

ART. XVI.—*Chrism Crosses at St. Kentigern's Church, Crosthwaite.* By THE REV. CANON RAWNSLEY.

*Read at Ambleside, September 3rd, 1915.*

IT will be remembered on the last visit of the Archaeological Society to Crosthwaite, I gave some account of the chrism cross on the north wall inside the church, and of the six crosses on the southern wall of the outside of the church (these *Transactions*, N.S., xiv, p. 295). It was known that in old times when a church was consecrated the Bishop sprinkled the building with water and anointed the walls in twelve places marked by twelve painted crosses, which were sometimes carved before being painted, as was probably the case at Crosthwaite.

This anointing with the sign of the cross and use of water and chrism was in imitation of the ceremony of baptism, the body of the church being looked upon as the temple of the Holy Ghost. The number twelve was symbolical of the twelve apostles upon whom the church was founded. In England a second set of twelve crosses was placed and anointed outside the church. That so many of these consecration crosses have disappeared is probably owing to the fact that they were painted and not carven.

In June of 1915 Mr. F. C. Eeles, a member of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and Rhind lecturer, much interested in bells, visited Crosthwaite to examine an ancient fourteenth century bell with inscription of Lombardic letters dating probably from 1340, which hung outside the parish room. This bell had been saved from the melting-pot when Loweswater church was restored some years ago.

He visited the church to photograph the existing chrism

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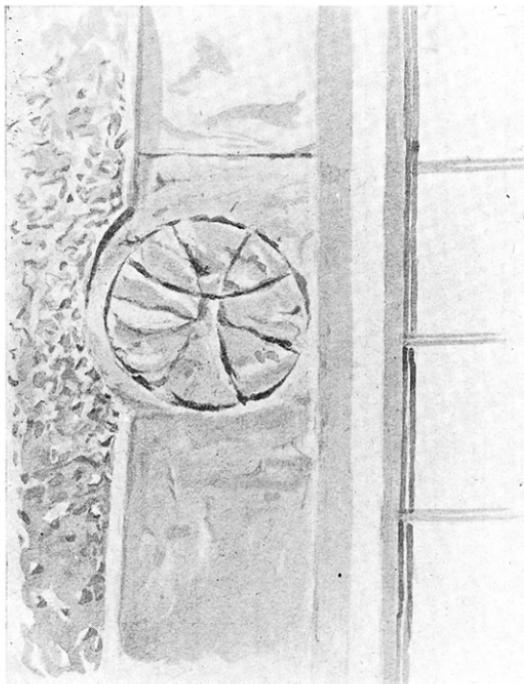
crosses, and knowing that six other crosses had once existed in some other part of the outside of the church, carefully examined the northern wall and discovered slight indications which warranted the taking away of the rough-cast with the result that the remaining six crosses were found *in situ* in perfect preservation.

Whilst all the consecration crosses on the south wall are on windows of the same date, presumably Marian, 1554, the six rediscovered on the north side were on window jambs of various periods, though all on the left jamb, and at various heights from the ground. This appears to have been the result of selecting the most important or hardest stone in the jamb for the chrism cross.

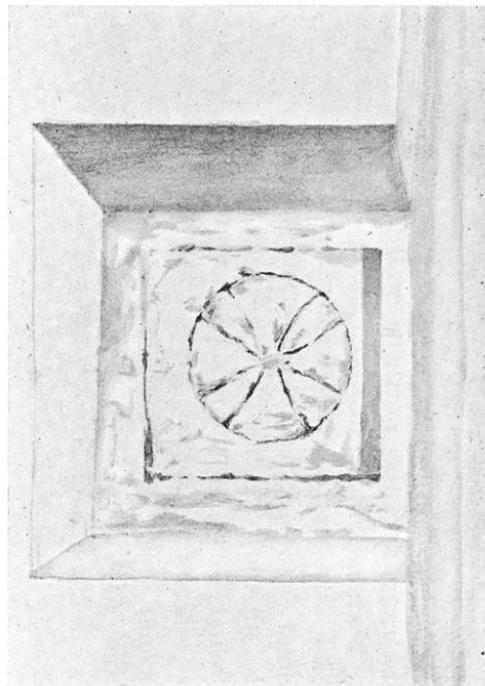
These crosses are of the cross patée form,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter, and Crosthwaite is now unique in having a complete set of twelve external crosses. No other church contains a perfect set though two others have the abnormal number of thirteen and seventeen, viz.: Ottery St. Mary, Devon, and Cannington, Somerset. One, Throcking, Herts, has the complete twelve inside.

The existence of the external crosses at Crosthwaite goes to prove that the church was consecrated according to the English use and not according to the Roman or any other foreign rite. And this is the more remarkable as when Bishop Aldrich of Carlisle anointed these crosses in 1554, Queen Mary was on the throne.

Mr. Eeles was then asked to undertake a search for the consecrated crosses on the inside walls, and was rewarded by discovering on the north wall, though sometimes buried as much as 4 inches deep in plaster, four crosses on the surface of the wall touching the splay and close to the left-hand side of the windows. All of these internal crosses are larger than those on the outside, the diameter being  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches. They also are at various heights from the ground. This is noteworthy because originally



Outside on North Wall.



Inside on North Wall.

CONSECRATION CROSSES AT ST. KENTIGERN'S CHURCH, CROSTHWAITE.

*Drawn by Mrs. Hardwicke Rawnsley.*

*Plates lent by Messrs. MacLehose.*

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the crosses were all ordered to be 10 palms, that is 7½ feet, above the ground, and a short ladder was provided for the use of the Bishop when he performed the act of chrism.

The interest of this find of consecration crosses is that it proves that the incision of the crosses was filled in with black paint, and that they were surrounded by a black line in the manner of a rectangular frame. Some of these painted lines are in good condition.

It is possible that Sir Gilbert Scott was unaware of the existence of these crosses because of their being covered with whitewash, but it is to be feared that he really did not know their interest when he restored the church in 1844, for it is quite certain that from the splays of the windows in the south aisle, three consecration crosses have been entirely obliterated by the redressing of the stone. Mr. Eeles was, however, fortunate to rediscover for us three consecration crosses on the eastern splay of the Marian windows in the wall of the south aisle.

We have therefore to-day in addition to the twelve external crosses nine consecration crosses inside the church. A further consecration cross was discovered on an outside buttress at the east end when the ivy was removed. This was of ruder type and evidently had belonged to the Norman or fourteenth century church and is a record of an earlier consecration.

In addition to these very interesting finds, owing to a leakage in the hot-water apparatus beneath the organ at the west end, and the necessary removal of seventy sacks full of bones from what must have been an ossuary, Mr. Eeles was able to trace the western wall of the transitional Norman church, which is spoken of by Jocelin of Furness in 1181, as recently built in honour of the blessed Kentigern; and he was able to prove that this wall ran on to the north and now underlies the northern wall of the fourteenth century church.

The church of that early date was built with a north aisle but no south aisle. A piece of the old south nave wall ran underneath the present south arcade. There was no tower to that church, and among the interesting finds beneath the tower was a stone which may have been the socket of the cross over the belfry at the west end. A fine fragment of what must have been a chancel arch or doorway of that twelfth century church has also been discovered, and a portion of a fourteenth century grave slab, and a head of a floriated cross. A portion of the rough-cast of the external wall south of the door has been removed to show the west corner of this old Norman church *in situ* from which it is plain as aforesaid that no south aisle and no western door then existed.

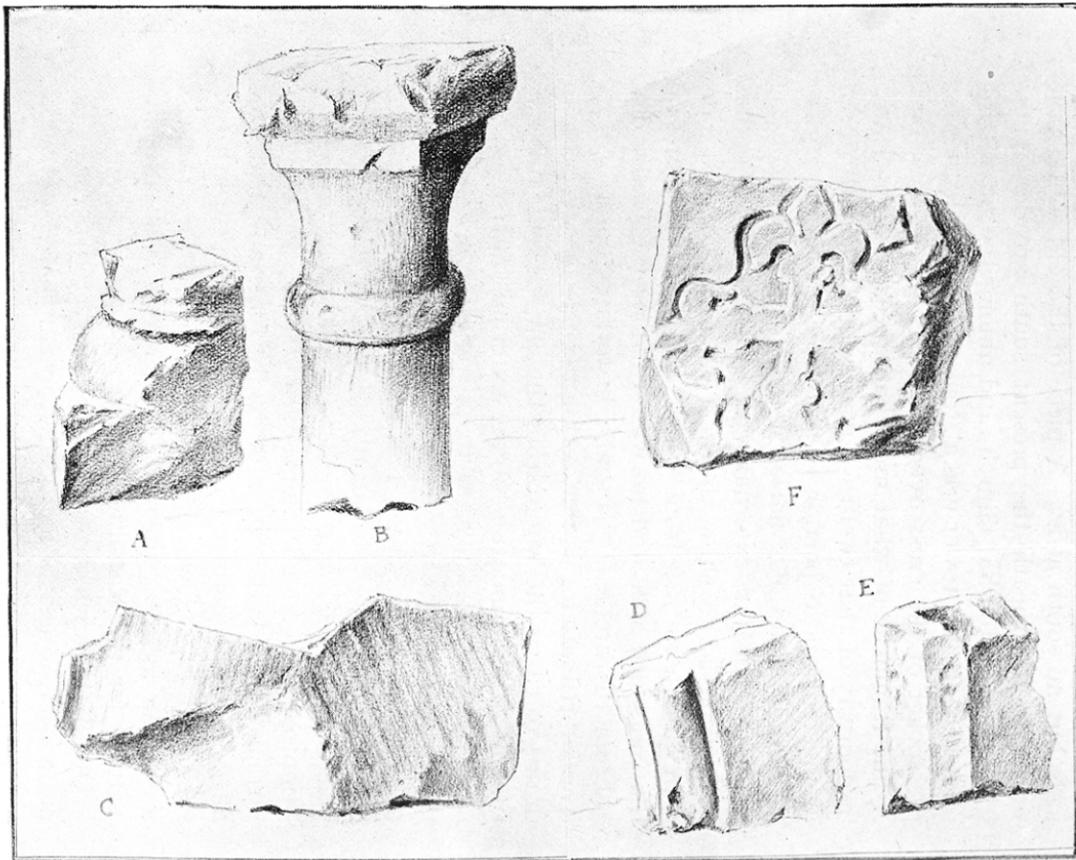
From the archæologist's and historian's point of view it was fortunate for us that owing to there having been no drains to carry the water from the church roof, this had run into the foundation of the external buttresses, and made them so unsafe that to prevent further cracks in the main structure it was determined that they should be removed and rebuilt. This was done with the greatest care. The stone entablatures which had been wrongly placed when they were built were placed in proper position. It was found that these buttresses were entirely rotten. They had been very badly built and had been filled in with remains of the twelfth and fourteenth century church, and with portions of the eastmost arch of the south arcade, which was widened in the sixteenth century for the Ratcliffe monument.

Of all the ancient stones thus recovered perhaps the most interesting is a moulded Norman shaft base, which may have been part of the south doorway of the twelfth century church. All these stones\* have been carefully

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\* The plate opposite is engraved from drawings by Mrs. Rawsley of these fragments :—

A.—Base of pilaster, probably Blencowe stone, and apparently injured by fire.



FRAGMENTS FOUND INSIDE BUTTRESSES OF ST. KENTIGERN'S CHURCH, CROSTHWAITE.

*Drawn by Mrs. Hardwicke Rawnsley.*

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preserved and placed inside the church together with some fourteenth century tiles which had been used as packing in the buttresses.

In addition to these the removal of the inside plaster round the windows has shown us that originally these windows had been decorated with painted floriation in black and white, and the elbow stone at the head of the windows, which are very interesting features, have been opened to view.

We have been able with Mr. Eeles's help to gain some knowledge of the probable dates of the church restorations and their result. There is reason to believe that the church, mentioned by Jocelin of Furness in 1181 as recently built, consisted of nave, north aisle, and chancel with chancel arch. It had neither tower nor south aisle. This was first enlarged by the addition of a south aisle to the chancel, then by an enlargement northwards and eastward of the chancel itself, then by the addition of a north aisle to the chancel wider than the present north aisle. Then perhaps the tower was built.

The church thus enlarged was remodelled late in the fourteenth century on the present plan of equal width with a continuous roof from east to west, and with no chancel arch. The existing arcades were built and the wide south aisle added; the north chancel aisle was rebuilt narrower so as to bring it in line with the altar further west in which new windows were inserted, the greater width of the earlier portion being sacrificed to uniformity of plan and constructional simplicity.

Much later at the end of the mediaeval period the east-

B.—Pilaster, probably of Blencowe stone; 1 foot 3 inches high; diameter of shaft 6 inches.

C.—Stone jamb of door.

D.—Portion of arch, perhaps of doorway or chancel, probably of Blencowe stone.

E.—Portion of arch, white sandstone.

All the above are from the fabric of the Norman Church built about 1175.

F.—Portion of a graveslab, late 13th or early 14th century; red sandstone.

most arch of the south arcade appears to have been widened, perhaps soon after 1529, to admit of the erection of the Ratcliffe monument beneath it, a similar arch of earlier work being destroyed at that time. Later on the windows in the south aisle, except the west window, all in the clerestory except two, and the eastmost window on the north side in the north aisle were renewed on a larger scale in the style of the sixteenth century. The south doorway was renewed, the embattlements added to the clerestory, and the tower rebuilt or certainly finished.

This work was not completed till 1553 when it is believed there was another consecration, at which time the consecration crosses were added. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the church was neglected, and early in the nineteenth century some unfortunate work was done upon it. In 1844 subscriptions were gathered for the Southey monument, and through the munificence of the late James Stanger of Lairthwaite, helped thereto by the parishioners, the church was restored, re-roofed, and re-seated under the direction of Gilbert Scott, the whole work being really a memorial to the poet laureate. Last year the whole structure was over-hauled; the ivy was taken from the tower by which an ancient sundial of very curious arrangement was discovered, and the bells were re-hung in a steel frame by Mears and Stainbank, and the lesser bell was recast at the cost of the Vicar.