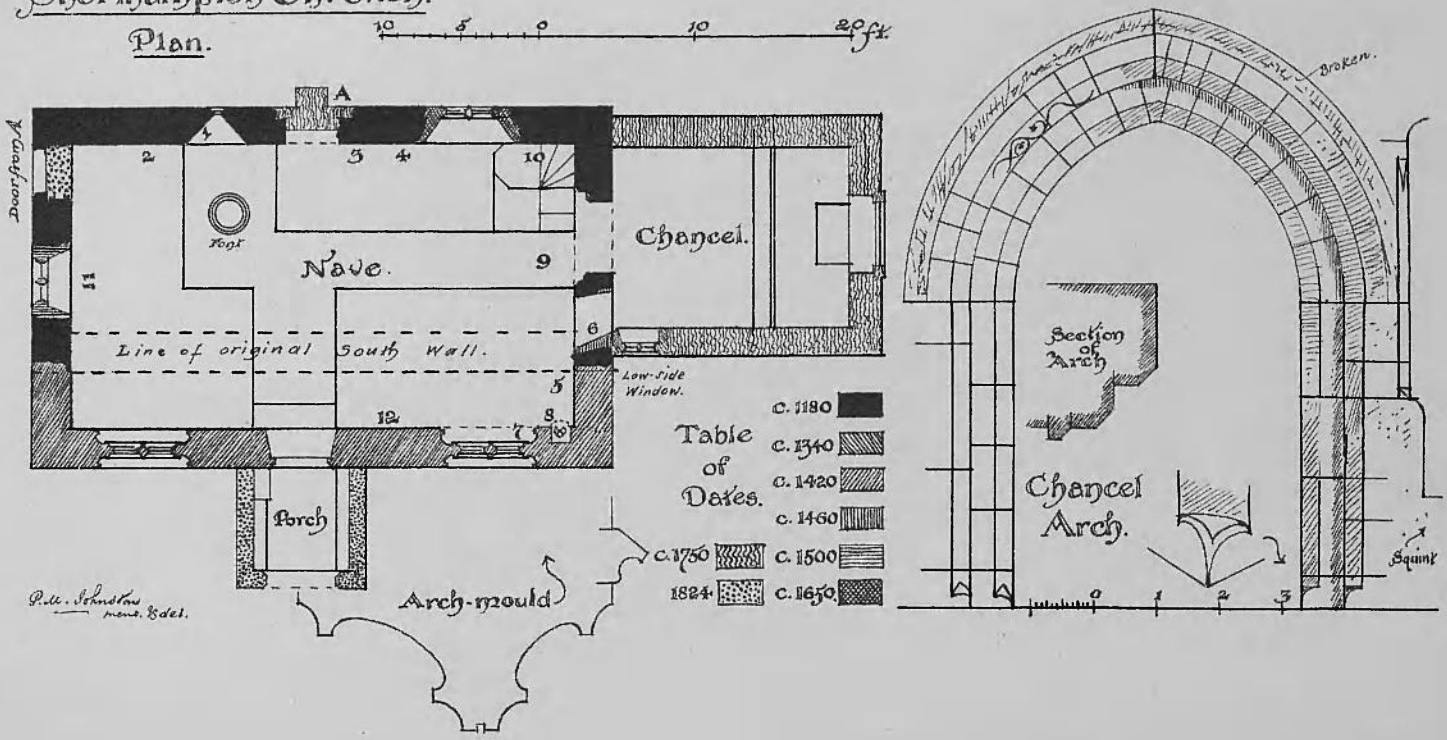

Shorthampton Ch: Oxon.
Plan.
10 5 0 10 20 ft.
A
Doorway
Font
Nave.
Chancel.
Line of original South Wall.
Low-side Window.
Porch
Arch-mould
P.M. Johnston
mens. & del.
Table of Dates.
c. 1180
c. 1340
c. 1420
c. 1460
c. 1750
c. 1500
1824
c. 1650
Broken.
Section of Arch
Chancel Arch.
Squint
0 1 2 3

SHORTHAMPTON CHAPEL AND ITS WALL-PAINTINGS.[1]

By PHILIP MAINWARING JOHNSTON.

Shorthampton is a chapelry attached to the parish of Charlbury, Oxfordshire, from which town it is distant between two and three miles. The tie is one of early date, for we have work of the twelfth century remaining in the mother church and the chapel.[2]

The Manor of Charlbury[3] belonged to the Mercian Kings, and was granted at some time during the tenth century to the Bishop of Lincoln, and in 1109, Bishop Robert Bloet handed it over to the Abbey of Eynsham, "entire and untouched in woods and fields and meadows and waters," including, no doubt, the hamlets known as Chadlington and Shorthampton. Whether there were then in existence chapels at either or both of these places it is now impossible to say, but it is certain that those now standing were built by the wealthy Benedictine abbey to serve the needs of its tenants.

The Cartulary of Eynsham preserves the earliest reference to Shorthampton chapel, under date 1296: "And because in the aforesaid Church of Charlbury there are wont to be two chaplains at least, and this because of the chapel at Shorthampton, in which three times every week Divine Service is celebrated and two Clergy ministering. And in the Chapel at Chadlington one parochial Chaplain continually staying there with a clerk. Therefore we, turning our eyes to the importance of the said Church of Charlbury, and the heavy duties of the ministers of the same, ordain from now that there shall be a Vicarage in the said Church of Charlbury and land revenues (hereinafter described) for the sustenance of the Vicar for the time being and of one Chaplain to stay with him, as long as the said Vicar shall be

[1] The substance of this paper was read before the Institute, and tracings of the paintings were exhibited, June 1st, 1904.

[2] Shorthampton Chapel is dedicated to All Saints—a dedication which has a special significance in view of the many saints painted on its walls.

[3] "The town of Free-men" (*Ceorls*). The local pronunciation is still "Chorlbury."

personally able to minister: and of two chaplains if he be incapacitated: and of one at Chadlington."[1]

It will be seen from this that the good monks of Eynsham exercised a very laudable care for the spiritual welfare of the people on their estates, and all the evidence goes to show that this beneficent influence continued until the Reformation destroyed the old order.

Happily, with all the changes that then took place, the chapels at Shorthampton and Chadlington escaped the fate of so many hamlet chapels. They were not pulled down nor suffered to fall into decay, but have continued to fulfil their original purpose as chapels-of-ease to the mother church.

After the dissolution of the monasteries, Henry VIII., in 1544, granted the Manor of Charlbury, with all its dependencies, to Sir Edward North, who afterwards sold it to Sir Thomas White. By him it was conveyed, in 1555, to St. John's College, Oxford, of which he was the founder, and that body has presented the living down to the present day.

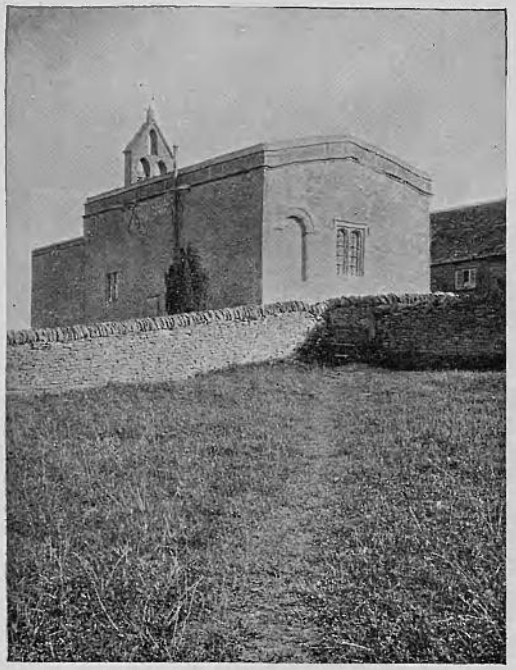
In 1903 the reparation of the little chapel of Shorthampton was taken in hand by Vernon J. Watney, Esq., of Cornbury Park, and carried out under the superintendence of Mr. John Belcher, P.R.I.B.A., A.R.A., at whose invitation the writer made a search for the wall-paintings with which this paper is principally concerned.

The plan (Plate I) is somewhat peculiar. The chapel was evidently built in the last twenty years of the twelfth century, and then consisted of a nave 32 feet 14 inches long by 12 feet wide, and chancel, probably square-ended and of the same dimensions as the present one, viz., 15 feet by 11 feet 6 inches. But by the end of the fourteenth century, or early in the fifteenth, the population must have increased sufficiently to necessitate enlargement, and this was effected, not in the usual way, by throwing out an aisle with an arcade between it and the nave, but by simply widening the nave on its southern side.[2] An aisle was, in effect, created, but without any structural division from the nave, and the chancel

[1] For this extract the writer is indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Julius D. Payne, the incumbent of the three churches.

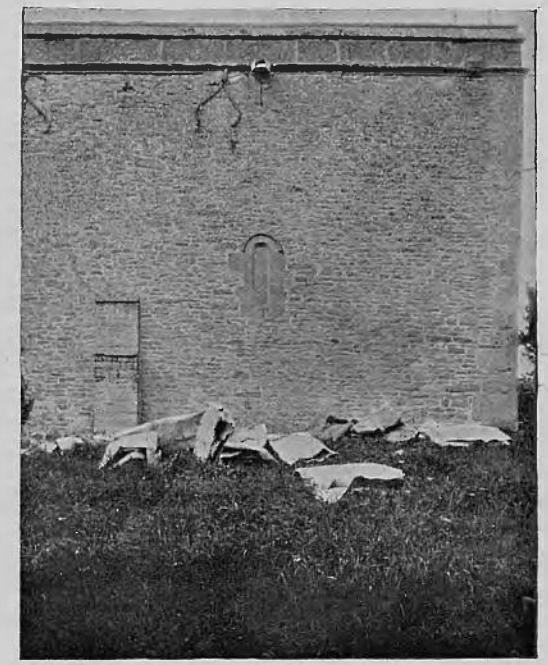
[2] It is now 18 feet 3 inches wide—just a third more than the original width.

SHORTHAMPTON CHAPEL.



N.W. VIEW.

THE FONT.



N. WALL OF NAVE.

P. M. Johnston, photo.

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SHORTHAMPTON CHAPEL.

To face page 159.

PISCINA IN NAVE.

WINDOW IN S. WALL.

LOW SIDE WINDOW, CHANCEL.

P. M. Johnston, photo.

Plate 3.

arch in this way ceased to occupy a central position. The builders realised this, and to remedy the defect they pierced the east wall of the nave to the south of the arch, and made an enormous squint, almost rivalling the chancel arch in height and width.

The original building had comparatively low walls and a high-pitched, open-timbered roof, covered with stone slates. The later builders raised the side walls to nearly double their first height and replaced the early roof by one almost flat and covered with lead (Plate II). I am assuming that nave and chancel were similarly treated; but the evidence in the case of the chancel is imperfect owing to a later reconstruction.

To the first period belongs the simple chancel arch (Plate I)—a good example of early pointed work. It is only 4 feet 7 inches wide, and consists of two chamfered orders, with a double-chamfered hood, and the arch and jambs are continuous, without impost or capital, the chamfers terminating in elegant stops just above the floor level. Of the same date are: a small round-headed window, having a hood-moulding on the outside (Plate II); a round-headed doorway, also with a hood and moulded imposts—now built in the west wall, high up, as an entrance to a former gallery, but originally in the north wall of the nave, where the internal opening remains as a sort of recess. Externally it is covered by a buttress of eighteenth century date. Finally, the font (Plate II), a plain, tubshaped example, the rudeness of which might even suggest an earlier date, were we justified in assuming an older foundation for the little chapel.

Next in order comes the interesting low-side window in the south-west corner of the chancel (Plate III), which would appear to have been preserved when the chancel itself was rebuilt. It is of early fourteenth century character (*c.* 1340), and consists of two ogee headed lights under a square head. The lower half of the lights is separated by a transom from the upper end formed into twin openings, rebated for shutters. Externally, this window has been cased within a square stone frame, and an outer sill has been added when the chancel was rebuilt in the eighteenth century. The internal arch has also

been renewed, but the tracery and the walling below have apparently not been disturbed.

To the chief rebuilding (*c.* 1400) belong the handsome two-light windows and the plain doorway in the south wall of the nave, the piscina, also in its south wall, and the roof, as before mentioned (Plate III). The windows, with their ogee heads, have a lingering trace of the Decorated period, with which also the cinque-foiled head of the piscina agrees. The former have the tracery set in the middle of the wall, with a suite of hollow mouldings in place of a splay, inside and out. The piscina has a deep bowl and a stone shelf for the credence. The plain south doorway, retaining its original oak door, also belongs to this period.

The tie beams of the roof are partly supported by posts resting upon stone corbels, which were evidently bedded upon the top of the first wall when it was raised. These corbels (Plate IV) are rudely carved into faces that may be meant either for general types of the clergy and laity of the day, or else for portraits of actual persons—benefactors to the chapel. Thus, on the south side are, (1) a layman with moustache and bifurcated chin-beard—perhaps the clerk of the works; (2) a cowled Benedictine, with grimly powerful face and shaven crown, representing the Abbey of Eynsham; and (3) a chubby-faced secular priest, probably meant for the priest who served the chapel. On the north are, (1) a lady in the square "tower" head-dress fashionable in the early years of the fifteenth century; and (2) a gentleman of the same period, who may have been the lord of the manor—an important-looking person with formally-cut hair and the bifurcated beard then worn. From the third corbel on this side being without a head, the assumption that these are actual portraits of persons associated with the enlargement of the chapel is rendered more probable. The roofs, which are of very flat pitch, are of lead, that of the nave being surrounded by a moulded stone coping, parapet and string-course, in the latter of which are grotesque heads and gargoyles.

The squint is probably later than the general enlargement, and may be dated about 1460. It has a flatly arched head of the four-centred type, and is of unusual

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SHORTHAMPTON CHAPEL: CORBEL-HEADS IN NAVE. *Upper on S., lower on N.*

Plate 4.

height and width; its sill is very low down, and the total effect is almost that of a twin chancel arch.

Later still (*c.* 1500) is the plain west window of two lights with four-centred heads under a square label; it no doubt takes the place of a small Norman window;[1] another, even plainer, in the north wall of the nave is a seventeenth century insertion. The chancel seems to have been entirely rebuilt on the old foundations about the middle of the eighteenth century. The low-side window in its south wall is the only mediaeval feature apparent. The bell-gable over the east wall of the nave (1821) and the south porch (1824) date from the early days of the Gothic revival, and are quite good of their kind. Some quaint Georgian deal pewing, and a pulpit and clerk's desk of the same era, have been wisely retained at the recent restoration. There are no ancient monuments.

So much for the fabric, in which, as will be seen, there are a surprising number of "styles" for so small a building. Let us turn now to the remains of wall-paintings, belonging to almost as many dates.

1.[2] Date *c.* 1200–1220. It was evident from numerous traces found on the north wall of the nave, and on the chancel arch wall (both sides), that the little chapel was first decorated, over the coat of Norman limewhite, with the common masonry pattern—oblong blocks enclosing roses—in a deep red upon a pale straw-colour ground.[3] There were traces of more elaborate ornamentation round the chancel arch, including flowers of a dark green colour, and on the arch itself some characteristic scroll-patterns in black and red. But the little Norman window contained the most perfect painting of this early period. Its splays were lined out in the masonry

[1] It is an interesting speculation whether this window may not have been inserted, either at the close of Mary's reign, or in the early years of Elizabeth, after the chapel had passed into the hands of St. John's College, Oxford. The window is of that plain late type which became almost traditional in the architecture of the Colleges from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century.

[2] These numbers have reference to the position on the plan of the various paintings, which are not strictly described in order of date.

[3] Even in so simple a scheme, there was variety. The lines of the blocks were in a brighter red than the roses.

blocks with roses, and on the western splay was found a nimbed figure in the black Benedictine habit, holding a crosier. Above his head are the remains of a scroll bearing his name—unfortunately almost obliterated. All that can be certainly made out are the letters S̄CS✠--O-S. I have carefully searched through several lists of saints, and have come to the conclusion that St. Leonard is the one represented, and that the inscription when perfect read—S̄CS✠LEO-S—the tongue between the O and the S being intended for a mark of contraction.

Now the parish church of Eynsham, under the patronage of the Abbey, was dedicated to this saint, who probably was claimed by the Benedictines as of their order. He was, as is well known, of Frankish birth, born of noble parents at the Court of Clovis, at about the end of the fifth century, and his death is placed in about 559. His influence with the King led to his obtaining the release of prisoners, of whom in due course he came to be regarded as the special patron. He founded more than one monastic settlement in the neighbourhood of Limoges, but, although abbot or superior, did not advance beyond the order of deacon. He is therefore commonly represented vested as a deacon, but holding a crozier, and usually also with broken fetters or a chain in the other hand in allusion to his good offices on behalf of the prisoners. What I have taken for the Benedictine habit in the painting might equally be a deacon's long-sleeved dalmatic, but the remains of the figure are so slight that it is difficult to say which is represented, as also whether the left hand held the usual fetters—this part having scaled off the plaster. There was no corresponding figure upon the eastern splay of the window, which is occupied only by masonry blocks and roses. The head of the crozier, which is fairly well preserved, is elaborately curled or crocketted.

I feel some confidence in ascribing this figure to St. Leonard, as it compares very closely with another thirteenth century painting of this saint—also on a Norman window-splay—at Frindsbury Church, Kent,

which I visited and made a drawing of immediately after its discovery in 1883.[1]

No doubt there was a corresponding Norman window eastward of this, in the place now occupied by a seventeenth century wider opening, and we may assume that this and the other original windows of the little chapel—eight, perhaps, all together—had saints painted on the splays. We may suppose that St. Giles, a Benedictine saint of great repute locally, was painted on one of the destroyed windows, and that the nave generally was appropriated to Benedictine saints; while the early chancel was occupied with Scriptural personages and scenes.

2. On the wall adjoining this window, to the west, the remains of another figure were found. It appeared to be that of a priest in a girded albe and crossed stole, without either cope or chasuble, the stole ends (almost the only part it was possible to preserve) being in a bright red and having long red and yellow fringes, and a little shamrock leaf with curly stem (✤) in place of the usual ✠. As this figure faces the font, which is probably in its original position, it seems likely that this figure had some reference to the Sacrament of Baptism.[2] This fragment appears to be of early fourteenth century date.

3. Eastward of the Norman window, on the north wall of the nave, I came across a painting partly obscured by another of later date (early sixteenth century?): the original painting appears to be of the fifteenth century (*c.* 1460). It represents St. Frideswide teaching the youth of Oxford to read.[3] On the left of the saint is an ox, in allusion to her connection with the city, and before her kneels a boy, with upraised hands

[1] Reproduced in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XVI, p. 226. In this the saint appears to be vested in the Benedictine habit, but with an amice. He holds the fetters in his right hand and the crozier in the left, and here also the head is shown as tonsured and without any covering. The Frindsbury paintings can be dated with some certainty to *circa* 1256-66. There were the remains of five figures in all on the splays of four windows, and as there had been nine windows originally in the chancel alone, there were probably some eighteen saints painted thereon.

[2] Under the old ritual the priest usually baptized vested in a girded albe and crossed stole only, but, especially in the fifteenth century and later, the surplice and pendent stole seem also to have been used.

[3] It is a pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Rev. E. S. Dewick for the elucidation of this subject.

conjoined, whom she is instructing out of a massively-bound book. There is a deep red background with a reticulated pattern, smeared with a half-dry brush, thereon; and the whole is enclosed in a wide border of orange. The saint's head and other parts of the painting are covered by the later decoration. As comparatively few representations of this once popular Oxfordshire saint remain, the addition to the list of even a faint and injured painting such as this is of considerable value.

4. On the north wall of the nave, close to the foregoing, and belonging to the same date, is the upper part of a figure of an archbishop (Plate VII). There is no name or distinguishing emblem, in the absence of which it is impossible to speak certainly; but the presumption is that we have here St. Thomas of Canterbury. That saint is perhaps most commonly represented as in the martyrdom scene—at any rate, in the few examples spared to us by the too zealous minions of Henry VIII.; but he occurs many times simply as a sainted archbishop—more as a devotional picture than as part of a scene. Hauxton Church, Cambs., presents us with an example of this devotional treatment. Here the saint is painted on the back of a niche, fully vested in mitre, amice, chasuble and pall, holding the cross staff in his left hand and lifting the right (with the two first fingers raised) in benediction. This is an early thirteenth century example. The figure at Shorthampton is of the fifteenth century—*circa* 1460—and agrees closely with that at Hauxton, allowing for the two-and-a-half centuries between their respective dates. In the later example the saint is depicted in three-quarter face, he is clean-shaven instead of bearded, and the pall hangs in one straight line from the neck, whereas in the Hauxton painting it is Y-shaped. The mitre is low, and the collar of the amice stands up stiffly round the neck. The collar and the apparels of the albe, the chasuble-lining, the nimbus and the saint's *lips*, are painted in a cherry red. The peculiarity of the red lips, together with other mannerisms of late date, such as the stiff, bushy cut of the hair, the white face and the painting of the eye-brows in separate fine lines, connects this particular subject with the group of paintings on the south and

MIRACLE OF THE CLAY BIRDS.

P. M. Johnston, del.

east walls of the nave. The chasuble is deftly painted to imitate the sheen of silk or satin, in pale grey-blue and yellow tints, and the pall bears the usual ✠-shaped pins, alternated with flowered ornaments, probably meant for jewels. Above the head is a background of black (also much used in the group of paintings of this date), while behind the figure is a rich crimson ground, with the reticulated pattern lightly sketched on it, as in the painting of St. Frideswide; and to the right is the angle of an orange border belonging to another subject, now destroyed. A peculiar purse-like object in the corner of this border has yet to be explained. It should be mentioned that an older painting, below this, appears in parts, but, happily, not so as to disturb the main outlines.

5. When the south wall of the nave was pushed out (*c.* 1400) a chapel was formed in the eastern end, and this was probably dedicated to either St. Cross or The Holy Blood. The piscina was painted a deep red, and the space over the altar had a painting of THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE, with a background *semé* with drops of blood.[1] In this subject I found part of the kneeling figure of Our Lord surrounded by the trees of the garden, and above Him a demi-angel holding a scroll with remains of lettering thereon. The painting was rude and in a poor style of art, and this may have led to its partial destruction, for in about 1460 the whole was covered with a thin coat of distemper, unfortunately far less durable than the original, which was painted on the fresh plaster at the time of the extension of the nave. The later painting seems to have related to the Blessed Virgin, as one little head of her—the only fragment it was possible to save—still remains over the earlier painting. This is evidently painted by the same hand as the archbishop before described. It has the same white face, red lips, and tawny hair, outlined in black against

[1] Answering, no doubt intentionally, to the passage in St. Luke's Gospel,—"His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." In restoring Ford Church, Sussex, I found this subject of the Agony painted on a window splay of a little nave chapel similarly placed to this, and the painting was of about the same date. The dedication to the Holy Blood was not uncommon; a well-known instance is the chapel of the *Saint Sang* at Bruges, Belgium.

a blue-black background. It seems probable that the new painting marks a change in the dedication of the chantry, and that it became a Lady Chapel.

6. The Miracle of the Clay Birds (Plate V), painted upon the southern splay of the squint. (Date *c.* 1460.) So far as I am aware, this interesting painting is unique as to its subject in either painting or sculpture of mediaeval date in England. The legend of which it is an illustration occurs in one of the apocryphal gospels—the gospel of Nicodemus—and is to the effect that Our Lord, making birds out of clay for the amusement of His boy companions, gave them life and caused them to fly. In the picture we have the Blessed Virgin, crowned and nimbed, standing against a black background. Her hair is loose and falling down her back, and she has quite a beautiful face (for a mediaeval artist), with the same red lips noticed in the other paintings of this series. She wears a tunic of ermine, a robe of pink, and a mantle of pale blue gathered over the shoulders and arms. She carries on her right arm the infant Christ, nimbed to distinguish Him from His boy companions, one of whom is seated on her other arm, while another, clad in an orange-brown tunic, kneels before her. The two companions are in attitudes expressive of wonderment and delight at the act of the Divine Child, who is causing one of the clay birds to fly. The little bird is appropriately painted clay colour, while the Child Jesus has a tunic of cinnamon brown with an embroidered collar, and the child on the Virgin's other arm is clad in emerald green, a colour that occurs elsewhere in this series of paintings. All the outlines are in black, and the hair of the figures is in brown. A pale French grey is used for the margin or frame of the picture, and this and other delicate shades impress one with the variety of colours at the disposal of the artist. Another impression is a certain minuteness and delicacy about the drawing, which, coupled with the brilliant colouring, suggests strongly the work of the illuminator, by whom, indeed, the paintings of this series (*c.* 1460) may well have been executed—the work, in fact, of some monk of Eynsham skilled in the use of the brush. Painting of any sort upon the sides of a squint is extremely rare: I cannot call to mind another instance.

ST. SYTHA.

P. M. Johnston, del.

7. On the large flat hollow of the suite of mouldings to the window in the eastern part of the south wall of the nave—the eastern jamb—I found, on removing the thick coating of colourwash which covered the whole of the stonework, a most perfect little figure, the only one on either of these two big Perpendicular windows (Plate VI). It represents St. Sitha, Citha, or Zita, a pious Italian servant maid, born in 1218, and noted for her zeal in attendance at church, and for her care of the poor.[1] The saint stands against a deep red background bordered with amber; beneath her feet the hollow was plainly coloured in black. She has a large ringed and rayed nimbus of orange and red; on her head is a white kerchief or hood with scarlet threads round the hem, and this appears to be pinned to a stiff gorget or wimple pleated under the chin. Here, again, the lips are touched with scarlet. She is habited in a plain white gown with loose hanging sleeves, like a surplice, and wears over this an emerald green mantle, fastened by a bronze brooch of rose shape. On her feet are little black shoes, and she bears in her right hand two large metal purse-frames, a bag—perhaps supposed to contain broken meat for the poor—and a bunch of four keys. The colours are extraordinarily fresh, and the whole painting looked, when uncovered, as though it had only lately been executed—thanks to the blessed whitewash of the Reformers! The date of the painting is *c.* 1460.[2]

8, 9, and 10. To the same date as the foregoing belong the scanty remains of a large Doom which covered the whole of the upper part of the east wall of the nave and

[1] This saint is often confounded with St. Osyth ("St. Sythe"), Virgin and Martyr, who lived about the end of the seventh century. My friend Mr. Keyser, who visited the church on my report of the finding of these paintings, suggested that this figure represented St. Sitha; and there can, I think, be no question that it is the serving woman, because of the curious collection of articles in her right hand. At first sight, the hood, wimple and mantle, fastened by a brooch, suggested a Religious of some sort, but these might be given appropriately to such a handmaid of the church as St. Sitha, and there is nothing distinctively belonging to an abbess or nun about the figure. St. Osyth, as a Mercian Saint, would have fitted very well in this neighbourhood but for the peculiar attributes of keys, etc. St. Sitha is commemorated on April 27th. Her figure is commonly met with on screens in East Anglia, and in stained glass. The only other mural painting known to me is of late fourteenth century date, on a Norman pier at St. Alban's, and this one is somewhat doubtfully assigned to the Saint.

[2] Figured in the *Building News*, February 26th, 1890.

was continued over the eastern parts of the north and south walls. This subject was treated on the usual lines, and was evidently very similar to the Dooms at the churches of North and South Leigh, in this county. On the north wall of the nave has been DEATH ON THE PALE HORSE, of which hardly anything is left. On the east wall, left and centre, is the RESURRECTION, with figures rising out of stone coffins (one very elaborately moulded); among these a woman in a white shroud is distinguishable. The background is red, with tufts of grass and flowers in green and black. Heaven, with the saved, the Divine Judge, Our Lady, St. Peter, and Michael, the weigher of souls, are not now to be seen, although all or some of these must have been features in the scheme when perfect. But a good part of the MOUTH OF HELL—shown as the open jaws of a whale—remains, and two particularly fearsome blue demons are standing therein (one a sort of pig-demon), hauling with a spiked chain a band of condemned souls into the open jaws. Some heads of small figures remain above, perhaps a batch of the condemned, being pitchforked by Satan to the demons below.[1] On the south wall, close under the wall-plate, is a very remarkable adjunct to this subject, fortunately in a more perfect state. It represents HELL CAULDRON.[2] Against a black background a great metal pot with two handles, standing on legs, is depicted—just such a vessel as must have been a familiar feature in the farm-feasts and church-ale drinkings of the fifteenth century.[3] Indeed, the whole appearance of the pot is so like that of a great pewter drinking measure that I cannot help thinking we have here a direct warning against the sin of drunkenness, with particular reference, perhaps, to the licence that so often disfigured the Whitsun ales, and other parochial "drinkings." It will be seen on referring to the illustration

[1] This feature occurs in a Doom which I found at Ford Church, Sussex.

[2] This subject is not at all commonly found now in wall paintings, although doubtless it formed a part of many Dooms in their pre-Reformation condition. It occurs among the torments of Hell in the remarkable early painting of the Ladder of Salvation at Chaldon Church, Surrey.

[3] Such a parish vessel, known as "Mother Ludlam's Cauldron," of mediæval date (c. 1300), is still kept as a curiosity in Frensham Church, Surrey. It is of beaten copper, with rings attached to the rim, for suspending over a fire, and four short legs strutting out. Doubtless it has been used in many a parish merry-making. It is of a low squat shape, without any waist, like the pot in the painting.

S. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY. Plate 7.

1 FOOT

P. M. Johnston, del.

HELL CAULDRON.

1 FOOT

P. M. Johnston, del.

To face page 168.

S. ELIGIUS.

1 FOOT

P. M. Johnston, del.

(Plate VII), that ten miserable little figures are crammed into the mouth of the pot, two of whom, with beards, are unmistakably men, while the rest, with characteristically monkish bias against the fair sex, appear to be intended to represent women.[1] Below the pot is the nozzle of a pair of bellows, meant, no doubt, to be blowing up the flames; and on the right is a peculiarly hideous little goat-horned demon, with goggling eyes and great white teeth, tootling upon a horn—perhaps in reference to the music that accompanied the parish ale-drinkings. This monster, who has monkey-like hands and tufts of hair over its body, has been left without legs, as though the artist had not quite completed the picture. Above the cauldron a devil's-see-saw is literally in full swing; a blue demon, partly destroyed, sits astride, weighing down one end of the plank, which is balanced on a post; while a naked figure, seemingly of a woman, clutching with her hands to the tilted end (the demon has apparently shaken her off her seat on the plank in this grim game), is about to be dropped into the mouth of the cauldron. Her clothes, which have been shaken off in the violence of the "play," are falling off behind; and here, perhaps, the rough sports that accompanied parish festivities are satirised. The humour of the whole scene is irresistible, if somewhat coarse and out of place to modern ideas. One must, however, remember that the Oxfordshire peasant in the fifteenth century required blunt speech, and would perhaps not have heeded a more delicate warning.[2]

11. On the west wall of the nave has been a large subject—St. George and the Dragon. A portion of the wing of the latter and some trees are discernible, but the insertion of a sixteenth century window has destroyed the greater part of the painting. The date is probably the same as that of the "Agony" on the east wall—*c.* 1400.

[1] Like the foregoing group of paintings, the little faces in this have scarlet lips.

[2] One of the fragments of the destroyed stone screen of the choir of Bourges Cathedral, France (thirteenth century), represents "Hell Cauldron" here of simple pot shape, containing a group of figures, among which a woman, a monk, a layman, and a bishop may be distinguished. A toad is perched on the rim of the pot opposite the woman, perhaps to indicate her familiarity with the black art; and a purse is suspended beneath the gripping hands of the prelate, no doubt with reference to his greed of gain. Thrust into the faggots that feed the fire below are two pairs of bellows. *Vide* illustration in *The Architectural Review*, Vol. VI.

12. The latest of these curiously-assorted paintings is in some ways the most interesting. It covers the large wall-space between the door and the eastern of the two windows in the south wall of the nave, and its date cannot be earlier than about 1500, and *may* be twenty years or so later (Plate VII). It is executed in very slight grey and black outlines, with a sparing use of pale tints and without any coloured background to show up the figures, as in the foregoing. The subject is the legend of St. Eligius, or Eloy, the patron of blacksmiths and farriers; and it is, so far as I can learn, unique as a wall-painting.[1] The saint, who in earlier life had pursued the calling of a smith and metal-worker, kept up his craft after he had been made Bishop of Noyon. He flourished in the seventh century, dying in 659; and among other legends connected with his name is the story that as he was one day shoeing a horse, the animal, perhaps moved by some evil spirit, became restive and plunged violently. The saint then quietly took off its leg, nailed on the shoe and put the leg on again. In illustration of this quaint incident we have here the smith's forge, the arched chimney being hung round with horse-shoes, St. Eligius, as a bishop, vested in a red-brown cope and holding in his tongs the horse's hind leg, which has been taken off at the first joint, while the shoe lies on the anvil. The horse before him appears to be standing in a sort of crate or wooden frame, perhaps meant to give him support while he is minus a leg; and behind stands the owner, represented by a typical well-to-do citizen of Henry VIIth's reign. He wears the peculiar square hat with flaps, common about the end of the fifteenth and the commencement of the

[1] There is a fine bas-relief of this incident, which seems to have been a popular one with the artists, in the church of Or San Michele, Florence. In England we have a bas-relief at Durweston, Dorset, now placed over the south doorway, of which my friend Mr. G. C. Druce has sent me an excellent photograph. In this, and the previously mentioned example, which Mr. Druce has also photographed, the person bringing the horse to be shod is a lady, gay-looking, and handsomely dressed. The details of the forge and figures in both are quaint and full of interest. St. Eligius is also represented on a Suffolk bas-relief and on two or three screens of East Anglia and Devon. A bas-relief of this subject strikingly similar to that at Durweston exists at Wincanton Church, Somerset (*vide* illustration in Cassell's *Social England*, Vol. III, p. 27). Here also it appears to be a fine lady that has brought the horse to be shod at the Saint's forge.

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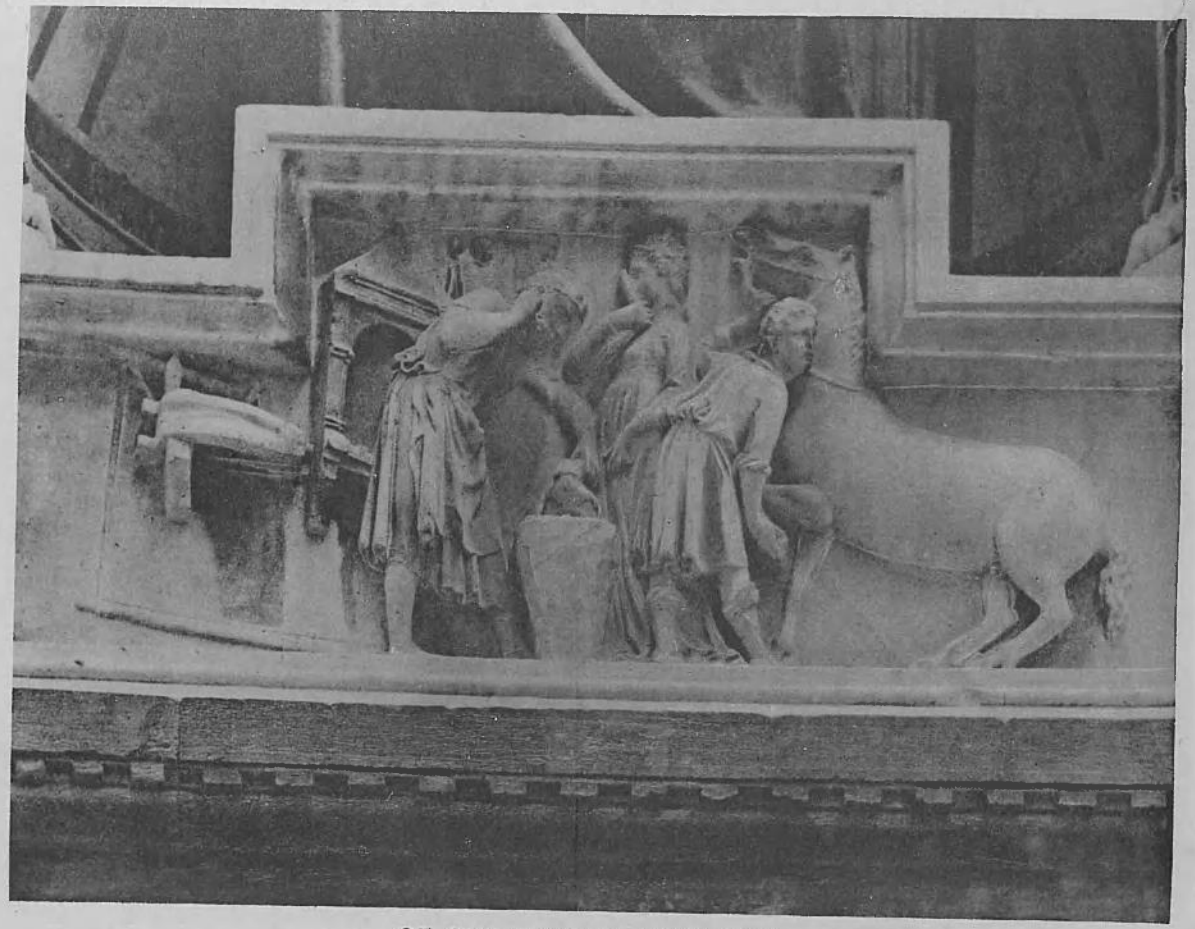

OR SAN MICHELE, FLORENCE.

DURWESTON CHURCH.

BAS-RELIEFS OF THE LEGEND OF S. ELIGIUS.

G. C. DRUCE, PHOTO.

sixteenth centuries. He has a clean-shaven face, hair falling over his shoulders, and a linen shirt gathered round the neck beneath a red jerkin. The horse and his master are fairly perfect, and the former has a scalloped bridle, but unfortunately the bishop, who is shown as a man of lofty stature, has lost his head. One may suppose that a guild of farriers caused this picture to be painted in honour of their saint.

It only remains to add that painted tables of the Creed and texts were found on the nave walls, framed in elaborate scroll borders. These, which were of various dates from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century, were in most cases preserved, as the earlier paintings beneath them had been destroyed.

This curious collection of subjects represent probably not more than half the number of paintings that once adorned the nave alone of this tiny hamlet-chapel. How suggestive is it of the wealth of lost imagery which formed the Poor Man's Bible before the Reformation, when the Church sought to teach through the eye as well as through the ear! To an archaeologist there comes also the sad reflection that in unnumbered cases such paintings as those which I have described, after centuries of burial under whitewash, have been destroyed either wantonly or in ignorance. and with them many a side light upon the modes of thought, the social customs and the art expression of our forefathers. But the practically-minded among us, instead of, like Mrs. Gummidge, for ever lamenting "the old 'un," now no more, will take steps to discover, and to preserve and record when discovered, those that still remain to us. Our thanks are not only due to Mr. Vernon J. Watney in this connection, but also for most generously bearing the cost of one of the coloured plates that illustrate this paper. It is a pleasure to be able to reproduce Mr. Druce's excellent photograph (Plate VIII) by way of comparison with the Shorthampton painting.