

THE MURAL AND DECORATIVE PAINTINGS WHICH ARE
NOW EXISTING, OR WHICH HAVE BEEN IN EXIST-
ENCE, DURING THE PRESENT CENTURY AT CANTER-
BURY CATHEDRAL.

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The architecture and history of Canterbury Cathedral are well known to archæologists, and many books have been published in recent times which deal generally with the most interesting features of this noble fane; but, so far as I am aware, no work has been brought out which treats only or specially of the Mural and Decorative Paintings which are now in existence or which have been recorded as existing during the present century. I now therefore venture to endeavour to supply this deficiency, and to mention as concisely as possible, and in regular routine, the various examples in this most interesting series of paintings which are still to be seen, or of whose recent existence I have been enabled to obtain certain information.

There is perhaps no building about which so much has been written as the Cathedral Church of Canterbury, and we have contemporary records for the execution of most of the important works in connection with it. The earliest mention of any paintings here—and this is, I believe, the earliest mention of any painting in the churches of England—is that by William de Malmesbury, who, writing of Conrad's choir, says :—"It was so glorious that nothing comparable to it was to be seen in England, whether we make our observations on the transparency of the glass windows, the brightness of the marble pavement below, or the admirable beauty and elegance of the paintings which drew the eyes of all beholders to the roof above."¹ Gervase, the monk of Canterbury, also an eye-witness, mentions the roof as "a sky finely painted;" and we know that this roof was flat and similar to the one still existing at Peterborough Cathedral.

In comparatively modern times, besides the volume by Somner, from which we have just quoted, we have a work by Dart with an engraving of the paintings in the Chapel of St. John the Baptist (as it is commonly called) in the crypt, published in 1725, another by Duncombe in 1787, two editions of Hasted's *History of Canterbury* in 1799 and 1801, *A Walk in and about Canterbury*, by W. Gostling, in 1825, besides several later works, which all make some mention of the paintings, which I will now endeavour, without further preface, to describe.

¹ William Somner's *Antiquities of Canterbury*, the second edition, revised and enlarged by Nicolas Battely in the year 1703.

Before I commence with the cathedral, I must mention very considerable remains of colouring on the canopies of the arches at the east end of the Chapter-house; there are also traces of painting on the wall within the arcade, and some fragments of enamelled work in the central canopy. This is in all probability coeval with the stone work, and may therefore be assigned to the middle of the fourteenth century.

On entering the cathedral from the cloisters by the north transept door, one's attention is at once attracted to the beautiful canopied monument of Archbishop Peckham, who died in 1292. The canopy still retains traces of elaborate painting and gilding.

On some tabernacle work and cornices at the east end of the Chapel of the Virgin, more commonly called the Dean's Chapel, leading out of the transept, are remains of decorative colouring of the fifteenth century.

Passing by the north choir aisle for the present, let us enter the choir, where on the north side is the monument of Archbishop Chicheley, which is kept in repair by All Souls' College, Oxford, of which the Archbishop was the founder. The colouring has been recently restored by the college.

On the south side of the choir, close to the altar steps, being the position of a former altar to St. Dunstan, and incorporated with the screen erected by Prior de Estria in 1304, is some very beautiful decorated carving and painting,¹ namely, in the upper part the space is filled in with elaborate diaper work, composed of a series of hexagons, each containing a six-leaved flower, and round it six trefoils with points between the cusps, of the character known as Kentish tracery. All the flowers and trefoils are coloured a pale red, while the wavy line surrounding them is blue. Above and below are a line of painted quatrefoils white on a dark green ground with a blue bordering, and below this again is an arcade with trefoils between the arches; these and the panels of the arcades are painted a dark red, and dark olive green alternately.

"Behind the existing woodwork of the return stalls, Sir Gilbert Scott found that the middle space of Prior Eastry's screen had been panelled with painted oak (between the tops of the stalls and the string course beneath the traceried openings). The pattern painted upon this oak panelling was simply formed of gilt rosettes upon a green ground, but it was surmounted by a handsome border, formed of gilded lions and lilies alternating in a horizontal band. In this Canterbury border there is not, as at Rochester, any marked allusion to the French flag, both lions and lilies being on one uniformly red ground. Yet there may be in them some allusion to the marriage of Edward II in 1308 to Isabella of France. Sir Gilbert Scott believes this decoration at Canterbury to be original work of the fourteenth century."²

On a projection above St. Michael's or the Warrior's Chapel were, until recently, paintings on panels of SS. Gregory and Augustine. There were, according to Gostling, originally four paintings, and there can be little doubt that the other two portrayed, SS. Ambrose and

¹ An engraving of the diaper work is to be found in Rickman's *Gothic Architecture*, 5th edition, page 173.

² *Archæologia Cantiana*, vol. x, 72. To the writer of the paper quoted from, on the decorative painting of the choir at Rochester Cathedral, viz.: the Rev. W. J.

Scott Robertson, as well as to the Rev. Dr. Blore and Mr. Gordon of the King's School, Canterbury, I am much indebted for valuable assistance given in duly appropriating and dating the various subjects.

Jerome, the two other doctors of the church. The projection has however been taken away. The paintings were probably of the fifteenth century. On the ceiling of the chapel above are considerable remains of colouring on the bosses and groining.

On the south side of the south choir aisle are the monuments of Archbishops Walter Reynolds and Hubert Walter, on which were remains of colour on the shields, &c., but these are now scarcely visible.

On entering the retro-choir or Trinity Chapel, we first notice the beautiful monument of Edward the Black Prince. The effigy itself still contains traces of the gilding with which it was once overlaid. On the canopy above are remains of painting, and gilding on the parapet and on the shields; and on the under side is a subject which it is somewhat difficult now to make out. Gostling mentions this subject as representing our Saviour in the centre, and the four Evangelists within medallions in the corners, all very faint. There can be little doubt, however, that the painting in the centre represents the Blessed Trinity, as usually portrayed, namely: the Almighty with the crucified Saviour in His lap, and the Holy Ghost as a star at the head. It is thus described by Mr. Blore in his *Monumental Remains*, and also in Stothard's *Monuments*. The only part which can now be distinguished, is a portion of a large figure clothed in an ermine robe. The four Evangelists within medallions at the corners are more distinct. The subject of the Blessed Trinity is not a very common one in mural paintings. There is an example which has recently been discovered, on one of the Norman piers on the north side of the choir of St. Alban's Cathedral.

On the opposite or north side of the chapel is the tomb of King Henry IV and his second wife, Joan of Navarre, also with a flat canopy above, which has the word "Soverayne" repeated along the southern half of the parapet, while the words "A temperance" are repeated on the northern, there are also considerable remains of painting and gilding. On the under side of the canopy are three shields, that on the west bearing the arms of England and France, quarterly; that in the centre the arms of England and France impaling Evreux and Navarre; and that on the east the arms of Evreux and Navarre, quarterly; the groundwork is diapered with "eagles volant," and the word "Soverayne" as the king's device and motto; and ermines collared chained with the words "a temperance" for that of the queen.¹ As on the parapet the king's device and motto covers the southern half of the canopy which is above the effigy of the queen, while the queen's device and motto covers the remaining portion above the effigy of the king. The space between the diagonal lines are diapered with small sprigs, terminating in flowers.²

At the foot of the tomb is a tablet, with the painting now rather indistinct of an angel bearing a shield with the same achievements emblazoned on it, as are on the central shield on the canopy, if this is correctly delineated by Dart. What can be made out now seems not to tally with this description, and there appears to be a crescent on which the Virgin was perhaps supported. It is highly probable that here and on the canopy there have been two distinct series of paintings.

Very similar to this monument and that of Edward the Black Prince,

¹ Gostling, page 275, New Edition (1825.)

² See also Mr. Blore's *Monumental Remains*.

and a connecting link between them, is the monument of Richard II, at Westminster Abbey, this also has a canopy, the under side of which is painted in four compartments; in two are angels holding shields, and in the other two representations of our Lord with the Virgin and our Lord in glory.

At the head of Henry IV's tomb is another tablet on which the painting is now almost obliterated. We have however ample evidence to prove that this was a representation of the martyrdom of Thomas-a-Becket. The date of these paintings will, I think, be correctly placed at about the year 1437, immediately after the death of Queen Joan of Navarre.

As the martyrdom of Thomas-a-Becket, in the year 1170, was not only the most important event in the history of Canterbury, but probably also the most important episode in the ecclesiastical history of England prior to the Reformation, it will not, I think, be deemed uninteresting for me to state here such other examples of the mural paintings representing the figure or martyrdom of the Saint of which I have been enabled to collect information. Considering the extraordinary popularity which the Saint acquired in England, we should expect to find him often portrayed among the numerous mural paintings in our churches of which any notice has been given; but though I have endeavoured to obtain information from all available sources, I can only give the few following instances of paintings on this subject which are now existing, or which are known to have been in existence during the present century.

At Hadleigh Church in Essex¹ is a portrait of the Saint, with the words "Beatus Tomas" above. This has by some been supposed to have been painted between the years 1170 and 1173, the dates of the martyrdom and canonization of the Saint.

At Stow Church in Lincolnshire, in a recess in the north transept, another portrait of the Saint has been recently discovered. There was another subject on each side, now almost entirely obliterated, viz., on one side the Saint dining with ecclesiastics, and on the other his martyrdom. This probably was painted in the thirteenth century.

Another early representation is to be found at Hauxton Church, Cambridgeshire. Of this painting a tradition is still extant in the village that in the time of Cromwell an order was sent down to Hauxton, as elsewhere, to destroy all Popish pictures, and that the parishioners, who even at this period held the Saint in special veneration, bricked up the arched recess, within which the painting was, before the arrival of the commissioners, while they left all the other paintings to their fate. An account of the discovery of this painting during the restoration of the church is to be found in the *Ecclesiologist*² where, however, a different reason is assigned for the walling up of the recess. The painting probably dates from the latter half of the thirteenth century.

Other portraits of the Saint remain on a panel of the screen at Stalham in Norfolk, in the chantry of Master Wotton at Maidstone Church,³ and at Stoke Charity in Hampshire.⁴

Examples of the martyrdom of the thirteenth century are, or were, to be seen at Bramley, Hampshire, recently discovered; at Preston, near

¹ Murray's *Handbook of Essex*.

⁴ *Archæological Association Journal*,

² Vol. xxii (xix, new series), page 383. x, 74.

³ Weale's *Quarterly Papers*, vol. iv; Murray's *Handbook of Kent*.

Brighton, in Sussex :¹ and at St. John's Church, Winchester :² of the fourteenth century, at Easton ;³ and Burlingham St. Edmund's,⁴ Norfolk ; and at Whaddon,⁵ Bucks : of the fifteenth century, at Eaton, Norfolk ;⁶ and at the Guild of the Holy Ghost Chapel, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire⁷ ; and of unascertained date at Brereton, Cheshire⁸ ; Hingham, Norfolk⁹ ; Wotton Bassett, Wiltshire¹⁰ ; Stoke d'Abernion, Surrey ;¹¹ and at Faversham, Kent.¹² This list can probably be very considerably augmented, as it only includes six portraits of the Saint and fifteen representations of his martyrdom. As, however, the Saint was expunged from the calendar almost immediately after the Reformation, and a special crusade ordered against every memorial of him, it is highly probable that most of the paintings of his martyrdom, &c., were entirely destroyed, and in several instances, where a series of paintings have been discovered in our churches, this special subject has been found to have been almost entirely effaced, whilst the others have been simply whitewashed over. In the example at Canterbury the whole panel is scratched over, evidently with the intention of defacing the painting. There are, of course, many churches dedicated to this Saint in England. It is said that at the time of the completion of the present choir the cathedral was re-dedicated in his honour,¹³ and we find him as the patron saint of the parish church at Portsmouth, founded very shortly after his martyrdom, also of Winchelsea in Sussex, and of other fine churches. A curious example of the popularity which the Saint immediately acquired exists in the fact of the great abbey of Aberbrothwick or Arbroath on the east coast of Scotland being dedicated in his honour. This abbey was founded by William the Lion in the year 1178, and in return for the tribute of respect to England, as this dedication was deemed to be, the town of Arbroath was allowed many special privileges of trade with all the ports of England, London only being excepted.

But to return to the cathedral. On the north side of Becket's crown were traces of curious paintings of two angels holding a Cardinal's hat ; these were part of the decoration above the monument of Cardinal Pole, who died in 1558, and who was the last Roman Catholic Archbishop interred in the cathedral. On the south wall was a large St. Christopher carrying our Saviour over the water, as he is usually depicted, and round the walls were numerous paintings of a Phoenix rising from the flames, probably intended to illustrate the many occasions on which the cathedral had been destroyed by fire, only to be built each time in a style of increased grandeur ; these were visible fifty years ago, but have now entirely disappeared.

The Chapel of St. Andrew, under St. Andrew's tower, and opening out of the north choir aisle, contains a considerable amount of painting of a much earlier character than any that has yet been described. On the four vaulting ribs of Norman architecture are painted stripes of black

¹ *Archæologia*, xxiii, 311.

² *Archæol. Assoc. Journal*, ix, 1, x, 53 and 80.

³ *Archæological Journal*, xviii, 269.

⁴ *Norfolk Archæologia*, v, 185.

⁵ *Norfolk Archæologia*, vi, 167 ; *Archæological Journal*, xxiii, 78 ; *Buckinghamshire Archæologia*, iii, 272.

⁶ *Norfolk Archæologia*, vi, 161.

⁷ Smith's *County of Warwick*, p. 262.

⁸ *Buckinghamshire Archæol.*, iii, 273.

⁹ *Norfolk Archæol.*, vi, 167.

¹⁰ Kelly's *Postal Directory of Wiltshire*.

¹¹ *Buckinghamshire Archæol.*, iii, 273.

¹² *Notes on the Churches of Kent* (Glynne), p. 15.

¹³ Hasted's *History of Canterbury*, 2nd edition, vol. i, p. 332.

and white alternately, and on the ceiling between them is an early foliated pattern. On the arch opening into the choir aisle, which has several plain roll mouldings, are painted the cable, rose, indented, and other ornaments of the Norman period. On the north wall, where the arrangements of the windows, most of which are blocked, is very curious, there is a pattern of broad bands of purple and white alternately, with a powdering of stars; there is also colouring on three corbels, supporting a projection on the north wall, and also round the semicircular heads of the windows. On each side high up on the wall, that on the south being above the arch opening into the choir aisle, is the monogram "IHC" within a plaited wreath, which may be intended to represent the Crown of Thorns. It is very difficult to assign a certain date to early paintings, and I have ventured to think that the dates often assigned to the early paintings in our churches are later than the styles of ornament, &c., would naturally suggest. No mention is made by Gervase of any painting in Conrad's choir, except that on the ceiling, as already quoted, but as this chapel seems to have entirely escaped the great fire in 1174, the painting was probably executed shortly before that date.

Covering the whole space within a blocked up window on the north side of the north choir aisle is a large subject, which has not, I believe, up to the present time been satisfactorily made out, and the only mention of it which I can find is in Murray's *Handbook of Kent*, where it is described as the conversion of St. Hubert. There can be no doubt that it is intended to represent scenes in the life of St. Eustace. The various scenes seem to have been somewhat mixed up, and without the knowledge of the legend it would be almost impossible to make out the various scenes. In the lower portion, on the left side, can be seen a fragment of a castle, and what appears to be a portion of the trappings of a horse; in the centre are two dogs lying down, and a figure carrying a horn; and on the right hand side is a large white stag with a noble pair of antlers, and a crucifix bearing the crucified Saviour between them, turned towards the figure in the centre. There can be no doubt from the attitude of the various figures, that this scene represents the conversion of the Saint, as described in the popular legend. On the tier above can be indistinctly made out the figure of the Saint also carrying a horn, and as portions of small feet can be seen, this scene probably refers to that part of the legend where the Saint is about to carry his two children across a river to a place of safety, a series of wavy lines being apparently intended for water. Above again can be seen a large figure of the Saint, sufficiently distinct to enable one to make out the costume as being that of a warrior. He is in the middle of the wavy lines, on either side of him are the hinder parts of an animal, and above him a portion of a ship. This, no doubt, represents that part of the legend where St. Eustace having carried one of his children across the river is in mid stream on his return to fetch the other, when suddenly a wild animal appears from the wood on either side and carries each of the children away; while to add to his misery he finds on his return home that during his absence his wife has been kidnapped by pirates. In the upper portion of the arch is the Saint's martyrdom. In the centre is a large brazen bull open at the top, and with a furnace burning fiercely beneath. The executioner can be seen on the right forcing the saint into the opening in the bull, and on the left at the head of the bull is a crowned figure in ermine, probably intended for the

Roman emperor. Above are clouds, &c., and perhaps a representation of the soul of the Saint being received into heaven. The early histories of SS. Hubert and Eustace are very similar, though the period of their conversions was nearly 600 years apart. Both saints were of noble birth and passionately devoted to the chase, and both were converted by an encounter with a milk white stag, bearing the crucifix between its horns. In the case of St. Eustace a voice actually proceeded from the crucifix, informing him of the trials and temptations which awaited him, and the support which would be accorded him. A most interesting account of the lives of these saints will be found in Mrs. Jameson's *Poetry of Sacred and Legendary Art*, pages 732 and 792 respectively.

In pictures and early paintings both saints are represented with their hounds and a stag bearing the crucifix between its horns, but I believe there is this invariable and certain distinction, namely that St. Eustace is always portrayed as a warrior, while St. Hubert has the habit of a hunter or the vestments of a bishop, and carries a horn which has been designated his special and characteristic emblem, and it is doubtless owing to the fact that the figure in the lower parts of the series is seen to be carrying a horn, that this painting has been erroneously supposed to represent the conversion of St. Hubert, which is now a more popular subject, and one better known than the conversion of St. Eustace.

We find on the authority of Mr. Parker in his work entitled the *Calendar of the Anglican Church*, and also in a work called *Emblems of Saints*, that St. Eustace was also sometimes represented carrying a horn, and this is, I think, all we require to prove that these paintings refer entirely to St. Eustace, and have nothing to do with St. Hubert.

It may be worth mention that there are no churches in England dedicated to St. Hubert, and only three to St. Eustace, viz., at Tavistock, Devonshire; Ibberton, Dorsetshire; and Hoo, in Suffolk. I have not been able to discover any other mural paintings representing St. Eustace, while there are at least two instances, which are called scenes in the life of St. Hubert, one, the well known painting of St. Hubert hunting, at the back of the monument of St. Oliver de Ingham, in Ingham Church, Norfolk, which was still visible when Stothard made his drawing of the monument, but of which no vestiges now remain. The other at the chapel of Idsworth, near Petersfield, in Hampshire, is supposed to represent the saint raising a Lycanthrope.¹ It is however very questionable whether either of these examples refer to St. Hubert at all.

Having, I trust, now described all the recorded and existing paintings in the upper portion of the cathedral, let us now descend to the crypt, which is without doubt one of the most interesting examples of Norman and Transitional architecture in the kingdom.

Near the west end on some of the piers are texts, within scroll borders, probably of the time of Elizabeth or the end of the sixteenth century, and in the centre of the ceiling of the western bay of the central aisle is a very perfect Tudor rose. On the ceiling of the enclosed chapel of St. Mary Undercroft, once so sacred, and to which admission was with such difficulty obtained, is another Tudor rose, which here and elsewhere

¹ A tracing of these paintings was exhibited on 1st March, by the kind

permission of the Rev. Campbell Lock, the vicar of Chalton-cum-Idsworth.

seems to have been a portion of decoration painted over some earlier work. The ceiling of the eastern portion is covered with circles enclosing rays, the general groundwork being painted black; these may be examples of the "Rose en soleil," the badge of Edward IV.¹ On the walls are numerous shields charged with the armorial bearings of France, the Sec of Canterbury, the Nevilles, Archbishop Arundel, also one with the royal arms and three labels, &c. There are considerable remains of colour on the canopy work of the reredos, and at the back of the altar can be made out a portion of an inscription. This chapel is said to have been screened off from the crypt by Cardinal Morton in the reign of Henry VII, though the screen work is almost of the Decorated character.

On the north side of the crypt under St. Andrew's tower remains of colouring are visible.

The roof of that portion under Becket's Crown at the east end is covered with the initials "M" and "I," and with crowns. This it is thought demonstrates the fact that the whole of the crypt was dedicated to the Virgin. The colour of the initials is as usual in red, and the date fifteenth century.

In that part under the Trinity Chapel on the east side of the massive south-west pier are now traced out by shallow lines filled with modern colour, our Lord seated in glory and giving the benediction, and surrounded by the emblems of the four Evangelists. It is probable that these figures were formerly coloured, the lines being simply the outline for the original design. On the corresponding pier on the north side are traces of similar outlines.

On the south-west face of the next column eastward (on the south side), are distinct traces of a painting of a bishop with a mitre under an ornamented canopy. The colour is quite gone, but on standing a little distance away the subject can be distinctly traced by the stain on the stone. A similar case may be mentioned, namely, at the church of Eaton Bishop, near Hereford, where, though no colour can be seen, outlines of saints are visible on the columns under certain conditions of light.

We have now come round to the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, as it is now erroneously called, as it should more properly be denominated the Chapel of St. Gabriel. It is situate on the south side of the crypt and partly under Anselm's tower, and is divided into a nave and chancel by two semicircular arches springing from a central column, which have at some period been bricked up. When this closing up took place is not recorded. Hart only mentions the fact of its being thus closed up, so that it must have been considerably before the commencement of the eighteenth century. The materials of the wall are certainly old, and it may therefore be open to the suggestion that, as the Chapel of St. Mary Undercroft became so rich in jewels and gold, the chancel of this chapel was used as a safe receptacle for the valuable offerings, and that these may have been hidden away and closed up at the time of the Reformation. The chapel itself is part of the original design of the crypt, and therefore of the early part of the twelfth century. It exactly corresponds with the chapel under St. Andrew's tower on the north side. The ceiling

¹ There is an example of this in Rainham Church: see Glynne's *Churches of Kent*, page 173.

of the nave, which appears to have been open to the rest of the crypt, has been covered with painting. There are at least two different periods, of the later only a Tudor rose, similar to those previously mentioned, remains. The earlier portion is still in a great measure concealed by the whitewash, and I consider that, were the whitewash carefully removed, very interesting discoveries might be made. There are numerous medallions, those in the central compartments being large, and containing groups of figures, while the smaller medallions contain single figures of saints or of seraphim holding scrolls; but on account of the whitewash and the imperfection of the paintings visible, it is almost impossible to make out either the general design or the individual subjects represented. It is however highly probable that these are connected with the paintings in the chancel, and that the whole scheme represents the various appearances to man by members of the Heavenly Host. The arrangement here is somewhat similar to that at St. Mary's Church, Guildford, and the date is afforded to us by some foliated designs of the last quarter of the twelfth century.

The task of getting through the wall dividing the nave and chancel is by no means an easy one. The hole which has been broken through is only about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter and 2 feet from the ground, sloping down to the level of the floor within. Those who have, however, safely accomplished this feat must have been surprised and delighted by the wonderfully perfect paintings with which they have found themselves face to face. This inner chapel, which is about 8 feet in length by 8 feet in breadth at the west end, is in the form of an apse, with a semicircular-headed arch in the east wall. On the south of the altar is a plain round-headed aumbrye and a round-headed piscina, while on the north side is another semicircular-headed recess, which had also a water drain. If this were also a piscina it is most unusually placed, and I know of no other in England in this position.¹ It may, however, be accounted for by the fact that there were two altars, as may be inferred from the two inscriptions formerly existing in the chapel. I have recently seen a piscina of the Early English period in the west wall of the sacristy at Flamstead Church, Hertfordshire, the position of which I believe to be unique.

In the case of the early paintings at Kempey² in Gloucestershire, which I had the honour of bringing under notice last year, I ventured to think that those in the chancel were executed almost immediately after the chancel walls were built, the paintings being on a very thin layer of distemper, not exceeding one-sixteenth of an inch in thickness, laid directly on a wall of very rough masonry. I do not think this is the case with the paintings under consideration, but that they are of a later date than the masonry. The walls, where now visible, are composed of excellent smooth stone work, which would hardly have been the case had they been intended to have been at once concealed by painting, and one

¹ At Bletchley, in Buckinghamshire, is a piscina in the south wall of the sacristy, which is, as is commonly the case, situate on the north side of the chancel, the recess within which the piscina is, though now closed up, seems originally also to have opened into the chancel as there is a canopy on the north side of the chancel,

over a portion of the wall which has been comparatively recently filled in, and which exactly corresponds with the opening on the north side of the wall into the sacristy. This may therefore be cited as being possibly another example.

² *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxiv, p. 275.

can see where the face of the stone work has been chipped in order to give the plaster a better hold than the simple smooth surface could have afforded it. The paintings here are executed on a coat of distemper laid on a thick layer of a sort of very coarse mortar, about a quarter of an inch in thickness, as can unfortunately be seen in the ceiling and elsewhere, where pieces have fallen away. They are of the highest interest, owing to the brightness of the colouring, the unusual excellence of the design and execution, and also to the fact of their not having been yet restored. Engravings of them are to be found in Dart's *Canterbury Cathedral*, published in 1725, and in Wright's *Archæological Album* in 1845. Both of these are, however, in several particulars incorrect.

The first paintings to be noticed are on a pier or buttress strip on the north and south walls respectively, near the west end, namely, the figure of a large angel with six wings full of eyes, and the feet resting on a wheel which is also winged. These were erroneously considered by Dart to be in some way connected with St. Catherine, but are now thought to represent the vision of the wings and wheels as mentioned in the first and following chapters of Ezekiel. The eyes on the wings of the angels and the winged wheels certainly accord with the vision of Ezekiel, but the six wings seem to refer to the vision mentioned in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, and both visions are probably intended to be represented.

There is no other example in England, as far as I can ascertain, of either of these visions in mural paintings,¹ and subjects taken from the Old Testament generally are very uncommon.

On the east side of the north pier is a large tree with spreading branches, incorrectly rendered in the engraving by Dart. This is said to be emblematical of "the Tree of Life," and a similar significance is attached to the trees sculptured on some of the tympana of Norman doorways.² There was, doubtless, as represented by Dart, another tree on the corresponding south pier, but of this no traces remain. This may have been emblematical of the "Tree of Knowledge," a subject also found on the tympana of Norman doorways.³ Above are some cupola-shaped domes, similar to those at Kempley and Copford. Covering almost the whole vault of the ceiling, which is plain and of the barrel shape, is a figure of our Blessed Lord, within a double nimbed vesica. All the authorities, down to and inclusive of the account given by Gostling, agree in considering this figure to be a representation of "the Creator," but though there is, I believe, an unique feature in this special subject, which I will shortly mention, there can be little doubt that it is an example of the comparatively common subject of "our Lord in Glory." Four angels with outspread wings and with countenances expressive of adoration are supporting the vesica, and the vigorous action of their bodies is very well portrayed. On their feet are shoes studded with precious stones. The figure of our Lord is seated clothed with a blue robe, with a cruciform nimbus, and the feet resting on a semicircle, enclosing a rose within a red and yellow border. In the engraving by Dart, the inner portion is

¹ At the curious church of Schwarz Rheindorf on the Rhine are frescoes representing "Ezekiel and the chamber of imagery."—*Ecclesiologist*, xxv (xxii N.S.) 362.

² At Moccas and Kilpeck, Hereford-

shire; Kempley, Gloucestershire; and Middleton Stoney, Oxon.

³ At Dinton and Lathbury, Bucks; Fritwell, Oxon; Lower Swell, Gloucestershire; and Lullington, Somerset. The symbolism is of course very doubtful.

erroneously represented as half a wheel. A considerable portion of the left side and of the right arm has fallen away, but the whole seems to have been perfect in Dart's time, and even in the year 1845, in the account of these paintings in Wright's *Archæological Album*, the figure was less injured, as we learn from this authority that a book was held in the left hand, on which were the words "Ego sum qui sum;" that is, "I am that I am."

The point to which I wish to draw attention as being most unusual, if not unique, is that the right hand is pointing downward and touching the lower side of the vesica, instead of being raised in the usual attitude of benediction. I have endeavoured to find any other examples of this early period where the right hand is not raised in the act of benediction, but have failed to do so. Our Lord is thus represented with the right hand raised in the mural paintings on the ceilings of the chancels at Kempley Church, Gloucestershire, of Copford Church in Essex, and at St. Mary's Church, Guildford; also of a later date at St. John's Church, Winchester, date about 1290, and at the Chapter-house, Westminster Abbey, date about 1460; and in sculpture on a voussoir of the south doorway of Teversal Church, Nottinghamshire; within the pediment of the south doorway of Adel Church, Yorkshire; in niches over the doorway of North Newbald Church, Yorkshire; Balderton,¹ Notts; of a chapel close to Prestbury Church, Cheshire; of Leigh and Rouse Lench, Worcestershire; Elstow, Bedfordshire; and Lullington, Somersetshire; and on the tympana of the doorways of the churches at Essendine, Rutlandshire; Pedmore, Worcestershire; Rowstone and Shobdon in Herefordshire; the latter now forming part of the triumphal arch in Shobdon Park; at Elkstone, Quenington, and Little Barrington, Gloucestershire; Malmesbury, Wiltshire; Water Stratford, Bucks; Ely Cathedral (the prior's doorway); and at Rochester Cathedral, Betteshanger, Barfreston, Patricxbourn, and Bridge (interior) in Kent, and there are doubtless many more examples.² In a niche over the south doorway of Hadiscoe Church, Norfolk, is a figure with both hands raised, and it is doubtful whether this is intended for our Lord or not. On the font of Kirkburn Church, Yorkshire, is the figure of our Lord within a vesica, also with both hands raised.

It seems somewhat rash to hazard a conjecture as to why the usual form of representation has in this instance at Canterbury been departed from. There can be little doubt that this chapel was dedicated to St. Gabriel and the Angelic Host, and that the various scenes represent the appearance of angels to men and the fulfilment of their messages. Our Lord is, of course, seated on His throne in heaven, and His right arm, which is slightly raised from His side, may be intended to be inclining towards those on earth, to whom His gracious messages have been sent. The figure of our Lord is therefore represented as being in heaven, while the other scenes are occurring on earth. In the somewhat similar paintings both at Kempley and Copford there is only one general subject covering the ceiling and walls of the chancel, viz.: Our Lord in glory surrounded by certain emblems, and with the Apostles and Angels in

¹ This figure is by some supposed to be intended for St. Giles. The right arm is gone; but there can be no doubt that it was originally raised in the act of benediction.

² There is an example on a reliquary, formerly the shrine of St. Maidulf, at Malmesbury Abbey, figured in *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. ii. plate li. The date of this is mentioned at about 1000.

attitudes of adoration, the Apostles having obtained the most blessed reward of everlasting life. Thus our Lord is represented as giving with upraised hand the benediction to those immediately around Him. So again in the figures on and over most of the doorways previously mentioned our Lord is represented as preaching that the only way to heaven is through Him, in the words, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved:"¹ "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Here again our Lord is intended to be in the act of blessing, again with upraised hand, those who are standing before Him. I understand that the peculiarity in this painting at Canterbury has not hitherto been specially noticed, and no comment has, as far as I am aware, been made upon it.

The drapery of this figure of our Lord is in folds, and fastened in the usual manner over the waist. It is very well executed, and it has for this reason been suggested that the paintings must be of a later date than that usually assigned to them. I venture, however, to think that we may assume that at the most important epoch in the history of Canterbury Cathedral, namely, the last quarter of the twelfth century, the most celebrated artists of the day both English and foreign were brought together to beautify a building, which had suddenly acquired such increased importance. We cannot therefore feel surprised at finding paintings of considerably later date, though of very inferior execution.

On the north wall is a representation of the circumstances connected with the birth of St. John the Baptist. The subject is in two tiers, with two subjects in each tier. In the upper on the eastern side is the Angel appearing to Zachariah in the Temple; above them on a scroll are the words "orat populus." The angel is also holding a scroll, on which can be deciphered the words "et oratio tua," the whole inscription doubtless having been "audita et oratio tua," "thy prayer hath been heard." At the west side of the picture Zachariah appears to the people, who are represented by four or five figures, and beckoning to them explains that he has been struck dumb. Between this tier and the next is a sentence in large capital letters, "Iste puer magnus coram Dno et Spu Scō replebitur," "This child of thine shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." In the lower tier is the naming of St. John. On the eastern side is Elizabeth on a couch under an open arched and early roofed canopy, with the infant John in her lap, and other figures in the foreground. She is holding in her hand a scroll, with the words "sed vocetur Johne." One of the figures is also presenting her with a scroll, the writing on which is now illegible. It may have been to the effect that the child should be called Zachariah after his father, or it may have been a message from his father that he should be called John. On the east side Zachariah is seated on a stool, having just written on a scroll "Johne est nomen ej," and surprise is expressed in the faces of those about him. A coloured copy of this lower tier is given in Wright's *Archæological Album*, but it is not very accurate. The colouring is still almost perfect, and the whole of the subjects express considerable animation and character, more so than can, I think, be found in any other paintings of this period. It is a curious fact that the colour and arrangement of the hair in all the figures varies considerably. Below

¹ St. John, x, 9.

² St. John, xiv, 6.

this tier could be deciphered in Dart's time the inscription "Hoc altare dedicatum est in honorem Scti Gabrielis Archangeli." (This altar was dedicated in honour of St. Gabriel the Archangel.) Only the last three words can now be made out. Below this inscription is a design representing the upper folds of a curtain; there is a pattern of an oval between two oblongs, and an oblong between two ovals in the alternate folds, arranged within a bordering. The masonry of the wall below is very rough, but traces of painting representing the folds of a curtain are distinctly visible upon it.

On the south wall, even at the time when copies were made for Dart's work, more than 150 years ago, the paintings were very faint and imperfect, and the subjects as there represented are almost entirely the result of conjecture. It is however even now possible to make out that on this side also were two tiers of paintings, the upper one containing two subjects. On the east side of the upper tier is the "Annunciation," the figure of the angel holding a scroll, the word "Nazareth" can be made out above. On the west side is a more uncertain subject, but it is probably the meeting of the Virgin and Elizabeth, the word "Elizabeth" being written above. On the lower tier were probably the "Nativity," and some other early subject connected with the New Testament history, but it is impossible to make out anything clearly in this part of the picture. On the east side there certainly seems to be a recumbent figure, but nothing else is visible. Below were the words in the same large type as those on the north wall, "Hoc altare" probably the commencement of a sentence recording the dedication of a second altar to some saint or saints in this chapel. As I have previously suggested the peculiar position of the piscina in the north wall can only be accounted for by the fact of there being at least two altars in this chapel, and this inscription would probably have commemorated the dedication of a second altar to another of the Archangels, or, as I venture to think, to the Angelic Host. It is extremely improbable that this inscription referred to the dedication of an altar to St. John the Baptist, as Dart supposes, as the series of paintings representing the Nativity of St. John is on the opposite wall. There seems in fact to be no foundation at all for the now generally accepted dedication of this chapel to St. John the Baptist, and the series of paintings on the north wall would obviously afford sufficient groundwork for the origin of this error, if such it can be proved to be.

On the eastern arch is painted a band of cable ornament, then of roses on a red ground, and then of plain yellow ochre, and on the soffit of the arch were originally nine medallions, of which only five perfect ones and one in a mutilated condition remain. In the lowest one in the north side is St. John writing the Apocalypse, the words "Scs Johannes" across the medallion, and the word "Apocalipsis" on the open book. St. John is seated and holds a pen in his right hand, and another larger instrument with a point in his left hand probably to steady the book. A figure within one of the medallions at St. Mary's Church, Guildford,¹ is writing with a similar pen, and has a similar instrument² wherewith to steady the

¹ It is numbered seven in the copy of the paintings given in the first volume of Brayley's *History of Surrey*.

² See also the portrait of Edwin the Monk, making the celebrated plan of the Cathedral Church and Benedictine Priory

book. In each of the three medallions above, and in the portion of the medallion remaining on the upper part of the south side of the arch, is an angel holding a candlestick. The candlesticks are of the ordinary pricket kind, with three bands on the stem, two of them on flat round bases, and one with branching legs, the lower angel holds the candlestick in the left hand, the next in the right hand, and the upper one in both hands. In the left hand corner of each seems to be a rude representation of a church. There were doubtless three more angels within the three lower medallions on the south side, which are now entirely gone, and this design therefore represented the angels of the seven churches with the seven golden candlesticks. In the central medallion, immediately beneath the feet of the figure of our Lord, are the seven stars, a central star surrounded by six others on a blue ground.

On the west wall, within the space between the ceiling and the two western arches, are remains of a scroll and part of a seraph, also a portion of a tree similar to that on the north pier, there were probably here two seraphim holding scrolls. Between the arches are some cupola shaped domes, and there are remains of colour round the arches.

I have ventured to assign as the date of this most interesting series of paintings about the year 1175, from the several architectural features, the general character of the subjects, and more especially of the figure of our Lord in Glory. The drapery of this figure bears a striking resemblance to that of the figures on several of the tympana of the Norman doorways, of which I have given a list, and the hair especially resembles that of the figure on the tympanum of the south doorway of Barfreston Church, which is now acknowledged to have been built at this period. The patterns on the eastern arch, and the various architectural features would also accord with this date, though these would not be conclusive in themselves, as we have instances of designs possessing all the features of Norman architecture, but in some cases proved to be as late even as the middle of the thirteenth century. In Wright's *Archæological Album*, published in 1845, we find the following opinion on this subject. "The style of these paintings is that of the first half of the twelfth century. They so closely resemble in design and colouring the illuminations in a manuscript in the British Museum (MS. Cotton, *Nero* c. iv), of which a specimen is given in Mr. Shaw's beautiful work on the dresses and decorations of the Middle Ages, that we might be led to look upon them as the work of the same artist." On the other hand, Mr. J. Neale, F.S.A., who has been engaged in copying these paintings for the Kent Archæological Society, is of opinion that they are considerably later than the date I have mentioned, and that they are not even all of one period.

This completes the list of this most interesting series of mural paintings and decorative colouring, which can hardly be equalled by any other examples in England, and which I have now endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to bring more prominently forward. I trust that, in mentioning each remaining or recorded subject in regular routine, I have at least succeeded in collecting together, in a condensed form, all the specimens of this branch of the decorative art from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries inclusive, which are now existing, or which have been in existence, during the present century in Canterbury Cathedral.

at Canterbury. *Monumenta Vetusta*, vol. ii, Plate xvi. The date of the original was between the years 1130 and 1174. The

original manuscript now belongs to Trinity College, Cambridge.