

ART. VII.—*An Architectural Description of Newton Reigny Church.* BY THE REV. T. W. NORWOD, M.A.

Contributed at Kendal, July 11th, 1888.

THIS church, with the exception of a new and very disproportionate chancel by Mr. Christian, is an ancient edifice, built mainly of ashlar roughly dressed; it is coated with whitewash, and roofed with fissile stone.

Its plan is—nave and aisles, under the same wide roof, with a chantry at the east end of each aisle; and there has formerly been a south porch. Internally, the old rafters are hidden by ceilings, except where they are partly visible in both aisles. There are two late buttresses on the west wall.

There is a western bell-turret with two bells, one of which is said to be inscribed in black letter with legend

✠ s'c'a m'ria magdalena ora pro nobis.

The register is said to date from 1571; the communion cup is said to have London marks for 1568, and to be the oldest hall-marked ecclesiastical vessel in the diocese.* For these particulars about the bell, book, and cup, I am indebted to the rector, the Rev. H. Whitehead.

Externally, the length of the old work is about 37 feet, and its breadth about 42 feet. The new chancel is about 20½ by 19.

The nave is divided from the aisles by three plain obtusely pointed arches on each side, all recessed, approximately semi-circular, to the depressed shape of which it is important to call attention. They are very slightly chamfered in the south arcade, but more freely in the

* The Bridekirk communion cup, hall-marked 1550, was originally secular. H. W. north,

north, these chamfers being about in proportion of one to two. The south western arch shews a little ancient sinking, and the whole north arcade has fallen out of the perpendicular. This last probably gave occasion to the raising and strengthening of the original lean-to aisles,* that they might buttress up the weak north nave. There is a more recent crack across the nave, in its east part, from north to south, which may be due to the removal of the ancient chancel, and which requires attention, especially as it traverses the region of some of the most important remains of the two aisle chantries, which are a principal part of our investigation.

The nave arches rest on *low* piers not more than 5½ feet high, which on the south side are cylindrical and on the north octagonal, a fashion not uncommon in Early English churches. There are two on each side with their eastern and western responds. All these piers and responds have, with slight modifications, the same abacus and cap-mouldings throughout; except that the west pier on the south side is a little more ornate, through the introduction of two additional mouldings. The base-mouldings of the piers are also similar throughout—as if of late Norman character, passing into Early English—low and more or less concave. Some of them distinctly so.

Though the arches and pier abaci make this church look late as one first enters it, this impression is corrected by an examination of the piers and responds in detail, which are then seen to be of one period, and that probably the late 12th or early 13th century.

For precise evidence and illustration of this, let us begin at the south-west and proceed in order through the two arcades.

The south western respond is of a pointed-Norman character, often seen in ruined abbeys (as at Fountains,

* Which, as well as the removal of the porch, took place about sixty years ago. H. W.

Valle Crucis, and Kirkstall, for instance), where it is of the 12th century; but in a plain country church on the border it may well be a little later (It would, have been desirable, had opportunity permitted, to compare Newton Reigny with other small churches in the neighbourhood of Penrith). The abacus is scarcely undercut; but the bell-moulding is hollow-chamfered and undercut slightly; below which this respond is elegantly prolonged through three members to a point.

Close under this respond but much concealed by pews is a round font,* the bowl of which, two feet in diameter, looks like an imitation of Norman with a heavy lip or rim. The base cannot at present be sufficiently examined.

The next pier, with its extra cap moulding, and low base of two or three rather concave rounds, has its abacus square above as in Norman and 16th century work, and below very slightly hollow-chamfered and undercut. Then follow the bell-mouldings, in order thus: a half round, a short vertical plain, a groove, then the abacus repeated and undercut. Then a neck band. The whole cap bell-shaped.

The second south pier is simpler; and may be taken as a sample of the pier-caps and mouldings in general on both sides; but in essentials it corresponds with the one just described. It has the same prevalent abacus, square above, a little more widely hollow-chamfered below than in the first, and this is repeated, as the bell moulding, on a rather larger scale and undercut, with the same neck band and general bell-shape. The base mouldings, much injured, here and in other piers on both sides of the nave, might with advantage be repaired.

The south eastern respond has much the same cap moulding and general form, and rests on an elegant knot

* Called by Bishop Nicolson, who saw it on March 14, 1704, "a good new Font." (Bp. N.'s *Visitation*, p. 146). H. W.

of unmistakable stiff-leaved incipient Early English foliage, with the trefoils ascending on their proper stalks, as if of date about A.D. 1170. The wall is cracked near this graceful work and otherwise needs repair.

Coming now to the north nave arcade, from east to west, the north-eastern respond is of the same time and style as the other responds and caps in general. Here we have for mouldings of the capital the same two verticals and slight hollow chamfers below each of them, the lower being decidedly undercut. Attached in front is an original round piscina, and the whole is supported on mutilated stiff-leaved trefoiled foliage, much concealed by the yellow-wash which colours both arcades. The rest of the wall in nave and aisles is whitewashed. The piscina itself is moulded and undercut in the usual way, and has a slit drain running backwards into the wall, like an old piscina of the south east chancel, which has been rudely inserted in the new wall there. We have in this church, I believe, clear indications of two original aisle chantries coeval with the church itself. The south chantry piscina is not in the respond, but in the south wall, as usual, round, but much built over and hidden. Aisle chantries in parish churches are often later than the main fabric; but here I take them to be coeval.

It is not necessary to describe particularly the two piers of the north arcade. They correspond, as I have already said, with the more eastern pier on the south side in all essential characters, differing chiefly in their octagonal form, not in height, mouldings, nor thickness of wall above; and I repeat that there is nothing unusual in this difference of form. The mouldings vary only in scale and proportion from one capital to another, in the greater or less undercutting of the lower part of the bell, and in the more or less concavity of the upper surfaces of the two or three rounds which compose the low (mutilated) bases.

The

[V]

The north western respond is very similar to the south western, with which we began, and to the piers, in its abacus and bell-mouldings, with the two successive short verticals, slightly hollow-chamfered below, the lower being decidedly undercut. It is finished below similarly, but more simply.

The chancel is new, as has been said; but its arch is old, with seeming indications of a rood loft on both sides. The arc is large, high and equilateral, or nearly so, much injured in perhaps more than one "restoration"—and certainly in the last, when its low capitals have been tooled out of character, except that fortunately one uninjured stone remains on the south side, and shews that this arch, so different in size and shape from the nave arches, is yet certainly coeval with the nave pier caps. The original supporting pillars and bases seem to have been slightly attached; but what exists of this kind is all new or altered, and of little architectural value. I have mentioned a late Norman slit drain of a piscina, roughly reset in the south east of the chancel; and in the north east corner there is an under-chamfered rude stone ledge also inserted, as if intended by Mr. Christian for use as a credence table.

The aisles show no ancient windows on either side, but have modern insertions of a chapel character, round and oblong. In the west window of the nave, however, and east window of the south aisle, I noticed mediæval ogee-mouldings in the jambs. And in the churchyard wall, south west of the church, is a portion of a mullion, diverging above as if into the cusplless heads of two conjoined lancets; this may be a fragment of a former window. The south aisle wall is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick. The oblong window at the east end, which has the old jamb mouldings, has had an external shutter. In the south aisle are two round south windows, and in the north aisle three, of no value.

Some

Some memorial slabs lie in the nave floor, one to James Pearson, 40 years curate, who died in 1676.

The most interesting is a large flagstone incised with a cross, the arms flory, and the lower limb descending to a calvary of three steps, on the dexter side of which is a shield bearing *a fess chequy between six garbs* for Vaux of Catterlen, and on the sinister a large pommel-hilted sword. The time may be early 15th century or late 14th. I saw no legend. This slab is in the mid-floor of the nave. The Hall of Catterlen (or Kaderleng anciently) built by the Vaux family is close by. I saw this same Vaux coat with date 1577 on the more ancient part of it; with several other arms of ownership and alliance, as of Richmond, Delamore, Chaytor, and Clarevaulx. William Vaux married Isabel Delamore in 20 Edward IV; and Richmond on the newer portion of Catterlen Hall of date 1657 impales Chaytor who quarters Clarevaulx.

In the north aisle chantry the north wall is marked as if with the impression of a high tomb; but "restoration" has swept away the records of both chantries.

Though there seem to have been three altars I saw no altar stone among the reddish flags of the floor. But the ledge of the north chantry altar is clearly seen in the east wall, though the last restoration has cut clean through it by a door into a new vestry, as the way of "restoration" is.

The church is fitted with old-fashioned panelled pews of oak, with straight up backs, in a uniform arrangement, which is not displeasing but rather simple and appropriate. I would commend their suitableness and venerable associations rather than advise their removal. They might easily be made all that is necessary or properly desirable. Among them are a few pieces older than the rest, as is shown both by their colour and mode of construction. The oak, both older and newer, is mostly sound. The pulpit of painted deal is valueless.

Newton

Newton Reigny and Catterlen are two adjoining townships separated, I understand, by the river which flows near the church. As there is, some way off, an old *Church Field*, where tradition says the first church stood, the Reigny and Vaux families may have combined to build the present church* in a place more equally convenient to themselves and their tenants; and may have simultaneously founded original chantries, one in each aisle, though I cannot learn that these chapels are now distinguished by any names. They may have done this near the time of their first settling here; for Henry II's reign would suit well with the stiff-leaved foliage of the responds and piscina.

I have been the more carefully minute in my description of this church, because, in spite of evidences which to me are convincing, it is very unlike late Norman work upon the whole; and I desire that my report may be strictly criticised.

If it be proposed to repair the church, I see no harm in removing the whitewash from the walls, and the yellow wash from the piers and arches. The nave and aisle ceilings too should be removed, and the roofs attended to. The crack across the east end should be examined, and stopped if possible; though the new chancel, which probably caused it, may now prevent its widening. Several pier bases and parts of the walls are in need of strengthening and repairing. There is indeed a general want of repair, on the principle of care and maintenance,

*Whellan (p. 581), in his account of this church, says that "the character of the architecture indicates the date of the construction of the church as being about the commencement of the fourteenth century"; which, if correct, would exclude the Reignys from any share in the erection of the church, as the manor of Newton had passed out of their hands before the end of the 13th century. Accordingly it has hitherto been supposed that a Vaux of Catterlen must have been the sole founder of the church; though it is not easy to explain why, if sole founder, he should have built it in Newton manor, where he had no land. But if Mr. Norwood be right in his opinion that the church is at least of the beginning of the 13th century, and may be of as early date as 1170 or thereabouts, we arrive at a more probable story of its foundation.—H. W.

all through the interior, both in stone and wood. But if it were projected to take off the wide roof, and return to lean-to aisles, on what was very likely the original plan, then it would be necessary to consider whether the north arcade, so much fallen outward, could stand without the support of the present high buttresses, formed by the east and west walls of the heightened aisles.
