convert the Britons. They settled in Glastonbury, and, in accordance with an admonition of the archangel, St. Gabriel, erected a chapel of wattled rods in honour of the Virgin. It is this chapel that our author proves to have occupied the site of that now so well known as that dedicated to St. Joseph. In the old accounts it is known as the "vetusta ecclesia." In the eighth century there were no less than four separate chapels or churches on the spot, one of which the old wicker church, stood at the west of all the others, and the "major

ecclesia" of King Ina at the east of all the others, the whole forming a group of churches nearly as we find in Ireland or in Greece.

At the time of the Conquest these churches had been reduced to two, viz., the *ecclesia vetusta* and the *ecclesia major*. The Normans, as usual, erected a new edifice, which was burnt, together with the *ecclesia vetusta*, in 1184. It was then rebuilt at the expense of the king, the abbey being at that time in his hands.

Chapter II. of the work under consideration is occupied with the proofs of the "identity of St. Joseph's chapel with the site of the wicker church and the lady chapel of the abbey," and gives us the authority for the legend of St. Joseph being burned at Glastonbury, which legend, it appears, was very coldly received by William of Malmsbury, who only mentions St. Joseph's name once, and even then in a very slight manner. However, in the middle of the fourteenth century the belief in his burial in the cemetery appears to have been revived, and John of Glaston, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, spares no pains to establish it. Our author has, however, forgotten to remark the very important place which St. Joseph of Arimathea occupies in the romance of the St. Grael—a romance which M. Villemarque has traced to a Pagan source, and which, with others of the same family, were revived and Christianised in after centuries.

Chapter III. is dedicated to the documentary history of the great church from 1182 down to the suppression of the monastery; and Chapter IV. to "its structural history and description." In Chapter V. the description and history of St. Joseph's chapel is resumed, and a most minute account is given—firstly, of the structural peculiarities, and, secondly, of the various changes which it underwent subsequent to its erection in 1184. As the old chroniclers tell us, it was built of squared stones of the most beautiful work, and no possible ornament omitted. As the Professor remarks, no zigzag work occurs in the contemporary round church of the Temple in London, and the mouldings of the latter also belong to a school of masons different from those of Glastonbury. The difference of contemporary schools of architecture in England is a most curious subject, and has hitherto been but little investigated. It is much to be hoped that some competent architectural antiquary would take it up and work it out thoroughly.

At page 50 we have an elaborate description of the common difficulty, which every architect undergoes when planning a building with vaulting inside and buttresses outside. The architect of St. Joseph's chapel got over it by sacrificing the outside piers. In the interior elevation all the services are equal, and a window comes in the middle of each; but if we look on the plan, we shall find that the vaulting shafts do not agree with the centres of the buttresses, and that the windows come most irregularly in the spaces between these buttresses. In process of time it was considered desirable to connect the two churches, which were only 50 feet apart, by means of a gable porch, and accordingly we have a very beautiful Early English piece of work for that purpose. It had two doors, North and South, and a flight of steps up to the entrance of the church. As it rendered the East windows of the chapel useless, an arch was cut in the East wall and a dome placed between its jambs. The chapel thus received an increase of light from the gables. In plate 7 a section of this part of the building is given, showing how the Early English masons used up the old arcade shafts of the east end to adorn the jambs of these new arches.

In Chapter VII. the history of the chapel is still further carried out and illustrated by the changes which took place in the gables at Durham. In the fifteenth century it was considered desirable to extend the Lady Chapel. The dome was, therefore, removed from the eastermost portion of the Norman chapel, and placed very near the western door of the church, that is, at the eastern end of the Early English gables.

The crypt under the gables was probably built first of all, and that under the chapel when the Virgin's altar was finally transported to the eastern end of the gables.

The last chapter is occupied with a short history of the monastic buildings, and with it a short *resume* of the last contribution of Professor Willis to the architectural history of our mediæval buildings. As a history, it must be pronounced most clear and exhaustive; it also presents most careful reading to the practical architect, as showing him how our ancestors grappled with, more or less, necessarily the same difficulties which present themselves to us every day. But anyone who has really seen the so-called chapel of St. Joseph at Glastonbury, can scarcely help desiring a companion little book illustrating the art, as well as the science, displayed by the twelfth century architect. For there are quite as many lessons to be learnt from the art as from the history.

It only remains to remark, that there are seven lithographed plates from the Professor's own drawings, &c., which admirably assist the text.

W. B.

A HANDBOOK OF ILLUMINATIONS, AS PRACTISED DURING THE MIDDLE AGES, with a Description of the Metals, Pigments, and Processes employed by the Artists at Different Periods. By HENRY SHAW, F.R.S. Bell and Daldy.

THE author and artist of this admirably illustrated book is known throughout the world for his skill in reproducing the arts of the illuminator and caligrapher as they were in vogue during the Middle Ages. This book is, so far as its proper subject extends, the most valuable result of his labours either of the literary or the artistic sort; like many other works of men capable in their peculiar walks of study, it far exceeds the promises of its title-page as quoted above, and deals not only with the minor decorative art in question during its mediæval stages, but opens with the ninth century, which is, to say the least of it, full early, and closes with the history of a state of the illuminator's art, which is absolutely that of the *renaissance* in design at its best—that is, ere mere imitation of common objects in a pictorial, laborious manner took the place that had been erst in possession of one of the most beautiful, thoroughly logical and consistent minor arts. Briefly to describe the contents of this book, let us add that its illustrations —to which the text is wisely made subordinate—begin with subjects of the ninth century, and continue, sometimes with one specimen from each age, sometimes with two of the same, until the sixteenth century is reached, and the craft of the illuminator, as understood in mediæval times, is shown to be dying out in the luxurious modes of that greater art of painting which, even then, was itself decaying rapidly. That Mr. Shaw had no occasion to follow his subject beyond this period will be readily understood by those who remember the "illuminations" which came into vogue in less than half a century after the latest specimen now before us was produced, and were really pictures illustrative of the texts to which they were attached, or

what we are accustomed to style "illustrations"—not caligraphic, decorative enrichments that grew out of its lettering.

When the period had arrived with which Mr. Shaw's labours terminate, the arts, major and minor, might be said to be flourishing, but they certainly were not in a progressive state. As during the Gothic ages all these fields of human genius had been cultivated for the sake of architecture, and to that end painting, sculpture and the rest were made her servants, so, in turn principally, as we believe, by means of the abuse of the art of the glass-stainer, architecture and sculpture were made subservient to painting, and cunningly placed mouldings and quaint bosses gave way to blank spaces that were destined to be filled with pictures, and ere long, as decay advanced, with long processions, and preposterously painted gods and goddesses, so that at last, by means of Verrio and Laguerre, soaring vaults defied at once perspective and probability, and the pictorial and decorative arts perished together.

The history of the rise, perfection, and decline, before the fall of every art, is to be read in Mr. Shaw's book, or what is better, traced in the exquisite copies he has produced from the masterpieces of illumination.

At first we have a beautiful, strictly conventionalised letter O from Cottonian MS. Galba A, xviii., purely a work of the caligrapher, not of the painter, having for its primary characteristic and fundamental condition perfect clearness of form, *i.e.*, legibility. This was a quality to be desired because the first business of every letter is to get itself read. The letter itself is not unmarked by Byzantine influences, and is a gem of art. The same Byzantine effect appears, but, so to say, acting in a different direction, in the Hiberno-Saxon letter S, which is here copied from the unsurpassed "Durham Book," and displays that apparently inexhaustible love of the serpent as an object for representation, or, more truly to write, as an exponent for those ineffably delicate curved lines which unfailingly characterise the productions of the marvellous schools of which the Book of Kells is the *magnum opus*. Decorated caligraphy was still the rule with the illuminators of the tenth century, and is superbly displayed here by means of a full-page facsimile—in all but colour—from the famous Egerton MS. No. 608, now in the British Museum. This example is among the most fortunate transcripts in the book before us, one of the principal objects of which is to show how happily the process of wood-engraving can be employed in wise hands to reproduce, if not the tints, at least the tones and forms of the several schools with which it deals. Mr. Shaw's success and that of his assistants in this respect approaches the marvellous. In exercising his peculiar skill, and dilating, as he does, upon its advantages, he proves satisfactorily the power of wood-engraving to render what is technically called "colour" by thoughtfully dealing with black and white. It is true that this faculty of the wood-engraver's art was always held to be one of its greatest recommendations. In fact the art of the chiaroscurist is proper to the wood-engraver, as well as to the worker on copper. This art is exactly that which, in a limited and mechanical manner, Mr. Shaw has now fortunately and, as he seems to believe, for the first time employed. Within these limits his success is extraordinary, but he does not, to our minds, justify that broader aim of others who propose to supersede the efforts of engravers on metal when dealing with the infinitely more difficult subjects that are supplied by representations, as in pictures of the human figure and landscapes, of forms which require what is technically

called "modelling" to become perfectly satisfactory to artistic eyes. The artists who have assisted Mr. Shaw are Mrs. Gould, Miss Byfield, Messrs. R. B. Utting, J. O. Jewitt, and J. S. Williams.

Further progress with the art of illumination is exemplified by specimens of eleventh century work from "Canute's Gospels," in the British Museum, a Bible (Harl. 2803), the Lindesey Psalter, now belonging to the Society of Antiquaries, and a fine illustration of the skill of the thirteenth century; a letter B, that is surrounded by a border with miniatures in roundels, enriched by intricate interlacements, and set in a mosaic-like ground.

Mr. Shaw gives ample consideration to one of the most beautiful examples of its kind, *i. e.*, the famous Tenison Psalter, which comprises sixteen pages of exquisite workmanship, and display apparently inexhaustible invention. Of these the book before us now contains a copy —without colours—from the first page, which is in itself probably the most happy specimen that could have been found of illumination during that golden age of English art, the reign of Edward the First. Fine as it is, this example is not without a few signs of the growth of luxury among our ancestors, and, with all its beauty, errs a little in excess of playfulness and exuberance of invention, such as could not be restrained even by the solemnity of the office of decorating the Psalms themselves. Of all things a book of devotion should be severe, and, if needful, even melancholy in its decorations. Severity of style does not imply lack of pathos or of cheerfulness, still less of incidental illustration and wealthy ornaments such as this book displays. Nevertheless, lovely as are the paintings and illuminations of this famous MS., it is to us so far unfortunate that loveliness is its chief characteristic. It is as if the artist treated the Psalms as a collection of secular poems, and the result is the production of what is rather the finest "gift book" that ever existed than the aptest inclosure for the songs of David. This was in all probability a gift book from royal hands. Its supposed history is curious, being that the volume was wrought in that famous monastery of Blackfriars, London, which was founded by Edward the First and his queen Eleanor, a convent which shared with Lincoln Minster and Westminster the relics of the queen and the young prince Alphonso. It was begun as a marriage present for that Alphonso, after his betrothal to the daughter of Florent, Count of Holland, in 1284. This young prince was employed by his father to deposit, in his name, upon the shrine of Edward the Confessor, the gold ornaments of Llewellyn of Wales: to him also has been ascribed that very curious piece of the inlaid work of a tomb-slab which was not many years since accidentally discovered in Westminster Abbey, between the head of the Confessor's shrine and the foot of the monument of Henry V. He died almost immediately after his betrothal, and, as it is alleged, this fact accounts for the work in question never having received more than eight pages by the able hand which produced such exquisite decorations as those before referred to. Inferior hands completed the book, and it passed not long after into the possession of the princess Elizabeth, who married Humphrey de Bohun. The marginal illustrations of this ineffably lovely work, of which Mr. Shaw engraves that which is, so far as design goes, probably the finest, are simply perfect. There is one peculiarly gratifying point in the history of this gem of illumination: this is, that the ornaments and pictures with which it is so profusely illustrated are, beyond all reasonable doubt, the work of an English hand. Upon this over-refinement followed, as might be expected,

a stage of art in illumination which admitted in no small degree the practice of the painter proper, and dealt with marginal decoration with miniatures and pictures; as this state of things progressed it opened the door to a greater proportion of pictorial matter, and expelled a corresponding amount of that which was purely decorative, so that ere the end came, the crafts of the illuminator and caligrapher had merged into that of the miniaturist. Whether this change was an improvement or not is a question for critics.

We have not space to follow Mr. Shaw through all the mass of interesting facts and still more precious pictures which he has reproduced here. Suffice it that he has compiled with industry an account of the art to which he refers, which, although it does not take a very large scope or exhibit considerable critical knowledge or acumen, is yet marked by good taste and the results of that cultivated judgment in respect to illuminations which has grown up during a long and laborious course of study. The author judges of his materials rather as the historian of a peculiar class of paintings than an artist. It may be that this accounts for a certain limitation of aim that is apparent in his remarks, no less than for his neglecting to pronounce critically upon the respective values of the numerous examples that are before us. This has yet to be done in English. The text may most correctly be described as a series of running comments on some of the most exquisite examples of the kind to which it is devoted, chronologically arranged, with analyses of the separate styles as they follow one another, and is therefore truly the thing it is described to be, *i. e.*, a "handbook" of the art of illumination, not an essay or history of the subject, and still less a critical account of the art in question. A very important addition to the text comes from the author's competent hands, and takes the shape of a continuous and elaborate account of the modes of practice in illumination during the Middle Ages, the pigments, metals, and other materials that were then or have since come into vogue; also, so far as it is possible to produce such a thing in completeness, a very carefully written and thoroughgoing account of the modes for using these materials.

ECCLESIASTICAL AND DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF ENGLAND. By Francis T. Dollman.

Mr. Dollman announces a work on the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of London (40 plates), including St. Saviour's, Southwark; St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield; St. Helen's, with other examples. Also additional Illustrations of the Ancient Domestic Architecture of England (80 plates), in continuation of Mr. Dollman's work already published. It is requested that subscribers' names should be sent to the Author, 63, Gloucester Crescent, Regent's Park, N.W.

LITERATURE AND ITS PROFESSORS. London: Bell and Daldy, 1866.

Though not coming under the head of Archæological, and therefore not within the province of the reviewer, some readers of the Archaeological Journal may be interested to learn that a work under this title has just been published by Mr. Thomas Purnell, late Secretary to the Institute.

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Now the present book tells us that so far from this being the case, the crypt is clearly, from its architectural features, of fifteenth century work, and not only of fifteenth century work, but of two distinct periods. It was probably constructed to afford increased means of burial in consequence, as the author tells us, of the revival of the tradition of St. Joseph in the 14th century.

The history of the chapel itself may be told in a few words. In the year A.D. 63, according to the legends, St. Philip sent twelve of his disciples, with Joseph of Arimathea at their head, to convert the Britons. They settled at Glastonbury, and, in accordance with an admonition of the archangel St. Gabriel, erected a chapel of wattled rods in honour of the Virgin. It is this chapel that our author proves to have occupied the site of that now so well known as that dedicated to St. Joseph. In the old accounts it is known as the "vetusta ecclesia." In the eighth century there were no less than four separate chapels or churches on the spot, one of which, the old wicker church, stood at the west of all the others, and the "major ecclesia"

of King Ina at the east of all the others, the whole forming a group of churches such as we find in Ireland or in Greece.

At the time of the Conquest these churches had got reduced to two, viz., the *ecclesia vetusta* and the *ecclesia major*. The Normans, as usual, re-erected the latter, which was burnt, together with the *ecclesia vetusta*, in 1184. It was then rebuilt at the expense of the king, the abbey being at that time in his hands.

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In Chapter VII. the history of the chapel is still further carried out and illustrated by the changes which took place in the galilee at Durham. In the fifteenth century it was considered desirable to extend the Lady Chapel. The dossel was, therefore, removed from the eastermost portion of the Norman chapel, and placed very near the western door of the church, that is, at the eastern end of the Early English galilee.

The crypt under the galilee was probably built first of all, and that under the chapel when the Virgin's altar was finally transported to the eastern end.

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