

ART. X.—*The Church of St. Leonard's, Cleator, Cumberland.*

By J. H. MARTINDALE.

Read at Carlisle, April 30th, 1903.

THIS ancient church, now in the smoky mining district of the county, was no doubt like most ancient churches at its foundation, in the midst of beautiful surroundings close to the foot of Dent, on the banks of the river Kekle.

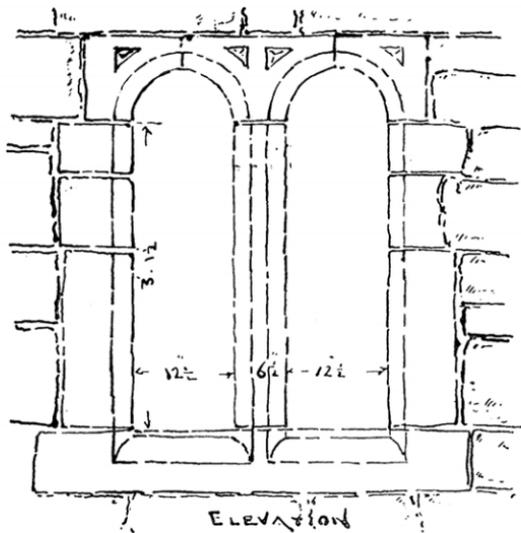
The only interesting portion of the building is the chancel. The nave was entirely rebuilt in 1841 in the style of that period, and all ancient features destroyed or obliterated. Fortunately the chancel was not touched then, although it had been some sixty or seventy years before.

The chancel is of very early date, the beginning of the twelfth century. The internal dimensions are 19 feet 9 inches long from east to west, and 14 feet 6 inches from north to south. The north and south walls are not quite parallel, the building being 2 inches narrower at the west end. All the walls are about 2 feet 9 inches thick, of fine blocked and squared masonry with wide joints, very similar in character to the masonry of St. John's Chapel in the White Tower, London, circa 1081. This wide-jointed masonry continued in vogue until the latter part of the reign of Henry I.; afterwards fine or close-jointed masonry came in. William of Malmesbury, describing the new work of Roger of Salisbury, says, "the courses of stone work are so correctly laid that the line of junction escapes the eye." The buildings so described were erected between 1115 and 1139, though the new style of construction would be a few years later in the north.

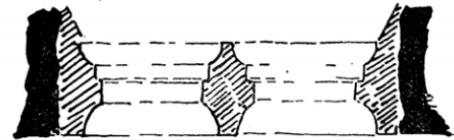
Externally the walls have a splay plinth course round the three sides, but otherwise have no strings or projections of any kind. The east angles are capped by solid pilaster buttresses 2 feet 5 inches wide on each face and 7 inches projection, rising in one height 7 feet 6 inches from plinth and finished with a single splay. A smaller and shorter buttress has been added in the centre of the east gable, finishing below the sill of the east window. The walls were raised about 2 feet at the end of the eighteenth century, the work being executed in red ironstone, and possibly the date may be fixed from the time when a certain quarry or pit was opened. The roof was reconstructed at the same time. At this alteration the old corbel quoins of east gable were happily left *in situ* and give the height of the original eaves as about 11 feet above the plinth. The quoin on the north side has a hollow with a recumbent animal in it, and is in a fair state; the south one is similar, but the carving is apparently foliage and is much worn by the weather. The original springer stones of the gable coping seem to have been destroyed, but two kneestones were used as springers for the raised gable, and these give the size and pitch of the ancient coping. The original apex stone was also replaced, and in the present works these indications have been followed in deciding the pitch and size of gable coping, and the stones themselves have been refixed.

In the north wall one of the original round-headed windows of the twelfth century building remains and has been opened out. It is 1 foot 2 inches wide and 2 feet 2 inches to the springer line; there is no rebate for the glass, but the crooks for a wood shutter remain. Internally the western jamb has been cut away, but the eastern shows the wide splay of the period.

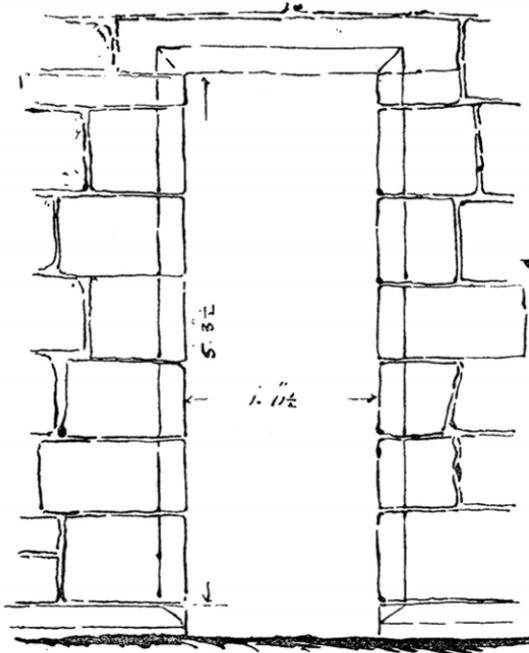
A square-headed door remains on this side near the west wall; the jambs and head have externally a simple splay $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide each way, finishing at the plinth, and the crooks for the door also remain here.



ELEVATION



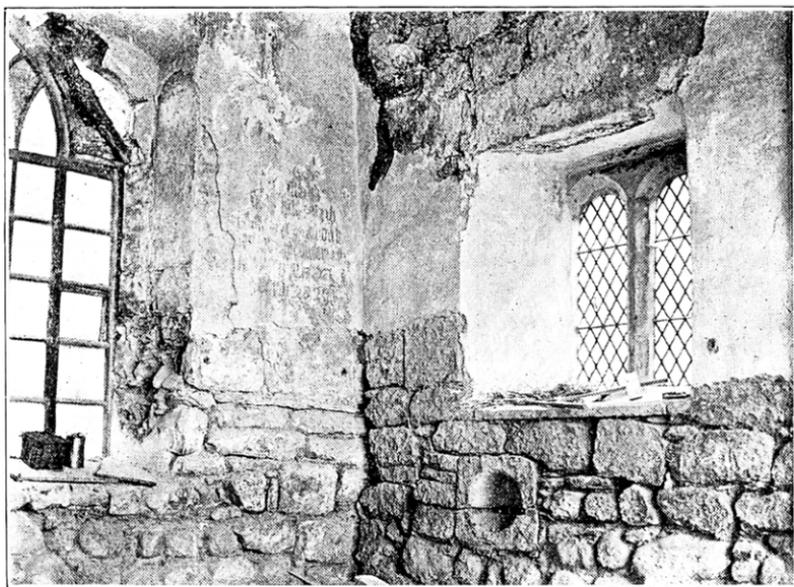
-PLAN-
WINDOW IN SOUTH WALL CHANCEL



-ELEVATION
DOOR IN NORTH WALL CHANCEL



PLAN



MURAL PAINTING, PISCINA, AND MASONRY
OF CLEATOR CHURCH.

Photo. by G. F. F. Martindale.

TO FACE P. 189.

In the east wall no traces of the original windows have been found, but fragments of an inserted fifteenth century one of possibly four lights.

In the south wall a two-light window exists, inserted in the fifteenth century, and no doubt occupies the position of a single light similar to the one on the north side. The lights are $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 3 feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches high to the springer line; the mullion is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 11 inches, with hollow mould both outside and inside. The window appears as if it had been prepared for or removed from some other building, as the head is dressed to receive a square hood mould which has never been fixed. The internal head is carried on stone corbel course across the splay reveals.

The arch between nave and chancel was a late insertion in a white stone—possibly Tallantire or Walk mill.

Internally, on the removal of the whitewash, fragments of painted decoration were discovered on the east wall. They were of two dates: the *later*, beneath two or three coats of whitewash, consisted of lettering turned a brown colour from damp, and undecipherable; the *earlier* was under a coat of plaster on which the later painting was executed; it was very fragmentary and consisted of scroll-work in black and brown. Similar traces of colour were found on the lintel of the two-light window on the south side, which gives a clue to the date, viz., after the insertion in the fifteenth century. Cleator must now be added to Canon Bower's list of mural paintings in the Diocese. (These *Transactions*, XV., 2).

In the south wall, about 4 feet from the east end, is a piscina. The head consists of a single stone 19 inches by $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, with semicircular recess cut in it, $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter with a splay on the edge $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide. The basin consists of the remains of a bowl 11 inches in diameter and about 4 inches deep; it projected about half its diameter, but the projecting part has been cut off. This piscina is apparently of the same date as the wall,

and if so is a very rare one. Parker, in his Glossary, says none are known to exist in this country earlier than the middle of the twelfth century. It is not mentioned in Canon Bower's list of piscinæ in the diocese; in character it is most like the one illustrated from Brampton old church. (These *Transactions*, XII., 19; pl. 8).

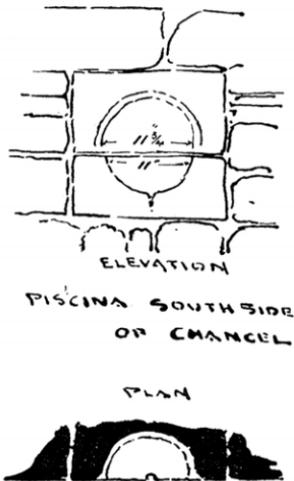
Perhaps the most interesting feature discovered after the plaster was removed is that the walls for a height of about 3 feet are built of round cobbles, above of dressed stones. Are these the remains of an earlier building? And was it only in extent the size of the present chancel?

No traces of west wall or foundation of arch have been discovered, this part being rebuilt in 1841.

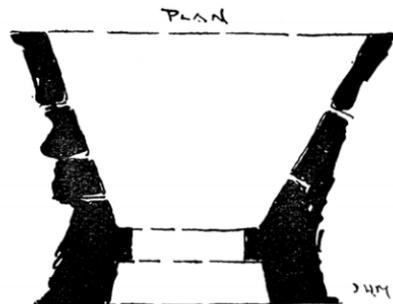
In excavating for the heating trenches in the nave, portions of a clay and cobble floor were discovered at a level of about 12 inches below the present floor.

Very few fragments of dressed stone have been found—only one or two broken fifteenth century window heads and several pieces of floriated ledger tombstones.

The sketches give plan of chancel, door and original window on north side, and piscina and inserted window on south side, with photograph of walling and mural painting.



WINDOW NORTH SIDE
OF CHANCEL



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